

I ran into quite a lot of problems out there . . . with my landlady. She, all of a sudden, she was really nice, all of a sudden she just changed because these other foster parents, they were really strict and she tried to go by them, you know, and we didn't like that and we really got into lots of hassles over that. Sometimes I just felt like running away and quitting school . . . That landlady used to scream at us, and all this. And I didn't like it. I thought it was just like jail to me . . . And Indian Affairs . . . they should have told us we were able to transfer and move out, you know. Instead they always pushed us back into that house, you know and the last part, that's in June, all we did was go upstairs, eat, go back to the basement, and we did that for a whole month, you know.

Indian High School Student,  
Edmonton

The Hon. Jean Chretien, it seemed, had had his own conception of what was happening on Indian reserves in Northern Alberta, one that was much brighter than that produced by concerned people in that area. He let go with a cheery, bureaucratic "Progress Report on Indian Education" on Sept. 17 at Thunder Bay, Ontario.

The contrast between 1959 and 1971 is great. In 1959 the total appropriation for Indian education was \$25 million.

This year the total cost, including adult education and university opportunity programs, neither of which existed in 1959, will be \$120 million. Student enrollment has increased from 40,000 to 67,000. While the Indian population has increased by 30%, school enrolment has increased by 67%. Secondary school enrollment has risen by 280% from 2,250 to 8,770.

Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and New Brunswick all have legislation which enables Indian people to participate in provincial school boards. The Key Band in Saskatchewan has formed an official provincial School District.

Teachers need the support of parents, too. The Government has pressed for effective education committees in Indian communities, pressed the provinces for Indian participation on local boards and for more responsive education. We have urged Indian parents to support their children in their educational goals.

We shall continue to press toward these goals and, although money is not the secret of a successful community education committee, we will be making more funds available for them.

The teachers will be needed regardless of who operates the school. The demands placed upon their skills will grow in the years ahead. They are entitled to the fullest support they need to do their work. Geographical problems alone defeat the efforts of the federal system to give them the back-up they are entitled to have.

It is not more sensible to make the provincial systems excellent for Indian, Metis and non-Indian students alike? Can we create an additional structure of expertise in a federal school system scattered across Canada? Remember we would have to handle ten provincial curriculums so the student could go on to university, technical school or be fitted for his chosen career.

Provincial school systems have the over-all skills and resources to provide a total education for all classes and kinds of pupils. Where they do not have the specific resources supporting the pupil, they can and *must* be persuaded to develop them or deploy them better. Where they are failing their students, they have the capacity of change.

With the participation of the Indian community we are influencing the provincial systems. We fund the education and, as buyers of service, we can speak effectively to the provinces.

The federal government pays for the education for those who live on reserves whatever school the children attend. The parents must be involved and it is easy or as difficult to arrange this involvement

with provincial school systems as it is with federally operated schools.

We, in the federal government, operate schools scattered over the length and breadth of the country for a relatively small school population and we find it difficult by the nature of our system to offer either the breadth of support or opportunity to our educators.

As I said earlier, Indian identity was ignored in both the federal and provincial systems. That is changing now, although there is much yet to be done.

I believe that the best and most effective way of broadening understanding and of enabling Indian students to live in Canadian society is for them to attend the schools and to be taught the curriculum of their fellow Canadians.

I think that Indian parents must take an active part in the education system in which their children learn. But I think all those things are better done in a setting where the schools are shared with others, others who will share the world of the adult Indian in later life. Others who will have learned to understand them better through shared schooling.

This same Mr. Chretien had an assistant who was made painfully aware of the unhappy situation at the Cold Lake and Kehiwin Reserves when he was sent down on a special mission by his superior, the Minister.

To: Harold Cardinal, President  
Indian Association of Alberta

My special Assistant, Mr. Moses, has reported to me and I acknowledge your presentation of September 22 and the telex of October 11, from Chief Youngchief. In order to improve conditions of the Reserves I have ordered the following measure to be taken immediately.

1. The remedy of all conditions prejudicial to health, safety, and general well being of students in all Federal schools on your Reserves including necessary carpentry, plumbing, and heating repairs.

2. The acceleration of plans for the construction of a kindergarten and recreation room on the Kehewin Reserve which can be expanded in consultation with the people to include primary grades at a later date.

3. The provisions of a portable classroom to replace the kindergarten building on the Kehewin Reserve if the people feel this interim measure is necessary.

4. The provisions of portable classrooms on the Cold Lake Reserve to replace the two (2) basement rooms if repairs cannot be effected in an acceptable manner.

5. Improvement of water supply throughout the Reserves.

I have instructed the Regional Staff to carry out these measures and keep me fully informed. These measures are to be taken in accordance with my personal desire to see positive changes occur in all Indian communities. Much has been achieved in

One old lady, one time I came home and I was working in the store and she said to me "You think you're a white girl or something like that just because you're going to school. You don't care about us anymore." I felt real bad then.

Indian High School Student,  
Edmonton

many areas in the past few years and the involvement of all concerned will be required to further improve the conditions of all Indian people.

Jean Chretien  
Minister of Indian Affairs  
and Northern Development  
Ottawa

*Of an extremely polite nature were the recommendations made on behalf of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development by Chairman Ian Watson. A brief excerpt from the beginning should convey the idea.*

Your committee is convinced that the Education of Indian and Eskimo young people, and in particular Indian young people, has suffered from the day-to-day, year-to-year improvisation attitude of successive governments which regarded the Indian education as a passing thing, soon to be handed over to the provinces. At the present approximately 65% of Indian students attend provincial schools with the remaining 35% attending federal schools.

In those schools remaining under the control of the Education Branch, the committee believes that the objectives of the federal schools should be the creation of models of excellence which will furnish to Indian and Eskimo young people, an education which will provide to them equality of opportunity and the ability to be employed at every level of the economy of the regions in which they live. A model education program that will have among its goals the elimination of all those factors within the present system which have condemned succeeding generations of Indian students to a disadvantaged status within the school system as well as in the adult society into which they graduate. The model system envisaged by the committee would recognize that it has a major role to play in the elimination of the gap between the average Canadian unemployment rate and that of the Indian people, and would have among its goals the elimination of the differences in the high school drop-out rate, the elimination of the negative parental and community attitudes towards education now existing in many Indian and Eskimo communities. The Education Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development should have as a primary aim an effective approach to the problem of acculturation which faces most Indian and Eskimo young people.

## ... and Indians today are alive. This concise md

*One of the strongest reactions to Mr. Chretien's airy Thunder Bay speech came from George Manuel, president of the National Indian Brotherhood.*

240 The Hon. Jean Chretien  
Minister of Indian Affairs  
and Northern Development  
400 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Mr. Chretien:

The text, "A Progress Report on Indian Education," delivered by you in Thunder Bay on September 17, 1971, has caused consternation among us. The policy set forth in your speech is in complete contradiction of the principles and recommendations set forth by