

**Cultural Education for and by Whom?: Indigenous Education,  
Cultural Education Centres, Activism and the Struggle for  
Sovereignty in the 1970s**

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the Cultural Education Program, a Canadian federal government program which began in 1971 with goals to fund cultural education centres for Indigenous citizens. As Red-Power activism ignited post-White Paper, government programs such as the Cultural Education Program were offered as remedies. Through archival research, primarily through government correspondence, this thesis examines the government's attempt to address educational inequity through the cultural education program and the continuous Indigenous activism that was required to maintain funding and support. The program was plagued by unclear intentions and fluctuating funding and application requirements. Decentralization of power was the goal of many Indigenous organizations in entering into partnerships with the program. However, this was not attained as Indian and Northern Affairs alone governed the program without Indigenous input throughout the 1970s. Program fiscal allotments were frequently millions of dollars more than what was dispersed, and rejections of certain funding requests appeared arbitrary and without reasonable cause. Issues with the program are highlighted through case studies on fiscal stewardship and the Indigenous activism required to keep Coqualeetza Education Centre, a center relying on cultural education funding, operational.

**Keywords:** Indigenous; Education; Cultural Education Program; Coqualeetza; Indian Control of Indian Education

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## Introduction

Much light has been cast on colonial attempts to marginalize Indigenous peoples through the institution of education prior to the 1950s public school integration in Canada, but what about after this time period? What did government responses to Indigenous education in this period say about colonial power and domination over Indigenous sovereignty? In response to both federal and provincial governments historically proving themselves unworthy and incompetent, Indigenous peoples have sought agency in the education of their peoples. The federal government's proposed *White Paper*, released in 1969, planned to eradicate the status system and any government responsibility to provide education to Indigenous peoples in Canada. Massive Indigenous resistance, pan-Indigenous activism, and newly introduced government programming followed. Among other Indigenous responses to the *White Paper*, the 1972 policy document, *Indian Control of Indian Education (ICIE72)* offered by the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) outlined philosophical values and principles of education for Indigenous students and suggested a way forward through Indigenous sovereignty. The Cultural Education Program, a government program which began in 1971 through the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), aimed to address these concerns by providing cultural education to Indigenous youth and adults. Supported by the Cultural Education Program, cultural education centres opened across Canada to facilitate the delivery of programming. These centres of learning were funded by the federal government to address inequities outlined in *ICIE72*. What Indigenous equity in education means to those pursuing it has changed over time. This thesis will show that the concept of equity evolved as Indigenous leaders and activists addressed their people's concerns regarding outcomes and cultural inclusion in education provided by the government. As "Red-Power" activism ignited post-*White Paper*, government programs such as the Cultural Education Program were offered as remedies. The vision of how to attain Indigenous equity in education shifted. The UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 and endorsed in Canada in 2010, addresses the concept of equity in

Articles 14 and 15. This description supports similar definitions found in both *ICIE72*, *First Nations Control of First Nations Education 2010*, and *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*—Articles 28 and 29. UNDRIP states in Articles 14 and 15 that

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. That Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination. That States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language. That Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.<sup>1</sup>

The definition of equity for Indigenous learners was incomplete without reference to control and sovereignty over education, culture and language, and parity in basic educational standards with non-Indigenous students. The Cultural Education Program attempted to address some of these issues.

In the spirit of *ICIE72*, the federal Cultural Education Program allowed cultural education centres, fiscally reliant on the Canadian government, to open their doors to Indigenous youth and adults in the 1970s and 1980s to address inequity Indigenous learners were experiencing in the public education system and in accessing equitable opportunities to participate in the Canadian economy. The government coupled public school support, workplace skills, and career counselling courses with cultural education offerings to bridge the gap created by a system designed to keep Indigenous peoples in the margins. These programs and schools required continued advocacy and activism in the wake of provincial and federal funding roadblocks resulting in constant threat of closure. The subsequent policy paper by the Assembly of First Nations, *First Nations*

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly. 2007. "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." Resolution A/RES/61/295, 2 October 2007. Articles 13-15

*Control of First Nations Education*, released in 2010, highlighted the successes of *ICIE72*, but also discussed the state's failings to support true sovereignty for Indigenous peoples in the governance of their own people's education. Cultural education centres and their advocates relied on government funding to continue operation. The arbitrary nature of funding approval and the threat of closure caused Indigenous activists, centre administrators, and advocates to see their educational needs categorized as second class.

This thesis will consist of three chapters. Chapter 1 will detail the history and historiography of pan-Indigenous activism and the Red Power movement that defined the 1970s and 1980s post-*White Paper*. Indigenous activists and theorists continued their activism for equality while reimagining the role of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The movements in this era led to the opening of cultural education centres in the pursuit of Indigenous control over Indigenous education. In the second part of Chapter 1, I will discuss the history and historiography of educational activism post-*White Paper* with a focus on the NIB's *ICIE72* and the federal government's response in the form of the Cultural Education Program. Indigenous attempts to implement recommendations in the *ICIE72* policy paper will be discussed, as well as the federal government's unwillingness to relinquish control to Indigenous peoples in their educational pursuits. Chapters 2 and 3 are education-based case studies formulated from archival research using the Iona Campagnolo fonds at the Northern BC Archives in the University of Northern British Columbia. Chapter 2 discusses the government's creation and application of the Cultural Education Program, a program in which Campagnolo was heavily involved. Fiscal stewardship by the federal government will be discussed as well as Indigenous response to the program's operations. Chapter 3 examines more deeply the experience of one cultural education centre at Coqualeetza in Sardis, BC. This case study details the experiences of the Stó:lō as they worked with the Coqualeetza Board to navigate inconsistent government messaging and support that consistently kept the centre in a state of limbo and on the verge of closure. The history, historiography, and case studies will exhibit continued Indigenous activism for sovereignty in education in the era of integration. The colonial response to Indigenous assertions of educational sovereignty will shed light on the government's commitment to providing educational equity for



Indigenous peoples. The mandate of the Cultural Education Program was provision of funding and support for Indigenous-run education centres. The archives show that what unfolded was a much more convoluted and arbitrary process of approval and denial of support. Frustration over what was viewed by many Indigenous activists as program failures resulted in further activism and calls for government transparency.

### **Methodology and Primary Sources:**

My methodology centres on archival research conducted in person at the Northern BC Archives at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in Prince George, BC as well as secondary sources to support this research. The case studies used in this thesis highlight the Cultural Education Program and the relationship between Indigenous educational activists and government officials. The basis of the case studies is primary source material from the Iona Campagnolo fonds in the Northern BC Archives at UNBC. Campagnolo began her political career in Northern BC in local government, moving on to become the Member of Parliament (MP) for the Skeena region, the Secretary for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, a federal minister, and eventually the first female president of the federal Liberal Party and first female Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. The existence of this wealth of records in the Northern BC Archives at UNBC can be associated with Campagnolo's appointment as founding Chancellor of UNBC and her enduring relationship with the university.

I felt privileged to visit the Northern BC Archives at UNBC in person and interact with primary documents. Preliminary internet archival searches, and communication with the librarians at the archive prior to my visit made the Campagnolo fonds a particular priority. Campagnolo's records allowed for research regarding government programming post-*White Paper*, which led me to the federal Cultural Education Program, a clear response to Indigenous calls for educational sovereignty in the period. In the archive, I discovered a large, comprehensive cache of records regarding the implementation of the Cultural Education Program three years after the program was introduced, encompassing the years 1974-1979. The Iona Campagnolo fonds span the 1970s, reflecting

correspondence with government officials and Indigenous Bands from her time as the MP for Skeena and as the Secretary for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The records contain hundreds of pages of correspondence between Indigenous activists, Cultural Education Centre administrators, Indigenous Bands, and government officials. Campagnolo added notes along the margins of telex messages and responded to frequent correspondence from Indigenous peoples and groups who were trying to contact the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Campagnolo's fonds included boxes containing files of information and correspondence regarding the Cultural Education program more broadly, including concerns regarding funding, program requirements, and program implementation. Campagnolo's records also included mention of specific centres, and their requests for funding and support from the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, their program offerings, and details regarding centre openings and closures. Coqualeetza Education Centre was the most frequently referenced centre and made up the largest file within the Campagnolo fonds. Through this research I was able to formulate case studies on the program more broadly, and then on Coqualeetza Education Centre as a specific example of program implementation

The tone of correspondence from Indigenous politicians, activists, and organizations to Campagnolo herself was friendly but persistent in getting their message forwarded to higher authorities: specifically, Ministers Judd Buchanan (1974-75), Arthur Laing (1976), and Warren Allmand (1976-77). Forwarding concerns from these constituents to those with decision-making power was communicated with elevating urgency and frustration as situations became more pressing. At times, Ministers or Deputy Ministers responded to Indigenous activists, politicians, or organizations, after Campagnolo pursued responses on their behalf. Indigenous peoples had communication difficulties with senior government officials, sometimes receiving confusing responses or no response whatsoever. The reality of this dynamic made Campagnolo an asset to Indigenous activists and a crucial partner in attaining land and educational rights for her constituents. Notes in the margins of letters and telex correspondence frequently questioned why no response was being received or suggested persistence might be

required to elicit a response. Campagnolo's fonds also contain correspondence between Indigenous and government officials outside her immediate office. The records also contained intergovernmental messages, usually regarding access to funding to run specific cultural education centres; the messages had been forwarded to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Few researchers have investigated the Cultural Education Program.<sup>2</sup> The Iona Campagnolo fonds provide a detailed narrative of the inner workings of the Cultural Education Program and the reactions of the people that it attempted to serve. I am aware that there are limitations to my research and that sources may exist in archives and through primary sources that I have not found or consulted. The decision to focus on the Iona Campagnolo Fonds was made due to the sheer amount of comprehensive information I had found in an archive in Northern, BC where I resided, and was also impacted by issues such as access to other archives and material, travel to said archives, and the Covid19 pandemic. The pandemic also impacted my ability to conduct oral interviews with Indigenous educational activists and Cultural Education Program administration and participants, as in person visits during 2021/2022 were difficult to arrange, if not outrightly dangerous.<sup>3</sup> The Cultural Education Program is not well

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret S. Ward's, "Indian Education in Canada: Implementation of Educational Policy, 1973-1978" is heavily cited in this thesis. This work looks at the Cultural Education Program as an example of the Canadian federal government's attempts at educational consultation as a response to *ICIE72*. Ward's work highlights the discrepancy between the federal government and Indigenous peoples in the interpretation of what true consultation is and also provides specifics as to program regulations and financials.

<sup>3</sup> Iona Campagnolo's Fonds were the only source of information regarding the Cultural Education Program that I could find at the Northern BC Archives in Prince George. Specific centre proposals for funding and program descriptions were numerous at Library and Archives Canada, however I struggled to find clear program descriptions or criteria for funding. The Covid19 pandemic changed the nature of my thesis entirely. My original goal was to look at the Cultural Education Programs in Northern, BC and conduct oral history interviews. Indigenous reservations in my town and across the north began restricting access to non-locals due to the spread of Covid19. Some remote Indigenous communities in my area of Northern, BC restricted access altogether. I did not believe I could respectfully conduct interviews in person and did not believe that phone or live-streamed interviews would accomplish what I had set out to do. I had to shift my plans completely and began pursuing archival research as my main source of information. Access to the archives also posed a challenge as travel in 2021/2022 was at times, dangerous. I drove from Terrace to Prince George, BC to the NBCA several times in 2021/2022. Multiple flights to other archives seemed unsafe at the time and the Campagnolo Fonds from the archive I was able to safely visit was vast and informative. I was required to book an appointment during my visits to the NBCA as only one patron could be in the archive at a time to limit the spread of the virus. Overall, I feel privileged not only to have found Campagnolo's fonds, but to have travelled and conducted research in such an uncertain time.

documented through basic online searches, however, the Campagnolo records helped illuminate not only the inner workings of the federal Cultural Education Program and its policy, but also helped me discern what Indigenous groups were hoping to get out of the program, what the government was willing to provide, why and how funding difficulties occurred, why Indigenous activists were frustrated with the program, and how there were breakdowns of communication at times resulting in protest. After careful research into the primary documents, I became convinced that what the records very clearly showed was the government's reaction to calls for educational sovereignty for Indigenous peoples, the early implementation of the Cultural Education Program, and the Indigenous activism that resulted from its implementation. The records illuminate federal government philosophy regarding Indigenous sovereignty in education in the 1970s and 1980s.

One must note that Campagnolo was a white woman working in an unquestionably sexist and racist environment. We must view her advocacy for Indigenous peoples within the historical context of the 1970s. She worked for a colonial government that, as the case studies show, continued to marginalize Indigenous peoples in Canada through manipulation of educational support and funding for Indigenous peoples. She worked to uphold this institution. Campagnolo worked within the colonial system while advocating for Indigenous rights and lobbying her superiors to recognize value in Indigenous activist pursuits. Her work in this period has been recognized by many Indigenous peoples in BC as acts of friendship and advocacy. Campagnolo was instrumental in carrying Indigenous voices up the channels of authority. Nevertheless, Campagnolo's work was firmly rooted in upholding the power and dominance of a colonial government that marginalized and continues to marginalize Indigenous peoples in Canada. Although her intentions were to move toward equity, her role afforded her privilege and power as a settler, a role that relied on the subordination of the other to maintain itself. Yes, Campagnolo was an advocate for change and for Indigenous voices; however, her work as an ally did not destabilize the system or question the nature of the power dynamic that existed. Indigenous activists, finding the state's intentions in negotiations to be disingenuous, were forced to work outside governmental structures to be heard. My use of the Campagnolo fonds primarily centred around the Indigenous

leaders, Bands and activists that contacted or carbon-copied Campagnolo on correspondence in assertions of their rights. Government response further illuminates the fraught relationship and highlights the difficulties Indigenous peoples encountered in pursuing agency in the education of their peoples.

The federal government's *White Paper*, produced in 1969, and *Indian Control of Indian Education*, produced in 1972 by the NIB, are primary sources that have formulated the basis of this study. The *White Paper* was a government attempt at Indigenous erasure, and for the purposes of this thesis, the ability for the proposed policy within the *White Paper* to remove status and therefore the government's fiduciary duty to provide Indigenous peoples in Canada education is highlighted. The 1964 *Hawthorn Survey*, commissioned by the federal government and edited by H.B Hawthorn, indicated racism and inequity in public education that was preventing Indigenous peoples in Canada from participating equally in the workforce. *The Hawthorn Survey* and the *White Paper* worked as catalysts for *Indian Control of Indian Education*. *Indian Control of Indian Education* asserted Indigenous rights to agency in their people's education. It demanded equity be provided through funding and resources that allowed First Nations the opportunity to participate fully in the colonial economy while recognizing the value of Indigenous cultures and knowledge systems. Indigenous peoples in Canada, living in a new colonial reality that had been forced upon them, sought schooling opportunities for their people prior to integration, and after this point pointed to inequity in a system that was never intended to serve them.

### **Situating Myself in the Methodology**

Theresa Southam, in her work *Academics as Allies and Accomplices: Practises for Decolonized Solidarity*, indicates that "allyship" is a process of unlearning and re-evaluation done by a person of privilege who wishes to operate in solidarity with a

marginalized group.<sup>4</sup> Allyship can be seen, in wildly simplistic terms, as advocacy for individuals or institutional change and an awareness of racism:

Allyship tends to entail a more passive learning, such as reading Indigenous work, visiting Indigenous community events, and inviting Indigenous people to speak. Although learning can be unsettling to our minds and souls (i.e., personal values and beliefs may be challenged), in allyship we may not go beyond personal change or advocacy within our institutions.<sup>5</sup>

Acts that progress beyond allyship toward solidarity are the acts of an accomplice. Actively involving oneself in Indigenous resistance to colonial institutions and Indigenous access to rights moves beyond the supporter role and does not assume that resistance to colonialism should be left only to Indigenous peoples.<sup>6</sup> The goal of my research has been to highlight Indigenous activism conducted to challenge government control and demand educational equity. I believe that this thesis could benefit school districts, such as my own in Terrace, British Columbia, in drawing attention to Indigenous policy papers such as *ICIE72* and *First Nations Control of First Nations Education*, their demands, and the legacy of colonialism that has permeated our institutions despite these policy papers. This thesis could be a place to start the discussion with school districts, administrators, and teachers, around meaningful attempts at addressing educational inequity with the history of government failures in the era of integration in mind. The Cultural Education Program, at its inception, lacked Indigenous consultation, and allowed the federal government to determine what culture was and how it should be valued. Many of *ICIE72*'s recommendations have not been fully realized even today. I believe that this is due, in part, to a lack of consultation and accommodation of Indigenous educational activists. I believe this thesis could help to highlight this activism and these policy papers and their value in modern educational realms. Indigenous peoples should not be solely responsible for drawing attention to inequity in education for their people. It is through this work and my position as an educator that I endeavour to move towards the acts of an accomplice.

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<sup>4</sup> Theresa Southam, "Academics as Allies and Accomplices: Practices for Decolonized Solidarity," *Anthropology & Aging* 42, no. 2 (2021): 153-154.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

I do not wish to suggest that Indigenous peoples themselves need to be reminded of their own activism. I believe that harmful narratives of Indigenous apathy and colonial platitudes towards reconciliation in education permeate our educational institutions in the present and allow settlers within the institution of education to leave continued inequities unaddressed and unquestioned. This thesis endeavours to draw settlers to a history that requires attention and a system that requires questioning. Through case studies that highlight state resistance to equity, I wish to draw attention to the power dynamics of colonial domination that operated during this period. Erich Steinman in *Unsettling as Agency: Unsettling Settler Colonialism Where You Are* suggests that the process of unsettling must be personal and outward. Discomfort will be caused by disruptions to one's own settler-positionality and cognitions before one can endeavour to use unsettling as a form of agency towards settler institutions and practices.<sup>7</sup> I am a white woman, married into a Tahltan family, living in Northern British Columbia. My husband and I have a one-year-old daughter who is Indigenous. I live and work on the Indigenous territory of the Tsimshian and am a teacher at a senior high school, teaching history, social justice, and First Nations Studies. Roughly 40% of my students are Indigenous. My process of unsettling has felt simultaneously gradual and immediate. The reality of being embraced by my husband's family and being gifted the opportunity to experience and take part in their culture while working as a young educator, fresh out of university, with my own ideas of reconciliation and colonialism, led to an eye-opening experience. I became more aware that my privilege and positionality as a white settler influenced my teaching. I began the process of unsettling my position and cognitions by engaging with Indigenous students, with my own Indigenous family and friends, and through further reading. As I became more aware of my own role as a settler in a colonial institution, I began to question the institution, its motivations, and the service we were providing Indigenous students. I remain unsettled and learning.

Erich Steinman suggests that unsettling as agency must be "bounded and modest rather than overreaching and authorial. To function effectively in alliances settlers must

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<sup>7</sup> Erich Steinman, "Unsettling as Agency: Unsettling Settler Colonialism Where You Are," *Settler Colonial Studies* 10, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 567.

be prepared to recede to more backstage and supportive roles as Indigenous leadership emerges (or is finally recognized).”<sup>8</sup> I intend to bring Indigenous activists and activism to the forefront. The archival research I have done has formed case studies that draw conclusions with which Indigenous peoples are familiar. It is not new. Government pursuit of inequity is clearly not a new premise for Indigenous peoples in Canada. The point of this research is to bring to the fore documentation that holds acts of Indigenous sovereignty and educational activism up to the light during a period seldom talked about in terms of educational inequity for Indigenous peoples in Canada. Residential schooling and its horrible legacy will forever require recognition; however, I believe we, as settlers, and the educational institution, benefit from seeing post-residential school integration as a time when racism and inequity ceased. We then do not have to admit to ourselves that this institution was built on, operated in, and continues to operate in colonialism. We then do not have to consider methods of dismantling it. I recognize that this information is not new information to all; however, the goal of this work is to take a supporting role in calling settler attention to activism for Indigenous agency and sovereignty in education, a pursuit that deserves much more recognition.

## **Chapter 1: Historical Context and Historiography**

### **History and Historiography of Pan-Indigenous and Nation Specific Activism**

In his book *Red Skins, White Masks*, Glen Sean Coulthard characterizes the 1960s and 1970s as a tumultuous time of Red Power activism where the recognition and reconciliation of Indigenous land and political grievances with state sovereignty began to appear. Indigenous peoples in Canada had been organized prior to this time, but Coulthard asserts that this era displayed increasing activism and Indigenous anti-colonial nationalism.<sup>9</sup> A catalyst to this activism was the release of the *White Paper* by Jean

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 572.

<sup>9</sup> Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 5-6.



Chrétien under Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government in 1969, indicating a continued colonial effort by the federal government to shirk their responsibilities entrenched in the Indian Act. The *White Paper* would effectively abolish the Indian Act and any special status or recognition of Indigenous peoples of Canada. This recognition included historical and future treaty agreements and land claims. Collective Indigenous outcry led to pan-Indigenous unity in opposition to this document. Indigenous authors Sarah A. Nickel and Coulthard have described the release of the *White Paper* and the Indigenous activism that followed as a watershed moment in Indigenous unity across Canada.<sup>10</sup> Indigenous resistance to this document was swift; through literature, the creation of many unified Indigenous organizations, and calls for sovereignty, Indigenous peoples in Canada showed their refusal. In her book *Assembling Unity*, Sarah A. Nickel describes the negative effects the *White Paper* would have on First Nations groups in British Columbia, a province that had widespread state resistance to treaty, especially regarding their ability to negotiate claims to land in the future. The creation of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) provides an excellent local example of Indigenous resistance to the *White Paper*. In 1969, leaders from 140 of the province's 192 First Nations Bands attended the first meeting of what would become the UBCIC: a turn-out of 85% of the status Indian population.<sup>11</sup>

Harold Cardinal's widely read *Unjust Society*, published in 1969, also responded to the *White Paper* by indicating the federal government's role in the destruction of First Nations culture and self-determination, calling for pan-Indigenous unity and political organization and highlighting the importance of equitable education for Indigenous peoples in Canada.<sup>12</sup> In response to the *White Paper*, the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA), with prominent Cree activist Harold Cardinal, as President, produced *Citizens Plus* in 1970, more commonly referred to as the "Red Paper." This document positioned the *White Paper* as a colonial document produced to suppress and marginalize Indigenous peoples and their claims to land:

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<sup>10</sup> Sarah A. Nickel, *Assembling Unity: Indigenous Politics, Gender, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 6-7; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Nickel, *Assembling Unity*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 10-14.

We have studied carefully the contents of the Government White Paper on Indians and we have concluded that it offers despair instead of hope. Under the guise of land ownership, the government has devised a scheme whereby within a generation or shortly after the proposed Indian Lands Act expires our people would be left with no land and consequently the future generation would be condemned to the despair and ugly spectre of urban poverty in ghettos.<sup>13</sup>

The IAA also called for further programming in education, health, and economic development as a means for the federal government to uphold their fiduciary duty to Indigenous peoples in Canada. Under the pressure of such pan-Indigenous unity and activism, the federal government tabled the *White Paper* in 1971. Just two years after the *White Paper* was tabled, the Supreme Court of Canada's 1973 Calder case decision led not only to recognition of Nisga'a land title prior to European contact, but also the altering of the federal government's land claims policy, as outlined in *The Statement on Claims of Indian and Inuit People: A Federal Native Claims Policy*, which set out guidelines for Indigenous claims to land where the question of existing title remained open.<sup>14</sup> This significant shift in state policy can be attributed to Indigenous activism.

Despite its immense impact in creating unity through resistance, the *White Paper* and proposed dissolution of the *Indian Act* were not unilaterally the cause of increased Indigenous activism in the 1970s. In his book *Canada's Other Red Scare: Indigenous Protest and Colonial Encounters in the Global Sixties*, Scott Rutherford suggests that the *White Paper*, though influential, needs to be considered as part of a wider pan-Indigenous discourse and continuum of debates regarding the rethinking of Canadian history in the period.<sup>15</sup> Rutherford highlights the theorizing of Indigenous unity with the "third world" and of other marginalized groups worldwide as an important and dominant discourse within activism in the 1970s. Then-president of the NIB, Secwepemc leader George Manuel, in his 1974 book *The Fourth World: A New Reality*, discussed how there had never been a time when Indigenous people had not been resisting, and asserted that there

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<sup>13</sup> Indian Association of Alberta, 'Foundational Document: Citizens Plus,' *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 1, no. 1 (June 1970): 189.

<sup>14</sup> Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Scott Rutherford, *Canada's Other Red Scare: Indigenous Protest and Colonial Encounters During the Global Sixties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), 66.

were commonalities that Indigenous peoples in Canada shared with other peoples resisting colonization in the “third world.”<sup>16</sup> Manuel suggested that political unity, self-determination, and the acquisition of power through those means would create a Canadian Indigenous “fourth world” that would claim “home rule” and become sovereign partners in the leadership of Canada.<sup>17</sup> Another influential work promoting unity and activism amongst marginalized groups was Métis writer Harold Adams’ 1974 book *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. Adams suggested that Indigenous peoples in Canada and Black Americans were both colonized peoples who shared a broad colonial framework of oppression. Adams wrote of state education as a source of marginalization in both communities and called for Indigenous liberation through Red Power nationalism.<sup>18</sup>

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s plans in the late 1970s to patriate the Canadian Constitution would have nullified the British North America Act, which outlined the federal government’s responsibility to Indigenous peoples and their lands, and the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which defined the Crown’s process for negotiating through treaty the control of Indigenous lands. In 1980, George Manuel, the leader of UBCIC, declared a state of emergency regarding the need to entrench sovereignty in the constitution by including language that protected Indigenous rights and governance. The UBCIC produced the *Aboriginal Rights Position Paper* in 1980, detailing this sovereignty.<sup>19</sup> For many Indigenous activists, maintaining linkages with Britain was the only way to guarantee some measure of self-determination. This belief prompted highly publicized protests such as the cross-country Constitutional Express, which began on November 25,

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<sup>16</sup> George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 5.

<sup>17</sup> Manuel and Posluns, *The Fourth World*, 5, 217; Rutherford, *Canada’s Other Red Scare*, 70-71. Manuel traveled extensively in his role as president of the NIB. During a visit to New Zealand, he showed his distaste for the Canadian government’s argument that the Māori had integrated into New Zealand society, suggesting that Indigenous peoples in Canada and Māori needed to get together to tackle the issue of destructive school curriculums.

<sup>18</sup> Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from the Native Point of View* (Toronto: General Publishing, 1975), 167.

<sup>19</sup> Nickel, *Assembling Unity*, 150.

1980.<sup>20</sup> By November 26, the Trudeau government, under immense pressure from the Constitution Express and ongoing activism, agreed to reinstate “existing” treaty rights into the constitution, wording which remained vague and problematic. Nevertheless, this assertion of Indigenous rights was officially entrenched in the constitution as Section 35.

The late 1980s and 1990s saw significant Indigenous protests and court challenges across Canada stemming from intense local, provincial, and national debates and unresolved political conflict. Blockades and standoffs intensified throughout the 1980s and onward.<sup>21</sup> In 1987, Indigenous leaders were excluded from the First Ministers Conference that would lead to the creation of the *Meech Lake Accord*, a document that included a “Distinct Society Clause” suggesting French and English peoples were the foundational groups of Canada.<sup>22</sup> Indigenous resistance to the *Meech Lake Accord*, and scrutiny and disapproval from the provinces, resulted in the Accord being discarded by June 22, 1990. The standoff in Oka, Quebec, that same year and the Meech Lake debate prompted the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and the Canadian Human Rights Commission to set up a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) in 1996.

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<sup>20</sup> Joel Hebert, “‘Sacred Trust’: Rethinking Late British Decolonization in Indigenous Canada,” *Journal of British Studies* 58, no. 3 (July 2019): 581. Activists boarded a train traveling from Vancouver to Ottawa to rally for Indigenous consultation on the new constitution directly at Parliament. On November 1, 1981, the UBCIC continued the momentum of the Constitution Express by traveling to Europe to lobby against Trudeau’s proposed partition, garner support from activists and politicians in Europe, and put political pressure on Margaret Thatcher’s government to recognize Britain’s treaty obligations to Indigenous peoples in Canada.

<sup>21</sup> Ken Coates, *#IdleNoMore and the Remaking of Canada* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), xi. There were incidents at Burnt Church, New Brunswick; Caledonia, Ontario; Gustafsen Lake, British Columbia; the Oldman River, Alberta; Oka, Quebec; and Ipperwash Provincial Park, Ontario, to name just a few.

<sup>22</sup> Ian Peach, “The Power of a Single Feather: Meech Lake, Indigenous Resistance and the Evolution of Indigenous Politics in Canada,” *Review of Constitutional Studies* 16, no. 1 (June 2011): 21. After the creation of Section 35, Indigenous leaders had been promised consultation prior to constitutional change. Manitoba MLA and member of the Red Sucker Lake First Nation Elijah Harper refused to consent to introduce the motion concerning the Meech Lake Accord into the Manitoba Legislature on June 6, 1990, with the support of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Native Council of Canada, and the Dene Nation. By June 16, the Manitoba Chiefs announced their plan to defeat the Meech Lake Accord. The Charlottetown Accord, which was the first constitutional debate that included Indigenous leaders in the negotiations, was rejected in a 1992 referendum. This was a significant loss for Indigenous activists as the Charlottetown package included significant language for Indigenous self-government.

The RCAP's final report recommended the limiting of state intrusion into Indigenous nations, the respecting of historical treaties, the continued effort to negotiate treaty, and an overall recognition of Aboriginal title to land.<sup>23</sup> This level of consideration of Indigenous issues within the RCAP was extensive and points to the success of Indigenous activism in the late twentieth century. Another result of unrelenting Indigenous assertion of Indigenous sovereignty is the *Nisga'a Final Agreement* which was realized in 1998, effectively resolving the land claim of the Nisga'a's nation after twenty years of negotiation with the Crown. The "first modern-day treaty" in British Columbia came into effect on May 11, 2000.<sup>24</sup> International recognition of the world's Indigenous peoples in the form of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was endorsed by Canada in 2010. This document set out the minimum acceptable standards for states in their dealings with Indigenous peoples.<sup>25</sup>

### **History and Historiography of Indigenous Education (1970-1990)**

In 1972, as a response to the *White Paper* and in an effort to show the importance of educational equity as part of Indigenous sovereignty, the NIB produced *Indian Control of Indian Education (ICIE72)*, a policy paper reaffirming Indigenous peoples' desire to control their own education and the government of Canada's fiduciary duty to provide equal educational access and resources to First Nations peoples.<sup>26</sup> This policy paper, adopted by then-Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien, was not only a call to action for the provinces to recognize the inherent rights of First Nations peoples to govern and control their own education, but also a recognition of the failings of the state to provide equity and opportunity. Given this mismanagement, Indigenous leaders redirected their goals from educational equity in the settler education system, to determining and implementing their own educational needs and policies. Considering that Indigenous peoples historically sought access to colonial education, this shift in stance was indicative

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>24</sup> Colin Samson and Elizabeth Cassell, "The Long Reach of Frontier Justice: Canadian Land Claims 'Negotiation' Strategies as Human Rights Violations," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 17, no. 1 (2013): 39.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>26</sup> Assembly of First Nations. *First Nations Control of First Nations Education: It's Our Vision, It's Our Time*, (2010): 4.

of Indigenous recognition that only they could properly provide education for their own people. After *ICIE72* was released, in the wake of continued Indigenous activism for equity in education, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) began to transfer educational administrative responsibility to Indigenous peoples within existing federal legislation but without significant increase in budgetary levels. The role of the DIAND in Indigenous education became one of deciding on school funding and collecting annual statistical documentation.<sup>27</sup> First Nations organizations entered into agreements with Canada in relation to educational jurisdiction and the creation of on-reserve schools and cultural education centres in increasing numbers.<sup>28</sup>

The notion of Indigenous control of Indigenous education has varied in intention and scope over time. The 1970s saw publications calling for the devolution of total government control over Indigenous education in favor of Indigenous Bands. Activists and theorists considered what Indigenous control of Indigenous education really meant post-*ICIE72*, a meaning that shifted and evolved with changing government policy and Indigenous conceptualizations of sovereignty. To highlight changes over time in conceptions of Indigenous control of Indigenous education, I will use works by a number of scholars who have written about this perspective shift. In *First Nations Education Policy in Canada: Progress or Gridlock?*, Jerald Paquette and Gérald Fallon suggest that the 1970s, post-*ICIE72*, were characterized by the first stages of devolution of control from sole government monopoly of Indigenous education to divided accountability between the government and local Bands. Paquette and Fallon suggest that this stage showed central authorities delegating agency, but not autonomy to Indigenous leaders in the education of their peoples.<sup>29</sup> This shift allowed Indigenous Bands to create programming and influence educational goals, but not to do so as agents free of external control or influence. “The Challenge of Indian Education: An Overview,” published in 1987 by Jean Barman, Yvonne M. Hébert, and Don McCaskill, highlighted the

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<sup>27</sup> Sheila Carr-Stewart, “The Changing Educational Governance of First Nations Schools in Canada: Towards Local Control and Educational Equity.” *Management in Education* 20, no. 5 (November 2006): 10.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Jerald Paquette and Gérald Fallon, *First Nations Education Policy in Canada: Progress or Gridlock?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 144.

misunderstanding and frustration between the government and Indigenous leaders with the definition of what Indigenous control of Indigenous education really meant. Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill discussed federal public schools, which operated with funding given to the school districts for the education of status Indigenous children through tuition agreements, and Band-operated schools and day schools, both of which received funding directly from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. “The Challenge of Indian Education: An Overview” pointed to federal apathy regarding funding of education outside of the public realm and the sharing of power and resources to redistribute educational control to local Bands.<sup>30</sup> Its authors asserted that

to be successful, educational and governmental authorities including the DIA and provincial educational authorities, who currently hold a restraining power on developments in Indian education must be willing to share power and resources with Indian peoples. At the same time, Indian peoples must continue to equip themselves for new roles in their efforts to assume control of the education of their children. Internal preparation includes the training of educational planners, managers, teachers, evaluators, and analyst/researchers. Indian peoples must as Yvonne Hébert discusses, determine what constitutes appropriate quality education for Indian persons.<sup>31</sup>

In a similar vein, Dianne Longboat’s “First Nations Control of Education: The Path to our Survival as Nations,” also published in 1987, discussed the role and fiduciary responsibility of the federal government in administering Indigenous education. Longboat asserted that the federal government’s role should “be redefined to one of an obligation to fund, but not control, education. That education legislation, policies, and regulations are the responsibility of each First Nation to develop with its own people.”<sup>32</sup> These works highlight the tumultuous nature of defining “control” at all. As Paquette and Fallon noted, the difficulty with sharing power between Indigenous Bands and the government who carried the fiduciary obligation is that Indigenous peoples had the agency to effect change

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<sup>30</sup> Jean Barman, Yvonne M. Hébert, and Don McCaskill, “The Challenge of Indian Education: An Overview,” in *Indian Education in Canada: Volume 2: The Challenge*, ed. Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 6-7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>32</sup> Dianne Longboat, “First Nations Control of Education: The Path to our Survival as Nations,” in *Indian Education in Canada: Volume 2: The Challenge*, ed. Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 39.

in the education system; however, the system itself was still totally controlled by the government.

In *Red Skins, White Masks*, Glen Sean Coulthard suggests that prior to the 1970s the Canadian state's relationship with Indigenous peoples was exclusionary and assimilationist with genocidal intentions. Post-*White Paper*, the state's methods changed in an era where the focus shifted toward reconciling Indigenous claims to land and human rights with state sovereignty.<sup>33</sup> Although this shift allowed for recognition and accommodation of Indigenous voices, the state responded to Red Power activism simply by reproducing colonial domination through more conciliatory discourses and practices. The state and its institutions remained colonial to their foundations.<sup>34</sup> Coulthard, citing theory from anti-colonial theorist Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, suggests that in lieu of strictly exercising state violence, the government employed colonial domination through enticing Indigenous peoples to identify with a non-reciprocal need for recognition granted to them by the settler state. The terms of recognition laid out by the state disproportionately serve the state, and are essential to maintaining economic and political power over the marginalized other.<sup>35</sup> One can see this theory regarding the continuation of colonial domination in the relationship that Indigenous constituents, pursuing equity in education, had with government officials:

In the Canadian context, colonial domination continues to be structurally committed to maintain—through force, fraud, and more recently, so-called “negotiations”—ongoing state access to the land and resources that contradictorily provide the material and spiritual sustenance of Indigenous societies on the one hand, and the foundation of colonial state-formation, settlement, and capitalist development on the other.<sup>36</sup>

Indigenous peoples were negotiating with the federal government for the basic human rights provided through accessible and Indigenous led education. The politics of recognition, as described by Coulthard, characterized activism in the 1970s in the wake of

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<sup>33</sup> Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



the proposed *White Paper* and total erasure of Indigeneity. Red Power activism post-*White Paper* forced the federal government to attend to Indigenous peoples' call for action, resulting in new legislation to address the inequity their activism highlighted. Indigenous activists and organizations forged partnerships with the federal government through programs created to address issues Indigenous peoples themselves had brought forward concerning the health and welfare of their peoples. Despite these programs and partnerships, Coulthard asserts that from the mid-1980s and into the 1990s there was

a near decade-long escalation of Native frustration with a colonial state that steadfastly refused to uphold the rights that had been recently "recognized and armed" in section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act, 1982. By the late 1980s this frustration was clearly boiling over, resulting in a marked rise in First Nations' militancy and land-based direct action.<sup>37</sup>

Coulthard suggests that in the 1970s the government used the currency of recognition to bring Indigenous leaders to the table to negotiate. By the 1980s and 1990s, Indigenous peoples, frustrated with the lack of federal government action, moved away from the table in favor of open demonstration.

The Cultural Education Program was one of several programs introduced by the federal government in the 1970s to meet the growing demand for services from the Indigenous population. Cultural Education Centres addressed the educational needs of Indigenous peoples by providing access to cultural education and support in the public and post-secondary education system, while Friendship Centres supported a growing Indigenous population in their transition to cities by giving support in areas such as housing, access to services, and community building. Both were to be places run by Indigenous peoples for Indigenous peoples. The federal Migrating Native Peoples' Program proposed to fund new Indigenous Friendship Centres to support the growing Indigenous population moving to urban areas. Findings from Mary-Jane Norris and Stewart Clatworthy's study "Urbanization and Migration Patterns of Aboriginal Populations in Canada: A Half Century in Review (1951 to 2006)" note that in the 1950s Aboriginal peoples in urban areas counted only in the hundreds but increased by 50%

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 116.

over that decade in seven of the twelve cities in the study. By 1971 Winnipeg, Edmonton, Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto, Regina, and Calgary each had over two thousand Aboriginal residents.<sup>38</sup> An influx of Aboriginal peoples in urban areas increased interest in government-funded, off-reserve Friendship Centres and cultural education centres. Will Langford's "Friendship Centres in Canada, 1959-1977" describes this influx of young Indigenous men and women in cities as connected to changes in Indigenous activism and public policy in the 1950s and 1960s. Langford notes that Indigenous peoples moved to urban centres to access better economic opportunities, education, and living conditions than were available on reserves and at residential schools. Friendship Centres were a direct reflection of the Indigenous activists in rural areas recognizing the needs of Indigenous migrants to cities. Although this recognition required widespread community activism, including non-Indigenous voices and financing, the needs of Indigenous peoples determined by Indigenous peoples were still central. Indigenous women, who were central to the creation of Friendship Centre programming, identified priority needs as assisting Indigenous peoples in navigating the courts, housing issues, and loss of identity and freedom brought on by residential schooling, among other concerns.<sup>39</sup> Once Indigenous people were in urban communities, Langford describes how large-scale activism was required to secure funding to open centres and keep them open. By 1972, the federal government under Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier introduced the Migrating Native Peoples Program, a 26-million-dollar program of fiscal support for 37 friendship centres across Canada:

The MNPP did not immediately resolve problems with the adequacy and administration of funding. The Treasury Board was slow to approve the new funding program, while the old funding arrangement was suspended. By August 1972 the center in London had closed, and centers in Calgary, Red Lake, and Edmonton suggested that they would soon have to follow suit. Only renewed pressure from Friendship Centres pushed Pelletier to release funds to avert further closures. Yet twelve months later, NAFC threatened to close all Friendship Centres in a twenty- four hour protest over the slow implementation of MNPP. The Department of the Secretary

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<sup>38</sup> Mary Jane Norris and Stewart Clatworthy, "Urbanization and Migration Patterns of Aboriginal Populations in Canada: A Half Century in Review (1951 to 2006)," *Aboriginal Policy Studies*, no. 1 (2011): 15.

<sup>39</sup> Will Langford, "Friendship Centres in Canada, 1959-1977," *American Indian Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2016): 2, 9.

of State had yet to implement the \$3.6 million capital funding part of the program, and smaller centers, like the one in Swan River, continued to close recurrently for lack of funds.<sup>40</sup>

Cultural Education Centres and Friendship Centres both experienced funding difficulties causing threat of closure. The need for persistent Indigenous activism to receive promised funds from the federal government exemplifies Paquette's, Fallon's, and Coulthard's theories of government control and oppression. The system maintains Indigenous subservience through the colonial state's control of funding through the guise of recognition. What defined Indigenous control of Indigenous education shifted as activists found their efforts did not decentralize government power.

In 1988, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), successor to the NIB, published *Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of the Future*, a comprehensive four-year study on Aboriginal education in Canada that advanced the arguments of ICIE72. This study also showed a clear shift from thinking strictly about authority in education to authority in education as provided through self-government. *Tradition and Education* demanded federal legislation recognize the Indigenous right to self-government and control over education.<sup>41</sup> The 1980s also saw the first class-action lawsuits brought forward by Indigenous victims of residential schools. Through the late 1980s and into the 1990s churches across Canada attempted apologies for their roles in residential schooling, the first of which came from the United Church of Canada in 1986.<sup>42</sup> Between the 1980s and the 2000s, prominent historians wrote accounts of residential schooling in Canada. They relied not only on textual sources and archives, but conducted oral interviews to reconstruct the past. Works such as J.R. Miller's *Shingwauk's Vision*, published in 1996, called attention to the damaging history of Indigenous schooling in Canada through the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>41</sup> Frances Abele, Carolyn Dittburner, and Katherine Graham, "Towards a Shared Understanding in the Policy Discussion About Aboriginal Education," in *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise*, ed. Marlene Brant Castellano, Lynne Davis and Louise Lahache (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 15.

<sup>42</sup> J.R. Miller, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts its History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 36.

use of both types of sources.<sup>44</sup> More importantly, Indigenous activists and Bands wrote about residential school experiences.<sup>45</sup> In addition to increased historical scholarship, the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, released in 1996, asserted the importance of history and historical research in the pursuit of recognition of Indigenous right and title to land and education.

The *ICIE72* policy paper led to the creation of First Nations schools and institutes of higher learning in British Columbia, with approximately 80,000 First Nations students registered as of 2009. However, the updated version of the ICIE policy paper *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* (2010) stated that

the full spirit and intent of the policy [was never] supported in a meaningful manner by federal, provincial, or territorial governments. The Canadian government's inadequate implementation of the ICIE 1972 policy allowed for only a modest level of control by local communities in the form of delegated authority. The unilaterally designed devolution process instituted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) transferred limited administrative control of education by First Nations without including the necessary transfer of the resources that would have allowed for full implementation of First Nations controlled education systems.<sup>46</sup>

Power and control of education was not relinquished; instead, small segments of authority were delegated in response to a document that articulately indicated self-determination in First Nations education. The state was still stifling First Nations' efforts to provide adequate education to their people. *ICIE72* showcased Indigenous political ability and agency; it challenged the colonial state's monopoly over education and thus undermined its use of education to colonize. Celia Haig-Brown's experience working with the Native

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<sup>44</sup> See also *Indian Education in Canada Volume 1: The Legacy* and *Volume 2: The Challenge* (1996), edited by Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill, and John Milloy's *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879-1986* (1999). Regional examples include Celia Haig-Brown's 1988 book *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*, which provided detailed interviews from 13 former students of Kamloops Indian Residential School, and Elizabeth Furniss' *Victims of Benevolence: the Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* (1992), which detailed the conditions at this school and the death of two students there due to mistreatment.

<sup>45</sup> Such works include Basil Johnston's *Indian School Days* (1988), which detailed his time at Spanish Indian Residential School in Northern Ontario, and Isabelle Knockwood's *Out of the Depths* (1992), which detailed her experience at Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia.

<sup>46</sup> Assembly of First Nations, "First Nations Control of First Nations Education," 6.

Education Centre in Vancouver in 1988 and 1999 echoes the concern over allocation of resources and inability for centres of higher learning to fulfill the mandates in *ICIE72*'s policy. The Native Education Centre, which delivered adult educational services and curriculum rooted in cultural knowledge while preparing students for a Euro-Canadian workforce, dealt with continual threats to have government funding cut by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development<sup>47</sup> First Nations schools struggled with finding properly qualified teachers and accessing educational resources while being unable to make policy decisions due to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) restrictions.<sup>48</sup> Seth Agbo, in working with the Great Spirit Memorial School in Green Lake, Ontario, noted in his 2005 study that although the federal government seemed to have, in theory, given control of the school to the Band, the financial resources, including the supplies, salaries, and school budget, as well as human resources, were still strictly controlled by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development<sup>49</sup> These examples indicate schools and education centres were constantly threatened with closure, left with inadequate resources, and denied proper authority over areas as integral as finances. Without being able to control their budgets, schools and centres struggled to have control or authority over curricula, resources, or staff. Within this model, the 2010 updated policy paper by the AFN reported that "high school drop-out rates nationally remained at 51% and the graduation rates of First Nations children had not exceeded 48% in the nearly forty years since the enactment of the *ICIE72* policy."<sup>50</sup> Even though Indigenous peoples had created policy and practice that shifted power and control to their own Bands, the state allowed them only minimal agency and controlled the most important sectors of the education system for Indigenous peoples. On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper formally apologized to Indigenous peoples for the government's operation of residential schools and established the Canadian government's role in delivering healing to its past students. This apology was the first of

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<sup>47</sup> Celia Haig-Brown, *Taking Control: Power and Contradiction in First Nations Adult Education* (Vancouver, CA: UBC Press, 1995), 87.

<sup>48</sup> Seth A. Agbo, "Decentralization of First Nations Education in Canada: Perspectives on Ideals and Realities of Indian Control of Indian Education," *Interchange* 33, no. 3 (2002): 298.

<sup>49</sup> Seth A. Agbo, "Perspectives on Local Control of Education with a Future Orientation: A View from First Nations." *Journal of Educational Thought* 39, no. 3 (Winter 2005): 306.

<sup>50</sup> Assembly of First Nations, "First Nations Control of First Nations Education," 5.

its kind. However, educational inequity and struggles for Indigenous control of Indigenous education continued. Indigenous peoples had demanded meaningful reconciliation through control of their own education. Regardless of this ground-breaking apology, control over education would, in large part, remain firmly in the hands of the federal government, requiring Indigenous peoples to continue activists pursuits to get their voices heard.

### **Iona Campagnolo and the Archives: A Preface to the Case Studies**

Iona Campagnolo was a politician in British Columbia who worked as Liberal MP for the Skeena region and as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development from 1974-1976. This role brought her into contact with Indigenous bands across British Columbia. Much of her correspondence with Indigenous Bands during her tenure in this position is kept at the Northern BC Archives at the University of Northern British Columbia. Indigenous Bands across British Columbia contacted Campagnolo to lobby for their rights within the federal government. Her role included forwarding these concerns through the political channel to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. As Iona Campagnolo's records of correspondence between government officials and Indigenous groups are key to this thesis, background to her political and humanitarian pursuits have been included.

In 1940, when Iona Campagnolo was seven years old, her family moved to Prince Rupert from Galiano Island so her father could pursue employment as Chief of Maintenance at the North Pacific Cannery.<sup>51</sup> Campagnolo herself attained her first job at the cannery at the age of ten, where she worked with other labourers of European, Indigenous, and Asian descent.<sup>52</sup> Her career in politics began in Prince Rupert, where she was elected as a School Trustee for the Prince Rupert School Board in 1966, a position

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<sup>51</sup> Biographical Sketch, Accession No. 2009.6, The Honorable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, Northern British Columbia Archives (hereafter NBCA), University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Iona Campagnolo and David Suzuki. "Scientist David Suzuki, Politician Iona Campagnolo" by Lynne McNamara. *Then and Now*, CBC. 1988, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsKnX4uE8GI&ab\\_channel=ST40TV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsKnX4uE8GI&ab_channel=ST40TV).

she held for six years. In 1972, Campagnolo became a city councillor and remained in that post until 1974.<sup>53</sup> In her time as city councillor Campagnolo was known for her focus on the benefits of embracing ethnic diversity in the BC northern coastal region. This activism earned her the Order of Canada in 1973 for her twenty years of community volunteerism. Shortly after, Campagnolo began her career in federal politics with a successful bid to become the Liberal Party candidate for the Skeena region. As MP for Skeena, Campagnolo was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.<sup>54</sup> Much of her work within this position was as advocate for Indigenous peoples across British Columbia in lobbying for their rights to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at the time. These ministers included Judd Buchanan (1974-1975), and subsequently Arthur Laing (1976), and Warren Allmand (1976-1977). All the documentation included in the subsequent case studies are from fonds from her time in this role. In 1976, Campagnolo was appointed as Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport within Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government. Not only was she the first Minister of Amateur Sport; she was also the first female Cabinet Minister and first person from Northern BC to be appointed as a federal minister. She held this position until 1979.<sup>55</sup>

From 1979 to 1982 Campagnolo worked in refugee activism overseas and for feminist organizations. She spoke passionately about feminism and the need for women to pursue roles in government. She showed continual dedication to fundraising, speaking engagements, and advocacy for organizations such as the Canadian University Services Overseas Organization, which worked with Thai-Kampuchean border refugees, and the Canadian International Development Agency, a group that worked to address world hunger. In 1980, Campagnolo travelled to Jerusalem, Israel, to attend the Jerusalem Women's Seminar, a professional networking and cultural exchange meeting for women from Canada, the United States, Israel, and Egypt during the negotiations for the Camp David Accords.<sup>56</sup> In 1982, Campagnolo turned her attention back to the political realm,

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<sup>53</sup> Biographical Sketch, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

running for the presidency of the Liberal Party of Canada, a position she held until 1984. Campagnolo was the first female president of the party after fifty years of male leadership.<sup>57</sup> During the mid- to late 1980s, Campagnolo continued her humanitarian and equality-seeking work while maintaining her interest in and support for sport advocacy, consulting on the Calgary Olympic Development Association's bid for the 1988 Winter Olympics, as well as helping to develop educational programming at Simon Fraser University and McMaster University.

In 1992, Campagnolo began her work helping to establish a university in Northern BC. Campagnolo was appointed the founding Chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George. In her role as Chancellor, she traveled to every northern region which the university served, advocating for the programming it could provide for the people of the North. She held the position of Chancellor until 1998. In 2001, Campagnolo was appointed by Adrienne Clarkson, the Governor General, to serve as the first female Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. She held this position until 2007. After Campagnolo retired from federal politics, she continued her advocacy for diversity, inclusion, and humanitarianism in the recognition of Indigenous title to land, as well as salmon sustainability.<sup>58</sup>

Campagnolo received many honours and awards throughout her career. For her work with Indigenous Nations of the North, she was honored with First Nations names from both the Tsimshian and Haida people. In 1973, Chief Haq-ba-quo-too (Kenneth Harris) of the Tsimshian people granted her the name Noltz-whe-neha, or "Mother of the Big Fin." In 1976, Chief Skidegate (Clarence Collinson) bestowed upon her the Haida name of Saana ag X's' wah, or "Person who Sits High."<sup>59</sup> Campagnolo has also been deemed a lifelong friend of the Nisga'a Nation.<sup>60</sup> On November 15, 2003, at the thirtieth anniversary of the historic Calder decision, Iona Campagnolo gave a speech to close the celebrations. She spoke eloquently of her time as a "cannery kid" and the respect that she

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>60</sup> "A Surprise Visit from Iona Campagnolo," *Nisga'a Lisims Government* online, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.nisgaanation.ca/news/surprise-visit-iona-campagnolo>.



developed for the First Nations of the North Coast. She spoke of the history of the Nisga'a claim to their traditional territories, her involvement in the earlier negotiations as the MP of the Skeena region, and Frank Calder's large contribution to the eventual ratification of the Nisga'a Treaty:

By now, the Nisga'a were my Skeena constituents, and, on January 26, 1976, the Nishga Tribal Council and Canada gathered in New Aiyansh, on a basis of equal respect, to open negotiations on a treaty. Under Premier Bill Vander Zalm, British Columbia joined this negotiation in 1990. On September 12, 2000, the Nisga'a Lisims Government convened their first meeting in their own legislature. Every step along the way is recorded in history, providing other First Nations here at home and across the world with the confidence that it can be done. Few of us are privileged to change history; Frank Calder is one who has done so. Had there not been an Honorable Member for Atlin, elected in 1949, in the person of the "Little Chief," Frank Calder and for his presence in the legislature of British Columbia, we would all today be the poorer. Frank, through your actions and leadership, you have allowed us all to reinforce the dignity of this great country. I also bring a salute from that long ago group of "rag-tag" cannery kids, who few thought had much of a future but who grew up to become great Nisga'a chiefs, members of parliament and the legislature, ministers of the Crown, and representatives of the Queen, knowing what an extraordinary country Canada really is when a "little chief" can do such big things!<sup>61</sup>

In Frank Calder's response to the final remarks of several political figures involved or associated with the Calder case, he spoke of Campagnolo affectionately as an ally:

As part of my brief, short address to you, it is foremost in my mind, I reply to what Her Honor Iona Campagnolo has said to you. She comes from the area, as most of us know, which is considered by many to be the birthplace of the BC land question. She grew up in that area, and she's seen with her own eyes exactly what was happening. She has witnessed and taken part in the progress of this land question, especially during her term of office as councilor in the city of Prince Rupert and as federal member for Skeena in the House of Commons. This, of course, took several years. Now we listened carefully to her remarks. I am replying to those remarks as my work this evening. Along with you, I treasure all of the words that she has expressed to us. You're the witness when I say to her that I thank her with

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<sup>61</sup> Iona Campagnolo, "Closing Thoughts: Final Remarks from Iona Campagnolo, Lance Finch, Joseph Gosnell, and Frank Calder," in *Let Right Be Done: Aboriginal Title, the Calder Case, and the Future of Indigenous Rights*, ed. Hamar Foster, Heather Raven, and Jeremy Webber (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 219-21.

all of our hearts. We remember the work she has done for us up north during her earlier years and during the time that she was elected as the people's representative and her dedication and involvement and participation, which of course, benefit everyone, especially our people. We don't forget those things. We thank her for that, and we thank her for her supportive remarks that you have just heard. We thank her for those encouraging words. Iona, by your presence, we all feel at home.<sup>62</sup>

In 2012, Iona Campagnolo became known as the “woman of firsts” at an award ceremony for the Comox Valley Walk of Achievement.”<sup>63</sup> Her contribution to Indigenous advocacy, international humanitarian pursuits, and the elevation of sport in Canada is clear from her long list of achievements and awards. Iona Campagnolo left a majorly positive impression on many Indigenous communities in British Columbia. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Campagnolo was a white female politician who had the privilege to have her voice heard and at times to be a voice for Indigenous peoples within the federal government. She became the “woman of firsts” when women of colour were denied the opportunity to reach these goals politically or otherwise. Although in her time as Secretary for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development she was an advocate for Indigenous Bands to access educational funding and support, Indigenous activism in British Columbia worked mostly apart from Campagnolo. It is important that Campagnolo be seen as an advocate for Indigenous activism, but not the source of it.

Campagnolo was also a female politician during a time where women were unlikely to receive political party support for leadership roles in Canada. Campagnolo first worked within municipal politics in Prince Rupert, a realm of public service that was found to be much more attainable for women and thus likely than provincial or federal politics by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, which commenced on February 16, 1967, and finished on September 28, 1970, under Lester B. Pearson's government. The report concluded that a significant hurdle for women in provincial and federal politics was receiving party nominations and support. For women, receiving nomination from one's own party proved to be more difficult than being elected after the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>63</sup> Renee Andor, “Woman of Firsts’ Admitted to Comox Valley Walk of Achievement.” Comox Valley Record, Dec 4., 2012. <https://www.comoxvalleyrecord.com/news/woman-of-firsts-admitted-to-comox-valley-walk-of-achievement/>.

fact. It was also found that they were most likely to be recruited in constituencies where the party was the least likely to win.<sup>64</sup> It is within this political environment that Campagnolo started a career and made successful bids to become MP of Skeena and Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development from 1974-1976, a federal minister in 1976, the president of the Liberal Party of Canada in 1982, and eventually the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia in 2001.

Despite accomplishments that helped transform ideas about women in political leadership, Campagnolo experienced the kinds of sexism and discrimination that characterized the 1970s and 1980s. In her position as Liberal Party President, Campagnolo received increased media attention after then-Prime Minister, John Turner, patted her behind on camera at a Liberal Party gathering in Edmonton, Alberta. Campagnolo famously turned around and patted him right back, saying “that’s equal, that’s fair.” Several news organizations described the event as humorous and described Turner as a very “tactile politician.”<sup>65</sup> Campagnolo was described by a columnist in *Maclean’s Magazine* in 1982 as the “attractive female star of the Federal Liberal Cabinet” with the “flattest belly of any 50-year-old.”<sup>66</sup> In an environment where party support was extremely low for women seeking nomination for election to the House of Commons, Campagnolo advocated for Indigenous rights to her strictly male superiors. Her ability to do her job was no doubt affected by the patriarchal environment in which she worked, an environment that undervalued female leadership and oversexualized women in government. Although Campagnolo’s interventions increased the likelihood of government response, both women and Indigenous peoples struggled to gain the attention of upper-echelon officials in the federal government during this period.

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<sup>64</sup> Joni Lovenduski and Jill Hills, *The Politics of the Second Electorate: Women and Public Participation: Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, France, Spain, West Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Eastern Europe, USSR, Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 66.

<sup>65</sup> “John Turner: A very ‘Tactile’ Politician,” *CBC Video Archives*, 1984, <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2652870398>.

<sup>66</sup> Allan Fotheringham, “The Female Sex in Public Life,” *Maclean’s Magazine*, November 22, 1982, <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1982/11/22/the-female-sex-in-public-life>.

The following case studies are drawn from the correspondence Campagnolo had with Indigenous Bands and political figures, as well as her personal notes on that correspondence. The following case studies concern Cultural Education Program funding provided by the Canadian government and the experience of the Coqualeetza Education Centre in Sardis, BC, an education centre that was to be operated by the Stó:lō Tribe on their traditional territories. These case studies span 1973 to 1979, indicating that Campagnolo was continuing to work with Indigenous communities after her appointment concluded as MP for the Skeena region and Secretary for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. These case studies are a direct reflection of the Indigenous culture of activism in the 1970s post-*White Paper*. *ICIE72* called for greater Indigenous control over the education of their people and government response remained limited and firmly colonial in its reluctance to relinquish power. Allies such as Iona Campagnolo advocated for Indigenous voices but continued to operate within colonial state structures. Regardless, Indigenous activists linked sovereignty over land to educational equity, contributing to the rise of federally-funded Band schools and education centres. The following case studies will exhibit the fraught relationship between Indigenous activists seeking agency in the education of their peoples and the federal government in implementing the Cultural Education Program.

## **Chapter 2: Cultural Education Program Case Study**

The Canadian government amended the *Indian Act* in 1951 to allow Indigenous students to attend public school. Integration in British Columbia was complicated by the continuation of several church-sponsored residential schools in that province well into the 1970s, which not only prolonged segregation, but demanded continued state support even after public schools opened their doors to Indigenous students.<sup>67</sup> In 1964, the *Hawthorne Report* concluded that Indigenous students had unequal access to education, were not achieving similar results in school, and were not able to participate in the workforce as

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<sup>67</sup> Michael Marker, “Indigenous Resistance and Racist Schooling on the Borders of Empires: Coast Salish Cultural Survival,” *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2009): 776.

non-Indigenous students were. The survey also noted the use of inappropriate and discriminatory texts and resources.<sup>68</sup> The study indicated that the Canadian state, threatened by the calls for equity in education from First Nations leaders, attempted to marginalize Indigenous students within these sought-after integrated schools. In 1969, despite the *Hawthorne Report* findings, the Canadian government produced the *White Paper*, which proposed removing any reference to the state providing education to this marginalized group. Following the IAA's Red Paper publication, the NIB entered into a series of discussions with the federal cabinet, seeking a review of federal approaches to Indigenous education.

The creation of a federal Cultural Education Program stemmed from the IAA's proposal to the federal government to fund an Alberta Indian Education Centre in 1970. Excerpts from IAA's proposal were included in *Citizens Plus* as a means for *Indian Control of Indian Education*.<sup>69</sup> The IAA imagined that the Centre would work hand in hand with other institutions by allowing them to run programs out of the Centre and allowing participants in the centre to engage in cultural education while being supported in the provincial schooling system. The IAA hoped that they would coordinate this with the support of federal funds.<sup>70</sup> However, DIAND continued to reject funding requests for improvements to on-reserve schools and centres due to their commitments to provincially operated schools in towns.<sup>71</sup> After British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick submitted similar proposals, the federal cabinet began discussing approval for a sub-committee to study the concept of cultural/educational centres.<sup>72</sup> In 1971, the federal government began funding the Cultural Education Program through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The program's intention was to preserve, develop, and promote First Nations and Inuit culture and heritage through funding programs developed by community non-profit organizations. *ICIE72* outlined the ways in which the Cultural Education Centres would allow Indigenous peoples to mobilize

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<sup>68</sup> Haig-Brown, *Taking Control*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> Margaret S. Ward, "Indian Education in Canada: Implementation of Educational Policy, 1973-1978" (M.Ed thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1988), 50.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Abele, Dittburner, and Graham, "Lessons from the Policy Discourse," 5.

<sup>72</sup> Ward, "Indian Education in Canada," 50.

educational experiences that represented and celebrated their history, culture, language, and values, while also giving them access to important skills and knowledge to benefit from economic and social development in contemporary Canada. A need to fill in the educational gaps that clearly existed in the colonial education system was also highlighted.<sup>73</sup> *ICIE72* also touched on the need for support for these programs, inviting support from provincial/territorial or local governments, businesses or industry, and churches or foundations. In what seemed to be a result of a prior understanding of government bureaucracy, the policy paper also stated that “funds for these centres should be available with a minimum of regulations. These latter should be the result of discussion and agreement between the Government and the Indian people. These centres must be Indian controlled and operated, in view of the fact that they are established for Indian purposes and use.”<sup>74</sup> As previously stated, *ICIE72* recognized the need for Indigenous peoples to govern their own education in light of government mismanagement. With the inauguration of the Cultural Education Program, the federal government had agreed to share jurisdiction in Indigenous education with Indigenous Bands themselves. The fiscal side of the agreements remained tightly controlled and regulated, making much of *ICIE72*’s hopes for Indigenous control over operation of these centres complicated to achieve in practice.

Based on early government documents and Iona Campagnolo’s correspondence with Indigenous activists and non-Indigenous politicians, the criteria for centres looking to apply to the Cultural Education Program were not clear. This lack of clarity can be associated with the DIAND monopoly over Indigenous educational funding, resulting in unclear standards for acceptance or refusal. In a federal Cabinet meeting on July 27, 1971, cabinet approved in principle the rollout of a Cultural Education Program in Canada. The cabinet suggested the program be implemented by:

- i) reviewing and evaluating all native cultural/educational centre proposals;

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<sup>73</sup> National Indian Brotherhood, *Indian Control of Indian Education: A policy paper presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development* (Ottawa, 1972), 16-17.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

- ii) consulting with native groups who initiate proposals, to affect any necessary changes in program design or financial planning adjustments;
- iii) consulting with appropriate provincial authorities in order to ensure their support and participation in proposed centres within their boundaries;
- iv) advising the Department of the Secretary of State and Indian Affairs and Northern Development as to the proportionate level of financial support which each Department should provide for each centre as initial “start-up” grants for annual operating subsidies;
- v) co-coordinating those activities of federal government agencies which may be directly related to the operation of the native cultural/educational centres program;
- vi) maintaining an evaluation procedure in relation to established centres, in order to ensure their continued viability and satisfactory standard of performance;
- vii) appointing a standing sub-committee to carry out the above responsibilities, subject to the general ratification of the senior committee. The sub-committee would be made up of representatives from the Departments of the Secretary of State, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Regional Economic Expansion, and Manpower and Immigration.
- viii) reporting through the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development responsible to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy, on decisions taken concerning the establishment and operation of native cultural/educational centres.<sup>75</sup>

Unfortunately, I found little information regarding the suggested reviews, evaluation procedures, and reporting standards mentioned in the above cabinet minutes. A 1978 Evalucan Limited Report on federally funded cultural education centres indicated that centres that were approved were supported in the following endeavours:

preservation of culture (includes traditions, life skills, arts and crafts, history, legends), language programs (teaching, documentation, research translations), resource centres (museums, archives, consulting services, audio-visual, graphics), school programs (curriculum development, improvement of education for Native peoples), outreach programs and

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<sup>75</sup> Cabinet Minutes, July 29, 1971, RG2 A-5-a, Volume: 6381, Cabinet Conclusions, Library and Archives Canada.

home economics, special events (cultural, i.e. Pow-wows, elder-youth workshops, spiritual and ceremonial events; and educational, i.e. workshops and conferences for staff, teacher orientations, courses in administration and public relations.<sup>76</sup>

The program's mandate, as outlined by Indigenous Services Canada in 2021, was to revive traditional cultural skills among First Nations and Inuit people, develop contemporary cultural skills among First Nations and Inuit people, develop First Nations and Inuit peoples' knowledge and use of their traditional languages, and promote cross-cultural awareness in mainstream educational programs and institutions.<sup>77</sup> The lack of clarity regarding which cultural education endeavours were applicable is indicative of some level of disorganization on the part of the government. Centres did not always know why their programs were or were not approved. The tight government control over acceptance and refusal of what was to be considered an Indigenous cultural endeavour also challenged the idea of sovereignty and agency for Indigenous peoples in their education.

The program received approval for a five-year term and continued financial support from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Department of the Secretary of State. Two million dollars was allotted for the 1971/72 fiscal year, with a planned ten-million-dollar yearly allotment for the subsequent four fiscal years.<sup>78</sup> Margaret Ward's work entitled "Indian Education in Canada: Implementation of Educational Policy, 1973-1978," scrutinized results from a 1978 Evalucan Ltd. report on the intention, results, and financials of the Cultural Education Program. Results showed that many weaknesses in the original plan for the program were indicated:

1. what is to be funded--i.e. what is a cultural/educational centre;

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<sup>76</sup> Ward, "Indian Education in Canada," 58.

<sup>77</sup> Government of Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations and Inuit Cultural Education Program, *National Program Guidelines 2021-2022*, April 15, 2021, <https://www.sacisc.gc.ca/eng/1618237851752/1618237868391>.

<sup>78</sup> Ward, "Indian Education in Canada," 52.



2. who will be the recipients of the services provided--i.e. a program for status Indians with possible special arrangements for non-status and Métis people;
3. where exactly the funding is to come from and who controls it--i.e. two departments appointment to oversee--one whose mandate is for status Indians--the other for multi-cultural groups.<sup>79</sup>

The above-mentioned issues reveal a lack of clarity around the program's intended goals and implementation. There was no strict outline of the source or intended use of funding, leaving the program and its finances up to government interpretation. The same report indicated that in 1971, several government departments created a new set of goals and criteria for the Cultural Education Program without any input from First Nations, Inuit, or affiliated organizations. Under this jurisdiction, nine more centres were approved for funding by November of 1972.<sup>80</sup> By 1973, funding for the program was controlled solely by DIAND and was reduced from ten million per year to eight million per year. This allocation continued for the remainder of the five-year mandate.

The NIB submitted a report to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in early 1973, highlighting three important changes to the management and administration of the program. They suggested that the position of Executive Secretary of the Cultural Education Centres Program be controlled solely by the NIB, that money be provided by DIAND and dispersed to a provincial or territorial Indigenous organization, and that the NIB pursue funding for capital expenditures to establish centres. DIAND rejected the NIB's submission as contrary to program policies and did not consider it further.<sup>81</sup> This rejection shows that Indigenous organizations pursued participation in early program development and suggests that DIAND did not prioritize consultation. In 1975 at a General Assembly meeting in Truro, Nova Scotia, the NIB passed a motion in support of the continuation of the Cultural Education Program, with a revision of criteria determined by the NIB to ensure proper disbursement and use of funds. Although the NIB was not included in talks to revise the program, they supported the creation of the National Steering Committee of Centre Directors, a committee of Indigenous Directors

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

that liaised between the federal government and individual centres to ensure centre needs were met.<sup>82</sup> DIAND applied for continuation of the program in March of 1976, but was approved for only a one-year extension with a budget reduction to five million dollars per fiscal year and a freeze on funding of any new centres.<sup>83</sup> The Committee of Centre Directors had an elevated role in 1976/1977 after the completion of the Cultural Education Program's initial five-year mandate. The committee was heavily involved in the 1976/1977 investigative report on the Cultural Education Program. DIAND requested the committee provide a revised copy of program criteria that contributed to the reshaping of the program by 1977.<sup>84</sup> In 1977, official extension of the program was secured by approval of the Treasury Board with a budget of five million dollars per fiscal year and a new set of objectives and criteria. This extension would be the first time that a board approved the criteria and objectives of the program outside of DIAND since the program's implementation in 1972/1973. In addition, the new objectives and criteria had been created with consultation and input from the National Cultural Education Centres Directors.<sup>85</sup> Cultural education centres were finally able to voice concerns and suggest program change.

The fiscal yearly allotment for the Cultural Education Centres Program was much higher than what was actually dispersed. The 1972/1973 fiscal year allotment was set at \$2 million; the 1973/1974 to 1975/1976 fiscal years were set at \$8 million; and subsequent years were set at \$5 million. The 1972/1973 fiscal year found nine centres access a national disbursement of \$1.7 million; the 1973/1974 fiscal year found twenty centres access \$3.2 million; the 1974/1945 fiscal year had forty-four centres access \$4.5 million; the 1975/1976 fiscal year had fifty-three centres access \$4.9 million; the 1976/1977 fiscal year had fifty-one centres access \$5 million; and the 1977/1978 fiscal year had fifty-two centres access \$4.55 million.<sup>86</sup> These figures mean that the 1973/1974-1975/1976 fiscal years had an average of around \$4 million dollars per year allocated to

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 57.

the program that was not dispersed. As of the 1973/1974 fiscal year, funding was based on a per-capita allotment of \$28.21 per person, funding that required Band approval through Band council resolutions.<sup>87</sup> With this formula, the national fiscal budget for the 1974/1975 fiscal year should have been around \$5.9 million dollars, not \$4.5—a discrepancy of \$1.4 million dollars that could have been allocated to Bands that had requested it for cultural/education centre programming.

On February 17, 1975, Lou Demerais, Administrator at the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, wrote Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Judd Buchanan to discuss the implementation of the Cultural Education Program and its effects on the centres in British Columbia. The Indian Cultural Education Association of BC (CEABC) was an organization that represented the interests of BC's Cultural Education Centres and received and dispersed federal funding allotted for British Columbia's centres. In the correspondence, Demerais indicated that the Union of BC Indian Chiefs had carried a motion regarding the government's refusal to disperse the allotted funds to British Columbia for the 1974/1975 fiscal year. The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs' Motion #19 stated that

Chiefs' Council supports the Indian Cultural Education Association of British Columbia in protesting this unilateral action by the Department of Indian Affairs in transferring B.C.'s share of cultural education funding without consultation with us, and that the Indian Cultural Education Association of B.C. take all necessary steps to ensure that we have adequate funding for the new fiscal year.<sup>88</sup>

Demerais explained that Mark Point, the Coordinator of the CEABC, informed Council at a meeting on February 7, 1975, that Buchanan's department "had transferred—without consultation with the elected leaders from the province—most of that portion of the federal program money which had been ear-marked for British Columbia. This naturally resulted in the above motion being seconded and carried."<sup>89</sup> The decentralization of the

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>88</sup> Lou Demerais, Administrator for Union of BC Indian Chiefs to Judd Buchanan, February 17-19, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.139, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA. .

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

Cultural Education Program from DIAND authority to Indigenous Bands and organizations had been a goal articulated by the Indian Association of Alberta in their original requests for funding through the federal government for the first such centre. This desire to decentralize was also articulated by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. Demerais outlined his frustration by stating the following:

I must remind you, Mr. Minister, that decentralization of the program to British Columbian Indian people was the main reason for the creation of the Indian Cultural Education Association of British Columbia. In light of the financial record of the program in terms of British Columbia's allocation, it seems only fair and just that compensation be made to the extent of an increase in the per capita entitlement as stated by the Indian Cultural Education Association of British Columbia.<sup>90</sup>

*ICIE72's* goal of disbursing funds with minimal regulations, allowing Indigenous Bands themselves to determine the cultural and educational needs of their people, proved difficult. Tight federal fiscal control left the decisions on what was or was not to be approved to the discretion of the government. The final move made by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs more broadly addressed a general issue with the Cultural Education Program. Motion #432 stated that the program was not meeting the needs of the BC Indigenous population—a fact highlighted by the \$300,000 that had been dispersed to BC out of a total of \$3.4 million allocated to the province and the Indian Cultural Education Association of BC since the program began. The motion also touched on the losses in funding from the past two years the program had run from 1972-1973 to 1973-1974. Based on the \$28.21 per capita allotment for BC, \$3.1 million should have been provided during these two fiscal years. The motion also mentioned the plans for other centres to be built in BC and stated that they too would encounter undue delays and unnecessary problems resulting in low Cultural Education Program benefits.<sup>91</sup> In the final statements of the carried motion, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs gave their support

for the formation of a provincial body composed of representatives of existing centres and Districts not yet involved in Cultural Education Programming and for the body to be given the mandate to bring BC's share of the Cultural Education dollars to B.C., set policy through the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

Bands they represent concerning the funds, and provide an annual report to the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.<sup>92</sup>

Indigenous activists and organizations demanding control over their own people's education with the support of federal resources was central to the NIB's 1972 policy. Indigenous Bands indicated that this transition was not happening and the need for motions such as those indicated above show UBCIC's disenchantment with the program. It is important to note again that the 1974/1975 fiscal year allotment for the Cultural Education Centres Program was \$8 million dollars, Canada-wide, and only \$4.5 million was transferred.

In a progress report completed on March 12, 1975, Mark Point, Coordinator of the Cultural Education Association of British Columbia (CEABC), also referred to as the Indian Cultural Education Association of British Columbia, wrote of the Cultural Education Executive Director's meetings in Ottawa in March 1974. The discussion centred on the issues that all centres across Canada were experiencing with the Cultural Education Program. The issues outlined were the following:

1. Funding problems with D.I.A. C.M.P., etc. (insufficient funds in some cases)
2. Duplication of work and negotiations
3. Fragmentation generally
4. Concerns of time limit (remaining time left to fund the existing centres and programs)
5. Shortage of trained staff<sup>93</sup>

These positions were presented to Peter Lesaux, Administrator for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development by a spokesperson for the BC delegation. Point indicated that there was "a positive response from Mr. Lesaux. Mr. Lesaux stated that he was open to a proposal from BC on some form of decentralizing the Cultural Education

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Mark Point, Progress Report for the Indian Cultural Education Association of British Columbia, March 12, 1974, pg. 1, 2009.6.13.17.139, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA,.

Program.” Point wrote that “with stars in our eyes, the BC group returned home eager to get the wheels rolling towards the offer presented to us by Mr. Lesaux.”<sup>94</sup> Point indicated that the Union of BC Indian Chiefs also provided their support for decentralization and the Cultural Education Association of BC appointed an interim board for negotiations, obtained a lawyer to construct a constitution, and requested that the lawyer register a new non-profit association in BC. In the progress report, Mark Point seems to indicate that the federal government would decentralize power completely to the new association made up of members of the Indian Cultural Education Association of BC. Although the federal government would continue to provide fiscal supports, the new association would control the maintenance and operations of cultural education centres in BC. In June of 1974, the proposal for the new organization was delivered to Lesaux, who rejected it in August of that year.<sup>95</sup> The CEABC entered into further discussions with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs to refine plans, establish a permanent board of directors, and create a proposed budget for the association. Point indicates that after this period of reorganizing the proposal, several trips were made to Ottawa where negotiations with DIAND took place. Point asserted that he was “of the honest opinion that this period was a big waste on our part because the Department didn’t negotiate in good faith. In other words, the dollars that were spent during this period were a waste and we could have better spent them in BC on our information field-work program.”<sup>96</sup> Point pointed to the general success of the Cultural Education Program and the huge support it had garnished from the community, including chiefs, education committees, and Band employees. He finished the progress report by advocating for the program’s continued renewal.

Mark Point contacted Iona Campagnolo two days later on March 14, to draw attention to programs that were waiting for funding, the applications for which had been with the government for a sufficient amount of time to be processed. The Saanich Peninsula Centre, Kootenay Cultural Centre, Masset Cultural Centre, Lillooet Cultural Centre, Gitsan Carrier District Council Cultural Centre (K’san), and Kitimat Cultural

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 6-8.

Program were all awaiting response. Point asked Iona Campagnolo to help in any way she could to speed up the process of fund dispersal.<sup>97</sup> Campagnolo replied by sending notification to Lesaux that she was waiting to hear back on approvals for three of the applications that were of particular concern for her: the Saanich and Kootenay centres and the K'san program, which was for cultural dancers. It is unclear why Campagnolo was concerned about these three programs specifically, though she did note that these programs needed to be funded by the end of the fiscal year so timeline may have played a role.<sup>98</sup> In a response regarding the K'san dancers from James Deacey, Special Assistant to Lesaux, it was highlighted that the K'san had asked for their fiscal year finances too late in the year and that the dancing might not meet the cultural education mandate. Deacey recommended that pressure be put on Lesaux to fund this activity within another program. It was also mentioned by Deacey that Ray Jones, who had applied on behalf of the K'san, was meeting with Mark Point: "They are not going to win any points or assist their cause by taking the advice of Mark or accepting his views on the Association of Cultural Education Centres."<sup>99</sup> The K'san dancers, depending on their project plans, could have easily fallen under the Cultural Education Centre Program mandate. The insinuation, not only that their program might not meet standards for the federal program, but that they were not helping their case by working with the Coordinator of the Cultural Education Association of BC, shows the fraught relationship between the federal government and the BC association. Mark Point was consistent in his correspondence with the federal government and adamantly conveyed frustration and unwillingness to accept government offerings or lack thereof.

The 1974/1975 fiscal year saw a dispensing of \$4.5 million dollars of the total \$8 million allocated to First Nations and Inuit cultural programming. The opportunity to dispense funds to the K'san dancers beyond this limited amount was rejected on grounds

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<sup>97</sup> Joyce Fonella for Mark Point, Coordinator for the Cultural Education Association of BC to Iona Campagnolo, Parliamentary Secretary for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, March 14, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.139, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>98</sup> Memorandum from Iona Campagnolo to Pete Lesaux, March 17, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.139, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>99</sup> James Deacey, Special Assistant to P.B Lesaux to Iona Campagnolo, April 4, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.139, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

easily construed as racially motivated. Again, Point addressed Campagnolo on the issue of the 1974/1975 fiscal year allotment being denied to BC on April 7, 1975. Campagnolo forwarded Point's letter to Lesaux, who responded saying that BC had been allocated \$24,543 for their 1974/1975 fiscal year and that the issue of the K'san dancers was still up for debate. Lesaux did not believe that the needs of the K'san dancers fell under the purview of the Cultural Education Centre Program and rejected the notion that BC had been denied funds; he did refer to the fact that BC was entitled to \$3.1 million based on per capita allotment.<sup>100</sup> The rejection of the K'san dancers on program suitability grounds is in no way supported by the 1978 Evaluacan study indicating the activities conducted by centres that were funded. The study indicated that there were centres whose programming was approved in the preservation of culture, including traditions, life skills, arts and crafts, history, and legends. Program approval was also given to centres that conducted special events, including cultural events, pow-wows, Elder-youth workshops, spiritual and ceremonial events, and educational workshops and conferences.<sup>101</sup> As the K'san dancers' request fell within the purview of the Cultural Education Program, rejection on the ground of suitability appears arbitrary.

The 1988 study *Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of the Future*, published by the Assembly of First Nations, shifted from ICIE72's focus on government support of Indigenous control over education and began tilting toward self-government. *Tradition and Education* demanded that federal legislation recognize Indigenous peoples' right to self-government and control over education.<sup>102</sup> The financial roadblocks that Bands had been experiencing in funding their centres since 1971 may account partly for this shift. Confusing criteria, underfunding, late payments, and lack of government communication were all complaints about the Cultural Education Program. Attempts at decentralization in BC had not been successful and the federal government's monopoly over funding kept sovereignty in education through the Cultural Education Program

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<sup>100</sup> Mark Point to Iona Campagnolo, April 7, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.139, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA; P.B Lesaux to Iona Campagnolo, April 17, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.139, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>101</sup> Ward, "Indian Education in Canada," 58.

<sup>102</sup> Abele, Dittburner, and Graham, "Lessons from the Policy Discourse," 15.



unattainable. In order to decentralize, the federal government needed to see value in Indigenous agency and control over their people's education and to fund the programs Indigenous groups deemed appropriate for their people. It is important to note however, that the Iona Campagnolo Fonds contained a large amount of correspondence between the CEABC and DIAND. These records are included as an example of Cultural Education Program implementation and issues. My sources from the Campagnolo Fonds focused heavily on British Columbia and therefore I cannot know if they fully represent the national experience with the Cultural Education Program.

### **Chapter 3: Coqualeetza Education Centre Case Study**

Coqualeetza, an area near Sardis, a neighbourhood in Chilliwack, BC, was designated an unofficial Stó:lō Indian reserve by William McColl, a surveyor for BC governor James Douglas, in 1864. In 1868, Joseph Trutch and his surveyors reduced the reserve lands in the Chilliwack area from 40,000 acres to 3,907 acres. A year later, in 1869, the Coqualeetza land was gifted to a non-Indigenous farmer.<sup>103</sup> Though the Stó:lō had clearly not ceded Coqualeetza territory to the government, the land was sold without their consent and the Coqualeetza Day School was opened in 1886 in Sardis. In 1887, the Methodist missionaries that ran the school added a boarding house, which by the 1930s was accompanied by cottages for the younger students and semi-private rooms for the older students. The school closed in 1940; the site then housed Coqualeetza Indian Hospital, a centre used primarily to treat tuberculosis.<sup>104</sup> The Stó:lō continued to seek the return of the site through the remainder of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

In November 1969, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs met in Kamloops to discuss the idea of setting up a cultural education centre on the Coqualeetza site. This move not

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<sup>103</sup> Madeline Knickerbocker, "We Want Our Land: A 1976 Stó:lō Land Claims Negotiation Comic," *Findings/Trouvailles* (blog), The Champlain Society, March 2014, <https://champlainsociety.utpjournals.press/findings-trouvailles/archive/1976-stolo-land-claims-negotiations-comic>.

<sup>104</sup> "Coqualeetza," Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre Collections, University of British Columbia, accessed Sept. 2, 2022, <https://collections.irshdc.ubc.ca/index.php/Detail/entities/44>.

only proposed to provide education to the Indigenous populations of the area but also clearly asserted claim to the lands at the site: “The return of the Coqualeetza site would both rectify a colonial error around land appropriation and provide the necessary space for the expansion of cultural activities at Coqualeetza.”<sup>105</sup> In 1970, Stó:lō Chiefs from the Skowkale Band passed a resolution recognizing that the site was no longer being used as an Indian hospital and requesting government approval for the property to be returned to the Band as an Indian reserve. The resolution went unanswered by the federal government and the site was leased to the Department of Public Works, with several smaller buildings being leased to the Department of National Defence.<sup>106</sup> The colonial misappropriation remained unrectified.

While the Stó:lō continued to pursue claim to Coqualeetza, the Salish Weavers Guild used a small on-site building for their programs, and in 1970, the Coqualeetza Elders Group used the “Big House” as a site for their meetings, some of which concerned the creation of an educational centre on the property.<sup>107</sup> Goals of the centre were to support the educational needs of school-aged Aboriginal students in the Fraser Valley, develop Stó:lō language classes, run cultural revitalization programs, and run programs in family life, drug and alcohol education, life skills, and education counselling.<sup>108</sup> According to “Coqualeetza: Our Predicament,” an appendix to the report “Educational Needs of Native Indians: A Consultancy Report to Fraser Valley College from Coqualeetza Education Training Centre,” between 1969 and 1974 the Cultural Education Committee, supported by ten local Bands of the Fraser District, negotiated with the Department of National Health and Welfare to present a feasibility study to determine needs, priorities, costs, and sources of revenue for the Coqualeetza Centre. The Department of Health recognized the centre as a viable project, committing to providing a total of \$50,000 for the renovation of the building. The committee also submitted several

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<sup>105</sup> Madeline Knickerbocker, “Making Matriarchs at Coqualeetza: Stó:lō Women’s Politics and Histories Across Generations,” in *In Good Relation: History, Gender, and Kinship in Indigenous Feminisms*, ed. Sarah Nickel and Amanda Fehr (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020), 35.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>108</sup> George Manuel, President of the National Indian Brotherhood to Members of Parliament, February 27, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

additional reports regarding the project to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jean Chrétien, who had expressed his interest in acquiring the property for the Stó:lō as early as 1969.<sup>109</sup> On September 20, 1973, Chrétien sent a letter to the committee saying that funding for the centre had been approved for the 1973-1974 fiscal year, barring a few conditions that needed to be met. The committee addressed these issues and continued negotiations with the DIAND assuming that Coqualeetza would be transferred to DIAND and sold to the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Society for a token payment of \$1.00 as previously agreed upon. It quickly appeared that this transfer was not the intention of Indian Affairs, as the society was made aware upon visiting Ottawa that the new cost for Coqualeetza was \$400,000 and that it could not be sold to them for four years.<sup>110</sup> It was clear that the Centre would not open in 1973 and that there would not be prompt delivery of cultural programming to the people at Coqualeetza.

In “Coqualeetza: Our Predicament,” the society pointed out that they had intended to rely on Cultural Education Program funding through the federal government to run their education programs after the \$1.00 token payment was made. The society stated that

the monies for that program (totalling 40 million) were specifically earmarked in a Cabinet decision in 1971 for just such projects. They are calculated on a per capita basis, and awarded through Band Council Resolutions. The Band Council specifies which project, if any, is to receive its share of this special fund and the amount awarded to that project is determined by multiplying per capita allotment (\$28.21) by the number of registered Indians within that Band. The Coqualeetza project, with the support of fifty-two Band Council Resolutions, thus appeared to be entitled to approximately 370,000.00 in Cultural Education Program funds. At least this was the projections before the Board members began their Ottawa meetings.<sup>111</sup>

By February of 1974, the society returned to Ottawa to discuss their willingness to pay the eventual \$400,000 purchase price (which Ottawa assured them they would be able to

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<sup>109</sup> Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, “Coqualeetza... Our Predicament,” in “Education Needs of Native Indians: A Consultancy Report to Fraser Valley College from Coqualeetza Education Training Centre,” September 1975, p. 96, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED119745.pdf>.

<sup>110</sup> Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, “Coqualeetza... Our Predicament,” 103.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

do after four years) and pay rent in the interim. The tone of negotiations had shifted greatly since the promised \$1 symbolic payment. Shortly after this trip, DIAND Assistant Deputy Minister Peter B. Lesaux informed the society that the land at Coqualeetza had been transferred from the Crown Asset Disposal Corporation to the Department of Public Works.<sup>112</sup> The committee would not be working with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as they had been told. The society thought that they were receiving funding for the 1973/74 period that would enable them to rent and then purchase the Coqualeetza site, and they had made rental agreements with the Fraser Valley College to provide them space to run independent and joint programs out of the centre. It did not appear that any of these agreements were going to proceed.

To the surprise of the society, a telex arrived from Lesaux in March of 1974 informing the society that they would meet the majority of their requests. DIAND promised to (1) provide the society with funds up to its per capita entitlement under the Cultural Education Program and contribute an additional amount of \$74,400 on or before October 31, 1974; (2) recommend that the Department of Public Works rent the second floor of Snookwa Hall, and the three-story house to the society; (3) support the request for additional space to meet the program requirements within the limitation of the society's financial resources; (4) recommend to the Department of Public Works that for at least three years none of Coqualeetza's lands or buildings would be leased to outside parties for periods in excess of one year; and (5) assist the society in obtaining a long-term lease to the buildings and lands at Coqualeetza at the end of the three-year period if the program was successful.<sup>113</sup> If these terms were to come to fruition, the society would enter into a mutually beneficial relationship with the federal government with support provided through the Cultural Education Program. Although moving in a positive direction, this recommendation still lacked any recognition of right and title to land that had been traditional Stó:lō territory.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

<sup>113</sup> TELEX from P.B. Lesaux, Assistant Deputy Minister to Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, March 1974, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

Despite Lesaux's offer, inconsistent federal government messaging created further roadblocks to the full implementation of programming at the centre. Just five months later, in a letter from G.R. Phillips, the Manager of Acquisition and Disposal at Public Works Canada, to W. Mussel, the President of the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Society, it was made clear that the Ministry of Public Works did not plan to lease the society the Coqualeetza site in its entirety and doubted the ability of the society to pay the rent on even part of it. In a discussion with the Assistant Deputy Minister on September 10, 1974, Phillips stated that he was

advised that our Department could not enter into a lease with your society for the entire complex without firm evidence that economic rent could be paid by your group. I was also advised that we could not entertain the suggestion that the complex be leased to you and agree that the society sub-lease to other parties. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs advise that approximately \$143,000.00 could be available to your group from the Cultural Education Fund. If this is the principal source of funding, at least for this year, we do not see how you would propose to support use of the entire complex.<sup>114</sup>

This letter also stated that the society would be given the buildings that it already occupied, the former hospital superintendent's residence, and Snookwa Hall—an offering that was much reduced from the society's proposal of the superintendent's residence, Snookwa Hall, a four-bedroom house, a former laundry building, and the former nurses' residence.<sup>115</sup> This correspondence illustrates several additionally troubling points. The society had made their intentions clear regarding the assertion of right and title to Coqualeetza as historical property of the Stó:lō and wished to build an education centre on the site. Although this assertion seemed to be embraced by the federal government initially, several augmentations were made to the agreed-upon terms without consultation with the society. The token \$1.00 payment was replaced by a \$400,000.00 one to be made in four years; the terms of the lease included restricted building access with the property being made available to several government-user groups with priority over the society;

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<sup>114</sup> G.R Phillips, Department of Public Works to W. Mussel, President, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Society, September 10, 1974, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>115</sup> Clarence Pennier, Administrator/Accountant, Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, to George R. Phillips, Department of Public Works, October 2, 1974, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

and the government cultural education funding was vastly insufficient to pay for the lease of the small building allotment the society was given. The affirming telex from Assistant Deputy Minister Lesaux was replaced by restrictive terms and suggestions that the society would not be able to meet the new requirements.

A letter from Clarence Pennier, the Administrator/Accountant at the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre to George R. Phillips from Public Works clarified that the society wanted to negotiate further regarding the building allotment presented by Public Works. The letter pointed out that the funding to run the centre came from the federal government, and that considering this fact, it was appropriate to charge a nominal amount so that the society could run the Centre effectively. The society also requested first rights to the property at Coqualeetza and that other user groups be allowed leases of up to only one year. The society opposed any lease outside of the one provided to the Fraser Valley College, with which the society had a partnership.<sup>116</sup> The society was clear and steadfast in their request for sufficient space for their centre and was aware of the disparity between the \$400,000.00 purchase price, the lease agreement, and the low amount of cultural education funding provided by the government.

However, the Department of Public Works continued to favour other user groups. In a letter dated October 21, 1974, George R. Phillips responded to Clarence Pennier, refusing to entertain the idea of the centre expanding into the nurse's residence, the new houses, or the laundry without permits from "whatever authority is necessary" and proof of ability to pay the rent. He then went on to suggest that first refusal would not be given to the society ahead of the needs of the other interested players and that Public Works would not entertain the idea of limiting outside leases to one year. Phillips also suggested that Fraser Valley College should enter into a relationship only with Public Works to rent space and that accommodation of the college not be part of the condition of the society's acceptance.<sup>117</sup> This back-and-forth correspondence resulting in outright refusal to give the

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> G.R. Phillips, Department of Public Works to Clarence Pennier, Administrator/Accountant, Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, October 21, 1974, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

society first rights to Coqualeetza led to Clarence Pennier contacting Judd Buchanan, Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on October 25, 1974, four days after receiving the final letter from G.R. Phillips. In his letter, Pennier cited the telex from Deputy Minister Lesaux, guaranteeing appropriate funding and space for the centre, stating that

we were led to believe that your Department, through Mr. P.B. Lesaux' telex, would strongly recommend to the Department of Public Works that our space requirements should be met. This has not happened. We have received a letter from George Phillips, Manager, Acquisition and Disposal, Department of Public Works, Vancouver, which contradicts what was outlined in that telex. We are requesting that you intercede on our behalf, since we are representatives of the Fraser District Chiefs.<sup>118</sup>

The Society's frustration was palpable not only in their letter to Minister Buchanan. In the final statements of "Coqualeetza: Our Predicament," the society reflected on five years (1970-1974) of attempts to negotiate in good faith with the federal government and wondered "if the government of Canada is negotiating in good faith with us; if they are, the time has come to let that be known; if they are not, we are left with no alternative but to make our own solutions."<sup>119</sup>

On October 28, 1974, Clarence Pennier contacted the members of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs, explaining that negotiations with the government had come to a standstill. His letter included the contradictory correspondence with government officials and requested that the members help to resolve the matter in any way they could. He wrote of the land claim that the Board and the Fraser District Indian Chiefs were making for the Coqualeetza property and the government roadblocks that would soon become a national issue.<sup>120</sup> Iona Campagnolo received this correspondence on October 30, 1974, and sent a letter marked confidential to Lesaux on November 5, 1974. In the letter, Campagnolo acknowledged the conflict that had arisen among the Coqualeetza

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<sup>118</sup> Clarence Pennier, Administrator/Accountant, Coqualeetza Education Training Centre to Hon. Judd Buchanan, Minister, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, October 25, 1974, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>119</sup> Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, "Coqualeetza... Our Predicament," 106.

<sup>120</sup> Clarence Pennier, Administrator/Accountant, Coqualeetza Education Training Centre to the Members of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs, "Re: Acquisition of Space for Cultural Programs," October 28, 1974, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

Board, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Indian Affairs. She acknowledged that Lesaux was busy, but she felt that they were “at a moment of truth with regard to Coqualeetza and if we do not take action on behalf of the Indian people, the national scope of their complaints will soon be a reality.”<sup>121</sup> Campagnolo clearly sensed the immediacy of the society’s needs and the potential for the issue to worsen.

1975 continued in much the same fashion. The Coqualeetza Society requested more space and funding and experienced significant delays in the cultural education funding that was distributed for the fiscal quarter. The funding was always less than requested. 1975 was also the first time that Campagnolo’s records indicated that government coordinators began to question if the Coqualeetza Centre’s programming met the parameters for cultural education funding. Coqualeetza Education Centre provided language classes and cultural revitalization programs that received Cultural Education Program funding in past quarters and therefor previously met the criteria for preservation of culture, traditions, and life skills among other criteria. The Coqualeetza Society viewed the suggestion that the centre did not meet DIAND criteria as an act of bad faith. November of 1975, Saul Arbess, Coqualeetza Band Manager, sent a letter to Peter Lesaux, indicating that the society were once again being met with excessive delays in receiving cultural education funding for their second, third, and fourth quarters—funds that were already budgeted by the government for the program’s use. Arbess wrote that

the funds are supposed to be routinely released when an audit, program report and program projections are submitted. But we have to fight for our money and it appears as if the Department does not wish to release funds thereby causing Coqualeetza to close down. We will have to cease operations by the end of November unless the funds which are rightfully ours are released to us. Therefore you have again left us no choice but to come directly to Ottawa to secure our funds. We won’t leave without having them in hand. Some questions, bogus or real (I don’t know), have been raised by your Mr. Gideon. He wanted to know if some of our programs fall within the guidelines of the Cultural Education Program. That, in itself, is hard to know since these criteria seem to shift like sand.

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<sup>121</sup> Iona Campagnolo, MP Skeena to Mr. Peter Lesaux, Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian and Eskimo Affairs, November 5 or 6, 1974 (Campagnolo was unsure of the exact date and wrote “Nov 5-6?” at the top of the letter), 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.



But if we take the original objectives listed in the Treasury Board Minutes of June 27, 1973, our program clearly falls within those guidelines.<sup>122</sup>

Arbess's tone was one of frustration. He threatened to expose the lack of funding in the political arena and ended the correspondence with the following statement: "Again let me repeat: WE WILL NOT LEAVE UNTIL WE HAVE OUR REMAINING FUNDS, SOME \$122,664 IN HAND."<sup>123</sup> Campagnolo was copied into this correspondence and sent a letter to Lesaux indicating that the Band had apparently made prepayments for a linguist for a year using first quarter funds, an error that was partially to blame for the delay in funding. She explained to Lesaux that although the Band realized their error, they now needed funds desperately. Campagnolo asked if the program would be evaluated and if the funds would be dispensed.<sup>124</sup> P.C. Mackie, Lesaux's replacement and the new Assistant Deputy Minister, responded to Campagnolo on January 21, 1976, saying that funds for the Centre had been authorized and the Evaluation Team was going to be visiting the centre and reporting their findings to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development by the end of February. Mackie suggested that no firm commitment on the future of the Centre's programs could be given prior to this report.<sup>125</sup> In handwritten notes taken on January 22, 1976, by what appears to be a secretary of Iona Campagnolo, it was recorded that the Coqualeetza Board representatives went to Ottawa for four days and requested \$122,000 but received \$54,000. It was in Ottawa that they were made aware they were going to be evaluated for program continuance. Although the money was not what they had requested, the Board was pleased that an evaluation would take place.<sup>126</sup> The continual exchanges on the viability of the program, whether it would receive funding, whether it would expand its space or remain the same, was causing an already strained relationship between government officials and the Coqualeetza board to

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<sup>122</sup> Saul Arbess, Coqualeetza Band Manager to Peter Lesaux, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, November 19, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Iona Campagnolo to Peter Lesaux, December 5, 1975, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>125</sup> P.C. Mackie, Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian and Eskimo Affairs to Iona Campagnolo, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, January 21, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>126</sup> Handwritten Notes re: Mackie Reply and the Boards 4 day Ottawa trip, January 22, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

come to a tipping point. Negotiations for recognition were deteriorating and Indigenous activists for Coqualeetza were becoming exceedingly frustrated. The Stó:lō and the East Fraser District Council were clear on what their next steps would be.

On January 21, 1976, Bill Mussel, Chairman of the Coqualeetza Board, sent a letter to Judd Buchanan, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, on behalf of the Coqualeetza Board and the East Fraser District Council. In the letter, Mussel praised the government for entering into discussions with the Nisga'a Tribal Council regarding their land claim and attempted to turn Buchanan's attention to the Coqualeetza land claim in their district. Mussel said that "the stated policy of your government is to negotiate issues concerning Indian land claims, and we call upon you to put this policy into practice. We call upon your government to show its good faith by returning Coqualeetza to the East Fraser District Council and the Coqualeetza Board."<sup>127</sup> Mussel requested a meeting within the month and a response to his correspondence within the week. This letter was copied to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, BC Members of Parliament, BC Members of the Legislative Assembly, the National Indian Brotherhood, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Council and Executive, the Fraser Valley College, the Department of Public Works and Science and Technology, the Department of National Defence, and A. Digby Hunt, Special Government Representative for Comprehensive Claims at the Department of Indian Affairs. A subsequent letter on January 26, forwarding the letter from Mussel to Buchanan, was sent to Campagnolo by Mary Lou Andrew, a member of the executive committee for the East Fraser District Council and Coqualeetza Board. Andrew asked for Campagnolo to support them in securing Coqualeetza for the educational needs of the people and to help them resolve the land claims issue.<sup>128</sup> Campagnolo responded to Andrew, suggesting there might be some issues of jurisdiction before she could advocate on their behalf.<sup>129</sup> Andrew's response

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<sup>127</sup> Telex from Bill Mussel, Chairman of the Coqualeetza Board to Judd Buchanan, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, January 21, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>128</sup> Mary Lou Andrew, Executive Committee Member of East Fraser District Council and Coqualeetza Board to Iona Campagnolo, January 26, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>129</sup> Iona Campagnolo to Mary Lou Andrew, February 9, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

suggests that the issue of federal or provincial jurisdiction did not apply to Coqualeetza as it was situated on federal crown lands. In a handwritten note on the copy of this letter, Campagnolo thanked Andrews for her clarification and said she had suggested the Minister submit their claim to Jean Fournier at the Office of Claims Negotiation for further action.<sup>130</sup> It was clear that land claim and the education provided on that land were linked.

On February 27, 1976, George Manuel, President of the NIB, contacted Members of Parliament regarding the survival of Coqualeetza Education Centre, sending materials explaining the Centre, its programs, the space required, and the claim to land tendered.<sup>131</sup> On March 17, the Office of Native Claims rejected the Fraser District Council's land claim to Coqualeetza, citing they did not understand the "extent of the land claims."<sup>132</sup> Frustration with government inactivity resulted in the Stó:lō conducting a peaceful demonstration at the Coqualeetza site on March 18, 1976. Minister of Indian Affairs Judd Buchanan was invited to participate. Over one hundred Stó:lō gathered at the site to participate in the protest, which consisted of drumming and dancing. Buchanan sent Cy Fairholm from the Office of Native Title to meet with Stó:lō at the sit-in; however, Fairholm did not seem to be aware of the issues surrounding the Centre's programming or the Stó:lō's claim to land. Mary Lou Andrew produced a cheque for \$1,187, which accounted for rent that the federal government claimed the board owed for the building rental: "Instead of presenting the cheque to Fairholm, however, she gave it to Chief Charles, declaring that since Coqualeetza was Stó:lō land, it was to Stó:lō political leadership, not the Canadian state, that the cultural centre was beholden."<sup>133</sup> This event was also indicative of the disconnect that remained between the government and the East Fraser District Council and Coqualeetza Board. Despite the best efforts of the Stó:lō and the councils that they had organized on their behalf, the government remained unwilling

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<sup>130</sup> Mary Lou Andrew and Bill Mussel to Iona Campagnolo, February 24, 1976, with handwritten inclusion by Iona Campagnolo, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>131</sup> George Manuel, President of the National Indian Brotherhood to Members of Parliament, February 27, 1976. 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>132</sup> P.C Mackie, Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian and Eskimo Affairs to M.G. Jutras, Acting Regional Director General, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, May 7, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>133</sup> Knickerbocker, "Making Matriarchs at Coqualeetza," 36-37.

to recognize the viability of their educational pursuits or their claim to land. Buchanan had not only not attended, but had also sent an uninformed colleague on his behalf.

The Coqualeetza Education Society felt that the government had treated them with a dismissive lack of respect that no amount of activism in the forms of meetings or letters seemed to be able to rectify. On the morning of May 3, 1976, approximately forty protestors occupied a two-storey building at Coqualeetza. This building was in use by the Canadian Armed Forces as overflow housing, with the entirety of the complex remaining in the hands of the Department of Public Works.<sup>134</sup> Roughly five years of lobbying the government for funding, space, land claim, and general recognition of Coqualeetza had resulted in this demonstration of resistance: “By 1976, Stó:lō efforts to reclaim the land had become entwined with the potential use of the space for cultural education; the occupation that began that day was the final climax of years of escalating activist efforts.”<sup>135</sup> The occupation, which was supposed to last for several days, began with a circle gathering and declaration that the occupation would be non-violent, and drug and alcohol-free. Soldiers stationed at the CAF base moved onto the Coqualeetza property and began conducting drills and positioning snipers on nearby buildings. Eventually, with the support of the RCMP, they ordered the protestors to leave or be removed and arrested.<sup>136</sup> Activists refused, barricaded themselves within the building, and resisted entry by the Canadian army and RCMP. At about 6:30 pm, armed forces pushed into the building by breaking a glass door, whereafter they removed activists using physical means and put them under arrest. Of the roughly 40 protestors that occupied the site, around 17 were detained.<sup>137</sup> A letter to Iona Campagnolo sent on May 5, 1976 from Rose Charlie, President of the Native Homemakers Association of BC, detailed the protest and subsequent military action:

The Indian Homemakers Association of BC strongly supports the efforts of the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre to have control over Coqualeetza returned to the Stó:lō Tribe. We also criticize the actions of military police under orders of Col. Robertson on May 3, 1976.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 26.

Coqualeetza's actions at the nurse's residence were peaceful yet your men broke glass doors and started scuffling with the participants. The military police acted with irresponsibility and it was only the discipline of the Indians that prevented a more serious situation. Col. Robertson reported that his men were to use any force necessary to retake the building and we call on your government to drop all charges to begin negotiation to secure the nurses residence for Coqualeetza's use and to commit itself to turn control of the property to the Stó:lō tribes.<sup>138</sup>

The government and military positions were clear: no protests, peaceful or otherwise, were allowed at Coqualeetza. The Stó:lō, the East Fraser District Council, and the Coqualeetza Board would not be given first rights to property that had been taken from them and sold without their consent.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development discussed the Coqualeetza Education Centre's request for additional space in briefing notes from May 6, 1976. In a list of issues with the request, DIAND indicated that the society had not paid their rent since February 1976 and that they now owed a total of \$16,254 toward rent and utilities. The document also noted that the land claim on Coqualeetza made by the Fraser District Council had been rejected on March 17, 1976, and the rent, which on that day was given to Stó:lō Indian Bands symbolically, was to have been given to the Department of Public Works. In a letter sent a day later, on May 7, 1976, from Assistant Deputy Minister Mackie to Acting Regional Director General of Indian and Northern Affairs M.G. Jutras, Mackie suggested it might be pertinent to re-evaluate Indian and Eskimo Affairs' role in the Coqualeetza matter.

The recent sit-ins and confrontations at Coqualeetza make it necessary for us to re-examine the role that Indian and Eskimo Affairs Program can play in helping the local Indian people to resolve their difficulties. I frankly do not believe that it is appropriate or even possible for our contribution to be made from Ottawa unless the Region is assisted to perform the lead role. At present the situation is being clouded by the infusion of land claims into the purely Program matter of acquiring facilities for training. The two issues must be kept apart.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Rose Charlie, President of the Indian Homemakers Association of BC to Iona Campagnolo, Parliamentary Secretary to Judd Buchanan, May 5, 1976, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>139</sup> Mackie to Jutras, May 7, 1976.

Mackie explained that moving forward, Indian and Eskimo Affairs would support the use of the nurses' residence only if the late rent was paid and there was a guarantee that it would continue to be paid. Mackie suggested it be taken "off the top" of the cultural education funding. The issue of title to land, and therefore the appropriateness of requesting this type of rent from the Stó:lō was not addressed. The Coqualeetza Education Society had been given a five-year lease from 1971-1975 which was re-evaluated in early 1976; they had then been granted a short-term, one-year renewal for 1976/1977. The program was granted another extension for a further six months until September 30, 1977. It appeared that as the Stó:lō increased tensions on government officials to move forward with funding and land claims, the Centre became at greater risk of collapse.

On June 14, 1977, Ron Gray from Rosedale, BC, a representative of the Friends of Coqualeetza Committee, which was made up mostly of non-Indigenous residents of the area, wrote Campagnolo a letter advocating for the continued financial support of the Centre. Gray detailed the need for long-term funding to allow the Centre to create plans for long-term programming without constant fear of closure. The committee indicated five main areas in which the Centre benefitted the community at large: addressing gaps in education that non-Indigenous schooling was not able to fill, working in partnership with other educational institutions such as Fraser Valley College to fill the aforementioned gaps, creating classroom curriculum and materials pertinent to the Stó:lō culture, creating pride in heritage, and preserving language and culture. Gray asked Campagnolo to contact the Minister of Indian and Eskimo Affairs Warren Allmand and do anything else in her power to provide continued support to the Centre.<sup>140</sup> Campagnolo responded on June 25 by forwarding Ron Gray's concerns to Warren Allmand and inquired about assistance for the organization to continue their programming after September 30.<sup>141</sup> She also sent confirmation to Ron Gray that she had forwarded his letter to the Minister,

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<sup>140</sup> Ron Gray, Representative of the Friends of Coqualeetza Committee, to Iona Campagnolo, Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, June 14, 1977, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>141</sup> Iona Campagnolo, Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport to Warren Allmand, July 25, 1977, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

promising to write again as soon as the Minister responded.<sup>142</sup> On August 8, 1977, Warren Allmand responded to Campagnolo with an enclosed letter written by Assistant Deputy Minister Mackie in which Mackie responded to Ron Gray's correspondence on the Minister's behalf. The letter explained the history of funding to the Centre but blamed the current short-term funding on delays in preparing revised guidelines required prior to the extension of financing. Mackie suggested that in the

extensive discussions required with the centres' National Steering Committee (which includes the Director of Coqualeetza) and Treasury Board representatives, the final version of these guidelines was not completed until very late in March. As a result, and so that the operating centres would not experience any financial hardship, the Board authorized the continuation of an extension until September 30<sup>th</sup>. The revision process is now in the final stages, and a submission will be presented to the Treasury Board in the very near future, requesting authority to continue the Cultural Education Program on an on-going basis. We sincerely hope that this will be approved, and that we will be able to assist the Coqualeetza Centre to continue its activities.<sup>143</sup>

The speed with which Ron Gray received correspondence from the government officials whom he contacted is significant. The Stó:lō, who had been negotiating with the government for their education centre since 1969, did not receive such a prompt response from the Federal Minister. Almost exactly a year later, in July 1978, the Coqualeetza Board was made aware that the Department of Public Works was considering allowing a post office to take space at the Coqualeetza Complex, a fact that clearly caused frustration for a board that had been attempting to receive additional space since 1969.<sup>144</sup> A post office was never built on the property.

The Coqualeetza Education Centre remains open and active in Sardis. Since the 1970s the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has provided funding,

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<sup>142</sup> Iona Campagnolo, Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport to Ron Gray, representative of the Friends of Coqualeetza Committee, July 25, 1977, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>143</sup> P.C. Mackie, Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian and Eskimo Affairs to Ron Gray, representative of the Friends of Coqualeetza Committee, August 8, 1977, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

<sup>144</sup> Clarence Pennier, Administrator/Accountant, Coqualeetza Education Training Centre to Rev. Alex Patterson, M.P. Fraser Valley East, July 25, 1978, 2009.6.13.17.110, The Honourable Iona Campagnolo Fonds, NBCA.

which is still based on a formula of per-capita allotment and Band resolutions. Fifteen First Nations from in and around the Coqualeetza area support the centre, with two supporting the centre but without the per-capita rate.<sup>145</sup> In 1977, the Coqualeetza Education Centre staff and community developed a writing system for the oral Halq'emeylem language, which was adopted by many speakers. The centre began efforts to archive the language and oral histories, an project that continues. The Stó:lō Awards, initiated in 1977, honour students attending public schools in the five school districts in the Fraser Valley. The Centre also produced a comprehensive social studies curriculum for grades 1-7 based on Stó:lō history and BC Ministry of Education guidelines for social studies. Ceremonies such as the first salmon, name giving, and uplifting were supported by the centre along with cultural revival activities in the form of beading, drum making, paddle making, canoe building, carving, Salish weaving, and cedar bark clothing making. In 1992, the Centre, in partnership with Fraser Valley College, opened Toti:lthet Centre, which provides basic adult education, chef's training and university-transfer courses for Aboriginal students.<sup>146</sup>

The Coqualeetza case study reveals the power dynamics associated with colonial dominance in the 1970s and beyond. There is a very clear link between land and educational sovereignty as displayed in this long-standing pursuit of equity. Indigenous activism has been required throughout the operations of the centre to keep the doors open. The Stó:lō continued to advocate for their rights, formally opening a new land claim for the site in 1997 when the Canadian Military ceased their lease of parts of the property. As of 2023, the Stó:lō are in stage 5 of treaty negotiations.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Coqualeetza Education Centre, "Qw'oqw'elith'a: About Us," accessed Sept.15, 2022, <http://www.coqualeetza.com/page2.html>.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Government of British Columbia, "Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association," January 3, 2024, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations-negotiations/first-nations-a-z-listing/sto-lo-xwexwilmexw-treaty-association>



## Conclusion

On September 24, 1912, the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission Report was signed with the intention to review Indian affairs in British Columbia and reserve land allocations. Regardless of these intentions, leaders from Nations across British Columbia took the opportunity to voice their concerns about residential schooling and overall educational opportunities for their people.<sup>148</sup> Access to schools, school safety, student safety, cost of schooling, access to educational resources, properly trained teachers, and absences from family and cultural activities were all issues of concern for First Nations leaders. These concerns were fueled by a “desire for an education parallel to that of non-native children—an education which they felt was not available to them and one which would be useful to their new circumstances.”<sup>149</sup> These First Nations leaders were advocating for their people to be able to participate in settler society and receive access to equal and fair education. During the commission hearings, Indigenous leaders questioned officials on how it was possible for settler society to have occupied and stolen all of their lands, but they still could not afford to provide them resources and education.<sup>150</sup> Indigenous leaders wanted agency and partnership, but the governments of Canada wanted subordination. In 1923 and 1927, the Allied Indian Tribes of BC met with Indian Affairs to discuss the insufficient land allocation results of the McKenna-McBride Commission. Once again, First Nations leaders asserted that education, land, and control were inextricably linked. In 1923, Reverend Peter Kelly asserted that proper vocational training and higher education for First Nations youth were essential not only to participation in the economy, but also to the ability to intelligently articulate political stances and goals to Euro-Canadian leadership.<sup>151</sup> It was clear that Indigenous activists in the early twentieth century saw education as of utmost importance to allowing Indigenous peoples in Canada access to equity. In a time marked by state violence and genocide, Indigenous peoples sought recognition and negotiation.

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<sup>148</sup> Haig-Brown, *Taking Control*, 35.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 53

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

Peter Kelly's hopes for equity and an education for Indigenous peoples that paralleled that of their non-Indigenous counterparts did not fully materialize in the period of integration after 1951. Regardless of this fact, Indigenous activists such as Kelly paved the way for residential school closures and the strong, informed, and organized sovereignty movements that dominated the 1970s. The Canadian government, while shifting policy toward what appeared to be equity, continued to marginalize Indigenous peoples in Canada through the institution of education. Public school integration was complicated by the fact that Indigenous students attending these schools in the 1960s and 1970s experienced conditions frequently more discriminatory than residential schools in terms of racism and psychological trauma.<sup>152</sup> Indigenous activists moved from calling for equity within colonial systems to fighting for their rights to operate outside it; they asserted that true educational sovereignty was not realized with authority lying strictly in the hands of the federal government. The *Hawthorne Survey* and the *White Paper* brought into focus the inequities of the institution of education for Indigenous peoples and also highlighted government response to this reality. The federal government would do away with their obligations to Indigenous peoples in Canada before they restructured the institutions that oppressed them. This response created calls to action across Canada, igniting a period of pan-Indigenous activism that resulted in a massive increase in protest in the form of Indigenous policy papers, creation of new Indigenous organizations, and publication of groundbreaking works by Indigenous activists that asserted right and title to land and educational sovereignty. Government response to this period indicated the success of the movement, with groundbreaking cases such as the Calder decision, a new federal land claims policy, and the federal government agreement to provide funding to cultural education centres across Canada.

Although these developments were successes for Indigenous rights activists, federal government restrictions on equity continued. In the spirit of *ICIE72*, the government was willing to discuss delegation of educational authority to Indigenous Bands. This authority, however, proved to be limited in scope, with budgets remaining

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<sup>152</sup> Marker, "Indigenous Resistance and Racist Schooling," 760.

controlled strictly by the state. The Cultural Education Program created in 1971 was plagued by constant federal government confusion as to intent of the program, disorganization, and fluctuating funding and application requirements. Decentralization of power, though the goal of many Indigenous organizations in entering into partnerships with the program, was not attained as Indian Affairs and Northern Development alone governed the program without Indigenous input during initial program implementation and for much of the 1970s. Although much of the evidence presented here represents the British Columbian Cultural Education experience, Margaret Ward's study, also heavily relied upon here, illuminates national issues with the Cultural Education Program surrounding Indigenous consultation, funding criteria, funding allotments, disbursement, and lack of decentralization. The Indian Association of Alberta, the first to request funding for a cultural education centre, had emphasized decentralization as a priority. The Cultural Education Program did not decentralize in Canada. Indigenous attempts, such as those by the NIB, to be included and consulted in the running of the Cultural Education Program were also denied for far too long. Program fiscal allotments were much higher than the funds that were actually dispersed, and rejections of certain funding requests appeared arbitrary and without reasonable cause. The Coqualeetza Education Centre, situated on the traditional territory of the Stó:lō, consistently fought with the federal government through the 1970s for cultural education dollars and support. Funding restrictions and the need for persistent Indigenous activism to keep the centre running resulted in several protests at the centre. The more violent of the protests ended in the use of military snipers to survey and intimidate those participating in the Indigenous occupation of the centre and the breaking of glass windows by the RCMP to arrest protestors who refused to leave.

The historical record during the 1970s indicates that Indigenous peoples continually called for equity in education through activism. The myth of Indigenous apathy toward education, which dominated the period in which residential schools were in operation and continued into the integration period, has remained prevalent and dangerous. Iona Campagnolo's records show continual Indigenous work to access proper support for educational programming and state resistance to this endeavour. Many Bands

during the residential school era had to lobby for the creation of schools in their territories; they had to call repeatedly for funding, teachers, building materials, and overall recognition from the federal government. Indigenous peoples, using their funds, eventually created many of these schools. When the schools experienced low attendance due to staffing shortages, seasonal rounds, and abuses within the schools, they came under government threat of closure. Regardless of the real issues, the federal government chose to believe that the problems were due to Indigenous peoples undervaluing education.<sup>153</sup> History reveals that Indigenous peoples continued their vigorous pursuit of access to equitable education after residential schools closed, and the federal government displayed the same unwillingness to provide that opportunity. In the 1970s, Indigenous peoples began to shift their focus away from the colonial institution to management of their own educational goals and centres of learning in conjunction with the education provided by the state. To find consistent and equitable value in education, Indigenous peoples have had to reimagine the role of the state. The creation of Indigenous-controlled centres for education was intended to transfer control from the federal government to Indigenous peoples themselves, but instead the federal government created financial roadblocks that prevented centres from properly managing their programs. Negotiations for recognition under the guise of state-supported reconciliation, a new approach to colonial domination, resulted in similar outcomes to that prior to the 1960s: a refusal to recognize Indigenous land and educational sovereignty. In this period, Indigenous education was undervalued not by Indigenous people, but by the federal government.

Iona Campagnolo's archives at the University of Northern British Columbia, a university for which she was named founding chancellor, informed this study. Her career in politics was extraordinary, and her sentiments regarding Indigenous inequity and the role of women in society were forward-thinking. Despite her accomplishments, Iona Campagnolo worked within a governmental system that perpetuated a colonial power structure of Indigenous marginalization. Her role as an advocate for her Indigenous constituents in Northern British Columbia and province-wide was instrumental in getting

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<sup>153</sup> Kate Dubensky and Helen Raptis, "Denying Indigenous Education in British Columbia: Examples from Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) and We Wei Kai (Cape Mudge)," *BC Studies*, no. 195 (2017): 17.

their voices heard by those who had the decision-making power to fund cultural education endeavours. Her work was recognized by Indigenous peoples themselves as instrumental in supporting their sovereignty. Nevertheless, Campagnolo worked as an ally without destabilizing the power structures that kept Indigenous peoples marginalized. She was instrumental in allowing activists voice by using her own, but was not instrumental in questioning why nobody wanted to hear those voices. She therefore upheld the state's role as dominant and did not help to dismantle the systems that denied her Indigenous constituents' equity. The historical context must be considered when analyzing Campagnolo's work, because her role as an ally to Indigenous peoples existed in a very patriarchal and racist environment that not only limited the options for Indigenous equity but also for that of women, particularly in the political realm.

Although the government of Canada has come a long way regarding recognition of the need for equity in education for Indigenous students, federal financial control in education continues today. This control bars the ability for Indigenous peoples to acquire true educational sovereignty. Jerald Paquette and Gérald Fallon, in their book *First Nations Education: Progress or Gridlock?*, suggest that federal control of funding naturally leads to lack of Indigenous control in all aspects of Indigenous education, be it public or independent:

Financial resources for First Nations "education" are framed by the devolution conundrum. On the one hand these resources are, with the rare exception, provided exclusively by the Government of Canada and its fiduciary and treaty obligations to First Nations peoples. Yet, following the underlying principles of ICIE 1972, those resources should serve the educational purposes of First Nations peoples themselves. In the case of non-status Aboriginal peoples, the conundrum is even more pronounced. Resources for the education of non-status Aboriginal children flow from and through the normal funding and governance of publicly funded, provincially mandated education. Both are geared towards, and dominated by, the needs and values of non-Aboriginals. Fundamental disjuncture exists, in a word, between the funding source and the desirable locus of control, hardly a portent for success in a world where he who pays the piper does, almost inevitably, choose the tune.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Paquette and Fallon, *First Nations Education Policy in Canada*, 125-26.

The federal government still “holds the purse strings” for Indigenous education. Although the obligation to provide education to Indigenous students is entrenched in the *Indian Act* and asserted by Indigenous peoples themselves in *ICIE72*, Paquette and Fallon argue that true sovereignty cannot be accomplished while Indigenous education remains beholden to the federal government’s funds. The Cultural Education Program, now called the First Nations and Inuit Cultural Education Program, still operates, providing federal government funding to over one hundred centres Canada-wide. The funding of these centres is on a case-by-case basis and no yearly allotment is set.<sup>155</sup> Paquette and Fallon suggest that the weakness of cultural centres is that they exist “off to the side of First Nations education” and do not have lasting relationships with First Nations schools or educational organizations. Although centres have been invaluable in their ability to offer cultural and language-specific learning materials, without connection to other educational organizations these materials may not be accessible to First Nations schools or learners.<sup>156</sup> This disconnect, coupled with the reliance on federal funds, complicates the pursuit of educational sovereignty.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational activists still draw attention to the fact that modern education of Indigenous peoples in public schools perpetuates historical settler-colonial domination. Decolonization of education, a current buzzword tossed around by federal and provincial governments to create the perception of change, has not been attempted in a meaningful way. Educational activists such as Four Arrows suggest that provincial and federal governments have cultivated a public-school system that “unquestioningly supports the dominant colonizing worldview’s beliefs about such things as nature, hierarchy, authoritarianism, competition, cooperation, women, children, future generations, economic concepts, diversity, learning approaches, spirituality, and

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<sup>155</sup> Government of Canada, “First Nations and Inuit Cultural Education Centres Program: National Program Guidelines 2022 to 2023, Section 9: Funding,” March 25, 2022, <https://www.isc-sac.gc.ca/eng/1648149026564/1648149043981>.

<sup>156</sup> Paquette and Fallon. *First Nations Education Policy in Canada*, 218-219

virtue.”<sup>157</sup> Stephen Harper’s 2008 formal apology from the federal government to residential school victims suggested that the government had a role in helping Indigenous peoples heal. Through this apology, the federal government initiated a policy of settler-humanitarianism, or “the state finding a ‘humanitarian reason’ to co-constitute Aboriginal healing as public policy and intervening out of sympathy for Indigenous suffering; aligning with settler-colonialism’s enduring goal of eliminating Indigenous peoples in order to control and exploit their territory.”<sup>158</sup> This is most evident in the Harper administration’s doling out of reparations, which “entrenched many Indigenous peoples’ victim status and exacerbated everyday forms of suffering [caused by trauma experienced in the schools].”<sup>159</sup> Krista Maxwell discusses the government’s focus on the “Indigenous child victim” of residential schools and the physical and sexual violence that occurred there as a means to negate action toward such injustices as those related to loss of culture, language, land, and so on. The focus on this victim, who was powerless to combat physical and sexual violence, creates a paternalistic narrative of Indigenous inadequacy to fight back against their oppressors and consequently to occupy land. These victims are agentless in their own healing and need the state to decide what made them victims and how they must heal. Settler-humanitarianism is ongoing settler-colonial violence that reinforces the political status quo.<sup>160</sup> This status quo is also reinforced in modern BC social studies curricula that prioritize the teaching of residential schools, victimization, and trauma as most worthy of mention in the context of Indigenous history. Settler-humanitarianism can also be explained in terms of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang’s descriptions of “settler moves to innocence.” These hidden moves create a narrative of settler innocence regarding colonial injustice to Indigenous peoples; they reject decolonization, Indigenous agency, and Indigenous claims to land, masked as public attempts at the relatability of all peoples and humanitarian aid to the victims of colonialism.<sup>161</sup> These moves to innocence can also be found in modern public schools,

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<sup>157</sup> Four Arrows, “The Indigenization Controversy: For Whom and By Whom?” *Critical Education* 10, no. 18 (2019): 10.

<sup>158</sup> Krista Maxwell, “Settler-Humanitarianism: Healing the Indigenous Child-Victim,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 5 (2017): 995.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 999.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 998.

<sup>161</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 10.

where curricula gloss over Indigenous injustice to preach the successful settlement of British Columbia. Settler society cannot reconcile its colonial guilt and therefore must create narratives of innocence to rationalize the continued colonial domination of British Columbia.

Indigenous activism has resulted in large-scale change in the teaching of Indigenous content and ways of knowing in public schools. I work at Caledonia Secondary School in Terrace, BC, where I teach BC First Peoples 12, among other courses in the social studies department. In 2005, BC First Peoples Studies 12 became a core course that fulfilled the grade 11/12 social studies requirement for graduation.<sup>162</sup> Our school also offers First Nations Art 11/12 and BC First Peoples English 11/12 as choice methods for attaining required art and English credit. Unfortunately, these courses are offered by non-Indigenous instructors, as our school does not have any Indigenous teachers on staff—a situation that needs rectifying. In addition to this, instructors in British Columbia are not required to take any substantial training in First Nations studies or ways of knowing, or the history of colonialism. Aside from Ministry-mandated single-day presentations or optional workshops concerning First Nations ways of knowing, conducted on professional development days, instructors in British Columbia are not required to learn about the history of First Nations peoples. In fact, teachers can provide instruction without training. Ill-equipped teachers, predominantly non-Indigenous, teaching a large number of Indigenous students, who have disproportionately low attendance rates, passing rates, and graduation rates, undoubtedly contributes to a systemic failure in our education system. An audit of B.C. secondary public schools for the 2017/2018 school year indicated a 16% gap between Indigenous students' graduation rates (70%) and non-Indigenous student rates (86%).<sup>163</sup> Leaving this system unchallenged leaves the question of whether we are providing Indigenous students with access to educational equity unanswered.

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<sup>162</sup> Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, "BC First Nations Studies 12: Integrated Resource Package 2006," <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/pdfs/curriculum/socialstudies/2006bcfns12.pdf>.

<sup>163</sup> Carol Bellringer, "Progress Audit: The Education of Aboriginal Students in the B.C. Public School System," (Victoria, BC: Auditor General of British Columbia, 2019), 15.



In my eight years as a teacher at Caledonia, I have expressed to colleagues, administration, and the superintendent my opinion regarding the need for our students to take BC First Peoples 12 in order to graduate. It seems shocking that a student living on Indigenous territory, in a school with 40% Indigenous students, run by a ministry with an apparent focus on “decolonizing education,” can graduate without ever learning the history of Indigenous peoples and settler colonialism. On March 4, 2022, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, announced that they would ensure that all secondary school students complete Indigenous-focused course work in order to graduate from BC’s K-12 public education system. This requirement would come into effect in the 2023-2024 school year.<sup>164</sup> Although not a solution to the ills of the public education system, this move, long overdue as it is, is a step in the right direction.

In summation, I believe that the history of Indigenous education demonstrates how Indigenous peoples have continued to organize for equity despite the state’s attempts to persist in colonial domination. The assumption that this is not the case has influenced colonial educational offerings into the present. Indigenous activists continue to critique the institution of education and their activism, along with the slow government and societal acceptance of colonial injustice, has resulted in positive change in the institution. However, the fact remains: our educational institution still underserves Indigenous students and peoples. Our talk does not match our walk. Federal government control of funding still negates true sovereignty and ministries preach decolonization without feeling it necessary to instruct non-Indigenous educators on the meaning of the word. The negotiations for recognition are ongoing while the state remains a colonizing and dominant force with the power and intentions to block true sovereignty over land and education. Indigenous peoples have always valued and fought for education; it remains the government’s job to give them something worth valuing.

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<sup>164</sup> Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, “New grad requirement ensures students expand their knowledge about Indigenous perspectives, histories, cultures,” March 4, 2022, <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022EDUC0007-000297>.

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