

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA:
ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN FIVE COMMUNITIES

BY



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ABSTRACT

Despite rapid advances in the field of economic, social and cultural growth in the Province of Alberta during the 1950's and early 1960's, the native population of Alberta was never in the vanguard of such developments, due largely to historic circumstances. On the contrary, native communities were characterized by increasing welfare subsidies, a diminishing traditional economic base and the absence of adequate health facilities. In view of this situation, the Government of Alberta initiated a community development program with the expressed purpose of bettering the social and economic conditions which characterized native communities. In so doing, they hoped to reduce welfare payments and enable the native population to merge into the mainstream of Canadian life in a meaningful way. Community Development was regarded by the government as an educational-motivational process designed to create conditions favourable to economic and social change, preferably on the initiative of the residents in a community. Programs were started in communities which were felt to be in need of such a program.

The history of the Community Development program in Alberta during the first five years of its implementation suggests that while the idea was basically sound, it was too narrow in its outlook. While due regard was placed on the development of the latent initiative of people, very little consideration was given to the provision, or assistance in the provision, of

tangible services through which the initiative of people to better themselves could have been successfully channelled. In as much as the problem of native development is not singular, but multi-faceted, though inter-related, any program aimed at native development must be comprehensive. It is in this respect that the program in Alberta has not met with the success it deserves. Coupled with the lack of a comprehensive plan for native development has been a lack of ability and sensitivity of government officials to creatively provide leadership and resources that were required at the particular time to fulfil the expressed needs of the communities. This thesis reviews the Alberta government's Community Development work between 1964 and 1969 in Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, Hinton, Slave Lake and Wabasca.

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CHAPTER I

THE OBJECT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The origin of the term "Community Development" is as confusing as its definition. Despite its rather nebulous meanings, however, post-war developing as well as developed nations, in their search for solutions to pressing social and economic problems, have given official sanction to community development as an instrument of socio-cultural change and rural development. The term itself gained international recognition on the occasion of the 1948 Cambridge Conference on African Administration and was defined as

"A movement designed to promote better living for the whole community, with the active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement."¹

In India,² a "Grow more Food" campaign was launched in 1948.

While it was not very successful, it did point out the need for a community

development process as the villagers were largely illiterate and under-nourished. In 1952, a community development program was implemented towards these ends and had so great a promise that in 1956 a Ministry of Community Development was formed.

In the Philippines,³ community development has also played an important role, politically, economically and socially. President Magsaysay, elected to office partly because of his belief in community development principles, launched a program in 1956. Following a lack of co-operation of the various national departments, since each professed to be the chief executor of community development, the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (P.A.C.D.) was formed in January 1956 to implement a program of making the "barrio" (village) an effective form of social and political structure.

Apart from the Commonwealth countries and the Philippines, community development has been, and continues to play a prominent role in many other countries including Latin America, the United States and Canada. In the United States, it was more commonly referred to as social action programs, nevertheless utilizing the basic philosophy. In Canada, various government departments and voluntary agencies have been involved in community development programs geared primarily to lower socio-economic groups in rural as well as urban areas.⁴

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In Alberta, a community development program was launched by the provincial government in 1964. It was primarily aimed at native communities, which, faced with social, cultural and economic repressions, were assuming an increasing burden to the province, financially and administratively. Despite the fact that it is now⁵ in its seventh year of operation, there has been very little written on the kinds of activities that have been taking place nor have any serious attempts been made to analyse such activities.⁶ Previous to 1968, the Community Development Branch of the Government was under the Department of Industry and Tourism. Since then, it became a part of the Human Resources Development Authority and a new approach to community development is emerging. Whereas in the past, a community development officer was placed in a community to act as a catalyst, he is now becoming part of a larger team of professionals working in area development.

The main purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to document, analyse and compare community development activities in five communities of Alberta which were first selected for the program. The second concern of the thesis, in light of the history of community development activities in Alberta, is to evaluate the changing functions of the Community Development Branch as to their relevance and practicability in meeting desired objectives.

C. LIMITATIONS

There have been community development activities in over ten communities of Alberta, some for a shorter duration than others. As such, the abundance of information available was over-whelming. One limitation of this thesis, therefore, is that it deals with selected activities in only five of the areas. These five were those that were initially chosen by the Community Development Branch for the program and thus have the longest history. Apart from the over-whelming amount of information, another reason for only dealing with the five areas was that they are sufficient in themselves to give a fair and accurate knowledge of the entire community development program in Alberta. As will be evident later, the five areas were quite different from one another and involved quite different community development approaches which enhances the comparability of the areas.

As was also quite evident from the literature, community development covers a broad scope of interests, e.g. illiteracy, health, social organizations, co-operatives - only to mention a few. The second limitation of this thesis, therefore, is that it concentrates on those activities which were readily evident in a community and on specific projects of socio-economic development. The activities of many social organizations were omitted because of the lack of clear knowledge of participation and involvement of residents in such organizations and because the gaining of

such knowledge was too time-consuming and required a great amount of skill in attitude testing. This is a rather unfortunate limitation as social organizations, performing a very educational role in a community, (providing that the democratic process is maintained) are of intrinsic value to community development. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this loss can be minimized by a detailed study of other activities in the various communities.

D. METHODOLOGY

Most of the information presented on community development activities has been obtained from files of the various community development officers. Each community development officer was required to submit semi-annual, annual and progress reports to the Provincial Co-ordinator of the program and it was mainly from these reports that information has been obtained. Reports, however, apart from being subjective, can be very biased in that one may want to write only those things that are pleasing to the Government. To ensure the reliability of the information presented, therefore, approximately two weeks were spent in each of the five communities, talking to the community development officer (where there was still one) and to the residents of the community, particularly those who were very active in the various activities, as to their interpretations of events.

Footnotes

¹Great Britain, Colonial Office, "Social Development in the British Colonial Territories," Report of the Ashbridge Conference on Social Development, London: 1965, p.14.

²Sugan Chand Jain, Community Development and panchayati raj in India, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967.

³Socorro Espiritu and Chester Hunt (eds.), Social Foundations of Community Development, Readings on the Philippines, Manila: R.M. Garcia Publishing House, 1964.

⁴"Community Development in Canada," International Society for Community Development, Volume I, No. 2, July, 1966.

⁵This thesis was completed in September, 1970 but the final copy was not submitted for the degree until October, 1972. The reader should orient his thinking to 1970 in reading the material. Many changes with respect to Community Development have taken place in Alberta between 1970 and 1972.

⁶Only two studies that I know of have attempted to do this. They are (1) Antony Lloyd, Community Development in Canada, Ottawa: 1967 and (2) Charles Hynam, "An Evaluation of Three Alberta Community Development Projects, A Summary Report," (unpublished, April 1969).

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS A CONCEPT

An examination of the literature dealing with community development reveals a very marked ambiguity as to its definition and frame of reference. Some, including A. Davis, define community development as "...the movement of a population toward higher material levels of living and toward the institutional patterns associated with urban-industrial society, whether of the capitalist or of the communist variation"¹. Others, including Biddle and Biddle define it as "...a social process by which human beings can become more competent to live with and gain some control over local aspects of a frustrating and changing world."² And still others, including participants of the Ashridge Conference, define it as "...a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation, and, if possible, on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming, by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure the active and enthusiastic response to the movement."³

Charles Erasmus⁴, in questioning whether community development is a science or ideology, reviewed fifty-nine policy articles and found that

of these, sixty percent stressed the concept of self-help, forty percent emphasised such concepts as self-determination, democracy, self-reliance or local and self government, fifteen percent was concerned with the development of self-confidence, while ten percent expressed the concept of material goals, such as better living standards, improved housing, health and diet. Others have also been concerned with the philosophy of community development. Sanders⁵ found that community development could be conceived of on four levels, as a program, as a process, as a method, and as a movement. Whitford, in a recent unpublished paper, also has the following to say:

- "1. Some definitions confuse a statement of goals or techniques with definition as in: 'community development is self-help' or 'community development is democracy in action...'.
2. Some definitions are so inclusive that they in fact say nothing as with Batten in: 'community development is any action taken by an agency primarily designed to benefit the community'.
3. Some definitions contradict other definitions without specifically denying the validity of them or even recognizing their existence as in: 'the community development is a process of social action...' as opposed to 'community development is a movement designed to promote better living.'"⁶

The result of the conceptual confusion surrounding the term community development has led some to either attempt to clarify its definitions or to look upon community development as encompassing all the varied definitions. In this respect, Biddle recommends among other things that, "for the present, all approaches which claim to be Community Development be accepted as legitimate contributions" and "that each interpreter acknowledge there are other approaches as well as his own."⁷ Hynam, concerned with the theoretical danger of confusing community development with other programs, e.g. extension work, combines two definitions to come up with his own. To him, "Community Development is the utilization under one coordinated program of approaches and techniques which rely upon local communities as units of action to purposefully change living conditions by making use of all available resources."⁸ Whitford, in dealing with the conceptual confusion, saw the merit of a more restricted definition of community development. He defined it as "...an educational-motivational process by which people, in a community setting, become more effective in their public relationships."⁹ A last and final definition merits attention here, not because of its peculiar nature but because it shows what can happen in some programs. According to J. Botting, community development "...is a subtle process of disintegration whereby a formerly cohesive and contented community gradually dissolves into a series of sub-groups and factions pursuing goals which lead to perpetual conflict and the squandering of resources which might otherwise have contributed to the economic develop-

ment of the nation."¹⁰

Theoreticians who battle constantly between the social and economic constitutions of community development should by now realize that it is very difficult, if not impractical, to separate the social from the economic relationships that exist in the real world. As an ad hoc group of experts of the United Nations pointed out, "Distinctions between social and economic aims in relation to community development are at best artificial, Life is never so well differentiated at the village level as to justify a segmented approach to social and economic components. The combination and interplay of such components is of the very nature of community development as a process of promoting the well-being of individuals and communities in the fullest sense and of achieving the integration of their efforts into national life."¹¹

B. TYPES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

In as much as there are differences in community development definitions, there are also different types of community development programs. In a United Nations study of public administration aspects of community development programs, three different types were found.

"(a). The Integrative-type programme is designed to be country-wide in scope, emphasizes the co-ordination of technical services, and might involve in the early years substantial changes in the

administrative organization and functioning of government. It has a readily identifiable organization which is designed to marshal and co-ordinate at each level the efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies which can make a contribution to community development. New administrative areas might be created in order to co-ordinate technical services at a point closer to the people. Substantial technical and financial resources are channelled through this organization to achieve centrally planned development goals.

(b). The adaptive-type programme is country-wide in scope, but involves little change in administrative organization of government. It seeks to attract the support of the technical departments to the task of stimulating community self-help, usually through an informal arrangement for consultation and teamwork. Programmes of this type could be attached to almost any department and otherwise adapted to the prevailing administrative organization of government.

(c) The project-type programme is limited in geographic scope to certain parts of a country and is usually designed as a testing ground for techniques and practice."¹²

Another way of looking at types of community development programs deserves mentioning. Daryll Murri lists four types of programs as being the direct, indirect, laissez-faire and a combination of the three types.

He describes them as follows:

"The direct community development program is generally a passive technique in which the outside individual develops the program within a framework of the desires of local community leaders.

The indirect community development program is essentially one in which an individual or individuals outside the community assume the role of leadership and are active in promoting a particular program...

In laissez-faire community development the community is allowed to evolve without direct or indirect leadership. The rationale behind this approach is that the basic social and economic forces in society will mold or change the community into the type of community society wants.

The combination approach uses parts of the previous three approaches depending upon the community's situation and needs."¹³

Despite the different types of community development programs, however, certain basic elements are noticeable. A United Nations report¹⁴ lists four such basic elements.

1. A planned program for the needs of the total community.
2. Self-help as a basis for the program.
3. Technical assistance from government and other organizations.
4. Integration of specialist services.

The lack of conceptual clarity also surrounds the process of community development and the roles that are expected of a community development officer. Biddle and Biddle¹⁵ outline one such process, warning however, that such a process should not be accepted as final. They see the process as starting from an exploratory stage and moving to an organizational, discussional, action, new projects, and finally to a continuation stage, in that order. Goodenough,¹⁶ in dealing with the phases of a revitalization movement, which he feels are fundamentally the same as those of successful development, gives six such phases.

1. Perception of a solution to an existing problem by the development agent or prophet.
2. Communication of the solution to others.
3. Organization of the following.
4. Adaptation of the proposed solution and its accompanying doctrine.
5. Transformation of the community as it mobilizes to put the proposed solution into effect.
6. Routinization of the changes.

As reported by Kaufman and Cole, Edwards, in reviewing four different studies, found agreement on six steps in the development process.

These are:

- "1. A recognition of need.

2. Some person or group must initiate action.
3. The situation is studied or diagnosed.
4. Alternative solutions are explored and goals are determined.
5. Action is taken to realize the goal, and
6. The achieved goal must be put into effect or administered."¹⁷

C. ROLES OF A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

With respect to the roles of a community development worker, the variations in functions seem to depend on how he is regarded. From the theoretical literature, a community development worker, also referred to as a change agent, social animator, facilitator, extension agent, encourager and the like, is usually regarded as either a generalist or specialist.

Carl Taylor¹⁸ looks upon a community development worker as being a local person rather than an outsider, who understands why people act in their accustomed ways, and is listened to attentively when he suggests easier or probably superior ways of gaining the ends which the people desire.

Desmond Connor¹⁹ identifies four major roles in which an individual must function effectively:

1. Observer - to observe and understand his environment, including the community and its people, his agency and professional colleagues.
2. Diagnostician - to assess the problems faced by the people.

3. Strategist - to spread out the varieties of means by which development may be induced and then let the worker eliminate those which are inappropriate and use the others in a comprehensive strategy of development.
4. Stimulator - to stimulate development.

Whitford,²⁰ the Co-ordinator of the community development program in Alberta from 1964 to 1968, lists six things which a community development worker must do. He must communicate, organize, create learning situations, motivate, encourage local leadership and phase out.

As a last example, Mezirow described the community development worker as

"fundamentally a procedural technician in the cooperative problem solving process which involves special competence in teaching democratic human relations, group discussions and action methods and the application of scientific methods to the solution of common problems. His primary job is to help people who make up a community function productively as democratic members of problem solving groups... The community developer assists these local groups to handle and reduce factionalism and conflict and to cultivate a willingness to experiment with procedures and problem solutions."²¹

Footnotes

¹Arthur K. Davis, "Rejoinders," Human Organization, Vol 27, No. 1, Spring 1968, p.89.

²William Biddle and Loureide Biddle, The Community Development Process, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966, p.78.

³Community Development - A Handbook, London: H.M.'s Stationery Office, 1958, p.2.

⁴Charles Erasmus, "Community Development and the Encogido Syndrome," Human Organization, Vol. 27, No. 1, Spring 1968, p.65.

⁵I.T. Sanders, The Community: An Introduction to a Social System, New York: Ronald Press Co., 1966, 2nd Edition, p.521.

⁶James Whitford, "Towards a More Restricted Definition of Community Development," (unpublished article), undated, pp.6-7.

⁷William Biddle, "The 'Fuzziness' of Definition of Community Development," Community Development Journal, No. 2, April 1966, p.12.

⁸Charles Hynam, "Community Development, An Example of Conceptual Confusion." (paper presented to the tenth Annual Meeting of the Western Association of Sociologists and Anthropologists, Banff, Alberta, Canada, Dec. 29, 1968), p.4.

⁹James Whitford, op.cit.

¹⁰Joseph Botting, "Ideal Type Community Development!," Community Development Journal, No. 8, Oct. 1967, p.43.

¹¹United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Community Development and National Development, New York: United Nations Publication, 1963, pp. 25-26.

¹²Ibid., pp.60-61.

¹³Daryll Murri, "Community Development and Motivation," (unpublished article), undated, pp.2-3.

¹⁴United Nations, Bureau of Social Affairs, Social Progress Through Community Development, New York: United Nations Publication, 1955, p.10.

¹⁵Biddle and Biddle, op.cit., pp. 88-107.

¹⁶Ward Goodenough, Cooperation in Change, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1963, p.302.

¹⁷H. F. Kaufman & L. W. Cole, "Sociological and Social Psychological Research for Community Development," International Review of Community Development, 1959, No. 4, p.206.

¹⁸Carl C. Taylor, "The Local Worker in Community Development Programmes," Community Development Journal, Jan. 1967, Fifth Issue, pp.16-19.

¹⁹Desmond Connor, "Four Roles for the Development Worker: An Approach to Training and Action," Community Development Journal, October 1967, Eighth Issue, Manchester England, pp.23-24.

²⁰James Whitford, op. cit., p.11.

²¹Jack Mezirow, "Community Development as an Educational Process," International Review of Community Development, 1960, N.5, p.138.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ALBERTA

A. HISTORICAL SKETCH

In July of 1963, the concept of "Community Development" was first introduced to the Government of Alberta as a means of combatting rising welfare payments to the natives and, at the same time, encouraging them to integrate into the mainstream of Canadian life. In December of 1963 the Government of Alberta decided to institute a Community Development program in the province with the aim of assisting people of Indian ancestry to better their own social and economic positions. A cabinet committee, composed of the Hon. F.C. Colborne, as chairman, the Hon. L.C. Halmrast, the Hon. I. McLaughlin, and the Hon. A.R. Patrick as members, was established to set up and implement a two-year experimental program.

On February 16, 1964, James R. Whitford was employed as the Provincial Co-ordinator of Community Development and charged with the task of preparing a preliminary statement of a program. In his preliminary statement, presented to the committee on April 3, 1964, he reviewed the various problems facing the natives, such as discrimination, inability to maintain their culture, psychological problems arising from Indians being

a conquered people and set apart legally from other citizens. In his submission were the following statistics as well:

TABLE 1:
A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT NATIVES AND ALBERTANS

ITEM	TOTAL	INDIAN ANCESTRY	
Population	1,500,000	44,000	3.0%
Unemployment Rate	3½%		44.2%
Inmates in Tuberculosis Sanitaria	1,244	310	24.9%
Inmates in Alberta Jails	1,400	350	25.0%
Female Inmates in Fort Saskatchewan Jail	70	56	80.0%
Cases Before City Magistrates	18,000	6,000	33.3% -
		9,000	50.0%
Average Earnings in Canada (1961)	\$ 3,192.	\$ 1,995.	

Source: J.R. Whitford, "Preliminary Statement of a Community Development Program for the Province of Alberta," undated, p.2.

His search for a solution to these problems led him to choose the path of community development over such other approaches as the traditional paternalistic method, nativistic revitalization movements, militant anti-white role, and a voluntary or enforced segregation, reasoning that if a community development program could introduce into a community

knowledge and skills of a certain order, then the people might be motivated to attempt to better their own situation.

B. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: DEFINITION

Whitford defined community development as "an attempt to influence values, attitudes and behaviour patterns of people in a community setting by creating a favourable environment in which change can occur"¹ (involving the local people at all stages, in isolating the problems and carrying out the actual work). In a later paper, he re-defined community development as "an education-motivational process designed to create conditions favorable to economic and social change, if possible, on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, then techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure the fullest participation of the community must be utilized".²

C. ASSUMPTIONS

1. There are no healthy people who are not concerned about their own predicament.
2. There are no people who will not act in their own self-interest.
3. Many social and psychological ills are caused because people have neither the knowledge nor the skills to act effectively in their own interest.

D. OBJECTIVES

1. To create community by helping people organize into groups which will be effective in providing and/or utilizing the normal community services which the majority of our citizens find available to them.
2. To assist people to better their social and economic positions vis-a-vis the rest of the Canadian society.
3. To help in the generation of a social climate which will encourage our native peoples to assume broadly normative value systems and patterns of behaviour.

E. QUALIFICATIONS AND ROLES OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Realizing that the key to the whole program was the community development officers, Whitford felt that they had to have the following qualifications among others:

1. Sensitivity - to the needs and wants of people
2. Maturity - to be able to recognize and appreciate the needs of the people
3. Training - to be able to analyse the social components of a community
4. Intelligence - to be able to relate means to possible and alternative ends

5. Skill - in working with individuals and groups
6. Discipline - to be able to withdraw from unrequired situations irregardless of how emotionally rewarding it may be
7. Married

Once a community development officer was assigned to a community, his role was to be:

1. To establish a residence and an office in the community
2. to make an intensive analysis of the community in order to discover where the people are demographically, culturally, economically, and socially.
3. to make himself available to the people, individually or in groups, for consultation on a formal or informal basis
4. to establish a good relationship with no authority or money at his command.

F. SELECTION OF AREAS

Since it was going to be an experimental program, the Coordinator felt that the communities chosen as project areas had to satisfy the following requirements:

1. They had to be sufficiently varied in nature so that there could be comparison of results.
2. They had to require only short-term projects.

3. They had to comprise both Indians and Metis.
4. Areas would be chosen neither on the basis of population nor need, but rather on the apparent willingness of the people to consider practical solutions to their problems (justified on the grounds that, with the given time limit to prove the value of the approach, and in any case, people in whatever community must be brought to this point before observable results can be expected).

G. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Community Development, as a branch of the government, was conceived to perform four tasks - namely: to relate to the native people, to administer the funds, to relate to the policy level of government and, as Indians were to be affected by the program, to relate to the Indian Affairs Branch of the Federal Government.

On relating to the native people, it was felt advisable to utilize native field personnel, but the lack of training in social process among natives presented a problem. In relating to the administrative machinery of government, it was decided to include Community Development as a branch in the Department of Industry and Development with the Coordinator being responsible to the Deputy Minister of that department for administrative purposes. However, for purposes of policy and programming, he was made responsible to the Cabinet Committee on Community Development.

In relating to the policy level of government, the Cabinet Committee was given the responsibility for policy-making and, in relating to Indian Affairs Branch, a Local Committee on Indian Affairs was formed, comprising representatives of the Provincial Government and Indian Affairs Branch.

In 1967, however, a Federal-Provincial Community Development Agreement was reached whereby all direct community development services were to be provided by the Provincial Community Development staff with the Federal Government sharing the cost of providing such services in the same proportion as the Indian population of that area was to the total population of the area. A Federal-Provincial Coordinating Committee was also established, taking over the functions of the Cabinet Committee on Community Development.

H. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES DURING THE FIRST YEAR

With the setting-up of the administrative machinery to implement the community development program, attention was next turned to the matters of selecting potential project sites and acquiring capable persons to fill the positions of community development officers. Mr. Whitford, previous to his presentation of a preliminary statement on community development and particularly after that, visited various communities in Alberta discussing with residents the nature and scope of community development and, at the same time, trying to find out what areas would be

most suitable for the experimental project. Having the criteria mentioned previously for selecting project areas, Mr. Whitford³ submitted a recommendation to the Cabinet Committee listing four areas where the program could be implemented. These were:

1. Fort Chipewyan, serving 300 Chipewyan Indians, 600 Cree Indians, and 500 Metis and Whites and having fish, fur, and timber resources. The main objective was to be adult education and economic development.
2. Fort McMurray, serving 300 Metis and 900 Whites, and having timber and oil resources. The main objective was adult education and placement.
3. Slave Lake, with the objective being adult education and economic development.
4. A reserve in southern Alberta having grazing and farm land as resources, with the objective being adult education and economic development (the particular location was to be selected only after an agreement between Indian Affairs Branch and the Province of Alberta could be signed).

During this period also, Mr. Whitford was also busy seeking qualified personnel to act as community development officers. A total of twenty-one men and, where possible their wives, from all across Canada were interviewed, but with little success. At the end of the first six months

only three men were selected namely: Mr. Terry Garvin, who was borrowed from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and took up duties at Fort McMurray on August 1, 1964; Mr. Raymond Albert, formerly a prison psychologist at Dorchester Penitentiary in Dorchester, New Brunswick, who was placed in Fort Chipewyan on September 1, 1964, and Mr. Doug Babcock, who was in the process of finishing graduate studies in anthropology at the University of British Columbia, to be placed at Slave Lake on December 1, 1964. Then, Mr. John Burch, formerly with the Community Development Branch of the Manitoba Government, was placed in Hinton on April 1, 1965; Mr. Sam Sinclair, borrowed from the Department of Lands and Forests, was placed as an economic development officer in Wabasca on October 1, 1965 and, Mr. Murray Smith, from Westlock, Alberta, was placed in Wabasca on October 18, 1965.

With the setting-up of the administrative machinery, the project areas and selection of the field personnel, attention was now turned to the events leading up to the implementation of the program in the various areas and the actual field work of the various community development officers.

I - ANALYSIS:

The introduction of a new program in any institution is never free from problems. There are those who view the new program as a threat to the prevailing distribution of power within the structure, others who are least concerned because it does not affect them, and those who openly welcome it because of its utility. The success of a new program lies, therefore, not only in its ability to produce results but, perhaps more importantly, in its ability to convince or overpower those elements that seek its destruction. Likewise, the setting-up of a community development program in Alberta has not been without immediate or consequential problems, the chief of which from the beginning was a lack of clear understanding as to what community development constituted. Its conceptual clarity becomes rather confusing when one looks at the varied definitions and objectives stated. The Federal-Provincial Coordinating Committee defines it as "the process which induces an attitude in people which is favorable to social change, recognizing that social change is inevitable". According to the objectives mentioned, community development was looked upon as a method of affecting social and economic development. In a report, it was looked upon as a method of effecting economic development and adult education only. In another report yet, it was looked upon as a process only of initiating self-development irregardless of what such process may lead to. And then there are the two definitions mentioned earlier.

The conceptual confusion surrounding the term 'community development' becomes more blurred when the motive behind its acceptance is examined. It would be erroneous to generalize that the idea of community development was bought by the Alberta Government as a way of assisting people of Indian ancestry to better their own social and economic conditions through the use of their initiative. The increasing native population was becoming more and more a 'high-cost, multi-problem' segment of the total population. The increasing welfare subsidies and administrative costs were ineffective and were neither preventative nor curative measures. It was, therefore, in the interest of the Government to experiment with a community development program for two years. Some Government officials, regemented to the institutional nature of the Government machinery as a result of their many years of service, and particularly insensitive to the problems facing natives and their culture, looked upon it primarily as a program to reduce welfare costs. Only a few who were genuinely concerned with the plight of natives looked upon it from the perspective of native self-development and not so much from how it would benefit the Government. The differential perspectives have led to countless frustrations on the part of natives trying to better themselves, as will be evident later.

The confusion surrounding the concept of community development was not only confined to Government circles. It was quite apparent in the various communities as well. In discussions with residents who were active

in community development activities, it was clear that few people in the communities really understood that it was not another give-away program of the Government to pacify the natives. The general impression was that Government was sending a man with 'magical powers' who would solve all of the community's problems and that all the people had to do was to ask for what they wanted without assuming any responsibility as was customary. The result of such discrepancy at the community level has led to constant frustrations faced by the community development officer in his role as a catalyst, not to mention those faced by the community itself in attempting to assume a more responsible role.

The other important aspect of the foundation of the program lies in the determination of project areas. As was pointed out earlier, the program was an experimental one and the areas chosen had to satisfy four requirements. Chief of the requirements was that the areas would be chosen neither on the basis of population nor need, but rather on the apparent willingness of the people to consider practical solutions to their problems. It seems rather unfortunate that such a requirement had to be built into the program, in that those communities most in need of such a program were to be deprived of it. It is understandable that the Government would want to see the effectiveness of such a method, nevertheless, the requirement goes against the very philosophy and objectives of the program. If a community is to be chosen because of the apparent willingness of the people

to consider practical solutions, then there is little need for community development to be an educational-motivational process, as the motivation is already present, and there is also no need to stimulate initiative in the community. It can be argued that one of the chief aims of community development is to bring a community to the stage where it shows an active willingness to consider solutions to its many problems. What is required after such a stage is not a program of community development but a more comprehensive program of rural development where technical and physical resources are brought in or developed to solve whatever problems are locally identified. The need for such a requirement, as mentioned, also serves to strengthen the opinion that the Government little understood what community development involved. The Provincial Coordinator felt that he needed to have tangible results at the end of the two year experimental program in order to convince the Government of its effectiveness. Needless to say, the effectiveness of such a program cannot be measured in any tangible way except indirectly, and to base a program on tangible results is only to jeopardize the qualitative contribution such a program can make.

Footnotes

¹ J. Whitford, Preliminary Statement of a Community Development Program for the Province of Alberta, undated, pp.5.

² J. Whitford, Community Development in Alberta, November 25, 1965, pp.1.

³ J. Whitford, Report of a Community Development Program for Alberta, undated, pp.1-3.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FORT McMURRAY

A. THE PROPOSED PROGRAM

Previous to the year 1964, Fort McMurray was an isolated and economically stagnant community. Its population was about 1,300, of whom over fifty percent were either Indians or Metis. The permanent jobs were held mostly by whites living in the area while for the natives, jobs were few and seasonal in nature; their incomes were derived from a fading trapping occupation and an increasing welfare subsidy. From the perspective of a social hierarchy, they were by and large crowded at the bottom of the social scale, poor, living in shacks on land that was not theirs, and poorly educated. The community itself was cut off from civilization except by air and rail, and most community services were sent in periodically by government officials.

Conditions, however, were to be drastically changed, at least for some segments of the community, when, in the spring of 1964, the Great Canadian Oil Sands Limited (G.C.O.S.) concluded an agreement with the Government of Alberta to extract oil from the Athabasca bituminous sands centered at Fort McMurray. It was estimated that over \$190 million

would be spent in the area, providing many kinds of jobs for people of Indian ancestry in the area. In granting the permit, the Alberta Government made the following stipulations which were agreed upon by G.C.O.S.:¹

1. the use of Alberta labour
2. except for technical processes, the use of Alberta engineers and other professional personnel
3. the use of Canadian contractors where possible
4. at least one Albertan on the Directorate of the Company
5. the opportunity for Albertans to invest in the venture

The Community Development Branch, noting that past commercial and industrial developments in northern Alberta resulted in constantly increasing job opportunities on the one hand yet continuing low average incomes, low standard of living conditions, and low levels of involvement of native peoples on the other hand, felt that native peoples had not been effectively integrated into the social and economic mainstream of northern Alberta life. Thus, to see that the Natives be more effectively integrated through the application of community development principles and practice, the Branch thought it best to initiate a program with the chief aim of assisting the native peoples to improve their economic and social positions by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by G.C.O.S. The community development officer's job was considered two-fold:

1. to be a placement man in terms of considering the number and types of jobs available, the number, skills and whereabouts of potential workers; means of getting them to Fort McMurray; the disposition of the families, briefing the potential workers on the role they were expected to play; placing them on jobs, and; to do a follow-up on an individual and group basis.
2. as the felt needs of the community were expressed, he was to address himself to those areas which were more often associated with classical community development.

At a meeting held on April 27, 1964, attended by various Government officials, it was proposed that since no community development officer could be placed in Fort McMurray at a time when G.C.O.S. was recruiting workers, someone be made available from Indian Affairs Branch to the Community Development Branch, temporarily, to set up the community development program as smoothly as possible by locating and analyzing potential native workers and contacting potential employers. It was also proposed that welfare payments be handled on a coordinated basis rather than by the Provincial and Federal Governments independently. At a subsequent meeting on March 1, Indian Affairs Branch agreed to place Mr. Ben Baich, then an economic development officer, at the disposal of the Community Development Branch on a loan basis for three months

beginning as of May 5, 1964. In addition, plans were underway for the implementation of a coordinated program for handling welfare payments. On May 2, another meeting was arranged between some officials of the government and a representative of G.C.O.S., at which time hope was expressed by an official that native people would be given an opportunity to find jobs, encouraged to upgrade themselves and could be lead to participate more fully and freely in the social life of Fort McMurray. The representative of G.C.O.S., who had travelled extensively in the Canadian North and who was not new to conditions facing natives, expressed his interest in the program and assured them that G.C.O.S. would certainly cooperate as long as such cooperation was not detrimental to their project.

During the next three months, up to the time when an official community development officer was placed in Fort McMurray, Mr. Baich visited Fort McMurray and surrounding areas to get first-hand information on the nature of the communities, the human resources present, and employability of the natives. Table II sums up some of the information gained. He also spent a considerable amount of time talking to individual natives, the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce, and employers in the area about the community development program and how they could all contribute toward its success. While in Fort McMurray, also, he met with a Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman, Mr. Terry Garvin, on a few occasions and was quite impressed by his activities - so much so that he

wrote to the coordinator of the program of the possibility of Mr. Garvin being placed there as a community development officer. Accordingly, a letter was sent to the Assistant Commissioner of the R. C. M. P. in Edmonton by the coordinator, requesting that Corporal Garvin be loaned to the Community Development Branch for a period of two years, which was later agreed upon. On May 21, 1964 also, at a meeting held in Fort McMurray and attended by representatives from Indian Affairs Branch, the Department of Public Welfare, Community Development Branch, along with the Chamber of Commerce, the Town Council and interested citizens of Fort McMurray, the nature and objectives of community development were explained, cooperation on the part of the three government agencies to provide effective services to the area was expressed, and discussion about the immediate hopes and fears with regard to the future of Fort McMurray took place. At a following meeting, later in the day, attended by some twenty-four citizens, topics such as housing, employment, the training of native workers, welfare, handicrafts, and town planning were further discussed, which resulted in the natives forming the NISTAWOYOU Association soon afterwards. On June 15, representatives from the departments of Municipal Affairs, Community Development, Public Welfare, Education, Northland School Division #61, Indian Affairs, National Employment Service, Immigration Branch, and Citizenship Branch, met in Edmonton and discussed the various aspects of, and contributing factors to, the development of the town of Fort McMurray. The Coordinator

of Community Development, in his address, stated that the particular purpose of the community development officer was to give attention to employment, housing and social aspects of the community so as to upgrade the opportunities of the Indians and Metis. As of August 1, 1964, Mr. Terry Garvin, on loan from the R.C.M.P. for a period of two years, began his duties as a community development officer.

TABLE II

LOCATION, POPULATION, OCCUPATION AND # OF EMPLOYABLE MEN IN COMMUNITIES IN AND AROUND FORT McMURRAY

COMM-UNITY	LOCATION: DISTANCE FROM FORT McMURRAY	POPULATION	OCCU- PATION	EMPLOY- ABLE MEN
Anzac	24 Rail Miles South	2 Treaty Families 30-40 Metis	Trapping	12
Chard	70 Rail Miles South	145 Treaty 140 Metis	"	N.A.
Conklin	90 Rail Miles South	0 Treaty 165 Metis	"	N.A.
Philomena	132 Rail Miles South	0 Treaty 25-40 Metis	"	N.A.
Imperial Mills	145 Rail Miles South	0 Treaty 100-140 Metis	"	N.A.
Fort McKay	40 Air Miles North	160 Treaty (mostly and Metis)	"	N.A.
Fort McMurray		1,085 (800 Treaty & Metis)		

Source: Letter from B. Baich to J. Whitford, May 15, 1964, p. 2

B. ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER:**1. Employment of Native People**

From the time that the community development officer took office, and during the first few weeks of his activities, he spent much time approaching the various employers in the area, outlining the community development program, his role, and soliciting support from them. Among those he met were the project manager of Canadian Bechtel Limited which was awarded the contract by G.C.O.S. to build the oil plant at a cost of approximately \$230 million, the project superintendent of Mannix Company, which was contracted to construct a road between the G.C.O.S. plant and Fort McMurray, and the contractor of the Highways Project. The response as a whole was, generally, a favourable one though doubts were sometimes expressed as to the economic usefulness of native employment. He also contacted potential employees from Fort McMurray and surrounding communities, as well as other natives coming from Lac La Biche, Uranium City, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Wabasca, and Hobbema looking for employment with the intention of placing them on appropriate jobs as they became available. The Nistawoyou Association was also very concerned with native employment and training facilities to the extent that one representative of the association, Mr. J. Sanders, devoted the greater part of his time and energy, without any financial remuneration, to assisting the community development officer in contacting potential employees and acting

as an interpreter on occasions which necessitated the use of the Cree language (he was later hired by the Community Development Branch as an assistant).

As a placement officer, the community development officer would, when requested by various employers to provide men for jobs, locate suitable men to fill the vacant positions which usually required unskilled labour. Next, he would get together with the recently selected employees and representatives from the Nistawoyou Association and provide counselling as to what would be expected of them on the job, what they could expect - to be neat, clean, and to always have a presentable appearance in the bunk houses and dining rooms.

The employment statistics reveal that up to the month of April, 1965, more and more natives were being employed. As early as August 25, there were thirty-one (31) natives out of a total of fifty-four (54) general labourers working for Canadian Bechtel Limited. By September 10, an additional 29 natives were placed by the community development officer with four employers, of which only three had quit their jobs later. By September 20, there were sixty-two (62) natives working for Canadian Bechtel Limited alone, five as rodmen (for surveyors), seven as vehicle operators, and fifty as labourers. The total employed by the same company at that time was three-hundred and seventy-seven men. By December 18, although about one hundred and fifty men were laid off their jobs, there

were still sixty-five (65) natives out of a total of two-hundred and forty-one employees working for Canadian Bechtel Limited, and by February of 1965, almost all employable natives were working for the various employers, the most significant of which was Canadian Bechtel Limited which had about 100 natives, constituting just under twenty-five percent of total employees, working for the company.

From the above statistics, it is not surprising to note that from August 1964 to April 1, 1965, most of the community development officer's time was spent in trying to establish a favourable employee-employer relationship and practically every native obtaining employment with Canadian Bechtel Limited was interviewed prior to commencing work by the community development worker and/or another native. Also, because Canadian Bechtel Limited would usually contact the community development officer to locate and dispatch men to available jobs, it meant that all local hiring was done through him and it was thus virtually impossible for outsiders to come and get jobs when local people were available to fill such positions. During this period of time, also, Canadian Bechtel Limited offered to the community development officer, the opportunity to meet with native employees at the job-site once a month to discuss whatever they wanted. The first such meeting was held on February 16, 1965 and attended by twenty-nine (29) natives to discuss job developments.

As of April 1, 1965, however, the National Employment Service

opened an office in Fort McMurray to serve as an employment agency for the area. Previous to this, representatives from the Service had gone to Fort McMurray on September 15, 1964 to survey the need for their service and had left with the intention of recommending that a National Employment Service office be located there as soon as possible. This meant, of course, that most of the community development officer's efforts toward the employment of men on the jobs was drastically reduced since the National Employment Service was going to provide the same type of services. Subsequent statistics, however, reveal that native employment suffered greatly after the take-over. As of April 1, native employment started to decline and during the course of a year, about one hundred and fifty local people had terminated their employment with Canadian Bechtel Limited, mostly through their own decision. From August to December 1965 alone, over one hundred and twenty native employees were fired or decided to quit for a multitude of reasons, including:

1. lack of family accommodations and eventual home sickness forcing some to return to their communities;
2. having to take time off, without notification of such to the Company, to cut wood for their families or to build a log house;
3. sickness or the birth of a baby in the family;
4. having to return to the trap-lines (to retain their trap-lines, they are required to work there at least two weeks of the

- year), or wanting to obtain a meat supply for the winter (moose-meat);
5. misunderstanding of their duties due to the lack of understanding of English;
 6. bad drinking habits;
 7. inability to do the work (minimal).

Following the take-over by the National Employment Service, the community development officer refrained from actually recruiting jobs for natives and aimed to encourage them to seek jobs for themselves, though at the same time watching native employee-employer relationships closely and intervening only when natives were deprived of jobs unjustly. He also spent a lot of time dispelling the notion that, through community development, the Government had come up with another way of giving something away for nothing in return and that, though many of them wanted permanent jobs, better homes, good education for their children, and to be a meaningful part of the community, they had to get used to the idea that all of those were possible provided that they struggle for them. With regard to the employee-employer relationships, there were two cases in particular that required intervention on the part of the community development officer. On October 22, 1965, he received a telephone call from the project manager of Canadian Bechtel Limited to the effect that he, the project manager, received a complaint from the head-office in Toronto that Indians were not being treated

properly on the job-site. Apparently some 'high' Government officials in Ottawa got word to the Toronto office that Indians were receiving improper treatment, in that they were treated the same way everyone else was treated, but that they needed special treatment. The project manager's reaction was that it was not fair to give a certain segment special treatment and that he would not have any Indians on the property if he could not treat them like people. However, on the following day, the community development officer and the project manager spent several hours going over files of some one-hundred and six employees (96 labourers and 10 equipment operators), the majority of whom were young single men with few responsibilities. Of the 106 men, 35 - 40 of them were actually fired on the job while the rest lost their jobs because of failure to remain on the job for reasons mentioned earlier. It was finally agreed that out of the 106 men, about 60 of them should be given another chance to work. This did not materialize, however, as most of them had other jobs or went away and could not be contacted. The second case arose as a result of so many natives becoming unemployed. The community development officer felt that it was not just to see Fort McMurray enjoying its highest employment record in its history while so many local native people were unemployed. He therefore proposed to Canadian Bechtel Limited that fifty percent of their labourers be local people and that to maintain the fifty percent the Community Development Branch could provide men who would do nothing but counsel local natives

and would see to it that the amount of men were provided for, in addition to, or replacement of, any of the men who found it necessary to leave the job or who were dismissed for any reason. Finally, that a man dismissed and ineligible for re-hiring would, in fact, be able to return to the job when a vacancy occurred, subject to some flagrant violation of rules. This proposal was agreed upon in principle both by the labour union and the project manager though there is no subsequent mention of it ever becoming a reality.

2. Work Relationships: Some Examples

The following examples, listed below, serve to illustrate the conditions faced by natives in their role as employees:

1. Mannix Company, constructing a road between the G.C.O.S. plant and Fort McMurray, employed natives to brush-cut the right-of-way. A camp was set up about fifteen miles from Fort McMurray to accommodate the brush-clearing crew (entirely native) and the men were expected to work ten hours a day, seven days a week, each being required to supply and cook his own food. The company supplied large tents, oil heaters and blankets, but no beds, chairs, tables (except for a 4 x 8 piece of plywood perched on stakes driven into the ground outside the tent) and no stove on which to cook. All

- cooking had to be done over an open fire. When the community development officer approached the project superintendent concerning such conditions, he was told that the company was not in the social field but was out there to make money. The office manager and another representative, however, agreed that something should be done to change the situation and decided to install a kitchen with a cook. What they actually did was to hire a flunky for five hours a day to cut wood and start fires but, as it turned out, he did very little. It was not until later that the men were put in a trailer camp at Fort McMurray.
2. A native working for the same company as a power-saw operator on a brush-clearing job had to work in water up to his knees several hours. When he told the foreman that he could not stand in the water for very long the foreman replied "why not, you are used to that"; the native was eventually fired.
 3. Three natives worked for Canadian Bechtel Limited for over a month and suddenly quit their jobs. The community development officer later learned that a superintendent, noting that production was not up to standard, got after his general labour foreman. He in turn got after one of the three men who was the crew foreman and told him that they would have to produce a bit more.

It was the first time that the three men had been told off and thus decided to quit.

4. A native was hired by Canadian Bechtel Limited as a cat-skinner on a non-union job. The job soon afterwards expired and the tractor was put on another job that required a union-member operator. Because he could not get into the union, he was retained as a 'jack-of-all-trades' at the operator's rate of pay, but was later asked if he would wash floors. He refused, suspecting that he was asked because he was an Indian, and quit working. Through the intervention of the community development officer, however, arrangements were made for him to join the union.

3. Occupational Training

It was a common understanding at the outset of the program that one of the major problems facing natives in their pursuit of employment was their lack of training in the basic trades. The G.C.O.S. project required, in the majority of jobs, trained tradesmen, many of which required journeyman status and there were not enough men of such calibre to fill the vacancies expected (+1800 jobs).

On September 3, 1964 therefore, the community development officer met with the general foreman of plumbing and steam-fitting for

Canadian Bechtel Limited concerning the feasibility of getting natives employed in that line of work. He was told that both the employer and union would welcome people to take such jobs, including Indians. However, interested individuals would have to get an apprenticeship certificate from the Government of Alberta and then join the union; furthermore the union would be willing to hire one apprentice for every three fully qualified men there were. Other labour unions within the same company also suggested the same. The community development officer next contacted the Apprenticeship Board of the Government of Alberta regarding the matter and was pleased to hear that the Board welcomed the program. All that remained was to get applications from individuals desiring apprenticeship training. However, this proved to be a problem because of certain insurmountable obstacles preventing particularly the natives from getting through. For many of them, standards set by the Apprenticeship Board were beyond the ability of native workers to meet without a general upgrading of their schooling. Secondly, most of the apprenticeship programs were of a four-year duration while jobs with Canadian Bechtel were only for two years, which would result in a disruption of training. Lastly, under apprenticeship regulations, most apprentices would have to accept a drop in salary from the minimum wage paid to a labourer to a much lower rate, and it was questionable as to whether the natives would welcome that.

Partly because of these obstacles and in a genuine attempt to provide training facilities in Fort McMurray, a temporary adult vocational school was set up in October 1965 to provide basic skills to adults. The courses offered were very broad work-oriented, but included such fields as motor mechanics, building trades, heavy equipment operation, maintenance and service trades. Its first year of operation yielded the following statistics which, above all, stressed the urgent importance of training facilities:

TABLE III
STATISTICS OF THE ALBERTA VOCATIONAL CENTRE
FROM OCTOBER 4, 1965 TO APRIL 17, 1966

Total Enrolled	138
Total in Training (as of April 17, 1966)	56
Completed Training and Secured Jobs	37
Left Centre for Various Reasons	15
Dismissed-Disciplinarian Reasons	08
Terminated Training-reason appears to be low academic background which compounds the problem of adjusting to the training environment	22
WAITING LIST:	
Total	269
Building Construction	06
Heavy Equipment	172

continued....

TABLE III - continued...

Vehicle Servicing	42
Welding	36
Vocational Preparatory	04
Holding	90
Dead File (unable to contact or were working when contacted)	69

Source: J. Whitford, "Outline of Enrollment and Terminations of Trainees,"
(undated) p.1.

The expressed need for vocational training, along with its apparent applicability, served to convince the Government of Alberta, at least for the time being, that a permanent centre was needed. An Edmonton architect was commissioned to prepare detailed plans for an adult training centre with a capacity of three-hundred and fifty students. He presented his proposal on September 14, 1966 to various Government officials who were very much impressed with it. However, because a permanent building required time to be finished, they decided to provide additional dormitory facilities for thirty-two students, regarding the existing instructional space to be adequate for the time. Since then, the Alberta Vocational Centre has become permanent and is now run by Alberta New Start Inc., a Federal Crown corporation, which became operational in 1968.

4. Housing Accommodation

As equally important as the need for occupational training facilities was the need for housing if the program was to ever achieve any measure of success. Prior to, but particularly after Fort McMurray was facing an oil boom, the problem of native housing was acute. At a meeting on July 15 1964 between the recently formed Nistawoyou Association and the Provincial Coordinator, it was expressed quite urgently by the former that land was badly needed on which to build homes. The statistics showed that there were about five to ten families living on the highway's right-of-way along with others living on Municipal Affairs land, school land and other people's private property. The Highways Department offered families living on the right-of-way the sum of \$350.00 approximately for their admittedly low-value homes in return for which the people were expected to leave their houses and fend for themselves. Others were expected to either move their houses and/or leave. The problem of course was not a lack of desire on the part of the natives to move, but was simply their inability to afford the rapidly diminishing and costly sites available in Fort McMurray. The Coordinator suggested to them that they should contact the Board of Administrators who would be visiting Fort McMurray on July 21, 1964 and to impress upon them the acute need for land. They followed his suggestion, which resulted in the Board setting aside about twenty to twenty-five lots for their use. A further complication arose, however, when it was learned

that the natives had little or no money to buy such lots and could not receive loans through the normal mortgage channels because of their previous economic instability and the high degree of risk involved.

On September 1, the Provincial Coordinator, in a report to the Cabinet Committee, suggested that housing could become feasible through two channels: on a welfare basis, or on a co-operative basis. Under the former, outside financing would be unnecessary and the houses would be provided with a minimum of delay and maximum efficiency. Under the latter, the work would be much slower and involve numerous complications, but with two good results: the first being that at least seventy-five percent of the money borrowed would be repaid and, secondly, the people would develop a sense of responsibility and pride. The second channel apparently was the most appealing, as it was learned on September 30 that the Cabinet Committee had approved a loan of \$150,000.00 to be used for housing projects among native people in northern Alberta. This was repayable at a four percent (4%) rate of interest with no down payment necessary and to be administered through the Alberta Commercial Corporation.

On October 11, 1964, the Nistawoyou Association held a special meeting to discuss housing for natives and to select five families who would have the first opportunity to obtain housing loans. Prior to the selection of five families by secret ballot, the president urged the wives present to encourage their husbands to work and keep up payments, to budget pay-cheques

and spend wisely, and encouraged all of them to prove that they could work and live on equal terms with the rest of the community. On November 7, 1964, a branch of the Association named the Nistawoyou Cooperative Housing Association was formed under the guidance of the community development officer for purposes of obtaining housing loans for members. It was much easier to receive loans through a cooperative rather than individually, and they requested a loan of \$50,000. from the Government to be repaid at a rate of four percent interest per annum over a period of up to twenty years. The process of obtaining loans and finally building houses, however, was a very slow one and by the end of the first year of the community development program, only one house was under construction. By the end of the second year, six were completed, thirty more were in the planning stages, and a low-rental housing scheme was finally inaugurated.

C. ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FORT McMURRAY

Of the five communities studied, Fort McMurray offered one of the best possibilities for the successful implementation of a community development program. The community was experiencing an oil boom which was to bring prosperity to its residents. The natives were anxious to become identified with developments in the area. The community development officer was a person who was quite familiar with the area and had a good relationship with the natives and other residents. The Mayor, town council,

other agencies responsible for developments in the area, and the oil industry were anxious to see that the natives benefitted from the development of the oil industry. Yet, at the end of five years since the oil boom, the general impression one gets from visiting Fort McMurray is that the natives have not been integrated into the mainstream of life there. Rather, they have been pushed outside of the community and relegated to a lower position.

The consequence of events over the past five years is indeed unfortunate. There are those who would say that it was an expected outcome as natives could never do anything worthwhile. This is far from the truth, however, as an analysis of activities over the years would show that it was not so much the inability of natives to become a part of the mainstream of Canadian life as it was the inability of the institutions and those responsible for their functions to adapt to different conditions and varying needs of the natives. No one can really question the desire of a native to become self-sufficient and enjoy the amenities of life afforded by the average Canadian. Native work experience in Fort McMurray as elsewhere has shown that a native on the job performs as well as any other Canadian. But history has dictated a unique set of circumstances under which the native lives. The Indian reserve, while being a place of security in a changing and complex world, also serves to isolate the Indian from the rest of Canadians and to minimize his exposure to opportunities that lead to personal advancement.

The declining trapping industry has made obsolete one of the few occupations that remained for so long a part of his cultural heritage. And with no subsequent means of replacing his occupation with a marketable skill, the native has no recourse but to seek the security of welfare subsidies. By destroying a way of life that was looked upon as no longer functional in modern society without replacing it with appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude, the native was destined to remain at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder.

It was a common realization from the beginning of the program that unless special considerations were made, the natives would not be able to integrate with other groups effectively. The history of other communities faced with the exploitation of a physical resource and the resultant relegation of the local people without skills to a lower position attested to this fact. The program therefore envisioned was towards three ends, (a) to develop skills among the natives so that they could be employable in a meaningful way, (b) to make them gain meaningful employment and (c) to facilitate proper housing arrangements. While it appeared conceptually quite remarkable, its actual way of implementation proved otherwise. With respect to the actual employment of natives, the role of the community development officer as a placement officer and counsellor was most commendable. It may be argued that regardless of his presence, natives would still have been employed as employment opportunities were greater

than the supply of employees. This is certainly not without merit. But what is most important, however, is not whether natives could get jobs, but the conditions governing the working relationships, the responsibility of the employee and the employer-employee working relationships. The process of getting employment was not merely a physical one but involved an educational process in which responsibility, obligation and expectation were vital. The result was that natives not only stayed longer on the job but assumed a greater responsibility in their jobs than was customary. Employers, in return, were more understanding to their problems and were desirous of maintaining a favorable relationship.

A favorable employment climate, however, was not the only need. The natives needed appropriate skills to be able to compete with outsiders for permanent positions with the Great Canadian Oil Sands. Apart from skills, they also needed a permanent place of abode rather than having to travel great distances to and from work. In both respects, these needs were never dealt with seriously and quickly enough by the Government.

Footnotes

¹ James Whitford, Preliminary Statement of a Community Development Program for the Province of Alberta, undated, p.5.

CHAPTER V
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FORT CHIPEWYAN

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Fort Chipewyan, some 200 air miles north of Edmonton, is the oldest community in Alberta. In 1778, Roderick McKenzie built Fort Chipewyan on the south shore of Lake Athabasca and in 1798, it was re-located to its present site. Since then, Fort Chipewyan became a trading centre that drained the rich fur resources of the Athabaskan area without due regard to ecological considerations. The people of the area were mostly nomadic, making their living over a widespread area - hunting, fishing and trapping, selling the furs of animals caught to the Hudson's Bay Company. In a non-Indian frame of reference, therefore, Fort Chipewyan was more of an agglomeration rather than a community.

The trapping occupation necessitated families living in relative isolation for the better part of the year and associations between families outside of the immediate family were few. The people were mostly self-reliant, their primary concern being survival and having very little time for cultural and intellectual pursuits. Because of their always immediate concern for survival, they reached others more out of necessity than of social enthusiasm toward a common goal. For the above reasons, therefore, power and decision-making had historically become concentrated around the

Hudson's Bay Company, a few government departments and the religious missions. Prior to the 1960's, it had no road, no electricity, no cars, no telephone, no airport, no cinema, no street-lights, no adequate school with gymnasium, no fuel service, and no taxi service. Contact with the outside was by boat via Lake Athabasca during the summer months, dog-teams during the winter when the lake was frozen. And, for all practical purposes, Fort Chipewyan could have been regarded as a quite primitive society, isolated and with little or no formal relationships. Relatively few people were ever sedentary, most families travelling back and forth to the trap-lines with the whole or part of their family and leaving some of their children in the residential school. However, with the coming of compulsory education and the later availability of family allowances, a system was set into motion seriously disrupting the trap-line economy. Wives began to stay behind in the community while their husbands worked their traplines which in turn created the need for external assistance for staple items. Eventually, many of the husbands found life in the community a great deal more convenient than the rigors of the trap-line. The 1960's saw the arrival of various services such as taxi service, electric lights, regular air service, a restaurant, movies, fuel, and telephone services: However, as far as people's development was concerned, native life style was fading without due regard to any functional replacement. For the more than one thousand people residing in and around Fort Chipewyan and, apart

from the small minority of primarily transient whites (less than 50), a sense of hopelessness, helplessness, and increasing dependency on the government prevailed and the area was destined to become completely subjected to welfare.

It was quite evident, therefore, that Fort Chipewyan needed the injection of some miraculous 'medicine' whereby leaders would be given a chance to emerge and the average person placed in a position of knowledge and in a new sphere of social influence which would permit him to exert his democratic rights and initiative as an individual and as a social entity.

B. THE PROGRAM

At the time that a community development program was started, Fort Chipewyan had a population of 300 Chipewyan Indians, 600 Cree Indians, and 500 Metis and Whites. Its economic resources were fish, fur, and timber, and the main aims of the program were towards adult education and economic development.

On November 20, 1964, on the occasion of Mr. Baich's visit to Fort Chipewyan, a meeting was called with the purpose of acquainting the power structure with the rationale behind the community development program, creating an awareness of, and determination, to solve the seriousness of the situation, and inviting them to cooperate, coordinate, and help. To the approximately 30 persons, representing most of the non-Indian

community, who were present, community development was explained as a means, not of creating disorder, but of restoring order, peacefully and through the democratic process of vested authority and power. If anything was to change, it would be primarily through the medium of the native people themselves, with a sympathetic understanding hand on the Community Development Branch's part.

On November 21, 1964, a second meeting was held, with the native people this time, for the purpose of officially presenting the community development officer to them, explaining his role as well as the role native people themselves would have to play.

A decision was made to have a second meeting on November 24, with only one representative from each of the three native groups and the community development officer, so as to form an association and outline its purpose and function. The Councillor of the Cree Band, the Provisional President of the Metis Association, and the Chief of the Chipewyan Indians were contacted and solicited to think about an association and possible names for it. At the meeting, none of the three men had many suggestions to make and, as not much was forthcoming, the community development officer decided to be more active and to adopt a more guiding role. He explained what an association was, its goals and purposes, and suggested eight possible names for the association - all arising out of combinations of the words Metis, Cree, and Chipewyan. Out of those presented, it was

decided to use the name Cremetchip Association. Each of the three representatives were then asked to bring two more members to the second meeting.

The next two months, December and January, were spent by the community development officer encouraging the leaders to organize weekly meetings so as to form and promote the Cremetchip Association, to elect an official executive, and to further clarify the roles of the community development officer, the people, and the government. On January 31, 1965, the election of President, postponed repeatedly in the past for lack of attendance, finally took place. The meeting was originally set for one o'clock, but because of lack of attendance, did not get under way until 4:00 P.M. after soliciting more people - reaching a total of 52. Of the eight nominations for the Presidency, Noel McKay (absent) received 23 votes on the first cast, which did not represent a majority. Fifty-six percent of the voters then voted against any other presidential vote, thus resulting in Mr. McKay becoming President. A subsequent meeting of January 7, 1965, attended by 84 people including the President reaffirmed overwhelming support, by all attending, to have Mr. McKay (a Metis) as President. They next proceeded to elect a vice-president (a Chipewyan), and a secretary-treasurer (a Cree). Thus, the Cremetchip Association was finally born with hopes of bringing together the Cree, Chipewyan, and Metis into an indigenous and representative native organization. Over

the next two years, the Association was very instrumental in bringing about quite a few changes in the community, the most important ones of which are described in the following pages.

C. FORT CHIPEWYAN RE-PLOTTING SCHEME

One of the first moves made by the Cremetchip Association, after its formation, was to address a letter to the Municipal Affairs Department, with copies to the Northern Alberta Development Council (N.A.D.C.) and to Hon. M. Maccagno, M.L.A., regarding the need for surveyed land in the Fort Chipewyan area. The land had not been surveyed since 1912 and, in many cases, the landowners did not know where their lots began or ended. There was no surveyed space for expansion and it became quite obvious that a housing project could hardly be undertaken without prior attention to the provision of legal lots. Also, the state of affairs made it very difficult to bring about the normal services that most communities enjoyed, since there were relatively few properties on which tax revenue could be levied. The Department of Municipal Affairs agreed to act on the matter, and the community was laid out as a regular townsite with surveyed lots, key-hole crescents, and main streets. All roads were put in by the Department of Highways, but problems arose when it was found that a number of houses and the Co-op. store were located on a proposed road. The Directors of the Co-op. store felt that the Department of Municipal Affairs should pay

the cost of moving. Municipal Affairs, however, tried to hold the Co-op. responsible due to various technicalities, none of which appeared very valid. This resulted in a number of letters being exchanged between the Co-op. and Municipal Affairs, and no tangible action on either side.

Meanwhile, the Department of Highways wished to proceed with the road, and attempted to put pressure on the Co-op. to move their building by finally giving a definite date when the bulldozer would start work on that location. This produced the necessary crisis that resulted in definite action occurring. The directors of the Co-op. composed a letter outlining their position and sent copies of it to various interested and helpful persons, including the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The result was that Municipal Affairs advised the Department of Highways to move the Co-op. and all other buildings in Fort Chipewyan that were located on the proposed road at no cost to the local residents. The directors of the Co-op. thus saw themselves as successful in their confrontation with Municipal Affairs. For the community as a whole, it was also a good example of how local native organizations could demand consideration from the government and how an organized group could confront and solve such problems far more effectively than an unorganized aggregate of individuals.

The Department of Municipal Affairs, however, had the last word in the situation. As the store was now in a new location, it was necessary that a new building location permit be issued. Municipal Affairs issued a

temporary permit, good for only one year, but felt that the building should be on a cement foundation before it could be given a permanent permit. However, it was impossible to jack it up to put in this type of foundation as the store was quite old. As it turned out, the Co-op. store remained as it was until the end of 1969, at which time the Co-op. transferred its business to another vacant store.

D. THE ATHABASCA FISHING CO-OPERATIVE

Because of promising prices for fish offered by Alaska Fisheries Limited and cooperation expressed by the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Government of Alberta, local fishermen of Fort Chipewyan decided to start a co-op. called the Athabasca Fishing Co-operative which was incorporated under the Co-operative Association Act of Alberta. Prior to 1967, however, the co-op. existed only in principle as the fishermen had no idea of how much detailed planning was necessary and what key roles a few of them would have to play. Whatever fishing operation existed was done on an individual rather than a collective cooperative fashion, with most members adopting a 'to hell with you guys, I'm going on my own' attitude.

In October, 1967, however, a number of people started to discuss the possibility of winter fishing during the 1967-68 winter season. The local Fish and Wildlife Officer was contacted, but it was disclosed that the full quota of pickerel had already been taken out of Lake Athabasca during the

summer by McGuiness Fish Company and that the lake was thereby closed to commercial fishing. As the lake offered the only source of fish accessible to the local people, however, it was decided that a fishing committee, to be composed of Indian and Metis people, be formed. The committee met with the Fish and Wildlife officer and discussed the possibility of re-opening the lake for fishing. An agreement was reached whereby the officer was to make recommendations to his head office which were in line with those suggested by the committee. The committee also submitted a letter on October 24, 1967 to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Branch concerning their recommendations.

While awaiting a reply, the group felt that they should organize into a more formal group, and, as the Athabasca Fishing Co-operative was already incorporated, they decided to reactivate it. Membership totaled approximately 20, and as they all wished to go through the planning stages as one group, a Board of Directors was not elected.

Fort Nelson Company was next approached to sell the fish for the Co-op. They agreed to act as a marketing agent and also to provide nets and equipment to the Co-op. on a credit basis to get them started. The operating cost of the fishery, per pound, was decided to be:-

1¢ for hauling fish from basin hole to Fort Chipewyan
 2¢ for one person to receive, pack, weigh and record all fish
 1¢ for cardboard shipping carton
 3½¢ for freight to Edmonton
 2¢ for sale commission
 ½¢ for royalty
1¢ donation to Co-op. Capital Fund
11¢ per pound total

Persons to do the hauling, packing and recording, were recruited to perform these services.

All further activities came to a halt as no work was received regarding the opening of Lake Athabasca. The person in charge of commercial fishing was away at the time the letter was sent and it was not until November 14 that the members of the Co-op. were advised that Lake Athabasca and some of the inland lakes to the north would be open for pickerel on November 15. The quota proposed was 50,000 lbs. of pickerel and 100,000 lbs. of whitefish and pike. The Co-op., therefore, had to immediately confirm the order for nets from Edmonton, not having done so previously as members did not wish to have nets on hand if they were not going to be able to fish. After some delay, the equipment was received and a meeting was called to distribute it. Only twelve persons wanted equipment, which left a quantity of equipment unused. By that time approximately 10 days of the season had been lost.

Due to a number of reasons, such as the late start, the brevity of the pickerel run, and the weather, only four individuals actually worked for any length of time at fishing and caught 7,655 lbs. of pickerel, for which they were able to get \$1867. after costs. They also caught some whitefish and pike, which they sold to local people as it was uneconomical to ship to an outside market. As a consequence of the failure of the operation, the Co-op. had a debt of approximately \$2,000. to pay off to Fort Nelson Fish Company.

The final statistics for the winter operation are as follows:-

Number of fishermen obtaining equipment	12
Number of fishermen marketing pickerel	7
Number of fishermen still in debt for equipment	4
Total amount of pickerel marketed	7,655 lbs.
Total realized from sale of pickerel	\$1,866.70
Average net price realized on 1st shipment	\$.18 per lb.
Average net price realized on 2nd shipment	\$.316 per lb.
Overall average realized on pickerel	\$.238 per lb.
Accounts Receivable as of April 30, 1968	\$ 398.26
Accounts Payable as of April 30, 1968	\$ 838.77
Inventory of Equipment on hand	Not Available

Source: "Brief submitted by The Athabasca Fish Co-operative to the Hon. A.O. Fimrite as the Representative of the Human Resources Development Authority," August 19, 1968.

The prices realized on the marketing of pickerel were very interesting in that there was a 13¢ per lb. difference between the first and second shipments. The first shipment was made in January and the intention was that Fort Nelson Fish Company would store the pickerel, send a 20¢ per lb. advance to the Co-op., and then sell it when the best price could be obtained, and upon consultation with the Co-op. In reality, the 20¢ per lb. advance was never received and Fort Nelson forwarded the fish to Winnipeg for storage. The buyers in Winnipeg then claimed that there were some drowned fish in the shipment and that they were too heavily iced, which resulted in a low price obtained. The second shipment was sold immediately upon arrival in Edmonton and, in fact, was only shipped when the guarantee of price was received. Thus, the Co-op. was, to a great extent, in control of its product in this case. The fact that both shipments were sold in the same week, made a great impression on the Co-op. members. They intended, in the future, to stock-pile their fish in Fort Chipewyan and issue tenders for its purchase, F.O.B. Fort Chipewyan, and payment would have to be made by certified cheque before the Co-op. would release the fish at all.

After the new year, thoughts turned towards the operation of a summer fishery. This raised a lot of problems as such a fishery required a great amount of equipment, e.g., boats, motors, good storage areas, etc.

The first step taken was to contact Swanson's Lumber Company to see if lumber could be obtained for the construction of an ice-house. Swanson's was quite willing to let the Co-op. have as much cull lumber as they needed,

without charge, providing that they sorted it out as it came off the green chain. Persons were then contacted who would haul the lumber. However, they were unable to find an individual who would go to Swanson's for two or three days to sort the lumber, and so this project fell through.

The next move was to find a local building that could be used as an ice-house, and two such buildings were located. They then started to fill the first of these buildings and, after 4 days, this was completed. By that time it was the middle of March and 'rat fever' (trapping) was starting to set in quite badly. Consequently, the second building was never filled with ice. The result was that there was not enough ice put up to make it possible to operate a fishery.

While all this was taking place, the Co-op. was making strong representation to various agencies in order to obtain the necessary financing needed, but with no luck. Indian Affairs had six boats and motors in Fort Chipewyan which were not used and, when contacted, they appeared interested in turning these over to the Co-op. However, they decided that at least half of the Co-op. membership should consist of Treaty Indians. A membership campaign was then started, resulting in the Co-op. having 41 members, of which 20 were Treaty Indians. Further, unsolved complications arose when Indian Affairs decided that it couldn't turn over the equipment to the Co-op. but could do so to the Band Council pending approval from Ottawa.

The situation immediately prior to Easter, therefore, was not

promising. To all intents and purposes, it looked as if the summer fishery was a dead issue. On April 8, however, a message was received from Fort Nelson Fish Company that they would be in Fort Chipewyan over Easter to discuss the setting up of a fishing operation. Mr. Bromley, of Fort Nelson Fishing Company, and Mr. Bodner, of Bodner Fish Distributions in Winnipeg, were willing to put up \$3,000. to get the operation started provided that the Co-op. members put up 100 tons of ice. Canadian Fish Distribution was contacted and arrangements were made to rent their ice-house and packing plant for \$250. for the season; Indian Affairs agreed to let the Co-op. use their freezer barge for the summer, and; the Department of Transport was also contacted to obtain use of their unused freezer. It then appeared that over the Easter weekend everything had suddenly sorted itself out satisfactorily. Unfortunately, however, due to the early advent of warm weather, it was found that ice had already started to melt and was impossible to store. Thus, the Co-op. was unable to meet the prerequisite of storing 100 tons of ice and the deal fell through which, in turn, meant the end of a summer fishing operation.

On August 19, 1968, at a community meeting between the Honourable A. Fimrite, then Minister without Portfolio in the Alberta Government and also Chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council and various groups in Fort Chipewyan, a brief prepared by the Fishing Cooperative was read. In it, it was stated that, according to the

Commercial Fishing Regulations Guide, a person applying for license to fish had to be:

1. A Canadian citizen;
2. A resident of Alberta for not less than one year immediately preceeding the date of application;
3. The full age of sixteen years or over;
4. Resident for one year within the applicable zone;
5. Hold no license in any other zone;
6. Hold no other license in the applicable zone, except in Zone G where any applicant eligible under items 1, 2, and 3 may obtain a license.

Source: "Brief submitted by The Athabasca Fish Co-operative to the Hon. A.O. Fimrite as the Representative of the Human Resources Development Authority," Aug. 19, 1968.

Members of the Cooperative felt that Zone G, which includes everything north of the fifty-seventh parallel in Alberta including Lake Athabasca, had special regulations attached to it which no other zone had. Thus, while Lake Athabasca was left open to fishermen from all over Alberta, the people of Lake Athabasca (Fort Chipewyan included) were unable to fish in other parts of the province. The Co-op., therefore, wanted Lake Athabasca closed to outside fishermen in the interest of the local people and particularly since other exploitable resources were scarce in the area. To develop the fishing industry, however, the Co-op.

requested that the Alberta Government make money available to them on a long-term loan basis. Their financial statement at the time was as follows:-

<u>ASSETS</u>		<u>LIABILITIES</u>	
Equipment	\$402.60	Accounts Payable	\$813.77
Cash on Hand	235.77	Membership Equity	<u>151.99</u>
Accounts Receivable	<u>327.39</u>		<u>\$965.76</u>
	<u>\$965.76</u>		

Source: "Brief submitted by The Athabasca Fish Co-operative to the Hon. A.O. Fimrite as the Representative of the Human Resources Development Authority," Aug. 19, 1968.

and with a loan of about \$50,000. to pay off bad debts and another \$20,000. for an ice house and filtering plant, some twenty families would be able to live decently and not depend on welfare.

Mr. Fimrite, upon hearing the brief, replied that, under present regulations, the Government could guarantee up to fifty percent loans for co-ops., but that the Government was considering bringing into legislation the matter of full guaranteed loans. With regard to the special regulations, he reassured them that the government would certainly consider their proposal. Since then, however, no mention has been made of any financial loans or change in commercial fishing regulations as they relate to Zone G.

E. THE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The Community Association, registered under the Societies Act of Alberta in 1942, was formed for the purpose of raising funds for community projects by sponsoring dances and bingo games, primarily. During the past fifteen years of its existence, the Community Association had been operating in a non-constitutional manner in that while the By-Laws called for an Executive of seven elected members, only three persons served during any one year. Meetings either of an executive or general nature were few despite the fact that meetings were supposed to be held at least once every three months. Furthermore, there were no legal memberships as fees were never paid, nor were any proper financial statements prepared at the end of each year. The Association had continuously been dominated by the white faction which represented only two or three per cent of the community. The native people who contributed the most towards funds that were raised had very little or no say in how the funds should be handled.

The above state of affairs continued until the end of 1966, at which time the Community Association was warned by the Government to take corrective actions with regard to the legal requirements of the Association by January 31, 1967, or face rescission of its legal status and liquidification of its assets which at that time were approximately \$35,000. Coupled with the Governmental threat was a concern by certain

residents to honour a commitment made in 1966 by the executive of the Association to loan \$1,000. to the then recently formed Consumer Co-operative, a retail store, but which to the end of December was never honoured. Thus, on January 13, 1967, at the occasion of a bingo game, the Community Development Officer requested those who wanted to have an election to remain after the game was concluded. Approximately 143 persons did so and in the ensuing election, Messrs. Noel McKark and James Paquette, both natives, were elected President and Vice-President respectively, despite the fact that the old executive consisting of Mr. Laurence Benoit, President, Mr. Jackson Whiteknife, Vice-President and Donald Nicholson, Secretary-Treasurer, were still technically in office. It was not until several months later, and after much internal turmoil, frustrations, and definite sides taken, that the native people actually gained the balance of control, with four of six elected representatives on the Executive. In the words of the Executive Director, Family Service Association of Edmonton who was in Fort Chipewyan at the time:

"The winter arrived at Fort Chipewyan in the immediate aftermath of this meeting and found the community resembling an armed camp... A very small group of white residents and their native allies took the position that native leadership of the Community Association had been irresponsible and incompetent. A larger group took up the cause of the Community Development

Officer in the sense that the native people must be given a chance to learn, to develop the organizations of which they are a part (over 90% of Community Association funds were raised and contributed by native people).

The loan to the Consumer Co-operative was finalized and steps were made to allocate funds through loans and grants to projects which were more likely capable of doing the greatest good to the greatest majority.

In February 1967, an Executive consisting entirely of native people was elected and by August 1967, it was reported that the Association was performing its fund-raising function very well. The Executive met every three months and special meetings were called when the President felt that they were necessary. A donation of \$1,200. for the Centennial Project, which consisted of building a library, was also granted. Despite regular meetings, however, it was felt by the Community Development Officer that there was a need for proper conduct of such meetings as agendas were usually by-passed and furthermore that co-ordination within the Executive was lacking, as the President often did not know what the Entertainment Committee was doing.

F. ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITIES

The community development program for Fort Chipewyan differed

from those for the rest of the communities in that it did not coincide with any other developments in the area. The purpose of the program was to be economic development and adult education; yet, significantly enough, there were no significant plans to develop what resources were available. It was felt by the co-ordinator that fishing and timber offered prospects of being developed, but with the exception of fishing, no attempt was ever made to even study the feasibility of developing the timber resources located a few miles away from the community.

When the first community development officer went to Fort Chipewyan, he found nothing resembling a social organization through which he could work with groups of people. Apart from the few 'white' transients, there were three groups inhabiting the community, the Crees, the Chipewyans and the Metis. Though inter-marriage among the groups was evident, there seemed to be no bond that held the community together and a lack of leadership was noticeable. It was, therefore, only imperative that the community development officer initially assume a very direct role in getting the groups together, which he did. He was very instrumental in the formation of the Crematchip Association to the dismay of some who felt that it was contrary to community development principles. In light, however, of the circumstances that prevailed on his arrival, it was very necessary for him to take the initiative in bringing about certain changes in the community. The problem, however, with such an approach, is to

know how far one can go in assuming a direct role and how to shift community responsibilities to the emerging leadership without creating a dependency that is fatal to any community development process. It is in this respect that one can argue that the community development officer failed in performing his functions. Many factors attest to this conclusion. Of all the community development activities in Fort Chipewyan, at the time of the first community development officer, there was hardly one that involved or utilized the educational-motivational process. Significantly enough, the Cremetchip Association ceased to function when the community development officer left the community. The co-op. store, while undoubtedly a successful venture, is for all intent and purposes not really a co-op store, but can be more accurately described as a successful private business owned and operated by relatively few people. There is no community participation nor involvement in the co-op.'s affairs despite such desire by the Board of Directors, and the price of goods, not the co-op.'s philosophy, is the chief determining factor in its sales operation. Had there been the educational-motivational process in its early stages, the affairs of the co-op. may well be different today.

The second community development officer for the area assumed a more indirect role in the community's affairs. He felt that the community's dependency on Government services was a serious threat to whatever initiative it may have had and his role was therefore to get the community

to assume a greater responsibility in conducting its affairs. He worked with groups and individuals on a consultative rather than an authoritative basis and would only offer his services when such were asked for by groups and individuals. To people, however, accustomed to having things done for them, even to the extent of having letters written, this course of action was very disturbing. There were those, not understanding what the role of a community development officer was and accustomed to a different relationship, who felt that he was not helping the people as he should and thus alienated themselves from whatever services he had to offer. The question that has to be asked, therefore, is, in light of the circumstances, what should be the appropriate role of a community development officer. Should he take an active role at the risk of not knowing at what point to stop or should he play it safe and adopt a totally non-directive approach? How can he commit himself to the felt needs of the community without having the community becoming dependent on his services? It is by no means an easy question to answer yet one that all community development officers face. There is a fair concensus of opinion among theoreticians and practitioners that the 'do-gooder' approach has consequential problems which do not merit its use. On the other hand, the non-directive approach runs into the risk of being perceived as 'insensitivity' on the part of the community development officer by the community. With regard to the Fort Chipewyan experience, the directive approach enhanced the dependency

syndrome which was unfortunate indeed. But to assume a non-directive approach without any intermediate educational-motivational process was equally unfortunate in that people do not change their ways of behaviour overnight. What seems lacking, therefore, was an active process, not of taking over responsibilities, but of educating and motivating the people as to the utility of self-determination. As a conclusion to this part of the analysis, it should be mentioned here that, as of summer 1970, there is no longer a community development program in Fort Chipewyan. This was suggested by the second community development officer as a way of reducing the dependency syndrome. The very fact, however, that there are other Government services in the community would seem to suggest that the dependency will not be reduced but transferred over to the other services.

With regard to the specific community development activities mentioned, the fishing co-op. was a viable economic activity that could have enhanced the economic development of the community. Yet, the history of the fishing co-op. showed on one hand a group of men frustrated constantly in their attempts to better their economic positions because of their inability to get adequate finance and because Government regulations discriminated against local people being given preference in the development of resources in and surrounding their community. On the other hand, it showed the Government, insensitive to the needs of the people and making

decisions which served only to increase exploitation by outsiders of the scarce resources of the community. One wonders why a community development program was ever implemented in Fort Chipewyan when the Government was not committed to provide other comprehensive services which would facilitate any kind of development. It makes very little sense and is rather dangerous to awaken a people with promises of a beautiful life when in fact there is none. If a government is seriously committed to the principle of local self-government, then it has an obligation to provide services which would facilitate people to be truly self-determining. In this respect, the response of government to the needs of the Fort Chipewyan community has been a disappointment. No one should therefore be very surprised, though many are, at the natives for being passive, apathetic and generally suspicious of Government intentions.

CHAPTER VI

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN HINTON

A. EMPLOYMENT PROPOSAL

In September 1964, a meeting attended by Ralph Ragan, Regional Supervisor of Indian Affairs, Murray Sutherland, Placement Officer of Indian Affairs, James Whitford, Community Development Coordinator, Mr. Stan Hart, Woods Manager, and Mr. Sawyer, Industrial Relations Manager, both for North Western Pulp and Power Company, was held in Mr. Sawyer's office, the purpose of which was to discuss a proposal of the Pulp and Power Company regarding native employment.

Both Sawyer and Hart indicated that the Company was prepared to hire a minimum of forty (40) Indians as cutters to work a specific timber berth near the village of Brule for two years and that whether or not Community Development Branch and Indian Affairs Office accepted the proposal, they would proceed the next year to hire forty men as the extra wood was required. Sawyer further indicated that the Company had a policy of hiring groups of Indians to work as cutters in the bush but that such a policy proved ineffective as Indians were not effective woodsmen and that they frequently left the operation to return home to their families who lived at some distance.

As Whitford saw it, the proposal provided the sort of economic base which the Community Development Branch was seeking in its efforts to improve the social and economic conditions of native peoples. Any action to be taken should, therefore, consider the location of a labour force to consist primarily of married men and the creation of a community into which these people could move their families and thereby enjoy the same benefits as non-Indian cutters in and around the town of Hinton. Also, the proposed community should be within the corporate limits of Hinton with access to stores, schools, hospital etc.

At the Federal-Provincial Co-ordinating Committee on Indian Affairs meeting, held December 2, 1964, Mr. Sutherland and Mr. Whitford were charged with the task of returning to Hinton to study the feasibility of the Company's proposal, which they did on January 7th and 8th. Their study presents the following information:

1. Employment of a long-term nature was available with North Western Pulp and Power Company.
2. Woodcutting was culturally acceptable to most native people in Alberta. Thus, workers would require less counselling than might be necessary when introducing them into either agricultural or industrial pursuits.
3. Past experience had shown that a large turnover was likely among native workers who left their families in home

communities distant from their place of employment.

4. There was a shortage of housing accommodation in Hinton.
5. All the native workers needed could be found in the Hinton, Marlboro, Edson, Wabamun, and Alexis areas.
6. It was not advisable to foster a large house construction program during the first year of employment when the desire and ability of workers to undertake permanent residence was being tested.
7. The Company had a vacant 600-man camp establishment at the pulp mill site, part of which could provide temporary housing.

Their recommendations presented to the Federal-Provincial Co-ordinating Committee on January 22, 1965, based on the above, were:

1. That the Federal-Provincial Co-ordinating Committee agree to provide a minimum of thirty pulp-cutters to work the specified timber berth provided: (a) that part of the 600-man camp establishment was prepared at the Company's expense and used for temporary housing for incoming native workmen and their families, and; (b) that normal Company and Union benefits and privileges which were open to non-native workmen were also made available to native workmen.

2. That the Federal-Provincial Co-ordinating Committee be prepared to share with the Company the costs of a worker-training program which could take the form of a one to two week pre-employment course to interpret the nature of the work, conditions and responsibilities of employment, union relationships, computation of earnings and deductions, operation and maintenance of powersaws, use of skid horses etc., followed by probably two months of subsidized on-the-job training.
3. That a community development officer be appointed to that area at the earliest possible date with duties to include employment counselling, adult education measures, and guidance with respect to housing and urban living.
4. That potential workers and their families be located at the earliest possible date with pre-move counselling proceeding immediately.
5. That the Federal and Provincial Governments provide removal and establishment loans to selected families to cover costs of moving and to purchase adequate work equipment; such loans to be repayed over a one-year term.
6. That Alberta's native housing program be extended to Hinton and made available, through appropriate types of organizations, to families who have proven their ability to adapt and establish

permanent residence in Hinton and who have been accepted for a housing loan.

On January 27, 1965, a letter was sent from the Cabinet Committee to Mr. Sawyer to the effect that the Committee decided to agree in co-operating with the proposal by way of locating workmen, assisting in their removal to Hinton, and assisting financially in a training program to upgrade their work skills, on the condition, however, that the Company would, at its expense, prepare temporary housing in the unused 600-man camp establishment and would make it available at a low monthly rental to the native families.

On February 5, 1965, Sawyer replied that the camp establishment was to be kept for possible expansion of the Company, also that the cost of opening it would amount to about \$30,000. Thus, no steps would be taken at that time to open it. However, the result of a recent survey in the Robb area by the Company indicated that there were about 30-35 vacant houses suitable for worker accommodation which Whitford might look into.

In a report to the Cabinet Committee on Community Development, February 15, 1965, Whitford mentioned that he would be visiting Hinton and Robb to inspect with Mr. Sawyer the homes that were found vacant and that the community development officer's position for Hinton was offered to John Burch, a trained forester with three years experience as a community development officer in Manitoba.

A subsequent report, dated April 12, 1965, to the Cabinet Committee on Community Development made no mention of Whitford's inspection of the vacant homes available in Robb, but mentioned a proposal that five trailers be bought to accommodate five families; also that down payment on a number of available housing units in Hinton (including basic furnishings) and an agreement with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for a number of housing units should be made, funds for which would be repayable by the selected families. The report further indicated a change in thinking in regards to segregation of native workers. Whereas previously the objective was to only have native workmen cutting a specific timber berth at Brule, it was not felt both by the community development officer and the resident Manager for North Western Pulp and Power Company that the native workmen should mix with other workmen in other timber berths. One significance of the change in thinking, whether it was done purposely or not, was to increase the pressure on the Cabinet Committee to meet the May 1 deadline to provide the required number of workmen.

B. THE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

Turning now to the actual implementation of the above proposed program, the distinction between program and process becomes significant. As was mentioned earlier, the community development officer was hired for the area effective April 1, 1965 on a two-year contract to implement

the relocation program. His first activity centred around talking to the residents of Hinton, outlining his role and the nature of the program. Two, ten by forty-six trailers were bought by the Community Development Branch and placed in a fully serviced trailer court to be rented for \$80. per month each, plus utilities. The Company also implemented a training program for those who did not know how to produce pulp wood efficiently. Thus, it would appear in the early phase of the implementation process, that the major obstacles preventing the native workmen and their families from successfully relocating was appropriately dealt with, except for the actual recruitment of native families.

Based on the first semi-annual report of the community development officer, only five families were interviewed for employment and of those, only one man went to Hinton and without his family. The views of the community development officer were that, to many people of Indian ancestry, the idea of paying rent for something that ultimately would not even belong to them was not acceptable. In relation to job training, he felt that it was rather inadequate and suggested that more on-the-job training (use of power chain saws and techniques of pulpwood cutting) was needed.

By the end of the first year of the program, no improvements of any significance were noted. There were only two families recruited, one of whom moved after a short time to a poorer house in Hinton, without running water, for \$25. a month rent. The training program also proved

ineffective as it was felt that the two-week program was too short for a man to learn how to produce pulpwood well enough to make a good living. It was also felt that recruitment should not be directed to men from other areas as there was a large transient labour force right in Hinton that should be assisted to remain permanently. Still, the labour shortage remained critical and trips by the community development officer to Wabamun and Alexis Reservations to recruit workers proved negative as residents there did not feel that Hinton was a good area to work in.

C. THE HOUSING PROGRAM

A housing cooperative, Gemini Housing Co-operative, was formed in October 1965 and supported by a group of native people wishing to have decent housing accommodations. No houses were built, bought, or improved in the area during the next two years, however, due to the lack of adequate funding. Nevertheless, it was looked upon by the community development officer as a means of making better homes available and eventually developing a cohesiveness among Indians. A more realistic 'modus operandi' to relocate people was evident, one which would be acceptable to both industry and the people being relocated.

The second annual report of the community development officer, dated January 31, 1967, made no mention of any family being relocated to Hinton. Much of the community development officer's time was spent

assisting transients in obtaining employment, accommodation, and transportation, but no mention made as to whether that was successful or not. Within that year, also, the N.W.P. & P. Company began embarking on a mechanization program and purchased a large number of wheeled skidding machines to extract pulpwood from the forests, thus reducing the number of men required to cut pulpwood. Meanwhile, groups of people from Lac La Biche and Wabasca went to Hinton to look at prospect of relocating, but decided against doing so for lack of suitable housing accommodation.

The shortage of suitable housing accommodation also had an adverse effect on the Company's training program. Most of the people attending the course left before or right after completion, and it was suggested that arrangements be made immediately with Canadian Vocational Training and the N.W.P. & P. Company to establish a meaningful training program for woods employees.

In 1967, activities of the Gemini Housing Cooperative seemed to have improved despite some drawbacks. Having gone through the motion of acquiring its third president and a third complete new set of directors, the Co-op. was instrumental in the purchase of two homes, one for \$8,000. and the other for \$15,000. Two other homes were under construction, three applications for new homes submitted to the Alberta Commercial Corporation were approved with three others awaiting approval and one

being processed locally by the executive of the Co-operative.

A new community development officer, Mr. S. Sinclair, former Economic Development Officer, was hired in September 1967 who, however, concentrated working more in the Grande Cache area, where the native inhabitants there were trying to obtain permanent residence areas. His first report (undated) indicated that job opportunities with North Western Pulp and Power Company were not bright and that about 100 men were to be laid off logging operations in the fall of 1968. In the next report, dated April 21, 1968, he stated that the Gemini Housing Co-operative was inactive as far as any new clients being taken in and that Native employment was still scarce. With increased coal-mining activities and employment opportunities in the Grande Cache area, the role of the community development officer in Hinton was relegated to an employment liaison position between employer and potential employees, while he concentrated more on community development activities in the Grande Cache area.

D. ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITIES

The community development program in Hinton was centered around the tasks of recruiting thirty natives to work as cutters for North Western Pulp and Power Company and to see their families successfully relocated in Hinton. Since it was a Government initiated program and planned without the active participation and involvement of its beneficiaries, it is probably

more apt to refer to it as a relocation project rather than a community development program.

One of the basic problems of the program is that, while it was immaculately conceived and well-planned from the perspective of the Government, it failed to deal adequately with the process whereby the program could be implemented. One of the underlying assumptions of the program seems to be that because job opportunities were available in Hinton, natives from surrounding communities would automatically want to go there, work and eventually settle down. The program, however, failed to take into consideration the need for adequate motivational measures which would serve to make the natives desirous of relocating. It is very unrealistic to assume that people, regardless of their ethnic or cultural origin, would leave the relative safety and comfort of their community and relocate in another community for the sake of economic reasons only. The natives, in particular, not accustomed to the way of life of the larger society, would not want to discontinue their relationships with others in the home community to be economically self-sufficient. Proof of this lies in the fact that after two years of the program, only two families were relocated.

The lack of appropriate motivation to relocate and give up past associations, however, is not the only explanation for the shortage of workers. Housing presented a serious problem for prospective natives who wanted to relocate. The native has traditionally been accustomed to

owning his own home and the idea of paying rent for accommodation which would never be his was very repulsive. The housing program for natives which was extended to include Hinton was a poor attempt to alleviate the housing situation since it failed to take into consideration the special position of the natives. Under the Alberta Commercial Corporation's regulations, only those who had permanent jobs and some form of security could qualify for housing loans, which therefore excluded many from getting loans. It was no wonder, therefore, that natives were very hesitant to relocate.

With regard to the training program, it was felt by the community development officer that it was not adequate enough to permit the natives to work efficiently. Many natives who took part in the training program left before or right after completion. It would seem, however, that it was not the training program in itself that prompted the natives to leave but other factors such as housing, relative isolation, homesickness etc. which were more prominent. The nature of the job did not require much training nor academic qualifications and even if the training program was improved, it would not necessarily mean that the natives would remain.

In conclusion, therefore, it would seem that unless the natives were properly motivated into wanting to relocate to Hinton, the provision of other services such as housing and job training, would not be sufficient incentives to warrant their relocation.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SLAVE LAKE

A. THE NEED FOR RELOCATION

The Metis population of Slave Lake had been residing for a considerable period of time on land which was owned either by private individuals or the Government. However, with the advent of boom conditions due to oil development, the land was becoming very valuable and as such the Metis were being forced to move to new locations (some forty-eight families had been living in non-permanent dwellings). At a meeting on July 13, 1964, between the Department of Lands and Forests, Municipal Affairs and Highways, the problem of relocation was discussed and it was suggested that a parcel of land be set aside in the town area of Slave Lake for re-settlement of the Metis. On September 30, 1964, the Co-ordinator of the community development program and a representative from Indian Affairs Branch visited Slave Lake where they met with the Forestry Superintendent and discussed the general progress made as regards oil and gas discoveries, road, pipeline and other forms of construction. They also pointed out the need for housing programs for native people. In the afternoon and during the next day, Mr. Sam Sinclair, a Metis Forest Ranger, was made available

to show them the town and introduced them to various native people who might be interested in a housing program. The Co-ordinator's observation was that a two-pronged program was needed in the area; the first to focus on a group of people who lived on the banks of the Slave River at the effluence of the Lesser Slave Lake and who were partially and in great danger of being completely flooded out the next spring; the second to focus on a group of people who were scattered throughout the area, had reasonably good jobs and could therefore participate in a community development housing program. He felt that the first group referred to above might or might not be able to participate in a housing program but that, regardless of their inability, they were nevertheless in need of better housing and of land which was less liable to inundation.

On October 26, 1964, the Co-ordinator returned to Slave Lake to attend a meeting called to discuss a proposed housing program. He had suggested to the people during his previous visit (September 30 - October 1) that Slave Lake would be a possible site for a housing program if the people indicated an interest for such. At the meeting, there seemed to have been considerable interest as there were about seventy-nine (79) natives in attendance for a preliminary discussion of the type of program the Community Development Branch was planning. Sam Sinclair had set up the meeting and was looked upon by the Co-ordinator as an invaluable aid to the incoming community development officer, Mr. Doug Babcock, who began his duties on

December 11, 1964.

From that time until 1967, the activities of the community development officer were centered mainly around three organizations, namely Ksepegamau (End of Lake) Housing Co-operative Ltd., the Lesser Slave Lake Water Level Control and Development Association and the Slave Lake Location Clearing Co-op. Ltd.

B. THE KSEPEGEMAU HOUSING CO-OP. LTD.

Upon the arrival of the C.D.O., two meetings concerning a housing program were held on December 20 and 27 by the C.D.O. and interested natives which resulted in the formation of the above-mentioned co-op. It began with a five-man board of directors and membership of fifteen, with the C.D.O. acting as Secretary. The meetings decided that:¹

1. While membership should be unrestricted, only native members should be directors of the Co-op.;
2. There should be a membership fee of \$2.00;
3. Prospective home purchasers should file application with the Co-op., the directors should select suitable applicants and the final selection should be approved by a majority of members;
4. Home purchasers should provide an insurable mortgage;
5. Defaulters who fail to give a satisfactory account within a prescribed period should be evicted from their homes.

The Bank Manager and Forestry Superintendent pledged their support and advice. House plans were received from a building supplies firm by the board chairman who was having them checked by local builders and contractors with the view of possibly building comparable homes with local material and labour.

By March of 1965, the Ksepegeman Housing Co-op. was prepared to purchase lots in the Village of Slave Lake in preparation for the construction of five homes. There were four private lots for sale, all zoned R-1, and equipped with water, sewage, and power facilities, at a total cost of \$2,100. The Co-op. therefore requested that the Alberta Commercial Corporation (A.C.C.), who by that time became actively involved in the program as the money-lending agency, deposit the required amount of money to the credit of the Co-op. By the end of March, one of the lots was purchased independently by a Co-op. member and titles of the remaining three were transferred from the owner to the Co-op. on the assumption that the A.C.C. would deposit the money needed. However, by August 1965, the A.C.C. had still not released any funds to the Co-op., which resulted in the Co-op. finally paying the owner by obtaining a bank loan. Shortly afterwards, the necessary funds were forwarded by the A.C.C. to the Co-op.

The Co-op. next turned its attention to the possibility of constructing housing accommodations for rental purposes, the concern being for some two dozen Metis families whose homes were flooded. On July 22, 1965, a

meeting was held between representatives of the A.C.C., the Field Service Branch, and the Provincial Planning Office, for the purpose of exploring the factors involved and problems likely to be encountered in implementing a rental project. A course of action was recommended whereby technical and social statistics would be collected, analysed, and made available to the Co-op. for review and consequent decision. The province would then approve a course of action and technical assistance would be provided to the Co-op. in implementing the scheme.

Subsequent to the meeting, another meeting was called by the A.C.C. and attended by representatives of various departments including the executive of the Co-op. and the mayor of Slave Lake. The A.C.C. representative explained that the Government might approve a housing rental program for Slave Lake and thus wanted to seek information, guidance, and the attitude of the Co-op. towards the proposal and what role the Co-op. could play in the initial construction and operational stages of the program. The community development officer for Slave Lake, speaking on behalf of the Co-op., gave a history of the events leading to the proposal to the effect that, during the spring and early summer of 1965, some 15 to 20 families living in the old town had been flooded out and as winter was approaching, some form of accommodation was necessary. The Co-op.'s proposal was:²

1. to supply a number of units to house those families and to collect rent to amortize the loan from the A.C.C.

2. to charge a maximum rent of \$40. per month
3. to have the proposed homes consist of three bedrooms with a floor area of some 600 square feet
4. to have the homes built outside the town as taxes would be too high otherwise
5. to have the Co-op. maintain maximum control over the operations of the rental units
6. to have the project extended not only to natives, but to everyone requiring low-rental accommodation

On September 9 and 10, a survey of the housing situation was conducted and classified into three groups: group 1, consisting of seven families who were living in the area affected by the flood, and whose dwellings were shacks of makeshift type which could not be moved; group 2, consisting of three families who were still in the affected area, but whose homes could be moved, and; group 3, consisting of six families who had left the area and were presently in and around Slave Lake, but in accommodations of a very poor substandard nature. However, by that time it was already too late to instigate and complete a low-cost housing project for the winter, and attention was thus turned to the possibility of provincial provision of trailers or mobile homes for a limited period of up to one year on a rental basis. An emergency housing meeting was held on September 20, 1965, where the housing survey, updated to keep in line with the changing

situations, was discussed. It was felt that twelve families, consisting of 71 people, required emergency housing. By September 30, it was agreed that:³

1. A.C.C. would purchase five acres north of the town boundary
2. A.C.C. would negotiate purchase of 12 skid houses of suitable sizes and would consult the Co-op. on a final choice
3. The units would be placed in reasonably close proximity
4. No water services would be provided because of costs of laying the line (which was agreeable to the Co-op.)
5. Heating was to be done by wood stove
6. Houses would be wired for electricity
7. On completion of development, the houses would be transferred to the Co-op. to effect the loan for a one-year period of the cost involved in the purchase.
8. Funds involved in the transaction would bear interest at the rate of 4% per annum
9. Repayment by the Co-op. would be based on amortization of the cost of the units over a 15-year period
10. Following transfer of the units, the Co-op. would assume responsibility for management
11. At the end of one year, the Co-op. tenants would have to vacate the units so that the units could be removed

12. The A. C. C. or the Department of Public Works would repurchase the units from the Co-op. for the amount of the balance due.
13. As an alternative to #12, the Co-op. could purchase one or more units for removal to another location and continue payments on them.

By December 15, 1965, twelve newly constructed skid houses were officially opened for rent to flood victims and other needy families. Each unit, containing two or four bedrooms with a central living and dining area, cost the government \$4,500., and the Co-op. was charging \$35. and \$40. per month for the small and large units respectively. A number of meetings were held with prospective tenants prior to the arrival of the units during which time the community development officer pointed out the advantages of organizing for purposes of water delivery, garbage collection, reporting of damage or delinquency to the Co-op. executive, and general mutual assistance. By the time the units were installed, however, three families had already moved back to the flood area and a total of six families had lost interest in emergency housing, so that, of those who finally occupied the units, only six were actually flood victims.

The actual management of the units over the winter months proved to be too difficult for the chairman of the Co-op., though he was assisted by the community development officer. From the beginning, the oil

companies received individual requests to supply fuel, as was the case with the water truck, and talks by the community development officer to the tenants about organization failed to produce anything, as too many hostilities divided the people. A great deal of drinking, improper disposal of garbage, damages to some of the units, poor housekeeping, and lack of involvement in the Co-op.'s affairs were also evident. This finally caused the executive of the Co-op. to call a general meeting on April 4, 1966, requesting the presence of at least one adult from each of the units. They were told by the chairman that because of their past actions, they were jeopardizing the future of the Co-op. and that they should decide either to behave themselves and clean up the mess or leave the units. The following week brought a few changes. On June 4, the chairman served notice on all of the tenants to vacate the premises by June 30, under agreement with A.C.C. On June 6, at a general meeting attended by most of the adult tenants, to discuss purchasing the units, nine decided to purchase their units and filled out the necessary forms. A few weeks afterwards, the Co-op. was engaged in disposing of the rest of the skid houses.

C. THE LESSER SLAVE LAKE WATER LEVEL CONTROL AND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

The old town of Slave Lake (formerly Sawridge) is located about two miles north of the village of Slave Lake on both sides of the Lesser

Slave River. Lesser Slave Lake is fed by many creeks and rivers of various capacities which drain an area extending from twenty to sixty miles around the lake. There is, however, only one outlet from the lake, the Lesser Slave River, which is judged to be incapable of handling the volume of water except in the driest of years. And, since most of the land surrounding the lake is low, even a minor upward rise of the lake level renders the land useless.

In 1920, the lake level rose to an elevation of 1896.7 feet, resulting in a flood. A survey conducted in 1921 by the Federal Government recommended straightening and dredging of the river canal at an estimated cost of \$220,000. to avoid future floods. Since that time, the lake's intake system was made more efficient through the construction of roads, pipelines, power poles, and a drainage project on the East Prairie River. On the other hand, the lake's outlet system had become less and less efficient, owing to the constant accumulation of silt at the mouth and in the channel of the river. The 1921 recommendations were ignored and in 1935, the lake rose to a peak of 1897.07 feet, forcing the evacuation of the old town of Slave Lake. Rather than controlling the lake, the only action taken was to move people and facilities to higher ground, which involved a large expenditure of relief payments. Following this peak, the lake level remained relatively low over the next twenty years, during which time families gradually moved back to the old town and farmers in the

surrounding areas built up their livestock herds and cropped a maximum acreage, including wild hayland for winter feed. By 1954, the lake level rose once again and remained high for five years, resulting in curtailed agricultural production. In 1964, the lake froze at an elevation of about 1895 feet, only about two feet below the highest recorded level and it was anticipated that when the ice melted, the level would rise still further, causing a flood.

On April 1, 1965, by which time the community development officer had assumed the duties of Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce in Slave Lake, two members of the Northern Alberta Development Council went to Slave Lake, upon invitation, to discuss the water control problem with the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce. A further meeting was to have been held with the entire Council which, however, did not materialize. During April, also, the community development officer assisted a local resident in a survey of the lakeshore to assess the flood threat and the degree of feeling among other affected residents. In the course of several visits and telephone calls to various points between Slave Lake and High Prairie, the community development officer encouraged and promoted the formation of a pressure group whose main object was to be the control of the water level of the lake and development of the surrounding areas. A number of individuals along the lake shore began recruiting support, conducting studies and preparing statements and on May 9, largely

at the instigation of the community development officer, a group of twenty-five people representing the Slave Lake - High Prairie district met at Kinuso to organize and listen to the prepared statements. The community development officer initially chaired the meeting, and in the ensuing election of officers, declined the position of chairman, but accepted that of secretary, hoping to maintain a measure of control over subsequent developments, since he felt very strongly that a different choice for chairman, other than the person elected, was desirable. The Lesser Slave Lake Water Level Control and Development Association was thus formed. The chairman proposed a march to Edmonton, taking the form of horse-mounted, banner-waving riders, whose progress to the city would be publicized by all possible news media, but no one followed up on his proposal.

At an executive meeting of May 11, the purpose of which was to compile a master brief from the statements made at the previous meeting, the community development officer personally antagonized the writer of the statement from the Big Meadow Area on the grounds that while his statement was full of merit, it was nevertheless a little too polite and unnecessarily obsequious. That resulted in the writer's resignation. A second general meeting, attended by about seventy persons including the M.L.A., took place on May 20, the purpose of which was to edit the prepared brief. Preceding the general meeting was a hurried executive

meeting during which the chairman submitted his resignation, having been earlier convinced by the community development officer to do so for reasons of health. The community development officer also submitted his resignation and was personally instrumental in the choice of replacements. At the general meeting, the executive changes were accepted and the brief was endorsed with minor alterations. The M.L.A. spoke against a passage in the brief which he felt to be too critical of the A.R.D.A. project on the East and West Prairie Rivers, but the ensuing motion to strike out the passage was defeated. Following the meeting, copies of the brief were circulated to residents along the lake, to the Slave Lake Chamber of Commerce (which endorsed it), and to the Improvement District No. 124 Ratepayers' Association. On May 30, the chairman called an executive meeting to which the community development officer was invited, to draft the Association's constitution and decide upon procedures concerning the brief. He proposed a rational 'gentlemanly' approach with regard to the brief, which was agreed upon. The strategy was to forward copies of the brief to all M.L.A.s, with a letter accompanying those going to the Premier of Alberta and the Honourable Messrs. Strom, Hooke, and Ruste, requesting an audience about the middle of June.

On June 5 and 6, with the westerly winds reaching a velocity of 50 miles per hour, the water level rose six inches within a few hours, which was sufficient enough to inundate most of the homes in the old town, and by

the evening of June 6, approximately half of the residents had to evacuate to higher ground. Those who remained, occupied houses which were still a few inches above water but, as outhouses were engulfed and stagnant water trapped on the land, there was concern for the possibility of fecal contamination, at which time the emergency housing program became a necessity.

A year later, with the level of the Lesser Slave Lake down three inches, some of the incentive which saw the organization of the Association also subsided, though not dead. The Association was waiting for the government to receive a report from a Toronto firm of engineers which would provide data on the feasibility of controlling the lake. This report in brief concluded that it was economically unfeasible to control the lake, the capital and operating costs outweighing revenue that can be derived from controlling the lake.

D. THE SLAVE LAKE LOCATION CLEARING CO-OP. LTD.

Oil developments in the Slave Lake area in 1964 led to the emergence of a group of local contractors who were contracted by oil companies to clear roads, pipelines, well sites etc. As native labour was regarded as cheap, contractors normally utilized their labour and, in most cases, without adequate compensation. During the winter of 1964-65, the hourly rates for

various kinds of jobs were generally as follows:

<u>OIL COMPANY TO CONTRACTOR</u>		<u>CONTRACTOR TO CREW</u>	
Labourer	\$2.75	Labourer	\$1.50
Surveyor	4.00	Surveyor	2.50
Foreman	3.00	Foreman	2.00

Source: Memo from D. Babcock to J. Whitford Re: Slave Lake Location Clearing Co-op. Ltd., Dated December 6, 1965.

Apart from the low wages that natives received, late payment, bad cheques, inadequate camp facilities and long periods of isolation were typical complaints of working conditions. In response, the contractors complained of the natives' lack of responsibility, reliability and drunkenness. The community development officer, upon observing such conditions facing the natives, suggested in April 1965, on the occasion of a Housing Co-op. meeting, the formation of a native slashing co-op. to overcome such difficulties. Reaction by the natives was very favourable and in two consequent meetings, the community development officer explained the organizational framework of a co-op. while the natives discussed how it could be successful. Apart from the meetings, however, no native initiative was shown until June, when a native forestry employee, Mr. John Bellerose approached the community development officer with the idea of setting up a slashing co-op.

The following months was spent by the community development

officer and Mr. Bellerose getting the co-op. set up. Mr. Bellerose named it The Slave Lake Location Clearing Co-op. Ltd. and a tentative membership and five-man executive, with Mr. Bellerose as chairman, was drawn up. Also, he obtained the necessary signatures for the memorandum of association, all without holding a meeting of those involved. Against the advice of his friends, Mr. Bellerose quit working for the Forestry Department as of August 1 so as to devote full time to the Co-op. Many felt that he was not the right man to administer activities of the Co-op. as they felt that he was personally unsuited for the job.

With the setting up of the Co-op., Mr. Bellerose began the task of looking for work with the help of the community development officer. On many occasions he was urged by the community development officer to call a general meeting so as to discuss work opportunities but to no avail. On September 13, obtaining eight signatures which constituted a majority to the Co-op. members, Mr. Bellerose and the acting secretary, Mr. Favel, received a loan of \$1,000. from the local bank to buy insurance and make a down-payment on a one-ton truck. By October 8, an opportunity arose for a sixteen mile clean-up job. Mr. Bellerose placed a bid for the work but was underbid by another native from Whitecourt who got the job. On October 18, the Production Manager of Imperial Oil Co. in Slave Lake, who was sympathetic to the idea of the co-op., informed both Mr. Bellerose and the

community development officer of developments on the Nipisi-Rainbow Lake pipeline and furnished them with some useful contacts in Edmonton.

According to the community development officer, Mr. Bellerose did go to Edmonton for the next three days but did not follow up on any of the contacts.

By October 23, the acting secretary was becoming concerned about the lack of results and the following day met with Mr. Bellerose, the community development officer and Mr. Gullion, a member of the Co-op., to discuss the situation. Mr. Bellerose was urged to make contacts and to reduce his rates as they were above what the oil companies wanted to pay. Mr. Favel and Mr. Gullion offered their services to make contacts but were refused by Mr. Bellerose. They also wanted to have an organizational meeting of the Co-op., but while Mr. Bellerose agreed, he did nothing about it.

On November 5, another job opportunity arose. Mr. Bullion heard about it through a contact with Imperial Oil and immediately told Mr. Bellerose, who then went to Imperial Oil and submitted his rates which they accepted. Work was to commence November 8 on a flow line twenty miles south of Slave Lake but no attempt was made to call a meeting to inform members. On the evening of November 6, Messrs. Favel and Gullion called a small meeting at Mr. Gullion's home, to which the community development officer was invited. Mr. Bellerose, however, did not turn up, and after considerable searching, was found and taken to the meeting. There,

it was pointed out to him that before work could commence, a board of directors had to be elected. After a great deal of discussion, it was finally agreed to call a general meeting for the next evening, despite Mr. Bellerose's fear that he might not be elected to the executive. At the general meeting, ten members were present and Mr. Bellerose was elected to the executive for a three year term while Messrs. Gullion and Favel were elected for two years and two others for one year. Work began on November 9 and within a few days, the Co-op. had a crew of twenty men working, including two whites. Mr. Bellerose worked as bush foreman for the first day only and, under the excuse that Imperial Oil wanted a contact with the Co-op. in town at all times, stayed in town. On November 20, an executive meeting was held in which Mr. Bellerose was elected chairman. Regarding the question of his salary, he finally accepted the foreman's rate of pay of \$2.00 an hour plus \$1.50 per hour for his truck, nine hours a day for every day of the month, which brought his salary to approximately \$950. a month. In return, he was to deal with prospective employers and make sure that the Co-op. did not lack jobs. At the meeting, it was also decided to open membership to anyone at \$2.00 a year, but that the executive should always be all-native. A general meeting was called for the following week, but besides the executive, only two men showed up, and was thus converted into an executive meeting. They decided that membership should be limited to twenty natives but that any number of employees could work for the Co-op. It was also decided to pay Miss Henrietta Huculak,

a local bank employee, \$125. a month for her duties as secretary and to pay Mr. John Tomy, the local hotel manager, \$50. a month for his duties as bookkeeper.

By November 28, the Co-op. had completed its work for Imperial Oil but had no prospects for future work. A week earlier, the community development officer had informed Mr. Bellerose that Banister Construction was putting in over 200 miles of pipeline but he did not contact the company for five days, by which time the job was given to another local sub-contractor. The community development officer felt that Mr. Bellerose was doing little or nothing about getting work for the Co-op. and that the prospect of making a phone call or going into an office visibly intimidated Mr. Bellerose. A general meeting was held on the same date in which the community development officer explained to those present what a Co-op. was, how it might benefit them and what their responsibilities were. He pointed out that it was not Mr. Bellrose's Co-op., nor were they working for him, but that it belonged to all of them and they were working for themselves. Mr. Favel raised the question, in light of the fact that the Co-op. was out of work, as to whether Mr. Bellerose should continue receiving a salary. Mr. Bellerose took objection to the question, pointing out that he had already been given a permanent salary, and wanted to know whether that was the thanks he was getting for sacrificing so much to get the Co-op. started. He also stated if that was the way things stood, he would resign as Chairman

and work in the bush. The matter was finally settled when Mr. Favel suggested that Mr. Bellerose be paid for as long as two weeks when every man in the Co-op. was out of work.

By the beginning of December 1965, the Co-op. was once again able to get work from Imperial Oil. On December 6, work started on a heavily timbered two and a half mile line about twenty miles southeast of Slave Lake and lasted until December 29. Mr. Bellerose continued his former occupation of staying in town each day, not doing much in the interest of the Co-op. The community development officer, in talking to Messrs. Gullion and Favel was able to learn of many of Mr. Bellerose's unfilled responsibilities. There was still no first-aid kit for the crew, members were denied credit at the store because no satisfactory arrangements were made and bills were unpaid. Both Mr. Bullion and Mr. Favel felt that the time had come to replace the chairmanship, liberalize the membership restriction, and hire a qualified salesman on commission to get jobs for the Co-op. A general meeting was called on December 12 but was called off by Mr. Bellerose when he learned that the community development officer could not attend. He, however, called an emergency executive meeting on December 15, to deal with a lengthy questionnaire from the taxation office. During the meeting, Messrs. Gullion and Favel questioned Mr. Bellerose concerning the various problems mentioned above and told him that he was paid too much for what he was doing. Mr. Bellerose offered to trade places

with Mr. Gullion (foreman) but the offer was declined. The following day, three directors of the board borrowed \$8,000. from the bank to cover the December payroll. The personal titles of Hector and Bill Gullion had to be given as security as Mr. Bellerose's title was not acceptable. Messrs. Gullion and Favel were resolved to remove Mr. Bellerose from office at a general meeting by informing members about the aims of the Co-op. and how those were being frustrated by Mr. Bellerose. Mr. Bellerose, on the other hand, attempted to keep a loyal following by arousing hatred for the two men. A general meeting was held on December 19. Shortly before the meeting, Mr. Bellerose informed the community development officer that the meeting had to be cancelled as he did not have his supper yet and one of the directors was drunk. When he was told that it was no reason to cancel a meeting, he reluctantly agreed to go and was the last person to arrive, as was his usual habit. Messrs. Gullion and Favel, along with their supporters, however, failed to raise the chairmanship problem, partly because of a loss of nerve and partly through Mr. Bellerose's timely use of some raffle tickets. Two motions were passed nevertheless to increase membership to any number and to Whites as well as Natives, with the executive remaining all Native (both were objected to by Mr. Bellerose).

On December 29, the same day that the crew finished work for Imperial Oil, a general meeting was scheduled for the evening. Before the meeting, Mr. Bellerose informed several members that the hall was not

available, that most of the men were drunk and that others wanted to do late shopping, which resulted in the meeting being cancelled. The community development officer checked with the Anglican minister who told him that the hall was available and that Mr. Bellerose had merely cancelled the booking. Another meeting, on January 2, failed to materialize, but on January 4, a meeting was finally held. Mr. Bellerose had earlier indicated that the secretary was working late and that he would not attend unless she did. She eventually went to the meeting and so did Mr. Bellerose. At the meeting when he was asked what the general financial position of the Co-op. was, it became evident that he did not have the slightest idea. Mr. Favel then successfully moved a motion that the executive be enlarged to nine directors (from five). Following that, was a lengthy discussion lasting for about one and a half hours on Mr. Bellerose's position in the Co-op. Two motions were moved, one that he was over-paid and two, that he should go to work in the bush, but both motions were not carried because of a large number of abstentions.

On the following day, eight of the nine directors met and went over the Co-op's finances with the aid of an adding machine, and discovered the following:-

INCOME.....	\$23,000.
EXPENSES (including wages, trucks, saws, compensation, insurance, salaries, and payments to Mr. Bellerose).....	17,000.
INVESTMENT (payment on Co-op. truck).....	1,000.
NET PROFIT	5,000.

Source: Memo from D. Babcock to J. Whitford, Re: Slave Lake Location Clearing Co-Op. Ltd. (Cont'd.) Dated January 11, 1966.

The realization that payments to Mr. Bellerose amounted to approximately twenty-five (25) percent of the Co-op.'s profits proved to be a strong motive for the executive to tell Mr. Bellerose that they wanted to select a new chairman. Mr. Bellerose suggested that Mr. Gullion exchange positions with him, but Mr. Gullion declined for personal reasons. Four other members of the executive also did not want to accept the position and finally Mr. Favel accepted it. A few decisions were then made to allow the Board of Directors to become more involved in the Co-op. activities and to offer a native entrepreneur \$50. commission for each job he could line up for the Co-op.

During the course of the next two days, following Mr. Favel's take-over, there were rumors of a petition to return Mr. Bellerose to his position. Mr. Bellerose called the community development officer to confirm that the members wanted a meeting on January 7, and when asked whether he had informed everyone, particularly the executive, he replied

affirmatively. The community development officer then contacted Mr. Favel and learned that he knew nothing of the meeting but was therefore immediately going to rally men for the meeting. One hour before the meeting, Mr. Bellerose visited the secretary and paid the \$2.00 membership fee each for five men and, just before the meeting started, several more men paid their fees. At the meeting, the Favel-Gullion group sat together in front while the Bellerose group sat at the back behind their leader. A member of the Board of Directors, representing the Favel-Gullion group, began by severely criticizing Mr. Bellerose's past activities. The fire was returned by Mr. Bellerose's brother, while he, aside from calling a few men liars, said nothing (giving the impression that his followers were reacting out of their own accords). Both Mr. Bellerose and his brother denied playing any part in promoting a petition to unite members of the Co-op. under the leadership of Mr. Bellerose, who had been grievously wronged, and to vote Mr. Gullion out of the Co-op. Mr. Favel gave a financial report using a small blackboard in which he stressed the proportion of profits that had gone to Mr. Bellerose. Mr. Bellerose, however, insisted that his income was an executive decision and not his own. Following this, a motion was moved by Mr. Bellerose's brother that a new foreman be elected. It was seconded, but failed to get a majority, with some negative votes coming from men whose fees were paid by Mr. Bellerose. Thus, the meeting ended with no changes in the executive. The following day,

the Board of Directors bid conservatively on a piece of work, got the contract and on January 10, twenty-five members of the Co-op. began working once again.

During the course of the year, many problems still haunted the Co-op. The executive was not always able to secure enough work for its members and found it necessary to provide cash advances to members who subsequently left the Co-op. to work for other outfits. Meetings were few, the bookkeeping was constantly out of date, and Mr. Bellerose, still claiming that he was illegally ousted from the chairmanship, sought ways and means of regaining control. Despite the drawbacks, however, excerpts from the Co-op.'s 1966 audit revealed the following:

INCOME FROM SALES	\$59,051.93
WAGES (paid out to its 22 Metis members).....	40,932.65
GROSS OPERATING PROFIT.....	18,119.28
NET PROFIT	11,453.53
CASH ON HAND IN BANK	5,944.94

Over the 1966-67 winter operation, unfortunately, the Co-op. was unable to get any contract, due primarily to the feuds that occurred between two factions in the executive. Mr. Bellerose soon after left the Co-op. and started his own falling operation north of Manning, employing about eight former members of the Co-op.

E. ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITIES

The oil boom and subsequent housing problems of the natives in the Slave Lake area led to the implementation of a community development program with the aims of economic development and adult education. The community development officer, in his concern for the problems faced by the natives, adopted a very direct and involved approach in dealing with their affairs. He assumed the responsibility of secretary of the Ksepegeman Housing Co-op. and worked very closely, primarily with the President, in the affairs of the Co-op. He also became secretary of the Lesser Slave Lake Water Level Control and Development Association since he wanted to watch over the activities of the President, whom he felt was not the right choice. Moreover, together with a native, he was very instrumental in the formation of a slashing co-op. and equally instrumental in bringing about the down-fall of the President. These activities would suggest that the community development officer saw himself as a trustee of the native people, fighting for their rights while having some degree of control over their affairs. The consequence of such a position has been to suffocate an otherwise educational-motivational process and limiting the initiative of the natives to do things for themselves.

In the area of housing, two significant problems seriously interfered with it becoming successful. Partly because of the community development officer's direct role, the administration of the twelve skid

houses was conducted by the President and the community development officer, while the rest of the Board of Directors played a very minor role. It may be true that their minor role was a reflection of their inability to administer the housing affairs but it can also be argued that the minor role was a reflection of the major roles performed by the two. In any case, the problems that arose in the administration of the twelve houses came about simply because the tenants did not feel identified with the activities of the Co-op., which could very well have been avoided through more meaningful participation and decision-making by the group.

The other significant problem faced by the Co-op. was the role of the board of directors in relation to the functions of the Alberta Commercial Corporation. It was rather unfortunate that, on the one hand, the Board of Directors of the Co-op. was responsible for the selection of prospective home-owners, and on the other hand, that their selections had to be subjected to A.C.C. regulations. What it amounted to in effect was that the Board of Directors was doing the dirty work for the A.C.C. and that such a function was not really necessary as A.C.C. had the final say. If people of Indian ancestry are to assume some measure of self-determination in their affairs, then it is important that they are not subjected to such restraints. Since the ultimate decision rested with the A.C.C., then the formation of a housing co-op. was only an exercise in futility as those who did benefit from it would have ordinarily benefitted anyway. It would seem

then that a housing program can only reach those who need it when their special circumstances are taken into consideration; and people can only be self-determining when they are not subjected to absolute controls from above.

Footnotes

¹Letter from D. Babcock to J. Whitford, "Re. Slave Lake",
January 18, 1965, p.1.

²D. Babcock, "Meeting with the Executive, Ksepegemau Association,
Slave Lake, Concerning Proposed Rental Housing Program," August 5,
1965. p.3.

³Letter from J.R. Fleming to J. Whitford, "Re. Emergency
Housing - Slave Lake," September 30, 1965, pp.1-2.

CHAPTER VIII

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN WABASCA

A. EARLY HISTORY

The settlement of Wabasca, in Improvement District 128, is 278 road miles north of Edmonton, and 85 miles north-east of Slave Lake. Very little written information is available on its early history apart from files of the Roman Catholic priests at the Mission of Saint Martin. The first community development officer, Mr. Murray Smith, was able to research the following information:

- March 1891 - Father Desmarais paid his first visit to Wabasca where he found a tribe of Cree Indians known as the Bigstone Band.
- July 1897 - The building of the first Roman Catholic church was completed.
- August 14, 1899 - Treaty No. 8 was signed by the Chief and four headmen of the Bigstone Band
- July 13, 1901 - A regular school was opened, though informal classes were held earlier.
- August 15, 1901 - Classes were held for twenty students.

- 1906 - The road from Wabasca to Slave Lake was completed.
- 1919 - Mail services started to arrive twice monthly.
- 1921 - The first election campaigning took place.
- 1924 - The first telephone line between the Father's house and the convent was hooked up.
- 1925 - The Department of Indian Affairs sent a doctor and dentist to visit the people.
- 1926 - The Mission of St. Martin started its own sawmill.
- 1928 - The first hospital, 28' by 30', was completed.
- 1929 - The people of Wabasca first saw an airplane.
- April 1, 1931 - A new boarding school with 113 children attending was officially opened.
- September 3, 1937 - A radio-telegraph service was established with places outside the settlement.
- November 10, 1938 - The first automobile arrived in Wabasca.

Before the advent of a community development program, Wabasca lacked any formal community institutions. To the outsider, the residents appeared passive, lifeless and withdrawn. Excessive drinking and family disorganization were common and the closest kind of unity that the Indians and Metis felt came from their general suspicion and hostility towards white

society. The natives felt that the white man was cold and indifferent to their needs while the white man looked upon the native as a hopeless irresponsible bum. For the majority of natives, and particularly the Metis, chronic poverty and unemployment marked their existence, and because of the differential treatment given to Indians and Metis, they were very skeptical of any ideas suggesting cooperative effort. Their children did noticeably well in the lower grades in school, but seemed to do poorly as they approached high school. A general feeling of passive, yet hostile dependence, seemed to pervade the native society.

B. ORIGIN OF THE PROGRAM

On February 26, 1964, a resident of the area², writing to Government officials on behalf of the Metis, requested that a community development officer go there to see the people, their way of life, and the area and explain how the residents could contribute to their own welfare. In his reply the Coordinator of Community Development requested that a meeting with the local people be arranged so that he could attend. Such a meeting got underway on July 6, 1964 with about sixty-two (62) people in attendance. The following day, the Coordinator, in travelling about the community and talking to people, noted that:

"The feeling which one gets when speaking to these people and visiting their homes is of utter frustration, helplessness and hopelessness. Sickness is their constant companion. They say that

although there is a lot of moose in the surrounding bush, they, unlike the Treaty Indians, are not allowed to hunt for it, nor are they allowed to fish for domestic fish without a license, nor are they allowed to hunt ducks in the summer time... Furthermore, the Metis people feel that they are being left out in relation to the few jobs that do arise in Wabasca from time to time because the Mission and the Indian Agent both favor Treaty Indians in this regard... There appears to be a considerable amount of conflict between Treaty and non-Treaty people despite the fact that most of them are intermarried."³

He also noted that among the possible resources that could be developed, including timber, fishing, mink farming, and cattle raising, the best and easiest resource for immediate exploitation appeared to be timber.

Even before, but especially after the Coordinator's visit, letters, petitions, resolutions and the like from the residents of Wabasca-Desmarais flooded government officials requesting that a community development officer be sent to the area and that the Treaty and non-Treaty Indians had agreed to co-operate in a community development program. Finally, on November 10, 1964, the Coordinator, in replying to one resident, stated that the government had decided to send a community development officer the following year.

C. THE WABASCA CO-OP. ASSOCIATION LTD.

The major emphasis of the community development program in Wabasca was the development of the timber industry so as to better the socio-economic positions of natives. Thus, the remainder of this part focuses on the activities of the Wabasca Co-op. Association Ltd., though it must be pointed out that there were other activities, particularly those of the Kee-Wee-Tin-Nok Association, directed towards uniting the Treaty and non-Treaty Indians and trying to make life more pleasant for both groups.

For three winters, previous to the winter season of 1965-66, the Treaty Indians of Wabasca had been operating a small milling and logging operation on the North Wabasca Indian Reserve. As most of their timber was depleted, they decided to ask the Provincial Government for a timber berth which was located on Crown land within eight miles of Wabasca. They were, however, required to prove that they were capable of handling such an operation. Thus, in the 1965-66 winter season, the Indian and Metis people got together and formed a timber cooperative with the objectives of logging and milling a million or more feet of timber successfully so as to strengthen their plea for a special timber berth.

Under the guidance of an economic development officer, Mr. Sam Sinclair, on loan from the Department of Lands and Forests to the Community Development Branch, the Co-op. operated a sawmill on Township 82,

range 25. Fourteen Treaty Indians and fourteen Metis were involved, and without any financial assistance and despite the fact that the equipment used was inadequate and constantly breaking down, the Co-op. was able to cut 1,041,287 feet of timber with a gross value of over \$47,000. A breakdown of assets and liabilities over the period December 1965 to March 1966 is as follows:-

MILL OPERATION, DECEMBER, 1965 TO MARCH, 1966

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF BOARD FEET CUT - 1,041,287

<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>AMOUNT (\$)</u>
Wages	18,976.70
Lumber Dues	1,976.82
Fuel	3,504.45
Machine Rental	7,775.61
Groceries	5,002.83
Workmen's Compensation	100.00
Miscellaneous (Power Saws etc.)	1,854.58
Repairs	<u>1,139.98</u>
TOTAL	<u>40,330.87</u>
REVENUE	41,479.50
BALANCE	1,148.63
ASSETS: One power unit	2,750.00
DEBTS OWING:	
Timber Dues	3,000.00
Miscellaneous (Fuel, Food, etc.)	2,000.00

Source: "Statement of Mill Operation, December 65 to March 66."

In March of 1966, a delegation representing the timber co-op. met with the Hon. Mr. Ruste and Mr. Colborne to discuss and explore what the chances were of acquiring an additional block of timber in the Wabasca area. It was indicated that a new quota system was being implemented in the province so as to improve the harvesting of forest products, and the delegation was assured that they would be notified when the timber in Management Unit S4 would be released for tender (see Appendix F). In early April, however, they learned that the major part of the timber in Unit S4 had been sold to Federated Co-operatives. Feeling at once began to run very high as the local people felt that they had been unfairly dealt with. They began considering a protest march to Edmonton until the community development officer told them that there were still two blocks of timber in Unit S8, west of North Wabasca Lake (see Appendix F), containing an estimated four million feet each of timber. As both blocks were to be released for sale at the end of June, a second delegation from Wabasca met in Edmonton on May 2, 1966 with Forestry officials to request that the two blocks be reserved for their use. At the meeting it was decided that blocks one and two would not be tendered until the Wabasca question was resolved; furthermore, that Forestry officials would negotiate with Federated Co-op. to see what type of arrangement could be devised for working Wabasca men into Federated Co-op.'s plans. On May 17, 1966, Forestry officials met with representatives of Federated Co-op. The idea of

sub-contracting to the Wabasca Co-op. for timber operations was suggested to Federated Co-op. and the response was most encouraging. The head of Federated Co-op. for Alberta stated that the company would be very pleased to work out a contract for logging only, but not for milling, which he felt would eat into total profits. However, he would be prepared to consider both aspects and also intended to hire a large number of Indians to work in the woods for him both in logging and milling. Furthermore, he would like to see some Wabasca Indians moved to Fort Smith where they could be employed at the co-op.'s planing mill.

On June 8, 1966, a third delegation went to Edmonton to attend two meetings, one with Federated Co-op. to hear their plan, and the other with the Hon. Mr. Ruste and Mr. Colborne to request, among other things, the reservation of the two blocks of timber for their use. They also submitted a brief to the Government of the Province of Alberta, pointing out the fact that, for the fiscal year 1964-65, the Governments of Alberta and Canada spent an estimated \$187,774. and \$363,588. respectively in their community and received only \$5,056.38 in taxes. They requested that the two blocks to be reserved for them along with a loan of \$300,000. to purchase new equipment and to provide six months working capital.

On June 27, 1966, the Wabasca Co-op. Association received a letter from the Department of Lands and Forests to the effect that the timber in Management Unit S4 was not sold to Federated Co-op. but the

Company was awarded an annual quota to be cut by them which was earned by the company holding the rights to certain license timber berths in the area - also that the government would proceed to advertise the sale of the two blocks of timber in Management Unit S8. However, the following clause was to be added in each advertisement:

"This timber quota certificate is subject to the holder offering local residents first chance by means of

- (1) direct contract at competitive price, and
- (2) competitive wages

to harvest the timber which will subsequently be cut under the related timber licenses."⁴

On the following day, Forestry officials met with representatives of the Wabasca Co-op. who again expressed a desire to undertake a timber sawing operation. The Forestry officials, however, pointed out that because of the government's decision, it would be best to operate a logging business and contract quota holders. The advantages and possible ways of financing equipment were discussed and the Co-op. was told that the Government would proceed with plans for financing and training programs if the overall proposal was acceptable; to which the delegation replied that they would consider the proposal and give a formal reply in a few days.

D. THE WABASCA DEMONSTRATIONS

On July 15, 1966, a mass meeting was held in Wabasca to consider,

among other things, action to be taken in reply to various government proposals. The Wabasca people apparently felt that they would again be placed in a position of subservience to some commercial company. They had no faith in the writing in of guarantees in working contracts as they had witnessed such failures many times before. The government's contention, on the other hand, was that most people in Canada, with the exception of farmers, do not own the resources which provide their jobs and that it would be fatal to the government's future work with native people to have the principle established that they must own the resources that provide their future employment. As no favourable resolution could be reached, the Wabasca group made arrangements on July 18 to go to Edmonton to conduct a demonstration the following day. When the government heard of their plans, a representative was sent to Slave Lake to meet some of the leaders of the demonstration to clarify once more the government's position and to assess the character of the demonstration, its organization and the degree of dissension in the Wabasca area concerning the demonstration. He met them at 2:00 A.M. July 19, 1966 just prior to their departure for Edmonton via a Canadian Coachways bus, such transportation having been arranged by the community development officer. He found that the group was definitely committed to a demonstration in Edmonton to demand rights to timber in Management Unit S8.

July 19, 1966, the group, totalling 56, arrived in Edmonton and

stayed at Emily Murphy Park. In the afternoon, a demonstration march from the MacDonald Hotel to the Parliament Building was held, followed by a discussion between representatives of the group and two government officials. The same proposals and counter-proposals were discussed with no compromise reached. A serious conflict was also becoming evident between the Treaty and non-Treaty Indians as a result of a resolution of the Bigstone Band Council. Signed by the Chief and five councillors, the resolution stated:

"That the majority of the Bigstone Band Council disagree and don't support the demonstration for obtaining the timber berths. The Council are more in favor of the offer made to them in Edmonton, by Honorable F.C. Colborne to go for the proposed contracts with all the assistance to start logging under whoever gets the timber berths.⁵"

The Wabasca group was without food and shelter, and arrangements were made with the Welfare Department and the Canadian Army to provide such. Also the police were informed that the group would be tenting at the same park for the night. On the morning of July 20, the group, not satisfied with the government's response, decided to remain in Edmonton, especially when they got a telegram from the Canadian Youth Council, meeting in Calgary, declaring support and funds in the amount of \$50. They moved from Emily Murphy Park to a vacant lot next to the Indian-Metis Friendship

Centre. On July 21, some of the national Indian leaders arrived from Calgary to discuss the situation with the Wabasca group. A program of action was decided upon as follows:⁶

1. To have a lawyer investigate the possibility of a legal injunction against the government prohibiting the sale of timber until further negotiations were held with the Wabasca people.
2. To prepare a statement to the press.
3. To continue demonstrating.

On the same day, also, the Hon. F.C. Colborne sent a letter of thanks to the Chief of the Bigstone Band Council for expressing support of the government's proposal and advised him that the government planned to hold some meetings early in August to help the local Wabasca people plan a training program and to consider the selection of proper equipment that would be needed for a logging operation.

With no break-through in sight, the demonstrators returned to Wabasca with representatives of the Canadian Indian Youth Council to plan further strategy. During the course of the next two days and after much deliberation, a decision was made to march to Edmonton once again. One hundred and thirty-eight persons pledged their active support and the Canadian Indian Youth Council was asked to act as a resource committee and help in any capacity. The Resource Committee, en route to Edmonton

to make arrangements, stopped in at Lesser Slave Lake to arrange bus transportation but was told that all the buses were under repair. Nevertheless, in Edmonton, they contacted various organizations, the news media, radio and television networks, notifying them of the planned march. On June 25, despite previous drawbacks, everything was moving smoothly. Buses became available after an old debt of the Wabasca people was paid; the Chief and his Councillors, who had previously passed a resolution of non-support of the demonstration, decided to march and give full support and instead of the one hundred and thirty-eight persons expected, some two hundred and fifty of them pledged to go to Edmonton. In the evening of the 25th, they arrived in Edmonton and were accommodated at two parishes.

On June 26, the Wabasca people, along with other supporters, began to march once more to the Legislative Buildings, with much publicity. En route, the leaders visited the Regional Director of Indian Affairs at the Federal Building, who volunteered to march with the group. As the march stopped in front of the Legislative Building, Mr. Whitford, the Co-Ordinator of the Community Development program met the delegation and escorted them to the Premier's office. The delegation made it known that they would speak through no one but Mr. H. Cardinal, their interpreter, despite the Premier's desire not to have an interpreter. The meeting lasted for about two and a half hours and resulted in the Premier promising to meet them the following afternoon and come to a decision. In the evening,

the people were given hotel accommodations at Government expense and in the following afternoon, a ten-point agreement (see appendix G) was reached.

E. AFTERMATH

With settlement being reached between the Government of Alberta and the people of Wabasca, bids were offered for the sale of Management Units S8, S3 and S4 on August 2, and was awarded to Federated Co-op. who had the highest bid. The Wabasca Co-op. began to assume the responsibility of obtaining the services of a manager, sawmill superintendent and accountant and to make arrangements with the Alberta Commercial Corporation for a hire-purchase agreement for logging equipment. A committee of four was also elected to determine the distribution of welfare payments in Wabasca, subject to governmental authority to do so. This was felt necessary since:⁷

1. The welfare officer was unable to understand Cree, causing communication with many people to be difficult.
2. The welfare officer did not live in Wabasca and thus was not fully aware of all the conditions under which people were living.
3. For the success of the logging operation, it was essential that men do not receive welfare when they were capable of working.

Another committee of four was set up, as outlined on point two of

the government's ten-point agreement, to negotiate with Federated Co-op. for logging and milling contracts. By early October, however, no contract could be reached as Federated Co-op. was willing to pay up to \$15. per thousand feet (per m) of timber to the Wabasca Co-op. for a logging contract and \$30. per m. for the sawmill contract, while the Wabasca Co-op. was asking for \$18. per m. and \$35. per m. respectively.

On October 31, 1966, a certified copy of a resolution of the Directors of the Wabasca Co-op. and Alberta Commercial Corporation was signed. The Alberta Commercial Corporation would purchase logging and sawmill equipment and related items as designated to the Corporation by the Wabasca Co-op. Under the hire-purchase agreement, rental applying to the initial six months period would be in the nominal sum of one dollar, and monthly rentals would be paid thereafter at the rate of 1/16 of the total cost of the equipment as paid by the Corporation plus interest at the rate of six percent per year. The hire-purchase agreement was also to provide for deferment of payments during periods when the equipment was idle due to shut-down of operations and for the Co-op. to be given a clear bill of sale covering the equipment when the full amount and interest were paid.

At that time, no contract with Federated Co-op. was still possible because of the price differentials. The government representatives of the four-man committee, in a letter to Mr. Reiffer of Federated Co-op. expressed that for a safe working margin, the Wabasca Co-op. should

receive \$17. per m., but in order to arrange a settlement as amicable as possible, they were willing to compromise with \$16. per m. (see breakdown below) and that, should Federated Co-op. not find that acceptable, they would have no alternative but to recommend to the Premier and Minister of Lands and Forests, the cancellation of quota sale S8.

BREAKDOWN OF PRICE REQUESTED FOR LOGGING CONTRACT/m.

1.	Fall, limb, top and lop	\$ 2.50
2.	Choke and skid	6.50
3.	Bush camp or crew transport	1.10
4.	Bush supervision, record maintenance, time-keeper, scaler, etc.	1.00
5.	Loaded on trucks	2.00
6.	Building of secondary roads and landings	2.00
7.	Profit allowance	<u>.90</u>
	TOTAL	<u>\$16.00/m.</u>

Source: E. Schmidt "Wabasca Re: Contract with Federated Co-operatives,"

October 12, 1966, p.1.

It was not until the end of November that Federated Co-op. gave in to the Wabasca Co-op.'s price. However, item number 5 was deleted from the contract and, because of the late start, item number 6 was also deleted, resulting in a final price of \$12./m.

As a result of compounded problems, very little profit was realized over the winter operation. The economic development officer, Mr. S. Sinclair,⁸ reported that among other problems, was the lack of good supervisory personnel, mainly management, which the Board of Directors of the Co-op. was rushed into hiring. Added to this was the late start of the winter operation (October and November having been non-working months when no contract was reached) and the relatively deep snow that fell. In the area of training over the winter months, the Industrial Training Supervisor, in a letter dated January 17, 1967 to Mr. J. Fleming, Director of Alberta Commercial Branch, Department of Industry and Tourism, pointed out that his branch:

1. Hired Mr. R. Walter from November 4 to December 8, 1966 to work with the staff in drawing up a training curriculum and schedule for sawmill operations.
2. Co-operated financially in a five-day course on wheeled skidders. The course was held in Wabasca November 7 - 11 1966 and attended by twelve residents.
3. Offered to pay expenses for two persons to attend a lumber graders school. No one took up the offer.
4. Encouraged persons from the Co-op. to enrol in the heavy equipment operating and maintenance course offered at Fort McMurray. Three persons took part.

5. Sent representatives, on four occasions, to Wabasca to discuss ways they could assist in the operation of the Co-op. An industrial training contract was drawn up between the Co-op. and the Division of Vocational Education whereby financial assistance was to be provided to the Co-op. for instructors and trainees' wages. No invoices to date.
6. Made a course in basic first-aid and lectures from the Safety Division of the Workmen's Compensation Board available upon request from the Co-op. No request to date.

For the second winter operation, a new contract had to be drawn up. On August 9, 1967, four members of the Board of Directors of the Co-op., a representative from Cooperative Activities Branch, and the economic development officer met with representatives of Federated Co-op. to try and negotiate a price for the 1967-68 logging operations. Federated Co-op. offered \$13/m. for the same amount of work that it offered \$14. the previous year, which was rejected by Wabasca Co-op. Apart from the reduction of \$1. offered, the Board of Directors of the Wabasca Co-op. pointed out that the price of repairs and wages had increased, they were no longer eligible for vocational training allowances, which helped to keep wages down the previous year, and that very little profit was realized from the last winter's operation. Federated Co-op.'s contention was that \$13./m. was the price paid to all their other contractors

the previous year and was being accepted again. It was finally resolved when Federated Co-op. agreed to pay the same price as last year's (\$12./m.), leaving out requirements 5 and 6.

Problems within the Co-op. over the winter operation unfortunately did not end with the signing of the contract. In a letter from the administrator of Forest Management to the Director of Forestry, he pointed out that as of January 9, 1968, hardly a million of the contracted 9.3 million feet of timber to be harvested had been cut and, as one could not depend on suitable weather beyond March 15, there was little time left to honor the contract. Thus, unless an all-out effort was made, no one could blame Federated Co-op. for having some other contractor in to do the job. He also urged that a capable and experienced woodsman with ability be hired by the Wabasca Co-op. to get things done. In a similar letter from the coordinator of community development to the Minister of Industry and Development of January 24, 1968, he indicated that the Wabasca timber operation was in difficulty. Production was alarmingly low, morale was low, the Board of Directors was confused and ineffective, and the manager of the Co-op. was apparently incapable. The Co-op. though one and a half years old, was composed of relatively uneducated natives and was located away from easy communication channels. The manager, regardless of his paper qualifications, had been completely ineffectual in running the operation. While he did not have the kind of direction he should have received from the

Board of Directors, it was precisely part of his job to help train and give direction to the Board. He did not have the sense or good management to hire the necessary mechanics, partsmen etc. to keep the machines operating, he had not been able to stimulate or organize his workers productively and he had not been able to get financial statements to the Board nor keep them effectively informed on other matters. The coordinator saw the key to solving the Co-op.'s problems as being education - continual courses in co-op. organization and theory, along with sending the Board of Directors to the Co-op. College in Saskatoon.

On February 7, 1968, the manager of Wabasca Co-op. wrote to the Alberta Commercial Corporation requesting that the A.C.C. give strong consideration to the possibility of arranging funds with the Provincial Treasurer so as to allow the Wabasca Co-op. to bid on a forthcoming auction sale of timber in Management Unit S-11, Quotas Q-1 and Q-2. He felt that, since the arrangements made for logging contracts were based on short-term operations and negotiations, it had led to seasonal fluctuation of high and low interest and excitement period. Also, future operational contracts were always questionable. Thus, it was desirable to have a long-term stabilized industry with a long-term timber lease to settle the chaotic rise and fall of operations and of personal interest and industry of the people.

At an executive meeting of the Wabasca Co-op. on April 17, three resolutions were passed. One was to have another accountant handle the

books of the Co-op. Another was to hold a general meeting on May 22 to elect a new Board of Directors and to reduce the number of Directors from nine to five. The last resolution was to give notice by letter to the manager of the Co-op. that unless he showed a vast improvement by May 20, the Wabasca Co-op. would have no alternative but to request his resignation at the general meeting. Soon afterwards, a loan agreement was reached between A.C.C. and Wabasca Co-op. whereby A.C.C. had agreed to loan the Co-op. \$30,000. to be used in acquiring timber quota certificates numbers S-11, Q-1 and Q-2, to be repaid within twenty years with seven percent simple interest per year. Also, on July 10, the Co-op. had the opportunity to obtain approximately five million board feet of fire-killed timber in the Slave Lake area at a cost of \$20,000. The Co-op. approached A.C.C. for a loan and was referred to a bank which indicated that it would make the loan to the Co-op., providing that A.C.C. guaranteed it. On August 20, the Deputy Minister of Industry and Development authorized A.C.C. to arrange a guarantee of the loan through the Royal Bank of Canada for \$20,000. to be used by the Co-op. to harvest the fire-killed timber and to make a direct loan of another \$20,000. to the Co-op. to be used to pay outstanding debts.

On October 29, 1968, as a result of past failures to reach a solution, a meeting was held between representatives of the Wabasca Co-op. and Federated Co-op. to come to some agreement in contract negotiations

for the 1968-69 logging operation. The manager of Federated Co-op. stated that their company was not prepared to pay anything over the competitive price of \$13./m. and that there were other contractors ready to move in and start work immediately. The manager of the Wabasca Co-op., on the other hand, expressed his view that the price offered was unrealistic and could not be accepted. According to his estimates, a price of \$15.80 would be more appropriate for the amount of work involved. On the same day, also, a letter was sent by a government representative of the 'watch-dog' committee to the Director of Forestry. In it he stated that Federated Co-op.'s offer of \$13./m. was too low for the well-being of the contractors and that other firms in the area were paying on the average around \$15./m. for the same kind of work under similar conditions. A representative of Federated Co-op. stated that because other contractors were willing to do the job at that price (\$13./m.), the price was therefore competitive and thus Federated Co-op. had fulfilled the terms under which the quotas were purchased. The 'watch-dog' committee, however, felt that the price was not 'fair' to contractors and would like to substitute the word 'competitive' for 'fair' in later sales of quotas where natives would be involved. He also pointed out that the previous year the mill net for lumber was \$60.07, while now it had increased to \$73.27 and yet none of the increase was reflected into the price of contracts.

At a meeting of November 4, 1968, the Directors of Wabasca

Co-op. passed the following resolution:

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried unanimously, it was resolved that the Wabasca Co-op. Association Ltd. and its management committee make representation to the provincial departments concerned to make every effort on behalf of the Wabasca community to arrange a fair contract price with Federated Co-operatives Ltd. for the 1968-69 contract.⁹

On November 6, 1968, the Premier of Alberta took upon himself the task of writing the manager of the Manufacturing Division of Federated Co-operatives Ltd. He requested, in light of the following two facts:

- (1) no other firms offering contracts to work of a similar nature, under similar conditions, for a price much less than \$15. per thousand board feet, which was \$2. more than Federated Co-op. was offering, and;
- (2) two years ago operating costs were lower and the price of lumber very much lower, yet the contract price remained the same - that the manager reconsider the price offered and advise whether he was prepared to accept a price of \$15. If not, was he prepared to have the matter referred to arbitration under the terms of the Arbitration Act?

On November 15, 1968, the manager replied to the Premier, pointing out the following:

1. Their other contractors, who would be logging three times the volume of trees on Management Unit S8, had agreed that

an equitable and fair price was \$13./m. and were prepared to do the work for that price.

2. The S8 area was the most attractive area from the point of view of cost of logging. Yet, Federated Co-op. was prepared to pay the same for that area as in the less favourable areas.
3. The contract offered to Wabasca Co-op. was at a rate competitive with the other established contractors in the area and one which was adequate to secure satisfactory revenue if prudent and efficient operations were maintained.

Under such circumstances, therefore, Federated Co-op. could not agree to pay more for the six million feet of timber to be logged by the Wabasca Co-op. and had to make a decision immediately as to who would get the contract as work had to progress immediately.

On November 28, 1968, the two government representatives on the 'watch-dog' committee wrote to the Premier, pointing out that \$13. offered by Federated Co-op. was not "the recognized cost for the same work done by the contracting industry and certainly not a fair nor competitive one when compared to the price being paid by other concerns in the same area." Thus, they felt that Federated Co-op. was not complying with the terms under which the government sold those quotas to them.

On December 11, 1968, a second letter was sent by the Premier to the Manager of Federated Co-op. to the effect that:

1. Over the previous two years, the cost of living, wages, and the cost of equipment had gone up.
2. The price of retail lumber had risen extremely.
3. The calculated costs for the contract work, as supplied by the industry, including Federated Co-op., for estimating timber appraisal was not below \$15.
4. The rate of \$15./m. for the contract was a fair, competitive, and realistic minimum rate.
5. To offer \$13. would result in taking advantage of the Wabasca people and would be a violation of the understanding on which the quota certificates numbers S8-Q3 and Q4 were sold to Federated Co-op.

Thus, the Government had to insist on the basic rate of \$15. and was willing to have the dispute arbitrated pursuant to the Arbitration Act.

On January 6, 1969, the manager of Forests Products for Federated Co-op. wrote to the Minister of Lands and Forests, pointing out that:

1. Federated Co-op. did not wish to arbitrate the question as it was made quite clear at the time of the sale of the quota certificates that Federated Co-op. would not be expected to pay the local residents more than they could secure the work done by another bonafide party.

2. They would be prepared in future years to advertise and accept tenders on a public basis (to solicit bids publicly).
3. The price had to remain at \$13./m. and would like to have the Wabasca people work immediately as a lot of time had already been lost.

By April of 1969, it was reported that the Federated Co-op. - Wabasca Co-op. problem was not resolved.

Despite the drawback, however, the Wabasca Co-op. was still functioning. It had a 'burnt timber' salvage operation in the burnt timber area it had bought, employing between twenty-five to thirty-five men steadily with a monthly payroll of \$8 - 10,000. It had also acquired its own timber berth in Management Units S11 and S12. Unfortunately, because of the severe deterioration of the timber, coupled with heavy rains, the salvage operation did not last for very long. The sawmill was moved north to Wabasca and a contract was taken with Federated Co-op. to cut 3.3 million board feet of timber six miles out of Wabasca during the summer of 1969.

Having obtained its own timber berth, the Wabasca Co-op. sought ways of best utilizing the resource. Mr. Reiffer, formerly with Federated Co-op., studied the matter in detail and submitted two sets of plans which he felt were workable. Plan One called for the building of an all-weather road from Wabasca to the centre of the quota in Unit S-11, while Plan Two called for the building of a permanent sawmill and planer

on the Wabasca highway. In terms of expected costs for both plans, he gave the following figures:¹⁰

Plan 1	Capital Costs	\$239,410.00
Plan 2	" "	132,910.00
Plan 1	Operating Costs	53.00 per m.
Plan 2	" "	53.00 per m.

Plan Two was accepted because of the lower costs involved and began to be implemented during the summer of 1969. A new manager, George Auger, a Metis, was elected by that time also. On September 20, it was reported that the total capital expenditure left required was \$65,410. and total operating expenditure \$22,000. Financial problems, however, arose as the Alberta Commercial Corporation was waiting for new legislation which would allow the Co-op. Branch of the government to handle loans. Recourse to banks for a loan was also impossible as the chartered banks were not being permitted by the Federal Government to lend funds.

In a fact-finding trip to Wabasca, during September 15 to 19, 1969, a Cooperative Development Officer reported that \$12,500. was urgently needed for transportation capital and that cash requirements to March 1970 would amount to \$199,208.

By March 1970, another Cooperative Development Officer went to

Wabasca for six weeks to look into the Wabasca Co-op. In a report, dated March 21, 1970, he noted that the Co-op. had no apparent control on spending or on repair costs and that there was no apparent effort to obtain the fullest production potential from employees. He therefore recommended, among other things, that:¹¹

1. The Co-op. staff be cut from 15 to 7 and to have work set out for them every day.
2. All equipment and buildings be moved to the permanent mill site soon.
3. There should only be one purchasing agent.
4. All machinery be repaired and put into shape for the coming winter.
5. The key people sit down to review past operations and plan for the future.
6. The books of the Co-op. be set up differently for the coming year.

A subsequent report dated April 8, 1970, indicated a cutback in staff. However, because of internal problems between some members of the Board and the manager, coupled with personal problems, the manager had confirmed his resignation effective April 30. A general meeting of the Co-op. was also to be held to fill four positions on the Board. At the general meeting, held on April 13, 1970 and attended by twenty-five of

the forty-three members, ten interested persons and a consultant, four new directors of the Board were elected. The position of manager was not filled. However, a few days afterwards, the old manager decided to stay on the job.

In his last available report, dated April 22, 1970, the Cooperative Development Officer reported that the Co-op. had not exercised any control in any phase of its operations. All concerned had failed to carry out recommendations of their Forest Consultant or of the Cooperative Development Branch. He felt that:

"the Co-op. has all the physical aspects to be successful. It owns an excellent timber berth, it has the required manpower, adequate equipment and roads, the millsite is on an all-weather road and the entire setup is geared for a year-round operation." ¹²

He recommended therefore that the government should: ¹³

1. appoint a controller, with broad terms of reference, for five years;
2. appoint a Forest Consultant for five years to draw up operating budgets and approve every contract;
3. provide qualified management for five years;
4. provide training for personnel whenever possible;
5. failing implementation of 1, 2, and 3, consider appointing an official director.

F. ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITIES

The Wabasca community development program offered the best possible scope whereby a community could become self-determining and not depend on welfare subsidies from the Government. With an adequate economic base and the availability of skills to make the physical aspects of industrial production possible, Wabasca could well have proved the utility of a community development program. As the events point out, however, the Wabasca program did not accomplish much of its objectives, largely because of the lack of a more co-ordinated effort on the part of the Government and the people of Wabasca.

Because of historic circumstances and the preferential treatment given to the Treaty Indians, there has always been the difficulty of getting the Indians and Metis to cooperate in matters affecting their lives. A community development program, to be effective, therefore, had to unite the two groups under a common goal. The first community development officer for the area realized this need and showed no preferential treatment to either the Treaty Indians or Metis. He sought their cooperation in community affairs and the Kee-Wee-Tin-Nak Association was formed specifically towards this end. The second community development officer for the area, however, personally felt that the Metis were being discriminated against and had always received the shorter end of the stick with regard to community affairs. Accordingly, he allowed his personal beliefs and

convictions to interfere with his role as a community development officer. The end result of such a course of action was to minimize any possibility of co-ordination and to create a greater friction between the two groups. A case in point was the friction that existed between the community development officer and the village-level worker who acted as liaison between the Government and the community. Because of the attitude of the community development officer towards the Indians, each time he attempted to call a meeting of the Kee-Wee-Tin-Nok Association, which was dominated by the Metis, the village-level worker would call a meeting of the logging co-op. on the same date and time. As matters now stand, the Treaty Indians are forming their own logging and milling operation separate from the one that has been in existence since 1965, which is a rather unfortunate act from the perspective of the total development of the community.

The Wabasca Logging Co-op. had, and continues to have, all the physical aspects of becoming successful. The fact that it has not yet obtained any measure of success would suggest that the mere provision of physical resources, without taking into consideration the educational necessities, does not in itself guarantee success. From its very inception, there was a distinct lack of knowledge on how to run such an important business venture, which was to forever keep the co-op. from having a successful operation. The Board of Directors little understood their

functions and the manager, who was most important to the running of the co-op., was unfit for the position. Despite the realization on the part of the Provincial Co-ordinator and others that an educational process was lacking, very little or nothing was ever done to familiarize the board of its functions and to assist the manager with his many problems. It is very unfortunate that the Government was willing to spend large sums of money to keep the Wabasca logging co-op. out of debt and functioning and yet would not provide the kinds of educational services without which, no operation can ever become profitable. It is this kind of insensitivity and organizational weakness on the part of the Government that has resulted in the failure of, not only the Wabasca program, but most of the programs previously discussed. If appropriate considerations were given to the particular situation and culture of the native people, community development could have gone a much further way than it did, in helping native communities to become self-sufficient.

The Wabasca demonstration attests very much to the Government's insensitivity. Demonstrations, by and large, result when a group of people, in their attempt to deal with some felt need, feel that their concerns are neither understood nor satisfactorily dealt with by the decision-makers. The people of Wabasca wanted very much to escape from the cyclical problems of poverty. Because of past experiences in dealing with outsiders, they had a genuine fear of promises and contracts. Thus, they felt that they

could only improve themselves if they controlled the resources and not be subservient to the dictates of any company whose only motive was the maximization of profits. The Government's action, or lack of action, need not be reiterated here, but it became quite evident that they were most insensitive to the genuine fears of the people and it was only after the natives felt reassured that the Government was deeply concerned and committed to their cause that any agreement could have been reached. On granting the ten-point concessions, the Government remarked that public demonstrations were not necessary to bring concerns to their attention. Yet, how often had their concerns not been given proper attention because of ills in the bureaucratic structure of the Government and their particular lack of good faith. The Wabasca demonstration could easily have been avoided, yes, had the Government shown much more understanding and willingness to become more involved in the affairs of natives.

Footnotes

- ¹M. Smith, "An Evaluation of Improvement District 128," (A Brief Submitted to J. Whitford), December 20, 1965, pp.9-11.
- ²Letter From S. Auger, Jr., to J. Whitford, February 26, 1964, p.1.
- ³J. Whitford, "Report on Trip to Wabasca - July 6 and 7, 1964," undated, p.2.
- ⁴Letter from the Hon. H. Ruste to the Wabasca Co-op. Association Ltd., June 27, 1966, p.2.
- ⁵"Band Council Resolution," dated July 18, 1966 and signed by the Chief and Five Councillors.
- ⁶E. Schmidt, "Memo. to File Re. Wabasca," July 22, 1966, p.1.
- ⁷Letter from H. Houle and S. Young to the Hon. Mr. Halmrast, September 25, 1966, pp.1-2.
- ⁸Memorandum from S. Sinclair to J. Whitford "Re: Progress Report," February 6, 1967, pp.1-2.
- ⁹Wabasca Co-op Association Ltd., "Certificate," November 8, 1968 (signed by the President and Secretary).
- ¹⁰S. Reiffer, "Proposal to Wabasca Logging Co-Operative for Developing Timber Holding S11 and S12," undated, pp.2-3.
- ¹¹G. Nordstrom, "Memo: Facy Finding Trip," March 21, 1970, p.5.
- ¹²Memorandum from R. Moore to R. Hiller, "Re: Wabasca Co-Operative Association Ltd.," April 22, 1970, p.1.
- ¹³Ibid. , p.1.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

A review of the community development activities suggests that the program was very much needed in the various communities. With the exception of Fort Chipewyan, implementation of the program coincided with other developments in the communities and one significant feature of the program, therefore, was to see that native people were not excluded from such developments. In this section, an attempt is made to observe the program from a macroscopic view, particularly the factors which proved advantageous and disadvantageous to its implementation in the various communities.

Administratively, it was a very wise decision, both in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, to place the community development program under a committee comprised of four Cabinet Ministers for purposes of policy-making rather than under a particular department. The effect of such a move was to draw on the resources of more than one department and to facilitate co-ordination among the departments at least at the executive level. In the implementation of the program, however, co-ordination at the field level presented a problem which affected community development

officers in the performance of their duties. Because of the nature of the program and the kinds of duties officers were required to perform, it was quite evident that the existing institutional arrangements governing the activities of most Government employees could not be applied to the community development officers. Working for the community as a whole, officers had to have flexible working patterns and be provided with special facilities that others were denied. The effect of such an arrangement was often to make other Government officers jealous and hostile towards the community development officers and resulted in very little co-ordination at the field level. Some felt that because community development officers had no specific or defined functions and seemed to be a part of everything that went on in a community, they were encroaching on their territory while others who could have helped in the development process shied away from any such attempts. It would seem that the role of a community development officer was never fully understood, partly through the community development officer's own fault, and therefore not fully appreciated by others who were accustomed to providing services to native people in a bureaucratic manner. One way of overcoming this problem would have been to form a council of agencies at the community level from the very beginning of the program, which would have facilitated an understanding and helping atmosphere amongst the various agencies.

A second observation is that most of the community development

officers and those responsible in Government for the program did not really understand the social life, relationships and particular culture of the communities they served. It was indicated at the beginning of the program that the community development officers were required, upon entering a community, to do a detailed study so as to be knowledgeable about the physical and human aspects of the community's life. Yet, apart from one or two of the officers, no one else seemed particularly worried about such information or at least they thought that they knew enough about natives without having to go through such a process. The importance of knowing and understanding the particular culture of the people one deals with should never be underestimated. To deal with them, therefore, in a manner consistent with the values of the larger society yet alien from their own culture can only lead to frustration and disappointment.

A third observation concerns the style of approach to native people in the community. A characteristic role of a community development officer when he first entered a community was to be instrumental in forming some social organization which would be cohesive and democratic. In western society, organizations are an acceptable and seemingly inherent form of social gathering. To assume, however, that such values can be readily transmitted and accepted by a different culture, is to be highly presumptuous. No one seemed particularly concerned about how to reach the natives other than through the formation of an organization, irregardless of how functional

it may be in a different social setting. An organization requires certain roles and responsibilities that its members must assume if it is to function. The democratic process is not an inherent birth-right but a value that one is socialized into accepting. To therefore expect that, by forming an organization, people would play their respective roles properly is to super-impose one value upon another. The history of the social organizations formed in the communities suggest that natives, not accustomed to assuming the roles required, could not function effectively and it was not uncommon to find associations run entirely by only a few people. Thus, while it may seem desirable as well as efficient to deal with natives through organizations, it is most imperative to start from the prevailing custom and work through an educational process before an organization could become functional. It is only through such an educational process that people can be brought to realize their roles and responsibilities.

A fourth observation concerns the relation of these communities to the Provincial Government. In dealing with the larger society, Government has set up institutions and procedures which are acceptable and operational. In dealing with native people, with a different cultural heritage, however, it becomes very necessary to modify the institutional arrangements to fit their needs. With respect to this, the community development experience in Alberta shows that the Government was very insensitive to native needs. It assumed that the same type of institutional arrangements could be transferred

to the native situation, particularly in the area of housing. For the larger society, housing loans are made available on the basis of the work experience of applicants, their income and ability to repay. To use similar requirements in granting housing loans to native people only served to benefit those who would in any case benefit and deny access to housing to those who needed it most. Historic circumstances, lack of skills, and the seasonal nature of scarce employment opportunities have resulted in many natives not being able to maintain steady employment nor save financially. The Government, by making funds available for a native housing development program, however, under the same arrangements as in the larger society, only excluded those whose needs were the greatest. This is not to suggest, on the other hand, that the Government should just give money away to the poorest to obtain houses, but rather that adequate attention should be given to those who need housing most. In other words, rather than denying them housing, it would perhaps be better to change the institutional requirements to suit their circumstances, and at the same time motivating them to assume the responsibilities and obligations of home ownership.

Another, fifth, significant observation is that the 'educational-motivational' process which describes the philosophy of community development in Alberta, has often been a mere 'cliche' and not really put into operational use. One can hardly describe the activities of many of the associations as being 'educational-motivational' in light of the self-determin-

ation objective. Of course it can be argued that any experience is educational, but an educational-motivational process suggests a process which educates and motivates a group of people into assuming responsibilities that would allow them to become self-determining. In the example of the organizations, people assumed responsibilities before any educational-motivational process began. Similarly with the Wabasca logging co-op., people were placed into positions without realizing the responsibilities they had. The fact that many associations were constantly plagued with the problems of poor attendance, lack of active participation and involvement and irresponsibility of roles would suggest that the educational-motivational process was gravely lacking and not understood.

The final observation is somewhat of an organizational nature. Inasmuch as the causes of poverty are many and inter-related, the solutions of poverty need to be many and inter-related. Yet, the Government of Alberta, in its attempt to deal with the general conditions facing natives, relied significantly on the community development program. It has often been stated, and with some accuracy too, that the Alberta Government, in buying the idea of a community development program, did not really realize the full implications of its decision. When it finally did, its reactions were to curtail such activities in the province. In any event, the history of community development activities in Alberta show that while community development was very instrumental in awakening native people to act in

matters affecting their lives, the Government was either too insensitive or unwilling to come up with the kinds of services and skills which would enable natives to break away from their traditional dependency on the Government. The Wabasca situation shows clearly that the granting of mere physical resources without a corresponding educational process resulted in the logging co-op.'s failure. The program in Hinton was unsuccessful, partially because of the lack of housing facilities. The Fort Chipewyan fishing co-op. could not survive without special regulations and adequate finance. The employment program in Fort McMurray was restricted because of the lack of urgent training facilities, and housing in Slave Lake was not feasible because of special regulations governing housing loans. Government should well realize by now that emphasis on any one solution of native problems, to the neglect of other factors, does not contribute very much to the process of development.

In this respect, it is pleasing to know, that with the establishment of the Human Resources Development Authority, of which the Community Development Branch is a part, the Government is moving ahead with plans for area development. Under this concept, communities facing socio-economic problems are grouped into areas. Each area is under the jurisdiction of a co-ordinator, who, with a team of professionals in related fields (e.g. community development, household economics, economics, agriculture, etc.) prepares, in consultation with the communities, a

comprehensive program of development. It is too early to decide how functional such a program really will be, but it at least seems to take into consideration many of the problems faced by the earlier community development program. It remains to see how sensitive and committed the Government is to serious developmental efforts in the various communities.

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APPENDIX F

REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR CHAPTER VIII

WABASCA

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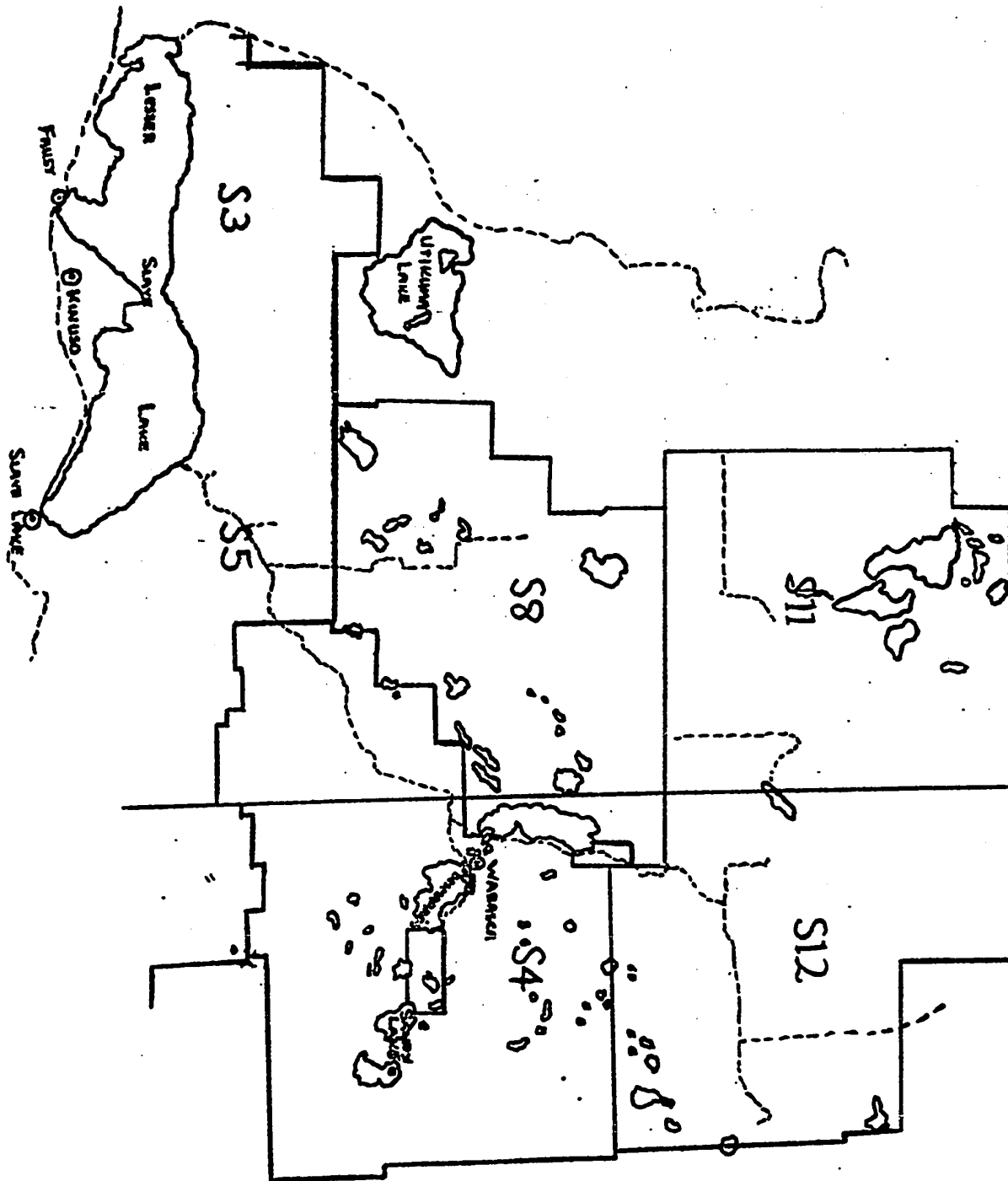
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MAP OF TIMBER MANAGEMENT UNITS

APPENDIX G

COPY OF LETTER FROM PREMIER ERNEST MANNING
TO THE RESIDENTS OF WABASCA

July 28th, 1966

To the Residents of Wabasca:

The Government of Alberta shares the deep concern of the Wabasca people regarding the social and economic conditions in their community. Stated below, as was agreed in the meeting of Wednesday, July 27th, are the actions which the Government of Alberta is prepared to undertake in co-operation with the Wabasca people in order to improve the social and economic conditions of the Wabasca area and in order to help the people of Wabasca become self-determining and self-sufficient citizens of the Province of Alberta:

1. The Government of Alberta will guarantee that the local residents of Wabasca will have the first right to contract at competitive price the harvesting of the timber in Management Unit S8, Quotas No. 3 and No. 4. After the sale of the quotas and before the quota certificates are issued, the quota holders shall meet the local residents and satisfactorily complete the above condition.

July 28th, 1966

2. The Government of Alberta will establish within two weeks a committee of four members, comprising one treaty Indian from Wabasca, one Metis from Wabasca, one representative to be named by the Department of Lands and Forests, and one representative to be named by the Executive Council, to insure that the above guarantee is carried out.
3. The Government of Alberta will establish a vocational training program for the Wabasca people, thereby providing them an opportunity to become skilled for employment in timber and other industries. Adequate allowances will be available to those individuals who take training courses.
4. The Government of Alberta will assist the people of Wabasca in the financing and selection of equipment adequate for the operation of a logging business.
5. The Government of Alberta will make available a loan to the Wabasca Co-operative Association Ltd. sufficient to provide six months of working capital for a logging operation.
6. The Government of Alberta will expand the adult education program in the Wabasca Community.
7. The Government of Alberta will co-operate with the native people of the Wabasca area in the acquisition of land and the development of a housing program for residents living outside the boundaries of Indian reserve territory.

July 28th, 1966

8. The Government of Alberta will examine the present system of welfare payments in the Wabasca community to make certain that the people of the Wabasca community receive fair and just treatment, equal to that of all residents in the Province of Alberta.
9. The Community Development Branch of the Government of Alberta is prepared to hire one Wabasca resident as a village-level worker to act as a liaison person between the Wabasca people and government officials.
10. The Government of Alberta will send representatives to the Wabasca community during the first week of August, 1966 to work out, in co-operation with the Wabasca leaders, details for the implementation of the above proposals.

The Government of Alberta has stated, at many meetings with the Wabasca people, its willingness to help in the long-term social and economic development of the Wabasca community. The government wishes the residents of Wabasca to clearly understand that public demonstrations, which so often create misunderstandings and bitter feelings among friends, are not necessary in order to bring their concerns to the government leaders in Alberta.

July 28th, 1966

The Government of Alberta always has met with Wabasca leaders whenever they have requested meetings in the past, and the Government of Alberta again declares its willingness to meet in the future with the leaders of Wabasca whenever they wish to discuss issues concerning the development of their people and their community.

Yours very truly,

signed

(Ernest Manning)

Premier.