

**Catalysts of Change: The Company of Young Canadians
and its Involvement with Indigenous Peoples in Western Canada, 1964-1974**

by
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Abstract

Several programs initiated during the 1960s were intended to address poverty in Canada through community development and mobilizing youth; some of these were federal, some provincial and some were private/locally designed programs. The Company of Young Canadians (CYC) was one of these. It was designed to engage youth in addressing issues of inequality and poverty through community development.

In this thesis I argue that out of the work of the CYC, Indigenous leaders emerged to become catalysts of change, and in addition, the CYC became the vehicle for these youthful volunteers to promote Indigenous rights and identity. The thesis will also examine the CYC and its relationship with Indigenous Peoples in Western Canada, specifically in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories. In the many CYC projects, relationships and interactions did occur with Indigenous organizations, such as the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA), the National Indian Council (NIC), the Metis Association of Alberta (MAA) and the Canadian Indian Youth Council (CIYC). These will be discussed.

In Alberta, Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the CYC soon became embroiled in a host of causes and controversies, starting with a 1966 march on the Legislature of Alberta of 250 Cree from Wabasca-Desmarais and a small group of CYC members demanding timber rights. There was strong political and settler community backlash from and criticism of the work of the CYC in Alberta. Premier Ernest Manning depicted CYC organizers, themselves Indigenous, as “exploiters” and “outsiders” trying to stir up discontent. With a focus on this incident, and others including the arrest and incarceration of CYC Indigenous volunteers at Canyon Creek, Alberta in 1969, my thesis will explore the impact and legacy of the CYC organization. In their roles as

“catalysts” of change, CYC workers drew attention to the poverty-stricken residents of Indigenous communities and this was not welcomed nor expected by political and legal authorities. Further to this, Alberta Indigenous communities and leaders saw the CYC as an opportunity to bring national attention to the adverse social and economic conditions they faced.

Histories of the Indigenous Peoples of Western Canada tend to concentrate on the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, and they generally cast Indigenous Peoples in secondary roles as the targets or recipients of government policies and the legal system. This thesis is groundbreaking in that its focus is on the 1960s to early 1970s, and on an organization that included and was influenced by Indigenous individuals in initial training initiatives, as well as later, taking activist and leadership roles within CYC projects. There is a focus on the initiatives, driven by both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples, on specific examples of achievements of the CYC in its specific projects. Finally, the legacy of the CYC through its projects and through the volunteers with Indigenous Peoples in Western Canada will be summarized.

The major sources for this study are government documents, newspaper accounts, and most importantly, oral interviews from active participants of the CYC program, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous which provide a “lively” context to this study. The story of how events played out becomes more meaningful when it is heard from those who were actual participants of events. As Sharon Venne, Notokwew Muskwa Manitokan, advocate for Treaty Rights for Indigenous Peoples, stated: “oral history can bring an understanding of events by adding a rich texture to mainstream history.....It is not a weakness to recount materials from memory – it is how the materials are valued.” As several interviewees have indicated in this research, books have been written about us, but not once, have any of these authors come to ask us about our

experiences. The CYC experiences and experiences of others in similar service programs, will serve to enhance the knowledge amassed about the CYC in Western Canada, from its inception in 1965 and covering the period up to 1974.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Inez Lightning. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “The Company of Young Canadians and Indigenous Communities in Alberta, 1964-1976,” MS4_Pro00071182, March 14, 2022.

Dedication

I would like to honour Dr. John E. Foster for willing to take me on as a graduate student in 1995. At that time, my area of interest was in Indigenous oral history. The Delgamuukw legal case (1993) was on the table then. The British Columbia court of appeal rejected Justice McEachern's ruling that all of the plaintiffs' Aboriginal rights had been extinguished. The case *Delgamuukw v British Columbia* went back to the courts. The Supreme Court of Canada on December 11, 1997 affirmed the recognition of oral testimony from Indigenous Peoples in the determination and understanding of treaty rights. Unfortunately, Dr. Foster passed away in 1996. We did not get the opportunity to define the parameters of this research.

Ironically, I did try to begin graduate studies in the area of Indigenous agricultural history. I had been reassigned an advisor, Dr. Paul Voisey, who tried to interest me and get me moving on this thesis. I tried to pursue graduate studies in this area, but my heart was not in it. I had no idea that Dr. Sarah Carter had recently published *Lost Harvests* (1990) then. She was an assistant professor of history at the University of Calgary. More profound and odd at the time, was the fact that I was researching a Canadian Museums project about the agricultural history at Hobbema (today known as Maskwacis). This research culminated in an exhibit at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton which ran from November 20, 1998 to March 24, 1999. Had the kind of advanced technology we have now, been available then in terms of reaching across cyber space, I might have been connected to the scholarship of Dr. Sarah Carter.

I had been intrigued with the prospect of researching more about Indigenous oral history, particularly for Nehiyawak (Cree). The magic of working with Dr. John Foster had disappeared into thin air when he was called back to the Creator. He had already been known for his interest in looking at the fur trade history in new and imaginable ways. He had hoped to find new lines of inquiry especially across disciplines, and he had hoped to re-imagine the Canadian West.

It had been 20 years since his passing when Dr. Sarah Carter said yes to my desire to pick up graduate studies where I had left off. I am sure that Dr. Foster had a hand in allowing the powers that be in the Department of History and Classics and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Alberta for allowing me to re-enter the academy.

Acknowledgements

There are many people who have stayed the course with me, pushing and encouraging me to continue, even when it seemed like a faraway reach to accomplish this task of writing a thesis. First of all, I wish to acknowledge and thank Dr. Sarah Carter for agreeing to supervise my work. I have been in awe of her scholarship since I read, *Lost Harvests, Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*. Dr. Carter contested the views held then that Indigenous Peoples were unwilling and unable to adapt. New information was brought forward to show that the new Indigenous farmers faced the same problems as non-Indigenous farmers in areas of economic, legal, social and climatic concerns; however, government assistance to alleviate these problems was minimal. This is the history that I wanted to research and write about. Finding new information that showed that Indigenous Peoples were active and key players in their own development.

I was encouraged to become a graduate student of history by Professor Rani-Villem Palo, Augustana University College, now Augustana Campus, University of Alberta. A second academic supporter was Patricia A. Myers, M.A. Historian and Curator of the Royal Alberta Museum. Throughout my years of graduate studies at the University of Alberta, Department of History and Classics staff, Lydia Dugbazah (now retired), and Lia Watkin provided assistance with forms, deadlines, and opportunities for research positions. The fellowship of graduate students, the lecture luncheon series, led by Samantha Blais, and student led conferences, helped in formulating lines of inquiry with my thesis. Lastly, I would like to thank the various heads of the Department of History and Classics that supported me in my research and continued applications as a student within the Department, Dr. David Marples, Dr. Adam Kemezis, Dr. Margriet Haagsma, Dr. Ryan Dunch, and Dr. Heather Coleman. Thank you to the staff at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research who helped with Ethics Approvals, re-admission processes, and grants applications. I am appreciative of the following grants and awards: the Roger Soderstrom Scholarship, JR Schrumm Memorial History Prize, Beryl Steel Travel Award, Eleanor Luxton Historical Foundation Graduate Fellowship, Senator David Cameron Graduate Scholarship, and recently, the Indigenous Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarships (AGES).

I would like to thank the various archivists for assisting me throughout my research. Matthew Wolkow, Client Services, National Film Board (NFB); Gilles Bertrand, Suzanne Lemaire, Lynn Lafontaine, Marie Julie Hyppolite, and Emily Crowe, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Bev Bayzat, Library Assistant, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University (MUA); Raven Smyth, Reference Archivist, Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA). In the search for information, I connected with Coty Savard, Producer, NFB and Philip Lewis, NFB writer. A special thank you to William Langford for providing me with his Ph.D. dissertation back in 2017 and some words of advice. I am hugely indebted to Sara Komarnisky, Research Chair, Health and Community, Aurora College, and Adjunct Professor of Anthropology, University of Alberta, who provided technical expertise with the formatting of this thesis on her spare time, summer time.

I am especially thankful to all those who shared their experiences through the interviews. The energy and enthusiasm as they returned to those days of promise and intrigue with the CYC and other volunteer work came through in our conversations. I am happy to have made relationships with all of my interviewees an important aspect of the Indigenous research process. I would like to especially remember Al Burger, and Noel Starblanket, CYC volunteers, and Lillian Shirt, activist, for their contributions to this research and whom have since been called from this world, to continue their good works with our ancestors.

I am thankful for the many relatives and friends of Maskwacis who were supportive throughout, as well as the following financial contributors, Ermineskin Education Trust Fund, Ermineskin Cree Nation Post-Secondary program, and Ermineskin Cree Nation Administration.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband of 40 years, Rick, and all of my ten children for their support in my studies; Rory, Candice, Nicki, Koren, Danika, Danielle, Bobbi, Sonny and Dylan; our daughter Amber passed away at the start of my studies in 2016. To all of our children, including those we, my husband and I, have traditionally adopted, our grandchildren and great grandchildren, I hope this study inspires them to be larger than life “activists” like the Indigenous CYC volunteers in ensuring that our rights as the unique Indigenous Peoples that we are, will always be there. It is this cultural uniqueness (our songs, ceremonies, prayers) that provides the opportunity where we can all meet as human beings.

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List of Abbreviations

ASC – Alberta Service Corps
CD – Community Development
CESO – Canadian Executive Services Overseas
CFC – Challenge for Change
CIYC – Canadian Indian Youth Council
CYC – Company of Young Canadians
DIA – Department of Indian Affairs
FNMI – First Nations Metis and Inuit
HBC – Hudson’s Bay Company
HCV – Holiday Community Volunteers
HRDA – Human Resources Development Authority
IAA – Indian Association of Alberta
IFC – Indian Film Crew
MAA – Metis Association of Alberta
MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly
MNO – Metis Nation of Ontario
MVS – Mennonite Volunteer Service
NAITC – North American Indian Travelling College
NARP – Native Alliance for Red Power
NDP – New Democratic Party
NFB – National Film Board
NIB – National Indian Brotherhood
NIC – National Indian Council
NPDF – Native People’s Defense Fund
NWT – Northwest Territories
PAANE or PANE – Protest Alliance Against Native Extermination
PC – Paunch Corps
SCM – Student Christian Movement
SOS – Summer of Service
VISTA – Volunteers in Service to America

Introduction

Wilfred Pelletier¹ (his pen name) had this to say after his experiences with the National

Indian Youth Council and the Company of Young Canadians (CYC):

But if you go beyond race, beyond color, beyond class, beyond every kind of category, and you find that you belong to humanity.....if you go all the way with the search, it takes you beyond property, beyond lumber, fish, furs, metals, oil, beyond 'resource' industry, beyond commercial food production to where you find you belong to the land. And that's who you are. And when you are that, there is no foreign land.²

I read *No Foreign Land* to gain a better understanding of Peltier's worldview. He was an activist and had much to offer with his knowledge about Indigenous Peoples. Peltier was hired in Ottawa for the Indigenous component of the CYC in 1965, its very first year. According to Jeanette Corbiere Lavell³, he was instructed to hire other Indigenous Peoples. Peltier called upon those he had worked with in the Canadian Indian Youth Council (CIYC). Corbiere, Isaac Beaulieu (Sandy Lake, Manitoba), Duke Redbird (Toronto, Ontario) and Harold Cardinal, (Sturgeon Lake, Alberta) were all invited to interviews in Ottawa. The CYC administration hired them all as CYC staff. Corbiere was hired as a field liaison and began her work out of the Ottawa CYC office.⁴

I chose this quote to begin this thesis as it encapsulates the essence of what the CYC was about for those volunteers who embraced its aims and objectives, and for the Indigenous CYC volunteers, and Indigenous communities served by the CYC, seeking equality, as well as protection of their rights and identity as Indigenous Peoples. Peltier speaks of finding that place, where we all should strive to be; where there is oneness; and the distractions to reaching that place,

¹ Wilfred Peltier (his pen name was Wilfred Pelletier) was born at Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island, Ontario, October 16, 1927. He passed away July 2, 2000. He was director of the National Indian Council, a consultant on Indigenous issues, a story teller, an Elder, and as an author, was renowned for his book, co-authored with Ted Poole, *No Foreign Land, The Biography of a North American Indian*.

² Wilfred Pelletier and Ted Poole, *No Foreign Land, The Biography of a North American Indian*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), p. 209.

³ Jeanette Corbiere Lavell legally challenged the removal of her status as an Indian based on the Indian Act. She made the plea that she was discriminated against by gender at the Supreme Court of Canada, 1973. Her action was unsuccessful; however, it led the way for subsequent challenges. This section of the Indian Act was finally overturned in 1985. She also became a founding member and President of the Ontario Native Women's Association. For over 50 years, Corbiere Lavell has continued to advocate for Indigenous women's rights at the Organization of American States, the UN's Human Rights Committee, the Committee to end Sex Discrimination, and at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. She has had various staffing positions in the field of education. She is from Wikwemikong, Ontario.

⁴ Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, Interview by Inez Lightning, December 8, 2017. More information pertaining to the CIYC and individuals such as Redbird, Beaulieu, and Cardinal appear in the first chapter.

are no longer in the way. In this study of the CYC in relation to Indigenous Peoples and communities in western Canada, more of what Peltier alluded to, will be uncovered with an analysis of specific CYC projects.

The emergence of Indigenous leadership has become the core of this thesis. I argue that these young CYC Indigenous volunteers were inclined to become leaders before their work with the CYC and that the CYC itself became the vehicle for these individuals to pursue the promotion of Indigenous rights and identity. Some of these leaders came out of previous organizations such as the CIYC. Through the CYC, they would become “catalysts of change.”⁵ A second intriguing aspect of the CYC work on successful projects was the commitment of non-Indigenous volunteers to the aims and objectives of the CYC, which had been developed with input from Peltier, Corbiere, and Redbird.



Figure 1: CYC volunteers: Harold Harper, Jeanette Corbiere, Jeremy Ashton, Alona and Al Burger, photo provided by Eleanor Hyodo

The Unjust Society (1969), by Cree writer and political leader Harold Cardinal, is a scathing critique of the treatment of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples. Cardinal briefly mentioned, and was critical of the work of the CYC. He wrote that these young non-Indigenous people became

⁵ An Introduction to the CYC, 1966. David S. H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-8, 3. Library Archives Canada, hereafter, LAC.

“instant experts” on anything Indigenous and would not allow Indigenous Peoples to progress unless it was under their guiding hand. Although they were supposed to motivate people to use their own initiative, Cardinal saw them bumbling their way through Indigenous communities with little sensitivity to those they were helping; he believed that “these dedicated amateurs discouraged and weakened Indian organizations.”⁶ In my research with the CYC volunteers, there was never any indication of the kind of overbearing relationship Cardinal wrote about. For the most part, my research indicates that the CYC helped to foster a generation of Indigenous activists, leaders and intellectuals, and helped build alliances in some cases with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Overall, the CYC movement helped to bring light to the poverty and marginalization faced by Indigenous Peoples.

The CYC in Context

In the 1960s governments in Canada and internationally devised programs and legislation to make “war on poverty”. The idea behind the (CYC) began in 1965 and was formalized through an act of Parliament in 1966. The organizing committee of the CYC, in its 1965 report to Lester B. Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada, stated that inspiration was derived from the work of the American Peace Corps and other international volunteer associations dedicated to dismantling social and economic injustice. The CYC was designed to work on these issues within Canada however, rather than internationally.

In the preface to the CYC Trainee Application Booklet, the Governor General of Canada, Georges Vanier, stated that the CYC philosophy was that of “removing obstacles to human progress” such as “poverty, illiteracy, disease and frustrating social problems”.⁷ As part of their training at Crystal Cliffs, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, the prospective CYC youth volunteers learned about becoming community observers, how to diagnose community problems, strategy concerning community development and to stimulate community development.⁸ The CYC was to be a Canadian institution which would allow youth to engage in “voluntary service, seeking to share in the solution of difficult human and social problems, and in so doing, to open up

⁶ Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society, The Tragedy of Canada's Indians*, (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig Ltd., 1969), 105.

⁷ Company of Young Canadians, Trainee Booklet, January 1966, David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287, 78-7, LAC.

⁸ This was training provided by Dr. Connor who had a Masters and Doctorate in behavioural sciences from Cornell University. Michael Valpy, “Stress and Strength at Crystal Cliffs”, *CYC Report*, August 6, 1966. No first name was provided in the document for Dr. Connor.

opportunities for their own self-development” in this partnership with government.⁹ The CYC would also be allowed to have the “maximum amount of independence it required in its work.”¹⁰

The principles and aims of the CYC impacted the work undertaken by its volunteers on projects involving Indigenous Peoples. As First Nations reserves and Canada’s Indigenous Peoples had been identified early on in the life of the CYC as places where much of this war needed to be fought, Indigenous input was required. As part of their CYC volunteer training, information was shared about Indigenous cultures, including the teaching of some languages. Jeanette Corbiere, in a report to the CYC, proposed that a training course in learning Indigenous languages be taught. She stated: “it may profit our volunteers, if they understood, spoke or wrote an Indian language.”¹¹ Further to this, Corbiere added that what volunteers needed was “a basic awareness of people, a sense of unrestricted reasoning and judgement and perhaps most important, a genuine love of life and living and optimism.”¹² These traits she believed would allow the individual to mingle and become a part of the community, ultimately leading to work in ways that would produce definite results. Corbiere Lavell and Peltier shared similar thought processes in the matter of individuals becoming a part of a community.

The CYC work continued full force until 1969 when a parliamentary inquiry was initiated to investigate some of the accusations being made about the administrative aspect and governance of the CYC. The resulting aftermath was tightened fiscal and administrative control over the CYC. The volunteer aspect of the CYC governing body was removed and replaced with a government appointed council of nine members, “answerable to the government. If it did not do a good job, the government [w]ould disband it.”¹³ As far as CYC administrator and author, Ian Hamilton was concerned, the CYC, “children’s crusade” died in March, 1970, and what was left was the

⁹ A Report by the Organizing Committee of the Company of Young Canadians to the Prime Minister of Canada, David S. H. Macdonald fonds, R12287, 78-7, 2, LAC.

¹⁰ David McDonald, MP, notes, David S. H. Macdonald fonds, R12287, 78-8, LAC. Also appears in The Company of Young Canadians brochure, David S. H. Macdonald fonds, R12287, 78-8, CYC-General, LAC.

¹¹ Jeanette Corbiere and Wilfred Peltier, CYC Director of Indian Programs, had been consulted early on as advisers to the CYC on matters pertaining to Indigenous Peoples and communities. Peltier had been asked to provide input at the first training session on Indian values and culture. His knowledge was used in other training sessions as well. *Report Prepared by Jeanette Corbiere*, Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319, Vol. 3, CYC June 1966-Dec 1968, LAC. Memorandum for the Committee of the Council Re: Mrs. Sam Lavallee. Stewart Goodings, CYC Director, September 14, 1966, William Ready Division, McMaster University Archives, hereafter, MUA.

¹² Corbiere, “Report”, 3.

¹³ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade, The Story of the Company of Young Canadians*, (Toronto: Alger Press, 1970), 304.

volunteers who would continue to keep the crusade alive despite it being made into a government bureaucracy. This study will analyze the purposes and results of the CYC projects, as well as the legacy of the CYC for Indigenous Peoples during the years, 1965-1976 in Western Canada.

Although the CYC was short lived, and most of its activity spanned the years 1965-1969, it did linger until about 1976. What is important is that it was a vehicle used by Indigenous leaders to promote Indigenous rights, and bring awareness, and subsequent change to areas where Indigenous Peoples in Western Canada experienced poverty and marginalization.

The certificate below shows the “pomp and ceremony” attributed to the executive positions with the CYC. Indeed, the prestige associated with this new program of the Canadian government comes through in this instance of celebration. Stan Daniels was appointed to the Provisional Council of the CYC in April of 1968. Daniels was a leader of the Metis Association of Alberta (MAA), and was instrumental in bringing awareness to poverty and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples in Alberta through his investigation of Fox Lake/Jean D’Or Prairie with John Samson, President of the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA). More will be said of this in Chapter 1.



Figure 2: Certificate presented to Stan Daniels, CYC Provisional Council Appointment, 1968

Historiography

This thesis draws on histories of the CYC program, Ian Hamilton's *The Children's Crusade, The Story of the Company of Young Canadians* (1970) and Margaret Daly's, *The Revolution Game, The Short, Unhappy Life of the Company of Young Canadians* (1970). These are not academic histories but they provide valuable background information on the CYC movement.¹⁴

Hamilton was the Director of Information for the CYC and he believed his book revealed the true story of the organization, minus the illusions and rumours. It is a critical account, covering only the first three years. Hamilton argued the volunteers were poorly trained, that the program was poorly planned and that not enough direction was provided to the volunteers in terms of what to expect once placed in the field. This book examines the bureaucracy of the CYC and how this caused problems from the start in the work that needed to be done. There were too many head office staff, in Hamilton's view, and they were paid better rates than the field staff and volunteers.

The *Children's Crusade* touches lightly on the field projects, but provides some information concerning the work at Faust, Alberta. Hamilton brings up other successful CYC projects located at Indigenous communities including at Oak River (Sioux Valley), Manitoba and at Indian Village (Dettah) near Yellowknife, NWT. He provides examples throughout the book of CYC volunteers who found their voices in asserting their rights. Ultimately however, he is profoundly critical of the CYC, finding that the government took control of the organization, to the point where those committed to its ideals had no say.

I agree with Hamilton, that the CYC bureaucracy caused problems from the start. It was a hastily conceived program, and as Hamilton suggests, it was poorly planned, in that there were no means of measuring the success of a project. Indeed, as time progressed and field work was undertaken, the CYC headquarters became more and more out of touch with the projects and was unable to provide the support the projects needed, as it was unaware that projects were meeting successful outcomes. Instead, as quickly as the program began, there were cuts to funding without fully evaluating the success of projects.

¹⁴ Hamilton, *The Children's Crusade*. Margaret Daly, *Revolution Game, The Short Unhappy Life of the Company of Young Canadians* (Toronto: New Press, 1970).

The one thing that was key however, was the fact that Indigenous CYC volunteers began to voice their concerns and demand change for Indigenous Peoples and they were supported by non-Indigenous volunteers, as well as other individuals, both organizational and public. I believe that the CYC training segments that were provided through Wilfred Pelletier, Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, Duke Redbird and Harold Cardinal assisted in providing that space for Indigenous CYC volunteers to emerge. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous volunteers, despite the fact that government began to take control, had been provided with community development concepts, as well as an Indigenous knowledge component, to complement the philosophy of CYC, and this is what carried them forward in project development. There was never any discussion found in my research that salary was a factor in their work. It was all about the ideals of the CYC in empowering communities. In interviewing some of those involved in the CYC movement, I was able to get in-depth perspectives related to the CYC projects, not found in Hamilton's book. The fostering of relationships with community members was prized, as well as encouraging "voice" for Indigenous Peoples in advancing their rights and establishing equality in the socioeconomic fabric of their communities.

The Revolution Game by journalist Margaret Daly draws on a variety of sources including interviews with CYC staff, though this too, is not an academic book. Her book pays more attention to the project work including at Faust, which, she wrote, was "identified publicly as a disaster for the very reasons that made it at least a partial success" around Lesser Slave Lake, and was one of the CYC's most successful projects. Daly is less critical than Hamilton of the achievements of the CYC, arguing that the work of many of the volunteers justified the public expense of the program. Daly also visited some of the successful projects that related to Indigenous communities. She hoped readers would come to judge the CYC not by the problems associated with its bureaucracy but rather by the efforts of the CYC volunteers in the field. Daly argues that the CYC was devoted to showing disadvantaged people how to organize, to take power over their own lives which would lead them to the exercise of political power.

Daly writes about how Jeremy Ashton and Al Burger (to be introduced in Chapter 2) were run out of the town of Faust, only to be recalled once the Metis and Indigenous Peoples voiced their disapproval of that CYC decision. This was a clear example of how the Indigenous Peoples discovered their voice. I would also argue that this project was not just a partial success, but a

major success due to the fact that the Faust CYC project became the base for a host of projects in and around Lesser Slave Lake, known as the Lesser Slave Lake Development program of the CYC.

Daly brings up many of the CYC projects across Canada which involved Indigenous Peoples; the ones which are covered in my thesis include, Oak River, the Winnipeg Project, Lesser Slave Lake, and the NFB/IFC; these are the ones which were most successful and as Daly concludes, had everything to do with the CYC volunteers, and less to do with the bureaucracy. Much of my knowledge of the specific CYC projects comes from interviewing volunteers who were there; by doing so, I believe I have accrued a deeper knowledge of the intricacies of each project, and the impact of this work upon the CYC volunteers. The intent of my thesis is not to impart judgement upon the CYC, but to demonstrate that this program was one in which Indigenous CYC volunteers emerged to become leaders in the promotion of change and Indigenous rights at that time, and well into the future.

Articles on the history of the CYC include the work of Kevin Brushett who focusses mostly on the eastern Canadian provinces. In “Making Shit Disturbers: The Selection and Training of the Company of Young Canadian Volunteers 1965-1970,” Brushett described the training at Crystal Cliffs, Antigonish, Nova Scotia as a disaster from the start as the organization was not prepared to train the chosen young volunteers.¹⁵ Brushett focussed more on the negative aspects of the CYC rather than any positive outcomes. There is very little content in his articles concerning Indigenous CYC volunteers or projects involving Indigenous Peoples, although he does mention that some work was done in 1973 with Cree people affected by the James Bay hydroelectric projects. Brushett focuses on the Quebec political situation involving the CYC; little information concerning the CYC movement outside of eastern Canada appears.

Brushett argued the CYC training was poorly planned and put together all too quickly. Mixed messages were conveyed to the volunteers; they were to be both “shit disturbers” and community builders. An interesting statement by Brushett was that it was difficult to make shit disturbers of

¹⁵ Kevin Brushett, Making Shit Disturbers: The Selection and Training of the Company of Young Canadian Volunteers, 1965-1970,” in *The Sixties in Canada: A Turbulent and Creative Decade*, ed. M. Athena Palaeologu (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009)

the volunteers, as “many of them simply did not have their shit together.”¹⁶ Once placed in the field, the volunteers had oversimplified stereotypes of work expected of them, little in the way of negotiating skills, and a lack of maturity in handling tense situations. Despite these obstacles, many believed in the aims and principles of the CYC and remained attracted to its work. This article is useful to my thesis as volunteers from and assigned to projects in the West, took the training at Crystal Cliffs.

Another article by Brushett, “Federally Financed Felquistes’: the Company of Young Canadians and the Prelude to the October Crisis”, focuses on the radical separatists in the CYC, particularly in Quebec. He argues that Prime Ministers Lester B. Pearson and later, Pierre Elliot Trudeau were complacent in allowing the CYC to continue its operations despite indications of poor fiscal and administrative management, as well as rumours that radicals were coopting this organization for revolutionary ends which culminated in the FLQ crisis of October 1970.

Brushett’s article meant to demonstrate that senior management in the CYC and the federal government were well aware of the potential for the events that occurred in October 1970. He further states that there was a lack of political will to address these issues. Finally, Brushett argues that the CYC did not wish to overreact to its radical members, but instead sought to maintain the CYC as an option for young Quebecers to release their “radical” ideas. Brushett provides valuable context for understanding how critics of the CYC seized on the negative press reports to discredit the organization.

The article, “Strange Bedfellows: Youth Activists, Government Sponsorship, and the Company of Young Canadians (CYC) 1965-1970,” by Carrie A. Dickenson and William J. Campbell,¹⁷ examines the changing relationships within the CYC where originally, youth activists were to have control, through a youth run permanent council, which would later become a federal government appointed council. This marked the end of the participatory nature of the

¹⁶ Kevin Brushett, “Federally Financed Felquistes’, The Company of Young Canadians and the Prelude to the October Crisis”, *Quebec Studies*, 55, (2013), p. 264.

¹⁷ Carrie A. Dickenson and William J. Campbell, “Strange Bedfellows: Youth Activists, Government Sponsorship, and the Company of Young Canadians (CYC) 1965-1970”, *European Journal of American Studies*, Vol 3, No 2 (2008), Special Issue, May 68, 3.

CYC. Further to this, volunteers were not allowed to carry private political convictions as this would reflect upon the Company.

As the CYC developed, so too did the problems associated with its bureaucracy, these authors found. Pressure and criticism about its projects took its toll, forcing the government to call for a parliamentary investigation and forcing a restructuring of the entire CYC. As the authors suggest: “despite the splintering and reorganization of the Company, the CYC is an inimitable entry in the annals of youth activism during the North American sixties.”¹⁸

This article examines the criticisms of the CYC that began to mount when some of its members became identified with anti-Vietnam war protests and separatist associations with Quebec leftist groups. Some members of the press were unwavering in pointing out the radicalization of CYC members. “The idealism of Canada’s youth, which provided the basis for the Company, began to come up against the restrictions of federal administrators.”¹⁹ This article provides valuable context for understanding the central administration of the CYC and the problems encountered that led to the demise of the program.

The most recent contribution to understanding the history of the CYC is William Langford’s book, *The Global Politics of Poverty in Canada, Development Programs and Democracy, 1964-1979*²⁰ He has four chapters on the CYC, with two focusing on Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta. Langford examines the relationship between poverty, democracy, and development in Canada within a larger global context, and insists that the most important effects of anti-poverty programs are to be found in lived activism rather than the institutional center. He begins by commenting on the poverty politics of the 1960s, which was about mobilizing the citizenry to actively take part in decisions which would affect them socially and economically. “Development was about ‘helping people help themselves’.”²¹

Chapter 1 is about community development around Lesser Slave Lake; CYC volunteers here were faced with “ongoing consequences of settler colonialism, entrenched racism and

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁰ William Langford, *The Global Politics of Poverty in Canada, Development Programs and Democracy, 1964-1979*, (Montreal: Mc Gill-Queen’s University Press, 2020).

²¹ Ibid., 16.

marginal economic existence.”²² Chapter 2 describes Metis and Cree poverty politics in the same region. Langford states that the “CYC volunteers included Indigenous activists and the company had connections to rising Indigenous mobilization.”²³ It did, and I would take it a step further by stating that many of these activists had already become activists prior to engaging with the CYC, as some had been involved with the CIYC. In Chapter 3, the Indian Film Crew (IFC) of the National Film Board (NFB) is discussed. The IFC is intriguing in that it also happened to be its own CYC project (the IFC members were funded by the CYC). Some members of the CYC become connected with Red Power (Indigenous activist group); however, the IFC end up becoming their own sort of “Indigenous mobilization” movement once they see the poverty and marginalization faced by northern Alberta Indigenous Peoples. Langford also contends the one thing that the CYC did was to “encourage[d] people to mobilize against unresponsive governments and exert a say in decisions affecting their own lives.”²⁴

Langford concludes by stating that CYC activity around Lesser Slave Lake in the form of community development was actually a means of integration. Attention was drawn at first to racial inequality and a distressed local economy, CYC projects began to restore the local economic base within capitalism. He states that “CYC supported a variety of self-help projects connected to a slow-moving reform movement for greater political and socio-economic democracy,”²⁵ but it neglected to address the inequality within community and externally in the contexts of politics, the economy, and the social environment. The CYC work, he believed, was idealistic and ambiguous.

In Joan Sangster’s 2017 presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association, she discusses aspects of settler colonialism and how the academy must reassess the roles that Indigenous Peoples had in historical events; they were very much active and in tune with what was transpiring around them. As part of her study, she looked at the CYC program and saw that for Indigenous CYC volunteers, the experience launched them towards future work as a “new

²² *Ibid.*, 20.

²³ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁴ William Langford, “Helping People Help Themselves’: Democracy, Development, and the Global Politics of Poverty in Canada, 1964-1979,” (PhD diss., Queen’s University, Canada, 2017), p. 387.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 392.

generation of Indigenous actors,” especially in challenging the paternalism of the Department of Indian Affairs.²⁶

Sangster describes the CYC as one example of settler initiated political alliances with Indigenous Peoples. While noting shortcomings and problems the CYC experienced, Sangster argues that the non-Indigenous volunteers and the Indigenous volunteers found some “common rapprochement” and she found that the emphasis in CYC training on “listening to communities, organizing upwards not downwards, letting Indigenous people define the problem, then working with them to deal with it” assisted to build bridges and alliances.²⁷ Sangster stressed that non-Indigenous volunteers learned about the “tenacity of Canadian racism” but also of the Indigenous Peoples’ long traditions of resilience and resistance to abet such. Sangster’s address reflects positively on Indigenous Peoples involvement with the CYC, although she does not go into detail regarding field projects. With the CYC projects, there was a commitment to hire local Indigenous volunteers which led to new forms of leadership. Sangster makes reference to George Manuel’s book, *Indigenous Fourth World* which speaks to the survival, self-determination, and the redistribution of economic and political power for Indigenous Peoples. Manuel suggests that accomplishment of all of these things would require recognition of “Indigenous presence and humanity”²⁸ through the genuine reconsideration of many peoples’ roles in North American society; very much reflective of what Peltier surmises in his philosophy of “no foreign land.”

Kelly Pineault in her thesis, “Shifting the Balance: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Activism in the Company of Young Canadians, 1966-1970,” looked at the intersection of “native and non-native” youth activists. Pineault saw this intersection of student activism and Indigenous activism as an opportunity to develop lasting social change by shifting the balance of power. She surmised that the CYC offered a site for networking the concept of pan-Indianism, which entertained the idea that there was a homogenous “tribal” structure across North American for Indigenous Peoples. My research indicates that the idea of pan-Indianism was something that CYC Indigenous volunteers did not agree with; they recognized their distinctiveness as tribes

²⁶ Joan Sangster, Presidential Address. “Confronting our Colonial Past: Reassessing Political Alliances over Canada’s Twentieth Century.” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, Vol 28, Number 1, 2017. URI <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1050894ar>., 32.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

and were adamant in opposing such views, but also encouraged awareness among the public of these distinctions. Pineault concludes her thesis by stating that Indigenous media projects, film, Indigenous newspapers, and radio, supported the protests, lobbying efforts, land claims battles, language reclamation, and education, in the strategy for social action.²⁹ She hoped to demonstrate that Indigenous CYC volunteers were activists and were just as participatory as non-Indigenous CYC volunteers, shattering the prevailing image of ‘youth activists’ as white and middle class only. Pineault did not interview any CYC volunteers as part of her research.

Interviews for this thesis provided rich and deep insight into the CYC projects. Hearing the experiences from individuals shed light on CYC events and projects which would not have been available in the written record. The energy and willingness of these youthful participants in the CYC, and their subsequent beliefs that carried them into the future come through eloquently in the oral histories. There were nine interviews from former CYC volunteers, and seven interviews from individuals associated with CYC projects or other service projects. Sharon Venne, Notokwew Muskwa Manitokan, advocate for Treaty Rights for Indigenous Peoples, stated: “oral history can bring an understanding of events by adding a rich texture to mainstream history.....it is not a weakness to recount materials from memory – it is how the materials are valued.”³⁰ Even though most of the events described in my thesis happened about 54 years ago, for many of those interviewed, there is still the same sense of excitement in their accounts as when they lived these experiences decades ago. I truly prize this aspect of this thesis; nothing compares to that sharing of knowledge, regarding the experiences of the CYC volunteers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, as well as those who were there in support of the CYC.

There have been many studies done regarding the use of oral history, oral narrative and oral interviews, and how these have been used has depended on the purposes of use. As an Indigenous person, Anishinaabe, I have a different understanding of oral history as it relates to our traditions and culture. Our world view is one of interconnectedness to all of Creation. What we do on one end of the spectrum must be balanced on the other end; this living in balance with the world is fundamental to all Indigenous Peoples. When we ask for something, it must be

²⁹ Kelly Pineault, “Shifting the Balance: Indigenous and non-Indigenous Activism in the Company of Young Canadians, 1966-1970”, (MA thesis, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, October 2011), 195.

³⁰ Sharon Venne, “A Critical Evaluation of Julie Cruikshank’s Approach to Oral Tradition and Oral History,” University of Alberta, unpublished paper, April 17, 2019, 2.

replaced with another thing. When I ask the interviewees to share of themselves, a gift is exchanged. This is how we do it in our Indigenous world. Further to this, I now have a commitment and responsibility to place their information in a truthful, honest and sincere manner within this thesis. Sharing of information is not taken lightly. In fact, through this sharing of information we have now created a lifelong relationship.

I spent some time looking at the myriad of ideas about “oral” ways of knowing to assist me in understanding the benefits of oral interviews for my research. I looked to Neal McLeod’s *Cree Narrative Memory* (2007), *Oral History on Trial, Recognizing Aboriginal Narratives in the Courts* (2011) by Bruce Granville Miller, and *Oral Tradition as History*, Jan Vansina, (1985), and other articles on oral history to guide me in what I was hoping to achieve in this aspect of the research. Initially, I had thought to use questions, and ask these hoping for matching answers. I found that this was not the easiest way for interviewees to express themselves. Instead, I allowed them to approach the topic of research, in whatever way their memory proceeded to come alive. In the end, they covered almost all of the areas that the prescribed questions had wanted to address.

As most of the interviews were conducted over the phone, I transcribed the conversations as we spoke. Once written out in full, I returned the transcript to the interviewees for them to confirm and make changes. The same process applied to those interviews I conducted in person. Finding people to interview can be described as a domino effect – I would interview one person, and then they would link me to another person, and so on. It was as though they were waiting for someone to ask them about their experiences. I even had one individual, Dorothy Henault of the NFB Challenge for Change program, who was not a part of my research topic tell me, “I have been written about in a book, but no one has actually come to ask me about my experience.”³¹ What Henault states is exactly the experience that happens when researchers do not engage in their projects at a human level. This is the importance of Indigenous ways of doing; if you are going to use someone’s information, it is best to ask them. It is important to have the interviewee review what has been taken from their shared memory and translated into written words to ensure that their lived experience is captured accurately. As I stated earlier in the Acknowledgements, in hearing the interviewees share their experiences, the energy and

³¹ Conversation with Dorothy Henault, Challenge for Change, May 2019.

enthusiasm as they returned to those days of promise and intrigue with the CYC came through wholeheartedly. The interviewees take you back in time and it is as if you are there with them experiencing what they felt and did. This is the part that is difficult to place on paper, although as a writer, I did try my best.

Outline of the thesis

The first chapter of this thesis deals with the formation of the CIYC, an important organization for Indigenous Peoples some of whom became volunteers with the CYC. The *raison d'être* of this organization was to become an “effective liaison between the Indian reserve and Canadian society”, and to become a place in which the Indian voice could be heard.³² It was a natural transition for those that did. A major influence on the development of the CYC regarding its work with Indigenous Peoples was a CIYC Report to the CYC, that identified the “most appropriate methods of recruiting Indian young people to act as volunteers in the Company of Young Canadians.”³³ The report identified such things as ensuring that recruits were not influenced by other organizations such as the Department of Indian Affairs. It recommended summer jobs for Indigenous CYC volunteers, to ensure those youth who were still in school remained in school, as opposed to the requirement to work with the CYC for two years. It urged that the testing used to select recruits be tailored for Indigenous society rather than using “Euro-English” standards. Recruits were to help protect Indian rights; but most importantly, “it was the Indians who must make the decisions, not the volunteers.....The volunteer may encourage it, facilitate it, but he must not make it.”³⁴ Decisions were to be left in the hands of the communities.

During these trying times, when the “war on poverty” was in full force, an initiative undertaken by the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA) and the Metis Association of Alberta (MAA) through John Samson and Stan Daniels as their respective presidents, was a fact-finding tour of Fox Lake/Jean D’Or Prairie, Alberta, October 27-29, 1966. This tour exposed the poor living conditions and high costs of living for the Nehiyaw (Cree) and Metis and this information was brought forward to both the provincial and federal governments. This would become a joint

³² Letter from Charles A. Lussier, Asst. Dep. Min. Office – Indian Affairs to Asst. Dep. Min. – Citizenship, Oct. 6, 1965, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, 1/24-2-36, pt. 1, LAC.

³³ “Canadian Indian Youth Council Report”, June 22, 1966, 1, MUA.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

project involving CIYC members and CYC. Other events which involved both CIYC and CYC Indigenous volunteers, were the Wabasca-Desmarais marches and protests concerning the lack of involvement in logging/sawmill operations for the Wabasca-Desmarais peoples. As these CYC initiatives played out, there were outcomes which were not anticipated nor welcomed by government policy makers. Indigenous experts were leading the way in terms of addressing the marginalization and poverty faced by Indigenous Peoples; they began to use tools, such as media and marches to bring their issues to light.

The first chapter also examines other volunteer service movements involving Alberta's Indigenous peoples during the 1960s, such as Summer of Service, the Mennonite Volunteer Service and Alberta Service Corps. These are compared and contrasted with the CYC projects. The longevity of some of the programs undertaken by these organizations was due to the commitment of the volunteers to the communities they served. This commitment led to the building of relationships, the emergence of Indigenous leadership and projects which addressed the needs of the communities.

The second chapter is an in-depth analysis of CYC projects which involved Indigenous Peoples and communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The marginalization and racism the CYC volunteers encountered will be examined, as well the impact of these on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous volunteers. There will also be a focus on the emergence of Indigenous leaders and the factors that precipitated this emergence. Some of the CYC projects were more successful than others; each project will be discussed to learn why. Although the majority of CYC projects lasted from 1966 to 1969, some projects continued in Alberta until 1976. The area where these projects had the greatest longevity was Lesser Slave Lake, where a CYC project had initially began in 1966 at Faust, Alberta, through the efforts of CYC volunteers, Al Burger and Jeremy Ashton. Economic and social inequalities needed to be addressed which required the admittance of racial discrimination experienced by the Metis and Nehiyaw members of this community from the non-Indigenous business owners. Of course, there was a reluctance to admit such discrimination and inequality. But the Faust CYC project proved long lived because here, as at other locations where CYC projects were successful, the volunteers were invited by Indigenous communities, and community members and volunteers put great effort into relationship building.

The third chapter will evaluate a unique development involving an all Indigenous component of the CYC, namely the National Film Board's (NFB) Indian Film Crew (IFC). The IFC found itself under the guidance of another NFB program, Challenge for Change (CFC), whose mandate was to film unscripted and undirected by NFB management. The IFC could film whatever they felt needed to be documented. The NFB/IFC signed a contract with the CYC to begin its work in northern Alberta Indigenous communities. This NFB CYC project generated considerable public attention in January, 1969 when members of the IFC were involved in an altercation at a local pub and were arrested. This altercation was fueled by the building discontent of some community members with the CYC volunteers' efforts in incorporating the CYC mandate to challenge the social and economic conditions in communities as well as address instances of inequality in its war on poverty. The overarching legacy of CYC projects in and around Lesser Slave Lake was the emergence of an Indigenous leadership determined to actively confront discrimination. Indigenous leaders were more vocal than ever in pursuing their rights to equality in the economy and social environment, while maintaining their uniqueness as Indigenous Peoples. This caused some anxiety among non-Indigenous community members, as well as within government circles.

The one thing that was key however, was the fact that Indigenous CYC volunteers began to voice their concerns and demand change for Indigenous Peoples and they were supported by non-Indigenous volunteers, as well as other individuals, both organizational and public. I believe that the CYC training segments that were provided through Wilfred Pelletier, Duke Redbird, Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, and Harold Cardinal, assisted in providing that space for Indigenous CYC volunteers to emerge. For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous volunteers, despite the fact that government began to take over control, they had been provided with community development concepts, as well as an Indigenous knowledge component, to compliment the philosophy of CYC, and this is what carried them forward in project development. There was never any discussion found in my research that salary was a factor in their work. It was all about the ideals of the CYC in empowering communities. In interviewing some of those involved in the CYC movement, I was able to get in-depth perspectives related to the CYC projects, not found in other studies. The fostering of relationships with community members was valued, as well as encouraging "voice" for Indigenous Peoples in advancing their rights and establishing equality in the socioeconomic fabric of their communities seemed to be the target.

What distinguishes my thesis from works previous studies, is that its focus is on CYC projects of Western Canada which had Indigenous volunteers as participants, and projects which involved Indigenous Peoples. Histories of Indigenous Peoples have tended to concentrate on the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, and generally cast Indigenous Peoples in secondary roles as the targets or recipients of government policies and the legal system. This thesis is groundbreaking in that its focus is the 1960s to early 1970s, and on an organization that included, and was to an extent led by Indigenous organizations and individuals. There is a focus on initiatives driven by Indigenous Peoples, on specific examples of achievements of the CYC, and its legacy with Indigenous Peoples in Western Canada. Articles and books on the history of the CYC have paid little attention to the work of this organization in Indigenous communities in Western Canada.

This thesis makes an original and significant contribution to our understanding of the activism of Indigenous youth, and the projects of the CYC in Western Canadian communities with substantial Indigenous populations. It adds important and fresh dimensions to understanding the youth challenge to the status quo of this era. It also sheds light on Canada's repression and suppression of the initiatives of these young activists. It analyzes partnerships with non-Indigenous CYC volunteers, and how these addressed the concerns of marginalization, poverty and the basic human rights of Indigenous Peoples. Lastly, my study is unique in the emphasis on the role of the CYC in shaping, equipping, inspiring and giving voice to a new generation of outspoken and dedicated activists who became prominent actors in Canadian history.

Chapter 1: The Canadian Indian Youth Council and the Company of Young Canadians: Vehicles of Voice and Opportunity for Indigenous Youth

The Canadian Indian Youth Council (CIYC) was a short lived, yet formidable force in the activism undertaken by young Indigenous Peoples, particularly in Western Canada. The CIYC was the springboard for further Indigenous activism, some of which involved the Company of Young Canadians (CYC). The CIYC was all about providing a space for Indigenous peoples, particularly the youth to voice their concerns. This same opportunity for voice would carry on through the CYC and become prominent at the close of the 1960s, when youth would be at the forefront in challenging the governments within Canada about Indigenous rights. These youth would become the writers, spokespersons, and creative artists promoting the voice of dignity and equality for Indigenous Peoples, while maintaining their identity as Indigenous Peoples. Overall, the Indigenous youth, such as Duke Redbird, Jeanette Corbiere, and Harold Cardinal, to name a few, had conviction; they believed that this was the time for change, and the organizations that were presented to them, such as the CIYC and CYC, were the vehicles of opportunity.³⁵

This chapter examines the formation of the CIYC and how it became involved with two Indigenous events in Alberta which had tie ins with the CYC. The first event, in the summer of 1966 was the protest, and subsequent marches undertaken by the Wabasca-Desmarais peoples regarding access to timber berths. The second was a shared project between the CIYC and the CYC which was designed to investigate socioeconomic conditions at Fox Lake/Jean D'Or Prairie which began in the fall of 1966. These two events resulted in new roles and responses from Indigenous communities and organizations. Government departments were forced to take notice and respond to these events. More importantly, it appeared that a specific relationship developed between the CIYC and CYC as some of the participants were involved with both organizations. With the CYC, Indigenous youth were given new tools to get their ideas/words to the forefront; they used the different media platforms, including film, as ways to reach a wider audience for the purposes of creating awareness about Indigenous issues, and for rallying support on these issues.

The 1960s was a time when youth were encouraged and willing to become involved in programs involving service to community. There were other “youth” or “activist” programs

³⁵ Duke Redbird and Jeanette Corbiere, along with Wilfred Peltier provided input to the CYC about expectations when engaging with Indigenous communities and peoples. These three individuals are mentioned in Chapter 1.

similar to the CIYC and CYC which had an impact on Indigenous communities. In exploring these programs and comparing these to both the CIYC and CYC, it will be shown how the success of these programs had much to do with being invited into the communities they served and making strong community connections.

Indigenous youth were confronted by “radical change throughout the world, in an age that saw the emergence of new nations in Africa, Asia and South America” in their aspirations for self-determination and autonomy.³⁶ Duke Redbird, an Ojibway from the Saugeen First Nation³⁷ and President of the Toronto Thunderbird Club, became chairman of the weeklong CIYC conference held from September 6-10, 1965, in Winnipeg. At that conference he stated, “we are here today to form a national body that will work to gain the human dignity and recognition and equality that are the birthright of every citizen born in Canada” and at the same time, “retain our identity as Indian people.”³⁸ CIYC objectives included: “training of leaders, how to become organized, development of relations between Indians and non-Indians, improving communication between all Indians (unity), and realization of this, as the Canadian Indians’ aspiration.”³⁹

Roots of a Movement

What were the roots of the establishment of the CIYC? This movement began in 1965 when the Community Development Branch of Manitoba sponsored young Canadian Indian College students to attend the American Indian workshops at Boulder, Colorado.⁴⁰ The intent of these workshops was to bring an awareness of their own history to these Indigenous students, and an understanding of the “legal, economic, and social forces which operate in Indian communities.”⁴¹

³⁶ “Young Indians Plan to Form Council”, *Indian Record*, October 1965, p. 16.

³⁷ “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Squash,” *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1970-04-18. Duke Redbird would become a well known poet, painter, broadcaster, filmmaker, orator, public speaker, and Indigenous intellectual. <https://dukeredbird.ca>

³⁸ Ibid. Also, Study of CYC Projects Involving CIYC, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN 1999-01431-6, Box 63. LAC.

³⁹ Study of CYC Projects Involving CIYC, and Report on Indian Organizations/CYC Projects, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN 1999-01431-6, Box 63. LAC.

⁴⁰ There is no clear definition here of what constitute’s “College students”, as such, all post-secondary programs including technical institutions of the time were included. As Tony Mandamin stated, he was registered with the University of Windsor when he was elected to the CIYC in 1965; he would switch to the University of Waterloo in 1967, after time he spent with the CIYC. Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017, Ottawa.

⁴¹ Charles A. Lussier, to Assistant Deputy Minister Department of Indian Affairs, Oct. 6, 1965, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN CYC 1999 014-31-6, Box 63. LAC

Some graduates of these workshops were Isaac Beaulieu, Manitoba; Marie Baker, Manitoba; Francis Keevaquedo [Kewaquadeo], Ontario; and Allen Jacob, Alberta, among others.⁴² Four of the Canadian graduates also attended the annual conference of the National Indian Youth Council of America. The purpose of attendance at these two American workshops was to prepare for the formation of a Canadian Indian Youth Council.⁴³

The follow up event to both the American Indian workshops and the annual conference of the National Indian Youth Council of America, was a seminar in Banff, Alberta called the Canadian Indian workshop organized by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews in 1965. There were approximately 54 Indigenous youth in attendance. As Leonard (Tony) Mandamin from Manitoulin Island recalled: “I was in Wiky (Wikwemikong, Ontario) and was just starting university. Tommy Peltier said I should apply and go to that. Expenses were paid. I applied and I was approved.”⁴⁴ He further recalled that on his train ride to Banff, he met Marie Baker, one of several people in the scenic car of the train. Duke Redbird, Wilfred Peltier, Francis Keewakido (Keevaquedo), and Allen Jacob were others he met in Banff. Of his group, he stated: “We were mostly young and full of energy.”⁴⁵

As part of this seminar, plans were set in place for a CIYC which was created to remove the paternalism experienced with the handling of “Indian affairs” by policy makers from centers miles away, and who had never stepped foot outside of their urban locales to go to the reserves or settlements impacted by their decisions. Allen Jacob, one of the seminar participants from Edmonton, stated the CIYC would address the negative ideas held by people about Indians; to

⁴² Ibid. Also, some of the participants would remain active in the communications and political fields, and in Indigenous projects, such as Isaac Beaulieu, who was the inspiration and voice in the animation clip, “Charlie Squash”, 1969, produced by Duke Redbird; and Allen Jacob, Treasurer and Executive Director, CIYC. Marie Baker was from the Little Saskatchewan First Nation but grew up in Winnipeg. She was a founding member of the Canadian Indian Youth Council. Another spelling of Francis Kewaquadeo appeared in the *Lightbulb*, Jan. 1968 issue, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6 Box 63. LAC.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017. Mandamin, called to the Bar in 1983 was a practising lawyer in the field of Indigenous law, representing First Nations, Indigenous organizations, and Treaty and Metis individuals. He was appointed to the Provincial court of Alberta as a judge in 1999. He was lead counsel in various significant Indigenous law cases. He was appointed to the Federal court in 2007. (Leonard S. Tony Mandamin: Our People - Witten LLP. <https://www.wittenlaw.com>)

⁴⁵ Ibid. Wilfred Peltier (pen name was Wilfred Pelletier) was born at Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island October 16, 1927. He passed away July 2, 2000. He was a consultant on Indigenous issues, a story teller, an Elder, and as an author, was renowned for his book, *No Foreign Land: the Biography of a North American Indian*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973).

remove the stereotypes about Indians, and consider new images of them as doctors, lawyers, and workers. “We want to be considered more as human beings with an Indian identity,” he stated.⁴⁶

Establishing and Organizing

An announcement had been made at the Banff seminar to meet in Winnipeg, September 6-10, 1965, to establish and organize the CIYC.⁴⁷ At this first official meeting, attended by 30 youth, officers were elected for the CIYC. Elected as President was Tony Mandamin. Duke Redbird of Toronto was elected vice-president, and Marie Baker from Brandon, Manitoba was elected as Secretary-Treasurer. In addition, 12 councillors were elected.⁴⁸ As Tony Mandamin recalled, the founding meeting was held at the St. Charles hotel, in a suite. He left the room to get refreshments and when he returned found out he was nominated for president. “I could not withdraw as they made a rule that no one could withdraw. I got elected President.”⁴⁹ After this election, Mandamin returned to his studies at the University of Windsor for the 1965/1966 terms.

The aims of the CIYC were to create “an effective liaison between the Indian reserve[s] and the Canadian society, and to provide a framework within which the voice of young Indians [could] be heard.”⁵⁰ This was another way in which Canada’s Indians were organizing to communicate with each other and to become “sensibilized to their [own] problems.”⁵¹ An office for the CIYC was set up in Ottawa. Allen Jacob, who had been elected treasurer of the CIYC, became executive director. The next year of CIYC activities included basic organizational development. A Canadian Indian Workshop was held during the summer of 1966 at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.⁵² Tony Mandamin, still President of the CIYC, who had attained a summer job with Ontario Hydro, at Rolphton, near Deep River, Ontario, took time off to attend this organizational meeting.⁵³

⁴⁶ “Indians Against Paternalism, Organizer Says”, *Globe and Mail*, 1 September 1965, 3.

⁴⁷ Study of CYC Projects Involving CIYC, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

⁴⁸ Charles A. Lussier, to Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Indian Affairs, Oct. 6, 1965, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

⁴⁹ Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017.

⁵⁰ Charles A. Lussier, to Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Indian Affairs, Oct. 6, 1965, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN 1999-01431-6 Box 63, LAC.

⁵¹ Study of CYC Projects Involving CIYC, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN 1999-01-143-6, Box 63, LAC.

⁵² *The Lightbulb*, January 1968 issue, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN 1999-01-143-6, Box 63, CYC, LAC.

⁵³ Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017.

The following week, the National Indian Council held a meeting in Calgary. The National Indian Council (NIC), precursor to the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), was a group formed of status and non-status Indians, and Metis, and had both urban and reserve representatives. Edward Lavallee, who was a CIYC member and worked with the NIC, stated that the NIC was an “outgrowth of the friendship centre movement.”⁵⁴ In 1965-66, its president was lawyer and member of the Saskatchewan Red Pheasant Cree Nation, Bill Wuttunee, and Wilfred Pelletier was hired as its executive director. Funding from the Secretary of State was used to maintain a national office.⁵⁵ The NIC had on its agenda proposals to deal with the newly developed “Indian nationalism (for lack of a better word)”, one of which, was geared towards the development of an international Congress of Indians whose aim was to promote the recognition of Indigenous Peoples at the international level.⁵⁶

The CIYC Board decided that the CIYC needed a representative at this NIC meeting and requested its President attend. Tony Mandamin called his employer, Ontario Hydro and asked for another week’s leave to attend the NIC meeting. Other CIYC representatives who attended were Jeanette Corbiere and Allen Jacob. Local Alberta Indian youth who were getting involved in the CIYC also attended this meeting, including Harold Cardinal, from the Sucker Creek reserve in Alberta.⁵⁷ In the fall of 1966, he became president of the CIYC. He also served as President of the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA) from 1968-1971.⁵⁸

One of the requests made at the NIC Calgary meeting was brought forward by Simon Beauregard, leader of the Wabasca-Desmarais Cooperative, and member of the Bigstone band. This request would generate further movement towards Bigstone band’s “self-determination and autonomy”. This cooperative, made up of Indians and Metis, operated a sawmill cutting local timber. The Social Credit government designated timber berths in their area

⁵⁴ Edward Lavallee was appointed to the Provisional Advisory Council of the CYC; announced on April 14, 1966. Edward Lavallee Interview by Murray Dobbin, November, 1976, Ottawa, Ontario. LB Pearson fonds, MG 26 M9 Vol. 39, LAC.

⁵⁵ Edward Lavallee Interview.

⁵⁶ Report by Duke Redbird to the CYC, 1966. Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319, Vol. 3, CYC June 1966-Dec. 1968, p. 4, LAC.

⁵⁷ Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017. Mention of Harold Cardinal as CIYC President appears in: “Fox Lake Pair Seek PM After Fruitless Laing Date”, *The Edmonton Journal*, November 15, 1966.

⁵⁸ Cardinal attended high school in Edmonton and furthered his education in sociology at Ottawa. He would become instrumental in the Indigenous battle against Prime Minister Trudeau’s White Paper of 1969. Laurie Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta, A History of Political Action*, (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 196.

for bids. The problem was that the cooperative did not have the financial capacity to outbid the larger companies, and so they organized a protest by marching on the legislature in Edmonton on July 27, 1966. In addition, the cooperative had asked Premier E. C. Manning to finance a sawmill in the amount of \$300,000; these requests had been met with a stalemate a week earlier.⁵⁹ The Bigstone Chief, Sammy Young, was not confident in bringing the government to task. As the cooperative did not have the support of Chief Young and his council at that time, the NIC was leery of backing the protestors. The CIYC saw this as an opportunity to follow through on their aims of organizing to achieve equality as Indigenous Peoples. “We, the Canadian Indian Youth Council members present, piped up that any time a local Native community was involved and calling for help, we should support them.”⁶⁰ It would become the first time that the “little brother of the NIC” would involve itself in a protest march.⁶¹ As young as the CIYC was, only ten months old, its members were able to see their connectivity to the larger national Indian organization, the NIC.

Simon Beauregard was introduced to Tony Mandamin, CIYC President, via phonecalls through the local Community Development Officer, Clive Linklater. Beauregard explained that the Alberta government was not listening to their arguments and asked for the support of the CIYC with their negotiations and to meet with them in Edmonton. It was at this point, that Mandamin realized he could not return to his work with Ontario Hydro due to this request. He called in to state he would not be returning to work.⁶²

On top of his duty as President of the CIYC, Mandamin was also requested by Phil Thompson, Dene Tha member (Alberta) who was running for president of the NIC in the upcoming elections, to also go to Edmonton as a representative of the NIC. Mandamin said Thompson “gave me forty dollars. I remember that airfare from Calgary to Edmonton was twenty-two dollars.”⁶³ The involvement of both the CIYC and NIC together on the issues facing Wabasca-Desmarais peoples was another means of improving communication between all

⁵⁹ Eaton Howitt, “Company of Young Canadians Members Involved in Demonstrations,” *Edmonton Journal* and “Manning Blasts Indian Exploiters,” *Calgary Herald*, 29 July 1966, 2.

⁶⁰ Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017.

⁶¹ “Organizers of Indian March May Lose Jobs,” *Lethbridge Herald*, July 30, 1966, 15.

⁶² Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Indigenous Peoples in achieving unity which had been one of the five main objectives of the CIYC. Mandamin would have a dual role in support of the Wabasca-Desmarais event.

Protest

The CIYC played a supporting role in the Wabasca-Desmarais protest. CIYC members on the march to the legislature included “Mandamin and Jeanette Corbiere both from Wikwemikong First Nation, Duke and John Redbird from Toronto, and Harold Cardinal from Sucker Creek First Nation, Alberta.”⁶⁴ Corbiere and Cardinal, drove to Edmonton to meet with Mandamin; Corbiere was also a member of the CYC, and in that capacity assisted with travel as she was able to rent a vehicle through CYC finances.⁶⁵ At this meeting of the three CIYC members and the Wabasca-Desmarais cooperative representatives, recommendations were made by the CIYC to “recruit support from the newspapers, CCF, labor organizations.”⁶⁶ Wabasca Chief Sammy Young was initially opposed to the march. When he decided to support the group, the cooperative group decided to go back to Wabasca and begin plans for another protest march, as the first march held a week prior did not produce the results that they had wanted. It was at this point, that the CIYC was asked to go to Wabasca-Desmarais and help in the organization of a new march.⁶⁷

As he was most familiar with the Alberta First Nations and organizations, Harold Cardinal took on a leadership role with the group. The CIYC group met with Indian Association of Alberta (IAA) leaders, Frank Cardinal and John Samson in Hobbema.⁶⁸ Upon explaining the request made by the Wabasca-Desmarais Cooperative, the IAA encouraged the CIYC group in their endeavour.⁶⁹ The CIYC group started north, stopping at Sucker Creek and Faust, with a stop for photos, somewhere on the shores of Lesser Slave Lake, before arriving at Wabasca-Desmarais.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Clive Linklater family records, private collection, undated. Karen Linklater, daughter of Clive Linklater provided this document.

⁶⁵ Tony Mandamin, Interview, June 24, 2017. Jeanette Corbiere was also Secretary to the CIYC in 1966.

⁶⁶ Ibid. CCF – Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was founded in 1932. It began as a political coalition of progressive, socialist, farm and labour groups. The Social Credit Party (distinct from the CCF) was led by Premier Ernest Manning. Francis, R. Douglas, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith, *Destinies: Canadian History Since Confederation*, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston of Canada Ltd., 1988), 262.

⁶⁷ Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017.

⁶⁸ Hobbema is now known as Maskwacis today.

⁶⁹ Tony Mandamin interview.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Once at Wabasca, a community meeting was held with the people and the cooperative. As Cree was the language spoken at the meeting, Harold Cardinal became the translator.⁷¹ According to Clive Linklater, community development officer for the Slave Lake region, “the people of Wabasca-Desmarais organized themselves and began to raise funds for the march. They prepared their case, wrote up a comprehensive brief of their position, and selected spokespersons.”⁷² CIYC members assisted by preparing information sheets, press releases, and “arranged for maximum publicity” while they maintained close contact with the communities.⁷³

Once there was full support from the Bigstone Chief and Council, the cooperative started on their second march, July 27, 1966. Chief Sammy Young had stated that “the timber [was] necessary if his people [were] to exist.”⁷⁴ A first march had taken place a week prior to this one with about 80 people from the reserve participating. At that time, they met with Minister of Public Works, F.C. Colborne, who told them the government could not give them timber cutting rights.⁷⁵ Approximately 240 people participated in the second march in Edmonton. Newspapers and labour groups were contacted and informed of the issue in order to garner their support.⁷⁶ In addition, students from the University of Alberta joined the march. It was also learned “that Indians from outside the Wabasca area and even from outside the province persuaded the group [CIYC participants] to march on the legislature.”⁷⁷ The march took place down Jasper Avenue to the old Federal building. The Regional Director General of Indian Affairs, R. D. (Ralph) Ragan came out and promised to support the march, that ended at the legislature.⁷⁸

Linklater elaborated by stating that this story was featured on the front pages of the Edmonton daily newspaper (the Edmonton Journal), on Alberta radio and television, as well as with the national media. Some articles referred to it as a “Native uprising.” In addition, non-Indigenous people, which included many in government, “were horrified by these ‘uppity Natives’ and some reacted by saying things like, “those damn Natives should learn to stay in

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Clive Linklater family records, private collection.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ “Indians Press Claim for Timber,” *Edmonton Journal*, July 27, 1966, 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Tony Mandamin Interview, June 24, 2017.

⁷⁷ “Indians Press Claim for Timber,” *Edmonton Journal*, July 27, 1966, 1.

⁷⁸ Tony Mandamin Interview, June 24, 2017. R.D. Ragan was a Regional Director of the federal Department of Indian Affairs.

their place.”⁷⁹ Linklater surmised, “And what was their place?” as many faced unemployment, low paying jobs, incarceration, poor housing, health concerns which required hospitalization. Many of the Indigenous students were pushed into ‘special [education] classes’ in the provincial schools, a cash cow for these schools as more funding was required for students identified as requiring extra attention.⁸⁰

Contrary to media reports, Corbiere and Duke Redbird were not involved as volunteers of the CYC but were there as CIYC members. Further to this, they denied being called back to Ottawa to the CYC office due to their involvement in the march. Redbird had informed CYC headquarters that he had been in Edmonton on other business.⁸¹ Neither were there to exploit “the problems of native people for their own ends” as claimed by news reports.⁸² This information was taken from Premier Manning’s comments, who further added, that the CYC “should not be tarred just because a couple of hotheads acted on their own.”⁸³ He concluded by stating that Ottawa CYC headquarters had been informed of the actions of these CYC members; believing that they would be dealt with, the province planned no further action.

Premier Manning attempted to address the fact that a “major segment of the population was not reaping benefits” of the oil industry which had created a robust economy.⁸⁴ He tried to address social and economic inequalities in the north of Alberta through the establishment of the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) in 1967. A briefing on this program was prepared and became known as the White Paper. It should not be confused with the 1969 “White Paper” created by Prime Minister P.E. Trudeau which proposed the end of treaties, reserves and the Indian Act.⁸⁵ The HRDA program was designed to improve education and vocational training, and to encourage job opportunities and “individual capabilities” of the people of Alberta.⁸⁶ There was resistance to implementation of its principles as HRDA staff members were

⁷⁹ Clive Linklater family records, private collection.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Young Canadians Deny Ottawa Return Order,” *Globe and Mail*, July 29, 1966.

⁸² “Manning Blasts Indian Exploiters”, *Calgary Herald*, 29 July 1966, 2 and “Young Canadians Deny Ottawa Return Order”, *Globe and Mail*, 29 July 1966.

⁸³ “Manning Blasts Indian Exploiters”, *Calgary Herald*, 29 July, 1966, 2.

⁸⁴ Correspondence with Roy Lynn Piepenburg and Inez Lightning, Feb. 7, 2017.

⁸⁵ Laurie Meijer Drees, *The Indian Association of Alberta, A History of Political Action*, (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 196.

⁸⁶ J.E. Oberholtzer, Director, HRDA to Mr. Gary Harland, March 18, 1968. Provincial Archives of Alberta, PAA, (hereafter PAA), CYC collection.

seen as “young, university sociology graduates [who] tended to be suspect by long term government employees in different departments.”⁸⁷ Although not specifically mentioning Indigenous peoples of Alberta, the HRDA program was designed to address marginalization of peoples in the economy and education.

What the Premier failed to realize also was that CYC members at the Edmonton protest were operating as CIYC members and were “university students and therefore familiar with abstract ideas; they also had both verbal and literary discourse”⁸⁸ available to them and they had also taken the training offered through the American Indian workshops which provided them with the skills to bring their ideas to action; ideas which they willingly shared with the Wabasca-Desmarais people.

In addition to his leadership role with this CIYC group, Harold Cardinal became the spokesperson and interpreter for the Wabasca-Desmarais people, and achieved “prominence in the process.”⁸⁹ When asked what his profession was, Cardinal stated, “I talk to people.” Chief Young and his council had a brief prepared to present to government officials listing their demands.⁹⁰ The three page brief was read in both English and Cree. In the group meeting with the Premier, they chose to use their Cree interpreter, Cardinal, described mistakenly as being from Ottawa or Winnipeg, even though they had spoken only in English at the first meeting.⁹¹ The use of the Cree language, requiring Cardinal as a translator, was no doubt a tactic to make government officials uneasy.

In the end, it was the people of Wabasca-Desmarais who negotiated a settlement. President of the CIYC Mandamin denied that his group instigated the march. “We were asked to help. We do not interfere unless we are asked”, he said.”⁹² The outcome was that bids would take place, however, the government would require the winning company to hire the Wabasca-Desmarais Cooperative as the local sawmill.⁹³ Clive Linklater recalled:

⁸⁷ Ike Glick, Interview with Inez Lightning, June 19, 2017.

⁸⁸ Clive Linklater family records, private collection.

⁸⁹ Tony Mandamin Interview, June 24, 2017.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “Company of Young Canadians Members Involved in Demonstrations”, *Edmonton Journal*, July 27, 1966.

⁹² Interview with Tony Mandamin, June 24, 2017.

⁹³ Ibid.

As a result of their march, the people of Wabasca-Desmarais did receive some attention – even if it was minimal – and promises to deal with their problems. A semblance of a forest industry – mainly cutting trees and providing them to outside companies – was begun. Some houses were built and repaired and roads were repaired. But the major change that occurred was within the people of Wabasca-Desmarais themselves. They awakened themselves to the idea that they could and must speak and act on their own behalf.⁹⁴

The CIYC had accomplished one of its visions in their support of the Wabasca-Desmarais protest and marches, as the people of Wabasca-Desmarais had become sensibilized to their own problems, and learned how to press for their own needs.

Task Force Investigations

A significant event for the CIYC was its first annual Congress held October 7-10, 1966. It was reported that in its inaugural year, CIYC membership peaked at 100 members and many projects were underway. The “Canadian Indian workshop” was one of its first projects.⁹⁵ One of the items discussed at these workshops was how to invigorate and bring First Nations and Indigenous communities out of isolation, as it appeared at that time that there were few means of connecting with each other. A CYC summer project in Northwestern Ontario which involved 16 Indigenous youth, clearly identified this as a problem. The Indigenous youth recognized that there was a lack of communication between their communities, and with Canadian society.⁹⁶ The solution to this was through the introduction of a newsletter, *The Lightbulb* which would become an essential component of the proposed community radio project as well.⁹⁷

Due to the lack of any kind of coordinated communication, it was difficult to isolate and locate “the Indian Problem”.⁹⁸ CIYC members determined that the lack of autonomy and

⁹⁴ Clive Linklater family records, private collection.

⁹⁵ Study of CYC Projects Involving CIYC, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

⁹⁶ Report on Indian Organizations/CYC projects, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 1999-01431-6 Box 63, LAC.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Study of CYC Projects Involving CIYC, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

The term “the Indian Problem” is attributed to Duncan Campbell Scott, in 1920 when he wrote that the government should get rid of the Indian problem through assimilation “until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic...” J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 207. Of course, since that time Indigenous peoples of Canada have come up with their own definition of what constitutes the Indian problem, which has not a thing to do with complete assimilation, but rather the opposite, of protecting what makes Indigenous Peoples unique as Peoples.

freedom of Indigenous Peoples to run their own affairs was one of the main factors involved in “the Indian Problem”. The CIYC believed itself to be “capable of giving to the Indians a chance to realize all their potential and talents which would provide new leaders among Indians.”⁹⁹ Indigenous youth would be taught how to ask fundamental questions about their situation particularly, when engaging with non-Indigenous peoples for the first time in business, politics, and education. Prior to this, Indigenous Peoples were rarely asked for their input into any of the economic or political activities which involved them and their lands.

The Wabasca Desmarais march had been the first of the CIYC’s initiatives to accomplish these goals. In fact, out of the CIYC involvement in the Wabasca march, a task force was created in conjunction with the CYC, which subsequently was sent to Fox Lake/Jean D’Or Prairie, Indigenous settlements within the Fort Vermillion Agency of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.¹⁰⁰

This area, along with other Indigenous communities of northern Alberta, were being investigated by both federal and provincial officials due to reports of poverty and deprivation, described in some cases as “an emergency situation”.¹⁰¹ One example of such an investigation took place at Trout Lake, situated 85 miles north of Wabasca, in November of 1966. This meeting of Indigenous peoples and government was marked by “complete harmony” in contrast to similar discussions during the previous summer which had been preceded by the marches held by Wabasca-Desmarais Indigenous peoples.¹⁰² Investigative team members were Rufus Goodstriker, team lead, Ken Motherwell, Director of Social Assistance Programs, Stan Daniels, fieldworker, Native Federation of Alberta and other federal and provincial officials.¹⁰³

The findings of the team were very disturbing to the team leader, Rufus Goodstriker.¹⁰⁴ What he saw were exorbitant prices for food and no wild game as trap lines failed to yield animals.

⁹⁹ Study of CYC Projects Involving CIYC, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN 1999-014-31-6, Box 63, LAC.

¹⁰⁰ *The Lightbulb*, January 1968, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG 10 BAN 1999-014-31-6, Box 63, LAC.

¹⁰¹ Bob Bell, “Indian Hunger Will Be Probed”, *The Edmonton Journal*, Nov. 1, 1966.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* Also, Steve Riley, “Indian Group Calls ‘Emergency’ Talks”, *Edmonton Journal*, Nov. 28, 1966.

¹⁰⁴ Rufus Goodstriker was a Kainai political leader - chief, cowboy, RCMP constable, spiritual leader /elder.

The lack of food and education, inadequate housing, and joblessness brought him to tears.¹⁰⁵ Daniels had hoped to meet with R.D. Ragan, to let him know that the people of Trout Lake needed moral and financial support.¹⁰⁶ Long term solutions to address these needs were set out by the investigative team. They sought government loans for project development, adult education and vocational training, and possibly a relocation plan for those wishing to move out of the isolated communities.¹⁰⁷

The most famous investigation of the same year was made by Stan Daniels, fieldworker with the Alberta Native Federation,¹⁰⁸ and John Samson, President of the Indian Association of Alberta. Their investigation concerned the Cree community of Fox Lake. On October 24, 1966, the two men met with Ragan, who stated that he would fully support the investigation and had hired both men to find out the facts behind a report which had been given to Stan Daniels from a provincial community development officer, William Bull, who had visited the area. It had also been reported that many of the residents of the Cree reserve at Fox Lake had moved to the north bank of the Peace River, 25 miles upstream to Jean D'Or Prairie.¹⁰⁹ Bill Rees, superintendent of the Indian Agency at Fort Vermillion denied rumours that Fox Lake people were being forced to relocate to Jean D'Or Prairie; he did however state that, "it is no secret Indian Affairs would like to see the Fox Lake reserve abandoned, but they know this is not possible."¹¹⁰ Although Fox Lake was a more isolated community with only a winter road and light fly in availability for transportation, some residents preferred to stay there. Others chose to move to Jean D'Or where the land was more fertile and access was available to the Fort Smith highway. At that time, six new homes were planned for the next year, as well as a nursing station with six hospital beds. Roy Gilmore, Indian Affairs officer, stated that although conditions were far from good, "everything possible" under the existing system was being done to help the people.¹¹¹

Daniels and Samson were accompanied by Art Sorenson of the *Edmonton Journal* and they flew to Fox Lake at the expense of Indian Affairs. They met with Rees, and Gilmore, his

¹⁰⁵ "Indian Group Calls 'Emergency' Talks", *Edmonton Journal*, November 28, 1966.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Bob Bell, "Indian Hunger Will Be Probed", *Edmonton Journal*, Nov. 1, 1966.

¹⁰⁸ Stan Daniels became the President of the Metis Association of Alberta, 1967-71, 1972-75, and 1977-79.

¹⁰⁹ "Probe Called Into Hunger On Reserve", *Tribune News Services*, Oct 25, 1966.

¹¹⁰ "Indian Agency Superintendent: 'Everything Possible Being Done'", *Edmonton Journal*, October 31, 1966.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

assistant. Their investigation, which began on October 27 and ended on October 29, 1966, included visits to many homes, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) store, the nursing station and the Little Flower Mission.¹¹²

In their report they identified deplorable living conditions in the homes, and according to John Samson, these conditions were a "national disgrace."¹¹³ Food supplies were so inadequate to lead one "to believe that undernourishment would be almost universal."¹¹⁴ There was little in the way of leadership and organization, which led to the lack of direction faced by the community. The HBC store held financial control over the community. These two factors, of no clear leadership, and of having no one to contest the way the HBC treated Indigenous Peoples there, led the two investigators to conclude that these issues needed federal attention. They decided to bring their report personally to the Prime Minister of Canada, Lester B. Pearson. Daniels and Samson hitchhiked from Edmonton to Winnipeg and were able to take a train for the rest of the journey to Ottawa. They had with them two pounds of beef sausage to be given to the Prime Minister, to show the difference in prices that Fox Lake members paid for food as compared to people in Edmonton. The sausages were 78 cents in Edmonton, and \$2.98 in Fox Lake.¹¹⁵

Leaving Edmonton on November 7, Daniels and Samson arrived in Ottawa on Thursday, November 10, 1966. As Friday was Remembrance Day, their attempt to meet with the Prime Minister did not go as planned. They agreed to speak with Arthur Laing, Indian Affairs Minister on the following Monday, November 14. This did not transpire. Daniels and Samson wanted to include Harold Cardinal, newly elected as President of the Canadian Indian Youth Council and Janet Spence, secretary of the same organization, both residing in Ottawa.¹¹⁶ If Minister Laing was going to have his experts on hand, Daniels and Samson wanted theirs.¹¹⁷ Minister Laing did not agree to meet with them because they were accompanied "by two other

¹¹² "Report on Investigating Trip to Fox Lake and Jean D'Or", Stan Daniels & John Samson, October 27-29, 1966. Stan Daniels fonds, PR 1999.465, 264, Folder 2, PAA.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ "Sausage-Bearers Get On the Rails", *Edmonton Journal*, November 9, 1966.

¹¹⁶ Harold Cardinal succeeded Tony Mandamin as president of the CIYC, after being elected during the CIYC Congress held October 7-10, 1966.

¹¹⁷ "Fox Lake Pair Seek PM After Fruitless Laing Date", *Edmonton Journal*, November 15, 1966. See also, Susan Berry and Jack Brink, *Aboriginal Cultures in Alberta, Five Hundred Generations*, (Edmonton: Provincial Museum of Alberta, 2004), 73.

persons whose attendance at the meeting the Minister did not feel would be appropriate and he preferred not to include them in the meeting in the present context.”¹¹⁸

Minister Laing had a prepared statement which said, “it is not the responsibility of government to support, indefinitely persons living in uneconomic locations simply because they live there.”¹¹⁹ There was no thought whatsoever put towards the fact that these “persons” were living there because these were their homelands. Prior to industry, specifically the Rainbow Lake oil fields changing the environmental landscape, these “persons” had the ability to live off the land. Traplines had provided sustenance for the Cree and Metis here.¹²⁰

A second meeting was arranged with Minister Laing on Wednesday, November 16, 1966. In attendance with Daniels and Samson were Senator James Gladstone of Lethbridge and Frank Howard, NDP, Skeena, BC. ¹²¹ The story from Laing had not changed; he could not see the emergency in the situation at Fox Lake. Laing responded to the investigating report which had been provided to him at that meeting, by stating in a letter to Daniels and Samson, “I agree that conditions are unsatisfactory at Fox Lake, but I think I should point out that, while there is a great deal to be done, a beginning has been made during the past two years in helping to improve the living conditions.”¹²² He also mentioned that discussions were underway with the Alberta government regarding federal-provincial agreements for welfare and community development services.

It is unclear whether Daniels and Samson had this letter in hand the next day. However, the meeting results prompted Daniels to stay longer to meet with the committee on human rights and Indian Affairs on Tuesday, November 22, 1966. At the informal sittings of the Commons Indian Affairs Committee, Daniels made a further request that the committee study allegations made about the HBC hoarding food supplies and charging higher than average food costs. There were

¹¹⁸ November 14, 1966, Statement Release, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Stan Daniels fonds, PR 1999.465, 264, Folder 2, PAA.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Reference to oil field development is made in Minister Laing’s letter to Stan Daniels and John Samson, November 17, 1966. The only other concern regarding the ability to live at Fox Lake was made regarding depletion of trap lines which although no studies may have been done at the time, could have been attributed to intrusion by the oil industry.

¹²¹ “Laing Meets Delegation from Alberta”, *The Edmonton Journal*, November 16, 1966.

¹²² Letter from Minister Arthur Laing, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to Mr. Stan Daniels and Mr. John Samson, November 17, 1966. Stan Daniels fonds, PR 1999.465, 264, Folder 2, PAA.

also problems with mail delivery, which the HBC controlled for remote northern Alberta communities.¹²³

At this same meeting, Harold Cardinal pleaded with the committee to initiate an investigation of conditions on Indian reserves. He referenced a report provided to the government in 1964 which stated that “the Fox Lake situation should be considered a state of emergency.”¹²⁴ Nothing had been done since that time, and as Cardinal stated, only lip service had been paid. Subsistence money was not enough; there was enough arable land in that area for the Indians to grow wheat, oats, cereals, hay.¹²⁵ “We are not asking for welfare. We are asking for help to get specialized aid; help to fit into the various economic aspects of society,” he stated.¹²⁶ Both investigations were reported in the local news media throughout November of 1966 and may have been one of the factors that prompted the Alberta government into producing its White Paper about the Human Resources Development Authority program in 1967.¹²⁷

According to Harold Cardinal, the Chief of the Tall Cree reserve had requested a task force be sent to help with his reserve, as well as the reserves at Fox Lake, Trout Lake, and other reserves of the Fort Vermilion area.¹²⁸ The CYC “[had] approved a project of the Canadian Indian Youth Council to send four volunteers into the Fox Lake community of the Fort Vermillion Agency.”¹²⁹ Task force members were Phil Fontaine, Janet Spence, Duke and John Redbird.¹³⁰

¹²³ “Despair, Deprivation of Indians Described”, *Edmonton Journal*, (nd). Stan Daniels fonds, PR 1999.465, 264, Folder 2, PAA.

¹²⁴ Bob Cohen, “Ottawa Probe Urged on Fox Lake Prices”, *Southam News Services*, November 22, 1966.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ “Fox Lake: They May Get A Visit”, *The Edmonton Journal*, November 23, 1966.

¹²⁷ The Human Resources Development Authority’s programs were designed to address the education, vocational training, job opportunities and other capabilities of individuals in Alberta. J.E. Oberholtzer, Director, HRDA to Mr. Gary Harland, March 18, 1968. CYC fonds, PAA.

¹²⁸ J. W. Churchman, Dir. of Indian Affairs, to R.F. Battle, Asst. Dir. Indian Affairs, and to R.D. Ragan, Regional Dir. Indian Affairs Edmonton, January 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999 01431-61, Box 63, LAC.

¹²⁹ Indian Affairs Report, Feb. 1967, and Memo - Regional Director Indian Affairs Branch, Alberta to Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, Jan. 17, 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC. (for both)

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* and R. D. Ragan to J. W. Churchman, January 17, 1967. Also, J.W. Churchman to Alan Clark, CYC Director, March 9, 1967; and J.W. Churchman, to Alan Clark, CYC Director, May 16, 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, LAC, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6 Box 63, LAC.

Members of the CIYC, Harold Cardinal and David Isaac met with the Director of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), J. W. Churchman to discuss the work of the task force. The CIYC task force was under contract to the CYC which provided financial support. The purpose of the task force was to “work with the people of the area on a community development basis to help them determine their needs and to find ways and means of meeting those needs.”¹³¹ Further, they wanted to see what cooperation could be expected from the Department of Indian Affairs in this regard. On this point, J.W. Churchman advised this CIYC task force to contact several of the directors of Indian Affairs, namely Ragan, Edmonton and Rees, Fort Vermillion Agency to make their introductions and inform them of their work.¹³²

Churchman suggested to the CIYC task force that any complaints or requests for projects should be presented by the members of the reserve communities and not by the task force, and that these be forwarded to the agency superintendent or assistant superintendent. The role of the task force should be supportive, in Churchman’s view, rather than acting directly on behalf of the reserve peoples. He further stressed the need for good relations between agency staff and the task force. The task force had made some inquiries into the types of assistance available from the DIA regarding housing, welfare, grants and loans, and specifically, if any grants were available to fund organizations such as theirs. Churchman advised that a special grant had been made available to the National Indian Youth Council.¹³³

Churchman asked Ragan to provide the task force with information as required and that all opportunities for discussion with the task force members and community members, either together or separately, be accommodated for mutual understanding to occur between the CIYC task force and the DIA. More specifically, he advised Ragan, to cooperate with the CIYC task force in their work with helping Indigenous Peoples of the Vermillion Agency “to find ways and means to improve their situation”¹³⁴ which would assist the DIA in their “aims and objectives of having the Indian people assume more of the responsibility for administration of their own

¹³¹ J.W. Churchman, Dir. of Indian Affairs, to R. F. Battle, Asst. Dir. Indian Affairs, and to R.D. Ragan, Regional Dir. Indian Affairs Edmonton, January 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431- 6, Box 63, LAC.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ J.W. Churchman to R.D. Ragan, Jan. 20, 1967, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431- 6, Box 63, LAC.

affairs.”¹³⁵ Churchman stated he would look forward to any reports on the progress of this task force. In fact, in the February 1967 report of CYC projects involving the Indian Affairs branch, the comment was made that Churchman was closely following this project and had been in touch with the CIYC task force and the Regional Director.¹³⁶ It is interesting to note that at that time, the Department wanted to find ways to off load their responsibilities to ensure the wellbeing of First Nations; there was no mention of the Indian Act nor Treaties, which provided for the unique position of Treaty Indigenous peoples.

There were problems with CYC funding which caused hardship for CIYC task force members. Phil Fontaine and Janet Spence became stranded at Fox Lake. They had no funds and no transportation to take them back to Edmonton. Through the efforts of the Indian Affairs Regional office, Churchman was notified of the problem. He then tried to reach the CIYC office in Ottawa, as well as Stewart Goodings of the CYC office. As no immediate help was offered, Indian Affairs contacted one of its Community Development officers, Wilfred McDougall to drive out to Fox Lake.¹³⁷ He used a CYC van as well as CYC credit card for van expenses, and he bought meals for the two CIYC task force members which were to be reimbursed on McDougall’s expense account. Fontaine and Spence were taken to a motel in Edmonton.¹³⁸

Alan Clarke, Executive Director, CYC thanked the DIA for their assistance with CIYC/CYC at Fox Lake. He elaborated by stating that the CIYC task force members very much appreciated the assistance, and so too, did the CYC. In addition, CYC “staff person”, Duke Redbird was the first to inquire about assistance from Ragan. Clarke further stated, “this appears to be a fine example of the kind of cooperation which can exist between the Branch, the Company and the Canadian Indian Youth Council”.¹³⁹

Based on the exchange of correspondence, the Fox Lake project came to a close at the end of March, 1967. It is unclear if a report was made by the CIYC task force. Community Affairs drew

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Indian Affairs Report, Feb. 1967, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

¹³⁷ Wilfred McDougall was a well-known politician involved with the Indian Association of Alberta, rancher, statesman, elder of Kainai nation (Brocket, AB.)

¹³⁸ J.W. Churchman, Dir. Of Indian Affairs to Alan Clarke, Dir. CYC, Mar. 9, 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6 Box 63, LAC.

¹³⁹ Alan Clarke letter to Indian Affairs, March 15, 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

up a report to the Regional Directors of the DIA, based on the input of all DIA regional directors across Canada concerning CYC projects related to Indigenous Peoples. The section referencing Alberta projects stated that a second project planned for Fox Lake in 1967 was cancelled.¹⁴⁰

The Fox Lake/Jean D'Or Prairie investigative project appeared to be the only combined effort of both organizations. After this, each organization worked separately on their own projects.¹⁴¹ Harold Cardinal summarized the work of the CYC and CIYC in a report to the CYC. He stated that there was no established relationship between the CYC and the CIYC. He requested support from the CYC to the CIYC at both the national and local levels.¹⁴² As he saw that both organizations were working on parallel projects, Cardinal believed that the two organizations could realize the impacts of their respective activities towards Indigenous Peoples at the same time. Further, he believed that both organizations should cooperate and elaborate on their projects with Indigenous Peoples. Finally, it was recommended that it would have been beneficial for both organizations to implement more formal contact with each other.¹⁴³

The CIYC continued with work projects in 1967. At its annual congress that year, the CIYC policy committee concluded that it needed cultural and financial aid from Indigenous Peoples in other countries, therefore it voted to send delegates to the Inter-American Indian Congress. Duke Redbird, chairman of the committee, saw this as a means of improving communications with other Indigenous Peoples in the United States and Latin America. Redbird also saw this as a way to “embarrass the federal government into action” and to have it pay the \$10,000 membership fee which other governments of these other countries have paid.¹⁴⁴ Other initiatives discussed at this annual congress concerned provision of higher education to Indians through an Indian Institution at Rochdale College, in Toronto and through a mobile Indian college, the North American Indian Travelling College.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Community Affairs to Regional Directors of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

¹⁴¹ Study of CYC Projects involving CIYC, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ “Young Indians Look for Ties Outside Canada”, *The Globe and Mail*, Oct. 9, 1967. There is no further information on the Inter American Indian Congress.

¹⁴⁵ The North American Indian College was developed in 1968. This CYC project led by Mohawk traditional leader, Ernest Benedict was an alternative in education presented to Indigenous Peoples. It aimed to bring awareness of Indigenous history by travelling to Indigenous communities. It was also an information centre for non-Indigenous

The CIYC continued into a third year of existence in 1967. The next president of the CIYC was Art Manuel.¹⁴⁶ Not much more is heard about the CIYC after 1967. This may have been due to the emphasis Indigenous Peoples placed on the protection of Treaty and Indigenous rights when the federal government began its assault on these rights through the federal White Paper.¹⁴⁷

Relationships with Other Organizations

It is important to note that there were other youth, activist programs in western Canada during this same time period, including the Alberta Service Corps (ASC), Summer of Service (SOS), Mennonite Volunteer Service (VS), the Paunch Corps (PC), and Holiday Community Volunteers (HCV). There may have been other similar volunteer programs hoping to make a difference with Indigenous Peoples especially in rural areas, however, these were the ones that caught the attention of media and government. A brief mention only will be made of the Paunch Corps, and the Holiday Community Volunteers, as there are more records available about the Alberta Service Corps, Summer of Service, and the Mennonite Volunteer Service. These will be discussed and compared to the CIYC and CYC in terms of what was accomplished and if there were any overlapping goals and projects.

The Paunch Corps was devised by the Canadian Executive Services Overseas, (CESO) as its first Canadian project. CESO and the DIA wanted to collaborate on a business advice program offered to Indigenous Peoples, by having Canadian businessmen provide their knowledge in the areas of housing development, real estate and industry. As the program involved seasoned businessmen, it was quite the opposite to the Youth Corps of CESO.¹⁴⁸ There is no other information about whether this program was implemented. The program organizers may have realized that there were delicate intricacies and obstacles associated with the Indian Act and treaties, in working with Indigenous communities, particularly reserves, in terms of the establishment of business and industry.¹⁴⁹

audiences. *CYC Review*, October 1968. David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-9, CYC Genl Nov 1967 – Feb 1969, LAC.

¹⁴⁶ Tony Mandamin Interview, June 25, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ R. Douglas Francis, et al, *Destinies.*, 335.

¹⁴⁸ “The Paunch Corps”, *The Winnipeg Tribune*, November 6, 1969.

¹⁴⁹ The Indian Act was created in 1876 to implement the reserve system, one result of the Treaty negotiations. Indians did not have privileges of full citizenship (nor did they want this in the way the government sought to administer it). An Indian Department was created to administer the Act and to promote enfranchisement of

Holiday Community Volunteers was an organization established either in the summer of 1969 or 1970. This group was made up of young men and women based out of St. Albert High School. They were sent to work with Indigenous communities in Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba. It was a religious based organization led by Father Ubald Duchesneau of the St. Albert Parish and Catholic high school. Volunteers worked as counsellors in summer camps. They were to teach handicrafts, arrange games and sport activities, as well as teach catechism. During 1972, Faust was one community they worked in, and besides the regular program agenda, they also set up a teen drop-in centre.¹⁵⁰ Faust had been one of the first communities around Lesser Slave Lake where the CYC volunteered. It is unclear whether the Holiday Community Volunteer group was invited to Faust, as the CYC had been, or if they just showed up. There is no evidence either that this group consulted with the Indigenous Peoples in terms of what they wanted for programming. Harold Cardinal, CIYC President stated, this was another organization that assumed it knew what Indigenous Peoples wanted, adding, “when we want advice we’ll ask for it but we are tired of free advice when we don’t need it.”¹⁵¹

Another program intended to assist communities was the Summer of Service (SOS), an interdenominational program which taught young people about citizenship and community life. This program began in 1964 and a pilot project was launched in 1965. This federal program had about 60-100 volunteers across Canada. Arlene Dion¹⁵², a prospective youth volunteer at that time, interested in this program, remembered the influence on her of the inauguration speech made by President John F. Kennedy on January 20, 1961. He implored people to ask not what their country could do for them, but what they could do for their country. “It made me think that our generation [could] do something and not expect the government to do things for us”.¹⁵³ She attributed the impetus for her volunteer work to the death of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. “It shocked us. Had this not happened, the world would have been different.”¹⁵⁴

Indigenous peoples. The Indian Act has been problematic since it was first established. R. Douglas Francis, et al, *Destinies*, 58-59.

¹⁵⁰ “Young Volunteers Work with Native People”, *St. Albert & Sturgeon Gazette*, July 19, 1972.

¹⁵¹ “Indians Don’t Have Problems, Whites Do”, *Edmonton Journal*, Oct. 2, 1967.

¹⁵² Arlene Dion came from Toronto, Ontario. She joined the Summer of Service Program. She was initially placed at Kehewin.

¹⁵³ Arlene Dion, Interview with Inez Lightning, January 12, 2018.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

In 1965, Dion's sister Linda MacDonald participated in the very first pilot project for SOS. She was about 18 or 19 years old. She was sent to the Cowessess reserve in Treaty Four, southern Saskatchewan. When she returned, "it seemed that she carried the heaviness of the world with her; in viewing the poverty, she became a different person."¹⁵⁵ Arlene Dion recalled that following her own experience with SOS, she returned with the same sense of weightiness.

For SOS, 1967 was the year of the main projects.¹⁵⁶ It had 102 volunteers working in 21 projects involving teens, children, and Indigenous Peoples. It was social action at work.¹⁵⁷ Dion recalled that since that was the Centennial year, she had wanted to do something for Canada's 100th birthday. This was why she joined the SOS.¹⁵⁸ She and two other volunteers were invited to Kehewin, in northern Alberta. As with the CYC, communities submitted requests to have SOS volunteers. At Kehewin, the local Catholic priest provided the housing for them in an old church rectory. The volunteers involved the youth in recreation, sports, and dances. Dion stated that a benefit for everyone was the sharing of culture. "The youth could ask us the most intimate questions. For example, they could ask us about what it was like to be white, or what it was like to live in a big city like Toronto."¹⁵⁹ These kinds of exchanges were made possible in the comfort of their own environment. Dion recalled that at that time, there was no running water nor electricity in Kehewin, which meant that there were many chores to be done. It made her wonder that if the youth were spending time with SOS volunteers, were they neglecting their duties at home.¹⁶⁰

The Associate Director of the CYC, Stewart Goodings had hoped that this program would cooperate and liaise with CYC. To Goodings, SOS was one good example of a short-term voluntary service which trained youth.¹⁶¹ SOS had the potential to partner with the CYC and as Goodings had remarked would have been a source of support to the CYC. However, it ended as quickly as it had arrived.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Alan Clarke Address to Rotary Club of Toronto, February 1968. David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78 CYC – Genl 78-9 Nov 1967 – Feb. 1969, LAC.

¹⁵⁸ Arlene Dion, Interview, January 12, 2018.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Letter to Sam Cormier, Citizenship Branch from Stewart Goodings, Associate Director, CYC. Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319, Vol. 3, CYC June 1966-Dec. 1968, LAC.

Dion surmised that SOS, came to an end because it was just that, a summer program. It was created as an initiative of the celebration of Canada turning 100; its Centennial celebration. She also thought that perhaps the churches could not afford to keep such a program going. And further to this, she stated, “any time a Liberal government was in place, there were many community projects. This was not so with Conservative governments.”¹⁶² Dion believes that SOS was a success for her at Kehewin, Alberta, as she and two other volunteers were invited back the next summer to continue with SOS work.

Another program that sought to assist communities was the Alberta Service Corps (ASC) established in January 1967 by the Social Credit government under Premier Ernest C. Manning. Its purpose was to meet the needs of economically and socially deprived communities and to provide an outlet for the idealism, energies and talents of university and technical school students in Alberta.¹⁶³ Most of its 60 volunteers were middle class university students selected from a pool of 300 applicants. They worked for four months in Indian or Metis communities providing classes to preschool students and some worked at institutions such as mental hospitals. The “volunteers” were provided room and board, a salary of \$1 per day and \$1000.00 at the end of the year.¹⁶⁴

Like the CYC, ASC workers could only go to communities if the communities requested this service. Few communities were aware of the availability of the ASC as it was poorly advertised. There were no direct requests made by communities as a result.¹⁶⁵

Consequently, Community Development officers (CDO) were asked to identify communities that required assistance, rather than have the ASC program terminated. Seven areas were identified. These were Alberta Hospital, Ponoka; Boyle Street area in Edmonton, and Kikino Metis colony. Clive Linklater, CDO put in a request for workers to both Slave Lake and Faust. Vocational counsellor, Eugene Courchene at Fort Mckay made a request for an ASC worker, and placement of workers at Fort Chipewyan was attributed to Ray Albert, CDO officer.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Arlene Dion, Interview, January 12, 2018.

¹⁶³ Donald C. Harper, Thomas E. Menmuir, Anne C. Coull, and Dr. Charles W. Hobart, *Alberta Service Corps: An Evaluative Study*, GOA, October 1967, 81.

¹⁶⁴ “Alberta Picks over CYC, rejects ‘disliked’ youths”, *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1969-11-27.

¹⁶⁵ Donald C. Harper, et al. *Alberta Service Corps.*, 14.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14 and 15.

It appears that both CYC and ASC began projects in Alberta around the same time. The first CYC volunteers to Alberta were sent in 1966. Alan Clarke, Executive Director of the CYC, had met with the Alberta Cabinet in 1967 as was noted by R. C. Clark, Minister of Youth. Clark stated that when the ASC was established, the CYC was consulted and informed about the intentions of the ASC. Since that time, the relationship between the two programs had been excellent according to Clarke who also remarked that the CYC lacked support for its volunteers in the field during the summer and fall of 1967. From this observation, it was suggested that a stronger collaboration needed to take place; it was thought that the ASC staff could administer and provide support if the CYC would consider contracting them.¹⁶⁷

Don Hamilton, United Church Minister and a Supervisor for the ASC had travelled to Ottawa in the fall of 1967 to visit with CYC leadership. Two goals were accomplished. These were to inform the CYC of the ASC projects and increase the communication between both, as well as explore the establishment of a contract between the two. It appears that somehow this negotiation of a contract was leaked to the *Calgary Herald* and was misinterpreted as a request by the government for a withdrawal of the CYC in Alberta. As a result, the CYC did not express an interest in signing onto a formal working agreement. The ASC would continue to work cooperatively with the CYC and keep the CYC informed of its activities.¹⁶⁸

Jurisdictional Decisions

A more elaborate discussion about the relationship between the Alberta government and the CYC occurred in a meeting held on February 5, 1968. In this meeting it was determined that the CYC, a federal initiative, had the authority to engage with any community in Alberta, through its legislative authority, but not necessarily with a municipality or the province. Alan Clarke, Director, and Jerry Gamble, Assistant Director of the CYC agreed that there had to be a closer relationship with the Human Resource Development Authority of Alberta (HRDA) which would strengthen the position of both the CYC and the province. It was also agreed “that if the letter of the law was carried out it will cause many problems, therefore, close liaison and co-operation is necessary.”¹⁶⁹ Neither the Alberta government nor the CYC were interested in finding out about

¹⁶⁷ Letter from R.C. Clark, Minister of Youth to Alan Clarke, Exec. Dir., CYC, Ottawa, Ontario, February 16, 1968. CYC fonds, PAA.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Memo to file, Raymond A. Speaker, Minister without Portfolio, March 4, 1968. CYC fonds. PAA

their legal relationship. They both chose to avoid testing the legislative authority regarding the CYC.

How would this relationship look? It was determined that a field level relationship should be constantly monitored. Minister of HRDA, J. E. Oberholtzer, and both Clarke and Gamble of the CYC would have a regular relationship. These meetings would include HRDA staff and staff from the Department of Youth, and the local Director of the CYC, Ben Baich, to meet as required.¹⁷⁰ Baich had been employed as Assistant Director at Alberta's Community Development Office and left to become a CYC staff member, January 15, 1967. He became the field consultant and supervisor for CYC in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the District of Mackenzie. He put together a team of eight volunteers and worked to improve the image of the CYC around Lesser Slave Lake.¹⁷¹ He publicly stated that he had a strong relationship with the director of HRDA, Minister Oberholtzer, as well as any government representatives and policy makers.¹⁷²

CYC volunteers around Lesser Slave Lake decided to firmly establish a relationship with the government through HRDA. The first CYC volunteer to enquire about the relationship was Gary Harland, Canyon Creek, who referred to himself as one of "Bennie's boys". This meant that he was one of the CYC volunteers under the supervision of Ben Baich, CYC Director. He asked for more information about the "Human Resources Council" to share with the people of Canyon Creek. He wanted to know what the Council was about, how it originated and its stated functions.¹⁷³ A reply was provided to him within days. Minister Oberholtzer stated that there was no brochure or written descriptions of the HRDA to send him, and further he stated, "our program is much like that of the CYC, it's a little hard to tie it down and define it closely."¹⁷⁴ He suggested that he could send a copy of the White Paper which provided the background to the establishment of the HRDA. Oberholtzer stated the programs would improve education, vocational training, job opportunities and individual capabilities of Albertans. He went on to

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ "One Lesson from Orthodoxy", Michael Valpy, *Globe & Mail*, Mar. 2, 1968. Letter from R. D. Ragan, Feb. 1967, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, 1/24-2-36 pt. 1, LAC.

¹⁷² "What is CYC Doin' in the Lesser Slave Lake Area", *Faust News*, Vol. 1 #8, February 1968.

¹⁷³ Letter from Gary Harland, Canyon Creek to Mr. Jack Oberholtzer, March 15, 1968. CYC fonds. PAA.

¹⁷⁴ J.E. Oberholtzer, Director, Human Resources Development Authority to Mr. Gary Harland, March 18, 1968. CYC fonds, PAA.

suggest to Harland that it would be a good idea to meet with Ben Baich and “all of his boys” to mesh through what HRDA and CYC could do together.¹⁷⁵

Harland replied to Minister Oberholtzer and stated that he had a copy of “Premier Manning’s White Paper” and admitted that it looked good on paper but was not sure how it would tie into the realities of the communities at Lesser Slave Lake. The fisheries had collapsed by the middle of the 1960s.¹⁷⁶ The closure of the fish hatchery at Canyon Creek spelled the demise of commercial fishing.¹⁷⁷ Without fish to feed the mink, the number of mink ranches decreased. This was also the result of falling prices for mink pelts. The rising population and limited work opportunities created a 30% unemployment rate; the negative balance to that was an increase in welfare payments and social assistance.¹⁷⁸

Harland shared Oberholtzer’s letter of March 18, 1968, with all those working on his project and they were excited about the possibility of speaking to the Minister regarding the White Paper. He asked for a date and time to meet and indicated that they could coordinate other details on their end. He also asked that copies of the White Paper be provided to the other volunteers. Addresses were provided for Peter Lloyd, High Prairie; Matt Hughes, Gift Lake; Willie Courtorielle, Atikameg; Drew McDonald, Grouard; and Rose Auger, Faust.¹⁷⁹ Pete Lloyd indicated he was looking forward to meeting the Minister, along with his fellow volunteers to go over what HRDA had to offer.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, Drew MacDonald of Grouard CYC was thankful upon receipt of his copy of the White Paper and looked forward to an opportunity to go over the plans of HRDA in his area.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, the community of Faust, specifically, the Faust Economic Development Committee met with provincial ministers involved in HRDA, including

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ G.R. Ash and L.R. Norton, *Lesser Slave Lake Study-Fisheries, Impact Assessment Final Report*. Prep. For Alta. Environment, Div. by R.L. & L. Envir. Serv. Ltd., Edmonton, 1979.

¹⁷⁷ “The Untold Tragedy of Lesser Slave Lake”, *Edmonton Journal*, Feb. 13, 1968.

¹⁷⁸ Paul Driben, *We Are Metis, The Ethnography of a Halfbreed Community in Northern Alberta*, (New York, AMS Press, 1985), p. 99.

¹⁷⁹ Mr. Gary Harland to Mr. J.E. Oberholtzer, March 31, 1968. CYC fonds, PAA. Note on this letter: all CYC volunteers were mailed copies of the White Paper.

¹⁸⁰ Pete Lloyd to Minister Oberholtzer, April 2, 1968. CYC fonds, PAA.

¹⁸¹ Drew MacDonald, CYC Grouard to Mr. Oberholtzer, April 29, 1968. CYC fonds, PAA.

the Premier in December of 1967. CYC volunteers Al Burger and Rose Auger were present at this meeting.¹⁸²

Regarding the relationship between the ASC and CYC, the Alberta government maintained its position well into the fall of 1968. The Minister of Youth for Alberta, C. L. Usher, believed that both programs had goals of assisting the less fortunate in Canada's society. He indicated at that time, that the ASC had developed significantly to that point and would be expanding in the future. They discussed proposals at a meeting during which, Minister Usher expressed his hope that the CYC would be able to assist with funding of collaborative projects, and also in the "contracting of projects that the C.Y.C. might normally become involved in by the Alberta Service Corps."¹⁸³ It was noted at this meeting that the "Company of Young Canadians was [is] autonomous"¹⁸⁴ and had its own agenda of working on projects without government interference, which included its funding. The only thing that was ensured, was the mutual agreement for close cooperation and communication between the two programs.¹⁸⁵

Volunteer Experiences

The ASC continued to attract volunteers and communities well into 1969. Arlene Dion, at that time, a young woman from Toronto, recalled some of the places where volunteers were sent. Tony Mercredi¹⁸⁶ and another young man were sent to a little town called Blue Ridge, somewhere in the Alberta foothills. Of his experience, Dion stated: "I am sure he had quite a different experience than us. He lived in an ice rink. They tucked you into the community somehow."¹⁸⁷ Another Indigenous participant was Mike Cardinal.¹⁸⁸ He would later marry Mary

¹⁸² "Faust Delegation to Meet Premier", *Faust News*, Vol. 1 #1, Nov. 20, 1967 and "Meeting with Premier, Date Set for Dec. 4", *Faust News*, Vol. 1 #2, Nov. 27, 1967.

¹⁸³ Memo from C.L. Usher, Deputy Minister of Youth to Hon. G. Pelletier, Secretary of State, Ottawa, ON, Sept. 25, 1968. Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319 Vol. 3 CYC June 1966-Dec 1968. LAC

¹⁸⁴ Memo to file from J. Rene Prefontaine to the Alberta Youth Department, Sept. 30, 1968. Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319 Vol 3 CYC June 1966-Dec 1968. LAC.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Tony Mercredi would become a chief for Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (1990 to 1995) and also a grand chief of Treaty 8 prior to 1990. In 1997, he ran as a Liberal candidate for Athabasca-Wabasca riding. "Former Grand Chief Seeks Liberal Nomination", *Alberta Sweetgrass*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, 1997, p.2.

¹⁸⁷ Arlene Dion, Interview, January 12, 2018.

¹⁸⁸ Mike Cardinal worked in the forestry and sawmill industries in northern Alberta before working in the Alberta government. He worked with the Alberta Housing Corporation, and then with Human Resources Development Authority. He then worked with Advanced Education and Manpower before entering politics. He would become an MLA as a Progressive Conservative.

Agnes Kurylo, a Ukrainian Canadian, who would become Arlene's best friend. Both Mary Agnes and Arlene were sent to Grande Cache as volunteers with the ASC.

The process of becoming a volunteer began with an interview which Arlene Dion attended in March of 1969. She then got accepted for training at Camp HeHoHa situated on Isle Lake, approximately 100km west of Edmonton. Upon completion, she was placed at Grande Cache along with Mary Agnes. She recalled that there were a lot of restrictions with the ASC and that "once we got into doing government stuff, there were all kinds of expectations."¹⁸⁹ Rigid report writing was a requirement. Dion recalled meeting the program director, Louise Million, which suggests that there was a strong communication link between the management of the ASC and its volunteers. ASC volunteers were told to expect "cultural shock" with projects involving Indigenous Peoples and in addition, were told to keep out of the politics.¹⁹⁰ This no doubt had to do with the marginalization and associated poverty experienced by northern Alberta's Indigenous communities.¹⁹¹ Of course, as government paid staff, they were deterred from raising any additional awareness about what they would see.

The kinds of work that the Alberta Service Corps was involved in were projects which had "well defined social needs" unlike the Community Development Branch which did work that was "potentially embarrassing to Alberta."¹⁹² No examples were provided of what was meant by embarrassing projects. Don Hamilton, a United Church minister and ASC founder was basically painting a negative picture of the CYC in Alberta in this article (somehow confusing it with the Community Development Branch, which had no authority over the CYC projects). Hamilton made reference to the Wabasca-Desmarais protest and marches which he believed damaged the reputation of the CYC. Hamilton was unaware that any of the CYC individuals involved in this event, were there as members of the CIYC. Hamilton further stated that the CYC had "sort of taken a pride in attacking institutions" in Alberta, which he believed deterred the two organizations from working together.¹⁹³ He may also have been referencing the events that transpired with the Indian Film Crew and their work in northern Alberta at Loon Lake (more to

¹⁸⁹ Arlene Dion, Interview, January 12, 2018.

¹⁹⁰ "Alberta Picks over CYC, Rejects 'Disliked Youths'", *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1969-11-27, 4.

¹⁹¹ Paul Driben, *We Are Metis, The Ethnography of a Halfbreed Community in Northern Alberta* (New York: AMS Press, 1985), 99.

¹⁹² "Alberta Picks Over CYC, Rejects 'disliked youths'", *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1969-11-27., 4.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

be said on this in Chapter 3). These events which Hamilton was alluding to were embarrassing only because for the first time, Indigenous Peoples were beginning to stand up for their rights, a desire to have equal share in the economy, and were using their voices through protests, marches, and media coverage to get what they needed.

Dion and Kurylo taught children in Indigenous communities by Muskeg River and Sheep Creek near Hinton, two hours away from Jasper. Jasper had been their community at one time, but they were displaced, or as Arlene stated, “They had gotten kicked out of Jasper.”¹⁹⁴ The children there did not go to school; from May to August, Arlene and Mary Agnes became their teachers. The displacement of Indigenous Peoples in what is now called Jasper Park began when it was created in 1907. The removal of Indigenous Peoples of their homelands was attributed to environmental and conservation concerns, although no notice was paid to mining, timber operations, railway and tourism as having impacts upon the lands there. Further to this, the CPR in its bid to attract tourism to its rail lines, offered a romantic notion of an empty wilderness, devoid of humans which was an utterly European concept. The CPR thus managed to convince Jasper Park officials to push the Indigenous Peoples off their lands.¹⁹⁵

Dion recalled that Grande Cache was just being built as a town. There were a lot of “yahoos” there and it was still very much the “wild west.” There were only gravel roads back then. The Alberta Service Corps had provided cars for them to get back and forth to their projects. One day in August, young guys decided to play chicken with Arlene and Mary Agnes. “They would raise dust after they passed us. They would slow down. Then we would have no choice but to try and pass them. After one of our attempts to pass them, we lost control on the loose gravel. We rolled six times. It wasn’t our fault.”¹⁹⁶ These boys that did this to them, had to help them out; to get them to the hospital. Mary Agnes was hurt badly. Her father pulled her from the program and that was the end of their project. Arlene was left with no job. She remained in the Hinton hospital for two weeks. She had chipped bones in her back. They did not try to press charges, as in those days nobody would have believed the young women. That was the end of their project. Arlene

¹⁹⁴ Arlene Dion, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, Edmonton, AB., January 12, 2018.

¹⁹⁵ Jason Waub-Addick Johnston, “Incorporating Indigenous Voices: The Struggle for Increased Representation in Jasper National Park”, 2018. Masters in Environmental Science, Kamloops, BC.

¹⁹⁶ Arlene Dion, Interview, January 12, 2018.

recalled of her experience with the ASC, “as individuals, we went off and affected other communities.”¹⁹⁷

She went to Kehewin to visit the Dion family after her project ended. She was told about a position at Blue Quill’s residential school. She was hired in August at Blue Quills and was fired by the priest in October; she did not like what she saw there. As a former ASC volunteer, she saw things and was opposed to what she saw in the institution of the residential school. She spoke up one too many times and lost her position at the residential school.

Many times, volunteers with service organizations were unaware of the overall political agendas associated with their programs. Hamilton, ASC executive was also the executive assistant to Premier Harry Strom. He believed that the CYC was still involved in “disturbing things” in northern Alberta.¹⁹⁸ Hamilton believed that Alberta needed to set goals and weed out any undesirable CYC volunteers.¹⁹⁹

This idea of weeding out undesirable CYC volunteers, came through in the evaluative study of the ASC completed in 1967. Hamilton was mentioned in the acknowledgements of this study for his availability to discuss “informal aspects of the program.”²⁰⁰ His opinion of the CYC comes through in the section on the reaction of communities to the ASC. This study stated that “the Faust community reacted skeptically to the local Alberta Service Corps workers. There was confusion and a negative carry over from experiences with C.Y.C. workers who arrived in Faust with similar ideas as Alberta Service Corps workers.”²⁰¹ This section concluded by stating that of the two ASC volunteers, the one male was at first regarded as being lazy but over time, he was seen as “an informal leader and a motivator.” The female volunteer had been seen as a “go getter” from the start.²⁰² No ASC projects in the northern communities took place beyond the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ “Alberta Picks over CYC, Rejects ‘disliked’ Youths”, *Winnipeg Tribune*, 1969-11-27.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Donald C. Harper, Thomas E. Menmuir, & Anne C. Coull, *Alberta Service Corps, An Evaluative Study*, Dept. of Youth, Government of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, October, 1967. Legislature Library Archives, Edmonton. An interesting note, Lillian Piche (Shirt) was acknowledged as the native interviewer in the northern centers for this study.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 43.

²⁰² Ibid., 43.

summer months. Therefore, as projects could only be short term, frustration would result when volunteers left the communities and this may have led to the program's downfall.

A third organization which did service work in Alberta was the VS or Mennonite Volunteer Service. It was an organization based out of the Mennonite community in the United States. It attracted mainly youth, fresh out of high school, although there were some older volunteers in their twenties, hoping to gain life experiences prior to entering secondary education or a career.²⁰³ This program had originally been set up during the Second World War. When young men were being drafted, this alternate service was developed and had been approved by the United States government as legitimate service for "conscientious objectors." It was an alternative to military service. Many young people saw it as an opportunity to make a difference.²⁰⁴ Ike and Millie Glick were sent to Calling Lake, Alberta from Pennsylvania on a two-year assignment. "Young and inexperienced, we knew little of what lay ahead of us, nor was community development a clear concept in our minds. We were on a service mission."²⁰⁵ They were VS volunteers from 1955 to 1967, a period of 15 years. Some of the projects they worked on were the development of health services and a health centre at Calling Lake, schools at Sandy and Chipewyan Lakes, and an innovative rail car school through the cooperation of Northern Alberta Railway and John W. Chalmers and the government of Alberta, Department of Education at Anzac.

About their work, the Glicks stated, "we simply did what we had to do to fit into the community. We were not there to besmirch or degrade their way of life. The people were self-reliant and no one owed them a living. They made the best with what they had and so did we."²⁰⁶ Over time, as the need for additional volunteers was discovered, Ike and Millie were asked to become area directors for the program. They coordinated personnel and programs for Sandy Lake, Chipewyan Lakes, Anzac, Imperial Mills, and Marlboro.

²⁰³ Ike Glick, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, Edmonton, Alberta, June 19, 2017.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. Also, Muriel Stanley Venne alluded to this concept of "draft dodgers" from the United States moving into Canada.

²⁰⁵ Ike Glick and Mildred Glick, *Risk and Adventure: Community Development in Northern Alberta (1955-1970)*, (Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Press, 2016), 13.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 68.

Similar to the experience of Al and Alona Burger, CYC volunteers at Faust, Ab., Ike and Millie had come as VS Volunteers, thinking they would stay only for the two-year assignment. They stayed on for 15 years. Al and Alona stayed on at Faust and made that community their home. Some of the VS volunteers also settled permanently at Calling Lake, which made “the continuation of volunteers from outside less necessary.”²⁰⁷ In fact, Ike saw the emergence of local leadership at Calling Lake, as a positive turning point for the community. Some of these new leaders were Mike Cardinal and Gilman Cardinal. At least four women, two Cardinal sisters and two Nipshank sisters, became teachers at Calling Lake.²⁰⁸ With the overall decline in Mennonite community volunteers, this program tapered off. Of the 100 volunteers that did come to Alberta over a period of 15 years, about 40 of them became permanent residents. Ike and Millie Glick went on to work on economic projects with the communities. The similarity with CYC was that Mennonite VS was a volunteer program as well, and that its success came in the form of volunteers staying on with communities that they were placed in, becoming permanent residents, as well as pursuing new ideas in the area of community development.

Conclusion

The CIYC achieved its purpose of motivating young Indigenous Peoples to bring Indigenous issues to the forefront in such a way that other Indigenous organizations, some led by or having these same Indigenous volunteers as participants, would eventually replace the CIYC. Through the experiences of the CIYC, new methods of achieving results such as protest movements, following through on the recommendations from national Indigenous organizations, and the use of other media platforms brought quicker responses from governments in getting Indigenous issues addressed. Indigenous youth involved with the CIYC gained public experience through either or both the CYC and CIYC programs. They became the leaders in other activist movements or Indigenous organizations and became well versed in the new tools of the trade to get desired results. They were not fearful of saying what needed to be said. This was a time when Indigenous participants in both organizations sought to move away from the paternalism of Indian Affairs and other government agencies.

²⁰⁷ Ike Glick, Interview, June 19, 2017.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Mike Cardinal was also mentioned by Arlene Dion as one of the Alberta Service Corps volunteers; he married her best friend, Mary Agnes Kurylo. Gilman Cardinal would become a leader at Calling Lake.

Certain perceptions were generated about the formation of the CIYC. Wilfred Pelletier saw that he was recognized as a leader by the settler community because he sat as an executive member on the CIYC. He recalled that the CIYC was highly regarded by the settler community as a “fine, Indian organization.” Pelletier himself had this to say about it: “Our organization was not Indian, not in the Indian tradition; it was in the white tradition, and of course it was pleasing to whites because what they saw in it was a reflection of themselves and their own culture.”²⁰⁹ It also occurred to him that organizations gathered more respect than individuals themselves. He was constantly asked what organization he represented. In fact, joining organizations became a two-way street in his mind. “Indians who sought to use organizations were being used by organizations.”²¹⁰ Indigenous Peoples began to realize that in order to have any positive result in pressing for their equality, they would have to adapt to the tactics of organization that the settler community used.

With both the Wabasca-Desmarais marches and the Fox Lake/Jean D’Or Prairie investigations, the CIYC was instrumental in providing support and showing members at each community how to voice their concerns, not only verbally, but through media and demonstrations. It is noted that CIYC members Duke Redbird and Jeanette Corbiere, who were also CYC members during the Wabasca event, declared that they were in Alberta on CIYC business only.²¹¹ It also helped that there were concerned individuals such as Clive Linklater who was witness to the Wabasca-Desmarais issue and was asked for his input with ASC and where the ASC would be most useful. Stan Daniels, Native Federation of Alberta, and John Samson, Indian Association of Alberta and Rufus Goodstriker, Investigative Team Lead for Trout Lake, challenged the status quo and brought forward issues of poverty and marginalization in northern Alberta communities. The government’s responses were that these issues were being addressed, but it can be safe to state, that if they had not pressed on these issues, not much would have changed.

There are many Indigenous names that come up through this time of upheaval, and these people would become future shakers and leaders. Lillian Shirt was a Cree translator in the ASC

²⁰⁹ Wilfred Pelletier and Ted Pool, *No Foreign Land, The Biography of a North American Indian* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973), 147.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

²¹¹ “Young Canadians Deny Ottawa Return Order”, *The Globe and Mail*, July 29, 1966.

evaluative report.²¹² Mike Cardinal, became involved with both ASC and Mennonite VS; he would later become an MLA in the Alberta government. Wilf McDougall (CDO) assisted CIYC volunteers, Duke Redbird and Jeanette Corbiere out of Fox Lake. Wilf McDougall became prominent in later years with the Indian Association of Alberta. CDO officers were a noteworthy force, assisting where they could with the Indigenous investigations, and organizations involved with Indigenous rights and equality in socioeconomic affairs. Names that appear in the record include Clive Linklater, William Bull and Ray Albert, amongst others. Of course, Harold Cardinal became stronger as the voice of not only the youth, but for all Indigenous Peoples across the nation.

These young leaders were also very intuitive. They knew when to choose which organization or mandate they were working under, when they had permission to speak and when they should speak up. Tony Mandamin understood he had a dual role as the CIYC President and the representative of the NIC. Harold Cardinal and Jeanette Corbiere knew that it was important to get the blessing of the Indian Association of Alberta in their work with the Wabasca-Desmarais issue. Duke Redbird and Jeanette Corbiere knew that their work in Alberta was under the mandate of the CIYC and not the CYC. They were clear when they were questioned about their work, stating they were the voices of Indigenous activism through the CIYC and not speaking or participating as a CYC volunteer. Minister of Public Works, F.C. Colborne stated that government had inquired with the CYC to determine whether the two, Redbird and Corbiere, were involved in the Wabasca-Desmarais “demonstrations under the CYC banner.”²¹³ Redbird and Corbiere also acknowledged their roles as CYC volunteers with the Fox Lake/Jean D’Or Prairie investigation. Duke Redbird as a CYC volunteer knew when and where to ask for assistance, when the CYC left them in the lurch during this investigation.

The provincial government tried to stand by their position that much was being done to assist these Indigenous communities. However, the provincial government became wary of the CIYC and CYC, as they began criticizing and unravelling the socioeconomic fabric in the north. How was it that industry – mining, lumber and sawmill operations, and oil and gas exploration were

²¹² Harper, Donald C., Thomas E. Menmuir, Coull, Anne C., and Dr. Charles W. Hobart, *Alberta Service Corps: An Evaluative Study*, GOA, October 1967, Acknowledgements. Later in 1971, Lillian Shirt would pitch a tipi in downtown Edmonton to protest the high cost of housing for Indigenous peoples in Alberta.

²¹³ “Young Canadians Deny Ottawa Return Order,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 29, 1966.

not engaging with Indigenous Peoples and communities? This question began to appear more and more to have no definite answer provided by government. The government tried to undermine both organizations by stating that they were creating disturbances to meet their own ends, and that active volunteers were from elsewhere, and that their accusations were unfounded.²¹⁴ The major benefit of the investigations and marches was that the government began to put in place a plan, HRDA, to address the socioeconomic concerns.

In the overall scheme of the growth of the CYC, Harold Cardinal may not have been aware of the changes going on with the CYC. There had always been poor communication between the head office in Ottawa with projects in the field. Cardinal's report regarding the relationship between the CIYC and CYC was apt on how best to achieve results between the two organizations, however, larger political battles were being drawn within the CYC and with government, which would have an impact on the successes of the various CYC projects in Western Canada. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

Cardinal, as CIYC President, had very clear positions regarding Indigenous rights. He told the Indian-Eskimo Association that "there is no Indian problem in Canada; it's a white problem."²¹⁵ What Indigenous Peoples aspire to, he concluded, was the "freedom to decide the course of their own destiny" and "equality of opportunity in every aspect of Canadian life" which did not exist at the time.²¹⁶ Cardinal stated that the CIYC wanted Indigenous peoples to become constructive and contributing forces within communities.

As mentioned, not much more is heard about the CIYC after 1968 which may be the result of larger, political issues looming for Indigenous peoples regarding their rights under the treaties, and as Metis peoples. The CYC would continue to have projects, however, without the support of the head office in Ottawa; it will be shown in another chapter how this impacted the CYC projects. However, what has been learned about other youth, activist organizations and which pertains to both the CYC and CIYC, is that success with projects usually involved being "asked"

²¹⁴ "Manning Blasts Indian Exploiters", *Calgary Herald*, July 29, 1966, 2., and "Alberta Picks Over CYC, Rejects 'Disliked' Youths", *Winnipeg Tribune*, 1969-11-27.

²¹⁵ "Indians Don't Have Problems, Whites Do", *Edmonton Journal*, Oct. 2, 1967. The Indian Eskimo Association was a non-Indigenous support group started in the 1960s. It later became the Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples. R. Douglas Francis, et al., *Destinies*, p. 334.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

or invited to a community. Organizations such as ASC and SOS as prime examples were short lived; had they remained longer, they may have had more opportunity to partner with CYC, and with the promise of longevity for both.

The success of volunteer programs had everything to do with the “buy in” or staying power of the individuals and volunteers to the communities they were involved in. Much was accomplished at Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta through the efforts of Al Burger and other CYC volunteers in the communities there. More will be said about the investment of CYC volunteers into the communities they serviced in the next chapter. Ike and Millie Glick also stayed on with Mennonite VS for fifteen years and continued with other ventures outside of the volunteer service for the community of Calling Lake and other northern communities.

Arlene Dion continued to stay on in northern Alberta, through her volunteer work with both SOS and ASC. She married George Dion of Kehewin First Nation and continued her service in that community throughout her lifetime. As Dion stated about the long term benefits of her service work, “I am still at Kehewin 50 years later.I know all of the relationships there. I have connection to all of these people. I have a story about all of the people. This is one of the benefits. That and the fact that I cannot side with any particular group. I had to be open; this left me free in the community. I wasn’t already judged.”²¹⁷ This self-assessment is quite interesting in that she continued to see herself as a neutral party many years after completion of her service as a youth, even though she married into the community and became a contributing member. In later years, she opened and operated a weaving facility which led to employment for community members. Her own children and grandchildren continue on her tradition of “service” to the community and are involved in many aspects with Indigenous events and institutions in Kehewin, and in urban centres, such as Edmonton.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Arlene Dion, Interviewed, January 12, 2018.

²¹⁸ Arlene’s daughters for example are leaders in academia. Amber Dion, assistant professor in the School of Social Work, at Grant MacEwan University has helped shaped the universities policies and procedures concerning Indigenous knowledge. Shana Dion is the Director of Aboriginal Student Services Centre/ Assistant Dean for First Nation, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) Students at the University of Alberta.

Chapter 2: CYC Projects in Western Canada Involving Indigenous Peoples

We are all entitled to certain rights, human rights. We did not have to sit back and take it. The CYC gave me that extra confidence. What we were trying to do with the people we were working with, was to give them that boost/confidence. They were so used to being told no; what we did for them was teach them the opposite of being stepped on.²¹⁹

This statement made by Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, former CIYC executive member and CYC field supervisor at Winnipeg in 1967 would be echoed by many of the CYC volunteers who were sent to work on projects throughout Canada. Further to this, she stated that what she benefitted from with the CYC was meeting people from all levels – “people who never would have talked to me. My horizons broadened and I got to travel. With Harold [Cardinal], this is where he got a lot of his independence to do things. There was Al Jacobs from Alberta, and Richard Atleo with the Canadian Indian Youth Council (CIYC). I remember meeting them about that time.”²²⁰ In studying the documents surrounding her work, and from her interview, it was clear that she met and engaged not only with other CYC volunteers, but also executive members of the CYC organization itself, as well as government officials involved with this program. In a written document prepared for CYC volunteer training purposes which was sent to the CYC organizing committee in 1966, she provided her knowledge of what to expect in working with Indigenous Peoples. She also was asked to assist Wilfred Pelletier with the training of CYC volunteers on Indigenous issues at the community level at Wikwemikong, Ontario. All of her CYC work was recognized in 1968 with her appointment to the CYC Permanent Council by the Secretary of State, Gerard Pelletier.²²¹

²¹⁹ Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, December 8, 2017., p. 3. Jeanette Corbiere Lavell legally challenged the removal of her status as an Indian based on the Indian Act. She made the plea that she was discriminated against by gender at the Supreme Court of Canada, 1973. Her action was unsuccessful; however, it led the way for subsequent challenges. This section of the Indian Act was finally overturned in 1985. She also became a founding member and President of the Ontario Native Women’s Association. For over 50 years, Corbiere Lavell has continued to advocate for Indigenous women’s rights at the Organization of American States, the UN’s Human Rights Committee and the Committee to End Sex Discrimination and at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. She has had various staffing positions in the field of education.

²²⁰ Ibid., 4. There were quite a number of young Indigenous people who had taken the leadership training with the CIYC. As mentioned by Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, many of these easily slipped into the role of volunteers with the CYC. Richard Atleo is a hereditary chief of the Ahousaht First Nation. He has obtained his BA, M.Ed. and Doctor of Education, and has taught and researched at Malaspina College, University of Victoria, University of Manitoba, Simon Fraser University, and University of British Columbia. No other information is available regarding Al Jacobs.

²²¹ Government Appointments to CYC, Release No. 9-2669E. Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds. RG6 1986-87/319, Vol. 4, CYC Jan. 1969, LAC.

This chapter will look at those CYC projects that involved Indigenous Peoples or communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta (British Columbia will not be included), as well as projects in the Northwest Territories as there were connections to the Alberta projects. There were at least four CYC project areas in Manitoba: Winnipeg, Selkirk, Brandon, and Oak River (Sioux Valley). There were several, short-lived projects in Saskatchewan. In Alberta, CYC projects were few as well. Calgary had one CYC volunteer who worked with urban housing. The Alberta projects that will be examined for this thesis are the CYC Faust and Lesser Slave Lake projects. CYC projects in the Northwest Territories were the Great Slave Lake projects which became concerned with treaty issues amongst the communities of Behchoko, Fort Providence, Dettah and N'Dilo (these last two places being of the same band), as well as Hay River and Fort Resolution, and lastly with Indigenous peoples of Yellowknife. Another project was the CYC National Film Board/ Indian Film Crew partnership which filmed a Cree/Metis community at Loon Lake, in northern Alberta. As there was much controversy involving this project, it will be discussed on its own, in Chapter 4.

The CYC volunteers involved in these projects were imbued with the confidence to make things happen. They had bought into the philosophy of the CYC movement. They hoped to inspire change, but not be the ones to undertake the work in facilitating change. Their prerogative was to motivate persons in those places where change was needed to act of their own accord. These projects will be described and analyzed, to determine what things worked for and against these CYC projects. How was the organization seen by the volunteers, community, by government, by agencies, and by the media? What if any, were the results of the various western CYC projects? What was the legacy of any of the individual projects?

Overall, in what ways did these CYC projects impact Indigenous individuals, Indigenous communities and the volunteers themselves? I argue that the CYC was one way in which Indigenous activists were encouraged and became emboldened in demanding equality for Indigenous Peoples within the overall economy, yet at the same time doing so, in such a way, that they retained their uniqueness and identity as Indigenous peoples. Indigenous Peoples had been mobilizing to stand up for themselves since the League of Indians was established after

WWI.²²² The CYC movement would become another opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to take a stand and discover that they could have a stronger voice on issues concerning their livelihood. No longer were they willing to allow governments to patronize them.

Manitoba CYC Projects

Within both federal and provincial government circles, there was strong approval initially of CYC projects involving Indigenous Peoples. One official from the Citizenship and Immigration Branch in Ottawa, was Garth Crockett who was a proponent of community development, and had this to say of the potential of the CYC and its volunteers in 1966: “they will be able to supply a real service to Indian communities who ask for their services.”²²³ He used the example of Fort Alexander (now known as Saugeen First Nation), when it hired one of its own as a recreation director through the Citizenship grant program. He determined that this First Nation would be able to request a CYC volunteer with a recreational background to train the director; in this way, the band member would learn as the program was being developed, and the band would also benefit. This program would also make young CYC volunteers aware of what was going on within the Branch and within Canada as it pertained to “Indian people and all the problems that surround[ed] them.”²²⁴ In 1966, the problems Crockett encountered were “poverty, alcoholism and hopelessness that blights the lives of reservation Indians.”²²⁵ This official also believed that through such projects, CYC volunteers would improve their understanding of citizenship, which he deemed most valuable. Crockett had applied the following to the development of his work projects; “he supplied only the alternatives and the Indians furnished the answers.”²²⁶ This was in complete alignment with the method CYC volunteers would use. They were trained to act as catalysts, but not to take over projects that involved Indigenous Peoples.²²⁷ This official knew that the mentality of an “outsider looking in,” would not work here; he clearly understood that

²²² The western arm of this body was created in 1929 called the League of Indians of Western Canada. In 1943, this body reorganized to become the Association of Saskatchewan Indians. It would later become the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, in 1958. In Alberta, the Indian Association of Alberta formed in 1939 and would remain a strong organization into the early 1980s. In 1970, The National Indian Brotherhood was created as a national Indigenous organization.

²²³ Letter from Garth Crockett, Minister of Citizenship & Immigration to Mr. Barnes, Education Division, Department of Indian Affairs & Northern Development, Ottawa, Ontario, April 14, 1966. LAC

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ “For Once, An Indian Saga without Shame,” *MacLean’s Magazine*, Jan. 1, 1966, Vol. 79, #1, 1.

²²⁶ Ibid., 1.

²²⁷ “The Kids We Pay to Rock the Boat, CYC’s Young Rebels,” *Maclean’s Magazine*, Aug. 1, 1967, 27.

the answers needed to come from the Indigenous people themselves.²²⁸ Throughout 1966 and up to October 1967, the CYC volunteers in Manitoba drew little attention to themselves in their projects. As one official from the Department of Indian Affairs surmised, the CYC operated “unobtrusively in Manitoba” and while active, was not the source of “adverse publicity” which allowed their activities to go unnoticed.²²⁹

Up until late 1967, the Winnipeg CYC office had supervised the three Prairie provinces, as one of the five regional CYC operations. This changed when a decision was made by the CYC head office to have separate provincial operations.²³⁰ The eight CYC members working in Manitoba became known as the “Winnipeg Project.”²³¹ Field staff members, Murray Smith and Harold Harper, as well as secretary Yvonne Still coordinated the project from the CYC offices at 430 River Avenue, Winnipeg.²³² Still recalled: “we rented a big, three storey house, that was our location. It was great. Bedrooms became offices. The staff we had were volunteers, truly volunteers. It was an opportunity for them to travel, learn something and share.”²³³

The Winnipeg Project was actually four smaller projects. Four volunteers worked with Indigenous and Metis new arrivals to the city, two volunteers worked with truants and high school drop outs in the Furby-St. Logan Avenue, “north end” area of Winnipeg and another volunteer worked with the Fort Rouge ecumenical Ministry assisting people with welfare concerns, legal advice and employment needs. The eighth worker was placed at Oak River, a Dakota reserve in southwest Manitoba, to assist with the operation of a nursery for young children.²³⁴

Harvey Stevens, one of the CYC volunteers, worked with drop outs from the Furby-St. Logan area since 1967. One of the first challenges he faced was that he felt some of the youth were only using him, much in the same way that they would use their social workers. When he did not comply with their requests to do things for them, they would get upset with him

²²⁸ Albert Burger, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, May 29, 2017, Faust, Alberta.

²²⁹ N.K. Ogden, A/Regional Director of Indian Affairs, Confidential Report for Minister – Company of Young Canadians, October 13, 1967. Indian and Inuit Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, 1/24-2-36, pt. 1, LAC.

²³⁰ “CYC Covers Four Projects in Manitoba”, *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1968-01-22.

²³¹ “This CYC Volunteer’s Work is Appreciated”, *The Brandon Sun*, Friday, February 2, 1968.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Yvonne Still, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, November 20, 2020.

²³⁴ “CYC Covers Four Projects in Manitoba”, *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1968-01-22.

and call him a phony. He organized dances, and a variety program. He worked one-on-one with individuals helping where he could.²³⁵ At times, he wondered if he was accomplishing what he as a volunteer had been ingrained to do, “to encourage people to solve their own social problems.”²³⁶ The response he received from those he helped indicated a measure of success. They began to trust him; they would share their problems with him, and he would just listen. As Bob Harris, one of the youths, recalled about Harvey’s work: “It was good. He helped them, he went out with them to find jobs and things like that.”²³⁷ He gained their respect as he was there for them. Unlike the social workers who only worked from nine to five, Harvey lived right with them in the run down Logan Avenue district.²³⁸

In addition to verbal assaults on a personal level, CYC volunteers found themselves facing tough situations in their quest to act as catalysts in a process of social change on a broader, societal level. In their training as CYC volunteers, they came to embrace this philosophy of promoting change, but allowing people to undertake this on their own. A CYC volunteer was recorded as stating, “if things are bad in a city neighbourhood or on an Indian reservation, the CYC volunteer’s role is to motivate the people who are affected into taking action.”²³⁹ Another unidentified CYC volunteer said “of course we’re rocking the boat,”²⁴⁰ and further stated that this is what they were paid to do.

CYC volunteers received salaries as well as living allowances. At the end of a two year volunteer period, they would also receive an honorarium calculated at \$50.00 per month.²⁴¹ CYC volunteers were able to do “worthwhile” volunteer work such as “showing disadvantaged people how to organize, to take power over their own lives—in full cognizance of the fact that this must eventually lead to the exercising of political power.”²⁴² Peter Brian, a CYC volunteer at the St. Francis Youth House, a drop in centre for youth on Furby street remarked, “We are more or less resource people for the kids” and further stated, that if the project were to be shut down, he

²³⁵ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade, The Story of The Company of Young Canadians*, (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd, 1970), 72.

²³⁶ “The Kids We Pay to Rock the Boat, CYC’s Young Rebels,” *Maclean’s Magazine*, Aug. 1, 1967, 26.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 26 and 55.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁴¹ Margaret Daly, *The Revolution Game, The Short, Unhappy Life of the Company of Young Canadians*, (Toronto: New Press, 1970), p. 3, and Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, 19.

²⁴² Margaret Daly, *The Revolution Game*, 4.

would stay to work on the project “in which I am very much involved.”²⁴³ A certain prestige was attached to becoming a “CYC Volunteer.” The volunteer would not be a civil servant, nor an employee of the CYC, but rather a member of the CYC. The CYC organizing committee believed this was a position of honor for anyone who was chosen to become a member.²⁴⁴



Figure 3: Group of CYC Volunteers, Photo provided by Eleanor Hyodo.

Standing are (l-r) Myles, Pat Roberts, Harold Harper, Doreen Jarvis, Al Burger, Art Wabageeshik, Ian Nunn, Alona Burger, and Jeanette Corbiere. Seated on steps are (l-r) Caroline Pickles, Harvey Stevens, and Jeremy Ashton. Art Wabageshik was from Oak River, and was brought as a guest, as they were told to bring someone from their work projects.

In 1967, the CYC Winnipeg Project developed and supervised a separate project which placed twelve young Indigenous men and women in activities in Winnipeg, Brandon and Selkirk. They established a committee which screened applicants selected to work on short 2 to 3 month contracts. Margaret Stott, Regional Community Development worker was involved with this CYC committee. She saw this work of the CYC as one of the “useful outlets provided for Canadian youth to work meaningfully with people singly or in groups, which in the long run may

²⁴³ “CYC Free to Act Without Controls,” *The Brandon Sun*, Friday, February 2, 1968.

²⁴⁴ Report by Organizing Committee of CYC to PM of Canada, David S. H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-7, LAC.

prove most helpful.”²⁴⁵ The selected individuals met twice a week with the regular CYC volunteers to review their experiences. Knowledge gained from this group work was used when they returned to their home reserves, or in the high school systems. Some of these projects involved part time activities; the youth were placed “in mental hospitals, others as counsellors and court workers, and the remainder in Indian-Metis Friendship Centres.”²⁴⁶ Of the twelve, three signed onto a two-year contract with CYC as regular volunteers.²⁴⁷ The project was a great concept. The CYC had come up with an in-house training for additional volunteers especially geared towards attracting Indigenous volunteers. One of these trainees was Dolores Nanie. She and three other Indigenous CYC members helped Indigenous and Metis children in Winnipeg during the summer months in recreational activities.²⁴⁸ The project also provided meaningful work for the current CYC volunteers. In addition, the Acting Regional Director of Indian Affairs considered the CYC “a useful exercise” in these projects.²⁴⁹

The Winnipeg Project was comprised of 8 CYC staff and volunteers split evenly in terms of an Indigenous to non-Indigenous ratio. Harold Harper, Indigenous, and Murray Smith, non-Indigenous, were the lead staff. The Indigenous volunteers assisted with new Indigenous arrivals to the city under the auspices of the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre. In March of 1967, Jeanette Corbiere, CYC field supervisor, initiated this program in Winnipeg believing that many Indian youth who had moved to the cities were in need of help.²⁵⁰ Corbiere recalled, that “in Winnipeg, we worked with the community. We went to the Indian Friendship Centre; nurse Jean

²⁴⁵ N.K.Ogden, A/Regional Director of Indian Affairs, Manitoba, Confidential Report for Minister – Company of Young Canadians, October 13, 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36, pt. 1, LAC.

²⁴⁶ Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities, David A. Munro to all Regional Directors, Dec. 30, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2, LAC. Note: according to Alona Burger, not much was known about the Selkirk Hospital for Mental Diseases CYC Project after she left it in September 1967. There had been plans to continue with this project and it was included as part of the training program of the Winnipeg CYC Project during 1967.

²⁴⁷ Letter N.K. Ogden, A/Regional Director of Indian Affairs to Chief, Social Programs Division, IAB, Ottawa. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

²⁴⁸ “Indian Princess Keeps Cool in Beaded Cape,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 19 July 1967, p. 19. As she was not identified as one of the original 8 CYC volunteers with the Winnipeg CYC projects, and as three other Indigenous CYC workers were stated to be working with her, she no doubt was one of the trainees of the separate CYC training project.

²⁴⁹ “Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities”, Dec. 30, 1968, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2, LAC.

²⁵⁰ Jeanette Corbiere held a position with CYC head office in Ottawa. She was also the treasurer of the Canadian Indian Youth Council (CIYC).

(Tootoosis) Goodwill was Director of the Centre then.²⁵¹ We would talk to people who came off the reserve. We would explain their rights to them. There was a lot of discrimination with the police.”²⁵² She described her learning as experiential; “I learned about justice, the courts and the police from time spent on the streets; there were no resources.”²⁵³ Corbiere’s program helped young women deal with exploitation, and young mothers with children with housing concerns. The CYC volunteers acted as intermediaries between the different agencies and the landlords. As there were no organizations or services available to these single mothers with children, the CYC volunteers had to step in and work with the people from a grassroots level. “There was also socializing that went on at the Friendship Centre. We were a part of it.”²⁵⁴ She believed that this program could expand to other cities such as Vancouver and Toronto and expected that the CYC would recruit young Indian workers on a temporary, volunteer basis.²⁵⁵

The first goal of Corbiere and Harper was to interest Indigenous youth in setting up cooperative houses in Winnipeg to which newcomers could go for help. It was also determined that CYC volunteers could work closely with social workers at these centers. These programs could be further expanded to include work with young mothers and older persons. She had particularly wanted to help those who were unsuccessful with their transition to city life: “They need people of their own to help them during these difficult times. This is what we are hoping the new Indian volunteers we recruit will be able to do.”²⁵⁶

Urban Indigenous Peoples in Toronto were discussed at a meeting Corbiere attended in the summer of 1967 with the CYC Social Planning Council. She presented a paper which proposed

²⁵¹ Jean Cuthand Goodwill nee Tootoosis was from Poundmaker First Nation and was the first Indigenous person to become a registered nurse in Saskatchewan and quite possibly in the whole of Canada in 1954. She worked in the health care field for a number of years and then dedicated herself to Indigenous issues. She moved to Winnipeg and became executive director of the friendship centre, 1962-1966. She became involved in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. She went on to an illustrious career in the public service in Ottawa with positions in the Department of Indian Affairs, Secretary of State, and Department of National Health and Welfare. (Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia, University of Regina Press).

²⁵² Interview with Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, Manitowaning, Ontario, December 8, 2017., 2.

²⁵³ Ibid., 5.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 2.

²⁵⁵ “Seek Young Indians for CYC Social Work,” *Globe and Mail*, 6 March 1967, p. 8. This program may have taken place in Toronto, as Jeanette Corbiere did spend time in Toronto as Youth Director at the Canadian Indian Centre 1968.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

that the CYC should consider working with Indians in Toronto; how to fund such projects was an item of discussion in this paper.²⁵⁷

Corbiere recalled working with non-Indigenous volunteers on cross cultural communication. As part of this work, Ted Poole, a non-Indigenous writer, and Isaac Beaulieu, former CIYC member, would go into communities to teach the history and culture of Indigenous Peoples to try to remove the stereotypes that had been created. She learned from her own training how to get people to talk and to come to know their own rights.²⁵⁸

Arguments began to develop between the two lead CYC staff, Harper and Smith. Corbiere made no reference to this dispute in her interview; in fact, she stated that in relation to negative publicity, there may have been some, but she paid little attention to it. The dispute between Harper and Smith involved white volunteers setting up a home in the inner city for “alienated youth.”²⁵⁹ Indigenous volunteers disagreed with the type of work the non-Indigenous CYC volunteers were doing, and so too, the non-Indigenous volunteers disagreed with the type of work being done by the Indigenous CYC volunteers. The type of assistance provided to youth was of varying nature: the non-Indigenous volunteers wanted to create a home for youth, while the Indigenous volunteers wanted to assist youth with their transition to city life. Neither Harper nor Smith could resolve the disagreeing perspectives. “A genuine hatred began to develop between the two groups and it took on racial overtones.”²⁶⁰ When word of the disagreements reached Ottawa CYC headquarters, the CYC council was asked to scrap the Winnipeg projects. CYC administration feared that this ongoing racial tension would spill out into the open and possibly damage the reputation of the CYC. The Winnipeg project lost support from CYC Ottawa after the dispute, and the constant criticism by the press concerning the CYC gave additional reason to end the CYC work there.²⁶¹ The CYC volunteers were provided no reasons

²⁵⁷ Letter from J.G. McGilp, Regional Director of Indian Affairs to Chief, Social Programs Division, Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, 3 October 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, LAC.

²⁵⁸ Interview Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, December 8, 2017. Ted Poole and Wilfred Peltier wrote the book, *No Foreign Land, The Biography of a North American Indian*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973). Isaac Beaulieu was a CIYC member, from Sandy Lake First Nation, northern Ontario and had been one of the original trainees sent to the Banff workshop in 1965. Ted Poole was a non-Indigenous writer from British Columbia, and he had co-authored several books with Wilfred Peltier.

²⁵⁹ Ian Hamilton, *The Children's Crusade*, 163.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁶¹ “CYC Free to Act Without Controls,” *The Brandon Sun*, February 2, 1968.

for the closure of their projects. In May of 1968, at Winnipeg, Murray Smith, CYC organizer was informed that their \$17,000.00 budget was removed. The overall CYC budget of \$3.4 million from the prior year, was cut down to \$1.7 million. Smith stated then, "I don't know why Manitoba was axed."²⁶² All he knew was that the bigger provinces, such as British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec continued to receive full funding. The inner city CYC projects of Winnipeg had to be abandoned.

In addition to the news of infighting which had reached Ottawa, a further negative image was being drawn. The press was alerted to the fact that the CYC office building was run down. It was dirty, with broken windows and garbage was strewn about.²⁶³ What was not known to the press about this house was that it was already condemned when CYC volunteers began using it.²⁶⁴ In fact, Yvonne Still stated, "that place was in a mess when we moved in there. We did attempt to clean the whole place."²⁶⁵ This was but one of the constant criticisms by the press as identified by Manitoba CYC volunteers in early February 1968 at a Brandon CYC conference.

Indigenous CYC volunteers had ideas which were way ahead of their time. Jeanette Corbiere pushed for the engagement of Indigenous people in the CYC movement and she brought into her reports and her volunteer work an awareness about Indigenous issues. As she stated in a report she made to the CYC Social Planning Committee in 1967, organizations such as the American Peace Corps recognized that volunteers should get "a good grasp of the language of the country to which they will be assigned and working with."²⁶⁶ She believed that volunteers going into Indigenous communities should do the same; get a good grasp of the language of that community. This of course was an alien idea to Canadians who did not recognize the First Nations of this country as nations within Canada at that time.

Corbiere was recognized for her work as executive secretary to the Canadian Indian Youth Council, her assistance in training CYC volunteers to work in Indigenous communities, her committed efforts in the Winnipeg Project as a CYC field supervisor, her report writing, and her

²⁶² "Some CYC Workers Stay, Money Gone," *The Brandon Sun*, May 9, 1968.

²⁶³ Ian Hamilton, *The Children's Crusade*, 163.

²⁶⁴ "The Troubles of the Company," *Winnipeg Tribune*, August 24, 1968.

²⁶⁵ "Landlord Considering Action Against CYC," *The Winnipeg Tribune*, May 17, 1968.

²⁶⁶ Report to the Social Planning Council, Jeanette Corbierre, 1967, 3. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6 Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 1, LAC.

work as the Youth Director of the Canadian Indian Centre in Toronto. This recognition ultimately led to her appointment to the Permanent Council of the Company of Young Canadians in 1968.²⁶⁷

The CYC project on the Oak River Dakota reserve located west of Brandon and north of Griswold, Manitoba was started by two volunteers in late 1966. Oak River Indian reserve was aptly named due to the river which ran through it. It later became known as the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (Wipazoka Wakpa). This project was intended to address the social development of Indian pre-school children on the reserve. This project continued until the summer of 1968 and was the only one undertaken on an Indian reserve in Manitoba.²⁶⁸

Eleanor Hyodo, a CYC volunteer of Japanese descent, discussed how she became involved with the CYC. “I had just finished Grade 13. I heard of the CYC at high school. A newspaper for high school students, advertised for the CYC. I applied and went to the interview. Once selected, I went for the training.”²⁶⁹ She met Alona (formerly Ericson) Burger at the second training at St. John’s College in New Brunswick, where they learned sensitivity and community development theory. They took further training in November, in Orillia, Ontario, where the first group of trained volunteers from Antigonish/Crystal Cliffs were brought in. These first CYC volunteers to graduate were idealistic and more anti-establishment.²⁷⁰ An additional component to Hyodo and Burger’s training was the Indigenous cultural training advocated and taught by Wilfred Pelletier and Jeanette Corbiere. Eleanor Hyodo remembered that “Wilfred Pelletier did the Indian training at the beginning. Jeanette Corbiere was also involved with the CYC. Those of us who were to be

²⁶⁷ The 15 member CYC Permanent Council was to replace the Provisional Council which had been formed 3.5 years prior in 1965. The Permanent Council were to be strong decision makers and chosen by the government. The objectives of the Council were continuity, policy and program development, budget projections, and where required, consolidation of programs. Government Appointments to CYC, Release No. 9-2669E., Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319 Vol. 4 CYC Jan 1969, LAC. The suppression of the “voluntary” nature of the CYC by government is also mentioned in Brushett’s article, “‘Federally Financed Felquistes’: The Company of Young Canadians and the Prelude to the October Crisis,” *Quebec Studies*, 55 (2013).

²⁶⁸ Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities, David A. Munro to all Regional Directors, Dec. 30, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2., 3, LAC. Another CYC project on a Manitoba First Nations occurred in 1974. Michael Stern was recognized for his help in establishing the Dakota Ojibwe Tribal Council. He was honoured by being gifted an eagle feather headdress.

²⁶⁹ Eleanor Hyodo, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, October 4, 2019.

²⁷⁰ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, pp. 22-24. There is no clear definition of what sensitivity training was, only that it was not carried out fully in the training sessions. It appeared that many trainees got “too hung up” on personal staff and group problems to concentrate on community development theory.

involved with Indians had to take the Indian training.”²⁷¹ This training began right after their sessions at St. John’s College. Pelletier and Corbiere were both from Wikwemikong, Ontario and they chose that place for CYC volunteers to take the Indigenous training.

Hyodo recalled that it was up to the volunteers to find a place to live at the Wikwemikong, reserve. She gave the stipend she received from the CYC as room and board to the family she stayed with; her interest in craft work led her to live with an elderly woman who taught her how to do quill work. She learned to work with bark as well as quills. She learned about living in conditions of poverty. She learned more from Wilfred Pelletier the next summer when she and Alona Burger drove a CYC car to Wikwemikong. Pelletier talked about his experiences and they learned more about his peoples and culture.²⁷² Alona Burger recalled of this training: “You couldn’t ask for someone better to be with than Wilfred. I remember being there; we stayed in a two-storey house that belonged to some family. We had a view, walking places, and much space surrounded us. There were just the two of us from CYC.”²⁷³



Figure 4: Eleanor Hyodo at a training program at Wikwemikong, photo provided by Alona Burger

²⁷¹ Eleanor Hyodo, Interview, October 4, 2019.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Alona Burger, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, March 11, 2018, Faust, Alberta.

From that training, Hyodo had to make a decision as to where she wanted to go. She first went to the Selkirk Psychiatric Institute, where Alona Burger started her CYC volunteer work. John Cooper was the first CYC volunteer placed at the Selkirk Mental Hospital in 1966.²⁷⁴ Alona Burger and Patrick Roberts, another CYC volunteer, worked with adolescents at this institution for psychiatric patients. Alona recalled being on her own at Selkirk. In January of 1967, she met Al Burger. They were married in September, 1967 in Winnipeg. She stayed on with her project until September 23, and then joined Al Burger at Faust, Alberta.²⁷⁵

Hyodo had heard about the Indian reserve project at Oak River. By this time, she had been with the CYC for one and a half years. She decided to work with the nursery school at Oak River. “I was so naive as to think I could make a difference,” Hyodo recalled of this choice.²⁷⁶ “She was a sweet heart, but she also was straight business,” Yvonne Still remembered of Eleanor Hyodo.²⁷⁷

The Chief of Oak River, John Sioux had heard of the CYC. He and the Oak River band council applied for a volunteer and they were first assigned Katie Barlow, a non-Indigenous CYC volunteer who had arrived at Oak River, full of enthusiasm.²⁷⁸ “I expected so many things to happen. I had all these terrific ideas about how I was going to save the world. Yet, a full six months after I’d arrived on the reserve, no one except the mothers and the kids in the nursery school even knew my name.”²⁷⁹ There were several factors that led to Barlow’s departure from Oak River to another CYC project, Knowplace, an experimental school in Vancouver. Barlow had been sent to Oak River alone, with no clear direction nor specific skills to run a nursery school. She fell into a period of depression due to her isolation and loneliness.²⁸⁰

Hyodo recalls it was winter when she arrived at Oak River: “There was a volunteer already there and she left disenchanted. Her name was Katy; she was isolated on an Indian reserve. She

²⁷⁴ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, pp. 30 and 70.

²⁷⁵ Alona had not heard of what became of the Selkirk Project, although she believed that Yvonne Still would have been the one to know more about this project once she had left it.

²⁷⁶ Eleanor Hyodo, Interview, October 4, 2019.

²⁷⁷ Yvonne Still, Interview, November 29, 2020.

²⁷⁸ “This CYC Volunteer’s Work is Appreciated,” *The Brandon Sun*, February 2, 1968, 12.

²⁷⁹ “Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing Any Good?”, *Chatelaine*, March 1968, 81.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

needed a car. She didn't drive or have a license. What she was demanding was a solution to her isolation."²⁸¹ Barlow was unsupported in her volunteer work at Oak River.

Upon her own arrival in the early part of 1967, Hyodo learned that the nursery school program was much like a "head start" program.²⁸² "Head start" had originated two years prior in the United States. It was designed to, "put children living in deprived areas on a par with the average North American child."²⁸³ What was different for her from Katy Barlow's experience, was that Hyodo was able to find support from within the community of Oak River. Two women, bishop's messengers from the Anglican church had been doing outreach in the communities.²⁸⁴ They did not proselytize. They offered support to Hyodo, and her other source of support was the Winnipeg CYC office.



Figure 5: Teacherage at Oak River, photo provided by Eleanor Hyodo

²⁸¹ Eleanor Hyodo, Interview, October 4, 2019.

²⁸² As part of U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty in 1964, the "head start" program was designed to help disadvantaged preschool children to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional and educational needs. Office of Headstart, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, 330 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20201

²⁸³ "This CYC Volunteer's Work is Appreciated," *The Brandon Sun*, February 2, 1968, p. 12.

²⁸⁴ Bishop's messengers were women appointed as lay readers by the Church of England during the First World War due to the shortage of male clergy. Women were appointed to run missions, and in some cases church congregations in the absence of men. From 1928, bishop's messengers were also appointed in the Diocese of Rupert's Land, which is named for the historical British North American territory of Rupert's Land, which was contained within the original diocesan boundaries of the Church of England (Anglican Church).

There was a recognized gap between home and kindergarten in terms of skills children had. The idea was to raise the skills of nursery school students to assist the kindergarten teacher once these students reached kindergarten entry. Hyodo's classroom was joined to the kindergarten classroom.²⁸⁵ When Hyodo took over the program, there were not more than ten children in the nursery school. Mrs. A. C. Dezois, the kindergarten teacher noticed a difference in the children who had attended the nursery school, and this was helpful to Dezois' work with the 39 kindergarten students she taught.²⁸⁶ Chief Sioux was very enthused with Hyodo's work, and said that she was made welcome wherever she went in the community. The Chief felt that "the most important part of her work was to get the nursery school back into operation. She not only started it, but got the mothers involved."²⁸⁷ The Chief recognized that with the involvement of the mothers, the nursery would be able to continue once Hyodo was done her work at Oak River.



Figure 6: Eleanor Hyodo at Oak River Nursery School, photo provided by Alona Burger

²⁸⁵ Eleanor Hyodo, Interview, October 4, 2019.

²⁸⁶ "This CYC Volunteer's Work is Appreciated," *The Brandon Sun*, February 2, 1968, 12.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

Another leader, Oak River Council member Eva [Mrs. Moses] McKay²⁸⁸ stated that Eleanor was not like other workers; she was welcomed and made herself available to the community, in fact, she worked harder than other highly paid government employees and as a result, the children “have been given a great advantage through the Company of Young Canadians.”²⁸⁹ It was clear that Hyodo pushed for active engagement with the people she lived with; as with the philosophy of CYC, she became a catalyst with the head start program. Originally, she had been asked to teach which went against the “policy” of the CYC “which attempted[s] to have people help themselves, rather than do specific duties for them.”²⁹⁰

At that time, the perception of Indian reserves was that they were “notoriously tough places for anyone to enter and be accepted.”²⁹¹ Quite the opposite reception happened for Hyodo. Community members came to trust her and she became a “sounding board for complaints.”²⁹² She began to help the community of 800 in their dealings with the white world. Hers would become the last remaining of the approved Winnipeg CYC projects in 1968, which was a testament to the demonstrated confidence the community had in her project.²⁹³

One child from the nursery program seemed quite troubled. Hyodo learned that the father, who was a survivor of an Indian Residential school, had mental health issues. Eli Taylor, a band councillor, was able to help Hyodo learn more about this family’s issues.²⁹⁴ This piqued her interest in wanting to attend band meetings. With the permission of the leadership of Oak River, she started to attend band council meetings. She began to observe these meetings and from her observations, came up with questions. She was especially concerned with why there was never enough money provided by Indian Affairs to Oak River.

²⁸⁸ Eva (Bell) McKay, Petawotewastewin (1920-2005) was the first female council member of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, and in Manitoba. She cofounded the Brandon Indian-Metis Friendship Center; helped establish and was first president of the Manitoba Indian Women’s Association (1969). Shortly after 1973, this organization broke away from the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, to become the Native Women’s Association of Manitoba. She served on many boards and committees, and would become a respected elder and historian for her people. Sarah Carter and Nanci Langford, eds., *Compelled to Act: Histories of Women’s Activism in Western Canada*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020), 1, 2.

²⁸⁹ “This CYC Volunteer’s Work is Appreciated,” *The Brandon Sun*, February 2, 1968, 12.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁹¹ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, p. 164.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁹³ “The Troubles of the Company”, *The Winnipeg Tribune*, August 24, 1968.

²⁹⁴ Eli Taylor would later become a prominent elder for Oak River.



Figure 7: Eleanor Hyodo and unnamed person at Oak River, photo provided by Eleanor Hyodo

Regulations governing the Indigenous Peoples of Oak River were typed out by Hyodo and provided to the band council, “they knew in their gut, that it [having a lack of funds] was not fair.”²⁹⁵ She also learned that there was a fear about asking too many questions of government, that this might jeopardize what they did receive.²⁹⁶ The people of Oak River knew that since they were Dakota peoples, they were not Treaty signatories, however, they were still faced with living under the “stifling administration” of the Indian Act. Indeed, their reserve was also much smaller than those of other First Nations reserves who were Treaty signatories.²⁹⁷

Another instance of Hyodo’s help to the leadership came when a “farming expert” was sent to explain to the community that the only way for their farms to make a profit, was to decrease the number of farmers. The farming experts were consultants, Frank E. Price and Associates Ltd., and were commissioned by the Department of Indian Affairs. Their task was to supposedly identify resources available on reserves and how best to develop these. “The consultant was to outline the economy of the reserve, provide an inventory of human resources and physical resources, and in consultation with the Band and Branch staff, recommend programs for the

²⁹⁵ Eleanor Hyodo Interview, October 4, 2019, 4.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁹⁷ Sarah Carter and Nanci Langford, eds., *Compelled to Act*.

development and use of Band resources.”²⁹⁸ In their reports, the consultants included what would be needed in terms of land, equipment, livestock and crops. The experts produced a number of similar reports concerning reserve agriculture throughout the west. Many of the reports came up with the same conclusion: that there were only enough agricultural resources to successfully support a few families on the reserves; the recommendation was for other band members to relocate. Price did not hide the fact that once Indigenous Peoples left the reserves, buyers would be interested in these reserve lands.

Bert Deveaux was a provincial Community Development (CD) officer at Oak River. He developed a successful cucumber project at another reserve. Hyodo was not sure if this project’s results were shared with these experts when they made their presentation.²⁹⁹ In his assessment of his project, Deveaux advised that cucumbers could be grown, and these could be turned into pickles. It was determined that there was a market for these, so the community would have products to sell. Also, children and grandmothers would get paid for picking the cucumbers. For Hyodo, this was a clear example of why people wanted to work; it improved the value of the land they worked on and they were sought and appreciated as workers.³⁰⁰

Oak Lake, known today as Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation (Chanupa Wakpa), was one such location where Price recommended that one or two family units remain, and everyone else should relocate. The consulting firm added that the government could not “go on supporting an unrealistic situation forever. Pressure will- and should- be gradual at first but it will increase steadily in the future for Band members on Reserves such as Oak Lake to go where they had some hope of becoming more self-sufficient.”³⁰¹ This is not what the band members at either Oak Lake or Oak River wanted to hear; they were not willing to exclude a fellow band member to enjoy a profit, nor was relocation an option. It was clear that there was never any consultation with the reserve residents about the report’s recommendations. Such recommendations aimed

²⁹⁸ Sarah Carter, “‘The Consultant Binge’, Corporate Farms, and the Deliberate Diminishment of Manitoba First Nations Reserve Agriculture, 1960s-70s”, unpublished paper, University of Alberta, 2017.

²⁹⁹ One CYC volunteer, Bert Deveaux who had formerly been with the Community Development (CD) program in Manitoba prior to 1968, had developed a successful crop program, involving cucumbers, on one Manitoba reserve (not named), as a CD officer. The financial success for this reserve, he believed, added to their confidence and they began to look at some of their social concerns such as juvenile delinquency and recreation. *The Revolution Game*, Margaret Daly, p. 195

³⁰⁰ Eleanor Hyodo, Interview, October 4, 2019.

³⁰¹ Sarah Carter, “The Consultant Binge...”, 2007.

only to promote the assimilationist program of the government to abolish reserves, to relocate the reserve peoples and eliminate their special treaty status and relationship to the Crown.³⁰²

As Hyodo stated to the Indian agent, “What you consider profitable is different from what these Indian farmers consider profitable. The experts were not appreciating that there was a difference. Band council agreed with my statement, and I do not know how this fared.”³⁰³ Clearly, the leadership had confidence in Hyodo’s assessments, but as she stated, she was not aware of the end result.

Hyodo began to see what community meant for members of Oak River. She began to see life from their cultural point of view. Theirs was not a Western view of making individual profits, but learning to look out for each other. Profit was not in their vocabulary; their concern was to ensure everyone would grow enough to eat, to sustain the community. In fact, Hyodo contended that this was a prime example of where written documents such as “biographies and personal introductions” were dry and missed points; especially in relation to “the experts on farming in Oak River and that cultural setting, it did not fit.”³⁰⁴

In addition to learning more about Dakota culture, Hyodo also learned about racism and in her CYC work, saw first-hand, what Indigenous Peoples faced on a continuous basis. She remembered when she was growing up in Brantford that her father had stated how they were often mistaken for Indians. She did not believe him. In Manitoba, she realized in retrospect that this was true. It was also easier for Indigenous Peoples to like her and made dialogue easier. “It was transformative,” she recalled.³⁰⁵ At the same time, it allowed her to experience firsthand the kind of racial intolerance that Indigenous Peoples faced. Once when she was driving a rented vehicle in Brandon, she got yelled at, “Indian” while sitting at a stop sign. She also learned that the dealership had calibrated mileage faster on that car than it should have been. Another time, when a female community member came to her to get help, after getting beaten by her husband, Hyodo called the RCMP who purposely did not come to help the female. “She was frightened of her husband. We waited and waited. She got fed up and left. The RCMP came quite a bit later

³⁰² Ideas concerning the assimilationist program of the government came from *James Burke, Paper Tomahawks: From Red Tape to Red Power*, (Winnipeg: Queenston House, 1976).

³⁰³ Eleanor Hyodo, October 4, 2019.

³⁰⁴ Eleanor Hyodo, October 4, 2019, p. 10.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

and they were annoyed.”³⁰⁶ The RCMP were not interested in what happened to this community member; she was not a priority.

These types of experiences with the non-Indigenous communities, led to a lack of confidence and self-esteem within the Dakota Peoples, Hyodo learned. She recalled that the CYC never had conversations concerning racism, and when she brought it up with other volunteers, they dismissed her views and she was left on her own to figure this out.³⁰⁷ She decided then that the best she could do was to show an interest in how the Dakota lived. She began to attend powwows. When they saw this, she was invited to attend other powwows. At the Oak River powwow she received an Indian name, Peyweytekwe, Woman of Another Land. This was an example of her acceptance by the community. She danced at powwows which encouraged one shy, Oak River woman band member to dance. She came up to Hyodo and said, “you know, I noticed you dancing,” and a shift in the Dakota woman’s consciousness came about.³⁰⁸ It became something that this woman wanted to do. This one thing Hyodo did made a difference in this person’s life. Hyodo became aware of her ability to influence change on a personal level upon individuals, simply by being the example.



Figure 8: Eleanor Hyodo and Peter Kelly pow wow dancing, taken at the Kenora Indian Folk School. photo provided by Eleanor Hyodo

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 6.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 4, 7.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 4.

Hyodo was adamant that the purpose of the CYC was to assist individuals to help themselves and to show them the resources available to them and to avoid bringing solutions to local problems. She believed that CYC work was mostly about learning to understand people. In her case, she learned to look at life from the “Indian point of view rather than strictly from the point of view of middle class western society trying to force its way of life upon the Indian.”³⁰⁹ She visited people at their homes, school, church functions, attended hockey games, drove them to town, and rode on the school buses in order to learn about them. She hoped to develop a mutual understanding between herself and the people, and in this way, assisted them in helping themselves.

The Chief had another plan for Hyodo which was to begin working with teenagers. The Chief’s ideas included things such as Friday night dances and skating as social events. Hyodo knew full well that it was up to the community to initiate these projects, and for her to assist where she could.³¹⁰ However, the CYC closed her project in 1968 and based the closure upon the fact that there were no CYC staff members to support her project. Despite the fact that she and her project were popular in Oak River, CYC Director Allan Clarke said they could not leave her in such a vulnerable position. This was a prime example of how CYC headquarters could at times be out of touch with its field staff and the CYC volunteers, and was also an example of deep-seated prejudice within organizations. If they would have consulted with Hyodo, they would have become aware of the reciprocal relationship that she had built between herself, as a CYC volunteer, and the community at Oak River. When it was confirmed that all Manitoba CYC projects were being shut down, Hyodo assumed that she would be allowed to finish off her two year volunteer period which ended in September of 1968.³¹¹

The community protested her project closure and wrote letters to CYC head office, asking that they allow her to stay. The decision had been made and she was “pulled out of the community against her own and the community’s wishes.”³¹² She did not find another project which matched the success of Oak River. “The Company failed her and the community.”³¹³

³⁰⁹ “This CYC Volunteer’s Work is Appreciated”, *The Brandon Sun*, Friday, February 2, 1968, p.12.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ “Some CYC Workers Stay, Money Gone”, *The Brandon Sun*, May 9, 1968.

³¹² Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, p. 164

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Sid McArton had been hired to prepare feasibility studies regarding possible future CYC projects and programs in Manitoba. In this study, he had evaluated the Oak River project and deemed it a good example “of community motivation and involvement.”³¹⁴ As for Hyodo, she stated, “my family was not aware of the profound influence the CYC program had on me. I was super Indian after my experience. I was irate, thinking of Indian causes. Then I thought, Eleanor, you are Japanese. That started a process within myself.”³¹⁵ She began to look at the work her aunt was doing with Japanese redress and injustice concerning the Japanese internment camps.

The CYC made the decision to close all Winnipeg operations by June 30, 1968. The two staff members and secretary and eight volunteers became the “victims of a \$500,000.00 cut to the CYC budget.”³¹⁶ There was no longer a CYC office in Winnipeg. Wally Kubitiski, CYC Provisional Council member and a few other CYC supporters tried to keep projects going but they were not successful as they required administrative staff. Kubitiski had hoped that Indian Affairs would contribute through “consultation, guidance, and financial assistance if possible in the projects where Indigenous Peoples are involved both in Metro Winnipeg and on the reserves.”³¹⁷ His hope lay in the belief that it was the responsibility of Indian Affairs to provide for the Indigenous Peoples that the CYC program serviced.

The “Winnipeg projects”, were short lived. For the youth and Indigenous peoples of Winnipeg, the projects did provide structure, in that the youth dropouts had somewhere to go and CYC volunteers willing to listen to them. For the Indigenous new arrivals to the city of Winnipeg, the CYC program helped them to find their voices, to stand their ground with apartment managers, police, and the courts. It was a start and was successful in its short existence, as this project partnered with the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre in administering programs. Another unique and inspiring initiative was the training program developed by the Winnipeg CYC volunteers in 1967 to train in particular, Indigenous youth, for short (two to three month) contracts to learn from the CYC volunteers with the aspiration of returning to their

³¹⁴ Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities, David A. Munro to all Regional Directors, Dec. 30, 1968, and Letter from R.M. Donnelly to the Regional Director of Community Affairs, November 7, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2., 4, LAC.

³¹⁵ Eleanor Hyodo, Interview, October 4, 2019.

³¹⁶ “CYC Pulls Out”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 16 May 1968, p. 1.

³¹⁷ Letter from R.M. Donnelly, CYC to the Regional Director of Community Affairs, November 7, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2. LAC.

reserves to continue service work there or become CYC volunteers. Hyodo had made great strides with her nursery project and was at the cusp of assisting with other community projects being formulated by Chief John Sioux. The CYC had definitely failed her as she had long term plans of assisting at Oak River. However, her legacy was that she persuaded the leadership to ask more questions about their rights as Dakota Peoples. CYC projects did start up again in Manitoba. One CYC volunteer, Michael Stern was honoured by Manitoba First Nations for his help in the establishment of the Dakota Ojibwe Tribal Council in 1974. The CYC assisted the Native Women's Association of Manitoba in getting fair trade for their crafts. During 1973-74 three CYC project managers, one being Michael Stern, oversaw 15 projects in the Winnipeg area.³¹⁸

Saskatchewan

It appeared that any CYC projects developed in this province were at a disadvantage from the start, as any would be judged against the standard of the Neestow Partnership at Green Lake, Saskatchewan, which was an Indian-Metis community. This community development project of the federal Citizenship Branch which had been in place prior to the formation of the CYC began in 1964.³¹⁹ In 1966, the CYC Council was aware of the success of the Neestow Project through CYC Provisional Council member, Richard Thompson.³²⁰ The Neestow project had well defined "capacities" such as a theatre in Prince Albert, education research in the north, legal research in Saskatoon, and a project on the Cowessess reserve in Treaty Four. Experienced workers with access to resource personnel were the reasons attributed to the success of the Neestow Project. Although it was quite early in the establishment of the CYC, there was a feeling in 1966 that the CYC program in Saskatchewan had yet to attract the best people for staff and committees, and as well as new, exciting project ideas according to Richard Thompson³²¹

Saskatchewan's only CYC project in 1967 took place in Fort Qu'Appelle, in Treaty 4, where there were many First Nations. East and north of Fort Qu'Appelle were the File Hills First

³¹⁸ "CYC Needs More Money, Says Director," Winnipeg Free Press, October 15, 1974, 3.

³¹⁹ Documentation was not found which clearly indicated when the Neestow Project began; in all probability, it began in 1964.

³²⁰ Richard Thompson was both a member of the CYC's Provisional Council and a member of the Neestow Project.

³²¹ Letter from Richard Thompson, CYC Council/Neestow member to Citizenship Branch, May 24, 1966., Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, RG6 1986-87/319 109 Vol. 2, LAC. Also, Joan Sangster, Presidential Address, *Confronting Our Colonial Past: Reassessing Political Alliances over Canada's Twentieth Century*, *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 24.

Nations, and other First Nations who would later join with these to become part of the File Hills Tribal Council of Treaty Four.³²² This project was designed to train CYC volunteers and local citizens to become literacy teachers for Saskatchewan First Nation peoples. A former Indian Affairs adult educator, John Ferguson, was the lead volunteer on this CYC adult education project which involved 15 to 20 trainees.³²³ Eleven of these were CYC volunteers that he recruited from the September 1967 CYC selection weekend held at Toronto, Ontario. He advised the trainees that the work involved Indigenous Peoples, who faced literacy challenges. The volunteers were advised of other hardships they would face on the reserves. With his knowledge about Saskatchewan's First Nations, Ferguson made sure that his trainees would know how to "enter a community and not make waves."³²⁴ He developed a program that was rigid to say the least; CYC volunteers were told they could not have beards and that they had to refrain from sex and the use of pot. University lecturers and other professionals had been selected to educate the trainees over a six month period, at the end of which the trainees would receive certification.

Ferguson's proposal came at an opportune time. "The Company jumped at the prospect of a concrete project that would deliver measurable, toutable results."³²⁵ Ferguson was very much interested in the ability of the volunteers to be effective teachers, and less interested in their opinions about anything to do with the project. Two months in, only two of the original eleven CYC volunteers remained. This was due to Ferguson's unwillingness to include all trainees in the development of the project. They were not asked for their input or concerns. As a result, CYC organizers had to teach Ferguson how to reach young people so that the next batch of volunteers would stay on.³²⁶

As a community based organization, CYC was responsible to the people and not to any local, provincial, or federal government, nor even to the "Company's executive authority in

³²² File Hills Tribal Council members are the 11 First Nations: Nekaneet First Nation, Wood Mountain Lakota First Nation, Piapot First Nation, Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation, Pasqua First Nation, Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation (File Hills Agency), Little Black Bear's Band of Cree & Assiniboine Nations, Okanese First Nation, Star Blanket Cree Nation, Peepeekisis Cree Nation and Carry-The-Kettle Nakoda Nation.

³²³ Memo from Social Programs Division to Regional Director of Indian Affairs, October 12, 1967, LAC.

³²⁴ Selection weekends were held in centres across Canada several times a month. Individuals would take part in interviews, psychological tests, and group discussions. Based on these, selection as a CYC volunteer would be made, and then the individual would go on for further training.

"Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing Any Good?", *Chatelaine Magazine*, March 1968, 81.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 80. Tutable is the word used in the quote, although there is no word in the dictionary. The word is tout meaning to promote, ballyhoo, talk up, etc.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.

Ottawa.”³²⁷ What the CYC was up against just when the Fort Qu’Appelle project was launched, was the image created by CYC volunteers in Quebec and British Columbia, by David Depoe and Lynn Curtis, respectively. This image had everything to do with the hippie movement its supposed association with communism. Depoe, a CYC volunteer at Yorkville in Toronto, worked with hippies; he was seen by the media, as a person who rejected everything associated with the middle class; all things related to youth such as drugs, sex, and youthfulness itself, became associated with Depoe. In January, 1967, Depoe was seen at an anti-Vietnam war protest in front of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto. The press and Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson were dismayed. As a result, one press outlet described the Company as ‘a “dangerous and disgusting growth” gnawing at the vitals of Canadian society.’³²⁸ This added to Depoe’s image as a troublemaker.³²⁹

Lynn Curtis, a CYC volunteer based out of Victoria, B. C., had sent out an invitation in an allegedly Communist sponsored magazine to student radicals to join the CYC. This led people to conclude that individuals such as Curtis were planning to overthrow the government. He was described as having “shaggy features” most likely related to his work assisting hippies into “organizing themselves into something approaching a self-supporting commune.”³³⁰ Some of the youth Curtis had wanted to help, raided and destroyed his youth centre.³³¹ This only proved what people were thinking, that overthrowing the establishment and government were the goals of the CYC. There was little in the way of positive publicity to counterbalance images of both Depoe and Curtis. As a result, they came to “personify the company in most people’s minds.”³³² Young people admired them; much of the rest of the public and the press showed them hostility.³³³ Newspaper accounts of David Depoe’s work with Toronto’s hippies had reached Fort Qu’Appelle on the same day as the arrival of the eleven CYC volunteers. Needless to say, Ferguson’s volunteers were met with hostility from the start. It took several weeks to reassure the townspeople, that his “trainees” were not “filthy, goddamn hippies.”³³⁴ Referring to the Fort

³²⁷ “One Lesson from Unorthodoxy”, Michael Valpy, *The Globe and Mail*, March 2, 1968, p. A2.

³²⁸ “The Kids We Pay to Rock the Boat”, Michael Valpy, *Macleans*, August 1, 1967, 27.

³²⁹ “Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing Any Good?”, *Chatelaine Magazine*, March 1968, 77.

³³⁰ “The Kids We Pay to Rock the Boat”, Michael Valpy, *Macleans*, August 1, 1967, p. 27.

³³¹ “Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing any Good?”, *Chatelaine Magazine*, March 1968, 77.

³³² *Ibid.*, 77.

³³³ Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, p. 66.

³³⁴ “Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing any Good?”, *Chatelaine Magazine*, March 1968, 78.

Qu'Appelle project, the Liberal Premier Ross Thatcher of Saskatchewan accused the volunteers of "agitating" among the Indians. Three of the community's clergymen however, came to the support of the CYC volunteers and stated that Thatcher had been misinformed and that his accusations were "unfair and unfounded".³³⁵

At the end of the training course, two local citizens who were part of the Fort Qu'Appelle literacy training were hired by the Saskatchewan Department of Education to teach at Green Lake and Abernethy.³³⁶ CYC volunteers from the group at Fort Qu'Appelle were sent to Onion Lake, Turnor Lake and places in the Northwest Territories.³³⁷ It is unclear whether CYC volunteers were invited by the communities themselves to these locations as per the principles of the CYC. If that had been the case, perhaps what happened at Onion Lake could have been avoided. This project at Onion Lake, Treaty Six had to be aborted as the Department of Manpower and Indian Affairs were working on a similar project there. This proved to be an example of poor communication between government departments. The Turnor Lake volunteers found they were not being used to their full potential. They were requested to work as substitute teachers for short periods of time in classrooms in the local schools. It appeared that at both Onion Lake and Turnor Lake, there had been a mixed reception to the CYC volunteers, as well as from federal and provincial staff.³³⁸ Volunteers from both of these projects moved to Buffalo Narrows, north of Meadow Lake, to carry on with their training. They became involved with the Indigenous Peoples there on issues such as welfare, fishing regulations, unemployment, education and discrimination.³³⁹

The CYC literacy projects at Onion Lake and Turnor Lake superceded any other programs planned for Saskatchewan. For example, "South Saskatchewan was obliterated at the beginning of the year, only to be immediately replaced by a project in the northwestern part of the

³³⁵ "One Lesson from Unorthodoxy", Michael Valpy. *The Globe and Mail*, March 2, 1968, p. A2.

³³⁶ Report on CYC Activities with Western Natives, 1966-1968, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt 2, LAC. Indian reserves located near to Abernethy, which was east of Fort Qu'Appelle, were Okanese, Little Black Bear, Peepeekisis, and Star Blanket (all File Hills First Nations). Green Lake was a Metis community surrounded by many reserves such as Water Hen, Loon River, Thunderchild, Chitek Lake, and Flying Dust (near to Meadow Lake). Onion Lake is a First Nation north of Lloydminster. Turnor Lake is a hamlet near to Birch Narrows First Nation; both of these are north of Buffalo Narrows, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and Meadow Lake.

³³⁷ Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities, Davis A. Munro to all Regional Directors, Dec. 30, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2, 4, LAC.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

³³⁹ *CYC Review*, October 1968, David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-9, CYC Genl, Nov. 1967-Feb. 1969, LAC.

province.”³⁴⁰ Another project had been started in 1968 in southern Saskatchewan with a purpose of Indian adult education. Bob Luker, Herb Walker, Chuck Wilson, Rod Tyler, and Gunner Carlson were the CYC volunteers involved with this project.³⁴¹ There are few records concerning CYC projects in Saskatchewan after 1968. It can be assumed that CYC in this province had its funding cut as well.

In summary, the Fort Qu’Appelle project was one in which there was a partnership created in training both local citizens and CYC volunteers for the literacy project. This is one example of a partnership program with CYC in Western Canada. A part of its inability to achieve much success can be attributed to its lead CYC volunteer John Ferguson, a former Indian Affairs educator. Had he adhered to the CYC philosophies that other CYC volunteers embraced, he would have known to wait for an invitation from communities. Also, his project, although well intentioned, was clearly not developed through the ideas and input of those communities and/or the volunteers (trainees). Alan Clarke, CYC Executive Director’s had tried to promote this project, as one which offered literacy through the reading of newspapers, and in the reading of documents such as the Indian Act, which would outline the “civil liberties” of Indians. Further to this, Clarke denied accusations that the CYC had been taken over by radicals.³⁴² The negative media coverage of David Depoe and Lynn Curtis had tainted this project from the beginning, as witnessed by the hostility that CYC volunteers met when they first arrived at Fort Qu’Appelle.

Alberta

In the 1967 federal, Department of Indian Affairs Report regarding activities of the CYC related to Indians, two CYC volunteers were working at Faust, Alberta “a small hamlet situated between the Driftpile and Swan River reserves of this Agency.”³⁴³ The Indian Affairs agent had no knowledge of the work of these volunteers nor if they were involved with adjacent reserves. What was known at that time, was that the CYC volunteers at Faust worked with a large number of Metis and some Indigenous Peoples living there. By the end of 1968, a similar report stated

³⁴⁰ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, p. 162.

³⁴¹ Annual Report, *The Company of Young Canadians*, March 31, 1968, David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-9, CYC Genl. Nov. 67-Feb. 69, 10, LAC.

³⁴² “CYC Ready to Expand says Leader,” *The Albertan*, February 7, 1968. CYC fonds, GR 1976.0502 Fed Govt Company of Young Canadians, 1968, Box 12, PAA.

³⁴³ Indian Affairs Report, Regional Director of the Indian Affairs Branch to Indian Affairs, Ottawa. January 17, 1967. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, 1/24-2-36, pt. 1, LAC.

that 19 CYC volunteers worked with Indigenous Peoples in Alberta in three main project areas at Calgary, Lesser Slave Lake, and with the National Film Board, Indian Film Crew.³⁴⁴ These two reports clearly indicated that the CYC was a program that this government department was aware of and followed in its activities. In fact, David A. Munro, the Director of the Indian Affairs Branch had stated that the aims of the Company of Young Canadians were similar to those of Indian Affairs as it related to “Indian and Eskimo citizens,” and as such, encouraged his regional directors to work closely with the CYC on projects. This rest of this chapter will focus mainly on the CYC projects at Faust and Lesser Slave Lake. The CYC / National Film Board project will be discussed as its own topic in the next chapter.

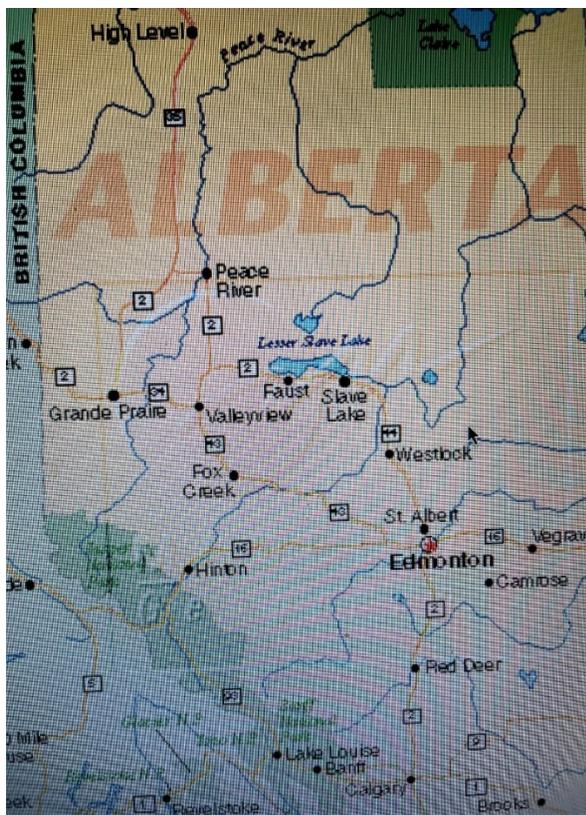


Figure 9: Map showing location of Faust, Alberta

In a report by the Organizing Committee of the Company of Young Canadians to the Prime Minister of Canada of Nov. 15, 1965, three specific needs were identified which the members of the CYC were to meet in doing their work. These were, to meet “the needs of economically and

³⁴⁴ Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities, David A. Munro to all Regional Directors, Dec. 30, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2., 4, LAC.

socially deprived people in Canada”, to meet “the needs of young people for more adequate channels through which they can bring their idealism, energies and talents to bear constructively and usefully in working with such people” and, to meet “the need of our society as whole for such dynamic experimentation, based on the constructive interaction of these two groups” (the CYC and those they would service).³⁴⁵ In looking at the example of Faust and the CYC project there, it can be seen how all three specific needs were addressed. With the first goal, the Metis of Faust, in particular, were encouraged by the CYC volunteers to voice their concerns with government. The CYC volunteers came to Faust determined to act as “catalysts” of change, but not to take over the work required in achieving positive results, whether with economic or social projects, or with recreational programming. The CYC volunteers brought their “ideas, talents, and energy to communities” but they allowed the people to act on their own accord. As far as dynamic experimentation went, Faust became the hub of further CYC projects around Lesser Slave Lake.³⁴⁶ CYC volunteers at Faust began their work by first researching all the facets around the socio-economic situation at this community. What they did not anticipate, was how the “constructive interaction” would play out.

Faust was a community of approximately 800 people, most of them being Metis and some First Nations of this Treaty 8 area. In a 1967 CYC report, the Faust project was described as in its initial stage and it was a “self help, community involvement project.” Indigenous involvement was through the Indian-Metis Progress league. The report went on to describe the number of Indigenous Peoples affected as very small. Seemingly, this report left out the numbers of Metis community members.³⁴⁷ As per CYC policy, the request for CYC volunteers had to come from the communities. The Faust Community League and the Faust Canadian Indian and Metis Progress League had made the formal request for CYC volunteers in 1965 to organize a recreation program.³⁴⁸ The settler population of Faust believed that what was needed to transform their failing economy was to encourage industry to come to Faust thereby providing jobs. “An organized programme of recreation and leisure activities to stop the spread of

³⁴⁵ Report by Organizing Committee of CYC to PM of Canada, David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-7, LAC.

³⁴⁶ Report on CYC Activities with Western Natives, 1966-1968, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 2, LAC.

³⁴⁷ CYC Projects Report - Indian involvement, Indian and Inuit Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6 Box 63 1/24-2-36, pt. 1, LAC.

³⁴⁸ Al Burger, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, May 29, 2017, Faust, Alberta.

immorality among our teenagers,” would assist in this regard.³⁴⁹ The annual report of the CYC in 1967 had stated that the two CYC volunteers, Al Burger and Jeremy Ashton who had arrived in August 1966 as part of the first rollout of CYC volunteers across Canada, were there to identify and work on community problems.³⁵⁰ They began by establishing a men’s basketball team. Turning to the youth of Faust, they also started a boy scout troop.



Figure 10: Relationship building at Faust: Al Burger playing guitar and Johnny Lalonde on violin, photo provided by Alona Burger

Burger had heard Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson’s speech from the throne in 1965 about the creation of the CYC and it had sparked his interest immediately. He saw this as his chance to make the world a better place. He was 26 years old and arrived at Faust with “no preconceived

³⁴⁹ Margaret Daly, *The Revolution Game*, 65 and 66.

³⁵⁰ CYC Annual Report, March 31, 1967. Lester B. Pearson fonds, MG 31 K37 Vol. 1, LAC.

notions nor any of the prejudices that had scarred the social fabric in Alberta's north."³⁵¹ He also felt that the invitation to come to Faust through the Canadian Indian and Metis Progress League, as one sponsor (the other being the Faust Community League), gave him immediate entry into Native society. Burger would make life-long Indigenous friends from Faust and the surrounding communities. As seen in the writings he shared, Burger valued Indigenous philosophies and embraced these as answers for living a good life for humanity.³⁵²

Ashton and Burger would go on to research the needs of Faust in terms of its economy, and other social aspects. Almost all of the residents were on welfare. After discussions with government officials, sociologists, and grassroots people, the CYC volunteers discovered that the economy based on fishing, logging and mink farming profited mainly white people. Socially, there were high incidences of drinking, fighting, promiscuity, and home invasions. The original reason for the CYC volunteers to come to Faust was quickly eclipsed by the bigger social concerns. The root of the problem at Faust was racial discrimination and the "powerlessness of the Metis to determine their own lives."³⁵³

Both CYC volunteers had hoped their research would improve relations with the Metis and the settler community. Upon being encouraged by the CYC volunteers, the Indigenous Peoples and Metis began to voice their concerns about their exclusion in the local economy; of the two CYC volunteers, the Metis at Faust had this to say, "those fellows may not have accomplished much in a practical sense, but at least they got us thinking and talking and looking."³⁵⁴ By February of 1967, the new confidence of the Indians and Metis in speaking up for themselves caused the settler population to dislike and distrust the CYC volunteers. This conscious raising prompted the settler population to seek the removal of Ashton and Burger. They complained that the two were lazy, rude, dirty and were advocates of Communism.³⁵⁵ This was similar to the experiences of CYC volunteers in Saskatchewan. Anyone associated with hippies was also associated with Communism; the CYC had been labelled as a "pre-eminent national organization

³⁵¹ Albert Burger, "The Challenge to Indigenous Emancipation," undated.

³⁵² Ibid., 6.

³⁵³ Margaret Daly., 64.

³⁵⁴ Ian Hamilton, *The Children's Crusade*, 71.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 71.

propagating “New Left ideals” from when it was formed, and well into 1968.³⁵⁶ The settler population was trying to divert attention away from what Ashton and Burger clearly pointed out as the problem. How did the townspeople not notice the “poverty, squalor and filth of the Metis’ living conditions” just over the tracks in the small town of Faust?³⁵⁷ One local businessman, a mink ranch owner, had made comments such as “coloured people are inferior” and noting that Ashton and Burger were championing equal rights for the Metis, stated that they had turned their backs on the settler community and were fraternizing with the Metis.³⁵⁸ In his own defense, Burger had this to say: “The Metis are beginning to look at this community and want some of the power over their own lives. We help them.”³⁵⁹ He noted that this was most likely the reason the settler population were against the CYC volunteers.

The Metis however, and a few non-Indigenous people, supported the work of Ashton and Burger. One Metis woman stated: “They are interested in us, in our problems and our needs. For the first time in 40 years, I think the Metis problem is being recognized here and those boys are responsible.”³⁶⁰ This caused a ripple effect among the non-Indigenous people, first within Faust and then outward to neighbouring communities, and finally, to various departments within government. Although the settler community at Faust had wanted to address the failing economy of this region, they did not anticipate the Metis and First Nations movement to become active partners in this change. The overarching concern of the settler community was that the current situation would be changed and they liked how things were, as they were the ones who reaped all the profits to be made from the resources in this region.

As for Ashton and Burger, they began to understand that what they came to do, was beyond recreational programming. As Burger stated, “that is not what it was about; there were issues that were there. We were the catalysts for the issues to air; we were the catalysts to cause them to bubble up. Proof that community development was a sound process.”³⁶¹ One CYC advocate and

³⁵⁶ The New Left argued that other social groups, such as students, were the central forces of change. Doug Owsram, *Born At The Right Time, A History of the Baby Boom Generation*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 225, 227.

³⁵⁷ Margaret Daly, *The Revolution Game*, 64.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁶⁰ Hamilton, 71.

³⁶¹ Al Burger, Interview, May 29, 2017.

journalist, Michael Valpy³⁶², had even thought that if there was to have been any kind of revolution, it would have happened at Faust because of the work of Burger and Ashton.³⁶³

The Faust town hall meeting held in February 1967 had a heated debate with both sides arguing over the necessity of CYC volunteers. In the end, there was much pressure placed upon the CYC “directly and through Alberta Community Development”³⁶⁴ to have the volunteers removed. The CYC pulled Burger quickly out of Faust. Ashton stayed on a while longer until April. The Metis circulated a petition asking for them to come back. There were no CYC volunteers at Faust between April and July 1967. When both Ashton and Burger returned, they addressed some of their own shortfalls. They had been strong in their resolve not to be “co-opted by the Establishment”³⁶⁵ and did everything needed as community organizers to identify natural leaders in the community as well as community issues. The white community members did not recognize these efforts of the CYC volunteers. They believed that Ashton and Burger were trying to undermine their needs, rather than looking at the larger picture of how Faust could have been developed to serve the needs of all of Faust’s community members. “The project would fluctuate from this time on, but no one could ever doubt the devotion of Burger and Ashton to the principles of the Company and to the Metis community in Faust.”³⁶⁶

As stated earlier, Burger had married another CYC volunteer, Alona Erickson; she was then assigned to the Faust project. Some of the hostile whites noted that Burger seemed to have settled down after his marriage. They further believed that marrying Alona had much to do with what they saw as the dissipation of the “state of militant confrontation over the race issue” attributed to Burger.³⁶⁷ It is interesting how Burger and Ashton’s work related to overt racism was seen as confrontational; it was as if this topic should not have been brought up at all. Much negative publicity was incurred as a result of their work; and the effects of this negative publicity were long lasting and would take away from the good works that they did. Although it eventually

³⁶² Michael Valpy was the first CYC director of communications, 1966-67; prior to Ian Hamilton taking on this role.

³⁶³ Margaret Daly, 63.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 67. The CYC volunteers were “loosely responsible” to the province’s Community Development program as “resource persons”.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 63.

³⁶⁶ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, 72.

³⁶⁷ Margaret Daly, *The Revolution Game*, 68.

became one of the more successful CYC projects across Canada, it did retain notoriety as the project where the townspeople ran the CYC volunteers out of town.³⁶⁸

Of his CYC work, Burger stated that as a volunteer, he was to act as a catalyst, to raise expectations. He understood that it was a leadership role, but one in which he would not take on any aspects of power; he used the example of procuring a photocopier for the community, which he stated he would not do, but he could assist them in finding a way to get this equipment for themselves. Once the community people were able to articulate what they needed, then they could move to act.³⁶⁹

Burger also saw himself as an outsider as opposed to those CYC volunteers who were Indigenous, and were recognized as insiders working on CYC projects. An example of such a project where there were insider volunteers, was the Neestow Partnership project, at Green Lake, Saskatchewan, discussed earlier in this chapter.³⁷⁰ This project had originally been a Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA) project. Prince Albert, Saskatchewan was another SUPA project location according to Burger. “We worked with SUPA and at Prince Albert; also with the University of New Brunswick. The CYC took on a number of their projects, including the Prince Albert one.”³⁷¹

As a European immigrant and as an anarcho, Burger saw himself as an outsider.³⁷² Although he was labelled an anarchist, he saw himself more as an anarcho, a “sovereign individual, that is I and the ego besides which there is no higher cause or responsibility.”³⁷³ He saw himself as a neutral observer and as someone who did not recognize any government.³⁷⁴ Over time, as he came into contact with “interesting people across a broad spectrum” and was also introduced to many Indigenous Peoples, he came to the realization that he did not have the same background as the settler community. He became both the outsider and the insider.³⁷⁵ In this way, Burger’s experience was similar to the experience of Eleanor Hyodo, CYC volunteer at Oak River. They

³⁶⁸ Ian Hamilton, *The Children’s Crusade*, 71.

³⁶⁹ Al Burger, Interview, May 29, 2017.

³⁷⁰ Ian Hamilton, 6.

³⁷¹ Al Burger, Interview, March 12, 2018.

³⁷² Ibid. Also, correspondence between Al Burger and Inez Lightning, dated June 19, 2017, June 18, 2017 and March 7, 2018.

³⁷³ Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own* (1806-1856) translated by Steven T. Byington, 1907.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Al Burger, Interview, May 29, 2017.

were both accepted by the community in a way which differed from any other non-Indigenous person involved in CYC projects. For Hyodo, her features as a Japanese-Canadian worked both to her advantage, to be readily accepted by the community, as she looked similar to the people of Oak River, but as a disadvantage in the non-Indigenous community, as she was mistakenly identified as an Indigenous person, and had negative, racist experiences.

In rural, isolated areas in Canada, the CYC had a focus on communities having social and economic problems. In early January, 1968, a local development committee was started through the assistance of CYC volunteers in the Lesser Slave Lake area of northern Alberta, to promote economic and tourist development in the area. This was one example of this type of CYC work.³⁷⁶ This project was known as the Lesser Slave Lake Project and its purpose was rural community development. It would become one of the CYC's strongest, most successful projects.³⁷⁷

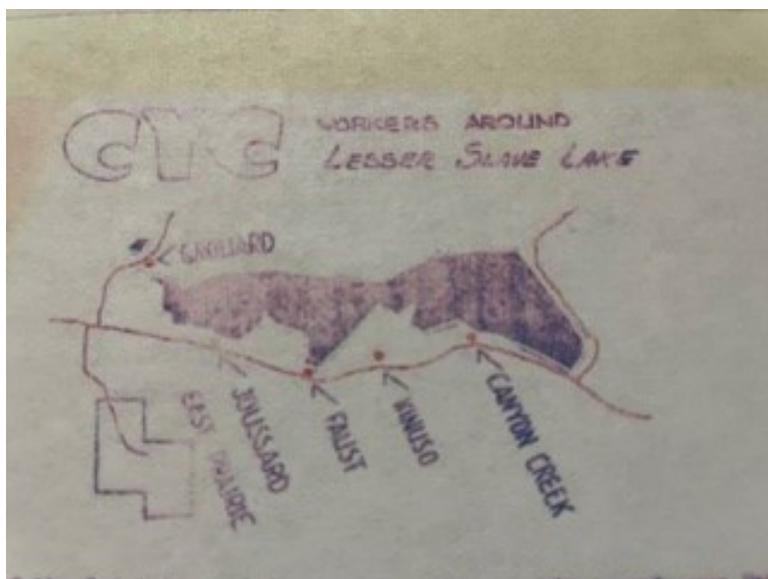


Figure 11: CYC Projects at Lesser Slave Lake, map printed in *Faust News*

CYC staff that organized this project were Marilyn Assheton-Smith and later, Ben Baich. Assheton-Smith was the CYC staff member on the Northwest Territories and Slave Lake projects.³⁷⁸ Baich had been a Field Consultant, for the Alberta Community Development Branch. He began his work as the

³⁷⁶ CYC Annual Report, March 31, 1968. David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-9, CYC Genl.Nov.67-Feb.69, 8.

³⁷⁷ Margaret Daly, p. 68. Also, Steve Iveson, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, February 12, 2018.

³⁷⁸ Ian Hamilton, p. 183. Marilyn Assheton-Smith, born in Olds, Albert. She had a career in nursing, nursing education and health education. She worked with the Dene in Yellowknife (CYC work) and also sat on the executive board of the CYC. She also worked with Indigenous Peoples in teacher education.

CYC Supervisor for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the District of Mackenzie, January 15, 1967.³⁷⁹ There were a number of First Nations located around Lesser Slave Lake which had close ties to CYC projects. Project locations were at Atikameg (Whitefish), Canyon Creek, Kinuso, Faust, Driftpile, Jousard, East Prairie Metis Settlement, and Grouard.³⁸⁰ CYC volunteers were Al and Alona Burger, Willie Courterielle, Peter Lloyd, Gary Harland, Drew MacDonald, Matt Hughes, and Rose Auger.³⁸¹ Both Al and Alona trained seven new CYC volunteers to work in these project areas.³⁸² As Ben Baich stated, the CYC in this area adopted a team approach, which accomplished two things. It gave young people a chance to do something positive for their country and secondly, it gave the young people an opportunity for self-growth. Baich, as the CYC project coordinator at Lesser Slave Lake, lived in St. Albert. He had a close working relationship with the Director of the Human Resources Development Authority, J.E. Oberholtzer, as well as other government officials and policy makers.³⁸³

These were some of the young people and where they worked: Gary Harland had immigrated to Canada from Detroit, Michigan. He worked on community surveys at Canyon Creek. Rose Auger hailed from Faust, and was just coming on board at that time as a CYC volunteer. Rose Auger, had been described as “a thoroughly troublesome, honest and dedicated Indian woman.”³⁸⁴ In her work with the CYC she was not shy about stating her opinion.³⁸⁵ According to Al Burger’s description, Rose Auger was a Faust community member, working on the CYC project there, and would have been considered an insider. This perhaps, was why she was able to state quite aggressively what she saw as her community’s needs in contrast to new CYC workers. She and Vic Cathers, CYC coordinator, were a part of a group that held creative classes for children, organized meetings, brought in experts, and united communities in their battle against poverty by working with industry to bring opportunities to the area.³⁸⁶ This was

³⁷⁹ Memo from R.D. Ragan, Indian Affairs, Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6 Box 63 1/24-2-36 pt. 1, LAC.

³⁸⁰ “CYC Lesser Slave Lake Conference”, *Faust News*, Vol. 1, No. 5, Jan. 16, 1968. Also, *The CYC Review*, October 1968, David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12282 CYC Genl 78-9, LAC. Other Indigenous communities around Lesser Slave Lake were Driftpile, Kapawe’no (Grouard), Sawridge, Sucker Creek, and Swan River. Metis settlements close by were the East Prairie Metis Settlement, Gift Lake Metis Settlement and Peavine Metis Settlement. There are other First Nations within Treaty 8 such as Lubicon Lake, Bigstone Cree Nation, Duncan’s First Nation, Horse Lake, Sturgeon Lake, Whitefish Lake, and Woodland Cree First Nation.

³⁸¹ CYC Annual Report, March 31, 1968, David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-9, CYC Genl. Nov. 67-Feb. 69, 10, LAC.

³⁸² “Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing Any Good?”, *Chateleine Magazine*, March 1968, 79.

³⁸³ Ben Baich, “What is the CYC Doin’ in the Lesser Slave Lake Area?”, *Faust News*, Vol. 1 No. 8., Feb. 19, 1968.

³⁸⁴ Ian Hamilton, 250.

³⁸⁵ This will be discussed in the following chapter regarding the National Film Board, Indian Film Crew and the Canyon Creek incident.

³⁸⁶ Ian Hamilton, 250.

probably the same group described in an Indian Affairs document of 1967, which stated that “three volunteers undertook a self-help and community development project in the small community of Faust, and this village has since become a Company of Young Canadians base for projects involving Indians in Alberta.”³⁸⁷



Figure 12: Photo of Al and Alona Burger's home, Photo by Inez Lightning, 2018

The local *Faust News* of February, 1968 carried Ben Baich’s update to the people in and around Lesser Slave Lake on the individual CYC projects, and what the volunteers were doing at each location. The report began with Peter Lloyd, who had come from Dundas, Ontario, and who lived and worked at the East Prairie Metis Colony. He stated at that time, that there was much to learn from the people, and they from him. Lloyd identified his volunteer CYC work as a two way

³⁸⁷ Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities, David A. Munro to all Regional Directors, December 30, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431, 6, Box 63 1/24 2-36 pt.2, 4, LAC.

process. Drew Macdonald hailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia. He was placed at Grouard, and he too, understood that there was endless possibility in opportunities for work there.

Willie Courtorielle, was a CYC volunteer from Faust, but lived at Atikameg or Whitefish Lake, and understood in much the same way that Drew MacDonald did, that there was much work to do as a CYC volunteer. Similar to Rose Auger's status, Courtorielle too, was considered an insider to the CYC project at Atikameg, being both Indigenous and raised in the local area.

Even though the CYC was fairly new, there was much movement with its volunteers throughout the country. Vicki Walters had been sent to Kinuso, Alberta, but then was transferred to Fort Rae, NWT, as was Linda Folster, who initially was placed at Jousard, and was then transferred to the Greater Winnipeg Project.³⁸⁸ Another exceptional CYC volunteer in this area was Stan Daniels, who was also president of the Metis Association of Alberta. He was brought on as an outside consultant, and worked with the CYC projects six days of the month.³⁸⁹

Al and Alona Burger had started their team work as a CYC couple in September 1967. Alona was a registered nurse and used these skills in her work at Faust. She was a member of the Faust Welfare Committee. Al Burger continued to publish the *Faust News Magazine*, which was considered controversial at times; however, it met its purpose of stimulating conversation. This news publication would further evolve into *The Lesser Slave Lake News* as the Lesser Slave Lake CYC project grew. Other initiatives of the CYC project at Faust included having more meetings with the provincial government, general community development and individual volunteer projects.³⁹⁰ Al also sat on the Faust Development committee.³⁹¹ Alona used their home as a local drop in centre for young people.³⁹² Eleanor Hyodo made reference to another project initiated by the Burgers. They had started a heavy equipment cooperative which employed Indigenous men of Faust. Hyodo became the camp cook when she came to visit the Burgers.³⁹³ Al and Alona would remain as Faust community members long after their two years of service

³⁸⁸ Ben Baich, "What is the CYC Doin' in the Lesser Slave Lake Area?", *Faust News*, Vol. 1, No. 8., Feb. 19, 1968.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ *The CYC Review*, October 1968. LAC R12282 CYC Genl 78-9.

³⁹¹ Ben Baich, "What is the CYC Doin' in the Lesser Slave Lake Area?", *Faust News*, Vol. 1, No. 8, Feb. 19, 1968.

³⁹² "Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing Any Good?", *Chateleine Magazine*, March 1968., p. 79.

³⁹³ Eleanor Hyodo, Interview, October 4, 2019.

with the CYC. As Al Burger stated, they used their CYC honorarium to purchase land upon which they built their home.

Burger described his early CYC days in this way: “When I first got to Faust, I was seen as a beatnik. I was just a guy from Amsterdam. I heard the throne speech. I wrote a letter. I went to UBC for an interview. I was then sent to Antigonish for training. Then they [CYC] said, we will send you to Faust. For me, these were adventures with possibility. To affect the world in a way that might improve it. We can make society better, with ‘peace, love, and hippy stuff’, but without the hippy stuff. I was not a beatnik, I was just working in Vancouver.”³⁹⁴

This was a time of civil rights, hippies and social revolution, Burger further recalled. In his own work as a CYC volunteer, he applied community development principles.³⁹⁵ One of the projects Al Burger worked on was a CYC community development project which operated in the Lesser Slave Lake Reforestation area. Little was known in 1968 about this project.³⁹⁶ Burger recalled that it was a government supported project in a forested area south of Faust. Ray Speaker, chairman of the Human Resources Development Authority, of the Socred government had been helpful with this initiative launched by the Faust Cooperative.³⁹⁷

One of the lasting benefits of being a CYC volunteer according to Burger was the fact that they made lifelong friendships: Alona still remained in contact with Eleanor Hyodo, as did he, to Jeremy Ashton. “The CYC created real bonds between volunteers.”³⁹⁸ One lasting memory that Burger retained was that members of his generation, of the 1960’s and 1970’s, believed that society and civil life were perfectible.³⁹⁹

The success of the Faust CYC had everything to do with the commitment of the Burgers, and the other CYC workers who wanted to work on projects that would improve the economy. The Metis and Indigenous Peoples began to find their voice to address economic inequality.

³⁹⁴ Al Burger, Interview, May 29, 2017.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities, David A. Munro to all Regional Directors, December 30, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999 01431, 6, Box 63 1/24 2-36 pt. 2, 5, LAC.

³⁹⁷ Al Burger, “The Challenge to Indigenous Emancipation,” undated., 5. Ray Speaker, Chairman, Human Resources Development Authority, served under Premier Ernest Manning (1943-1968). Manning was replaced by Harry Strom in December, 1968.

³⁹⁸ Correspondence from Al Burger to Inez Lightning, March 8, 2018.

³⁹⁹ Correspondence from Al Burger to Inez Lightning, October 24, 2017.

Cooperative ventures that Al and Alona Burger began helped to improve the job market and prepare Indigenous Peoples at Faust for work. Auger, Courtoreille, Daniels, and other CYC volunteers had ideas to improve the socioeconomic situation around Lesser Slave Lake. Under the guidance of CYC Coordinator, Ben Baich they were able to make inroads with government as the Lesser Slave Lake Community Development project to propose plans of action which would benefit the many Indigenous communities surrounding Lesser Slave Lake.

NWT

The Great Slave Lake Project out of Yellowknife was about research and community development. As Steve Iveson, CYC volunteer recalled, “We began our CYC project in November 1967. Marilyn Assheton-Smith was our coordinator. She paired up one insider, community member CYC volunteer, with one outsider, CYC volunteer external to the Northwest Territories (NWT). Naz (Nazareth) Therriault was paired with Louis Rabesca⁴⁰⁰, who was from Behchoko (Rae). I was paired up with Georgina Sabourin. She was from Fort Providence. Georgina stayed for about one year as a volunteer on the project. I lived in Yellowknife for 4 months, then I moved to Behchoko (Rae).”⁴⁰¹ This strategy of pairing CYC volunteers together in this manner would become one of the factors which led to successful outcomes for the CYC. Vicki Walters was another CYC volunteer who would later become associated with this project.⁴⁰² She was initially placed at Kinuso, Alberta, along the shores of Lesser Slave Lake, and was then later transferred to NWT CYC projects. Walters reported on Assheton-Smith’s presentation at the CYC Conference held at Lesser Slave Lake, January, 1968. At that conference Assheton-Smith introduced three of the CYC volunteers and two community members from Fort Rae and Fort Providence, locations where CYC projects in the NWT were located. Discussions at that time concerned the differences between NWT government and its legislation, as well as the economy and peoples of the north.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ Louis Rabesca came from a prominent family in Behchoko. He was instrumental as a CYC volunteer. He passed away at an early age. His daughter Bertha Rabesca-Zoe became a lawyer and would pick up where he left off. Steve Iveson, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, February 12, 2018. Edmonton, Alberta.

⁴⁰¹ Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018.

⁴⁰² Ibid. Also, Marilyn Assheton-Smith had made Yellowknife, the CYC headquarters since May, 1967. Letter from K.W. Hawkins, Administrator, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, November 7, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, 1/24 pt. 2, LAC.

⁴⁰³ “CYC Lesser Slave Lake Conference”, *Faust News*, Vol. 1 No. 5, January 16, 1968.

The NWT projects were in locations where there was some economic depression, but for the most part, Indigenous Peoples had to adjust to a sudden large influx of non-Indigenous peoples who worked in industry and construction. The CYC found itself helping to develop children and adult organizations, as well as “bringing the community together on major problems, such as treaty settlements, the Indian Act and problems related to white contracts.”⁴⁰⁴

One CYC volunteer, Laura Dexter, worked with the Indian Village, a settlement just outside of Yellowknife to get funding for a school during 1968-69. The Indian Village had been deemed an eyesore by the non-Indigenous community and little attention was paid to its inhabitants or children. The community members wanted their own school there and not have to send their children into Yellowknife. Laura used her contacts in her previous work as editor of the weekly newspaper, the *News of the North* and CBC Radio to bring the plight of the Indian Village forward. The Chief and community members brought their issues forward to the Territorial government, to no avail. Laura returned to the press and radio. But these initiatives must have worked, as the government finally allowed the Indian Village to have its school.⁴⁰⁵ Dexter lived in Dettah and had a good relationship with the people. The Chief of Dettah was Joe Sangris, Chief since the 1930s. Dexter lived with Chief Sangris and his family.⁴⁰⁶

Akaitcho Hall, a student residence, federal government school at Yellowknife, had nearly 200 Indian students ages 14 to 24 living there. As Steve Iveson, CYC volunteer recalled, Akaitcho Hall was a residence for out of town, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students attending Sir John Franklin High School. In November, 1967, Iveson and Naz Therriault had been placed there by Marilyn Assheton-Smith until it was known which communities they would be assigned to work with. He further recalled: “At that time, I was 21 and Naz was 19. A few students were as old as 23. There was a mix of people in this residence which included Inuit, Dene, Metis and non-Indigenous students.”⁴⁰⁷ Iveson tried to remain uninvolved with residence activities. A few of the students came to him and asked for direction on how to form a student

⁴⁰⁴ *CYC Review*, October 1968, David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 CYC Genl 78-9, LAC.

⁴⁰⁵ Ian Hamilton, *The Children's Crusade*, 247-248.

⁴⁰⁶ Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018, 3.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

council. He found a set of bylaws for a student residence he had previously lived in as a student which were less restrictive than the “medieval regulations” of Akaitcho Hall.⁴⁰⁸

After he had moved to Behchoko, several students of Akaitcho had asked Iveson to write a report about the conditions. He wrote about the environment the students found themselves in; they had even been afraid to show the student bylaws he had given them, to the staff at Akaitcho. In his report, he compared the rules and regulations unfavourably to those of the Yellowknife correctional institute; “it appeared that there was more flexibility in the rules for inmates.”⁴⁰⁹ He provided this report to Assheton-Smith who then gave it to Jack Boyd, Manager, Giant Gold Mine and leader of the Indian Eskimo Association Branch, Yellowknife. Boyd had forwarded this to David Lewis, Leader of the NDP in Parliament who waved the report in the House of Commons and called for an investigation into the conditions at Akaitcho Hall. Iveson learned of it all through a regional Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) newscast. He heard “all hell broke loose at Akaitcho Hall”; he had no control over what transpired.⁴¹⁰

The Chief Administrator of Akaitcho Hall, Bert Boxer, had wanted the students to sign a petition stating that there were no issues at the residence. The students refused to sign. He then asked them to express their concerns. When a student, Francis Blackduck did speak, Boxer cut him off stating that as a new student, he had only been there a few months. From this point, the students got angry and a table was broken. “That is what some people tried to refer to as a riot,” recalled Iveson. The CBC got involved; interviewing five to seven of the key students. The students also used the CBC studio as a place to regroup, and then returned to Akaitcho Hall to make their case. “In the end, it became a way for the students to talk to each other; to develop their next strategy. They would go back to the hostel invigorated.”⁴¹¹ Key leaders were expelled from the hall, but were placed in private residences to complete their studies. The Commissioner of the NWT, Stuart Hodgson got involved and got the students to elect representatives to speak on their behalf to government about their issues. This was how they were able to get their student council.

⁴⁰⁸ Ian Hamilton, 249.

⁴⁰⁹ Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018, 10.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 10.

The CYC was criticized in the NWT Legislative Assembly over this incident. Hodgson threatened Assheton-Smith that he was going to have Iveson removed, along with a CBC reporter, from the Northwest Territories. This did not happen. Although Iveson was not at the Akaitcho Hall event, he was in Yellowknife at the time. The fact that he provided the by-laws and prepared a report about the conditions of the hall, was enough to associate him with the event. The CYC volunteer had initiated the action to review school regulations. An injustice was battled. The Indian students stood up for themselves once they realized that their rights were being impeded. True to the philosophy of the CYC, in this instance, the CYC volunteer was a catalyst to create change.

Great Slave Lake Project

This project involved communities primarily along the highway around Great Slave Lake due to CYC lack of resources. These communities were Yellowknife, Behchoko, Fort Providence, Dettah, N'Dilo (Dettah and N'Dilo were two parts of the same band), Hay River and Fort Resolution.

In 1968, there were no reserves in the NWT and the Indian Act had little impact upon daily activities of the people. Voting rights were given to Indigenous peoples in 1961. There was an Indian Advisory Council which was comprised of the Chiefs or their representatives. This Council would meet once a year with Indian Affairs representatives at the regional office in Fort Smith to discuss issues.

Treaties 11 and 8 were often discussed in political meetings which involved Indigenous Peoples. In 1967, the Indian agent made a point of having interpreters at the annual meeting. In the Mackenzie Valley there are five Indigenous languages. The Indian agent asked that the written versions of Treaties 11 and 8 be translated word for word for the Chiefs. "When the leaders heard that the written treaties said they had ceded, released and surrendered all their rights to their traditional lands in exchange for a small reserve and a \$5.00 annual payment, they were very upset. They all brought this message back to their communities."⁴¹²

This is where the CYC would play an important role. The CYC volunteers assisted with the "documentation of Treaties 8 and 11; particularly with the Treaty 11 oral history of the elders

⁴¹² Ibid., 4.

and the formation of the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT. This movement within the Northwest Territories was rooted in the Dene version of Treaties 8 and 11 – the real treaties as negotiated by the Dene and not the federal government’s written version of the treaties.⁴¹³ This became known as the Great Slave Lake project and it was an oral history project.

In January 1968, Iveson was paired with Georgina Sabourin of Fort Providence (where she was from). As they had few funds for rooms, Iveson, had asked the Chief, Vital Bonnetrouge whom he had met previously met, if he could live with them. “It was an unusual request for a non-Indigenous man to ask to stay with a Dene family” but the Chief and his wife, Bella, welcomed him into their home. He learned how the couple had met, as she was from Fort Good Hope.⁴¹⁴ The Chief had told Sabourin and Iveson about the meeting at Fort Smith; about the story of the translation of the written treaties and how upset all the Chiefs were about the size of the reserves in the written version; much smaller than what the Chiefs had understood in the oral version of the treaties. Chief Bonnetrouge said “how could the government ever imagine that the Dene would give up their rights to all their traditional land in return for a tiny area that they could not possibly sustain themselves on?”⁴¹⁵

The Chief and his chief councillor, Joe Squirrel, asked Iveson to write out a letter for them. It was addressed to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Indian Affairs, the Commissioner of the NWT, and the NWT Member of Parliament, with copies to CBC Radio North, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Edmonton Journal*. It expressed strongly their disagreement with Canada’s interpretation of Treaty 11. The letter was typed up by Iveson for the Chief and his council members to sign. “This was an example of the delicate balance between facilitating and supporting a project versus assuming any kind of leadership role,” Iveson recalled. The signed letters were given to the Chief, who put them away in a drawer. The letters were not mailed. A few months later, Iveson asked why they were not mailed. The Chief told him they were not sent out of concern that the community would be cut off from government benefits such as family allowance, old age pension and education funds. This would be a concern that emerged numerous times with Indigenous peoples who felt it was dangerous to stand up for their rights. It

⁴¹³ Ibid., 3.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 5.

happened at Fox Lake in 1965; Indigenous peoples there were overcharged for food prices and were afraid to complain.

The process of taping elders for their treaty histories began with Louis Rabesca at Fort Rae (Behchoko) and Wha'Ti (Lac La Martre). Many of the elders in 1968 were adults and were present when Treaty 11 was negotiated and signed in 1921. These treaty stories were about peace and friendship; about living side by side with white trappers and prospectors. All their existing rights were retained. They understood that they would be helped with teachers and medical needs. There was no talk about giving up lands. Other elders stories were gathered from Dettah and N'Dilo. More Indigenous youth became part of the CYC. James Wah-shee⁴¹⁶ and Charlie Charlot⁴¹⁷ came on board. They participated by taping elders in these Tlicho communities. "It was a pretty exciting time. This was a whole new world for me. It is still vivid in my mind."⁴¹⁸ Elders from Fort Providence were also taped over the next 18 months by CYC volunteers such as Mike Canadian⁴¹⁹ and Joachim Bonnetrouge.⁴²⁰ CYC volunteer Roy Daniels, who had been a National Film Board/Indian Film Crew CYC trainee, moved to Behchoko with the intention of capturing the treaty taping and movement on video.⁴²¹

During the summer of 1968, the federal Liberal government had just been elected led by Prime Minister being Pierre Elliot Trudeau. One of Trudeau's mandates was to consult with Indigenous Peoples across the country regarding the Indian Act. In the NWT, Norm Ogden, head of the Treaty party, a meeting of government and Indigenous Peoples' leadership (Chiefs and council members) met at Fort Rae, 1968. They organized a meeting of the NWT Indian Advisory

⁴¹⁶ James Wah-shee was a CYC volunteer. He was President of the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT in the early 1970s after Roy Daniels. He became an MLA and a cabinet minister for the Territorial government. He was on the negotiating team for the Tlicho comprehensive land claim and self-government agreement, 2005. He is still involved in politics in Behchoko.

⁴¹⁷ Charlie Charlot was a CYC volunteer at Behchoko. He became first mayor of the Behchoko hamlet council. He passed away at an early age. Chief Jimmy Bruno was the Chief and primary leader of the Tlicho at Behchoko and the 4 other Tlicho communities despite the government's efforts to create settlement/municipal councils.

⁴¹⁸ Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018, 5.

⁴¹⁹ Mike Canadian, CYC volunteer. He became the settlement secretary, CEO for the new Settlement Council in Fort Providence, 1970-71.

⁴²⁰ Joachim Bonnetrouge became a strong leader for his community and the Dene of the Deh Cho Region. He retired as Chief for the Fort Providence First Nation in 2021.

⁴²¹ Roy Daniels was originally from Manitoba; he was a member of the Indian Film Crew (National Film Board). He came to work on the Great Slave Lake project, an oral history project recording stories of the elders present at the 1921 Treaty 11 negotiations. He recorded one elder present at the 1899 Treaty 8 negotiation. Daniels stayed in Behchoko and married a local woman. He transferred his band membership. He became president of the Indian Brotherhood in the early 1970s. His son Clifford would become Chief of Behchoko.

Council in Yellowknife for July. Ogden had expressed some interest in the Dene perspective of their treaties. The CYC volunteers were asked to help the Tlicho communities and Fort Providence prepare for this meeting. As there were no reserves in the north, the Indian Act had little impact on the Dene communities, but clauses applied as the NWT Indigenous Peoples were still considered wards of the federal government. The task of the CYC volunteers was to learn something about the Indian Act that would be useful for the Chiefs.⁴²²

The federal government was consulting regional First Nation organizations across the country in 1968. Both Iveson and Leon Sambelle,⁴²³ another CYC volunteer from Fort Providence, were sent to La Pas, Manitoba to get their perspectives on the Indian Act. They also went to Winnipeg, where they met David Courchene, President of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. The CYC volunteers learned about the Brotherhood. Iveson recalled, “it occurred to us that the Dene might benefit from forming an Indian Brotherhood in the NWT through which they could pursue their objectives to rectify and clarify Treaties 8 and 11.”⁴²⁴ It would become a territorial organization for the Dene leaders to address treaties.

Leon Sambelle encouraged the Chiefs at the Indian Advisory Council meeting to only talk about treaties and not the Indian Act. An important part of the discussions was the establishment of the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT as an organization to focus on the treaties; later, these discussions would be known as comprehensive land claims and self-government discussions. The Indian Brotherhood of the NWT was incorporated in early 1970 through the assistance of some CYC volunteers such as Roy Daniels, James Wah-Shee, Joachim Bonnetrouge, Charlie Charlot, Mike Canadian, and the Chiefs of the 16 Dene First Nations in the NWT together with lawyers. Ed Bird and Frank Laviolette from the Thebacha Association in Fort Smith were also involved. Mona Jacobs of Fort Smith became the first President.

Iveson was a CYC volunteer from October 1967 to December 31, 1969; a total of two years plus 3 months. He was also involved with the CYC council in Ottawa as a representative of the

⁴²² Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018, 7.

⁴²³ Leon Sambelle was a CYC volunteer from Fort Providence. He was a municipal contractor with his own company (unheard of at that time for Indigenous peoples of the north). He died at a young age from complications with his lungs. His legacy lived on through a local facility being named after him at Fort Providence.

⁴²⁴ Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018, p. 7. And Ian Hamilton, p. 160. Also Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs, Glimpses of Dene History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 242-246.

Great Slave Lake project. He gained experience on the policy side by being involved with the CYC council. He was not a part of the non-Indigenous social milieu in Behchoko or Yellowknife, instead he travelled on the land with Tlichó. He recalled travelling by boat to get to the barren lands for a caribou hunt which lasted for five weeks with 36 people. Other hunting trips were of shorter duration either by dog team or by boat.⁴²⁵

CYC Winds Down in the NWT

The CYC has been described as an organization unlike any other; its purpose was unlike a welfare agency which sought to dole out goods or advice. As much as people would have liked to believe that it was also “single minded band of agitators” with a master plan for society, its purpose really was to bring to “have-not” communities a sense of their own importance and power.⁴²⁶ Marilyn Assheton-Smith was exceptional in this regard. As Steve Iveson recalled, even though “she was on salary as she was coordinator for the project, she did not try to direct; her idea was to help make it all work and she did.”⁴²⁷ Non-Indigenous CYC volunteers were paired with CYC volunteers from the local communities. Iveson shared his example of being paired with Louis Rabesca. At that time it was difficult for Louis, as a young member of the community, to speak out in community meetings. Louis was committed to his community, knew all the leaders personally and knew how to coordinate meetings. Iveson was allowed by the leaders to speak. They both worked together on behalf of the community.

As the treaty issues were front and centre at that time, it was key that most of the CYC volunteers were Indigenous and speakers of their languages. It was a huge task to tape the elders stories about the treaty negotiations. “We understood that there were real treaty issues and that we had to help the Dene with how to move forward.”⁴²⁸ It helped having to live in the communities and learning what was important to them, in grasping the treaty issues. The Great Slave Lake project addressed culture, language and Indigenous education. This occurred at the same time as the Tree of Peace Centre which was established in Yellowknife.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁵ Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018, p. 12.

⁴²⁶ “Is the Company of Young Canadians Doing any Good?,” *Chatelaine Magazine*, March 1968, p. 79.

⁴²⁷ Steve Iveson, February 12, 2018, 8.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴²⁹ Tree of Peace – an organization in Yellowknife; the volunteers here had their training paid for by the CYC. Both volunteers of the Tree of Peace and CYC Great Slave Lake project met once per month to discuss common problems and solutions to these. Georges Erasmus was a staff member, as were Cindy Erasmus, Charlie Beaulieu and Alizette

The Great Slave Lake CYC project was unique: most of the volunteers were young Indigenous peoples working in their own communities. There were no band offices nor band core funding. There were no programs, no offices. There were no regular office hours. The CYC volunteers had nothing to sell. The goal was to live with the people, listen and look for ways to assist the communities; to help advance issues important to them. They were not a “single minded band of agitators” at all; they were all unique individuals. As for Iveson, his experiences in living with the people gave him a Dene perspective. It was a perspective not readily available to other non-Indigenous people such as civil servants and teachers, for example. Iveson’s experience was similar to that of Al and Alona Burger at Faust where they stayed permanently in the community of their CYC projects. Iveson married Fibbie Tatti, a leader and advocate of Dene education, languages and culture of the NWT. She is from the community of Deline, Great Bear Lake.

Many of the CYC volunteers were provided opportunities and experiences which would help them to play important roles amongst the Dene in the future. Most of the Indigenous CYC volunteers ended up becoming leaders in their communities or in Territorial institutions. Charlie Charlot, James Wah-shee, Roy Daniels, Georges Erasmus⁴³⁰ and Cindy Erasmus⁴³¹ were some of these volunteers.

The CYC had lasted from 1967 to about 1973-74 in the NWT. Once the Indian Brotherhood was formed, the role of the CYC was redefined. As CYC coordinator, Peter Puxley, who took over from Assheton-Smith in the spring of 1969 reported, the Great Slave Lake project volunteers had undertaken to work with the NWT Indian Brotherhood in assisting it to establish itself as an organization in the Mackenzie district.⁴³² Despite this request, as the Indian Brotherhood established itself, it decided the future of the CYC. The Brotherhood did not want the CYC in Indian communities any longer as it believed the CYC had fulfilled all tasks assigned

Potfighter. Volunteers were Joachim Bonnetrouge, Fort Providence, Jim Thom, Fort Providence, Charlie Charlot, Fort Rae (all CYC volunteers) and Rick Fader as well as Wayne Bertrand, Yellowknife Youth Centre. “What is This Incestuous Relationship Going on between the Tree and the Company?”, *Tsigoinda*, Vol. First, p. VIII, Indigenous Peoples: North America, <http://tinyurl.galegroupcom/tinyurl/A2Yao6>. Accessed 13 May, 2019.

⁴³⁰ Georges Erasmus would become the head of the Dene Nation, elected leader with the AFN (Assembly of First Nations).

⁴³¹ Cindy Erasmus and Georges both were involved with the Tree of Peace organization, an ongoing institution of the north. Cindy was also a professor at the University of Lethbridge.

⁴³² Peter Puxley, *CYC Report – Great Slave Lake Project*, Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319, Vol. 4, LAC.

to it; there was even an accusation that CYC volunteers were trying to undermine the work of the Brotherhood.⁴³³ This was a strange twist of fate for the CYC, as it was through the efforts of Steve Iveson and Leon Sambelle, that this organization was formed to address Treaty issues. The CYC did try to focus on smaller scale projects after the formation of the Indian Brotherhood NWT but the central momentum of the CYC gradually dissipated. Iveson described it as a natural evolution. “The CYC Great Slave Lake project had served its purpose successfully and it faded away along with the CYC nationally,” Iveson surmised. CYC did bring a sense of importance and power through its volunteers to the communities in the NWT.

Conclusion

The CYC projects in Western Canada involving Indigenous communities and peoples were of many and varied experiences. The projects that enjoyed success were those in which the CYC volunteers were imbued with the CYC philosophy of allowing the individuals of these communities to come up with their own solutions to their needs. The CYC volunteers would assist but not take over the lead. Prime examples of such projects were Oak River, Manitoba; Faust, Alberta and the Lesser Slave Lake Projects; and the Great Slave Lake projects. A part of the success had everything to do with the long term commitment to these projects. Had Eleanor Hyodo’s project not been shut down by CYC headquarters, she may have found herself there to this day, as she was adept at establishing relationships with community members. Al and Alona Burger stayed on in Faust, long after their contracts with CYC were completed; Al Burger chose to describe their stay at Faust, as being in the “navel of the universe”. Everything they needed or wanted was to be found at Faust, and at some point, new ideas via people would make their way to Faust, such as Kanentakeron’s teachings about the Two Row Wampum. Steve Iveson felt comfortable living on the land with Tlicho peoples. He too stayed on and remained active in assisting where he could after the CYC program ended in the NWT.

Projects that had trouble getting off the ground or met limited success were those that faced negative CYC media coverage from the start or did not follow through on the CYC aim of having communities request their presence. The CYC project at Fort Qu’Appelle was one example. Even before the CYC volunteers arrived, a negative media image of CYC volunteers had been established by the likes of David Depoe and Lynn Curtis; in addition, the lead for this

⁴³³ *Brandon Daily Sun*, July, 1971, 2.

project, John Ferguson, did not have the support of the communities he hoped his literacy project would assist. There were many First Nations surrounding Fort Qu'Appelle, and Ferguson did not get the required invitation from these communities to work with them. This would lead to a larger miscommunication when his CYC volunteers went to Onion Lake and Turnor Lake. Similar literacy projects had been started there through the department of Manpower and Indian Affairs. Had there been a stronger communication between his CYC Project and these departments, there may have been a more successful end.

The Winnipeg projects were not provided enough time nor support (from headquarters and financially) to achieve successful outcomes. This was an example of lack of communication between Ottawa and local initiatives. The project involved in house training which attracted Indigenous volunteers, but also provided valuable experiences for those CYC volunteers training the new recruits. The Oak River project had created strength for the individuals in that community; they were prepared to take over the head start program; they began to speak up for themselves when meeting with officials from the Department of Indian Affairs; they began to come up with other ideas to inspire the youth in the community. In Alberta, negative media coverage of the initial CYC program at Faust would continue to be pointed out any time there was reluctance/resistance to positive projects in and around Lesser Slave Lake.

Governments of the prairie provinces would consistently refer to negative media coverage in their bid to shut down the CYC. The premier of Alberta, Ernest Manning felt the CYC was a waste of money; further, the prairie premiers decided that although some CYC volunteers were dedicated, the ones that were considered agitators and radicals made it difficult to support this program. Despite the fact that the 2.4 million in federal funds was spent on this program, "considerable adverse publicity" continued to push the premiers to look inward to their own youth development programs.⁴³⁴

As Steve Iveson recalled: there was always criticism of the CYC. He was criticized by the GNWT for the decision of the Tlicho leaders who did not want to proceed with the election of a Settlement Council (municipal). One civil servant threatened Iveson with court action over obstructing the Settlement Council election. He stated: "I was not even aware of the meeting of

⁴³⁴ "CYC Chief May Talk to 3 Prairie Premiers", *The Globe and Mail*, January 20, 1968.

the Tlicho leaders at which they boycott[ed] the election. One might argue that the assumption that an outsider must be behind such a decision demonstrates a lack of respect by government and media for Indigenous Tlicho leaders.”⁴³⁵ This was a prime example of what Jeanette Corbiere Lavell spoke to about providing confidence to Indigenous peoples to stand up for themselves.

The CYC was one vehicle which Indigenous youth used to express their opinions about accessing equality of rights in the areas of politics, economy, education, and employment. Through the efforts of non-Indigenous CYC volunteers they were encouraged to speak their mind, to stand up for themselves. Yet at the same time, these CYC volunteers saw that the Indigenous Peoples had their own culture and philosophies which needed to be upheld as well, in their push for equality, as evidenced by Al Burger’s examination of his relationship with Indigenous peoples in his “Challenge to Indigenous Emancipation.” With the CYC projects in the NWT, the CYC Coordinator had the foresight to pair a non-Indigenous volunteer with a local, or Indigenous volunteer; in this way, the volunteers were able to partner and share their skills to achieve successful program results. The 1960’s was definitely a decade of immense change and risk in trying out new ideas. The CYC grasped new methods of doing programs. The CYC used Jeanette Corbiere and Wilfred Peltier in their training sessions for those planning to work with Indigenous individuals and communities to create awareness of Indigenous knowledge and culture. With many of the CYC workers, they were able to see what needed to be done to achieve positive results for the Indigenous Peoples and communities that they came across in their projects. As Corbiere stated, the CYC gave her the confidence to stand up for herself, and it was this same confidence that brought ideas to her which she shared in her work, in the hopes that this would allow other Indigenous Peoples to embrace their emancipation as human beings.

⁴³⁵ Steve Iveson, February 12, 2018, 12.

Chapter 3: Loon Lake and the National Film Board, Indian Film Crew

Rose Auger, a Metis woman from Faust, Alberta, and a Company of Young Canadians (CYC) member since 1967, was arrested in January 1969 after an altercation at a beer parlour in Canyon Creek, Alberta. Two others of her group were also arrested, Willie Dunn, a Montreal filmmaker, and Tony (Henry) Antoine, his friend and a Vancouver based Red Power advocate.⁴³⁶ Auger and Dunn were members of the National Film Board (NFB) Indian Film Crew (IFC), a CYC project, and they had been working on a film that drew attention to the poverty and squalid living conditions at Loon Lake, Alberta. Not one of the four white people involved in this incident was arrested.⁴³⁷ Was this an instance of institutional racism or simply a poor attempt to stop the Indian Film Crew's activism? This incident is but one example of how the CYC, an initiative of the federal government, evolved in ways neither anticipated nor welcomed by government policy makers. This chapter analyzes this event and unravel how the CYC project at Loon Lake became a "voice" for Indigenous Peoples. What were the legacies arising from this film? The Indigenous CYC volunteers would become active players in the pursuit of equal rights for Indigenous peoples. The CYC became the vehicle by which they would advance "human rights" of Indigenous Peoples, yet maintain the cultural uniqueness, the Indigenous identity of the people. I argue that these young Indigenous leaders were activists prior to joining the CYC, and would become leaders throughout their lives in advancing Indigenous rights. Through their abilities to voice their concerns, they were able to address the racism and marginalization that they saw as they did their work.

⁴³⁶ Red Power was an Indigenous activist movement which began in the United States, in the early 1960s; issues addressed by Red Power were colonialism, racism, nationalism and Indigenous identity, and the assertion of Indigenous rights. Sit-ins, protests, road blockades and media were methods used to advance their positions. In Canada, Willie Dunn was a co-founder of the Native Alliance which later became known as North American Red Power (NARP). "Who's who in PANE," *The Edmonton Journal*, October 25, 1968, p. 39. Indian and Inuit Affair Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999 01431-61, 1/24-2-36, Vol 2, Indian Association -CYC. Also, Bradley G. Shreve, *Red Power Rising, The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), and Dick Fiddler, *Red Power in Canada*, (Toronto: Vanguard Publications, 1970), p. 4.

⁴³⁷ Ben Tierney, "The Pub Fight That Could Lead Indians to More Protection in the Courts," *Globe and Mail*, March 13, 1969, p. 7.

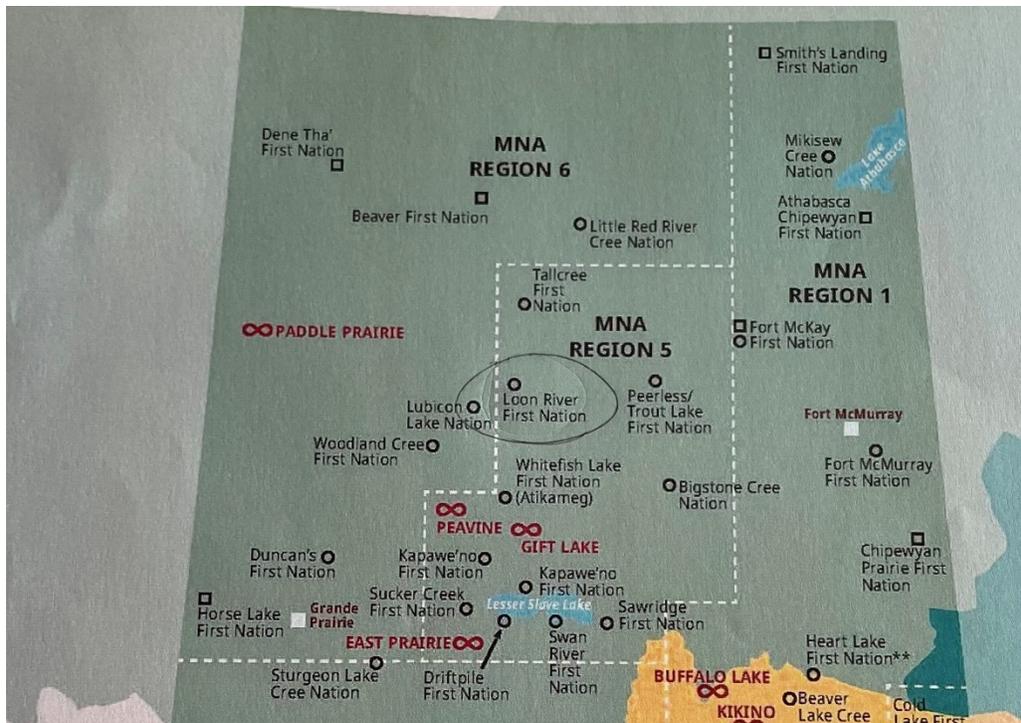


Figure 13: Map showing location of Loon Lake, Alberta

The NFB/IFC became one of the most intriguing of the CYC projects around Lesser Slave Lake.⁴³⁸ Not only was the IFC a CYC funded project, it also was created at a time when the NFB was promoting a new film program termed Challenge for Change (CFC). The IFC was an interesting anomaly as it was one CYC project that had mobility in that the members filmed projects at various locations. They also had separate training for its members equipping them to become film makers. This will be discussed further, as well as details regarding its members. The NFB CFC program will also be described in this chapter.

The IFC was invited to film at Loon Lake, in northern Alberta. Little did they know at the time, that this film, *The Cree Speak at Loon Lake* would become controversial for several reasons.⁴³⁹ The film brought significant notice to the marginalization of the people of northern Alberta, especially at Loon Lake. The IFC was unique in its own way, as its members were not only learning a trade as film makers, they were also becoming activists in their own right. What

⁴³⁸ From this point on, I will refer to the NFB IFC as just the IFC.

⁴³⁹ “The Cree Speak At Loon Lake” is the NFB name for this film; until 2018, it had remained in the archives of the NFB. The film is entirely in the Nehiyaw language (Cree) and that was the reason given for it not being made available to the public. It can be now accessed through the NFB website, along with the other IFC films.

was the film about? How did it cause so much controversy? What were the results of this film being produced? Who got to see it? What impact did it have on people? Based on what they saw and what they learned in the production of this film, members of the IFC felt compelled to create an organization called the Protest Alliance Against Native Extermination (PAANE). PAANE was just one example of how the IFC wanted to create a safe space for Indigenous peoples to voice their concerns; it would also become an opportunity to enhance the confidence of Indigenous Peoples. They recognized that they had the ability to create change, and to also encourage others to find their voice, to stand up for their rights. More will be said of PAANE later in this chapter.

The pub fight at Canyon Creek and resulting media coverage led to other interesting developments. Auger, Dunn and Antoine were jailed, but not the other, non-Indigenous people involved in the incident. Auger was released but Dunn and Antoine were kept in jail for approximately one month and a half. A host of individuals were rallied to bring attention to this incident including CYC volunteers, University of Alberta personnel, and NFB staff. All recognized that there were instances of injustice for many Indigenous peoples and there were no means for Indigenous peoples to fight these. This would lead to the creation of the Native People's Defense Fund (NPDF). This chapter will also look at how this fund came about and its legacy for Indigenous Peoples.

The impact of the Loon Lake film reverberated through many circles – within the IFC itself, amongst other CYC volunteers, within various levels of government, within the Indigenous audiences viewing the film, amongst the media, within Indigenous political organizations, and most importantly, within the community of Loon Lake itself. The Loon Lake film would resurface in later years having been left untouched by the NFB for almost 50 years. Those involved with the film had much to say about the legacy of the film then, and in retrospect fifty years later, about their work and about creating that space for Indigenous voices to be heard.

Incident at Canyon Creek

Rose Auger, who joined the CYC in October 1967, was a 29- year-old Nehiyaw (Cree) and had worked in oil and lumber camps as a cook.⁴⁴⁰ Auger had an important role to play as she

⁴⁴⁰ “The Pub Fight That Could Lead Indians to More Protection in the Courts,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 13, 1969., p. 7.

became the liaison for the film crew with the community of Loon Lake, as well as the Nehiyaw (Cree) translator for the IFC. Filming at Loon Lake⁴⁴¹ began in the fall of October, 1968. Mike Mitchell, who now uses Kanentakeron, his Mohawk name, recalled that his role was to do advance scouting for film locations, to find people to interview and to explain to the local people why, and who the IFC were trying to film.⁴⁴² Auger was from that area so she knew the people, so she arranged meetings with the Nehiyaw families around Faust and surrounding areas. She also worked with Al Burger, Faust CYC volunteer on finding people to film. With help from Auger, Kanentakeron talked with elders about their views regarding their life situations. He stated that other members of the crew did the final shooting.⁴⁴³ Auger also recognized the cultural/traditional knowledge of the IFC members and decided to seize the opportunity to share knowledge with the Indigenous community around Faust. For example, she made arrangements for Kanentakeron to give talks on Indigenous rights, including the Two Row Wampum treaty with the Dutch and English. (Al Burger remembered learning about this treaty history.) After this exchange, Kanentakeron was invited to some of the local ceremonies and more cultural knowledge was exchanged.⁴⁴⁴

Another aspect of the sharing of knowledge between Indigenous CYC participants, was the relationship building that resulted. Kanentakeron noticed how the Indigenous Peoples of the area lived. To an outsider, it may have seemed like they lived poorly, but to Kanentakeron, “they seemed happy with their modest surroundings.”⁴⁴⁵ He asked the community for their permission to report to his own community and to establish a relationship with them. He went home to his community of Akwesasne prior to any filming by the IFC. He wrote a report on what he saw in northern Alberta, and “our families decided to do a community fund raising and send some food and clothes back to them.”⁴⁴⁶ Indian and Northern Affairs did not welcome this effort of relationship building between the two Indigenous communities. They tried to discourage

⁴⁴¹ Loon Lake, in 1968, was a Metis and Indigenous community. It is located approximately 350 km north of Edmonton, it is a 5 hour drive, highway 88. Loon Lake is described as a “First Nations settlement” within the Loon Lake 235 Indian reserve. Loon Lake 235 is one of three reserves of the Loon River First Nation. The other two are Loon Prairie 237, and Swampy Lake, 236. They are all a part of Treaty 8, and the people are Cree. Bernadette Noskiye is the current Chief of Loon Lake.

⁴⁴² Correspondence from Mike Mitchell to Inez Lightning, Tuesday, December 17, 2019. Mike Mitchell refers to himself with his Mohawk name, Kanentakeron.

⁴⁴³ Correspondence from Mike Mitchell to Inez Lightning, Wednesday, December 18, 2019.

⁴⁴⁴ Correspondence to Inez Lightning from Mike Kanentakeron Mitchell, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

Kanentakeron and his community from taking any further action. The community of Akwesasne went ahead with this relationship building endeavour. They held a food and clothing drive and sent to Auger what had been collected. It may well have been that Indian and Northern Affairs saw this effort as an attack upon their reputation to provide for Indigenous peoples in northern Alberta, as “some of the government people felt what they were providing was more than adequate to meet their needs.”⁴⁴⁷

The CYC continued on with its projects around Lesser Slave Lake. A drop-in centre was established at High Prairie. Antoine, from Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP), made his presence felt in the area; he advocated for violence if that was what it would take for his people to stand up for themselves, and for society to understand how Indigenous Peoples suffer. People were afraid of him.⁴⁴⁸ Throughout his time in the north country, he and other CYC volunteers experienced acts of racism. It finally culminated in the incident at Canyon Creek.

As Auger recalled, “there were eight of us and fifteen whites and they started in on us, a big, horrible fight, and when the police arrived they arrested two people, Willie and Tony, and grabbed me too.”⁴⁴⁹ They spent the night in jail and were marched to court the next morning. “They wouldn’t even allow me a comb so of course I looked like a criminal.”⁴⁵⁰ According to Dunn, the group of racist whites insulted his friend, cofounder of the Native Alliance for Red Power, Tony Antoine.⁴⁵¹ Rose Auger’s brother Paul was also involved. A remark about “long hair” started the brawl. The manager of the hotel, Elmer Weiss, called for an RCMP officer.

Charges were laid against Dunn, Antoine and Auger that night. At the Slave Lake court the next day, Magistrate B.O. Barker sentenced Dunn and Antoine to two months for obstructing a peace officer, and fined \$25 or 25 days for “causing a disturbance on licensed premises”, under the Alberta Liquor Control Act. Auger was remanded.⁴⁵² There was no mention of the others

⁴⁴⁷ Correspondence to Inez Lightning from Mike Kanentakeron Mitchell, Tuesday, May 24, 2022.

⁴⁴⁸ Myrna Kostash, *The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada, Long Way From Home*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1980), 155.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴⁵¹ “Portrait of the Artist as a Young Half-Breed”, *MacLean’s Magazine*, June 1, 1970., p. 43.

⁴⁵² “The Pub Fight that Could Lead Indians to a Happier Day in the Courts,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 1969.

who were involved in the brawl, only that there were some “Metis, some Indians, and some of the local mink ranchers in attendance.”⁴⁵³

This incident opened a conversation about “institutional racism” of the police and the courts.⁴⁵⁴ This was not the first account of an unjust situation for Alberta’s Indigenous Peoples. Community Development Officer, Clive Linklater who was based out at Slave Lake, had encountered many such situations and treatment in the communities around Lesser Slave Lake.

He recalled several instances where frightened Metis were bullied by the police and magistrate. “They would charge people, pronounce them guilty, and hold court right there in the police car, because the magistrate was sitting right in there.”⁴⁵⁵ It was through Linklater’s work with Indigenous people that this had happened to, that all documents and receipts for fines paid were gathered and sent to Edmonton to the Attorney General department. As a result, every case was overturned. The magistrate was fired and the police sergeant demoted and transferred. The whole police detachment at Slave Lake was changed as well.

The attitude towards Alberta’s Metis and Indigenous peoples at that time was captured in a study by Paul Driben, Lakehead University anthropologist. He wrote that as far as economic development went, “the only sure thing at this time, is that the program is actually a reflection of Euro-Canadian rather than Indian and Metis interests,” and further to that, the “interaction between Cree and Euro-Canadians was limited to a client-patron relationship with Euro-Canadians always having the position of power.”⁴⁵⁶ In this instance of the judicial process used with the trio at Canyon Creek, it is clear that this was another imbalance of power being applied.

Dunn referred to his incarceration as an instance of racial “suppression”. “Starvation, ill treatment before the police and courts, poor health and welfare services” were other examples where racial suppression existed.⁴⁵⁷ Dunn believed that as a result of their film at Loon Lake,

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Dimitrios J. Roussopoulos, ed., “The New Left in Canada”, Richard Price, *The New Left in Alberta* (Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1971).

⁴⁵⁵ Clive Linklater personal writings; provided to Inez Lightning by daughter, Karen Linklater. In 1979, Clive Linklater helped coordinate a delegation to meet the Queen in the First Nations fight regarding repatriation of the British North American Act.

⁴⁵⁶ Paul Driben, *We Are Metis, The Ethnography of a Halfbreed Community in Northern Alberta*, (New York: AMS Press, 1985), p 137 and p 144. Driben was an anthropologist at Lakehead University, and his study was based on fieldwork conducted in the summer and fall of 1970.

⁴⁵⁷ Willie Dunn, “Native Peoples ‘suppressed’...The North and its ‘injustices’”, *The Gateway*, February 27, 1969, 6.

resentment built up in the area, which carried over into the violent episode at the Beach Lodge Hotel, at Canyon Creek on January 6, 1969.

According to Richard Price, who was chaplain with the Student Christian Movement organization (SCM) of the University of Alberta at that time, the police arrived after the incident and asked what happened. White patrons exclaimed that “these Indians were [are] responsible for the fight,” upon which the three were promptly arrested. As the RCMP had not witnessed the actual fight, they legally should have only issued a summons; they had no grounds to arrest. Undoubtedly, the three were arrested based on their earlier “political activities” with the NFB film which showed the “horrible living conditions of Indian people in the Lesser Slave Lake area.”⁴⁵⁸

NFB/IFC

The NFB/IFC members were selected from across Canada to learn about “motion picture production techniques” at the NFB in Montreal.⁴⁵⁹ In addition, Associate Director of the CYC, Jerry Gambill, was asked to find young Indian volunteers from within the CYC to recruit for IFC positions.⁴⁶⁰ IFC members had a different role from that of other CYC volunteers, as they were trained in a specific skill set under the auspices of the NFB, and were also a part of a new program under the NFB entitled Challenge for Change (CFC).

The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) insisted that members selected for the IFC come from different First Nations, “Mi’kmaq on the East Coast to Haida on the West Coast. The only thing they had in common was that we called them Indians,” said George Stoney.⁴⁶¹ What they

⁴⁵⁸ Richard Price, “The New Left in Alberta,” in *The New Left in Canada*, ed., Dimitrios, Roussopoulos (Montreal: Our Generation Press, Black Rose Books, 1971., p. 46.

⁴⁵⁹ David A. Munro, *Indian Affairs Report on CYC Activities*, Dec. 30, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999-01431-6, Box 63, 1/24-2-36, pt. 2, 5, LAC.

⁴⁶⁰ Noel Starblanket, “A Voice for Canadian Indians: An Indian Film Crew (1968),” in Thomas Waugh, Michael Baker, and Ezra Winton, eds., *Challenge for Change, Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada* (McGill-Queen’s Press, Montreal, 2010), 38.

⁴⁶¹ Alan Rosenthal, “You Are on Indian Land: Interview with George Stoney (1980),” in Waugh, et.al. eds., *Challenge for Change*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 172.

George Stoney was a distinguished documentary filmmaker for over 70 years. He taught at New York University (NYU) Film School until the age of 95. He became the executive producer of the NFB’s Challenge for Change program in 1968. With this program he hoped to move documentary filmmaking into a more participatory type of filming, dubbed documedia. He saw that there were possibilities of using the moving image as a tool for social activism and that this tool should be used by the people themselves (those being filmed) in pushing their ideas onto the media. Brian Winston, “A Handshake or a Kiss, The Legacy of George Stoney (1916-2012),” *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 67 (3) 35-49, March 2014, University of California, 36.

all shared in common though was the growing recognition of their rights as individuals and as Indigenous Peoples which they concluded were not equal to the rights of white people. This came to the forefront when they started to make films.

The crew of six men and one woman were Barb Wilson, Noel Starblanket, Kanentakeron (Mike Mitchell), Willie Dunn, Morris Isaac, Roy Daniels, and Tom O'Connor.⁴⁶² Barb Wilson, 35 years of age, was born at Haida Gwaii, British Columbia and lived in Vancouver. She started with the CYC in March 1968. She was placed at Faust. Noel Starblanket was Nehiyaw (Cree), age 22 at that time, and was born in Treaty Four territory at Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. He spent time with the CIYC before joining the CYC in March of 1968. Willie Dunn, a Mi'kmaq born at Restigouche, Quebec, was renowned as a folksinger. He was a cofounder of the North American Red Power organization (NARP); as a CYC volunteer since March, 1968, he was posted at Faust. Tom O'Connor, aged 21, from the Robinson-Huron Treaty area, was an Odawa born at Wikwemikong, Ontario. He joined the CYC in November 1967 and was placed at Kinuso, Alberta.⁴⁶³ O'Connor worked with the Expo '67 Pavilion and learned to shoot film at night so reels could be sent to Europe.⁴⁶⁴ Roy Daniels, age 30, was Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) from Portage La Prairie, Manitoba; he was "one of the original CYC volunteers and was [is] believed to be the first Indian selected."⁴⁶⁵ He was also placed at Kinuso. Morris Isaac, Mi'kmaq was also from the Restigouche reserve.⁴⁶⁶ Wilson recalled that fellow film crew member, Morris Isaac was not there the whole time; he may have come on later.⁴⁶⁷ Kanentakeron was Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk), one of the six Indigenous Nations of the Haudenosaune Confederacy; he was from Akwesasne (borders on Cornwall, Ont., St. Regis, Que., and New York State).

⁴⁶² "Indigenous filmmaking at the NFB: an Overview", *National Film Board of Canada*, (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2017), 3.

⁴⁶³ All information concerning IFC members was taken from "Who's Who in PANE," *The Edmonton Journal*, October 25, 1968. It is PAANE – but the news article has it spelled as PANE.

⁴⁶⁴ Tom O'Connor, IFC Member, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, August 15, 2019.

⁴⁶⁵ "Who's Who in PANE," *The Edmonton Journal*, October 25, 1968.

⁴⁶⁶ Morris Isaac applied to the CIYC and was selected from 50 applicants to attend the Canadian Indian Workshop at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver in 1966. He also applied to the CYC; one of his first assignments was to travel across Canada to evaluate the CYC projects which were taking place on several reserves. Isaac did apply to IFC and took part in the film training for the next six months; he specialized in editing. He left the CYC to run in reserve politics (August/September 1968). "Co-editor appointed", *Indian News*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Ottawa, Ont., May 1969.

⁴⁶⁷ Barb Wilson, Interview by Inez Lightning, May 1, 2019.

Most of the training took place at the NFB in Montreal. Noel Starblanket recalled that “there was a lot of hands on with the camera, with sound equipment and with shooting of film.”⁴⁶⁸ They also learned about picture editing and the production end of filming. The training was to last only six weeks, out of which, the NFB wanted to narrow down the number of trainees to 3 or 4. After the initial six weeks, it was felt that all of the crew merited further training based on their “aptitude” and “capability.”⁴⁶⁹ The IFC began to see that for the first time, their knowledge and opinions were “being sought, encouraged and appreciated by any kind of government agency.”⁴⁷⁰ Their own confidence was being built up with the opportunities they were given to express themselves.

The Ballad of Crowfoot 1968 was the first film made by the IFC.⁴⁷¹ Dunn began directing the film, but both Starblanket and Kanentakeron had to complete the film as Dunn, the “rabble rouser ended up in jail.”⁴⁷² Credits were given to both of them. In this film, Willie Dunn sang one of his own songs as archival photographs were shown, one being, Starblanket’s own contribution of a photograph of his grandfather, a Treaty Four Chief at the 1874 treaty negotiations at Fort Qu’Appelle. The intent of the film was to recapture key moments in the history of Indian-white relations, searching for truth in the retelling of these relationships.⁴⁷³ It became one of the most famous of the IFC films. It was shown in schools and has been dubbed the first Canadian music video.⁴⁷⁴

In *These Are My People...*, filmed at Akwesasne, (St. Regis Mohawk Reserve) the film crew had opportunities to be behind the camera, to direct, as well as to interview people. The film was unscripted and each IFC member was able to express their own feelings as the film was being made. The film became a collaborative effort. The IFC members themselves received specialized

⁴⁶⁸ Noel Starblanket, Interview by Inez Lightning, March 11, 2018.

⁴⁶⁹ Noel Starblanket, “A Voice for Canadian Indians: An Indian Film Crew” (1968), in Waugh, et. al. eds., *Challenge for Change*, 39.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁴⁷¹ Crowfoot, head chief of the Blackfoot, spoke at treaty negotiations for Treaty 7 at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877. Hunger was not a predeterminant in the Blackfoot treaty negotiations; in fact, Crowfoot refused government rations until his concerns with the treaty were addressed. Daschuk, James, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 106.

⁴⁷² Noel Starblanket, Interview, March 11, 2018.

⁴⁷³ Michele Stewart, “The Indian Film Crews of Challenge for Change, Representation and the State”, *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (fall 2007), 59.

⁴⁷⁴ “Indigenous Film Making at the NFB: An Overview”, *National Film Board of Canada*, (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2017), 4. Also, “Aboriginal singer, activist Willie Dunn dies at 71”, *CBC News*, August 9, 2013.

training depending on their interests and demonstrated skill level. Barbara Wilson and Tom O'Connor worked the camera; Noel Starblanket and Roy Daniels took on sound and editing roles; Willie Dunn and Kanentakeron worked on directing and production.

A contract was in place between the NFB, the CYC and the film crew.⁴⁷⁵ All equipment was provided by the NFB and the training went on for a full year. The CYC covered the expenses of these trainees. The NFB and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) would both show the films but neither organization contributed financially to the trainees expenses.

How did Indian youth become attracted to the NFB IFC? As Tom O'Connor recalled: "I was with the CYC and one of the communities I was working at was St. Regis reserve (Akwesasne). At that time, they were promoting the North American Indian Travelling College (NAITC).⁴⁷⁶ I had met Alanis Obomsawin⁴⁷⁷ and she encouraged me to apply to the IFC project. I told Kanentakeron about it. We both travelled to Montreal for an interview. We both got selected."⁴⁷⁸

Barb Wilson had a totally different experience. Her father had told her about a position with Expo 67. She went to the Indian Affairs Vancouver office and applied. Of 200 applicants, she made the cut for 75 that were interviewed; this number was then trimmed down to 25 and finally, 12 made the final selection of which she was one. During her time working at Expo 67 she became pregnant. She moved to Toronto and made the decision to have her child be adopted and brought up in a Catholic home.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁵ CYC Report November 1969. David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-10 CYC – Genl., LAC.

⁴⁷⁶ The North American Indian Travelling College (NAITC) was another CYC project which hoped to offer an alternative educational system to Indians; it was a mobile educational institution meant to educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Its director was Ernest Benedict. Kanentakeron and Tom O'Connor were also a part of this project. The 1968 annual report lists all NFB IFC participants as members of the NAITC also. Barb Wilson recalled that the IFC CYC volunteers were also involved with the NAITC. CYC Review, October 1968, and Annual Report, The Company of Young Canadians, March 31, 1968. David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 78-9 CYC Genl Nov 1967 – Feb 1969, LAC.

⁴⁷⁷ Alanis Obomsawin, one of Canada's most distinguished documentary filmmakers, was hired as a consultant on NFB projects related to Indigenous peoples after NFB producers Joe Koenig and Bob Verrall had seen her interview on CBC-TV's Telescope series about her 1966 concerts, lectures, and other fundraising activities to pay for the construction of a swimming pool in Odanak; children in her community were not allowed to use the pool in a neighbouring community after it was determined that swimming was no longer allowed in the Saint Francis River. She was successful in raising funds to build the pool for the Odanak children.

⁴⁷⁸ "Why You Should Know the Indian Film Crew," *The Secret Life of Canada*, podcast, December 2020. CBC ©2019.

⁴⁷⁹ Barbara Wilson, Interview by Inez Lightning, May 1, 2019, p. 7. In later years, she had two more children which were placed in adoption as well. She speaks to these choices in Linda Eastman's book, *First Ladies Nation*, as a means of providing hope to young First Nations women.

Prior to this whole selection process, she had heard that a film crew in Vancouver was looking for young First Nations people living in the city. She wrote a letter to the CFC program explaining how she had learned photography from an uncle; she also knew how to develop black and white film; in her letter she included her work experience with the public from her job as a receptionist at an architectural office. She received a call for an interview, was selected, travelled to Montreal, and began her work with the IFC.

Challenge for Change

CFC, of the NFB, also known as Société Nouvelle, was an activist documentary program which lasted from 1967 to 1980. Over 250 films and videos in both French and English were produced. CFC was a participatory media program based on the new technology of lightweight cameras, portable videotape recorders referred to as VTR, and live location sound, which allowed filmmakers to work in closer contact with their subjects. With this flexibility in equipment, the filmmaker was able to rebalance power between the filmmaker and the subject, this was “an undiluted means for letting communities speak for themselves.”⁴⁸⁰ There were no predetermined scripts as had been the case in the past when participants were required to be out of their “home” elements to be filmed. Professionals could now train participants, “traditional documentary subjects,”⁴⁸¹ to make their own films and not merely perform in front of the cameras.

One 1967 documentary, was filmed at Fogo Island, off the coast of Newfoundland by Colin Low.⁴⁸² There was an established fishing community there and at that time, the provincial government wanted to “forcibly evict” the people to depopulate the island.⁴⁸³ Low decided to create films about the people on Fogo Island. The people were allowed to speak for themselves, and the film was not controlled in any way by the director. Low’s style of film making became known as the “Fogo process.”⁴⁸⁴ By having the people of Fogo Island show what their

⁴⁸⁰ Michele Stewart, “Cree Hunters of Mistassini: Challenge for Change and Aboriginal Rights,” in Waugh, et. al. eds., *Challenge for Change* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 181.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 181.

⁴⁸² Colin Low was a “pioneer” filmmaker at the NFB. He began his career with the NFB in 1945, working his way up from graphic artist to film maker, to Director. One of his earliest documentary films, *Circle of the Sun* (1960), was about the life of Pete Standing Alone of Kainai (Blood reserve) in southern Alberta.

⁴⁸³ Brian Winston, “A Handshake or a Kiss: The Legacy of George Stoney (1916-2012),” *Film Quarterly*, 67 (3):38. March 2014, Univ. of California.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 38. This article has more information on the Fogo process which was titled after a series of films made on the Fogo Islands.

community meant to them, it was hoped that enough support would be garnered from audiences to allow the Fogo Island people to remain in their community. As NFB's Executive Producer for the CFC program, George Stoney remarked, "when it [the film] gets used in the localities where it was exposed, and when it is made a part of a conflict situation, [it] seems to excite so much more reaction than the written word."⁴⁸⁵

The purpose behind CFC was to empower Canadians by developing community and political awareness on issues such as poverty, sexism and marginalization. Its creators saw this program as "an articulation of merging and competing spaces: government, community and cinematic."⁴⁸⁶ Others involved with the CFC included Kathleen Shannon, Dorothy Todd Henault, Colin Low, Dennis Gilson, and Barry Howells.

Stoney also realized that the NFB had "too many films [were] being made 'about' the Indian, all from the white man's viewpoint" and with little active participation by the Indigenous Peoples themselves.⁴⁸⁷ It was determined that the NFB IFC would be able to "present a picture of Indian history, culture, and contemporary problems from an Indian, rather than a white, point of view."⁴⁸⁸ So began the film endeavours of the IFC.

IFC / CYC Lesser Slave Lake Projects

After the IFC's hands-on training at St. Regis, they moved on to a different project with the CYC at the Lesser and Great Slave Lake areas to develop communication between government and people. A project proposal had been developed in which the CYC and the NFB would collaborate on various projects aimed at filming some "of the existing problem areas in Canada" with the intent of creating an atmosphere "of awareness of the need for change."⁴⁸⁹ The CYC organizers hoped that films would act as a stimulant to the public, who could react positively or negatively, but "the important thing, is that they 'react'."⁴⁹⁰ One film of this NFB – CYC

⁴⁸⁵George Stoney, NFB, CFC Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 3, Winter 1968-69

⁴⁸⁶ Waugh, et. al. eds., *Challenge for Change*, p. 3. Playlist.

⁴⁸⁷ Brian Winston, "A Handshake or a Kiss..." 36. Also, reiterated in the document, "Indigenous Filmmaking at the NFB: an Overview," NFB/GOC publication.

⁴⁸⁸ CYC Review, October 1968, 20, 1. David S.H. Macdonald fonds, R12287 CYC – Genl. 78-9, LAC.

⁴⁸⁹ "Film-Project Proposal for the Company of Young Canadians," Company of Young Canadians fonds, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Libraries, hereafter MUA.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

collaboration, *The Cree Speak at Loon Lake*, did generate major reaction.⁴⁹¹ This will be discussed further on in this chapter.

The NFB project for the Lesser Slave Lake region became a reality in the form of an August 1968 contract based upon discussions between the NFB representative, Donald Duprey, and CYC representatives Stewart Goodings and Jim Littleton. The NFB representative was sure to make known that the purpose of the IFC was to “utilize communication technology creatively” under the CFC program. Further to these discussions, it was acknowledged that there was no clear indication that the IFC would eventually incorporate under the auspices of the CYC.⁴⁹² It appeared that the IFC would remain an anomaly of sorts; paid through the CYC, but technically, more connected to the NFB and CFC program. Kanentakeron stated about the CFC program: “what we were studying at the NFB was how to use the medium as a communications vehicle. We were learning to speak of unfairness.”⁴⁹³

A plan of action was outlined. As there was a “compatible” CYC unit in the Lesser Slave Lake area of Alberta, the IFC members were to familiarize themselves with this area and develop a strategy for filming. As Rose Auger recalled the CYC workers brought government people, social workers, and the press to listen and see. The workers fought for health care and housing and then, when they heard about the Indigenous film crew, they asked for them to come to Faust. “The idea was to use the crew to film exposes of the condition of native life in the north country, show the dying babies, the intrusion of the oil and gas companies into the bush, the pollution, the diminishing wildlife.”⁴⁹⁴ In the plan of action, October and part of November were to be months to film and the remainder of November and December was for “utilization”. It is not clear what utilization meant. This was project one and there was an idea to have a second project.

In the agreement, the NFB was to provide the resources and the CYC was to provide living allowances and projects that they would work on, until the end of the fiscal year. Noel Starblanket had noted and was upset with the fact that in the CYC-NFB arrangement, there

⁴⁹¹ Correspondence, NFB archivist, Matthew Wolkow to Inez Lightning, Feb. 1, 2018.

⁴⁹² “Indian Training (Film Crew),” NFB document, written by Donald Duprey, August 23, 1968. NFB Archives.

⁴⁹³ Kanentakeron, Interview, November 19, 2019.

⁴⁹⁴ Kostash, Myrna, *The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada, Long Way From Home*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1980), p. 155.

was a lack of funds for location expenses which provided the new filmmakers with minimal living expenses, and yet they were being trained to become semi-professionals.⁴⁹⁵

By the first of January 1969, the CYC, in consultation with the NFB, would “determine their intentions for the coming fiscal year for the film crew.”⁴⁹⁶ There was also a clause which requested a type of evaluation or measurement regarding the effectiveness of the communication technology in achieving the goals of the CYC. The projects would be under the guidance of the NFB, and CYC personnel were to be oriented to the use of the IFC. The IFC was to be aware of their place in relation to the CYC and the NFB and “any other information which will describe a clear picture of the future of the Film Crew.”⁴⁹⁷ Lastly, it was hoped that the CYC would finance other necessities for the IFC members besides the living allowance.

The NFB/IFC began by filming 300 miles north of Edmonton, in isolated Indigenous communities. As IFC member Tom O’Connor recalled: “I remember that there were CYC volunteers at Kinuso and East Prairie (Metis settlement). There were also volunteers at Loon Lake. This was a small family community in northern Alberta.”⁴⁹⁸ The film crew was aware of the other CYC volunteers and knew that their own roles were somehow different. The films were meant to depict day to day life in these locations. The IFC’s understanding of their own people – “to show the Indian, in their films, as he really was [is]” – was one of the objectives in their work. In this way, the IFC had hoped to improve communications between Indigenous Peoples throughout Canada and “to make them aware of the potential of their own land.”⁴⁹⁹ For the most part, many Indigenous Peoples were aware of the value of their lands. What was needed was to learn how to articulate what they saw as their rights in relation to land use by non-Indigenous Peoples. As others have noted this was exactly what was achieved in the CFC “dialogue films”, *Indian Dialogue* (David Hughes, 1967); *Indian Relocation: Elliot Lake* (David Hughes and

⁴⁹⁵ Noel Starblanket, “A Voice for Canadian Indians: An Indian Film Crew”, in Waugh, et. al. eds., *Challenge for Change*, (Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2010), p. 40.

⁴⁹⁶ “Indian Training (Film Crew),” NFB document, written by Donald Duprey, August 23, 1968. NFB Archives.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Tom O’Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019.

⁴⁹⁹ CYC Indian and Eskimo Program, 1969/70, Department of the Secretary of State of Canada fonds, RG6 1986-87/319, Vol. 4 CYC Jan. 1969-LAC. This report also mentions Interim NFB staff member Maeve Hancey.

D'arcy Marsh, 1967); and *Powwow at Duck Lake* (David Hughes, 1967) which had activists, such as Duke Redbird and Harold Cardinal, speak in these films.⁵⁰⁰

Upon his visit with the IFC at Lesser Slave Lake, Bill Nemtin, NFB Coordinator, recognized that there were difficulties in bringing the IFC together which were related to transportation and physical separation of the group. They had only one vehicle for use amongst six CYC volunteers in the area. Physically, the IFC members were situated at different locations: two in Faust, two in Kinuso, and one in "Canyon City" (Canyon Creek). Members of the IFC were unable to meet people and to get together to work out strategy. This situation was addressed by securing a station wagon and a truck from Doug Babcock, Community Development officer, who had also asked to go with the crew when filming. Babcock's interest was to learn techniques involved in community development filming.

Noel Starblanket began to take over coordination of project activities. Some subject ideas for filming included school bussing issues at East Prairie, "punitive welfare policies of the province," and lack of recreational programs for high school students at Faust.⁵⁰¹ The idea to discuss punitive welfare policies may have been one of the first indications of a determination to deal with the marginalization of the Indigenous Peoples of northern Alberta.

The IFC produced several films around Lesser Slave Lake. One film was a CYC meeting at which Ben Baich addressed the group. There was a discussion of Red Power, the need for action, and the aims of the CYC. The camera man was Tom O'Connor. In several of these film clips, there is sharing of residential school experiences and the attitudes these men as students faced in these schools. In another clip, Baich tells a "story to illustrate peoples' attitudes toward speaking against government."⁵⁰²

⁵⁰⁰ "Why You Should Know the Indian Film Crew," *The Secret Life of Canada*, podcast December 2020, CBC ©2019. *Powwow at Duck Lake* (David Hughes, 1967) film about problems encountered by Indigenous Peoples in educational system insensitive to their cultures and histories; *Indian Dialogue* (David Hughes, 1967) and *Indian Relocation: Elliot Lake* (David Hughes and D'Arcy Marsh, 1967) CFC films conceived as tools to combat poverty within Indigenous communities. Stephen Michael Charbonneau, "Bonnie Klein, Saul Alinsky, and the American Experience," in Waugh, et. al. eds., *Challenge for Change* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2010) and *Indigenous Filmmaking at the NFB: An Overview, NFB document.*, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁰¹ Correspondence from Bill Nemtin, NFB Coordinator IFC, to NFB Challenge for Change members.

⁵⁰² "Indian Film Crew", NFB document (description of film rolls), Alan Stewart. NFB archives.

Loon Lake Film: The Cree Speak at Loon Lake

The Indian Association of Alberta (IAA) President, Harold Cardinal, wanted the IFC to film at Loon Lake as part of their training, as the IAA had been aware of the issues of poverty and marginalization faced by Indigenous Peoples there. One of the big issues was a conflict about oil rights.⁵⁰³ There was economic activity going on around Loon Lake in the areas of lumber operations and in the oil and gas industry but Loon Lake Indigenous Peoples were scarcely involved. Film crew members at Loon Lake were Tom O'Connor, Barb Wilson, Noel Starblanket, and Roy Daniels. Willie Dunn was not there when filming was being done, as he may have been in Quebec and Mike Kanentakeron Mitchell, who had been there prior to the film being shot, was at home in St. Regis, Quebec. Kanentakeron stated that he had met Tom O'Connor and Rose Auger at Faust, where they had stayed for at least three months. Kanentakeron remembered: "At Loon Lake, we shot meetings, scenery, events going on. We tried to cover as best we could. There were some weather impossibilities, I remember being out there and staying in an isolated area; it was difficult to get out."⁵⁰⁴ Bill Nemtin recalled that they rented cars and drove the rough roads up to Loon Lake. Starblanket described these roads as basically wagon trails which required the use of four-by-four vehicles.

Rose Auger was a CYC community organizer at the time. She was not a part of the film crew but became critical to the project as a Cree speaker. The film they made was titled "The Cree Speak at Loon Lake." As the community of Loon Lake was entirely Cree and spoke only Cree, the film was recorded entirely in the Cree language. Rose Auger became the on-site translator while filming. As Starblanket recalled, "Rose was our go between back then, as she was a fluent Cree speaker."⁵⁰⁵ Although Noel Starblanket spoke the language, his spoken Cree was not as good then, as it became in later life.

Nemtin's original plan was to have their equipment ready for use by Monday, October 7 and to start filming by October 9, 1968. Further to this, they hoped to prepare the rushes of the film footage for screening at the CYC conference scheduled for October 20 in Edmonton.⁵⁰⁶ This

⁵⁰³ Bill Nemtin, Interview, May 15, 2019, 2.

⁵⁰⁴ Kanatakeron, Interview, November 19, 2019.

⁵⁰⁵ Noel Starblanket, Interview, March 11, 2018, 2.

⁵⁰⁶ NFB Archives, Correspondence from Bill Nemtin to Challenge for Change members, September 26, 1968

plan was evidence that there was some collaboration between the NFB and CYC. The IFC ended up filming from October 12 to October 17, 1968.

Barb Wilson lived in Loon Lake from September to October 1968. Prior to that, she had stayed with CYC volunteers, Al and Alona Burger, at Faust. Her accommodations while at Loon Lake were meagre. She lived with a family in their tipi for several months and when it became colder, moved with them into their cabin. She further recalled, “I had a walled up curtain for privacy.”⁵⁰⁷

In retrospect, Wilson stated: “This time, making this film, was probably one of those mountains where you learn a lot. As a young woman, I was carefree. At that time, I protested how people were having to live without help. Welfare gave them the minimum on which to live.”⁵⁰⁸ She remembered seeing a young girl in October, wearing a cotton dress, a light cardigan, and no shoes. There was no running water; they got their water for drinking and washing with from the lake. The home she stayed at had a floor that was earth; “the floor was shiny, there was no dust anywhere. It was spotless.”⁵⁰⁹ It was quite a contrast to the way she was raised in a large two storey home. With her 16 mm camera, she filmed women discussing issues of housing, recreation for youth, and how people were trying to live like whites.⁵¹⁰

IFC crew member, Tom O’ Connor stated, “we were up there just to do film work on the community itself. While we were there, we saw stuff happen. One guy from the community chopped himself with an axe while cutting wood. We took him to High Prairie for medical assistance. He received no help from the government.”⁵¹¹ The NFB crew began talking to people; they learned that some people did not receive their welfare cheques from the local director of welfare if they refused to transfer their rights to oil companies. The use of fear to prevent the Indigenous Peoples from speaking up for themselves was a manipulation tactic used by the provincial welfare department. An older couple that this had happened to showed IFC crew members their shelves empty of food. The IFC captured that on film. In another IFC film scene, a family is seen in their sparsely furnished home and the discussion centers on the need for more

⁵⁰⁷ Barb Wilson, NFB IFC member, Interview by Inez Lightning, May 1, 2019., 1.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 1-2.

⁵¹⁰ “Indian Film Crew”, NFB Document, (description of film rolls), Alan Stewart, NFB archives.

⁵¹¹ Tom O’Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019., 1.

funds to improve housing. Throughout the film, there are other instances that speak to the need for increased welfare funds to access more food.

The IFC also drew up a written report about what they saw, that stated that due to the poor road conditions, the welfare worker came infrequently and when he did arrive, gave out vouchers for food to the proprietor of the only store in Loon Lake. While there, they noticed that many people were without food; they had to share some of their food with the people. Many children had no shoes, and there was already snow on the ground. There were no nurses and no medical facilities onsite; only a box of aspirins.

The oil industry was encroaching upon their lands and the men of Loon Lake had asked the federal government through the Forestry department to survey their lands. As a result, Loon Lake community members were afraid to plant gardens as they had a sense of insecurity about title to their lands.⁵¹²

In the IFC film, *The Cree Speak At Loon Lake*, there is a scene where the men are outside speaking. Some of these men have been identified as Malcolm Noskey, Theo Letendre, and Dolphus Sinclair.⁵¹³ They talked about how they would like to be involved in the lumber and oil and gas industries doing business around them. They stated that with the right equipment and training they could become employed.⁵¹⁴ Out of all the oil companies set up there, only one Loon Lake member was employed. No training was offered, and only temporary, odd jobs were made available. They also expressed interest in setting up a sawmill. These were some of their concerns, and these needed to be brought up either with the public or with government.

Shortly after it was produced, *The Cree Speak at Loon Lake* was shown in a few locations. Anthony Kent, NFB National Distribution Coordinator was also, a liaison for the IFC from 1968 – 1971. He recalled that CFC local representatives in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal and Halifax had as their jobs to ensure the IFC films were distributed for show, particularly with First Nations communities. *The Cree Speak at Loon Lake* became one of these in his distribution duties, even though the film itself had no English translation. Through his connections in Winnipeg, this film was shown to inmates at the Stoney Mountain Penitentiary. This was the first

⁵¹² “Background to Loon Lake”, NFB document, undated. NFB archives.

⁵¹³ Correspondence from Matthew Wolkow, NFB Archivist, February 02, 2018.

⁵¹⁴ *The Cree Speak at Loon Lake*, NFB film, 1969. Reissue with subtitles 2019.

audience outside of the NFB to see the film. Those in the audience told him that it was rare for them to see a film about themselves, and particularly, for a film to be in their own language. While it was being shown, Kent was moved by what he saw; grown men in the audience with rugged faces, strong men, had tears running down their cheeks. He knew that some of these men were from northern Alberta. “The people there knew their land was being encroached upon by the oil industry.”⁵¹⁵ Kent also showed them the Willie Dunn film, *Ballad of Crowfoot*, which also brought audience members to tears. Kent stated, “I was very much affected by the audience’s reaction.”⁵¹⁶ He went away thinking that more films needed to be made in their languages. Other places where the Loon Lake film was shown were Saskatoon, Edmonton, Hobbema (currently known as Maskwacis), and Quebec City. Kent felt that the film should have been shown on more reserves, other than Hobbema, as most people commented that they appreciated that the film was all in Nehiyawewin (Cree).

Protest Alliance Against Native Extermination (PAANE)

The IFC crew members already planned to attend the CYC Conference in Edmonton, October 18 to 20, 1968. It was there that they shared what they saw at Loon Lake. They joined forces with members of the Indian Association of Alberta and other Indigenous organizations to form the Protest Alliance Against Native Extermination (PAANE). PAANE members identified in the newspapers of the day included Noel Starblanket as one of the founders, Willie Dunn, Barbara Wilson, Roy Daniels, Tom O’Connor, Gordon Willier, and Rose Auger.⁵¹⁷ All were identified as CYC members; however, Willier and Auger were the only CYC members who were not IFC members. Willier lived in Faust and began his stint as a CYC volunteer there.

The CYC Coordinator for all CYC activities in the Lesser Slave Lake and Great Slave Lake areas, Marilyn Assheton-Smith, was supportive of PAANE.⁵¹⁸ She advised PAANE not to act “too quickly or in anger against alleged conditions at Loon Lake” as “we’ve all seen this for

⁵¹⁵ Anthony Kent, CFC/NFB Distribution Coordinator, Interview by Inez Lightning, May 16, 2019.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Noel Starblanket was also identified as having been with the Canadian Indian Youth Council. “Who’s who in PAANE?”, *The Edmonton Journal*, October 25, 1968.

⁵¹⁸ Marilyn Assheton-Smith was born in Olds, Ab. She worked in nursing, health education, and was a professor at the University of Alberta in Intercultural, Women’s and Development education. Besides being the coordinator for the CYC at both Lesser Slave Lake, and Great Slave Lake, she sat on the CYC executive board.

years.”⁵¹⁹ At that point, PAANE members told her, “You may be getting used to it. We’re not.”⁵²⁰

Barb Wilson, PAANE member stated:

We were angry that people had only their land, nothing else; they had land and yet they were not a part of getting the oil and gas; this industry was affecting their ability to hunt. It did not matter where you drove; there were big containers and flares for burn off; wells were being pumped. There was also the bareness of the land, as they took all the trees off; there were no animals there anymore. What were they to eat? Not long after that, there was contamination in the water and land. With this there was isolation. That economic situation made our people outsiders. The people had no means of survival. If you went to the cemetery, there were all these little houses over the graves; these were mostly children. It broke my heart.⁵²¹

PAANE would become the vehicle for northern Alberta Indigenous Peoples to voice their concerns against industry, about their marginalization as peoples, and to bring forward the institutional racism that they were experiencing.⁵²² As Noel Starblanket surmised, PAANE was “pledged to harassment of officialdom in Indian Affairs” and to “knock the structure.”⁵²³ This organization was meant to strengthen Indigenous Peoples to stand up for themselves before “officialdom and politicians.”⁵²⁴

PAANE began its assault on several fronts to bring awareness to the public about the issues faced by northern Alberta Indigenous Peoples. One of the first items on their agenda, was to have Willie Dunn, who was appointed spokesperson and president for the group, contact the CBC to arrange interviews for himself to speak on behalf of northern Indigenous Peoples. These interviews were shown at the 6:30 and 11:00 p.m. news slots on October 21, 1968.⁵²⁵

⁵¹⁹ “CYC Leader backs Indian Alliance,” *The Edmonton Journal*, Thursday, October 24, 1968. GR1976 0502 Fed Govt CYC 1968 Box 12, PAA.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Barbara Wilson, Interview, May 1, 2019.

⁵²² “The North and its Injustices”, *The Gateway*, February 27, 1969; “Who’s Who in PANE”, *The Edmonton Journal*, October 25, 1968.

⁵²³ “Residential Schools Leave Scars”. GR 1976.0502 Fed Govt CYC 1968 Box 12, PAA.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ “Timeline,” NFB Document, Undated. NFB archives.

On that same Monday, the IFC had been invited to attend the Alberta NewStart Conference. F. C. Colborne, Minister of Public Works from 1962 to 1967 attended. (He would become Minister of Municipal Affairs from 1967-1971). In addition to Rose Auger, other PAANE members at this event were Willie Dunn and Roy Daniels. The NFB/IFC film claimed that 28 Metis families in the Loon Lake area were facing starvation. Colborne, stated that the government, although anxious to hear about these issues, could not “perpetually support people in uneconomic circumstances.”⁵²⁶ He seemed unwilling to look at the issues. It was reminiscent of the same government attitude to those individuals at Fox Lake (1964-1966) when they sought government assistance to alleviate their economic concerns. At that time, it was the federal Minister of Indian Affairs, Arthur Laing who had made the original comment.

On Tuesday, October 22, 1968, PAANE had its first direct confrontation with provincial cabinet ministers. Upon announcing that Loon Lake people were starving to death, Colborne began to answer questions posed by Rose Auger, PAANE member. In the end, the Minister stated that all that could be done, “was [is] to investigate and find out the facts.”⁵²⁷ Upon this comment, Roy Daniels asked why civil servants were always sent in only to bring out arbitrary (this word was taken from the news article) reports. He was basically admonishing the Minister to go himself and have a look at the situation at Loon Lake. Daniels further stated, “we are going to keep hitting the government until something is done.”⁵²⁸ When the Minister learned that the meeting was to be filmed by the IFC, he allowed news media into the same meeting. Was he afraid of something by doing so? NFB commentary about this film footage stated that this was a “very good scene contrasting need for action with bureaucracy.”⁵²⁹

A third event for PAANE involved other members of the IFC crew. Upset by what they saw and shared at the CYC Conference, they jumped into their cars and drove to the district headquarters of the welfare department at High Prairie, on October 21, 1968. The crew walked into the welfare office, cameras rolling, and asked to meet with the Superintendent, Peter Morris. Barb Wilson did the interview and Noel Starblanket captured the sound.⁵³⁰ Bill Nemtin was in

⁵²⁶ “28 Loon Lake Families Facing Starvation, CYC Claims”, *Edmonton Journal*, October 21, 1968.

⁵²⁷ “Starvation Charge: Bitter Words Flow”, *Edmonton Journal*, October 22, 1968.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁹ “Indian Film Crew”, NFB Document, (description of film rolls), Alan Steward, NFB Archives.

⁵³⁰ Tom O’Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019, p. 1.

attendance as well. They wanted to know what Morris would do about the blackmailing of welfare recipients at Loon Lake.⁵³¹

Morris described this event as a meeting with CYC volunteer, Barbara Wilson. A three-man NFB crew not invited to the meeting had come with Wilson. Morris asked them to leave but not before they shot film of the meeting. Morris had asked Wilson to provide names of families suffering at Loon Lake; she stated that it was the entire community. Morris described the rest of their conversation as “quite hostile.”⁵³² The hostility may have been the result of Morris’ words when asked if the cameras were on. Nemtin stated, “he looked up at the camera and asked if that thing was running. We said yes, we are doing a film on native issues in Alberta. We were then told to get the @\$#@! Out of here or we would regret it.”⁵³³ They were all escorted out of the office, but the cameras captured it all. As Tom O’Connor, recalled, “that’s when we decided to take this footage to the CBC in Edmonton. It was all of us together who decided to do this. We knew that the locals would not do anything about the situation they found themselves in, as this could affect their communities. Our presentations were about their living conditions.”⁵³⁴ They contacted IAA officials, Eugene Steinhauer and Harold Cardinal. The heated episode captured on film was recommended to be sent to the CBC and provincial news. The CBC aired it on the province wide news, evening edition on October 22, 1968.⁵³⁵

Peter Morris and his worker for Loon Lake, Arthur Wood, flew into Loon Lake to investigate. Morris stated that the district nurse had made a “routine” visit on Monday along with Wood, and to her knowledge, the children she saw had proper clothing and the few skin rashes on the children attributed to malnutrition were described as related to “playing in the dirt.”⁵³⁶ As far as starvation, a High Prairie doctor stated that although he had seen malnutrition from other areas he had never seen any at Loon Lake⁵³⁷.

Coincidentally, the doctor remained nameless. Also, the area around High Prairie had many Indigenous communities, so to brush off malnutrition in other areas in this manner, spoke to the

⁵³¹ Bill Nemtin, NFB Coordinator of IFC, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, May 15, 2019, 2.

⁵³² “Official to Probe Charge of Loon Lake Starvation,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 22, 1968.

⁵³³ Nemtin, Interview, May 15, 2019., 2.

⁵³⁴ Tom O’Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019., 2.

⁵³⁵ “Events”, NFB document. undated. NFB archives.

⁵³⁶ “Official to Probe Charge of Loon Lake Starvation,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 22, 1968.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

attitude of the health and government departments concerning northern Indigenous Peoples at that time. However, issues with housing did come up. A home owned by a Letendre (first name not known) housed two adults and 13 children; it was described as a “crumbling, one room shack” with dirty mattresses spread over the filthy floor. Welfare Director, Peter Morris was heard to say, “this is bad.” When told that Letendre had been advised to get a doctor’s note, to get more assistance, it was also noted that Letendre had a deep distrust of the welfare system.⁵³⁸ In this article about the Letendre home, it was also mentioned that the CYC “spent most of their time cataloguing hard core cases.”⁵³⁹ This may have been a bit of an exaggerated statement, as the CYC at Loon Lake, had not been there long enough to catalogue anything. What they saw was right in front of them. Although some community members did express the idea that the CYC were “crusaders” of sorts, there was no doubt that Letendre’s home and a few others were in a destitute state. This is a prime example of what activist Saul Alinsky referred to when he explained why he chose to speak to disenfranchised communities. He had stated, that what people required was to “remove rationalizations they use as an excuse not to get up and fight.”⁵⁴⁰

Not all people supported PAANE. One journalist with the Edmonton Journal, described the group as “young Indian militants”, as “intelligent and articulate”, and as a group, a “band of mobile protesters equipped with movie cameras.”⁵⁴¹ It was also believed that they were putting too much emphasis on a strong sense of injustice and in fact, were making false charges which would take away from advancing the Indigenous cause.⁵⁴² It is difficult to agree with this last comment as the members of the IFC were welcomed back on their return to Loon Lake with the CBC on October 24, 1968; the CBC were there to verify what the IFC had filmed.⁵⁴³ They were “impressed with the veracity of crew’s description of conditions.”⁵⁴⁴ This resulted in a one and

⁵³⁸ “Filthy Shack Home for Family of 15”, *Edmonton Journal*, October 23, 1968.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁰ *Encounter with Saul Alinsky, Part 2: Rama Indian Reserve*, NFB documentary, 1967, (32 min.). In this documentary Saul Alinsky had been speaking to Duke Redbird. Redbird and Alinsky shared their ideas. Redbird steadfastly hung on to the concept that Indigenous peoples’ have their own values, which makes them unique from Western society. As Redbird described it, “preserving the things we want, the spiritual nature of ourselves.”

⁵⁴¹ “Editorial Comment”, *Edmonton Journal*, Saturday, October 26, 1968. Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999 – 01431-6, Box 63, 1/24-2-36 pt.2, LAC.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ “Events”, NFB documents. undated. NFB archives.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

half hour television program on the conditions the CBC found at Loon Lake which aired on October 28.

Starblanket stated that the NFB trained them, provided the equipment for filming, supplied the film and would distribute their finished product: the films. “In the meantime” Starblanket said, “they [the IFC] are free to promote publication of their product – as they have been doing in Edmonton through the agency of the CBC.”⁵⁴⁵ One thing that was made clear was that the CYC, although it paid their living allowance, did not pay for promotion of their product. Travelling expenses were covered through a generous grant from the Native Communications Society and other private donations. Vehicles they used were provided by “well-wishers”.⁵⁴⁶

The position of the CFC on PAANE was indicated in a letter by W.G. Lee, Challenge for Change executive with the NFB, who remarked that the scenes of poverty and starvation the IFC witnessed motivated them to create this organization. PAANE wanted to expose what they witnessed to everyone in Alberta, and across Canada. They wanted to contact the Leader of the Opposition in Alberta, and the media. The letter also stated that PAANE would appear on the CBC news that same night, not in the capacity as the “NFB film crew, but as volunteers in the Company of Young Canadians.”⁵⁴⁷ Further, although the NFB provided the training and equipment for the films, their assignments in the field, were “CYC assignments.”⁵⁴⁸ In the original contract discussed in August 1968, it was agreed that the IFC would do work that was aligned with CYC goals. The IFC was to be mindful of its work under both the NFB and the CYC. This contractual relationship permitted the crew to film what came naturally, in working with the local peoples regarding the content to be filmed. However, under the CYC philosophy, they were to let the people they worked with find their own solutions and “voice” on issues.

A year prior to the IFC and events surrounding Loon Lake, the western premiers had been wary of the CYC and its projects. They had wanted the CYC to be removed from the West; however, the communities involved with their projects sprang to their defense in Winnipeg,

⁵⁴⁵ “Who’s who in PANE,” *The Edmonton Journal*, October 25, 1968.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Correspondence W.G. Lee, NFB/Challenge for Change, October 21, 1968.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

Manitoba, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, and in Alberta, both at Calgary, and Faust.⁵⁴⁹ The Alberta politicians needed to speculate no longer as an instrument of "racial unrest" had been developed, PAANE. All were Indigenous Peoples, and all members of the IFC, as well as CYC. PAANE, "serious in its demands, were not afraid of publicity and had no intention of being put in their place by civil servants."⁵⁵⁰ Ernest Manning was the Social Credit Premier of Alberta at the time. "He saw us as a bunch of radicals and shit disturbers. We proved him right. I thought of that for many years."⁵⁵¹ As Bill Nemtin recalled, "The Alberta government was livid and angry that the NFB was making a film on welfare for Natives."⁵⁵² Bill Nemtin recalled, "the Minister of Welfare was furious that this film on native welfare issues in the province was being produced by a federal agency. He demanded Gerard Pelletier, federal Minister of Communications who was responsible for the film board in Parliament, to get the NFB crew out of the province. This was passed on to the film commissioner's office. The film and equipment were removed shortly after. I remember being phoned and asked to have the film crew removed from Alberta as soon as possible. This whole episode took 10 days to two weeks."⁵⁵³

The Social Credit government of Alberta through an investigation by the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) denied the claims made by the CYC, even though the communique it issued on November 4, 1968 admitted to a standard of living for the people of Loon Lake which was not consistent to that of non-Indigenous Peoples living in northern Alberta.⁵⁵⁴ One news editorial stated that there is "chronic unemployment, illness, malnutrition and demoralization" in Loon Lake, but certainly not starvation.⁵⁵⁵ The result of the IFC effort was a commitment from the HRDA to strengthen communication with Loon Lake members, particularly with the lack of employment opportunities and to find ways to create work opportunities with industry. The government would also look further into medical and housing concerns.⁵⁵⁶ The government was forced to listen through the efforts of the IFC.

⁵⁴⁹ Michael Valpy, "One Lesson From Unorthodoxy," *The Globe and Mail*, March 2, 1968; "Setback for CYC", *The Telegram*, May 8, 1968. Toronto.

⁵⁵⁰ Tom Campbell, "Special Report, The CYC vs. the Alberta Government", *The Brandon Sun*, November 13, 1968.

⁵⁵¹ Tom O'Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019.

⁵⁵² Bill Nemtin, Interview, May 15, 2019.

⁵⁵³ Bill Nemtin, Interview, May 15, 2019.

⁵⁵⁴ GOA, Information bulletin, Nov. 4, 1968, GR 1976 0502, Fed Govt CYC 1968 Box 12, PAA.

⁵⁵⁵ "PAANE in Alberta: a constructive force?," Editorial comment, *The Edmonton Journal*, October 26, 1968.

⁵⁵⁶ GOA, Information Bulletin, Nov. 4, 1968, PAA, GR 1976 0502, Fed Govt CYC 1968, Box 12.

Shortly after the film was made, Barb Wilson moved back to Faust where she lived with Al and Alona Burger, before returning to Montreal.⁵⁵⁷ Tom O'Connor stayed on at Wabasca-Desmarais at the Co-op Store. Not long after, the IFC contracts with CYC expired. All equipment was returned to the NFB and that was the end of PAANE. This group exposed what was going on in northern communities. As IFC crew member Tom O'Connor stated, "through both written (media) and film work, nobody or very few people at that time, were doing any kind of work like this. We were able to voice the concerns of the Loon Lake people publicly, as they could not do it themselves for fear of what would happen to them."⁵⁵⁸

Native People's Defense Fund

Rose Auger was not about to let the incident at Canyon Creek rest. Richard Price, Student Christian Movement chaplain at the University of Alberta invited Rose Auger to speak on campus about the incident at Canyon Creek. She told them that they had been unjustly charged. The presentation she made to the University of Alberta's student council recounted how the RCMP at Canyon Creek "arrested Willie Dunn and Henry Antoine one day and convicted them in a closed court the next day."⁵⁵⁹ The incident at Canyon Creek became a "cause celebre" among Western Indigenous Peoples. It even got to the point where the Slave Lake prison warden was badgered to distraction in having "famous" prisoners of the Indigenous world, held there without clear charges.⁵⁶⁰ University professor Anthony Fisher stated in support of Auger that "Indians and Metis in Alberta are arrested and convicted about seven times more often than white people."⁵⁶¹ IAA President, Harold Cardinal also spoke up about racism experienced within the legal system by Alberta's Indigenous Peoples. Auger's presentation led to the establishment of a Native People's Defense Fund which had "as its primary goal the assurance of fair treatment for native people by police and courts."⁵⁶²

The Native People's Defense Fund (NPDF) was established to raise bail and appeal funds for Dunn and Antoine. Original members of the NPDF included Richard Price, Rose Auger and

⁵⁵⁷ Barb Wilson, NFB IFC member, Interviewed by Inez Lightning, May 1 2019., p. 2.

⁵⁵⁸ Tom O'Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019., p. 1.

⁵⁵⁹ "SU gives cash to natives to fight 'injustices'," *The Gateway*, January 23, 1969, 3.

⁵⁶⁰ Jon Ruddy, "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Half-Breed", *Macleans*, June 1970. 8.

⁵⁶¹ "CYC Workers are in Jail, Financial Support Builds," *Brandon Sun*, January 20, 1969, 2.

⁵⁶² Ben Tierney, "The Pub Fight That Could Lead Indians to a Happier Day in the Courts", *The Globe and Mail*, April, 1969.

Martha Campiou.⁵⁶³ Dollars came in from the National Alliance for Red Power (NARP) in the amount of \$500.00 for Antoine's bail; \$200 from NFB employees for Dunn's bail; additional funds came from a University of Alberta professor in the amount of \$300.00.⁵⁶⁴ The University of Alberta Student's Council approved a motion granting \$100.00 to the NPDP.⁵⁶⁵ In this contribution the Student Council undermined its own philosophy that student government should limit itself to student matters.⁵⁶⁶ Their contribution was no doubt a result of the urgency that Auger imparted on the injustice of their incarceration. Barb Wilson recalled, "at that time, government was scared because university kids were involved with the NPDP. We were as ballsy as we were ever gonna get."⁵⁶⁷

Lawyer Gordon Wright was hired to defend Dunn and Antoine in court.⁵⁶⁸ In a letter to George Stoney, NFB Director Tom O' Connor mentioned that both Dunn and Auger were going to court on February 27, 1969, as a retrial for the Canyon Creek "scene".⁵⁶⁹ Through the lawyer's efforts, Dunn and Antoine were acquitted.

Support for the IFC/CYC activists came from the CYC itself. Jim Littleton, CYC, wrote to CYC Director Claude Vidal stating that the Company should "render all possible assistance to Willie Dunn in his conflict with the judicial system of Alberta."⁵⁷⁰ Littleton recognized that Dunn was being treated unfairly by the authorities:

"If the Company sends volunteers into situations such as that in Northern Alberta where they face bigotry and traditional misuse of the law then it must be prepared to support them. To allow other groups to lead in taking the initiative in raising funds and performing other actions to assist Willie Dunn is to abdicate our responsibility as an agent of social change."⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶³ Martha Campiou may have been both Rose Auger's sister and Willie Dunn's girlfriend. Interview with Richard Price, May 24, 2017.

⁵⁶⁴ Ben Tierney, "The Pub Fight That Could Lead Indians to a Happier Day in the Courts", *The Globe and Mail*, April 1969. (Akwasasne Notes)

⁵⁶⁵ "SU Give Cash to Natives to Fight 'Injustices'," *The Gateway*, January 23, 1969, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁶ Richard Price, "The New Left in Alberta", Dimitrios Roussopoulos, ed., in *The New Left in Canada*, (Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1969), p. 46.

⁵⁶⁷ Barbara Wilson, Interview, May 1, 2019.

⁵⁶⁸ Richard Price, Interview, May 24, 2017.

⁵⁶⁹ Letter from Tom O'Connor to George Stoney, February 24, 1969, Slave Lake, Alberta. 7, 40-031, 1969-02-06. NFB Archive 7, 40-031, 1969-02-06.

⁵⁷⁰ Memorandum from Jim Littleton to Claude Vidal, January 11, 1969, NFB Archives.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

The legacy of this court case was that a considerable amount of money had been raised through national support which included York University campus in Ontario. These additional dollars led to the consideration of a more permanent NPFD. The Student Christian Movement at the University of Alberta developed a proposal calling for Indigenous Peoples to control the funds associated with the NPFD. In devising the proposal, the first step was to get the support of the Alberta Indian and Metis associations. A board was selected with representation from each association.⁵⁷² Guidelines for a permanent fund were established.⁵⁷³

Activist Lillian Shirt recalled how she became involved with the NPFD in 1969 upon seeing the high number of Indigenous men being incarcerated. She figured that “systemic discrimination was creating a cycle of problems for these men and that prison was not the solution.”⁵⁷⁴ Shortly after the win in the Dunn/Antoine case, the fund was used to win five other cases out of six. This generated hope for Indigenous Peoples that power structures could be challenged and beaten.⁵⁷⁵ The NPFD would be utilized many times until its end around 1985-86. Through the efforts of CYC participants involved in PAANE, who also happened to be IFC members, a method had been developed to counter racial discrimination faced in the judicial system. This was one legacy of the IFC and the controversy created by their work at Loon Lake.

Another legacy of their work as CYC volunteers and CFC with the NFB, was that many of them went on to larger roles as leaders within the Indigenous community and society as a whole. O’Connor stated that many went on to political positions within national organizations. He himself became involved with the Metis association of Alberta for a while. He then moved to Ontario and was elected into an executive position for a few years with the Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO). He stayed on with the MNO for many years, until he resigned in 1987.⁵⁷⁶

Noel Starblanket, who would become the president of the National Indian Brotherhood for two terms from 1976-1980, had his political start with the CIYC, when he became president elect

⁵⁷² Ben Tierney, “The Pub Fight that could lead Indians to a Happier Day in the Courts”, *The Globe and Mail*, April 1969. (Akwasasne Notes).

⁵⁷³ Richard Price, “The New Left in Alberta,” *The New Left in Canada*, Dimitrios Roussopoulos, (Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1969), p. 46.

⁵⁷⁴ “Imagine; Activist, Fighter, Leader – Lillian Shirt,” Caroline Barlott, *Avenue*, June 2017, p. 45.

⁵⁷⁵ Richard Price, “The New Left in Alberta,” in Dimitrios Roussopoulos, *The New Left in Canada*, (Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1969), p. 47.

⁵⁷⁶ Tom O’Connor, Interviewew, August 15, 2019.

after Harold Cardinal.⁵⁷⁷ He made several films with the NFB and left to work with the Indian Brotherhood in Winnipeg in 1970.⁵⁷⁸ He later became Chief of his reserve, Starblanket, in 1971 at the age of 24. He was on the executive of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSIN) and was Director of Treaty Rights and Research.⁵⁷⁹ Starblanket fondly reminisced about how he switched from being behind the camera, to being in front of the camera, as he became involved as an actor in films and plays. He participated in a private play about “Sitting Bull, and his most recent acting foray was with “The Making of Treaty 4”, a production of the Grove Theatre of Regina.

Starblanket also recalled how the CYC / IFC project “spawned many different things.”⁵⁸⁰ He stated that Barb Wilson, became a professional photographer, which he believed was a direct result of their training. Immediately after her contract was done with the IFC, Wilson organized the film, *Potlatch*, also titled, *This Was the Time*, for the NFB.⁵⁸¹ Willie Dunn, continued on in his career as a professional singer and composer. The film, *The Ballad of Crowfoot*, and *You Are On Indian Land* were shown across North America to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. For the most part, both films inspired many Indigenous Peoples to stand up and voice their concerns and uphold their rights as Indigenous Peoples.

Kanentakeron worked as an ironworker, filmmaker, and as the Director of the North American Indian Travelling College. He became the Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne from 1984-2002 and from 2009 to present. He was District Chief from 2003 to 2006, representing Cornwall Island.⁵⁸²

Roy Daniels became a politician in the NWT after he moved there as a CYC volunteer. He worked with the translation of the oral histories of the treaty negotiations for Treaty 11. He married the daughter of one of the chiefs. His immediate work after completing his CYC term, was as a social animator using mainly sound tapes and slides; he also produced radio programs

⁵⁷⁷ Noel Starblanket, Interview, March 11, 2018.

⁵⁷⁸ Michelle Stewart, *The Indian Film Crews of Challenge for Change*, p. 78.

⁵⁷⁹ Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia, Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina Press.

⁵⁸⁰ Noel Starblanket, Interview, March 11, 2018.

⁵⁸¹ Michelle Stewart, *The Indian Film Crews of Challenge for Change*

⁵⁸² Burns, Shannon. “Re-introducing Grand Chief Michael Kanentakeron Mitchell,” *Indian Time*, Feb. 11, 2010.

for the CBC.⁵⁸³ He became president of the NWT Indian Brotherhood (which later became the Dene Nation in 1978).⁵⁸⁴

The National Film Board Training Program with this particular IFC group lasted from 1968-1971. When the CYC funding ended, independent film making by Indigenous Peoples was made impossible without the assistance of the NFB.⁵⁸⁵ A second NFB Training Program was held from 1971-1973 and produced an impressive film *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*, which showed how the Cree of James Bay lived, as caretakers of the land. There was no involvement with the CYC on this training program.

These two NFB training programs opened the doors to further Indigenous led film making. In *Circle of the Sun*, a NFB film directed by Colin Low in 1960, commentary was provided by Stanley Jackson (NFB staff member). The unique feature of this film, was that it was narrated by Kainai member, Pete Standing Alone when it came to telling his part of the story. This film depicted elements surrounding a Kainai sundance ceremony and featured Standing Alone, as a young man, talking about how it was to tread both worlds at the time: Kainai ways and its culture, and western, modern society.

In 1982, Director Colin Low returned to the story of Pete Standing Alone. In this film, *Standing Alone*, he talked about his life in terms of returning to his homeland at Kainai, and the changes he saw over a period of fifty years. Standing Alone shared how his people tried to keep the sundance camp held in the summer over a three week period. *Round Up*, produced in 2010, was a third film made about Standing Alone and was directed by Narcisse Blood. The film was about Standing Alone, as an elder of the Kainai nation wanting to do one last round up for his horses. Discussion in this film is about the necessity of the Kainai people holding onto their spiritual ways. This film ended up being directed and written by Indigenous peoples (Narcisse Blood as director and Gil Cardinal, writer). This final film was a selected tapestry of the first two films intertwined with the Niitsitapiisini (Kainai) view from Pete Standing Alone.⁵⁸⁶ Going back

⁵⁸³ Michelle Stewart, *The Indian Film Crews of Challenge for Change*, p. 78.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Also, Steve Iveson, Interview, February 12, 2018.

⁵⁸⁵ Ezra Winton and Jason Garrison, "If a Revolution is Screened and No One is There to See It, Does It Make a Sound? The Politics of Distribution and Counterpublics," in Waugh, et. al. eds., *Challenge for Change* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press 2010), p. 414.

⁵⁸⁶ All information on the three films was selected from the NFB website information page about each individual film. (<https://www.nfb.ca>)

to the Challenge for Change philosophy, “Round Up” is a prime example of the vision that all of the CFC directors/staff, including Collin Low, and NFB IFC had in mind when they began their journey as film makers.

Conclusion

With Loon Lake, the silent voices were now captured on film and through the concern of the CYC volunteers, the IFC, change was about to happen whether people wanted it or not. There was still the fear among Loon Lake members that their welfare would be impacted if they made waves. As Tom O’Connor recalled, “What we did at Loon Lake was all out of concern; it was not a political move. It was about making a change, to bring out the news/stories. It was not really about the philosophies of either Challenge for Change (CFC) nor CYC.”⁵⁸⁷ The equipment, film and news reel were there, ready to be used, he added. As Noel Starblanket recalled, we were “deeply interested in this communications medium and [have] discovered that we [were] dealing with a powerful outlet for emotion and a power that even administrations recognize[d].”⁵⁸⁸ The IFC were provided the medium by which they could bring awareness to Indigenous issues such as marginalization and poverty, and also to promote change. They used it. As CYC volunteers, they brought up what they saw at Loon Lake at the CYC conference in Edmonton. That got ball rolling in many aspects. They became the catalysts of change.

Unlike the observation made by Michele Stewart in “The Indian Film Crews of Challenge for Change: Representation and the State”, in which she states a “sense of national Indianness” was developing at the time; it was more about the ability to make political statements rather than any kind of “national Indianness.”⁵⁸⁹ As Barb Wilson came to view her work, she was both a film maker and an activist, and unsure as to which one came first. She understood she worked with the Company of Young Canadians as part of the NFB’s CFC program as an IFC member. She further stated, “I do not recall the philosophy of CYC because we were so immersed with the NFB. We were paid as volunteers; we were never a part of the CYC as in they controlled what we did.”⁵⁹⁰ Of her work she stated, “I like frank presentations and a realistic view” and although

⁵⁸⁷ Tom O’Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019.

⁵⁸⁸ Noel Starblanket, “A Voice for Canadian Indians: An Indian Film Crew (1968)”, in Waugh, et. al. eds., *Challenge for Change*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), p. 40.

⁵⁸⁹ Michele Stewart, “The Indian Film Crews for Challenge for Change: Representation and the State”, *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (fall 2007), p. 64.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview Barb Wilson, IFC member, May 1, 2019.

the IFC films could have been construed as “protest films”, the point of the films was to “establish communication within and among groups in Canada”.⁵⁹¹ Wilson believed they were making a difference in the world through their filmmaking under CFC. “It changed me in that I have often spoken about that first time I protested the government, and how they treated us.”⁵⁹² As Jeanette Corbiere Lavall stated, it was time for Indigenous peoples to stand up for their rights as human beings, to begin to engage in those conversations about their rights. In addition, Roy Daniels offered that Red Power meant developing a strong economic base which would benefit Indigenous Peoples by providing more control over their own destiny. In this way, they would build up their pride, dignity and self-assurance.⁵⁹³ O’Connor recalled, “It was a changing world for a lot of us native people back then.”⁵⁹⁴

O’Connor further surmised, that what the IFC did was groundbreaking. The ability to film on site was new at the time and for once, other people could do the filming of Indigenous Peoples, not just Indian Affairs who had dominated film making about and in First Nations communities. As far as he knew, nobody or very few people were doing any kind of work like they were doing; the exposition of what was going on in northern communities was brought to the publishing world of news media, as well as through their film work. “As a film crew, we were doing what we thought we were supposed to do, especially with our news breaking story.”⁵⁹⁵

They were also supported by those involved with the IFC in their defense of Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Directors of CFC and other technical/creative staff understood that film and video could be used for community advocacy. Now, they and the IFC put added pressure upon administrators both in and outside of the NFB to question their own roles regarding social change.⁵⁹⁶ There had been some controversy with the NFB regarding the content of what the IFC would film. The question loomed as to whether there would be “Indian content” in their films.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹¹ Sheila McCook, “Realism, Frankness her Aim, Indian Woman Makes Films”, *The Ottawa Citizen*, (Akwasasne Notes, October 1969, p. 47).

⁵⁹² Barb Wilson, Interviewed, May 1, 2019.

⁵⁹³ “Key to Red Power is Economic Power”, *Edmonton Journal*, 1969.

⁵⁹⁴ Tom O’Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019.

⁵⁹⁵ Tom O’Connor, Interview, August 15, 2019.

⁵⁹⁶ Michele Stewart, “The Indian Film Crews of Challenge for Change”, *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (fall 2007), 61.

⁵⁹⁷ Gil Cardinal, “The Aboriginal Voice: The National Film Board and Aboriginal Filmmaking Through the Years”, <https://www.nfb.ca/playlists/gil-cardinal/aboriginal-voice-national-film-board/>.

This should not have even been a question, as the CFC philosophy had been set in place to challenge film makers to open the doors to all ideas and discussions.

As far as the relationship between the NFB and CYC went, a “battle with the Company of Young Canadians for the freedom of our Indian Film Crew would ensue in the summer of 1969.”⁵⁹⁸ It appeared that the IFC prevailed, as a showing of their films was held in Ottawa for top government officials and college students in October of 1969. Willie Dunn was there to sing live prior to the screening of *Ballad of Crowfoot*; Roy Daniels had joined upon his return from Yellowknife, to be the emcee. Although Kanentakeron was away in California, he was well represented in his film, *You Are on Indian Land*.⁵⁹⁹ They were becoming leaders in the film industry as well. As early as January 1968, their work was being showcased. The provisional council of the CYC had a dinner and screening with William H. Crook, National Director of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and Jean H. Lagasse, Director of Citizenship, Department of the Secretary of State among invited guests.⁶⁰⁰

R.D. Ragan, Regional Director of the Indian Affairs Branch had this to say of the whole IFC expose: “The activities of this group (CYC NFB IFC) have helped to focus public attention on an area which would not ordinarily be brought before the public conscience.” Further to this, he added, “the provincial government is directly involved in this off-reserve situation and provincial government officials are receiving criticism for inaction.”⁶⁰¹ The work of the IFC in terms of what they brought forward to the public, brought quickened government responses to the socioeconomic needs of members at Loon Lake, and for that matter, the area around Lesser Slave Lake. As catalysts of change, they brought pressure upon the government to address the poverty and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples in the north.

As for community members at Loon Lake, there were varied opinions regarding the IFC. One community member, William Noskey recalled that he had high hopes for the IFC; that they

⁵⁹⁸ Brian Winston, “‘A Handshake or a Kiss’: The Legacy of George Stoney (1916-2012)”, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 3, (Memo from George Stoney to Mary Stoney, July 12, 1969), 42.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43 (Memo from George Stoney to Elizabeth Segal “Libba”, January 26, 1969).

⁶⁰⁰ Letter from Alan Clarke, Executive Director, The Company of Young Canadians to Mr. Jean H. Lagasse, Director of Citizenship, Secretary of State, January 5, 1968. RG6, 1986-87/319, Vol. 3, CYC, June 1966-Dec. 1968, LAC.

⁶⁰¹ 1968 Reports of CYC and Indigenous Projects (Indian Affairs), Indian and Inuit Affairs Program fonds, RG10 BAN CYC 1999m-01431-6, Box 63, 1/24-2-36 pt. 2, LAC.

had accomplished what they had come up north to do.⁶⁰² As Willie Dunn stated about the IFC's role, "activism is where it should be at; you have to be prepared to put down your camera some time and open your mouth." This is why PAANE had been created. Upon revisiting their experience and exposing the poverty they found, Dunn felt that perhaps they should have got to know the people more first, as their words about finding this community in a state of starvation, hurt the pride of some community members. "So they went against us. It was a lesson."⁶⁰³ Whereas, with the experience of Kanentakeron, when he approached the people to ask if he could share what he learned about them, and then offered their help with goods, the people of Loon Lake were more than willing to be helped.

Now referred to as activists, Duke Redbird and Harold Cardinal spoke out in *Powwow at Duck Lake*. Howard Adams, author of *Prison of Grass* and Metis activist had denounced the "racist ideology of the residential school system" in this film as it being "segregation and a form of apartheid", and he further stated, "the principle behind this kind of rule is that all men are not created equal."⁶⁰⁴ The IFC activists most likely had viewed these films, and inspired by CFC and their training as film makers, continued the work of telling the truth of what they saw, even though some people did not believe in nor support their efforts. It is somewhat intriguing to know that just because someone speaks out, and speaks what they see as the truth, they become labelled activists, which for the most part held a negative connotation. At that time, the systems in place did not recognize the marginalization nor admit to the racism that prevented Indigenous peoples from taking their rightful place in society.

Although it has been more than fifty years since the film Loon Lake caused such controversy, the socioeconomic situation has improved little. Many Indigenous Peoples still remain on the "outskirts" of economic activity, and the impact of the oil and gas industry, and forestry industry, continues to affect their communities.

⁶⁰² William Noskey, Loon Lake, NFB Vimeo.

⁶⁰³ Jon Ruddy, "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Half-Breed", *Macleans*, June 1970.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3. Howard Adams was a Metis born in St. Louis, Saskatchewan; he became one of the most highly educated, outspoken and controversial Indigenous leaders of his time. He was active as a political leader in the 1960s and early 1970s. He inspired Metis pride and identity with his leadership. He was a professor at the University of Saskatchewan from 1966-1975, and then taught at the University of California, until he retired in 1987. He passed on in 2001.

One of the current “activists” in northern Alberta is Crystal Lameman who relies on her Indigenous ways of knowing and being to address the damaging impacts that resource extraction and industrialization have on the land. Reminiscent of the feelings of community members of Loon Lake when their poverty was being exposed, Lameman had this to say of her challenge in bringing her nation’s legal battle to court. Although they are rich in land, resources, and culture, the financial wealth of the nation had been impacted by colonization and genocide which makes it difficult to “uphold and respect and honour your ancestors. So you have to be very cautious about the way you talk about your people’s poverty.”⁶⁰⁵

In addition, it would take almost another forty years after the IFC began its “activist filming” before the Canadian government would deal with the devastating impacts of the residential schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission began its mandate of informing all Canadians about what happened in residential schools in 2007, through the documentation of the truth of survivors, their families, communities and anyone affected by the residential school experience, personally.⁶⁰⁶ It concluded its mandate in 2015. After the first truth was told, many others began to share their truths, finally assured that their experience did not just solely happen to them. If this is what it took for the truth to be told, than all of those 6,500 plus individuals who contributed their stories are today’s activists, since sharing their truths makes them so.

The IFC and other Indigenous CYC volunteers, such as Rose Auger and Gordon Willier, saw their opportunity to effect change through the vehicle of the CYC. They also had the support of non-Indigenous CYC volunteers in creating social and economic change in the Lesser Slave Lake region of Alberta. If speaking out makes one a leader, there sure were a large number of Indigenous leaders that emerged out of the Loon Lake film controversy.

⁶⁰⁵ Stephanie Wood, “Are You Poor Enough?: First Nations Face Compounding Financial Hardship when Defending Rights in Court”, *The Narwhal*, June 12, 2021. P. 1.

⁶⁰⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, National Center for Truth and Reconciliation, 2022.

Conclusion: Catalysts of Change

Wilfred Peltier wrote that there is no foreign land, that once people go beyond the material things in life, we will all belong to the land. He was expressing his belief that humanity should all be as one, equal, at the same level. Peltier believed that getting to that place could take much time, and the goal might never be attained, but he thought there was hope for humanity, if we could strive for this objective. Peltier brought this philosophy to his work as Indigenous advisor to the CYC in its humble beginnings.

In this thesis, I argue Indigenous leaders emerged through their work with the CYC and that the CYC became the vehicle for young Indigenous volunteers to promote Indigenous rights and identity. They were poised to become leaders before they began their work with the CYC. Some of the CYC Indigenous volunteers began their activist careers with the CIYC. Prior to the official launch of the CIYC, many of these youth activists attended the American Indian Workshops at Boulder, Colorado in 1964 and 1965 (these American Indian Workshops ran from 1961-1968)⁶⁰⁷ and the 1965 Canadian Indian Workshop held at Banff. Through these events they began to acquire knowledge of understanding their Indigenous rights.

These early activists, such as Duke Redbird, Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, and Harold Cardinal, to name just a few, had conviction and saw that it was time to secure rights and to seek equality for their people. Organizations such as the CIYC and CYC were vehicles of opportunity. These young activists would become catalysts of change. In its June 1966 report, the CIYC provided recommendations to the CYC on how to attract and maintain Indigenous volunteers. There were two initiatives which were combined efforts of the CIYC and CYC in addressing poverty and marginalization in Alberta's north country. These were the fact-finding tour of Fox Lake/Jean D'Or Prairie and the Wabasca Desmarais marches and protests regarding the lack of opportunities in sawmill operations for their people. These events galvanized young Indigenous activists and made them ever more determined to boldly fight for justice and equality. The outcomes of their efforts were not always anticipated nor welcomed by most government policy makers and many members of the non-Indigenous public.

⁶⁰⁷ M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler, eds., *Beyond Red Power, American Indian Politics and Activism Since 1900*, (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research, 2007), 296-7.

In this study I have concluded that successful CYC projects were due to the commitment of the non-Indigenous CYC volunteers to the aims and objectives of the CYC. Peltier, Lavell and Redbird helped to train non-Indigenous CYC volunteers and this training was especially helpful for those sent to projects involving Indigenous communities. According to Lavell and Peltier, CYC volunteers who became a part of the Indigenous communities met more success in their projects. A third factor leading to successful projects was the incorporation of community development ideals into CYC training. All of these, assisted the CYC workers with project development in and around Indigenous communities.

This research has shown that the CYC helped to foster a generation of Indigenous activists, leaders and intellectuals, that relationships were built within the CYC movement; and that the CYC helped bring light to the poverty and marginalization faced by Indigenous Peoples. The original purpose of the CYC was to address the war on poverty, by removing obstacles to human progress such as economic deficiency, illiteracy, social ills, and health concerns. The original intent of the CYC organization itself was that it was to be youth driven but this changed in 1969 when a parliamentary inquiry took place addressing financial and administrative concerns and the volunteers lost power and authority over the activities of their organization.

The importance of this thesis is that it demonstrates how the CYC was a vehicle used by Indigenous leaders to promote Indigenous rights and bring an awareness and subsequent change to areas where Indigenous Peoples of Western Canada experienced poverty and marginalization. Some examples from the study where this took place were: at Faust, when Jeremy Ashton and Al Burger arrived in 1966 and clearly identified the poverty and inherent racism which allowed such extreme disparities in wealth to persist; what the National Film Board Indian Film Crew uncovered at Loon Lake; what Laura Dexter ran into at Indian Village outside of Yellowknife; and what Indigenous students at Akaitcho Hall experienced in terms of marginalization.

CYC volunteers were all about empowering communities and less about salaries involved. As Margaret Daly pointed out, the CYC was devoted to showing disadvantaged people how to organize, take power over their own lives, and learn to exercise their political power. One prime example where this happened was at Oak River. CYC volunteer Eleanor Hyodo saw that providing the Oak River Chief and Council with a set of policies concerning welfare gave them a means to challenge the funds that Indian Affairs was providing to them. Previous to this, the Oak

River leadership had to rely solely on the word of the Indian Affairs officials, not really knowing if they were receiving the proper amounts of funding. There was still a reluctance to use these policies as they felt that if they challenged Indian Affairs too much, they would lose this funding. In addition, Hyodo empowered the mothers of the community with the confidence to take over the Head start nursery program.

Provision of voice for the Indigenous Peoples was at the forefront of the goals of the CYC volunteers. The CYC project at Faust became a major success, despite its initial setback of having the CYC volunteers removed. Faust became the base for a host of projects at Lesser Slave Lake under the CYC leadership of Ben Baich and Al Burger.

Negative media coverage was detrimental to the CYC program. Critical newspaper coverage abounded about Al Burger and Jeremy Ashton's experience at Faust where the townspeople requested they be removed, but they returned, after the Metis circulated a petition to have them reinstated. The unfavourable coverage however, left the more lasting impression. Faust was always referred to as the community where the CYC workers were run out of town.⁶⁰⁸ The Winnipeg Project too had its woes with the press. The house which served as their headquarters was shown as run down and dirty in the press; not one reporter dug deeper to find out that the house already had been in a state of disarray prior to the CYC moving in. The negative media coverage from eastern Canada that associated the CYC with communism and separatism had an impact in the West, particularly just when a group of CYC volunteers were due to arrive at a CYC project at Fort Qu'Appelle. Suspicions were raised in that community that these CYC workers were potential political radicals.

Despite these challenges with the press, CYC Indigenous volunteers became activists. They became prominent spokespersons and advocates for Indigenous Peoples. They helped Indigenous Peoples to gain the confidence to speak out. The IFC learned that Indigenous community members of northern Alberta were afraid to speak up concerning oil company intrusions on their land as they feared their welfare payments would be jeopardized. As William Langford stated, Indigenous Peoples faced "settler colonialism, entrenched racism" and lived a "marginal

⁶⁰⁸ Ian Hamilton, *The Children's Crusade*, 71.

economic existence.”⁶⁰⁹ The CYC movement was about helping people to help themselves. They learned how to mobilize against unresponsive governments.

Within the CYC movement volunteers built bridges and developed alliances through listening to the needs of the communities. They began to organize projects from the bottom up by letting the communities identify their problems and then working with communities on these problem areas.

An important initiative which helped increase the numbers of Indigenous leaders in the ranks of the CYC was the commitment to hire local Indigenous volunteers for CYC projects. New forms of leadership were generated in this way. One example was the training program designed by the Winnipeg CYC project which invited Indigenous youth to train and learn about volunteerism; some of these stayed on to become permanent CYC volunteers, and others returned to their home communities with new community development tools at their disposal. In the Northwest Territories, the CYC movement paired one Indigenous volunteer with one non-Indigenous volunteer. This strategy of pairing would lead to successful outcomes for the CYC there. Again, projects here were focused on helping Indigenous Peoples find their voices as they coped with the influx of non-Indigenous peoples from the industry and construction fields. This proved very useful with the Great Slave Lake oral history project. As more elders’ stories were gathered from Dettah and N’Dilo, more Indigenous youth signed on to become part of the CYC project to tape the elders information about treaty negotiations. Steve Iveson recalled how the 27 months he spent on this project were the most exciting and the memories of it remain vivid to this day. He also stated that in living with the Dene people, he ascribed to a Dene perspective which was important to achieving success in his CYC projects. Many of the CYC volunteers became leaders in their communities or in the Territorial institutions. Charlie Charlot, James Wah-shee, Roy Daniels, Joachim Bonnetrouge, Georges Erasmus, and Cindy Erasmus were some of these who became advocates of Dene traditions and rights.

The IFC was another astounding CYC program. All of its members were Indigenous and came from diverse First Nations. Theirs was a unique experience as they were also under the Challenge for Change program of the NFB. Based on their input about their role as activists or

⁶⁰⁹ William Langford, *The Global Politics of Poverty in Canada, Development Programs and Democracy, 1964-1979* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2020), 20.

leaders, IFC members simply stated that when they saw the poverty, they felt that they had to speak up for those who were afraid. They also stridently and vocally criticized officials who tried to downplay the impoverishment and destitution they saw. They presented the public with vivid evidence and insisted the government address these inequalities and injustices. The legacy of their leadership was the creation of a forum by which concerns could be brought forward anonymously, through PAANE. In addition, the results of their efforts with the public led to the creation of the NPDF which assisted Indigenous Peoples requiring legal help. This organization lasted for some years afterward, however, PAANE ended as the IFC program closed down, as most of its members were IFC.

The CYC Indigenous volunteers were a new generation of Indigenous actors. They readily picked up new tools such as protests, marches, lobbying government officials, letter writing, getting the support of media (both newspapers and television), and film to get action.

Aside from marginalization, the emerging Indigenous leaders addressed racism. CYC projects in Western Canada where racism was confronted included Oak River, Fort Qu'Appelle, and Faust. At Faust, the non-Indigenous business leaders would not admit that they were racist and could not see how they were helping to sustain the impoverishment of Indigenous Peoples. When questions started to be asked by Indigenous Peoples, the settlers wanted the CYC volunteers removed claiming they were instigating trouble. The overarching legacy of the CYC projects in and around Lesser Slave Lake was the emergence of an Indigenous leadership determined to actively confront discrimination. Many of the non-Indigenous CYC volunteers such as Burger, Ashton, Iveson, Hyodo also worked to address instances of racism.

This thesis is important as its focus is on the CYC in Western Canada. It deals with the 1960s and 1970s, which have largely been overlooked in previous studies about Canada's Indigenous Peoples. In articles and books about the CYC very little is written about the work within Indigenous communities yet the CYC was an organization which included and to an extent was led by Indigenous organizations and individuals. Another fascinating aspect of this study is that it draws upon perspectives of those who were CYC volunteers, as witnesses to the projects, or those who had similar experiences with other service programs. Their perspectives were captured through interviews and provide new perspectives on the history of the CYC program not found in the documentary record.

There were many achievements and legacies derived from the CYC movement for Indigenous Peoples, such as the Great Slave Lake oral history project, the establishment of the NWT Indian Brotherhood, the nursery school program at Oak River, Winnipeg assistance program provided to new Indigenous arrivals to the city, the literacy projects at Fort Qu'Appelle and Green Lake, and the Lesser Slave Lake Project, to name a few.



Figure 14: Al and Alona Burger, Photo by Inez Lightning, 2018

A very important additional aspect of this study was the finding that some CYC projects were very successful due to the partnerships developed over time with the non-Indigenous CYC volunteers. Eleanor Hyodo and Al Burger are the most obvious examples of CYC volunteers who achieved this. Hyodo had already established a strong relationship with the community and she was accepted in return. Both she and the community were shocked when the CYC headquarters closed down all CYC projects in Manitoba due to a lack of finances. Al and Alona Burger stayed on at Faust after their two year contracts had expired. They continued to work with all communities around Lesser Slave Lake and made Faust their lifelong home. They developed a very strong relationship with the Indigenous community. Burger studied the history of the Indigenous Peoples in this area to understand more about them.

I would like to conclude by stating that the CYC movement was unique for Indigenous Peoples. The CYC had a role in shaping, equipping, inspiring, and giving voice to a new generation of outspoken and dedicated activists who became prominent actors in Canadian history.

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