

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada  
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens Canada  
Actualité**

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**Source: Nunavut News North (also appeared in News North NWT)**

**Date: 2005.12.05**

**Time for the truth; Horror stories of residential schools must come out**

Most Canadians do not understand the pain and suffering wrought by forcing Inuit and First Nations children to attend residential schools .

Some will call compensation payments announced last week misplaced charity. But however well-intentioned the government of the day may have been, the residential school concept was wrong.

Children were ripped from their homes and forced to live in sometimes appalling conditions. Some children were subjected to physical and sexual abuse. They were forbidden to speak their native language in an attempt to assimilate them into Canadian society.

The damage done persists to this day. The memories continue to bring tears to the eyes of the people who attended.

Cash compensation will not ease that pain. Only understanding and acknowledgment that it was wrong will do that.

The federal government's \$1.9 billion settlement pledge acknowledges the sins of the past. Now non-aboriginal Canadians must be helped to understand or else the compensation plan will be bitter for both peoples.

That's why \$70 million set aside for public education, events and memorials to commemorate what happened in these schools is so important.

More importantly, a truth and reconciliation forum with the profile of a Gomery inquiry needs to happen.

Only then will the victims be able to give a full airing to the injustice and the lasting harm suffered. Only then will the issue be laid to rest in Canada.

**Source: Winnipeg Free Press**  
**Date: 2005.12.05**

David Sinclair Impact missed Lindor Reynolds and Catherine Mitchell, in their respective Free Press columns on Nov. 24, completely miss the impact of residential schools on First Nation history and managed to trivialize the generational damage that it has wrought. Both exclaim the flicker of the positive as equitable to the raging forest fire of the negative of residential schools.

Neither writer seems to realize that the various abuses were horrible enough, but the generational impacting damage that is evident today is a result of not only those abuses but also the forced separation of child from mother, in ways more than just physical, and the subsequent lack of self-worth purposefully instilled in children of themselves, their families and their people. All cultures can survive almost anything if the family bond is secure, but no family bond is secure if it has been severed at the mother-child connection.

Lastly, it is unbelievable that Ms. Mitchell would compare today's school children voluntarily attending school in billets to that of forced attendance at residential schools at sometimes the tender age of five. One simple difference, out of many, is that there is no longer an officially sanctioned strategy to force those children to despise the fact that they and their parents are First Nation.

Dean B. Head Opaskwayak Cree Nation The Pas Here are some thoughts Regarding Tom Oleson's Nov. 26 article, The Canada that believes in honour: If, as Tom Oleson likes to believe, using plain speak is courageous and honourable, then I'd be curious to know how he'd categorize the following thoughts. His diatribe against political correctness, an innocuous term fanned to flames by people like Mr. Oleson so they can dress unnerving disrespect as straightforwardness, strikes me not as blunt, courageous writing, but more like the murky misrepresentation he has become more known for.

His assertion that anyone who has labeled Don Cherry "un-Canadian" is silly, and at the last cabal meeting of left-lib intellectuals not one of us even considered that Don Cherry was any less Canadian than Shania Twain.

Not surprisingly, the central thread of this column was the holiday season, the Mecca for all political correctness taggers. Christmas, a holiday that, over many decades, has taken on traditions, symbols and meaning beyond the initial Christian set, is an inclusive holiday of vastly different belief systems.

Needing to reflect the multitude of traditions and beliefs at work, Christmas is publicly sterilized, though always open to vast applications. This way, people like myself who grew up celebrating the holidays in a secular sense don't have to suffer the indignity and tyranny of worshipping that to which you don't subscribe. Simply put, this is freedom from religion, a basic tenet to freedom of religion. This, according to Mr. Oleson, is all fodder for the political-correctness mill, where millions of those who engage in a secular holiday season, like cowards, ask for the simple respect of different beliefs.

Putting it all aside though, if Mr. Oleson believes it is honourable and brave to defend Christianity during a multi-faceted Christian holiday in a Christian country like Canada, one can only wait with bated breath for his follow-up article, not of bravery, but common decency when he bestows similar words on those who celebrate Ramadan and Hanukah.

Jeff Erbach Winnipeg Sale's thinking ludicrous I applaud Lindor Reynolds for her Nov. 26 article Minister misses the point on MRIs. She says it as it is.

It is not conceivable to believe that a sick person who requires an MRI and is told that he must wait six or eight weeks, or more, to get one through our health-care system would not be allowed, in this democratic society, to visit a private clinic, at his expense, and receive this service in a day or two.

True, Health Minister Tim Sale may be trying to show that Manitoba's health-care system is equally for all Manitobans, rich or poor, but he fails to admit that this system is still not working properly and possibly jeopardizing many lives.

Nor would he admit that if some citizens choose to go to a private clinic where this service is available, this would help shorten the waiting time for those who don't.

While this government promised in 1999 to end hallway medicine, this has not happened yet. It would be ludicrous to threaten any private clinic with \$5,000 fines, when it cannot, itself, help those in urgent need of this service.

Issie D. Oiring Winnipeg Tell it to sows Bruce Caister (Hog plants OK, Nov. 30) writes that there are no signs of cruelty in hog barns.

Perhaps he should tell this to sows, which spend most of their miserable lives in gestation and farrowing stalls, that typically measure two feet by seven feet.

These stalls have been banned in Sweden and Britain because they are inhumane. Similar bans are pending in New Zealand and the entire European Union.

C. Hugh Arklie Dugald

**Source: Calgary Sun**

**Date: 2005.12.04**

**Byline: Beverly Hungry-Wolf**

## **FED FUNDS STEP TOWARD HEALING**

I was very interested to see what would come from the announced compensation for Native Residential School victims.

In response to Ted Byfield's column of last Sunday, "Endless billions haven't eased Natives' woes," I think he, and those who think like him, should read the Indian Act -- the false promises made to Native People -- and walk a mile in our moccasins before they sound off.

I can't get over how the general population is so misinformed about Natives and how willing they are to stay that way.

First off, I would like to point out this is not just a windfall for Native people, it's also a \$4-billion boost to the economy. Every dollar will soon end up in some non-Native retailer's pocket.

The general population believes its tax dollars are being distributed to First Nations on an annual basis, when, in reality, our own tax dollars are given back to us in transfer payments.

The rest of the nation is led to believe Native people don't pay taxes, which we do. Native people pay \$8 billion in taxes a year, according to the recent census, which means Natives pay for the reserve system.

Reserves were designed to assimilate Native people into non-Native society.

The money given in transfer payments to band councils has to all be accounted for to Indian Affairs. We can't just do whatever we want to do with it. These moneys are for very specific programs and have to be spent for that only.

The programs that are not covered, are covered by money the tribe comes up with.

According to the Blood Tribe's oral history, we only agreed to share one plow depth of the land.

The natural resources transfer agreement was signed without any Native representation from Treaty 6, 7, and 8 for Alberta. Not to mention the First Nations that had never signed a treaty with the government of the day.

We've never been compensated for these natural resources. Billions of dollars in revenue leave Native reserves every year; I don't read Ted Byfield's comments about those dollars.

If the government allowed those dollars to stay on reserves, they wouldn't need to give billions to ease our woes.

Here on the Blood Reserve, I remember a time when our people were self-sufficient; there was no welfare or alcohol. My people were given a month in jail if the agent heard about someone drinking even two weeks after the fact.

Our people all had to work hard for survival.

This ended in 1962 when the government decided to take our farming away and non-Natives were brought in to farm our lands.

Native people can't borrow any money on reservation land, but non-Natives can borrow money on land they farm on the Blood Reserve.

When the government did this, they added a whole new dimension to the mess we were in, they created dependency.

The government made whole tribes idle.

Furthermore, a lot of my people can't get over the trauma they suffered in boarding school.

The norm in my tribe was not to disturb the spirit of the child. Hitting a child or a woman was a shameful thing to do.

In residential school, when I was seven or eight years old, I got hit by a nun across the ear with a brass bell. I lost my hearing.

I wasn't the only little girl she did this to.

Six- and seven-year-old boys were made to lay on the floor so the supervising nun could walk over their tiny bodies because they wet their beds, and if they had a brother, he also got punished.

We were made to watch people get whipped, not spanked, with great big, thick rubber straps.

One little girl got her hand stuffed into a heat register, her hand was badly burned.

Why the nun did that, I still don't know.

My father told us about a little boy who got rubbed down with camphor oil and whipped with thistles.

I personally knew him as a grown man and he was never able to get over the trauma.

I had the misfortune of having parents who worked at our school. Everything was done to keep me from seeing or talking to them, they were so close and yet so far away.

I won't even say anything about sexual abuse, except that it was the ultimate betrayal of trust.

I could use up the whole newspaper to list all the hurtful things that were done to us in residential school -- and no, we were not just spanked like the rest of the country was.

There was a time when our women and children felt quite safe from physical abuse, our men would get publicly flogged if they lowered themselves to beating on someone who was weaker.

Our men were also raised with the knowledge that women were givers of life and therefore to be honoured and protected.

After contact, this all changed, especially after residential schools, our men's primary contact with women were nuns whose meanness gave them a distorted view of women.

The one at our school was particularly brutal and she was there through generations of boys.

When a species is threatened, it usually multiplies faster. Ours has been threatened.

In the old days, the norm was three or four children in a family, big families were rare. When the priests arrived, they started dictating a child a year.

The residential schools are the root of many of our problems. Quite frankly, I feel no amount of money is going to compensate us for our experience in boarding school. I consider the compensation as just a step toward healing.

The government has finally recognized the damage done to their wards.

In exchange for sharing our homeland and for peaceful coexistence, the government promised we would be taken care of in our homeland.

At least, that is what our people believed, but the government has interpreted the treaties the way it wanted, and is in contrast to the oral testimony passed down from our elders present at the signing of the treaties.

These treaties were promises from the government of the day for as long as the sun shines, grass grows and rivers flow that we would continue to flourish in our homeland, and we haven't.

The government signed treaties to avoid long drawn battles. They did not want a repeat of the American experience.

They wanted to live in peace and prosper, and they have.



**Source: Calgary Sun**

**Date: 2005.12.04**

**Byline: Janis Favel**

### **BYFIELD BELITTLES PLIGHT OF NATIVES IN CANADA**

I'D LIKE to address Ted Byfield's comments about the abuse dished out to Native people in the **residential schools**, "Endless billions haven't eased Natives' woes," (Nov. 27). He states the physical abuse suffered by the children was no more than an occasional spanking. Obviously, he has never talked to a Native person who was abused at the hands of so-called God-fearing Christians and our very own Canadian government. There is someone very close to me who still has nightmares of those terrible days. She was forcefully taken from her parents at the age of 12 and suffered unspeakable horrors in her five years at school. School is a very inappropriate word for those torture chambers. She was raped and beaten for the simple reason that she was a Native person. She was constantly told she was half-human and that she should beg forgiveness from God for being a Cree person. Also, there are his concerns for the other \$3.2 billion being spent on other forms of abuse he listed. I find it very hypocritical of him to condemn the \$3.2 billion on spending on Native programs.

Janis Favel

**Source: Edmonton Journal**

**Date: 2005.12.04**

**Byline: Ed Struzik**

**The Dunbow School: A blueprint for despair: The abuses of Indian residential schools have haunted aboriginal people in Canada for generations. Historical records of the first such school show how the experiment, created with good intentions by religious leaders, was doomed from the start**

DUNBOW - In spring 2001, a group of aboriginal elders gathered along the banks of the Highwood River in southern Alberta. They had come on this grey, chilly day to rebury the remains of dozens of children who died while attending St. Joseph's, the Indian residential school that once stood here.

Leo Cattleman, an elder representing the Montana First Nations at Hobbema, delivered one of the eulogies.

"We live in a spiritual world, and when we bury the deceased their bodies go back to Mother Earth, but their spirit lives on," Cattleman said. "Now these little children's spirits are in a peaceful resting place and they will have no more sorrow and no more hurt."

Four years later, Douglas McHugh isn't so sure.

The 84-year-old farmer says he still gets the creeps every time he looks at the new cemetery near the head of his long driveway.

"The fact is no one gave those kids much thought until my older brother, Pat, complained that some of the coffins from the original gravesite were popping out of the banks of the river and in danger of getting washed downstream," says McHugh.

"Only then did the government come down and move them over to this site. Nobody ever came back after the reburial to pay their respects or to even mow down the weeds. It's like those poor kids never belonged to anybody."

McHugh can still recall many of those who attended St. Joseph's Industrial School, also known as Dunbow School. One of them was Tom Three Persons, who won the world bronc riding championship at the Calgary Stampede in 1912.

"You can still see the cartoon that he scratched out in the wood frame up in the meat house," McHugh says. "It's of girls. Kind of indecent, the sort of thing you'd expect from young bucks. He and Maurice McDougall and Charlie Royal, they did all right after they left here.

"The rest of them? I don't know. When I was a kid, some of the students who once lived here would stop by with their horses on their way to the Calgary Stampede. Some missed the place. Others, well, I think it's fair to say they felt differently."

Built in 1883 for a modest \$12,420, St Joseph's was the first of three industrial schools in Western Canada that became the prototype for more than a hundred so-called **residential schools** that were set up across the country.

Situated in a lush, low-lying valley along what was once the Blackfoot Trail, far from the Indian reserves in southern Alberta, St. Joseph's was initially headed by Albert Lacombe, the legendary Oblate missionary. It and two others like it, at Qu'Appelle and Battleford in Saskatchewan, set the stage for one of the most tragic social experiments in Canadian history.

For a century after those first three institutions opened, aboriginal children of all ages were rounded up by Indian agents and Mounties and transported by boat, buggy, bus, train and bush plane to schools dozens, and sometimes hundreds, of kilometres away from their parents. There, they would be met by priests, nuns and laypeople who cut their hair, bundled up their Indian clothing and, in most cases, prohibited them from speaking their own language or from writing home.

For many of these children, the regimented days of early rising, chores, prayers, academic and practical learning in a world devoid of family and affection was agony. Hundreds ran away in those early years. The ones who were caught would sometimes return to the same kind of beatings other children received for speaking in their own tongue, falling asleep at their desk or wetting their beds at night.

Vulnerable to the diseases that European settlers brought west with them, an extraordinary number of children died at the schools. In all, 73 children perished at Dunbow during its 38 years of operation; 50 pupils died at Qu'Appelle in just its first eight years.

By the time Dunbow closed in 1924, it was, according to its Oblate principal, "in a sad plight," with many parts "entirely unfit for human habitation." Only 26 students, one-fifth of what the school housed in the 1890s, were registered. Conditions were so bad that an agent for the Blood Indians complained he could not in good conscience refer children to the school anymore.

One woman who had visited her two boys in the summer of 1914 was horrified to find their feet badly bruised and swollen because they had been without boots for three months. Another claimed that his two grandchildren were "being abused worse than animals."

Even newspapers weighed in on the controversy. On July 14, 1914, the Calgary News Telegram described Dunbow students as "running wild, eating gophers and without shoes, hats or clothing."

The toll of hard work and abuse was reflected in the records of 15 students who were tracked four years after graduation. Only one, James Rainy Chief, had made a good life for himself. Most of the others were well along a dead-end trail. Bob Plaited Hair and John Red Crane were in jail for the fourth time. Joe Crazy Horse, Peter Bruised Head, Frank Daly, Peter Black Rabbit, Percy Plain Woman and Sam Wolf Sitting all had prison records as well.

The school was also in a financial mess. By 1924, unpaid bills had reached a staggering \$4,324.19. The Oblate missionaries and Grey Nuns who ran the school were owed by the government more than \$8,000 in salary that they had deferred in order to keep it going. Students were kept so busy doing farm work to help the bottom line that in 1917 they went four months without picking up a pencil.

Today, all that is left of the school is the gravesite, a huge, sagging red barn, the ice and slaughter houses, and the shell of a wood-frame cabin that once housed the carpenters and tradespeople who worked at the school before it closed.

The school registry, however, remains. It and dozens of letters the school's principals sent to the federal government painfully demonstrate why St. Joseph's, and other schools like it, failed so miserably in educating and assimilating Canada's aboriginal children.

Albert Lacombe never envisaged any of this when he and Vital Grandin, the bishop of St. Albert, developed a plan in the early 1880s for educating Indian children in Western Canada. Having lived with the Blackfoot, Cree and other tribes when they were prosperous hunting cultures, both priests were mortified to see how the Indians had been reduced to catching gophers and mice and killing their own dogs to feed their starving families after signing treaties and settling on reserves.

Realizing the great buffalo herds that had sustained the Indians' nomadic ways would never come back, Lacombe and Grandin felt it was their Christian duty to provide them with the skills they needed to take part in the new, white man's economy. This was in keeping with the philosophy of Charles-Joseph-Eugene de Mazenod, founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Lacombe and Grandin regarded the destitute Indians of the Prairies in the same light as de Mazenod saw the poor of France -- as valuable but uncherished members of society who had to be saved.

The "poor redman's redemption" was the "dream of my days and nights," according to Lacombe, writing in his unpublished memoirs.

The blueprint for their education plan took shape in 1880 following Grandin's visit to a reformatory school for young offenders in Citeux, France. Grandin was impressed with the way the boys were educated, and he and Lacombe envisaged a similar program in Canada in which Indian children at Oblate-run schools built with government money would be "continually under the moral and civilizing influences of devoted teachers."

Though well-intentioned, the Oblate plan was doomed to failure. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald never really warmed to the idea of the federal government building the schools and giving the Oblates, or any other religious group, exclusive control over their administration.

But with the signing of treaties in the 1870s that legally committed the government to providing aboriginal children with an education, he had no choice. He also had to find a way to curtail the rising costs of feeding the starving Indians on the reserves. And so, as a national goal,

Macdonald embarked on a plan "to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people ... as speedily as they are fit to change."

Macdonald, however, did not go to the Catholic or Protestant leaders who had some experience and very strong ideas on education, the cornerstone of any plan for assimilation. Instead, he commissioned Toronto journalist Nicholas Flood Davin, a former British war correspondent, to go to the United States in 1879 to see if the industrial school system for Indians there could serve as a model for Canada.

Davin had no expertise in this area, but Macdonald had a penchant for hiring and rewarding his friends with political appointments.

Davin's was not the most comprehensive of inquiries. After meeting with the American commissioner of Indian affairs, a few other high ranking officials and some Cherokee leaders in Washington, he briefly visited an industrial school in Minnesota.

Swayed by what he had seen and been told, Davin returned to Canada convinced that day schools close to or on reserves were not the answer. "The child who goes to day school learns little," he wrote, "and what little he learns is soon forgotten, while his tastes are fashioned at home, and his inherited aversion to toil is in no way combated."

Davin headed West for a first-hand look at the so-called "Indian problem" and consulted with Lacombe and Alexandre-Antonin Tache, the bishop of St. Boniface, whom he considered the only clerics "who could speak with authority" on the subject.

Initially, Tache was reluctant to buy into Davin's plan, not because it was cruel to separate young children from their parents but because he didn't want the government interfering in missionary work. Ultimately, Lacombe and Grandin got him to reconsider. They argued that the future of their missionary life in Western Canada would fail if they forfeited this opportunity to promote their cause through the schools. Lacombe convinced Tache that, in time, the government could be persuaded to do the right thing.

Time proved Lacombe to be tragically wrong.

No one in government, it seemed, cared much for Lacombe's vision of getting the most talented and dedicated people teaching at **residential schools**. In fact, Lawrence Vankoughnet, the deputy superintendent of Indian Affairs, made it clear he would not allow residential school teachers to be paid as much as their public school counterparts for fear that they would attract good ones away from the city.

When Lacombe and Tache proposed instead to use the Sisters of Charity to make up for the teacher shortfall they knew would inevitably result, Vankoughnet reluctantly agreed, but only on condition that the nuns' pay did not exceed the meagre sums that went to the matron and cook.

Another policy that doomed the **residential schools** from the start was basing their funding on the number of pupils enrolled.

Getting children to attend St. Joseph's and other residential schools proved to be a constant challenge. Neither Lacombe nor Grandin foresaw the possibility that the Blackfoot, the Bloods, the Stoney and the Sarcee might not want to give up their children to distant institutions where they would be placed under the care of white people who had treated them so terribly.

Nor did they realize the blunder of bringing Hayter Reed, the assistant Indian commissioner, along on their first recruiting drive. As a former military man who had risen from drill instructor to garrison adjutant of the entire force in Western Canada, Reed was not well regarded by prairie Indians.

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Continued from E4

For example, when Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney ordered the closing of Fort Walsh in southwestern Saskatchewan in spring 1883 with the aim of getting Big Bear and his followers to settle on reserves, Reed cut off their rations to get them to capitulate. And when told to deal with destitute Indians on the reserves "as economically as possible", Reed insisted that every Indian work for rations no matter how desperate their health or circumstances.

Among prairie Indians, Reed came to be known as Iron Heart, and his boss, Dewdney, became Man With Four Tongues.

Not surprisingly, the Bloods on the Peigan reserve wanted no part of what Lacombe and Reed proposed on that first trip south.

Still, Lacombe was optimistic when he returned to St. Joseph's after his old friend, Crowfoot, the great Blackfoot chief, promised to do what he could to get Indian children into the school.

Unfortunately for Lacombe, Crowfoot's influence with his people had waned. In 1878 he led the Blackfoot across the American border on horseback searching for buffalo that had largely disappeared from Western Canada. Three years later they returned on foot, hungrier and more desperate than ever. More than 1,000 members of the Blackfoot Confederacy had perished in that time, and many who were still alive were appalled by the way they were being treated by both Canadian Indian agents and the Americans who got the contracts to distribute food to them.

Not only were some families not getting the food rations the government had promised, others were being subjected to the indignity of having to bid on the offal and steer heads that were supposed to be distributed to them for free. Each time the young warriors tried to retaliate, Crowfoot lost face by insisting on keeping the peace.

Ultimately, all Crowfoot could send Lacombe were eight boys who, according to the school registry, were much "too big and too well acquainted with the Indian fashion to remain in an Institution like this."

Still, Lacombe did his best to make the students comfortable.

Initially, the boys revelled in the strange design of the school and furniture. Most of them had never seen the inside of a building like that and they had trouble fathoming what stairs, desks and big mirrors were all about. Things were actually looking up on the third night of their stay when Lacombe made them "sore with laughter" with his "Magic Lantern" entertainment.

But it was all downhill after that.

First, the building had structural problems. Lacombe got nowhere begging government officials to fix the toilets that were backing up into the school and contaminating the water well.

"I must repeat again what has already been named to you before; the urgent necessity of having the indoor water closet put in good order," he wrote in January 1885. "They are utterly useless. You can understand how ... detrimental to health it is for the boys to have to use the outside closets at night -- especially in winter weather."

Then it was the challenge of getting instructors, books and enough food for the pupils. When Lacombe complained what the government was allocating wasn't nearly enough, officials instructed him to cut food rations to make ends meet.

"Received your letter of the 13th in which you advise me to alter the sugar ration," Lacombe stated after complaining many times that the students did not have enough to eat.

"All right! I will arrange it this way. Sundays and Thursdays, I will give the full ration of sugar and other days serve tea without it because the small quantity from one source gives no taste at all. If I am going against the rules and wishes of the Dept., please let me know."

The government, in fact, was so miserly that at one point officials demanded Lacombe account for the bags of oats he had bought that first winter to feed the horses that transported supplies from Calgary.

Officials also refused to spend a penny to furnish the chapel in the school.

"You say that it is more than doubtful that the Department will furnish anything!!" wrote Lacombe in an uncharacteristic show of anger. "Very strange indeed!. Well, never mind, in my official report, I will state that I was obliged (with my own salary) to furnish what was absolutely necessary from the beginning."

By spring of that first school year, Lacombe was still waiting for plows and other agricultural equipment he needed to put in the crops he hoped would help feed students and staff. Nor had the books arrived.

"I have the honour to inform you that I have received in due time one Map of the World and one of the Dominion of Canada as promised in your letter of January 14th," Lacombe states facetiously in a letter to Vankoughnet on March 18, 1884. "I have not yet received the school books promised in the same letter."

Without the books, agricultural equipment or instructors the government had promised, students had little to do that first year but cause trouble.

Just two weeks after the first boys arrived, a group of Indians showed up at St. Joseph's, taunting the new pupils and trying, according to the school registry, "to demoralize them." Three of the students ran away with the troublemakers, only to return the next day cold, hungry and promising to be good.

The peace, however, did not last long. After three more boys were delivered in late November, the registrar of the school noted things were getting out of hand. One angry young man, for example, showed up to take his young brother home just before another student "who is too bad to keep" ran away.

By December 1884, Lacombe was so frustrated he finally expelled three of the worst troublemakers.

It didn't do much good. With every new batch of boys brought in that cold, nasty winter, another departure or expulsion soon followed. To make matters worse, many Indian families began setting up camp around St. Joseph's so they could get food for their hungry children or visit those who were enrolled. When some of these parents tried to take their children away, Lacombe resorted to bribery.

"I bought with my own money more than \$100 worth of candies and toys etc. to make them pleased and fond of the place," he wrote. "So ignorant and stupid of what is for their good."

By the time March 1885 rolled in, Lacombe was at his wit's end and begging the government for help. Knowing he had to expel more of the older boys if he was ever going to regain control of the situation, he called in the Mounties to make sure there would be no serious incident when he sent the troublemakers away.

The police remained at the school for five days before the threat of a Metis rebellion led by Louis Riel compelled them to go back to Calgary.

As a man who could only see the good in people, Lacombe never seemed to grasp that neither Dewdney nor any other government official had any intention of providing meaningful financial support for the school.

Dewdney was hardly empathetic to the plight of the Indians. Trained as a civil engineer, he emigrated from Great Britain in 1859 hoping to cash in on the gold rush in the British Columbia interior. Macdonald, his friend, offered him the job of Indian commissioner in the winter of 1879 after two other candidates rejected it.

Loud, pompous and ambitious, Dewdney only took the job because his get-rich-quick schemes had failed to elevate him to the lofty status in society he so much desired.



Throughout his tenure, Dewdney regarded the Indians as "worthless and lazy." The only way of getting them to work, he believed, was to withhold food and rations, no matter how desperate they were. Even Macdonald expressed concern at one point about the way Dewdney allowed Reed to starve out Big Bear and his followers from the Cypress Hills in 1882 so that he could scatter them across a number of reserves.

That Dewdney was "self-seeking, brusque and tyrannical," as the opposition Liberals charged, was never debatable. Yet Macdonald refused to fire his old friend.

Dewdney liked reserves not because they offered any hope for the Indians but because he knew that in them "no place of rendezvous will be found where food can be had without a return of work being extracted."

It was Dewdney, not Vankoughnet, who outlined to the last flake of pepper what the government was willing to provide each student at St. Joseph's and other schools.

Dewdney dictated that for each month of attendance, students should be limited to one pound of flour, one pound of beef, a half pound of bacon, eight ounces of tea, two ounces of sugar, a half ounce of rice, one ounce of dried apples, three ounces of oatmeal, a half ounce of pepper and three gallons of syrup.

One senses that Lacombe was actually relieved the day he received a telegram from Prime Minister Macdonald asking him to go to Blackfoot Crossing to dissuade Crowfoot and his people from joining the Metis rebellion.

The school was in chaos by that time. With news of a possible insurrection, many of the children at St. Joseph's had either run off or had been taken away by their parents. Those who remained were "about as much at home as wild cats in a beaver lodge," according to the acting principal.

In the end, Lacombe succeeded in securing a pledge that the Blackfoot would support the government in the war on the Metis and Cree.

While Lacombe did not return to St. Joseph's, he never stopped trying to get the government to properly fund the schools, even though Dewdney and other officials gave him little hope that things would change. Each time he wrote, he would get a polite, but negative, response.

"The Department does not desire that any loss to the Church should occur," Hayter Reed wrote Lacombe as late as 1893. "But it was expected that (residential) schools would employ officials at less wages and buy the necessary provisions at a cheaper rate."

On and on it went like this until the day St. Joseph's closed for good in 1924.

The failure of St. Joseph's eventually drove Lacombe to write a letter -- a manifesto of sorts -- outlining what the government needed to do to make the schools succeed.

"When willing, (Indian children) are fit to learn," he wrote to Dewdney.

But if the government wanted these schools to work, he advised, agents would have to stop bringing in older boys who could not change their ways.

He suggested that no child over the age of eight be allowed in for any reason. He also recommended that parents be bribed or rewarded in some cases to give up their children and then be prohibited from camping near the schools.

"The Indian Department must at once well understand and put in mind, that among the four tribes of Blackfeet, Bloods, Peigan and Sarcies, no one is willing to depart with the small ones," he wrote. "It is impossible to make them understand that it is for their welfare."

Evidently, Lacombe was willing to go to extreme measures to ensure the schools' success. Should the Indian parents persist in keeping their children at home, he advised, it might be "necessary to bring pressure in some way to bear upon them as by threatening and deprivations of rations."

And if a child ran away, he added, "the principal will inform the agent of the reserve to which the child belongs, and they shall bring him back, willing or not willing, (and) to call for the police if necessary."

Finally, Lacombe wrote it was "a great mistake" to believe that schools like the one at St. Joseph's could succeed without the power to punish students who misbehaved. Some form of "coercion" was essential, he said.

See DUNBOW / E8

Given his gentle nature, Lacombe would have been appalled by the extremes to which the government eventually adopted his recommendations.

While corporal punishment was universally regarded at the time as an acceptable way of dealing with unruly school children, it was evident that over the next century, many residential school teachers were overzealous, even sadistic at times, in the way they administered it. Charges of sexual abuses in some cases proved to be true as well.

The sad truth is what happened at St. Joseph's during its 38 years was tame compared to what went on at other **residential schools** right up until the 1960s. David Laird, a government education official, said as much in 1907 in his report on the residential school at Norway House in Manitoba.

In one case, a boy named Charlie Cline was whipped so many times for bedwettings over an eight-year period that he finally ran away "in weather so severe that his toes were frozen and he will lose them."

"The severity of the punishment" Laird wrote, was not "in accordance with Christian methods."

In another case, Indian agent D.L. Clink refused to return one child to a residential school in Red Deer after the boy was hospitalized because of repeated beatings.

"Such brutality should not be tolerated for a moment and would not be tolerated in a white school for a single day in any part of Canada," he wrote.

Frank Oliver, the powerful Alberta MP, was one of the few politicians of the time who questioned the morality of ripping Indian children from their families and putting them in **residential schools**. "I hope you will excuse me for speaking but one of the most important commandments laid upon the human by the divine is love and respect by children for parents. It seems strange that in the name of religion a system of education should have been instituted, the foundation principle of which not only ignored but contradicted this command."

Oliver's grave doubts notwithstanding, the Canadian government amended the Indian Act in 1920, making it mandatory for aboriginal parents to send their children to Indian **residential schools**.

The legislation dictated that "every Indian child between the ages of seven and 15 years who is physically able shall attend such day, industrial or boarding school as may be designated by the Superintendent General for the full periods during which such school is open each year."

By 1935, the Oblates pretty much conceded that **residential schools** were failing to do what Lacombe and Grandin had hoped. Gabriel Breynat, the Oblate missionary of Mackenzie, suggested that to prevent the "Indian language and Indian life from passing into oblivion," schools should "introduce Native languages in the Indian schools together with courses in syllabics."

The Department of Indian Affairs rejected the idea.

As became the pattern over a century, bureaucrats like Dewdney, Reed and Vankoughnet clung to the same philosophy that guided the government when St. Joseph's was established in 1884.

By 1950, **residential schools** were so starved for resources and teachers and so far behind the public school system in Canada, according to one study, that "over 40 per cent of the teaching staff had no professional training. Indeed, some had not even graduated from high school."

Only one out of 10 aboriginal children by that time had gone beyond Grade 6. So miserable were the conditions in many of these schools that one department superintendent wryly noted that if he "were appointed by the Dominion government for the express purpose of spreading tuberculosis, there is nothing finer in existence than the average Indian residential school."

Albert Lacombe and Vital Grandin's plan for educating the aboriginal children of Canada may never have worked. Separating children from their parents was not the way to solve First Nations problems. But the fact is that from the outset, the federal government never gave the churches the resources they needed to evolve and adapt a better system of educating Canada's aboriginal people.

Inevitably, the "dreams" of Lacombe's "days and nights" never had a chance to succeed.

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**Source: The record**

**Date: 200.12.03**

**Byline: Liz Monteiro**

**Healing circle eases legacy of residential school abuses; Program reintroduces local natives to the culture of their ancestors**

When Andrea Misquadis walked through the door, Pat Green saw the pain in her face that aboriginal people have gone through in the last 250 years.

Green, program co-ordinator for Healing of the Seven Generations, an aboriginal group in Kitchener helping victims of **residential schools**, said when Misquadis came looking for help she was scared, tired and there were tears in her eyes.

The 51-year-old Kitchener woman had lived a painful life and was ready to grieve and put it to rest.

Her 71-year-old mother was a residential school survivor. Many aboriginal children were forced to attend the government-mandated, church-run schools throughout much of the last century. They suffered sexual, physical and culture abuse.

"I carried what she brought home," Misquadis told about 30 people gathered at the Healing of the Seven Generations King Street office yesterday.

Misquadis was among nine participants who graduated from a 36-week healing program. Yesterday, they were presented with certificates and praised for their accomplishments.

For many of the participants, life has been a long and difficult road because of alcohol and drug addictions and abuse.

As a young girl, Misquadis was sexually abused by her grandfather and watched her parents fight after binges of drinking.

"I saw a lot of things a child should never see," she said in an interview after the presentations.

The cycle of abuse continued as Misquadis matured. She lost her three children to the Children's Aid Society for 15 years. As adults they were reunited and then five years ago her son died in a car accident.

Misquadis said she's grateful for the program and those who run it.

"If it wasn't for these beautiful people I don't know where I'd be. I've come a long way," she said. "I thank the creator everyday."

The office opened its doors in April 2004. The healing program involves individual and group workshops and healing circles where individuals learn about aboriginal medicines and smudging -- the burning of sage in a purification ceremony.

"We re-introduce culture in a positive way," said Donna Dubie, executive director of the Healing of the Seven Generations.

"We are not here to make them instant Indians. We give them some understanding of their culture."

Dubie said she can relate to the many stories told by those in the program. Her father was also a residential school survivor.

She, too, was angry and confused before coming to peace with herself.

"For my generation there was no culture. My father was taught that our culture was evil and we were heathens."

Program co-ordinator Pat Green said some of the work involves changing stereotypes of aboriginal people.

Green said he spends a lot of time talking about the four sacred native medicines and the ceremonies associated with those in the program.

"Our ceremonies were looked upon as devil worship and Satanism," he said. "This concept was sold to us in residential schools."

Green said he cleanses his mind with smudging to ensure he doesn't hold onto the resentment that has built up since 1492. "If I hold onto the resentment then I won't be able to see the future."

Green repeatedly praised the participants for their courage to deal with their pain.

"Your actions today will make an impact on the seven generations to come," he said.

"Our decision making was taken away from us a long time ago. Decisions were made on our behalf by people who didn't know us.

"We are now making a decision to do something other than what we did in the past," he said. "We are taking responsibility for ourselves."

Norm Harney told the group that the program allowed him to accept his culture and gain a new appreciation for his native traditions.

As a child he was told by his grandmother, who had attended a residential school in northern Ontario, that if he practised native traditions he would go to hell.

"You spend your whole life thinking one way and you know there is something missing," said the 47-year-old father of two adult children.

"It (the healing program) has enriched my life. What I found was community," he said.

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**Source: The Whitehorse Star**

**Date: 2005.12.03**

**Byline: Candice O'Grady**

**'I left home at six... and didn't return'**

In the wake of last week's \$1.9-billion funding announcement to compensate former students of Indian residential schools, opinions of first nations people across the territory are mixed.

The program is seen to be a good first step by some.

A recurring thought, however, seems to be that it will require more than money to heal the physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural wounds resulting from a government policy that separated tens of thousand of native children from their families across the country. The goal was to assimilate them into white Canadian culture.

"The way I put it, I left home at six years old and didn't return," Milly Johnson said in a recent interview.

Currently the social programs director for the Selkirk First Nation in the Pelly Crossing region of the territory, Johnson was sent to the Choutla mission school in Carcross.

"It's something that never should have happened and unfortunately, it did," she said. "It interrupted and interfered with most family units.

"It kind of misplaced people's identity and, you know, they're kind of stuck in two worlds."

While long overdue, she described the new deal as "a beginning."

Many children who were sent away to residential schools lost their traditional culture without even gaining a high-quality education, according to Vuntut Gwitchin Chief Joe Linklater.

He agrees that as adults, this has left many first nations people caught between communities.

"They didn't get a proper education and they were taken away from their culture. So they're not able to make their living on the land or in mainstream society," he said.

"So they're sort of caught in this nether region of society."

It took Eddie Skookum, chief of the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation, the best part of his adult life to regain his mother tongue. Skookum was also sent to mission school as a young child.

Before being shipped to Carcross, he remembers sitting around the fire and speaking to elders in his native language. When he returned to the community, it took him about 20 years to get back to that level of fluency.



"When we're young, we're innocent, and don't know what's around the next bend," he said in an interview this week.

"When I went to school, I didn't know why I had to get on the bus and have my clothes with me and why I was going to this strange building."

Some members of his community told him they would like to have been more directly involved in negotiating the agreement. The deal was reached among the federal government, a number of church groups and first nations organizations and lawyers representing thousands of former students.

"We didn't have really much input from the main actors, and that's the people who suffered," Skookum said. "It's usually just the top end like the lawyers and the people from the government."

The new federal government program offers money to any person who attended an Indian residential school. Former students are offered \$10,000 for the year they arrived and an additional \$3,000 for every consecutive year.

While victims of sexual and serious physical abuse can still sue independently, those who accept the money relinquish their right to take the government and churches to court.

The compensation being offered, which is expected to work out to an average payment of about \$25,000 per person, only covers a fraction of the loss, Linklater said.

"When they took the children away, they took on a whole hell of a lot of responsibility. By putting money and an apology on the table, that's not enough because that doesn't really address the issue.

"All it does is acknowledge that there has been damage done and there is some sort of monetary compensation for losses that a well-rounded child may have grown into a well-rounded human being and earned a good living."

Many adults who were separated from their families as children question the cost of spending their youth in isolation from the community, he said.

"There's a definite feeling of 'Why did we have to leave all of this?' What some people feel is that they've lost more than they've gained by being taken away to school."

While there are people who feel they benefited from the education, they are the exception not the rule, Linklater added.

In terms of the federal government's latest financial offer, feelings are, again, contradictory.

Some view the deal as an acknowledgment of the government's wrongdoing and as a step forward in healing, Linklater said.

"Some people don't even want to have anything to do with the money. They've already begun on their healing path and if they go back into that... to dredge up those old feelings again, it's not worth the money that may be available to them - no matter what it is."

Skookum said financial compensation does help in certain areas.

"Money is very important to all sectors and all programs and all issues. This is one of them that has to at least be accommodated," he said.

Money given to past students of **residential schools**, however, should be accompanied by some sort of counseling or programming, Skookum said.

Many former students have turned to drugs and alcohol as a result of abuse suffered within the walls of these institutions, he said, and there should be a safety net for them when they receive the influx of funds.

"Some of our people have really slowed down from alcohol and drugs, but what about the rest who are hardcore, who are homeless; what is going to happen there?"

"You know they're going to be taken advantage of, and next thing you know, they don't have any money, even the next day."

Healing the psychological scars left by the legacy of **residential schools** also requires counselling and support, according to Linklater.

"Just this morning, I heard one of the Kaska men talk about... (that) for the first time in his life, he hasn't had to sleep with the lights on and a rifle under his bed. So he's carried all of those things with him," he said in an interview this week.

Professional counselling and programs that re-teach traditional language and culture should also be part of the government's initiatives to help former residential school students heal, Linklater said.

"There needs to be an investment in those types of programs that would be available to residential school survivors."

Another human cost of Indian **residential schools** is that a generation of first nations men and women grew up without parenting skills, Johnson said.

"The ones who went through the schools never got that chance. It's irreplaceable," she said about developing child-parent relationships.

"Now they have to probably learn how to re-program themselves and the reprogramming will never be 100 per cent. It will take another four to five generations for that to phase out."

Educating all Canadians about **residential schools** and their effects on first nations people, and potentially including this information in school curriculums, should also be part of the federal government's program, Johnson said.

"There's mega information with books on it. It could get into the school system," she said.

As part of the agreement, the Canadian government has earmarked \$60 million for the Truth and Reconciliation process, which includes public awareness and education.

While there are seven national events planned with the funds, it's not clear at this point how the rest of the money will be spent, according to Sarah Mangione, media relations and public affairs officer with Indian **Residential Schools** Resolution Canada.

The agreement still has to be approved by seven judges across the country, she noted, and it will take time for the details to be "hammered out."

While the program appears to be a good beginning, Linklater said, it is hard to assess at this point.

The announcement has also come down just before the federal government fell last Monday evening and the country prepares for an election, he said.

Even if the government changes after the Jan. 23 election, however, the agreement is binding, Mangione explained.

**By Philip Raphael**  
**South Delta Leader**  
**Nov 25 2005**

### **Redress to help healing: Baird**

With news this week the federal government will compensate aboriginals who were enrolled in residential schools, Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) Chief Kim Baird said she hopes the financial redress will reach its intended targets.

"I hope that the monies will not get tied up in the process and help people resolve their outstanding issues and allow them to get on with their healing," she said.

Baird did not know of any TFN members who may receive compensation from the \$2-billion deal announced in Ottawa.

"We're a pretty small population here with very few elders left, so I'm not aware of anyone who may benefit from this," she said.

But there are younger generations-the children of residential school students- who are still suffering the after effects, she added.

"It's had a multi-generational impact," Baird said.

The proposal offers former students \$10,000 each, plus \$3,000 for each year spent in the government-mandated, church-run schools set up to assimilate native children into mainstream Canadian culture.

Estimates put the number of students-whose average age is 60-who are eligible to receive compensation at around 80,000.

People 65 or older can apply for a fast-track payment of \$8,000.

**By Grant Warkentin**  
**Mirror Staff**  
**Dec 01 2005**

### **Residential school victims compensated**

Some victims of abuse at North Island residential schools have finally received financial compensation through a fast, new process.

Many First Nations students who were forced to attend the St. Michael's residential school in Alert Bay suffered abuse - physical, sexual and psychological - while at the government-sponsored school.

For victims who chose to seek it, compensation used to mean years of litigation, long waits and going public with all the minute details of their abuse.

Until now. Since spring, 23 former students of the North Island residential school have been involved in an alternative dispute resolution process, designed to move them through their claim quickly and privately, and leaving them with a cash settlement in hand at the end.

"The awards have been very good - I don't think any of the clients have been short-changed," said Stephen Bronstein, a lawyer who has been helping his clients move through the resolution process. "There's been a great level of satisfaction."

The resolution process deals exclusively with the physical and sexual abuse suffered by residential school students, it does not address any loss of First Nations culture or language. Under the process, clients fill out an application form, provide supporting documentation and must testify to qualify for financial compensation based on the severity of their experiences. They are then matched to a grid to determine what kind of cash settlement they should receive. The most an individual can receive is \$250,000.

An adjudicator reviews their claims and decides on an award. The adjudicator is supposed to be unbiased, like a judge.

However, in the intimate setting allowed by the resolution process, the adjudicator can also be compassionate and put clients at ease while they describe the abuse they suffered.

The process doesn't publicly shame the Anglican church, which operated North Island residential schools, or the government, which sponsored the schools. It is also quick, which has attracted criticism from many victims of abuse who doubt the process can offer any real healing or a settlement worth taking.

But it does, argued Bronstein, who said a relatively quick cash settlement in hand - and the closure of receiving compensation for their abuse - is better for many clients rather than a long, messy, drawn-out legal process.

Sandra Sewid, who is helping to co-ordinate the program, said the program does bring real healing. She said a recent celebration by the first group to complete the process proves it.

"Of course reconciliation doesn't happen overnight," she said. "It takes time and it's terrible what happened. But it's exciting because there's actual healing taking place."

Sewid said a recent reconciliation feast involved over 300 people from North Island communities. A federal government representative apologized on behalf of Canada for the treatment natives endured at residential schools.

"It was overwhelming. It was really spiritual at the time," she said.