

Oxfam Aid to Canada's First Nations, 1962–1975: Eating Lynx, Starving for Jobs, and Flying a Talking Bird

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Volume 23, numéro 2, 2012

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1015796ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1015796ar>

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Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (imprimé)

1712-6274 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

Marshall, D. & Sterparn, J. (2012). Oxfam Aid to Canada's First Nations, 1962–1975: Eating Lynx, Starving for Jobs, and Flying a Talking Bird. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 23(2), 298–343. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1015796ar>

Résumé de l'article

Le premier projet financé par Oxfam Canada après son incorporation en 1962 a été une opération de secours auprès des Amérindiens du nord du Manitoba qui a fait la une des médias nationaux. Une décennie plus tard, Oxfam Canada a financé l'hydravion du Yukon Native Brotherhood qui devait permettre d'établir la communication entre les communautés autochtones isolées du Grand Nord. L'avion a fini par transporter plusieurs politiciens autochtones qui ont initié la première ronde moderne de revendications territoriales. Une étude des acteurs et des idées en jeu démontre comment l'organisation non-gouvernementale d'origine britannique a fait face à la désapprobation des autorités provinciales et fédérales ainsi que des Églises traditionnellement responsables du bien-être des Amérindiens, pour la mauvaise presse qu'elle leur a apportée. Au moment où les humanitaires britanniques et canadiens prenaient en compte les racines des enjeux économiques, politiques et culturels auxquels les Amérindiens étaient confrontés, chacune de leurs interventions soulevait les questions de leur engagement dans la politique autochtone canadienne, des nouvelles relations industrielles imposées par les grands projets d'exploitation des ressources naturelles ainsi que du développement inégal de l'État-providence pour les Premières Nations. Inversement, ces demandes ont à la fois mis en lumière et façonné la structure de gouvernance d'Oxfam, les discussions internes au sujet de la charité et de la justice, de la neutralité et du soutien aux mouvements de libération coloniale ainsi que les objectifs souvent contradictoires entre les levées de fonds de grande envergure et l'éducation du public euro-canadien au sujet de l'hémisphère sud.

Oxfam Aid to Canada's First Nations, 1962–1975: Eating Lynx, Starving for Jobs, and Flying a Talking Bird*

DOMINIQUE MARSHALL WITH JULIA STERPARN

Abstract

The first project financed by Oxfam Canada after its incorporation in 1962 was an emergency relief operation towards First Nations in Northern Manitoba, which made national headlines. A decade later, Oxfam Canada funded the floating plane of the Yukon Native Brotherhood, to foster communications between distant First Nations communities of the far north. The ship ended up carrying many of the aboriginal politicians who launched the modern round of reclamations for land claims and aboriginal rights. A close study of the actors and ideas at stake shows how the British-born NGO had to face the disapproval of provincial and federal authorities, and of churches traditionally responsible for Indian welfare, for the embarrassment it brought them. As the British and Canadian humanitarians considered the deeper economic, political and cultural stakes of aboriginal hardships, each step of their interventions called for decisions about the extent and the nature of their

* Thanks to Michel Hogue, Melanie O’Gorman, Hugh Grant, and the anonymous readers of the JCHA for their generous suggestions; to Rosie Dodd, Antonia Hassan, and Lucy McCann, who helped with the archives of Oxfam in the United Kingdom; Jodi Aoki and Christine Withrow of the Trent University Archives; Robin Weber of the North West Territories Archives; Mark Fried from Oxfam Canada; Marie-Luise Ermisch and Will Tait, Ph.D. students and research assistants; to the I-CUREUS program of Carleton University for the a research assistantship of Julia Sterparn; the Association of Commonwealth Universities for the Jean and Gordon Southam Fellowship; the SSHRC fund for institutional grants. This paper is based on J. Sterparn’s work of identification of all projects towards First Nations figuring in the archives of Oxfam Canada. We have selected the two most meaningful ones, for their visibility and size, but the history of the others remains to be told.

involvement in Canada's Indian policy, the new kind of industrial relations brought to the North by large projects of exploitation of natural resources, and the unequal development of the universal welfare state for First Nations. In turn, these external demands revealed and shaped Oxfam's very structure of governance, and its own internal debates between charity and justice, neutrality and support for movements of colonial liberation, and the often competing goals of large fundraising and education of the Euro-Canadian public about the global South.

Résumé

Le premier projet financé par Oxfam Canada après son incorporation en 1962 a été une opération de secours auprès des Amérindiens du nord du Manitoba qui a fait la une des médias nationaux. Une décennie plus tard, Oxfam Canada a financé l'hydravion du Yukon Native Brotherhood qui devait permettre d'établir la communication entre les communautés autochtones isolées du Grand Nord. L'avion a fini par transporter plusieurs politiciens autochtones qui ont initié la première ronde moderne de revendications territoriales. Une étude des acteurs et des idées en jeu démontre comment l'organisation non-gouvernementale d'origine britannique a fait face à la désapprobation des autorités provinciales et fédérales ainsi que des Églises traditionnellement responsables du bien-être des Amérindiens, pour la mauvaise presse qu'elle leur a apportée. Au moment où les humanitaires britanniques et canadiens prenaient en compte les racines des enjeux économiques, politiques et culturels auxquels les Amérindiens étaient confrontés, chacune de leurs interventions soulevait les questions de leur engagement dans la politique autochtone canadienne, des nouvelles relations industrielles imposées par les grands projets d'exploitation des ressources naturelles ainsi que du développement inégal de l'État-providence pour les Premières Nations. Inversement, ces demandes ont à la fois mis en lumière et façonné la structure de gouvernance d'Oxfam, les discussions internes au sujet de la charité et de la justice, de la neutralité et du soutien aux mouvements de libération coloniale ainsi que les objectifs souvent contradictoires entre les levées de fonds de grande envergure et l'éducation du public euro-canadien au sujet de l'hémisphère sud.

At the end of the 1950s, when the humanitarians who had founded the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam) in 1942 decided to internationalize their fund-raising appeals beyond the United Kingdom, they chose Canada as their first experiment. At a time when Oxfam's field of activity was rapidly expanding towards areas beyond central and eastern Europe, some of the first projects to come out of its new Toronto office were destined for Canada's First Nations: a famine relief operation and the purchase of a snowmobile in northern Manitoba, a field worker and a floating plane in the Far North, amongst many others. In Canada as in the United Kingdom, Oxfam's priorities were continuously changing, entangled in complicated relations with various levels of government, a number of transnational charitable networks, the public of donors, and groups of recipients. As such, they were shaped by religious and political collaboration and ambitions, and traversed by the debated and changing ideals of the postwar world, towards internationalism, human rights, development, community organization, and empowerment. For historians who want to understand the role and characteristics of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the second half of the twentieth century, it is interesting to analyze the succession of Oxfam's projects for Canada's First Nations peoples. This paper follows Oxfam officers and those who entered into close relations with this humanitarian organization: the Salvation Army (SA), the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada (IEAC), the federal authorities in charge of the welfare of First Nations, and the provincial government of Manitoba.

Encounters between lay charities, such as anti-slavery societies, Save the Children Fund, and Canadian University Students Overseas, and Canadian indigenous populations have been studied.¹ But the origins and the outcomes of the early Oxfam projects are little remembered. The documents left about them are divided between British and Canadian archives, and this case study is part of the larger history of the Oxfam Canada.² The Manitoba relief operation of 1962–1963 and the northern community work of the early 1970s contained a large dose of improvisation. As with most histories of development, these efforts were highly contingent, yet they can be understood as points of “coalescence of events and institutions,”³

which shaped the history of public life. More broadly, the early decisions concerning the possibility and the nature of aid from Oxfam to First Nations accompanied the transformation of Indian policies, helped the extraordinary politicization of Canadian First Nations, and represent an interesting part of the history of the opening of the Canadian public to the Third World in the 1960s.

Finding Donors in Canada: Salvation Army Contacts, the Competition of other Charities, and the Requirements for a Charitable Status

In the head office of Oxfam in the United Kingdom, the late 1950s were the time of the adoption of projects of development, away from the work of emergency relief, reconstruction and help to refugees of central Europe that had occupied its members for the decade and a half following its creation. Existing histories tell of how a few dozen British humanitarians (mainly Quakers, businessmen, and members of churches and universities) and many more voluntary advisors (a large number of them academics, retired colonial and military officers, who were knowledgeable of the situation of newly independent countries and whose city welcomed many learned refugees), invited a new generation of young, idealistic workers committed to peace, equality, and internationalism to start fieldwork in Africa. In the context of the large United Nations campaigns to end hunger in the early 1960s and of the early movements for decolonization, Oxfam authorities insisted on projects that would be long lasting, financially solid, of a middle scale (between small charitable projects and the large endeavours of the United Nations), and in tight collaboration with local community groups. They would accompany the construction of new democracies. Soon, they were opening field projects in Latin America and India. Simultaneously, Oxfam experimented with ways of informing northern citizens about the global South and with institutions by which members of northern civil societies, whose monetary contributions they solicited, could become involved in these historical changes. For this work of publicity and education, they were looking for cases and stories amongst the disadvantaged that would interest and mobilize a large public. And, as it had been

the case since its inception, the charity acted as a critic of British foreign policy.⁴ With these large goals came many disagreements around NGOs' ideals of neutrality and the nature of relations with governments, around professionalism and voluntary actions, and on the ways Third World countries would achieve equality.

It is in this context of expansion, discussions and transformations that the head office in Oxford decided, in 1962, to solicit donations directly from the Canadian public. Their reasons for doing so were many: the decentralization of the largest of the British dominions constituted a pattern set previously by the British Red Cross and the London-based Save the Children Fund, and the Canadians who already sent contributions to Oxford, including many graduates of Oxford University, indicated an interest in expanding this work in Canada. Moreover, a "Canadian Committee for Famine Relief" could be used as a trial and a stepping-stone towards the less familiar and richer American public.⁵ In the winter of 1961, the general secretary of Oxfam, Leslie Kirkley, instructed the organization's travelling secretary, Christopher Widdowson, to visit Canada and the United States for a six-week "tour of goodwill." A pacifist, Quaker, and long time reformer, Kirkley had occupied this position since 1951.⁶ Widdowson, in his capacity as colonel of the Salvation Army for 38 years, one of the main organizations through which Oxfam had channeled aid so far, had risen to the rank of territorial commander of Indonesia, and he fondly remembered working with Canadian nurses, soldiers, and ambulance units in South Korea. By the time of his tour of Canada, he had already visited 14 African countries for Oxfam. In Edmonton, according to the *Ottawa Citizen*, he, typically, "addressed representatives of agencies of all faiths and persuasions, through which OXFAM channels its relief to needy countries," lunched with city officials, and met with the media. In Ottawa, he had an interview with fellow Salvationist Walter Dinsdale, who was minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources of the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker, and he impressed on the local newspaper the importance for the "peoples of the West" of departing from traditional charity to embrace the type of personalized understanding of disadvantaged communities Oxfam promoted. He firmly placed this goal within the fight against communist advances in Asia

and Africa, showing a lack of neutrality common to many non-governmental organizations during the Cold War.⁷ The following year, in the summer of 1962, General Secretary Kirkley himself came to Canada, this time for a meeting in Toronto with major humanitarian agencies, organized by Widdowson. All present confirmed that they were "well disposed" towards Oxfam,⁸ but other charities warned that since Oxfam was "a bit late in the field [of] famine and distress overseas," the Canadian public was already saturated and there would be no place in Canada for a new fund-raising organization.⁹ Widdowson reassured the head office that Oxfam's work could go ahead, as long as it remained in the field of what he called "World Relief."

In late September 1962, Colonel Albert Dalziel, the retired Salvation Army Officer Widdowson had chosen locally to organize Oxfam's work from Toronto, came to Oxford for two weeks of training at headquarters.¹⁰ On his return to Canada, he received the resources to work for an initial period of six months to see if Oxfam would be viable in the country. From his new office in an attic on St. George Street, he hired advertising experts to plan media campaigns and contacted "the right sort of people" to raise money in the short term, mainly some 400 Oxford graduates, over 500 Rhodes scholars, and British expatriates.¹¹ It was then that the honorary secretary of Oxfam, Cecil Jackson-Cole, recommended that funds raised in Canada be devoted to projects originating in and managed from Canada. Jackson-Cole, a founding member and the main director before the arrival of Kirkley, had been equally important in the drive to internationalize the fund-raising basis of the organization. Known for his ability to apply business methods to aid, he advised: "Canadian pride is fairly strong [and] I should hate to see our 'branch' getting off on the wrong foot by diverting funds to English schemes."¹² More prosaically, Jackson-Cole had learned from a lawyer Oxfam had hired in Ottawa that to receive the status of a charity for income tax deductions, Oxfam needed to ensure that "responsibility for the utilization of funds should remain with the Canadian organization concerned."¹³ As the United Kingdom fund-raisers were already fully cooperating with the United Nations in the campaign for "Freedom from Hunger" (1960-1965), and the "Decade of Development" (1960-1969), Jackson-Cole suggested that Dalziel try to do the same

from Toronto: he could start Canada's own "Canadian Committee for World Relief," and associate it with the Canadian Freedom from Hunger Committee (CFHC) founded two years previously.¹⁴

The Canadian tax law presented an additional stumbling block by stipulating that charities needed to accomplish some of their work within the country. Most Canadian charities involved in international work met this requirement, but it had prevented the CFHC from achieving such status.¹⁵ It took Dalziel and the Ottawa lawyer "discreet lobbying and unobtrusive propaganda which we focused on a few people in key positions"¹⁶ to successfully convince the tax authorities on 12 December 1962 to give charitable status. Dalziel was looking for the required work within Canada's borders. He considered helping refugees arriving from Hong Kong, but discovered that it would be difficult since the Canadian Department of External Aid, which coordinated the work, did not seek help or funds from voluntary agencies. Assisting "Eskimo and Indian peoples" was equally problematic, according to the department of the very minister that Widdowson had encountered in the spring in Ottawa. As Dalziel wrote to Oxford, "The Administrator for Northern Affairs who is responsible for the welfare of Eskimo and Indian peoples whilst prepared to receive help from voluntary organizations and women's auxiliaries will not admit there is any real physical need amongst these races as this would reflect on Government administration."¹⁷

Under the Indian Act, status Indians were wards of the federal state; as such, any charitable efforts to address starvation was tantamount to saying that Canada was negligent. Finally, working at education and welfare projects in Labrador and Newfoundland seemed desirable, and "key people" there had told him, "there is some real need for medication feeding schemes and probably better facilities for education and character building. This is a largely neglected field in Canada." Dalziel promised to "continue explorations."¹⁸

Oxfam, the Salvation Army and the Impact of INCO in Northern Manitoba 1962–1963

Dalziel's choice of which Canadians to help with Oxfam's resources was hastened by an emergency: in mid December 1962, two days

after Oxfam's receiving charitable status in Canada, reports of starvation in Nelson House were of the very kind that Oxfam had been looking for to trigger the Canadian public's interest. Located 600 kilometres north of Winnipeg, the area was home to a band of 100 families belonging to the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation of northern Manitoba. The minister for Northern Affairs might have warned Oxfam's travelling secretary that no such need existed, but on Friday, 14 December, Dalziel telegraphed Oxford: "ACUTE DISTRESS INDIA [*sic*] AND ESKIMO NORTHERN MANITOBA RECEIVING FRONT PAGE HEADLINES TODAY IN TOUCH WITH GOVERNMENT MAY I COMMIT OXFAM \$10 000 PLEASE WIRE IMMEDIATELY WANT PUBLICITY EVENING PAPERS FRIDAY."¹⁹

The director in Oxford sent \$ 10,000 at once, which Dalziel transferred to the Salvation Army of Winnipeg.²⁰ He proudly reported, "[we were] first in the field and had our man right up there right on the scene the day following the report of acute distress."²¹ SA Major Preece visited Nelson House on the weekend and on Monday the SA Manitoba commander, Colonel Arthur Moulton, confirmed to the press that 90 out of 100 families existed "on dry bread and lynx." They "had no meat, potatoes, vegetables or milk," and some of them were six for one blanket. He continued: "I have seen many men, women and children on a bare existence standard of living, eating only the mixture of flour and lard known as bannock."²² Wildlife brought in from trap-lines for food and trade was not sufficient for all the people of Nelson House, leaving families wanting when there was sickness, or no breadwinner.²³ The Canadian leader of the Salvation Army, Commissioner Booth, instructed Winnipeg "to give help to those Indians and any other Indians needing it in the north." They knew, however, that the real need was for training schools, which was the responsibility of the government. Moulton thought it appropriate to use his work on European War Relief, an experience he shared with many of Oxfam's founders, to inform his work with First Nations.²⁴

The same Monday, Moulton launched a campaign in the daily *Winnipeg Free Press* asking readers to send winter clothing, money, and 500 blankets needed for the 760 Indians and Metis of Nelson

House.²⁵ The newspaper received several hundred blankets by the Thursday (See Figure 1), which, added to Salvation Army's "150 cases of canned meats, flour, sugar and caned milk [and] potatoes," were shipped by train to the nearest station, the planned mining community of Thompson opened five years earlier by the International Nickel Company of Canada (INCO). As it was impossible to reach Nelson House by ground in the winter, 12 commercial flights carried the aid for the remaining 60 miles on the following Tuesday and Wednesday, and a second large shipment followed later from Winnipeg. Major Preece went back to Nelson House to deliver the goods, accompanied by the SA leader of Thompson, Alice King, and a pilot dressed as Santa.²⁶

The complexity and the broader meaning of the emergency at Nelson House soon plagued Oxfam work in Canada. Oxfam's man in Toronto Albert Dalziel could have expected it, as he had been told that aid to First Nations would trigger the disapproval of federal authorities, and from their very first iteration, projects initiated by Oxfam Canada showed the characteristic difficulty of navigating between "forging important links with government" and being "increasingly vocal in its criticism of federal government policy," mentioned in the in-house history of the NGO.²⁷ Somehow, less expectedly, the relief operation forced Dalziel to consider other agents of northern public life: the province of Manitoba; INCO, one of the largest mining consortiums of its time; the churches, traditionally responsible for much of indigenous social welfare; and the First Nations recipients of Oxfam's program.

The initial report of "near-starvation" in the Nelson House Reserve had come from one Euro-Canadian trade union leader, K.A. Valentine, a member branch of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) at the nearby mine of Thompson, newly accredited after a long struggle. His letter alerted politicians and the media to social and economic difficulties of neighbouring First Nations peoples, which had spilled over to the settlement of Thompson. The previous summer he had seen 80 Indians picketing at the company gate (a technique they might have learned from the very fight for recognition of the USWA according to another commentator). Valentine reported, they were asking for jobs because the rise in population due

Indian Blankets



TRUDY SMITH (left) and Betty Burkowski, employees of the Winnipeg Free Press, check over blankets and one fur coat donated for use by the Salvation Army to ease reported deprivation among Indians and Metis on the Nelson House Indian Reserve, 400 miles north of Winnipeg. The blankets were to be sent by rail to Thompson, Man., and from there to the reserve by plane. —CP Photo

Figure 1: In 1962, the heavy publicity brought to the hardship of Nelson House First Nations by the media and the Salvation Army, helped by money from Oxfam in the United Kingdom, embarrassed public authorities and the International Nickel Company of Canada (INCO).

Source: *WFP*, 18 December 1962, p. 1, reprinted in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 20 December 1962, 1. With permission of the *WFP*.

to the opening of the mine, the lack of training available for them to work in the mine, and the general depletion of natural resources made it impossible for them to continue their way of life in the region. "If the Indian chooses to remain in the settlement, he has to submit to exploitation and a fawning gratuitous attitude," and he warned, a "deep resentment creeps in and he begins to live in idleness, with all that it entails, while he still envisions and dreams of a better way of life." Thompson's merchants had to "go to bed with their loaded rifles at their bedside" and missionaries were having "nervous break downs because they know how the Indians resent the treatment they receive."²⁸ The volatile situation made the front pages not only because, in the words of a *Financial Post* analyst, "a story on Indian poverty is always good for headlines," but also because a provincial election was scheduled for three weeks later in the two northern ridings of Rupertsland and Churchill. As the same *Financial Post* analysis pointed out, First Nations' hardships had been long coming: the fur trade had largely collapsed after World War II, forcing Nelson House trappers to sell their harvest at one-third the price of 1945; family allowances and schooling kept children away from the trap lines; and Euro-Canadian economic expansion was now seriously encroaching on Nisichawayasihk Cree territory through INCO's nickel mine and smelter and the Kelsey Generating Station, opened by Manitoba Hydro in 1960, 200 kilometres east on the Nelson River, to supply the needs of INCO.²⁹

The federal government initially agreed to lend an air force plane to the Salvation Army for the airlift of food and supplies to Nelson House, only to withdraw the plan after an Indian agent, who toured half of the homes, reported "no suffering, privation or urgent need among the Indians." Richard Bell, the minister of Citizenship and Immigration in charge of the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB), understood the need for "the assistance of Christmas Comfort from the Salvation Army," but one of their planes would not be necessary. Moreover, according to an editorialist for the *Ottawa Citizen*, fast relief would not accord with the federal policy of equal treatment for all bands.³⁰ In the meantime, the federal representative in The Pas, 400 kilometres southwest of Thompson, went to Thompson to see about the employment situation. INCO's plant manager announced

that he would hire 12 Indians. He insisted, "there had never been a policy of discrimination against Indians and that Indians were being hired whenever they could fill the job qualifications for available jobs," but the Roman Catholic Bishop of Keewatin and "the spokesperson for a group of Indians of Thompson" knew better: this represented a change in employment policy.³¹

Manitoba's minister of welfare, John Christianson, declared that the reports of starvation were false: his administration provided social assistance and relief to non-treaty Indians and Metis, as did the federal IAB for status Indians. The problems of the Indians and Metis were "indeed serious. They are the results of generations of neglect, oversight and apathy." Emotional reactions to journalists' reports would do more damage than good to First Nations, and measures were needed to "restore their ethnic pride so they will learn to build good lives for themselves."³² But the charges of famine were not easily dismissed. They were immediately brought to the attention of the Manitoba House of Assembly by the Liberal opposition, who referred to a similar scare nine months earlier, this time for the Prophet River Reserve in northern British Columbia. The Progressive Conservative Premier Duff Roblin had just been re-elected for a second mandate, but he was still campaigning in the north where the elections had been deferred until 4 January, and these were the first provincial elections where status Indians could vote. He arranged a meeting with representatives of the residents of Nelson House and their Chief Gilbert MacDonald for Thursday, 27 December, at the international airport in Thompson, where he flew in the company of Robert Langin, the supervisor of field services for the provincial welfare department's community development services.³³

Chief MacDonald said that the Nelson House Indians needed the food and blankets that were sent by the Salvation Army but that the real problem was that they were "starving for work." Only about ten men from the settlement had worked for the International Nickel Company at Thompson; all of them were now unemployed and existed on welfare. The chief wanted to go to Winnipeg to discuss the problem of training the young people of his band so that they could get jobs and "can live and be happy like good white men."³⁴ He asked for "assurance that Inco [*sic*] would hire Indians on a ratio of 35 out

of every 100 employees.”³⁵ In a press conference by phone from Thompson, Premier Roblin echoed Chief MacDonald’s understanding: the people he had met were “hungry for jobs.” He announced, “Nelson House is only the fringe. There are 50,000 Indians all around Manitoba’ who need job opportunities.”³⁶ Roblin returned to Winnipeg in company of Chief MacDonald (See Figure 2).



Figure 2: Manitoba Premier Duff Roblin (left) returning to Winnipeg after a trip to Thompson to investigate allegations of famine in Nelson House, in company of Chief Gilbert MacDonald of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, and his interpreter, William Thomas (right). At their request, they were about to meet government officials in the province’s capital, to speak about employment issues in the north of the province.

Source: *Winnipeg Free Press* (29 December 1962), 1. With permission of the *WFP*.

An agreement was concluded by which the construction of a winter road would start in the new year, in advance of what had already been planned, and the building of an airstrip for medical supplies to reach Nelson House during "freeze up and break up periods" would be underway by the end of January, both built with Indian manpower. Provincial engineers would arrive on site immediately. Work for the road began two days before the election in the north, amid Liberal accusations of electioneering and false promises.³⁷ By the end of February, 60 miles of road were completed. The First Nations were now asking for a snowmobile that would allow regular transportation from Thompson to Nelson House. The director of community development services for Indians in Manitoba approached Dalziel of Oxfam to purchase a snowmobile and spare parts, "to enable the Indians to bring their furs and fish into the town for market purposes." Oxfam, he thought, would be less likely to awaken the suspicions of trade unions. A month later, Chief Gilbert MacDonald and the local member of the provincial Legislative Assembly attended an official presentation of the snowmobile.³⁸ The earlier shift from emergency relief to aid to a permanent transportation system and economic initiatives had partly come from Aboriginal demands in a process of "indigenization of ideas" common to histories of development.³⁹

These short-term answers would be followed by economic projects, such as the power development on the Nelson River and a technical school in The Pas. These had already been planned, but in the wake of the emergency, Chief MacDonald was invited to discuss them with federal and provincial representatives. Government officials projected 1,500 jobs for Indians. More broadly, Premier Roblin committed his administration to "long term development," using the five-year-old community development services of the province, which "had worked so successfully in other Indian and Metis settlements."⁴⁰ He promised community development officers for Nelson House by the end of January to "help the Indians overcome their problem but ... the initiative must come from the Indians themselves."⁴¹ Manitoba officers counted among the pioneers of this method, which they had based on United Nations activities in the "under-developed countries."⁴² In such programs, the concern for

long-term influence, permanent infrastructures, and democratic institutions contrasted with the charitable and punctual relief operations envisaged by Oxfam and the Salvation Army in December 1962, or even the kind of personalized understanding promoted by Colonel Widdowson: the snowmobile, the jobs for INCO, the road, and community development projects ready to answer First Nations' demands all spoke of a measure of empowerment. Indeed, on his visit to Winnipeg, Chief MacDonald told the press that Roblin was "the first person of authority who has taken our suggestions seriously and is interested in our needs. I have the responsibility of every northern Indian and we hope his promises come true."⁴³ On 4 January, Roblin retained the two Conservative seats of the north, a testament, according to the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix*, of his "solid support amongst northern Indian population" in general, and the success of his visit to the Nelson House area in particular.⁴⁴

First Nations picketing in Thompson and reports of famine at Nelson House were now leading to wider "policies ... likely to affect relationships between corporations, prospective investors, and government through the Canadian North," and even business firms of the south.⁴⁵ In a long analysis of the situation published in February 1963, the *Financial Post* placed Nelson House in context: federal elections were anticipated in the spring, and the Indian vote was equally crucial for federal incumbents; the conditions of First Nations was a topic on which the Soviet Union frequently embarrassed Canada at the United Nations; given the increase in aboriginal population and the depletion of traditional sources of subsistence, their welfare would become costly unless they became wage earners and tax payers. The same article reported that a few weeks into the New Year, INCO representatives had come to Ottawa for a meeting on Indian employment and the creating of an advisory committee on the matter. Early attempts by provincial and federal governments to give responsibility for the welfare of the local First Nations to companies investing in the north had to be abandoned. INCO impressed on politicians that they could not absorb the rising population of First Nations of working age locally, and called for the government to act as an intermediary for wider solutions, away from the current policy of encouragement of traditional occupations. These solutions would involve training, not only in industrial skills but

also in skills not required in a trapping economy: punctuality, impersonal hiring practices, and the payment of taxes and deductions.⁴⁶

Oxfam's director in Toronto, Albert Dalziel, highly valued its role in the Manitoba project, both for the future of the NGO in Canada and for First Nations' recipients. First, it had proved Oxfam's readiness to engage in relief projects in Canada, and the balance of \$425.21 could be reserved for future calls. Second, thanks partly to Oxfam's action, "the Federal Government [had been stimulated] into long term planning to improve conditions and immediate action in laying a road from the nearest township of Thompson to the Indian Reserve at Nelson House. Lack of such facility for communication has been one of the prime causes of want and distress."⁴⁷ Blankets and snowmobiles might be a far step from airstrips and employment, but the significance of Oxfam's support was confirmed in March by the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, a lay group of Canadian citizens concerned about Aboriginal issues, when they met with Colonel Widdowson who was back in Toronto. "Oxfam's entry into the Eskimo-Indian field of Relief through our grant to the Salvation Army for the Nelson House emergency," Widdowson reported to Oxford, "has stirred the public and government conscience as regards the deplorable conditions of those people."⁴⁸

At first, General Secretary Leslie Kirkley was also enthusiastic about the publicity value of the relief operation for the British newspapers and for Oxfam's bulletin in the United Kingdom.⁴⁹ Dalziel sent pictures and press reports of the presentation of the snowmobile to the "Indians" of Nelson House. He believed that the media exposure in Canada had given Oxfam the publicity it was seeking to boost the profile of the NGO in Canada, belying the warnings he had received initially that "little if any public sympathy would be induced by appeals to meet emergency of need in these areas."⁵⁰ "It was a totally worthwhile endeavor," he wrote to Kirkley, "and it was good that so early in our establishment we were able to prove the sincerity of our intention to meet an emergency within Canada when necessary."⁵¹ Why is it, then, that Oxfam would never publicly bank on the success of Nelson House and that Canada's First Nations would largely be excluded from campaigns and projects financed by Oxfam Canada for many years to come?

Canada's main churches, who already regarded Oxfam's attempt to raise money for international aid with suspicion, resented the non-sectarian Oxfam's intrusion on their turf. At first, missionaries at Nelson House were reported to be severely depressed by the despair of First Nations peoples, and local pastors of the United and the Roman Catholic churches had contributed to the distribution of the goods sent in late December 1962 by the Salvation Army.⁵² But Widdowson learned later from the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada that famine relief "had raised a storm . . . against the [Salvation] Army who were accused of entering upon Mission premises of the [United Church] of Canada and the Anglican Church."⁵³ These church groups had traditionally received a prominent role in the welfare and education of northern First Nations, in close cooperation with government agencies.⁵⁴ Disagreement between denominations "concerning the need and agency for urgent welfare-supply to the Nelson House Indian community" was important enough for the IEAC to ask the Canadian Council of Churches to coordinate welfare provisions.⁵⁵ In the spring of 1963, a discouraged Dalziel wrote to Kirkley: "You may be surprised to learn this, but the situation is so different from the cooperative attitude of the churches in Gt. Britain. The Canadian Council of Churches made it clear that they did not welcome Oxfam of Canada if it intended to engage in fund-raising." In addition, the Anglican Primate had written Dalziel that "whilst he appreciated the splendid work Oxfam was doing, he did not consider it was necessary for [an] English relief organization to extend its operations to Canada!"⁵⁶ The warnings proved severe enough to stir the humanitarian agency away from the field.

The Project of a Northern Field Worker: Oxfam, Community Development, and the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada 1963–1968

An important and indirect effect of the Nelson House operation on Oxfam's relations with First Nations was that it attracted the attention of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada. The IEAC, introduced earlier as it conveyed to Colonel Widdowson the resentment of Canadian churches, was established in 1958 out of the Canadian

Association for Adult Education (CAAE) work with First Nations. As early as January 1963, its executive director, John Melling, had phoned to congratulate Dalziel "on behalf of his committee and admitted that we had 'really caught them napping'."⁵⁷ Melling had probably known about Oxfam previously, not only because he had studied philosophy and politics in Oxford before the Second World War, but also because of his own work of relief in Europe during the conflict.⁵⁸ Mindful of the short-lived impact of aid operations, the IEAC tried to steer Oxfam in the direction of more permanent actions. The hardship of Nelson House, the "convergence of Indian canoes on the INCO settlement at Thompson; the protest-demonstration at the company's gates; ... the angry stirrings of unemployed Indians much further afield" represented a series of "combustible situations ... smelled ... by our sensitive mass-media folks" of the same year, which were followed by a few quieter months and, by May 1963, "an almost suspension of public interest in our work." They understood that famine and the threat of protest it entailed "disturbed people's imagination" more than the chronic problems of housing of quiet local populations and that, in the end, most Canadians were neither knowledgeable nor interested in the situation of First Nations. The IEAC sought to work in the longer term, away from the calendar of catastrophes, to educate the public and the media and to encourage projects aimed at these chronic social problems.⁵⁹

The conditions outlined above explain why in the summer of 1963 John Melling tried to interest Oxfam in paying \$30,000 towards the training and employment of a "Northern field worker" for territories not covered by governments' jurisdictions and programs,⁶⁰ concerning general (and not basic) human needs, and promoting self-help.⁶¹ The IEAC Northern Service Committee⁶² had already conducted ad hoc visits in these places, but these were not enough to service First Nations. A field worker would do a much better job at identifying needs and means, and encouraging programs, but their attempts to raise money had been unsuccessful so far.⁶³

"Community development" was central to the ideals of the IEAC. Indeed, John Melling had been chosen as the director five years earlier with this very method in mind. An adult educator and community organizer in Cornwall, England, from 1945 to 1947, he

moved to the University of Leeds' Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, until he was hired by the IEAC. On arrival in Toronto, he started working with non-status Indians to foster collaborations between First Nations and Euro-Canadians. For this, he obtained the assent of the Indian Affairs Branch, trusting that the Canadian government adhered to the equality for native peoples in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1962, however, when this work brought him further north to meet status Indians on reserves, he formed the radical opinion that the "complete subjugation" of Indians lead to much "dependency and apathy." He also witnessed "a *new* feeling of nationalism amongst Indian Canadians and [saw that] new leaders are emerging among them."⁶⁴ Community development was a broad concept and Melling started advocating autonomy and agency amongst First Nations, away from IEAC's more patronizing and hierarchical projects, such as leadership training for young men and the creation of Indian Homemakers Clubs for women.⁶⁵

In March 1963, the IEAC sent its brief to Oxford requesting funds for a "Northern Field Worker Project: Operation Northland" to bridge distances and mutual ignorance between northern Indian and southern European communities, and to educate northern native communities in participating in public life. Melling insisted that the IEAC, as "an independent and widely representative body," was best placed for this "important and urgent" work:

The more northerly parts of Canada, being hidden from the public gaze and sometimes from the scrutiny of public authority, are yielding to us from time to time rumours of *extremely disturbing* events that can neither be confirmed nor denied. If democratic Canada is to become *one* nation, reliable knowledge about what is happening within its borders and resolute action to secure that we operate as a civilized national community are absolute prerequisites. The Field Worker would be a contribution to these ends.⁶⁶

When the visiting agent Widdowson met Melling the same month in Toronto, he promised to make a recommendation in support of

the required \$30,000 to his superiors once back in Oxford after his visit to the United States. Encouraged by his reaction, the IEAC prepared a list of possible candidates, secured the cooperation of the IAB for assistance "in the first area of his proposed activities, including a 'Government House' in the Arctic community of Aklawik; and ... worked out a whole area of the Mackenzie Delta and Northern Yukon in which the worker would function."⁶⁷ In Oxford, the director had the project examined by its Overseas Aid Office, but by May, IEAC officials still had no news from Oxford, and Kirkley admitted having "inadvertently overlooked" the matter.⁶⁸ He referred the case back to Toronto, where he found Dalziel offended by Melling's direct appeal to Oxford, a harbinger of many tensions to come: the Toronto office should have been the one to channel the request, "not only because such procedure would give authority to our relationship with the parent body and give status to our position in relation to other organizations here, but because we are familiar with the facts concerning needs in Canada and this applies particularly in regard to the Indian-Eskimo situation." In addition, Dalziel would be responsible for spending this money. His reluctance might have come from the fact that his relations with provincial authorities were warming up. Indeed, by June 1963, the government of Manitoba had sent to Oxfam of Canada "an extensive report on conditions amongst Indians and Eskimos in the Far North together with a request that Oxfam assist in a number of very worthy projects." Dalziel suggested that the IEAC application "should be considered as part of a broad scheme to benefit Indians and Eskimos and should embrace such a request as Mr. Melling has made to the Oxford Committee direct."⁶⁹ Nothing had come of it when, at the end of 1963, Dalziel withdrew from the organization for health reasons. On the whole, his tenure had been a disappointment to the Oxford staff who had expected a much more rapid expansion.

The main leader of Oxfam in Canada for the subsequent nine months was an envoy from Oxford, Lynn Ten Kate, one of the first organizers of charity shops pioneered in the United Kingdom by Oxfam, and of the sale of third world crafts.⁷⁰ In her first report to Kirkley, written in mid-December 1963, she confirmed that the grant to Nelson House had been "the centre of a great controversy between

the government, newspapers and the Salvation Army. The government issued a statement that no emergency existed and that supplementary feeding of these people was wrong, because it upset the long term planning, of their department.”⁷¹ To make things worse, she wrote, the Salvation Army had received “98% of the credit” for any benefits that might have ensued. By then, Kirkley thought that the First Nations experiment had been mislead, and he wrote Ten Kate: “I can imagine how difficult it is too live down to the mistake that we apparently made in regard to our initial grant to Northern Manitoba.” The idea of helping First Nations should be abandoned in favour of more promising projects for the popularity of Oxfam, which concerned far away causes. At the end of the summer of 1964, Lynn Ten Kate left the Toronto office in the hands of a Canadian, Kirk Bell, who made aid to the global South communities the main staple of his work.⁷²

In 1966, the deputy director of Oxfam International, Henry Fletcher, moved his family from Oxford to Toronto to become the executive director of Oxfam in Canada. An engineer and officer of the British army, he came to Oxfam four years after resigning in opposition to his country’s action in Suez, where he had been part of the invasion of 1956.⁷³ When Fletcher toured Canada in late 1963 and, again, in 1965 he had showed sympathy for the idea of aid to First Nations. Among the “various charitable organizations” he visited was the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, and the Red Cross told him that there was a “feeling Indian and Eskimos [would be a] good responsibility.” He had even drawn plans to divide responsibilities for this type of Canadian work between Oxford and Toronto.⁷⁴ But once he became director of Oxfam Canada, when he faced an emergency similar to that at Nelson House in 1962, he refused to intervene. The year he arrived, following an article in the *London Daily Mail* on Canadian Indians as victims of famine, the London-based Anti-Slavery Society asked Oxford about the possibility of aiding and putting pressure on the Canadian government.⁷⁵ Asked by his superiors for an opinion, Fletcher wrote that the newspaper report “inclined to be sensational,” and that the use of the word famine was inappropriate. He recalled to their attention the position of the federal and provincial governments: there was neither urgent distress nor existing problems which they could not alleviate,

and judged that Oxfam aided peoples in more difficult situations elsewhere. In the meantime, it was more important to “develop the spirit of self-help among the Indian people and ... [assist] them in finding ways to be self-supporting with dignity.”⁷⁶ Trusting Fletcher, the Anti-Slavery Society withdrew its request, writing sympathetically about the “difficulty ... confronting any government seeking to reconcile the conflicting merits of protection/preservation and integration/assimilation in deciding its policy regarding primitive or quasi-primitive minorities.”⁷⁷ As a result of Fletcher’s unwillingness, the annual report of Oxfam Canada that year mentioned only a small “Earmarked donations toward the cost of a truck for the centre which assists Indians and poor people in the Yukon — \$365.”⁷⁸

At the helm of Oxfam Canada for five years, Henry Fletcher presided over expansion, administrative efficiency, financial growth, and an increasing autonomy in the selection and the management of projects directly from Canada.⁷⁹ Already two years after his arrival, Oxfam’s campaigns in the press were meeting with enthusiasm from a public larger and more diverse than the “right kind of persons” and the older charities Dalziel had been in touch with in the early 1960s. The extraordinary success of the sponsored walks “Miles for Millions” of 1967–1968, largely conceived and organized by Fletcher and his wife, figured prominently in the annals of Oxfam at large. Kate Fletcher, who came from a family of missionaries in China and had worked for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency in the aftermath of the war, had collaborated with Henry to organize a sponsored walk for the World Year of the Refugee of 1960 in their former United Kingdom community of Leamington, which became the most successful town for fund-raising that year. Prime Minister Lester Pearson famously headed the Ottawa walk in 1967, which also celebrated Canada’s centennial, to raise funds for the famine struck community of Bihar in northern India. Some of the money raised by the annual marches that followed made its way to Aboriginal projects, but none of the fund-raising slogans seem to have mentioned First Nations, either among the active “Canadian” children or as the passive “Third World” children.⁸⁰ At the end of the 1960s, as Ten Kate and Kirkley had foreseen, the interest of the Canadian public of donors for First Nations paled in the face of its generosity in cam-

paigns for victims of famine in the global South, as a John Yardley-Jones cartoon about the Biafra emergencies of 1967–1968 bitterly stated, which was published in the Edmonton aboriginal newspaper *The Native People*.⁸¹ (See Figure 3)

The archives of Oxfam Canada show that from 1969 several Canadian First Nations groups approached Oxfam directly for the



Figure 3: In 1970, First Nations media compared the enthusiasm of Canadian campaigners in favour of starving peoples in Biafra to their neglect towards natives.

Source: *The Native People* (Edmonton), February 1970, reproduced in the Annual Report of the Indian Eskimo Association of Canada, 1969-1970, Appendix D. Reprinted with permission of the artist, John Yardley-Jones.

funding of projects designed to assist their communities with social development, education, and travel, ultimately enabling them to become more involved in public life. These demands reflected the heightened political claims of First Nations in the late 1960s. Several were the by-products of the federal Department of Indian Affairs' withdrawal of funding for the First Nations groups that were becoming too critical, such as Indian Homemaker's Association of Vancouver.⁸² In the face of similar pressures, the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada increased its native membership and adopted a supportive role of research and support.⁸³ Meanwhile in Ottawa, the Indian Affairs Branch underwent transformations, helped by the election of Liberals to the federal government and the retirement of several high-level civil servants. By 1965, the IAB included a service section devoted to community development. It hired 25 community development officers and seven regional supervisors, and they turned to the IEAC for guidance in overcoming large difficulties.⁸⁴ The reach of the federal government in the Far North remaining weak, and it entrusted the Indian Eskimo Association with some resources to send "an Eskimo field worker to help in setting up a Radio Forum for Indians and Eskimos of the Mackenzie Delta," the very project Oxfam had declined to fund a year before.⁸⁵ In what came to be known as DELCAP (Delta Community Action Program), the federal Department of Health and Welfare, the Indian Affairs Branch, and the North West Territory Council funded three IEAC community workers to start an "experiment" in collaboration with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Northern Service: discussions with communities would lead to nine radio programs for the Loucheux people, which would "generally prepare them in the use of the democratic process in the realization of their aspirations."⁸⁶

Meanwhile, in the assessment of the demands for aid coming from First Nations, Oxfam Canada continued to act with much caution. Accordingly, some politicized aboriginal groups became weary of the NGO's support, probably mindful of the proximity of the NGO to the government of the day. In 1971, the year of Henry Fletcher's departure, the Kipawa band of Northern Quebec abandoned one grant for fear of provoking political jealousies: "I must express my gratitude for the interest indicated by Oxfam to assist

native people in their struggle but funding at this point will only create more problems.”⁸⁷ These decisions reflect the ambivalence of Oxfam, an organization which, by the turn of the 1970s in Oxford as in Toronto, was deeply divided on the issues of political action, criticism, and education on international development.⁸⁸

The “Talking Bird”: Oxfam and the Float Plane of the Yukon Native Brotherhood (1971)

The departure of Henry Fletcher signaled a shift in internal and international action. In early 1971, the new executive director of Oxfam Canada, Jack Shea, had none of his predecessors’ doubts about the desirability of aid to First Nations. Trained in urban sociology in Indiana and Toronto, Shea was chosen for his experiences with governments and a newer kind of church, which differed markedly from the experiences of Fletcher, Ten Kate, or Dalziel. He had been director of the Social Action Department of the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops, and a civil servant specializing in community development for the welfare recipients of Ontario benefits.⁸⁹ His arrival marked the increasing influence of those within Oxfam Canada who harboured a more critical attitude towards the federal government’s international policies and who supported liberation movements in the global South. They had already produced a criticism of Trudeau’s review of foreign policy, the White Paper of 1968–1970, and were running a successful program of children and adult education on developing countries.⁹⁰ It is in this context that later in 1971, at the demand of the three-year-old Yukon Native Brotherhood (YNB), the IEAC finally succeeded in obtaining support from Oxfam for the project of a field worker.⁹¹

Reflecting on the difficulty to pursue the goals of community development in the Far North, the IEAC had already drawn a direct connection between the isolation of First Nations and the lack of political rights. Its annual report of 1969, for instance, observed that among Eskimos:

The distance separating communities has made it virtually impossible for these groups to communicate with the other. Accordingly, there has been no consensus develop among them about what is happening in their land and

what might be done jointly to defend their rights. Politically, at this stage, they are nonentities. The white man is steadily taking over their land on the assumption that the Eskimo is just another Canadian with no special claim to the land.⁹²

After the war, ill-fated federal projects to encourage First Nations to form stable communities had offered one solution to this problem. So had previous radio programs for and about northern communities.⁹³ In 1970, the YNB envisaged that meaningful and frequent communications between scattered and mobile indigenous peoples and between natives and non-native peoples would provide the sense of community they desired. It asked the IEAC for a floating airplane to facilitate the transportation of the Metis journalist Wally Firth between communities of the North to foster the bonds within the community, the participation of First Nations peoples in public life, and the fostering of knowledge about northern communities in southern populations through radio and television programming.⁹⁴ The project was conceived around the expertise of Firth, who had become IEAC's executive secretary in the North. A professional broadcaster with ten years of experience with the CBC and an seasoned pilot,⁹⁵ he would fly to Whitehorse with the IEAC's plane and work closely with the YNB on developing their communications program among the 12 Indian bands in the Yukon. Further, the use of the plane and his know-how could benefit the Yellowknife area and the Mackenzie Delta, Northwest Territories. The board of the IEAC voted in favour of obtaining the funds to purchase such an aircraft, and set to work to find contributors. The first application to Oxfam Canada asked for \$45,000 over three years for the purchase, insurance, maintenance, and general upkeep of the aircraft. The plane was to be outfitted with skis, wheels, floats, as well as a northern survival package and specialized radio equipment for the region. Salary for one person and training for the equipment would come from the IEAC's general revenue. Oxfam granted \$25,000 to the IEAC for the purchase an aircraft and \$14,000 for the rest. On 15 July 1971, the IEAC took possession of a Cessna 185 at Toronto Island Airport. In the words of new Director Shea, the aircraft would

give the IEAC a “degree of mobility in the isolated communities of the north while facilitating the important and necessary development of communication and organization among the needed adjustments for groups of people who were small in number and dispersed.”⁹⁶

A major grant such as this alerted the public again to comparisons with third-world living conditions in a first-world country. Where Dalziel’s resolve had lacked sufficient material backing and British support to face Canadian governments and churches, and where Kirkley, Ten Kate, and Fletcher believed that the relative well being of Canada’s First Nations compared to those of the global South prevented Oxfam’s support, Executive Director Shea held his ground. The NGO did not have to spare Canada’s First Nations policy more than its foreign policy. On 20 July 1971, the editorial of the *Windsor Star*, after establishing the credentials of Oxfam (“no new organization, no starry-eyed bunch of do-gooders”), pointed at the ensuing impact on Canada’s international reputation:

Many ask the embarrassing question: why is it necessary for Oxfam to make grants in one of the wealthiest nations in the world? Canada is not doing enough, privately or through our government which should be taking the lead, to share our prosperity and natural bounty with the world’s needy. That we cannot even meet the needs in our own country, but must depend on an organization like Oxfam, with so many grave demands upon it through the world, paints a bleak picture of Canada.⁹⁷

In a letter to the editor a week later, a volunteer with Oxfam insisted, “The reasons and causes of under-development are the same the world over,” that their presence in “lovely prosperous” Canada showed how vulnerable “overcrowded” countries were; private concerns such as Oxfam were often spearheading governments’ efforts, and the plane “might well be the means whereby Canadians might never again have to excuse themselves for the neglect of their countrymen.”⁹⁸ Ironically, Shea was helped in this endeavor by the financial stability and the autonomy inherited from his predecessors, a reality not available to Dalziel ten years earlier. Moreover, it might have been

harder for Fletcher, who came from the United Kingdom, to criticize the Canadian government than it was for a Canadian director.

The aircraft was bought second-hand at Inuvik, the best-equipped plane for the IEAC's needs, a Joint Aircraft Management Committee was established in November 1971, and the IEAC hired a professional fund-raising organization to ensure the maintenance of the machine.⁹⁹ The picture of Firth and his plane made it to the second page of Oxfam Canada's annual report that year, and to the report of the IEAC. (See Figure 4) The plane served its purpose of communications so well that the demand exceeded Firth's capacity, who accumulated a waiting list of six months. The Metis pilot and journalist even recorded his disappointment at the rushed work that often ensued, and he called for a better coordination of the plane's activities.¹⁰⁰ The "talking bird" as it came to be known eased travel between communities of the North, and to other areas within the country for a variety of matters, from the investigation of a cabin construction to a trip to bring the Indian Princess Lorraine Stick to Dawson City. On 27 July 1971, alone, several flights "were made over the proposed site of the new Whitehorse Indian village ... the next day [Yukon Native] Brotherhood Chief Elijah Smith was flown to Aisha to visit people living in [the] remote community and to make arrangements for the round-up of horses for the Dawson City Indian Rodeo, a venture which [was] part of a scheme designed to further understanding and cooperation between Bands."¹⁰¹ In addition, the aircraft helped telecommunications: pilot Firth recorded many conversations with people in the Yukon area. The tapes he compiled were used in the production of a new CBC radio program "Dunn Quandro," "a venture for native peoples heard Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm over nearly the whole of the Yukon." By making Firth better known, the IEAC believed that radio programs and frequent visits would foster unity.¹⁰²

The political administrative ramifications of the "talking bird" were remarkable. Early on, Firth transported members of the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB).¹⁰³ One year after the start of the project, on 26 July 1972, the Manitoba Metis Federation requested the use of the plane and pilot for a nine-day trip to allow its president, Angus Spence, and the president of the Native Council of Canada, A.E. Belcourt, to visit the communities of Churchill, Gillam, Split Lake,



Figure 4: Wally Firth, Metis “Airplane pilot, broadcaster, flying instructor, fur trader, native rights,” in front of Winnipeg, with the plane Oxfam Canada helped the Indian Eskimo Association of Canada purchase in 1971 for the Yukon Native Brotherhood, to enhance communications amongst First Nations of the far north and between them and southern Canadian communities.

Source: “Aircraft for IEA’s northern Programs,” Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, *Bulletin*, no.12 (5 July 1971): 1. LAC, Oxfam Canada, MG 28, I 270 , vol. 30, file 45, Indian-Eskimo Association - Correspondence, press release and other material re. grant given by Oxfam (1 of 2), 1971.

Permission to reprint the image from Oxfam Canada.

Telford, Oxford House, God’s House, Red Sucker, Islands Lake, St. Teresa, Warren Landing, Norway House, Cross Lake, Wabowdon, Ticket Portage, Piketonay, and Oxfam’s previous recipients at Nelson House and Thompson, at the pace of two communities per day. Furthermore, the IEAC project helped First Nations’ increasing ven-

tures in the administration of social services that provincial and federal authorities were now delegating in a piecemeal fashion.¹⁰⁴ The plane helped transport native social and education workers to remote areas, conduct medical surveys, coordinate housing initiatives in remote areas, assess hunting grounds destroyed by forest fires, distribute educational films, and evaluate timber reserves.¹⁰⁵ The IEAC, now named Canadian Association for the Support of Native Peoples, and its native partners promoted flight training for native pilots who would be able not only to serve their own communities but also to provide the aviation industry new employees. They dreamed that each First Nations organization could own its own aircraft within six months.¹⁰⁶ After a year of operation, the IEAC annual report marveled at the plane's success for the communications, administrative, and political life of First Nations:

This was one of the happiest and proudest occasions for the Association for some time Since [mid-July] the aircraft had logged 175 hours in the Yukon and NWTs. Significant developments have been made possible, such as the formation of the N.W.T. non-status Indians Association, development of a communications' programme in the Yukon, assessment of a band administrator's training course in the Yukon, and collection of research material for the N.W.T. Indian Brotherhood. The aircraft will be extensively used throughout the summer and fall of 1972 in a variety of program areas.¹⁰⁷

Towards Aboriginal Rights

The plane accompanied a process of politicization that brought First Nations peoples closer to the centre of Canadian politics. A decade after the INCO affair in Thompson, First Nations better organized and articulated their grievances towards mining interests. On 21 July 1971, the plane went from Toronto to Whitehorse to pick up representatives of the Yukon Native Brotherhood and fly them to Fargo where they met with representatives of the Anvil Mining Corporation to discuss concerns related to the operation of the Carmacks Coal Mines.¹⁰⁸ Oxfam Canada's money was now helping

to fly those who directly opposed the federal government's policy towards First Nations, who claimed land, and who denounced the federal government's White Paper of 1969, in which the Liberal government proposed to abolish the Indian Act in the name of civic equality. According to historian of aboriginal welfare Hugh Shewell, community development "left a legacy for Aboriginal politics: it helped re-establish a more radical Indian leadership, which began to agitate consistently for Indian rights and sovereignty."¹⁰⁹

Jack Shea, the Executive Director of Oxfam Canada, described the grant for the plane for the Yukon Native Brotherhood as a breakthrough: although Oxfam was already involved in projects in 120 countries, this was the first project of its kind.¹¹⁰ Four years later, in 1975, Oxfam Canada went further by directly supporting the Dene's protest against the Mackenzie Valley pipeline.¹¹¹ Oxfam Chairman Meyer Brownstone, Professor of Political Economy at York University and former economic advisor in the socialist cabinet of Saskatchewan, also linked First Nations' work with the NGO's tradition of help to the developing world: "It is the first time that Oxfam, which supports the self-initiatives of developing communities throughout the world, has embarked on such a program in Canada."¹¹² Like Jack Shea, Meyer Brownstone belonged, long before he came to lead Oxfam Canada, to a larger movement towards a new left, and a new Canadian nationalism, which were at once changing Oxfam and fostered by it.

First Nations peoples themselves were aware of the similarities with the global South when the reputation of Wally Firth's plane made it to South Africa in the pages of the *Race Relations News*.¹¹³ Already three years earlier, aboriginal community development officers of the IAB had asked the IEAC executive director to visit the Caribbean and Mexico to "observe first hand community development under a variety of structures and sponsorship, achieving a varying degree of success."¹¹⁴ One of these development officers hired in 1965, George Manuel of the Secwepemc people of British Columbia, became the chief of the National Indian Brotherhood (1970–1978), a role in which he met with leaders of the Third World, such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. It is in this context that Canada's First Nations, increasingly mindful of their differences from the Third

World, started to associate with indigenous people from other countries and continents.¹¹⁵ The NIB received consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1974, where the problems of indigenous nations within the rich north proved distinct enough, however, to call for original institutions. Manuel helped the foundation of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples the following year, at a ceremony held on Nuu-chah-nulth territory, on the pacific coast of Canada, and was its President until 1981. The notion of a "Fourth World" came to designate the inequality facing indigenous populations in wealthy countries and the movement towards international recognition of aboriginal rights and global land claims was established.¹¹⁶ Oxfam now works with First Nations within these parameters. In Newfoundland, it provided background support to several Innu struggles and initiatives, such as the campaign against low-level flying exercises, and to transnational exchanges, such as the visit of the South African company "Puppets against Aids" to Sheshatshit in the mid-1990s.¹¹⁷ The web pages of Oxfam France and Oxfam Australia give the pride of place to similar activities.¹¹⁸

The official history tells that "it took the radicalization of the North American youth in the late 1960s, largely wrought by Vietnam and a sense of disgust with Western imperialism, to create a more conducive climate. And then the Oxfams that flourished in such hot houses were different, radically, and controversially, from the careful balance of British pragmatism and passion."¹¹⁹ What a close study of Oxfam and its partners' early projects towards Canadian First Nations might well show is that the radicalization of Oxfam officers, and of their allies among First Nations peoples, was not only an effect of these larger forces. Oxfam's discovery of internal situations of imperialism, its subsequent efforts to publicize them and search for local remedies in conjunction with First Nations, played their own part, however modest, in the changing political identities and mobilizations of the late 1960s.

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DOMINIQUE MARSHALL est professeure au département d'histoire de l'Université Carleton où elle enseigne l'histoire de l'aide humanitaire internationale, l'histoire du Canada et du Québec ainsi que l'histoire de la pauvreté, du bien-être social, de l'État et des familles. Parallèlement à son projet sur l'histoire d'Oxfam, elle travaille sur l'histoire des droits des enfants ainsi que sur celle du Comité de protection de l'enfance de la Société des Nations et de la Conférence internationale pour l'enfance africaine de 1931.

Endnotes:

- 1 The newspaper *The World's Children* documented the Save the Children Fund's interest in First Nations from Canada and Australia in the mid-1940s; in the 1920s, the Scottish branch of the British Anti-Slavery Society welcomed Seven Nations Chief Deskaheh on his way back from the League of Nations where he had pleaded against the government of Canada's invasion of his nation's territory, and where he had been helped by the Swiss Bureau International pour la défense des indigènes. Donald Smith, "DESKAHEH (Levi General)," Dictionary of Canadian Biography

- Online, www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?id_nbr=8103, <viewed 1 September 2013>. In fact, humanitarians played a role in the very drafting of Canada's Indian policy; Hugh Shewell, "Bitterness behind every Smiling Face': Community Development and Canada's First Nations," *Canadian Historical Review*, 83, no. 1 (March 2002), note 2. For an earlier period, see Judith Fingard, "The New England Company and the New Brunswick Indians, 1786–1826: a comment on the colonial perversion of British benevolence," *Acadiensis* 1, no. 2 (1971–1972): 29–42; and Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Canada's Global Villagers: CUSO in Development, 1961–86* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013) Forthcoming.
- 2 After I consulted it on Oxfam's own premises, from 2004 to 2010, the archives of the main office in the United Kingdom (hereafter AOxfam) were acquired by the Bodleian Library where it is currently being catalogued. A number of historical accounts were published by witnesses, such as Mervyn Jones, *Two Ears of Corn: Oxfam in Action* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965); Peter Gill, *Drops in the Ocean. The Work of Oxfam, 1960–1970* (London: Macdonald Unit, 1970); *Picture of Oxfam. 50 Years for a Fairer World* (Oxford: Oxfam, 1992), prepared by Elizabeth Stamp. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary, journalist Maggie Black wrote the official history, *A Cause for Our Time: Oxfam: the First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Since then, a number of studies have been published, notably by Michael Jennings, *Surrogates of the State: NGOs, Development, and Ujamaa in Tanzania* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2008); "Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM)" in *AidWatch NGO Directory: AidWatch - Observatoire de l'Action Humanitaire* (2010) www.observatoire-humanitaire.org/fusion.php?l=&id=77 <viewed 29 January 2013>; and Matthew Hilton, "Oxfam" in *A Historical Guide to Development in Britain*, eds. Matthew Hilton, Nick Crowson, James McKay, and Jean-François Mouhot (Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 183–5. The papers of Oxfam Canada up to the 1980s are at Library and Archives Canada (hereafter OC), Oxfam of Canada fonds (hereafter OC), MG28-I270, with the remainder still in the main office in Ottawa. Tamara Myers has used them for a paper on Miles for Millions, cited below. With the exception of those of Calgary, deposited at the Glenbow Archives, the papers of regional offices have not been archived so far. Oxfam Canada's small manuscript history, Ormond McKague, "Oxfam Canada: Origins and Early History. With information from Henry Fletcher and Meyer Brownstone," February 1991, 8 pages, provides a helpful start.
 - 3 Michael Woolcock, Simon Szreter, and Vijayendra Rao, "How and why history matters for development policy" in *History, Historians and*

- Development Policy. A Necessary Dialogue*, eds. C.A Bayly, Vijayendra Rao, Simon Szreter, and Michael Woolcock (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 13; Pierre-Yves Saunier, “Transnational” in *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, eds. Pierre-Yves Saunier and Akira Iriye (Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1047–55; Patricia Clavin, “Defining Transnationalism,” *Contemporary European History* 14 (2005): 421–39.
- 4 Black, 72–4, 102–6 and after; and Jones. Donald G. Harrison, “Oxfam and the rise of development education in England from 1959 to 1979,” (Ph.D. diss., University of London, Institute of Education 2008). Black, 102–6.
 - 5 Black, 100–2.
 - 6 Frank Judd, “Kirkley, Sir (Howard) Leslie (1911–1989),” rev. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *ODNB*) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/view/article/39872, (viewed 13 Feb 2013).
 - 7 “Salvation Army Officer From Africa Supports People-To-People Aid Plan,” *Ottawa Citizen* (24 April 1961), 20. “International Visitor,” *The War Cry* [Bulletin of the Salvation Army in Canada] (27 May 1961), 1, 13, www.salvationist.ca/about-us/history/war-cry-archives/, <viewed 15 July 2012>. Colleagues also introduced him to Senator Cairine Wilson, a longtime humanitarian. For a good study of the dilemmas of neutrality, see Patricia Sellick and Andrew Rigby, “Responding to Children Affected by Armed conflict: A Case Study of Save the Children Fund (1919–1999),” (Ph.D. diss., University of Bradford, 2001).
 - 8 Oxford Committee of Famine Relief, Visit of International Director, Mr. Leslie Kirkley, England, AOxfam, r0185, file entitled “Canada,” Organizations contacted. These included the YMCA World Alliance offices, the Canadian Red Cross, the Lutheran World Service, the United Nations Association of Canada, the Adoption Committee for Refugees, and the Family Services and Catholic Society. Also see in the same file, Kirkley to Dalziel. Kirkley had also corresponded with C. Alexander Brown of Montreal about welfare and organization expertise among Canadians, food surpluses in Canada that could be directed to a systematic policy of famine relief without disturbing the markets. AOxfam, “Canada,” Brown to R.A. Exley, Appeals Officer, 20 March 1962.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, Dalziel to Kirkley, 23 November 1962; *ibid.*, Widdowson to Kirkley, 19 March 1963, said that the SCF of Canada welcomed their arrival and “the widening of the range of overseas agencies as bringing a little new life in a very selective circle.” Other acquaintances confirmed this sentiment. They also met with the International Order Daughters of

- the Empire (IODE); *ibid.*, Dalziel to Kirkley, 1 March 1963.
- 10 Black, 76, 96. AOxfam, “Canada,” Kirkley to Dalziel, 22 August 1962. Dalziel attended the committee meeting and the quarterly council meeting. We know little about Dalziel.
 - 11 AOxfam, “Canada,” Dalziel to Kirkley, 30 April 1963. Some were of his own acquaintances, including the network of Rotary Clubs, others were suggested by Oxford. Dalziel, “Brief on the Development of Oxfam of Canada”, 2 September 1963, International Files, Transfer Files, 9, “Canada.”
 - 12 *Ibid.*, Cole manuscript note, 29 March 1963. B.W. Walker, “Cole, Cecil Jackson (1901–1979),” rev. *ODNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/view/article/31280, <viewed 19 February 2013>.
 - 13 AOxfam, “Canada,” Kirkley to Dalziel, 22 August 1962; Dalziel, “Brief on the Development ... This question is also remembered in McKague. In a letter to Kirkley, Dalziel spoke of “the requirement of the Dept. of Inland Revenue for specific humanitarian objectives within Canada towards which a proportion of any funds raised must be directed,” *ibid.*, 16 October 1962.
 - 14 AOxfam, “Canada,” Kirkley to Dalziel, 22 August 1962. Dalziel attended the CFHC conference in Ottawa in March 1963, which had 78 associated fund-raising agencies. *Ibid.*, Widdowson to Kirkley, 19 March 1963, and attached confidential note. *Ibid.*, R0185, Cole manuscript note, 29 March 1963. Launched two years earlier, the CFHC already had projects in Asia and the Far East, such as a regional training centre in food technology, the mechanization of fishing boats, and a school gardening and nutrition education project. Matthew James Bunch, “All Roads Lead to Rome: Canada, the Freedom From Hunger Campaign, and the Rise of NGOs,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Waterloo, 2007).
 - 15 On this question, Canada was no different than Britain, where Oxfam would soon be involved in a battle for the recognition of aid outside the British Commonwealth as charitable work. Black, 86, 91, 96–7. The name was changed to Oxfam of Canada with the assent of the government of Canada on May 14, 1963; Dalziel, “Brief on the Development ...”
 - 16 AOxfam, “Canada,” Kirkley to Dalziel, 10 August 1962, 18 December 1963, and 20 December 1962. The lawyer was J.M Coyne.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, Dalziel to Kirkley, 16 October 1962. Constitutional responsibility for the health and social welfare of Canada’s First Nations was and still is an object of contention. The Constitution of 1867 and the Indian Act of 1871 allocated it to the federal government; responsibility for the Inuit remained debated, as was that of Indians not recognized as such by

exclusive federal definitions; some institutions, those of child welfare for instance, were often delegated to provincial administrations, and many federal services specifically aimed at Aboriginal peoples were transferred to federal departments working for all citizens.

- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid., “Cables received from Colonel Dalziel, 14.12.62.” The NCN, formerly the Nelson House First Nation, lives in an area delimited by Treaty 5, signed between 1908 and 1910. See also, Dalziel, “Brief on the development...”
- 20 Black, 101. Trent University Archives (hereafter TUA), Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada fonds (hereafter IEAC), 95-006, Annual Report, 1962–1963, 1. AOxfam, “Canada,” Kirkley to Dalziel, 20 December 1962. All IEAC Annual Reports are from the TUA. The history of the IEAC is briefly mentioned in Tom Symons, *A Canadian Life*, ed. Ralph Heintzman (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011), and in the introductory notes from the Trent University Archives.
- 21 AOxfam, “Canada,” Dalziel to Kirkley, 12 January 1963.
- 22 Also see “Airlifting Food To Indians. Existing on Dry Bread and Lynx: Salvation Army,” *Winnipeg Free Press* (hereafter *WFP*) (17 December 1962), 1–14; and “Blankets For Needy Indians May be Left At Free Press” and “Austerity Blamed in Privation,” *ibid.* (19 December 1962), 1, 16. Moulton deplored that the emergency food vouchers allowed by the federal government in such circumstances had not reached the reserve because of transportation restrictions imposed by the government on Indian agents. The reasons for these restrictions are not mentioned and they might be related to the weather. Preece had come from Thompson, Dalziel, “Brief on the development...”
- 23 “Food Airlifted to Hungry Indians,” *Star Phoenix* (20 December 62), 1, 10.
- 24 Ibid. Interestingly, 14 years earlier, the population of Nelson House had been visited by a Canadian medical party to detect tuberculosis in their community, who used equipment and facilities left by the American army after the war, much as the American army had done for the relief workers in Eastern Europe after World War I. Bruce Noton, “Northern Manitoba Treaty Party, 1949,” *Manitoba History* 39 (Spring/Summer 2000), www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/39/treatyparty1949.shtml, <viewed 1 August 2012>.
- 25 “Airlifting Food for Indians,” *WFP* (17 December 1962), 1.
- 26 Minister of Citizenship Bell, cited in “Ottawa Denies Offer,” *WFP* (19 December 1962), 1. “Blankets Still Needed For Northern Indians,” *WFP* (20 December 1963), 1. “Salvation Army Pledges Indian Aid Without Govt,” *Star Phoenix* (18 December 1962), 1. It seems that they were assembled into 150 “food hampers.” “Occasional Aid to Indians

- More Harm than Good,” *Star Phoenix* (20 December 62), 1. “Food Airlifted to Hungry Indians,” *Star Phoenix* (20 December 62), 1. A Community History Project is underway in Thompson Manitoba under the co-supervision of political scientist Caroline Andrew and municipal councillor and leader of the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy Charlene Lafreniere, to record the little known contribution of First Nations to the history of the town.
- 27 McKague.
- 28 Letter from K.A. Valentine to the federal and provincial governments and to newspapers, quoted in “Shipping Aid North by Railway,” *WFP* (18 December 1962), 1, 16. “Three Point Aid Program for Nelson House Indians,” *Star Phoenix* (29 December), 6. The comment on protest technique is from J.K. Edmonds, “Our Fast Growing Indian Problem; Government Realizing Responsibility Role/The Cheaper Market for Pelts Cuts their Traditional Revenue,” *Financial Post* (9 February 1963), 12–13.
- 29 Edmonds. Woolcock et al., 13, 18. Arthur Ray, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). Leonard Bateman, “A History of Electric Power Development in Manitoba, IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers),” *Canadian Review* (Winter 2005): 22–5. “A Brief History of the People of Nisichawayaski Cree Nation, www.ncncree.com/historybook/#/1, <viewed 15 February 2013>.
- 30 “No Emergency Among Indians,” *Globe and Mail* (19 December 1962), 13. “Salvation Army Pledges Indian Aid Without Govt,” *Star Phoenix* (18 December 1962), 1. “The State of Manitoba Indians,” *Ottawa Citizen* (19 December 1962), 6. The *Citizen* added that the solution to this predicament might be to give emergency help to all who needed it. The federal Indian agent on site had told Bell that those who talked of privation did it “for publicity purposes only.”
- 31 “Inco Hires Indians, Say North Report,” *WFP* (20 December 1963), 1.
- 32 “No Starving Indians: Govt,” *WFP* (17 December 1962), 1. “Aid Plans for Indians Harmful,” *Calgary Herald* (18 December 1962), 1. “The State of Manitoba Indians,” editorial, *Ottawa Citizen* (19 December 1962), 6.
- 33 Duff Roblin, cited in *Globe and Mail* (25 December 1962), 3. “Roblin After Information on Indians,” *Star Phoenix* (24 December 1962), 15. The spelling of the chief’s name varies in the sources, including Macdonald, and McDonald, the latter being the form used for the commemorative designation of the local arena.
- 34 John Dafeo, “Quick Start on Indian Project,” *WFP* (29 December 1962), 1. “A program to help Indians to make adjustments so that they could accept jobs in industry” was also the SA officer’s recommendation,

- WFP* (19 December 1962), 16. The lack of employment for First Nations in Thompson in the 1960s is confirmed by the testimonies collected by the Heritage North Museum of Thompson, “Community Memories,” www.heritagethnorthmuseum.ca/, <viewed 14 August 2012>.
- 35 “Indians,” *WFP* (28 December 1963), 4.
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 “Indians Build Road. Airstrip to Start Soon,” *WFP* (3 January 1963), 1. In fact, the road work employed 85 Nelson House residents. *WFP* (29 March 1962) 8. Edmonds pointed out that if construction work on northern large projects could employ First Nation peoples, they were temporary and the infrastructure once finished needed qualified workers to be operated.
- 38 “Relief Committee Presents Snowmobile to Indians,” *Globe and Mail* (28 March 1963), 17. The \$10,000 also paid for the training of a man from the reserve and spare parts. Dalziel was to travel to attend the “official handing over of the snowmobile.” AOxfam, “Canada,” Widdowson to Kirkley, 20 March 1963; Dalziel to Kirkley, 22 February 1963; Dalziel to Kirkley, 30 April 1963. “Bombardier First Over New Road,” *WFP* (28 March 1963), 24. “New Winter Road Boon to Indians,” *ibid.* (29 March 1963), 8. Dalziel, “Brief on the development...”
- 39 “How and Why History Matters” in *Historians Development Policy*, 16.
- 40 Duff Roblin, cited in *Globe and Mail* (25 December 1962), 3. Dafoe, 1. “Indians,” *WFP* (28 December 1963), 4. “Indians Build Road. Airstrip to Start Soon,” *WFP* (3 January 1963), 1.
- 41 “Indians,” *WFP* (28 December 1962), 4. In Thompson, Roblin attended a political rally, with 200 in attendance. “Three Point Aid Program.”
- 42 E.R. McEwen, *Community Development Services for Canadian Indian and Metis Communities*, (Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada of Canada, 1968), 16.
- 43 Dafoe “A program to help Indians to make adjustments so that they could accept jobs in industry” was also the SA officer’s recommendation. *WFP* (19 December 1962), 16.
- 44 “Indian Votes in Deferred Seats Factor in Tory Wins,” *Star Phoenix* (7 January 1963), 6.
- 45 Edmonds, 12–13. He added that quotas for the employment of Indians and Metis would run against the Fair Employment Practices Act.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 Dalziel, “Brief on the development...”; AOxfam, “Canada,” Dalziel to Kirkley, 12 January 1963.
- 48 *Ibid.*, Widdowson to Kirkley, 19 March 1963.
- 49 *Ibid.*, Kirkley to Dalziel, 20 December 1962; and 4 February 1963.
- 50 *Ibid.*, Dalziel to Kirkley, 16 October 1962. The aid to the Indians of Nelson House was amongst the most important projects listed in the

- annual report of Oxfam in the UK for 1962.
- 51 Ibid., Dalziel to Kirkley, 30 April 1963. An article published in the *Globe and Mail* on 28 March 1963, 17, publicized the identity of the NGO. “The Canadian Committee for World Relief is a government-approved extension of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief.”
 - 52 “Roblin to Meet North Delegates, Discuss Indians,” *Globe and Mail* (25 December 1962), 3. AOxfam, “Canada,” Dalziel to Kirkley, 31 July 1963. The SA had included them in a “Nelson House Welfare Community Council” of its creation, together with a nurse and the SA agent from Thompson. “Food Airlifted to Hungry Indians,” *Star Phoenix* (20 December 62), 1.
 - 53 AOxfam, “Canada,” Widdowson to Kirkley, 19 March 1963.
 - 54 Ibid., Widdowson to Kirkley, 22 March 1963.
 - 55 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1962–1963, 14. Also see Edmonds.
 - 56 AOxfam, “Canada,” Archbishop H. Clark mentioned in Dalziel to Kirkley, 31 May 1963.
 - 57 Ibid., Dalziel to Kirkley, 12 January 1963. It was first called the National Commission on the Indian Canadian, a branch of the CAAS. Oxfam arranged with the CAAE for free rent in their building at 113 George Street, until permanent offices were established at 97 Eglinton Avenue in June 1963; See also, Dalziel, “Brief on the development...”
 - 58 Hugh Shewell, *Enough to Keep them Alive: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873–1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 305.
 - 59 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1962–1963, 1. The other events were “the convergence of Indian canoes on the INCO settlement at Thompson; the protest-demonstration at the company’s gates; ... the angry stirrings of unemployed Indians much further afield.” G.E. Mortimore, “The Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada. A Background Paper,” undated. In 1976, Oxfam funded a project on “Pilot Study of Canadian Public Perceptions and Attitudes concerning Aboriginal Rights and Land Claims.” LAC, RG29, I270, vol. 58, file 13.
 - 60 The IEAC relied on government grants but also in private donations, which it saw as a gauge of its independence.
 - 61 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1962–1963, 11.
 - 62 Later called “Northern Regional Committee” and chaired by Mrs. W.H. Clark (past and founding president of the IEAC). TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1966–1967, 20.
 - 63 Ibid., 1961–1962. The annual income of the IEAC was \$37,000 in 1963. Ibid., 1963–1964, 15. “Foundations” contributions counted only for \$1,000, and corporations gave \$14,000.
 - 64 Speech given to the Women’s Canadian Historical Society, quoted in the *Globe and Mail* (17 October 1961), cited by Shewell, 306–97, 396.
 - 65 Shewell, 301–4. The archives of Oxfam Canada also contain demands

- for funding from at least two such women's clubs. McEwen.
- 66 "Oxfam of Canada. Budget and Finances, [1963–1968]," AOxfam, "Canada," Letter from John Melling, received 22 March 1963; and Kirkley to Melling, 25 April 1963; attached is a memo received in Oxford via Widdowson on March 22 1963.
- 67 Ibid., Melling to Fletcher, 24 July 1963. Fletcher, deputy director of Oxfam International, answered six days later that he had sent a query to the director in Oxford, Kirkley.
- 68 Ibid., Kirkley to Dalziel, 19 June 1963.
- 69 Ibid., Dalziel, to Kirkley, 4 June 1963. There were four projects "For equipment and tools to develop co-operative condition-improvement schemes among Indians and Eskimos in Northern Manitoba;" Dalziel, "Brief on the development..." The brief also mentioned a SA project of mobile unit for transport of food and supplies to those first Nations people moving for jobs in parts of the country that were only opening up.
- 70 Black, 100.
- 71 AOxfam, "Canada," Lynn Ten Kate to Leslie Kirkley, 10 December 1963 Ten Kate, a young woman who had previously helped run her husband's engineering business for two years, brought with her important planning and marketing skills. Lynn Ten Kate, interview by the author, Crookham Village, Hampshire United Kingdom, August 2010. All interviews are deposited at AOxfam.
- 72 AOxfam, R0221, Kirk Bell, Progress Report for Month of December 1964. Bell collected little money, and distributed material on India and Batusoland.
- 73 David Fletcher, son of Henry and Kate Fletcher, interview by the author, Oxford, 19 August 2010. McKague.
- 74 AOxfam, "Oxfam of Canada. Contacts [1962–1967]," Fletcher to John Melling, 20 June 1963. Black, 101. AOxfam, "Canada," Bell to Kirkley, "Oxfam of Canada, Director's Report for Month of September 1964." Fletcher had missed the opportunity to visit the IEAC during his first visit in 1963. Ibid., Melling to Fletcher, 24 July 1963.
- 75 AOxfam, R0211, IR/2, "Oxfam of Canada, vol. 1," Patrick Montgomery, Secretary, Anti-Slavery Society, to Oxfam SG, 17 December 1968. Kirkley answered on 4 January 1969. Ibid., Fletcher to Montgomery, 20 January 1969. Montgomery later sent a copy of his correspondence with Henry Fletcher to Kirkley (24 January 1969), all in the same file. The AAS had also written to the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs. The *Daily Mail* article was published on 13 December 1968.
- 76 AOxfam, R0211, IR/2, vol. 1, Fletcher to Montgomery, 20 January 1969. Fletcher referred him to the IEAC for further information.
- 77 Ibid., Montgomery to Fletcher, 24 January 1969. On Fletcher's memories of the colonial biases of Oxford's leadership, see McKague.

- 78 AOxfam, Oxfam Canada, Annual Report, 1966.
- 79 McKague, 2.
- 80 Tamara Myers, “Blistered and Bleeding, Tired and Determined: Visual Representations of Children and Youth in the Miles for Millions Walkathon,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Society* 22, no. 1 (2011): 243–75. The highly successful walks became part of a larger endeavour involving many more aid organizations. The walks contributed the lion’s share of the budget of Oxfam Canada, and allowed them to spend £1,200,000 overseas in 1970, for example, half of which via Oxford. Black, 169–79. By comparison, Dalziel had only been able to raise \$ 3, 212 over 1962–1963; “Brief on the development...”
- 81 LAC, “Aboriginal Newspapers,” www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/journaux-chez-bac/035005-4000-e.html#n, <viewed 1 March 2013>.
- 82 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1971–1972, financial report. On the IHA, see Erin Hansen, “Indian Homemakers Association of British Columbia,” www.indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/community-politics/indian-homemakers-association.html, <viewed 4 March 2012>.
- 83 In 1970, following a conference with First Nations leaders in Coppermine, for instance, the IEAC used a grant from the Canindis Foundation to hire “Tagak Curley to provide staff leadership,” which led to the creation of the Inuit Tapirisat (new the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami). TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1970–1971, 5.
- 84 Shewell, 298–9. The new deputy minister, C.M. Isbister, had learned about United Nations programs while working for the international organization; the new head of the Welfare Division, Walter Rudnicki, was a professional social worker committed to arctic problems; and Jean Lagassé, the new head of the Citizenship Branch, had overseen community development projects with the government of Manitoba. On the different models of community development and the tensions between them, see McEwen, 9–13. McEwen’s report was prefaced and highly praised by Charles E. Hendry, director of the School of Social Work of the University of Toronto. Also see Edmonds for the announcement of federal community projects in 1963, in the context of the northern Manitoba scandal.
- 85 McEwen, 14–15. By 1964, the IEAC also had four field workers in Southern Ontario. TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1963–1964, 11. The movement towards the respect of aboriginal autonomy would be consecrated in 1973 by the adoption of a new name: the Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples (CASNP).
- 86 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1965–1966, 7, 13. The workers were Paul Lumsden, John Pascal (Loucheux Indian), and Charlie Smith (Eskimo). Contributions for the Northern Radio Project were of \$18,346 and the expenditures of \$13,200. The numbers in 1967 were \$11,340 and \$16,540. *Ibid.*, 1966–1967, 20–1, 31. By 1968, there was one program

- supervisor in Inuvik, one full time field worker in Aklavik, and part-time workers. *Ibid.*, 1967–1968, 4, 23–4.
- 87 LAC, MG28, I270, vol. 66, file 23, “Kipawa Native Land Rights Committee — Correspondence, clippings and grant application — 1969.”
- 88 Linda Freeman, headquarter employee in 1966, interview by the author, Ottawa, November 2012.
- 89 “Shea Heads Oxfam,” *Oxfam-Canada News* 21 (Winter 1971): 1.
- 90 McKague, 6–7.
- 91 Founded in 1968 in Whitehorse, together with the North West Territory equivalent, the YNB fostered land claims to provided social programs. Paul Robert Magocsi, *Encyclopedia of Canada’s Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1999), 86. Also see YNB, *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* (January 1973), 16; and Yukon First Nations and Communities in Canada, “Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements,” “First Nations in the Past,” www.yfnta.org/past/claims.htm, <viewed 1 March 2013>.
- 92 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1968–1969, 5.
- 93 Shewell, 303–4. Also see Stephen J. Kuntz, “Health care policy for American Indians since the early 20th century” in *History, Historians and Development Policy*, 146–68. The IEAC had been working on the idea of radio programs for adult education in collaboration with the CBC since its beginnings. TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1962–1963, 7; Shewell, 305. In 1964, the IEAC was about to launch a three-year series like the “Farm and Citizens Forums,” but was still looking for financial support. It received financial assistance for a Radio Forum to the Centennial Commission, and hired Alex Sim, adult educator and sociologist, to do research and study feasibility. *Ibid.*, 1963–1964, 6, 9, 11.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 82-014, vol., 6, file 35, “Application to purchase airplane — Application and related correspondence,” 1971–1973.
- 95 “Walter (Wally),” House of Commons, Parliamentary Bibliography, www.parl.gc.ca/parlinfo/Files/Parliamentarian.aspx?Item=edb65535-ad60-442f-a555-9b971eea1637&Language=E&Section=ALL, <viewed 1 June 2012>. Of Metis origins, born in 1935 in Fort Macpherson, Firth was an “Airplane pilot, broadcaster, flying instructor, fur trader, native rights [activist].” He became a Member of Parliament for the North West Territories for the New Democratic Party from 1972 to 1980. He was a member of the “Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.” Also see Jack Boyd, memoirs, www.bahai-library.com/boyd_memoirs_yellowknife, <viewed 15 February 2013>.
- 96 “Indian- Eskimo group gets plane from Oxfam,” *Toronto Star*, found in LAC, MG28, I270, vol. 30, file 45, “Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada — Correspondence, press release and other material re: grant given by Oxfam (1 of 2)”; *ibid.*, vol. 67, file 35, 1971–1973, Canada:

- Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada —Application to purchase airplane —Application and related correspondence (1 of 6), “Project for Consideration.”
- 97 Ibid., vol. 30, file 45, 1971, Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada — Correspondence, press release and other material re: grant given by Oxfam (1 of 2), “Oxfam in action,” news release National Press Office; “Rich Canada takes relief from Oxfam,” *Windsor Star*, editorial (20 July 1971), 8; also printed in *The News and Eastern Townships Advocate* (5 August 1971), 1.
- 98 N.I. Bottoms, “Oxfam Volunteer Explains Plane Grant,” *Windsor Star* (27 July 1971), 9.
- 99 TUA, IEAC, vol. 55, *IEAC Bulletin*, 1972.
- 100 Ibid., inscription of tape recorded by Firth p. 1.
- 101 Three years earlier, Elijah Smith was leading the opposition to the White Paper and pressuring for First Nations land claims in the Yukon. “First Nations in the Past. Introduction to Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements,” www.yfnfa.org/past/claims.htm, <viewed 1 March 2013>. LAC, MG28, I270, vol. 30, file 45, Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada – Correspondence, press release and other material re: grant given by Oxfam (1 of 2), to Allan Clark, Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada of Canada, 1971.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 TUA, inscription of tape recorded by Firth p. 1. Founded at the end of 1967, this umbrella group for status Indians is now known as the Assembly of First Nations.
- 104 According to historian of aboriginal welfare Hugh Shewell, the federal program of community development itself was part of the forces that lead to a bureaucratic transfer of the management of some welfare institutions from the provincial and the federal governments to First Nations. Shewell, 321, 311.
- 105 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1973, 6–7.
- 106 Rudy Platiel “Oxfam breaks new ground, awards \$25,000 to Canadian Indians for purchase of plane,” Oxfam Canada, *Globe and Mail* (Friday, 16 July 1971), in LAC, MG 28, I270, vol. 30, file 45.
- 107 TUA, IEAC, Annual Report, 1972, 4.
- 108 LAC, MG 28, I270, vol. 30, file 45, Letter too Allan Clark, Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada of Canada. It also transported band chiefs to support Elijah Smith during his presentation to the parliamentary committee regarding the proposed Yukon Mining regulations contained in Bill C-187.
- 109 Shewell, 321, 311.
- 110 Platiel.
- 111 “Mackenzie Valley Issue: Booklet: Building a Gas Pipeline through the

- Arctic, What About the Environment Protection Board,” *Inside Oxfam*, no date. Tentative Outline for Mackenzie Valley (Spring, 1976).
- 112 Cited in “Oxfam lends hand to helping Indians,” *Ottawa Citizen* (30 October 1975), 91. Brownstone was no more aware of Shea’s initiative than Shea had been of Dalziel’s. This lack of corporate memory is not unusual in institutions that have little resources for their archives. Hugo Slim, “Introduction to Western Aid and the Global Economy,” *Western Aid and the Global Economy. Series One: The Save the Children Fund Archives, London* (Reading, UK: Thomson Gale, 2004), 9–11. When he arrived in Toronto, Fletcher complained about the lack of files to document the actions of the preceding years. McKague.
- 113 University of Alberta Library, “The Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples,” paper prepared by W.G. McConkey for the Race Relations News in South Africa, mimeographed and reproduced by the CASNP, Publication #119, December 1972, 7 pages.
- 114 W.B. Stewart, “Relations between the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada and the Indian Affairs Branch of the federal government,” (Course paper, Political Science Department, Carleton University, 1968), 25–6.
- 115 George Manuel, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Toronto: Collier Macmillan, 1974). Tony Hall, *The American Empire and the Fourth World: The bowl with one spoon* (Montréal and Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 238. Peter McFarlane, *Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the making of the modern Indian movement* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993), 160. The Legacy Of Grand Chief George Manuel, www.Cwis.Org/Gml/Manuel/, <viewed 15 May 2012>.
- 116 “A brief history on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” www.iwgia.org/human-rights/international-human-rights-instruments/undeclaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples/a-brief-history, <viewed 15 April 2012 >. Irène Bellier, “Les peuples autochtones aux Nations Unies: un nouvel acteur dans la fabrique des normes internationales,” *Critique internationale* 54, no. 1 (2012):61–80. Jeffrey Sisson, “Indigenous Networks,” *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, 526–7.
- 117 Bill Hynd, director of Oxfam Newfoundland, correspondence with the author, 7 December 2012. Barbara Doran, et al., “Puppet against AIDS: township to tundra,” VHS (Port Credit, Ont.: McNabb & Connolly, 1993). In the early 1980s, an Oxfam nutrition program aided northern Ontarian aboriginals victims of mercury poisoning. Inside Oxfam, Winter 1981. More recently, Oxfam Canada has issued a statement of solidarity with Idle No More, and co-authored a statement to end violence against women, with the Canada-Native Women’s

Association; www.oxfam.ca/news-and-publications/news/oxfam-expresses-support-idle-no-more and www.oxfam.ca/news-and-publications/news/time-action-plan-end-violence-against-women <viewed 15 March 2013>.

- 118 See for instance Oxfam France, “Droits des peuples indigènes et minorités,” www.Oxfam.org/fr/about/issues/indigenous-rights, www.Oxfam.org.au/explore/indigenous-australia/close-the-gap/publications, <viewed 15 April 2012 >. In 2007, Arthur Manuel, the son of George Manuel, attended an Oxfam conference in Australia. www.firstnations.eu/media/01-1-indian-land.pdf, <viewed 15 May 2012>.
- 119 Black, 102.