

“Teach Your Children Well”  
Curriculum and Pedagogy at the Shubenacadie Residential School,  
Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia  
1951-1967

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
July, 2000



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### Abstract

Throughout the era of residential schooling in Canada the federal government and churches maintained one paramount goal, to assimilate Native students into the majority culture. This aim overshadowed and impeded policies and ideals which might have worked to the advantage of Native students. All three of the Shubenacadie Residential School's "governing bodies" during the 1950s and 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church, the Nova Scotia Department of Education, and the Indian Affairs Branch, offered advice regarding how and what students should be taught. This advice might be expected to have been quite influential in the 1950s and 1960s, the decades when students at residential schools spent twice as much time in the classrooms as they had in the past. However, many factors, including the goal to assimilate the children and the racist assumptions that underlay this aim, stood in the way of implementing many of these ideals. This meant that policies and ideas were re-interpreted, distorted, contradicted, and ignored by the administration at the Shubenacadie Residential School and that children likely suffered as a result.

Abbreviations

NAC National Archives of Canada

PANS Public Archives of Nova Scotia

### Acknowledgements

My heartfelt thanks go to my supervisor, Shirley Tillotson, for her dedication and careful attention to this work. Thanks also to my readers, Michael Cross and David Sutherland for their invigorating conversation and helpful suggestions. Thanks also to Renée D., Renée L., Sarah, Lydia, and Ruth for listening to me and laughing with me over the course of my studies. My cousins, Lynn, Michael, and Beth have provided a welcome distraction for me and I owe them my gratitude. To my parents, who have indeed “taught me well,” and my brother who invariably lifts my spirits, I extend my love. Lastly, to Ken, my greatest supporter, my fiercest motivation, and my best friend, this work is dedicated to you and the energy you put into keeping me grounded while I completed it.

## Introduction

The history of residential schooling for Native children in Canada has exploded as a topic of study over the last decade. Historians have approached the topic as a means of further exposing the coercive nature of the federal government's attempts at assimilation and the role of the churches as agents of neglect and abuse.<sup>1</sup> Other areas of focus have included Native-white power relationships and the issue of Native agency.<sup>2</sup> The residential school system originated in the nineteenth century and was a joint venture of throne and altar in which the federal government provided policy and funds while the churches staffed the institutions. Though Native people agreed to, and even asked for, the "white man's learning" for their children, the system that they got was not the one they had envisioned. Native peoples across Canada saw European-style education as a means by which to ensure that their children survived and thrived in the changing social and economic order. For the churches and government, however, the enterprise rested on the notion that Native peoples did not know what was in their own best interests and, therefore,

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<sup>1</sup>See J.R. Miller, Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Agnes Grant, No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1996); Linda Bull, "Indian Residential Schooling: The Native Perspective," Canadian Journal of Native Education 18, Supplement (1991): 5-47; Elizabeth Furniss, Victims of Benevolence: Discipline and Death at the Williams Lake Residential School, 1891-1920 (Williams Lake, B.C.: Cariboo Tribal Council, 1992); John S. Milloy, A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986 (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1999); and Canada, Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, under "Residential Schools." This document is available in full on the RCAP website, <http://www.RCAP.ca>. (Ottawa: 1993).

<sup>2</sup>Tina Loo, "Don Cranmer's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol, and Rhetoric," Canadian Historical Review, 73:2 (1992): 125-165; J.R. Miller, "The Irony of Indian Residential Schooling," Canadian Journal of Native Education, 14:2 (1987); Robin Brownlie and Mary-Ellen Kelm, "Desperately Seeking Absolution: Native Agency as Colonialist Alibi?" The Canadian Historical Review 75:4 (1994): 543-556; Celia Haig-Brown, Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988).

their opinions were ignored. What was “best,” according to the white officials, was acculturation for the “Indians.” Acculturation would ensure that the Native people no longer stood in the way of “development” in North America. Therefore, the government and churches embarked upon a path of systemic cultural replacement to assimilate Native peoples’ lifestyles and values systems to those of the European white majority.<sup>3</sup>

The institutions themselves were no more considerate of Native peoples than their ideological foundation was. The schools were located far from the reserves so that children were separated from the “deleterious” influences of their communities. Children were removed, sometimes forcibly, from their homes and it was the prerogative of the school principal to grant or deny leave for holidays. The children in these institutions experienced extreme regimentation, physical, mental and sexual abuse in addition to the mandated “cultural abuse.” Moreover, the schools were chronically overcrowded and underfunded.

The Shubenacadie Residential School in Nova Scotia, operated by the Roman Catholic Church, was among the last of eighty such schools to open and was the only institution of its kind in the Maritimes.<sup>4</sup> The school opened in 1928 and closed in 1967. It was staffed by Sisters of Charity in addition to the principal. Father Jeremiah Mackey was the school’s long-time headmaster. His principalship began in 1928 and lasted until 1958, with a five year absence from

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<sup>3</sup>The government and Churches had differing but complementary goals. J.R. Miller argues that the government desired assimilation for economic reasons and the churches desired it for religious and “humanitarian” reasons. J.R. Miller, “The State, The Church and Indian Residential Schools in Canada,” unpublished paper, 2000.

<sup>4</sup>Eighty schools existed 1931 but the number fell to seventy-five by 1943. John S. Milloy, A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999) 102.

1943 to 1948. His reign was marked by a federal inquiry into the flogging of nine children at the school in 1934.<sup>5</sup> Father P.J. Collins took over the position from 1958 until 1966. The inmates at the institution were generally Mik'maw children from the Maritime region.<sup>6</sup> The school was only authorized to hold one hundred and sixty children. Therefore, instead of collecting all Mi'kmaw children within a certain radius, as many of the schools in the west did, this school housed children that were deemed, usually by white officials, to be "neglected" or who were orphaned.

As the concentration of institutions lay in the western provinces, so too have historians focused their studies on the west. Only a small amount of historical literature is available concerning the school at Shubenacadie.<sup>7</sup> In addition, emphasis on the schools as "total institutions," work farms, and welfare institutions that formed the strong-hold of assimilationist policies has left a wide gap in the historiography. As yet, very little has been written about the

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<sup>5</sup>Isabelle Knockwood, Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Shubenacadie Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia (Lockport, N.S.: Roseway Publishing, 1992)146-153. Knockwood relates the "official story," the incident's whitewashing and the plan by Mik'maq men to execute Father Mackey.

"In keeping with contemporary orthography the spelling, "Mi'kmaw" is an adjective while "Mi'kmaq" is a noun. See Knockwood's usage.

<sup>7</sup>Knockwood; Heather Laskey, "Hard to Erase Bitter Memories of School Days filled with Fear," Atlantic Insight (1988): 21-25; Marilyn Millward, "Clean Behind the Ears? Micmac Parents, Micmac Children, and the Shubenacadie Residential School," Towards a New Maritimes: A Selection from Ten Years of New Maritimes, Eds. Ian McKay and Scott Milsom (Ragweed, The Island Publisher, 1992): 45-59; Unpublished theses: Millward, "Researching the Devils: Brokerage at the Shubenacadie Residential School, Nova Scotia," Ph.D. thesis, Dalhousie University 1997.; Marilyn Elaine O'Hearne, "Canadian Native Education Policy: A Case Study of the Residential School at Shubenacadie, N.S.," M.A. thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1990; (\*note, Millward and O'Hearne are the same historian); and Martha Elizabeth Walls, "Native Responses to the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 1928-1951," M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1996.

academic portions of the institutions. To contribute to filling this gap, this study investigates the curriculum and pedagogy at the Shubenacadie Residential School. As such, it extends the study of government and church policies and actions, thus building on current historical studies. At the same time, it illuminates a significant portion of residential school life which has, thus far, received little attention. The classrooms provide useful sites for investigation as policy goals and obstacles to their success can be viewed at a point where they directly affected the students, teachers, school inspectors, and principals. Catholic Church officials, curriculum writers at the Nova Scotia Department of Education, and Indian Affairs Branch representatives offered advice and directives which might have counteracted some of the more destructive elements of residential schooling. However, the influence of teachers and others closely connected with the classrooms, and the goal of assimilating the students, which formed the backbone of the institution, meant that even the potentially helpful guidelines were not followed in any meaningful way.

For the purposes of this project, assimilation will be defined as the cultural replacement that the government and churches desired and Native peoples opposed. Native people wished to have their children educated in European-styled schools as they desired the essential knowledge for survival and success when the European settlers became increasingly dominant in North America.<sup>8</sup> However, Native peoples envisioned a convergence between home and school. That

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<sup>8</sup> J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 102-103. Miller goes on to outline continued Native resistance to the system of residential schools. He argues that this resistance to assimilation was consistent over time and place from the 1830s through the twentieth century. The argument for Native peoples' acceptance of some but not all European influences is echoed by Kerry Abel, who argues that the Dene people in the far North adapted those practices from whites that they saw as necessary or beneficial to their own survival. See, Kerry Abel, Drum

is, they desired the maintenance of “Indian” values, identity, and language alongside “quality education.”<sup>9</sup> The inclusion of Native cultural components required specific curricular contributions from Native peoples, and one of the more pointed criticisms of the system has been its lack of Native participation or control.<sup>10</sup>

Without Native participation, however, the education system designed and operated by the federal government and the churches respectively, allowed for no such synthesis of Native and white cultures. The residential schools constituted the foundation for the policy which aimed to destroy Native children’s religious beliefs, social habits, and language. This policy was to turn them into “brown white men” different from and ashamed of their parents and their heritage.<sup>11</sup> The concerted effort at “cultural replacement,” as opposed to the Native vision of “cultural synthesis,”<sup>12</sup> meant that many children were deprived of their parents’ and communities’ cultural

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Songs: Glimpses of Dene History (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup>Jean Barman, Yvonne M. Hebert, and Don McCaskill, “The Challenge of Indian Education: An Overview,” Indian Education in Canada: The Challenge, Barman et al eds (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987) 2. See also, Gerda Kaegi, A Comprehensive View of Indian Education (Toronto: Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples, 1974?) 5; and Noel Dyck, Differing Visions: Administering Indian Residential Schooling in Prince Albert, 1867-1995 (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997) 15.

<sup>10</sup>The most vehement and well-defined statement of a desire for Native control can be found in the National Indian Brotherhood’s 1972 position paper, Indian Control of Indian Education (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1972) 3 and 27.

<sup>11</sup>Dyck, 14-15.

<sup>12</sup>For a description and explanation of the terms “cultural replacement” and “cultural synthesis” see, David Nock, A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis versus Cultural Replacement (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988) 1-2; and, Hobart and Brant, “Eskimo Education, Danish and Canadian: A Comparison,” Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 3 (1966): 48.

influences. This aspect of the schools was and is widely criticised by Native peoples across the country and it forms the basis of what this study refers to as “assimilation.”<sup>13</sup> An endeavour that was characterised by such a goal did not include the respect necessary for the implementation of many of the Catholic Church’s and government recommendations. That is, to implement many of the ideas that will be explored throughout the following three chapters, white officials needed to listen to the Native students and their communities. The racism inherent in a systematic attempt to assimilate Native people meant that they were allowed no such attention. The study of curriculum and pedagogy shows the character and scope of this racism and also the complexity of its ideological and institutional context in the 1950s and 1960s. In this period, curriculum and pedagogy became much more influential in the schools as the 1951 Indian Act officially ended the “half day system” whereby students spent half of their day in class and the other half receiving “vocational education.” The period, therefore, is distinctive in the history of residential schools.

### Curriculum and Pedagogy in the Current Body of Literature

The body of historical literature dealing with residential schools in Canada continues to grow. To date, the most comprehensive account of the schools and students’ lives within their walls is

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<sup>13</sup>See, for example, Rosalyn Ing, "The Effects of Residential Schools on Native Child-Rearing Practices," Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18, Supplement (1991): 92-94; and Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, "Debates," Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Indian Act, 1946-1948 *passim*.

Pan-Canadian arguments by Native peoples are used in this study to help define “assimilation.” While specific concerns may have been influenced by local conditions, the resistance to assimilation and criticisms of residential schooling were surprisingly uniform over time and among places. Miller argues that Native peoples recognized this uniformity after the hearings of the 1946-48 Joint Commission. Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 396.

J.R. Miller's Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools. Miller explores traditional Native child-rearing practices, the establishment of the system, the various forms of physical and emotional neglect/abuse that occurred in the schools, some pedagogical concerns, resistance, and the positive and negative outcomes of the residential school experience for Native people. Miller addresses the question of curriculum in his assessment of classroom learning as "inappropriate." He notes that provincial school curricula, as implemented in the residential schools, ignored students' life experiences and emphasised the remote notions of European history and geography.

Miller also considers vocational education as an important aspect of daily life in the residential schools, but assesses its use as a money-saving venture for the schools rather than situating it in the context of debates over "progressive education" or as an impediment to academic pursuits.<sup>14</sup> The exclusion of Native children's experiences and the use of vocational education are crucial in understanding the government's overt goals of assimilating and placing the Native students in the unskilled labour force upon "graduation." However, Miller does not explore the more subtle forms of assimilation which were inherent in the provincial school curricula or the pedagogical advice that was provided and employed, distorted, or contradicted within the classrooms.

Comparable in content to Miller's book, Agnes Grant's No End of Grief takes a less thorough approach to the same issues, relying heavily on secondary literature. Both Miller and Grant

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<sup>14</sup>The notion that practical skills ought to be taught alongside academics, especially in the case of rural school students, was a progressive idea for educators in the 1920s through the 1940s. See L.A. DeWolfe, My Philosophy of Education (Halifax: Department of Education, Nova Scotia, 1958) 49. Vocational education was more important in the pre-1951 period. This system is explored in Chapter 3.

explore the context in which the schools functioned as well as their every day operations, but neither discuss in detail the curricular functions for which the schools were responsible. Grant notes the importance that was placed on learning English, the religious components of the system, and the outmoded pedagogical styles of the teachers. Her assessment also points to many deficiencies in the curriculum. Anecdotes about children who could not tell time or count money relate to the wider discussion concerning gaps in the curriculum. Like Miller, Grant points to the ethnocentric bias in materials which made much of what students were to learn irrelevant to their lives. Though she states that “curriculum was an integral part of the colonizing agenda,”<sup>15</sup> Grant does not explore how aspects of what *was* taught might have furthered this agenda or how the agenda meant that even potentially helpful policies were not fully implemented.

Linda Bull’s article, “Indian Residential Schooling: the Native Perspective,” attempts to put residential schooling in context with regards to Native and European approaches to child-rearing and education, the political policies and agenda of the Canadian government, and church attitudes toward the education of Native pupils. In interviews with former students, Bull discusses personal experiences in the schools and the positive and negative outcomes which resulted (though the negatives outweigh the positives 9 ½ pages to 1 ½). Again, little is included which deals specifically with academic pursuits. Bull does point out (as Miller does) that academics were overshadowed by religious teachings and technical training<sup>16</sup> and that the pedagogical styles of the teachers clashed with traditional Native ideals concerning teaching and

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<sup>15</sup>Grant, 166.

<sup>16</sup>Bull, 31.

learning.<sup>17</sup> Bull gives some attention to students' desire to learn<sup>18</sup> but does not focus on the "schooling" which was to have been a significant part of the institutions.

The texts which deal specifically with the residential school at Shubenacadie are few. Isabelle Knockwood's first-hand account of life at the school, supported with extensive interviewing of other former students, deals in detail with daily life in the institution and concentrates on the 1930s and 1940s. Though it seems that the Mi'kmaq in general felt that literacy and education were important,<sup>19</sup> Knockwood does not include substantial material which deals specifically with the academic components of the school. Like Miller and Grant, Knockwood outlines the obstacles Mi'kmaw children faced in the classroom. These obstacles included a language barrier, intimidating and humiliating teaching practices, cultural misunderstandings, and the time children spent outside the classroom performing manual labour. She also notes the lack of Mi'kmaw history and philosophy in the curriculum. These points all serve to illuminate some impediments to real academic progress in residential school classrooms, aside from the obvious issues of abuse, neglect, and emotional pain. The official guidelines that the government and Catholic Church provided for the school and their interpretation(s) within the classrooms,

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<sup>17</sup>Bull, 23.

<sup>18</sup>Bull, 23.

<sup>19</sup>Knockwood was permitted to attend the local public high school in after completing grade eight at the residential school. In order to attend, however, she was forced to live at the institution. While she detested this living arrangement, she felt that "going to the public school had opened up a door, and for the time being, the only way to keep that door ajar was to stay on at the Residential School." (126) Also, Knockwood writes, "Many parents recognized that their children would need other kinds of knowledge to get along in the white world. My father, John Knockwood,... had never attended school, but had taught himself to read and write by reading the Halifax Herald from cover-to-cover every week."(19)

however, are not explored.<sup>20</sup>

Two accounts of life at the Shubenacadie Residential School appeared in the Micmac News during the 1970s. Both included statements from various former students and concentrated heavily on the punishments and general mistreatment of Mi'kmaw children. These were the first published public accounts of school life and they focussed on the most overtly influential aspects of life in the institution therefore, leaving out questions concerning curriculum and pedagogy. That issues of abuse, neglect, and general mistreatment of children have been at the forefront of discussions concerning residential schools is not surprising. Such discussions have paved the way for a wider exploration of overall government and church policies concerning Native peoples in Canada. While physical and emotional hardships have often been the focus of studies around residential schooling thus far, they represent only the most obvious attempts to "beat the Indian" out of the students. Curriculum content and pedagogical practices were also important forces on the road to assimilation within the walls of the residential schools and the prominence that the goal held ensured that other potentially beneficial policies were not implemented at the Shubenacadie Residential School.

The three other studies which have been completed on the Shubenacadie Residential School include extensive discussions about admission and discharge policies, issues of medical care, punishments, the welfare functions of the school, parental, student, and community input, resistance, and bureaucratic powers.<sup>21</sup> While these accounts provide a good overview of the

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<sup>20</sup>The one exception is Knockwood's recollection of a song which she sang as a student. The song praised Columbus for "discovering" America "for you and me." Knockwood, 51.

<sup>21</sup>Millward, O'Hearne, and Walls.

school's administrative aspects, they do not address questions concerning the school's academic policies and practices. In order to assess government agenda, parochial attitudes, and the full range of experiences to which students were subjected, curriculum content and pedagogy must be considered along with other aspects of the school.

### The Historiographical Debate: Agency and Power

Curriculum content placed a government agenda in the laps of students. The provincial governments' curriculum guidelines, which were intended for white children, were used as the basis of academic content in the residential schools. The Mi'kmaw children at the Shubenacadie Residential School were, therefore, to follow Nova Scotia's public school curriculum. This curriculum and the accompanying pedagogical advice were handed down from the provincial and federal governments to the Catholic principals, then to the teachers, and finally to the students. Each person in this chain could ignore or re-interpret the information that was provided. These interpretations altered the power that government held as curriculum and pedagogical advice were subject to a number of forces that could influence their implementation.

In his "Two Lectures," Foucault argues that power is decentralized and that there are "manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society."<sup>22</sup> In this study, each person in the above-mentioned chain of power, in addition to school inspectors, the Canadian public and Native peoples themselves ensured that power was, in fact, decentralized. Foucault also argues that one ought not to study power from the center outward but that it should be analysed at its

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<sup>22</sup>Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, Colin Gordon ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) 96.

"capillaries" where it is in direct contact with its object.<sup>23</sup> Following Foucault, then, this study will consider some of the specific points of contact where government, Church, and their employees' power touched students. Specifically, these included pedagogical advice, curriculum content, and policies or ideas which directly related to classroom practices.

Historians of Native issues in Canada have applied (consciously or not) Foucault's argument about the decentralized nature of power. They argue that power was shared, however unequally, by Native parents, communities, and children, in addition to the combined forces of Church and government. The arguments focus primarily on how the opposing groups of Native and white peoples have asserted or been subjected to power. To illustrate these power relations and Foucault's theory, Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo use the metaphor of a net to represent power. They assert that one should view this net in both of two ways. It may be seen as a collection of holes which are bound together by string. In this case, one is able to slip through the net's grasp. From the other point of view, the net can be seen as an instrument which represses and binds its captives.<sup>24</sup>

This metaphor works well when it is applied to the varying viewpoints which historians hold regarding the power relationships that existed between Native peoples and the white government or church administrators. Historians and other scholars who have written on Native Canadian history may be located in one or the other of two camps on the question of power relations. The

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<sup>23</sup>Foucault, 96-97.

<sup>24</sup>Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 5; and Tina Loo, "Don Cranmer's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol, and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951," Canadian Historical Review, 73:2 (June, 1992): 165 note.

first group takes a viewpoint suggested by Strange and Loo's explanation that the net of power may be a collection of holes. This group emphasizes the strength of Native communities, their ability to resist and influence policy at the government or, at least, the school level. These scholars point to the continuing existence of Native cultures, and even their revitalization in the post-residential school era. Historians who fall into this group include James Redford, who argues that Native people in British Columbia exerted their power through attendance at residential schools. He argues that,

a whole range of factors- not just the efforts of the churches or of the Department of Indian Affairs- determined the educational experiences and social destinies of Indian children. Native patterns of life conditioned thousands of everyday decisions concerning details of attendance... The perspective of the last one hundred years reinforces the **misconception**: Indians... let slip control of their own destiny, and watched powerless as they were helped or victimized by schemes of social manipulation.<sup>25</sup> (Emphasis added.)

J.R. Miller also belongs in this group. In "The Irony of Residential Schooling," he argues that Native people took advantage of the residential school and used it for their own purposes. He asserts that the government did not achieve its goal of assimilation and that the churches failed to Christianize all Native people while the Native people themselves did attain their goals of basic education.<sup>26</sup>

The historians who take this interpretive position also emphasize the success of former students. Linda Bull states that enforced use of English meant that students from different

<sup>25</sup>James Redford, "Attendance at Indian Residential Schools in British Columbia, 1890-1920," B.C. Studies 44 (1979-80): 55.

<sup>26</sup>Miller, "The Irony of Residential Schooling," Canadian Journal of Native Education 14:2 (1987): 11. Miller's individual articles are not as complex as Shingwauk's Vision in their positioning on the agency question.

nations learned to communicate. According to Bull, this resulted in increased mobility for Native people and fostered a sense of a common identity.<sup>27</sup> Miller points to the Native leaders who emerged after undergoing education at residential schools<sup>28</sup> and Jacqueline Gresko argues that the experience

aided in the preservation of Indian cultural patterns, stimulated resistance to missionary and government assimilative efforts, spread a pan-Indian identity and eventually brought about the generation of modern Indian rights movements and cultural/educational activities.<sup>29</sup>

Criticism of this approach to the interpretation of power lies in the possibility that this analysis underestimates or misrepresents the obstacles which Native people encountered. In this way, critics claim that historians may actually trivialize the amount of strength it took for some Native people to resist.<sup>30</sup> Resistance was not, by any means, wholly effective and there are numerous accounts of the suffering that children endured in these institutions.<sup>31</sup>

The second group of historians takes the viewpoint that the net was a restrictive tool which

<sup>27</sup>Bull, 17.

<sup>28</sup>Miller, "The Irony of Residential Schooling," 11.

<sup>29</sup>Jacqueline Gresko, "Creating Little Dominions Within the Dominion: Early Catholic Indian Schools in Saskatchewan and British Columbia," Indian Education in Canada: Volume 1, The Legacy Barman, Hebert, McCaskill eds. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986): 102.

<sup>30</sup>Robin Brownlie and Mary-Ellen Kelm, "Desperately Seeking Absolution: Native Agency as Colonialist Alibi?" The Canadian Historical Review 75:4 (1994): 552.

<sup>31</sup>For example, Grant; Miller, Shingwauk's Vision; George Manuel, The Fourth World: An Indian Reality (Don Mills, ON: Collier-Macmillan Canada, Ltd., 1974); Isabelle Knockwood, Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia (Lockeport, NS: Roseway Publishing, 1992). It is important to note that these historians do not deny the obstacles that existed but choose to focus on how Native people circumvented them in some cases.

stifled Native agency and rendered it largely ineffective. These historians stress the sweeping powers that the government and church administrators held. They also point to the virtual disappearance of many Native languages, the chaos that reigns in many Aboriginal communities today, and the general suffering which has resulted from the residential school experience. Elizabeth Furniss, for example, writes that the imbalance of power that existed between the white officials and the Native peoples made any attempts at resistance futile.<sup>32</sup> She also points out that officials often misinterpreted acts of resistance and, in doing so, reduced the influence of Native power and agency.<sup>33</sup> Janis Dawson echoes Furniss's assertions when stating that the "history of Native education in Canada has been the story of what one group has done to another."<sup>34</sup>

Writing in this vein, scholars emphasize the breadth and depth of the harms done by residential schooling. Rosalyn Ing states that, as a result of the residential school system and the "systemic indoctrination" which occurred, Native people lost the self-esteem which is essential to the use and development of effective child-rearing practices.<sup>35</sup> She also remarks that isolation in the residential schools meant that children did not have a chance to develop respect for their

<sup>32</sup>Elizabeth Furniss, Victims of Benevolence: Discipline and Death at the Williams Lake Indian Residential School, 1891-1920 (Williams Lake, BC: Cariboo Tribal Council, 1992) 3.

<sup>33</sup>Furniss, 4. This idea is supported by some documents relating to the school at Shubenacadie. When one woman wrote to her Indian Agent to request that her children be returned to her, the Agent discredited and mocked her plea when he passed it on to the Department of Indian Affairs. The woman "says she *loves* her children and wishes to have them with her" he wrote. (Indian Agent for St Peter's Nova Scotia to Indian Affairs Branch, 20 September, 1941. NAC, Indian Affairs Branch School Files, RG 10 Volume 6053, File 260-10, part 1: as quoted in Walls, 98).

<sup>34</sup>Janis Dawson, "If my Children are Proud: Native Education and the Problem of Self-Esteem," Canadian Journal of Native Education 15:1 (1988) 49.

<sup>35</sup>Ing, 115.

elders, their culture, or their "Indianness."<sup>36</sup> Relating to the long term effects of the system, she points to Celia Haig-Brown's comments regarding the loss of language that occurred as a result of the residential schools.<sup>37</sup>

Robin Brownlie and Mary-Ellen Kelm point to the loss of language and culture and while they acknowledge that some students emerged from their educational experiences ready to fight their oppressors, they also note the fact that many more people were ruined by the experiences.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Ing refers to the destruction of the people themselves when she writes of the social symptoms which are now observable including "alcoholism, child and spouse abuse and neglect, prison incarceration, violence, and drug dependency."<sup>39</sup> This group of historians asserts that Native people's efforts at resistance did not alter the coercive nature of the government's laws.<sup>40</sup>

Both of these general viewpoints have strengths but their common weakness lies in the fact that they are general viewpoints. That is, to define the residential school experience as resulting in largely positive or largely negative outcomes is to deny the complexities of the experience, or, more accurately, of the experiences, plural. More importantly for this study, an emphasis on two overarching groups, Native and white, implies that there was a sort of unanimity within each

<sup>36</sup>Ing, 85.

<sup>37</sup>Ing, 82. However, Haig-Brown also speaks of the survival and the strength of Native cultures. The entire premise, the very title of her book, is the "resistance" of Native peoples toward the federal residential schools. Therefore, one must not take Ing's interpretation to mean that Haig-Brown views the residential school experience in the same way that Ing does.

<sup>38</sup>Brownlie and Kelm, 550.

<sup>39</sup>Ing, 114.

<sup>40</sup> For more information on Native-white relations and power divisions see, J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, and Miller, Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

group that simply did not exist. In her article on the Blue Quills Residential School in Alberta, Diane Persson implies that one must be sensitive to individual situations.<sup>41</sup> Individual situations, in the context of the present study, includes the personal attitudes of those who held government and Church-sanctioned power and the forces that helped to shape those attitudes. Teachers, school inspectors, the principal, and even individuals within the Indian Affairs Branch had various attitudes toward the directives they were given. Those within the system, then, chose selectively from these directives ensuring that any vision that the Church or government had of education was not uniformly implemented at the Shubenacadie Residential School. In some cases, the assimilative force of curriculum content itself stood as a barrier to implementing certain goals. A blanket condemnation or support of policies, therefore, puts too much trust in their implementation. While the Church and government hierarchies offered explicit advice and rules regarding what practices were to be followed with children in the schools, individual decisions that were influenced by many forces, including the predominant goal of assimilating the students, stood in the way of implementing these directions.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Diane Persson, "The Changing Experience of Indian Residential Schooling: Blue Quills, 1931-1970," Indian Education in Canada: Volume 1, The Legacy, Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill eds. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 155.

<sup>42</sup>Some of these policies or recommendations might have been helpful to the Native students at the school or might, at least, have made their experiences less harmful. However, my tacit support for some of the official ideals does not indicate sympathy for the residential school system as a whole. Nor does it indicate support for the government or Church representatives who oversaw the system. Their failure to supervise and enforce their ideas does not indicate a passionate commitment to the stated goals. However, the fact that the goals were not wholly implemented points to the fact that individuals within the system had different opinions and chose to exercise their own power. These detours from official policies were influential in determining the experiences of children within the Shubenacadie Residential School.

Students could not determine, to any great extent, what or how they were taught.<sup>43</sup> For this reason, this study focuses heavily on administrative policies and their place in the Shubenacadie Residential School. The study is concerned specifically with the directives that Catholic authorities, the Nova Scotia Department of Education, and the Indian Affairs Branch issued for teaching in general and for “Indian education” specifically. Evidence on the classroom situation at the Shubenacadie Residential School is then examined to see whether these “directives” were implemented, distorted, or contradicted within the walls of that institution. To establish what made up these religious and secular directives, this study relies on papal encyclicals and addresses, scholarly Catholic literature, provincial curriculum guidelines as outlined in publications of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, school textbooks, readers, and workbooks, and the instructions of the Indian Affairs Branch through general memoranda. The exploration of policy implementation at the school level relies heavily on the Indian Affairs Branch School Files and files for the Shubenacadie Agency, as well as the records in the Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax. These documents allowed me to delve into policy, stated intentions or goals, and the application of those goals within the school. What stood in the way of complete implementation varied depending on what was to be implemented, but what these documents made clear was that there never was agreement among all levels of

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<sup>43</sup>Certainly, selective listening and the re-interpretation of information also helped students to determine their academic experiences. A former student at the Blue Quills Residential School in Alberta recalled,

In social studies we would study about dukes and duchesses. But that was so far removed from what my life was. What did I care about that baloney? So I filled my notebooks with pictures and doodles of my ideas of what history was about. (Persson, 9).

Miller also argues that students helped to shape these experiences through attendance or absence from the schools in some cases. See, “The Irony of Residential Schooling.”

administration on policy goals. The documents did not allow for an investigation into student responses to curriculum and pedagogy or to their academic experiences. Personal documents, including the teachers' log books held at the Sisters of Charity Archives in Halifax, are currently closed. Glimpses into the classrooms are afforded by school inspector's reports and communications between school administrators and the Indian Affairs Branch.

The first chapter of this study deals with the Catholic Church's ideology of child-rearing and education in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. During the latter part of this period the staff at the Shubenacadie Residential School in the 1950s and 1960s had their training. Therefore, the ideology expressed by Catholic leaders might be expected to have been reflected in the practices at the school. The Catholic Church and its staff at the school, however, ignored or distorted the fundamental principles of this ideology in a way that stripped them of their potential benefits for students.

Chapter Two turns directly toward the classrooms themselves and the government's assimilationist goals as they were represented in the curriculum content at the Shubenacadie Residential School. Again, aspects of the guidelines around the curricular and pedagogical aims held promise for Native students. However, the goal of "education for citizenship" (which often replaces the words "segregation" or "assimilation" in the government's public rhetoric by the late 1940s<sup>44</sup>) took precedence over all other aims. Therefore, the potentially helpful guidelines were not followed.

The third chapter focuses on policy initiatives and changes that the Indian Affairs Branch legislated (but did not enforce) in the 1950s and 1960s. These policies were re-interpreted,

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<sup>44</sup>Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 382.

distorted, and ignored at the Shubenacadie Residential School. In the dying decades of the residential school system, the Department began to address some of the highly criticized aspects of the system, but many of the initiatives did not reach the children in the classrooms of the school at Shubenacadie. Influenced by many forces, individuals connected to the school or to the Indian Affairs Branch made their own decisions about policy implementation. Therefore, the differences of opinion regarding the aims of “Indian education” meant that government directives were not necessarily evident in the classrooms at the Shubenacadie Residential School.

Chapter One:  
Catholic Ideology around Child Rearing and Education

This chapter deals with the ideology concerning child rearing and education espoused by the Catholic Church in the period between 1890 and the 1950s. During this period, most of the faculty who taught at the Shubenacadie Residential School in the 1950s and 1960s had their training. These were the ideals which were supposed to have informed the actions of Church officials and educators.

In order to determine what these ideologies were, documents of the Church, including papal encyclicals and addresses, resource books, and some secondary literature, have been consulted. Historians of education have done very little work in this area, so the chapter relies mainly on these primary sources. The background in church history that would situate these documents in their full context of intellectual and political developments is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, what this chapter provides is a digest of common prominent themes that persisted throughout the early twentieth century in the literature of the Catholic Church pertaining to children and education.

When applied to the specific circumstances of the Shubenacadie Residential School, some of these ideals become quite interesting. Had the Catholic administrators adhered to Catholic ideologies, the residential school experience could have been much less destructive to the Mi'kmaw community. This is not to be interpreted as an indication of sympathy for the residential schooling experiment itself. In fact, the founding principle upon which the system was based, the racist notion that Native people ought to be assimilated to the "white majority culture," stood as one of the impediments to the implementation of some of the Catholic ideology. Simply, had Catholic ideology about child rearing and education been followed within

the Shubenacadie Residential School, children, parents, and the Mi'kmaw community as a whole might have suffered less at the hands of Catholic administrators and government policies.

The first section of this chapter deals with children's place in the world, as defined in the Catholic documents. According to Church officials, children were valued though they were low on the hierarchical scale of power and were, therefore, obligated to obey the authority of adults.

The second sections draw on the rights and responsibilities of educators to provide for children's needs. All children, by virtue of being human, were to be afforded the benefits of a Christian (Catholic) education. As well, the documents held that, although the Church and state had a duty to provide this education, parents' rights could not be usurped in any but "specific circumstances" of neglect. As parents' rights and responsibilities were paramount, the Church also found that there ought to be harmony between the aims of both the school and the family.

Following this section is a discussion of the pedagogical methods that Church leaders recommended for teachers and then an exploration of the idea that children required moral protection and the complex issue of discipline.

The conclusion draws on the most important aspects of the Catholic ideologies as they relate to the Shubenacadie Residential School. Within the school, these ideals were ignored, distorted, and directly contradicted, in part because of the underlying goal of assimilating the Mi'kmaw children.

#### Attitudes Toward Children and Education: Love and Obedience

The documents of the Catholic Church repeatedly express the value of children. This value is drawn from the teachings of the Christian Bible and is supported in the institution of marriage

and the official Catholic views concerning birth control. In his encyclical letter on Christian Marriage (1930) Pope Pius XI wrote,

Thus, amongst the blessings of marriage, the child holds the first place. And indeed the Creator of the human race Himself, who in His goodness wished to use men in the propagation of life, taught this when, instituting marriage in Paradise, He said to our first parents, and through them to all future spouses: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth."<sup>1</sup>

This same direction is present in the multi-volume Catholic Encyclopedia, completed in 1910. Under the heading "Family" this resource book states that the "primary end of the family is the procreation of children. The husband or wife who shirks this duty from any but spiritual or moral motives reduces the family to an unnatural and unchristian level."<sup>2</sup> This idea is inscribed in the Catholic Code of Canon Law which indicates its centrality in the precepts of the Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup> Thus, children were considered to be a duty and a blessing for married couples.

While the reason to have children appears to be rooted in a concern for the continuation of the Christian (Catholic) faith,<sup>4</sup> children were valued as people in and of themselves. Officials stated that children ought to be loved by their parents<sup>5</sup> and their teachers.<sup>6</sup> Again, roots of this ideal

<sup>1</sup>Pope Pius XI, "Casti Connubii," December 31, 1930 (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1930) 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Charles G. Herbermann Ed., The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume V (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911) 783.

<sup>3</sup>Pius XI, "Casti Connubii," 10.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 8.

<sup>5</sup>Herbermann, Vol. XI, 479. "The first duty of parents toward their children is to love them. Nature inculcates this clearly, and it is customary to describe parents who lack this affection as unnatural."

<sup>6</sup>Pius XII, "Nell'accogliervie," April 20, 1956, The Pope Speaks, 1956, 255.

were found in Christian scripture which was cited as a guide to how one ought to look upon children. According to the Christian Bible, Christ proclaimed, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.”<sup>7</sup>

Writing in 1956, Pope Pius XII felt that this love would aid in achieving obedience. He stated, “A pupil who is sure of the love of his parents and superiors will hardly fail to respond, sooner or later, to their wishes.”<sup>8</sup> Responding to superiors’ wishes would be of utmost importance for students in Catholic schools where obedience to authority was an important aspect of learning. In order to prepare students for a future in which respect and obedience toward authority would be necessary or at least beneficial, Catholic officials stressed the importance of children’s submission. In general, the Catholic documents emphasised teaching children to obey and respect authority. In order for them to function successfully as adults in their societies, a strict adherence to secular and parochial laws was deemed necessary.

While children were valued as the foundation for survival in the future, they were not seen as complete beings and, therefore, they were ranked at the bottom of a hierarchy of authority. They were subordinate to their parents, the Church, and their teachers, and young children even owed obedience to older children.<sup>9</sup> Again, Catholic leaders cited the Bible when supporting the need for discipline in education,

“You call Me Master and Lord. And you say well: for so I am.”

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<sup>7</sup>Mark 10:14, as cited in Frank P. Cassidy, Molders of the Medieval Mind: The Influence of the Fathers of the Church on the Medieval Schoolmen (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1944) 30.

<sup>8</sup>Pius XII, “Nell’accogliervie,” 255.

<sup>9</sup>Pope Pius XII, “Nell’accogliervie,” 253-254.

Without authority education is impossible. His noble life exemplified respect for law, obedience to authority. Authority of natural law, of parent and teacher, authority of Church and state, are fundamental concepts of His educational principles.”<sup>10</sup>

An earlier twentieth century Pope, Pius XI, supported the idea of obedience to authority in terms of fear. In a papal encyclical of 1929 he discussed the authority of parents stating,

This authority is not given for their own advantage, but for the proper up-bringing of their children in a holy and filial “fear of God, the beginning of wisdom,” on which foundation alone all respect for authority can rest securely: and without which, order, tranquility and prosperity, whether in the family or in society, will be impossible.<sup>11</sup>

Even some of the more “progressive” representatives of the Catholic education system upheld obedience as an important aspect of Catholic education and child rearing. John Bonner, a Catholic school superintendent in the 1940s, characterized the Catholic school as stressing “discipline and order and submission to authority” and worried that, “in the home itself courtesy, reverence, a wholesome awe and respect for authority have been in too many instances replaced by... flippancy and a reversal of the normal situation.”<sup>12</sup>

The main source cited in support for the importance of obedience is the fourth commandment from the Christian Bible, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”<sup>13</sup> This commandment was taken to mean that one

<sup>10</sup>Cassidy, 30.

<sup>11</sup>Pope Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” December 31, 1929, The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939, Claudia Carlen ed. (McGrath Publishing Co., 1981) 364.

<sup>12</sup>As quoted in Francis Ryan, “Sparing the Child: Superintendent John Bonner’s Philosophy of Classroom Discipline and Character Education in the Philadelphia Catholic Schools, 1940-1945,” Vitae Scholasticae, 10:1-2 (1991): 216.

<sup>13</sup>Deuteronomy 5:16.

ought to “honour” all those vested with authority. Pope Pius XII told a group of students, “put your confidence in those who have taken upon themselves and accepted from Providence the grave responsibility of directing your future.”<sup>14</sup> Parents, however, received the most attention as the objects of authority to whom children ought to submit, “Besides the parental relationship and dignity account is to be taken of their authority. Children, so long as they remain under its yoke, are bound to obey.”<sup>15</sup>

This emphasis on the power of authorities and the importance of obedience was intended to prepare students for a moral and successful future. The traits of obedience, co-operation, courage, perseverance, courtesy, punctuality, and good manners were considered valuable assets and were therefore stressed.<sup>16</sup> Obedience, however, was not unconditional. That is, many documents contain qualifiers which give children a small amount of autonomy in making the decision as to whether or not to follow instructions. Children were encouraged to disobey only when instructions were not “moral” or were not in the best interests of the family.<sup>17</sup> For the most part, however, children were expected to do as they were told instead of as they chose. Decision-making was reserved for adults.

<sup>14</sup>Pius XII, “Nell’accogliervie,” 257.

<sup>15</sup>Herbermann, Vol. XI, 479. See also, Leo XII, “Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae,” February 10, 1880, Etienne Gilson ed., The Church Speaks to the Modern World: The Social Teachings of Leo XIII (Garden City, New York: Image Books, a division of Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954), 94; and Pope Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 369.

<sup>16</sup>Ryan, 217.

<sup>17</sup>Herbermann, Vol. XI, 480.

### The Right/Duty to Christian Education

Because adults were given authority over children, they were responsible for providing a “proper” upbringing as it was defined by the Catholic Church. This meant that all children had the right to be educated and that their education ought to be a Christian one. The 1963-1965 Declaration On Christian Education stated,

every man of whatever race, condition, and age... has an inalienable right to an education corresponding to his proper destiny and suited to his native talents, his sex, his cultural background, and his ancestral heritage.<sup>18</sup>

While the form of education remained subject to social hierarchies, the right to education did not. Education, in the formal sense of the word, was considered to be an inalienable right, held by virtue of being human. The importance implied by such terminology is supported by Pius XI's assertion that the education of youth was “work of utmost importance”<sup>19</sup> and by St. John Chrysostom's question, “What greater work is there than training the mind and forming the habits of the young?”<sup>20</sup> This work, along with the duty to proselytise across cultures, was directed by Christian scripture. The Catholic Encyclopedia cites the command, “Going, therefore, teach [sic] ye all nations... and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Walter Abbott, ed., The Documents of Vatican II, trans. Joseph Gallagher (New York: Herder & Herder New York Association Press, 1966) 641.

<sup>19</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 354.

<sup>20</sup>As quoted in Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 354.

<sup>21</sup>Matthew 27:19, 20 as quoted in Herbermann, Vol. V, 300; also, Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 355; and Cassidy, 32.

This direction was taken, by Catholic leaders, to imply both secular or “academic” teaching and religious instruction.<sup>22</sup> Catholic schooling, however, was a prominent focus of teachings regarding education and child rearing which were espoused by the Catholic Church. The primary goal of education, in the opinion of Catholic leaders, was to promote the qualities and characteristics of their Christ figure in children. An expression of this goal also displays the complexity of Catholic ideology as these characteristics included authority and humility, justice and forbearance, wisdom and simplicity, austerity and sympathy, all in “complete harmony.”<sup>23</sup> Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical on Christian education, rooted his claims in Christian scripture when he declared,

The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by Baptism, according to the emphatic expression of the Apostle: “My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you.”<sup>24</sup>

Because this ultimate aim of education was based in religion, the only acceptable form of institutional education condoned by the Church was that provided by the Catholic schools. For this reason, among others (to be outlined later in this chapter), Christian education was considered to be far superior to all other systems of education. The Catholic Encyclopedia gives a brief account of “Oriental Education” (China, India, Egypt, and Persia are placed under this

<sup>22</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 300.

<sup>23</sup>Cassidy, 25.

<sup>24</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 367.

heading), as well as that of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews.<sup>25</sup> While these systems are praised for some of their “attributes” they are essentially deemed to be inferior to Christian education: “As in many other respects so for the work of education, the advent of Christianity is the most important epoch in the history of mankind.”<sup>26</sup> In criticizing pagan<sup>27</sup> education Frank Cassidy, a Catholic scholar and scholar of Catholicism, states that the “teachers were not concerned about matters of Christian faith or ethics; moral training was neither given nor expected.”<sup>28</sup> Informal systems of education were interpreted as “primitive” and wholly non-academic.

In primitive times the helplessness and needs of the child were so obvious that his elders by a natural impulse gave him a training in the rude arts that enabled him to procure the necessities of life... But of education properly so called the savage knows nothing, and much less does he busy himself with theory or plan.<sup>29</sup>

This contempt for non-Christian systems of education led the Catholic Church to denounce all other systems in favour of its own. Pope Pius XII declared that “no educational method... can give perfect and lasting results if it disagrees with Christian principles, or scorns their values, or fails to use true Christian means...”<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup>See Herbermann, Vol. V, 296-99.

<sup>26</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 299.

<sup>27</sup>This word is used by Cassidy to denote “non-Christian” education and not that of Pagan societies.

<sup>28</sup>Cassidy, 161.

<sup>29</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 296.

<sup>30</sup>Pope Pius XII, “Di Gran Cuare Vi Diamo,” October 24, 1955, The Pope Speaks, Spring 1956. This assertion echoes Pope Pius XI’s remark that “there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education,” “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 354.

Because of the concern over the “proper” education of youth, parents were strongly warned against sending their children to any but Catholic schools. While the Church asserted that parents had a right to choose where their children attended school, this assertion appears to have been directed more against state intervention than against its own practices. That is, while parents had the right to make their own decision(s) on the issue, they were directed by the Church to ensure a Catholic education for their children. Pope Leo XIII’s 1890 encyclical on Christians as citizens directs parents to keep their children “away from schools where there is a risk of their drinking in the poison of impiety.”<sup>31</sup> The Church promoted “traditional education” only insofar as it was “necessary or helpful to Christian education.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, education in the formal sense (and indeed Christian education at home was also stressed)<sup>33</sup> had to be under the auspices of the Catholic Church. “Hence, in general, parents may not with a safe conscience send their children to non-Catholic schools, whether these be sectarian or secularist.”<sup>34</sup> Education, therefore, was highly valued and the Church held that parents had the right to choose which school(s) their children would attend. But the Church also gave parents the responsibility of ensuring that education was Catholic as the main goal of Christian education, to develop Christ in children, was considered to be unobtainable under any direction but that of Catholic

<sup>31</sup>Pope Leo XIII, “*Sapientiae Christianae*,” January 10, 1890, *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878-1903*, Claudia Carlen ed. (McGrath Publishing Co., 1981) 221. See also, Pius XI, “*Rappresentanti in Terra*,” 358; and Herbermann, Vol. XI, 479.

<sup>32</sup>Pius XI, “*Rappresentanti in Terra*,” 356.

<sup>33</sup>In the 1963-1965 *Declaration on Education*, the Vatican council asserted, “Let parents then clearly recognize how vital a truly Christian family is for the life and development of God’s own people.” Abbott, 641.

<sup>34</sup>Herbermann, Vol. XI, 479.

institutions.

### The Rights and Responsibilities of Educators

The most prominent theme which ran throughout Catholic dialogue around education was the role of parents. According to Church officials, parents had the primary right to educate their children. This right was also a duty and parents were compelled to give their children a “proper” education. This right and duty was shared in part by both the Church and the state, but only in cases of neglect could the parents’ rights be subjected to parochial or governmental intrusion.<sup>35</sup> Though the Church deemed parents to be the ones responsible for ensuring that their children received a Christian education, the official documents also stressed the importance of ensuring harmony between parents and schools regarding the educational goals and practices.

Numerous official statements put forth arguments in favour of parental freedom and responsibilities concerning education. In 1890 Leo XIII stated that parents “hold from nature their right of training the children to whom they have given birth, with the obligation... of shaping and directing the education of their little ones to the end for which God vouch-safed the privilege of transmitting the gift of life.”<sup>36</sup> This responsibility is even ensconced in Canon Law, canon 1113: “Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of

<sup>35</sup>Even the duty of the state to promote education “whenever the efforts of parents and of other groups are insufficient” is preceded by the caution that the state should pay “attention to parental wishes” in the Declaration on Education, 1963-1965, Abbott, 642. See also, Pius XI, “Rapresentanti in Terra,” (359) which points out that the state should protect children only when parents were found to be wanting physically or morally.

<sup>36</sup>Leo XIII, 221.

their children...”<sup>37</sup> The right to determine the tools of that education are also repeatedly supported.<sup>38</sup> This idea is derived from scripture which remarks that the role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.<sup>39</sup>

Substitutes to parental guidance were not deemed to be desirable but supplements were. The Church itself claimed a special right to educate youths. Again drawing on the direction from the Bible to “teach ye all nations,”<sup>40</sup> the Church assumed that “the office of education belongs by a unique title to the Church... because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men...”<sup>41</sup> The emphasis on the need for Christian education was again apparent as the Church asserted her influence in educating youth. The importance of the Church in education was not limited to religious instruction, however. Pius XI in 1929 stated that the Church had the “inalienable right” and the “indispensable duty” to “watch over the entire education of her children... not merely in regard to the religious instruction...but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation in so far as religion and morality are concerned.”<sup>42</sup> In the same 1929 encyclical, Pius XI also asserted that the Church ought to enjoy complete freedom in

<sup>37</sup>Codex of Cannon Law, as cited in Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 357. For other references to the responsibility parents have to confer education upon their children see Abbott, 641;

<sup>38</sup>See, for example, Leo XIII, “Rerum Novarum,” May 15, 1891, in Gilson; Herbermann, Vol. V, 784; and Abbott, 644.

<sup>39</sup>Genesis 3.

<sup>40</sup>Matthew 27:19, 20, as cited in Herbermann, Vol. V, 300.

<sup>41</sup>Abbott, 642.

<sup>42</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 356.

teaching independent of any “earthly power.”<sup>43</sup> In exerting an influence the Church, according to Pius XI, was not exercising “undue interference, but rather maternal care... in protecting her children from the grave danger of all kinds of doctrinal and moral evil.”<sup>44</sup> The Church, therefore, guardedly protected her own right, as well as that of parents, to provide for the education of children. While the state was not absolved of any responsibility to educate children, Catholic ideals placed its role in a “third place” position.

Although they were seen as subsidiary to the Church and the family in educating youth, the Catholic Church acknowledged that schools were necessary institutions.

Since however the younger generations must be trained in the arts and sciences for the advantage and prosperity of civil society, and since the family itself is unequal to this task, it was necessary to create that social institution, the school... [T]he school is ... an institution subsidiary and complementary to the family and to the Church.<sup>45</sup>

As a subsidiary to the family and Church, the state’s role in schooling should follow only after education was begun in the home.<sup>46</sup> The Church indicated that Catholic schools should have the “same cultural aims as all other schools, be opened to the contemporary world, and be illuminated by faith.”<sup>47</sup> The Church also advocated harmony between the aims of public and Catholic schools as well as between schools and families. In 1956 Pius XII stated that schools and families should be “in perfect agreement” with regard to principles and goals in order that

<sup>43</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 355.

<sup>44</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra, 356.

<sup>45</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 365.

<sup>46</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 295; Abbott, 641 and especially 643-645.

<sup>47</sup>Abbott, 645.

"one may not destroy the influence of the other."<sup>48</sup> Both institutions were seen as necessary factors in the rearing and education of youth and, therefore, the Church assumed that both ought to have similar aims.

Though the state did have an obligation to provide for education, the documents of the Catholic Church indicate that Catholic authorities did not feel that this obligation superceded the rights of the Church and that the rights of parents were, in fact, inalienable. The Church had ideals concerning how people ought to be educated and the *proper* nature of the schools children ought to attend. However, it held that parents' rights and responsibilities were first and foremost in all but very "particular circumstances." The papal encyclicals advocated for consideration of parents' goals in administering education, and the sanctity of the family was held to be more powerful than the state or even Church officials.

### Ideals and Issues in Catholic Pedagogy

While Catholic officials asserted consistent ideals regarding where and by whom children should be taught, they also formed ideals about how that teaching should be administered. Thus, papal encyclicals and other documents of the Vatican gave teachers instructions about desirable pedagogical practices. It is, however, unclear whether this advice was given as a reflection of practices already in place, as a statement of ideals to work toward, or as an indication that such practices were uncommon and, therefore, in need of explanation and papal endorsement. It is impossible here to be certain as to the reasoning behind the Church's formal pedagogical advice. However, it is logical that Catholic Church officials would not have promoted practices that they

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<sup>48</sup>Pius XII, "Nell'accogliere," 259.

deemed to be “undesirable.” This advice on pedagogical practices, then, is certainly representative of the Church’s ideal view of teaching children. Official statements from the Vatican did not question the institutional aspect of the education system and, therefore, it can be assumed that the Church officials supported the system in general. While the Vatican documents did not invite Catholics to question the system in general, the recognition of ideals around pedagogical practices did indicate that the system was not stagnant and that there were ideals toward which to strive.

The main “ideal” for educators expounded by the Church was that of the “perfect teacher” drawn from Christian scripture. Cassidy describes this “perfect teacher,” in the person of Christ, as having a “magnetic voice” and an inspiring presence.<sup>49</sup> This Catholic scholar (and scholar of Catholicism) states that Christ understood the importance of building learning on students’ background knowledge, prepared pupils to receive new information, advocated active and not passive learning, recognised individual differences, acted as a role model, and taught with authority.<sup>50</sup> According to Cassidy, “these and similar educational principles... are the substance of the *pedagogia perennis* of Catholicism” and “they have been consistently expounded by the great leaders of Christian thought.”<sup>51</sup>

The importance placed on pedagogy is evident in the many pieces of advice officials offered to Catholic teachers. An American superintendent of schools, John Bonner, believed that when fairness, toleration, and courtesy were to be learned, pedagogical practices had to reflect these

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<sup>49</sup>Cassidy, 26.

<sup>50</sup>Cassidy, 30.

<sup>51</sup>Cassidy, 31.

values.<sup>52</sup> Also, the Catholic Encyclopedia emphasized that the learner's background experiences and needs must be considered in order to teach effectively.<sup>53</sup> The needs of the learner would, of course, differ between students, and teachers and Church leaders also recognized this fact. Pope Pius XII spoke in favour of giving students individual attention when he told the Italian Association of Catholic Schoolmasters in 1955 that "there are... times... when each child must be regarded individually and when it would be harmful to deal with him as part of a group."<sup>54</sup> He also cautioned against boarding schools which treated all students alike saying that a child "should never be allowed to get the impression of being confused with the crowd and forgotten; of being neglected in his particular requirements, needs, and weaknesses."<sup>55</sup> The Catholic Encyclopedia criticized "Oriental education" for "sacrificing the individual to the interests of human institutions, and... reducing education to a machine like process, the aim of which is to mould all minds upon one unchanging pattern." The passage goes on to explain that "Oriental education" demonstrated "how little can be accomplished for real education by despotic authority, which demands, and is satisfied with, an outward observance of custom and law."<sup>56</sup> Clearly, Catholic ideals about pedagogy emphasized institutional education which could also

<sup>52</sup>Ryan, 221.

<sup>53</sup>The encyclopedia states that "teaching must be adapted to the needs of the developing mind." (Vol. V, 295); and the "whole teaching of Christ is the clearest proof of the principle that education must adapt itself in method and practice to the needs of those who are to be taught." (Vol. V, 300)

<sup>54</sup>Pope Pius XII, "L'intima Letta," December 31, 1955, The Pope Speaks, (Spring 1956): 88.

<sup>55</sup>Pius XII, "Nell'accogliervi," 254.

<sup>56</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 296.

provide for the needs of individual students.

Students' needs included not only individual attention but interest as well. According to John Bonner, inflexible routine ought to be avoided<sup>57</sup> and the Catholic Encyclopedia again found fault with "Oriental education" for using rote memorization without ensuring understanding or allowing for free thought.<sup>58</sup> In order to promote "real" learning, Catholic officials advocated for some less mechanized processes of teaching. Again, the institutional system was not seen as an impediment to flexibility, emphasis on individual needs and interest was to be accomplished within the walls of the schools.

Church leaders, therefore, perceived schools to be the "proper" means of imparting knowledge and did not question them (as long as Catholic education was available within the system). Pedagogical practices were criticized, however, and officials appear to have been in favour of institutional education which acknowledged the need for individual attention and an understanding of each student's background and individual needs.

### The "Protection" of Children

Pedagogical advice also included directions regarding "role-modelling." Following the command found in scripture, "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect,"<sup>59</sup> Catholic officials strongly encouraged adults, especially parents and teachers, to act as role models for children.

<sup>57</sup>Ryan, 222.

<sup>58</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 296.

<sup>59</sup>Matthew 5:48, as cited in Cassidy, 29.

As parents were the primary educators of children, they received direction from Catholic officials concerning their behaviour. The Catholic Encyclopedia states that children should learn not only through instruction but also by following their parents' example.<sup>60</sup> Pius XI told Catholics that the education children received in the home would be "more efficacious in proportion to the clear and constant good example set, first by the parents, and then by the other members of the household."<sup>61</sup> Thus, in keeping with their responsibility to educate their children, parents were advised that this education would be more effective if they set a good example for their children to follow.

Aside from parents, teachers spent the most time in direct contact with children and shared in the responsibility of educating them. For this reason, Catholic leaders also encouraged teachers to set a good example for their students to follow. John Bonner believed that teachers "must model the prescribed behaviour and... demonstrate by concrete example the qualities and virtues they teach."<sup>62</sup> Pius XI and Pius XII also advised teachers to act as role models for their students.<sup>63</sup>

In order to show children which behaviours they ought to display, parents and teachers had to behave appropriately. While this may simply have been a way of allowing children to watch those adults who were "successful" in society and model their behaviour after them, there may

<sup>60</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 304; and Vol. XI, 479.

<sup>61</sup>Pius XI, "Rappresentanti in Terra," (1929), 364.

<sup>62</sup>Ryan, 219.

<sup>63</sup>Pius XI, states, "Perfect schools require perfect teachers" in "Rappresentanti in Terra," 367; and Pius XII tells teachers, "practice what you teach" in "L'intima Letza," 86.

have been some other underlying assumptions behind the direction to model appropriate behaviour. Catholic children were not fully integrated into adult society. The worlds that they inhabited, at home and at school, were very different from those in which the adults lived. Catholic leaders repeatedly expounded the idea that children had to be protected from the potentially damaging influences of the adult realm. Therefore, the direction to display desired behaviours in order to promote imitation by children may also have been drawn from this way of viewing children. In traditional Catholic ideals, children were not described as people able to make their own decisions but as people who required the protection of adults with regards to moral issues.

In 1955 Pope Pius XI stated, “a child is a small fragile being, completely helpless in the face of life...”<sup>64</sup> and, therefore, Church officials deemed the “exposure” of children to immoral influences to be very dangerous.<sup>65</sup> Again, this idea was drawn from Christian scripture, “But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.”<sup>66</sup> Children’s innocence was to be guarded and Catholic officials attempted to protect that innocence through positive role-modelling as well as through censorship of their activities and of the information to which they had access.

While officials did not advocate the complete segregation of Catholic children in society or

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<sup>64</sup>Pius XII, “L’intima Letza,” 86.

<sup>65</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 301.

<sup>66</sup>Matthew 18:6, as cited in Cassidy, 30.

their removal from society,<sup>67</sup> they did argue that censorship was necessary in order to avoid “the dangers of moral and religious shipwreck... for inexperienced youth.”<sup>68</sup> The importance that official statements placed on Catholic education (as opposed to secular or Protestant education) also sprang from this desire to protect children from damaging influences. Catholic officials warned against what might be taught in secular schools and what children might learn outside the classroom. Though Pius XI considered that the reading of “false doctrines” could be useful when children were properly prepared and given an antidote to their “poisonous influences,” there were direct attempts made to avoid having such material available to Catholic students. The Index Liborum Prohibitorum listed books which were forbidden to all Catholics; reading them was considered a serious sin.<sup>69</sup> Canon law permitted exemptions for those conducting scholarly research<sup>70</sup> but these people would not include children or even teenagers.

Apart from the Index, other measures were attempted in the name of protecting children from potentially damaging influences. In 1942 the H.W. Wilson Company published the Standard Catalogue for High School Libraries with a supplement, the “Catholic Supplement to the Standard Catalogue for High School Libraries,” available both separately and bound with the main edition. This supplement was aimed specifically at youths as it was to be applied to

<sup>67</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 367.

<sup>68</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 367.

<sup>69</sup>The Church first published the “Index” in 1559 and periodically updated it until 1966 when it was declared no longer binding. It listed “condemned books” alphabetically by author. See, Ralph D. Wagner, “Not Recommended: A List for Catholic High School Libraries, 1942,” Libraries and Culture 30:2 (1995): 172.

<sup>70</sup>Wagner, 173.

Catholic high school library collections and the standard which was used to judge material was “clearly tailored to the impressionability of a younger group of readers.”<sup>71</sup> In 1934, Catholic Americans founded “The National Legion of Decency” in order to advise the public about the morality of motion pictures. This was followed by the publication (by Catholic institutions) of two periodicals that reviewed current books with regards to their moral value.<sup>72</sup> These three sources, “recognizing the diverse reactions of different audiences..., used more stringent standards for youth than for adults.”<sup>73</sup> Clearly, Catholic organizations and leaders felt that children required protection from certain types of information. The specific types of information that was withheld is fully explored in Ralph Wagner’s article about the 1942 supplement to the Standard Catalogue for High School Libraries. However, information regarding specific sexual acts,<sup>74</sup> as well as plots involving “sins” which do not receive judgement and punishment, texts discussing the Catholic Church in an unfavourable light, and the treatment of religion as only one of many means for individuals to form a philosophy of life repeatedly received censorship from the various Catholic organizations.<sup>75</sup>

Through official declarations as well as Catholic organizations, the Church expressed the ideal that children needed protection against immoral influences. To combat these influences

<sup>71</sup>Wagner, 178.

<sup>72</sup>Wagner, 174.

<sup>73</sup>Wagner, 174.

<sup>74</sup>See also Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 363. The Pope advises against teaching “sex ed.” due to the “inborn weakness of human nature” and because “such is our inclination to sin, that often in the very things considered to be remedies against sin, we find occasions for and inducements to sin itself.”

<sup>75</sup>Wagner, *passim*, and especially 179-185.

parents and teachers needed to act as role models for children both to demonstrate acceptable behaviours and to censor inappropriate information. This ideal also resulted in the notion that children ought not to be presented with information and left to judge it themselves but rather that they be limited in what they would experience and be told what to conclude when material was suspect.

### Discipline

The issue of discipline, insofar as it relates to the authority of adults over children, is virtually unchallenged in the documents of the Vatican. Discipline with regard to respect for authority is described as absolutely necessary to education even in Christian scripture.<sup>76</sup> In support of discipline the Bible states, “He who loves his son will not spare the rod... He who disciplines his son will profit by him.”<sup>77</sup> According to Catholic documents, a lack of discipline was the beginning of “defective moral character in the children, and manifold unhappiness among all.”<sup>78</sup> Official documents gave parents both the right and the duty to discipline their children, “Parents have the right to administer chastisement to delinquent children. Their omission to punish suitably may be a serious offence before God.”<sup>79</sup> The Catholic Encyclopedia criticized Greek education for failing to “provide adequate sanction for the principles they formulated...”<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup>See Cassidy, 30.

<sup>77</sup>Sir. 30:1-2,

<sup>78</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 784.

<sup>79</sup>Herbermann, Vol. XI, 479.

<sup>80</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 297.

However, it is difficult to discern from official documents what would be deemed “adequate sanction” or “suitable punishment.”

It is clear that the officials valued control over children both at home and in the classroom but clear lines as to how that control ought to be achieved and maintained are not drawn. While Pope Pius XI, in his 1929 encyclical on Christian education, declared that discipline is necessary,<sup>81</sup> Pius XII argued twenty-seven years later that “there is no place in a school for... the penalty that is exclusively vindictive.”<sup>82</sup> Corporal punishment in its various forms is not specifically discussed in documents of the Vatican.

While in Philadelphia in the 1920s corporal punishment was “utterly forbidden,”<sup>83</sup> a small survey indicated that various forms of corporal punishment persisted in the Philidelphian Archdiocese into the 1960s.<sup>84</sup> John Bonner, superintendent of the schools in this Archdiocese in the 1940s, abhorred harsh discipline, especially corporal punishment, and repeatedly warned against using such methods of control in the classrooms of schools under his authority.<sup>85</sup> The repetitious nature of his warnings, however, may indicate that Bonner did recognize the occurrences, or at least the potential for the use of corporal punishment in Philadelphia’s parochial schools.

Though there are no official statements which draw distinct lines or make clear statements as

<sup>81</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 356 and 364.

<sup>82</sup>Pius XII, “Nell’accogliervie,” 255.

<sup>83</sup>Joseph M O’Hara, “Regulations for the Parish Schools” (Philadelphia: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 1923) as cited in Ryan, 215.

<sup>84</sup>Ryan, 212-213.

<sup>85</sup>Ryan, *passim*.

to what forms of punishment were acceptable, it is apparent that such punishments were used in Catholic homes and schools. According to Phillip Geven,

Catholics... have... sustained traditions of using physical punishments both in families and in schools. But so far very little has been written by or about Catholics concerning their attitudes toward and practice of corporal punishments.”<sup>86</sup>

Geven describes the experience of Dorothy Day who was raised Protestant and converted to Catholicism as an adult. In her book, Catholic Counterculture in America, Day admits that the ideals of suffering, self-denial and self-abnegation, and martyrdom apparent in Catholicism resonated with her.<sup>87</sup> Geven also includes anecdotes from a man who grew up as the child of a Catholic father who often used corporal punishment to elicit compliance from his child.<sup>88</sup>

Within the Catholic tradition of asceticism, there was room for rationalization of harsh methods of discipline and the Vatican set no clear parameters regarding the use of force. Even while influential Catholic educators such as Bonner fought against this distortion of the tradition, the reality of Catholic children at school and at home appears to have included harsh physical treatment, at least in some cases. Though officials of the Catholic Church emphasized the importance of discipline, no definitive statements were made to guide teachers and parents in exercising corporal punishment. This lack of clarity would have been as apparent to the contemporary Catholic parent or teacher as it is to scholars and the ambiguity left a great deal of room for a variety of behaviour. While vindictiveness and cruelty were certainly not advocated,

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<sup>86</sup>Phillip Geven, Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) 5-6 note.

<sup>87</sup>See Geven, 5-6 note.

<sup>88</sup>Geven, 230 note 49.

clear definitions of “appropriate punishments” remained unavailable.

#### Conclusion and the Ideology in Relation to the Shubenacadie Residential School

Catholic ideologies of child rearing and educational practice stressed the value of children and the importance of their education. While they were expected to obey their parents and other adults, children were allowed to disobey if they received “immoral” instructions. The ideology also asserted that children had the inalienable right to a “proper,” that is a formal and a Christian, education. Church officials deemed Catholic schooling to be far superior to all other systems of education (and especially to those “primitive” forms of education which did not use formal structures and institutions to relay knowledge). Therefore, Church leaders advised parents to avoid sending their children to any but Catholic schools.

As children had the right to an education, parents, the Church, and the state were compelled to provide it. Above all, this duty fell on the shoulders of parents. They were to be the primary educators and, while the other institutions played a role, the Catholic Church guarded parents’ rights against unwanted intervention in all but “specific circumstances.”

The Church’s concern over proper education also led her leaders to issue advice to educators regarding how they ought to approach their task. Pedagogy was recognized as an important aspect of teaching and Catholic Church officials advocated for individual attention to students, building new knowledge on pupils’ past experiences, and using pedagogical practices that reflected curriculum content and goals.

The main goal of Christian education was to promote in children the characteristics attributed to Christ. However, the Catholic officials considered children ill-equipped to withstand immoral

influences and to avoid moral corruption. Therefore, Catholic documents and organizations argued for the protection of children's innocence through censorship of "dangerous" influences. Until children were adults, they needed to be shielded from immoral culture (including books, movies, information about sexual activities, and secular schooling). While it was impossible to completely safeguard children from such influences, Catholic organizations did attempt to eliminate some of the more accessible materials.

All aspects of prominent Catholic ideology around child-rearing and education were complex and left room for individuality in their interpretation and implementation. The complicated relationship between the hierarchy of authority and respect for children left room for individual choice as either the authority or the respect could be emphasized to support desired outcomes. Nowhere is this complexity more evident than in the issue of punishment. While officials cited scripture in advocating the use of corporal punishment to elicit obedience and successful child rearing, clear lines were not drawn in official documents of the Vatican to define what sorts of punishments were acceptable. There are accounts of corporal punishment being used both in Catholic families and schools, but no specific guidelines from Church officials outlined when such punishment was needed or how harshly it ought to be administered. The prescriptions for the proper relationships of responsibility and authority among the Church, teachers, parents, and the government also left room for choice, conflict, abuse or agency.

This complexity runs throughout the ideologies. What was said does not necessarily reflect what happened, but it ought to have informed the general outlook upon which practices were based. The importance for this study is what those ideals were. How did Catholic officials view the rearing and education of children? These basic ideals and the complexities that existed

within them can then be applied to the situation at the Shubenacadie Residential School in order to compare ideologies and practices.

The stress placed on the “inalienable” rights of parents to direct their children’s education is remarkable in light of the practice of Catholic residential schools forcibly taking children from First Nations families. Pius XI declared that children ought not to be educated or removed from their families without parental consent.<sup>89</sup> The principal at the Shubenacadie school and the Indian Affairs Branch often admitted children without the “required” signature of consent from a parent.<sup>90</sup> And, in 1951 Maritime Regional Superintendent of Indian Agencies, Frank McKinnon wrote to Indian Affairs about two boys, “Knowing the family background, it was apparent that the only solution was their admission to the Indian Residential School. This move was opposed violently by the parents and it was necessary to forcibly remove the children.”<sup>91</sup> The Church held that the state exceeds its authority when it provides for the material wants of the child, removes him from parental influence or specifies the school that he must attend.<sup>92</sup> Though this declaration is preceded by the statement that there must be made “due allowance for particular

<sup>89</sup>Pius XI, “Rappresentanti in Terra,” 357.

<sup>90</sup>See, Martha Elizabeth Walls, “Native Responses to the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 1928-1951,” M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1996., 99-103.

<sup>91</sup>Frank McKinnon to Indian Affairs Branch, November 19, 1951. NAC, RG 10, Volume 6057, File 265-10, Part 4. Also, some children in residential schools did not meet the “qualifications” for enrollment indicating that they were placed there for reasons other than those deemed necessary by the Indian Affairs Branch. See Davey, Director of Educational Services, Indian Affairs Branch, to D.E. Wordsworth, Canadian Welfare Council, August 19, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 14.

<sup>92</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 784.

conditions,”<sup>93</sup> it appears that the Church itself, at least in its official ideology, disagreed with the methods used to obtain Native children for attendance in residential schools. Of course, not all of these institutions were under the auspices of the Catholic Church but some were,<sup>94</sup> including the residential school at Shubenacadie, and the Church was not vocal in opposing the common practices of the “fall round-up” that occurred on Native reserves throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Catholic officials argued in favour of day schools for white children in order that they receive both an education in a formal academic institution and within the family home. This right was emphasized as it was felt that the “virtues of control and purity can nowhere be inculcated so thoroughly as in the home.”<sup>95</sup> However, in 1912 the Catholic Archbishop of St. Boniface, along with four other bishops, entreated the government to remove Native children from their homes in order that they be “caught young to be saved from what is on the whole the degenerating influence of their home environment.”<sup>96</sup> The racist notion that Native parents stood in the way of solving the “Indian problem” meant that the Church ignored its own ideology by contributing to a system that usurped these parents’ rights.

The importance of achieving harmony between family and school goals is also a remarkable factor of Catholic educational ideology. Given the fundamental differences between First

<sup>93</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 784.

<sup>94</sup>About 60% were Catholic-operated. For a list of the schools and their denominational affiliations see, Milloy, Appendix; and for maps locating these schools see, Miller, xxiii-xxvi.

<sup>95</sup>Herbermann, Vol. V, 304.

<sup>96</sup>As cited in Milloy, 27.

Nations families and Church and government on the cultural goals of the schools, such an ideal must have been difficult to put into practice.<sup>97</sup> Far from being “in perfect agreement” the Church and state goals regarding assimilation in Indian education directly contradicted Native parents’ wishes. The very basis of the residential school system, then, stood as a barrier to the ideal. Did school officials simply ignore this ideal as impossible in the “particular situation” of residential schools? Did they convince themselves it could be attained with a sub-group of “good” families? Was this ideal a means by which some Mi’kmaw parents could negotiate some limited, shared educational agenda with the school?<sup>98</sup>

While Catholic officials argued that all children had a right to an education, compulsion on the level that Native children experienced was not supported in the Catholic ideology. The Declaration on Christian Education and a newspaper article written by a Native man, both published in the mid-1960s actually advocated similar educational principles. The Catholic document upheld the child’s right to an education suited to “his native talents, cultural background and ancestral heritage.”<sup>99</sup> In an article entitled, “Sons of Nature: Give Indian

<sup>97</sup> Mi’kmaw parents sometimes asked that their children attend the school in order to achieve social mobility through education but cultural assimilation was not a part of this desire. See correspondence between parents and the Department in Walls 106-109.

<sup>98</sup> Isabelle Knockwood guesses that her parents’ weekly visits to the Shubenacadie Residential School may have protected her and her siblings from some of the more vicious punishments routinely doled out at the school. The nuns, therefore, might have taken parental concerns into consideration however, this may also have been an attempt to undermine children’s claims about their treatment in the institution. (Though she and her siblings certainly did not escape physical punishments.) Isabelle Knockwood, Out of the Depths: Experiences of Mi’kmaw Children at the Shubenacadie Residential School, Shubenacadie Nova Scotia (Lockport, NS: Roseway Publishing, 1992) 27, 78-9, 84, and 123-4.

<sup>99</sup> Abbott, 641.

Education That Suits His Talents," Zavier Michan asked for education in forestry, geology, commercial fishing, fur farms, tourist resorts, guiding, and scientific trapping alongside the "three Rs." Like the Catholic ideology's emphasis on parental input, Michan also stated that this must "start from a central core whose aim is to develop Indians capable of doing what Indian people want and not what the white man would force upon them."<sup>100</sup> Native people, however, had little opportunity to contribute to the system of education designed and operated by whites which aimed to turn them into "brown white men."

Even outside the policies that directed attendance and educational aims at the school, Catholic ideologies were distorted, ignored, or contradicted in the institution's day to day teaching and child rearing. While the official ideal permitted children a small degree of autonomy to ignore "immoral" instructions, the administration and curriculum at the school distorted this idea. That is, teachers and academic content advised students to ignore the "immoral" influences of their parents and communities but did not invite disobedience to their own morally dubious instructions. A former student related a story to Isabelle Knockwood in which he was strapped for refusing to perform oral sex on a priest or brother.<sup>101</sup>

Even in the complicated area of discipline, practices at the Shubenacadie Residential School appear to have been discordant with Catholic directives. Though the documents drew no clear lines defining what types of punishments were acceptable, Pope Pius XII argued that they

<sup>100</sup>Zavier Michan, "Sons of Nature: Give Indian Education that Suits His Talents," Port Arthur Daily, January 20, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9027, File 51/1-10. Michan also called for Native doctors and lawyers and criticised the federal system for failing to produce these professionals over the previous century of "Indian education."

<sup>101</sup>Knockwood, 94. This man also told the nine-year-old child that he was God's friend and that if the child did things for him God would take him to heaven.

ought never to be vindictive in nature. In the 1950s, girls at “Shubie” were not permitted sanitary towels for overnight use, and bleeding onto the sheets often resulted in a beating.<sup>102</sup>

Pedagogical instructions from Church officials were also ignored. The administration paid little attention to the notion that individual students ought to receive individual attention.<sup>103</sup> Rather than use the pupils’ background experiences to aid further education, those experiences were negated and the educators’ goal was to extinguish the background knowledge instead of building on it.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the teachers also discouraged students’ respect for their parents and their cultural heritage. In 1908 Frank Oliver, Minister of Indian Affairs at the time, worried about this aspect of the system. He wrote to a prominent Toronto lawyer and evangelical churchman,

one of the most important commandments laid upon the human by the divine is love and respect by children for parents. It seems strange that in the name of religion a system of education should have been instituted, the foundation principle of which not only ignored but... contradicted this command.<sup>105</sup>

The government and Church administrators considered Native parents to be inappropriate role

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<sup>102</sup>Knockwood, 93. Knockwood also outlines many other forms of “discipline” that were regularly administered at the school including head shaving, strapping (at times on students’ backs, even to the point where the child became unconscious) and sexual abuse.

<sup>103</sup>Classrooms at the school were chronically overcrowded and school inspectors criticised teachers for failing to give students individual attention. These issues will be explored in Chapter Three. For class enrollment figures in the 1950s and 1960s and for reports on teachers see, “School Inspection Reports,” NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5; and NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 51/23-5.

<sup>104</sup>This idea is explored further in the next chapter.

<sup>105</sup>Frank Oliver to S.H. Blake, January 28, 1908. General Synod Archives, Gs75-103, Series 1-14, Box 15, Missionary Society of the Church of Canada, Blake Correspondence. As cited in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Final Report (Ottawa: 1993) Section 1.1, footnote #27.

models for their children and they were, therefore, deprived of the opportunity to act in this role. Children may have been seen as “helpless” and their educational material may have been censored or supplemented to provide “antidotes” to moral evils<sup>106</sup> but surely, nuns who beat or sexually abused children were not protecting or acting as role models for their students.<sup>107</sup> The joint venture of throne and altar left little room for the rights and responsibilities of Native parents. The goal to assimilate Native children, above all other educational aims, may have meant that Native students were not afforded the respect necessary to apply Catholic doctrine in the residential school at Shubenacadie.

While the discussions of various racial or religious groups in the Catholic documents belie an underlying bias, it makes little sense that Catholic officials within the residential school system in Canada would ignore all that their religious leaders had advised for decades. That is, even under the colonialist missionary agenda to “teach... all nations,” the most effective education, according to Catholic leaders, was a Christian one. If the desire was truly to educate and “uplift” the Native children, why would not the best available advice regarding pedagogy and child-rearing be applied?

Adhering to traditional Catholic ideologies could have eased some of the more insidious aspects of life at the residential school. The reasons behind the failure to do so may include racist notions that the Mi’kmaw children were not worthy of the respect entailed in treating them

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<sup>106</sup>The Ginn “Faith and Freedom Series” readers, authorized for use in Catholic residential schools were in use in the school at Shubenacadie alongside the provincial school readers. The content of the Catholic readers was heavily religious in nature and the stories contained many messages about “moral” and “proper” behaviour as it was defined by the Catholic Church.

<sup>107</sup>For an account of life at the school including instances of abuse see Knockwood.

as the Church advised for white Catholic children. Governmental policies, including assimilationist goals, may have played a role or the frustrations of a religious life and living at a residential school could also have influenced practices. The curriculum content and tensions within the system may also have influenced the practices of Catholic educators in the school.<sup>108</sup> The reasons hardly matter. Catholics are taught to believe in the infallibility of the pope, that the pope speaks from their highest spiritual power. Papal encyclicals and addresses, therefore, ought to matter. The Catholic ideologies that ought to have informed the school's founding and operation could have worked to the advantage of Mi'kmaw children, their parents, and their community. But the Catholic faculty at the Shubenacadie Residential School, and the Catholic Church in Canada generally, chose selectively from those ideological precepts in way that stripped the Catholic tradition of much of the benefit it might have offered.

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<sup>108</sup>These aspects of the school are explored in the upcoming chapters.

**Chapter Two: Tools of Assimilation:**  
**Content and Objectives in Nova Scotia's Public School Curriculum**

Throughout the experiments with residential schooling both Native peoples and the government of Canada expressed an interest in “educating” Native children in Western style schools. The reasoning behind the two groups’ desire to provide such opportunities, however, differed greatly. The federal government saw education as a means of assimilating and thereby reducing future financial aid to Native peoples. If education could help to procure jobs, the government would not be responsible for assisting graduates as adults. Further, the type of education that children were given could determine the jobs that they would be qualified to hold upon graduation. Prior to its abolition in the 1951 Indian Act, a system of schooling was used in residential schools whereby students spent half of each day in classrooms and the other half in “practical training.” Much of this training prepared students for work in a blue-collar workforce.<sup>1</sup> The effect was that the government was able to implement social control over Native peoples first by forcing them to give up their children to the principals/(principles) of residential schools and then through the education which slotted those children into the unskilled

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<sup>1</sup>Domestic science was key for girls while boys, in most cases, learned to perform other unskilled labour, especially farming. Children were used to do the chores which ought to have been performed by hired staff in an effort to save money. This system received criticism even from white school inspectors reporting to the Indian Affairs Branch who said that the system was not “likely to achieve more than mediocre results” and was of little “value... as educational training.” See John S. Milloy, A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986 (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1999) 170; Also, R.F. Davey, Director of Educational Services for the Indian Affairs Branch reported that, prior to 1950, the half-day system “contained very little of instructional value but consisted mainly of the performance of repetitive, routine chores of little or no educational value.” INAC files, Volume 2, File 601/25-2, Davey, “Residential Schools Past and Future” March 8, 1968 as cited in Canada, Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, under “Residential Schools” 1.2. This document is available in full on the RCAP website, <http://www.RCAP.ca>.

labour force.<sup>2</sup> The federal government also intended that education would act as an assimilating force on the Native students. Placement in an institution where they were not permitted to speak their own language and exposure to “white” ideals in curriculum content were measures meant to assimilate Native peoples to non-Native norms.<sup>3</sup>

This exercise in social control had some of its hegemonic success because Native people saw academic education for their children as an opportunity for upward social mobility. In 1871, when Chief Shingwauk requested that a “teaching wigwam” be built for his community, he expressed the notion that, because the English people were so “powerful,” successful, and advanced, he wished that Ojibwa children could be “taught how to read and how to write; and also how to farm and build houses, and make clothing; so that by and bye they might go back and teach their own people.”<sup>4</sup> This interest in learning continued and parents and children alike saw education as a means of procuring employment in the future.<sup>5</sup> Complete cultural and political

<sup>2</sup>J.R. Miller used the metaphor of a “buckskin ceiling” being placed over the heads of Native students. See, Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 157. M. Bacus noted a similar use of practical education for social control in the schools of British Guiana in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 1960s. See M. Kazim Bacus, “The Primary School Curriculum in a Colonial Society,” Journal of Curriculum Studies 6:1 (1974) 15-29.

<sup>3</sup>For examples of the government’s desire to use residential schools as agents of assimilation, see Nicholas Flood Davin, Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds (Ottawa, 1879) *passim* and John A. Macdonald as cited in Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 103. The government’s assimilationist goals regarding education also received support in the 1951 Indian Act, even as the residential schooling experiment entered its dying decades. See Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 530.

<sup>4</sup>As cited in Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 6. Spelling variation in the original.

<sup>5</sup>See Martha Walls, “Native Responses to the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 1928-195,” M.A., Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Department of History, 1996, 108. Other authors have explored the notion that colonized peoples have expressed a desire for

assimilation, however, was not their goal. Native people's contributions at the hearings of the Special Joint Committee (created in 1946) were markedly critical of the assimilationist aim of the Native schooling system.<sup>6</sup> While the desire to educate Native children in European-style schools was shared by the government (in conjunction with the churches) and Native peoples, the visions of what that education was to accomplish were vastly different.

While both the Native and the non-Native bodies held specific notions concerning the purpose(s) of educating Native children, only the government officials held power over which tools were used to accomplish this education. Therefore, the government chose a curriculum which would best suit its own financial, social, and assimilationist goals. In the 1950s and 1960s, that meant that residential school students followed provincial school curriculum, as did their white peers. This curriculum, then, becomes an interesting target for study as its use and content can illuminate the federal government's vision of what Native children ought to learn as well as the effects that the content might have had on Native students.

Richard Aldrich states that the "formal education system of a society, particularly as expressed in its formal curriculum, represents a selection from the activities which certain members of that society- politicians, benefactors, administrators, clerics, teachers, parents,

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"European" education as a means of securing upward social mobility. For example, see Clive Whitehead, "British colonial educational policy: a synonym for cultural imperialism?" Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism, J.A. Mangan ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 224-228; and Bacus 24-26.

<sup>6</sup>Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 379. See also an open letter from a Native mother in Surrey B.C. to her son's teacher (1975) in which she asked, "Can you help him acquire the intellectual skills he needs without at the same time imposing your values on top of those he already has?" as quoted in Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 443. See Appendix "E".

employers, students, pupils- regard as being particularly worthwhile.”<sup>7</sup> Both implicit and explicit in Nova Scotia’s public school curriculum were the “core values” and ideals held by those who had a hand in creating it. By authorizing the use of this curriculum in the Shubenacadie Residential School, the federal government too supported the values that it contained.

These “values” were most obvious in the subjects such as English, history, geography, “civics,” health, and music.<sup>8</sup> The content of texts in these areas routinely included directions about how one ought to live in order to achieve “success,” depictions of “good” or “bad” people, and explanations of how things came to be or how things ought to be. For this reason, these subjects are the focus of this chapter.

In approaching the question of curriculum in residential schools, this study assumes, as do Mangan and his contributors in The Imperial Curriculum, that the purpose of curriculum content is distinct from its implementation and that its dissemination is distinct from its assimilative effects.<sup>9</sup> That is, the reasons for implementing public school curriculum and the process of indoctrination are considered here in order to assess the possibilities for assimilation within that

<sup>7</sup>Richard Aldrich, “Imperialism in the Study and Teaching of History,” Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism, J.A. Mangan ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 24. See also, D. Lawton, Class, Culture and the Curriculum (London and Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1975) 85-86.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Nicholas Berard argued that social studies “is still the main tool used to drive home the themes of national unity and identity, socialize children to the political values and attitudes of our national leadership, and provide guidance to students in matters once thought proper to religious teaching.” See, Character Education and Nation Building in the Maritimes, 1880-1920, (Truro, Nova Scotia: Nova Scotia Teachers College, Dawson Lecture Series, March 31, 1993) 55.

<sup>9</sup>J.A. Mangan, The Imperial Curriculum: Racial images and education in the British colonial experience (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 2.

curriculum. While readers may explore the extent of the success of the government's assimilationist goals in other sources,<sup>10</sup> this chapter focuses on the federal government and curriculum designers' goals, on the messages contained in the texts, and on the effects that these factors might have had on Native students at the Shubenacadie Residential School. The possible impact of the curriculum on students is determined by weighing the messages that were presented and the audience that experienced them. That is, information which denigrated Native peoples in general, that which celebrated Anglo-Saxon society as the most "successful" and "advanced," and that which precluded Native students from identifying themselves within societal norms, was sure to have had a unique impact on those students.

Part of this impact might have resulted in resistance to assimilation had the curriculum-makers' main objectives been equally represented within course content. Three main goals were set out in the Department of Education's curriculum guidelines and publications. These goals included promoting an appreciation for "our way of life," creating "good citizens," and fostering "world understanding." The first two goals were supported but the third was not. In fact, this objective was undercut by material about Native people and other races which was often objectionable, inaccurate, and insulting. If it had been supported, this third objective might have provided an opportunity for Native students to gain a sense of self-awareness and confidence

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<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Knockwood, Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia (Lockeport, NS: Roseway Publishing, 1992) *passim* and 155-159; N. Rosalyn Ing, "The Effects of Residential Schools on Native Child-Rearing Practices," Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18, Supplement (1991): 92-94; Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 183-216, 343-374, 406-443; Milloy *passim*; Agnes Grant, No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1996) 245-267; and Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert and Don McCaskill, "The Legacy of the Past: An Overview," Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 10-13.

which, in turn, might have allowed for more resistance to assimilative forces, increased academic success or, at least, might have made the residential school experience less miserable.

Curriculum content did not foster a sense of belonging to a community, or an understanding of the religion(s), history, and culture of the Mi'kmaw community for the school's Native students. This may have helped pave the way for increased assimilation as students were not given the tools to build self-esteem or pride in their own community. The infrequent and cursory comments concerning the need for understanding among peoples which might have offered motivation for questioning other curriculum content were buried among the more vociferous and persistent messages outlining white superiority. This too inhibited the possibility of resisting assimilative forces within the curriculum.

The textbooks supported two of the three most prominent "official" objectives but this was done by maintaining limited views of what constituted acceptable lifestyles, beliefs, and appearances. Textbooks continually presented students with specific depictions of "good citizens" and "proper" ways to live. In this way, assimilation may have been more effective as alternative views were not available. The pursuit of assimilationist goals meant that the federal government employed provincial curriculum designed for white children in public schools. The disjuncture between the intended and actual audiences in this case meant that the Department of Education's potentially helpful curricular goals were undercut by the assimilative forces of the curriculum content.

In order to determine the major objectives of education, as expressed by education officials, this study examines the Department of Education's curriculum guidelines and

its publications, Education Office Bulletin and The Journal of Education.<sup>11</sup> The textbooks used in the schools were sometimes accompanied by teachers' guides or included notes to the teachers in their prefaces. These too are used to identify curriculum designers' educational goals. In order to define the most prominent messages contained in the actual curriculum, this study focusses on the texts that were the main sources of information for students in the subject areas under study. These included history, geography, social studies, and physical education textbooks, readers, spellers, and songbooks. Though many of these books had publication dates in the 1940s, 1930s, and even the 1920s, they were included on the public school curriculum for Nova Scotia in the 1950s. Therefore, these books often contained information that demonstrated a "cultural lag" between contemporary intellectual ideas and the curricular material.<sup>12</sup>

This chapter begins with an explanation of the federal government's financial and political motivations for choosing to employ provincial school curricula in its "Indian Schools." The study then examines the three most prominent official objectives of education followed by a review of the messages contained within the actual curriculum content, how these related to or contradicted the official goals, and what this might have meant for Native students. The study then compares Catholic education ideology and the Nova Scotia curriculum. Finally, there is an examination of pedagogical instructions to teachers and how these were likely affected by the

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<sup>11</sup>These publications were supplied to the teachers at the Shubenacadie Residential School. See, Chapter Three, page 132-133, note 62.

<sup>12</sup>Usually for financial reasons, school textbooks were used for long periods of time and, at times, presented children with ideas that had long been disproved or discarded by contemporary intellectual society. See John M. MacKenzie, Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) 190.

curriculum content with regards to Native students.

### Why use Provincial Curriculum in Native Residential Schools?

In the course of its relations with Native people in general, the federal government has been concerned with three main issues, one financial and the others political. The government wanted to deal with Native peoples as cheaply as possible, to deflect public criticism (both from Native peoples and especially whites),<sup>13</sup> and to assimilate the “Indians” as quickly as possible.

Denominational representatives who ran residential schools often complained that they were underfunded by the federal government and placed the blame for many of the schools’ deficiencies with the Indian Affairs Branch.<sup>14</sup> While funding for Indian education did increase over the time period, cuts were not unknown. In 1962 Indian Affairs Branch suffered a budget cut of \$4, 312, 700.00. As a result almost three hundred thousand dollars came out of education funding.<sup>15</sup> When extra funding was allotted for education improvement, it often went toward the physical maintenance of school buildings.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Some of this criticism will be discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>14</sup>Even in the 1920s, anthropologist Diamond Jenness placed the blame for limited success in Native education with the government as missionaries “lacked the resources and the staffs to provide a proper education... It was not the missions that shirked their responsibility, but the federal government...” As quoted in Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert and Don McCaskill, “The Legacy of the Past: An Overview,” Indian Education in Canada, Volume 1: The Legacy (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 9.

<sup>15</sup>H.M. Jones, Director to the Indian Commissioner for B.C., Regional Supervisors, and Superintendents of Indian Agencies, “1962/63 Estimates” July 9, 1962. NAC, RG10, Volume 9028, File 51/13-2-265.

<sup>16</sup>See for example, NAC, RG10, Volume 9028, File 51/13-2-265 *passim*.

The decision to employ provincial public school curricula in Native residential schools, then, related, in part, to this concern over expenditures.<sup>17</sup> Implementing course content which was designed, not by federally employed experts, but by those whose salaries were paid by the provinces was much less costly than conjuring up an entirely new federal body to deal with the question of curriculum content in residential schools. Likewise, qualified teachers (who were often hard to come by in the residential schools to begin with<sup>18</sup>) would not be deterred by the prospect of having to learn and prepare an entirely new course load. Therefore, federal officials could avoid the need to provide financial incentives for teachers.<sup>19</sup> By using provincial school curricula, the Indian Affairs Branch conveniently avoided the financial burdens of designing and implementing a separate curriculum for Native residential schools.

The two factors which had “political” motivations included the need for the federal government to appear concerned about “Indian education” and the desire to accomplish assimilation. It had long been the goal of the federal government (and the churches) to assimilate Native peoples and this continued in the 1950s and 1960s. The rhetoric around this intention shifted, however, from an emphasis on segregation to integration and to the post-World War Two

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<sup>17</sup>While responsibility for education fell under provincial jurisdiction, the Canadian constitution stated, “exclusive Legislative Authority of the Parliament of Canada extends to all Matters coming within the Classes of Subjects next hereinafter enumerated; that is to say, ... (24) Indians and Lands reserved for the Indians.” Constitution Act, 1867, sections 93 and 91(24) respectively.

<sup>18</sup>See quote from Laval Fortier, Deputy Minister, in Chapter Three, page 132.

<sup>19</sup>Prior to 1951 teachers’ salaries were paid by the Churches from federal grant money which was provided to fund the schools. After 1951, however, the federal government took over the direct responsibility for paying the salaries of teachers at the Shubenacadie Residential School as part of an experiment that was aimed at raising the percentage of qualified teachers in Native schools.

rejection of racially segregated institutions. This was exemplified by the initiation of integrated schooling for some areas and the official abolition of the half-day system following the 1951 Indian Act.<sup>20</sup> The Canadian government's residential schools were often criticized for their failure to produce successful students. Even within the Indian Affairs Branch such criticism existed. In 1954 the Director of the education division, R. F. Davey, noted that many students who went on to high school from residential schools were "unable to do the work, which result[ed] in frustration and disappointment and dropouts..."<sup>21</sup> Especially during the 1960s, public awareness was evident in the annual reports of the Indian Affairs Branch and in the media coverage of Indian schools.<sup>22</sup> In this context, the use of a separate curriculum (though advised by some<sup>23</sup>) might have appeared to be a conscious attempt to limit Native students' chances for

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<sup>20</sup>This movement was a major focus of concern for the Education Division of the Indian Affairs Branch. The annual reports often commented on the increase in the percentage of Indian students enrolled in provincial schools during the period. See Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Report of Indian Affairs Brach for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1952, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration" (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1952) and annual reports through to the fiscal year ended March 31, 1968. \*Note, on January 1, 1966 the control and supervision of the Indian Affairs Brach were transferred from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to the Minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources.

<sup>21</sup>As cited in Milloy, 227.

<sup>22</sup>This interest will be discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>23</sup>Especially notable was School Inspector Warkentin, as cited in the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, section 1.2 under "Residential Schools," note 74; the Catholic authorities in Canada also desired a "tailor-made curriculum" for Indian schools: Father A. Renaud, O.M.I., "Education for Acculturation," Residential Education for Indian Acculturation, Oblate Fathers in Canada, 1957 (Ottawa: Indian and Eskimo Welfare Commission, 1958) 35. A project to design "basic primers for Indian schools in outlying areas" (meaning the far North) was initiated in 1959, though whether or not this was completed is unclear. F. Barnes to R.F. Davey, Director of Education Services, Indian Affairs Branch, August 19, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 7.

academic success. On the other hand, for those who ascribed to the emerging liberal views, the provision of “equal opportunities” meant the opportunity for “equal outcomes.” The appropriateness of the tools that were used or their double-edged effects were not in question.

An understanding of the purposes for using provincial school curricula is necessary in order to explore what the implications of the choice to use it might have been. The use of provincial school curricula enhanced the probability for success of the government’s assimilationist goals. While federal officials may not have reviewed the specifics of public school curricula with an eye for specific possibilities for encouraging assimilation and provincial officials in the Nova Scotia Department of Education likely had no thoughts regarding the effects of the content on Native students, the objectives set out in curriculum guidelines as well as the subtle and not-so-subtle elements of the texts themselves did provide enhanced opportunities for the assimilation of Native students.

#### The “Official” Objectives of Education in Nova Scotia’s Public School Curriculum

The objectives of public school education in the 1950s and 1960s were explicitly stated in the curriculum guidelines published by Nova Scotia’s Department of Education. Articles in the Department’s publications, The Journal of Education and Education Office Bulletin also included messages about the official goals of education. Teachers were expected to study both the curriculum guidelines and the other departmental publications.<sup>24</sup>

This material repeatedly referred to three main ideas concerning the objectives of public

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<sup>24</sup>These were provided to teachers at the Shubenacadie Residential School. See Chapter Three, page 132-133, note 62.

school education in the 1950s and 1960s. The first, and most prominent, of these objectives was to create “good citizens.” A contribution to the Education Office Bulletin for 1951-1952 stated that a child in the primary grade had “many things... [to] learn in order to become an acceptable member of a social group.”<sup>25</sup> While this statement concerned interaction within the school for the youngest students, children were expected to continue this development as they matured. Under the heading “General Objectives of the Course” a teacher’s guide to social studies in grades primary through six, listed as the first goal, “To help the child become a good citizen of the community, of our country, of the world.”<sup>26</sup> This objective extended into many different subjects and grade levels. The teaching guide for art in the primary to grade six level stated that a “meaningful art program is concerned with the aesthetic and social development of the individual” and that this encouraged “acceptable behaviour” so that society would “benefit by the more adequate personality of the individual.”<sup>27</sup>

The emphasis on producing citizens who would demonstrate “acceptable behaviour” was linked to a consensus of opinion and outlook. A grade six geography text included this objective in the foreword to teachers, “Geography should help pupils to develop the *right* social attitudes: to prepare pupils to assume with intelligence their duties as citizens... now as well as in the

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<sup>25</sup>“The Primary Grade: A Teaching Outline,” Education Office Bulletin 2 (1951-1952): 5.

<sup>26</sup>“Social Studies: Primary- Grade VI, A Guide for Teachers,” Education Office Bulletin 2 (1955-1956): 9.

<sup>27</sup>“Art: Primary- Grade 6: A Teaching Guide,” Education Office Bulletin 2 (1956-1957) reprinted 1959, 5.

future.”<sup>28</sup> The general guide for teachers in social studies also included this idea as the fourth objective listed: “To help the child develop attitudes which will enable him to live well and usefully as a member of society.”<sup>29</sup>

The Department did not include a comprehensive definition of a “good citizen” but one can be inferred. Part of the definition was about personal relationships. A teacher’s guide to the grade 7, 8, and 9 “civics and citizenship” course included as “desirable personal qualities: honesty, loyalty, kindness, neatness, being a good sport, being dependable.”<sup>30</sup> The same teacher’s guide also emphasized the importance of informing students about the place of the church in the community, the place of schools in the community, the importance of family, and the unity created by the Commonwealth of Nations. Therefore, in addition to the interpersonal qualities of a good citizen listed above, the Department also wished to develop a respect for authorities (including the church, teachers, parents, civic authorities, and the Commonwealth). In more junior grades, the interpersonal and social qualities of a good citizen were based in the notion of courtesy. A guide to teaching the primary grade stated that teaching courtesy meant that the child learned to “listen while others are talking and to respect the property of others,

<sup>28</sup>Griffith Taylor, Dorothy J. Seiveright, and Trevor Lloyd, Canada and Her Neighbours, (Toronto: Ginn and Co., no date) Emphasis added. \*No publication date is included in the book itself or in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia records. However, this textbook was included in the Nova Scotia public schools’ curriculum from 1954-55 until at least 1961-62.

<sup>29</sup>“Social Studies: Primary- Grade VI, A Guide for Teachers,” 9.

<sup>30</sup>Eveleen Burns, Civics and Citizenship, Grades 7, 8, and 9: A Guide for Teachers, Tentative Edition (Halifax: Curriculum Research Section, Department of Education, Nova Scotia, January 1957) 4.

to share materials and to become a good follower as well as a good leader.”<sup>31</sup> Here, courtesy may be viewed as a combination of kindness and obedience. The objective of creating “good citizens,” then, concerned the creation of people who would exhibit “acceptable” behaviour, as it was defined by those who wrote the guidelines. Those who did not act as the guidelines advised or who had divided loyalties around their respect for the identified authorities would not fall into the category of “good citizens.”

The second objective which figured prominently in those set out by the Department of Education was the desire to promote “world understanding.” This does not appear to have been considered under the idea of “good citizenship” with the exception that courtesy played a role in both areas. The introduction for teachers in a grade five social studies textbook stated that one purpose of the book was to “create friendly fellowship with people who live otherwise than we do and thus to counteract the tendency, natural to all children, to consider such peoples queer, strange, or inferior.”<sup>32</sup> Because this text defined the problem in terms of an emotional deficit (suspicion), rather than finding the barrier to fellowship in politics, the solution it offered was to encourage more benign emotions (“tolerance, understanding, and sympathy”<sup>33</sup>) rather than to promote an ideal of equality.

The need to develop “a sense of fair play, justice, of tolerance and co-operation towards their

<sup>31</sup>“The Primary Grade: A Teaching Outline,” Education Office Bulletin 2 (1951-1952): 5.

<sup>32</sup>Wallace W. Atwood and Helen Goss Thomas, Visits in Other Lands (Toronto: Ginn and Co., no date) 1. \*No publication date is included in the book itself or in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia records. However, this textbook was included in the Nova Scotia public schools’ curriculum from 1954-1955 until at least 1965-1966.

<sup>33</sup>“Social Studies Primary- Grade VI, A Teacher’s Guide,” 9.

neighbours near and far”<sup>34</sup> may have come as a result of the racial and religious attack launched in World War Two or it may have been fostered by fears related to the Cold War. The urgency of the need for understanding, as was evident in an article from the Journal of Education, “Teaching About Commonwealth,”<sup>35</sup> may have been motivated by the perceived importance of the United Nations in preventing another war. Whatever the motivations, the Department of Education, through articles in its publications and especially through the curriculum guidelines, repeatedly urged teachers to help students “gain an understanding of people in other lands and a feeling of unity with them.”<sup>36</sup>

The third “official” objective which figured prominently in the curriculum guidelines and instructions to teachers was the promotion of an appreciation of “our way of life.” To this end, the objectives were concerned with democracy, the Commonwealth/Empire, and progress. The teacher’s guide to civics and citizenship in the intermediate grades (7-9) encouraged teachers to “put democracy into action in everyday classroom experience” in order to ensure that students developed into “worthwhile citizens.”<sup>37</sup> This comment insinuated that those who were not involved in the democratic process or who did not adhere to its precepts were not, in fact, “worthwhile citizens.” Knowing the “basic principles of Western democracy” was inextricably

<sup>34</sup>Burns, 1.

<sup>35</sup>Joan Foster, “Teaching About the Commonwealth,” Journal of Education 13:1 (October, 1963): 46-47.

<sup>36</sup>T. I. Davis, Using Our Language: Grade Six, George N. Edwards Advisory Editor (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947). This Grade six “Language” textbook was on the Nova Scotia curriculum in the mid 1950s.

<sup>37</sup>Burns, 1.

linked to appreciating “our way of life” and education officials considered both necessary for proper education.<sup>38</sup>

Canada’s way of life was also identified with the Commonwealth or Empire in a way that made nation and empire co-equal objects of patriotism. A suggested program for Empire and Citizenship Day in 1951 indicated to teachers that they ought to emphasize “the fact that Canadians are citizens not only of Canada but of the Empire as well.”<sup>39</sup> Within this program provided for teachers, a student representing “Great Britain” was to step forward, “holding aloft a Union Jack” and say, “‘Tis thy flag and my flag, the best of flags on earth.”<sup>40</sup> The program itself was to be closed with a repetition of the Oath of Allegiance,

I, (A.B.) swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George the Sixth, his Heirs and successors, according to law, and that I will Faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen. So help me God.<sup>41</sup>

This was to be followed by the singing of “O, Canada” and then “God Save the King.” Part of “our way of life” in the eyes of curriculum designers, then, was Canada’s close affiliation with Britain and this was supported in guidelines and instructions for teachers.

The last major element of “our way of life” that the guidelines and instructions to teachers displayed dealt with the notion of progress. The texts treated “progress” as an unequivocal goal

<sup>38</sup>These two concepts were linked as one in a sentence from the teacher’s guide to “Civics and Citizenship,” “They [the students] should know the basic principles of Western democracy and appreciate our way of life.” Burns, 1-2.

<sup>39</sup>Department of Education, “Program for Empire and Citizenship Day,” Journal of Education 22:1 Series 4 (May, 1951): 69.

<sup>40</sup>“Program for Empire and Citizenship Day,” 70.

<sup>41</sup>In, “Program for Empire and Citizenship Day,” 72.

and teaching students to consider ethical issues around the means or consequences of “progress” does not appear to have been important. The teacher’s guide for social studies in grade six stated that students ought to “gain an appreciation of the courage, enterprise, faith and determination of the early explorers and pioneer settlers, and to realize our great debt to them.”<sup>42</sup> The guide did not encourage consideration of the consequences of exploration and settlement for Native peoples. Indeed, the “general topics” listed below the objectives included “Christianity brought to the Indians” as another example of the beneficent effects of “progress.”<sup>43</sup> The texts’ support for development in the Western world was another effort to promote an appreciation for “our way of life,” a mode of living that would continue to “progress” without serious contemplation of what effects that might have.

The objective of creating an appreciation for “our way of life” was tied to the notions of democracy, nation and Commonwealth/Empire, and a desire for progress. The promotion of this “appreciation” hinted at ideas of cultural superiority and might have undercut the goal of promoting “world understanding.” Pride in one’s own way of living, however, is not, necessarily, synonymous with feelings of racial or religious superiority. The ways in which these goals were interpreted by and presented in the Nova Scotia public school curriculum, however, did make superiority the basis for appreciating “our way of life.” The goals of cultivating “world understanding” and that of promoting “our way of life” were antithetical in some ways to begin with. The importance of democracy, pride in the Canada’s place in the Commonwealth, and the unquestioned benefits of progress, in combination with the narrow definition of a “good

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<sup>42</sup>“Social Studies: Primary- Grade VI, A Guide for Teachers,” 54.

<sup>43</sup>“Social Studies: Primary- Grade VI, A Guide for Teachers,” 54.

citizen,” stood as barriers to fostering understanding of alternative political, racial, and ethical points of view. The tension between these goals were resolved at the expense of “world understanding.”

### The Curriculum Content: Messages within the Texts

The most prominent goals noted throughout the curriculum guidelines and instructions to teachers were not fully supported and, indeed, some were lost or at least undermined by what children read in their textbooks. The messages that were apparent in the texts included acceptable ways in which to live one’s life, the idea that “progress” was a Western (European and by virtue of ancestral political connections, whites in North America) domain, and the notion that non-white races in Canada and elsewhere were less “civilized” than whites. The texts students used presented these general ideas in many subtle and explicit ways with a frequency that would have been unlikely to leave pupils unaffected.

Subtlety was the general rule around depictions of how one ought to live in order to be considered an “acceptable” member of society. That is, directions which pointed specifically to respectable forms of family, a proper work ethic, cleanliness, cheerfulness, kindness, and obedience were less common than simple support for these notions within the stories or scenarios presented in the students’ textbooks. Some very direct messages did find their way into some texts, most notably, those concerning health education. These texts stressed the importance of acceptable physical presentation and cheerfulness while comments on the dangers of substance use were unequivocally fierce. One grade seven textbook contained an entire lesson about the proper care of hair. How often should girls wash their hair? How often should boys? What

products should children use in order to achieve clean hair? To provide a concrete example about the benefits of having clean hair the text included the sad story of two horses, one nicely washed and brushed, the other matted and dirty. The poor unclean horse received no love while “the children like[d] Flora best because she [was] so beautiful. She [had] a soft shiny coat.”<sup>44</sup> Throughout its pages, the text emphasized a connection between success and a cleanly appearance: this message was most clear in the statement that “a clean body, clean clothes, and polite manners help every boy and girl to be happy and successful.”<sup>45</sup>

A grade five and six textbook that was used at the same time as Success and Health emphasized posture as an important aspect of physical appearance. Children were told that “a good posture helps us to look and feel our best and stiffens our courage as well. Idleness often goes hand in hand with a slouchy carriage...”<sup>46</sup> Yet another text made the connection between health and carriage when it told students that “sitting, standing, walking, the way you look, listen and talk... are the picture you give of health and vitality.”<sup>47</sup> These texts presented specific models of how one ought to look, sit, stand, and even act.

<sup>44</sup>J. Mace Andress and W.A. Evans, Success and Health, Canadian Hygiene Series (Montreal: Ginn and Company, no date) 171. \*No publication date is included in the book itself or in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia records. However, this textbook was included in the Nova Scotia public schools’ curriculum in the early nineteen fifties and was replaced after the 1952-1953 school year.

<sup>45</sup>Andress and Evans, 171.

<sup>46</sup>Donald T. Fraser and George D. Porter, The Canadian Health Book (Toronto: Copp Clarke Co. Ltd., 1926) Though this book was published in the mid 1920s, it was in use in Nova Scotia’s schools at least until 1954-1955. This is a prime example of the cultural lag that is often identified between popular (and especially intellectual) opinions and textbook material.

<sup>47</sup>W.W. Charters, Dean F. Smiley, Ruth M. Strang, Growing Up Healthily, Revised Canadian Edition (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1953) 223.

Under the heading "Mental Health" children were advised in one book to avoid getting angry and, instead, to maintain cheerfulness in order to keep healthy.<sup>48</sup> Another book suggested that cheerfulness would lead to improved digestion while "a long period of worry, fear and fretting will tend to weaken our whole physical condition."<sup>49</sup> One text told students that soldiers faced the "terrible discomforts and hardships" of war with the "most wonderful spirit of cheerfulness and optimism."<sup>50</sup> This information was accompanied by a selection from a popular soldiers' song, "What's the use of worrying? It never was worthwhile. So, pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile, smile, smile!"<sup>51</sup> The message was clear: be positive and ignore those things which threaten to worry you.

The third focus of these books which gave students very specific instructions about how one ought to live concerned substance use. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and narcotics, even in "moderation" was expressly forbidden for any one who wished to "hold a high position in athletics," for those who "valued Safety First" or who wished to be a "good Canadian."<sup>52</sup> Students were told that alcohol, even in moderation, would "impair one's judgement, will power,

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<sup>48</sup>Andress and Evans, 250-251.

<sup>49</sup>Fraser and Porter, 92.

<sup>50</sup>Fraser and Porter, 94.

<sup>51</sup>Fraser and Porter, 94.

<sup>52</sup>Fraser and Porter, 99-110. Incidentally, abstinence from alcohol for children was used in this text as a mark of Canadian moral and intellectual superiority. The text stated: "Fortunately, Canadian children seldom drink wine or beer; but in some of the European countries it is different. One of the evil results is that even in small quantities it dulls their minds." 99.

and vigilance”<sup>53</sup> while tobacco was “harmful” and “filthy” and narcotics were “evil.”<sup>54</sup> The veracity of the claims may or may not have been problematic but the message was clear: those who wished to be successful and acceptable members of society, as children and later as adults, must avoid these temptations.

Other messages about how to become successful or respectable members of Canadian society were less blatant. The *form* of presentation rather than wording itself made some messages more subtle than those contained in the health books. These messages were contained in stories or were hidden in the context of other curriculum content. A song entitled, “The Canadian Way” emphasized work ethic and co-operation when children sang, “We work together, we learn together, the good Canadian way.”<sup>55</sup> A poem in a grade seven and eight reader contained the idea that kindness was more important than order, knowledge, truth, pleasure, love, beauty, freedom, home, fame, or equity.<sup>56</sup> A grade six speller included the importance of voting in a short story designed to familiarize students with the new words for that week.<sup>57</sup> In another speller, aimed at the grade five level, the story of a boy who grew up to become a lawyer demonstrated how one

<sup>53</sup>Fraser and Porter, 100.

<sup>54</sup>Fraser and Porter, 106 and 110 respectively.

<sup>55</sup>John. W. Beattie, Josephine Wolverton, Grace V. Wilson, and Howard Hinga, The Canadian Singer, Book #4 (Toronto: W.J. Gage Ltd., 1945) 8-9.

<sup>56</sup>John Boyle O'Reilly, “What is Good,” J.C. Bates and Lorne Pierce, Life and Adventure (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1958 reprinted from the original publication in 1928) 43.

<sup>57</sup>Gates, Rinsland, Sartorius, Comegys, and Peardon, Pupil's Own Vocabulary Speller: Grade Six, Revised Canadian Edition (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1951).

who respects the law may become successful.<sup>58</sup> These covert messages combined to provide students with an idea of how successful and acceptable members of society looked and acted.

None of the messages which dealt with how “good Canadians” ought to live were as prominent, however, as the importance of family and each person’s role within a core family unit. Most stories that incorporated a family presented a mother and father who performed very specific duties, divided along gender lines, alongside two or three children. Rarely were extended family members even mentioned in these stories. Texts occasionally gave specific instructions about family life but the most common endorsement of “family values” came within the stories that children read for purposes (supposedly) other than indoctrination with lessons about “proper” families. A grade seven, eight, and nine social studies textbook included the following observations on the happiest families where, “in evening they sit around the table and tell of the strange or amusing things that have happened during the day. They brighten the remainder of the evening with songs, games, telling stories or reading...”<sup>59</sup> The textbook also emphasized the fact that children were the most important part of family: “The government recognizes that the home exists in the first place for the children.”<sup>60</sup> While these ideas were expressed clearly and pointedly in the social studies book, they were also present in readers

<sup>58</sup>Gates et. al, The Pupil’s Own Vocabulary Speller: Grade Five, Revised Canadian edition (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1951) week #14.

<sup>59</sup>James McCaig with 4 chapters on Nova Scotia by Norman MacLeod Rogers, Studies in Citizenship (Toronto: The Educational Book Co. Ltd, 1944) 55.

<sup>60</sup>McCaig, 56. This statement goes on to remark, “Unfortunately some parents shamefully neglect their duty towards their children. Then, government steps in and removes the children from the charge of such parents, so that in a new home the boy or girl may have an opportunity to grow up to be a useful citizen.” Obviously, this statement, in the context of a residential school such as Shubenacadie, might have been extremely confusing and/or hurtful for students.

where “typical” families were child-centred and happy. Throughout the grade one reader, The Little White House, a family of two children, a mother and a father enjoyed happy times. The father was the focus of much attention while the mother cooked and cleaned. The children played games or received gifts in most stories.<sup>61</sup> Even in grammar books there was an emphasis on home and family.<sup>62</sup> Textbooks, especially language and reading books, continually gave families a distinct and prominent position. The message, of course, was that families followed a certain structural form, and within those forms there were specific duties for each member to perform.

Some direct instructions were evident in textbooks regarding how one ought to live, but most of these messages were included in stories, grammar lessons, songs, and poems. While many historians refer to the importance of “education for democracy” in this time period, this was not evident in the textbooks used for the Nova Scotia school curriculum.<sup>63</sup> While the rights and responsibilities of citizens were included,<sup>64</sup> the emphasis on how one ought to live (not a very *democratic* teaching method itself) did not involve strong messages about democracy or even its antithesis. The focus here was on cleanliness, cheerfulness, kindness, obedience, and family. If one wished to be or become a respectable and acceptable Canadian citizen, adherence to these

<sup>61</sup>David H. Russel and Odille Ousley, The Little White House, The Ginn Basic Readers (Toronto: Ginn and Co., no date). \*No publication date is included in the book itself or in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia records. However, this textbook was included in the Nova Scotia public schools’ curriculum as early as 1951-1952 until at least 1965-1966.

<sup>62</sup>See, for example, T.I. Davis, Using Our Language: Grade Five, George N. Edwards, advisory editor (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1947).

<sup>63</sup>See, for example, Owram, 127; and Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 157.

<sup>64</sup>McCaig, 274-281.

ideals was necessary.

This content supported the “official” goals of creating good citizens and of promoting an appreciation for “our way of life.” While these lessons were not specifically connected to ideas of rights and responsibilities of citizens, they did demonstrate how “good citizens” lived or ought to live. For Native students, the repeated direct and indirect messages about how acceptable Canadians lived might have served to undermine or stifle thoughts of rebellion and the idea of *who* a good Canadian was may have created an in group / out group feeling. That is, the little room for diversity of lifestyle, family structure, religion, political beliefs, even emotions and appearances offered in the curriculum may have prevented students from seeing themselves as “good Canadians.” For Native students at the Shubenacadie Residential School, their way of life differed from this norm, even if only by virtue of the fact that they lived in a residential school.<sup>65</sup> (As well, Native people in the 1950s were barred from exercising some of the rights and fulfilling some of the duties of “good citizens.”)<sup>66</sup> The fact that Native students’ experiences were excluded from depictions of “normalcy” and “decency” as they were represented in the Nova Scotia public school curriculum in the 1950s and 1960s might have led to a diminished sense of self-esteem, feelings of being an “outsider” in Canadian society, and a denial of family/community traditions in order to conform more closely with the image of the desired

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<sup>65</sup>However, most students at the school in the 1950s and 1960s were orphaned or had only one parent. Others were placed in the school (sometimes at the request of parents) because of economic considerations. Some might have been exposed to religious beliefs which were at odds with the repeated references to Christianity in the books although most Mi’kmaq in Nova Scotia were Catholic at this time. Their family structures definitely varied from the “norm” as it was depicted in the curriculum. For whatever reason, children at the school did not fit into the strict paradigm of “good Canadians” set out by school textbooks.

<sup>66</sup>Native people only got the provincial vote in the 1950s and the federal vote in 1960.

citizen.

In addition to the promotion of “our way of life” and “good citizens” through depictions of these people, texts also promoted the objectives in their treatment of “progress.” Texts identified progress as a Western domain, and this identification included ideas of racial superiority (intellectual, moral and political) which were often played out as a comparison between “uncivilized” and “civilized” peoples. This idea also included an emphasis on Empire as a desirable and positive force in history. Again, through direct and indirect curriculum content, the idea of progress was presented frequently, in a variety of ways in the public school curriculum during the 1950s and 1960s.

John MacKenzie argues that the British school system in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries indoctrinated students with curriculum that praised the Empire as superior to other political systems and that emphasized the continual progress of this political system from early Anglo-Saxon history through to the “present day.”<sup>67</sup> The Nova Scotia public school curriculum shared many of these elements. Emphasis on Canada’s connection to the British Empire/Commonwealth<sup>68</sup> and general praise of the Canadian/British political relationship demonstrated the advantages of this system without including discussions of any disadvantages.

Texts encouraged students to have pride in Britain as the ‘mother’ of Canada. Poems in praise of Britain were common in the school readers and songs to this end were often included in music books. Even the social studies text for grades seven to nine included the following lines

<sup>67</sup>John MacKenzie, Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) 173-197.

<sup>68</sup> These terms were used synonymously in texts other than history as a cultural rather than political identifiers.

from Kipling,

Land of our Birth, we pledge to thee  
 Our love and toil in the years to be;  
 When we are grown and take our place  
 As men and women with our race.

Land of our birth, our faith, our pride  
 For whose dear sake our fathers died  
 O Motherland we pledge to thee  
 Head, heart, and hand through the years to be.<sup>69</sup>

Songs in praise of Britain included “Rule Britannia” which contained the chorus, “Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves, Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.”<sup>70</sup> Each of the three books in the “Canadian Reading Development Series” contained sections which dealt specifically with the Empire. The headings for these sections were “Children of the Empire,” “Under the Union Jack,” and “The Sun Never Sets.” Each section included three or more stories about nations within the Empire.<sup>71</sup> A grade six speller depicted Empire Day celebrations<sup>72</sup> while a language book included an example of a newspaper story about the King and Queen receiving a

<sup>69</sup>As cited in, McCaig, 5.

<sup>70</sup>Dr. Thomas Augustine Aine, “Rule Britannia,” The New Highroad of Song: Intermediate 2, G. Roy ed., (Toronto: Gage Publishing co. Ltd, no date) 44. \*No publication date is included in the book itself or in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia records. However, the “highroad of music” series was included in the Nova Scotia public schools’ curriculum throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>71</sup>These books were (in order of difficulty) Marian D. James Ed., Up and Away, The Canadian Reading Development Series (Toronto: The Copp Clark Co. Ltd., 1946); Franklin L. Barrett Ed., Wide Open Windows, The Canadian Reading Developments Series (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co. Ltd., 1947); and Fred C. Biehl, All Sails Set, The Canadian Reading Developments Series (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co. Ltd., 1948).

<sup>72</sup>Gates et. al, The Pupil’s Own Vocabulary Speller: Grade Six, Revised Canadian edition (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1951) week #31.

“hearty welcome” during a visit to South Africa.<sup>73</sup>

The references to Britain and the Commonwealth, however, were not all simple emotional exhortations. Imbedded in the idea of “greatness” was the depiction of an advanced civilization which had progressed much more rapidly and to a greater end than most. The grade seven to nine social studies textbook told students that “as we trace the progress of our own people [Anglo-Saxons] down through the centuries, we find that the advancement has been slow but continuous.”<sup>74</sup> This advancement moved the Anglo-Saxons toward “civilization” which, in this text, was defined as a society in which people relied on specialized work. The “evolution” of this civilization, then, ultimately led to the emergence of cities. The progress of civilization was divided into the following steps: family groups, tribes under chiefs or priests, union under a king or queen / priests, from cities to states to nations and, ultimately to a union of nations.<sup>75</sup> The text also included the idea that this progress was desirable and that the Commonwealth was the culmination and perfection of “progress.” These notions were apparent in the suggestion that it was “even possible that at some future time the nations of the world may use the British Commonwealth as a model in setting up a world government, in order to secure a greater measure of peace and happiness for their peoples.”<sup>76</sup> Commonwealth or Empire, then, was treated as the highest form of political organization, and the fact that Britain headed that

<sup>73</sup>T.I. Davis, Using Our Language: Grade Seven George N. Edwards, advisory editor (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1947) 268.

<sup>74</sup>McCaig, 2.

<sup>75</sup>Gilbert Paterson, The Story of Britain and Canada from the earliest Times to the Present (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1934) xi-xii.

<sup>76</sup>Paterson, 148.

organization could only mean that the British and their Canadian descendants were the most “civilized” beings on earth.

Another method of showing how white people from the West were the masters of progress and that imperial power was their right included an emphasis on the heartiness, courage, and might of the early explorers and settlers in North America. The textbooks depicted progress as inherently good; consequences were either left unmentioned or were glossed over as unimportant when compared to the “higher goal.”<sup>77</sup> The “discovery” of North America was praised in one song book and, throughout many of the textbooks, white men were noted as conquerors of the rugged North American landscape. The Walt Whitman poem, “Pioneers! O Pioneers!,” included in a grade seven and eight reader, contained connotations of sexual conquest regarding the settling of the land.

We primeval forests felling,  
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the  
Mines within,  
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soul  
Upheaving,  
Pioneers! O Pioneers!<sup>78</sup>

A song entitled “The Flag” told students that “this land was built by pioneers” and contained the message that those pioneers were astute in controlling and conquering nature. The negative effects that exploration and settlement had on Native peoples were not included in the discussion

<sup>77</sup>In the field of medicine for example, the life of a dog who was sacrificed in Banting’s experiments with insulin received only a passing comment regarding ethics. This rationalization followed the story, “Dogs will do such brave things to save or help their masters and friends that he would probably have been very willing to give up his life to save thousands.” Biehl, 118.

<sup>78</sup>As cited in, J.C. Bates and Lorne Pierce, Life and Adventure (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1928) 413.

of the “great pioneers.”

The textbooks did note, very infrequently, that Native people opposed whites’ “progress.” A grade six social studies text included a story that also appeared in the grade four reader. This was the story of how Chief Pie-a-Pot and some of his band stood in the way of railway construction on the prairies by setting up their tents along the survey line. However, neither text explained why they did so and both put emphasis on the fact that the whites would not stand for such “silliness.” One RCMP sergeant knocked down the chief’s tent and “Chief Pie-a-Pot and his band moved quietly away.”<sup>79</sup> The message was clear, the white men were in charge of “progress” while the Native people stood, ineffectually, in the way.

The texts also occasionally noted that Native people began to die in great numbers with the arrival of white settlers but the fact was presented in such a way that progress was again seen as the benevolent possession of whites. That is, when texts did mention the deaths of Native peoples, the information was often given with a considerable amount of historical “creativity.” Texts skewed historical information in order to place the blame for the deaths on the shoulders of the “uncivilized savages” rather than on those of the whites. The grade six social studies textbook, The Story of Canada, blamed the decline in Native population which followed contact on the fact that the white man “brought his new way of life and destroyed the old.” “Indians,” the text claimed, died because they “found it difficult to learn the white man’s ways.”<sup>80</sup> This explanation was accompanied by a cursory remark about diseases, but the material left the

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<sup>79</sup>Gladys Lewis, “Across the Ribbon of Steel,” Marian D. James, 352. See also, Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 324.

<sup>80</sup>George W. Brown, Eleanor Harman, and Marsh Jeanneret, The Story of Canada (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1950) 36.

distinct impression that the deaths were attributable to Natives' lack of progress compared with whites' mastery of change.

Public school textbooks often used comparisons as a means of illuminating the superiority of white (especially Anglo-Saxon) races. The implications of these comparisons were obvious; if whites were shown as superior, then non-whites were inferior. If non-whites were shown as being inferior, then whites were obviously superior. Historical accuracy was often skewed or entirely forgotten in order to accomplish this. School textbooks used Native peoples most often as a foil to illuminate white superiority.<sup>81</sup> However, the books did, at times, refer to other races or cultures for comparisons. The introduction to a grade six social studies textbook, for example, included the following comments on various peoples: “[A]fter reaching a high state of civilization, the Chinese people ceased to advance in any marked degree for nearly a thousand years, and they are only now beginning to move onward again.” Regarding “red” men; “In the far south... they established a number of high civilizations; elsewhere, they remained at the Stone Age level, as in Canada.” Africans (with the exception of the Egyptians) “never got beyond the Stone Age in culture.” “The ‘brown’ people of the Pacific Islands and “the curious black race of Australia” were both described as “a mystery.”<sup>82</sup> This information included sweeping generalizations alongside considerable historical inaccuracies. The purpose, here, was always to demonstrate how highly “civilized” white races were in comparison with non-whites.

Another social studies book also used historical misrepresentation in order to shed a favourable light on the English involvement in the Acadian expulsion from Nova Scotia. The

<sup>81</sup>See details on the following three pages.

<sup>82</sup>Paterson, xv-xvii.

textbook was careful to note that the French were “trespassers” after the 1713 English victory. The book then used a mock letter written by an English soldier to his mother as a means of demonstrating English compassion in conjunction with the military superiority that resulted in the victory. The soldier called the expulsion orders “harsh” and “disagreeable” but then noted that Colonel Winslow was “as just to the poor Acadians as he could be” and “sent villages together as far as possible.”<sup>83</sup> This “fact” was untrue but was included in order to generate “understanding” for the British situation and actions.<sup>84</sup> The “letter” went on to further justify British actions by concluding that if the French had invaded first, the Acadians might have joined them and “we might have lost all our settlements in this province. So there are two sides to the story, are there not?”<sup>85</sup> British military superiority was the subject of this section in the textbook but, as a rationalization for ethically questionable actions, the authors blatantly skewed the events so that the British appeared to be emotionally sensitive as well as militarily superior.

The school texts included questionable material about several races but the most common peoples used for comparisons which made white superiority an obvious “fact” were Native. The comparisons served to illuminate “British superiority” in three main areas; political, moral (including religious), and most notably, intellectual. In discussing political organizations in Native communities, one textbook told children, “We must not suppose... that the Indians all had

<sup>83</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 144.

<sup>84</sup>For a brief overview of the expulsion, see Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, History of the Canadian Peoples: Beginnings to 1867 (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1998) 154-156.

<sup>85</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 145.

strong governments like those of the French and English.”<sup>86</sup> Another remarked that “the government of the Algonkians was very simple.”<sup>87</sup> Morally, the Native people and their religions were also misrepresented and disparaged in order to demonstrate white superiority. Alcohol consumption often acted as a basis for negative comparisons of Native to white peoples. The Story of Canada told students that the “Indians” would trade everything they could for “fire-water” and that they were extremely violent when drunk.<sup>88</sup> In order to show that whites were above such behaviour the text stated, “Not all the white men... were willing to let the Indians carry on so foolishly.”<sup>89</sup> These men were the missionaries who came to “mend the bodies and souls of the poor savages.”<sup>90</sup> The textbook also “informed” students of the religious (moral) inferiority of these “poor savages” by relating the fact that these missionaries wrote home telling of the “strange ways of the Indians.”<sup>91</sup> In a story about “The Canadian Eskimo” a grade five reader included the heading “He Learns from the White Man.” Under this heading, students were informed that before “Eskimos” heard from the missions about our God they had “strange beliefs about evil spirits.”<sup>92</sup>

<sup>86</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 23.

<sup>87</sup>Paterson, 210.

<sup>88</sup>See also, Paterson 224, “They became so fond of strong liquor that they would sell their most valuable furs for a small quantity of it.”

<sup>89</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 35.

<sup>90</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 61.

<sup>91</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 56.

<sup>92</sup>Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Violet Irwin, “The Canadian Eskimo,” Franklin L. Barrett ed., 282.

The most evident form of “white superiority” that the textbooks presented, however, was intellectual. Even though one text stated that “It is a mistake to think that the Indians of Canada were an ignorant people just because they did not have the same inventions and way of life as the white man,”<sup>93</sup> the information provided by this book and others did not support the claim. One of the readers included a story about “The Canadian Eskimo” which asserted that “Whenever the Eskimo meets white traders, missionaries, explorers, or the Mounties, he uses anything they have to offer them.”<sup>94</sup> Aside from being inaccurate information,<sup>95</sup> this remark implied that the Dene and Inuit were barely able to survive without the use of the “white man’s tools.”

The use of machinery was the source of another stab at Native intellectual capabilities which served to emphasize those of the white man. “Instead of using the plough, which had been known in Europe since the days of the early Egyptians, the Indians used simple wooden digging-sticks and hoes.”<sup>96</sup> Hunters and gatherers were criticized for their apparent lack of efficiency in comparison with the farming techniques and industrial progress of the whites. A band, one text stated, might go hungry for days or travel half the length of the St. Lawrence River in order to locate game. “Compare such a way of life with that of the modern farmer who can feed his

<sup>93</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 29.

<sup>94</sup>Stefansson and Irwin, in Barrett ed., 282-3.

<sup>95</sup>Kerry Abel argues that the Dene used only materials which would replace or improve upon “traditional” materials. See Kerry Abel, Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993).

<sup>96</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 27. Incidentally, the textbook made no mention of the Canadian government’s laws which forbade the use of machinery by Native farmers in the 1880s and 1890s. See Sarah Carter, “Two Acres and a Cow: ‘Peasant’ Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-97,” Canadian Historical Review 70 (1989): 27-52.

family and sell in the city with cattle in the barn for milk and meat.”<sup>97</sup> The comparison goes on, “A modern threshing machine or automobile can be made in our factories more quickly than an Indian could chip a piece of flint into the shape of an arrow-head, or build a birch-bark canoe.”<sup>98</sup> Of course, the inapplicability of such criticisms to pre-contact (or even post-contact) Native lifestyles was not acknowledged.

The emphasis on Commonwealth/Empire as the best of political organizations, the idea that progress was a uniquely “Western” domain, and frequent comparisons by which white Anglo-Saxons were made to look superior to other races and cultures gave the Nova Scotia public school curriculum an overwhelming bias. As Mackenzie argued regarding the British system, “The message was a highly simplified one, of racial and cultural superiority, breeding a sense of self satisfaction only rudely shattered in the most recent decades.”<sup>99</sup>

This curricular content seems to have supported the “official” objective of promoting “our way of life” and, insofar as pride in one’s political system was a part of being a “good citizen,” that objective was also supported. However, information that supported or promoted “our way of life” was offered at the expense of other peoples. Comparisons of “our way” with others failed to demonstrate, in any meaningful way, the advantages of differing approaches to life and sacrificed the goal of promoting “world understanding” to ideas of racial and cultural superiority. Therefore, it appears that the objective of promoting “our way of life” superceded that of cultivating world understanding.

<sup>97</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 35.

<sup>98</sup>Brown , Harman, and Jeanneret, 35.

<sup>99</sup>Mackenzie, 94.

If the message of racial/cultural superiority was much more clear than the idea that it was important to “understand” others, students were likely more affected by the first idea. Students were shown that, while there were some people who lived differently from “us,” “we” were the people who had succeeded and progressed and that, “our way” was better. This idea did nothing to promote world understanding and might have actively prevented toleration of differences. Students, therefore, were given no real opportunity within the curriculum to explore and understand diversity.

For students at the Shubenacadie Residential School, this curriculum encouraged assimilation through the repetition of the message that only one way would lead to success and that was the “white” way. Any real possibility of valid alternative belief systems or other admirable ways of life were not acknowledged. This singularity of cultural vision might have contributed to many students’ difficulty in feeling connected to their own families and communities upon leaving the school.<sup>100</sup>

In addition to the negative comparisons of Native people with whites, the textbooks, readers, and songbooks on the Nova Scotia public school curriculum were replete with representations of “Indians” as superficial or novelty elements in Canada and as “things of the past.” General stereotyping alongside inaccurate information also served to belittle the Native peoples. While curriculum guidelines claimed that education was, in part, aimed at promoting understanding among people(s), little genuine effort to do so with regards to Canadian Native peoples was

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<sup>100</sup>See Linda Bull, “Indian Residential Schooling: The Native Perspective,” Canadian Journal of Native Education 18, Supplement (1991) 42; Rosalyn Ing, “The Effects of Boarding Schools on Native Child -Rearing Practices,” Canadian Journal of Native Education 18, Supplement (1991): 94; Agnes Grant, No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1996) 245-246; and Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 10-11.

evident. Although many other peoples were stereotyped,<sup>101</sup> Natives drew the most negative attention. Even while their importance in the development of the Canadian nation was almost completely ignored, the material which did acknowledge them was often inaccurate at best and slanderous at worst.

The lack of attention to the history of Native peoples was most evident in social studies textbooks where history in Canada was commonly said to have begun with the arrival of the first white explorers and settlers. The first section in The Story of Canada was entitled, “The White Man Comes to Canada” while the *second* section was “The First ‘Canadians.’” The idea was even more blatantly obvious in the precursor to that text in which students were informed that “Not until the railway did settlers really begin to go West. Thus, the eastern part of Canada began making history much earlier than the western part...”<sup>102</sup> The existence of Native peoples prior to contact was not of great concern in these texts unless the emphasis was placed on how Native people were improved by “the coming of the white man.”

The lack of information about pre-contact Native societies was simply a more marked example of the general neglect that their histories suffered in the texts. Even when Native peoples were mentioned, they were seen as unimportant or superficial. Though one text acknowledged that Native peoples had aided the early explorers, it gave no particular

<sup>101</sup>In one reader, Mexicans were pictured only in “festive” dress and Asians wore traditional “Asian peasant”clothing while picking rice. Another reader includes a poem which referred to Gypsies as “wild”. Yet another included a story about a highly stereotyped black woman: She worked as a house cleaner for a white man, sang all day long and wore a red handkerchief on her head. See, Franklin L. Barrett, “Friends of Other Lands” section; J.C. Bates and Lorne Pierce,52; and Marian James, 86 respectively.

<sup>102</sup>Paterson, 9. Kerry Abel remarks on a similar curricular characteristic noting, “events that had occurred before the arrival of Euro-Canadians were called ‘pre-history.’” Abel, ix.

appreciation for their contributions. Students were told that without the help of the “Indians” tools” (canoes and snowshoes), “our country would have been opened up much more slowly than it was.”<sup>103</sup> There was no indication that exploration and settlement would have been impossible without the help, not only of these tools, but also of Native guides, fur trade suppliers and intermediaries, and tribal alliances. The text even went so far as to claim that the canoe had proven so useful that, “if the Indians had not already invented... [it], it seems likely that the white man would have had to invent it himself!”<sup>104</sup> In a 1975 study of “Education and the First Canadians,” André Renaud, supervisor of the Oblates’ Indian and Eskimo Welfare Commission, argued that the “first Canadians” disappeared from social studies texts in post explorers / fur trade era and only re-appeared in a “a semi-negative light when the school program [dealt] with Riel and the opening of the Prairies.”<sup>105</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, the texts used by public school students in Nova Scotia gave Native peoples no recognition for their role in the development of the Canadian nation.

Not only was much of the history of Native peoples absent from the texts but their presence in contemporary Canadian society was almost completely ignored. “Indians” in the textbooks were “things of the past” and not elements of Canadian society in the 1950s and 1960s. A poem from a grade four reader exemplified this idea,

Where we walk to school each day,

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<sup>103</sup> Brown, Harman, Jeanneret, 32.

<sup>104</sup> Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 372.

<sup>105</sup> A. Renaud, Education and the First Canadians (Toronto: Gage, 1971) 35-36, as quoted in George S. Tomkins, A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum (Scarborough ON: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1986) 343.

Indian children used to play...

And the trees were very tall  
And there were no streets at all  
Not a church and not a steeple--  
Only woods and Indian people.

Only wigwams on the ground  
And at night bears prowling round.  
What a different place today  
Where we live and work and play.<sup>106</sup>

The same idea was present in the song, “Dear Canada, My Home:” “Where shines the dying Red man’s sun, where bison feet no more may run, Nor waring [sic] tribesmen roam... fair Canada my home.”<sup>107</sup> Yet another poem in a grade six reader talked about finding an “Indian arrowhead” that was two centuries old. This treasure was found near the Richelieu River and the poem stated, “The Richelieu’s a river where Indians whooped and died.”<sup>108</sup> This emphasis allowed texts to romanticize the idea of “Indians” without making specific connections to contemporary society. Only in a social studies text were there references to “present day” Native peoples. In one case, a little boy complained to his grandfather, “I wish Indians dressed like that now. The ones I see on the Reservation just wear overalls or blue serge suits or dresses like everybody else.”<sup>109</sup> The idea that Native peoples did not matter in contemporary Canadian society was

<sup>106</sup> Annette Wynn, “Indian Children,” Over the Bridge, The New World Readers, 138. \*Note, the copy of this book at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia is damaged. No information regarding the editor or publication is available. It appeared on the Nova Scotia public school curriculum from at least 1951-55.

<sup>107</sup> E.C. Walker, “Dear Canada My Home,” in Fenwick, 1.

<sup>108</sup> Arthur S. Bourinot, “An Indian Arrowhead,” Fred Biehl ed., 180.

<sup>109</sup> Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 333.

supported by the fact that they were virtually absent from course materials and by the fact that the only reference to them within contemporary society indicated that they were the same as everybody else.

The fact that the texts treated Native peoples as “unimportant” led to another problem, the oversimplification and generalizations around the complexities of Native cultures. Native peoples were not depicted as individuals with differences from others in their communities but, rather, were treated as representatives of the whole. One story told students that “an Eskimo never learns to hide his feelings.”<sup>110</sup> Another example of generalization and oversimplification concerned languages and cultures. While one text did acknowledge diversity of culture and language, it divided Canada’s Native people into only four groups (Eastern, Prairie, Pacific, and Northern).<sup>111</sup> Another text ignored all diversity of language in stating that, “The early explorers found in Canada *a people* who were strange to them and whose *language* they did not understand.”<sup>112</sup>

The most overtly negative treatment of Native peoples by school textbooks came in the form of stereotyping and general slander. “Indian” characters in a primary reader were given stereotypical names (Blue Cornflower and Strong Boy)<sup>113</sup> at a time when most Native children

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<sup>110</sup>Stefansson and Irwin, in Marian James, 240.

<sup>111</sup>Paterson, 206.

<sup>112</sup>Taylor, Seiveright, and Lloyd, 5. Emphasis added.

<sup>113</sup>From the Ginn Basic Readers, as cited in Mrs. Carl Eaton, “The Readers Our Children Use,” Journal of Education Special Issue on Reading 3:1 series 5 (1965-1966): 47.

went by “English” names.<sup>114</sup> Native people were also stereotyped and slandered in more overtly harmful ways. The hunting and gathering techniques used by the Dene were used to slander two cultural groups; “During the summer months the Eskimos wander about the north country like gypsies hunting and fishing.”<sup>115</sup> Along with this stereotype went those of the dirty, drunken, violent, and superstitious Natives. The Algonkian peoples were targeted in the social studies text which stated that “living in... uncomfortable, smoky dwellings, and having only scant clothing, because everything had to be carried about from place to place, the Algonkians, as may easily be imagined, were exceedingly dirty.”<sup>116</sup> The stereotyping of Native peoples as drunkards has been documented earlier (see the section on the use of comparisons to demonstrate whites’ “moral superiority”) but the stereotype did carry through to contemporary issues. While the emphasis on drinking centred around the fur trade, one text stated, “To-day it is against the law for any of the Indians living on reservations in Canada to buy whisky.”<sup>117</sup>

Texts often linked violence to alcohol use but stereotypes about violence did stand on their own at times. One little boy, in a story about the railroad, told his friend, “Last year in the

<sup>114</sup>Students who were discharged from the Shubenacadie Residential School in 1952 were children with such names as Mary, Elizabeth, John, Paul, Virginia, and Daniel. “Discharge of Pupils, July-September, 1952.” NAC, RG10, Volume 6057, File 265-10 Part 4. At times nuns at the school would change a student’s name but even in these cases the names were “English” names to begin with. Knockwood notes that a nun changed one girl’s name from Margaret to Marjorie and another’s from Margaret Julian to Peggy O’Neill. Knockwood, 157-8.

<sup>115</sup>“The Canadian Eskimo,” Franklin L. Nora Kelly, 287.

<sup>116</sup>Paterman, 209.

<sup>117</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 315. This book was published in 1950 but the 1951 Indian Act deleted the prohibitions on alcohol that the previous Indian Acts had upheld. See J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 221.

rebellion,... we might all have been killed by the Indians and half-breeds if it had not been for chief Crowfoot.”<sup>118</sup> The implication here was that some Native people were more “civilized” than the rest. However, most confirmed the stereotype of violent trouble-makers. Without a thoughtful explanation about motivations or a careful analysis of actual events, the grade seven social studies text told students that with the decline in the buffalo population on the Prairies, “Indians” began to die and, therefore, stole cattle and “broke the law in other ways. The Mounties, however, quickly brought the wrong-doers to justice.”<sup>119</sup> The book made no specific connection between Natives’ actions and the loss of their food source.

Lastly, the texts included the notion that Native peoples ought to have recognized the positive force of assimilation. After noting the “criminal” activity on the Prairies, the social studies text went on to state that reservations had been set up by the government for the “Indians” and that “In the United States the Indians refused to give up their old ways of life without a bitter struggle. But in Canada, thanks to the North-West Mounted Police, the change took place much more peacefully.”<sup>120</sup> In another social studies textbook, the government’s assimilationist goals were fairly clearly outlined as a benevolent and desirable policy: “The aim of the government is to make the Indians self-supporting, to educate them and thus to hasten the time when, through intermarriage with other Canadians, they will perhaps cease to be a separate people.”<sup>121</sup> Progress toward this goal appeared to be well advanced in these textbooks: contemporary Native people

<sup>118</sup>Lewis, in Marian James, 355.

<sup>119</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 317.

<sup>120</sup>Brown, Harman, and Jeanneret, 317.

<sup>121</sup>Paterson, 226.

were virtually absent from their pages. In any case, the representations of Native peoples, past or present, were almost exclusively negative in the school books.

As with the emphasis on white superiority, the depictions of Native peoples in the public school curriculum worked in direct opposition to any increased “world understanding.” Cursory comments regarding the inaccuracies of blanket assumptions about the “Indians”’ intelligence were not supported in any meaningful way by the curriculum content. Negative comparisons with whites along with historical inaccuracies and stereotyping of non-white races (especially Native peoples) offered little possibility for an increase in tolerance among students.

For Native students at the Shubenacadie Residential School, the curriculum could have provided an opportunity for increased coherence between their two worlds (home community and the school). The inclusion of information about the contributions which Native peoples made to the development of the Canadian nation as it was in the mid twentieth century might have aided students in recognizing their own importance in Canadian society. This opportunity was lost, however, due to the Euro-centric and racist focus of scholarly and curricular materials. Kerry Abel points out that scholarly work in Canadian history ignored the contributions of Native people to development of the nation until the late 1960s.<sup>122</sup> This exclusion, however, did not mean that Indian Affairs Branch officials were ignorant of the deficiencies in the curriculum content. In 1960 the Deputy Minister of the Indian Affairs Branch addressed a letter to the Deputy Minister of Education in each province except Newfoundland “drawing attention to the concern of the Indian people and others interested in them about misleading and biased

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<sup>122</sup>Abel, x.

statements on the history of the Indian people in Canada.”<sup>123</sup> The Hawthorn Report of 1967 (for which information was collected during the mid-1960s) stated that information included in the texts about “Indians” was “Inaccurate, over-generalized, and even insulting” and should be eliminated in order that “Indian Children could acquire a sense of worth and status.”<sup>124</sup> Indian Affairs even attempted to supplement the provincial curriculum with suggestions for the inclusion of more “Native content” that came in the Indian School Bulletins supplied to the schools. However, funding that might have enabled the inclusion of such material did not follow the suggestions and, therefore, the possible benefit was lost and teachers relied heavily on the provincial curriculum.<sup>125</sup>

Another opportunity for increased self-awareness, and linked to this, increased self-confidence, disappeared as the texts students read misrepresented, stereotyped, and maligned Native peoples. Assimilation might have been more successful as a result of these “lost opportunities.” Self-awareness, pride, and self-confidence might have been helpful tools in resisting assimilation. However, the curriculum provided no opportunity to develop these feelings in Native students. By way of subtle as well as overt messages of whites’ political, moral, and intellectual superiority as well as through stereotyping and general slander of Native peoples, the Nova Scotia provincial school curriculum served as an agent of assimilation.

<sup>123</sup>Davey, Director of Education Services, Indian Affairs Branch, July 10, 1963. “Votes and Proceedings No.27- Question No. 690- Mr. Howard.” NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 13.

<sup>124</sup>See, H.B. Hawthorn ed., “A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies,” Vol. II, (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, October, 1967) 13 and 14.

<sup>125</sup>Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 389.

The narrow vision of acceptable ways in which to live one's life, the idea the "progress" was a Western domain, and the notion that non-white races were not as "civilized" as whites supported two of the "official" curriculum objectives at the direct expense of the third. That is, the curriculum content supported the promotion of "good citizenship," as it was defined in the 1950s and early 1960s, and an appreciation for "our way of life" were supported by sacrificing the goal of promoting "world understanding." This was accomplished in both overt (direct instructions and information for students) and subtle (through stories, songs, even grammar books) ways.

The "lessons" included in health texts alongside repeatedly narrow visions of how one ought to live, in stories, poems, and songs directed students to keep a clean physical appearance, to remain cheerful, to avoid any use of tobacco, alcohol, or narcotics, to be kind, hardworking, obedient, and responsible citizens, and, most importantly, to organize themselves into core family groupings which would include a mother, a father and two or three children. This might have created the feeling that there was an "in-group" and an "out-group" in Canadian society; those who conformed and those who did not. For Native students at the Residential School, placement in the "out-group" was predetermined. Thus, assimilation might have been promoted as Native students attempted to conform more closely with the ideal. The fact that all students at the Residential School were automatically barred from being "ideal" citizens (first because they did not live at home with both parents) might also have decreased self-esteem and a desire to conform with the image of the "good citizen" who was destined for future success.

Textbooks also relayed the idea that "progress" was the express realm of whites through the repeated praise of the Empire/Commonwealth with an air of superiority, an emphasis on the

courageous pioneers who were able to conquer North America directly contrasted by the deaths of Native peoples who “could not adjust,” and comparisons with other races who had not advanced as quickly or to as great a degree as the white (especially Anglo-Saxon) peoples. In this way, assimilation might have been helped as the way of the future appeared to be the way of the whites. Again, self-esteem might have decreased as a result of negative comments regarding the place of Native peoples in “progress.”

The school curriculum content also included the message that whites were generally superior to non-white peoples. Negative comparisons of Native peoples and other races with whites as well as blatant stereotyping, oversimplification of other cultures, and general slander were the vehicles which propelled this message. Again, the students’ self-esteem and self-awareness likely suffered as a result of this material. The possibility for promoting an understanding between the home and the school communities was lost due to the inaccuracies and insensitivities of the curriculum.

The three “official objectives” which education officials claimed to support in the 1950s and 1960s were only partially supported in the curriculum content. While texts supported the goals of promoting an “appreciation for our way of life” and creating “good citizens,” the means by which this was accomplished stood in direct opposition to the aim of fostering “world understanding.” The inclusion of content which supported this third objective might have provided Native students with some degree of self-awareness, a knowledge of their ancestors’ contributions to Canadian society, and some understanding of both their home and school environments. Unfortunately, this opportunity was lost and Native students were subjected to a curriculum which acted, instead, as an agent of assimilation.

### The Nova Scotia Curriculum and Catholic Education: Tension or Common Ground?

The curriculum employed at the Shubenacadie Residential School was designed by a secular agency but the school operated under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Therefore, it is possible that there was tension between the curriculum content and Catholic values which affected how teachers presented material to their students. However, a comparison of Catholic values, as espoused by the authorities cited in Chapter One, and the messages contained in the curriculum content does not reveal any major areas of contention. While Catholic teachers might have de-emphasized some material so that it conformed more closely with their own beliefs, this is true of all teachers and it does not necessarily alter the messages in any profound way. As far as “official” Catholic values and the curriculum content in the Nova Scotia public school curriculum was concerned, there were more areas of agreement than there were points of contention.

The most notable aspect of the curriculum content which might have received censure from the Catholic Church was the emphasis that the material put on how people ought to behave. Catholic officials were concerned about the secularization of morality and guarded this area as the responsibility of Catholic parents and the Church. Therefore, the government intervention through curriculum in this area might have been problematic.<sup>126</sup> It is possible that the teachers at the school left out the more blatant directives on morality which were issued by school texts and replaced them with their own teachings. However, much of the material which related to how

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<sup>126</sup>In the earlier part of the century, however, the Catholic Church was beginning to change its strong stance on this issue. Robert Nicholas Berard argued that “Even Catholics... expected their denominational schools to bear an increasing part of the burden of religion and moral education.” See Berard, Character Education and Nation Building in the Maritimes, 1880-1920 (Truro, NS: Dawson Lecture Series, Nova Scotia Teachers College, March 31, 1993) 8.

one ought to live in order to be an “acceptable” member of Canadian society agreed with Catholic values. The importance of family was the most prominent theme in this area of public school curriculum and the Catholic Church also placed a great emphasis on the importance of family. Children were taught to respect authority in their textbooks and this was a major theme in Catholic ideology as well. While the order of importance regarding who to obey might have shifted in the hands of Catholic administrators, the emphasis on obedience surely agreed for the most part with Catholic values. Therefore, the issue of who ought to teach children how to behave may have been contentious as the state increased its role in “character education” in the school curriculum of the 1950s and 1960s, but the values expressed by the curriculum did mesh with Catholic ideology.

As a very minor area of school curriculum, religious freedom received some recognition.<sup>127</sup> However, the actual curriculum did not acknowledge any religions other than Christian religions (except to belittle Native peoples’ beliefs)<sup>128</sup> and assumed that all children fell within the bounds of Christendom. Catholic ideals do not appear to have encouraged religious freedom for children, as parents were told that it was their duty to raise their children in the Catholic faith. Therefore, this small area of curriculum content may have been contentious but it would easily have been avoided as the issue was not supported in any meaningful way. The texts contained only one cursory statement regarding religious freedom and many poems, stories, songs, and

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<sup>127</sup>A social studies text told students, “It is unthinkable that... the people should be compelled to accept any particular creed. The people may profess any religious beliefs they may wish, provided that these beliefs are not contrary to the law of the land and do not interfere with good citizenship.” McCaig, 276.

<sup>128</sup>For instance, a social studies text stated that medicine men “pretended” to learn where it was best to hunt and how to cure sickness. Paterson, 212.

historical information assumed that the reader believed Christianity, at least, was the “true religion.”<sup>129</sup>

Curriculum content and Catholic ideology around education also appear to have been in agreement with regard to the issue of “good citizenship.” While Catholic authorities did not entrench their ideas in this specific term, the characteristics of a “good citizen” and the traits that various popes valued were very similar. Secular authorities saw “honesty, loyalty, kindness, neatness, being a good sport, and being dependable”<sup>130</sup> as well as having respect for authority<sup>131</sup> as desirable personal qualities. Catholic authorities included obedience, co-operation, courage, perseverance, courtesy, punctuality, and good manners among the qualities one ought to possess.<sup>132</sup> While the words chosen to describe the “desirable qualities” were not exactly the same, they do paint a similar picture. Therefore, the elements of good citizenship which received the most attention in public schools did not clash with Catholic ideals.

While the administration at the school did choose to use the Ginn “Faith and Freedom Series” readers, authorized for use in Catholic “Indian Schools” by the Indian Affairs Branch, the provincial readers were also in use at the school. The contents of the messages within these two

<sup>129</sup>Some readers included selections from The Bible and the songbooks included many Christian hymns, especially those which related to Christmas. See, Fenwick, 44; and Biehl, 396.

<sup>130</sup>Burns, 4.

<sup>131</sup>As is illustrated by the emphasis on information concerning the place of the school, the church in the community. Also, under “Duties of a Citizen”, obedience to the law received first mention. Burns, Grade Seven outline for Unit 2, 2.

<sup>132</sup>Francis Ryan, “Sparing the Child: Superintendent John Bonner’s Philosophy of Classroom Discipline and Character Education in the Philadelphia Catholic Schools, 1940-1945,” Vitae Scholasticae, 10:1-2 (1991): 217.

sets of texts are remarkably similar and their use in conjunction with one another indicates the compatibility of the materials. As the readers contained similar messages concerning “good citizens,” a promotion of “our way of life” in combination with equally racist depictions of Native peoples, the readers will only be discussed in Chapter Three with regards to their religious components.<sup>133</sup>

There were areas where the Catholic Church or Catholic teachers might have shifted emphasis, added to the curriculum or selected some material for use while discarding some. However, this would have been so for all teachers and much of the content provided in the Nova Scotia curriculum related to Catholic ideology in some ways. Owram argues that the emphasis on education for democracy meant that Catholic schools in Quebec were opposed to some of the thrust of education in the 1950s. However, the idea of democracy did not figure prominently in the public school curriculum. In fact, democracy, freedom and capitalism did not have any real place in the curriculum content at the public school level in Nova Scotia.<sup>134</sup> Of course, teachers

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<sup>133</sup>Murphy and Stortz discuss the “Canadian Catholic Readers” that were used in Ontario’s Catholic schools. They argue that the books promoted nationalism in schools which acted as agents of assimilation for immigrant Catholic children by placing “a great emphasis on Canada, the history of the British Empire and the duty of a child to the nation.” Terrence Murphy and Gerald Startz, Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholic in Canadian Society, 1750-1930 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993) 208-209 and 215-216

<sup>134</sup>Incidentally, dictatorships, bondage, and communism did not receive attention either. In texts which contained information about other countries, Russia, Cuba, and China were never mentioned. However, in high school this was no longer the case. On a grade twelve standardized provincial examination one question stated: “In October and November, 1964, three countries, the United States, Great Britain and Soviet Russia were “involved in the business of choosing new leaders or electing ones already in office. A) Contrast the way in which changes took place in the Soviet Union with the American and British methods...” followed by: B)“What is ‘the case against Communism’?” Department of Education, Provincial Examinations, 1965, (Halifax: Publication and Information section, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, 1966) 44.

might have employed democratic models of teaching or may have included such information as a corollary to the textual material, but the curriculum itself contained little information about democracy. The more conservative Catholic educators that Owram referred to would not have needed to censor these textbooks on the grounds that they included too much emphasis on democratic freedom in their pages.

While some areas of the curriculum content might have been altered or censored by Catholic educators, much of the material included ideas and lessons which can also be found in the statements of Catholic authorities concerning the aims of education. Therefore, any drastic differences between the curriculum implemented at the Shubenacadie Residential School and that used in public schools were not likely to have been related to ideological differences. Factors which might have accounted for any such differences would, therefore, include the fact that the audience for the material differed from those of the public schools.

### Pedagogical Instructions

Even in the area of pedagogy, “official” directions on the part of the Nova Scotia Department of Education often echoed those given by the Catholic authorities. Because the means of instruction is as important as the content<sup>135</sup> pedagogical directives are considered here as a means of determining the nature of education that children were expected to receive. This is not to say that instructions were followed in any meaningful way. Owram argues that there was a great

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<sup>135</sup>Department of Education, “Program of Studies for Schools in Nova Scotia, 1965-1966,” Education Office Bulletin 14 (1964-1965) 35.

difference between the reality and the ideal in education during the 1950s.<sup>136</sup> Just as the reasons why Catholic officials repeatedly gave pedagogical advice to Catholic teachers are questionable,<sup>137</sup> the exact motivation behind advice that was given to Nova Scotia teachers is also unclear. It may be that the emphasis indicated that undesirable practices were common or simply that desirable practices were not common. It is logical again, however, to assume that the education officials gave teachers advice that they viewed, at least, as desirable practice for public school classrooms.

The most common instructions that education officials gave to Nova Scotia's teachers were to make the material they taught interesting for their pupils, to use the background experiences of their students in their lessons, and to avoid the use of memorization techniques in daily lessons. The first two of these instructions are of most interest here as they directly relate to the curriculum content and its effects on the attempted assimilation of Native students. The Department of Education did provide other advice that generally dealt with teacher/student rapport which would help to ensure that students' experiences in the classroom were positive.

According to the authors of a health book that was on the curriculum, the principle of interest was key in contemporary pedagogical thought.<sup>138</sup> In the foreword to the teacher, they stated that they accepted "the current theory of education [that] the content of textbooks and courses of

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<sup>136</sup>Owram, 134.

<sup>137</sup>See Chapter One, pg.s 34-35.

<sup>138</sup>This was not a new idea in the mid-twentieth century. The Journal of Education in 1953 included the following quote in one issue, "We find that so far from enervating the pupil, the principle of interest braces him to endure all manner of drudgery and hard work... The theory of interest does not propose to banish drudgery but only to make drudgery tolerable by giving it meaning." J.F. Herbert (1776-1841) as quoted in, Journal of Education, 3:1 Series 5 (October, 1953): 54.

study should be based upon the needs and interests of children...”<sup>139</sup> The Education Department’s teaching guide for Art in Primary to grade six noted that “to hold the attention of all the children in Primary to grade six, broad topics of interest must be chosen.”<sup>140</sup> In addition to these instructions to the teachers which appeared at the beginning of textbooks or curriculum guidelines, the Education Department published an article entitled “The Principle of Interest” in the Journal of Education. This article stated that “[t]oday any reputable educator believes in the value of interest as a factor to improve learning.”<sup>141</sup> The Nova Scotia Department of Education officials believed that learning would be improved if students were interested in the material. For residential school students, however, curriculum content was so far removed from their reality and Native people were so often denigrated in the texts that the possibility of material being interesting for these pupils, in general, was unlikely.<sup>142</sup>

Another common direction that education officials in Nova Scotia gave to the province’s teachers was that the background experiences of their pupils ought to be used in order to increase the understanding of new information. This was not a new idea in the 1950s and 1960s, but it did receive endorsement by the Department of Education in this period. Especially in the case of reading, background experience was considered to be key. The Journal of Education included a

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<sup>139</sup>Charters, Smiley, and Strang, v.

<sup>140</sup>Department of Education, “Art: Primary- Grade 6, A Teaching Guide, Education Office Bulletin, 2 (1956-1957): 24.

<sup>141</sup>M.V. Marshall, “The Principle of Interest,” Journal of Education, 3:1 Series 5 (October, 1953): 74.

<sup>142</sup>Of course, individual teachers/courses might have proven to be of interest for some students but, in general, curriculum content was unlikely to have been of great interest to residential school students.

checklist for diagnosing “reading readiness.”<sup>143</sup> The following questions were among the list of concerns: “Has he [the pupil] had the majority of experiences that he will read about? How comparable is his home situation to the one about which he will be reading? Does he express himself in simple English sentences? Can he tell a personal experience in logical sequence?”<sup>143</sup> Officials told teachers that they must know their students in order to understand what the pupils’ knowledge was and to build on it.<sup>144</sup> Even number work, “to be real” had to be “founded upon the actual experiences of the individual pupil.”<sup>145</sup>

Again, the curriculum content of the Shubenacadie Residential School likely stood in the way of sound pedagogy as it does not appear to have lent itself to the incorporation of Native students’ background. An emphasis on home life, the lack of content which was applicable to the unique experiences of Native residential school children, and the dominance of majority cultural values was aimed at denying these students’ past experiences rather than using them as a foundation for future learning. Contemporary pedagogical theory thus was discarded in the name of assimilation efforts.

On top of these directions, Education Department publications included recommendations that teachers give light criticisms (as opposed to humiliating or nagging the students).<sup>146</sup>

<sup>143</sup>Department of Education, “Diagnosing Reading Readiness,” Journal of Education, 3:1 Series 5 (October, 1953): 63.

<sup>144</sup>Department of Education, “Social Studies: A Teaching Guide,” Education Office Bulletin, 7 (1956): 8.

<sup>145</sup>Department of Education, “The Primary Grade: A Teaching Outline,” Education Office Bulletin, 2 (1951-1952): 20.

<sup>146</sup>For example, under the heading “What you should not do”, teachers were told: “Never criticize a child’s speech by teasing him or making fun of him. Avoid constant criticism or nagging. A little corrective work each day is sufficient. Do not develop self consciousness or

Teachers were also instructed to “make them [the students] feel that she likes them...<sup>147</sup>” and to make the transition to school as pleasant as possible for the youngest children.<sup>148</sup> The education officials, then, appear to have been concerned with students’ comfort in the classrooms.

The two prominent pedagogical concepts discussed here were also present in Catholic education ideals.<sup>149</sup> Catholic authorities also included the idea that children learned better from some one who cared about them.<sup>150</sup> In these ways, pedagogical directions for Catholic teachers in Nova Scotia were similar whether they came from Catholic authorities or from the Department of Education.

While curriculum content provided one barrier to sound pedagogy, government objectives concerning the integration of Native children into non-Native schools and mainstream Canadian society set up another. Education authorities emphasized the importance of using background experiences, interest, and relevance in children’s education, but the federal government insisted that Native children be exposed to the same curriculum as white children. Therefore, the unique experiences and needs of Native students were ignored in order to promote integration and assimilation. In an attempt to give the appearance of equal treatment and to further assimilation efforts, the Canadian government stood in the way of providing sound pedagogy and, therefore,

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fear in the child by continually drawing attention to defects.” Department of Education, “The Primary Grade: A Teaching Outline,” Education Office Bulletin, 2 (1951-1952): 12.

<sup>147</sup> Department of Education, “The Primary Grade: Teaching Suggestions,” Education Office Bulletin, 2 (1952-1953): 7.

<sup>148</sup> Department of Education, “The Primary Grade: A Teaching Outline,” Education Office Bulletin, 2 (1951-1952): 5.

<sup>149</sup> See Chapter One, pg.s 35-7.

<sup>150</sup> See Chapter One, pg.s 23-4.

hindered the probability that Native students would enjoy meaningful academic experiences.

Clive Whitehead argues that one must not judge education systems by “to-day’s” standards but with an understanding of the best of contemporary educational thought.<sup>151</sup> While the Nova Scotia government’s Department of Education and Catholic authorities’ ideas might not have been “the best in contemporary educational thought,” they did reflect contemporary ideology around education.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, the fact that the provincial school curriculum, which was to be followed at the Shubenacadie Residential School, put up barriers to the implementation of some of the pedagogical techniques in a school for Native children meant that, in this school at least, it was unlikely that the authorities’ directions were followed. The Native students at the Shubenacadie Residential School are not likely to have been exposed to the “best in contemporary educational thought” as a result, in part, of the fact that the assimilative forces of curriculum content and government objectives stood in the way of any such enlightened attempts.

The use of provincial curriculum for Native Residential Schools supported the federal government’s assimilationist policies. The textbooks that were used in Nova Scotia’s public schools during the 1950s and 1960s promoted assimilation in a variety of ways. Subtle messages within the texts, as well as direct instructions and information provided for the students, acted as the vehicle by which the curriculum supported assimilation. The messages which pervaded the curriculum included how “acceptable,” “respectable,” and “successful” Canadians lived, the notion that progress was a uniquely white and Western domain, alongside

<sup>151</sup> Clive Whitehead, “British colonial educational policy: a synonym for cultural imperialism?” Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism, J.A. Mangan ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 214.

<sup>152</sup> Jerome S. Bruner was the most influential education theorist at the time. For his views on pedagogy see, The Process of Education (New York: Vintage Books, 1960).

the idea that non-whites (especially Native peoples in Canada) were inferior to whites.

Narrow limitations defined who was “acceptable” in Canadian society, and therefore, who would be successful. For Native students who, no doubt, wished to “succeed,” this material might have increased the probability that (or the degree to which) assimilation would occur as they attempted to conform to the paradigm of the “acceptable” citizen. Students might have wished to identify themselves with the “in-group” of “respectable” Canadians, rather than with the “out-group” to which they inevitably (due firstly to the fact that they lived in a residential school as opposed to a home with both of their parents) belonged.

The second message that students were faced with was that progress was the express possession of whites. The fact that the textbooks insinuated that the whites had led, and would continue to lead, progress might also have increased Native students’ desire to assimilate. And, if a positive depiction of whites was not enough to elicit this desire, the denigration of non-white (and especially Native) peoples might have tipped the balance. This third message, that non-whites were intellectually, morally, and politically inferior to whites, also permeated the Nova Scotia curriculum in the 1950s and 1960s.

The continual academic abuse that Native peoples endured in the textbooks, in the form of perpetual depictions of whites’ superiority alongside slanderous material concerning their own peoples, would have done nothing to build self-confidence in Native students. In all probability, self-concept and pride would have been destroyed, at least in part, by the vicious material. A lack of self-esteem and self-confidence is likely to have paved the way for increased assimilation as students lacked the pride needed to combat such negative forces and may even have lacked the desire to do so, in some cases.

In reference to American influence in Canadian schools, the Toronto Star reported that “American textbooks can be an effective and insidious instrument for Americanizing the thinking of young Canadians at the most impressionable period of their lives. They can instil the idea that the United States is the centre of the world; that its foreign policy is always right and its [sic] opponents have always been wrong; that its ways of doing things are the most advanced and efficient on the globe.”<sup>153</sup> This observation is equally true of the use of “Canadian” textbooks in Indian Residential Schools. The texts were overwhelmingly Euro-centric and racist, and they presented Native students with the idea that only the “Canadian” (that was, Canadians of Anglo-Saxon descent) way was right.

The messages in the curriculum even stood in the way of good pedagogy. Regardless of whether or not residential school teachers intended to use, or were capable of implementing, sound pedagogical practices (as they were defined at the time) in their classrooms, the curriculum content stood as a barrier to such methods. The content made two of the most important pedagogical techniques difficult to follow. The background experiences of Native students were not present in the curriculum and, therefore, past learning was ignored instead of being used as a building block for new knowledge. The principle of interest was, likewise, sabotaged by a curriculum which both ignored Native peoples’ true histories, cultures, and religions while slandering them at the same time.

The opportunity for the inclusion of correct information which might have made these two pedagogical practices possible, and, therefore, might have increased academic success or enjoyment, was lost in the pursuit of other objectives. The desire to produce “good citizens” and

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<sup>153</sup>Toronto Star, May 30, 1972, 6. As cited in Tomkins, 327.

to promote an appreciation for “our way of life” in the curriculum directly opposed the cultivation of “world understanding.” In this way, the needs of Native students were completely disregarded by the curriculum and, indirectly, by the federal government when it endorsed the use of provincial curricula in residential schools to aid assimilation. Curriculum content, then, served as an agent of assimilation in the Shubenacadie Residential School and elements of curricular and pedagogical advice and goals that may have proven beneficial to Native students were sacrificed to the “larger goal” of assimilating the children.

**Chapter Three:**  
**Dynamics Within the System: Policy, Debate, and Implementation**

The previous chapters in this study have concentrated on aspects of the residential school system that were relatively unchanging. The ideology around child rearing and education as expounded by the Catholic Church was consistent for the time period examined in Chapter One. The curriculum for Nova Scotia's public schools that was the basis for the Shubenacadie Residential School's academic program was also quite static through the 1950s and 1960s, and even in the decades prior to the period under study. However, even while many aspects of the system remained stagnant, there were undercurrents of change and a fairly extensive overhaul of many aspects of the system in its dying decades. These changes affected those in charge of "Indian education" at all levels of administration and created tensions within the system which affected the implementation of policy.

As public interest both pushed and was pushed by government inquiries into Indian education, and as Native peoples' voices became audible in Indian Affairs, to those who cared to listen, major policy changes began to take shape throughout the 1950s and 1960s in Canada's system of residential schools. These changes included a refocusing of the aims of education for Native children to a more "academic" approach that included a process of integration into public schools, restructuring funding arrangements, increasing teacher qualifications, pedagogical shifts, timetable regulations and changes, and a decrease in the use of "practical training." These sweeping reforms, however, were all subject to debate within the system and were not necessarily effective. Some were only proposed and not implemented.

People at all levels of the system had varying opinions regarding the goals of Indian education and the new policies, although for the white authorities, assimilation was still the primary aim.

These included officials within the Indian Affairs Branch, the Church(es), the Indian Agency, school inspectors, the administration at the institution, and even the Native and Canadian public. The differing opinions affected the means by and extent to which policies were implemented. They also shaped the students' experiences in the day-to-day operation of the school. While government policies may have set out how schools and classrooms were supposed to operate, an abundance of forces aside from official documents influenced the actual practices at the school. Official policies, then, did not necessarily reflect practices within the classrooms at the Shubenacadie Residential School. This chapter examines the relations between public pressure on the federal government, official policies, and the implementation of policy at the Shubenacadie Residential School. Those connected with Indian education, aside from Native people themselves, continued to express the desire to assimilate Native children through education. Differences in the focus of this education, however, created tensions within the system which influenced the extent to which policies were implemented.

#### External Forces: Public Concern, Native Voices, and Government Responses

Throughout the period of the 1950s and 1960s, public interest in the Native people in Canada increased in ways that paralleled the rise in concern over civil rights and racial issues in general.<sup>1</sup> The publicity that stemmed from this heightened interest may have pushed the government to make policy changes in the system of residential schools. But public inquiries and changing

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<sup>1</sup>See, J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 221; and Doug Owram, Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996) 223.

policies may also have increased public interest.<sup>2</sup> The relationship, then, was likely reciprocal, with government actions both pushing and being pushed by public interest and opinion.

Most of the correspondence received by the Indian Affairs Branch inquiring into Native issues dates from the 1960s. However, this kind of concern over the education of Native children, and the situation of Native Canadian peoples in general, was also evident in the late 1950s. The annual report of the Indian Affairs Branch in 1958 noted an increased level of interest among the general population of Canada,

An encouraging aspect of Indian Affairs administration during the year was the increasing interest shown by Canadians in their Indian fellow citizens. This interest was apparent in the work of provincial, municipal and private agencies, and in the numerous inquiries received by the Department.<sup>3</sup>

Concerns were expressed specifically about the quality and ethical considerations of “Indian education.” By 1965, an Indian Affairs publication was raising critical issues. The Canadian Superintendent dedicated its 1965 edition to “The Education of Indian Children in Canada.” The second chapter of this publication listed the criticisms of “denominational schools,” though the criticisms were actually directed at both the schools’ denominational aspects and assimilation ethics. The criticisms included: the undesirability of segregation (religious or racial); the poor teacher qualifications within the institutions due to the importance of religious affiliation over

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<sup>2</sup>The annual report of the Indian Affairs Branch for 1966/67 stated that interest was stimulated in part by research projects. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, “Report of the Indian Affairs Branch, 1966/67,” Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1966/67 (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1967) 48. Note, Indian Affairs was transferred from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to the new Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development during the 1966/67 fiscal year.

<sup>3</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1958, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1958) 47.

professional training; the insulation of children in residential schools which resulted in setting children adrift between the white and Indian worlds; the ethical considerations of transforming nomadic societies into a race of farmers; and general concerns over the efforts to destroy one culture and replace it with another that was different but not necessarily better.<sup>4</sup>

The Indian Affairs Branch's moment of reflection may have been sparked by the research undertaken for the Hawthorn report on Native issues. This report on the state of Native peoples in Canada, commissioned in 1963, was published in 1966-1967. The findings were very critical of government policies and argued that Ottawa ought to ensure that Native people enjoyed the same standards of housing, health, and education as other Canadians.<sup>5</sup> Aside from this report, the news media must also have played a role in stimulating interest or reflecting an existing concern, or both. The press coverage concerning government treatment of Native education was often quite disparaging. The Report of the Indian Affairs Branch in 1967 noted the volume of newspaper articles published in that year<sup>6</sup> while National Archives files contain several examples of these publications. In 1963 the Ottawa Citizen published an article entitled, "Metis Schooling Almost Useless."<sup>7</sup> Two years later the Globe and Mail printed an article entitled, "Schools that Fail" which dealt with the fact that Native children were often lost between two worlds when

<sup>4</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Education Division, "The Education of Indian Children in Canada," The Canadian Superintendent 1965 (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1965) 21.

<sup>5</sup>See, H.B. Hawthorn ed., A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies 2 Volumes (Ottawa: Indian Affairs, 1966-67).

<sup>6</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1966-67, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1967) 48.

<sup>7</sup>Ottawa Citizen, "Metis Schooling Almost Useless, Official Asserts," January 4, 1963. As contained in NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 11.

they emerged from the government's Indian schools.<sup>8</sup>

This heightened concern about Native issues did not go unnoticed in the Indian Affairs Branch. In 1964 R.F. Davey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, wrote to all Superintendents of Indian Education and supervising principals regarding the influx of inquiries to Indian Affairs. He stated, "Your personal involvement in this sphere of the field work is most essential because it is your attitude to public inquiry which will create in the minds of the people the image of Canada's concern for the Indian problem."<sup>9</sup> Davey's concern with public perception may have been merely precautionary or he may have been responding to failures by superintendents and/or supervising principals to deal effectively with the public. Notwithstanding the reasons for issuing his letter, Davey realized the need for sympathetic treatment of inquiries to avoid provoking anger among Canadians. Pressure from the public appears to have required tactical responses. These responses came in the form of letters in return to inquiries<sup>10</sup> and possibly in policy reform and changes to the system in general.

The Indian Affairs Branch also recognized the interest that Native people themselves had in their children's education. The government documents generally indicated a perceived increase

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<sup>8</sup>G.E. Mortimore, Globe and Mail, "Schools that Fail: Reluctance of white policy-makers to come to terms with Indian and Eskimo reality produces children lost between the two worlds," September 2, 1965, pg. E 10. As contained in NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 14.

<sup>9</sup>R.F. Davey to All School Superintendents and Supervising Principals, January, 1964. NAC, RG 10, Volume 10666, File 8/25-1 Part 2.

<sup>10</sup>For example, R.F. Davey to J. Murphy, re: sex education in Indian Schools, January 23, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 10; and Ellen Fairclough, Minister, to D. Jones, re: the number of Indians in Canadian universities, no date. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/23-1, Part 7.

in interest.<sup>11</sup> Some of these documents, however, discussed a lack of understanding or concern on the part of Native parents and/or communities with regards to education. As opposed to factual representations of Native peoples' positions, however, these may simply have been a response to Native resistance to changing government policies.<sup>12</sup> A pamphlet published by the Department of Indian Affairs in 1962 stated that "not all Indian parents... appreciate the new opportunities" noting, "they resent the fact that their children return with non-Indian ways, unfamiliar with the traditional pursuits of hunting and fishing, that they are sometimes scornful of their parents' viewpoints and of Indian culture."<sup>13</sup> Native communities were also criticized for failing to pressure students to continue their education after "school-leaving age" and to prepare themselves for "a life vocation."<sup>14</sup> A similar criticism came from the school inspector for Shubenacadie. He complained in one set of reports that "Better attitudes and work habits would seem most desirable for these children and those in the neighboring [sic] reserve."<sup>15</sup> It is clear that some officials within the Department felt that Native peoples neither understood nor

<sup>11</sup>To be discussed in upcoming section.

<sup>12</sup> See J.R. Miller, Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 391-2 and 397; and J.S. Milloy, A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1878-1986 (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1999) 222.

<sup>13</sup>Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, The Indian in Transition: Indian Education (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962) 5-6.

<sup>14</sup>Davey to Regional Supervisors, Indian Commissioner for B.C., School Superintendents, "Re: School Dropouts," May 24, 1963. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 13.

<sup>15</sup>M. W. Campbell, Inspector of Schools with the Department of Education, Nova Scotia, "Report on the Shubenacadie Residential School," April 15 and 16, 1964. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5.

appreciated the benefits that western style education offered to children.

Many other sources within the Indian Affairs Branch, however, commented on Native Canadian's increased appreciation and understanding of schooling. At times, credit for this increased interest was attributed to the Indian Affairs Branch. The 1957 annual report noted that over the year "Indian school committees" had been established on a number of reserves to "enable Indian communities to assume more responsibility in the development of educational facilities for their children, and in the use of government and band funds for educational purposes."<sup>16</sup> In 1959 the Minister, Ellen Fairclough, stated that enrollment of Native students in high schools had "more than trebled over the last decade" indicating that there was "no doubt that the Indian Affairs Branch ha[d] succeeded in convincing the young Indians and their parents of the value of high school training."<sup>17</sup>

Other government documents gave more responsibility for the perceived increase in interest in Native communities to the Native people themselves.<sup>18</sup> The Indian Affairs Branch's report for 1962 noted that school inspectors reported an improved standard of pupil performance which

<sup>16</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1957, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1957) 50.

<sup>17</sup>Ellen Fairclough, Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, "Address to the Canadian Association of School Superintendents and Inspectors," Saskatoon, September 15, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9027, File 51/12-4.

<sup>18</sup>Whether or not there actually was an increase in interest among Native peoples regarding education is difficult to assess. Perhaps more people were able to write to the Department. Perhaps more understood the means by which to attract attention from white officials. Perhaps those officials simply paid more attention to Native concerns due to the increase in concerns among the majority population. Whatever the reasons behind the perception, however, the Indian Affairs officials' sense of an increased interest is what would have created tension at this point.

“reflect[ed] fuller understanding by both parents and children of the benefits of education and its importance to their social and economic progress.”<sup>19</sup> The pamphlet produced by the Indian Affairs Branch in the same year stated that “Indian parents are becoming increasingly aware of the value of good schooling.”<sup>20</sup> These differing perceptions of Natives’ “understanding” might have been indicative of the dynamics and differences of opinion among Native peoples themselves. To assume that all Native people took the same stance on educational issues would be naive. No matter who received credit or what the reasons for the perceptions, however, many documents mentioned the heightened interest in schooling and education in Native communities.

The perception of increased Native awareness may have been linked to the fact that Native people across Canada voted in the 1963 federal election on the same basis as other citizens for the first time.<sup>21</sup> This new political power, in conjunction with their relatively new political organization,<sup>22</sup> might have increased Native peoples’ awareness of their own political influence, or it might have increased government concern over the input they received from the Native peoples. The addition of the Native peoples to the voting booth and political arena, however,

<sup>19</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1962, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962) 31.

<sup>20</sup>Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, The Indian in Transition: The Indian Today (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962) 9.

<sup>21</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1964, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1964) 21. The election took place on April 8, 1963 and saw Lester B. Pearson form a minority government with the New Democratic Party.

<sup>22</sup>Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 401.

likely increased the tension within the government concerning their demands.

Whatever the forces at work behind government inquiries and initiatives, many changes occurred in the system throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The 1951 Indian Act ended the highly criticised half-day system. The Indian Affairs Branch limited religious instruction to a half hour per school day and there was an increase in supervision and reporting on classroom practices during these decades. And, of course, the system itself was in decline by this time as the Indian Affairs Branch pushed for the integration of Native children into public schools. These developments were all likely to have influenced the implementation of government policies. As will be seen throughout the rest of this chapter, many policies were designed which were to have changed practices in federal Indian school classrooms. However, the critical climate of public opinion apparently created some difficulties for policy implementation.

#### Integration: Government Initiatives and Catholic Opposition

Linked to public interest in “Indian education” was the new government policy of integration. That is, throughout the 1950s and especially the 1960s, more and more Native children were beginning to attend public schools alongside their white peers. This fact might have increased general awareness of issues around Native schooling. At least, the issue received some attention in a local Halifax paper. In February, 1966 a Halifax Chronicle-Herald article described an address to the legislature. The paper stated that the speaker “didn’t feel the present set-up [of residential schools] is or has been productive of the kind of results we should like to see” and that “the field of education is one in which it is of utmost importance that there be no differentiation

[sic] because of race, creed, or color [sic]."<sup>23</sup> These sorts of criticisms and the general sense that federal schools had failed to assimilate Native children and the cost of operating federal day and residential schools across the country led to Indian Affairs Branch support for integration.<sup>24</sup>

In a 1959 address to the Canadian Association of School Superintendents and Inspectors, the Minister, Ellen Fairclough, stated that "the fundamental aim of the government's policy toward Indians is the gradual integration of our country's fastest-growing ethnic group into the Canadian community."<sup>25</sup> This general goal was extended into the education system and Fairclough asserted that the growth in integrated schooling was the "real progress" of Indian education.<sup>26</sup> In 1963 Indian Affairs' Education Director, R.F. Davey, noted that this policy of integration was supported in the findings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House on Indian Affairs in 1948 as well as by the 1963 Glassco Commission.<sup>27</sup> The Glassco Commission (Fourteenth Report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization) had strongly recommended an "intensification of the integration program in process" and stated that, "the results this year are in

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<sup>23</sup>Halifax Herald, February 26, 1966. PANS, MG 1, Volume 1434, Number 2.

<sup>24</sup>Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 383 and 412.

<sup>25</sup>Ellen Fairclough, Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Address to the Canadian Association of School Superintendents and Inspectors, Saskatoon, September 15, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9027, File 51/12-4.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>R.F. Davey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, Indian Affairs Branch, on behalf of the Indian Affairs Branch to Standing Committee of Ministers of Education, September 25, 1963. NAC, RG 10, Volume 10666, File 81/25-1, Part 2.

harmony with the recommendation of the commission.”<sup>28</sup> In 1958 the Report of the Indian Affairs Branch pointed to the fact that the “importance of the use of provincial curriculum underlined the expansion of integrated education”<sup>29</sup> and in 1962, the Report indicated that Indian schools used provincial curricula “so that Indian students can transfer to public school classes without undue difficulties.”<sup>30</sup> According to Davey and the Indian Affairs Branch, the policy was well on the way to full implementation in the early 1960s.<sup>31</sup> The Education Director stated that, in 1962, “nearly forty percent of the Indian school population [was] enrolled in non-Indian schools.”<sup>32</sup> By 1964, “more than forty percent” of the Indian school-aged population was enrolled in provincial schools.<sup>33</sup> Enrollment of Native students in provincial high schools increased from 611 in 1948-49 to 6, 110 in 1966-67. The numbers of Native children enrolled in public schools, then, did increase during the period when government policy supported

<sup>28</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1963, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1963) 21.

<sup>29</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1958, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1958) 60.

<sup>30</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1962, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962) 29.

<sup>31</sup>The “success” of the system, judged by student achievements in the public system, however, was anything but sweeping. See Milloy, 223-4.

<sup>32</sup>R.F. Davey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, Indian Affairs Branch, on behalf of the Indian Affairs Branch to Standing Committee of Ministers of Education, September 25, 1963. NAC, RG 10, Volume 10666, File 81/25-1, Part 2.

<sup>33</sup>R.F. Davey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, Indian Affairs Branch, to Sr. Administrative Officer, “Re: Minister’s Address: New Directions in Indian Affairs,” October 30, 1964. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 13.

integration.

However “successful” it may appear to have been, integration policy met with opposition. The main source of the negative reaction was the Catholic Church, although some Native parents may have opposed the policy as well. Ellen Fairclough stated that the “Indian Affairs Branch has at times met with opposition in the field of integrated education. It has come in part from the Indian parents themselves who do not fully... understand the object of integrated schooling.”<sup>34</sup> Though Native parents might have acted to prevent the integration of their children, the paternalistic tone of Fairclough’s comment indicates that the Department, in this case, was not particularly interested in their concerns. Perley states that the policy of integration was “adopted without the consent of Aboriginal peoples.”<sup>35</sup> Even though the government made radical strides by inviting Native peoples to the 1946-48 hearings of the special committee, the ensuing 1951 legislation appeared all the more conservative for its failure to incorporate their concerns. Religious opposition, however, could influence the system dramatically given that sixty percent of residential schools were operated by the Catholic Church.

Catholic officials in Canada offered many reasons as to why integration was not desirable for Native children in the 1950s and 1960s. In its brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs, the Canadian Catholic Conference argued that unless officials in public schools “are carefully informed about Indian’s cultural background and agree to provide adequate educational

<sup>34</sup>Ellen Fairclough, Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, “Address to the Canadian Association of School Superintendents and Inspectors,” Saskatoon, September 15, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9027, File 51/12-4. See also, Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 391-2.

<sup>35</sup>David Perley, “Aboriginal Education in Canada as Internal Colonialism,” Canadian Journal of Native Education, 20:1 (1993): 124.

services in terms of ethnic- not racial- and vocational differences, we prefer- the provision of special or specialized schools for Indians.”<sup>36</sup> In this same vein, the Oblate Fathers, recommended “specialized courses, methods and facilities suited to the local and regional cultural background and true occupational future of Indian pupils” as well as “special emphasis. . . on the choice of teachers so as to select those capable of imparting not only knowledge but also character formation.”<sup>37</sup>

The Oblate Order, then, desired not less segregation but more. That is, they envisioned a completely separate system which would not rely on provincial curriculum and provincially-trained teachers to provide education for Native youth. They stated that “if the non-indian [sic] type of school (indian school with provincial course of study and province-trained teacher [sic] or non-indian provincial school) is to be the only means of acculturating indian children, the following prescriptions appear necessary for success and thoroughness:... isolate the child as much as possible from his native background... to prevent ‘exposure to indian culture.’”<sup>38</sup> While these comments make it clear that Catholic officials maintained, as did the federal government, the goals of assimilating Native communities, of “changing the persevering Indian community

<sup>36</sup>Archbishop Hayes to the Department of Indian Affairs, “A Brief to The Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs” from The Canadian Catholic Conference, Ottawa, May 1960, pg. 8. Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Records for the Shubenacadie Residential School.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid, 12.

<sup>38</sup>Father A. Renaud, O.M.I., Director General of the Oblate Order, “Education for Acculturation,” Residential Education for Indian Acculturation, Oblate Fathers in Canada, 1957 (Ottawa: Indian and Eskimo Welfare Commission, 1958) 34. The word “Indian” is not capitalized throughout most of this document.

into a canadian [sic] community,”<sup>39</sup> the Catholic officials desired a continuation of segregated schooling to facilitate this and the government pushed for integration.<sup>40</sup> For Catholic officials, “When Indian children will not help but grow-up [sic] to be culturally canadian then the average canadian school will meet their educational needs.”<sup>41</sup>

At the Shubenacadie Residential School this dichotomy between Catholic and government officials’ views on integration would have been important. Disagreements about major policy goals between the government which employed teachers within the school and the Church which “employed” them outside the institution’s walls, and to which they had devoted their lives, would have produced tension within the schools. How were teachers to approach the idea that they ought to ensure that provincial school curriculum be implemented to aid integration, as government policy dictated, while their religious superiors argued in favour of specialized curriculum and increased segregation?

### Funding Structures: Improved Care?

One of the most criticized and influential aspects of the residential school system was the government funding structure.<sup>42</sup> This structure underwent some changes throughout the 1950s

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<sup>39</sup>Renaud, 36.

<sup>40</sup>While the Fathers argued for continued segregation, they objected to the use of the word “on the grounds that the recommendations infer no forced separation on the basis of racial differences.” Archbishop Hayes to the Department of Indian Affairs, “A Brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs,” The Canadian Catholic Conference, Ottawa, May, 1960, pg. 8. Archives of the Archdiocese of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Church officials often cited a lack of funding for the physical neglect of children in the residential schools. See Milloy, 270.

and 1960s. These changes, generally, were made in response to problems within the system. The per capita grant system was abandoned in order to deal with the system's shortcomings regarding the standards of care for children.<sup>43</sup> The amount of money spent on the school at Shubenacadie increased nearly every year over the final decades of its existence. And yet, the changes that were "officially" mandated were not always implemented. This might have been a cost-saving measure. It may have been due to ideological differences between the government providing the monies and those allotting the funds. It might have been due to the Catholic Church officials' concerns that the government was increasing control over the schools.<sup>44</sup> What is important here is that the Indian Affairs Branch initiatives that were allegedly designed to improve the standards of care for children in the Indian schools were not fully implemented at the Shubenacadie Residential School.

Reports of the Indian Affairs Branch for the years 1951 to 1958 showed a general trend of incremental increases in the amounts of money spent on the Shubenacadie Residential School.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, the reports for the years 1959 to 1963 include Nova Scotia's Indian Day schools in their statements of expenditures and so an accurate analysis of spending is impossible though the general trend towards increasing spending did continue. (See Appendix "A") The reports for 1964 through 1967 included re-organized tables of expenditures which make comparisons with other years futile. While the upward trend in expenditures was not entirely consistent, it is

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<sup>43</sup>Milloy, 260.

<sup>44</sup>Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 393.

<sup>45</sup>See the reports of the Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1952-1958, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1952-1958) Tables #6.

nonetheless apparent that the federal government did increase the annual funding to the residential school at Shubenacadie over this period.

While this general increase may appear to indicate that Native children in the Shubenacadie Residential School classrooms were receiving improved education, this may not have been the case. In 1965 Davey wrote to D.E. Wordsworth, of the Canadian Welfare Council, "we cannot ignore the fact that a disproportionate amount of our education budget is spent on the [physical] maintenance of those institutions [the residential schools]."<sup>46</sup> The person in charge of education, therefore, realized that even though increasing amounts of money were spent on residential schooling, teaching and the children in the classes benefited from only a small amount of that funding.

Even when physical structures needed improvements or additions, funding which was designated to cover such expenses did not always come through. In 1959 a new building was planned for the school at Shubenacadie. According to the Inspector of Indian Schools for the region, the building was to include five classrooms, "shops," and a gymnasium, leaving the old structure to hold only residences and recreation rooms.<sup>47</sup> The Indian Affairs Branch Estimates for 1958-1959, however, listed under "New School or addition" a building with four classrooms and a gymnasium at an estimated cost of one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars.<sup>48</sup> No

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<sup>46</sup>R.F. Davey to D.E. Wordsworth, Canadian Welfare Council, August 19, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 14.

<sup>47</sup>P.L. McGillivray, Regional Inspector of Indian Schools to Murray W. Campbell, Inspector of Schools, June 8, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>48</sup>Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, Estimates, 1958-1959, Indian Education, Construction or Acquisition of Buildings, Works, Land and New Equipment, Vote 534. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9028, File 51/16-3.

matter what the exact plans were, the funding for the project fell through, and the building was not constructed.<sup>49</sup>

Not only were there structural problems in general regarding the allotment of funds to residential schools but also, those in charge of the allocated funds did not always ensure that money was spent as intended. In 1959 the Department of Indian Affairs completed an audit of the Shubenacadie Residential School's books and found a four thousand dollar surplus which had accumulated over Father Mackey's principalship (1928-43 and 1948-58).<sup>50</sup> Father Collins, principal of the school at the time, sent a cheque for the full amount to Gerald Berry, Archbishop of Halifax.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, money which had been provided to cover expenses at the school was rerouted to the Catholic Archdiocese.

After sixty years of funding schools on a per capita basis (paying a per capita grant to the religious denomination operating the school), the Department switched, in 1957, to a new controlled-cost system whereby the "real" costs of maintenance and education would be covered. That is, school principals submitted requests for coverage of the actual costs of operation and the

<sup>49</sup>H.M. Jones, Director, Indian Affairs Branch, to Indian Commissioner for B.C., Regional Supervisors, Superintendents of Indian Agencies, "1962/63 Estimates", July 9, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9028, File 51/16-3.

<sup>50</sup>P.J. Collins, principal at Shubenacadie Residential School to J. Gerald Berry, Archbishop of Halifax, December 15, 1959. Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Records for the Shubenacadie Residential School. Similarly, according to Knockwood, Father Mackey did not distribute all of the clothing provided by the Department for children though she did not note what became of the surplus. Knockwood, 37.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid and response which included a receipt for the \$4000.00, Berry to Collins, December 17, 1959. Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Records for the Shubenacadie Residential School.

Department of Indian Affairs paid for the approved expenses.<sup>52</sup> According to Davey, “the purpose of the new program [was] to establish and maintain standards of supervision, food, clothing and accommodation.”<sup>53</sup> But the extent to which this program was implemented at the Shubenacadie Residential School is questionable. Records entitled “per capita grants” administered by the school’s Father, P.J. Collins, are included in the National Archives files for 1958-1961, three years beyond the supposed abandonment of the per capita system.<sup>54</sup>

The changes that were made to the official policies around funding residential schools, then, appear not to have been as influential as policy statements might suggest or were altered and abused in the case of the Shubenacadie Residential School. While increasing amounts of money were provided to the school, inflation and the physical maintenance of the institutions often precluded improvements to the children’s “educational experiences.” Even funds for improvements to physical structures were not always provided. Some of the funds from the government for the school accumulated to a four thousand dollar surplus which was re-routed to the Catholic Church in Halifax. The per capita grant system, officially abandoned in 1957, was still in operation in some form in 1961. It appears that the government’s efforts to change the funding structures of the institution were not entirely effective in the case of the Shubenacadie Residential School.

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<sup>52</sup>Approval was dependent on limitations set by the Indian Affairs Branch. See Milloy, 271.

<sup>53</sup>Davey to Executive Assistant, Chief Education Division, “Material for Joint Committee,” February 13, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 7. In 1956 Davey stated, “For some time now the per capita grant expenditures have been exceeding the allotment...” Milloy, 270.

<sup>54</sup>Indian Affairs to P.J. Collins, “Per Capita Grants,” 1958-1961. NAC, RG 10, Volume 8545, File 51/25-12, Part 1. These included grants for food and clothing.

Public perception may have played a role in financing as the physical maintenance of buildings could project a more positive image of the institutions for the general public while the academic portions of the schools remained relatively intangible. Or, the emphasis on the schools as welfare institutions may have meant that physical maintenance was valued over academics when money was distributed. The per capita grant system may simply have been difficult to discard as it had formed the financing structure of the system since 1893, long before the Shubenacadie Residential School opened in 1928. Perhaps the government failed to provide the supervision of finances that would have resulted in more rigorous standards. Whatever the reasons, the changing financial policies were not necessarily evident at the Shubenacadie Residential School.

#### Teachers: Salaries, Qualifications and Variables Influencing Effective Pedagogy

To raise standards of care and education, the Indian Affairs Branch in 1954-55 officially took over ownership of most schools. With ownership came responsibility for the hiring and payment of staff. As a result, teachers' salaries were brought more closely in line with provincial school teachers' salaries, taking into account raises for professional certification and post-secondary education in order to increase the probability of acquiring professionally qualified staff.<sup>55</sup> By attempting to attract "qualified" teachers the government again demonstrated both sensitivity to the public criticisms about the failures of "Indian education" and a refocusing on "academics." The Shubenacadie Residential School fell under this new system in 1950 as it was selected in

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<sup>55</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1955, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1955) 51.

1949, along with a handful of other residential schools, as part of an experiment to see if the number of qualified teachers would increase when the salaries were paid directly by the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>56</sup> The assumption behind this move appears to have been that higher qualifications would lead to better teachers and an improved learning situation. Direct evidence of whether the situation improved or not is beyond the scope of research for this study. Indirectly, it can be argued that this singular reform was unlikely to have had much effect. Too many other barriers to effective pedagogy continued to exist at the Shubenacadie Residential School. These barriers included the unattractive reputation that teaching at a residential school maintained, teachers' ages, a high turn-over rate, and overcrowded classrooms.

The goal of increasing teacher qualifications does appear to have been somewhat successful, as teachers at the school in the 1950s and 1960s had fairly high qualifications. However, the system whereby the federal government had direct control over hiring staff did not give the Indian Affairs Branch as much power as it appeared to. Even in 1960, the Sisters of Charity hired and removed teachers from the school. P.L. McGillivray, District Superintendent of Indian Schools wrote to Mother Stella Marie, Mother-General at the Mother house, Sisters of Charity, "Thank you for your letter of July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1960 outlining the changes which you plan to make in the staffs of the Indian Schools of Shubenacadie."<sup>57</sup> Relating to the same matter, Frank McKinnon, Regional Superintendent, Hants County wrote to Indian Affairs regarding one teacher's resignation and stated, "The Superior of the Order will be supplying an experienced and qualified

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<sup>56</sup>"Qualifications of Teachers in Residential Schools whose Salaries are paid by the Department." NAC, RG 10, Volume 8598, File 1/1-13-2, Part 2.

<sup>57</sup>P.L. McGillivray, District Superintendent of Indian Schools to Mother Stella Marie, Mother-General at the Mother house, Sisters of Charity, August 9, 1960. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9030, File 88/1-13.

teacher as a replacement.”<sup>58</sup> Therefore, the official policy was not as far-reaching as it seemed, though the Indian Affairs Branch did reserve the right to deny employment to any teacher who did not meet Department “standards.”

There were many reasons why teaching in a residential school might not have been attractive for teachers. In 1951 letter Laval Fortier, Deputy Minister, wrote that teaching in Indian schools entails removal from the teacher’s pension fund and from other advantages enjoyed by provincial teachers... In the minds of many teachers, not much prestige is associated with the Indian service possibly because too many persons of doubtful professional worth have accepted the moderate salaries, lack of amenities and absence of professional contacts and supervision that are thought to be- and too often are!- associated with Indian schools<sup>59</sup>

He also noted fear of tuberculosis, skin disease and “perverts” attacking, stating “There are cases on record.”<sup>60</sup> The government began to deal with some of these issues later in the decade. The new funding system raised teachers’ salaries and included pensions and financial incentives for professional training which raised both the teachers’ income and might also have begun to work against the notion that “Indian school” teachers were less respectable than their counterparts in the provincial schools.<sup>61</sup> Professional journals began to circulate in these schools,<sup>62</sup> which would

<sup>58</sup>F.B. McKinnon, Regional Superintendent, Hants County, to Indian Affairs Branch, September 6, 1960. NAC, RG 10, Volume 8538, File 51/2-32-265, Part 2.

<sup>59</sup>Laval Fortier, Deputy Minister to K.W. Taylor, Secretary of the Treasury Board, June 28, 1951. NAC, RG 10, File 8599, File 1/1-13-7, Part 1.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>To His Excellency, the Governor General in Council, November 8, 1950, “Salary increases and reclassification for teachers who improved their teaching certificates.” NAC, RG 10, Volume 8599, File 1/1-13-7, Part 1.

<sup>62</sup>R.A. Simpson to H.C. Rice, Superintendent, Shubenacadie Indian Agency, Micmac, Hants County, Nova Scotia, May 20, 1955. “A year ago we made arrangements to send 11

have increased professional contacts, and universities began to offer courses designed specifically for teachers in the federal "Indian" schools.<sup>63</sup> In 1959 there was a convention for "Indian School teachers in the Maritimes," an in-service training program for teachers in federal Indian schools was in place by 1963,<sup>64</sup> and a bibliography for these teachers was circulated by Indian Affairs in 1964.<sup>65</sup> In these ways, opportunities for professional development were improved during this time.

During the 1950s and 1960s the qualifications of teachers at residential schools came into question. For this reason, as mentioned above, the Department of Indian Affairs took over direct employment of teaching staffs. The Shubenacadie Residential School fell under this new system in 1950 and teacher qualifications were affected. In 1953 there were one hundred and ninety-eight teachers employed in Catholic-run residential schools. Of these teachers, seventy-nine had no professional teacher certification.<sup>66</sup> However, in the same year all four of the teachers

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copies of the Journal of Education and the Education Office Gazette for distribution to teachers in Indian schools in you superintendency." He then made arrangements to begin sending Education Office Bulletins as well. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9027, File 51/12-4.

<sup>63</sup>Universities which offered such courses in the late 1950s and the 1960s included the University of Toronto and the University of New Brunswick. See Ellen Fairclough, Minister, to Miss V.E. Ashdown, Corresponding secretary, B.C. Industrial Arts and Welfare Society. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 7.

<sup>64</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1963 reprinted from the Annual Reports of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1963) 24.

<sup>65</sup>R.F. Battle, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indian Affairs, Memorandum to Director of Personnel, November 27, 1964. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 13.

<sup>66</sup>R.F. Davey, Acting Superintendent of Education, to Father Laviolette, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, University of Ottawa. NAC, RG 10, Volume 8598, File 1/1-13-2, Part 4.

employed at the Shubenacadie Residential School were certified.<sup>67</sup> There are no records of unqualified teachers being employed at the school after this point and most of the teachers at the school had “Grade Three” certification which had the same requirements as a first class certificate for public school teachers.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the government’s plan to improve teacher qualifications at this school appear to have succeeded in ensuring that staff had professional training.

Teachers’ incomes at the Shubenacadie Residential School were fairly closely in line with their peers in Nova Scotia’s public schools in the 1950s. Salary scales for the residential school teachers, however, appear to have been more dependent on their level of certification than their teaching experience. In 1956, two teachers who were certified “Grade Three” and had many years of experience (forty-four and twenty-five) were paid at a lower rate than was prescribed for their counterparts in public schools with similar qualification and experience. However, one teacher certified “Grade Three” with only three years of experience was paid more than was prescribed for her provincial school peers.<sup>69</sup> In general, though, the salaries were more or less in line with what teachers with similar qualifications and experience earned in Nova Scotia’s public schools.

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<sup>67</sup>Report from Indian Affairs Branch, “Qualifications of Indian Residential School Teachers as of January 31, 1953.” NAC, RG 10, Volume 8598, File 1/1-13-2, Part 4.

<sup>68</sup>Grade Three certification required a first class teaching certificate or the equivalent, sr. matriculation, and a normal school course. Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, “Regulations for the classification of Teaching Staff- Revised, 1956.” (The “revisions” were of salary scales and not qualification requirements.) NAC, RG 10, Volume 9030, File 88/1-13.

<sup>69</sup>For salaries of Shubenacadie Residential School teachers in the 1950s see NAC, RG 10, Volume 8538, File 51/2-32-265, Part 1. For salary scales of public school teachers for 1955 see Department of Education, Education Office Gazette, 2 (September, 1955) 11.

Professional status, however, did not necessarily mean that teaching methods were improved. Some of the teachers at the school were near or even over the retirement age of sixty-five years and employed very formal and traditional teaching methods. Reporting on his inspections of the teachers in 1957, P.L. McGillivray stated, "This teacher has reached retirement age and I think that were she replaced by a younger teacher who would introduce more activity and project work the learning situation would be considerably improved."<sup>70</sup> Incidentally, this teacher had reached the retirement age in 1952 and had received permission from the Department of Indian Affairs to continue teaching each year from 1952 until September 1957 when she was asked to submit her resignation.<sup>71</sup> Also affecting her teaching record was the fact that this teacher did no training between 1950 and 1956 and there is no record of her completing training in her final year of teaching.<sup>72</sup> School inspector Murray Campbell noted of another teacher with thirty-seven years' experience, "Some of her methods might be criticized for being on the orthodox and stereotyped side..."<sup>73</sup> While most of the staff appear to have been in their late forties and fifties when they taught at the school, some were much older. Age does not necessarily indicate "poor" teaching methods, but some inspectors' reports indicate that there may have been a correlation at the

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<sup>70</sup>P.L. McGillivray, "School Inspector's Report," May 22, 1957. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>71</sup>R.F. Davey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, to Sister Maria Ursula, May 28, 1954 and passim. NAC, RG 10, Volume 8538, File 51/2-32-265, Part 1.

<sup>72</sup>R.F. Davey to Maria Ursula, June, 1954 and 1956. NAC, RG 10, Volume 8538, File 51/2-32-265, Part 1. Incidentally, her salary did increase over this time through submissions to the Privy Council on September 1, 1954 even though salary was to be dependent upon qualifications and training. See above file.

<sup>73</sup>Murray W. Campbell, "School Inspector's Report," April 22, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

Shubenacadie Residential School. Also, the older teachers may have been less likely to complete additional professional training. Therefore, the Department of Indian Affairs' plans to better classroom teaching by providing financial incentives for qualified teachers may not have ensured that students enjoyed a better learning experience.

Another factor which likely affected the capabilities of the teachers in the classrooms, regardless of their professional qualifications, was the high staff turn-over rate that the residential schools in general, and the Shubenacadie school specifically, endured.<sup>74</sup> Teachers at the school in the 1950s and 1960s stayed only for an average of two to three years. This meant that most teachers did not remain at the school long enough to really learn about the students they taught. While some stayed for four or five years, most left after one or two. Inexperience with teaching Native children was often cited by school inspectors as an impediment to effective teaching and learning possibilities. One school inspector noted of a teacher, "It will take her some time to adjust herself to the new situation and get used to working with the Indian children. I would suspect that perhaps she is a little impatient and expecting too much of them too suddenly."<sup>75</sup> Four years later another inspector noted that three of five teachers had been replaced with teachers "who had no previous experience in Indian schools and had to try to adapt themselves to a new situation."<sup>76</sup> Many of these teachers did not remain at the school long enough to learn to

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<sup>74</sup>In its 1965 report, Indian Affairs expressed "concern for the turnover of teaching staff which continued to be high, 29.3%." Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1965, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1965) 36.

<sup>75</sup>P.L. McGillivray, "School Inspector's Report," June 10, 1958.

<sup>76</sup>Murray W. Campbell to Indian Affairs, "Re: Visit of May 16 and 17, 1962." NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5. He noted of individual teachers, "Greater familiarity with [our

understand their pupils or their environment. A teaching placement at this school, then, does not appear to have been very attractive; and even though they were "qualified," teachers were not necessarily comfortable or knowledgeable in their jobs or in meeting students' needs.

In addition to the high teacher turn-over rate, heavy enrollments in the school's classrooms impeded the qualified teachers' ability to employ good pedagogy. The Department of Indian Affairs did offer a statement regarding what a "normal" class load ought to be but at the residential school in Nova Scotia, this direction was often ignored. School Inspector's Reports repeatedly pointed to this problem as an impediment to effective teaching and learning at the school. In fact, this was the most frequent criticism offered by the inspectors in the 1950s and 1960s. In a bulletin to all regional school inspectors for the 1958/1959 school year, the Indian Affairs Branch stated, "The modern classroom is constructed to accommodate 30 pupils and this figure is to be regarded as the normal pupil load per classroom."<sup>77</sup> Public schools, both elementary and high schools, in Nova Scotia had an average enrollment of 30.47 students per class in 1950 and 28.23 students per class in 1960.<sup>78</sup> For the residential school at Shubenacadie, however, the reality of class loads was often very much above these numbers. During the 1956/1957 year one classroom held thirty-four students, one held thirty-nine, one thirty-seven

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Nova Scotia curriculum and Indian children] ought to increase her efficiency..." and "Not yet wholly comfortable" in his "School Inspector's Reports." NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5

<sup>77</sup>Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, "Bulletin to all Regional School Inspectors," 1958/1959, pg. 4. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9030, File 88/1-13.

<sup>78</sup>Extract from Canadian Association of School Superintendents and Inspectors Newsletter 12, February 27, 1961. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 9.

and the grade two/three classroom had fifty-one students.<sup>79</sup> There were one hundred and sixty-two pupils at the school with only four teachers and four classrooms at this time. This situation prompted the Regional Inspector of Indian Schools to write to the Regional Superintendent of Hants County, F.B. McKinnon, "I am firmly convinced that the type of child coming to the Residential School requires much more individual attention from the teacher if the child is to profit from his attendance at this school."<sup>80</sup>

The overcrowding does appear to have made an impact on the officials in charge. In July of 1957 F.B. McKinnon wrote of "the probability of opening a fifth classroom at the Shubenacadie Residential School."<sup>81</sup> School inspection reports and records for the 1957/1958 year indicated that a fifth classroom and teacher were added in September 1957.<sup>82</sup> But, in his overview of the school after this addition Murray Campbell stated, "I think you will agree that we cannot expect the best results from our program of instruction where the beginners' classroom is so overcrowded."<sup>83</sup>

The situation did not improve with time. A new classroom block was proposed for 1958/1959 school year. The estimates for 1958/1959 noted, "Conditions at this school are crowded. There

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<sup>79</sup>"School Inspector's Reports," May 22 and 29, 1957. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>80</sup>L. Dobraski, Regional Inspector of Indian Schools to F.B. McKinnon, Regional Supervisor, March 15, 1957. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>81</sup>F.B. McKinnon, Regional Supervisor to Shubenacadie Indian Agency, July 30, 1957. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9030, File 88/1-13.

<sup>82</sup>See "School Inspector's Reports" for 1957/58. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>83</sup>R.F. Davey, Chief, Education Division, Indian Affairs Branch to P.L. McGillivray, Inspector of Indian Schools, August 7, 1958. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

are over 40 pupils in each classroom. I understand a full report has been forwarded to the branch by school inspector Dobranski regarding proposed changes at the Shubenacadie Residential School.”<sup>84</sup> But, as mentioned in the section on funding, these changes (the additional building) were not completed due to budget reductions.<sup>85</sup> In this year three classrooms had pupil loads over the thirty-student limit (one had forty-one students).<sup>86</sup> Even with the addition of a sixth classroom and teacher in 1961,<sup>87</sup> the problem of heavy class loads did not disappear. In 1962 the grade four/five classroom held forty-four students.<sup>88</sup>

While the additional teachers may have made the average class size appear to decrease, this was not necessarily the case in all situations. Although the average school enrollment for the years 1961-1966 was 123.5, this did not mean that these children were divided evenly between the six teachers and classes. Instead, the grade five, six, seven, and eight classes were grouped together but segregated by sex. This meant that the lower grades which typically had higher enrollments, could not be sub-divided into more than one class per grade. This skewed the class sizes so that the enrollments in lower grade classrooms often far surpassed the limit prescribed by

<sup>84</sup>Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, “Estimates, 1958-1959, Indian Education, Construction or Acquisition of Buildings, Works, Land and New Equipment, Vote 534.” NAC, RG 10, Volume 9028, File 51/16-3.

<sup>85</sup>F.B. McKinnon, Regional Supervisor to Shubenacadie Indian Agency, July 30, 1957. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9030, File 88/1-13.

<sup>86</sup>“School Inspector’s Reports,” April 14 and 22, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>87</sup>“Position Establishment of Indian Residential School as of March 31, 1961.” NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 9.

<sup>88</sup>“School Inspector’s Report,” May 17, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5.

Indian Affairs. In 1959 the division of grades five, six, and seven by sex meant that two classrooms, including the beginner room, still held more than forty students.<sup>89</sup> Also, government advice to avoid non-promotion which resulted in a concentration of students in the lower grades was not heeded. This will be pursued further in the next section. Even though the Department set a “normal” class size and school inspectors as well as government officials recognized the importance of individual attention and smaller class sizes, internal policies, such as segregation by sex in the higher grades, meant that these concerns were not adequately dealt with in the classrooms of the Shubenacadie Residential School. While Catholic education generally encouraged segregation by sex, as co-education was deemed to be “harmful to a Christian education,”<sup>90</sup> this practice at the Shubenacadie Residential School may have negatively affected class sizes at the lower grade levels.

The federal government in the 1950s attempted to enhance academic experiences in the residential schools by attracting more qualified teachers to the positions. However, throughout the 1950s and 1960s many barriers impeded the likelihood that even qualified teachers could employ “good pedagogy.”

#### In the Classroom: Pedagogical Practices and Timetable Regulations

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<sup>89</sup>R.F. Davey, Chief, Education Division, Indian Affairs Branch to P.L. McGillivray, Inspector of Indian Schools, August 7, 1958. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>90</sup>Diane Persson, "The Changing Experience of Indian Residential Schooling: Blue Quills, 1931-1970," Indian Education in Canada: Volume 1, The Legacy Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill eds. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 152. It was common practice in Nova Scotia's Catholic schools to segregate children by sex in the 1950s and 1960s. This system began to change in the late 1960s. [Personal communication; Sister Catherine Horgan (of the Sisters of Charity) who taught in Halifax schools at the time.]

In previous chapters this study has examined pedagogical instructions that were given to teachers by both the Catholic Church officials and officials within both the provincial and federal governments. Much of this advice, as has been noted earlier, was difficult to follow within the classrooms due to the curriculum content or the institutional nature of the school. However, teachers' attitudes towards their students, which inevitably played out in classroom practices, and their choices regarding how to approach their lessons and how to make decisions about student progress were not necessarily dictated by these forces. Even when the government issued directives, teachers, school inspectors, and others concerned with Indian education did not necessarily support or follow the guidelines. The same was true of timetable regulations. These were not likely to have been affected by the forces of curriculum or the institutional nature of the school but, again, Departmental regulations were ignored or distorted and timetables at the school did not conform with the directions. A heavy concentration on the subject of English, as well as additional religious instruction, and practical training at the school meant that the focus of education on "academics" was distorted by the administration at the Shubenacadie Residential School. Practices at the school often contradicted government policy regarding pedagogy and classroom practices.

Regarding "the instructional methods and techniques," government officials who worked in the area of Native children's education noted that "Unless this aspect of curricular planning is emphasized, the best curriculum on paper will not result in a better education program for the student."<sup>91</sup> Therefore, the Indian Affairs officials did offer some advice to educators on how to

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<sup>91</sup>"Agenda for the Ninth Meeting on Eskimo Education to be held on Thursday May 8, 1958." NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 7.

improve pedagogy. One document, which dealt with the “problem” of drop-outs, stated that there was “a lack of understanding of Indian students and their problems by teachers and school authorities.”<sup>92</sup> The minutes of an “Advisory Committee on Intercultural Education” meeting stated that “Teachers need to be made aware of their own prejudices, the motivation underlying these prejudices, and the consequence that prejudice has on its victims.”<sup>93</sup> Officials then, appear to have at least begun, in this period, to recognize some of the challenges entailed in cross-cultural education rather than simply laying blame at the feet of the students, their families, and their communities.

These views, however, are less than evident in the comments made by teachers at Shubenacadie on students’ discharge forms. Teachers’ attitudes toward some of the students leaving the school were apparent in these brief comments. Teachers criticised two students for a lack of “ambition.” Without considering the possibility that such an abstract idea might differ between cultures, or that certain situations might militate against a Native child in a residential school exhibiting “ambition,” teachers described these children as having, “no ambition to go further” and “no ambition whatsoever.” Another child was labelled “mentally and morally weak.” While it is outside the scope of this study to test the “veracity” of the claim, the comment is suspicious in that it echoes stereotypes of Native people that had existed for many years.<sup>94</sup> One teacher even used a child’s name to slander the student. In reference to this child, with the

<sup>92</sup>Davey to Regional Supervisors, Indian Commissioner for B.C., and School Superintendents, May 24, 1963. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 13.

<sup>93</sup>“Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Intercultural Education,” April 26, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 14.

<sup>94</sup>See Miller, 124, 154-5, 158, 178-9, and especially 186-191.

common Mi'kmaw family name Sillyboy, the teacher wrote, "well-named."<sup>95</sup> These teachers do not appear to have been very understanding of their students or sensitive to their own prejudices.

Reports on the teachers' practices at the school, however, were most often very positive. But, when interpreting these comments about pedagogical practices, one must be cautious. The inspectors visited the school at similar times each year, usually in February and May. Teachers, therefore, would have been able to anticipate the visits and prepare accordingly.<sup>96</sup> Also, while under supervision it is doubtless that teachers would have done their best to act as the inspectors and Department officials wished. It can be assumed, therefore, that the positive actions described by inspectors might not have been the norm with all teachers and that the criticized behaviours might have been more intense in the absence of direct supervision. With this in mind, inspectors' reports did praise teachers for many aspects of their teaching. The inspectors appear to have been impressed when teachers showed enthusiasm, patience, and interest, when they maintained good discipline and a pleasant atmosphere wherein students and teacher interacted easily.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, the most common criticisms of pedagogical practices centred around overly formal classrooms that allowed for little individual attention and did not command the

<sup>95</sup>"Discharge of Pupils" July-September (to preserve students' anonymity the year will not be noted here. These students were discharged in the 1950s.) NAC, RG 10, Volume 6057, File 265-10, Part 4.

<sup>96</sup>Knockwood quotes a former student, "Every time any officials came from the Department of Indian Affairs... the meals would be different. They always knew when the inspectors were coming so they had time to cream it up. If the inspectors had come unexpectedly, they would have caught them at their game." Another student told her that when an inspector came he was given a bag to burn in the furnace. The bag contained straps used to punish the students. See Knockwood, 142 and 95 respectively.

<sup>97</sup>These were the most common positive comments made by school inspectors. See "School Inspector's Reports" for 1950s and 1960s. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5 and NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5.

interest or involvement of the students.<sup>98</sup> Although overcrowding in the classrooms was identified in some cases as the reason for some of the undesirable pedagogy, particularly a lack of individual attention, not all of the criticisms were directed at overcrowded rooms and not all of the practices were necessarily affected by class enrollment. One teacher's style was described as "orthodox and stereotyped" and yet there were only twenty-five students in her class.<sup>99</sup>

Differences among teachers in their pedagogical views, experience, professional training, and personal biases likely played significant roles in determining the types of practices they employed in their classrooms. These variations in style may have meant that official directives were not uniformly followed and much student learning would have been dependent upon the attitudes, prejudices, and personalities of the individual teachers. Individual differences and tensions within the system appear to have been influential in determining the extent to which specific Indian Affairs Branch, Church, or Ministry of Education guidelines were followed. And, given some of the criticisms made by inspectors and the teacher comments on the discharge forms, administrators at the Shubenacadie Residential School in the 1950s do not appear to have followed the official advice and directions. It seems that some teachers were not dedicated to considering the consequences of their prejudices or to following directions to emphasize individual attention and to employ "modern" practices.

Another area of tension within the department and, no doubt, in the school, was around the intertwined issues of non-promotion and age-grade retardation, as they were termed. In 1962, R.F. Davey sent a memo to School Superintendents (these were School Inspectors, whose title

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<sup>98</sup>See "School Inspector's Reports" for 1950s and 1960s. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5 and NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5.

<sup>99</sup>"School Inspector's Report," April 22, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

had changed in 1959) which stated, “The percentage of non-promotion in Indian schools is too high, ranging between twelve and twenty-nine. Research points to the conclusion that non-promotion as a technique for improving school achievement is unwarranted.”<sup>100</sup> In support of claims that the failure rate was too high the Department included the percentage of failures by grade at the Shubenacadie Residential School for 1961. They were as follows:<sup>101</sup>

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Primary- 1%  | Grade 5- 19% |
| Grade 1- 12% | Grade 6- 0%  |
| Grade 2- 33% | Grade 7- 15% |
| Grade 3- 0%  | Grade 8- 17% |
| Grade 4- 15% |              |

A year later another piece of correspondence between Davey and the School Superintendents listed “non-promotion and overage pupils who are discouraged and frustrated” as one of the “Chief Causes of Drop-outs.”<sup>102</sup> Age-grade retardation was described as “the most serious threat to the advancement of the educational program” and promotion, according to Davey, ought to be based on the results of the year’s work in the classroom and not on an “absolute standard unrelated to the actual classroom program.”<sup>103</sup> Officials in the Department of Indian Affairs

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<sup>100</sup>Davey to All School Superintendents, April, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, 1/25-1, Part 10.

<sup>101</sup>Davey to All School Superintendents, April, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, 1/25-1, Part 10. As this document was circulated in April of 1962, before that year’s statistics would have been available, it is likely that these (undated) percentages were compiled using the statistics from 1961.

<sup>102</sup>Davey to Regional Supervisors, Indian Commissioner for B.C., School Superintendents, May 24, 1963. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 13.

<sup>103</sup>Davey to Regional School Superintendents, District School Superintendents, and Supervising Principals, January, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 10666, File 81/25-2, Part 2.

understood that age-grade retardation and non-promotion were directly related to “the tragic dropout problem in the elementary grades” and they informed their field workers of their views.<sup>104</sup> However, the problem remained. In 1957 there were eighty children in grades one, two, and three. Five years later, there were only thirty-seven students in grades six, seven, and eight. The concentration of students in grade five and under may also indicate that non-promotion was still frequent at the school in the 1960s.<sup>105</sup> Not all teachers, nor the principal at the school, then, supported the Departmental goal of lowering the percentage of non-promotions and the resulting age-grade retardation.

Linked to the debate around non-promotion and age-grade retardation was the issue of the “beginner year” in Native education. This was the term used to represent the first year of schooling that a child received. This year usually focussed on the child’s introduction to English, depending on his or her previous exposure to the language. In the 1950s, the beginner year became the focus of attention because age-grade retardation often began at this time. There were advocates both for and against the use of a beginner year. Although a course was implemented which was designed to eliminate the need for this “wasted time,” documents recording “failures” and a concentration of students in the lower grades at the Shubenacadie Residential School seem to indicate that students were often held back early on in their academic careers.

The most notable advocate of discarding the “beginner year” in the federal Indian schools was

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Davey saw unearned promotion as a problem as well. See Milloy, 227.

<sup>104</sup>Davey to Regional School Superintendents, District School Superintendents, Supervising Principals, January, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 10666, File 81/25-2, Part 2.

<sup>105</sup>See, “School Inspector’s Reports” for 1960s. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 51/25-3.

Rose C. Colliou, a language arts specialist, who designed a course entitled “Basic Oral English Course for Kindergarten and Grade One Beginners.”<sup>106</sup> This course was designed to be completed by Kindergarten (primary in Nova Scotia) students. Non-English speaking grade one students were to complete the course in conjunction with the regular grade one curriculum and English-speaking grade one students were to use the course to boost their vocabulary.<sup>107</sup> This course, intended as an audio-linguistic approach to teaching English as a second language, was implemented experimentally in the Maritimes in 1959<sup>108</sup> and throughout Canada’s “Indian schools” in 1962.<sup>109</sup> The goal was to ensure that children did not fall a year behind during their first year due to an initially low capacity to understand and use English. Colliou stated that “

<sup>106</sup>Rose C. Colliou, Basic Oral English Course for Kindergarten and Grade One Beginners (Ottawa: Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, Education Division, 1960).

<sup>107</sup>Colliou, 5. Incidentally, according to a 1963 analysis, 20% of Native school beginners in the Maritimes had “no knowledge of English or French” compared with 23% nationally; 23% understood “some English or French”, compared with 13% nationally; 28% spoke “some English or French” compared with 20% nationally; 13% were “fairly fluent” compared with 30% nationally; and 16% were “fluent only in English or French” compared with 14% nationally.

<sup>108</sup>Education Division, Indian Affairs Branch, “The Education of Indian Children in Canada” prepared for The Canadian Superintendent, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 14.

The reason given for using the Maritime region as the site for this “experiment” was that it was “a region where Language and reading problems were particularly acute.” Ibid. This conclusion was based on standardized tests of grade four students across Canada’s “Indian Schools.” The results for reading tests given in 1958 did show a lag by Maritime youngsters but these may have been misleading. The Maritime students were younger, on average, than their pan-Canadian peers. See, Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1959, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1959) 58.

<sup>109</sup>R. Colliou, “Second Language Instruction for Indian Children,” Indian Affairs, Education Division, “The Education of Indian Children in Canada,” The Canadian Superintendent 1965 (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1965) 75.

schools who formerly advocated and maintained the status quo of the beginner year are underestimating pupil potential as well as teacher initiative and drive.”<sup>110</sup> Both the implementation of this program in all federal Indian schools and the condemnations of non-promotion cited above indicate support for the goal of promoting young students.

Within the administration in Nova Scotia, however, not all those connected with the Shubenacadie Residential School agreed, in practice, with these ideas. The year that this course was initiated, one school inspector wrote of the primary and grade one class, “Many pupils will need more than two years to be ready for grade two.”<sup>111</sup> Many years later another report stated,

“Pupils vary greatly in maturity and previous experience. Some have been using only the Indian language so are handicapped by having to become accustomed to the English language... Many of them are rather young, at least mentally, for formal education. It may take two or three years from some of these to strike their stride.”<sup>112</sup>

In reality, the distribution of students at the school was concentrated heavily in the lower grades. In 1957/1958, forty-three percent of students at the school were in grades one and two. Most of the overcrowding in classrooms occurred in the lower grades.<sup>113</sup> As shown above, thirty-three percent of the grade two class and twelve percent of the grade one class in 1961 were not promoted. Obviously, the position taken by Rose Colliou and Indian Affairs officials in Ottawa

<sup>110</sup>Rose Colliou to Regional School Superintendents, Supervising Principals, Language Arts Specialists, Principals and Senior Teachers of Residential and Day Schools, and classroom teachers, “The Beginner Year- A Year of School Retardation for Indian Pupils,” April 19, 1966. NAC, RG 10, Volume 10666, File 416/25-1-13.

<sup>111</sup>“School Inspector’s Report”, April 22, 1959. RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>112</sup>“School Inspector’s Report,” May 17, 1962. RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5.

<sup>113</sup>See “School Inspector’s Reports” *passim*. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5 and NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

were not wholly supported by school inspectors, teachers, and the principals at the Shubenacadie Residential School.

While the inspectors did not necessarily embrace the goals of eliminating non-promotion in the early years which formed the basis for the oral English course, they did support an emphasis on English in the classroom. Their reports often praised teachers for this. In 1958, Murray Campbell wrote, "I was favourably impressed with her teaching of reading methods and the fact that she is spending about 70% of her time on reading."<sup>114</sup> Regulations set by the Department, however, clearly stated that the curriculum was to be that set out in provincial guidelines with an extra half hour a day for oral language instruction.<sup>115</sup> Dedicating seventy percent of class time to one subject was not authorized by Indian Affairs. And, in 1965 the Advisory Committee on Intercultural Education questioned the emphasis on linguistics in the program and wondered if basic linguistics "might not be incorporated into other courses."<sup>116</sup> While the Indian Affairs Branch did support an emphasis on English in the classrooms, some school teachers and inspectors at the Shubenacadie Residential School seem to have taken this emphasis further than government regulations required. And some people concerned with Indian education questioned this emphasis. Even with regard to the emphasis on English, therefore, there were many differing opinions and these affected teachers' practices in the classrooms.

Personal differences would again affect the timetable with regards to religious instruction.

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<sup>114</sup>"School Inspector's Report," June 11, 1958. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>115</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, "Indian School Regulations," November 14, 1952. NAC, RG 26, Volume 70, File 34.

<sup>116</sup>"Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Intercultural Education," April 26, 1965. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1, Part 14.

The residential schools, being denominational, provided time for religious instruction in addition to academic lessons. Just as the Indian Affairs Branch regulations set aside an extra half hour per day for oral English, it provided limits on the time dedicated to “religion.” Native peoples often criticised what they saw as excessive proselytising in the federal schools.<sup>117</sup> Regardless of Native peoples’ concerns, however, timetable limitations could be, and were, distorted in the classrooms of the schools. In general, the timetable set by Indian Affairs was often ignored or distorted in the day-to-day operations of the residential school at Shubenacadie.

One of the means by which the timetable set by the government was distorted was in the use of religious texts for reading material. The “Regulations Governing Indian Schools” 1952 revised edition stated that “a period of not more than ½ hour a day to be devoted to religious instruction may be included in the time-table for classroom instruction.”<sup>118</sup> The proposal of this regulation upset Catholic Bishops in Canada and they expressed “alarm over decreasing religion in schools.”<sup>119</sup> However, the government also provided for the use of separate reading texts for Catholic schools and these texts included religious and spiritual instruction in the form of stories

<sup>117</sup>A former resident of the Lejac school stated, “I felt sick and tired of two things: working on the farm where I was hardly learning anything, and the praying.” As cited in Grant, 173. Knockwood relates that at the Shubenacadie Residential School “Attendance at Mass seemed to be an obsession, and even the seriously ill children were required to go.” Knockwood, 31.

<sup>118</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, “Indian School Regulations,” November 14, 1952. NAC, RG 26, Volume 70, File 34. The government restated this regulation in 1962 but replaced the words “religious instruction” with “religious or spiritual instruction.” See, “Memorandum of Agreement made between Her Majesty the Queen in the Right of Canada (represented herein by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration... and Indianescom),” September 25, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 8545, File 51/25-13, Part 2.

<sup>119</sup>Bishops’ Committee Report, “Re: Proposed Indian Act,” April 23, 1951. Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Records for the Shubenacadie Residential School.

for children.

The provision made for the use of these texts was included on the school supplies requisition forms. It stated,

In certain Catholic schools, the Faith and Freedom Series is used. Other Catholic schools prefer the same readers as used in the public schools. The Department will again provide one or the other of the readers but not both, unless authorized by the Regional School Inspector concerned.<sup>120</sup>

It appears that the Shubenacadie Residential School classrooms had both sets of readers though they were not ordered on the same forms or in the same months, thereby skirting the issue of authorization by the School Inspector and Department regulations. This duplication occurred in the subject of reading. On separate requisition forms, one completed in June and the other in October of 1959, the first for public school books and the second for the Faith and Freedom series books, school administrators ordered books from both lists for the same grade level and subject area. For Grade six the school ordered copies of the provincial curriculum's All Sails Set and workbooks for the Faith and Freedom Series' This is Our Heritage, indicating that both would be in use for the 1959/1960 school year.<sup>121</sup> For Grade five, Wide Open Windows from the provincial curriculum and These Are Our Stories from the Faith and Freedom Series were both requisitioned.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, the Department did provide the school with two sets of books in

<sup>120</sup>Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, "Requisition Textbooks," no date but filed with 1958 files. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9028, File 51/13-2-265.

<sup>121</sup>See, Principal, Shubenacadie Residential School to Nova Scotia Book Bureau, "Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Indian Affairs Branch, 'Education Division Order Form,'" June 2, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9028, File 51/13-2-265 and, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, "Requisition - Textbooks," September 21, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9028, File 51/13-2-265.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

reading for grades five and six in the 1959/1960 school year, even though this went against its own regulations.

The administrators at the Shubenacadie Residential School ordered The Ginn “Faith and Freedom” series reading books alongside the public school readers. The individual teachers who used the books may have emphasized one set over another but it is clear that both were in use and, therefore, the contents and “messages” contained within the texts are of interest.<sup>123</sup> The Faith and Freedom Series readers provided a great deal of “religious” instruction within their pages. Because of this content, the use of these readers distorted Indian Affairs Branch regulations which stated clearly that “no more than” one half hour per day should be spent on religious instruction. The books contained overt and repetitive proselytizing which certainly would have qualified under the Indian Affairs Branch regulations regarding what was considered “religious or spiritual instruction.” One of the pre-primers which was in use at the school, according to the above-mentioned requisition form for September, 1959, contained the following dialogue.

“We will thank Jesus. Jesus helped us. Jesus helped me to find work. We will thank Jesus....” “Thank You Jesus. Thank You for the house. Thank You for Father’s Work. Thank You Jesus. You helped us Jesus. You helped Father. You helped Mother. You helped us. Thank You Jesus.” “Jesus loves us. Jesus loves us and helps us. Jesus loves Ann. Jesus loves David. Jesus loves Mother and me.”<sup>124</sup>

This dialogue continued until the end of the book, another eleven pages. The other pre-primers

<sup>123</sup>The curricular “messages” within the texts that related to the issues discussed in Chapter Two (promoting “our way of life,” “good citizens,” and the denigration of Native peoples) were very similar to those found in the provincial curriculum readers. For this reason, only the “religious” elements of the Faith and Freedom Series books are of concern here.

<sup>124</sup>Sr. M. Marguerite, This Is Our Home, Faith and Freedom Series (Toronto: Ginn and Co., 1953?) 47-52.

also contained this sort of repetitious religious dialogue including directions. “God Made us... Love God, David and Ann. Love God and thank God.”<sup>125</sup> The stories increased in complexity as they were to relate to older or more advanced students.<sup>126</sup> A reader for grade two students told the story of “The Last Supper” and informed students about what a priest would do at the side of a sick bed.<sup>127</sup> One of the grade three books contained a story which explained how children prepared for and completed the ceremony of confirmation<sup>128</sup>.

These books also included many stories about children who willingly suffered for their religion. A grade three reader told students of a little girl from “Long, long ago, at a time when many people did not believe in the true God.”<sup>129</sup> This girl refused to deny her belief and was, therefore, taken before a court and sentenced to death. The story did not include details on how she was killed but it is implied that a soldier drove his sword through the back of her neck. The child, however, thanked God “for allowing her to die for Him because He had once died for her.”<sup>130</sup> The same text also included a story about “bad people [who] did not want anyone else to

<sup>125</sup>Sr. M. Marguerite, Here We Are Again, Faith and Freedom Series (Toronto: Ginn and Co., 195?) 44. See also, Sr. M. Marguerite, Here We Come, Faith and Freedom Series (Toronto: Ginn and Co., 19??) 30-48.

<sup>126</sup>Incidentally, without differentiation for age, when children prayed in these stories, their prayers were always answered, usually immediately. This is a stark contrast to Knockwood’s reflection on the chapel at the Shubenacadie Residential School as, “a place where a lot of children’s prayers didn’t get answered.” Knockwood , 25.

<sup>127</sup>Sr. M. Marguerite, This Is Our Parish, Faith and Freedom Series (Toronto: Ginn and Co., 1954?) 145 and 215-217 respectively.

<sup>128</sup>Sr. M. Marguerite, This Is Our Town, Faith and Freedom Series (Toronto: Ginn and Co., 1940?) 289-315.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid, 290.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid, 295.

love and serve [God]" and who beat a child who was carrying the sacrament through the town. "They hit him so hard that he could hardly move. Still he held the Holy Treasure close to his heart."<sup>131</sup> And a grade three advanced reader told students of a boy who cut his foot very badly with an axe but did not cry saying, "My foot has only a little pain in it... Our Lord had terrible pain as He hung upon the cross..."<sup>132</sup> Children, therefore, were told about how they should relate to the "true God," they were taught Bible stories, given examples of how religious ceremonies were conducted and the meaning behind them, and they were encouraged to suffer for their faith. These texts were quite overtly religious and, therefore, regardless of government regulations, students had, in addition to the scheduled half hour of religious training, "religious and spiritual instruction" in their reading lessons.

The Indian Affairs Branch in the 1950s and 1960s had begun to shift the emphasis of Indian education toward improved academic instruction. This shift came as a response to criticisms about activities which prevented curricular learning.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the Indian Affairs Branch limited religious instruction to a half hour per day. The same regulations that set out the limits on religious instruction also dealt with other activities which might detract from class time. In 1952, the regulations stated that students should spend the same number of hours per week in school as their peers in the provincial schools.<sup>134</sup> The regulations set out in 1962 were even more

<sup>131</sup>Ibid, 302.

<sup>132</sup>Sr. M. Marguerite, This Is Our Valley, Faith and Freedom Series (Toronto: Ginn and Co., 1940?) 227.

<sup>133</sup>See, for example, Milloy, 379.

<sup>134</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, "Indian School Regulations," November 14, 1952. NAC, RG 26, Volume 70, File 34.

definitive on this point stating, “The Management shall not require any pupil to engage in any activity which may interfere with the attendance of such pupil at class.”<sup>135</sup> However, the administrators at the Shubenacadie Residential School ignored these timetable regulations again when they allowed, or forced, fifteen and sixteen year old boys to work in the “furnace room” at the school. These boys “began at four in the morning when they relieved the nightwatchman and ended the day at seven in the evening” taking turns “four to six weeks and sometimes all year around to work in the boiler room... They seldom attended classes as furnace tending was a full-time job.”<sup>136</sup> Department regulations, then, were also ignored in the case of the “furnace boys” at the residential school.

The issue of manual labour was closely tied, in residential schools, to “practical education” or “vocational training” as it was termed by the 1950s. Prior to the 1950s, manual labour by students was often used as a means of financial maintenance for residential schools in Canada.<sup>137</sup> However, the 1951 Indian Act officially abolished such practices. This meant that schools were supposed to abandon the half day system, whereby students attended classes only half of each school day and spent the remainder of the day receiving “vocational training,” that is, doing manual labour.<sup>138</sup> And, in a “circular” to Indian Affairs field workers in 1961, the Department

<sup>135</sup>“Memorandum of Agreement made between Her Majesty the Queen in the Right of Canada (represented herein by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration... and Indianescom,,” September 25, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 8545, File 51/25-13, Part 2.

<sup>136</sup>Peter Robinson, who took over furnace duties from the boys in 1958, as quoted in Knockwood, 57.

<sup>137</sup>As was the case until 1956 with the “furnace boys” at the Shubenacadie Residential School. See also, Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 181.

<sup>138</sup>Miller, Shingwauk’s Vision, 181.

decreed that no home economics or industrial arts would be included in the programs of study for pupils below grade seven.<sup>139</sup> This was another step away from the emphasis on vocational education which had persisted in the Department even after the 1951 Indian Act.

This emphasis created tension between what the “official documents” stated and the reality of the beliefs of Indian Affairs officials and administrators. The 1952 and 1953 annual reports of the Indian Affairs Branch both emphasized the teaching of “practical arts” as important aspects of the curriculum.<sup>140</sup> Regardless of the ideological moves away from practical education as the main focus of Indian education, the notion that this was a prominent aspect of the curriculum at federal Indian schools persisted. This may have resulted from underestimating Native children’s intellectual capabilities. It may have been inspired by the notion that Native people “belonged” in the blue collar workforce, that this sort of education “suited their needs.” Whatever the forces at work, many people associated with the Indian Affairs Branch and the Shubenacadie Residential School continued to support vocational education as an important factor in “Indian education.” Even in 1962, the administrator in charge of Indian education stated,

“If literacy and vocational fitness are to be upheld as the chief aims of Indian education, the program of instruction in our school must address itself assiduously to higher standards in the communicative skills and a

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<sup>139</sup>F.B. McKinnon to Indian Affairs Branch, “Re: Classroom Instruction- Indian Schools Circular 295,” June 19, 1961.

<sup>140</sup> See, Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1952, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1952) 59; and Indian Affairs Branch, Report of the Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1953, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1953) 58.

sounder preparation for vocational training.”<sup>141</sup>

Though the government set out specific regulations on the amount and type of vocational education that students in federal Indian schools were to receive, even the head of the Education division appears to have supported it as one of the “chief aims” of education for Native children. The tension between this way of looking at Indian education and the academic goals that were emphasized in official documents throughout the 1950s and 1960s<sup>142</sup> was evident within the administration of the Shubenacadie Residential School, Church officials, and the Indian Affairs Branch in general. The ongoing debate and tension undoubtedly created variations in the ways in which the classrooms at the school operated. For this reason, Departmental guidelines and regulations were distorted in the day-to-day workings of the school.

Outside of the Department, people concerned with federal Indian schools and their curriculum voiced opposing positions about the importance or problem of vocational education. The 1965 publication of The Canadian Superintendent on “The Education of Indian Children in Canada” included a lengthy comment by an Anglican priest from the Little Pine Band in Cardston, Alberta which argued in favour of academic and not vocational education.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, in 1960,

<sup>141</sup>Davey, Chief Education division to School Superintendents, “Memorandum, re: Classroom Instruction - Indian Schools,” June, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 10.

<sup>142</sup>For example, in its annual reports the Indian Affairs Branch often cited the growth in secondary enrollments as a positive development. But, even as late as 1964 Davey applied this increased enrollment to the issue of vocational education stating that “This rapid rise in the educational status of the Indian students now permits the Branch to place greater emphasis on vocational training.” Davey to Senior Administrative Officer, “Re: Minister’s address: New Directions in Indian Affairs,” October 30, 1964. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, 1/25-1, Part 13.

<sup>143</sup>Rev. Stanley Cuthand, as cited in, Indian Affairs, Education Division, “The Education of Indian Children in Canada,” The Canadian Superintendent 1965 (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1965) 735.

the Oblate Fathers asserted that, in providing education for Native students, one ought to determine the socio-economic opportunities on the reserve and in the vicinity and “in a realistic way and through a ‘tailor-made’ curriculum, train the bulk of prospective ‘bread-winners’ and ‘baby-carriers’ for maximum use of these opportunities...”<sup>144</sup> These men, then, appear to have wished to train most girls for domestic duties and boys, likely, for farm or carpentry work. They certainly did not advocate for Native children following the same curriculum as their white peers in provincial schools.

This debate existed within the administration closely linked to the Shubenacadie Residential School as well. In 1956 Sister Maura of the Sisters of Charity in Halifax wrote that the school’s “curriculum places special emphasis on subjects that will be most useful in the future lives of the pupils- the arts and crafts of housekeeping for the girls and farm and carpentry for the boys.”<sup>145</sup> This statement indicates that there existed within the Sisters of Charity, the perception that the education they provided at the school was focussed on vocational training. The views of teachers in this order undoubtedly influenced practices at the school and the implementation of Departmental initiatives.

The school inspectors who reported to the Indian Affairs Branch would also have had some influence in the operations of the school as they had the power to represent school administrators as capable or ineffective in educating the students and in following Departmental guidelines and regulations. Murray Campbell appears to have been relatively supportive of the government initiatives which decreased the emphasis on the vocational education provided at the

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<sup>144</sup>Renaud, 35.

<sup>145</sup>Sister Maura, The Sisters of Charity, Halifax (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956) 234.

Shubenacadie Residential School. In 1957 he stated that he would like to see an increase in the length of time each group of students spent in shop class if it "were possible without reducing efficiency in the work of the academic subject too much..."<sup>146</sup> In this report, he seemed to value academic education over vocational training but maintained a concern for the "practical arts." A year later Campbell commented on the fact that children at the school had been relieved of their farm duties and stated that the "increased time and attention for academic work ought to produce good results."<sup>147</sup> He again commented on this change in a letter to the Regional School Inspector in 1959,

I find that relieving older pupils in the residential school from farm and domestic duties has made quite a difference due to the fact that these pupils devote more time to their academic instruction. It is bound to improve the standards of the pupils.<sup>148</sup>

However, Campbell's support for an academic focus at the school was not absolute. In fact, he appears to have even changed his mind on the subject to a certain extent by the mid 1960s. In his 1964 report on the school, Campbell told the Indian Affairs Branch,

I am disappointed to find that practical work in Industrial Arts and Home Economics for the pupils of grades VI, VII and VIII has been completely eliminated. At the risk of criticizing policy in connection with Indian schools, I think that much greater emphasis on practical *rather than academic work* would better meet the potential needs of these students.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup>"School Inspector's Report," May 29, 1957. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>147</sup>"School Inspector's Report," June 11, 1958. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>148</sup>Campbell to MacGillivray [sic], May 25, 1959. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9019, File 51/23-5.

<sup>149</sup>M.W. Campbell to Indian Affairs Branch, "Report by M.W. Campbell, Inspector of Schools with Department of Education, Nova Scotia, on Shubenacadie Residential School," April 15 and 16, 1964. NAC, RG 10, Volume 9029, File 211/23-5. Emphasis added.

He suggested a program with twenty to forty percent shop work or home economics. Therefore, it appears that Campbell may have either overstated his original support for academic focus or might have changed his mind over the course of his duties at the Shubenacadie Residential School. Even within the person of this inspector, then, there was a variety of positions about the importance of academic and/or vocational education.

Aside from the school inspectors, teachers and the Shubenacadie Indian Agency administrators also held certain views on this issue of vocational training. In 1962, the Regional Supervisor, Frank McKinnon, wrote to Indian Affairs of the proposals which had been discussed at a series of Agency/teacher meetings in the region. These included a return to the half-day system for some students whereby they would spend half of their time in an academic course "designed to terminate for the pupils when they reach age 16..." The other half would be spent in shop work (indicating that the students envisioned for the program were male).<sup>150</sup> These students were to be those who were, according to teachers, "over-age and who [did] not possess the mental capacity to go on to high school (or possibly even to grade eight) and who obviously [would] be leaving school on their sixteenth birthday regardless of the grade level which [sic] they [had] attained by that time."<sup>151</sup> According to a testing project completed by the area's language arts specialist, Rose Colliou, there were approximately forty-five pupils in Nova Scotia who would qualify for such a program with the bulk of them being in the Shubenacadie Residential and Day schools. They proposed, therefore, that these students be removed from regular classes but that "for all other pupils... the instructions of Circular 295 be rigidly

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<sup>150</sup>McKinnon, Regional Supervisor to Indian Affairs, May 17, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 10.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.

enforced.”<sup>152</sup> Some teachers and Agency administrators, then, appear to have disagreed at least in part with the government’s new emphasis on academics over vocational training.

Not surprisingly, these differences of opinion were apparent in the reality of the school’s day-to-day operations. While the Indian Affairs Branch defined the terms by which schools were supposed to operate, there were variations in the implementation of regulations within individual schools and the Department was aware of this. Davey stated in a letter to a Regional Supervisor in North Bay, Ontario, “the school year as laid down by the province cannot be altered for any school” though, “a number of abuses have been uncovered.”<sup>153</sup> The Department itself abused the provincial schedules and its own regulations set out in Circular 295 and the Indian Act of 1951 when it allowed “terminal courses for slow learners and retarded children” which consisted of “a half day of academic work and a half day of instruction in the practical arts of home-making for girls and industrial arts for boys.”<sup>154</sup> Before these “courses” appear to have been officially sanctioned, however, the staff at the Shubenacadie Residential School had initiated just this sort of system. Referring to Circular 295, which banned practical training for students under grade seven, Frank McKinnon wrote to Indian Affairs in February 1962. He stated that the “recommended adjustments are almost entirely implemented (with a few overage grade 5 and 6 pupils allowed special classes in home economics and industrial arts).”<sup>155</sup> Obviously, school

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>R.F. Davey to Regional Supervisor, North Bay Ontario, “Attn: Mr. F.M. Shaw,” April 30, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Part 10.

<sup>154</sup>Indian Affairs Branch, “Comments on Various Phases of the Educational Work of the Indian Affairs Branch,” 1963. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7182, File 1/25-1.

<sup>155</sup>F.B. McKinnon to Indian Affairs Branch, “Re: Classroom Instruction,” February 23, 1962. NAC, RG 10, Volume 7181, File 1/25-1, Par 10.

administrators were using their own discretion rather than government regulations to structure the program for some students at the school. Whether this was beneficial to the students in question or not is not the focus of this study. What is of interest here is that official regulations were reinterpreted by the teachers and administrators at the Shubenacadie Residential School. Vocational training, then, was another site where policy and practice contended within the operation of the school.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the federal government reformed many of its policies governing Indian residential schools. These changes, however, were not necessarily evident, at least in their original form, in the classrooms of the Shubenacadie Residential School. Aside from Native peoples themselves, those involved in Indian education continued to express the desire to assimilate Native children through education. However, those within the system had varying opinions about the focus of Indian education. There were many voices which might have influenced the distortion or rejection of government reforms that began to emphasize academics within the institutions. The Canadian public and Native peoples themselves became increasingly more noticeable to Department officials and tensions created by “outside” forces might have pushed both government and school administrators to adopt or reject certain practices.

One major policy which was implemented with increasing rates of “success” was the integration of Native children into public schools. Opposition, especially from the Catholic Church officials in Canada, may have affected teaching at the Shubenacadie Residential School. Teachers may have emphasized or de-emphasized the need to follow provincial curriculum and timetables depending on their dedication to the goals of integration. While funding structures officially changed, not all of the money was properly distributed, per capita grants persisted and

the increased teacher salaries to reward more qualified people did not necessarily lead to the employment better teachers. While some problematic areas of teaching at residential schools improved with better salaries, more in-service training, and increased professional contacts, teaching at a residential school does not appear to have become desirable, as the high turn-over rate at the school in Nova Scotia indicates.

Many of the teachers at the Shubenacadie Residential School were over or close to the retirement age and employed orthodox instead of "modern" teaching styles. Inexperience with Native children, as a result of their short terms of employment at the school and overcrowded classrooms impeded the implementation of good pedagogy even where abilities may have existed. Poor attitudes toward students were evident on discharge forms and school inspectors, who were generally very positive in their overall assessments of the school, indicated some pedagogical problems in the classrooms. Non-compliance with Indian Affairs Branch goals to reduce the rate of non-promotion and age-grade retardation as well as the re-organization of timetables to allow for additional English, religious, and "practical" instruction all indicated that personal opinions and dynamics within the system had noticeable effects on day-to-day routines at the school.

While the federal government, through the Indian Affairs Branch, initiated many policy changes in the 1950s and 1960s, dynamics and tensions within the system ensured that implementation was not complete. The influences of a variety of voices within the Canadian public, the Indian Affairs Branch, the Churches, the school inspectors, and the administration at the school influenced actual practices so that much of the government's official policy never reached the students at the Shubenacadie Residential School.

## Conclusion

The joint venture of throne and altar had, as its basis, the aim to “beat the Indian” out of Native children. Residential school administrators removed children from their parents and communities, subjected them to extreme regimentation and mandated “cultural abuse” that was accompanied all too often by physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. The system was a horrific result of the government and churches’ ethno-centric visions of what Native peoples ought to be and how “best” to accomplish their assimilationist goals. Some critics even call Canada’s Indian policy, especially in the context of the residential schools, an attempt at cultural “genocide.”<sup>1</sup> A small number of former residents express gratitude for the education and religious instruction that they received at the institutions. Others have become dynamic and powerful leaders who now fight for Native rights. However, the system as a whole left deep scars that have only recently been acknowledged by white authorities and have yet to be overcome for many Native people.

At all levels of administration during the 1950s and 1960s there existed instructions and ideals which might have been of benefit to Native children in the Shubenacadie Residential School. The leaders of the Catholic Church throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided pedagogical advice as well as ideals about child rearing and education that might have worked to Native children’s advantage. Curriculum writers and the Nova Scotia Department of Education offered similar pedagogical directives to those given by the Catholic popes. They also included among their three most prominent curricular goals, the desire to promote “world

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<sup>1</sup>Roland D. Chrisjohn and Sherri L. Young, The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada (Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books Ltd., 1997) 43; and Agnes Grant 269-275.

understanding” in students. These pedagogical and curricular goals might have helped residential school students to develop a sense of self worth, or they might at least have made the classroom environment more conducive to learning and enjoyment.

The Indian Affairs Branch began in this period to alter some of the policies governing residential schools in a way that placed more emphasis on the “academic” requirements of the institutions. This meant that time devoted to manual labour<sup>2</sup> and religious instruction (two areas of the schooling that many Native peoples found problematic) decreased, leaving more time for “traditional” scholastic pursuits. The Indian Affairs Branch also provided financial incentives for teachers that were intended to attract staff with higher qualifications to federal “Indian School” classrooms. Some people in the Department even appear to have been influenced by the changing political environment which demanded a deeper understanding of Native peoples’ needs and desires.

The racism that was inherent in the assumptions supporting assimilationist goals, however, did not change in the dying decades of the residential school system. White officials gave Native peoples no more respect. Government representatives provided only a thin gossamer of “sensitive” rhetoric, which veiled the enduring policy, to appease the increasingly sensitive Canadian public. This facade of respect was obvious in the special joint committee hearings which led to the 1951 Indian Act. Even though the 1946-48 hearings included Native representatives, the resulting legislation in 1951 showed no evidence of that representation. This trend continued through the 1960s when Native people were asked to contribute to the research

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<sup>2</sup>The government and churches generally referred to manual labour as “vocational training” or “practical education.”

for the 1969 White Paper, a document that is notorious for its lack of consideration around Native peoples' concerns and desires.

The lack of consideration that the system allowed for Native people was in direct opposition to one of the foundation principles of Catholic ideology around child rearing and education. This principle was the authority that parents were to have had in directing their children's lives. Church officials held that parents had inalienable rights while the Church and government could simply supplement the learning which began in the home. The forcible removal of children from their families and their subjection to a system that most Native peoples did not support ought to have been unthinkable in the context of a Catholic residential school. Children, in the Catholic ideology, were to be valued and protected from moral harm. This concern over "moral protection" meant that though they were compelled to obey authority in most cases, children could exert autonomy when faced with immoral instructions. However, in the context of residential schools children were not protected from moral harm, especially if one considers assimilation a morally problematic issue. Children in the schools were invited to question the "immoral" influences of their communities but not those of abusive administrators. In the name of assimilation, then, the potentially helpful Catholic ideology was abandoned.

The Catholic officials also provided teachers with pedagogical advice and this advice was echoed by the curriculum writers at the Department of Education in Nova Scotia during the 1950s and 1960s. Both sets of officials emphasised the importance of building new knowledge on students' background experiences, of ensuring that students were interested in the material, and of providing them with individual attention. The provincial curriculum content, in use at the Shubenacadie Residential School, impeded the probability that teachers could heed this advice.

Curriculum, through subtle messages and direct instructions, promoted a narrow vision of “acceptable” and “successful” Canadian lifestyles. It explicitly and implicitly demonstrated “white superiority” juxtaposed over the slanderous denigration of Native peoples. This material may have created in Native children the desire to identify with the “successful” whites and to separate themselves from the “undesirable Indians.” The content, then, also directly contradicted the curriculum writers’ goal of promoting “world understanding” among students. If pursued, this goal might have provided Native children with some level of understanding about their ancestors’ histories, cultures, and religions, thus making their academic experiences more interesting and enjoyable. The curriculum to which they were subjected, however, acted as an agent of assimilation and, in so doing, impeded the possibility that their teachers could implement the pedagogical advice or help to develop “world understanding” among the students.

While curriculum content and Catholic ideology remained relatively unchanging for the period under study, the 1950s and 1960s saw a rather extensive overhaul of the policies that governed the system of residential schools. The federal government began to address some of the aspects of the institutions that had been widely criticised by both the increasingly vocal Native peoples and the politically-charged Canadian public. The government refocused the goal of assimilation through education so that children spent more time receiving the provincial curriculum in hopes that this would aid in the cultural replacement. The integration policy, opposed by some Native peoples, and the Catholic Church, was intended to submerge students in “white culture” and to thereby help the assimilation process. A new funding structure aimed, in part, to improve the quality of education through the provision of qualified teachers. However, problems persisted which meant that such “improvements” may not have led to substantial

changes in the classrooms at the Shubenacadie Residential School. The misappropriation of government funds, a high teacher turn-over rate, relatively aged teachers who drew inspectors' criticisms, overcrowded classrooms, and the persistence of negative teacher attitudes toward their students meant that children at the school may not have felt the direct impact of the altered government funding policy. Other policies may also have been ineffective. Non-promotion and the resulting age-grade retardation appear to have survived government counsels. Timetable regulations were re-arranged to allow for additional attention to English, religion, and vocational education. Teachers, school inspectors, and even officials within the Indian Affairs Branch held differing views on the aims of "Indian education." Therefore, even while the system underwent vast changes, policy initiatives were not necessarily in evidence at the Shubenacadie Residential School.

Regarding "cultural imperialism" and British colonial education policy, Clive Whitehead argues that one must not judge education systems by "to-day's" standards but with an understanding of the best of contemporary educational thought.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that the staff at the Shubenacadie Residential School did not employ, even in this period of change and refocusing on education, the "best" ideals available to them through the Catholic Church, the Nova Scotia Department of Education, or the Indian Affairs Branch. Many factors influenced the school's classrooms and meant that advice and ideals were ignored, distorted, or contradicted. Factors that affected implementation included the structure of the system itself, curriculum's cultural lag and problematic content, a lack of funding, teacher-related concerns, lax policy enforcement, and

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<sup>3</sup>Clive Whitehead, "British colonial educational policy: a synonym for cultural imperialism?" Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism, J.A. Mangan ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 214.

varying ideals about the nature and purpose of “Indian education.”

Lurking behind these factors was, of course, the white officials’ primary goal to assimilate Native children. This aim and the assumptions of cultural, intellectual, and moral inferiority that underlay it meant that Native children’s “academic welfare” suffered. Attempting to replace all that the students brought with them into the classroom interfered with “good pedagogy” and made many of the ideas that might have helped Native children and their communities impossible to implement. While the system itself was contemptible, its assimilationist aims negatively affected the possibility of implementing ideals and advice that came from all levels of school administration. Even ideals that might have made the residential school experiences less miserable and more fruitful for Native children, then were lost to the white officials’ vision(s) of assimilation.

## Appendix "A"

Table 1- Expenditures on Indian Education, 1952-1959, Residential School, NS; 1960-1963

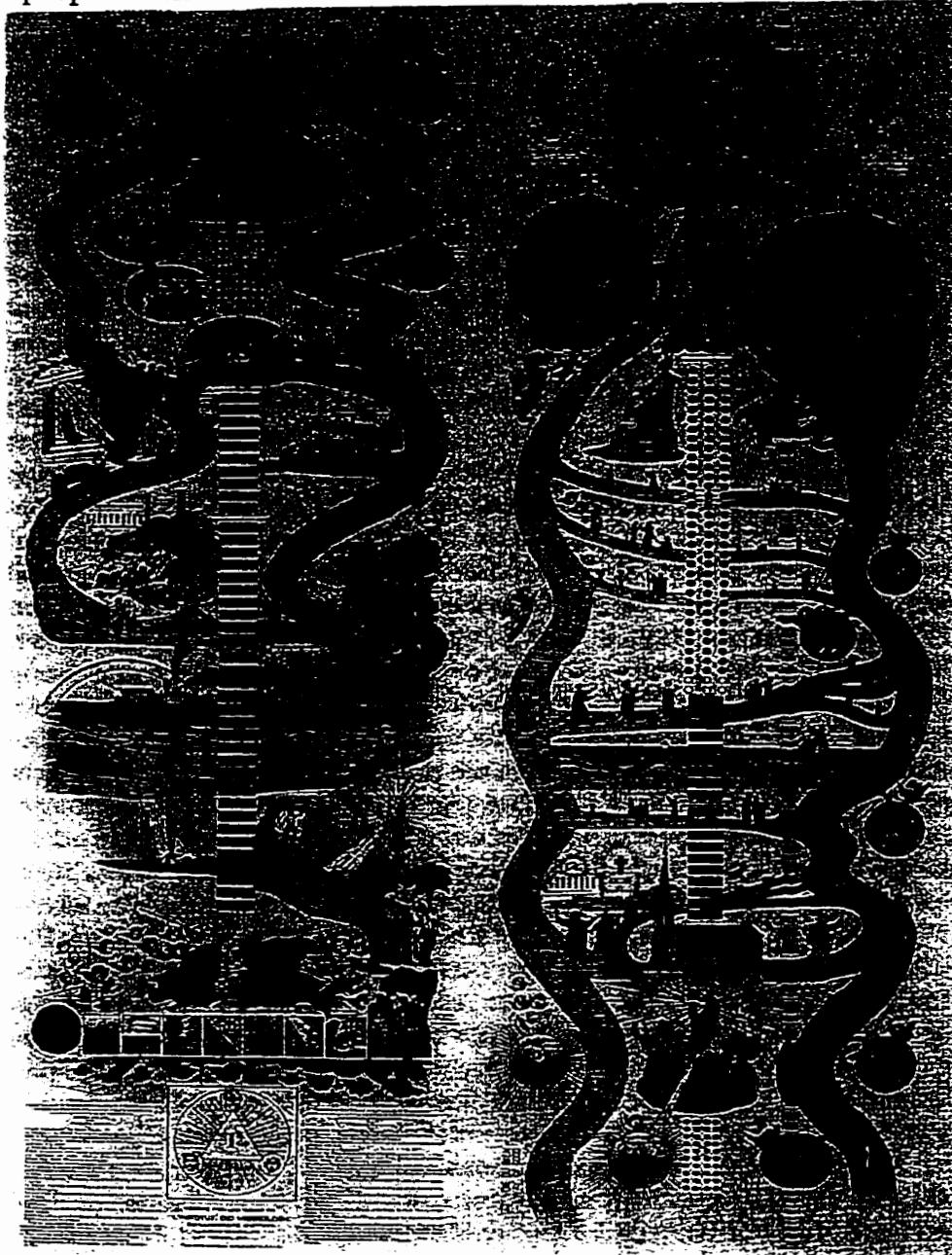
Total Expenditures as published in the Annual Reports of the Indian Affairs Branch.

|      |             |       |              |
|------|-------------|-------|--------------|
| 1952 | \$48 276.44 | 1958  | \$68 427.00  |
| 1953 | \$60 090.73 | *1959 | \$141 800.00 |
| 1954 | \$62 985.53 | 1960  | \$154 681.58 |
| 1955 | \$47 562.38 | 1961  | \$152 129.64 |
| 1956 | \$66 438.14 | 1962  | \$155 550.84 |
| 1957 | \$73 457.12 | 1963  | \$159 075.20 |

\*Note, although the report of the Indian Affairs Branch for 1958-1959 shows this figure as representing only residential school expenditures, the figure is much more closely in line with the "total expenditures" (inclusive of day and residential schools in Nova Scotia). It may be that this figure represents total expenditures.

#### Appendix "B"

The picture below was a catechetical device that, according to Miller,<sup>5</sup> hung prominently in all Oblate missionary establishments. Note the two pathways, the “Way of Good” and the “Way of Evil.” Many former students of Catholic residential schools identified those on the “path to Hell” as Native peoples while those destined for the arms of God were assumed to be white.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup>See Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 191-192.

### Appendix "C"

This picture exemplifies the idealized results of assimilation in residential schools. These students graduated from the Lebret Catholic school in Saskatchewan, 1953.<sup>5</sup>



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<sup>5</sup>Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 196.

Appendix "D"

One of the “before and after” shots demonstrating the “civilising” influence of the Catholic Qu’Appelle Industrial school, Saskatchewan.<sup>6</sup>



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<sup>6</sup>Miller, Shingwauk's Vision, 197.

## Appendix "E"

The following open letter from a Native parent to her son's teacher is included in the epilogue to J.R. Miller's, Shingwauk's Vision.

*Dear Teacher,*

*Before you take charge of the classroom that contains my child, please ask yourself why you are going to teach Indian children. What are your expectations- what rewards do you anticipate- what ego-needs will our children meet?*

*Write down and examine all the information and opinions you possess about Indians. What are the stereotypes and untested assumptions that you bring with you into the classroom? How many negative attitudes towards Indians will you put before my child?*

*What values, class prejudices and moral principles do you take for granted as universal? Please remember that "different from" is not the same as "worse than," and the yardstick you use to measure your own life satisfactorily may not be appropriate for their lives. The term "culturally deprived" was invented by well-meaning middle-class whites to describe something they could not understand.*

*Too many teachers, unfortunately, seem to see their role as rescuer. My child does not need to be rescued; he does not consider being Indian a misfortune. He has a culture, probably older than yours; he has meaningful values and a rich and varied experiential background. However strange or incomprehensible it may seem to you, you have no right to do or say anything that implies to him that it is less than satisfactory.*

*Our children's experiences have been different from those of the "typical" white middle-class child for whom most school curricula seem to have been designed. (I suspect that this "typical" child does not exist except in the minds of curriculum writers.) Nonetheless, my child's experiences have been as intense and meaningful to him as any child's. Like most Indian children his age, he is competent. He can dress himself, prepare a meal for himself, clean up afterwards, care for a younger child. He knows his reserve- all of which is his home- like the back of his hand.*

*He is not accustomed to having to ask permission to do the ordinary things that are part of normal living. He is seldom forbidden to do anything; more usually the consequences of an action are explained to him and he is allowed to decide for himself whether or not to act. His entire existence since he has been old enough to see and hear has been an experiential learning situation, arranged to provide him with the opportunity to develop his skills and confidence in his own capacities. Didactic teaching will be an alien experience for him.*

*He is not self-conscious in the way many white children are. Nobody has ever told him his efforts towards independence are cute. He is a young human being energetically doing his job, which is to get on with the process of learning to function as an adult human being. He will respect you as a person, but will expect you to do likewise to him. He has been taught, by precept, that courtesy is an essential part of human conduct and rudeness is any action that makes another person feel stupid or foolish. Do not mistake his patient courtesy for indifference or passivity.*

*He doesn't speak standard English, but he is in no way "linguistically handicapped." If you will take the time and courtesy to listen and observe carefully, you will see that he and the other*

*Indian children communicate very well, both among themselves and with other Indians. They speak "functional English," very effectively augmented by their fluency in the silent language—the subtle unspoken communication of facial expressions, gestures, body movement, and the use of personal space.*

*You will be well advised to remember that our children are skillful interpreters of the silent language. They will know your feelings and attitudes with unerring precision no matter how carefully you arrange your smile or modulate your voice. They will learn in your classroom, because children learn involuntarily. What they learn will depend on you.*

*Will you help my child to read, or will you teach him that he has a reading problem? Will you help him to develop problem solving skills, or will you teach him that school is where you try to guess what answer the teacher wants? Will he learn that his sense of his own value and dignity is valid, or will he learn that he must forever be apologetic and "trying harder" because he isn't white? Can you help him acquire the intellectual skills he needs without at the same time imposing your values on top of those he already has?*

*Respect my child. He is a person. He has a right to be himself.*

*Yours very sincerely,*

*His Mother<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup>Saskatchewan Indian and Northern Education, Northian Newsletter, 44 (September-November, 1975): 4-5. As quoted in J.R., Miller, Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 441-3.

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