

# “What Makes the Indian Tick?” The Influence of Social Sciences on Canada’s Indian Policy, 1947–1964

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*The continuing objective of state policy towards First Nations in Canada has been their assimilation into the dominant society. Until World War II the strategy had been to subjugate them through transparently harsh statutory and administrative measures. After the war, a new ostensibly more humane approach to assimilation was introduced. An analysis of archival documents from the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs reveals the role of the social sciences in influencing this approach. Knowledge from the social sciences, applied to Indian policy, reflected the biases of modern liberalism. The social sciences pointed to the required direction of Indian adaptation — the market, individualism, self-reliance, and the family — and to what aspects of Indian culture had to change — collectivism, extended kinship, and gendered roles reflective of traditional rather than modern cultures. Although these state policies enjoyed wide public support, First Nations refused to be mere objects of science and research.*

*La politique de l’État a toujours visé l’assimilation des Premières nations du Canada à la société dominante. Jusqu’à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, la stratégie avait été de les subjuguier par la prise de mesures législatives et administratives visiblement dures. Après la guerre, l’on a adopté une nouvelle approche ostensiblement plus humaine à l’assimilation. Une analyse de documents d’archives du ministère des Affaires indiennes et du Nord canadien révèle le rôle qu’ont joué les sciences sociales dans cette approche. Les connaissances des sciences sociales, appliquées à la politique relative aux Indiens, témoignaient de la partialité du libéralisme occidental. Les sciences sociales signalaient la voie à prendre pour assurer l’adaptation des Indiens — le marché, l’individualisme, l’autonomie et la famille — et les aspects de la culture indienne devant changer — le collectivisme, la parenté étendue et les rôles selon le sexe, reflet de cultures traditionnelles plutôt que modernes. Ces politiques de l’État jouissaient certes d’un vaste appui populaire, mais les Premières nations refusèrent d’être de simples objets de curiosité scientifique et de recherche.*

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What is this so-called “Indian problem”?

... In essence it is this: the Indian is too often considered an outsider in our society. His reserve is palisaded with psychological barriers which have prevented close social and economic contact between Indian and non-Indian.

It is the policy of the government to help the Indian, caught in an age of transition, to adapt himself to a larger and more complex society, to be able to earn a living within that society if he wishes to do so.

But there are many factors which inhibit the Indian in his adaptation to a mid-twentieth century technological world. Most are but dimly understood.<sup>1</sup>

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES had a growing effect on federal Indian policy in Canada in the period following World War II. Faced with the persistent failure of the primary goal of Indian policy since Confederation — the assimilation of Indian peoples into Canadian civil society<sup>2</sup> — the Indian Affairs branch administration gradually turned to the social sciences for new ways to accomplish this frustrated objective. The influence of the social sciences was not without resistance from the “old guard” bureaucracy both in Ottawa and in the field. In this sense, the rising wave of social science did not sweep away the thinking or the agenda of those veterans of Indian Affairs who believed that only they held the special knowledge, experience, and moral certitude that would lead to the final resolution of the “Indian problem” in Canada. It did, however, steadily infuse the thinking of the branch to the extent that, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, those who entered its service beyond the clerical levels were increasingly university educated and often trained in more specialized professions whose roots were in the social sciences.

In her book *The Science of Social Redemption*, Marlene Shore argues that early in the development of sociology at McGill University a strong link was made between a rational, scientific knowledge base and a community or national service ideal. In the context of the fallen ideals of the First World War and based, ironically, on the successes of the German educational system, academic disciplines at McGill were to inspire and train young men — and women — to higher service and to the reconstruction of a better society. According to Shore, the war

1 Canada, Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, *The Indian >In<Transition: The Indian Today*, 1962.

2 John L. Tobias, “Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada’s Indian Policy”, *The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1976), pp. 13–30, reprinted in A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, eds., *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, Nakoda Institute Occasional Paper No. 1 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), pp. 43–45.

had infused the university with a purpose that many previously felt it had lacked, and in the years that immediately followed, its spokesmen searched for ways in which it could continue to make such a tangible social contribution. One such solution was found in the ideal of service. While the philosophy stemmed from the mid- and late nineteenth century, the idea that the university and its students had a duty to serve society was given renewed strength by the wartime experience.... The philosophy of service came to mean more than giving moral guidance to society; it implied providing the community with active leadership in almost every field of endeavour.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas criticisms of higher education in the United States centred on its self-serving nature and its benefits to the individual, and criticisms of that in Great Britain on its attachment to a class-based society, in Canada the value of an academic life would be to utilize scientific knowledge for the greater national good and to create in students the essence of the good, progressive citizen. Yet in the aftermath of World War I the appropriate role of the state in mediating between civil society and the economy became a subject of greater debate within and outside government, in particular an internal debate among a rising class of academics, the social scientists, about the nature of academic disciplines and whether or not they should remain detached from or engaged in the creation and direction of public policy. At issue was the purity of science and the scholarly pursuit of truth unsullied by ideological biases versus the perceived need to bring new knowledge to bear on social problems and the policies created to address them.<sup>4</sup>

The debate was not a small one, nor did it lack acrimony. Prominent intellectuals like the League for Social Reconstruction's (LSR) Frank Underhill and the University of Toronto's Harold Innis debated the extent to which intellectual honesty was compromised by partisanship in the acquisition and application of knowledge; the degree to which the social sciences were sufficiently developed to offer solutions to the complex problems at hand; and whether or not the inclusion of experts in public life would hinder the exercise of democracy.<sup>5</sup> Bitter words flew, and Underhill's academic career was threatened, yet in the end the point of view propounded by the LSR tended to prevail. Certainly, the careers of intellectuals like the political economist O. D. Skelton, who had become a senior advisor to government in Ottawa, showed that academics could indeed advise government without surrendering their integrity or objectivity.

The debate gradually became moot as the events of the Great Depression and the onset of World War II overtook it, necessitating that the federal gov-

3 Marlene Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 27.

4 Doug Owsram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 163-164.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 166.

ernment — especially Mackenzie King's Liberals — call upon university academics to assist it in understanding the complexities of modern economics, the intricacies of Canada's constitutional arrangements, and the future role the state should or should not play in the welfare of Canadian citizens.<sup>6</sup> By the late 1930s and into the 1940s Canada's modern state began to take definite form characterized by more vigorous intervention in the economy and by an active interest in the general well-being of its populace. Underpinning this new, positive state was the integral role of university academics — including social scientists trained in disciplines like economics, political science, psychology, public health, social work, and sociology — in informing and shaping public and social policy.

The creation of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in 1949 was further indication of the birth of the active, interventionist state in Canada. Housed within the new department was the Indian Affairs branch. Having been reduced from departmental status 13 years before, it had toiled away in relative isolation from the mainstream bureaucracy and the public eye. A series of Indian conventions in 1943 and 1944,<sup>7</sup> the Committee on Postwar Reconstruction and Re-Establishment, and a growing public awareness of the dire poverty and unjust position of Indians within Canada obliged the federal government to strike a special, joint parliamentary committee in 1946 to inquire into most aspects of the *Indian Act* and how its administration affected the treatment of Canada's First Nations.<sup>8</sup> The resultant spotlight on Indian matters evoked a new optimism within the branch that it could positively effect the assimilation of Indians into Canadian society. In addition, the task of elevating Indians to full and equal citizenship attracted the attention of social scientists from Canada's leading universities. The "Indian problem", which had up to this time been essentially defined as a moral and political question of how best to manage Indians and induce their assimilation, was now perceived in more secular terms as an objective problem that could be subjected to the scrutiny of science and the application of scientific knowledge to the policies of the state.

What is significant is that Indians became subject to yet another aspect of

6 *Ibid.*, especially chap. 8 through 11.

7 See Hugh Shewell, "Jules Sioui and Indian Political Radicalism in Canada, 1943–1944", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 3 (Autumn 1999), pp. 224–234.

8 Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", p. 51. Amid Canada's postwar affluence the squalid, third-world conditions of most First Nations communities appalled a great many Canadians. During the 1946–1948 committee hearings, Indian communities were frequently referred to and reported in the newspapers as slums. The hearings and the recommendations arising from them appeased this moral outcry for about 10 years. However, by the late 1950s Indians' social and economic conditions remained much the same as before, and their relative legal position within Canada was also unchanged. This gave rise to further public concern and to international criticism of Canada for its treatment of native peoples. Such criticism, together with problems related to land settlements, prompted Prime Minister John Diefenbaker to appoint another Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs in 1959.

the project of liberal enlightenment. Whereas Indian policy in the period since Confederation had represented, in most respects, a continuation of imperial subjugation rooted in paternalistic assumptions about the Indians' natural inferiority and backwardness, the post-World War II period marked a decided shift towards policy based in the production of knowledge and universal truths. While social science sought to compare, understand, and explain similarities and differences among social groups and societies, it also sought to level difference and to find attributes that would provide a core of universal knowledge through which all humanity could be seen as one, as essentially the same.<sup>9</sup> As an idea it was perhaps noble, but profoundly Eurocentric in its assumptions about the measurements that would determine what all humans ought to be.

If, before the war, Indians had had to struggle to maintain their identities against repressive authority, in the postwar period they would have to resist the power of experts who would seek to define and solve their problems within this paradigm of universal and scientific truths. It was no accident that social workers were among the first of the new social science professionals to be employed by the Indian Affairs branch.<sup>10</sup> C. A. Dawson, who during the 1920s and 1930s headed the McGill School for Social Workers (formerly the Department of Social Study and Training) and was himself a sociologist influenced by the Chicago School, likened social workers to engineers. According to Ken Moffatt, Dawson constructed social work as an applied social science. "For example," Moffatt writes, "he felt that the study of families from the scientific and sociological perspective would contribute to a better understanding of the normal individual and encourage family stability. In this way, social science took on a normative cultural purpose."<sup>11</sup> Moffatt continues his analysis of Dawson's scientific view of social work:

In a world where old social institutions were declining and modern society based on international markets was being shaped, the primary role for the social worker, according to Dawson, was to aid people in social adjustment. In cultures or neighbourhoods outside of convention, the social worker's function became one of control as well as adjustment. The social worker was to help shape individual and community responses to the impersonal, natural forces of social development....

Dawson separated the world into dichotomies such as the subjective versus

9 Bob Mullaly, *Structural Social Work: Ideology, Theory, and Practice*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 119–121. See, too, Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 11–12.

10 Jessa Chupik-Hall, " 'Good Families Do Not Just Happen': Indigenous People and Child Welfare Services in Canada and Australia, 1950–1965" (MA thesis, Peterborough, Trent University, 2001), p. 45.

11 Ken Moffatt, *A Poetics of Social Work: Personal Agency and Social Transformation in Canada, 1920–1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 84.

the objective, and the emotional versus the disinterested. He had a technological, liberal bias toward control and intervention. He supported a scientific approach that was reductionist in nature. He shared the optimism of liberal professionals at a time when society's future was being defined by efficient professional groups with a technical, scientific understanding of social change.<sup>12</sup>

This view of social science and of social work prevailed in the postwar period and, arguably, as more and more welfare state measures were introduced, it gradually came to dominate the discourse around the "Indian problem". In the broadest sense, Indians collectively represented a social problem that could be solved through the application of scientific knowledge. More narrowly, the solution to the problem lay in finding ways to help them adjust as individuals to the "natural forces" of modern society.<sup>13</sup>

### **Methodology and Limitations**

The principal source utilized here is archival material from the Indian Affairs record group held in the National Archives in Ottawa. No attempt was made to supplement the file data with interviews or to use significant numbers of secondary sources. Instead, the file material speaks for itself. As well, it was not the intent to examine a wide range of social sciences, but simply to consider those evident in the files and to note their direct or indirect influence on thinking at Indian Affairs. The research does not imply that there were always specific links between the various studies examined and policy changes within the branch, or that Indian Affairs officials wholeheartedly embraced their findings. Rather, it merely shows that the social sciences gained a general influence in that they were considered as part of a new, expanded frame of reference around which the branch conducted its deliberations and business.

Thus, I do not argue that social sciences came to dominate the branch. The Indian Affairs bureaucracy had a long history and its own organizational culture and pragmatic wisdom of how best to manage Indians and to accomplish the task of ending their wardship and tutelage.<sup>14</sup> H. B. Hawthorn captures this notion of an organizational culture in his 1966 study of Canada's First Nations, commissioned by Indian Affairs to provide contemporary data and ideas for future Indian policy. In his description of the Indian Affairs bureaucracy until World War II, he observes:

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84–85.

<sup>13</sup> Chupik-Hall, " 'Good Families' ", pp. 33–34. Chupik-Hall observes that social adjustment for First Nations peoples meant their adoption of non-indigenous cultural patterns: "This was the all too familiar theme in post-Second World War social science discourse on Aboriginal people."

<sup>14</sup> John Leonard Taylor, *Canadian Indian Policy During the Inter-war Years, 1918–1939* (Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1983), pp. 203–205.

The Branch was a quasi-colonial government dealing with almost the entire life of a culturally different people who were systematically deprived of opportunities to influence government, a people who were isolated on special pockets of land and who were subject to separate laws. Throughout this period a dominating branch concern was simply to keep the peace and to prevent unruly clientele reactions to Branch policy....

For all practical purposes the Branch, until recently, was a miniature government, rather than an ordinary civil service branch. ...Partly for this reason the Branch was able to develop in a unique way unaffected by some of the constraints which moulded the behaviour of other branches of government which dealt with full citizens. The Branch was, and had a widespread reputation for being, a particularly authoritarian organization in a double sense. Within the organization itself, the Branch was characterized by a concentration of decision-making at the top. In the field, many of the "old line" agents in the past were authoritarian in their relations with Indians.

Possibly because of the unique aspects of its task, the Branch has been possessed of a particularly inward-looking orientation. This was reinforced by a grass-roots pattern of career mobility within the Branch which strengthened introspective tendencies. As a consequence, there evolved a mystique of Indian administration which laid great stress on field experience as a basis for knowing the Indian; by extension this implied that Branch personnel who possessed this experience were in touch with "mysteries" which outsiders could not comprehend. ...The result was an inward-looking parochialism, a partly self-chosen isolation from the overt political system of voters and politicians and the internal political system of the bureaucracy with its competitive struggle for funds and personnel. As a result, the Branch failed to carve out for itself that minimum position of power and influence in the federal government which was a prerequisite for the successful implementation of a progressive Indian policy.<sup>15</sup>

The real point here is that until the postwar period Indian Affairs played mainly a passive, custodial role in its management of Indian issues, ensuring that Indians remained docile and compliant with the general thrust of assimilation policies and that political demands for surrender of Indian lands to facilitate economic expansion were quickly met.

Finally, the research represents a small part of a larger study completed in 1995 on the history and administration of welfare (social assistance) policy

15 H. B. Hawthorn, "The Politics of Indian Affairs" in Hawthorn, ed., *A Survey of Contemporary Indians of Canada* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1966), part 1, chap. 17, abridged and reprinted in Getty and Lussier, eds., *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows*, pp. 172-173. The Hawthorn study represents one of the most obvious examples of the influence of social sciences on the Indian Affairs branch. However, it falls outside the time parameters of this research and is not included here *per se*. For an excellent discussion of the influence of the study on Indian Affairs policy, see Sally M. Weaver, "The Hawthorn Report: Its Use in the Making of Canadian Indian Policy" in Noel Dyck and James B. Waldram, eds., *Anthropology, Public Policy, and Native Peoples in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

on Indian reserves from 1873 to 1965.<sup>16</sup> When the federal government assumed responsibility for Indian matters from the former colonial administrations, it was constantly concerned about the costs of welfare — or relief — and the associated dependency on the state it feared would arise and persist among Indians in Canada. Indian Affairs relief policy consistently emphasized values of self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and individual independence and paid little attention to the collective dependence and marginalization of the First Nations. Arguably, of course, their marginalization and dependence on the state were both outcomes of Euro-Canadian economic expansion and the federal policies — including Indian land policies — that fostered that expansion and reinforced their exclusion. If Indians were to survive in the modern world of industrial progress, it was thought, they would have to give up their old ways and learn the values of the private, self-reliant, liberal individual. In this sense, assimilation was seen as an individual act, and relief policy was simply another method through which Indians were to learn that, as individuals, their welfare was to be found in the marketplace or in agricultural enterprise. Thus, after World War II, when Indian welfare costs continued to grow and their dependency on the state persisted, it was thought that the social sciences could provide a greater understanding of the overall Indian capacity to adapt to modern society. Policies could therefore be developed to further their adaptation and thus reduce their dependent condition.

### **Indian Policy Between 1867 and 1945: A Brief Overview**

As mentioned earlier, Indian policy from Confederation until World War II was largely derived from previous colonial administrations and was based on the assumptions of English and European imperialism and its relationship to “the backward races abroad”. These assumptions were well articulated by Jules Harmand, a French proponent of colonialism, who in 1910 said:

It is necessary, then, to accept as a principle and point of departure the fact that there is a hierarchy of races and civilizations, and that we belong to the superior race and civilization, still recognizing that, while superiority confers rights, it imposes strict obligations in return. The basic legitimation of conquest over native peoples is the conviction of our superiority, not merely our mechanical, economic, and military superiority, but our moral superiority. Our dignity rests on that quality, and it underlies our right to direct the rest of humanity. Material power is nothing but a means to that end.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Hugh Shewell, “Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare in the Canadian Liberal State: An Historical Case Study in Social Policy, 1873–1965” (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1995); see especially pp. 495–532.

<sup>17</sup> Jules Harmand, quoted in Philip D. Curtin, ed., *Imperialism* (New York: Walker, 1971), pp. 294–295, cited in Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p. 17.



That these imperial assumptions prevailed in the administration of Indian Affairs after Confederation is amply evidenced by Lawrence Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1874 to 1893. In this excerpt, Vankoughnet has drafted a response to an inquiry from W. P. Ross, the editor of an American newspaper, *The Indian Journal*:

The improvement and elevation of the Indian Race, socially and morally, ... engages the earnest attention of the Government. With this object in view, religious, educational and industrial areas are promulgated; and the machinery for carrying the same into effect is systematically kept in motion among such of the Bands as the circumstances ... will warrant the same being done with any fair possibility of success.

The legal status of the Indians of Canada is that of *minors* with the Government as their guardians; and laws are in force prescribing how this responsibility ... shall be discharged — the same being from time to time amended with a view to their adaptation, as far as possible, to present circumstances, and to the progress towards civilization attained by the Indian race.<sup>18</sup>

In the early post-Confederation period the fragility of the Canadian experiment and its ability to withstand American continentalism meant that the federal government had to act quickly to secure a strong sense of a nation stretching to the Pacific. This necessitated that the Indians of the vast Northwest Territory be pacified and settled as quickly as possible so that settlement could be accelerated and a strong Canadian presence established north of the 49th parallel. While Indian policy was, to some extent, differentially administered between the east and the west — the assumption being that Indians of eastern Canada were more advanced than those in the west — by the early 1900s, when most Indians were settled on reserves, the general policies, especially those related to welfare and education, were essentially uniform and administered according to the same guiding philosophy and principles across the country.<sup>19</sup>

John Leonard Taylor describes two principal concerns of Indian policy during the interwar years: the acquisition by the Crown of Indian lands for settlement and development and the management of Indians and their reserves after their lands had been surrendered.<sup>20</sup> These two concerns, however, may be fairly used to describe the entire thrust of Indian policy from Confederation to World War II and, arguably, even beyond. Of importance here is the management of Indians, for this concern provided the public

18 National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), RG 10, Red Series, vol. 1995, file 6886, "Memorandum Relative To the Policy of the Government of the Dominion in their administration of Indian Affairs", Ottawa, August 22, 1876, draft correspondence from Deputy Superintendent General Lawrence Vankoughnet to W. P. Ross, Editor, *The Indian Journal*, Muskogee Indian Territory, U.S.A.

19 Shewell, "Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare", pp. 157–158, 163–164.

20 Taylor, *Canadian Indian Policy*, p. 201.

façade of Indian Affairs and presented the ideology that justified the subjugation and social and economic destruction of First Nations.

While it might be said that governments act, by and large, pragmatically and amorally, it may also be said that they seek moral purpose to do so. Such was the case for the treatment of Indians in Canada. While the pragmatic purpose was to dislocate them from their lands, the stated moral purpose was to save them from themselves, to “elevate” them to modern society, to a society of progress and individual freedom. This, it was thought, could be best accomplished through a relationship of tutelage and patronization, of protector and protected. Noel Dyck describes tutelage with respect to First Nations as

a form of restraint or care exercised by one party over another as well as the condition of being subjected to such protection or guardianship. ... What is unusual about the particular form of tutelage experienced by aboriginal peoples in Canada is ... that ... [it] has been based neither upon a contractual agreement nor a negotiated understanding but upon the power of one side to regulate the behaviour of the other in accordance with a set of unilaterally selected purposes. ...[C]ontrary to relationships between parents and ... children ..., the form of tutelage that has held Indians captive for so long has not been ... a ... stage in the life cycle but a permanent condition.<sup>21</sup>

J. E. Chamberlin also explores this principle of Indian policy, noting that, while Indian peoples were being “ushered into the stadium of late nineteenth-century enthusiasms” and the “banners of self-sufficiency and individual enterprise were waved before them”, these exhortations to individual opportunity and economic liberty were wholly contradicted by wardship and patronization.<sup>22</sup> Referring to the earlier American experience, but clearly intending it as a lesson about Canadian Indian policy, Chamberlin writes that the

tradition of patronizing philanthropy was already a long one and had as its early spokesman Thomas L. McKenney, the energetic and humane superintendent of Indian trade from 1816 to 1822 and (under Secretary of War John C. Calhoun) first head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1824 to 1832. “Our Indians,” wrote McKenney in 1821, “stand pretty much in the relation to the Government as our children do to us. They are equally dependent, and need, not infrequently, the exercise of parental authority to detach them from those ways which might involve both their peace and their lives.” This was the thesis

21 Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian “Problem”?: Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration*, Social and Economic Studies No. 46 (St. John’s: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), pp. 24, 25.

22 J. E. Chamberlin, *The Harrowing of Eden: White Attitudes Toward North American Natives* (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1975), p. 55.

that informed the entire “wardship” theory which had been popularized by G. W. Manypenny and which was so generally accepted in the latter part of the century.<sup>23</sup>

In Canada, the upshot of this approach to Indian policy up to World War II was a crude admixture of measures and methods which restricted Indian cultural practices, supplanted traditional forms of governance, imposed limits on individual mobility, and attempted to curtail political activity.<sup>24</sup>

Central to Indian policy during this period were the boarding and industrial schools where Indian children were sent to become socialized and acculturated to white, Euro-Canadian ways and where they were to lose their Indian-ness. Indian education, E. Brian Titley argues, “was to be nothing less than an instrument of cultural annihilation, which would at once transform the Indians into an unskilled or semi-skilled workforce while forcing them into the mold of Anglo-Canadian identity”.<sup>25</sup> The boarding schools were intended for younger children and were focused on socialization. The industrial schools were loosely fashioned after vocational high schools and were to prepare students for simple occupations such as domestic service for girls and farm labour or basic mechanics for boys. All the schools were operated by either the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Roman Catholic Churches.<sup>26</sup> During the deputy superintendency of Duncan Campbell Scott (1913–1932), this system of schooling was accelerated and augmented by the introduction of segregated day schools. As well, the distinction between the boarding and industrial schools — which had never really taken hold — was abandoned in 1923 and the term “residential school” was introduced. Because Scott placed great emphasis on the schools as a means of transforming Indians into civilized citizens, he could claim a certain perverse success in improving enrolments and in extending the lengths of stay and attendance at school. Beyond that, however, as tools of assimilation the schools failed both prior to and after Scott. According to Titley, the students were hardly absorbed “*en masse* into the dominant culture”, although the life outlook of a great many was clearly

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 162–163. McKenney's remarks are taken from a report delivered by him to the United States Senate, December 27, 1821. Originally cited in Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 153.

24 See, for example, Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples From Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), pp. 320–321; Peter Kulchyski, “Anthropology in the Service of the State: Diamond Jenness and Canadian Indian Policy”, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 24–25; J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 189–207, 211–220; E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986); Tobias, “Protection, Civilization, Assimilation”, pp. 45–49.

25 Titley, *A Narrow Vision*, p. 93.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 75–77.

affected. Most “remained distinctly Indian and only marginally in the workforce, if indeed at all”.<sup>27</sup> Although they failed to achieve their desired end in effecting assimilation, the Indian residential schools did much to damage Indian kinship and caring systems and, as has more recently come to light, a great many of the children were subjected to severe emotional, physical, and sexual forms of abuse. In addition, many children died or became seriously ill within the residential system as a result of the schools’ poor sanitary conditions and the staff’s neglect of the children’s health.<sup>28</sup> By the end of the Second World War Indian schooling policy was seen as a failure, and the federal government looked toward the integration of Indian children into the mainstream public system.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the residential system remained in place for some time, and the last school of its type was not closed until well past the mid-point of the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup>

The system of residential education was in many ways the most enduring and proactive of state programmes directed toward Indians during this period. Although earlier farming programmes on the prairies were also proactive, they were, nevertheless, ill-conceived and relatively short-lived.<sup>31</sup> On balance, the period of Indian policy from Confederation to World War II can be characterized as one of subjugation, including the imposition of many restrictions on First Nations peoples and attempts to force their enfranchisement and thus their loss of legal Indian status.<sup>32</sup> The government’s inability or lack of will to implement programmes that would have ensured the collective economic development of First Nations during this period did much to contribute to their marginalization. Instead, the government expected Indians to assimilate individually, to make a conscious choice to surrender their identities and join the Canadian fold. To enrich their cultures or to support their collective well-being in any way made little sense if the real objective was their eventual disappearance. Instead, the government chose, in the main, to neglect the general welfare of Indians, chiding them on to self-reliance and employment and providing either minimal or no relief. This approach was especially evident during the interwar years when the government became increasingly fiscally frugal with the Indian Affairs portfolio.<sup>33</sup> Olive Dickason’s summary description of this period is apt:

Meanwhile the process of more and stiffer regulations continued. ...The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 shifted official attention to other areas, particu-

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>28</sup> Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, pp. 197–198; Titley, *A Narrow Vision*, pp. 84–88.

<sup>29</sup> Titley, *A Narrow Vision*, p. 93.

<sup>30</sup> Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, p. 198.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990).

<sup>32</sup> Dickason, *Canada’s First Nations*, pp. 326–328.

<sup>33</sup> Shewell, “Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare”, pp. 740–743.

larly those of business and economics; Indian Affairs drifted into a state of flux and *ad hoc* decisions, in contrast to the directed policies that had marked the period from Confederation to the end of the First World War. In 1936, Indian administration was absorbed by the Department of Mines and Resources, which was far more concerned with development than with the social problems of the Natives. In fact, in the Far North, economic considerations overtook the civilizing program, and Amerindians were encouraged in their traditional hunting and trapping activities as that enabled them to be self-sufficient instead of becoming a burden on the public purse.<sup>34</sup>

Such was the neglect of Indians during this period that, at the height of the Great Depression, per capita expenditure on Indian relief was about one-third of that on the general population, \$20.57 compared to \$61.69.<sup>35</sup> Historians generally agree that relief for the general population during this period was both mean-spirited and stingy. For Indians at the time, it was simply inhumanely miserly.

Although First Nations were subjected to extremely repressive policies up to the Second World War, their resistance remained remarkably strong, both overtly and covertly. Indeed, according to Dickason, Indians often created hardship amongst themselves rather than succumb to the tutelage and subservience of the Indian administration.<sup>36</sup> During the 1920s a pan-Canadian Indian movement, the League of Indians, led by F. O. Loft, an Ontario Mohawk and veteran of the First World War, gained considerable strength especially in Ontario and the Western provinces. Scott and the Indian Affairs bureaucracy went to considerable length to discredit Loft and eventually managed to cause the collapse of the organization's national reach. Other provincial organizations, however, grew out of the league or arose from its ashes.<sup>37</sup> By 1944 another national organization, the North American Indian Brotherhood, was created at a national convention of 200 chiefs and Indian leaders in Ottawa. This convention also drew the ire of Indian Affairs and of its director, Dr. Harold W. McGill. Despite this opposition and attempts to undermine the leaders and their complaints, six of the delegates secured a meeting with the Minister of Mines and Resources, Thomas Crerar, who subsequently addressed their general assembly. It was this speech, in which Crerar referred to Indians as "useful citizens" in our "common country", that

34 Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, p. 328.

35 Shewell, "Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare", p. 325. This represents the per capita expenditure in 1936. For an averaged amount, see p. 36, n. 99.

36 Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, pp. 327–328. Shewell also suggests that high rates of welfare dependency can be partly attributed to First Nations' resistance to federal policies intended to subjugate them and integrate them into Canadian society. See "Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare", pp. 2–4.

37 Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, p. 328; Titley, *A Narrow Vision*, pp. 102–109.

arguably signalled the government's new, more positive approach to Indian policy in the post-World War II period.<sup>38</sup>

**Sorting out the “Indian Problem”: The Need for a New Knowledge Base**

One of the difficulties encountered in a historical study of post-World War II Indian administration in Canada arises from the sudden growth and increased complexity of the responsible bureaucracy, the Indian Affairs branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. At headquarters, enriched funding and the development of new and existing programmes resulted in a dramatic increase in correspondence both internally and externally with various federal and provincial government sectors, educational institutions, international bodies, the media, other public and private organizations, and the Canadian public. Much of the earlier, apparent simplicity of branch policy was lost as officials grappled with a variety of influences and as branch programmes began to develop their own unique requirements. As professional expertise within the branch grew, blanket approaches to the “Indian problem” became less possible as each new programme area claimed its own special knowledge in understanding and solving it. While assimilation into the dominant Canadian society remained, as it had since before Confederation, the overriding policy objective, what exactly that meant and how best to accomplish it became matters of considerable dispute. Nevertheless, senior administration within the branch certainly agreed on one thing: the emerging social sciences were becoming more important to an increased understanding of and a solution to the Indians’ general failure to become mainstream Canadians.

In many respects social scientists were the explorers and missionaries of the mid-twentieth century, the new interpreters of the non-European “other” to the Euro-Canadian mind.<sup>39</sup> An early example of the application of various social science disciplines to the problems of Indian administration was apparent in a 1942 study of Indian nutrition conducted by Dr. Frederick Tisdall at Norway House, Manitoba, and reported by Dr. Percy Moore to the Parliamentary Committee on Postwar Reconstruction in 1944. Tisdall, in his report, “envisioned a battery of specialists tackling the Indian problem in one or two specific groups”.<sup>40</sup> As a consequence of that study, the Canadian government mounted a comprehensive survey of Indian bands living around

38 Shewell, “Jules Sioui”, pp. 231–233.

39 Edward Said makes a similar point in discussing the role of social science in interpreting the Middle East to the West, especially, he states, during the postwar period. As well, Eric Wolf highlights the roles of sociology and anthropology in developing worlds of contrast between aboriginal and European societies and is particularly critical of the American use of social sciences in defining the problems of the “third” or “underdeveloped” world. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978; Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 290–291; Eric R. Wolf, “Introduction” in *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

40 Dr. Frederick Tisdall, “Report of the Nutritional Expeditionary Committee” cited in John J. Honigmann, “The Logic of the James Bay Survey”, *The Dalhousie Review*, vol. 30, no. 4 (1951), pp. 378–379, in NAC, RG-10, CR Series, vol. 8618, File 1/1–15–1, “Psychological and Sociological Studies of Indians, October 1947 to January 1964”.

James Bay in northern Ontario and Quebec. The James Bay Survey was conducted by a research team of doctors, dentists, and two social anthropologists all under the general direction of Professor G. Gordon Brown, an anthropologist at the University of Toronto.<sup>41</sup>

Initiated in 1947 with the full blessing of a joint parliamentary committee appointed to inquire into the *Indian Act*, the survey had been, according to one of the researchers, John J. Honigmann, "a major attempt to integrate the points of view of diverse sciences and to apply those disciplines to administrative problems".<sup>42</sup> According to Honigmann, the idea of applying a social science, anthropology, to the administration of cross-cultural situations had first been applied "fruitfully" by the British — though he did not specify where — and latterly by the Americans in their Indian administration.<sup>43</sup> Of course, anthropologists had already made many studies of First Nations and Inuit in Canada. Among the most prominent of these were Franz Boas, Diamond Jenness, and T. F. McIlwraith. The difference between these earlier studies and those conducted in the postwar period was in how the knowledge gained of First Nations' cultures was to be utilized in manipulating, even forcing, their individual or collective adaptation to the dominant Canadian society.<sup>44</sup> To this end the James Bay Survey was a classic case example. In addition, however, the survey served to awaken a flurry of interest in academic Canada and alerted the government to the necessity of funding studies which would advance the state's aims regarding Indian integration.

Correspondence in 1947 from Forrest E. LaViolette, a sociologist at McGill University, to Herbert Marshall, the Dominion Statistician, reflected this new interest. LaViolette told Marshall about a current series of studies, sponsored by the Canadian Social Science Research Council, "dealing with the Canadian Indian and his position in contemporary Canadian life". LaViolette continued that "this initiative on the part of the Council came about as a result of the war experience of the Department of National Defence, of the new responsibilities of the Department of National Health and Welfare, of the new concern on the part of the Department of Indian Affairs, and of the increased interest on the part of the general public".<sup>45</sup> The possibility that the branch might not have access to the many studies underway prompted R. A. Hoey, the director of Indian Affairs, to write to his immediate superior, Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, the deputy minister of Mines and Resources. Hoey wrote in strong support of a suggestion from Dr. Morton of the National Defence

41 Honigmann, "The Logic of the James Bay Survey", pp. 378–379.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 378.

43 *Ibid.*

44 These studies were more in line with classical anthropology and represented the idea of capturing, before it was too late, the social and cultural characteristics of "vanishing peoples". Jenness, who was also a federal civil servant, was to a large extent an exception to this in that he began to apply his work to a plan to "liquidate" Canada's Indians within a 25-year time frame. See Kulchyski, "Anthropology in the Service of the State", pp. 28–30, 33–38; Shewell, "Jules Sioui", pp. 7–8.

45 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1–15–1, correspondence from Forrest E. LaViolette to Herbert Marshall, October 26, 1947.

Research Board<sup>46</sup> to develop closer links between the board's research and the activities of the branch. "It is encouraging", Hoey stated, "to learn of the steadily awakening interest on the part of scientists in ... the Indian problem." He continued:

There are a number of projects that naturally come to one's mind when ... research comes up for discussion. The scientists I have interviewed appear to be ... interested in psychological and sociological studies with the object of securing information relating to the temperament of the Indian, his innate inertia, his nomadic instincts, lack of frugality, etc. It is perhaps well that we should have thorough understanding of these before we undertake a program aimed at the legitimate exploitation of the resources to which the Indian claims ownership. But even at this stage, research work in forestry, fish culture, educational effort and the dietary habits of the Indian, and his available food supply, might very profitably be undertaken.<sup>47</sup>

Besides the enthusiastic response to the National Defence proposal, Hoey's memorandum implicitly elucidates the state's underlying objective and the potential usefulness of social science in its achievement. Why did it continue to be so important to integrate Indians into the Euro-Canadian mainstream? Was it simply the moral imperative of citizenship? Clearly, capital and the state worked in tandem on economic development;<sup>48</sup> for dominant class interests to pursue that objective, it was necessary for the political level of the state to ensure economic penetration into native territories with the least resistance possible. This could be accomplished, it was surmised, by gaining the confidence of the general public in the promise of Indian citizenship and betterment<sup>49</sup> and by securing the cooperation of First

46 During the war and in the immediate postwar period, the National Defence Research Board employed psychologists principally to study the effects of war on members of the armed forces. With the end of the war, the board sought other subjects for psychological study.

47 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, correspondence from R. A. Hoey to Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, December 15, 1947.

48 Ken S. Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, pp. 222-223; Desmond Morton, *A Short History of Canada* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1983), pp. 215-216; Paul Phillips and Stephen Watson, "From Mobilization to Continentalism: The Canadian Economy in the Post-Depression Period" in Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealey, eds., *Modern Canada, 1930-1980's*, Readings in Canadian Social History No.5 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), pp. 32-33, 38-43; David Wolfe, "The Rise and Demise of the Keynesian Era in Canada: Economic Policy, 1930-1982" in Cross and Kealey, eds., *Modern Canada, 1930-1980's*, p. 60.

49 By the mid-point of the Second World War Canadians had become more aware of First Nations peoples and the injustices they suffered. A growing sentiment prevailed to right these injustices and to "give the Indian a square deal". Much of this sentiment arose because of increased contact Canadians had with Indians serving in the armed forces and because Canadians were newly sensing rights of citizenship that should be extended to all contributing members of society. The state sought to legitimize Indian assimilation policy by appealing to these sentiments and used public hearings in the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the *Indian Act* (1946-1948) as one vehicle to do so.



Nations through fostering their inclusion into civil levels of society. One role of social science, then, was to assist in laying the foundations for the creation of a civil level of native society. This depended, first, on a scientific "understanding" of the Indians and, secondly, on the application of that understanding to the development of programmes necessary for their adaptation to the dominant Euro-Canadian society. There were several ways in which this might occur. For Indians in the south, the principal goal of assimilation policy was to connect them as individuals to the labour market. In the north, it was thought that Indians would either leave the reserves for the cities or, by establishing a more sedentary lifestyle, form the basis for a new labour force as the resource economy expanded.<sup>50</sup>

Also implicit in Hoey's memorandum was the modern, Euro-Canadian perception of what the non-European "other" lacked and what the Euro-Canadian believed was authentic human nature: that is, those characteristics that defined possessive individualism and that formed the core of the modern, liberal state.<sup>51</sup> Hoey had stated plainly what was an issue for the administration and for many social scientists: there was an innate Indian nature or psychology which prevented assimilation. Innate characteristics were separated from those that might be considered purely cultural, although innate characteristics presumably shaped Indian culture and its expression. Thus, the other role of social science — derived from the first — was to sort out these qualities and determine whether Indians' culture or their innate character was dominant in preventing them from advancement. The question was whether any of these characteristics could be modified, minimized, or eliminated to prepare them for assimilation.

Agreeing with Hoey's suggestion that Indian psychology be included in research of interest to the branch, Keenleyside wrote in January 1948 to C. J. Mackenzie, president of the Canadian Social Science Research Council. Keenleyside asked if the council might be interested in expanding its focus of Indian research beyond sociological and anthropological studies to include psychological ones as well. Mackenzie replied affirmatively and noted that, although the council had not until then considered psychology a part of its interest, its experience with psychologists during the war had been

50 Mel Watkins provides an excellent analysis of the process affecting Indians in the north. Drawing on the work of Peter Elias, Watkins shows how the process failed, either because First Nations resisted the incursion of the dominant economy or because they were marginalized and turned into a source of cheap, menial labour. As Hoey's memorandum casually implied, Indians were never to benefit from the surplus of economic exploitation. Rather, they were to be carefully managed as humanely as possible while the surplus drained south. See Mel Watkins, "From Underdevelopment to Development" in Watkins, ed., *Dene Nation: The Colony Within* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, University League for Social Reform, 1977), pp. 91–94; Peter Douglas Elias, "Metropolis and Hinterland in Northern Manitoba" (Winnipeg, 1975), quoted in Watkins, "From Underdevelopment", p. 93.

51 C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962; Oxford University Press Paperback, 1964).

so positive that he thought their inclusion in Indian research well worth supporting.<sup>52</sup>

### **Theories and Studies:**

#### **Psychology, Sociology, and Anthropology on the March**

During the Second World War, much of the research on Indian behaviour began to centre on the effects of malnutrition. Dr. Percy Moore and others had published some early findings in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, and in 1948 preliminary results of a new study, the James Bay Survey, were published in the same journal.<sup>53</sup> In September of that year Giff Swartman, the superintendent of the Sioux Lookout agency, wrote to branch headquarters, enclosing correspondence he had received from a local physician, Dr. L. C. Bartlett of Favorable Lake, Ontario. Bartlett wanted to caution the branch against an over-reliance on Moore's thinking about malnutrition and to bring to its attention psychiatric theory which he thought relevant to the advancement of Indians. "You will recall that several years ago," Bartlett wrote, "in an article in the Canadian Medical Journal, Dr. Moore concluded that some of the traits attributed to the Indian as a racial characteristic, such as shiftlessness, indolence, etc. might actually be the result of chronic fatigue from malnutrition. I have another thought on the subject..."<sup>54</sup> Moore and Bartlett agreed on the symptoms but their diagnoses and prescriptions were clearly different. Bartlett continued, freely blending a rather superficial understanding of Freud with allusions to the strict methods of child-rearing advocated by the early behavioural psychologist, John Watson:

It occurred to me that I have never yet seen an Indian parent punishing his child in any way. On looking into it, I find that they actually very rarely enforce any sort of discipline at all; the child merely obeys all his whims, and the parents cater to them at will. It is the path of least immediate resistance to let the child have his own way. ...Contrast this with a white child's upbringing.

Is it unusual, then, that the child should grow up with no sense of responsibility to anyone but himself? In adulthood, he merely continues to do as he pleases, usually the path of least resistance. He works when he feels like it, eats when he is hungry, but makes no store for tomorrow, etc. These are still

52 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, correspondence from C. J. Mackenzie to Keenleyside, January 23, 1948.

53 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, correspondence from Giff Swartman to the Indian Affairs Branch, September 10, 1948. In his correspondence Swartman referred to Moore's article in the *CMA Journal* but gave no date. However, the second article, which had just appeared, was clearly an early report on the James Bay Survey initiated in 1947. See R. P. Vivian, M.D., Charles McMillan, M.D., E. Chant Robertson, M.D., W. H. Sebrell, M.D., F. F. Tisdall, M.D., and W. G. McIntosh, D.D.S., "The Nutrition and Health of the James Bay Indian", *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, vol. 59 (1948), pp. 505-518.

54 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, correspondence from Bartlett to Swartman quoted by Swartman in his correspondence to branch headquarters.

childhood patterns, and I suggest that they have persisted into adulthood because at no period of his life was he taught to discard them and aim at adult thinking and discipline.

In support of this we have the observation that Indians who have been brought up in a better environment, eg. a good school under a good teacher, who tried to do more than teach reading and writing, usually show more initiative, and usually have more sense of responsibility towards other people than do Indians raised entirely in native ways.<sup>55</sup>

There is no evidence that Bartlett's musings were directly translated into policy, but the idea that Indian children could benefit from European child-rearing principles certainly was well entrenched in the Indian residential schools. Later, in the 1960s, the idea was further endorsed when disproportionate numbers of Indian children were placed by the agents of applied social science, social workers, for fostering and adoption in predominantly non-Indian homes.<sup>56</sup> If Bartlett's views represented a rather amateurish application of child development theory, those of Marcel Rioux did not.

In November 1949 — the year the Indian Affairs branch was transferred to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration — Rioux, a cultural anthropologist at the National Museum in Ottawa, conducted a study of the social customs of the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario. In the course of his study, Rioux developed an extensive questionnaire on child-rearing practices and family reactions to newborns. F. J. Alcock, the museum's chief curator, submitted the questionnaire to branch officials, informing them that it would be administered by the school teachers on the reserve who would "fill in the questionnaire, after having observed the behaviour of a certain number of families".<sup>57</sup> This was a necessary protocol since the teachers were employees of Indian Affairs. In addition, all studies of Indians on the reserves had to be approved by the branch. The questionnaire contained 94 questions, many of them highly sensitive and intrusive in nature (see Figure 1).

So sensitive was the questionnaire that a Mrs. Farmer, representing the Local Council of Women in Brantford, wrote a letter of protest to Ross Macdonald, the speaker of the House of Commons, stating the council's strong disapproval of many of the questions and opining that they infringed on the

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Canada, Child and Family Services Task Force, *Indian Child and Family Services in Canada: Final Report* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1987), pp. 3–4; Patrick Johnston, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983); Brian Wharf, *Toward First Nation Control of Child Welfare: A Review of Emerging Developments in B.C.* (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1987), pp. 9–10.

<sup>57</sup> NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1–15, correspondence from F. J. Alcock, Chief Curator, National Museum of Canada, to D. M. McKay, Director, Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa, November 21, 1949.

**Figure 1 Excerpts from “Questionnaire on Childhood Among the Iroquois”**

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*B. Prenatal Period*

11. How is the announcement that a woman is pregnant received by members of the family?
12. Is the behaviour of these people towards the expectant mother changed?
14. Does the couple continue to have intercourse?
15. Is there any belief associated with pregnancy? Dreams, forerunners, belief that the coming baby represents the soul of an ancestor.
16. What measure does the mother take to have a good-looking and healthy baby?
18. Is there any means known to foresee the child's sex?

*C. Birth*

20. Opinion of older people towards hospitals.
25. If delivery takes place at the Hospital, describe what happens before, during and after the entry in the hospital.
27. When the delivery takes place at home, what happens? (Full description of the event).
28. How is the cord cut, and with what instrument?
31. Does any member of the family leave the house during the delivery?
35. Are there any special practices in the family in connection with the childbirth?
47. Is there much attention shown to the baby?
48. How is he nursed. Breast or bottle-fed?

*D. Month 2 and 3*

71. At what time does the exposure of sex cease?
  72. Is there any curb to self-manipulation?
  79. Is the temper of the child controlled, encouraged or ignored?
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*Source:* NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1–15, Part 1, “Questionnaire on Childhood among the Iroquois,” by Marcel Rioux, in correspondence from F. J. Alcock, Chief Curator, National Museum of Canada, to D. M. McKay, Director, Indian Affairs Branch, November 21, 1949.

respondents' private lives.<sup>58</sup> Standards of respect applied to the dominant culture were dismissed in the interests of science and progress, however, when applied to the “other”. Alcock, asked to reply to Mrs. Farmer, wrote:

[I]t is thought that there is a close relation between the way children are brought up and the way they will later behave as members of a group; the aim of these studies on child social adaptation is to find the roots of actual adult behaviour with a view of eradicating the sources of maladjustments. ...[T]he behaviour, which we justly consider as intimate, has a wide influence on other aspects of human behaviour and should be investigated if a full understanding of a given society is to be arrived at. The best example ... of the good effects of this type of enquiry is that of the Navaho Indians who have been studied in this manner by members of the Peabody Museum of Harvard. These Indians are now dealt with by administrators with a full comprehension of their point of

58 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1–15, correspondence from Mrs. R. A. Farmer, Brantford Local Council of Women, to Hon. Ross Macdonald, K.C., May 17, 1950.

view and will in the near future be completely integrated into the active life of the country with their complete consent and satisfaction.

...The Iroquois of Brantford have been chosen ... because of their great culture [*sic*] achievements and because it is thought that in understanding the way they have accomplished their cultural transition this knowledge could be used and applied to some other groups who have not achieved so much.<sup>59</sup>

Just as over the years Indians had been reduced by the state to objects of paternalistic administration, so now had social science reduced them to objects of study. In addition, they were simultaneously subjects, participating in the development of knowledge for their own good. There was no question of what the final outcome ought to be. At issue was whether the methods to achieve it could simply be better developed and refined and the Indians made more willing partners in their own demise.

The idea of Indians as scientific objects provided the necessary justification to relegate any claim they had to cultural and social integrity. Almost any study could be justified if it promised to shed light on Indian dependence and their perceived aversion to acculturation to liberal society and the work ethic. In this context it was thought that, by studying Indian child-rearing patterns, some insight might be gained into their future predisposition to self-discipline and self-reliance and, consequently, into the likelihood of their need for social assistance in adult years. In the specific case of the Iroquois, a supposedly advanced people, lessons could be learned that might be transferable to those Indian nations considered less advanced. Nevertheless, this was a curious logic on Alcock's part. If, as he claimed, the Iroquois had already made a successful transition, it was unclear how understanding their child-rearing practices would be any more helpful to policy-makers than simply teaching those used in Euro-Canadian culture. Alcock was not forthright with Mrs. Farmer, for clearly Rioux's real interest was the Iroquois and their stubborn reluctance to embrace the Canadian nation.

Rioux's interest was typical of many sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists who made proposals to the government to study First Nations communities and cultures. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, graduate students made frequent requests to conduct summer research as part of their course and field work requirements. Nearly all these requests centred either on native languages or on acculturation and barriers to it.<sup>60</sup> By 1951 the many government departments and agencies involved in Indian matters had agreed on the need for a representative panel to rationalize and assess the merits of the study proposals and to make recommendations on the suitability of each to the overall aims of Indian policy. As a result, the Advisory Panel on Indian Research was established in January 1951, chaired by T. F. McIlwraith from

59 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1-15, correspondence from F. J. Alcock to Mrs. R. A. Farmer, May 23, 1950.

60 See NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8617, Parts 8 to 10; vol. 8618, file 1/1-15.

the University of Toronto's Department of Anthropology. The member groups on the panel were the National Research Council, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, the Canadian Social Science Research Council, the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Civil Service Commission, and the Indian Affairs branch. Shortly after its first meeting on January 27, 1951, McIlwraith wrote a memorandum to all the panel members to formulate in writing the agreed-upon terms of reference: "The primary function of the Panel is ... a clearing house for information on research, especially in the field of the adjustment of the Indians to changing conditions."<sup>61</sup>

The panel's tasks were to consult potential researchers and the government agencies it represented, to advise on the suitability of research proposals, and to distribute the findings of those it approved. Many members who worked in government agencies whose policies directly affected Indians were to bring policy changes to the panel for discussion. The panel could then adjust its criteria for assessing research proposals to accommodate these changes.<sup>62</sup> Discussion about a method of adjusting research criteria continued in subsequent panel meetings and culminated in the fall of 1951 when Colonel H. M. Jones, the superintendent of Welfare Services for the Indian Affairs branch, raised the issue of new policies resulting from the new *Indian Act* passed earlier that year.

The activities of the Indian Welfare Service were considerably expanded, he said, and social workers had been appointed in all the country's administrative regions. In addition, the effects of the new act would require study.<sup>63</sup> A member of the panel, Dr. Morton — previously of the National Defence Research Board — picked up on Jones's concerns and suggested the panel develop a comprehensive list of problems to guide it in selecting research projects. The discussion, led by Morton and Jones, then focused on the need for a "master plan" which could be used to match proposals with identified Indian problems. It could also help to interpret scientists' findings in a way that would be of assistance to administrators.<sup>64</sup>

One of the first studies to gain the panel's approval was a testing of Indian intelligence by D. J. Penfold at the University of Western Ontario. Penfold was interested in the educability of Indian children, and the results of his research were reported to the panel in October 1951 by Dr. Morton. Morton abstracted from Penfold's results and concluded:

[I]t could be inferred that in so far as immediate ability to meet white educational standards is concerned the Indian child is retarded, and this is true to

61 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, memorandum from T. F. McIlwraith, University of Toronto, Department of Anthropology, to members of the Advisory Panel on Indian Research, no date, but about February 1951.

62 *Ibid.*

63 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, minutes of the Panel on Indian Research, September 21, 1951. "Advisory" had been dropped from the panel's official title.

64 *Ibid.*

some extent even when age is neglected in grade-for-grade comparisons. On the other hand abilities of the Indian child expressed in a form less directly dependent on verbal tools or on the use of symbols more familiar to the white appear to be as high as for white children. Thus it could be judged that, given equal stimulation and comparable environment, the Indian child might be expected to be as educable as the white. This condition is not granted at present, but could be in the future; it would probably require, however, much more than the provision of better facilities for academic education alone.<sup>65</sup>

Here was a perfect example of how the panel proposed to work. The identified problem in this case was Indian education and educability. The study suggested a twofold approach to administrators: one, develop programmes to counteract the cultural disadvantages experienced by Indian children in encountering white education; and two, develop broader measures to promote general Indian acculturation and integration. Social science would thus help the Indian.

Another typical research project came from Dorothy Woodward, a student of anthropology at the University of Toronto. She proposed an ambitious three-month study of the Chippewa at Sarnia, Ontario, which would focus on their adaptation to urban life. She hypothesized that the Indian claim that there was racial discrimination in obtaining employment was probably a misinterpretation. Instead, poor results occurred because of

his failure to incorporate the work ethic and his lack of industrial training. The charge of discrimination [*sic*] against the Indian may be confused in the mind of the Indian as racial discrimination [*sic*] *per se*. The real factor probably lies in the lack of the work ethic stemming from the survival of cultural factors handed down as the remnants of another way of life. This phenomenon is not different ... from that which is taking place in ... formerly rural Quebec. The world view of the Indian ... is out of kilter with the psychological demands of industrial society.<sup>66</sup>

It was not evident from the file material whether Woodward's study was approved or conducted, but her thinking on the topic of the Indian and the work ethic was quite representative of the branch's concern about the matter. In addition, her double standard for Indian culture — sensitive to its uniqueness on the one hand and dismissing it as an out-of-kilter remnant on the other — was already becoming entrenched in the branch's organizational thought.

65 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, Results of I.Q. Tests of Indians at the Caradoc Reserve, Ontario, conducted by D. J. Penfold under the direction of G. H. Turner, University of Western Ontario, reported by Dr. N. W. Morton to the Panel on Indian Research, Ottawa, October 14, 1951.

66 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1-15-1, Part 1, correspondence from Dorothy Woodward to S. D. MacKay, Director of Indian Affairs, March 11, 1952.

This latter point was demonstrated in an especially hostile response to a project proposed by the Citizenship branch in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In 1954 A. E. Thompson, a regional liaison officer with the Citizenship branch, sought approval to develop a project on Indian citizenship. Thompson proposed that he attend courses at the Universities of Washington and Chicago which would provide specialized knowledge in Indian integration. He would then adapt this knowledge to the development of a pilot project in Canada. The Citizenship branch asked Indian Affairs for its opinion of Thompson's proposal. Indian Affairs dismissed it entirely, and one senior bureaucrat implicitly accused the Citizenship branch of entering its exclusive jurisdiction.<sup>67</sup> A particularly contemptuous judgement of the proposal by J. P. B. Ostrander, superintendent of the Welfare Service, expressed more than just a hostile opinion:

The whole submission implies that the long succession of capable and conscientious officials who have worked with and studied the Indians for the past hundred years ... have learned almost nothing and it remains for a rather mediocre official of another Branch to provide the answers to most of the questions which have long puzzled us.

Mr Thompson ... demonstrates ignorance of the real needs of the Indians, for example, encouragement to develop the Potlatch, tribal dances and other aboriginal customs would be a retrogressive step amongst the people who have for one or two generations accepted Christianity.<sup>68</sup>

Ostrander's indignation merely revealed the branch's own ineptitude and mediocrity. His statement represented the opinion of senior administration about Indian cultural practices despite Parliament's having removed any legal proscription against them. The tone of Ostrander's reply permeated the response of the director, Col. H. M. Jones.

[T]he statement [by Thompson] that the Indian is a member of a "demoralized group" without pride in their own institutions, culture, heritage, etc. is an opinion not shared by this Administration. By and large Indians are a proud people very much conscious of their racial heritage and privileges, real and imaginary, in Canadian society. ...[W]e do not discourage participation in any truly cultural native ceremony, although you will recall that certain ... ceremonies ... were unlawful under the former Indian Act. ...However, special "Indian days" and exhibitions ... have had a detrimental effect and interfere with work and study. Fortunately, our younger Indians who have had the benefit of education

67 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1-15-1, Part 3, internal correspondence from R. F. Davey, Indian Affairs Branch, to Col. E. Acland, March 4, 1954.

68 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1-15-1, Part 3, correspondence from J. P. B. Ostrander, Superintendent, Welfare Service, to Col. H. M. Jones, Director, Indian Affairs Branch, March 3, 1954.



are less attracted to such events than were their fathers. ...Mr. Thompson's proposals are, in actual fact, a resumé of the ... policies of the Branch.<sup>69</sup>

In the responses of Jones and Ostrander can be detected the administrative equivalent of Woodward's academic hypothesis about the Sarnia Chippewa: that their culture was a "remnant from another way of life". Not only did the branch disdain Thompson's proposal but it continued to be highly suspicious of Parliament's decision to allow the practice of cultural rites, a decision which could only result in the regression of the Indian and be counterproductive to the goal of integration.

Throughout the 1950s, then, the main theme of studies conducted for Indian Affairs centred on problems of Indian adaptation and transition to Euro-Canadian society and were tailored to the state's needs rather than to a sympathetic appreciation of the situation of First Nations. Most professed to be objective studies, but nearly all were implicitly biased toward ideas of liberal progress, modern society, and what Indians lacked, either in their social environment or in their nature, to enable them to become successful citizens. One study, by Reverend William Baldwin, applied a structural-functional analysis to the social problems of an Ojibwa band in Ontario. Using Durkheim's concept of anomie and Parsons's systems theory, Baldwin argued that the Ojibwa used to have institutionalized responses adequate to adapt to changes within their former way of life. The source of their contemporary social problems, he had found, resided in their failure to develop new institutional (normative) behaviours consistent with their new socio-economic environment. Thus, they had been unable to achieve a new equilibrium and were now in a state of "anomie".<sup>70</sup> Another study, typical of this bias and proposed by Dr. Frank Vallee, Director of Research for the Citizenship branch, intended to examine the "social and economic situation of Indians living in a place like Edmonton", with a special emphasis on Indian employment and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes. The study, Vallee thought, could give "a general picture of Indians in the city — their living conditions, leisure habits, examples of successful and unsuccessful adjustment". H. M. Jones, the officious director of Indian Affairs, thought it most worthwhile, although file evidence did not reveal whether the study proceeded.<sup>71</sup> Not until the early 1960s,

69 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1-15-1, Part 3, letter from H. M. Jones, Director, Indian Affairs Branch, to Col. Laval Fortier, Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, April 1, 1954.

70 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, "Social Problems of the Ojibwa Indians in the Collins Area in Northwestern Ontario", received by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, May 12, 1958; correspondence from Laval Fortier, Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, to William Baldwin, May 14, 1958.

71 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, correspondence between Dr. Frank Vallee, Citizenship Branch, and F. H. Tyler, J. H. Gordon, and Col. H. M. Jones, Indian Affairs Branch, March 15 and 27, April 17, 23, and 24, 1957; correspondence between Jones and R. F. Battle, Regional Supervisor of Indian Agencies, Alberta, April 30, May 9, and September 5, 1957. Vallee went on to a distinguished academic career at Carleton University, Ottawa.

in an effort to preserve what was so under attack and in danger of becoming lost, was there any movement toward an appreciation of native cultures. This change, as revealed in the Indian Affairs' files at least, was initiated by European — including East European — rather than North American scholars.<sup>72</sup>

The best summary of the intent of the postwar studies may be derived from Professor Harry B. Hawthorn's 1954 proposal for a special study of the Indians of British Columbia, a study which gained much favour with Indian Affairs<sup>73</sup> and whose methodology was expanded 12 years later to a general survey of the situation of all First Nations in Canada. Hawthorn wrote that "long-range planning in the field of Indian administration calls more urgently than ever for a non-partisan, systematic, comprehensive and reliable investigation of the present economy of Indian groups, of their progress towards self-responsibility and self-reliability, of their attitudes towards the general Canadian way of life, as well as of the attitudes of other Canadian groups and individuals towards them".<sup>74</sup> Hawthorn's proposal, approved by Treasury Board in mid-March 1954, was inspired by a special fund of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration established in 1953 to assist studies of Indians from a "citizenship standpoint to form the basis on which to judge advancement to the point of readiness for enfranchisement".<sup>75</sup>

Another research direction was developed when, in 1959, Professor W. J. Morris, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, proposed an extensive survey of Canada's Indians for the Indian Affairs branch. Morris's proposal was broader in scope than Hawthorn's British Columbia study, not just in the sample population but in the number of factors to be considered as affecting the adaptive capacity of First Nations. Whereas the Hawthorn study had confined itself only to the effects of federal legislation, Morris hypothesized that all "formal legislative requirements determine the nature of adjustment possible for an enculturating indigenous population".<sup>76</sup> By this he meant the impact of provincial as well as federal legislation and the total environment spawned by legislation in the different jurisdictions,

72 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8617, file 1/1-15, Part 8, correspondence to various Regional officials concerning the visit of Professor Lisabeth Welskopf-Henrich of East Berlin, German Democratic Republic, Summer 1963. Professor Welskopf-Henrich visited various Indian bands throughout the country collecting information for a children's book on Indian myths and legends. Officials were instructed not to discuss Indian policy with her for fear of adverse foreign publicity.

73 H. B. Hawthorn, C. S. Belshaw, and S. M. Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), cited in Sally M. Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda 1968-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 21.

74 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1-15, Part 3, correspondence from Jean Boucher, Assistant to the Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, to Dr. H. B. Hawthorn, March 30, 1954.

75 *Ibid.*

76 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8616, file 1/1-15, Part 4, proposal of Professor W. J. Morris, University of Toronto, in correspondence from Morris to Colonel H. M. Jones, Indian Affairs Branch, November 30, 1959.

including the emergence of provincial and voluntary welfare agencies. Morris was especially critical of Hawthorn for failing to take account of this total environment and believed that many of Hawthorn's recommendations were irrelevant as a consequence. Morris argued that the integration process had to be understood within the context of social change theory, which, he said, is a "dynamic process involving formal relationships between persons and their standardization in social institutions. In this context, the significance of legislation and programs of agencies with which the Indian comes in contact at any stage of development will be readily apparent."<sup>77</sup>

Morris's proposal was not approved, but he, more than any other researcher, squarely identified the constitutional division of powers as an important issue in Indian integration. In 1964, at the request of the Indian Affairs branch, Hawthorn initiated his now famous comprehensive survey of Canada's Indians in which he included many of the factors identified in Morris's earlier proposal. Although it is not clear if Hawthorn was aware of the earlier proposal, it is certain that, in Pearson's new era of cooperative federalism, the federal government now wanted a full picture of the constitutional, political, social, and economic environment of Indians in Canada. To oblige, Hawthorn added Allan Cairns, one of Canada's emerging constitutional scholars, to his research team.<sup>78</sup>

### **The James Bay Survey: A Case Example**

The James Bay Survey conducted between 1947 and 1949 is an excellent case example of how social science rose to prominence in influencing Canadian Indian policy in the postwar period and, until Hawthorn's 1954 study of Indians in British Columbia, was the most comprehensive and influential of all studies affecting Indian Affairs policy, especially in how to approach the thorny issue of Indian assimilation. An account of the survey was published in 1951 in *The Dalhousie Review* by John J. Honigmann, who at the time of the survey was an anthropology student at the University of Toronto assigned to study the Cree at Attawapiskat, Ontario. His paper is noteworthy because of its extensive discourse on what he perceived to be the revolutionary nature of the study in comparison with traditional approaches to anthropology established in the nineteenth century. "In this paper," Honigmann wrote, "we will be concerned with how contemporary patterns of thinking about man are related to problems of human administration. Particularly how they are related to the government of people who follow a way of life different from that of the administrators."<sup>79</sup>

Honigmann began by outlining the premise of nineteenth-century anthropology and its effects on colonial administrations. Essentially, he maintained, early anthropology was based on the "quasi-scientific" belief in

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, pp. 20–22.

<sup>79</sup> Honigmann, "The Logic of the James Bay Survey", p. 377.

socio-cultural evolution and in the inevitable progress of all cultures to the ultimate state of western civilization. This evolution could be hastened by teaching backward peoples the ways of the west. This, according to Honigmann, was what Indian Affairs administrators were trying to do when, for example, they introduced husbandry as a replacement for hunting-gathering, a mode of production considered to be at the lowest rung of human organization. In contrast, modern social anthropology had “come to replace the belief in cultural evolution with empirical laws concerning the processes through which social life maintains itself and changes”.<sup>80</sup> Equipped with the knowledge gained from other disciplines’ studies about human behaviour, the anthropologist now viewed man’s place not as the “lord of the universe but rather as a single variable in a most complicated field of forces”.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, the James Bay Survey was an attempt to understand the total field of forces affecting Indian cultures and to set in motion the processes by which, according to the newly identified empirical laws, social change might occur.

Utilizing previous findings on Indian malnutrition as the focal point for intervention, the James Bay Survey team postulated two possible solutions: one, to continue food relief policies that would alleviate the problem but not solve it; or two, to improve people’s capabilities to become self-supporting.<sup>82</sup> This latter, preferred approach required knowledge about “what makes the Indian tick, what motivates him”.<sup>83</sup> Once gained, this knowledge, it was thought, could be used to train government administrators to motivate Indians to adapt to the modern world. To acquire this knowledge and to gain insight into changes in food production and consumption, Professor G. Gordon Brown, the survey leader, proposed “to put two communities under observation for a calendar year and watch what happens not only at any part of the year, but through the whole annual cycle. In other words, the first task was to obtain the facts of the way of life.”<sup>84</sup> Two student anthropologists, Honigmann and Kerr, would spend one year in the communities. The second task, which Honigmann did not address, was to conduct a medical survey of the same communities.<sup>85</sup> The selection of the two James Bay communities, Attawapiskat, Ontario (Honigmann), on its western shore, and Rupert House, Quebec (Kerr), on its southeastern shore, was based on their “pronounced dependence on relief ... and ... adjacency to Toronto”.<sup>86</sup>

The organization of the study was guided by three principles which incorporated “contemporary patterns of thinking shaping the methods of the sciences and promising to influence the arts of human administration”.<sup>87</sup> The

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 378–379.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 379.

<sup>85</sup> See Vivian *et al.*, *The Nutrition and Health of the James Bay Indian*.

<sup>86</sup> Honigmann, “The Logic of the James Bay Survey”, pp. 379–380.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

first principle was the fundamental unity of human life. No longer was “man” to be perceived in particularizing terms such as economic, rational, or biological man, but instead in such terms as “organismic [*sic*]” or “holistic” man which reflected the “simultaneous interplay of biological, nutritional, emotional, social, and cultural forces”.<sup>88</sup> Thus, health was defined as a function of geography, human constitution, traditional habits of subsistence, and the size of the group — a deciding factor in the potential for economic cooperation.

To illustrate the study of health according to the first principle, Honigmann described the role of the biologist in specifying the symptoms of malnutrition, and of the anthropologist in identifying how learned behaviour patterns had caused the neglect of once useful food resources. The problem, Honigmann argued, was that the Indians had learned to become dependent on European foods when fur-bearing animals and game were depleted; now, when traditional foods were again replenished, they had remained dependent on the European foods.<sup>89</sup> The Indians' unwillingness to “unlearn” this dependency and to return to traditional subsistence patterns was interpreted by the social scientists as a problem of how to alter desire, of how to motivate change in behaviour.<sup>90</sup>

Part of the solution, Honigmann wrote, was to demonstrate to government administrators methods of inducing change in Indian behaviour that would allow administrators to remain true to their own democratic values: that is, to refrain from the direct manipulation of people.<sup>91</sup> Honigmann, it would seem, equated democracy with the politics of choice; Indians would change their behaviour based on alternatives among which some would be evidently more desirable than others.<sup>92</sup> Was not the very idea to motivate change in behaviour — change for the purpose of adaptation and hence assimilation — a form of manipulation, however? Through methods of social science, the Cree were to be benignly engaged as active subjects in a process designed ultimately to result in their final suppression and complete disappearance.

The second principle was to understand the “total situation” of human behaviour in both its external and subjective reality.<sup>93</sup> To illustrate this principle, Honigmann examined the issue of starvation in Attawapiskat. He noted that neither in 1947 nor in 1948 was there starvation in Attawapiskat, yet “they believed themselves both on the brink of starvation and neglected by the Federal government. Psychologically they were ... troubled, anxious, and insecure, conditions no doubt related to the fact ... they had seen their ...

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 382.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* Honigmann seemed more concerned with the ethics of the study as it pertained to its implications for government administrators than for Indians.

<sup>92</sup> Honigmann's view of democracy was distinctly liberal. See C. B. Macpherson's classic discussion of democracy, *The Real World of Democracy* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1965).

<sup>93</sup> Honigmann, “The Logic of the James Bay Survey”, p. 382.

resources dwindle in a period of over-trapping as well as to the fact ... the government was ... sharing their anxiety by pursuing a generous relief policy.”<sup>94</sup> Honigmann suggested that Indians needed to be weaned from relief — itself a harmful thing — with the assurance that life really was not as bad as they subjectively experienced it, even though they had indeed suffered from rapacious exploitation and the virtual elimination of their primary food sources. The lesson for government administrators was to respond, not in the manner of worried parents giving in to the groundless fears of the child, but by fostering and encouraging healthy responses to uncertainty and change.

Honigmann then made an extraordinary leap from the “totality” of the immediate situation of the Attawapiskat to their position in the entire post-war world. The researchers had decided, he stated, to consider all the influences in the lives of the James Bay Cree from the policy-makers in Ottawa, to changing fashions in London, Paris, or New York, to the over-hunting of geese wintering in Alabama. “Canada’s bush Indians are far less ‘bushed’ or isolated than is commonly supposed,” Honigmann wrote. “Together with the rest of the population of our shrunken globe they are intensely bound up with their contemporaries. Realization of this complex ‘social field’ is of paramount importance for ‘planned change’.”<sup>95</sup> This last statement seemed to contradict the study’s previous assertion that the Indians needed to revert to traditional ways, for this concern had now been obviated by the greater need for “planned change”, a euphemistic allusion to the Cree’s necessary adaptation to modern society. In addition, Honigmann could not appreciate that, in fact, the Cree had continually adapted to influences beyond their own lands — what was their penchant for European food if not an adaptation? — since the time of European contact. He had conceived them to be without history.<sup>96</sup> Honigmann and his fellow researchers, it would seem, were absorbed in their own cultural biases of modernism and science.

The study’s third principle — perhaps the most troubling in its application — was the recognition of the part played by culture in the resistance to or facilitation of change.<sup>97</sup> Why, Honigmann asked, do cultures resist change? First, he noted, there is a reluctance to expend energy on learning something new. Secondly, proposed changes are usually “incongruent with the ideas, values, skills, or patterns of organization familiar to the group”.<sup>98</sup> Here, Honigmann gave an especially interesting example of how Indian administrations had erred in introducing a new pattern of livelihood to the Cree.

94 *Ibid.* Honigmann’s knowledge of government relief policy was either minimal or tainted by his implicit attitudes against relief (welfare) as a legitimate government function, or as a sign of short-coming on the part of the recipient. During the Great Depression, for example, the average per capita expenditure on Indian relief from 1932 to 1936 — based on the percentage of the on-reserve population in receipt — was \$19.64. This compared to \$51.05 in the general Canadian population. See Shewell, “Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare in the Canadian Liberal State”, p. 325.

95 Honigmann, “The Logic of the James Bay Survey”, p. 383.

96 See Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*.

97 Honigmann, “The Logic of the James Bay Survey”, p. 383.

98 *Ibid.*

It is ... likely that a fundamental mistake occurred when gardening was introduced with the expectation that men would undertake planting. ...[T]raditionally in Attawapiskat culture men engage in the more spectacular and least humdrum occupations — hunting, trapping, travel, large scale marketing. Women do the routine work, including net fishing and cooking. ...Probably plant husbandry would be more successful than it has been in Attawapiskat if the women were placed in charge of the gardens.<sup>99</sup>

Clearly, Honigmann reduced the failure of gardening to gendered role division. Indian Affairs officials obviously had made a fundamental oversight in assigning the tasks of gardening to men. While Honigmann attributes this error to a failure to understand traditional Cree culture, arguably he was drawing upon his own assumptions about gender and the division of labour in any culture, including modern western culture. Men were used to “spectacular” occupations (real or productive work), whereas women were best suited to those which were “humdrum” (routine or domestic work). It did not occur to him that sustenance gardening was probably not a viable proposition for any culture on the shores of James Bay.

Once convinced that these three principles were the basis for transforming the Attawapiskat Cree, the research team turned to find ways to assist the Attawapiskat in overcoming cultural resistance to change and learning skills in innovation. Ultimately, the task of the research team was to educate government administrators to help the Attawapiskat change in a manner that would appear self-determined and democratic and that they would recognize as to their material advantage.<sup>100</sup> Helping maladapted, aboriginal cultures address dilemmas about change and innovation became the genesis of a new approach to government administration. Referring to the American experience under the *Indian Reorganization Act*, Honigmann noted that the objectives of assimilation were difficult to realize as well as basically undemocratic. Yet nobody, he thought, “desires to withhold from native societies techniques that would enhance their control over the environment or traits that members of those groups are anxious to adopt. The policy of internal development ... has come to replace assimilation as a doctrine of cross cultural administration.”<sup>101</sup> Successful change would occur, the James Bay study had concluded, if it was congruent with the Cree way of life and reflected goals the Cree thought were desirable. On the basis of this conclusion, the research team recommended that material development should occur from within the culture, not from without.<sup>102</sup>

An initial appraisal would indicate that this conclusion seems reasonable and farsighted. Community development as an administrative strategy is

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

clearly a part of its rationale. The true objective of such a strategy — Indian adaptation to and integration into Euro-Canadian society — must not be ignored, however, nor the fundamental fact that a strategy of intervention was required in the first place.

Thinking like Honigmann's was delusory. The survey had set out deliberately to determine "what made the Indian tick" because government and academia alike were concerned about Indian dependency and apparent lack of desire to change. Researchers embraced the notion of "holistic" or "universal" man — the modern, liberal idea from the Enlightenment which, when boiled down to its Euro-Canadian essence, still seemed related more to utilitarian or economic man than to any other. They shuddered at using manipulation — a method "not acceptable in Canadian administration" — and then recommended a strategy to do precisely that. If, as the state and academia paternalistically averred, Indian survival lay in change and in the unfolding fabric of Canada, and if Indians and Indian culture by nature resisted change, then a method of inducing change had to be found. In an insidious fashion, then, Indians were to be manipulated by principles of self-determination to an accommodation of Euro-Canadian society so that they appeared satisfied and, principally, so that state objectives were satisfied. This, Honigmann proclaimed, was the great contribution of social science and scientific method.

We maintain that scientific methods can develop and thereby change the Indian's traditional culture to the point where it is not a slavish imitation of the white man's but where it represents a unique and satisfying instrument, both adjusted to its milieu and at the same time not radically divorced from tradition. The success of such a program rests ... with imaginative and sympathetic administrators who may themselves be trained. It demands continuous application of social scientific and other knowledge. Above all it calls for men who believe that social science can be successfully applied [*sic*] to human administration.<sup>103</sup>

The training of government administrators in these ideas began in the two communities during the course of the survey. The training, however, was not necessarily openly welcomed, and, at first, the branch became more concerned about changing the thinking of its own personnel than that of the Cree. Indeed, Major C. A. F. Clark, an educational survey officer with Indian Affairs in Ottawa, sardonically commented that Euro-Canadian culture could be equally resistant to change. In a report on a 1948 field trip to the James Bay agency, Clark discussed a meeting he had had with Professor Brown and his two field researchers.

Their findings and recommendations would not irritate a person accustomed to objective scientific discussion, but I left them advice that they should take into

103 *Ibid.*, pp. 385–386.



account the reactions of two types of minds often found in personnel employed in Indian education and welfare activities:

- (1) those with a positive philosophy which tends to make them heedless of or even hostile to scientific opinion which has not received ecclesiastical sanction;
- (2) those with a mass of experience which they have not been able to organize ... so as to be able to do a progressively better job and who will resent what might appear to be a criticism of their achievements.

The organized opposition of such people might deter the authorization of further surveys.... Professor Brown and his associates will likely urge ... workers in the Indian field ... receive at least sufficient instruction in sociological anthropology and allied subjects to give them "sophistication" in those subjects and in their dealings with the aborigines.<sup>104</sup>

### Concluding Comments

During the period following World War II the social sciences introduced a more sophisticated culture of thought into Indian Affairs and, in effect, invented a new form of paternalistic administration based on the "neutrality" of secularism, expert knowledge, and the tools of social engineering. What, at the time of Canadian Confederation in 1867, had originally been the Indian "question" — a political dilemma whose solution lay in subjugation — had been gradually transformed into the Indian "problem", something science and the production of knowledge could solve. The "problem" was the Indians' failure to adapt to the modern world, and the solution lay in finding ways to help Indian adaptation processes so that they could actively integrate into Canadian society as full and equal citizens. Originally, the church, as an agent of education and tutelage, had been charged with the responsibility of preparing Indians for modern society.<sup>105</sup> However, during and after World War II religion rapidly diminished as the dominant discourse for transmitting morality and culture in Canada. The church-based system of residential schools for Indians similarly became dissonant with the rise and growth of secular institutions, including government. Not surprisingly, Indian Affairs turned to the emergent social sciences — the new symbols of meaning in modern society — for a fresh source of policy direction.

Indian welfare policy became a key part of the strategy for Indian citizenship and integration after World War II.<sup>106</sup> Welfare policy and services were

104 NAC, RG 10, CR Series, vol. 8618, file 1/1-15-1, memorandum from Major C. A. F. Clark, Welfare and Training Service, to Colonel B. F. Neary, Superintendent of Education, Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, September 14, 1948.

105 Dyck, *What is the Indian "Problem"*.

106 Shewell, "Origins of Contemporary Indian Social Welfare"; Hugh Shewell and Annabella Spagnut, "The First Nations of Canada: Social Welfare and the Quest for Self-government" in John Dixon and Robert P. Scheurell, eds., *Social Welfare with Indigenous Peoples* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-53.

a reflection not only of the new rights of citizenship, but also of the significant norms and values of the dominant culture. The social sciences, therefore, were important background tools in informing the development of new ideas about welfare, of the role of the state, and of welfare policy *per se*. First, they underpinned the development of social assistance programmes which, through the construction of rules of eligibility, furthered modern notions of the nuclear family, of home and work, of male responsibility for employment and support, and of female domesticity. Thus, the social sciences pointed to the direction of Indian adaptation — the market, individualism, self-reliance, and the family — and to what aspects of Indian culture had to change — collectivism, extended kinship, and gendered roles reflective of traditional, not modern, cultures. Secondly, they set the course for new ideas about community and community development, which would lead directly to strategies for economic development on the reserves and for promoting provincial involvement in the reserve system. This last point was critical, for if the provinces could be successfully involved in Indian matters, then the process of assimilation would be almost complete. Indians would eventually dissolve into their respective provincial jurisdictions and be treated as any other Canadian citizens. The Indian “problem” would be solved. Today, however, it stubbornly persists.

Within the dominant discourse of secularism, optimism, and the promise of modernism, government officials and social scientists could not — or perhaps would not — understand that the continuing failure of assimilation policies did not reside in the maladaptiveness of the Indian First Nations, but in their resistance to these policies and to state control over their lives. First Nations peoples were to be studied and manipulated, their histories marginalized, and their political and collective rights denied. They were to become citizens of the whole, grateful participants in the promised land of liberal democracy, individual rights, and freedom. As the first peoples of the Americas they were fully aware of this continued “war” against them, a war which sought — and continues to seek — their repression and eventual disappearance as viable peoples and cultures.

The state policies directed towards First Nations enjoyed wide public support and consent. The production of knowledge and the applied disciplines it induced both promoted and reinforced the ideology and hegemony of the liberal society, its culture, values, and economic arrangements. Antonio Gramsci explains hegemony as a constant historical process of struggle and submission.<sup>107</sup> It follows, then, that Michel Foucault’s schema of domination-repression, of an ongoing political, administrative war against, for example, the Indians in the context of pseudo-peace, reflects this hegemonic

107 Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), cited in Patrick Brantlinger, *Crusoe’s Footprints: Cultural Studies in Britain and America* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 98–103.

process.<sup>108</sup> Yet Indians have refused to be mere objects of science and research, manipulated and engineered to be Canadian citizens. The Indian subject has not died. Resistance is agency, and Indian resistance has been, and is, deep, strong, and well organized.<sup>109</sup> In understanding this, one can understand the failure of the social sciences in postwar Indian policy and that policy's unsuccessful attempts to engender and maintain consent to citizenship within the First Nations communities of Canada.

108 Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" in Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 109–133.

109 See, for example, Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999); Peter Kulchyski, " 'A Considerable Unrest': F. O. Loft and the League of Indians", *Native Studies Review*, vol. 4, nos. 1–2, (1988), pp. 95–117; Shewell, "Jules Sioui"; Paul Tennant, "Native Indian Political Organization in British Columbia, 1900–1969: A Response to Internal Colonialism", *B.C. Studies*, no. 55 (Autumn 1982), pp. 3–49.