

## Culture

# Governmental Indian Policy, Administration, and Economic Planning in the Eastern Subarctic

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Volume 2, Number 3, 1982

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1078110ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1078110ar>

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### Publisher(s)

Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie

### ISSN

0229-009X (print)

2563-710X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this article

Hedican, E. (1982). Governmental Indian Policy, Administration, and Economic Planning in the Eastern Subarctic. *Culture*, 2(3), 25–36.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1078110ar>

### Article abstract

This paper undertakes a comparative analysis of the effects of governmental administration and planning in northern Native communities. The effects are examined with reference to two community types — reserves, with their single-stranded ties to Ottawa's Department of Indian Affairs, and non-reserve settlements, which have a diversity of outside contacts. It is argued that the limited external contacts characteristic of reserves impede local initiative and foster reliance on decisions made by Government personnel. By contrast, the non-reserve community is able to exercise greater local control because no single external agency is in a position to dominate local affairs. Lacking significant outside structures, leadership in the non-reserve community is able to pursue more autonomous and coherent local planning for economic change.

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# Governmental Indian Policy, Administration, and Economic Planning in the Eastern Subarctic

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This paper undertakes a comparative analysis of the effects of governmental administration and planning in northern Native communities. The effects are examined with reference to two community types — reserves, with their single-stranded ties to Ottawa's Department of Indian Affairs, and non-reserve settlements, which have a diversity of outside contacts. It is argued that the limited external contacts characteristic of reserves impede local initiative and foster reliance on decisions made by Government personnel. By contrast, the non-reserve community is able to exercise greater local control because no single external agency is in a position to dominate local affairs. Lacking significant outside structures, leadership in the non-reserve community is able to pursue more autonomous and coherent local planning for economic change.

*Ce texte a pour but d'analyser les conséquences de l'administration et de la planification gouvernementale sur les communautés autochtones nordiques et d'en comparer les résultats. Cette analyse est faite à la lumière de deux types de collectivités : les réserves, dont les liens avec le Ministère des Affaires indiennes à Ottawa sont privilégiés, et les communautés (sans le statut légal de réserve), qui présentent des traits hétérogènes marqués par des contacts extérieurs ponctuels. Nous partons du postulat que les contacts limités, caractéristiques des réserves, les empêchent de prendre des initiatives, et créent une relation de dépendance avec les fonctionnaires du gouvernement. À*

*l'opposé, en l'absence de l'influence d'un cadre administratif extérieur, les communautés sont en mesure de contrôler les affaires locales. Les conditions d'émergence d'un corps politique, capable de prendre les décisions indépendantes au sujet de la planification de l'économie locale, sont donc rendues possibles.*

*My eyes seek a vision —  
For old people told of visions  
That were not seen by eyes  
But burned in the mind and mouth  
Of our men  
Who fought battles  
But did not win.*

Duke Redbird  
Tobacco Burns (1972 : 1)

*The behavioral scientist would do well to remember that when science is divorced from policy, the result is not only that science is "set free" but also that policy is thereby thrown on its own resources — which is to say that it is left to be determined by tradition, prejudice, and the preponderance of power.*

Abraham Kaplan  
The Conduct of Inquiry (1964 : 403)

The philosopher of science (Kaplan) perceives an abdication of responsibility by scientists who fail to bring the results of their research to bear on the needs of policy formation. He fears that in the absence of scientific involvement, research will be subverted to undesirable ends by policy makers. The Metis poet (Redbird)<sup>1</sup> expresses a related fear — that the history of unsuccessful encounters with Whites will continue, and that Indians will always be “burned” by their attempts to reify visions of a better life. The crux of the problem lies in the extent to which Whites and Indians can work together to achieve solutions compatible with each other’s “visions”. At present, Indians in North America have little input in the formation of policy and administration of Indian Affairs. The Indian desire for increased autonomy remains pitted against white intransigence on the devolution of power issue.

This study examines the effects of Governmental Indian administration and planning on the course of economic change in two Ojibwa communities in the Canadian Subarctic. The focus of discussion is on the different strategies that Ojibwa leaders in northern Ontario use to promote economic development, and to deal with agents of the larger Euro-Canadian society. One community, Fort Hope, is a Federal Reserve on the Albany River, and the other, Collins, is a “non-reserve” Indian village near Lake Nipigon<sup>2</sup>. Both communities allow for a degree of controlled comparison, since the majority of people in the Collins settlement are former members, or descendants, of the Fort Hope population. In the analysis to follow it is noted that leaders in the non-reserve community of Collins have a specific set of development strategies, contact with many different institutions of the larger society, and the people have one of the higher per capita incomes in the region. By contrast, in the Fort Hope settlement there does not exist coherent economic planning, outside interaction is restricted primarily to a single Government body (the Federal Department of Indian Affairs), and attempts to develop a viable and self-supporting local economy have not been successful.

Problems related to economic planning in these two communities, such as outside administrative control and the devolution of power issue, provide a framework for the pursuing discussion. The most important variables which are seen to account for differences in Fort Hope and Collins economic planning include: (a) the degree to which there exists an over-all or comprehensive plan for development, (b) the emergence of forceful leadership

at the local level, and (c), the nature of dependency relationships with institutions of the larger society.

The argument here is that perdurable development in the wage-earning Indian community is contingent upon the emergence of an active political group whose members have a specific set of development strategies or goals which are not controlled or determined from above. Control of development by outside agents will invariably increase dependence and inhibit local initiative. As Belshaw cautioned in his study of Melanesian (Papua) commercial operations:

The problem of control of capital resources raises the question of management and political supervision. Indeed to insist on too great a caution, with the timidity of many bureaucrats, would be to destroy the spirit of adventure and initiative which is the scheme’s great merit (Belshaw, 1955 : 52).

Further examples considered in this paper (the Lower Brule Sioux and George River Inuit) suggest that struggles for local control vis-à-vis external administrative bodies have a wide comparative ethnographic base, and may be considered near-universal phenomena concurrent with processes of political centralization and nation-state building (e.g., Bujra, 1971 ; Salzman, 1974, 1976 ; Salisbury, 1964).

What follows below is an historical synopsis where the emphasis is on factors responsible for the emergence of non-reserve settlements in northern Ontario, followed by a discussion of non-reserve leadership and attempts to circumvent outside influences and maintain local economic controls. The theme of external pressure to change local affairs is then pursued with reference to reserve leadership as aspects of “ambiguity” in colonial situations. These ethnographic concerns then provide a basis for the positing of analytic distinctions between two divergent approaches to community development — referred to as “independent grantmanship” and “welfare-statism”. Finally, a wider perspective on these local issues is gained by relating them to the devolution of power problem, the relationship between research and public policy, and Indian-White co-existence in North America.

### *Historical Background*

Generally speaking Ojibwa Indians inhabit the Laurentian uplands, but they also live in southern Ontario, the northern states of Wisconsin and Minnesota, and the Plains area. As with most Native peoples of the northern hemisphere, the fur trade was a dominant factor affecting their lives. But, depending upon the area, northern Indians

have been subjected to varying degrees of contact with the larger Canadian society. On the whole, though, these Indians have become irreversibly linked with the outside market economy.

North of the Canadian National Railway's mainline through Ontario live about 30,000 people, almost exclusively Ojibwa and Cree. Most of these northern Algonkians live in settlements of under 500, which are usually situated on the larger lakes and rivers. For the most part, northern Ojibwa have subsisted on trapping, fishing, and wild rice harvesting, but all of these activities do not have the income potential to adequately support the growing population. Alternative and additional employment is thus considered necessary by many residents but new opportunities are lacking in most areas. At present there is an acute lack of jobs suited to the remote locations, skills, and lifestyles of Native people.

Fur merchants were the only Europeans with which northern Ojibwa had to contend for almost two hundred years. But after 1850, a wide array of outsiders could be found traversing their country. Missionaries came to introduce new religious beliefs, government agents arrived to sign treaties and settle land claims, and surveyors plotted the future course of roads, railways, and mineral development (Bell, 1870 : 345-403). Ojibwa and Cree living north of the Robinson-Superior treaty limits (signed in 1850), negotiated one of the largest land alienations ever (90,000 square miles) when they signed the James Bay Treaty in 1905. During the same summer a survey crew for the Canadian Transcontinental Railway (now called the Canadian National) was mapping a 125 mile strip westward from Lake Nipigon (Collins, 1906 : 103-109). And by 1910, an anthropologist had even arrived to document some preliminary aspects of social and economic change (Skinner, 1911 : 1-177).

Completion of the CNR in 1912 afforded an opportunity for independent fur traders to re-enact a process that had occurred during the height of the Hudson's Bay-Northwest Company rivalry. A hundred years after the amalgamation of 1821, backwoods entrepreneurs once more attempted to circumvent trade, which in northern Ontario had previously gone to HBC posts on the Albany-Attawapiskat River systems (Fort Hope, Lansdowne and Osnaburgh House), or to posts in the Lake Nipigon drainage area. Independent traders in the Nipigon country chose their positions with some foresight, locating on the shortest canoe routes from the Albany River to the rail-line — Collins and Ombabika. For Ojibwa trappers, competition among the managers of line posts, coupled with cheaper freight overhead, meant a lower cost of living. In addition

line posts could offer a more varied supply of trade goods, and higher fur prices, than their more northerly HBC counterparts.

While Ojibwa near the railroad saw a reduction in commodity expenses, Indians in the north were experiencing the cumulative effects of a steadily increasing population. One consequence of burgeoning reserves was that many northern trappers began to orient their operations in areas where resource competition was less severe, that is, in the most remote areas of their band's territory (Dunning, 1959 : 65-66). Competition resulted from increased population, which in turn, reflected an ever increasing number of trappers per trap-line. To give some indication of the rapid rate of population growth, between 1909 and 1945 the Fort Hope Band population increased by fifty-four percent, but there was a significant jump of twenty-seven percent for only the twelve year period from 1933 to 1945 (Baldwin, 1957 : 77), years when population mobility was at its peak in northern Ontario.

Although the Collins trading post was open for business by 1921, informants relate that permanent log structures were not constructed on Collins Lake until the end of the 1930's. The years during World War II were a period of resurgence in Ojibwa geographical mobility, a demographic pattern reflecting population increases and consequent pressure on the land. For most times during the five year period from 1941 to 1945, a sizeable proportion of the Fort Hope population was absent from the home community for treaty payments. Of those absent from the reserve, fifty percent of these were stationed in the vicinity of Lansdowne House, an HBC outpost of Fort Hope some forty miles to the north. The remaining twenty-five percent were scattered throughout the territory, primarily at points along the Albany River or the rail-line. By 1945, thirty-one Fort Hope families had 'settled' at the line points of Collins and Ombabika. Since that time, eighteen of these Fort Hope families have remained to form the nucleus of the present Collins community.

### *Non-Reserve Indian Leadership*

Collins (population 150) is a non-reserve Ojibwa village formed by the migration of northern reserve Indians, mostly from Fort Hope, during the War years to the Canadian National Railway (CNR). In general the genesis of such settlements can be attributed to increases in the population densities of northern reserve communities, and the resulting competition for trapping territories and other diminishing resources (fish, game, firewood). Migrants to the rail-line sought to extricate themselves

from the restrictions and uncertainties of a limited resource base by moving to areas where there was a greater opportunity to supplement subsistence production with income earned through wage labour.

Today Collins is composed of status Indians, Indians who for various reasons (such as enfranchisement and marriage) have lost their treaty status, and a few persons of Indian-White ancestry. Since migrating to the rail-line these Ojibwa have made a living by fur trapping and railway work, but railways have automated their maintenance programs. Commercial fishing used to be a viable source of income, but lakes in the area were heavily fished. There was also a lack of an efficient marketing system to organize fishermen, to collect and store produce, and to negotiate sales with southern wholesalers. By the mid-1960's, economic activity in the settlement was fragmented and uncoordinated, welfare dependency was on the rise, and unemployment was reaching alarming proportions.

Leadership posed a further problem. Skills which made a trapline leader effective were less relevant in attempts to cope with the uncertainties of the outside world. That the Collins community was in a crisis situation was most evident to the young people — those that had some schooling and familiarity with the larger society (mainly through the now defunct residential school system), coupled with a knowledge of the limitations of a trapping economy as a basis for coping with future problems in a wage-earning context. It was their conclusion that some variety of community council was necessary as a first step towards extricating themselves from the current economic and political dilemma.

Ogoki River Guides Ltd. (ORG) was incorporated in 1972 as a Native non-profit corporation, as they put it, "dedicated to the social and economic improvement of all Collins' people". Actually their motives were not entirely altruistic, given the fact that the permanent core of the corporation consists of three brothers who operate a retail outlet in Collins, and a kinsman who has long been the CNR section foreman — positions which depend on the continued existence of Collins as a stable, economically viable, community both as a source of labour and new cash flow. Overall this group has provided continuity in leadership and the formulation of strategy which has continued to the present day, to wit, the mobilization of local labour coupled with outside investment capital.

The high unemployment in the community assured a readily available supply of labour, and mounting social problems provided ample opportunities for government involvement. All that was needed was a linkage mechanism — someone with

the capabilities to translate the inaccessible and unfamiliar into the possible and known. Leaders launched an active campaign to solicit outside support. They engaged the help of opposition party members to make their demands known in the Provincial legislature. They cultivated media support both locally and in the provincial capital by stressing the larger society's neglect of northern Indians. As ORG leaders indicated in a *Globe and Mail* article: "What we're talking about here is the survival of a community. If we fail to make a go of this [tourist lodge] project, the people will have to turn to welfare and Collins will become just another dying Indian Community."

The main applications for support were to the provincially based Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (ARDA) which has a cost-sharing agreement with the Federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE). At first ARDA attempted to disqualify the project, from Collins' perspective, on technicalities. ARDA and DREE officials claimed that their charter applied only to status Indians, and in any event, they could not deal with a non-profit corporation like ORG which is not 'publically owned', and is not based on principles of elective government. The ORG counter-stressed White intransigence and played on public guilt: "This stipulation is just a matter of policy developed by ARDA, it has no basis in legislation. We feel a charge of racial discrimination can be made in this case. We think ARDA just doesn't want to give us the money."

ARDA finally acceded to ORG demands, but their initial contribution was for only one-third of the projected costs, which in any event was sufficient to begin construction of the tourist lodge. As it turned out, from the Government perspective, ARDA was too hasty in granting funding because further controversy developed over the terms of the ORG-ARDA contract. ARDA wished to retain control over management of the lodge, hiring of personnel, and so on. This was not in the best interests of ORG, so they refused to sign the contract which was not really necessary since they already had control over the initial funding. ARDA countered with the statement that, to paraphrase, "If you [ORG] won't sign, we will terminate funding and our association." The ORG response was, "That's fine with us. We'll close down all activity at the construction site immediately, and sell off all movable equipment to pay the workers' wages. The half-completed lodge will remain a monument to Government incompetence." The timing was perfect, since a provincial election had just been announced. The result was that ARDA,

rather than remaining aloof, now urged ORG to continue negotiations. By the end of 1975 ORG had been granted their original projected costs (in addition to compensation for cost overruns), funding to furnish and equip the lodge, a training course for management and staff, and have effectively-maintained control over their local economic and political affairs.

In sum, the principal strategy of Collins' leaders has been to encourage the investment of outside aid in the local economy, but at the same time, to restrict external political influences. Since funding for economic development emanates from diversified outside sources at both the provincial and federal level, no one Government body has been successful in monopolizing the decision-making of local leaders. Their power positions are enhanced, where disputes exist with outside administrators and officials, by manipulation of conventional channels of the larger society, such as politicians willing to lobby on their behalf and the public news media. In addition, efficient business and administrative practices on the home-front tend to obviate outside pressure for control in local affairs. This strategy is made more effective in light of the fact that local leaders were able to hire their own planning experts (architects, engineers, construction advisors) whose accountability is to ORG rather than the Government funding agency. A concluding point is that the private entrepreneurial activities of Collins' leaders, such as providing materials and transportation facilities for Government-sponsored projects, has led to more than a passive concern for the success and viability of economic change.

### *Reserve Leadership*

When European missionaries, soldiers, and fur traders made their initial contacts with Native people of North America, they were impressed by an apparent lack of a recognizable authority structure in most Indian tribes. Essentially, these visitors saw a contradiction in the fact that Indians could exhibit effective collective activity without a hierarchical structure of authority figures (Miller, 1955). Conversely, Native people had difficulty in comprehending how a person could retain his self-esteem and much-valued individual autonomy, while at the same time accepting without question the directives of a good number of other people. Probably the members of both Indian and European cultural traditions regarded as "natural" their particular perceptions of leadership, power, and consent. As a consequence, Europeans and their descendants have made a concerted effort for over three cen-

turies to inculcate among Indian people role relationships which conform to a western democratic tradition (Friedl, 1950 ; Kupferer, 1966).

Following the earlier efforts of their British and French predecessors, the Canadian Government recognized the strategic importance of negotiating treaties with the Native populations. Indian land cessions allowed for more rapid white settlement, and the government of the day, after a particular treaty was signed, felt justified in attempts to convince Indians that they were now permanently under Canadian jurisdiction. In order to facilitate administrative control, the Government introduced a version of the Westminster parliamentary system on Indian reserves. Via the *Indian Act* the election of chiefs and councils, along with their duties, were specified (Canada, 1970 : 34-40).

The ethnographic literature is replete with references to the relative impotency of elected Indian leaders. We are told that the Federal Government imposed a political system which the Ojibwa have never understood, and therefore did not recognize (Landes, 1937 : 2-3). An elected chief is called "boss-like" (*okima.hka.n*) — a surrogate for the real thing ; a 'put-up job' (Ellis, 1960 : 1). The chief and council are the least developed law-enforcing agency (Lips, 1947 : 475). Today's chief has even less power than many Indian leaders had during the fur trade era (Rogers, 1965 : 277). From the ethnographic literature, one conclusion predominates : on Canadian Indian reserves "political sovereignty is attenuated, if not controlled ultimately by the Indian Affairs administration" (Dunning, 1959 : 20).

As Rogers concludes for leadership among Subarctic Indians : "The government asserts that authority be vested in the chief whereby he can carry out his duties. But in the final analysis, the chief has lost his former powers and acquired no new ones" (1965 : 277). Rogers (1965 : 277-279) states further that the chief has lost former powers because he no longer has the multiplicity of role attributes which bolstered his position in former times — missionaries have taken over religious power and the chief is no longer the principle distributor of goods to band members. But why has an elected chief acquired no new powers ? Part of the answer lies in the fact that leaders are apt to avoid conflict in order not to jeopardize their election chances (Miller, 1966). In addition, individual members of the community can by-pass the chief and consult directly with outside authorities. A major reason, however, is that in the event that a chief is in opposition to government policy, he is likely to be circumvented by the outside authorities

who are attempting to implement these policies (Rogers, 1965 : 278-279). In such instances the elected Native official is apt to become an object of ridicule<sup>3</sup> : “White officials expect the [Inuit] men to take prominent positions in local government institutions. But since those positions are seen to be devoid of power, the men who occupy them are criticized as ineffective... Some men refuse to accept positions of ‘authority’ for precisely that reason : to accept is to become a target for criticism and ridicule” (Brody, 1975 : 196). Thus one of the effects of Euro-Canadian encapsulation is that elected Native leaders have little freedom to make decisions for their communities as a whole, and this is a crucial problem effecting whether development will take place. As the authors of a report on Fort Hope economic development conclude : “In spite of an honest humanitarian concern, existing government policies have reduced what little economic freedom Band members formerly had” (Driben and Trudeau, 1976 : 11).

### *Fort Hope : A Case in Point*

The Fort Hope Ojibwa community of 600 people on the Albany River in northern Ontario has a different political organization, and more limited outside contacts, than is the case with the Collins population. Because of its status as a Federal Indian Reserve, Fort Hope residents have an elected chief and council, and normally do not have access to provincial services. As such their contacts with the larger Euro-Canadian society are restricted almost entirely to two Federal Government departments — Indian Affairs and Canada Manpower (aside from a few missionaries, teachers, HBC personnel, and nurses).

In 1975 Canada Manpower reached an agreement with the Fort Hope Band to begin an employment-assistance program. The two main objectives of the program were, first, to provide new and meaningful employment, and second, to develop a plan which would allow Fort Hope to become economically self-sufficient by the end of the 1970’s. Unlike the Collins case where local leaders had to actively solicit the financial assistance of government agencies, the initiative or drive for development at Fort Hope stemmed from Indian Affairs. Large capital grants were made available from Indian Affairs’ Economic Development Fund for the establishment of sawmills, tourist camps, and fisheries. In addition, the Band’s budget for education and community affairs was increased, and more funds were made available for housing construction and administrative positions.

But, because each particular scheme had its own specific problem — poor management, missing supplies, too many employees for the work involved, virtually no incentives to increase production, negative involvement because of a distant sense of ownership and control — none of the businesses were self-supporting in 1976, all depended upon further government subsidy, and Indian Affairs was insistent on maintaining ownership. For 1975-1975, all seven businesses accounted for only 4.3 percent of the Band’s income, while Canada Manpower’s short-term make-work programs contributed 35.5 percent of that income. Government salaries and allowances are now the main source of income for the Band, increasing from 14 percent in 1969 to 44 percent of the total cash income by 1975 (Driben and Trudeau, 1976 : 53-55, 76-84).

In fact the most dramatic effect of the infusion of new government funds has been in the expansion of the Band’s political and administrative infrastructure. The influx of new capital forced the council to hire a Band administrator, three full-time office employees, and create numerous committees. Where they were virtually non-existent before, there are now 36 steady government jobs in the Band (Driben and Trudeau, 1976 : 36-43). In other words, what we find at Fort Hope is an oft-repeated theme where the Government is ready to invest in social welfare schemes, but places lower priority on planning for economic development purposes.

### *Discussion*

Now that the disparate roles of local leaders and outside officials in the economic affairs of the two Ojibwa communities have been delineated, it is necessary to consider the analytic significance of these roles in such a way as to admit wider comparison. The significance lies in the fact that although both communities are dependent upon government funding as a spring-board for development, leaders in the two communities have utilized outside resources in different ways. The primary source of variation in the two cases is the role of government officials in influencing local economic affairs, and the ability (or lack of it) of local leaders to counteract or adjust to external pressure. My interpretation of these two situations is that leadership in Collins and Fort Hope illustrates two divergent approaches to economic planning and negotiation over outside resources.

The first, exemplified by Collins’ leaders and discussed by Schusky (1975 : 117-236) for the lower Brule Sioux, is the “independent grantmanship” approach. In this case it is local leaders, and not

Government bureaucrats, who take the initiative in formulating development strategy. This is an important point because it is local people who are most aware of opportunity costs in their home area. In addition, leaders in this case hire (albeit with government 'seed-money' in most instances) their own professional planners who are accountable to the local people rather than to external administrators; a strategy which serves to curtail dependency relations. Lastly, local leaders espouse a clear commitment to long term business and industrial development, rather than to ephemeral, short-term programs to increase employment levels. The consequence of this approach is that outside financial aid to the Indian community is largely under the control of the local political group. Such control allows for the maximum effect of Indian decision-making, and greater possibilities for Indian management and eventual ownership of development enterprises.

The second, characterized by the Fort Hope case and illustrated further by Arbess (1967 : 65-76) for the George River Inuit, is the "welfare-type" approach, or as Paine (1977 : 5-32) phrased it, "welfare colonialism". In this instance economic development has a low priority, and outside investment is largely in social welfare programs. Attempts to create employment are often short-term, and are initiated by outside personnel who insist on controlling new enterprises. Because of this control factor, local people do not aspire to management positions, and outsiders make no attempt to train locals for such positions. According to Arbess' (1967 : 73) account of the George River Inuit : "If we look at minutes of meetings held prior to 1965, we see the DIAND personnel taking the initiative constantly, with the Eskimo leadership acting in compliance." Driben and Trudeau's (1976 : 33) assessment of the Fort Hope situation is much the same : "The relationship between Band and Government was dialectical. Government acted and the Band responded, and in turn government acted again, causing further changes in the Band."

The suggestion here is that only the first approach — the "autonomous grantmanship" one — holds possibilities for stimulating self-supporting economies in Native communities, and providing the necessary groundwork for future Native policy-makers. More specific research is needed in this area, but available evidence indicates that in the absence of controls by Native policy-makers, members of the local community tend to respond to changing conditions in regressive fashion (Dunning, 1964). It is for this reason that Driben and Trudeau (1976 : 73-85) suggest that there exists a paradox

between the aims and results of outside-planned economic development. Overall, government sponsored projects at Fort Hope failed because "government agencies provided financial rewards which were independent of performance" (1976 : 11). From both the perspective of Fort Hope Band members and the government, recent efforts at developing the local economy have not been successful. Projects have provided little new income from the Band's point of view, and from the Government's vantage point projects have not been a success because they have made Fort Hoppers not less dependent, but more so — contrary to Government intentions outlined in the 1969 White Paper.

Some writers, such as MacGregor (1969 : 63) and Schusky (1975 : 230), have gone so far as to argue that this dependency relationship is inevitable for most Indian groups because of the legal relationship between tribal and federal governments. In Canada most reserve funds are held in trust by the Government, and the Minister of Indian Affairs ultimately holds responsibility for approving expenditures. The *Indian Act* contains many passages referring to this "Guardianship" role, such as :

... the Governor in Council may determine whether any purpose for which Indian moneys are used or are to be used is for the use and benefit of the band (Canada, 1970 : 28).

The Governor in Council may by order permit a band to control, manage and expend in whole or in part its revenue moneys and may amend or revoke any such order (Canada, 1970 : 31).

Under such conditions initiative for reserve leadership is severely restricted. In Paine's (1977 : 26-27) account of developments in the eastern Arctic, this dependency relationship is seen to lie at the heart of 'ambiguity' in the colonial situation. He pinpoints the source of ambiguity further by noting : "The whites themselves are responsible for the inception of the programmes, and the programmes themselves are, in large measure, responsible for the stimulation of the dependency needs which the whites deplore among Inuit" (1977 : 12).

The question then is this : If the dependency relationship is one of the more formidable barriers to development, are we then dealing with cases of maladaptation by Native peoples ? Both Driben and Trudeau argue to the contrary.

At George River a Co-operative Development Officer of DIAND acts as government representative in all administrative capacities. The explicit goal to develop a viable self-supporting Inuit economy has failed partly because Inuit have evolved a



political ideology in response to white control over most spheres of their lives which Arbess (1967) characterizes as "welfare-statism". He elaborates further :

The George River Eskimo have made a radical shift in political ideology and kind of political activity from absolute autonomy within the framework of atomistic organization to absolute dependence upon the Canadian Government, within a framework of community solidarity. This shift is seen as a rational adaptation to the economic and political situation as perceived by the George River Eskimo (1967 : 76).

Driben and Trudeau's conclusions about unsuccessful development at Fort Hope are strikingly similar to that formulated by Arbess for the Inuit case :

It is important to note that what is seemingly a paradox in recent attempts at economic development is not necessarily an indication of maladaptation. If adaptation is equated with sufficiently maximizing what was offered to it by government, the Band has in fact adapted very well. The question really had to do with what the Band has adapted to : a pattern of generally poor business practices. Only from government's point of view have they perhaps failed to adapt (1976 : 84-85).

Up to this point in the discussion I have concentrated on the deleterious consequences for local people of a reliance on economic planners who are employed by an external political body. In the pages to follow I advance the argument that a measure of independent economic action has been made possible by Collins Ojibwa and Lower Brule Sioux because their economic planning relies on multiple outside resources. As such, because of this multiple resource factor, Native people in these two communities are not dependent upon the directives of a single agent, or contact point, with the larger society.

A significant point to note in regards to this resource factor is that Collins Ojibwa have been forced, in fact, to pursue multiple outside resources for economic enterprises because of their unique relationship, or lack of it, with the Federal Government. Since the Collins settlement lacks Federal Reserve status, and because a portion (23 percent) of the population is composed of non-status Indians and Metis, the community does not qualify for aid from the Department of Indian Affairs, as is the case with the Fort Hope Reserve. One consequence of this "non-status" categorization by federal authorities is that Collins' leaders were forced to secure investment capital from the conventional channels of the outside society. But in historical perspective, the Provincial Government has tended to view

"Indians" of whatever genre as a Federal responsibility, and has been hesitant about implementing unsolicited programs. At the community level there have not emerged, until recently, competent individuals who were willing to assume the responsibility for community development, and the task of pressing provincial agencies for community services.

In part, as a result of this lack of identifiable community leadership, and lack of accessible communication channels with higher levels of government, members of non-reserve settlements have generally not benefitted from the basic goods and services which most other Canadian citizens have come to take for granted. However this situation has begun to change in recent years because of the incipient community leadership on many non-reserve settlements, and because of the rise of Metis and non-status Indian associations across Canada since the mid-1960's. These emerging leaders are rapidly developing the organizational skills necessary for the effective promotion of their group's political and economic interests, as is demonstrated by the Collins case.

As outlined earlier in the section on non-reserve leadership, the Collins community council (Ogoki River Guides Ltd.) has emerged as the vehicle through which government officials have begun to deal with Collins in the absence of a "legal", i.e. elected, council. Since 1972 ORG has secured funding from over a dozen outside sources. Leaders have had the foresight to integrate all projects towards a single economic enterprise which they expect will be a self-sufficient operation, employing most of Collins' family heads. In large part this single-handed approach to development, plus the business acumen which leaders acquired in operating their private entrepreneurial endeavours, has lent credibility to their efforts, and assured more autonomy in local decision-making than is usual in Indian communities.

By contrast, both in Fort Hope and George River, the Department of Indian Affairs is virtually the only employer, which in itself creates employment difficulties since officials for this department wield unusual power. As Arbess (1967 : 66, 68) records, "DIAND is viewed as the underwriter of George River and the guarantor of Eskimo society" ; "DIAND maintains the standard of living at an artificially buoyant level, and gives the illusion of economic viability." In other words, jobs and training, although positively valued by the Inuit, are not considered as a permanent substitute for welfare, relief, and government subsidy. At George River there exists an occupational caste structure<sup>4</sup> where administrative work and other positions

related to policy making are the sole prerogative of the *qadlunâq* (white) world (Arbess, 1967 : 68-71). *Qâdlunâq* occupations are inaccessible to Inuit and there exists no systematic vocational programme.

Part of the problem stemming from this relationship, as Arbess (1967 : 71) records, is “the capriciousness of the DIAND development programs as opposed to the welfare program. Projects were late in starting, compared to the welfare scheme. Once begun, they were often inexplicably [in Inuit eyes] dropped, only to be started again and no real industry developed... the lack of training and education pre-condition the people to a welfare type of approach.” It is not surprising, then, that Driben and Trudeau (1976 : 81-82) should also lay part of the blame for unsuccessful development at Fort Hope on the lack of appropriate training facilities and poor management : “From 1969 to the present [1975] all seven ventures suffered from poor management. The main reason for this has been the general lack of managerial skills within the Band and the fact that little in the way of outside managerial assistance was provided.” As one informant in Driben and Trudeau’s (1976 : 78) study related : “We had to go along with this [project failures] because everything was controlled by Indian Affairs. We didn’t really know what was happening.”

### *The Devolution of Power Issue*

A crucial issue which will undoubtedly emerge more fully in the future is the extent to which Native peoples should manage their own programs for community development, within a framework of core funding provided by Government sources. The problem is that both Government officials and Indian leaders view this issue of ‘colonial transfer’ from different perspectives.

Historically, the issue for Whites has been how to effectively assimilate Indians into the larger Canadian society. Even the *Hawthorn Report* (1966 : 11) which was expected to herald a fresh approach to old problems, tended only to reiterate long-standing Government policy — “further economic participation of Indians in White society seems the only feasible path by which to achieve substantial improvement in economic status.” For Government, then, to transfer more power to Indians is to abandon perforce any assimilation policy. The issue for Indians, as evidenced by the *Citizens Plus* statement (Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1970), the collection of essays entitled *The Only Good Indian* (Waubageshig, 1972), and Harold Cardinal’s *The Unjust Society* (1969), is how to wrestle control from

Indian Affairs so that Indians can run their own societies.

These two polar positions, however, do not exhaust the possibilities. For the social scientist there exists a third perspective on the assimilation-local control dichotomy. As Salisbury (1975 : 2) explains : “The third perspective is one that has emerged more clearly since the polarized confrontations of 1969 – 1973. Practically, and if amity is to exist, assimilation cannot be the aim of white policy towards native people, nor can a fully independent Indian policy without whites be the aim of native peoples. The problem is how co-existence can work equitably.” The problem of co-existence, then, is sure to become more difficult in the future if the Indian desire for autonomy remains pitted against White intransigence on the devolution of power issue. But if the verdict is that both social scientists and Indians lack sufficient political clout to affect change in existing policies, it is not because Indians lack sufficient numbers. In fact Indians represent a large interest group within the Canadian social mosaic — possibly as high as a million people if Metis and non-status Indians are included along with status Indians. Yet Indians and Whites are far from being groups of similar power, and this situation has inhibited negotiations on how to solve problems effecting *both* groups. As Paine (1977 : 14) concluded after a synthesis of available reports for the Canadian Arctic : “As the root of the white’s difficulties is the official insistence that social problems in the north are reducible to ‘the Eskimo problem’; this carries the corollary that their mission and their lives in the north are publically presented as unproblematic.”

Besides two conflicting perspectives on which party should be held responsible for “the problem”, an added factor contributing to the Indian-White power imbalance is the present structure of Federal Government ministries. It has only been since 1963 that the Indian Affairs Branch has been separated from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Yet by lumping Indian Affairs and Northern Development together in the same Department, as is the case today, it is not unexpected that conflicting interests should exist within DIAND and at cabinet level (Ponting and Gibbins, 1980 : 127-133, 153-160). As long as the same Minister occupies the often conflicting roles of head of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in a single portfolio will he be forced to compromise his decisions in favour of one interest group or another. An important block to Indian-White negotiations, then, is that the power base of multi-national resource industries working in the north tends to be more firmly

entrenched in Government decision-making than is the case with Indian interests (Dacks, 1981 : 24-30).

### Conclusions

It is unreasonable to presume that ready-made solutions are possible in response to the co-existence problems of people from different cultural backgrounds who are encapsulated within modern nation-states. Yet for the Federal Government to argue that it is inappropriate at this time to transfer more control to Native people, because they presently lack sufficient skill in administration, management, and business, is a self-fulfilling prophecy so long as few attempts are made to provide access to such knowledge. Problems of co-existence, and repeated failures, will likely continue as long as local development is controlled from outside on the assumption that local people are not capable of managing their own affairs, and as long as local people regard external strictures as the main impediment to their autonomy.

The examples discussed in this paper suggest that both Indians and Whites must be prepared to alter their positions on the issue of control if amity and co-existence have any chance to exist within our life-times. First, peaceful co-existence will depend largely on the extent to which Native people are allowed more control in ownership, management, and policy-making, so that both groups can be held responsible for "success". Such a move would be a step toward stimulating local initiative so that Indians may more fully realize local aims. In all, more attention should be given to the local consequences of policy changes, such as those aiming to increase Indian political and economic power, but which, as Mortimore (1975) documents for the Dokis Band, only create local fragmentation, internal conflict, and further loss of resources.

By the same token, Indians should realize that it is unrealistic to expect completely autonomous political and economic organizations without participation by members of the larger Euro-Canadian society. But participation by Whites in the internal affairs of Native communities need not be oppressive or paternalistic. Outside participation would better serve the needs of both groups if it was in the form of visiting expertise concerned with local problem-solving, and whose responsibility or accountability is more to the Native community than to "higher-ups" in the outside administration. In this regard Cochrane's (1971) suggestion that administrators should examine the extent to which the influences tend to dominate local affairs, and take an active hand in systematically investigating local requirements, is a useful one.

### NOTES

1. Duke Redbird is also President of the Ontario Metis Association.

2. This paper is based on fieldwork conducted in 1974-75 and supported by a grant from the McGill Centre for Northern Studies and Research. Time to analyse the data was made possible through financial assistance provided by the Direction Générale de l'Enseignement supérieur, Gouvernement du Québec, the McGill Programme in the Anthropology of Development and a Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship. More extensive ethnographic treatment of the political and economic characteristics of the Collins — Lake Nipigon area can be found in Hedican (1976, 1978, 1982a, 1982b).

3. In a study of reservation politics among the Southwestern Ojibwa, Smith (1973 : 27) states that "Almost every former officer of the tribal or reservation councils known during this study has asserted that he would never again accept public office and suffer the abuse that accompanied it."

4. Similarly, Dunning (1962 : 227) generalizes from his fieldwork among the Pikangikum Ojibwa and states : "The presence of any local government personnel permits possibilities of a caste-like structure."

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