

Our Indians

cerned with. Our reporter explored St. Mary's reserve in Devon a couple of weeks ago. The new "lower-class residential houses" were poorly finished with shabby paint jobs; but there was a television set and telephone in each, with a car in the yard. English was the spoken language. The younger generation has little knowledge of their native tongue.

Nobody goes to church on Sundays anymore.

As for Indian educational facilities in the province, there is kindergarten training available on the St. Mary's reserve, and in some, elementary services are provided. Following this the young Indians are thrust out into the regional schools. Tuition is paid to the provincial government by the federal to allow the Indians to attend classes. The cost of purchasing of classroom spaces increases with the school.

This system, Andy Nicholas observed, is a short of portraying culture" of their people. Anthony Francis noted that Indian school adolescents were "turned-off", felt out of place, suffered from "inferiority complexes" and had little interest in their education.

Those who do carry on with higher education are still "moving out" due to lack of opportunity around their home reserves which as the Union officials noted did little to improve the situation at home.

A school - TRIBE (Training and Research in Bicultural Education) has recently been established at Bar Harbour. It is open to NB Indian students. The curriculum, which is comprised of the study of Indian culture, is an attempt to find meaningful education for Indian people.

Dr. Vince Erikson of UNB has been preparing a text of Indian folk tales in the Maliseet language. It is "a quest of trying to devise a written system that they will accept", he said.

When asked about TRIBE, Chief Sappier commented that it was a good idea, but so far it hasn't had too many results. When approached about whether or not some of the courses or methods could be implemented into the NB school, he thought it was too early to tell whether things would pan out.

For Indian Housing a grant of \$8500 can be furnished to start a household.

An Indian may be granted up to \$10,000 if he moves off the reservation and can prove able to bear financial responsibility for the remainder of the cost of his house.

However Chief Sappier noted that it takes about \$2000 just for the basement at St. Mary's since it is on a solid rock hill. So he concluded that doesn't

really leave that much to start.

Most have to go on welfare to finish them.

To combat the welfare and job problem Mr. Gorley explained that the federal government has established manpower training centers on reserves. There is one at Oromocto. Also a relatively new idea is work-incentive programs. This is a plan where an Indian claims only 50 percent of what he earns while on welfare, for income tax purposes. Such programs are being experimented at the Tobique and Burnt Church reserves, Mr. Gorley added.

Insight was gained into the total situation when an Indian friend of the Brunswickan was interviewed. He said he thought that when people get things for nothing that they don't care for it and look after it. He commented "There's lots of work if they want to look for it and the ones that get it (welfare) should be the ones that need it."

He too had mixed views on Indian government. He thought they "waste money travelling and money should be used for what it is granted for." The Indian representatives although having accomplished some things, it was considered by some Indians that they could be doing a lot more and could be less "secretive" about what they

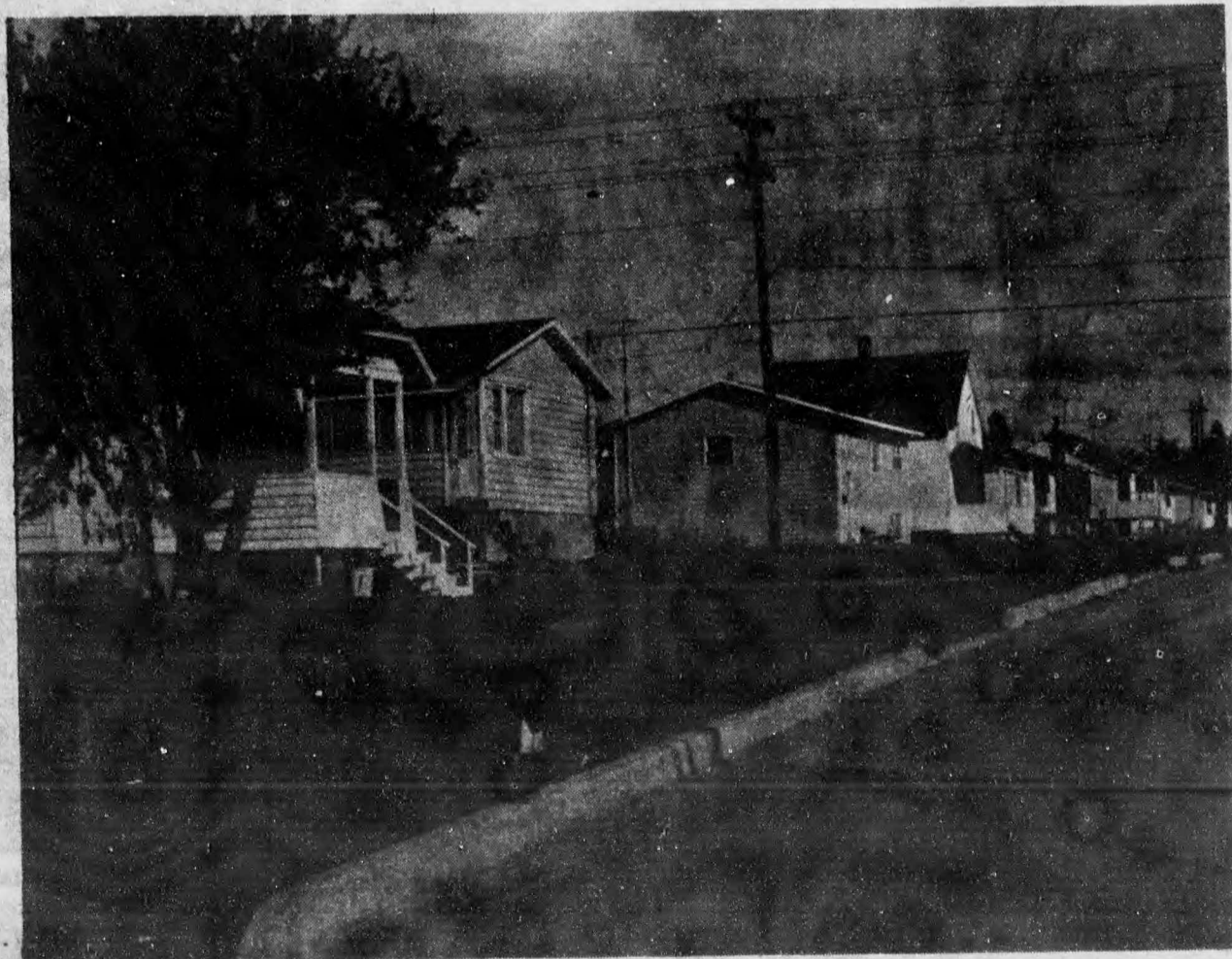
are doing and could present more of the "facts".

He also was very concerned that "Indians lose identity if they can't speak their language." The educational system had to be revamped but he thought that the youngsters should get more encouragement from home. He thought that the parents were a lot to blame for the children's plight at school. If they feel like dropping out generally the parents don't try to stop or punish them.

When one young Indian was asked why he couldn't speak his own language, he said "nobody teach me."

Most white people have a stereotyped idea of a screeching-drunk Indian, the Brunswickan friend continued. This problem seems to be more pronounced in the case of the Indian, because they are all grouped together on reserves. If there are a few alcoholics and drunks, he implied, the scene is magnified out of proportion. White man's society has the same problem but they are spread out over a wider community.

But the problem goes deeper than that, he added. The Indian still distrusts white man's greed. "There is slight suspicion. Like me when you called I was wondering what he wanted. That was in my mind," he said.



The Indian reservation in Devon.

PHOTO BY SHEDD