

FOSTER HOME PLANNING FOR THE INDIAN CHILD

A casework study of foster children, parents,
foster parents, and agency service: Children's
Aid Society of Vancouver, 1959-61.

by

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ABSTRACT

The core of this study is an intensive review of a small sample of Indian foster children, their natural parents, their foster parents and of the services each group receives from a children's aid society. To a considerable extent, this is a test of facts against theoretical knowledge and against common beliefs. It is also an operational study which has been undertaken in response to a specific need, and with the hope of finding some procedures for remedial action.

The research material is drawn from thirty-one sets of three kinds of files, and the returns from twenty-four questionnaires which were mailed to the foster parent group with covering letters. Data were also secured from a questionnaire which was pretested in an interview with one foster mother who had several Indian children; from consultations with social workers and other experienced people; and from personal knowledge gained by working with the groups involved.

A preliminary review of Indians in British Columbia, historically and currently, throws light on the special problems of Indians here characterized as "marginality", "anomie" and prejudice. The study is, then, directed to three primary questions relating to: (1) planning foster placement for the Indian child; (2) the adequacy of the service offered to the Indian children, their parents and foster parents; and (3) the equipment of the social worker who handles Indian cases. The research also throws light upon eight other related queries, which were formulated in the course of the enquiry. On the basis of the evidence from the aggregate material, a number of procedures are proposed, both for improved service in planning for the Indian foster child, and for helping the agency and its workers who are responsible for his care.

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FOSTER HOME PLANNING FOR THE INDIAN CHILD

A Casework Study of Foster Children, Parents, Foster Parents and Agency Service: Vancouver Children's Aid Society, 1959-61.

CHAPTER I: THE ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

The illegitimate and neglected Indian children who come into the care of the social agency are not readily provided with the security of a permanent life plan. Concern over this, and the desire to offer better service, prompted the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, in 1959, to authorize an intensive study of Indian foster children, designed to cover, if possible, their parents, their foster parents, and the service each has received from the agency.

Little study is necessary to discover that the problems of the Indian foster child are rooted in the past history and the present situation of the Indian people in general. The deleterious position of the fast growing Indian minority¹ in British Columbia had already stimulated two surveys in the province by 1959, both of which proved invaluable when the present study was commenced.² Shortly after, the Vancouver Community Chest and Councils sponsored a survey of the Indian in the urban community;³

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1. Vancouver Daily Province, February 3, 1962, pp.3. Lyman Jampolsky, Regional Superintendent of Indian Schools, was quoted to have said: "Indians are now the fastest growing ethnic group in Canada and they show a 3% increase in school enrollment every year."
 2. Hawthorn, H.B., Belshaw, C.S. and Jamieson, S.M., The Indians of British Columbia, A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment, University of Toronto Press and University of British Columbia, Toronto, 1958; and Indian Affairs Branch (Canada) and Social Welfare Branch (British Columbia): A Pilot Survey of Welfare Services to Indians in British Columbia, 1957.
 3. Marcuse, Bert, Report to the Community Chest and Councils of the Greater Vancouver Area Committee on the Canadian Indian in an Urban Community (Vancouver), May, 1961.

and, in 1961, two Masters students in the School of Social Work at the University of British Columbia completed theses on other aspects of Indian organization.¹

What has become of the Indian, in the land he once possessed, has pricked the conscience of the nation for almost three centuries, and has inspired the pen of numerous anthropologists, historians, biographers and sociologists. Comparatively little, however, has been done to alter the lot of this now dependent, apathetic, under-educated people who, on the frayed fringes of two cultures, either hibernate on primitive reservations, or become parasites in the city slums. Nevertheless, the Indian and his problems cannot rightfully be understood until the reel of his history is cast over the past five hundred years.

The Indian, Past and Present:

Before the explorers, traders and colonizers arrived on the North American continent and subjected the Indian to their greed, betrayal and brutality, the British Columbian Indian was living in command of an abundant environment where it was easy to "live unto himself" in the small tribal unit. Unlike other peoples of the earth whose ingenuity was taxed as they had to adapt and mould their environment in order to produce the necessities of life, the natives of this verdurous province were offered, for minimum effort: food, clothing, shelter and transportation. Fish, fur-bearing animals, fruit and herbs abounded; wood for homes and boats was plentiful; a network of rivers, inlets and an ocean provided easy access over much of the territory; and the climate was mild. Their

1. Holmes, Alvin I., The Social Welfare Aspects and Implications of the Indian Act, the University of British Columbia, 1961; and Evans, Marjorie, G., Fellowship Centres for Urban Canadian Indians, the University of British Columbia, 1961.

neighbours were similarly endowed; hence, there was little "borrowing" of cultural traits as tribes met in war and peace. Diamond Jenness concludes that this opulence is responsible for the subsequent decay of the Indian nation. He describes the culture of the British Columbian Indian at the coming of the white man as a "rich hot-house plant, nurtured by isolation in a peculiar environment and incapable of withstanding a chill breeze from the outside world."¹ He claims, also, that it had "reached full blossom ... and was lacking in further potentialities for healthy and vigorous growth."

The west coast Indians had no true political organization but had come to a type of feudalism. The "lords" gained power and prestige as they captured slaves from other tribes and accumulated food and utensils taken in raids or made by their family. Their belongings were meaningless, however, unless they were able to exhibit their wealth by giving generously to their own and to neighbouring people. This was done at the potlatch - the "status symbol" of the early Indian. It was a festival marked not only by feasting and the bestowing of gifts, but by significant dancing and music making; its preparation often took weeks, and the celebrations would continue for several days.

The seasons of these people were marked by strenuous summer activity in readiness for the more leisurely winter with its ceremonies, story telling, and hand-crafts. The roles of work were systematically allocated to the separate sexes. The men did the hunting, fishing, fighting, and they built the heavy equipment for the family, such as boats and houses. The women tanned skins, made garments, foraged, grew, preserved and prepared food; made pots and other household equipment; and cared for the girls and

1. Jenness, Diamond, Indians of Canada, National Museum of Canada Bulletin 65. Anthropological Series No. 15, January 31, 1955, Ottawa, pp.147.

younger boys.

In the closely-knit family units, the children grew up under the eye, care and counsel of the whole group. From birth to burial the lives of the early Indians were regulated by a system of taboos, mores and prohibitions. Puberty, courtship and marriage were especially governed by rituals and rules which prescribed a course of action for each member of the group.

Religion, too, was interwoven with all phases of their daily routine. The Indians worshipped a Supreme Being, besides many lesser deities, and attributed the finest human qualities such as bravery, courage, love, loyalty, etc. as gifts of the gods. But there was much they did not understand about their environment, themselves and the world beyond; hence, they wove a religion of beliefs, practices, ceremonies and deities to explain, placate and cajole the mysterious forces. The Indian, Clutesi, in a recent television interview, spoke about the religion of his people as having been similar to that of the old testament. He said that God, to the early Indians, was an approachable, kind Father whom young and old consulted reverently and constantly. From Him they did not ask for material possessions, but for the "power within self to achieve and prepare for the years with a clean heart."¹

Today the life of the British Columbia Indians is a stark contrast to that of their abundant, busy, well-regulated, satisfying past. Many Indians live on allotted parcels of land which are dwindling, undeveloped and often alien to their original habitat. Others drift about the country

1. Clutesi, George, "Interview - Seven O'Clock Show", Canadian Broadcasting Corporation production, September 4, 1961.

picking at fragments of employment, or remain in the slums until disease, crime or neglect transfers them to government custody. Their living, at the best, is frugal, precarious, and most often a "hand-out" which requires little effort to possess, and which forces them below the minimum standard for human development and personal dignity.

The political, social and cultural structures that once formed the basis for Indian life have been gradually undermined; and little has been offered to fill the void. Canadian citizenship is not readily obtainable for the Indian. Not only does he have to relinquish his "Indian rights" in order to manage his own affairs and to vote in the land where he and his ancestors have always lived, but he has to prove he is "a responsible citizen successfully coping with his changed environment"; and establish "his ability to earn his living off the reservation."¹ This has been an impossible feat for most Indians who are generally inadequately educated, and untrained for a vocation away from the reservation which Erickson speaks of as "the refuge of those who feel isolate and inefficient."² The Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs reports that "only 182 Indians became full citizens from 1876 to 1918, and only 4,000 between 1876 and 1948."³

Another void was left when the politically and socially important Indian potlatch was outlawed by the white "guardians" along with other traditions, beliefs and the native languages. The Indian culture was stamped as "savage", "wasteful" and "un-Canadian"; religion, as "pagan." As a result, the Indian has become a passive recipient of the white man's offerings, and docilely puts on the veneers of another religion, culture.

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1. Vancouver Daily Province, "Indians Still Spurning Right to the Franchise", March 24, 1961.
 2. Erickson, Eric H., Childhood and Society, Imago Publishing Co., London, 1954, pp.384.
 3. Vancouver Daily Province, op. cit.

educational routine and mode of existence, while underneath rots the core of his heritage. It is ominous that the totem pole, with its garish mounts, has today become practically the symbol, not only of Indian artistic expression, but of the Indian himself. The totem pole is said to have first appeared soon after the coming of the white man. It was apparently raised as a status bid by the Indians, drawing attention to ancestors and their deeds of valour after the intruder had already begun to strip the Indian of all that he valued, and make him an "unwelcomed guest in his own land."

Today, Native men and women together take similar, unskilled jobs which hold little interest or challenge and, because they do not make a "career" of canning fish, cutting trees or culling peas, they gain the reputation for being shiftless and unreliable. Even more demoralizing than this breakdown in role differentiation is the disintegration of family ties and abandonment of the moral codes, mores, and ceremonies which once gave stability and meaning to the individual in his extended family unit. The young Indians now adopt the white man's scorn for the traditional ways of their people and, floundering in the larger cultural milieu, they have become labelled as "immoral" and "a poor type."

Relevant Concepts:

As studies of the modern Indians progressed, there emerged two concepts which seem to have almost universal application to the Indian and to those of his children who become wards of a social agency. The first, termed by contemporary sociologists "marginality", applies to the state of being on the fringes of one or more situations and yet not being a part of any one of them. This is evident in a three-fold sense with the Indian foster children. Frequently of mixed racial origin, the children bear, in varying degrees, the physical characteristics associated with the mongloid and caucasian races; secondly, they often remain indefinitely

in "temporary" foster homes; and lastly, growing up on the edges of two cultures, they do not entirely accept their adopted way of life, yet are unable to return to the vestiges of Indian customs, mores and religion which remain.

This same "marginality" is also a disrupting influence in the lives of the children's parents. Unfitted educationally, occupationally and socially for the life in the white man's society, they are, nevertheless, dissatisfied with their life on the reserve and contemptuous of what their parents teach. Consequently, they drift into the sordidness of the skid road and slip along with the shifting dregs of the larger culture.

The second concept can be summed up in the word "anomie." This was a term coined by Emile Durkheim and applied to the antithesis of what he describes as "the pleasure man may experience in acting, moving, exerting effort ... his efforts are not futile ... as he travels, he gets somewhere ... is moving towards a goal."¹ Whereas "anomie" is generally considered an accompaniment of emotional disturbance in the white population, it is a blight which cripples, in some degree, most of the Indian people. The very apathy and inconstancy which is considered characteristic of the present-day Indian is an expression of this lack of motivation and the result of there being few strong goals to incite his effort.

A third concept, relevant to the study of the foster parents as well as the Indian children and their natural parents, is "basic need." Social scientists have offered varying lists of what they consider individuals need most to operate as mentally healthy members of society. Some have emphasized the biological: e.g. nutrition, sex and body shelter; others, the psychological: e.g. new experience, response, etc; and yet others, the sociological: e.g. "gang" approval, etc. Gordon W. Allport,

1. Durkheim, Emile, "On Anomie," from Images of Man, Ed. Mills, C.W. New York, 1960, pp.476.

in his book "Becoming"¹, and Adlerian psychiatry², both suggest three needs which are basic to healthy survival for human beings. The first is the need for security; that is, to belong to an individual, a group and groups; to be nurtured, accepted and be an active participant (not just an observer or a passive recipient) in the group; and to have boundaries set. Secondly, there is the need to develop one's own potential, no matter how small or how great it may be. This may also involve developing potentials of one's environment such as the home, the land and the community. This development is achieved by education, recognition, encouragement, opportunity and freedom from fear. Physically, the human organism grows; he also needs to develop his intellectual, artistic, social, manual and other potentials. When growth is blocked, the product becomes stunted and sometimes ugly.

The need to contribute to the wellbeing of others, and thus be necessary, is a third requisite for mental health. This is a need which is not always recognized and may be confused with the need for security. In the case of the mental patient, for instance, health is often regained as the patient becomes less preoccupied with himself and acquires interest in doing something for others. Dr. Driekurs speaks of this as "integrating one's own interest with the interest of others."³

Throughout the study, and in the final summation, there is evidence to support that these three needs are not always being met, but may be better supplied, by the service offered to the Indian foster child and those responsible for his care.

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1. Allport, Gordon W., Becoming, Yale University Press, 1955.
 2. Driekurs, Dr. Rudolf, The Adlerian Approach to Psychodynamics in Contemporary Psychotherapies, Ed. Stein, Morris I., The Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1961.
 3. Ibid., pp.93.

Foster Care Theory:

There is a large literature on the subject of substitute care for children, and work with foster parents. In the development of the social work profession, many of its practices have been "trials", not always without errors. Steps have been advanced and then partly retraced. For instance, the abandoned institution has now been reclaimed for "special" cases. Again, parental rights of the father alone, and then of both parents, were once unquestioned; then the right of the state to protect the child was recognized. Next came a period when the "neglecting" parents were stripped of their responsibilities as well as their "rights." Today, more consideration is being given to the value of the parent in the life of the child; and to strengthening, where possible, this primary relationship. Recently, there has also been a re-evaluation of the foster parents' function and of their relationship with the welfare agency.

In two recent articles from social work journals,¹ some points are made which are vital for work with foster children, and especially Indian children. The very title of the first, "Is Foster Care the Answer?", would have been heresy a few years ago. Ten directives from these two articles - six from the first and four from the second - are enumerated

1. Hill, Esther, P., "Is Foster Care the Answer?", Public Welfare, April, 1957, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp.67 ff; and McMahon, M.E., "The Flexible Use of Foster Parents for Emergency Care", Child Welfare, June, 1958, New York.

here as being pertinent to this study. These are:

1. You cannot "begin to talk about sound family life and child rearing until there is food, shelter, heat, light, clothing and medical care."¹
 2. "Most parents want to be good parents; most are capable of some change with help."²
 3. "A child can stand physical neglect far better than he can stand being nobody's child."
 4. "Placement is a major operation" and needs a thorough pre-diagnosis, a trying of "everything first" and the working out of a "total plan" before the severance is made.
 5. "For the discouraged parent, placement of the child removes the very thing around which his efforts can be mobilized; the most compelling motive for doing better is lost."
 6. "Visiting her child in a foster home, or an agency office, is not a constructive experience for the parent." It reinforces all the feelings of "failure, inadequacy, inferiority, helplessness and despair."
 7. "It is unrealistic to expect to find many foster families free from neurotic motivations and needs, since the seeking of a child is usually, to some degree, the family's way of solving a conscious or unconscious problem."
 8. "We strive to evaluate the crucial balance between the healthy and the neurotic motivations in parental functioning in our selection and use of foster homes."
 9. Speaking of ways to ensure foster parent satisfaction with their undertaking, the essentials were assessed to be:
"(a) a team approach with much agency backing; (b) security in the feeling that help is available at all times; (c) strong identification with the agency."
 10. "We need more foster caring agencies (and foster parents) with the vision to see beyond the child's problems, to his potentialities; and the willingness to gamble on the little islands of strengths which most children possess."
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1. This was demonstrated by the FamilyCentered Project of St. Paul, 1951-1959, when it was found that "there was a rise in public assistance payments during the first year of treatment, followed by a decrease in subsequent years." (See mimeographed seminar series on The Family Centered Project of St. Paul by Beverly Ayres, Community Chest and Councils of the Greater Vancouver Area, April, 1960, pp.44. These multi-problem families were initially in dire need of basic essentials for physical maintenance - clothing, household equipment, etc. which long years of marginal living had impoverished.
 2. Another fact demonstrated by the St. Paul project.

Professional literature further indicates that very little social work has been undertaken with the Indian people either in Canada or the United States.¹ A project designed to find adoption homes for Negro children among their own people bears, however, many aspects which would conceivably be duplicated if a similar project were ever undertaken among the Indian people.² These are worth noting:

1. It was found necessary to develop a knowledge of the cultural and environmental factors influencing the group.
2. A strong bi-racial advisory committee was essential.
3. The minority group "held back" in the "fear of yet another rejection in a lifetime of rejection."
4. A differential set of child placing standards and methods, more in keeping with the cultural background and pattern of the group was necessary.
5. The minority group required immediate and continuing help in modifying and enriching their mode of life in order to qualify for a child.

Comparing further the situation of the Indian people with that of other non-white minority groups, it is interesting to note from the report of the 1960 White House Conference on "The Nation's Children ...", that the Mexican Spanish-speaking children in the United States are confronted with problems similar to those experienced by North American Indian children.

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1. In Child Welfare, October, 1959, there was a brief notation (pp.11) to the effect that "The Child Welfare League of America and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs have entered into a joint pilot project on the adoption of Indian children ... to study the feasibility ... and to explore with Indian tribal leaders and others, including the National Indian Organization, their attitudes towards adoption of Indian children by white people."
Reference is made to this same project in McCalls Magazine, March, 1962. Abraham Ribicoff, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the United States, ("All to the Good", pp.26) says, "some fifty children have been placed with families without regard to race or religion."
 2. Duckett, Rita, and Thompson, T.G., Adoption Resources for Negro Children, Child Welfare League of America, Inc., New York, 1959.

These are:

1. Schooling is affected by their low economic, social and cultural level.
2. Teachers have difficulty in presenting their cultural heritage both to the minority and to the majority groups.
3. A high proportion of the socially approved avenues for making money are virtually closed to them.
4. "They are relatively free from self-discipline ... more easily influenced by matters of the moment."¹

The author of this report goes on to say that she does not consider it is realistic to assume that the members of a minority group can retain for themselves the "best of both cultures", since "cultures do not consist of many unrelated bits and pieces ... The individuals need to make up their minds which culture they wish for their own."²

Murray Ross, the author of a manual on community organization, agrees that the "segmented adaptation of undeveloped and more primitive people to modern society" causes disruption, generating conflict between generations, goals and values. He suggests, however, that "the community, as a whole, must make the adaptation."³ In other words, the onus is on the majority group to involve the minority in an integration - though not necessarily an assimilation - process, to enable equal advantages, opportunity and acceptance.

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1. Burma, John H., "Mexican Children", from The Nation's Children, Problems and Prospects, White House Conference, 1960, Ed. Eli Ginzberg, Columbia Press, New York, pp.85 ff.
 2. Burma, John H., Ibid.
 3. Ross, Murray G., Community Organization, Theory and Principles, Harper Brothers, New York, 1955, pp.11.

Dimensions of the Indian Foster Child Problem:

The first step that the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver took towards this "adaptation" in 1950 was to make a survey of its 129 non-white wards, and it was found that almost half of this group had an Indian background. These children have always been "hard-to-place." They often remain beyond the allotted three-month period in the infant receiving-homes; and not infrequently spend their lives in "temporary" foster homes. They are replaced often, rarely adopted, almost never return to their natural parents, and often have a poor record of social adjustment in the community as they grow to adolescence and adulthood.

As a result of the 1950 survey, a full-time social worker was hired by the agency to concentrate upon the "hard-to-place" children; but these included not only the non-white wards, but children who had physical and mental handicaps. Many of the group were placed in "permanent", and even adoption, homes, during this time. However, when the worker left the agency three years later, her position was not re-filled, and the children were once more distributed among the district workers.

Nine years later, the non-white children were again surveyed by the agency, and those of Indian origin, who were steadily growing in numbers, were separated for intensive study.¹ There were now 160 Indian wards in

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1. In 1959 the Children's Aid Society of Vancouver authorized the writer to spend a limited period of time on the study, but before its completion, more pressing demands within the agency terminated the research.

The writer was particularly interested in Indian foster children, having spent many years working with Indian parents on the skid road of the city, and later in the adoption department of the agency, where it became evident that an adoption home for an Indian child was a rare thing.

the care of the Children's Aid Society and Table 1 shows their distribution by age and foster home placement.

Table 1

Age and Foster Home Distribution of Indian Wards of
the Vancouver Children's Aid Society in April, 1959.

Foster Homes	Age 1 to 6	Age 7 to 12	Age 13 - 21	Total
Temporary	27	9	8	44
Long Term	21	37	28	86
Adoption	13	3	0	16
Other	0	0	14 *	14
Total:	61	49	50	160

* Five girls were in the Girls' Industrial School, one staying at the Y.W.C.A., one in the Preventorium, two in the Receiving Home and two in a Roman Catholic home for emotionally disturbed girls. Two boys were in commercial boarding homes and one was being maintained temporarily in a housekeeping room of his own selection. He had been self-supporting.

It was evident from the agency's earlier experience that the Indian situation required attention beyond just finding "permanent" homes for the children. A four-dimensional problem was indicated involving: (1) the children; (2) the parents; (3) the foster parents; and (4) the social workers.

The mothers - mostly Indian women - are, almost without exception, emotionally deprived women who, although frequently expressing affection for their children and a desire to keep them, do not have the personal or social resources to carry out such a plan. They are generally on their

own, i.e. unmarried, "separated", deserted or widowed. The fathers, who may be of any racial origin, are rarely seen or involved in planning for the children.

When the study commenced, it was suspected that the foster parents might have special needs which prompt them to foster non-white children, or else they were being coerced into taking such children because of the agency's need for homes. It was further thought that the foster parents might be confronted with hard-to-handle problems as a result of having an Indian child in their home and in their community.

The social workers, too, were found to be faced with special problems when working with Indian clients. It was evident from reading files and from talking with the workers, that they did not devote sufficient time with Indian clients to complete an adequate social history, understand them, or to see that they received help with their problems.

The results of similar prejudice in working with the Indian were observed by Mary Woodward in 1940. She comments in her thesis on "Juvenile Delinquency among Indian Girls" - "A good case worker attempts to understand human nature and tries to put away prejudice in an attempt to help the client. This was not the case for any of the Indian girls; thus their problems and behaviour difficulties remained unsolved."¹ Again, the social workers' ignorance of the Indian and his milieu is verified in the more recent Vancouver Community Chest study. The questionnaire that the Chest circulated to the staff of social agencies in the city which deal with Indians reveals that the workers are "generally ignorant of the cultural, sociological and economic structure of this particular ethnic group."²

1. Woodward, Mary T., Juvenile Delinquency Among Indian Girls, Master of Social Work thesis, University of British Columbia, 1940, pp.23.

2. Marcuse, B., op. cit., pp.52.

Scope and Purpose:

This study undertook to be essentially exploratory, with an attempt at a causal analysis of some facts, judgements, practices, etc., drawn from case histories and questionnaires. The case histories are used as illustrative material rather than as a basis for argument. The recommendations, therefore, are suggestive rather than definitive.

The ultimate purpose of the undertaking has been remedial action. However, several preliminary steps were necessary which, in themselves, become goals. First, the hypothesis that there are special factors present, which make fostering an Indian child a different experience from that of fostering a white child, is tested. Second, information is assembled about the Indian child, his parents and his foster parents for the purpose of understanding each group and how they inter-acted. The third goal is to describe and evaluate the service that social workers are rendering to each of these groups. Finally, the study is directed towards finding procedures for enhancing the foster home service, or else suggesting areas where further research is indicated.

The purpose of the study was given direction after several questions had been posed; and the research was subsequently designed to supply answers to three primary areas of enquiry. These ask:

1. Are there special factors which complicate planning for the Indian child?
2. Are the needs of the foster parents, and those of the children and their natural parents, being met by the fostering service; and, if not, why not?
3. Do social workers require special knowledge and skills to do an effective job with their Indian clients?

As thought was given to the problem, eight related queries were also

listed. These are:

1. How can social workers, foster parents and the community in general gain a better understanding of the culture, needs and the potentials of the Indian, in order to facilitate working relationships between the Indian and the White, and help the Indian to become an integral part of the Canadian life?
2. How can children who "look Indian" be helped to identify in a positive way with their Indian background and not be handicapped by a sense of inferiority?
3. What wishes, ambitions, etc. does the Indian have for himself, his children and his future in Canada?
4. Is the placement of the Indian child in a white foster home a good plan for him now?
5. What are the possibilities for alternative care of the Indian child who becomes a ward of an agency? e.g. (1) group homes? (2) Indian foster homes?
6. To what extent are Indian parents who are "neglecting" their children capable of keeping them? And what should be added to the casework service and developed in the community in order to strengthen the parental tie?
7. To what extent do foster parents accept the Indian or part-Indian child, and what factors influence him in this respect?
8. What image does the Indian foster child have of himself?

It was realized that, whereas the research might undertake to suggest answers to the three primary questions, the others might be beyond the scope of the study. However, some light is thrown on the secondary considerations in the course of the investigation, and this is indicated in the final summation.

Method and Procedure:

The first step in this study was to confirm that investigation of Indian foster children would be profitable, not only to the agency concerned, but to other social agencies in the province which supply a similar service. Staff members of the agency were first consulted; a perusal was made of a limited number of files; and then social workers were asked to fill

out a schedule about their non-white foster children. (Appendix A.) A meeting was also arranged with the Catholic Children's Aid in the city, and discussions held with officials of the Provincial Child Welfare Service. All of these sources confirmed that (1) social work with the Indian was presenting extra problems; and (2) more information was necessary if something constructive was to be done about the situation.

Therefore, the next step was to become better informed about three areas: (1) the historical background and the current circumstances of the Indian in British Columbia; (2) relevant theory associated with child welfare practices, especially relating to work with the non-white children; and (3) the situation under consideration. As already noted, there was generally no lack of material dealing with the first two subjects. In addition to consulting sources such as texts, magazine articles, published and unofficial research reports, newspaper items and government publications, several radio and television scripts were obtained from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in which Indians had been interviewed.

Then, facts about the nature, wishes, ideas, relationships, etc. of the four groups under study were obtained from two primary sources: (1) thirty-one sets of three files - i.e. child, parent, foster parent; and (2) a questionnaire given, first, in an interview with one foster mother and then circulated to the foster parents of the Indian children in the sample.

The sample of cases for study was selected on the basis of (a) the child's age; and (b) the length of time he had been in the foster home. The children were all between the ages of six and twelve, attending school in the community but not yet encountering the social problems associated with adolescence. They had also been in the foster home for at least

two years; hence, it was assumed that both foster parent and child would, in this time, have resolved the early problems of adjustment. There were initially thirty-one children of twenty-nine mothers in thirty-one foster homes. It was then found that there were often other siblings in the same homes - some in the same age range but who had not been in the home so long, and some older. These were also included in the study; so that the final sample included twenty-one girls and twenty-two boys.¹

The questionnaire to foster parents (Appendix 'B', no. 3) was designed essentially to ascertain: (1) the needs, wishes, ideas, problems, experiences, etc. of the foster parents; and (2) the ability of the substitute parents to meet the needs of the foster child. It was also constructed to reveal: (3) something of the child's self image; and (4) his acceptance in the home and community. It also served: (5) to verify some information recorded on the files.

Twenty-four of the recipients replied to this questionnaire. It was possible, however, by checking the files of those who did not reply, to gain some of the needed information. In all cases except one it was the foster mother who filled in the questionnaire. In the single case, the foster father answered the questionnaire relating to one child in the home and his wife completed the information for the sibling.

The final procedure divided itself into two operations: (1) sorting the material from files and questionnaires under classified headings (Appendix 'C') and tabulating specifics; and (2) analysing, comparing and cross-referencing this material in order to arrive at answers to the

1. Two of the original group moved from their homes before the questionnaire could be completed by the foster parents, one girl went to an adoption home and a boy, who was in a most unsatisfactory home, was replaced. In his case, the new foster mother filled in the questionnaire.

research questions. Before this could be done, however, it was necessary to discover what, if any are the "additional components" which make fostering an Indian child a different experience from that of fostering a white child. The tabulations supported the view that these "components" are specific and are related to the problems of the Indian foster child and those responsible for his care. The material was analysed, further, to find out if and why social casework with the Indians deviates from the accepted norm.

In bringing information together, in the ensuing chapter, about (1) the Indian foster children, (2) their natural parents, and (3) the casework services, answers to the research questions begin to appear. As similar treatment is given to the foster parents of the same children in chapter three, the areas of enquiry are given further clarification. In the final chapter, the findings are focussed to show how they might answer the three primary and the eight secondary research questions. In conclusion, specific procedures are suggested for enhancing the fostering service as it applies to the Indian children.

The value of agency files as source material for this study was found to be limited for two reasons: (1) Recording is not systematically kept up to date. (In some instances there has been no dictation on the files for four or five years.) (2) There is a notable lack of significant data pertaining to background information, developmental history, strengths, needs, relationships, diagnostic planning or casework treatment. There is more recording on the foster home files because, once the child is in agency care, the major contact is with the foster mother. But here again, there is little recording of the foster parents' wishes, feelings towards the child, their relationship with him, or how they are handling problems that arise. All this would indicate an agency need for re-

evaluation of recording, not only for operational but for research purposes.

The questionnaire to foster parents was unwittingly constructed to draw forth more of the foster parents' own problems than to give an idea of the relationships experienced by the child. In this connection, the impression was gained from aggregate returns that the racial question is one which many foster parents are "keeping the lid on", and the "peek under" raised some anxiety and hostility.

The time allotment for the study did not permit interviews with any Indian parents. This was regrettable, as it has generally been a practice not to consult the Indian on matters which affect him most; and, consequently, a distorted impression has been perpetuated that the Indian is incompetent to think or act for himself.

Again, because of the time limit, a control group made up of foster parents with white children was not given parallel study. This would have permitted a more scientific assessment of the situation, rather than the essentially descriptive findings and expirical deductions which resulted.

CHAPTER II: CHILDREN OF "MARGINALITY"

The findings from questionnaires and files indicate again and again that many of the Indian foster children, and nearly all their natural parents, have neither place nor purpose in life. There is the suggestion, too, that little is being done in the community or in the agency to remedy this. Many of the children in the study belong nowhere - neither in their own homes nor in the homes of their foster parents. Many do not belong to themselves or to the future, because their self image is confused. Again, they belong to nobody. The record of the parents is even worse - no place, no person, no purpose!

In most cases, there is little inter-relationship between the Indian child and his parents once he becomes an agency ward. These family members, therefore, are considered separately in the chapter; but with an indication of the links which bind them.

I. THE CHILD:

The neglect situations which precipitated the children under study coming into agency care, gave the first indication of the parents' lack of direction, purpose, stability, personal resources and sense of belonging. "No parent capable ..." was the legal cause of neglect in most cases. A breakdown showed, however, that eight mothers had deserted at the time of the child's apprehension; seven were prostitutes; four were unmarried juveniles; four had died of tuberculosis; another two were medically unfit to care for their children; and two others, who had large families, needed help in caring for a child with a medical problem. The paternal figures were generally not in the picture. Common-law relationships which were most general had, for the most part, dissolved due to the man's desertion,

death, or incarceration in a penal or mental institution. In four instances where the father had taken or wanted to take responsibility for a child, the plan broke down for reasons similar to those faced by the unattached mother - lack of resources, both personal and community. An adequate home, sufficient income, child day-care, character resources and extended casework help were all found to be lacks contributing to the legal neglect.

Table 2 shows the ages at which the children of the sample were admitted to care and the number of placements each had had up to April, 1959. Contrary to expectations, children who had remained with parents generally showed good nutrition and physical care upon admission to agency care.

Table 2.
Ages of Indian Foster Children at Time
of Apprehension and Average Number of
Placements for Each Age Group

Age at Apprehension	Number of Children	Average Number of Placements
At birth	9	3
1 year and under	9	5
2 years	8	4
3 years	5	4
4 years	3	5
5 to 9 years	9	2
Total:	43	(4)

The mothers of the children placed at birth (and up to ten days old) were mostly the younger unmarried mothers who had been previously known to the agency. The group of children three years and under generally

represented children whose parents had attempted to make a plan for them even if it involved placing them privately. Several of the older children were separated for the first time from precarious family units which had finally broken down due to an additional strain of illness, death or desertion of one parent.

The placement history of ten year old Jean, who was admitted to agency care at birth from hospital, illustrates dramatically how the prejudice of social workers, foster parents and the community, together with unclarified policy between government levels, can impair the social service given to Indians. Jean's mother had been reared in the worst conditions of poverty, degeneracy and disease. She was immediately judged to be of "low mentality" by the social worker, whom she met with hostility while still in hospital. The extent of the work done with this girl was the one interview with a completely rejecting worker.

Jean was initially detained in a temporary infant home while a controversy ensued as to whether she had "Indian status" or not. At a year old, her foster parents, feeling "the child did not look Indian", wanted to adopt her; but the worker "stressed the poor background." In spite of a Child Guidance Clinic report indicating she was of "below average" intelligence, the foster parents still insisted that they wanted to adopt her and so the agency agreed. After a medical examination at 18 months, which indicated she had an eye defect and an under-developed head, she was taken off adoption probation at the suggestion of the agency. She received a great deal of affection in this home until she was four years old. At this time there was a notation in the file (after no recording for over three years) that the foster father had had an accident and the family was suffering financial strain. There was no record of how her next move came about; but she next appears in a foster

home where there are eight natural and three foster children. Here she was described as "silent, undemonstrative, but loved to be fondled ... a pathetic, bewildered, inarticulate child, seemingly without any inner resources and without the ability to show rebellion." After another move at the age of four, Jean was placed in her present home. The foster parents, who were unable to have children of their own, wanted to adopt Jean when finances permitted. They were concerned when the school principal said Jean was not ready for classes at the age of six years, and even more distressed when he consoled them with the remark, "Why worry? She is only a foster child!"

The story is repeated again and again. Planning for another child was delayed because of "unclarified Indian policy." This baby had eight homes before she was one year of age. Today, the foster mother, who has had her for eleven years, speaks of her as having a "feeling of insecurity born in her." One seven-year old boy, who had five homes in as many years, now "goes into a world of his own" almost like a "blackout." He was first rejected because he "was too young to be a companion for the foster parents' daughter." In the second home, he "wanted too much attention"; in the third, "he was rejected because he took off his clothing in public"; and in the fourth, he "went into a world of his own", did not sleep well and destroyed things. The foster parents who have him now were among the few who did not reply to the questionnaire.

Intelligence and Health:

The study indicated that the intelligence of the Indian children would follow the curve of the general population. However, a "slow start", besides mental and physical "handicaps", were evident in many cases. In the sample, eight children had been tested in the "average"

group of general intelligence and another eleven estimated by the social worker to fall in the same range. Eight had been tested and thirteen were estimated to be "below average." Only three fell in the "above average" to "superior" group. This is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3.

Intelligence Distribution:
Confirmed and Estimated: of 43 Indian Children

Children	Average Intelligence	Above Average Intelligence	Below Average Intelligence	Total
Tested	8	3	8	19
Estimated	11	-	13	24
Total:	19	3	21	43

Although there had been numerous placements in the "average" group, the children showed more stability, and were better accepted in their foster homes; only three had physical or medical problems. In the "below average" group, thirteen showed emotional disturbances including "withdrawal, timidity, speech defects, accident prone, excessive eating, and destructiveness." In this group, too, there were seven cases of physical-medical problems. The three children who were estimated to be of "superior" intelligence were children of two mothers who had been wards of the Children's Aid.

These findings would lead one to conclude that the "below average" ratings might not be entirely valid because of other predisposing factors. This fact is illustrated by the case of Nan Bell, a ward who was the mother of one of the "superior" children. She came into agency care at the age of seven years and was then tested in the "moron" group of

general intelligence. Prior to this, she had suffered extreme neglect and deprivation in the home of an almost illiterate mother. Her foster parents, who had a grown family, and had fostered numerous children, gave her a great deal of stimulation, affection and encouragement. In spite of repeated warnings from the agency and the school that she could not complete high school, Nan's foster parents never accepted this. In grade eleven she was tested again and showed performance in the "high average" group of general intelligence. With others now having a new interest and confidence in her, she matriculated with honors.

The health of 29 of the children was reported as "good." The other 14 had multiple medical and physical problems. There were three cases of defective eyesight, three of impaired hearing, three of speech defects, three tuberculosis cases, and a single incident each of club feet, enuresis, bronchitis and heart impairment.

Self-Image:

There is continuous evidence that "marginality", "anomie" and prejudice confuse the part-Indian child's image of himself. As a basis for this part of the study, the recent research report on "The Self-Image of the Foster Child"¹ was invaluable.

"Who am I?" presents the problem: 'Am I an Indian or a White? Both? Or neither?' The respondents to the foster parent questionnaire who checked choices to the question asking for an appraisal of the child's

1. Weinstein, Eugene A., The Self-Image of the Foster Child, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1960.

attitude to his Indian background, answered as follows: "ignorant" - ten; "indifferent" - nine; six were "proud"; another six were "accepting"; one was "confused"; and one was "ashamed."

Answers to a previous question regarding queries the child had made about himself, together with unsolicited comments from the foster parents, indicated that these replies were, however, a rationalization. The true picture was more nearly: sixteen children were both "confused and ashamed"; ten were "ignorant" (due to the foster parents deliberately attempting to conceal his Indian background); four were "accepting" (principally because they knew their own parents); and three were "indifferent" (the issue was avoided.)

A child in the first category tried to "scrub off the tan"; another worried because his "tan did not fade in winter like that of other children"; another asked why he "looked Chinese"; others wondered why they looked different (i.e. did not have hooked noses as the Indians on television.) Throughout, there was evidence to support that "looking White" was related to the child's better adjustment in the home and community; and certainly to the foster parents' acceptance of him.

The Indian child's concept of "Where am I?" appears to be influenced by his historical background. Erickson expressed amazement how "Indian children could live (in residential schools) for years without open rebellion or any signs of inner conflict between two standards." He spoke of this as a "general apathy and an intangible, passive resistance against any further and more final impact of White standards in the Indian conscience."¹ This tendency to withdraw was noted with 19 of the children

1. Erickson, Eric H., Childhood and Society, Imago Publishing Co., London, 1954, pp.115.

in the study. They were described by the foster parents and social workers in terms of: "cannot be reached, ... plays by self, ... withdrawn, ... fearful of people, ... shy, ... escapes into silence, ... lives in dreams, ... retreats, ... feels no pain, ... plays in dark places, ... sleeps too much, ... goes into a trance, ... shows no feeling, etc. This would indicate an inability to relate positively, or see themselves as one with those who were responsible for their care.

The question "Where am I"- the place where I am staying or the place where I belong? - is more frequently answered for the Indian foster child by the word "staying." In none of the cases had plans been made to have the child return to his natural parents. In five instances children had been returned to parents, but re-admitted to care. In 14 homes, where there were, in all, 23 non-white children, the Indian in the child (hence the child?) was not accepted. The criteria for this evaluation was the foster parents' cited concept of Indians on the questionnaire and their additional remarks about Indian "characteristics" and "poor inheritance." Four parents made a distinction between taking an Indian foster child and adopting one; four definitely had not wanted children of mixed racial origin but had now become sentimentally over-protective. Another mother was embarrassed about having an Indian child. Other children were in homes which were never intended to be more than a temporary shelter.

An answer to the child's expressed or inferred enquiry, "Why am I here?" (or as the child often interprets it, "Was I bad?" or "Am I unloved?") is not always revealed in the agency records. However, from the fact that 13 children were specifically concerned about the whereabouts of their mother, three about a father, and six about siblings from whom they had been separated, the indication was that the children did worry about the separation from their family.

The question "What is my future?" is not a concern of this age group, beyond anxiety engendered by many separations from those who had won a piece of their love. The story of Jean has already demonstrated what such fear can do to a child. The question of the child's future concerns the foster parents, however, and will be discussed further in chapter three. There were only five incidences which indicated the parents had concern for the child's future. One girl asked that her child be placed in an "all Indian home"; another said she "didn't care so long as the child went to a good home"; and three others wanted assurance that their child would not be adopted because each wanted him back at some future time.

One item on the questionnaire was designed to see if children were concerned about their identity. Question 1, part 3, asked if the child had questioned about (a) his origin, (b) his parents, (c) his difference in skin coloring. The foster parents indicated that seven children had been curious about where they had come from; eight about their parents; and seven about color of skin. One twelve-year old boy was interested in his tribe and wanted to know which parent was Indian and how much Indian was in that parent. Another boy of similar age questioned about the circumstances of his early life. Negative responses were given for all parts of the question in the case of 14 children. A relationship was noted between the negative response and (1) age of child - (one parent commented that her seven-year old was "not old enough" to ask questions); (2) closeness of the relationship between foster parent and child - (one parent commented that the children "might talk among themselves" but did not communicate with the foster parents); and (3) their cooperation with the survey - (this often meant attitude towards the agency.)

Parent-Child Relationships:

For the Indian ward, visits with parents are "discouraged", "limited", "restricted" and "prohibited" as a matter of informal policy. This could be partly due to the prevalent attitude towards Indians, an attitude which Erickson describes when he laments, "The Indian persists in begin a rather impractical relic of a dead past."¹ The reason is, more likely, however, that a plan is rarely made for the return of the child to his parents, and "goal definitions" are undefined and ambiguous. But the "presenting" reason is that the child is "disturbed" by the visits, "over-indulged" by his parents, and the foster parents find him "difficult" after these contacts.

There is an illustration of how visiting can be smothered in the case of one mother who had given her child good care until she was picked up on a vagrancy charge, and the child was apprehended. She telephoned the social worker regularly "but never once asked after her child." She was given no information nor invited to visit him; eventually she phoned no more.

Information on the files about the extent of the contact between parent and child is again limited, and it was only possible to make an assessment of this in the case of 30 children. Eleven were not seeing their parent or parents but were "worried" about the separation; another seven were seeing them but were upset by the visits; twelve others had no contact with their parents, nor had there been any attempt to visit the children.

In the first category, the child had known his parent(s) and in several instances had had periods of returning to them. The severance

1. Erickson, Eric., op. cit., pp.105.

of the relationship had been caused by (1) parents' formation of other marital relationships, (2) rejection tinged by stabs of conscience, (3) want of character strengths and financial resources, (4) agency's insistence that the visits were too upsetting for the child and the foster parent. In the second category, reasons for the parents' unsatisfying, though continuing, visits were similar: lack of personal resources, rejection and no plan. Where there had been no contact with parents over a long period of time, the reasons were slightly different: three juvenile unmarried mothers had relinquished their infants at birth; four guardians were dead; three parents were completely rejecting to the point of being sadistic; and two had disappeared, one saying she had "nothing to offer."

Foster Parent-Child Relationships:

An attempt to assess the relationships between foster parents and child was the design of question four, parts 3 and 4 on the questionnaire. The first item was worded: "Some foster parents have said they feel self-conscious about having a non-white child; how have you felt about this?" Two foster parents indicated that an initial self-consciousness had been overcome; five described how they "answered back" to any surprised looks; and five said they were "proud" of the child. One foster mother qualified her answers by saying she would not like her son to marry the Indian girl in the home; another said it was not a problem because hers was only a "temporary" daughter; and the rest either did not answer or said "no problem."

The next question offered four alternatives and asked that the respondents check, with reasons, which would be the best family arrangement, in their opinion, for the Indian child. Seven foster parents checked "Both parents Indian". One mother qualified her answer by

saying that this would be preferable if "a woman (no men) was in the home"; and another, "if the Indian home is of good standard." One parent thought it "depends if the child looks more Indian than white." A mother explained her judgment by saying that the child "might be understood better"; and another felt that this arrangement would tend to "reduce conflict." One foster parent stated specifically that the Indian child in her home "wanted to be with her own people."

The "Indian-White" home was considered preferable in two cases. One said this was because "both could contribute something"; and the other qualified her opinion by saying that "it depended on whether the child would be living as an Indian or as a White in the future."

Four respondents considered the home with "both parents white and there are other Indian children in the home" ideal. Their reasons, though worded differently, expressed the idea that this arrangement would "assure the child of cleaner living plus moral support."

Practically the same reasons were cited by the nine foster parents who checked "two white parents" as preferable. The last group of six foster parents who answered the questionnaire left this question blank. Two said they could not form an opinion and two, who were terse throughout, said "it didn't matter." One of these added, "the public in general, and the child in particular, should be taught that color makes no difference." Another felt it "depended on the circumstances", and another filled in "not applicable" because she denied her child had any Indian resemblance.

In an assessment of the relationship which existed between foster parents and children, four patterns were identified: (a) impersonal, (which was a temporary expedient for both foster parent and child) - six

children; (b) anxiety ridden, (where both parent and child were insecure and the situation was often highly charged with emotion) - 16 children; (c) mutually satisfying, (some affection was evident on both sides) - six children; and (d) warm and fond - two children.

The six children in the first category, where an impersonal relationship existed, were described in the files as a "labour source"; "a boarder" (putative father paid board); "limited belonging" (child identified with foster father in appearance); "no close relationship"; "a temporary expedient." In the anxiety ridden category, the sixteen children were described by social workers as "dependent,... insecure,... under rigid control, ... excessively grateful, ... rejected, ... hostile, ... distrustful, ... over-protected, ..." etc. These children, generally, had been unable to form meaningful relationships because of multiple rejections in numerous homes. The children for whom the relationship was mutually satisfying were either "intellectually accepted" (the foster parents were 'interested in Indians'); "helped" (a 'missionary' was helping a child to know about Indians); or "settled" (after many confusing placements); or else a "close tie" existed between them and the foster parents (but the parents would not adopt because the child was Indian.) In the fourth category, the relationship was pictured as one of "complete acceptance" (the foster parents say they will adopt when finances permit) with a "warm, easy relationship."

Community Relationships:

Information regarding the children's acceptance in the community was again lacking in the files. However, there was some indication in 26 cases of how the children responded to people outside the home. Using this information with the replies from question 1, sub-section 2, of the questionnaire, some idea, in a limited number of cases, was gained about

the children's relationship with the community.

Sixteen children were withdrawn; six were hitting back or attacking; and with four only there seemed to be a relationship of normal give and take. The children who withdrew inside the home followed a similar pattern in the community. Some "could not be reached"; five siblings "stuck together" and did not seek outside contacts or relate to the foster parents; another child "played in dark places"; two others "over-ate"; and others were described as "silent, ... solumn, ... afraid." Of those who hit back, one fought those who jeered at him with words and fists; another could not stop talking about his lewd past; another always had to "be the Indian" in any game; another hurt the smaller and weaker; another sought excessive attention; and another was intensely eager to please. Of the four who seemed most normal, two could be mistaken for "white", and two were in low standard but very relaxed homes.

The questions designed to learn how the child was accepted by relatives and neighbours in the community showed that acceptance was largely contingent upon factors applicable to any foster child: namely, the closeness of the relationship between relatives, the popularity that the foster parents enjoyed in the community, and the extent to which the child was liked for himself. Fifteen reported that relatives had accepted the child completely; six, that there had been a fair acceptance; one, that he had been rejected; and two that relatives were unconcerned.

Only two reported an unfavourable response from neighbours. Of those who said neighbours were favourably disposed, seven said they were "admired" and "praised" for their undertaking; three others said neighbours were "interested" and "curious"; eight said the children were liked a great deal in the community; two others maintained that "no one knew the child

was Indian"; and in six other cases, the child was "taken for granted" (i.e. accepted because foster parents were accepted.)

II. THE PARENTS:

The record of the parents of these Indian foster children is most depressing. It speaks of inadequate education, unskilled occupations, delinquency, non-legal, broken, and "mixed" marital unions; and a large number of children of whom four-fifths are illegitimate. All the natural mothers had a "skid road" address at the time of their child's apprehension.

Personal Description:

Information recorded about the mothers was fragmentary in the case files and there was even less about the fathers. The educational standard was only recorded on 23 mothers and 8 fathers. Of these, four mothers and one father had no formal education; eight mothers had between two and six years of schooling; seven had between seven and nine; and one each had attained grades ten, eleven and twelve. There were three fathers who had below a grade six education and another four with less than grade nine. Even less was recorded about the work history of these parents: of six mothers, one was reported to be a stenographer, one a waitress, one a factory worker, and three had worked in canneries. Two fathers were longshoremen, two fishermen, one a cannery worker, one was in the army, and two others were known to be in gaol.

As noted earlier, the mothers of the Indian children were generally "single"; that is, nine were unmarried, nine were separated from a common-law husband, and four had been legally married but were also separated. Three others had deserted, and five were dead.

The thirty-one mothers in the study were, between them, estimated to have given birth to 132 children. These were distributed as follows: Four mothers had had one child; three, two; three, three; seven, four; nine, five; and five from six to nine children. Over four-fifths of these children were estimated to be illegitimate. Some were with relatives, some still with the mother, some with a former spouse, some had grown up, others were in sanitoriums and mental institutions, some had died, and the rest were in agency or private foster homes.

Finally, the racial origin of the parents for whom there was a record is noted in Table 4.

Table 4.

Racial Origin of Children's Parents
(where information was available)

Natural Parents	Indian	White-Indian	White	Indian-Negro	Total
Mothers	19	9	2	0	30
Fathers	3	5	16	2	26
Total:	22	14	18	2	56

Background:

Information regarding the background and developmental history of the children's parents was again sparse. Ten of the twenty-nine mothers involved in the study had literally nothing recorded about their family or early life; it would appear that it was never discussed. There was brief mention about the separation, immorality and gaol sentences of the parents of five mothers; another four mothers had experienced no meaningful relationships because of the death or the complete rejection of their

parents; four more had been orphans and spent their lives in an Indian residential school; and another five, who were brought up on a reserve, were either rejected by parents or never knew them.

In rare instances where the social worker was interested in the total Indian situation and had some understanding of Indian culture, the parents of the Indian children were presented as human beings with needs and capabilities, rather than grouped as a scorned race.

There was Jennie who had a racial problem even as a member of her own band. The Japanese are held in low esteem by the Coast Indians, and she was part Japanese. Escape from this rejection was offered her in a marriage of convenience with a half-breed from a different band. He was a man who "wanted to be respectable but felt hopeless." His escape from the "life between" which offered little purpose or prestige, was in drinking and deserting his family. Jennie tried to learn the ways of his band, and supported her family by the occupation of her husband's people - tanning hides. However, she had other children by other men, and finally drifted to the city where venereal disease gradually blinded her. Here she lived in a skid-road "cabin" which was unkept and bare; and by the time she was referred to the Children's Aid Society, her daughters had already been molested by men of the "skids."

She protested to the social worker who came to take her children, "Many Indians get into trouble because they want to live according to the customs of their own people, but they get into trouble with the white man's culture." Jennie also admitted she hated her girls and felt a mixture of guilt and pleasure over the way she had abused them. She said she did not know why she felt this way, but added with more insight than she realized, "People didn't like me when I was a girl, and I didn't want girl children."

Another Indian mother, also able to express herself to the same sympathetic caseworker, related her sadistic desire to have others experience her own loneliness and suffering. Verna was "troubled over the mess she had made of her life" and her "inability to face new situations." Her own mother had died when she was a child, and her step-mother had not liked her. She had her first illegitimate baby when she was 14 years old; she married one year and left her husband the next; she then visited "a friend" in the city and never returned home. "Home" was the characteristic British Columbia reservation with its scattering of primitive, clapboard shacks, little cultivated land, no roads and few of the facilities for social satisfaction or personal dignity. This, and the four years she spent in a segregated residential school, ill-fitted her for the demanding life of the metropolitan community.

Character and Problems:

In evaluating the mothers of the children according to character and their approach to life, it was found that the 29 involved in the study fell into four categories. There were four who could be called (a) responsible (but without the resources within themselves or the community to plan effectively); another 12 were (b) withdrawn (discouraged, crushed and uncommunicative); four were (c) retaliating (hitting out at individuals and the social system); and another nine were completely (d) disoriented (unable to focus or plan, and easily led.)

In the first group, the four mothers were interested in making a plan for their children and had attempted to keep them, but they had been unable to find day care for their children, or a suitable job; they needed the sustained support of a responsible person, and did not just require "relief" money alone, but help with budgetting and planning. The next group of 12 represented the "traditional" Indian who, since the coming

of the white man, has withdrawn into a shell of silence and compliancy. A mother, who became a ward of the agency in her pre-teens, was an example of this type. In her several foster homes she was described as "never becoming angry" and exhibiting "excellent behavior." She was intelligent but quit school at the eighth grade. She had already, by that time, been involved in a succession of immoral episodes and, when this study was begun, she had seven illegitimate children.

The four who were retaliating were intelligent and had some insight into their problems. They were, however, hostile, frustrated and bitter; and were acting out these feelings by being sadistic towards their children, verbally and physically abusive towards persons in authority, and they "punished" the men who used them. The disoriented group had gone beyond being just withdrawn; for them, any attempt at planning produced confusion rather than negativism. One mother expressed the problem of the group when she said "I cannot seem to concentrate."

Financial problems were also general with the sample, and contributed further to disorganization. One Indian man had been living in common-law for nine years because, as he maintained, he never had the money for a marriage license. A man and wife broke up and drifted to the city - the woman to prostitution and the man to drink - when fire destroyed their rural home and possessions. A responsible girl abandoned her child after it became impossible to obtain a job which would support herself and provide day care for the baby.

Health problems were almost universal with this group of mothers. Nine were known to have venereal disease, eight had tuberculosis, four chronic sensory impairments, and three mental illnesses requiring institutional treatment. The cases of the only two white women in the group run parallel, in many respects, to the stories of the Indian mothers, and

their problems were the same. These women had both married their Indian men, but they were women who had been on the "fringes" of their society. One was large and unattractive, mentally dull, and "lived from day to day." Nothing was recorded of her parents or early life. The other was the "black sheep" of a "good" family. She was rejected and neglected by her busy mother, and grew up with a low sense of self-worth. Neither had much direction in life beyond the immediate gratification of their physical needs, and they had developed few strengths. The first obtained a divorce, and the husband of the other died. The one was unable to meet the demands of caring for a handicapped child, and the other relinquished her two "Indian" children, but kept the child who looked "white."

Relationships:

Three patterns emerged when an attempt was made to assess the feeling that the parents had for their children. There were the cases where one or both parents were (1) interested in the children but were prevented from retaining responsibility for one, or a combination, of the following reasons: (a) illness, (b) lack of personal strengths, (c) financial difficulties, and (d) marital discord. This group accounted for twelve families. Then, there were the seven parents who had (2) tried to maintain the relationship with the children but had been opposed, or not assisted, by the agency. These included the incidents where visiting was "upsetting" to the child, and one case where a common-law father could not obtain financial support from the Air Force, and cases where parents were left to "prove themselves" without the necessary help to achieve this feat. The eight parents who apparently (3) showed no interest, or who were openly rejecting of the children, had inhibiting personal problems of their own.

The relationship between Indian parents and the agency is one of client and professional social worker. Unfortunately, this relationship, because it has been tinged by prejudice, ignorance and fear, has not been a satisfying one for either the caseworker or the Indian client. This was evident from the cases studied. Because of social, cultural and racial distance, the Indian was unable to achieve rapport with the worker; and the social worker, uncomfortable in his ignorance of Indian ways and thoughts, did not make best use of his professional skills.

The records show that these parents were repeatedly and quickly "estimated" to be of "low intelligence", "inadequate", or a "typical Indian." There was frequent reference to them in terms of "nothing to work with", "a degenerate group" and "few personal strengths." In spite of this, a promise was made, in several cases, to return the children to the parents if they "proved themselves"; and in others, parents were warned "to mend their ways", or the children would be removed from them. Thus, there was a recognition, on one hand, that the neglect stemmed from the parents' deficiencies of character; and, on the other hand, it was inferred that the parents had resources within themselves to become better parents.

Throughout the history of the Indian, this laissez faire approach of his white "guardian" has been prevalent. And there is little evidence to support that casework has been directed towards assisting the Indian parent personally, or helping him to improve his environment, so that he can be a better parent. In the cases studied, parents were not helped to obtain special training or develop skills, find employment, achieve meaningful relationships, improve living conditions or build a sense of self-worth - something which is generally lacking with the Indian.

A condensation of Frances' long association with the Children's Aid

Society illustrates much of this:

At the age of twenty-six, Frances was referred to the Salvation Army by the Indian Department who, in turn, referred her to the Children's Aid Society for help in planning for her expected child. She apparently had "Indian Status" but she did not want to return to the reservation because she hated her step-mother. She desperately wanted to keep her baby; and was asking for a foster home where she could live with her child and have him looked after during the day while she worked.

It was suggested that she return to her home town where she had been steadily employed, and the agency keep the child until she could make a plan for him there. Then the Indian agent suggested she apply for a housekeeping job in a motherless home. This job opportunity in a remote British Columbia town had been recommended by a minister. Frances asked the social worker to make further enquiries about this for her. The Provincial Government social worker, to whom a referral was made, was not able to visit the home. Frances decided to take the job, in spite of this. Unfortunately, it was too late; the position had been filled.

Frances obtained leads on several other housekeeping jobs and each time asked the social worker to make the enquiries for her. It was not clear from the record if these steps were ever taken. But, finally, Frances obtained a domestic job with her son, through her own efforts. She was obliged to leave this position soon after, however, because the family, though sorry for her, felt "she was too withdrawn from social contacts ... and was inclined to be too possessive of her baby."

Her step-mother then offered to take the baby so that Frances could be free to find other employment in the city. However, Frances "could not bear to be separated from her son." She next made an unsatisfactory arrangement for the care of the boy and found herself a job. But she was worried about the child; she lost her job, became entangled with a group of immoral relatives, and was finally picked up by the police on a drunk charge. At this point, the Children's Aid apprehended the baby. The Department of Indian Affairs commented at this time that they felt the apprehension of the child was for the best, as now "the mother would know her child was well cared for."

After her release from gaol, Frances became distraught and morose over the separation from her son and again resorted to drinking; and, whereas her attitude towards the social agency had once been friendly, it now became hostile. She wanted to visit her son regularly but was only permitted to see him in an agency office, at infrequent intervals.

Frances then made application to the court for the return of her child; but, not having a steady job at the time, her plea was dismissed.

Her cry was: "Why does everyone have to pick on Indians?" She applied to the court again when her son was four years old but, by this time, she was again pregnant.

This second child was also a boy. She had planned to keep the child and asked the Children's Aid for temporary non-ward care until she could take him herself. But she did not keep in touch with the agency, and the child was made a ward.

Frances reappeared and continued to lavish money upon her children but was still only permitted to see them occasionally. In the winter of 1955 she had yet another boy and kept this baby with her.

She returned to her home but two years later was back in the city with the child and no money. She was then apprehended on a drunk charge and the child was taken into the care of the Children's Aid. This healthy, attractive child was soon returned to his mother. But again, she was unable to find a room or day care for her baby while she worked. He was apprehended a second time when Frances gave birth to her first baby girl. She had no plan for either child and the baby was taken into non-ward care - "to give her time to make a plan."

Then, she was sentenced to Oakalla for being in possession of liquor in a restaurant. While in prison, she was seen by a psychiatrist who "judged" her to be of low-normal intelligence and "a very dependent" person. It was felt she would be much better off in a rural area. The comment was made at this time, however, that she spoke in a well educated manner but she was "living in hopes and dreams rather than reality."

At the time this study was commenced, Frances' oldest boy had been in a foster home for six years but was moved soon after. The foster mother, a widow, was very fond of him, but she was old and not well. He was a bright boy and the tie between himself and his own mother was a fond one. The second boy, of lower intelligence, was then in his third agency home.

The foster parents had very low standards but they gave the boy a great deal of love. These foster parents, who now have both boys, were themselves products of broken homes and the mother was once the ward of a children's agency. At first, the foster parents encouraged the contact with the boys' mother, but on the questionnaire the foster mother commented, "When a child is placed in a long term home, the contact with natural parents should be cut to a minimum and then only with the worker in supervision." The third boy has remained in a home which was originally only intended for "temporary care", and now the family has moved to another part of the province and has taken the boy with them. The little girl was placed in yet another foster home and sees her mother only occasionally.

This case history, and many others like it, confirms that the service given to Indians by social agencies is sometimes not casework. The record of this Indian girl shows that few facts were ever gathered about her, about her past, and those who had been an influence in her life; there is little evidence to support that a diagnostic assessment of her personality and her problems was attempted; and a plan, made with her approval and cooperation, was notably lacking.

The cases selected for this study revealed further that little was recorded about the parents of the fourteen and fifteen year old unmarried mothers, and the parents or guardians were not consulted about plans for these minors. In the cases where marital break-up was the precipitating cause for the apprehension of the children, the reasons, feelings, wishes, were left unexplored or unrecorded. Then, the cry of the woman who gave up her child saying "I have nothing to offer", was uncontested; and little was apparently contributed to the "search for happiness" of another girl, during the long years she was a ward, and then an unmarried client

of the agency. No attempt was made to fulfill the request of one mother for an Indian home for her child. And a child who required special medical attention was separated from his family, and the parental and sibling ties gradually broken. The worker's recording of this case stated that the plan was favored so that the child "would have a good home environment and would not become a burden on society."

Again, it is prejudice towards the "red savage" and an ignorance of the meaning and worth of his past and his potential, which has handicapped any service extended to the Indian, whether it be educational, legal, social. A small glimpse, however, of what is achieved when the barriers of prejudice, ignorance and fear are lowered, is indicated by one worker who had learned about the history and living conditions of the mother he was helping. He reported, "I knew something of her cultural pattern, and she was able to express herself."

Conclusions:

It is evident, from this review of the Indian foster children and their parents, that child welfare work with this group is frequently a case of "picking up the pieces" and storing them, rather than of prevention or making a place for the "whole." In order to understand the reasons for this, and to plan effectively for the group in the future, it would first seem necessary to understand the concepts of "marginality" and "anomie" in their relation to the Indian. At the same time, prejudice towards the red man, and ignorance of his potential, are factors which need to be handled. A poignant reminder that the Board member of the Children's Aid Society was not alone in her thinking, when she referred to the British Columbia Indian as "such an inferior type", is confirmed in a current news-

paper article.¹ The reporter, who was attending a conference at the University of British Columbia between Indian chiefs and counsellors, wrote: "One of the Indians' problems is discrimination; but they know they can't help what others think about them and they are not bitter." The caption for this item - "Indians try to capture ideas from the white men" - is, in itself, an indication of how far the Indians have been isolated from the main stream of Canadian life.

1. Vancouver Daily Province, March 6, 1962.

CHAPTER III. FOSTER PARENTS FOR THE "HARD TO PLACE" CHILD.

The Indian child in his foster home became the next area for study. It was necessary to learn something about the child's environment, his relationship with foster parents and community, and the service he was receiving from the social agency. Also, there were many things to know about the foster parents: their characteristics, motivation for taking a child - especially an Indian child - and their acceptance of him, after a two year period in the home. Lastly, an attempt was made to learn of the attitudes, feelings, ideas and problems of the foster parents; and the help they were receiving from the agency.

The Questionnaire - Pretest and Response:

Although the questionnaire, in which the foster parents were "speaking for themselves", was the primary source of material for this chapter, personal files, which recorded facts and judgments of the social workers, were also consulted. The pretest questionnaire was first tried out, in a two hour interview, with a foster mother, in her own home. The foster mother and her husband had completed the adoption of a part-Indian girl who was nine years old at the time of the interview. They were also foster parents for a part-Chinese girl, and they had a two year old part-Indian boy on adoption probation. This couple, who were in their early thirties, had been unable to have children of their own.

Both parents were out-going, gave the impression of being well-adjusted, and they participated in several community activities. All this was in spite of the fact that the woman had a marked physical, though not a crippling, handicap. They had a large modern, rural home; the man had his own thriving business; and they had been given more than usual

attention by their social worker.

The pretest interview revealed four items of special interest connected with problems of the foster parents. This information, though evident to a lesser extent in the written responses, was, however, confirmed by the subsequent mailed questionnaire. It proved most helpful in the analysis of the combined file and questionnaire material.

It was found that: (1) Foster parents will give "clues" to the areas with which they require help; and some will discuss their problems directly --(probably the result of their being aware that the researcher was a social worker); (2) Serious conflicts, often unrecognized by the foster parents, may arise when white parents take non-white children; (3) Problems may be avoided, evaded, denied or transferred to other problem areas by foster parents; (4) The "needs" of foster parents, viewed in the light of the suggested three-fold classification, may not originally be "neurotic" but may become so if not recognized and satisfied. During the pretest, it was felt that some questions pricked defenses which had been inflated to cope with the acceptance of the children of non-white racial origin. These questions, which "threatened", were, therefore, re-worded or omitted in the final draft. The record which follows is a condensed presentation of this pretest interview:

Pretest Interview with a Foster Mother of Non-White Children.

The first question posed was: "How did you come to take a non-white child in the first place?" This was changed on the mailed version to read: "Did you originally want a non-white child? Yes ... No ... Why?" In the interview, the mother stated that she and her husband had not been able to have children and they "had been waiting for a child for two years from the Children's Aid." When the social worker asked them if they would take a child of mixed racial origin, the mother had agreed. She added, now, "I wanted a baby so badly."

The respondent spoke several times of her great need to be a mother; even if, in taking a non-white child, she was accepting a third choice. She said how much she regretted not being able to see how a child of her own "would turn out." Wishfully, she stressed how much the children in the home looked like herself and her husband, and even said that the Indian

boy had a "flat Irish nose."

The next group of questions drew out her concerns and ideas about the Indian child growing up. She replied to one question, that problems of dating, employment and marriage were ones they would face when they were eminent. She observed that people with a nice personality were accepted, in spite of their appearance, when others got to know them. However, she felt life would always be easier for the Indian boy than the girl, saying that "for a girl, appearance means so much." (She commented later that people did not notice her handicap when they got to know her.)

Another question asked what arrangement in the home she felt would be most advantageous to her children - (1) both parents Indian, (2) both white, or (3) one of each? - She felt the white home was preferable because the children were part white and growing up in a white home; they "would not have such a sense of inferiority." She noted that Indian people are ashamed of their Indian background.

The next questions asked about her experience with Indians and her impression of them. She said they had not had much opportunity to know Indian people but had once lived near an Indian family. She spoke of them as "nice" people but admitted she had never got to know them, saying that they never "got too pally with people."

Her general impression of Indians was that they were lazy, and the B.C. native people were not as bright or attractive looking as the United States tribes. She added, however, that they had not been given a chance - they did not have the money for permanents and other beauty aids and they had been isolated from the "progressive culture" in separated schools and on primitive reserves.

The foster mother said that she was opposed to separate schools for religious sects. She went on to discuss her own conflicts about religion, relating that she had been a strong Catholic as a child and a rigid, domineering father made all the children attend church regularly. She had been turned out of the church when she married a Protestant.

At this point her conversation flowed into several areas which indicated trouble and conflict. She said: "I am not a Catholic now but I don't think I could ever be anything else. I may go back to it some time. I read about all religions and each thinks they are better than the other, but there is some good in all. It is the same with races. There is conflict too when in-laws are different - that is why it is better for children to live in an all-white or an all-Indian home."

Attention was again focused on the child with the question: "Do your children have any Indian friends? If not, do you wish they had?" Her answer to this was that they had none, but she wished they had. She felt this was important because "racial prejudice builds up when people don't understand or know each other." She added that her sister was very condemning towards white girls who went out with Negro men; she herself never objected to this.

In answer to the questions relating to foster parents discussing background with the children, she said she had told the children they were one-quarter Indian. They apparently "took it quite well." It was harder, however, to talk to them about being adopted. She said: "You wonder how they are going to take it." She felt she had solved the problem by often putting her arm around the girl and asking her: "How is my little adopted daughter?"

The acceptance of the children by family and friends did not, as she viewed the situation, present a problem. She said: "Our family never mentions it. It has never been discussed." The neighbours also refrained from broaching the subject. Again, she felt the children were "accepted for themselves." She recalled, however, that one of the girl's play-mates had said something about her being Oriental once but "they had forgotten about it - it wasn't important - they hadn't spoken of it since."

A general question, and then a question in which she was asked, out of her experience, to help the agency, brought the interview to a close. The first question was: "What do you feel a family needs in order to bring up any child not its own?" Her answer came without hesitation: "A strong male parent." In spite of the fact that she had earlier complained of her own father being "too strong", she valued her husband's ability to handle the money, and give leadership in making decisions. She felt it was important, too, for parents and children to do things together. She noted that parents are "too ready to ditch their children". "Drinking plays a large part", she added. She went on to say that "children need to feel secure and 'belong'", and that her sister's family were so "united" that the teenagers had not even wanted dates.

The foster mother was asked, finally, to give her opinion of how the agency could best help foster parents who take non-white children. She thought it was most important for them to know more about the children: what their parents were like, their health background, the type of relationship they had had with other foster parents. She suggested, too, that the agency should endeavor to gain more of this information and share it with those who are responsible for the day to day care of the child.

The mailed questionnaire was answered by twenty-four of the thirty-one foster parents who received a copy. The respondents have been classified, first, according to the manner in which they answered the questionnaire; information from the files was used to describe those who did not elect to participate in the study. Five groupings were observed.

There was (1) the non-cooperative group - six in all - which did not fill in the questionnaire. Another four were termed (2) hostile, because they were belligerent and terse in their replies. The (3) complying respondents - numbering four - were thus designated because they answered the questions incompletely and with brevity. Seven were (4) cooperative,

and these attempted to give an opinion in most cases. The largest group of nine were (5) very cooperative and helpful, even following up their replies with telephone calls to give more information. They expanded their answers, added remarks and directed notes to the researcher.

It is interesting to observe the relationship between this classification and other information about the foster parents. In the non-cooperative group, five were parents with very low physical standards and three of these had not wanted non-white children. Four of the same group displayed emotional problems such as marked inferiority, a neurotic need to pamper, and an almost fanatical attachment for the child. A fifth non-respondent was a German family who had never been very communicative. The sixth in this group had had high school education and had "made a study" of Indians. They, however, were concerned about the color and the possible low mentality of the child. They had previously discussed their fears with the agency but were still bothered.

Of the four sets of parents who were hostile, one was a withdrawn, low standard Ukrainian couple; another, insecure financially and emotionally; another maintained they did not know the child "had mixed blood"; and the last were a man and woman with many personal problems, who had been rejected as adopting parents. They had wanted a girl but had accepted, grudgingly, a handicapped Indian boy, hoping it would help them to be "accepted."

In the complying group there were three rigid, controlling mothers who were intent upon doing a "good" service. The other mother was a shy, tense woman who wanted more foster children, but was prevented by poor health and a husband who said "No."

The majority of those who were cooperative wanted help with the job they had undertaken. One set of parents was frustrated by an inability to "reach" the children; another two sets had the child forced upon them; another needed recognition; another was the "crusader" type; another foster father identified with the child because of his own rejection in foster homes; and one alone accepted and were unthreatened by the Indian children in the home. In this case, the family was living in an area where there were a number of Indians, many of whom worked in the plant where the foster father was a foreman.

The "missionary" urge, and the need for recognition, characterized most of those who were very cooperative. Two foster parents were needing help and asking for it.

A condensed version of the questionnaire response from a cooperative foster mother is recorded here. (See Appendix B-1 for copy of questionnaire form.) This foster parent reveals much about herself, and her relationship with the foster children, in her replies.

Response of a 'Cooperative' Foster Mother.

The foster parent answered the first question by saying that her Indian foster children did not have any friends of their own racial origin and that she was glad of this because she "just could not cope with any more."

Friends of the children had made comments about their being Indian, and the little girl had once confided to her teacher that she was Indian but cautioned her "not to tell anyone." The boy had asked why his skin became red in summer and the "tan" did not wear off like that of other children. The foster mother said she had explained to him that he was Indian and believed "he seemed glad that he was different." She said further that relatives and friends had accepted the children "fairly well" and the majority of their neighbours "were interested as to how they got along with them." An added comment was made to this reply, noting that "one neighbour would rather have cows than children."

The foster mother had never known Indians before or after the children were placed in her home. She felt she would like to know more about the children's parents and "as much as possible for the children's good as they do ask questions." She said they wanted to know what they were like when they were little: (she has no early photographs of the children) how old they were when they walked, talked, had their first tooth, and what was their first word.

The foster parents had not wanted Indian children because they "had never thought about it as happening to them." Now, the mother expressed a number of concerns about her foster family. Of the girl, she said, she "would like to have her more friendly and hoped she would become a good citizen and help other people." She stated further: "My only concern regarding having non-white children is we have a sixteen year old son and one five years old. They both have accepted non-whites (we had a Chinese brother and sister.) - the Chinese better than the Indian. This could be the boy was the same age. But I was afraid of having them long enough that our sons might inter-marry. For them alright, but the children they might have, I don't like the idea."

Her impression of Indian people, in general, was expressed with the words: "slow, crafty, placid, lazy." She added a plea for help in understanding the children better, saying: "Have they been down-trodden so long that they have given up in despair? These children don't seem to have any sense of pride about looking nice or being tidy. They seem to enjoy squalor. What to do, I don't know." She said later in the questionnaire, however, "I am sort of proud to be entrusted with them."

She could not decide whether she felt it was best for Indian children to be brought up in an Indian or a white home but felt it was "good for them to mingle with whites and to learn new ways of living." To the question which asked "What special qualities would you suggest we look for in foster parents of our non-white children?", she answered: "Tolerant, patient people who will give of themselves."

When asked specifically what particular help foster parents need from the agency, she answered by posing several questions. The first was: "These children do not seem to think the same way we do - is it their early training? Is it right to try to change them to our way? Maybe we should learn more of their culture."

Then, in reply to the question "Have you any suggestions, criticisms or ideas which would help us in future planning for all our non-white children?", she replied: "I think children should be left in one home as long as possible so they can develop roots and a sense of belonging." Finally, she added a profound observation which social workers might well ponder. She said: "I also think they (the foster children) should be taught to face difficulties there, instead of moving on, as the problem goes with them."

Characteristics of Foster Parents:

Vital and social statistics of the foster parent group would have been of greater significance if compared with a sample of foster parents who had white children. However, three trends were observed: (1) The foster parents who take non-white children are generally older than the average foster parents of white children; (2) They are more likely to live in a rural area; and (3) There is a high incidence of broken homes in the background of these foster parents.

The group studied were predominantly British (16 men and 23 women.) More than a third of the men, and a quarter of the women, were in their fifties and sixties. The average educational attainment for both men and women was grade nine, with less than a third of each having reached the senior high school level. Five parents were judged to be of low intelligence.

Residence of the group showed conformity. Four-fifths of the parents lived in a rural area, and the rest resided in the east end, working class district of the city. The majority were purchasing their own homes.

The occupations of the men were predominantly skilled and semi-skilled, e.g. mechanics, carpenters, clerks, farmers. The women had been waitresses, dress-makers, factory workers; one was a nurse, and one had had training as a stenographer. None of the women was working outside her own home. There was one widow and one single woman in the group; and three women and two men had been previously married.

Only a third of the group were strongly religious. These adhered to the Baptist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Plymouth Brethren, Anglican, United and Greek Orthodox faiths. Three had been Roman Catholic but were "non-practising."

In six families, one parent had either been brought up in a foster home or an institution. Another five came from broken homes, three of which had been caused by the death of a parent. The foster parents, for the most part, came from large families - e.g. four to eleven children in the family. Only one family, when the study was made, did not have natural children. However, nine sets of parents had but one child, and another nine could not have more children. In twenty of the families there were from two to five children, the average being three.

Reasons for Taking Indian Foster Children:

Not all the foster parents of Indian children had wanted a non-white child. On the questionnaire, seven reported they had not considered this possibility when they applied to the agency. Two of these confessed they had not felt able to handle the problems which would be encountered in such an undertaking. Ten respondents, on the other hand, said "it made no difference" whether a child was white or not; and another seven said they had indicated willingness to take a non-white child because "no one wanted him."

The questionnaire alone did not give the whole picture, or even the correct picture, of the foster parents' motivation for taking an Indian child. When it was related to material from the files, however, a four-fold classification of the foster parents, according to their reasons for taking the children, was possible. There were those who had been: (1) coerced by the agency because there are few "rooms" for the Indian child; those who (2) identified with the child because of their similar experience of growing up, unwanted, in a foster home or institution; there were the (3) reformers who took the child (a) out of a sense of religious duty, (b) a wish to better social ills, (c) indignation that there should be unwanted children, or (d) from a personal drive to identify with a

"cause" which would give them recognition in the community; and finally, there were those who were (4) accepting. The parents in this last group, which was the smallest, might have been prompted by any one of the foregoing reasons to take a child initially but were, at the time of the study, enjoying the child for his own sake. This group accepted the child because they understood and liked him as an Indian, and as a child. Their experience with Indians and children had been extensive and satisfying.

Acceptance of the Child:

After two years or more in the foster homes, the children's acceptance by their foster parents was again not uniform. Three possible patterns were recognized: There were those families who had (1) made a place for the child in the home; homes where the child was still (2) an outsider; and (3) the temporary homes.

Half of the foster parents were estimated to have made a place for the child. Five of these had "low standard" homes, one of which was described as being "not any better than an Indian home." In another two cases, the parents were dark skinned and the child "fitted in." Included in this group, also, were those parents who were interested in Indians either because they had some Indian in their own background or because they had work with the native people; or again, because of intellectual or emotional involvement. These foster parents, generally, had more community interests, better relationships with their larger family and, although five parents came from broken homes, they had experienced some satisfying relationships with a parent or a relative.

Where the child was still on the outside, the foster parents had either not overcome their original prejudice against Indians, or were antagonistic towards the agency. The hostility was usually due to an unresolved conflict or lack of attention with a specific problem.

The temporary homes, where children had, nevertheless, remained on for want of a permanent plan, made up the third category. It was always felt that these homes should not be used beyond an emergency period. The reason for this was that some of the parents were in the grandparent age group; others had only requested a temporary foster child; and in other cases, the parents had problems which, the agency assessed, would prevent them from sustaining a long and satisfying relationship with a child.

Feelings for Indian Child:

It was interesting to observe, in the foster parent sample, the varying degrees of initial and continued feeling that foster parents, who themselves had once been wards of an agency, had for their Indian foster children. Three parents who, themselves, had been reared in substitute homes, were perhaps better able to accept a foster child because of their own experience, which had included rejections, conflicts and deprivations. Another three, however, were so impoverished by their separation from parents, that their relationship with the foster child was impaired. One of these - a woman - was "rejecting, cold and hard"; another was "nervous and insecure"; the third was a man who had once been a ward of "The Aid." He was described as "rigid and short-tempered"; and, although he was "sorry for the homeless children", he could only accept those who were working, and who made minimal demands.

The foster parents expressed their feelings towards their Indian children in two sections of the questionnaire, and in additional comments. Much confusion in their feelings was indicated. The question relating to whether the foster parents wished their child had Indian friends, was given affirmative answers by seven respondents. Of two who replied in the negative, one commented that she could not "handle any more Indians"; and the other, who had five Indian children, felt that the children tended

to cling together, excluding association with the foster parents and with other children in the community.

Several foster parents had strong ideas about the influence of environment and training. One thought Indian girls did not have much of a chance in the white man's world, and provision should be made for them to remain in the Indian community. Another declared that environment and guidance determined character traits, and there were no such things as "Indian characteristics." One foster mother was even intent upon proving that her training would prevent the development of these "characteristics" in her Indian child. Some thought the Indian had a better chance in life if reared in a "white" home, or he was very lucky to have the opportunity to be brought up "white." Others felt that the child would be happier with his own people.

The responsibility of fostering a child with a background and appearance so different from that of their family and those in the community, weighed heavily upon some of the foster parents. One looked upon the child as a "challenge." Another experienced initial revulsion in eating at the same table with an Indian, and in kissing an Indian child. One parent spoke of "doing her best" for the child, but it "was not enough." Still others expressed worry and confusion about their responsibilities, feeling the children were "slovenly, ... thought differently, ... were unfriendly, ... inherited insecurity." There were also parents who felt that a higher education would help overcome the "stigma of being an Indian" and they were grateful that their child had good mental ability.

Several parents offered possible explanations for the difficulties they were experiencing with the children. They suggested that the child's lack of stimulation, poor living standards in its original home, multiple placements, and inheritance, might be contributing to the lack of rapport.

Experience and Impressions:

The experience that the foster parents had had with Indians was more extensive than initially estimated, whereas the impression they had of Indians was largely that of the general population. Half the foster parents reported they had known Indians before the child came into their home, but only three had had more than a superficial contact. One-eighth said they had got to know other Indians since the child had been placed in the home. In seven families, Indian parents had visited; and in three instances, they were still coming to see the children. Only two foster children had the opportunity to know other Indian children. One foster mother reported that the little girl in her home was most self-conscious about her difference in appearance until they moved to a district where there were other Indian children in the school.

Those who had got to know Indians well liked them, admired them; and any pre-conceived ideas that they were of lesser intelligence than other Canadians was dispelled. It was those who had had no association, or else a superficial contact with the Indians, who recorded stereotyped impressions. Foster parents were specifically asked for their conception of the Indian, because it was thought important to determine whether having an Indian child in the home would, in itself, have a positive effect. It was found, however, that prevalent prejudices were largely retained by the group; and the words most frequently used to describe the Indian were "slow" and "lazy." Negatively, the Indian was assessed, further, to be crafty, placid, primitive, insecure, untidy, inferior, dissatisfied, simple, lethargic, demanding, moody, and to have no regard for the future. On the positive side, he was given the attributes of friendliness, loyalty, affection, kindness, willingness and generosity.

Foster Parents and the Agency:

As already noted, the foster parents in the study had, with two exceptions, a relatively long (at least two years) association with the agency. Moreover, except in six cases, all of them had had foster children before - one as many as seventeen. In fourteen homes there were two or more Indian children, and in seven others there had been Indian children before. In spite of this, the foster parents' actual experience with the agency was not always discernible from the files. This was largely due to the lack of current recording. There were often gaps of one to four years in the dictation on the foster home files, as well as on children and family files. Furthermore, the entries in the foster parents' records were more generally about the activities of the child, rather than about the needs, wishes and ideas of the substitute parents. Further, there was little indication of how problems were being handled in connection with the children. The replies on the questionnaire give a much clearer picture of the experience that the foster parents were having with the agency.

Although foster parents are, theoretically, an auxiliary group upon which the child caring function of the agency is dependent, and not clients of the agency, they are obliged to meet specific qualifications, and they expect the assistance in their undertaking which is afforded by the professional social work practitioner. This means that foster parents, once they have been selected and they have accepted the requirements of the agency, expect to be prepared for foster children in general, and for each individual child they do take into their homes. Furthermore, they realize that they will likely require specific education in such areas as agency policy and procedure, child psychology and care, and inter-personal relations. Finally, they look to the "expert" for support when confronted

with the special problems, tensions and anxieties which so often result from taking neglected, disturbed and rejected children into their family and into their community. The relationship between foster parents and agency is, therefore, examined under these four areas, namely: (1) selection, (2) preparation, (3) education, and (4) support.

There is cause for concern that some of the parents in this group were originally selected to foster children; especially Indian children, who require even more security and wise guidance because of their special problems. Seven foster parents had not wanted Indian children but had been persuaded by the agency to take them. One of these had a bitter prejudice towards Indians and, as a result, both foster parents and children alike were unhappy; another foster mother, who was rigid and domineering, was making a project of proving that an Indian could progress; another denied that anyone could tell her child was partly Indian; another young, insecure mother felt under obligation to the agency because she herself had once been a ward; one mother was an older woman who had lost two children and had a great need to mother a baby; and another mother, convinced that her child looked "white", hoped he would eventually be able to take a "non-menial" job.

In taking a non-white child other foster parents were attempting to gain the recognition and attention they had apparently been denied by parents, and in their own home. This was partially evident from their answers to the question about neighbours' attitudes. They replied: "they say we are brave to take a chance to raise her, ... they seem to admire us, ... they wish they had the courage to do likewise, ... they say we are wonderful." One woman replied: "I don't think anyone would care to make their views known, because of my strong stand in giving these children a break."

The files give further indication that, in the selection of foster parents for the "hard to place" child, standards are sacrificed in order to get the child "under a roof." There were instances where foster parents had been considered unsuitable because of their own instability and multiple personal problems; where homes had, for good reason, originally been designated "temporary only"; and where foster parents were having severe problems in rearing their own children.

Once selected, it was then evident from the replies on the questionnaires, that the foster parents had had little preparation for the entry of the child in the home. All but six stated that they "wanted to know more about the child"; and many of these said they "knew practically nothing." The six who were satisfied with the knowledge they had were all special cases; one had been well informed by her caseworker; two others were terse and hostile in their replies and showed resentment that it should be implied that their foster child was "different"; and another had had the child since an infant and felt this altered the situation; another made a distinction between a "foster" child and an "adopted" child; and the other claimed that her child was "white" and no one knew otherwise.

The balance of the foster parents said they wanted to know such items as the child's medical history, his experience in previous homes with his own and other foster parents, his mental capacity, emotional problems, special needs, and why he was a foster child. They felt it was important to have this knowledge in order to understand the child, and be in a better position to help him with his problems. In their own words they stated their reasons in terms of: "helping him with training, ... understand him, ... source of bad habits, ... judge his inheritance, ... understand how other foster parents treated him, ... sources of emotional development, ... reason for his characteristics."

Although the recording on the files is generally most incomplete, it would appear that most of the children had been placed in the foster homes "on an emergency basis" without the customary pre-placement discussions and visits. Also, as the foster homes were generally in a rural area twenty miles or more from the agency, frequent visits following placement had not been possible.

This group of foster parents indicated repeatedly that they required specific information and training in some areas. As noted, most wanted more information about the background and life experience of their child. Some, also, said they would like to know more about Indian history and how Indians lived today. Another mother was concerned about what could be inherited by a child, thinking that a person could "inherit" insecurity.

Some indicated they needed, and some even asked for, help with problems. More than one was trying too hard to make the child feel accepted; others were in conflict over whether the child should be reared "all white", Indian, or a bit of both. Others required assistance in helping the child to meet the "inevitable inferiority" or "rejection in the cruel world" which has been the Indians' lot. Gaining a better rapport with the child and helping him to make friends were also problems which some felt inadequate to meet. There was evidence, further, that education would be a continuous process with these foster parents because of the special problems in fostering Indian children. 12 respondents voiced concern over the child's marital prospects, 8 regarding his employment, and 14 about dating and friendships. These 14 parents showed frequently that they required support in what was often an arduous undertaking.

When the experience of fostering a child does not meet needs that the foster parents are attempting to fulfill, frustration, bitterness and despondency are likely to result. The mother who felt there should be more of a "partnership" between foster parents and agency, was insecure in her roles as parent and community helper. Others who had let themselves be persuaded to take a "second best" child became bitter towards the agency when they did not receive the recognition and attention they felt they could claim. Yet others became despondent when their inability to meet problems made them doubtful of their contribution to society, and to the wellbeing of the child.

Summary:

Clearly, the derogatory impression the general population has of the Indian is often held by foster parents, even after fostering an Indian child for two years or more. Also, these foster parents, when consulted, generally let a social worker know, directly or indirectly, that they have taken foster children to meet their own need for security, personal development and contributory effort. Finally, the growing needs of a Protestant British Columbia agency¹ to find homes for hard-to-place children sometimes mean that foster parents are selected who do not want Indian children. All is not lost, however, if, with preparation, education and support, these same parents can be helped to accept the child and meet his needs and, at the same time, to meet needs of their own.

1. A Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society reports that it has an even greater number of Indian children in its caseloads, and the Provincial Welfare throughout British Columbia is faced with a similar problem.

CHAPTER IV. HIND-SIGHT AND FORESIGHT.

This study of Indian foster children and their milieu has pursued two areas: (1) information about the children, and their parents and foster parents; and (2) the type of service each of these groups is receiving from a child protection agency. The design also included gathering empirical evidence which would support or negate the hypothesis that (1) additional components complicate planning for the Indian and part-Indian foster child, and (2) to isolate these factors.

Although the study was primarily concerned with a local problem in a specific agency, there has been an attempt to show that the investigation has wider implications. From the offset, it was hoped that the results would prove beneficial to any agency which offers services, not only to Indian children and their families, but to other non-white clients with similar problems.

The essential purpose of the study has been to find procedures which would assist in making a better plan for these children, and offer the most effective service for the parents and foster parents. A preliminary objective was to cope with a list of research questions; and the first purpose was dependent on this second. In this chapter, procedures for planning, and answers to the three primary and eight secondary research questions are suggested as the result of a causal analysis of the aggregate material.

The answers offered for the three primary questions are: (1) Special factors are present which influence planning for the Indian child and his family and they are (a) marginality, (b) anomie, and (c) prejudice; (2) The needs of the Indian foster child, his parents and his foster parents were generally, at the time of the study, not being met for

specific reasons; (3) Social workers do not require special knowledge and skills to work with Indians; however, they should be aware of the roots and extent of racial prejudice, and its effect on themselves and others.

THE PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Additional Components:

In considering the special factors which might have bearing upon planning for the Indian foster child, it soon became evident that most British Columbia Indians are having problems today because they are fast slipping away from tribal holds and yet have not found a place for themselves in the cultural patterns of the white Canadian. This marginal state is one which also influences planning for the Indian foster child. First, the child is less likely to return to his parents or ever be fostered by his own ethnic group, since Indians do not have a place in society; second, he is less likely to be adopted by white people because of his difference in appearance and because of the connotation that Indian still holds for the community; and third - a fact which was evident with parents of this study who themselves had been agency wards - as the Indian foster child grows to adolescence and adulthood, the community may counteract any sense of belonging he might have derived from the foster home.

Anomie, the second special factor that influences planning for the Indian foster child, is a state which cripples his parents. As shown, these parents are generally inadequately equipped to make a decent life for themselves outside the reservation (and the reservation itself offers only degradation and poverty.) As a result, the children's parents have not developed the needful personal strengths, directions and incentives to establish and maintain a family. Again, when the child does not belong anywhere or to anyone, his sense of direction and self worth are

likely to be impaired. This is illustrated by the case of an intelligent, good looking young Indian man who was among the three finalists selected for a Civil Service job. Before he was called for his last interview, however, he fled the waiting room. Asked later why he had done this, he replied that he did not have as much education as the others, and he was Indian. He could not bear "yet another rejection."

Finally, prejudice, which blinds Canadians to the potentials of the Indian, inhibits work with the native people. Conceived as shiftless, irresponsible, lazy, mentally inferior, the Indian can rarely break through the blockade of this prejudice and open the doors to opportunity, self expression and personal enrichment. Even the foster child who has the "advantages" of the white environment, "inherits" the concept of his race. An illustration of this was seen when three Indian high school students were brought to live in one of the so-called "good" districts of the city by a minister who had known them in their native village. The two boys and the girl were frequently stopped by prowling police cars and questioned as to what they were doing in the area.

2. Fulfilment of Needs:

The second consideration, which is based on the concept of "needs" described in the opening chapter, asks: "Is the social agency offering Indian foster children, their parents and foster parents (1) the security of becoming "one with" people?; (2) a chance to develop their own potential and that of their environment?; and (3) a means of making a contribution to the needs and wishes of others?"

Several foster parents expressed the wish to belong to the agency; that is, to be recognized as a "partner" in its fostering function. They wished for more opportunity to discuss specific problems, to receive

professional direction, be given information about the background of the child, and to participate in working out a life plan for the child; in other words, be accepted by the agency, belong to it, and be active in its program.

The need to develop potentials within themselves, and a wish to serve the community, was inferred by the foster parent group, especially by foster mothers. These foster parents had generally come from large families and had one or more children of their own; the mothers had less than high school education and they had had little work experience. The mothers' skills were, therefore, largely confined to child raising; and it is probable that they received small recognition for "doing their job." In applying for a foster child, especially a "hard to place" child, the mothers saw themselves gaining recognition from neighbours and attention from the agency.

Fostering an Indian child, on the other hand, often involves the family in having to "fight a cause" and "sell" the child to the community. This in itself may be a challenge. If, however, under the curious and skeptical eyes of the neighbours, the parents (or, more generally, the mothers) are faced with problems they cannot handle - or necessary help and attention are not given by the agency - or the children are unhappy and unresponsive - then the mother is unable to develop her supposed talent for mothering.

The need for self-development is witnessed, further, in the parents' motivation for taking a child. For instance, those who identify with the children because of their own experience as a foster child may imagine themselves doing more for a child than their guardians once did for them. At the same time, they find pleasure in working as part of the community. However, frustration is the reward when the child's experience in the

foster home is no better than theirs had been; and their participation in the fostering program does not go beyond housing a child for an indeterminate period.

The need to make a contribution to others also forms a part of the incentive to be foster parents. Even those who were coerced into taking a child must have had a vision of themselves as needed. Those who identified with the child or who would be reformers were expressing a wish to create a better life for someone. The words of one foster mother tell of her need, not only to do something for herself, but to contribute to the welfare of another, when she said: "Something deep down inside me makes me want to help these poor unwanted children."

For this review, it is concluded that the needs foster parents were attempting to fill by fostering an Indian child were not entirely being met. This was largely because (1) the parents were not being drawn into partnership with the agency in planning for the child and in understanding him better; and (2) these parents were not always receiving the sustained assistance and support they required from the agency.

When considering, next, whether the needs of the children were being met, it is evident from the record of ambiguous family status, multiple placements, and non-acceptance in the community as they reach adulthood, that Indian foster children seldom find the security of belonging. On the other hand, they are generally provided with better physical environment, more education and more tools to develop their potentials than the Indian children who remain with their own parents. However, there was evidence that their insecurity prevented most of the children (and their parents) from developing their abilities, and expressing their ideas, wishes and needs.

Perhaps the most important contribution a child can make to his

family is love; not the desperate, clinging affection which results from deprivations and parental withdrawal, but the love which can let parents go, knowing they will return to him; and the type of love Indian foster children had for their natural parents was generally desperate and fearful. They had known separations; physical and emotional needs had been unsatisfied; and the male parent had generally been an absent or a shifting figure. Once he became a foster child, parental ties were weakened even more, and he saw himself able to give nothing but pain to his natural parents. The child's ability to give to his foster parents was also limited. This was noted again from the many "escape mechanisms" employed by the children, and the complaints of the foster parents that they "could not reach" them.

How are the needs of the natural parents being met by the fostering situation? From the group studied, it was found that these parents do not generally have the security of acceptance by their social worker; for he neither understands them nor believes in their worth as individuals. Besides this, the social worker is not able to treat the Indian as he does other Canadians with citizen "rights"; further, Indian parents do not have the security of participating in the plan for their children. With little rapport between themselves and the agency, the parents often find they are merely observers of what is happening to their children and they themselves are recipients of a service.

Both before and after the Indian child was taken into the care of the agency, little casework appears to have been done with his parents. This was likely because the parents were often diagnosed as having "few potentials" and "unable to develop even a sense of responsibility towards their children." Instead, therefore, of receiving a prolonged period of nurture, education, encouragement and recognition - all of which are

necessary for personal development - the Indian parent often had a brief and abortive association with the caseworker.

For the parent, removal of the child frequently takes away the only person who might need him, and leaves him without his last means of making a contribution to the welfare of another. One mother voiced this when her child was apprehended, saying: "I have nothing to live for now."

Again, it is concluded that, at the time of this investigation, the needs of the Indian child and his parents were generally not being satisfied by the fostering service; and this was because essentials of social work practice were sometimes missing. More facts, a diagnostic assessment and a long range plan can alone offer security for child and parent (and foster parent.) And, finally, the client must be involved in the process. The whole emphasis to date has been on doing for the Indian, instead of discovering and helping him to discover his own wishes, potentials and direction.

3. The Social Worker:

An answer to the query "Do social workers require special knowledge and skills to do an effective job with their Indian clients?" has already been suggested. First, if people are going to help Indians, they have to understand them. Those who worked with Negro foster parents recognized this, saying: "A knowledge of the cultural and environmental factors influencing the group is necessary."¹ Second, they have to be conscious of the source and extent of their own prejudice and that of the community; and then be prepared to handle this in themselves and in others. Finally,

1. Duckett, Rita and Thompson, T.G., Adoption Resources for Negro Children, Child Welfare League of America, New York, 1959.

it is important to understand the form that this prejudice takes in schools, between neighbours, in the press, and in many other community groups.

Understanding the client, achieving self-awareness, and helping the client to make a place for himself in the community, however, are goals in any casework process. Work with the Indian client just demands more time and more effort to achieve the same results. This is because, with the Indian, the social worker often starts out with an unfamiliar culture and he has to fight through a maze of derogatory and distorted concepts before he can "reach" his client. Then, when he himself understands the Indian, the worker often finds he not only has to assist the foster parent appreciate the native people, but he is obliged to help the Indian client value himself as an individual, and as one of a minority (though now an increasing one) in Canada.

It is not, therefore, that special knowledge and skills are necessary to do an effective casework job with this ethnic group. But the social worker does have to be alert not to let other factors, such as cultural difference and prejudice, prevent him from putting to the best use both his professional knowledge and the skills he has already demonstrated in working with clients of his own race and background.

THE SECONDARY QUESTIONS:

This study did not specifically set out to assess how "social workers, foster parents and the community in general gain a better understanding of the culture, needs and the potentials of the Indian, in order to facilitate working relationships between the Indian and the White, and help the Indian to become an integral part of the Canadian life." However, this was clarified somewhat during the investigation, although further research was indicated.

The foster parents gave a clue as to how they might understand their Indian charges better, when they asked for more information about the child and those who had influenced him in the past; and for details about the British Columbia Indians in general. The natural parents, too, implied by their silence and bitterness, that the Indian must be encouraged to speak, and be helped to plan for himself.

What wishes and ambitions the Indian has for himself and his children, and what place he hopes to take in Canada, will never be answered until survey teams, Royal Commissions, sociologists and others interested in Indians elicit, record, and make use of the Indian's own ideas and wishes. Given the opportunity to talk for himself - as the Indian, Clutesi, was on a recent television broadcast¹ - the Indian offers direction to the white man.

Clutesi spoke of the Indians' fear of never saying "no" to the white man, who had branded their beliefs, religion, recreation and language as barbaric and evil. As a parent, he spoke of standing at the cross-roads, not knowing which way to turn, adding: "The greatest blessing of mankind is the feeling you belong." He also cried out at the way "everything has been given to the Indian" by the paternalistic government. He said: "We have lost the value of saving, ... we no longer have the courage and incentive to stand on our own feet. We keep coming back to what is free." He spoke, too, of what the outlawing of the potlatch had done for the Indian. The potlatch had not only been something for which to plan, save and prepare, but, as the focus of their social life, it brought peoples together sharing their talents and goods.

The concern about how "children who 'look Indian' can be helped to identify in a positive way with their Indian background and not be handicapped by a sense of inferiority" is difficult to answer now, because it

1. Clutesi, George, op.cit.

will be almost impossible for Indian children to have pride in their race until they are able to identify with Indians who are held in high esteem. It would seem, therefore, that Indians, and groups of Indians, must be helped to make a place of prestige for themselves in the community. And education, as in the case of the American Negro, more than any one thing, levels barriers of prejudice.

Whether the white man's home offers a good plan for the Indian child, and whether there could be alternative arrangements for him, have only been partly answered in the course of this study. It would seem, however, that if white foster parents could receive more help in specific areas, their homes could prove a better plan in the future.

Indian foster homes also present a possible resource which bears further investigation. However, judging from survey reports, consultations with those who have worked with the Indians, and from the agency record of a single case where an Indian child was placed in an Indian foster home, it is concluded that, whereas Indians may give the security of unlimited affection to all children in their group, they can give little else when they know only minimal security themselves. When pressures resulting from inadequacy of the basic essentials of living, cultural conflict, insufficient education and vocational training, and no proper means of support cause the individual and the group to become disorganized, there is no place for the child.

The Indian foster home, noted above, was on a reservation adjacent to the city, and the parents were given a seven year old part-Indian girl for a short time. The family lived in a mean shack which was better, however, than the other unpainted clap-board houses on the partly-cleared reservation. The child was sent to school irregularly and unclean; the family moved frequently around the country during the year in search of

casual, unskilled employment; and diseases were mis-treated with primitive remedies.

From this one experience it was concluded that, if Indians are to be used as foster parents in future - and this would seem in the best interests of the children who "look Indian" - a project will have to be set up similar to that of the Negro foster parent experiment quoted in the opening chapter of this report.¹

Several foster parents suggested that the best plan for the Indian child would be to live in a family with white foster parents (to "elevate his standard") and other Indian children (to "make him feel secure.") Another alternative considered was the "mixed group" home. In the study there were two instances of "group" homes; one where there were nine children - two Indian, two Chinese, one East Indian and four natural children of the foster parents; in the other home there were five Indian children and three natural children. In the first, the foster parents were making a concerted effort to "sell" the children to the community by dressing them well, training them to have good manners, and opening their home to religious and other local groups for meetings and parties. In the second, the children clung together to the exclusion of foster parents and community. From these isolated examples it was concluded that to have children of mixed racial origin living together does not, in itself, have special value; the dynamics of the family constellation are the deciding factors.

"To what extent are Indian parents who are 'neglecting' (in its legal sense) their children capable of keeping them?." An answer to this sixth question was found in the fact that, although the parents most frequently wanted to care for their children, they first lacked the physical resources to maintain a family; and second, they had not had the

1. Duckett, Rita and Thompson, T.G., op. cit.

opportunities to develop personal resources which would sustain them in face of hardships. The parents studied were confronted with such handicaps as inadequate housing, lack of education and a trade, poor health, and lack of recreational and child care facilities. The mothers had not been able to use the skills they had or develop others. The girls who were "good housekeepers" and "neat about their personal appearance" often bedded in a room-with-a-hot-plate, and earned their rent from the men they brought back to sleep; and the mothers who "gave their children good care" had no means of continuing this care.

"... And what should be added to the casework service and developed in the community in order to strengthen the parental tie?" A casework service, designed to help even one of these mothers keep her child, would likely entail a great deal of professional attention and drawing upon resources in the community not generally available to Indians. However, it is interesting to speculate what might be the outcome if but one family were helped successfully to remain as a unit. In terms of visible costs to the community, a blind mother and her four children in the research sample would likely have been maintained cheaper as a unit even with a visiting homemaker coming a few hours daily, than they were in separate foster homes. But the professional time involved to work out a diagnostic assessment and to construct and support a long term plan would have been much greater.

The casework, therefore, that is needed to maintain parental ties between Indian children and their parents is similar to that required for any family situation where problems are so serious that children have to be removed for their own protection. However, the question arises: "What criteria are being used to determine at what point the child should be removed from his family?" This is an area for more research.

The findings of this study answer clearly how foster parents accept the Indian child and what influences them in this respect. It was found that foster parents, generally, took an Indian child with mixed feelings of wanting and not wanting him, and the child's final acceptance in the home depended on several factors. These were: (1) the child's "white" appearance; (2) the degree of his original disturbance, and hence his ability to fit into the home and community; (3) the foster parents' own satisfying experience: (a) as parents, (b) as members of the community, (c) with Indians; and (4) the help the foster parents got from the agency in preparing them for the child and then in assisting them in their undertaking.

Finally, there was little information in the files which gave a clue to the self-image of the Indian foster child. However, an answer was suggested by the foster parents' replies on the questionnaire. It was found that the Indian child may think of himself as both white and Indian but is confused by this, and ashamed of his Indian self. He has little sense of belonging to anyone or anywhere; his confusion may lead him to feel responsible for his parents' rejection and therefore, guilty and miserable. Lastly, living in a precarious present, some children retreat to "dark corners", apparently afraid to look at the painful glare of their uncertain future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The findings of this study reveal some specific areas where child protection agencies might enhance their services for Indian children. These services, however, will continue to be handicapped until the larger Indian problems of marginality and anomie are alleviated. Indian and non-Indian together will have to help the native peoples establish a place for themselves in the local community and in the Dominion. The Indian must

also find direction and purpose for himself and his family, and to do this, he has to become better equipped mentally and socially. Besides these problems, the facts of prejudice have to be faced. This is going to mean helping the Indian find his own worth, and then aid him in demonstrating to the public that he does have a potential equal to the general Canadian population.

A small but important beginning towards solving these problems can perhaps be made with the adoption of the following procedures, suggested as a result of the experience reviewed. These are:

1. Handle each Indian "case" in accordance with the best social work practice; that is, make a thorough "background" study, consider a diagnostic assessment of the total situation, and form a long range plan with the parents (where possible.)
2. Assure that supervisors and workers who handle Indian cases have sufficient background information about Indians to understand and gain rapport with them.
3. Introduce discussion on a total agency basis, with view to handling prejudice towards Indians and understanding the significance of marginality and anomie in working with the Indian client.
4. Draw foster parents into partnership with the agency by giving them more share in background information and planning for the child; and prepare them continuously for the problems which might arise concerning friendship, dating, marriage, employment,
5. Bring foster parents of Indian children together in group meetings to share their problems, fears and ideas associated with rearing their Indian children.
6. Prepare newsletters, circulate pamphlets, and suggest readings in order to help foster parents understand and identify with their Indian children and to assist the children in growing up.

7. In publicising the need for more foster homes for Indian children, make an appeal to the human "needs" for:
 - a) the security of belonging to, and working with, a group in the community;
 - b) an opportunity to develop individual potentials for parenthood and community service;
 - c) a chance to make a contribution to the needs of others and to feel needed oneself.
8. Since one of the primary functions of private agencies has been to experiment with new methods, test untried procedures, and demonstrate community needs; therefore, private agencies, again, might find it challenging and profitable to experiment further with developing foster homes in Indian communities. In order to achieve this, it is suggested that a start be made with a pilot project; and a bi-racial committee with representation from child welfare agencies, the Department of Indian Affairs, and native groups.

It is conceivable that present agency standards for selecting foster homes might initially have to be sacrificed in order to obtain Indian foster parents. This would likely mean accepting homes which are over-crowded; parents of common-law union; and families with sub-marginal income. However, such acceptance should be followed by a planned program to bring personal and family conditions in line with those common to the average Canadian family.

9. Finally, the need for research in two other areas was indicated during the course of the study. It is suggested, therefore, that a study be undertaken with view to (1) forming criteria for evaluating the point at which a "neglected" child should be separated from his family;¹ and (2) re-evaluating the requirements

1. Research has already been started in this connection in the United States and is outlined in the mimeographed report, "A Research Design for an Assessment of Family Adequacy in Protective Cases" by Dr. Bernice Boehm. (State of Minnesota, Department of Public Welfare, Division of Child Welfare, May, 1960.)

form, content and uses made of case records currently being kept by the agency.¹

Out of Dark Corners:

A sociologist commenting recently on the American Indian said: "Relatively little research has been directed to this sector of our population, which we treat almost the way in which we used to treat the mentally ill, hidden away in the dark wings of old houses."² Indian people, instead, have been pushed into primitive corners of the country - reservations - from whence they periodically emerge to irritate the national conscience.

Even as this report was being completed, a news item - one of a succession in the past month - appeared in a local newspaper to tell that the B.C. Native Brotherhood were pressing for a Royal Commission on the health and welfare of Indians. The spark which flared this renewed urgency to do something about the Indian problem was "the condition of the Prophet River Indians, starving and infected with hepatitis last month."³

Once having caught the attention of the white man, the Indian spoke further about other problems of his people. Mr. Guy Williams, President of the Brotherhood, said: "The big problem facing British Columbia Indians is to find jobs after they graduate from high school. In 1945 there were only 24 B.C. Indians in high schools and 1,200 with education of any kind. Today there are 3,750 Indian boys and girls in high schools. Many young Indians go to the United States for jobs after they graduate; others become frustrated and let go, and follow the line of least resistance.

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1. In Vancouver at the present time there is a move to solicit a money grant in order to pursue the topic of social agency recording.
 2. Robinson, Sophia M., Juvenile Delinquency, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1960.
 3. Vancouver Daily Province, "Indians Demand Inquiry", April 16, 1962, pp.27.

Many who feel they have been beaten end up as skid road derelicts."

One of the great tragedies of social development is, perhaps, the slow pace at which human ills, already detected, move toward remedy. The "Indian problem", characterized by marginality, anomie and prejudice, is "rooted" deep in Canada and its history; on the other hand, it is now a situation which is in the process of being "felled." Steadily, there have been small "cuts" in this "standing" problem. A survey,¹ a new piece of legislation,² the efforts of voluntary organizations,³ and pressure from Indians themselves have all contributed to knowledge about the many unmet needs of the native people, to some relief of the situation and to awareness that a "clearing" must soon be made.

One "branch" which still requires attention, however, is "neglected" native children. The number of young Indians who are forced to become wards of social agencies has increased, as the population of a once "dying" race has grown. Yet, over the past nine years, too few of these children have found the permanency of adoption or have returned to better conditions in their own families.

This search for ways to help Indian foster children has included a study of children, parents, foster parents, and agency. It presents information, analyses and suggestions which should, hopefully, be of assistance to social workers in their professional duties with Indian clients. Finally, the thesis aims yet another "blow" at the "Indian problem" and the shadow it casts upon the Canadian scene.

1. Marcuse, Bert, op. cit.

2. Holmes, Alvin, op. cit. pp. 96 ff. In his thesis, Mr. Holmes draws attention to effects of the New Indian Act of 1951; the extension of the federal franchise to the Indian in 1960; and to the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs which is presently studying the conditions of Indians in Canada.

3. Evans, Marjorie, op. cit.

APPENDIX A.

SCHEDULE USED TO COMPILE AGENCY INFORMATION

NAME OF CHILD: _____

Worker: _____
Date: _____
File No. _____

<u>Racial Origin</u>	<u>Predominant Racial Appearance</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Placement History (dates)</u>
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1.

2.

3.

<u>Foster Parents</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>'Phone</u>	<u>Racial Origin</u>
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Status of Foster Home: 1. Temporary
2. Long Term
3. Adoption pending

Intelligence: 1. Average 2. Below average 3. Superior

TESTED? Yes: _____

No: _____

Emotional Adjustment: 1. Good 2. Disturbed 3. Unknown

Health: 1. Good 2. Problems - 1.
2.
3.

Parental Interest: 1. Consistent 2. Sporadic 3. None

Consent to Adoption: 1. On file 2. Possible 3. Unavailable

REMARKS:

APPENDIX B. (No.1)
INFORMATION FROM FOSTER PARENTS:
QUESTIONNAIRE OUTLINE

No:

Age:

EXPERIENCE WITH INDIAN FOSTER CHILDREN

M

F

1. The Child and his Playmates.

1. Does the child have any friends who are part-Indian? Yes...No...
If not, do you wish he had? Yes...No...
Can you give a reason for your answer?
.....
.....
2. Have his playmates commented about him "being Indian"?
If "yes", do you remember what was said? Yes...No...
.....
.....
How did the child respond?
.....
3. Has he asked questions about himself, such as:
Where he came from? Yes...No...
Who were his parents? Yes...No... Why his skin is darker?
Others? (please list) Yes...No...
.....
.....
4. What words would you say best describe the child's
attitude to his Indian background?:
Ignorant? Ashamed? Confused?
Accepting? Indifferent? Proud?
Others?

2. The Child and Adults.

1. How have your family and relatives accepted your taking
a non-white child into your home?
Completely? Fairly well? Not accepted?..
Are not concerned?
2. What have your neighbours said about you having an
Indian foster child?
Favourable?
.....
Unfavourable?
.....

3. The Child and his Foster Parents.

1. Have you ever known any Indian adults reasonably well?
 - a. Before you had this child? Since?
2. How much do you know about the child's parents?
(Check answer)
 - a. All you want to know
 - b. Would like to know more
 - c. Know practically nothing
3. What do you think is necessary to know about the background of any foster child?
.....
4. Did you originally want a non-white child? Yes...No...
Why?
.....
.....

4. Information and Experience.

1. What concerns do you have for the child, especially as he gets older?
 - a. Making friends
 - b. Dating
 - c. Employment
 - d. Marriage
 - e. Others
.....
2. What words come to your mind when you think of describing the characteristics, behaviour, etc. of Indian people?
.....
.....
3. Some foster parents have said they feel self-conscious about having a non-white child; how have you felt about this?
.....
.....
4. From your experience would you say it would be better for an Indian foster child to grow up in a home with:
 - a. Both parents Indian?
 - b. A white and an Indian parent?
 - c. White parents and other Indian children in the home?
 - d. Both parents white?Would you like to suggest a reason for your answer?
.....
.....
.....

5. What special qualities would you suggest we look for in foster parents for our non-white children?

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. What particular help do you feel foster parents need, or could use, from the Children's Aid Society in bringing up a child of Indian origin?

.....(use other side if necessary)

7. Have you any suggestions, criticisms, or ideas which would help us in future planning for all our non-white children?

[illegible]

APPENDIX B. (NO.2)

INFORMATION FROM FOSTER PARENTS

Letter from Executive Director of Agency which
Accompanied the Questionnaire to Foster Parents.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER, B.C.

File No:
Research.

In Your Reply Refer to:
Mrs. P. Massy.

February 13, 1961.

Mr. and Mrs. John Doe

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Doe:

I am writing to ask if you would cooperate in a study which we hope can help us give better service to a group of children in our care.

Mrs. Patricia Massy, who has been a social worker with the Children's Aid Society for many years, is now doing some research at the University of British Columbia in connection with problems likely to be encountered by children of non-white racial origin. As foster parents, you always play an important part in our plans and programs, and now your knowledge and suggestions for improvements would help us again to move ahead.

The information Mrs. Massy is collecting will be given finally in a very general report and no names will be mentioned. The study will cover a large number of foster parents and children.

We should be most grateful if you feel you can give favourable consideration to this request. We are taking the liberty of enclosing a questionnaire which we ask you to fill in as fully as possible and return at your earliest convenience to Mrs. Massy in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

(signed): Executive Director.

Encl.

APPENDIX B. (No.3)

Memorandum from Researcher which
Accompanied Questionnaire to Foster Parents.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER, B.C.

MEMORANDUM

In filling out this questionnaire, would you please make use of the back side of the sheets if I have not allowed enough room. Also, please try and answer all questions; if there are some you cannot, however, just put a cross (X).

If you want to phone me for any reason, my home number is _____ . If you would like me to visit and discuss any item further, would you put a note with the forms when you return them?

This questionnaire may entail a good deal of time, thought and discussion, and I personally want you to know how much your help is appreciated. I would be most grateful if you could possibly return the forms within a week, because my time for completion of this study is quite limited.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Patricia Massy.

APPENDIX C.

WORK SCHEDULE FOR COLLATING INFORMATION

FOSTER PARENTS		CHILDREN AND PARENTS		SOCIAL WORKER AND AGENCY	
				No. _____	
Attitude towards child & his parents	1	Child's attitude towards self and prnts.	7	Attitude to child and parents	13
Reason for fostering	2	Reason for neglect	8	Reason for Apprehension	14
Concept of selves	3	Attitude to foster parents	9	Appraisal of foster parents	15
Family Constellation	4	Family Constellation	10	Contacts	16
				<u>Placements:</u>	
				<u>Workers:</u>	
				<u>Recording:</u>	
Personal Information	5	Personal Information	11	Casework Assessment	17
				<u>Facts:</u>	
				<u>Diagnosis:</u>	
				<u>Planning:</u>	
Needs - Noted and Implied	6	Needs: (1) Child (2) Family	12	Needs: Casework	18

APPENDIX D.

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