

INDIAN EDUCATION



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NEWSLETTER

Indian Education Resources Center
University of B. C., Vancouver.

ALVIN MCKAY APPOINTED DIRECTOR

Alvin McKay, a Nishga Indian with 14 years of teaching experience including 4 years as principal of the Indian Day School at Greenville, was appointed Director of the Center at a meeting of the Center Council on April 13.

Mr. McKay was selected by secret ballot from a final list of 3 candidates which the screening committee presented to Center Council. The screening committee, Angie Dennis (Todd), Joe Michel and Karen Mussell, began with a list of about 40 inquiries concerning the Director's position, which resulted in 17 formal applications. Screening was done on the basis of the criteria laid out by the B. C. Native Indian Teachers Association at their January meeting and published in the last Newsletter.

Mr. McKay was formerly Chairman of the Center Council and he replaced by George Wilson, a Kwakiutl Indian, now an elementary principal in the Prince George area. Co-chairmen are Joan Ryan, Giteksan, a Prince Rupert elementary teacher and Bert McKay, Nishga, principal at Aiyansh Indian Day School and brother of the Director. Former Acting Director, Dr. Art More will continue to work with the Center as Consultant.

Mr. McKay's long involvement in Indian Education as a teacher, principal, parent and veteran fighter for improved educational opportunities has well-equipped him for his new position. He has stated that one of the most important tasks this year will be to promote greater involvement by all members of the B.C.N.I.T.A.

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GEORGE CLUTESI RECEIVES DOCTORATE

George Clutesi, Canada's foremost Indian author and painter, was presented with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Victoria on May 29. Dr. Clutesi was also the Convocation speaker.

Dr. Clutesi is a member of the Tse-shaht people of Port Alberni. He is the author of Potlatch, a beautiful description of a potlatch seen through an Indian's eyes, and Son of Raven, Son of Deer, a collection of stories and legends used in B.C. Public Schools. He paints in oils as he paints a picture in words to capture the real meaning of that which is important to his people.

Dr. Clutesi has a long involvement in Indian education which began long before the present surge of interest in the native Indian people. He has taught dancing and the Tse-shaht language for years. He has spoken in various places in his fight to improve Indian education. He has lectured all over B.C. and Canada and appeared on panels at seminars. The Indian Education Resources Center is proud that he is a member of the Center Council, and grateful for the help he gave when the Center was just beginning.

We congratulate you, Dr. George Clutesi on receiving this honour which you have earned many times over.

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TWO BCNITA MEMBERS RECEIVE DEGREES

Joe Michel and Alvin McKay received their Bachelor of Education degree from U.B.C. on May 28.

Joe Michel is the Indian Advisor to the Curriculum Division of the Department of Education in Victoria. He was the first Home-School Co-ordinator in B. C. and previously taught for many years in the Kamloops Residential School.

Alvin McKay is the former principal at Greenville and is the newly elected Director of the Indian Education Resources Center, at U.B.C.

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INDIAN EDUCATION--B.C.

By Alvin A. McKay - Director

Indian Education has only one indisputable aspect--it is in a state of flux or transition. From this point on, very little is stable, common, predictable, measurable or reliable with reference to the education of the Indian Child.

Many dominant factors control the progress, the retardation or the development of Indian Education. The most powerful force, is the unequal, unstable, low socio-economic life, the Indian is forced to live under. Compared to the rest of the province, this is a subsistence life. How can parents, compelled to eke-out a meagre livelihood, aspire to the higher ideals of academic education, while their day to day activities are controlled by an almost life or death situation? The general attitude of the Federal government and its many bureaucratic levels of operations, the Provincial government and its indifference to the total Indian question, (and of course, the general public follows the example of their respective governments), results in a general overtone of "it's the Indian's responsibility to better himself--why isn't he doing anything about it?"

In a single article, one can hardly do justice to the many faceted problem. In view of this, I shall concentrate on one aspect of Indian Education.

Many "non-statistically based statements are used daily whenever Indian students are encountered. When you consider that most non-Indians believe, without question, all of these damaging statements--a real negative, defeatist, undetached attitude is cemented in their minds.

It is rumoured--not backed by actual statistical facts for B.C., that:--

- 1) The Drop-Out Rate is 95% and upwards (that is, 1 out of 12 pupils in Primary grades end up in grade 12).
- 2) Most Indians entering grade 8 are two or three years retarded in reading.
- 3) All secondary Indian students clique together and refuse to socialize in school.

- 4) The majority of secondary Indian students refuse to participate in class discussions.
- 5) Only a handful of B.C. Indian students are capable of academic programs.
- 6) The majority of Indian secondary drop-outs or graduates are back on Reserves, doing nothing.

The essence of this stereo-typed, stigmatized conception of the Indian students, at the Junior Secondary levels, can be summed up by this quotation "Oh, he's Indian, so he is general program or occupational program or social promotion material." This negativism has resulted in teachers "typing" the Indian students, and no attempt is made to actually assess them.

I don't for one dispute the fact that all of the six points listed are true for some districts or in some individual cases, BUT, I question very strongly whether these conditions are rampant and applicable in all cases of Indians!!

My purpose in jotting down some thoughts on Indian Education--is the hope, that all who read the article will not continue to stigmatize, generalize or interpret as "gospel truth" the examples of non-statistical statements.

To my knowledge there are no up-to-date statistics on Indian Education in B.C. So, until the compilation of such up-to-date material, all of us in Education should consider every Indian pupil as a student (perhaps one with some difficulties), and then diagnostically evaluate each student as to his individual strengths and weaknesses, and from there on, Guide, Encourage, Enrich, Re-teach lacking skills etc., Excelerate these students until they become productive members of the class. A concerted emphasis should be made on the strengths, and a sympathetic, (as opposed to a detached) analytic, remedial approach made on the weaknesses.

Such a positive approach is the secret of every successful teacher--and in my experience as a seasoned teacher,--every educator is trained and equipped to handle all students in this manner.

To all BCNITA members, and to the few genuinely interested non-Indian teachers, I urge all of you to take a second step, towards changing this damaging negative attitude. Until this type of attitude is changed, all of the "catch-up programs" and what have you, will have no effective impact on Indian Education.

What is this second step? Well, it is the compilation of relevant, correct, up-to-date statistical facts (the 6 I listed are only an indication--you add any others, that are damaging the image or the progress of your respective districts). A definite part of this necessary step, is for you to summarize the extent of progress or retardation in the field of education, for your respective district. With this information, perhaps, we can team up on the educationally retarded districts, or use the educationally progressive districts as examples to encourage or guide etc. At least, this will give us a truer picture, district-wise, of Indian Education.

In all of your fact find, also list the pluses or the minuses that you think controls each category. Nothing is said about the successful Indian student--I hope that your survey will bring out this aspect. When the drop-out-rate is used--no breakdown is given for the whereabouts or the pursuits of the drop-out. In my opinion, a person is not a "true drop-out" if he is gainfully employed or is pursuing some further training etc.

If you are near our Center this summer, please drop in and discuss the contents of this article, or better still, find sometime to jot down some of your findings on the problem, and sent it in to us.

Finally, it is my intention, to do the "odd" article on Indian Education for future editions of our Newsletter. Please react to it, as I am convinced that, any progress to be made, needs an unlimited amount of exchanging of ideas.

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDIAN CULTURE

Kamloops, B.C. - Joe Michel

The theme "Culture in the 70's" was introduced by Mr. James Sewid of Alert Bay. His appeal to the assembly was for greater effort to preserve and develop those elements of the Indian culture which are essential for identity and self pride. For those Indian communities that have lost a great part of their cultural expression, he urged that means be pursued to help these communities research and develop activities. In addition, Mr. Sewid appealed for improved communication in sharing of knowledge and skill among various tribes and Indian organizations. This resulted in the formation of a National Indian Cultural Committee. Each province elected one member from its provincial delegates to act on this Central Committee. Mr. Bert McKay, New Aiyansh, Nass River School Principal was elected the B. C. delegate on the Committee.

The mechanics for funding and carrying out cultural programs were discussed and modified to ensure practical and local applications. The bulletin accepted was the one drawn up by Colin Wasacase (a native Indian), Head of the Cultural Development Division, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Basically, the Cultural Development Division is a vehicle for providing grants to individual groups and organizations "requiring assistance in their cultural endeavours for the retention, preservation and promotion of Indian culture." In addition the Cultural Development Division will seriously consider requests for funds to research aspects of Indian culture that need to be revived.

A good number of solid resolutions were passed into the hands of the Central Committee for further study and follow-up. Notable among these were those designed for the Continuation and development of Indian Culture throughout Canada.

- 1) The Central Committee be the negotiating body to negotiate directly with federal government departments.
- 2) The Central Committee be empowered to seek adequate funding for planning co-ordinating Cultural Conferences.
- 3) The Central Committee be empowered to set-up a centralized clearing house for the purpose of exchanging ideas, knowledge and skills.
- 4) The Control Committee work toward total involvement of Indian people in community affairs.

Mr. Bert McKay, principal of New Aiyansh, Nass River was the first speaker on the educational panel designed for the exchange of ideas regarding Indian Education. Mr. McKay called for increased funding for Indian education as a major step in alleviating problems in Indian education. Three areas of prime concern were increased parent involvement planned attempts to orient teachers to the needs of Indian students, speed up of Indian involvement in curriculum development. Mr. Michel stressed the importance of involving native Indian teachers in the improvement of Indian education. He cited the B. C. Native Indian Teachers Association as an example of a movement to help ease communication between home, school student and university. Mr. Barry Nicholas, representing TRIBE, a group working on native education problems in the Maritimes said his group was doing a critique on text-books offered to Indians in the School System and trying to improve them. Joyce Wall of Caughnawaga described the local interest shown in developing an Indian oriented program in their Indian Schools. Alanis O'Bomsawin outlined the positive values of using Indian people as resource personnel in schools. Joyce Wall expressed the thought of the panelists in speaking to the Indian parents when she said, "If we take an interest in what our children are learning we can get what we want." Mr. Kent Gooderham, a representative of Education Branch agreed with this view point.

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B. C. C E N T E N N I A L

by

Teddy Earl Antoine

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In the year nineteen-seventy one	* When you came, you gave a friendly smile,
The Centennial year for the province of B.C.	* And to prove your friendship you shook our hand,
The year for everyone to have fun,	* Why then did you come thousands of miles,
Everyone should be happy but me,	* To take our freedom and our land?
	*
Now why don't I celebrate,	* You made promises that should be kept,
British Columbia's birthday,	* With honesty and truthfulness,
A province that is beautiful and bold,	* But now they're just stories to be told,
A province with hidden stories untold.	* Stories that bring Indians loneliness.
	*
I am pure blood Canadian,	* This is why we have grown to hate,
But there's something else about me,	* But we know it's not too late,
I am also pure blood Indian,	* Why can't we begin from the start?
I'm from the Indian race that can't be free.	* But this time put more feelings in our heart.
	*
I can't roam over the great plains,	* So, Canadians, go ahead and drink,
I can't climb the great mountains,	* Have you parties, dances, and all,
I can't do the things I used to do,	* But this is what I really think,
I can't do anything because of you.	* While I'm imprisoned by these walls.
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* With permission of the author, Mr. Antoine of "B. C. Centennial" we have taken this poem from January, 1971's edition of Indian Echo.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE SAANICH INDIAN SCHOOL BOARD

by the Board Members

It is our hope that we can present in the next few pages a brief account of the growth of the Saanich Indian School Board. This School Board is the result of many years of striving by the Indian people of the Saanich Peninsula. Many organizations and many individuals have made it possible to accomplish the things that are being done today and the things that will be accomplished in the future.

BACKGROUND AND FORMATION OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The Indian people of the four Saanich Reserves have made every possible effort, over the last twenty years, to become actively involved in the social, economic and educational aspects of their young people, to better improve conditions by involvement and participation.

The following organizations were established as the Indian people of the Saanich Bands moved towards more self-determination: Saanich Indian Recreation Commission; Saanich Homemakers Club; Saanich Indian PTA; and the Saanich Indian Education Association.

In May of 1970 we established the Saanich Indian School Board to carry out the struggle for self-determination and to pursue an improved educational standard for the Indian people on the Saanich Peninsula.

It was brought to our attention some two years ago that the Tsartlip School was scheduled to be phased out in favour of the provincial schools. We were asked by the Superintendent of Indian Schools for Vancouver Island what we felt the future of Tsartlip should be. The overwhelming response from the Indian people of the Saanich Bands was that the Tsartlip School remain open indefinitely. The reasons are obvious to those concerned. Since the introduction of the provincial system to the Indian people on the Saanich Peninsula in 1949, we have had only about six Indian people graduate from the provincial school system. This is what has given rise to the anxious concern of the Indian people of the Saanich Bands.

The argument has been put forth by the Federal Government that segregated education for Indian people has not worked and that Federally operated schools should close. We maintain that the provincial school system is taking the same approach as the Federally operated schools took, giving rise to the same problems for the Indian students. In other words the B. C. educational curriculum does not re-affirm an Indian child's value system or cultural heritage. In order for an Indian child to succeed and be accepted in the present system he must leave behind all that he is. This gives rise to a very serious conflict and if an Indian child is not assisted in dealing with this problem effectively, he will inevitably be forced out of the school system.

The Board was formed in direct response to the indicated wishes of the Indian people of the four Saanich bands that the Tsartlip school remain open indefinitely.

Previous attempts by the Saanich bands towards more direct involvement in the education of their young people, was impeded by the Indian Affairs Department which allowed our predecessors to only act in an advisory capacity in so far as school policies are concerned.

In the light of the expressed determination of the four Saanich bands we felt it would be in the best interests of the Minister of Indian Affairs and his Department to officially recognize and assist the Saanich Indian School Board in its objects namely self-determination and Indian parental involvement in the educational process. Not just as advisors but to manage control and direct the operation of educational programs on the Saanich Peninsula. In January the Indian Affairs Branch finally accepted the School Board as a legal entity and entered into a contract for a Home-School Co-ordinator.

PRESENT COMPOSITION OF THE SAANICH INDIAN SCHOOL BOARD

The Saanich Indian School Board is comprised of representatives from four distinct Saanich Indian Reserves, namely: Tseycum, Tsawout, Pauquachin and Tsartlip. These reserves include 797 Indian people.

The board itself is composed of nine members, two from each Reserve plus the chairman of the Board. At the present time the representatives are the following:

Tseycum	- Chief Sandy Jones
	- Councillor Gus Bill
Tsawout	- Chief Harold Pelkey
	- Band Manager Victor Underwood Jr.
Pauquachin	- Chief Max Henry
	- Band Manager Don Williams
Tsartlip	- Chief Philip Paul
	- Councillor David Bartleman

In the initial stages of the Board it was deemed important that the four chief's two band managers and two councillors be an integral part of the Board as they are the legally elected representatives of their people.

In regards to the administration of the Board itself there is a chairman, at present Marie Cooper, a secretary and a treasurer, all elected by the Board. The chairman is a member of the Board, although the secretary and treasurer are not necessarily members of the Board.

Most of the preliminary work is done by an executive committee of the Board, at present Marie Cooper, Don Williams, and Dave Bartleman, and then presented to the Board for discussion and ratification.

GOALS OF THE SAANICH INDIAN SCHOOL BOARD

We will attempt in these next few paragraphs to very briefly outline the philosophy behind all our efforts. These are the goals that we have set up for ourselves.

- a) That we can, and should, be educated to retain our identity with our native values and culture, while at the same time, learning to master the non-Indian culture and to take our place in the non-Indian world.
- b) That Tsartlip School be controlled and directed by the Saanich Indian people; and the supremely important aspect of this local control is to prove that we have the interest,

- b) desire and capacity to provide real leadership, direction and self determination in education.
- c) That Tsartlip School be created as a community school serving the four reserves of the Saanich Peninsula and directed by a School Board with power.
- d) That the School involve the community and be so orientated, rather than merely child orientated.
- e) While rejecting the concept of assimilation or cultural genocide we are seeking through community involvement in education to become grounded in our own Indian culture thus enabling us to function in the non-Indian world.

Everything that has been done, is being done, or will be done in the future, is motivated by the principles listed above and we are struggling to keep this vision clearly before us.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SAANICH INDIAN SCHOOL BOARD AND THE INDIAN PEOPLE OF THE SAANICH PENINSULA.

1. Busing Program
 - a) Purchase of 5 buses, three large passenger buses and 2 mini-buses.
 - b) Hiring of 5 Indian bus drivers.
 - c) Total control by the Indian organizations through the bus committee chairman, Mrs. Joanne Claxton.
2. Nursery Program
 - a) Setting up of the Co-op Nursery school under full control of the Saanich Indian School Board and the Nursery Committee chaired by Mrs. Caroline Elliott, supported by a per pupil grant from the Indian Affairs Branch. The children are taught by a qualified Indian teacher, Mrs. Adelynne Claxton and an Indian Aide Mrs. Doreen Pelkey. The enrolment is 24 pupils.
 - b) The Nursery program which completely controlled by the Indian organization has been highly recommended by visiting non-Indian groups.
3. Kindergarden

The organization of Kindergarden classes is in conjunction with the public school Kindergarden classes. The classes for 1971-1972 will be at Tsartlip School with a qualified teacher, involved in training an Indian person to take over this class the following year.
4. Buildings and Grounds

Setting up of an active community concerned with present facilities and future projection of the community school as Tsartlip. Under the guidance of a community development planning group.

5. Health A proposal has been made to appoint and support an Indian community Health Co-ordinator. This program would be in conjunction with the Family and Children Services in Victoria and would also provide in-service girls training, which is already initiated.
6. Home-School Co-ordinators - Indian Affairs has agreed to pay for a Home-School Co-ordinator to be hired by the School Board. This will provide a councillor and a person for contact between the Reserves. Miss Molly Daniels is the Home-School Co-ordinator.

Projection

We have presented the history and background of the attempts of the Indian people of the Saanich Peninsula to take a hand in their own destiny.

We presented our motivation, our goals and a brief summary of what has been accomplished to the present.

We have also presented some of our dreams for the future. But perhaps our greatest ambition is to keep advancing along the lines that we have talked about in the last few pages. We do not want to present grandiose and visionary programs that have no roots in the development of the people. We feel that the best programs are those tested in the actual doing situation where people are involved and learn by action and reaction. Indian people working with and for Indian people.

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REPORT MERRITT DISTRICT

Mr. Robert Sterling - Home-School Co-ordinator for Nicola Valley Indians (Merritt Area), has organized a mutual co-operative effort of the Education Committee from Lower Nicola, Upper Nicola, Coldwater, Nocaitech, Shakan Bands.

Aside from the working liaison being set up amongst the Indian Bands and the non-Indian people of that area--two major projects have been set up. The following are excerpts from Mr. Sterlings report to us.

1) An Indian Library: We realize that very few Indian homes had reading material of any kind and that there was certainly no place for our students to go for resource materials on their assignments. It was a good project and we have since laid the groundwork for the purchase of sixty-five books and we are subscribing to various Indian newspapers. We have Band support on this project and have obtained funds for the majority of our literature and for the present we are well away.

2) A Basic Indian Lesson Kit: As Home-School Co-ordinator I have had the opportunity to enter classroom and give talks that give a general picture of our local Indians--history, culture and way of life. These talks are usually followed by question and answer periods where I am astounded at the naive questions of students and very often Indian students. We are facing the disastrous certainty that unless we begin now to record and circulate our Indian language and culture we will have lost these valuable holds on our identity.

I will attempt now to present a picture of the content of our Basic Indian lesson kit.

1) A written history of the Nicola Valley would be made and presented in such a manner as to be well understood by elementary students where we plan to first circulate our kit. We will have to aid us, two people in the persons of Mr. & Mrs. David & June Wyatt from the college of Potsdam in New York. Mr. Wyatt is an anthropologist and has spent two summers in our valley digging artifacts and doing much research into the History of the Nicola Valley. Mrs. Wyatt is a teacher at the Teachers College of Potsdam and has accompanied her husband to the Nicola Valley and has rapidly made friends with Indians. They have lain the groundwork already for a workshop for teachers to take place in the Nicola Valley. She plans to offer as material the Anthropological History, the past culture and the contemporary Educational, Political and Social Status of Indians. We believe that with this husband, wife team-- with the help of our committee doing research into the museums and libraries--our committee can do research into the museums and libraries and from our older Indian people we can put on paper a good History of our Valley.

2) Photographs of local Indians in the true native costume of our past. We have obtained already from the National Archives in Ottawa prints of Indians of the Valley taken by James Teit around the turn of the century. We hope to obtain more as we are prepared to research further into other areas for information, example, Smithsonian Institute and the Provincial Museum. We would have these prints made and be prepared to meet the cost. We have tried to enlarge these photos but they turn out poorly due to the coarse grain of the negatives. We would have to photograph the copies and then enlarge. We have received local estimates attached. These photographs will be accompanied by Indian translated comments on the meanings and significance of the particular photo.

3) Tapes of basic Indian language, also songs and stories. We plan to use some finances to purchase suitable tape recording machines, enough tape to record any and all offerings by my people. I have contacted Randy Bouchard of the Provincial Museum, asked him if I could borrow his linguistic tapes, legends of the Thompson Indians of Lytton and Okanagan Indians of Vernon and Penticton. To explain this I must mention the languages spoken in the Nicola Valley are dialects of Thompson and Okanagan but Mr. Bouchard himself has expressed that he hesitates to come into our Valley because our original "Stuix" language has died and what remains is a curiously mixed Thompson and Okanagan. Nevertheless, we feel, we must record the language that applies to us. With the aid of Mr. Bouchard's tapes we can find the basis of our language. Perhaps some of our myths and stories are similar or can inspire our older people into remembering other versions.

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Our best wishes for the success of your projects and efforts Bob!

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