

***NATIVE REVIVAL IN ALBERTA, CANADA:***

***ILLUSION OR REALITY ?***

par

Mélanie SCHEFFER

Université de Haute-Alsace  
Mulhouse

FLSH  
Département d'Anglais

Maîtrise d'Anglais

Soutenance: Septembre 2002

Directeur de Recherches: M. Georges GARY  
Membre du Jury: Mme Elisabeth LABADIE-SCHWAB

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I express my deep gratitude to my family and friends, who have put up with me for the two years of this emotional roller-coaster. A special thanks to my friends Athena, Jean-Pascal, Lara, Franco and Leo, who provided an incredible support and who were always here to encourage me.

Thanks also go out to my supervisor, Georges Gary, who helped and guided me during these two years, and who was always available. His comments on my work, and those of my second readers, Professor Philip Zachernuk and Renée Lafferty, from Dalhousie University, were always very helpful.

I would also like to thank Professor John L. Tobias and Professor Nigel Bankes for their help and advice, as well as Lyle Keewatin Richards, Nicole Lorrain and the Red Deer Native Friendship Centre for sharing their experiences with me.

# **Table of Contents**

	Pages
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	2
<b>Table of Contents</b>	3
<b>Introduction</b>	7
<b>PART 1</b>	10
<b><u>Chapter 1: A Short Historical Background</u></b>	
A. The pre-Confederation treaties	11
B. The numbered treaties	12
C. The Alberta treaties and their import	13
<b><u>Chapter 2: Perspectives on the Negotiations of Treaty Six and Treaty Seven in Alberta</u></b>	
A. From independence to dependence	14
1. The influence of the North-West Mounted Police	14
2. The Indians' mixed feelings regarding the treaties	16
B. The scope of the arguments discussed by the Commissioners	18
1. Survival and dependence	18
<i>1.1. The Queen Mother and her red children</i>	18
<i>1.2. Their right to the land, or how to make room for their brothers</i>	19
<i>1.3. Life and survival of the future generations</i>	20
2. The commissioners and the government's goals	21

### **Chapter 3: White Charity vs. Native Need**

A. Perspectives on Morris’s interpretation of the treaties	23
1. Morris’s faith in the success of the treaty activity	23
2. Morris’s definition of success	25
3. A definition of the “good Indian”	25
B. The evolution of the terms: the Indians as negotiators?	26
1. From treaty one to treaty six	26
2. The Indians’ attempt to retain their lifestyle	28

### **Chapter 4: Treaty Eight Negotiations and De-Tribalization: (Mis)Understanding Government Treaties**

A. From public outcry to private conciliation	30
1. Government failure and public pressure	30
2. Indians resist in treaty negotiation	32
B. The policy of de-tribalization	34
1. The Indians in a predicament	34
2. From Indian protest to government repression	36

### **Chapter 5: Two Different Perceptions, Two Different Agreements**

A. The treaties as yearly agreements	39
B. Two different cultures	41
1. The foundations for controversy	41
2. What the government meant	43
3. What the Indians understood and signed	45

**Chapter 1: Implications and Scope of a Native Revival vs. Survival**

A. Acknowledgement of the losses and situation	49
1. Dependence vs. autonomy and identity	49
2. The Indian Act and the legal Indian	50
3. Autonomy and identity as interrelated notions	51
B. Revival and survival: definitions in context	52

**Chapter 2 : The Role of the Government**

A. Post-treaty policies and institutions	55
1. Protection, civilisation and enfranchisement vs. freedom	55
2. The Indian Act in service of the de-tribalization policy	58
3. Towards a new Indian Act?	59
4. D.I.A. and welfare, discriminatory institutions?	60
B. From the White Paper to the Constitutional Conferences	62
1. From the Hawthorne Report to the White Paper	62
2. The constitutional conferences: a new governmental attitude	66

**Chapter 3: Resisting and Surviving : Indian Activism**

A. Regaining dignity	69
B. Asserting their identity	72
1. The role of the National Indian Brotherhood	72
2. From “Indian Brotherhood” to “First Nations”	73
3. Connecting with the past to be present in the future	74

C. In search of a lost autonomy	77
1. The Red Paper	77
2. From London to the Constitution	80
<b><u>Chapter 4: The Means to Passively Resist</u></b>	
A. The impact of education	83
1. Education in the hands of the government	83
2. The curricula: surviving or reviving?	86
3. Educating the adults	87
B. The role of programs and associations	88
<b>Conclusion</b>	91
<b>Bibliographical References</b>	95
<b>Bibliography</b>	97

## **Introduction**

Taking an interest in the Native presence in Canada allows a better understanding of Canadian society. In a way, Natives have a double history : that of 'Indians' and that of 'Canadian Indians'. Whether or not the government once admitted it, they are a part of Canada's heritage, and thus give the opportunity to look at the country differently.

Canada has always had a good image in the eyes of the European tourist: a vast country, unpolluted, with welcoming people, amazing landscapes and a peaceful reputation. It is true that Canada has not started any of the wars it was involved in. Yet, in the mid-1960s - 1980s, a people re-appeared from the past. Indeed, for years and years, Canada's image had never involved the Indians. Of course there were Indians out West, but nobody mentioned them, and besides the government, very few Canadians actually dealt with them. Suddenly, within a decade, Canada's Indians were heard of in Europe, and were seriously disrupting the government's policies. Why would a people living in such a peaceful country suddenly rise? Why such an awakening? Did not they chose to live aside from society? A new reality was thus revealed to the public. No, the Indians had not chosen to lead the lives of recluses, and they were determined to be a part of society.

All over the country, Indians were demonstrating and organizing themselves. In Alberta, more precisely, bands often took initiatives which became sources of inspiration for Indians across Canada. In that sense, their struggle truly represents that of all 'Canadian Indians'. The question is, what is their struggle? What do they want and what do they reject? Does it testify to a simple coming back to social life or can we

talk about a Native revival? In other words, are they surviving as Indians or are they reviving their ‘indianity’?”

The Native issue is a very complex subject. The various aspects of the question all inter-relate and it becomes difficult to study them separately: politics, land claims, economy, culture, rights, all rest in the hands of the federal government and are all inter-dependent. Therefore, this paper does not pretend to cover all the aspects of the Native awakening in Alberta, and will only study some that are symbolic and relevant to the question of a possible revival. The aim is to define whether or not there was and still is a Native revival. Since the various events taking place today represent a continuity to the initial awakening and not a new aspect, they will not be as detailed. The issue is not about what is happening nowadays, but rather about what the Indians achieved and why. Therefore, one has to go back in time to look at the reasons which led the Alberta Indians to react and to demonstrate their discontent a century later. It is also important to see why it took them so long to publicly react, and how they finally organized their defense. This study will thus establish a relationship between the causes and the means of the Native awakening, in order to determine which term – survival or revival – applies best to this unprecedented phenomenon.

The issue of whether or not there is a Native revival also implies a certain number of questions. Indeed, in order to survive or to revive something, one has to suffer important losses or injustices. If such a thing happened at a time when they were quite powerful, how can the Alberta Indians actually hope to become re-established in a modern society dominated by white values? What can they obtain in comparison with what they ask for? Are they leading a rearguard fight? To answer these questions, the goals, the means and the characteristics of the Native strategy need to be analyzed.



In Part 1, I will review the treaty-making process in Alberta. This review will concentrate on how the Indians came to sign treaties with the Crown, and in particular will canvass the humane and cultural aspects of both parties. Native and non-Native perceptions of the negotiations will be contrasted to underline how the question of a possible revival has its roots in the treaties and in the treaty activity period.

In Part 2, I will study contemporary aspects of the Native issue in order to determine which term –survival or revival– applies best to the rising Native movement. The implications and scopes of a Native survival / revival will be paralleled with some of the various initiatives undertaken by both the government and First Nations, and with the various means of the Alberta Indians to resist the threat of a second disappearance.

Turning to matters of terminology, since I mainly concentrate on “status Indians”, I will use the terms “Indians” and “Natives” indiscriminately. I will however reserve the term “First Nations” for all the events which occurred after 1980, year when this expression was publicly used for the first time. I would like to underline that although I am aware of the subtlety of the terminology used, English not being my mother tongue, I am not familiar with the implied connotations of each word. Therefore, my intention in using such or such term is not to imply a certain mood or attitude towards First Nations, but simply to designate a people and/or its individuals.

# PART ONE

# CHAPTER I

## A Short Historical Background

Indian treaty activity has been and continues to be a major source of debate in Canadian history. In Alberta, the Native population has been deeply involved in this debate and has appeared, to the modern observer, to be looking for something lost in those early treaty agreements. In fact, the foundations for most contemporary clashes are rooted in the treaties made between Natives and the British Crown over a century ago. What are the First Nations now trying to “revive” and why? In order to understand this, one has to look at the treaty-making process in the prairies: how it was conducted, what was granted, what both parties thought they agreed on and finally, what the immediate consequences were.

### **A. The pre-Confederation treaties**

The first treaties, or rather “agreements”, made with the Indian population date back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and are known as the Maritime “Peace and Friendship” agreements. They were concluded between certain tribes and either the British or the French authorities during the period of the colonial struggles. The Indians were required either to remain neutral, or to help one or the other European powers in their conflict.

Once France withdrew and ceded its territory to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, and as soon as Eastern North America was confirmed as British territory by the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the British government issued the Royal Proclamation in the same year. This important document was the first to refer to land title, and stated that all

lands for future settlement had to be cleared of Indian title through Crown Purchase. These represented the earliest land treaties between Native and Western European populations.

In the early 1780s, as Iroquois allies were promised land in recognition for their help during the revolutionary war against American forces, British Governor General Haldimand was directed to purchase the land, deemed to be in occupation, from the Indian people. From then on and until 1850, about twenty-four “purchases” or “surrenders” were conducted, thus clearing most of Upper Canada of Indian title.

### **B. The numbered treaties**

In 1870, article 14 of the Order-in-Council admitting Rupert’s Land and the North-West Territories in what was then the Dominion of Canada, obliged Canada to satisfy Indian claims by compensation for lands required for settlement. The series of treaties based upon this new regulation are known as the “numbered treaties”. Treaties one to seven were negotiated between 1871 and 1877, and treaty eight, nine, ten and eleven were negotiated in 1899, 1905, 1906 and 1921 respectively.

Patterned to a great extent after the Robinson Treaties of 1850, the numbered treaties were more or less similar to each other, taking cessions of Indian title, promising reserves, small annuities, the continued exercise of hunting, fishing and trapping rights, ammunition, farm implements and other goods and services. All were written and elaborated on the same basis: the Indians were to “cede, release, surrender and yield up to the Government of the Dominion of Canada, for her Majesty the Queen and Her successors forever, all their rights, titles and privileges, whatsoever, to the lands included within the following limits”, then carefully described.

The numbered treaty negotiations were carried out by a team of commissioners and by the Lieutenant-Governor in office. From 1872 until 1876, Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris thus conducted almost half of the numbered treaty negotiations (treaty three to six inclusive); he was then replaced by David Laird. Morris and Laird were the two men who conducted the treaty negotiations with Alberta Natives.

### **C. The Alberta treaties and their import**

The province of Alberta was created in 1905, with its present boundaries. It was the first and only part of Canada to become a province after the Indian title had been nearly extinct (save for a small corner on the Eastern border, included in treaty ten the following year). Indeed, treaties six, seven, and eight covered the territory of the province, and gathered together the Cree Indians, the Assiniboines, the Chippewyan Indians, the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Beaver Indians. Both treaty six and seven were signed between 1871 and 1877, along with the first five treaties.

The government knew the land of the Prairies was rich and suitable for cultivation, and had planned to settle the region of the “Fertile Belt” as soon as possible. A race for treaties was thus politically and economically expedient. This intense period of negotiations and signing between Natives and the government was a turning point for Indian culture and tradition. The very identity of Alberta’s Native population was in the hands of the government.

## CHAPTER II

### Perspectives on the Negotiations of Treaty Six and Treaty Seven in Alberta

#### A. From independence to dependence

##### 1. The influence of the North-West Mounted Police

The treaty-making process in the Prairie Provinces was partly made possible through the work of the North-West Mounted Police. This police force was established in the prairies in 1873, as a result of two discovery trips conducted in the early 1870s by an Irish colonel of the British army, R. A. Butler. Butler was one of the few to admire and to try and understand the Indian culture, and the Mounted Police was therefore in touch with the Indians long before the commissioners arrived. The Mounted Police remained present and very influential throughout the treaty activity period. Whether their influence was positive or negative is debatable.

If, during the treaty six negotiations, the policemen mainly provided an escort for the commissioners and added to the pomp of the ceremonies, they amply participated in the signing of treaty seven. By 1874, when the police force reached what is now Southern Alberta, the Indians were reduced to a terrible state of poverty. In 1870, the whole of the Indian population had suffered from a smallpox epidemic spreading in the West, which had killed “between six hundred and eight hundred” Blackfoot, according to Reverend Constantine Scollen’s 1876 report to the Governor. Moreover, in the 1860s, unscrupulous American traders had crossed the border to

pursue an illicit traffic of alcohol, which destroyed the Indian population. As Reverend Scollen mentioned in his report:

The fiery water flowed as freely (...) as the streams running from the Rocky Mountains, and hundreds of the poor Indians fell victims to the white man's craving for money, some poisoned, some frozen to death whilst in a state of intoxication, and many shot down by American bullets.<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say that the epidemics worsened the situation, since the ones who survived drank more and more and sold whatever they could to buy more alcohol. By 1874, the Blackfoot population was then greatly decreased, and those who remained were divided, and harrowed by alcohol, violence, starvation and poverty.

The arrival of the North-West Mounted Police thus appeared as a real salvation. Their role was to maintain order and to protect the Indians. Within a short time, they stamped out the illicit traffic and the Blackfoot prospered again, regaining their dignity and their power. Because of their intervention, the policemen were soon respected. According to Lieutenant-Governor David Laird, in his detailed 1877 account of the negotiations, the Indians "always spoke of the officers of the Police in the highest terms, and of the Commander of the Force, Lieut.-Col. McLeod, especially as their great benefactor. The leading Chiefs of the Blackfeet and kindred tribes, declared publicly at the treaty that had it not been for the Mounted Police they would have all been dead ere this time."<sup>2</sup>

James McLeod, appointed Commissioner of the Mounted Police in 1876, actively participated in the signing of treaty seven and was even appointed Indian Commissioner in order to help Laird in the negotiations. Since he had established genuine relations with the Indians, and since he and his men were given all the credits for having saved the Blackfoot population, he was expected to use his influence in order

---

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians...*, p.248

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.255

to have the treaty signed. In fact, the positive image of the Crown that was displayed through the Mounted Police was greatly used by the commissioners during the negotiations. In the course of treaty six negotiations already, coats were to be distributed if the Indians signed the treaty, and were presented as an honourable gift by Alexander Morris:

...red is the color all the Queen's Chiefs wear. Indian wear this coat, but it is only worn by those who stand as the Queen's Councillors; her soldiers and her officers wear red, and all the other Chiefs of the Queen wear the coats we have brought, and the good of this is that when the Chief is seen with his uniform and medal every one knows he is an officer of hers.<sup>3</sup>

The Queen, having been presented as a saviour, and the Mounted Police having successfully accomplished their duty, the colour red was made the symbol of the link between the good men of the Mounted Police and the promises of the Queen. After a period of doubt and suspicion, the Blackfoot Chief Crowfoot, who was a highly respected man across the plains, eventually convinced his people that the treaty was a good thing for them. According to Helen Buckley, who worked for many years for the Canadian government, Crowfoot's decision was partly motivated by the fact he "felt a debt to the North-West Mounted Police for controlling the whiskey trade, and trusted the Queen to keep her promises."<sup>4</sup> If this is the case, it shows how the Mounted Police was inevitably answerable for the Queen's promises in the Indians' minds. It also demonstrates the influence of the Mounted Police in the signing of the treaties, and raises the question of whether or not the Indians were misled.

## 2. The Indians' mixed feelings regarding the treaties

Most Indians of the prairies seemed anxious to sign the treaties, and what is prominent in Morris's report is that the Indians were both afraid of and looking forward

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.226

<sup>4</sup> Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.38



to the negotiations. Many stories were circulating about the terms of the treaties, which the Indians could not ignore. Reverend George McDougall, in his 1875 report to Governor Morris, gave examples of such stories:

... an interesting party went to considerable trouble to inform the Willow Indians that I had \$3,000 for each band (...). A gentleman (...) had told them (the Buffalo Lake Indians) that the Mounted Police had received orders to prevent all parties killing buffalo or other animals, except during three months in the year...<sup>5</sup>

Along with these stories, Alberta Indians also heard accounts of what had or was happening across the border.<sup>6</sup>

The Indians were therefore worried about signing a treaty, and they also realized that their future was threatened and that survival would become more and more difficult over the years without these treaties. They were faced with epidemics, alcohol, the threat of starvation due to the falling off in number of the buffalo herds and the inevitable arrival of an increasing number of white settlers. The presence of the railway workers and of the Geological Survey people already made them quite anxious, and in 1876, the arrival of five thousand Sioux, refugees from the United States, further threatened their food supply.<sup>7</sup> For these reasons, the Indian chiefs asked for the treaty commissioners' help, as did the Chief Sweetgrass, the most respected Cree Chief, before the treaty six negotiations took place:

Our country is getting ruined of fur-bearing animals, hitherto our sole support, and now we are poor and want help (...). We want cattle, tools, agricultural implements, and assistance in everything when we come to settle –our country is no longer able to support us.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians...*, p .175

<sup>6</sup> *examples*: the terrible 1870 Baker's massacre (attack by US soldiers of a Blackfoot winter camp), and the involvement of Indians in the American civil wars

<sup>7</sup> Richard Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties*, p.26

<sup>8</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians...*, p.171

His statement shows how aware of their difficulties the Indians were, and proves they also knew that the transition from hunting to farming could not be done without help, since they had no experience whatsoever of the white lifestyle. In short, the Indians, who used to be completely autonomous and self-governed, were slowly moving to a position of economic and political dependence because of all the problems related to white settlement.

## **B. The scope of the arguments discussed by the Commissioners**

Rendered vulnerable and fearful by the factors discussed above, the Indians had no longer control over their fate. Treaty negotiations took advantage of this through use of rhetoric on three levels – the family, the land and the future of the nation.

### 1. Survival and dependence

#### *1.1. The Queen Mother and her red children*

Throughout most of the negotiations, there were recurrent arguments used by the commissioners in order to influence the Indians to agree with the terms proposed. First of all, the emphasis was put on the Queen's benevolence, mostly made credible by the role of the North West Mounted Police. The Queen was presented as a mother who cared for all of her children, whether they be white or red: "...the Queen (...) cares as much for one of you as she does for one of her white subjects.", "...the Queen and her Councillors have the good of the Indian at heart, because you are the Queen's children and we must think of you for to-day and to-morrow...".<sup>9</sup> This type of rhetoric was used

---

<sup>9</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada...*, p.200 and 230

before and throughout both treaty six and treaty seven negotiations, to introduce the concept of the poor and lost Indian who needed help and of the good Queen/mother who was going to save him. This was a Manichean rhetoric, placing the good white queen on one side, and the red Indian - bound to an evil fate - on the other.

Continuing on this mother/child image, the commissioners would then insist on the brotherly aspect of the treaty: “We are of the same blood, the same God made us and the same Queen rules over us.”, “We respect the Indians as brothers and as men.”<sup>10</sup> Having thus won part of their trust, the Lieutenant-Governor would reassure them about the stories circulating in the prairies: “...do not listen to the bad voices of men who have their own ends to serve, listen rather to those who have only your good at heart.”<sup>11</sup> If this argumentation seemed innocent, it was, however, potentially harmful. Indeed, by acknowledging such a relationship with the white men, the Indians were in a position to lose their traditional familial values, and thus their identity as tribes.

### *1.2. Their right to the land, or how to make room for their brothers*

Those for whom the good of the Indian was so important also had at heart a strong fondness for settlement and development in the West. The idea of “sharing the land” was then a major point on which the Indians would have to agree. In order to introduce this idea, the commissioners addressed the Indians in their own way of speaking, using the image of the “Great Spirit”, who had made the country large enough for the whites and the reds: “...the country is very wide and there is room for all.”<sup>12</sup> The concept of living on reserves was explained to them as if it was an honour, since they could choose the land they were to settle in first, before the white settlers arrived. Another point on which the commissioners had to insist in order to convince the Indians

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.199 and 200

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.232

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.231

was that, contrary to the stories heard, they would be free to hunt, fish and to continue living the way they had. “ I do not want to interfere with your hunting and fishing” explained Governor Morris<sup>13</sup>. These words were an often-repeated chorus throughout the negotiations: “The Government will not interfere with the Indians’ daily life, they will not bind him.”<sup>14</sup> Sometimes, treaties made with eastern tribes were used as examples and Morris would then turn into a preacher spreading the good word:

I see the Queen’s Councillors taking the Indian by the hand saying we are brothers, we will lift you up, we will teach you (...) the cunning of the white man. (...) I see them enjoying their hunting and fishing as before, I see them retaining their old mode of living with the Queen’s gift in addition.<sup>15</sup>

However, despite all those promises, the Indians still had to surrender or “share” most of their land. There was no compromise; the government still obtained everything it needed without losing much, whereas the Indians were still losing their autonomy and a basis for their cultural identity.

### *1.3. Life and survival of the future generations*

The other main argument used by the commissioners concerned the Indians’ future. The threats the Indian population was well aware of, were emphasised, leaving the treaty as the sole condition for their survival. Governor Morris would insist on the decreasing number of the population, “... you see for yourselves and know that your numbers are lessening every year.”<sup>16</sup>, knowing the Indians would be sensitive to their children’s future. The tragedy of the extinction of the buffalo herds was also put forward:

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.204

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.241

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.231

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.233

...in a very few years the buffalo will probably be all destroyed, and for this reason the Queen wishes to help you to live in the future in some other way. She wishes you to allow her white children to come and live on your land and raise cattle, and should you agree to this she will assist you to raise cattle and grain, and thus give you the means of living when the buffalo are no more.<sup>17</sup>

The Indians knew their survival, such as it was, depended on the buffalo, and knew that if they wanted to survive, they would have to adopt the whites' way of life, farming and raising cattle. They were also aware that help was essential to succeed in this transition, and were offered no other solution than to accept the commissioners' terms.

If Morris and his "white brothers" wanted to appear as the saviours, one has to keep in mind that the deplorable situation in which the Indians lived was the very one those "white brothers" had created. Indeed, the various epidemics were unknown to the Indians before the first whites arrived, the massive destruction of the buffalo was due to the white man's craving for money (trade), and the ravages of alcohol were made possible because of white traders. This, the commissioners did not mention, nor did they ever apologize for it. Could the Indians really expect sincere help from the same people who had caused their decline?

## 2. The commissioners and the government's goals

The commissioners' main concerns in relation to the signing of the treaties seemed to have been overlooked. In 1867, the recently formed Dominion of Canada had plans for expansion and by 1870, believed the West was appropriate for settlement and development. In the mid-1870s, geologists confirmed the presence of tar, oil, and other natural resources in the region. The government also had in mind the construction of the railway, which was at first scheduled to start in 1873, to link the new province of British Columbia with the rest of the Dominion. This, the government hoped, would preserve

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.268

the survival of the new country and facilitate its settlement and development. The construction of a railway was obvious to the Indians, but its potential impact was not explained to them, and even if they knew it would bring more white settlers, they surely could not have foreseen the considerable proportions which settlement actually took on.

What the treaties really aimed at was, as the Royal Proclamation of 1763 declared it, to have the new country cleared of Indian title, in order for the government to have total sovereignty. Through the various terms, the Indians would accept to live in peace with the whites, to respect British law and thus, indirectly, promised that there would not be any Indian wars. This was also one of the reasons for signing treaties with the Indians. As early as 1871, in a letter to the commissioners, the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, W. J. Christie, warned the government against the possibility of Indian rebellions. Mentioning starvation, Christie explained:

If not complied with, or no steps taken to make some provisions for them, they will most assuredly help themselves; and there being no force or any law to protect the settlers, they must either quietly submit to be pillaged, or lose their lives in the defence of their families and property, against such fearful odds that will leave no hope for their side. <sup>18</sup>

It was thus made clear that to avoid the American experience of Indian war, the very first step would be to placate the Indians through written agreements. On the whole, those who “only had the good of the Indian at heart” seemed mostly to secure their own interests.

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.170

## CHAPTER III

### White Charity vs. Native Need

#### A. Perspectives on Morris's interpretation of the treaties

##### 1. Morris's faith in the success of the treaty activity

If the government's aims were not always unmotivated by personal gain, the commissioners were not all totally anti-Indian. They had had to meet with many tribes in many different places, and had, most of the time, been welcomed in "civilized" ways. Some actually did have "the good of the Indian at heart", like Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris, and tried to understand the Indian culture. However, as sincere as they were in wanting to help, the way they had in mind to do so was not adapted to the Indians' desires, but rather stuck to a "white" understanding of Indian problems.

In his preface to *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians...*, Morris gave a definition of the treaties which described them as means of "securing the good will of the Indian tribes, and by the helpful hand of the Dominion, opening up to them a future of promise, based upon the foundations of instruction and the many other advantages of civilized life." In the introduction, various explanations and reasons were given concerning the treaty-making process, but Morris never mentioned talking with the Indian tribes. In other words, the main people directly concerned by the treaties, were not asked their opinion. The Crown just assumed that offering them "civilization" was the best thing to do, and Morris seemed to agree. He truly believed that the treaties would help the Indian population become, "by the adoption of agricultural and pastoral pursuits, a self-supporting community". Therefore, since he pressed upon the

government to grant these terms during the negotiations, Morris was most likely sincere in his desire to help the Indians, and took this duty at heart.

Indeed, in his conclusion, Morris was convinced of having accomplished the best for the Indian population and could only foresee a positive future for them. His confidence in the governments was boundless: “I have every confidence in the desire and ability of the present administration, as of any succeeding one, to carry out the provisions of the treaties, and to extend a helping hand to this helpless population.” But his conclusion rather sounded like a plea “to help and elevate the Indian population”, and one can then wonder who he was really trying to convince, whether it was the Canadian people, the government, or himself.

Morris was probably convinced of the good of the treaties, because he seemed to care about the Indians and because civilization was the only help he thought could be offered. He was thus a good commissioner, who probably displayed a lot of sincerity during the negotiations and appeared very convincing:

I had ascertained that the Indian mind was oppressed with vague fear; they dreaded the treaty; (...) I accordingly shaped my address, so as to give them confidence in the intentions of the Government, and to quiet their apprehensions. I impressed strongly on them the necessity of changing their present mode of life (...)<sup>19</sup>

However, the Indians were offered no other solution for their problems, as Morris had defined them, and they were never asked what they themselves wanted. The government hardly considered them as human beings with equal rights.

---

<sup>19</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, p. 183



## 2. Morris's definition of success

Morris has sometimes been described as a practical man who knew the treaties would not help the Indians, but would instead help the government get rid of them, and who was proud of having contributed to most of the numbered treaty negotiations.<sup>20</sup> However, if such a view is defensible, one should keep in mind that the commissioners and Lieutenant-Governor Morris did not have the power to change the terms of the treaties as they had been established by the British Crown. They did show an understanding of the Indians' situation, and were flexible enough to meet the Indians' requests part way. Morris was indeed proud of having contributed to the process which he thought necessary and in the Indians' interest, and clearly expressed it in the preface:

I have prepared this collection of the treaties (...) in the hope that I may thereby contribute to the completion of a work, in which I had considerable part, that, of, by treaties, securing the good will of the Indian tribes, and by the helpful hand of the Dominion, opening up to them, a future of promise, based upon the foundations of instruction and the many other advantages of civilized life.

What then might have been reprehensible was not Morris's intention to help the Indians, but the means of doing it.

## 3. A definition of the "good Indian"

This means of helping the Indians often went together with eradicating their culture or transforming them into "whites". Thus, the success of the treaties was based on the extinction of the Indian title, not just over the land, but over the Indians as well. Indeed, the Indians were offered civilization, which consisted of Christianity, a little education, western clothes, and farming or cattle raising over limited land. Being civilized also implied becoming economically independent and believing in private property. In the United States, Custer had said: "The only good Indian is a dead

---

<sup>20</sup> G. Brown and R. Maguire, *Indian Treaties in Historical Perspective*, p. 37

Indian.”; in Canada, a different version could have been: “The only good Indian is a non-Indian/white Indian.” Indians were therefore expected to accept what they were offered and to turn into a malleable copy of the white farmer, since they could only “be rescued from the hard fate which otherwise awaited them (...) by the adoption of agricultural and pastoral pursuits.”<sup>21</sup>

Morris thus conducted the negotiations knowing that the extinction of Indian title would give way to massive settlement and development. He probably did not think that the compensation granted in the treaties would be reduced and the Indian culture eradicated. He did not believe the Indians would ever refuse to live like white people and so was convinced that after the signing of the treaty the Indians would fully adopt the “civilized” way of life offered to them and thus become “loyal subjects of the Crown, happy, prosperous and self-sustaining.”<sup>22</sup>

## **B. The evolution of the terms: the Indians as negotiators?**

### 1. From treaty one to treaty six

The government’s initial offer concerning the numbered treaties is reflected in the first two treaties, concluded in 1871. The compensation for the land surrendered was very close to that of the Robinson Treaties, signed twenty years earlier, and mainly consisted of reserves and a small cash annuity and gratuity. In these early treaties, there was no mention of possible assistance in farming or cattle raising, nor a provision for education. Treaty six and treaty seven, however, provided for various tools, animals,

---

<sup>21</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, preface

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.297

implements and supplies, as well as assistance in farming, education and health. So how did the terms evolve? From a draft treaty sent from Ottawa before the treaty one negotiations, it is obvious that the government intended to give no more than what the Robinson Treaties had offered.<sup>23</sup> Knowing the Indians' condition and their need for help, as well as the government's intentions over the land, it is easy to conclude that there was no real concern for the Indians' future. The government mainly intended to placate the Indians at a minimal cost. This however, did not satisfy the Indians, who were anxious about their survival.

During the treaty one and treaty two negotiations, many outside or "oral" promises were made, and at the Indians' request, these were eventually added in the form of a memorandum, which only became effective in 1875. Those promises provided for education and agricultural aid. The signing of treaty three went one step further, since it did not only offer agricultural assistance, but also hunting and fishing supplies. Moreover, the annual payment and the size of the reserves were raised, and all the terms were included in the treaty text itself. Treaty four and treaty five were more or less similar to treaty three, with the exception that the size of the reserves in treaty five were reduced to what they originally were. As for treaty six, it was quite unique, since it was the only treaty providing for a medicine chest, to "be kept at the house of each Indian agent for the use and benefit of the Indians", and for assistance in case of "pestilence" or "general famine". The following treaties were then patterned mostly on treaty three.

---

<sup>23</sup> R. Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties*, p.5

## 2. The Indians' attempt to retain their lifestyle

Some negotiations, particularly those of treaty three and treaty six, were difficult to conclude. One can then wonder why there were such difficulties if the conditions were more and more in favour of the Indians. The fact was that the government had no intention of offering so much, and the Indians were not ready to accept such simple offers as those of the Robinson Treaties. These additional terms were thus most likely initiated by the Indians, and what caused trouble during the negotiations was the government's reluctance to grant more than they had planned.

The Indians knew they had to take treaty in order to survive, but they also knew they could not take on the transition on their own. The government, on the other hand, needed to have the treaties signed to have hold of the Indian title and to pursue its goals in peace with the Indian population. The treaty three negotiations reflect how determined the Indians were to have assistance and help before giving up their old way of life. Indeed, there were four attempts to reach an agreement prior to the signing of the treaty, which was supposed to be the first one concluded on the road to the West. The Saulteaux refused to sign the government's initial offer; they resisted until the government finally gave up on the terms they requested. The Cree of treaty six followed the Saulteaux's example in refusing the offered terms three times, on the grounds that the land granted was not sufficient and that they needed help. They finally obtained a notable increase in the size of the land, and the medicine chest clause.

On the whole, the additional terms were necessary and served not only the Indians' interest, but also that of the government. They reassured the Indians about their future and enabled the government to have the treaties signed. Moreover, as the historian John Leonard Taylor explains, "the provisions for schools, agricultural assistance, and the help in making the transition to a new life (...) give the treaties the

appearance of a forward-looking plan for the economic and social well-being of the Indian people.”<sup>24</sup> In a word, these “exorbitant demands” as Morris called them,<sup>25</sup> are the very terms which served the Crown’s image, displaying the Queen’s benevolence and concern for her “red children”, but also the very words the government took at heart to apply, as we will see later, using them against the Indian population.

---

<sup>24</sup> R. Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties*, p. 6

<sup>25</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, p. 190

## CHAPTER IV

### **Treaty Eight Negotiations and De-Tribalization: (Mis)Understanding Government Treaties**

#### **A. From public outcry to private conciliation**

##### **1. Government failure and public pressure**

After the signing of treaty seven, the pace of treaty activity slowed considerably. Except for the adhesion to treaty six by certain Wood Cree tribes in 1889, no other treaties were conducted before 1899, that is to say over twenty years later. With the signing of treaty seven, the Fertile Belt was entirely cleared of Indian title, and the Macdonald government, who did not find it necessary to have sovereignty over new areas, decided to stick to the Royal Proclamation policy of postponing the treaty-making until new land was required for settlement. However, the difficult conditions of the Indians living north of the Fertile Belt kept worsening. By 1880, the buffalo was completely extinct in the prairies, and although the Northern tribes were able to continue to live the way they had for a few more years, they were, in the mid-1880s, in need of assistance; they had to find another way of making a living.

When, in 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company sold its territorial rights to the Dominion of Canada, the new government had somehow expected the company and the missionaries to keep on providing relief to the Indians; but by 1880, both parties felt the government had to take its responsibility towards the Indians. They thus sent many petitions with descriptions of the miserable conditions of the tribes and pleas for government assistance. In 1883, the Prime Minister was advised of the fact the Indians

were “most anxious to enter into Treaty relations with the Government.”<sup>26</sup> However, Macdonald replied in 1884 “that the making of a treaty may be postponed for some years, or until there is a likelihood of the country being requested for settlement purposes.”<sup>27</sup> His government also declined all responsibility towards Indians who had not yet taken treaty.

The pressure to resolve these issues increased significantly when, in the late 1880’s, public awareness was raised about the poor conditions in which many Indians were living. The Indians’ suffering from starvation, and dreadful accounts of their survival could be read in important newspapers. The condition of these Indians along with the government’s passiveness gave way to a general feeling of sympathy. Public opinion grew in favour of assistance and the government’s lack of morality was duly criticized in various newspapers, such as in the *Calgary Tribune*, 5 February 1887: “...it is surely a fearful thing that any community under Canadian rule should perish for lack of assistance that it is possible to render. It is not a duty that we owe to the Indians as much as one that we owe to ourselves and to humanity in general.”<sup>28</sup>

The very inhabitants of Canada were then ashamed of their government’s attitude, and it is obviously thanks to the public opinion that the Indians did benefit from some assistance the following year. Various accounts of treaty negotiations had been edited, such as a *report of speeches of the Commissioners and Indians at Treaty seven*, published in the *Globe* newspaper on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1877, presenting the Queen and the commissioners, and thus the government, as the Indians’ saviours and as good-hearted people concerned about their future. Although Morris himself advocated caution about the authenticity of these reports, they were the only source of information

---

<sup>26</sup> R. Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties*, p. 56

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.56

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.57

available to most Canadians, who therefore had a good opinion of the government. When they realized that the “red brothers” were starving and that the Prime Minister and his men were not planning on sending aid, they may also have become aware of the fact that the Indians’ lives were in the hands of a government who gave more importance to money than to the people.

## 2. Indians resist in treaty negotiation

The first step towards assistance was taken in 1888, when the Hudson’s Bay Company was given a large sum (\$7,000) in order to provide relief to the Indians in need. If this satisfied the public opinion, one should note that the government did not apply itself, but once again counted on the Hudson’s Bay Company, thus delegating its responsibility towards the “red brothers”. It was then the turn of the religious people to help the Indians with the government’s money, since an annual grant of \$500 was given to the Roman Catholic bishops of the Mackenzie.<sup>29</sup> The sole presence of the government seemed to have been linked to education, with assistance provided to the school at Fort Chipewyan.

After 1890, the Indians’ living conditions started to improve and in 1891, the government was giving some thoughts to making a treaty in the following year. Various geological reports had proved the land in the North to be rich in minerals and fit for agriculture. However, in 1897, the negotiations were postponed for fear that the treaty would present the same difficulties observed with the previous ones, that is to say, the involvement of more money than planned, the potential difficulty of the Indians’ adaptation to an agricultural economy, as well as the temptation to rely completely on the government’s aid. Finally, in 1898 the government informed the North-West

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.57



Mounted Police and missionaries that a treaty would be signed in the following year. Reports were then sent to the government, saying that the Indians were afraid of losing their hunting, fishing and trapping rights, and that if it was going to be the case, they were ready to refuse the treaty and to oppose settlement.<sup>30</sup> During that year, much correspondence thus circulated to inform the government on the Indians' reactions to what was said.

Eventually, treaty eight was concluded in 1899, thanks to one of the commissioner's pleas to the government: "They are adverse to living on reserves; and as that country is not one that will be settled extensively (...) it is quite questionable whether it would be good policy to even suggest grouping them in the future."<sup>31</sup> In a word, the treaty he wanted to negotiate would still clear the land of Indian title, but the Indians would not give up as much as in the previous treaties.

As a result, treaty eight met most of the Indians' request part way, as one can see in the report of commissioners for treaty number eight, written by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Clifford Sifton on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, 1899.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the Indians were promised to "be as free to hunt and fish after the treaty as they would be if they had never entered into it" and were "given the option of taking reserves or land in severalty (...) with the promise that this would be done when required." Also, at their request, the Indians were assured that in education, "the law (...) provided for non-interference with the religion of the Indians in schools maintained or assisted by the Government."

However, regarding health care, the provisions for treaty six were not reiterated, but brought down to the fact that "supplies of medicines would be put in the charge of

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.67

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, J. A. McKenna, 17 April 1899, p.69

<sup>32</sup> [www.inac.gc.ca/treatdoc/treat8/report.html](http://www.inac.gc.ca/treatdoc/treat8/report.html) visited on April 14th, 2000

persons selected by the Government at different points, and would be distributed free to those (...) who might require them.” The government’s aim was to have the treaty signed and some promises were made in that perspective, as explained by the commissioners regarding the reserves: “It would have been impossible to have made a treaty if we had not assured them that there was no intention of confining them to reserves.” Similarly, agricultural implements were to be delivered once the Indians would start to farm, but the commissioners were hoping that this extra money would not have to be spent:

...it is not likely that for many years there will be a call for any considerable expenditure under these heads. (...) it is not probable that the Indians will (...) engage in farming (...) it is safe to say that so long as the fur-bearing animals remain, the great bulk of the Indians will continue to hunt and to trap.

Clearly, the government did not really have the good of the Indian at heart, but was rather concerned about saving money and about clearing the route from Edmonton to the Pelly River in the Yukon, which more and more people were using since the discovery of gold. The territory covered by treaty eight was also greater than that of any previous treaty and thus represented a major stake for Western settlement and development.

## **B. The Policy of De-Tribalization**

### 1. The Indians in a predicament

One has the feeling that, already during the treaty eight negotiations, the government was aware of the inefficiency of previous treaties in specific areas, and thus did not bother so much over the terms. Rather, it seems that the government tried to sign at a minimum cost and to postpone difficulties for a few years by giving the Indians

their freedom until white settlement and development became inevitable. As a matter of fact, previous treaties were already proven inadequate in the early 1880's. What the terms offered soon appeared obsolete in comparison with what was needed. At the negotiations, the Indian Chiefs knew they were unable to define future needs regarding agriculture, since they knew nothing about it. The commissioners had a better idea of what the Indians would have to go through, but as we saw, their main duty was to spend as little money as possible. Therefore, no real efforts were made in order to meet the Indians' needs on a long-term basis, on the ground that the government's aim was to turn the Indian tribes into self-supporting communities. As Morris explained it to the treaty six Indians: "I cannot promise (...) that the Government will feed and support all the Indians (...) if we were to try to do it, it would take a great deal of money, and some of you would never do anything for yourselves."<sup>33</sup>

The main challenge the Indians then had to face was to survive on agriculture. But how could agriculture provide enough to support a whole community in a society inevitably moving towards progress? Moreover, the Indians were self-supporting before the first settlers' arrival, but they were slowly made to rely on the Hudson's Bay Company, and thus on the white community in order to survive. The Indians grew more and more dependent over the years and finally became used to hunting and trapping in exchange for food, clothes and sometimes, money. How could they become self-supporting again under a "white code of life", which they did not know nor understand? In 1881, the treaty six Cree and Saulteaux Chiefs met with Governor-General Lorne and requested that the treaty terms be modified or renewed in order to meet their material needs, stating that they could not live by the first treaty. On behalf of the government, Governor-General Lorne firmly declared that the treaties would not be changed or

---

<sup>33</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, p.210-211

renegotiated: “I am come here to hear what you have to say but not to make any changes in [the] treaties.”<sup>34</sup> Although he made it clear at various meetings that the terms would never be re-considered, the Indians kept asking for changes to be made.

## 2. From Indian protest to government repression

Agriculture on reserves thus floundered, and in 1884, Ottawa made a decision that almost invited to rebellion, that of no longer providing rations to the Plains Indians. During the treaty six negotiations, the two chiefs Big Bear and Little Pine had objected to the terms subjecting their people to Canadian law, over which they had no control. In 1884, many dissatisfied Indians then joined their non-violent movement, which was to create an “Indian territory” where the government would have little control over them. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, Edgar Dewdney, feared that if Big Bear and Little Pine were successful, the Cree would make a united demand to negotiate a new treaty guaranteeing Cree autonomy. In 1885, the militia units sent into the North-West to suppress the Métis Rebellion were then also used in order to crush this treaty revision movement. The following years, the government set up what Hayter Reed, then Assistant Indian Commissioner, called the policy of de-tribalization; that is, the systematic destruction of Cree autonomy. The North-West Mounted Police force was increased in number and used, no longer in order to gain the Indians’ respect, but to intimidate them, since this was what the government now required. Military troops were also sent in order to assist the policemen in this task.

In order to prevent the creation of a new movement for the revision of the treaties, basic human rights were violated. Indeed, the Indians’ freedom of movement was reduced through the seizure of their horses and through the introduction of the pass

---

<sup>34</sup> F. Barron and J. Waldram, *1885 and After*, p.244

system, which required the Indian Agent's permission for an Indian to leave the reserve. Guns were also confiscated to avoid any resistance. "Politically", the Indian unit was destroyed and they were to remain under strict governmental control, since their leaders were either dead or imprisoned and since they were not allowed to designate new leaders "until such time as the Cree political and cultural traditions were eradicated."<sup>35</sup>

All aspects of religious or cultural traditions were also suppressed, with first a ban on religious ceremonies, followed by a ban on all Indian ceremonies. Moreover, all Indian children were sent to the now very controversial residential schools. If a few did provide some education, most were located in remote places, far away from 'unwanted' influences. These schools would often try to suppress any manifestation of native language or culture and would sometimes teach the children to be ashamed of their parents' culture and of their heritage.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the Cree social organization, which was based upon the community, was broken through the subdivision of reserve land into allotments usually located far from one another. In other words, all the promises made by Morris and Laird at treaty six and treaty seven, concerning the right to retain the old way of life and the fact the government would never "interfere with the Indians' daily life", were broken. The Indians were thus deprived of rights the government had promised would last "as long as that sun shines and yonder river flows."<sup>37</sup>

Thus, Morris's "paternal Government doing its utmost to help and elevate the Indians"<sup>38</sup> finally showed its real concern and its real aim towards the Indians, once it was put under the threat of a possible resistance on the part of the "red brothers". This ultimate reaction proves that the government of the time lacked a real flexibility or a

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p.245

<sup>36</sup> H. Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.48

<sup>37</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, p. 202

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.296-297

real understanding of the Indian condition, and that its dream of conquest did not include the first inhabitants of the land they had supposedly “discovered”. However, the Canadian government had witnessed the American failure, and had sought to be more careful in defusing possible conflicts through treaty activity. The problems that emerged years after the signing of treaty six were then unexpected, most likely because the government was convinced it had reached an agreement with the Indian population and that everything had been understood and settled. However, the Indians obviously did not understand it that way, since they insisted on having the treaty modified and even felt that creating a movement would make things change. In short, each party stood its ground. If the result of this conflict was very harmful to the Indians, it nevertheless suggests their complete misunderstanding, not only of the terms of the treaties, but also of the meaning of the treaty itself.

## CHAPTER V

### Two Different Perceptions, Two Different Agreements

#### A. The treaties as yearly agreements

The de-tribalization policy was the first major conflict that occurred after the signing of the treaties, but it certainly was not the last one. However, it probably remains the most harmful conflict experienced by the Indians, who underwent a total negation of their identity. The very cause of such terrible acts was inspired by a simple misunderstanding of what was really being said and done during the treaty negotiations. According to Professor John Tobias<sup>39</sup>, the Indians saw no difference between the treaties signed with the Queen and those previously signed with the Hudson's Bay Company. Indeed, prior to the treaty activity set up by the Canadian government, the Indians had signed numerous treaties with the fur-trade company, which had a long-established presence through trading posts throughout the Plains. The kind of treaties that were then signed was closer to yearly agreements than to "real" treaties, since the terms could be re-negotiated every year. The Indians did not worry too much about signing these agreements with the Hudson's Bay Company, since they knew they could present their request again on the following year. They were therefore quite familiar with this type of proceeding, and this is certainly the reason why they turned out to be good negotiators throughout the years of the numbered treaties, managing to obtain more generous terms for themselves.

---

<sup>39</sup> F. Barron and J. Waldram, *1885 and After*, p.241

As Professor Tobias argues, there are a few elements that can prove this theory. First of all, the numbered treaties were conducted at the Hudson's Bay Company posts and actually used the Hudson's Bay Company officials and interpreters.<sup>40</sup> Tobias also insists on the fact that the ceremonials carried out by the tribes before the treaty negotiations were similar to those performed before the negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company.

In Morris's report, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians...*, the description of these ceremonials included the pipe-stem ceremony, whose importance was most likely underestimated by the commissioners when one considers the result of the research carried out on that matter by Gordon Lee, then assistant director of the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research branch of the Indian Association of Alberta. Indeed, while Morris described it as a mere acceptance of friendship –“the pipe was presented to us and stroked by our hands. After the stroking had been completed, the Indians sat down in front of the council tent, satisfied that in accordance with their customs we had accepted the friendship of the Cree nation.”<sup>41</sup> - Gordon Lee explains that for the Indians, the pipe was sacred and that in its presence, “only *the truth* must be used and any commitment made in its presence must be kept” and that “the only means used by the Indians to finalize an agreement or to ensure a final commitment was by use of the pipe.”<sup>42</sup>

This does not only explain why the Indians truly believed that the terms and promises would never be broken, it also draws a parallel between the Hudson's Bay Company agreements and the later treaties with the government. What was agreed upon with the Hudson's Bay Company could not be broken, since the terms could be renewed

---

<sup>40</sup> F. Barron and J. Waldram, *1885 and After*, p.242

<sup>41</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, p.183

<sup>42</sup> R. Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties*, p.111



every year; if the Indians carried out this ceremonial for the commissioners, it obviously suggests that they did not really differentiate the two types of negotiations. Both were conducted in the same places, with the same people and finalized in the same way. In both cases, the Hudson's Bay Company and the commissioners accepted the pipe, and thus led the Indians to assume they shared the same feelings over what was being done and signed. Moreover, as was earlier stated, the government had always delegated its responsibility towards the Indians to the Hudson's Bay Company; the distinction between what was under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company, and what was under the control of the government, was thus difficult to make for a nation who dealt with leadership and responsibilities in a totally different way. In addition, throughout the treaty negotiations, the Indians had managed to obtain more than what was offered; and this type of "bargaining" was common practice with the Hudson's Bay Company.

## **B. Two different cultures**

### 1. The foundations for controversy

Other more general arguments corroborate the theory outlined above. Indeed, Indian tribes had often requested to enter into treaty negotiations, spurred by difficult living conditions and their need to survive under the white invasion. They were very aware of the need to adopt a new life style in order for their children to survive, and this is probably the main reason why they requested and accepted treaties with the government. Knowing their future depended on the terms agreed upon with the commissioners, would they have accepted to sign if they had been aware that the treaties were definitive? Although the Indians managed to negotiate new terms over the years, some treaties did not include education and except for treaty six, none included

the healthcare issue. Would they really have jeopardized their children's well-being and conceded such important terms if they had understood the treaties would never be amended or revised afterwards? The Indians' original intent clearly was to spare the next and future generations a miserable life and it is logical to admit that if they accepted to sign without having all their requests satisfied, it is because they thought they could obtain satisfaction at a different time.

One could argue that throughout the negotiations with the Alberta Indians, Morris and Laird insisted on the fact that the promises made were to last "as long as the sun shines and river flows", but if the metaphor was quite clear, what it really focused on was more ambiguous. Indeed, the negotiations dealt with two different peoples whose cultures were each rooted in an old tradition passed on from generation to generation. These two cultures inevitably had a different relation to the environment, to the people and to the notion of society. Thus they had a peculiar understanding of what was being done, said, dealt with, and finally signed. To the Indians, the word "promises" could then concern the notion of "assistance" only or the idea of making treaty when needed, while for the commissioners it strictly applied to what had been written down. Moreover, even if the Indians had understood it that way, the fact the treaties would never be changed was not clearly explained. By using metaphors, the government failed to be precise on some important points, such as the impossibility of a future revision of the treaties. The Indians could then interpret things freely, and they seem to have agreed on terms they thought could be modified or completed on a yearly basis.

## 2. What the government meant

The government's use of metaphors throughout the treaty negotiations undoubtedly came from the desire to adapt to the Indians' language full of imagery, but it was used by the white negotiators somewhat excessively. This attempt, which came from finer feelings, was made in the hope that the Indians would have a perfect comprehension of what would be said, and this desire to fully understand each other was clearly expressed by both parties. For example, during the treaty six negotiations, commissioner James McKay declared: "I hope you will not leave until you have thoroughly understood the meaning of every word that comes from us."<sup>43</sup> The Indians also shared this desire. Still, they knew that the language was a barrier, as expressed by a Chief of the Chipewyan: "If I could have used my own language I would then be able to say more."<sup>44</sup>

When one considers the disagreements that followed the signing of the treaties, it becomes obvious that such an approach to language was idealistic; it mainly emphasized the impossibility for white people to embrace and understand the Indian culture. Both parties were so far apart in their way of thinking and living that what was intended to facilitate communication actually emphasized each party's conviction to understand things right, while what was meant was in fact quite different and sometimes even the complete opposite.

For the government, the treaty represented the extinction of Indian title: the land would be used freely in favour of white settlement and expansion, and the Indian rights would be under the control of the government. What was offered was mainly a compensation and once all the assistance and help granted in the terms would be

---

<sup>43</sup> A. Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians...*, p.212

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p.239

completed, the Indian tribes would have to be self-supporting, so as to have nothing to do with the government anymore. The relationship described during the negotiations was that of a guardian towards his ward. It implied total control on the part of the government, and very limited rights to the Indian nation. Indeed, we saw before that the Queen was often referred to as the “Great Mother” watching over her subjects/children. As Professor Tobias explains it, “Given the context of a middle class familial relationship in the mid-Victorian era, the metaphor was appropriately chosen to express the trust relationship (...) intended by Ottawa – that the Indian was to be under the close supervision and control of the government.”<sup>45</sup> When the treaties were signed, the commissioners thus took for granted that the Indians were accepting to submit to the white government authority. This understanding and interpretation was rooted in the Imperial British cultural background, and since the commissioners had used the Indians’ type of speech, they probably truly believed that everything had been made clear and transparent.

However, this belief did not take into account the Indians’ own cultural tradition and failed to prove the government’s flexibility when it came to understanding and opening up to a different culture. In a way, it also suggests either a naivety or a will to ignore the real issue on the part of the government: did it really believe that the Indians would so quickly renounce centuries of tradition in order to throw themselves headlong into a culture so different and unknown to them? No matter what the answer to that question might be, once the treaties were signed, the government was both glad and relieved to have come to an agreement with the Indian nation and believed that the Indian issue was definitely resolved.

---

<sup>45</sup> F. Barron and J. Waldram, *1885 and After*, p.248

### 3. What the Indians understood and signed

Reaching an agreement with the government also relieved the Indian nation, but for different reasons. The Indians had requested to enter into treaty in order to survive and were thus relieved, once the negotiations were over, to be assured of the government's help and support. However, what the Indians understood and signed was very different from what the government agents believed. In fact, what has become clear from interviews carried out at the end of the 1970s about the treaty issue, is that the Indians believed they were getting assistance on a lifetime basis. Indeed, as described by Lazarus Roan, a treaty six elder, the Indians were promised to "always be cared for, all the time, as long as the sun shines."<sup>46</sup> Another elder, Pat Weaselhead, from treaty seven, explained: "...David Laird told the members of our tribe that just as they had watched the redcoats protect them, so would the Great Mother, the Queen, hold them in the palm of her hand, and protect them, and look after them just like a child. In other words, "the Great Mother will become your mother, since you are accepting the treaty. As long as these things are there [the sun, the river, the mountains]..., then these negotiations will last."<sup>47</sup> Thus, while for the government, assistance was to be provided only for three years after the signing of the treaty, the Indians understood that the assistance and help was to last forever. The metaphors used by the government agents during the initial treaty negotiations echo strongly in the protests launched nearly 100 years later.

In addition, the Indians' understanding of the mother-child relationship implied the total opposite of what the government sought to establish. Indeed, as Professor Tobias underlines it, "A relationship analogous to a Cree familial relationship means

---

<sup>46</sup> R. Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Treaties*, p.116

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p.128

that the child has a great deal of autonomy and liberty from his parents.”<sup>48</sup> Does that mean that while the government was taking control over the Indians’ life, the Indians thought they could be largely free of governmental control? When reading Morris’s report, it is quite obvious that the Indian Chiefs, such as Big Bear, knew that their autonomy was threatened. However, this type of argumentation is sometimes put forward by contemporary leaders.

The main argument concerning the treaty activity period, is that it clearly emphasizes how different the two cultures were, and how easy it was to reach a complete misunderstanding, by trying to use a language full of imagery totally unfamiliar to the commissioners. If the Indians knew they would not completely be free of governmental control, they still believed that they could rely on the government when they needed aid. Tobias completes his explanation by adding that in a Cree familial context, although the child is “free of parental control”, “when the child is in need of assistance the parent is obliged to provide such aid.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, given the mother-child metaphor used by the government and the promise of assistance in the transition towards “civilized life”, the Indians undoubtedly accepted the treaty as a relief to the difficulties their children might face in the future. This, added to the fact the Indians most likely thought the terms could be changed on a yearly basis, explains most of the motivations that led to the terrible policy of de-tribalization. As an elder from treaty seven, Peter O’Chiese, summed it up in an interview held in 1976: “He [the white man] wrote his treaties from his understanding and we wrote ours from our understanding.”<sup>50</sup>

It thus appears that two different treaties were signed according to the perception and understanding of each party. These conflicting views were both thought to be

---

<sup>48</sup> F. Barron and J. Waldram, *1885 and After*, p.248

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p.248

<sup>50</sup> R. Price, *The Spirit of the Alberta Treaties*, p.114

legitimate and right and, in fact, both understandings make sense given the cultural interpretation applied by each party. The gap between the two cultural traditions then gave way to increasing dissension, resentment, and finally to anger and revolt against what was thought to be unfair and contrary to the promises made. This deep dissatisfaction, along with the feeling of having been cheated, were the basis for most conflicts over treaties in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the meaning and scope of the treaties are not clearly defined and are still subject to great disagreements.

# PART TWO



# CHAPTER I

## Implications and Scope of a Native Revival vs. Survival

### A. Acknowledgement of the losses and situation

#### 1. Dependence vs. autonomy and identity

The long years of treaty activity marked the beginning of a new era for the Alberta native population. Whether or not this beginning actually helped the Indians survive is however debatable. It is undeniable that the Indian population survived, at least physically. Although the Alberta Native population represents only a small percentage of the total Canadian population (4,6% in 1996), it is growing much more rapidly, and its average age is about 10 years younger than the average age in the general Canadian population.<sup>51</sup>

So what has happened to them? They are present all over the province, they have not disappeared, but have they survived as a people, or rather, *could* they survive as a people? With the arrival of the white settlers, the Prairie Indians lost their means to be self-sufficient (hunting grounds, buffalo herds,...), and with the signing of the treaties, they lost most of their autonomy. When trying to suppress Big Bear and Little Pine's movement to create an "Indian territory", the government took its policy one step further, one step too far. Indeed, with the de-tribalization policy, the Indians not only lost what was left of their autonomy, but also started to lose their identity. The ban on religious and cultural ceremonials, combined with the effectiveness of most of the

---

<sup>51</sup> D. Quinlan and K. Reed, *Aboriginal Peoples, Building for the Future*, p.78

residential schools ensured a gradual and complete loss of Indian identity. This slow process started in 1876, under the Indian Act. Indeed, the act gives a legal definition of who is recognized as having Indian status, that is to say, those whose names are recorded on the register of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and its predecessors.

## 2. The Indian Act and the legal Indian

One could argue that the act does not actually define who is an Indian. However, when one studies the impact of such a law on the Native population, it becomes obvious that the current identity crisis is linked to it. The requirements to be recognized as a 'legal Indian' were not always logical, and thus led to a split in the Native unit. In 1980, only 275 000 people were recognized as having Indian status, while 750 000 people were considered "non-status". This larger portion included people who had not been registered, but who nonetheless were genetically and culturally Indians.<sup>52</sup> It also included Indian women who had lost their status through marrying a non-status Indian or a non-Indian man. On the other hand, the 275 000 status Indians included white women who had gained status through marrying a status Indian. Therefore, the limit between being legally Indian or not was very frail and subjective, since entitlement descended to children through the male line exclusively.

It is only in 1985 that the Indian Act was officially changed, so that people who had lost status could regain it. The government accepted the amendment only after the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations ruled, in 1981, that the Indian Act violated human rights. It probably was more convenient for the government to narrow down the right to be legally Indian. Indeed, "non-status" or "non-registered" Indians were not eligible for the benefits status Indians received, and were not subject to the

---

<sup>52</sup> Sabine Hargous, *Les Indiens du Canada*, p.27

Indian Act, whereas entitlement included such things as housing, health services, education, social assistance for non-earners, exemption from income tax and special hunting and fishing rights. This is still the case today. These distinctions between legal and non-legal Indians thus led and still lead to resentment and conflicts within the Native population.

The Indian Act definition was therefore a first and effective step in destroying Indian identity. Moreover, Alberta status Indians were, for the longest time, merely numbers in the eyes of the government. Indeed, they were all “treaty Indians”, another sub-category referring to those whose ancestors signed a treaty with representatives of the Crown. To avoid copying names which were incomprehensible to them, the European state servants gave a number to each signatory. These numbers, passed down from generation to generation, certify that their holder is Indian according to the government criteria. Numbers instead of names, further reducing the Indian people to an inferior race with no rights.

What does it mean to be an Indian today, when individuals of the same nation do not have the same rights and are thus confronted to hostility within their own communities? Who are the Indians, when they are not given the right to say who they are, and what do they become, once they have suffered over a century of injustices?

### 3. Autonomy and identity as interrelated notions

Autonomy and identity are certainly what First Nations try to revive today. They are closely related to each other, since they both relate to the same elements, and since government policies always aimed at depriving the Indians of both their autonomy and their identity. These losses, which took place gradually and quite at the same pace, should thus be studied together.

Language, culture, heritage and land, are the four components of a people. If one is missing, an individual cannot be whole. If they don't have the language for example, what do they have left? Basil H. Johnston, an ethnologist and educator, once pointed out the strong link between language and identity:

They lose not only their ability to express (...) daily sentiments and needs but they can no longer understand the ideas, concepts, insights, attitudes, rituals, ceremonies, institutions brought into being by their ancestors; and, having lost their power to understand, cannot sustain, enrich, or pass on their heritage. No longer will they think Indian or feel Indian. They will have lost their identity which no amount of reading can restore.<sup>53</sup>

Likewise, the four components all interrelate, and are each equally necessary to a balanced and strong sense of identity.

How can a people deprived of autonomy over their own destiny still feel whole? On the other hand, how can a people with no identity pretend to be autonomous over their own destiny? Autonomy and identity are the two pillars of sovereign nations throughout the world, the two pillars the Alberta Native population lost. The tangled concept of "sovereignty" has now become a recurrent term in First Nations' claims.

## **B. Revival and survival: definitions in context**

Before discussing the various perspectives on the post-treaty period, the scope and implications of a Native revival or survival have to be clarified. In order to establish whether or not these terms apply to the Native awakening today, one has to take a close look at their definition. The word "revival" for instance has many implications and can be applied to various fields. First of all, a "revival" requires a loss, which is the case for the Alberta Indians. However, whatever is revived has to have completely ceased according to the British definition: "a process in which something that has been inactive

---

<sup>53</sup> D. Quinlan & K. Reed, *Aboriginal Peoples, Building for the Future*, p.17

begins again or becomes active again”. With the de-tribalization policy, Indian autonomy did disappear completely, both on the political and cultural levels. We can thus talk about a native revival related to autonomy. The question of identity is yet more complex. Can we affirm that the Alberta Native population has ever ceased to be Indian? Under the British definition, it is difficult to assert that there is a revival of identity today. However, a Canadian dictionary defines revival as “a coming back to life or consciousness”. Concerning identity, such a definition could imply that if the Indians cease to *feel* Indian, that is to say no longer realize what it means to be Indian, they nonetheless never cease to *be* Indian. There could thus be a revival of Indian identity, in the sense that this identity is now understood and fully lived.

The issue of revival raises another question: what does to revive actually mean? Does it imply to strictly copy what was lost or to renew it and adapt it? According to the American and Canadian definitions, a revival can be “a new presentation” of something old, but also “a bringing or coming back” to life, consciousness, style, use or activity. In other words, reviving can mean renewing something old as well as bringing something from the past into the present, just as it was.

Finally, another definition could relate to the whole Native awakening taking place today: “a restoration to vigour or health”. The various political and cultural means to resist, along with the growing number of the Native population, show that the Indian people is coming back to life. There is a general Native revival, within which there are different movements to revive their autonomy and possibly their identity and culture.

Where is the limit between reviving and surviving then? It may have to do with the notion of continuity. Indeed, a survival is “a continuance of life; living or lasting longer than others”; “something that continues to exist after the cessation of something else, or of other things of the kind”. It differs from the concept of inactivity implied in the term

revival, and could thus better relate to the issue of identity. One could also talk about survival concerning culture: “ a custom, observance, etc... kept after the circumstances or conditions, in which it originated or which gave significance to it, have passed away”. When one looks at some ceremonies today, it is indeed difficult to say if they have been revived or if they have survived.

Whether we use the word “revival” or “survival”, we inevitably imply that the Indians have resisted. The question is “how?”. How can the Indians revive their autonomy and their identity, and is this revival actually taking place? Under past and present circumstances, has the Indian movement changed? Did the Indians have to survive in order to revive their cultural and political rights? And finally, who are they today?

## CHAPTER II

### The Role of the Government

#### A. Post-Treaty Policies and Institutions

In order to understand the motivations which led the Indians to resist and how their movement evolved, one has to look at the obstacles set up by the government. Whether or not the impacts of the various Indian policies were planned is yet another debate, but it is obvious that the misunderstandings of the treaty period still existed afterwards and maybe still exist today. It seems that not much has been done to try and understand the Indians' request better.

##### 1. Protection, civilisation and enfranchisement vs. freedom

From 1876 up until now, the Alberta Indian population has been under the legislation of the “Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians” or “Indian act”. Passed the same year as treaty six, the Act was a development of the Indian policy started in the East after the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and laid all the foundations for Canada's future Indian legislation. Its goals therefore remained the same: protecting the Indians from European encroachment in the use of their lands and from fraudulent trading practices, offering them civilisation through farming, religious instruction and education, and assimilating them through enfranchisement. The attitude of the government was the same as the one adopted during the treaty negotiations. The goals of Indian policies were thought to be gifts made to the Native population, who thus had no other choice than to “accept” them. Once again, the very people concerned by this

policy were never asked their opinion, which was considered perfectly normal since the government had exclusive jurisdiction over Indians and Indian land, according to section 91 of the British North America Act of 1867.

The first Indian Act was therefore meant to further the process of civilisation started in the East. All the protective features of the earlier legislation were incorporated, with more stringent requirements concerning non-Indian use of Indian lands. The mechanism for enfranchisement was also slightly modified in order to facilitate assimilation, with, for example, the introduction of the location ticket. The reserve divided into individual lots which the band council could assign to individual band members. However, as most bands refused to allot reserve lands to individual members, the power was given to the superintendent general in 1879. As a form of title, the band member would receive a location ticket, thus entering a three-year probationary period during which he had to demonstrate he could use the land as a Euro-Canadian would. Moreover, before he could receive the ticket, he first had to fulfil all the requirements of the previous legislation, that is to say read and write the French or English language, be free of debt and of good moral character. If he could pass all these tests, he was enfranchised and given title to the land. A faster alternative linked to education was given. An Indian who went to university and earned a professional degree could be given a location ticket and enfranchised immediately, without going through the probationary period. The location ticket was therefore a new means by which an Indian could demonstrate that he had adopted the European way of life, which was regarded as a necessity for enfranchisement. More than a simple test, the location ticket was a new way to break down Indian identity, through the destruction of their community spirit. It represented the very European concept of private property which led the Native population to cede their territory and to live on reserves. In Alberta, some



sections of the act were not immediately applicable, since the western Indians were not considered “advanced enough in civilization to take advantage of the act”<sup>54</sup>. However, the government’s determination to eradicate old values and to turn Indians into non-Indians was confirmed.

As Eastern Indians rejected the act, the government decided to “offer” more direction and guidance, and the 1880 Indian Act, which concerned Alberta Indians more, saw the power of the superintendent general increased. Not only did the government ignore the Indians’ requests, it also aggravated the conditions of Alberta Indians on two levels: their political autonomy and their identity. The Department of Indian Affairs, a new branch of the civil service, was created in order to provide the means to manage Indian matters. The superintendent general was also empowered to impose the elective system of band government (spokesmen elected according to the provisions of the Indian Act) on bands he considered ready. Combined with his power to deprive traditional leaders of recognition, it was an effective way to destroy the last vestige of the old tribal system, the traditional political system.

Section 12 of the act also had a major impact on the general attitude towards Indians. Indeed, it clearly stated that “ The term person means an individual other than an Indian.”<sup>55</sup> Although it was not used in subsequent acts, the attitude which produced it and which it produced persisted among Indian agents, superintendents and other Canadians with legal knowledge. The effects of such an attitude was certainly felt by the Native population, eventhough the act was not read by Indians in 1880.

---

<sup>54</sup> J.R. Miller, *Sweet Promises*, p.133

<sup>55</sup> H. Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, p.109

## 2. The Indian Act in service of the de-tribalization policy

Although the Indian people was already deprived of autonomy and respect, their troubles still were not over. In 1884, the Indian Advancement act was passed. In order to encourage bands to ask for the elective system of band government, the powers of the elected band councils were slightly extended. At the same time, the powers of the superintendent general or agent were greatly increased, and in effect, the superintendent general or agent directed the political affairs of the band. As most bands refused to come under the act, the elective system was imposed on them. Then, since the traditional leaders elected by the bands were often unsatisfactory to the government, they were deposed according to the criteria of dismissal of the Indian Act. As the band would then usually re-elect them, the government amended the act in 1884 “to prohibit people deposed from office from standing for immediate re-election”<sup>56</sup>. In 1894, another amendment allowed the minister to depose chiefs and councillors even where the elective system was not applicable, because western Indians resisted the government’s efforts to discourage the practice of traditional Indian beliefs and values. During what is now called the de-tribalization policy, Alberta Indians thus resisted as well and as much as they could, although the means to do so were limited and always right away countered by amendments or new legislation. The powers of the superintendent general kept increasing and were totalitarian by the 1900s. The Indians were therefore legally deprived of their basic human rights, and since the older ones were difficult to civilize, the emphasis was put on the education of the young Indians, through the residential schools. Amendments were passed “to ensure compulsory school attendance and treat chronic non-attenders as juvenile delinquents”<sup>57</sup>. At the same time, farming was

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p.134

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.138

promoted so that Indians could become self-supporting, and bands' funds were used by the superintendent general to purchase machinery for individual Indians. Thus pulled apart and oriented in opposite directions, Indian parents witnessed the destruction of their familial unit. Not only had the Indians lost all powers over their life, they also had no more control over their own children. Through the next generation, their future was definitely in the hands of the government.

### 3. Towards a new Indian Act?

Under the Indian Act and the assimilation policy of the government, the Indians suffered great losses. However, instead of giving up and adopting a new lifestyle, they resisted. By 1920, slightly more than 250 Indians were enfranchised all over Canada<sup>58</sup>, a ridiculous number compared to all the efforts and spendings of the government. With the 1929 economic crisis and the second world war, not much attention was paid to the Indians until about 1945. The public opinion then developed a sudden interest in Indian affairs, probably due to “the strong contribution to the war effort in the years 1940-5”, according to John Tobias<sup>59</sup>. The treatment of the Indians as second-class people and their special status drew churches, citizens and veterans' organizations to call for a royal commission on Indian affairs and conditions on reserves. All wanted a complete revision of the Indian Act and an end to discrimination. In 1946, a joint committee of both the Senate and the House of Commons studied and made proposals on Canada's Indian Act. It recommended the revision of the act so as to facilitate a gradual transition from a position of wards up to full citizenship. On the whole, all its recommendations aimed at the same thing: assimilation and loss of the special status. It however mentioned the notions of self-government and assistance:

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.137

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.139

... the Act should provide: ... Bands with more self-government and financial assistance... That the Affairs officials were to have their duties and responsibilities designed to assist the Indian in the responsibility of self-government and to attain the rights of full citizenship.<sup>60</sup>

In other words, all approved of the policy of assimilation, but they disapproved of the earlier methods to achieve it.

The 1951 Indian Act met most of the joint committee's criteria: the minister's powers were reduced to a supervisory role, but with veto power; individual bands could now run their own reserves; and the new means to achieve assimilation was to turn over the responsibility for services to Indians to the provinces. When one looks at the Indians' requests during the treaty negotiations and at their response to all government's attempts to assimilate them, it is obvious that they never, not even once, accepted assimilation as a solution. The new act thus gave them some of their autonomy back, but the battle was not even starting yet, since once again, neither the government nor the citizens asked the Indians' opinion on their own fate.

#### 4. D.I.A. and welfare, discriminatory institutions?

The Indians still had long ways to go in order to be asked to participate in the decisions concerning them. The various Indian acts and all the previous Indian legislation had established a discriminatory mood. The Indians were not really considered as human beings, and although the terrible definition of the 1880 act was never used again, the bureaucracy which it created still remains today. Indeed, the Department of Indian affairs was a legal way to separate Indian matters from the rest of society. Thanks to this special department, Indian affairs would no longer interfere with the course of Canada's political life. Through the nice concept of assimilation, it was in

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.139

fact eradication that the government was hoping for. Those who resisted, and who thus disrupted the government's plans, had to be rendered harmless. The paradox of the Native issue was born: while the policy aimed at assimilating the Indians, it actually separated them from the rest of the population by treating them differently. The Department indeed administered all topics related to Indians. For more than a century, it controlled Indian lands, monies, business transactions, government programs, and services in Indian communities. According to the writer Menno Boldt, "within the Canadian government, the D.I.A.N.D. occupies one of the lowest rungs in the political and bureaucratic hierarchies"<sup>61</sup>, and that, in spite of his extensive authority over Indians. Indeed, the Department suffers from a poor public opinion and is resented by the Indian population. Over the years, the Department has not been successful in improving the conditions of the status Indians, its only purpose. Concerning employment for instance, the Department has managed to worsen the situation. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the end of fur trading, employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples have been limited. Often too small to sustain any kind of economic activity, the reserves offered no employment, and the Indians had no skills to find decent jobs in the cities. Rather than to implement means to provide for the needs on reserves, officers of the Department created a social aid, the "welfare".

First composed of rations and rudimentary help, it became legal in 1958 to replace the rations with cash. Social assistance then became a major source of income for the reserves. Indeed, the Indians quickly realized that unless they had high levels of education, special skills or good connections, they would be financially better off if they lived on welfare on the reserve than if they entered the labour market and tried to work their way up the ladder. By 1972, 73% of the Alberta reserve population was receiving

---

<sup>61</sup> Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, p.109

social assistance.<sup>62</sup> On- reserve welfare has become a way of life, passed on from generation to generation, and has been one of the most effective ways to neutralize the Native population.

Making money without working has led the Indians to boredom and then to despair. This incentive to begging, although it has been denounced as being a poison by the Indians themselves, kept adding people to its list. The D.I.A., thanks to its program, not only marginalized the Native population, it also transformed an active people into a group of unemployed.

## **B. From the White Paper to the Constitutional Conferences**

### **1. From the Hawthorne Report to the White Paper**

In the 1960s, although the assimilation plan was still on the agenda, the policy was lacking coherence and direction. More money was thrown at the problem, but little of it was spent in a useful way. Indeed, the various programs were emphasizing the Department's caretaker role, but had no vision of the future. For example, in the early 1960s, the D.I.A. was offering \$5,000 to Indian families who would relocate to the cities. In 1967, seeing that the program was not convincing many people, the grant was doubled for those wishing to purchase a city home. This program, like many others, was eventually discontinued.<sup>63</sup> Other than social assistance, the D.I.A. did not know how to manage Indian affairs effectively, and had commissioned a study on policy development.

---

<sup>62</sup> Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.77

<sup>63</sup> Donald Purich, *Our Land*, p.183

In October 1966, after two years and a half of research, Harry Hawthorne, an anthropologist at the University of British Columbia, and his team presented their report, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada* to the D.I.A.N.D. The *Hawthorne Report*, as it is also called, is best remembered for its concept of “Citizens Plus”. Indeed, it stated that the Native people should receive assistance to become full participants as citizens of Canada, while retaining their special privileges. It also criticized the D.I.A. for failing to look beyond the traditional industries of hunting, fishing and trapping, thus neglecting economic development. This report, revolutionary for its time, was however rejected. One provision, stating that services should be delivered by the provinces, was regarded as a threat by the Indians, and the D.I.A. conveniently ignored all the recommendations made by Hawthorne.

With the change in government in 1968, a new approach to Indian policy was adopted, once again without prior consultation with the people most affected. This new policy was contained in the (in)famous *White Paper*, or *Statement of the Government of Canada*, issued in 1969 by the liberal government of Pierre Trudeau. His slogan, “the just society”, was not very explicit until it was clearly exposed in the White Paper. At first, the Native population was therefore quite optimistic, since the government had promised to change its Indian policy and to consult the Native population about the changes linked to the revision of the Indian Act. When this revision process began, the newly formed Native organizations unanimously agreed that their priorities were centered on the wish to preserve themselves as a people, rather than linked to economic development. Unfulfilled treaty promises, treaty rights and reserve lands were thus still topical. Moreover, as Menno Boldt explains it, the White Paper represented “an ‘enlightened’ attempt to shift Canadian Indian policy from the framework of ‘guilt

management' to the framework of 'justice''<sup>64</sup>. The hope to finally be heard and treated in a "just" and fair way started to emerge. However, it quickly became clear that Trudeau's vision of justice for Indians was rooted in a western understanding of the issue. He believed that the special status of Indians was the cause of their non-acceptance within the Canadian society, and that if every individual in Canada had equal rights, it would eradicate the Canadian racial psychology. To him, the special status was the main obstacle to Indian participation in the society. Concretely, the White Paper proposed to repeal the Indian Act within five years, to give Indians the control of their reserves, to dismantle the D.I.A., to shift all responsibility for Native peoples to the provinces and to eliminate treaty rights. As Pierre Trudeau explained it:

[In] our policy... we won't recognize Aboriginal rights. We will recognize treaty rights. We will recognize forms of contract which have been made with the Indian people by the Crown and we will try to bring justice in that area and this will mean that perhaps the treaties shouldn't go on forever. It's inconceivable, I think? That in a given society one section of the society have a treaty with the other section of the society. We must be all equal under the laws, and we must not sign treaties among ourselves.<sup>65</sup>

To the Indians, this policy was a denial of their basic rights. It went against what the Native organizations had set as their priority. According to the White Paper, "A plain reading of the words used in the Treaties, reveals the limited and minimal promises which were included in them"<sup>66</sup> This plain reading was precisely what the Indians were fighting.

Menno Boldt, in his book *Surviving as Indians*, defends the fact that Trudeau did not "consciously" advocate the cultural assimilation of Indians:

...he felt the same great respect for Indian culture as he had for French-Canadian culture. What he did not understand is that, while French-Canadian culture could survive in his Just Society, *Indian* communal cultures would inevitably be destroyed by his Western-liberal vision of their place in Canada.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, p. 21

<sup>65</sup> D. Quinlan & K. Reed, *Aboriginal People, Building for the Future*, p.59

<sup>66</sup> H. Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.124

<sup>67</sup> M. Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, p.22



If such a view is defensible, it does not explain why the Indians' requests were once again ignored, while they had been made very explicit prior to the White Paper, through their reaction to the Hawthorne Report and when they were finally consulted about the revision of the Indian Act. The government thus could not but be aware of what the Indians wanted for their people.

Trudeau, in his White Paper, also advocated "amnesia" as the cure to the Indians' grievances: "No nation can continue to live if it doesn't want to forgive a lot of the past. The best we can do is to try to be fair in our time ... If we try to undo the things we have done wrong we would be enemies among ourselves."<sup>68</sup> The Indians were expected to pretend that no injustices were done to them, in order to be able to fully participate in the society which kept ignoring and mistreating their people. Such expectations convey a total lack of understanding on the part of the government. Almost a century after the signing of treaty six, the basic attitude of the government was still the same. This time, the Indians had to "disappear" within the society, since they had already disappeared from the land, and their whole history as Canadians had to disappear with them. If the government thought it was really trying to solve the Native issue, to the modern observer, it seems that no efforts were made. This discrepancy in opinions is obviously due to the same problem, that of acknowledging or not the Indians' requests.

The White Paper shocked the Indian community and dominated the landscape for a long time. How could they have confidence in future justice when the government did not think worth correcting past injustices? They could not forget the past, and they could not accept Trudeau's racial conception of their "special status". As Harold Cardinal, the president of the Indian Association of Alberta, summed it up: "The federal

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p.22

government, instead of acknowledging its legal and moral responsibilities to the Indians of Canada and honouring the treaties that the Indians signed in good faith, now proposes to wash its hands of Indians entirely...<sup>69</sup>

The Indians' reaction was so massive that the White Paper never proceeded to legislation and was eventually withdrawn in March 1971. To his credit, Trudeau later admitted that the White Paper had "been naive, maybe short-sighted and misguided"<sup>70</sup>. His new attitude towards Indians still showed in March 1983 at the First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Constitutional Matters, when he observed, in his opening statement: "Clearly, our aboriginal peoples each occupied a special place in history. To my way of thinking this entitles them to special recognition in the constitution and to their own place in Canadian society, distinct from each other and distinct from other groups."<sup>71</sup>

## 2. The constitutional conferences: a new governmental attitude

The 1980s finally witnessed a time of change. The Indians went from having their demands ignored to playing an increasing role on Canada's political scene. Canada's new Constitution, which came into force on April 17, 1982, guaranteed a constitutional conference within one year to identify and define aboriginal rights. With this first conference, the federal and provincial governments agreed that at least two other conferences would be held. Compared with later conferences, considerable progress was made in March 1983. Both the Prime Ministers of Canada and the Native leaders agreed that no constitutional changes would be made concerning aboriginal rights without a constitutional conference to which aboriginal people would be invited.

---

<sup>69</sup> D. Quinlan & K. Reed, *Aboriginal People, Building for the Future*, p.59

<sup>70</sup> M. Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, p.24

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p.24

This agreement marked a turning point in Native rights and history, although it did not go as far as some Indian leaders had hoped, that is to say an absolute veto power over constitutional changes affecting them. Moreover, it was agreed that the 1982 Constitution would be amended so as to recognize and protect existing aboriginal and treaty rights, and any rights or freedoms acquired by way of land claims settlement.

At the following conference, held in March 1984, a great deal of the discussion was devoted to the concept of self-government, as announced by Trudeau: “A hundred and some years have not changed the minds of aboriginal peoples... They have not assimilated... they must be given a chance to run their own affairs and self-governing institutions.”<sup>72</sup> The federal government wanted the provinces to commit to maintain and promote aboriginal culture while respecting their freedom to live within their cultural context. It also expected the provincial governments to negotiate with aboriginal representatives to identify the nature, powers and jurisdiction of self-governing institutions that would meet the needs of their communities. In other words, it offered to amend the Constitution so as to recognize the right of aboriginal peoples to self-governing institutions. Western provinces, including Alberta, strongly opposed the federal proposal.

In 1985, Brian Mulroney’s conservative government offered a similar proposal, but still, the West strongly opposed it. The main objection from Alberta and other provinces was that self-government had not been defined. They all wanted it spelled out in detail before agreeing to any proposal. The federal government then came up with the theory of “conditional rights”. According to this theory, rights could be granted to Indians provided that the rules to apply these rights would be defined and agreed upon in an agreement between Indians and the governments. Only then would they become

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid , p.24

part of the Constitution. The Indians opposed this proposal, claiming that their right to self-government was intrinsic and should not be conditional. They also expressed their desire to actualize the treaties. No changes were made at this conference, nor at the next one, in March 1987. Indeed, both parties stood their grounds, although the federal government tried to mediate between the two extreme positions. Instead of concluding on a failure, and since there was no possible agreement, the conference was adjourned.

The conferences marked a major change in the governmental attitude towards Indian policy. For the first time in Canadian history, the Indians were actively consulted about their rights, which undoubtedly boosted the morale and hope of the whole Native community. In Alberta, however, the feeling could not be as strong. The province's position throughout the conferences proved that changing the Western attitude would not happen overnight. The Alberta government did not want to re-open the treaty talks, and feared that by accepting the federal government's proposal, it would lose land, political powers and money. On the other side, the Alberta Indians were very determined to stand their ground, and the assurance taken throughout the 1970s and 80s, with the Indian Association of Alberta and as part of the Aboriginal population nationwide, had eventually marked their minds. However, the interests of the Indians did not coincide with those of the Alberta government, and although a first major step had been taken, the Indians still had long ways to go in order to regain their identity and their autonomy.

## CHAPTER III

### Resisting and Surviving : Indian Activism

#### A. Regaining Dignity

The government's new attitude was a major step in the Indians' quest for autonomy and identity. At least, they were to some degrees involved in their own destiny. This shift in Indian policy, however, did not occur without efforts on the part of the Indians. The government did not suddenly decide to include the people it had tried to "assimilate" in their political negotiations, it rather reacted to resistance and pressure from this group. Indeed, the Indians resisted all the government's attempts to assimilate and civilize them. They did not want to become "non-Indians" in the Canadian society, they wanted to remain Indians. Since the government was ignoring their requests and wishes, the Indians started to organize themselves. In order to regain what they had lost, they had to resist and survive - resist the rules and laws set up for them by a Euro-Canadian government and survive by manifesting their presence and their needs.

The first step towards regaining their identity and their autonomy was through recovering their pride and dignity. Indeed, with the numerous injustices and humiliations suffered over the past decades, the Indians had lost more than just their unity as a people; they had lost their pride as individuals. How could a people survive if it did not even feel worth being heard?

On February 22, 1965, the Slavey Indians from Hay Lake marched on the Legislature in Edmonton, which was an unprecedented event in Western Canada. This first demonstration is well described in Heather Robertson's book *Reservations are for*

*Indians*, who discloses an unusual aspect of the event when quoting Father P. E. Plouffe, the parish priest:

The men were scared to death. They didn't want to hold the posters. Some were shaking and nearly crying. They didn't know what the result would be or what might happen to them. Except for the leaders, they only knew it was important for them to be there.<sup>73</sup>

The Indians, who had been oppressed and mistreated since the Europeans settled their land, were almost proving the government right. They had never been respected, and they now doubted their right to ask for respect, that is to say their right to be treated as human beings.

The Hay Lake band signed treaty eight in 1899, and like most bands of Northern Alberta, kept their traditional lifestyle well into the 1900s. It was only in 1953 that the band settled, when a residential school opened on the reserve. Their lives, which depended on hunting and trading with the Hudson's Bay Company, suddenly changed with the new emphasis put on children and their education. Unable to rely on their children's help at home, the men started to trap closer to home. Soon, game and fur were almost extinct and the people relied exclusively on the Hudson's Bay Company for food. At the same time, the population was growing and welfare was spreading. The government and the Hudson's Bay Company did not try to re-employ the men and the band was soon totally dependent on the government. With no work and a maximum welfare that was half the provincial rate (\$15 to \$20 per month for a family), the band quickly found itself below the poverty line. The Indians wanted work, they wanted to feel useful and proud, not incapable and assisted. One of the posters they took with them read: "Help, We Want Work, Don't Treat Us Like Kids But Like Men, Where Is Our Freedom? Where Do You Want Us To Go? We're People First, Not Just Indians."<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> H. Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, p.12

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p.12

The Indians were received by the Premier Ernest Manning, and by the Indian Affairs regional director R. D. Ragan. Not much was done for them. They were heard, then told to see with the federal government, and in the end, their condition did not change much. Although they received “a sawmill, diesel power units, a tractor and seven pre-fabricated cottages”<sup>75</sup>, along with more welfare, the Hay Lake Indians remained unemployed. All their important requests, such as work, training or vocational programs for the people, education close to home, were ignored. However, some individuals had changed. They had done it, they had told the white leaders what they were: human beings first, then Indians. They had showed them they were still alive, still resisting and more determined to do so. More than anything else, they broke the stereotype of the lazy Indian apathetically living on easy money, and showed all the other Alberta bands that they could do something to regain dignity and respect. At that point, it maybe did not really matter to obtain satisfaction; what mattered most was to react. Thus far, the Indians had been silently resisting and passively enduring the government’s programs and policies. Now they were reacting and showing themselves. Of course, it was only a start, but this first demonstration surely had an impact on the Alberta Native population, on the government, and on the Native population across Canada. As Heather Robertson observed:

Bureaucrats in the Department of Indian Affairs ... were seriously embarrassed. Indians from the most isolated areas of the country were suddenly showing initiative, intelligence and political sophistication.... although Indian Affairs officials continue to speak of Indians as helpless and inept, now fewer people believe them. Most important, the Indians no longer believe them.<sup>76</sup>

This was the first native initiative in Western Canada, the first time the Indians appeared organized and determined to use their unity in order to change their destiny. Indian activism was slowly emerging.

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p.15

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p.5

## **B. Asserting their Identity**

### **1. The role of the National Indian Brotherhood**

The 1960s marked a time of “unity” among Indian nations. The population was growing rapidly and the Indians became aware, thanks to their leaders, that they could become stronger if they came together. In 1961, the National Indian Advisory Council was formed by the Cree elder William Wuttunee in order to try and represent all people of Native ancestry: the status Indians, the non-status Indians and the metis. Its main purpose was to promote unity among all Native people. The council lasted for a few years, but by 1968, disagreeing on how to deal with the various problems related to each group, it split into two associations: the non-status Indians and metis formed the National Council of Canada (now called Congress of Aboriginal Peoples) and the status Indians, who felt cheated by Wuttunee’s support of the White Paper, formed the National Indian Brotherhood. The purpose of the N.I.B. was to operate as a national lobby, to represent the status Indian people and disseminate information to them. This organization was therefore more effective, since it did not dissipate its efforts but rather concentrated them on a specific group. The National Chief Walter Dieter and his board of directors, which included the activist Harold Cardinal -then president of the Association of Alberta-, wanted to study with Indian representatives from across Canada the problems confronting the Indians, in order to find a solution to these problems. They also wanted to act as national spokesmen for Indians throughout Canada, and to work at retaining Indian culture and values. Unwillingly, the government helped the N.I.B. Indeed, its White Paper actually quickened the growth of unity among Indians, who all felt equally attacked by such a policy.



Inspired by the courage of the Hay Lake Indians and thanks to this first representative body run by and for them, the Indians felt they could finally assert their identity. In 1972, through its *Statement of the Indian Philosophy of Education*, which we will study later, the N.I.B. presented its recipe for happiness, finally pointing out what the Indians had eventually forgotten: “pride in one’s self”.<sup>77</sup> After the example set in 1965 by the Slavey Indians, and after their first victory over the government in 1971 with the repeal of the White Paper, the Indians finally regained some pride and some identity. They did not feel ignored or set aside by the government anymore. They maybe were not very powerful compared to the machinery of the state, but at least they now had some influence. The creation, in 1975, of a Joint Cabinet / N.I.B. Committee, supports this theory. Indeed, this joint policy-formulating experiment was an attempt of the government to improve its relations with Indians. Eventhough the committee did not produce a single joint policy agreement in the three years of its existence, the impression made by the government lasted in the Indians’ minds. Indeed, the government now knew it could not stop the Indians anymore, and that from now on, it would have to count with them on any decision it might take.

## 2. From “Indian Brotherhood” to “First Nations”

In April 1980, the term “ First nations” was used publicly for the first time, on the occasion of a constitutional conference held by the N.I.B. in Ottawa. Calling themselves ”First Nations” was highly symbolic. According to Tom Flanagan, professor of political science at the University of Calgary, it “brought in the theme of aboriginality, laying claim to privilege in virtue of prior occupation.”<sup>78</sup> More than that, it publicly demonstrated the coming back of a people who was not ashamed, nor afraid

---

<sup>77</sup> H. Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.100

<sup>78</sup> T. Flanagan, *First Nations, Second Thoughts*, p.75

anymore, to remind the Canadian society of its place and of its value. At the same time, they were forcing the government to accept them on the political scene. Indeed, this new Indian awakening was the living proof of the government's failed Indian policies, and the public opinion would not have approved of a new attempt to achieve assimilation through the same old means. A resolution was thus passed "to unify Canada's 570 Chiefs in to one organized assembly."<sup>79</sup> Two years later, in April 1982, the N.I.B. became the Assembly of First Nations, structured so as to present the views of the various First Nations through their leaders, in areas such as environment, housing, education, aboriginal and treaty rights, economic development...and other issues of common concern. The Indians had asserted their identity to the government and to Canadians, they were proud again, and they were slowly becoming involved in decisions concerning their future.

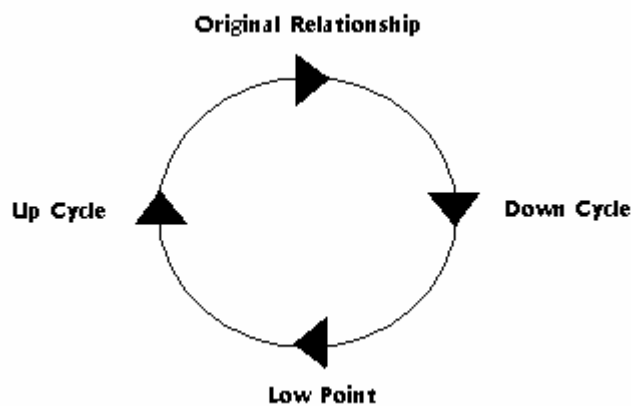
### 3. Connecting with the past to be present in the future

The Indians were indeed back within society. Well, the Indians thought they were back, but to the Canadians, this awakening was new. They had never counted with the Indians before. In a way, this awakening was also new to the Indians. Indeed, since the Europeans had taken over Canada, they had never been involved in the changes taking place, nor really invited to participate. As we saw it, the policy of assimilation meant teaching the Indians how not to be Indians, but never raised the possibility of accepting them as such within society. The Indians had once been a proud people, and were now a proud people again; but the circumstances were not the same anymore, and this new context was very unfamiliar. In order to fully seize the opportunity to be in control of their destiny, they had to understand this new context, but they also had to keep in mind who they were, that is to say where they came from. In Indian culture, the

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.74

circle has always been a prominent figure, and the Indians have what the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission calls a “cyclic perspective” on history:



The original relationship represents the one established in the early days of contact with the Europeans, involving some kind of equality and mutual respect. The slow down turn and the low point represent the loss of the traditional lifestyle (cultural and political), followed by the loss of the principles of respect and equality. Finally, the cycle goes back up, with efforts to renew the original relationship and to restore its balance.<sup>80</sup>

Having been isolated for years, the Indians were disconnected from the new realities of the Canadian society. They had experienced the down cycle and the low point. Some believed that they could restore their traditional way of life by re-establishing their spiritual and subsistence relationship to the land. In 1971, Chief Small boy from Hobbema fled to the Rocky Mountains with a group of followers, in an attempt to escape the awful conditions on their reserve. According to the various opinions on the subject, this event seems to be represented either as a success or as a failure. Indeed, in

---

<sup>80</sup> Report of the Royal Commission, Vol.1, p.35

*Surviving as Indians*, Menno Boldt describes it as a “desperate attempt” which “could not satisfy the day-to-day subsistence imperatives of the group, and thus ... failed on practical grounds.”<sup>81</sup> On the contrary, Sabine Hargous, in her book *Les Indiens du Canada*, describes how the Indians recovered their traditional lifestyle to finally become free and self-sufficient again.<sup>82</sup> Both authors at least agree on the fact that recovering the practical gestures of the past was not an easy task. Indeed, all the trapping techniques, making of clothes and jewels, tanning of skins,... had been forgotten after years and years of welfare, inactivity and humiliation. Sabine Hargous even mentions the irony of the situation, when the Indians had to turn to a white silversmith for advice.<sup>83</sup> In fact, when comparing the stories, it appears that both authors were right. Chief Small Boy merely established a subsistence relationship to the land, which could not be similar to the original one, since settlement had changed the original environment. However, the spiritual relationship was restored, which was necessary to establish a balanced relationship with Canadians in the present society. By fleeing white society and trying to renew with their past, Chief Small Boy and his men renewed their original identity: who they were, how they lived, and most important, their culture, their principles and their philosophy. They also inspired many Indians to whom this venture was symbolically meaningful. Indians across Canada then realized that they needed to know who they were in order to know what they wanted and could ask for in a society dominated by whites. From now on, the Indians not only had their place on Canada’s social scene, they were also back as Indians, as what they would soon call themselves: First Nations.

---

<sup>81</sup> M. Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, p.196

<sup>82</sup> S. Hargous, *Les Indiens du Canada*, p.127

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p.127

## C. In Search of a Lost Autonomy

### 1. The Red Paper

It is undeniable that the Indians survived as a people. They had forgotten who they were and lost their identity, they had suffered from the various Indian policies, but they had never accepted their condition and the way they were treated. As they were becoming aware of their strength as a united people, and regaining their identity and their principles, they were also taking up again with their desire to be autonomous.

When Trudeau announced its White Paper, the Alberta Indians felt ready to counter act. The Hay Lake Indians' march to Edmonton probably inspired them more than the rest of Canada, since they appeared very determined and organized. The White Paper was the last straw and the Alberta Indians soon replied to it with their "Citizens Plus", also known as the "Red Paper", in June 1970. Written by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta, the counter policy was extremely well organized and logical. The Red Paper was the first Indian initiative on the political level, and it once again proved the Department of Indian Affairs wrong: the Indians were not incapable of deciding about their own fate.

The title "Citizens Plus", as a reference to the Hawthorne report, clearly summed up what the Indians had always been asking for: have the same rights as Canadian citizens, plus additional rights linked to their special status. In other words, they wanted to participate and contribute to society as Indians. What was new was the way they exposed their requests. It was the first time that they produced a written document addressed to the Prime Minister and his government. Moreover, their paper was not a simple list of requests, but rather a forceful and pertinent policy. In a 100 pages, they meticulously dissected the White Paper, choosing key-statements and justifying their

choices by expressing their opinions and their expectations regarding the various themes: Indian status, Indian culture and contribution, control of Indian lands and channels for services. For example, in response to Trudeau's statement on removing the Indians' special status in order to achieve the Just Society, the Indians made a distinction between equality in law and equality in practice: "Equality in law precludes discrimination of any kind; whereas equality in fact may involve the necessity of different treatment in order to obtain a result which establishes an equilibrium between different situations..."<sup>84</sup> The government's understanding of the concept of equality was thus cleverly proved inadequate.

The Indians also felt necessary to point out the new broken promises of the government:

We have received assurances that the implementation process would not take place. However, ... (it) is being carried as fast as possible. [...] The Minister of Indian Affairs has stated publicly that he is not attempting to throw the Indians over to the provinces ... Yet,... he writes a letter to the Premier of Alberta... stating that the federal government would transfer funds to the Provinces for the extension of provincial services to reserves.<sup>85</sup>

It is obvious, knowing the position of the government on the matter, that the Indians justly doubted the government's good intentions. The White Paper itself showed the government could not be trusted, since it came out after the Indians had been consulted about the Indian Act, and was totally contradicting what the Indians had declared as being their priority. This was also denounced in the preamble of their counter-policy:

In his White Paper, the Minister said, "This review was a response to things said by Indian people at the consultation meetings which began a year ago (...) Yet, (...) what Indians asked that the Canadian Constitution be changed to remove any reference to Indians or Indian lands? What Indians asked that Treaties be brought to an end? What group of Indians asked that aboriginal rights not be recognized? (...) The answer is no Treaty Indians asked for any of these things (...)."<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Indian Chiefs of Alberta, *Citizens Plus*, p.5

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p.2

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p.1

To the modern observer, these remarks are immediately hinting back to the treaties, with their set of broken promises. Placed in the preamble, they reveal a strong wish to avoid repeating history.

The Red Paper went even further. Indeed, it was described as being “a first draft of (their) Counter Policy”.<sup>87</sup> The Alberta Chiefs thus tried to come up with viable alternatives to their own problems. They provided a historical background for the various themes included in the treaties, such as Indian lands, reserves, health care, education and traditional activities, and then specified for each one what the problem was, what their objectives were, and what kind of program and strategy could be adopted. Their strategies were very specific and happened to be very realistic demands. The main goal was to regain autonomy in the economic, political and educational fields. They were asking for proper cabinet representation, recognition of the updated treaties, revision of the Indian Act, revision of the school curricula, a smaller Indian Affairs Branch closely attuned to their well-beings, and the establishment of an Indian Claims Commission by consultation with them. Practically, the Indians wanted opportunities for individual improvement, work to raise their families and live a decent life, and control over their communities and their own destiny. The government clearly had the means to satisfy the Indians on all levels, but was not necessarily willing to do so. However, a solution would have to be found soon, because the Indians were not going to step back: “if for much longer the rights are not noticed, needs not met, or aspirations not fulfilled, then no one (...) can be assured that the ranks and file will continue to accept such pacific conduct from its leaders.”<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p.3

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.23

Indian activism was well on its way, and proved to be effective, since not only the White Paper was withdrawn, but Indian priorities suddenly got put on the national agenda, with the creation of a Land Claims Commission and funds made available to bands to research their claims.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the government revealed a completely different policy in 1976, that of “promoting Indian identity within Canadian society”.

## 2. From London to the Constitution

Throughout the second half of the 1960s, Alberta Indians had incredibly progressed on the provincial and national scenes, but “self-government” was hardly pronounced by government officials. The 1976 policy left the Indians suspicious, with reason, since the program was very vague and changes occurred at a slow pace. The federal government was reluctant to let go of its control and to further development. By 1980-81, the government was seriously preparing its Constitution. Indians had repeatedly tried to get protective clauses into the federal government’s proposition, without success. Except for the treaties, which were not taken seriously by the government, their special rights were not included in any legal texts. Since 1968, during the consultations preceding the White Paper, the Indians had however clearly insisted on retaining their aboriginal and treaty rights. By 1981, feeling that they had exhausted all the possible means to obtain satisfaction in Canada, the Alberta Chiefs left for England. They were hoping to seek support of British parliamentarians to block the patriation of the Constitution until all Indian land claims had been resolved, and that the treaty obligations were properly dealt with. Once again, the Alberta Chiefs were extremely organized and well-prepared, with a memorandum of law to be presented to the British government and a petition to the Imperial government to settle all current land claims prior to patriation. They thus demonstrated how they had tried, since 1876,

---

<sup>89</sup> H. Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.125



to become full and equal participants in the Canadian society, comparing themselves to Quebec, who had tried to separate. They also reminded the British government of the 1876 British North America Act, which Britain alone retained the power to amend, making it impossible for the Canadian government to leave the Indian Nations unprotected by law.

When asked to explain itself, the federal government pleaded ignorance as to what aboriginal rights were. Yet, in December 1980, Indian Nations had adopted the Declaration of First Nations, describing what they called aboriginal rights. Moreover, a confidential document prepared at the same time and entitled *Briefing Material on Canada's Native People and the Constitution* was discovered. It revealed the true position of the government: "Native leaders realize that entrenching their rights will be enormously difficult after patriation, especially since a majority of the provinces would have to agree to changes which might benefit Native Peoples at the expense of provincial power."<sup>90</sup> Eventhough all the land claims were not settled, this new initiative was again a successful one, since in 1982, the Charter of Rights and Freedom of the Constitution officially recognized their special Aboriginal and treaty rights. Moreover, the Alberta Indians had taken their political struggle not only to Britain, but to the world. They had reached the international scene, and by doing so, had all the European countries turned towards Canada, waiting to see what would happen next.

Canada's Indian policy was evolving, slowly but surely. If Indians across Canada were part of this process, Alberta Indians had a huge impact on all levels and could be considered as the pioneers of Indian activism. They did not undertake that many initiatives, but the ones they did were always unprecedented and partly or completely successful. In order to achieve such success, they needed support,

---

<sup>90</sup> Alberta Chiefs Seek Support in England, p.16

encouragement and help from the provincial scene. The Indians were indeed resisting at various levels, and while some were confronting the federal government on the national and international scenes, others were doing their best to keep the people together day after day.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Means to Passively Resist

#### A. The Impact of Education

##### 1. Education in the hands of the government

In the early 1900s, when the federal government decided to concentrate its efforts on the education of Indian children, the impact on Indian families was huge. As we saw it with the Slavey Indians from Hay Lake, taking the children away left the parents with more work, thus forcing them to settle. Moreover, it contributed to the deterioration of the family units. In traditional Indian education, both the parents and the grandparents played an important role; they held the knowledge to be transmitted through story telling and experiences of life. When the children, made to blend in with and acquire the values and outlooks of the Euro-Canadian society, came back on their reserves, the cultural differences soon created clashes. The parents and grandparents suddenly appeared as having little education and traditional perspective on the world, and the children, torn between who they were and who they were supposed to become, often turned to delinquency. In addition, the schools were not well-prepared to welcome children who did not speak a word of English and to whom teachers often appeared hostile and unsympathetic. As a result, the drop-out rates in grades 7, 8 and 9 climbed rapidly in the first half of the 20th century.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> H. Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.96

In the 1950s, there was a change in Canada's education policy, in response to Indian parents asking for a better education for their children. Their demands reflected a real concern for the survival of the new generation; they were aware that the Euro-Canadian education was the only way out of poverty. In order to avoid unemployment, their children needed special skills, which they could not acquire without the basic knowledge of white society and values taught in schools. The new plan to involve the Indian children into the provincial system by bussing them to town and village schools, was conformed to the general assimilation plan. However, this new system soon turned out to be inadequate. The schools were part of Canadian society and most of them thus reflected the same attitudes towards Indian students as that of the government towards Indian nations. White children did not mix with them and teachers made them feel unwelcome. Schools were not providing an equal education and the pattern of failure kept increasing. Indians knew that education was the key to their future, and by the 1960s, they decided that they could do better than the government. The Department of Indian Affairs' main mistake had been to ignore the differences between white and Indian students.

Parents started to hold meetings and organizations began discussing the issue of Indian education. In 1971, when the D.I.A. announced its decision to close the Blue Quills residential school, north of Edmonton, a group of parents peacefully protested by occupying the school, one of the few that "had always had a good rapport with the people" according to Helen Buckley.<sup>92</sup> The event made the headlines, and the Department was forced to back down, leaving the management and control of the school to the Native people of the region. The residential school became the Blue Quills Native Education Centre, one of Canada's first Native centre for education.

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p.100

One year later, motivated by such initiative and by a nation-wide demand for control over schools, the National Indian Brotherhood presented its *Statement of the Indian Philosophy of Education* to the D.I.A. Their program was obviously based on the failure of previous education policies, since it advocated the exact opposite of what had been done so far. Indian leaders and parents were aware of the reasons that led previous policies to failure. For instance, and among other reasons, children could not see the purpose of education for them, the competitive environment of provincial schools was opposed to the one in which they had been raised and distances, often very long due to the remoteness of some reserves, had obvious consequences on their capacity to be attentive and efficient. The N.I.B. thus came up with a different approach, aiming at making “education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people”.<sup>93</sup> The accent was put on regaining their pride as individuals, understanding their fellow men and living in harmony with nature. The last two elements were in fact ensuing from the first one: by being proud again, they would be confident, they would then try to understand Canadians rather than fear them, and would thus live in harmony with their environment. They also defined education “as a preparation for total living; as a means of free choice of where to live and work; as a means enabling (them) to participate fully in *their* own social, economic, political and educational advancement.”<sup>94</sup> In other words, their statement on education had visions for both short-term and long-term periods, the long-term being the training of tomorrow’s leaders. Education would finally benefit the Indian population and ensure a steady support to activism and to political changes on the provincial level.

In 1972, the Department agreed to Indian control of education as a basic principle, and more and more bands started to run their own schools. The results were

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.101

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p.101

immediately encouraging for the native population, and over the years, improvements were undeniable. For example, when the Alexander Band took over the school, the drop-out rate was close to 100%, and the students going past grade 9 were rare. By 1989 however, students were finishing grade 11 and the drop-out rate had fallen to 15%.

## 2. The curricula: surviving or reviving?

Obtaining control over their own school was an important step towards Indian control of their own affairs, and the Indians proved very capable and successful in their undertakings. Free to choose their own curricula, most band-run schools often combined the provincial curricula with added cultural content. They made room for native languages and culture, and appointed Native teachers, sometime elders, who involved themselves with the children.

Today, each nation has one or more schools, which are all over the province. Children are either taught their Native language, or taught in their Native language, and studying mathematics and social studies is done as seriously as participating in sweat-lodge ceremonies or learning pow-wow dances. The question is: does the Indian educational system today represent a revival of past education or an attempt to survive within society?

Languages certainly could not be revived. Although very few people knew how to speak them, they never disappeared. This is also true for ceremonies. The Indians did not create new ones, but saw or heard of their parents or grandparents performing them. The education provided today is very different from the education Indian children received over a century ago, when schools were unheard of. The notion of survival then seems more correct. The Indians are surviving through the control of their education: they have never completely ceased to speak or perform their original languages and

ceremonies, but now they do it with the help and financial support of the government. This is where we can talk of a revival: they control their future again. They had lost this basic right, and they regained it. In this sense, there is a Native revival. The Indians have revived their role as parents, concerned and involved in the education of their children. The fact the means to do so are different is not an excuse, since the definition of “revival” can imply “a new presentation of something old”. The necessity to combine both terms in order to define this phenomenon proves that the Indians have been successful in adapting to the modern society: they managed to survive in some areas, and to revive what had been lost in others, thus establishing themselves so as to last. The opening of Amiskwaciy Academy in September 2000, a new high school for students interested in pursuing their studies from an Aboriginal perspective, was again a height in Indian control of their affairs.<sup>95</sup>

Alberta Indians have without a doubt survived, since they are still present today, and they have revived their traditional principles just as well; but above all, they have adapted their principles and their identity so as to fit this modern society.

### 3. Educating the adults

The impact of education did not stop at the children, it also reached the adults on different levels. First of all, Indian colleges were created, and a lot of universities now offer to take Native Studies, like the University of Alberta, in Edmonton. Some universities also work in partnership with Indian colleges. For example, Blue Quills, now a First Nations college open to non-Aboriginal students, offers programs which can be accredited by partner institutions, like the University of Alberta, Athabasca University or even the University of Regina. Although the number of Aboriginal

---

<sup>95</sup> *Native Journal*, vol.9, n°4, April 2000

students at university level is much lower than the number of non-Aboriginal students, it still represents a huge step for Indian nations.

On a different level, adults were also offered training courses for specific jobs. In 1970, to pursue its theme of economic growth, the government created the Manpower Department (now called the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission), in charge of training Indian people for the new jobs to be created. At about the same time, large resource companies, pushed by the Alberta government to hire Native people, set up a special corporation, Nortran, to provide the training. A lot of Indians thus obtained a job, and several Alberta companies then similarly opened their doors to Native people.<sup>96</sup> What was important for Indians was to set a good example for their children, and to show them that education led to jobs.

The new job opportunities offered to adults and available for future graduates are ensuring the steady ascension of the Indian people on the social level. By accepting to work for white employers, and by opening their schools to non-aboriginal people, the Indians are once more proving their capacity to adapt and their wish to contribute to society. Moreover, they are teaching the Alberta population and the government how to be open to change and how to further equality.

## **B. The Role of Programs and Associations**

Another and quiet way to resist the impacts of government policies and to assert their identity was and still is through the various programs and associations created and run by the Alberta Indians. They all disclose a sense of unity and a desire to contribute to society while remaining Indians. Small and major associations all have an important

---

<sup>96</sup> H. Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.128



function at their level, and all aim at helping the Indians to be themselves and to find their place in today's society. Whether they relate to culture, education, economics or politics, in the end they all match the same goal: reviving and /or consolidating their identity and their autonomy.

The Alberta Native Friendship Centre Association, created in 1970, was the result of the friendship movement of the mid-1950s. At that time, Indians were moving to the cities and forming groups to represent their interests. The aim of the movement was to encourage and assist Aboriginal peoples adjust to their new environment. Today, the aim is still the same, but the Centre has developed a supportive network, to the point where it now has one of the larger memberships in Canada, with 19 Friendship Centres located in most major urban areas across the province. Their objective is to promote understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, to preserve and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage, and to generally improve the lives of Aboriginal people in the cities, by working with the community. The ANFCA has developed successful programs for Aboriginal women and youth, employment training and more. The centre is present in the Indians' everyday life. For example, in March 2000, the centre organized a forum called *Eliminating Racism through Understanding*, with Native Counselling Services of Alberta and the Northern Alberta Alliance. With 350 students, they performed traditional drumming and dancing, had an elder telling a story on how knowledge of other cultures can help break down the barrier of racism, and hosted a play showing the senselessness of racist insults. A video, *Mythomania – Drumming Away False Ideas* was also screened, and copies were distributed to all the participating schools.<sup>97</sup> This initiative was very successful, and reflects how the centre acts simultaneously on various levels: social integration, education and culture.

---

<sup>97</sup> *Alberta Sweetgrass*, vol.7 n°5, April 2000

The smaller organizations usually have more specific objectives. For instance, the White Buffalo Athletic Club of Edmonton is, in its way, encouraging a healthy lifestyle and instilling cultural values, so as to bring the Indian community together. This sport and education-oriented organization indeed requires from its participants to sustain a drug and alcohol free lifestyle. Present at the Edmonton Heritage Festival every year, it proudly presents its participants, publicly announcing their personal achievements before they perform a traditional dance. Such organizations are great help to the young Indians and encourage them to keep to the straight and narrow way.

Finding their place in society and remaining Indians, are the two wishes Indians have always expressed. To the white community, this has often been interpreted as an oxymoron: how could individuals so different from them pretend to contribute and participate in their society without trying to adapt? This is where the misunderstanding lies: Canadians have always felt that Indians had to adapt, which, in their understanding of the world, meant “assimilate”. Very few realized that the Indians had adapted in a more enriching way than they had been expected to. Today, Indians still have a few battles to fight, notably related to the issue of welfare; but they have taught a lesson to the Canadian community. They have more autonomy, and they participate in society, eventhough their difference is still sometimes considered as a burden.

Thanks to their organizations, they have found a better way to communicate with white society. They have revived some of their principles and values and they have modified them so as to adapt and survive. Today, the Indians are still in the long process of searching for their identity. In fact, they are establishing a new identity based on the original one, one which will allow them to maintain the conditions of life they have finally reached and to keep on improving them.

## Conclusion

A comparison between what the Indians have obtained and what they lost during the treaty activity period shows that the notion of revival well defines their awakening. As shown in Chapter 1, Alberta Indians entered treaty negotiations in order to survive. The European settlement had unbalanced their traditional way of life, and the only way to avoid starvation, mortal diseases and a total loss of land was to agree to becoming wards of the state. At this stage, however, although both parties agreed and signed the same paper, their interpretation was very different. Still, the announced goal of the government, that of helping the Indians survive, matched the hopes of the Native population.

Seeing how the Native population's growth rate increased over the years following treaties, their first victory was obvious: they had won over death and extinction. They survived. This survival was maybe not very active and successful, since their conditions kept worsening, but the government did "help" them survive, at least in numbers. Therefore, the concept of survival also applies to the Native movement of the mid-1960s – 1980s, in the sense that the Indians had to survive in order to revive their values.

Both Chapter 1 and 2 show that the Canadian government did not further the Indians' participation in society, but rather made it a difficult achievement. The de-tribalization policy of the 1880s had dramatic consequences on the Native population, on the humane, cultural and political levels. The Indians undoubtedly witnessed and experienced the most sordid aspect of Canadian society, a silent cultural genocide. The various Indian acts, the assimilation policy and the welfare system of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

seemed like effective ways to maintain the Indian people in a vegetative state and thus render them harmless. The White Paper of 1969, first meant to definitely eradicate the special status of Indians, that is to say the very notion of 'indianity', turned out to be the one stimulus the Indians needed. Already aware, prior to the White Paper, that they had to react in order to improve their conditions one way or another, the Alberta Indians took advantage of the White Paper to let the country know about their struggle and to stand their grounds.

The Alberta Indians' struggle is an amazing lesson of courage. Decades of mistreatment and disrespect have not decreased their determination to remain who they were. They resisted the various policies and slowly managed to regain their basic rights: that of being proud, of being treated with the respect one owes to all human beings, and of being Indians. Indian activism has helped recover their right to self-determination and is now taken seriously. Today, most Alberta bands have regained control over their destiny and some are self-governed, although this does not mean that they are independent. Studying the evolution of Indian self-government would be the logical continuity to this paper and would certainly testify of the inequalities and difficulties Indians still have to fight in order to achieve self-determination and independence as Indian nations. Yet, it would not add much to the question of revival, since these difficulties and injustices Indians face today are somewhat still rooted in the treaties and the treaty activity period. Their progress on the political and social scenes, however, prove that the Indians have successfully adapted to the contemporary world in which they now find themselves. They were not able to revive their traditional modes of subsistence, but they have revived their philosophy and their culture. More than that, in order to prevent any future threats of disappearance, they have adapted their philosophy and their culture, so as to fully participate in society. Their struggle is not

over yet, but the Alberta Indians probably do not expect to cure a century of injustices in less time than it took to establish them. What matters now is that they know they will not lose what they have obtained. Each victory over the government is forever acquired.

Moreover, by trying to be a part of society, the Indians are again teaching us a very valuable lesson: tolerance. Having to face racism and prejudices most of their lives, they still find enough courage to open their events and their ceremonies to all the people curious to learn about their culture, thus offering the possibility to meet and to understand one another better. They are also willing to teach their philosophy and their values to all students without discrimination. One cannot expect to break down the barriers of racism over a short period of time, and the Indians' reluctance to trust the Canadian people is understandable, but at least they do not reject the possibility of a better relationship with Canadians and leave their world open to everybody. It is up to Canada to seize this opportunity. The Native revival in Alberta has witnessed lots of efforts on the part of the Indians, and the adaptation to modern life has been so well organized that the Indians are now a full part of society. Thanks to their revival, the Indians have found their place in Canada, and now need to keep on being adjustable to modern life requirements.

Revival and adaptation have led the Indians to slowly establish themselves a new identity, combining elements from the past with necessities of the present. However, this new identity is not yet fully established and still needs to be given some thoughts and efforts. The challenge they face is to admit the necessity to adapt their culture. Indeed, although the current Indian generation has no responsibility in what is left of the cultural crisis they face, they must assume full responsibility for the future of their culture. In all societies, culture is a determining element. It represents who the people are. Alberta Indians, and Indians across Canada, have survived thanks to it, and

have tried to revive and to adapt it so as to maintain themselves in this modern society. As Canadian society develops, they will need to adapt it more and more, while keeping its original spirit. The main difficulty in doing so is that, unlike immigrant cultures in Canada, Indian culture has no other homeland, and could thus disappear completely, depriving not only the Indians, but all humankind of its teachings. The Indians' success in adapting their culture will also determine their future place in society. Will Indians exist as a nation or as a race? Without a viable cultural background, race will become their only identity, and Indians will be condemned to evolve in a society which would more than likely remain racist, judging them on the percentage of their 'Indian blood'. On the contrary, if they manage to revitalize their culture, new doors will open, and maybe one day, the Indians will be considered not only useful, but essential to keep society in the good working order.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- BOLDT (Menno). – Surviving as Indians, The Challenge of Self-Government. – Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 1993. – 384 p.
- BUCKLEY (Helen). – From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces. – McGill: Queen's University Press, 1992. – 209 p.
- DUPUIS (Renée). – La Question Indienne au Canada. – Les Editions du Boréal, bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1991. – 124 p.
- FIDLER (Dick). – Red Power in Canada: an Eastern Indian design devoting the unity of the tribes. – Toronto: Vanguard Publications, 1970. – 15 p.
- FLANAGAN (Tom). – First Nations? Second Thoughts. – McGill: Queen's University Press, 2000 - XX p., 245 p.
- HARGOUS (Sabine). – Les Indiens du Canada: Tant que l'herbe poussera... - Paris: Ramsey, 1980. – 189 p.
- INDIAN CHIEFS OF ALBERTA. – Citizens Plus. – Edmonton: Indian Association of Alberta, copy of the University of Alberta, 1970. – 100 p.
- INDIAN NEWS MEDIA. – Indians and the Canadian Constitution: Alberta Chiefs Seek Support in England. – Liberty Printers, 1981. – 16 p.
- MILLOY (John S.). – “The Early Indian Acts: Developmental Strategy and Constitutional Change”, p.145-154 in: Sweet Promises: a Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada – 468 p. – University of Toronto Press.
- MINISTER OF SUPPLY AND SERVICES CANADA. – Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol. 1.: Looking forward, looking back. – 1996. – XXVII p., 732 p.
- MORRIS (Alexander). – The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, including the negotiations on which they were based. – Fifth House publishers, 1991 (first printed in 1880). – 375 p.
- NATIVE JOURNAL: Bridging the Gap between Cultures in the Spirit of a Bright Future. – “Amiskwaciy Academy: High school from an Aboriginal perspective”, p.13. – Volume 9, Number 4 – April 2000
- PETTEN (Cheryl). – “People begin to understand racism”, p.13 in: Alberta Sweetgrass: the Aboriginal Newspaper of Alberta. – Volume 7, Number 5 – April 2000
- PRICE (Richard). – The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties. – Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1999 (first printed in 1979). – XX p., 213 p.

PURICH (Donald). – Our Land: Native Rights in Canada. – Ontario: James Lorimer & Company, 1986. – 252 p.

QUINLAN (Don), REED (Kevin). – Aboriginal Peoples, Building for the Future. – Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999. – 96 p.

ROBERTSON (Heather). – Reservations are for Indians. – Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1991 (first printed in 1970). – XIV p., 303 p.

TOBIAS (John L.). – “The Origins of the Treaty Rights Movement in Saskatchewan”, p.241-250 in: 1885 and After: Native Society in Transition – 306 p. – Canadian Plains Research Centre.

TOBIAS (John L.). – “Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada’s Indian Policy”, p.127-144 in: Sweet Promises: a Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada – 468 p. – University of Toronto Press.



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

BADCOCK (William T.). – Who Owns Canada? Aboriginal Title and Canadian Courts. – Ottawa: Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples, 1976.- 82 p.

BARRON (Laurie F.), WALDRAM (James B.). – 1885 and After: Native Society in Transition. – Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1986. – 306 p.

BOLDT (Menno). – Surviving as Indians, The Challenge of Self-Government. – Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 1993. – 384 p.

BUCKLEY (Helen). – From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces. – McGill: Queen's University Press, 1992. – 209 p.

DUPUIS (Renée). – La Question Indienne au Canada. – Les Editions du Boréal, bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1991. – 124 p.

FIDLER (Dick). – Red Power in Canada: an Eastern Indian design devoting the unity of the tribes. – Toronto: Vanguard Publications, 1970. – 15 p.

FLANAGAN (Tom). – First Nations? Second Thoughts. – McGill: Queen's University Press, 2000 - XX p., 245 p.

HARGOUS (Sabine). – Les Indiens du Canada: Tant que l'herbe poussera... - Paris: Ramsey, 1980. – 189 p.

INDIAN CHIEFS OF ALBERTA. – Citizens Plus. – Edmonton: Indian Association of Alberta, copy of the University of Alberta, 1970. – 100 p.

LITTLE BEAR (Leroy), BOLDT (Menno), LONG (J. Anthony). – Pathways to Self-Determination: Canadians, Indians and the Canadian State. – Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. – 197 p.

LONG (J. Anthony), BOLDT (Menno). – Governments in Conflict? Provinces and Indian Nations in Canada. – Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988. – 296 p.

MILLER (J.R.). – Sweet Promises: a Reader on Indian – White Relations in Canada. – Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. – XIX p., 468 p.

MORRIS (Alexander). – The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, including the negotiations on which they were based. – Fifth House publishers, 1991 (first printed in 1880). – 375 p.

PRICE (Richard). – The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties. – Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1999 (first printed in 1979). – XX p., 213 p.

PURICH (Donald). – Our Land: Native Rights in Canada. – Ontario: James Lorimer & Company, 1986. – 252 p.

QUINLAN (Don), REED (Kevin). – Aboriginal Peoples, Building for the Future. – Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999. – 96 p.

RICHARDSON (Boyce). – Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country. – Summerhill Press, the Assembly of First Nations, 1989. – 302 p.

ROBERTSON (Heather). – Reservations are for Indians. – Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1991 (first printed in 1970). – XIV p., 303 p.

### **Reports, and bulletins:**

ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER. – Information on Natives in Alberta. – unpublished report, March 1984. – 18 p.

INDIAN NEWS MEDIA. – Indians and the Canadian Constitution: Alberta Chiefs Seek Support in England. – Liberty Printers, 1981. – 16 p.

MINISTER OF SUPPLY AND SERVICES CANADA. – Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol. 1.: Looking forward, looking back. – 1996. – XXVII p., 732 p.

SIGNER (Andrew), LOCATELLI (Chantal). – An Overview of Demographic, Social and Economic Conditions among Alberta's registered Indian Population. – Research Centre, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program, January 1980. – 49 p.

## Index

Big Bear and Little Pine, 36, 46,49

Citizens Plus, 63, 77-79

Constitution 1982, 66, 67, 80

Constitutional conferences, 66-68 ;  
first conference, 66 ; second conference,  
67 ; third conference, 67 ; fourth conference, 68

Department of Indian Affairs, 57, 60-65, 84

Hudson's Bay Company, 22, 30, 32, 35, 39-41, 70

Indian Act, 50-51, 55-60, 78, 91

Laird David, 13, 15, 42, 45

Morris Alexander, 13, 16, 20-21, 23-26, 29, 31, 35,  
37, 42, 46

National Indian Brotherhood, 72-74, 85 ;  
Assembly of First Nations, 74

North-West Mounted Police, 14-16, 18, 36

residential schools, 37, 50, 58, 84

Royal Proclamation, 11-12, 22, 30, 55

Trudeau Pierre, 63-67, 77-78

welfare, 60-62

White Paper, 63-66, 72, 77-80, 92