

Big Cove Satellite — Community Policing Initiative

by Sergeant M.J. Woods, Richibucto Detachment

January 17, 1995, was a typical winter day in south eastern New Brunswick. This particular day was different however, for it marked the fruition of many months of work for the Commander of Richibucto Detachment. S/Sgt. P. Lemonde was about to preside over the official opening of the new Satellite Detachment at Big Cove, a Mic Mac First Nations reserve located approximately 20 km west of Richibucto, but still within the Detachment's boundaries. With the enthusiastic support of the CO, "J" Division, C/Supt. R. Berlinquette, Richibucto Detachment was about to embark on a new and exciting community-based policing initiative.

While the region policed by Richibucto Detachment enjoys a rich variety of linguistic and cultural characteristics, perhaps the most culturally distinct is the community at Big Cove. Because of this uniqueness as well as its relatively large population and remoteness from the community police service centre (Detachment), Big Cove was an ideal location for a satellite office.

Staffed by three regular members of the RCMP, two of whom are Aboriginals, and five Big Cove First Nations Police officers, the satellite would offer a community-based service responsive to the unique

needs of Big Cove, while maintaining the logistical support of a larger detachment.

This initiative was welcomed by Chief Vincent Simon and the Big Cove First Nations Council. They shared the views of S/Sgt. Lemonde, that a satellite detachment would foster a better understanding between the citizens of Big Cove and the members of Richibucto Detachment, and would also provide an opportunity for training both for the band constables and for our members.

In addition, this arrangement would enhance the policing service to the community in ways just now being explored in depth by the Force. That is to say, the community would be given a chance to become directly involved in determining the focus and direction of policing in their community. They, through community-based policing committees, would identify local problems and be invited to suggest solutions to them. And what better way to initiate this dialogue than through the development of the Big Cove Satellite, where the members will be devoted to serving this community within a community in a way that will foster trust, respect and friendship.

While this approach to policing is undoubtedly familiar to many members who have