



INDIAN EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Indian Education Resources Center
University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, B. C.

Volume One, Number Three

March, 1971

BC Indian Teachers Meet

A study of the Boarding Home Program, selection of an Indian Director for the Center, and problems of Indian counsellors highlighted the second conference of the B. C. Native Indian Teachers Association, (BCNITA) held at the Center, January 29 and 30. Twenty-seven members of the Association, from all parts of B. C., were in attendance. Special guests were Rod Soonias, Director of the Task Force in Indian Education in Saskatchewan, and his secretary, Joanne MacLeod.

The Boarding Home Study, ordered by the first conference of the BCNITA last September, took up most of the conference deliberations. The study is an attempt to uncover more accurate information about the problems Indian students face on the program, and to look at successful Boarding Homes to find out why they are successful. This is the first time that such a study has been done primarily by native Indians. All interviews will be done by members of BCNITA, an all-Indian organization. Conclusions and recommendations will also be made by BCNITA members. A more detailed description of the study appears in a separate article in this issue.

A great deal of interest centered around the selection procedures for the new Director of the Center. When it was first set up, the Center committed itself to having an Indian Executive Director by July 1, 1971. The meeting decided to hold an open competition for the job, the competition will close March 31, 1971. An advertisement for the position appears later in this issue.

The qualifications that the members decided were most important were personality, experience and dedication. Personality requirements emphasized the willingness and ability to work with Indian people. Experience in order of priority included experience in Indian education, teaching experience, academic and professional training, and experience in other fields related to Indian education. In addition the successful applicant must have an intimate knowledge of the problems of Indian Education, and must have a high degree of dedication to the future of native Indians. By a close vote it was also decided to restrict applications to B. C. Indians.

Problems faced by Indian counsellors, often called Home-School Co-ordinators, were considered. It was decided to request support from Indian Affairs for a meeting of the Home-School-Co-ordinators and Indian Counsellors in B. C. to plan a training course for Home-School-Co-ordinators, to develop an ideal job description and to plan a program for promoting better use of Home-School-Co-ordinators.

Some of the problems faced by the Home-School-Co-ordinators were lack of training for the job, insufficient knowledge of the public school system and the Education Branch of Indian Affairs, misunderstanding by School Boards and teachers of duties of Home-School-Co-ordinators workload and lack of job security. Delegates also emphasized the Indian Counsellors and Home-School Co-ordinators were extremely effective despite the problems they face.

Special guest Rod Soonias, described the Education Task Force which he is heading in Saskatchewan. Five areas of Indian Education are receiving special attention in the study. drop-outs; education-related legal rights; educational values held by Saskatchewan's Indian peoples; educational institutions analysis, and a cost-benefit analysis of programs.

Native Indian student-teachers are now eligible for full membership in BCNITA. This is a result of a motion which also set aside a seat on the Center Council specifically for a representative of the student teachers. The motion was passed unanimously.

Five more members of the Center Council were elected at the meeting to bring the total to fifteen. The Center Council is the governing body for the Center. Its members are: Alvin McKay, Greenville, Chairman; Richard Atleo, Ahousat; Flora Baker, Alert Bay; Harvey Brooks, Nanaimo; George Clutesi, Port Alberni; Flora Dawson, Kingcome Inlet; Bert McKay, Aiyansh; Joe Michel, Kamloops; Shirley Ned, Comox; Gordon Robinson, Terrace; Joan Ryan, Prince Rupert; Robert Sterling, Merritt; Angie Todd, Fort St. James; Lorna Williams, Mount Currie; and George Wilson, Prince George.

A more detailed summary of the proceedings is available upon request from the Center.

Report of The Boarding Home Study

Introduction

At the first meeting of the B. C. Native Indian Teachers Association in September 1970, the following motion was passed:

"That a committee of members be appointed to look into the boarding home problems throughout B. C. and to recommend immediate action."

Since that time Resources Center Staff, particularly Janice Mathias and Alvin McKay, and the committee members (Richard Atleo, Bert McKay, Bob Sterling, Angie Todd) have been gathering background information to develop more specific objectives and information-gathering procedures for the study. During the Center Council meeting in October and the BCNITA meeting in January, the background information was discussed. The following is an explanation of the results of the preliminary work.

Objectives

The main objective is to find ways of improving the Boarding Home Program. This is the first time that a group of Native Indian Teachers have taken a co-ordinated look at the program. It is hoped that the fresh approach they bring will result in a number of new ideas. The intention is to look at those who have chosen not to be on the program, as well students who have.

After four months of gathering information the following specific research question have been formulated:

1. To whom is the Boarding Home program available? To whom would Indian people like it to be available?
2. In situations where the Boarding program is only one alternative, why was it selected? Who makes such decisions?
3. What are the problems encountered by Boarding students, by boarding parents and by natural parents?
4. Are there common characteristics to successful Boarding relationships? Can these successful characteristics be developed in other Boarding homes?
5. What are the alternatives to the Boarding program as presently constituted? What is the economic feasibility and educational potential for such alternatives?
6. Are there ways in which the Indian parents could be more involved in the Boarding program?
7. How can the effectiveness of the role of the Boarding program Counsellors be improved?
8. Are there ways in which the B. C. Native Indian Teachers Association can assist in carrying out and improving the Boarding program?

Method

The method for collecting information related to each of the above questions is presented below:

1. To whom is the Boarding Home program available? To whom would Indian people like it to be available?
The following information is necessary to answer this question:
 - a) Information related to reasons for acceptance into the program obtained from the Snider report, from more recent Indian Affairs Branch files and policy statements and interviews with students.
 - b) Demographic information indicating where boarding home students come from and where they are placed.
2. In situations where the Boarding program is only one alternative, why was it selected, or not selected? Who makes such decisions?
The following information is necessary to answer this question:
 - a) Demographic information obtained for question 1 will identify those students who come from areas near a secondary school.
 - b) Students so identified will be sampled and interviewed by BCNITA members trained in interviewing techniques.
 - c) Also a sample of students from these areas who are attending the local high school will be interviewed by BCNITA members.
3. What are the problems encountered by Boarding students, by Boarding parents and by natural parents?
The following information is necessary to answer this question:
 - a) Information already gathered in the Snider report and other sources.
 - b) Interviews with a sample of Boarding program counsellors.
 - c) Interviews with a sample of Boarding program students and Boarding program drop-outs.
 - d) Interviews with a sample of parents of Boarding students.
 - e) Interviews with a sample of Boarding parents.
 - f) Reports of meetings of Boarding parents and meetings of Indian parents, where BCNITA members have been invited to attend.
4. Are there common characteristics to successful Boarding relationships? Can these successful characteristics be developed in other Boarding homes?
The following information is necessary to answer this question:
 - a) A definition of "successful".
 - b) Interviews with a sample of students and Boarding parents who have a successful Boarding relationship.
 - c) Interviews with Boarding program Counsellors.
5. What are the alternatives to the Boarding program as presently constituted? What is the economic feasibility and educational potential for such alternatives?
The following information is necessary to answer this question:
 - a) Interviews and correspondence with Indian Affairs Department Personnel in B. C. and other parts of Canada.

- b) Interviews and correspondence with Indian individuals and organizations in B. C., Canada and the United States.

6. Are there ways in which the Indian parents could be more involved in the Boarding program?

It is anticipated that a number of ways of increasing involvement of Indian parents will be suggested by BCNITA members and through other interviews and correspondence. These suggestions will be discussed with Indian people and Indian Affairs Department Personnel. Financial feasibility as well as educational benefits will be considered.

7. How can the effectiveness of the role of the Boarding program Counsellors be improved?

The following information is necessary to answer this question:

- a) Interviews with Boarding program Counsellors and other department personnel.
- b) Interviews with a sample of Indian students, their parents and Boarding parents.
- c) Correspondence and interviews with individuals and organizations in Canada and the United States.

8. Are there ways in which the B. C. Native Indian Teachers Association can assist in carrying out and improving the Boarding program?

This question will be discussed by members of the BCNITA at the conferences and by correspondence. After all other information has been collected, the Boarding Study Committee will prepare a list of recommendations to be considered by the membership.

INDIAN EDUCATION AT SKEENA JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, TERRACE, B.C.

By D. Cunningham, Principal

What has been referred to as a project in Indian Education is simply a sincere interest on the part of the staff of Skeena School to look realistically at some of the problems facing Indian children in the Public School system; children who come from the remote isolated Indian villages of Iskut Lake, Telegraph Creek, Port Simpson, Kincolith, Greenville, Canyon City, New Aiyansh, Kitwancool, Kitwanga, Kispiox, Kitseguelka and Kitimat where they had lived the 14 or 15 years of their life, usually without having travelled beyond their immediate fishing or hunting grounds. These children come from villages of perhaps 200 people where they had attended Indian Day schools to Terrace, approximately 12,000 people, where they are usually boarded in non-Indian homes. They attend Skeena Junior Secondary school, a regular public school of 850 pupils. Obviously these children are faced immediately with a multitude of adjustment problems, only one of which is to find a place in the public school.

The Indian School Boarding Program was started in Terrace in September, 1969. Previously, pupils from the above villages were sent mostly to schools in the Lower Mainland of B. C. or to Edmonton. However, after several years of marginal success with the boarding program, the Department of Indian Affairs through pressure from the Nishga people primarily, decided to board the students closer to home.

The staff at Skeena School were informed in the Spring of 1969 that 50 Indian Boarding students would be attending the school in September; thus we had an opportunity to gather information about the students, their villages and people, with a view toward mutual understanding in the hope that the Indian students would be more successful at Skeena School.

Through the Anglican priest in Greenville, I was invited to the village for a weekend where I met Alvin McKay, a Nishga Indian and Principal of the Lakalzap Indian Day School in Greenville.

Mr. McKay became a close friend and invaluable advisor to myself and the staff at Skeena School. A teacher exchange for one week was arranged between Mr. McKay and Mr. Dave Walker, a Skeena teacher and self-made archaeologist cum anthropologist. In the school most of Mr. McKay's time was spent with the counsellors, individual students - Indian or White, and groups of Indians or Indians and Whites either by himself or in a team with the school counsellors. Also he spent considerable time discussing problems of Indian education with staff members and made a presentation complete with slides depicting the life and culture of his people. Outside of school hours his time was spent in T. V. interviews, meeting various leaders in the community, and attending their meetings. To summarize this exchange, the real value was in having a native Indian educator and leader to provide information and background about the culture of his people.

Mr. McKay felt, as did we, that a firm foundation could be established if a mutual understanding of the two cultures could be developed. From the outset we were determined to allow the Indian student to retain his identity while at the same time gain a meaningful education in our school.

Since this initial contact with the Indians we have attempted to keep in constant touch with the Nass villages and have participated in many of their activities. Some of the activities, relating to the Indian students who attend Skeena School that we have participated in since the fall of 1969 include: Assisted the Terrace Community Recreation Director in preparing a brief to the First Citizens Fund for financial support for a Youth Activities worker to co-ordinate the work of the various community activities as they pertain to Indian students. The Boy's counsellor spent one day in the Nass valley meeting teachers and talking to Grade Seven students at the Indian Day Schools at New Aiyansh and Greenville. The boy's P. E. Instructor and his wife, the P. E. Instructor at the Senior school, spent a Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Greenville and organized a full weekend of activities for all age groups in the community. A teacher exchange for one week in the fall of 1970 was arranged between the Skeena boy's counsellor and the Native Indian Vice-Principal and counsellor of Hazelton Amalgamated School, Mr. Gordon Reid. The Skeena School Band visited Greenville and Aiyansh and were billeted in Indian homes in the spring of 1970. As well as playing concerts band members were taken on board some of the Indian fishing boats where they were given a demonstration of gillnetting and fishing, the Nishga Indians' chief means of livelihood.

Space does not permit details of out many other activities but the following list will indicate some of them: attended a traditional Indian Wedding Feast in New Aiyansh uniting in marriage a boy from the Valley of the Nass and a girl from the Valley of the Skeena spoke to the Council of Indian Chiefs and a number of business and professional groups in Terrace on "Problems of Education facing Indian Children", participated in a meeting with the Terrace Boarding Parents of Indian Students; attended the Annual Nishga Tribal Conference; went on an exciting sea lion hunting expedition with the Indians from Greenville to the mouth of the Nass River; visited Fishery Bay on the Nass River, the temporary living quarters during the ollichan processing period and witnessed "Grease" processing and sun-drying of ollichans; visited fish canneries along the mouth of the Skeena River during the summer; attended the In-Service workshop on Indian Art and Culture of the Northwest Coast held at K'shan Village, Hazelton; and set up local Terrace Indian Corner, Ben Bolton in the Art room for a month to outline the fundamentals of Indian Art through demonstrations of actual carving in yellow cedar and birch.

Future plans include; a trip to New Aiyansh and Greenville in late February to bring the school on film to the communities; institution of a one week mini-course "Exploring Indians of the Past" on which regular school classes will be programmed to spend one day each at the site of the ancient Indian village at Kitselas Canyon on the Skeena River approximately 12 miles east of Terrace; institute an elective course for Grade 9 or 10 on Northwest Coast Indian Art for September, 1971; consider offering the Nishga Language as either the language requirement of an elective course; the Indian Dance Group numbering some 50 members have accepted an invitation to perform their traditional Indian Interpretative Tribal Dance in the school during an evening; formation of an Indian Senate to work with the Skeena Students Council; holding an "Indian Day" in the late Spring with Indian students hosting non-Indians at the school for an afternoon; a trip to Haida Village on the Queen Charlotte Islands; inviting Grade 7 students from the Nass Valley for an Orientation Day at Skeena School; and making representation to the Department of Indian Affairs for a Home-School Co-ordinator for Terrace.

We recognize the Indian students as an ethnic group, culturally very different from us, but certainly not as inferior, second rate citizens. We have been very fortunate in having the co-operation from the Nass Valley and the other areas out Indian students come from. It is only through getting to know Indian people and sharing in their life that one can fully appreciate them. Another real value is that when the Indian people have the opportunity to understand our system and feel a sincerity in what we are attempting to do, then and only then can we ask them to co-operate and support our efforts.

Whatever success we may have had at Skeena School is attributable to a positive attitude about Indians rather than any projects that we have undertaken. The Indian students at this school for the most part are proud of their rich cultural heritage. Some bewildered, apparently "backward and shy, self-conscious" students, often played truant to escape and generally manifested hostile feelings toward students and teachers. Many of these same students are now taking their place in the school and making a major contribution to it. It is at this point that these students and teachers are at the point where they were at the end of Grade 7 in the Indian villages approximately one year ago. We can continue their education. Furthermore, with the leadership of these children in Grades 9 & 10, the length of the adjustment period for the Grade eight pupils coming in next fall should be considerably shorter. We have made some progress!

TWO NEW CURRICULUM AIDS

The Helping Hand, How Indian Canadians Helped
Alexander MacKenzie Reach the Pacific Ocean

This is a 50 page booklet describing the help given to Alexander MacKenzie in his trip to the West Coast by land. It consists mainly of quotes from MacKenzie's Journal, illustrations, cartoons, maps and exercises which continually bring out MacKenzie's complete dependence on Indians, and how this has been omitted or misinterpreted in most accounts of the journey. The following is an example of the contents of the booklet.

"When MacKenzie's party reached the junction of the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers (see Fig. 12), an important question to answer again was: Which way shall we paddle? What choices did MacKenzie have to help him decide? Should he take what looked like the easier and more promising Finlay River to the north, or the less inviting Parsnip River to the south? The entry in MacKenzie's diary for May 31 provides the answers to the questions.

May 31, 1793.....the old man, whom I have already mentioned as having been frequently on war expeditions in this country, had warned me not, on any account, to follow it, (the Finlay River), as it was soon lost in various branches among the mountains, and that there was no great river than ran in any direction near it; but by following the latter, he said, we should arrive at a carrying place to another large river, that did not exceed a day's march, where the inhabitants build houses, and live upon islands. There was so much apparent truth in the old man's narrative that I determined to be governed by it; for I did not entertain the least doubt, if I could get into the other river, that I should reach the ocean.

Taking the advice of several Indians, MacKenzie paddled up-stream along the Parsnip until he approached its head waters."

....The map in Fig. 16 represents the Fraser River which MacKenzie reached after being guided overland by the Indians from the Parsnip River. Again, the Indians described some of the difficulties which he would face in trying to paddle downstream to its mouth. Fig. 17 is a cartoon suggesting the information given to MacKenzie about the main stream of the river. The map in Fig. 18, drawn in 1858, is another kind of "description" of a part of the river shown in the cartoon.

MacKenzie's diary tells us something about his meeting with the Indians along the Fraser River, and about the help they gave him in planning the next part of his journey:

June 21, 1793. (Meeting with the Carriers) According to their account, this river, whose course is very extensive, runs towards the mid-day sun; and that at its mouth, as they had been informed, white people were building houses. They represented its current to be uniformly strong, and that in three places it was altogether impassable, from the falls and rapid, which poured along between perpendicular rocks that were much higher, and more

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rugged than any we had yet seen, and would not admit of any passage over them. But besides the dangers and difficulties of the navigation, they added, that we should have to encounter the inhabitants of the country, who were very numerous. They also represented their immediate neighbours as a very malignant race who lived in large subterraneous recesses: and when they were made to understand that it was our design to proceed to the sea, they dissuaded us from prosecuting our intention.....

It is useful in grades 4 through 12, although it is most suitable for junior high Social Studies classes. The booklet contains many illustrations, and is printed on various colours of paper to heighten interest and readability.

The Helping Hand is available at cost (50¢ per copy) from the Indian Education Resources Center.

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Indian Metis and Eskimo Leaders in Contemporary Canada

This book of biographies has been prepared to illustrate for classroom purposes, some of the well-known Indian, Eskimo and Metis people of Canada.

In the past, most available materials have dealt with the past and this book is an effort to remedy the situation and provide schools across Canada with material on contemporary Canadian Indian, Eskimo and Metis people. Included in the book are fifteen pictures of native people representing different walks of life with a biography of each.

Copies of the book are available at \$3.25 from the Indian and Northern Curriculum Resources Center, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

We Recommend for Juvenile Readers

(These annotations are from Book Reviews for Juvenile Readers developed by Anthropology 301 students during Summer Session, 1968. Copies of the reviews are available, free, from the Center).

Carter, Anthony, Somewhere Between, Vancouver, Agency Press, 1966.
Nonfiction: Coast Salish.

An artistic blending of colour photographs and commentary focuses on the life and history of the Tsla-a-wat, Squamish, Bilgula, Kynoc and Kitistu people of the B. C. coast area.

The book included legends such as the Squamish story of the great flood and historical events such as the dramatic story of Queen Wi-Nish-Shi-Bawn. Comments on contemporary life are included. Anthony Carter's full page coloured photographs are excellent. His collection includes coastal scenes, the fishing industry, portraits and works of art. The text and photographs are printed on large glossy white pages. The different sizes of type compliment the pictures.

Highly recommended for readers 10 years and up.

Harris, Christie, Raven's Cry, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1966.

Non-fiction: Haida; history and biography, 193 pp.; illus. by Bill Reid, maps, geneological chart of Haida Eagle Chiefs.

Christie Harris's words and Bill Reid's illustrations compliments one another to produce one of the finest books available on the Westcoast Indian. The book is a fictional history of the first contacts between the Haida's and the Europeans. Young readers may easily identify with many characters in the book. By concentrating on the Haida Eagle Chiefs of the Stastas Shongalth Lineage they have told the history of the Haida from the first contact with the white man to the present day; from the great Chief Edinsa down through the years to Bill Reid himself. Together they are able to introduce to the contemporary reader a people of immense dignity and pride who have faced destruction at the hands of the strangers they welcomed, and who have left us their only heritage: art, that is "so refined and highly evolved that..." critics "...can't believe it emerged from an Indian culture..."

Bill Reid is a descendent of the last great Haida chief and an international recognized artist in his own right. Mrs. Harris, a well known Canadian author, received a Canada Council grant to do the research for this book. Wilson Duff, the Curator of Anthropology and the Provincial Museum of Victoria says of the book: "The historical details are as accurate as they could possibly be. The same applies to anthropological details of costume, etc. and the motivations of the characters..."

Highly recommended for grades 5 and up: for readers of all ages, probably should be required reading for all B. C. teacher.

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Baker, Betty, Little Runner of the Long House, New York, Harper, 1962.

Little Runner of the Longhouse is an "I can read book" that grade two's would enjoy reading for themselves. The book is also suitable for the teacher to read to Kindergarten and grade one pupils.

The Story centers around the longhouses of the Iroquois, which are filled with busy people preparing for the New Year celebrations. Little Runner wanted to be like the older boys who wore masks and went with the basket woman to ask each family to put something in the big basket. If they did not get something for the basket, then they would take something. Little Runner was more

interested in getting lots of maple sugar than he was in the Iroquois ceremony. He tried hard to trick his mother into giving him some candy, but she was difficult to fool.

The book is printed in large type with carefully chosen words for the beginning reader. The illustrations by Arnold Lobel are large and realistic in colours of red, black and brown.

Harris, Christie, Once Upon a Totem, New York, Atheneum, 1966.
148 pp., illus. John Frazer Mills.

Christie Harris has retold, in most beautiful language five tales related to her by Indians of the northern northwest coast of British Columbia.

'Fly Again, My Proud Eagle' encompasses almost the whole culture of the Tsimshian people in operation before the coming of the white man. For example, it reveals the clan system, the matrilineal kinship, puberty rights, the position of slaves, the importance of wealth and rank, the oolaken run on the Nass, the carving of totems, the potlatch, the necessity to revenge, and above all, the great courage expected of and accepted by the nobility.

During a bitterly cold winter, the Eagle clan of Kitsum-galum are attacked and murdered by the Bear clan. Only the young Eagle princess and her grandfather escape. Although the princess hears the voice of her younger sister, she dare not go back to aid her for she, herself, must live to mother young Eagles, who will some day revenge the slaughter of her clan. More than twenty years pass before four brave young princes, with their sister, sail to their mother's homeland to force atonement for the murder of the Eagle clan.

Other legends in the book show the Indians' strong belief in supernatural beings, such as 'The Giant Ogre' and 'The Wild Woman of the Woods'.

Black and white woodcuts by John Frazer Mills add a touch of mystery. Highly recommended for graded 4 to 9; since many of the names are difficult to pronounce, perhaps the legends should be read to the younger children. Students in grades 5 and 6 might enjoy reading "The Wild Woman of the Woods" in play form.

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Executive Director

INDIAN EDUCATION RESOURCES CENTER

Competition Open to Status and Non-Status Indians

The Executive Director is responsible to the B. C. Native Indian Teachers, Association. His duties shall consist of:

1. Supervising development and distribution of Indian Education resource material.
2. Developing communication between the many groups involved in Indian Education.
3. Assuming responsibility for inservice program development related to Indian Education.
4. Preparing annual budget.
5. Authorizing expenditures and financial arrangements encompassed within the annual budget.
6. Conducting public speaking engagements and making major policy statements for the Resources Center.
7. Co-ordinating research projects related to Indian education.

The Executive Director should:

1. have intimate knowledge of the problems of Indian education.
2. be an experienced teacher.
3. have adequate academic training.
4. possess leadership qualities.
5. have ability to work and co-operate with Indian people.
6. have experience in other areas related to Indian education such as working with Indian organizations.
7. have an overall view of Indian education in Canada but particularly in British Columbia.
8. be a resident of B. C.

Salary: Negotiable, commensurate with ability.

Tenure: Full-time.

Selection will be made by the British Columbia Native Indian Teachers Association.

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