

Indians



Agnes Panadis, 80-year-old Abenaki Indian from the Odanak Reserve near Pierreville, Quebec, weaves a basket of 'sweet-grass' in the traditional manner of her people. The name 'Abenaki' is a corruption of 'Wabanaki', meaning 'easterners'.

has to be translated into French. Many do not know their rights or what services are available to the Indian moving to the city.

Education is everything. At least with academic or technological training behind him, the Indian can have a free choice — he can enter white society or return to the reserve.

Educating the Indian creates new problems. It has had a harsh effect in the North where more traditions exist to conflict with new values. Some reserves have schools but most children must travel great distances and reside in non-Indian homes in non-Indian communities. This has resulted in the breakdown of the family.

According to the B.N.A. Act, education of the people of Canada is a provincial responsibility — except for Indians. The Minister has authority here, and Indian parents have no say in the education of their children. "Where Indian children are integrated into schools of neighbouring white communities, the parents are neither elected to seats on these boards nor invited to even sit on them," said Currie.

There is an 87.5 dropout after grade 8. Of the approximately 67,000 kids in school, 8,000 are in grade 9 or higher. Only 200 attend university.

Out of the conference came recommendations for the use of the Indian languages in reserve schools in primary grades, introducing English and French later. Better facilities are needed so that the children do not have to leave home so soon, and more parental choice and participation is essential.

COMMUNITY APATHY

The Committee on Housing and Health stressed the need for removal of the "head office boys" and called for planning on the community level with the Indians themselves outlining the needs for each region.

It urgently requested that the provincial and federal governments decide who is going to be responsible for services.

Grant programs were found inadequate. Indian economic self-sufficiency varies and as the level here goes, so goes the standards of health and housing.

But we know this. It's all been said before. Anywhere that poverty is this acute you find similar problems.

Much has been said about the liquor and the increasing rate of crime and juvenile delinquency among Indians. But the conflicts faced by the Indian would cause this in any people. "How smug so many people are about alcoholism among Indian people! Indian people drink for the same reasons that so many other people do — frustration. However, in the case of the Indian, the pressures and frustrations that create addiction are far greater than they are with most other people," reported the Indians of Kenora to the Town Council.

Frustration grows when the Indian comes to the city. He looks for bright lights, more opportunity, and better education. He finds skid row, discrimination and feels like a second class citizen, unequal, and ashamed of being an Indian.

This mental attitude is not improved by the Indian act. It has treated them paternalistically, excluded them from the Canadian way of life, and isolated them from a world of progress and growth.

The Indians assert that some reserves have advanced to the point where they can look after their own affairs better than any outside authority could. They demand recognition of this and introduction of a greater degree of elasticity so that those clauses designed to protect Indians be less applicable to more developed areas.

Do the Indians want to maintain their reserve system? Some, such as Alex General, chief of the Brantford reserve, say "To abolish the reserve system would be an act of genocide." Culture would die if the reserves were disbanded and the people scattered. Others would like to see the reserves phased out as economic development increased.

When you realize that some of the northern reserves are located 100 miles north of roads in Canada, it is easy to understand why the Indians have tremendous difficulties communicating among themselves and getting store supplies let alone relating to Ottawa.

Speaking at Glendon College on September 25, Currie stated that there is no way the situation facing the native citizens of Canada will change, unless the white society becomes aware, understands, and insists on change. Otherwise the Indian will remain in an economic morass.

GOVERNMENT AWARENESS

Robert Andras is now aware. Speaking at the close of the conference he admitted to unfulfilled treaties, broken promises and past errors. He agreed that economic development in a context of Indian values, new mechanisms as well as review of old ones, and great initiative on the part of the Indians themselves, were critical and vital needs. He expressed a willingness to work with Indian leaders in establishing priorities.

Encouraging words, but confidence dwindles when we learn that Ottawa went ahead and reorganized the Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development without consulting the Indians, and then put down Andras when he objected to these tactics.

FOREIGN AID

Now some Canadian Indians are thinking of seeking foreign aid if the federal government doesn't back development projects for treaty Indians and Metis.

France was hinted as a possible source by Harold Sault, vice-president of the Northwestern Ontario Indian Association.

Hector King, president of the Armstrong Indian Association took a delegation to Ottawa to present Chretien with proposals for a development project in Armstrong. "We have listened too long to their talk — talk that leads only to more talk," he said.

When a gentleman approached Currie after a meeting and said "I am ashamed for what my forefathers have done to your people," he replied, "Do not be ashamed for what they did, but be ashamed if you do nothing."

RADIO AND TV COLUMN

Bill C-163, Television, and You

by david schatzky

When did Bill C-163 first come into your life? The consenting adults of the House of Commons passed it on the seventh of February, 1968. Three recent events featured in the press have shown the impact that our friend Bill C-163 will have on us.

The first was the cabinet's admonition to foreign (read American) investors to stay clear of Canadian broadcasting as a way to get rich quick. The overwhelming voting interest in all Canadian radio and television and cable facilities must now be Canadian.

The second was the CRTC's decision to limit the Toronto area to two television stations, thus dashing the hopes of Standard Broadcasting Ltd., the multi-million dollar company owning CFRB, who had designs on a third outlet, of joining the rich ranks of "Bassett-Tely-Eaton-CFTO, Ltd."

The third was the cancellation of the licence of a radio-station in Nova Scotia, if this station failed to implement better local news and public affairs programming.

There has always been the debate concerning who should control broadcasting in this country, and how wide-ranging these powers should be. Bill C-163 ends that debate, and

the aforementioned decisions show how powerful the government now is in its control of all aspects of air activity here.

The title of the Bill is THE BROADCASTING ACT, and it states that "broadcast undertakings in Canada to make use of radio frequencies that are public property and such undertakings constitute a single system . . . referred to as the Canadian broadcasting system, comprising public and private elements." It is stated that this system should be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians so as to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social, and economic fabric of Canada. It says that broadcasters must be responsible for their broadcasts, but freedom of speech is guaranteed. However, that which is on the air should be varied, comprehensive and balanced. It must be of high standard, and its creative and other resources should be "dominantly Canadian".

All Canadians are entitled to both French and English service.

It goes on to say, in effect, that the CBC should continue in all its glory, but that if there's a conflict between the

objectives of the CBC and private broadcasting, public interest shall be served (but "paramount consideration" will be given to the CBC).

There must be facilities made available, the Act continues, for educational broadcasting.

Now comes the crunch. In whom will all the power to carry this out be vested: the Cabinet? the Commons? The Senate? Nope. It all goes to the CRTC, the overhauled reincarnation of the BBG. CRTC stands for Canadian Radio-Television Commission, and according to Bill C-163 is made up of 5 full-time, and 10 part-time members, each of whom is appointed by the Governor-in-Council (actually, the P.M.).

They must all be under seventy and none of them may hold the job long enough to let the seven-year itch set in. Of course, they must be Canadian, and have no geld in the broadcast biz.

These moguls are empowered under the act to dictate regulations about advertising, standards of programming, how much time a network member must give to network and local programmes, what licence fees should cost, and, among other things, who

should or should not get a station licence.

The whole success of a set-up such as the CRTC naturally depends on the calibre of its members. Whether by accident or design, the first appointees to the Commission are by and large hostile to private broadcasters (or more properly pro-CBC). This, however, is the character of Bill C-163 personified, and Harry J. Boyle and his crew are more easily in sympathy with the goals therein embodied, than perhaps someone who might have been a CRTC member, the only Liberal MP from Newfoundland — Don Jamieson, would be. Jamieson is probably the private broadcasters' best friend in high places. A former radio station owner from Cornerbrook (I think), he was for a long time President of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, a private organization comprising most radio stations and private T.V. outlets across the land, and has always been an outspoken defender of the private sector in broadcasting. As a potential Minister of Communications in the cabinet, I'm sure he reassures many small station owners in Canada that they need not be afraid of the dictatorial pow-

ers of the CRTC. However, he would be the last man to tolerate a paucity of public service or an absence of quality in broadcast operations.

Generally, it's safe to say that the CRTC is made up of responsible, intelligent people, genuinely concerned with providing Canada with a service on both radio and television that is directed towards the best interests of all the people, except financial opportunists. Let's drink to that, and as long as we're sober, just try to keep aware of what the CRTC is doing. If their decisions become too narrow and Greek junta-ish, then a public outcry must be raised.

In as far as their decision to disallow a third local VHF outlet in Toronto means that Torontonians without a cable hookup will continue to be able to view "only" six channels, no one except Standard Broadcasting feels deprived. Our greatest need in this area is a UHF ETV outlet, and that is expected within the next couple of years. If Toronto did have a third VHF outlet, it would deprive other less well-served areas in Ontario, especially those who are outside the range of the 'big-three' American networks, from getting a varied tv diet. So, once again, let's drink to Bill C-163, by jingo!