

**"We Are Not Beggars": Political Genesis
of the Native Brotherhood,
1931 - 1951**

by:

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"We Are Not Beggars": Political Genesis of the

Native Brotherhood, 1931 - 1951

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ABSTRACT

Historical writing on Native-government relations in Canada invariably focuses on the imposition of government policy on a weakened and subjugated people. Thus, the historical literature serves to expand the corporate memory of the Department of Indian Affairs, but tells us little about how native people responded to government policy. This thesis is an attempt to redress this imbalance by examining the origins and politics of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia.

The Native Brotherhood came into existence in response to the economic pressures of the Depression. Between 1931 and 1951, while never straying far from the objective of economic equality, the organization expanded its political agenda in an effort to redefine the very nature of Indian-government relations in Canada. It pursued a strategy of cooperation and protest in the hope of winning the support of the Canadian public and thereby pressure the federal government to renounce its policy of assimilation in favour of the Native Brotherhood's objective of integration. This thesis details that struggle.

The Native Brotherhood had an extremely articulate leadership which left a considerable paper trail for the historian. Included in this record are the organization's files in the Department of Indian Affairs records (RG10). There is also the testimony of the Native Brotherhood before a number of Parliamentary Committees, the minutes of which proved valuable as sources of government opinion. Finally, the organization's newspaper, the *Native Voice*, proved to be an invaluable source.

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INTRODUCTION

With the colonization of the new worlds of the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand white settlers displaced the indigenous populations. As Europeans came to dominate, so too did the history of the Europeans become the dominant history with the indigenous population being relegated to the background. This situation has changed recently as historians have attempted to reconstruct the history of these dispossessed peoples and introduce it into the national consciousness. In Canada, as elsewhere, this is proving to be a none too simple task, as the preliterate nature of native societies deprives historians of their primary tool, the written word. Historians have therefore been forced to try and distill aboriginal peoples, and their motives, from a variety of European sources. There are limitations to this approach as it is still difficult to isolate native motives. What emerges is an history of native-white relations, from the independence of the fur trade to the dependence of the reserve, through to the modern era.(1)

1 Historians are now attempting to rectify this situation through the use of an inter-disciplinary or ethnohistorical approach, one that combines traditional historical methodologies with current trends in anthropology and archaeology, foremost among these techniques is the use of oral history as a means of understanding the Indian perception of historical events. Among the main advocates of this approach is Bruce Trigger, whose work *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1985.), encourages scholars of native history to adopt this interdisciplinary approach

Underscoring all of these experiences was the reality of Indian-government relations, as first colonial, and later Canadian officials sought to realize their dream of nation. In spite of the crucial role of government policy, historians have traditionally ignored the relations of the Canadian state with its native population. With the recent upsurge of interest in the native experience the literature on Indian-government relations has expanded quantitatively, if not qualitatively. Much of this research has been generated by the native political resurgence as academics, including historians, have lent their weight to the legal and political struggles of native people. All too often, however, this research concentrates on the details of government policy, and how this policy contributed to placing native people in the situation they find themselves in today. These accounts paint a picture of native people as being overwhelmed by the forces of European society and the policies of a racist and paternalistic government. This is an unfair portrait, ignoring, as it does a long and vigorous history of native resistance, both overt and covert, to white society, and the policies advanced by the representatives of that society. Too many academics have ignored this legacy of protest, preferring to focus on

in an effort to redefine our understanding of not just native history, but of the general history of Canada. On a more international note there is Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.)

government policy. In so doing they fail to ask if the Indians had alternative solutions to the problems created by contact? Or, how did the Indians view their role in Canadian society? And, how did the Indians seek to influence policy and achieve their objectives?

Indians, particularly those in Western Canada, were quick to reject government plans for assimilation. Resistance manifested itself at all levels, social, political, and economic, as Indians fought to remain Indians in the face of the increasingly coercive policies of the Indian Act.(2) It was not until well into the twentieth century however, that Indians began to overcome tribal and linguistic divisions to organize at the provincial and national levels. This protest was particularly vigorous in British Columbia where the colonial, and later the provincial government's stand on the land question was instrumental in fostering native discontent, which in turn provided the stimulus for political organization and protest.

In British Columbia initial contact between Indians and Europeans took place in the cooperative environment of the fur trade. It was not until the demise of the fur trade, and the advance of the settlement frontier that political protest began in earnest, as native groups struggled to come

2 See the work of John L. Tobias, particularly "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree", in Robin Fisher and Ken Coates, eds., *Out of the Background*. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988.)

to grips with a society that viewed them as an impediment to progress. Early protest was sporadic and local, the chief concern was a common one, competition for land. These early protests met with little success, and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that Indians had begun to transcend local rivalries to organize, first at the regional, and later at the provincial level. By the eighteen-nineties the provincial government's heavy-handed administration of the land question had created a legacy of bitterness and discontent that stimulated protests to Victoria, Ottawa, and London.(3)

While, native protest is over a century old, historians have been slow to recognize it as a fertile field for study. There is a small, and ever expanding, body of literature, but until recently the majority of the scholarship tended to be superficial and narrative. Historians have chronicled the history of protest, but failed to examine specific concerns, organizations, or the activities of those organizations.(4) Scholars discussed

3 A number of academics have reviewed these early protest movements. The most comprehensive is Robin Fisher's, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977) which details the interaction between Indians, missionaries, and the Indian Reserve Commission in the nineteenth century.

4 There are a number of works that deal with Indian protest organizations. See F.E. Laviolette, *The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961.); E.P. Patterson, "Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence" (Phd. dissertation, Department of History, University of Washington, 1962); and Patterson, *The*

protest, but ignored the factors that shaped the protest, or more importantly, how the organizations responded to, and attempted to influence governments and their policies in the quest for justice.(5)

As fur trade scholars have demonstrated, the Indian was not always a passive victim. In British Columbia, as elsewhere, Indian-white contact through the fur trade was often profitable for native groups.(6) By the eighteen-fifties, however, the fur trade was coming to an end, leading to social, economic, and political disruption among the native population. This disruption was compounded by the colonies' handling of the land question.(7) When British Columbia entered confederation Joseph Trutch, former Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, and framer of the province's land policy, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor. It was in this capacity that Trutch sought to end the Indian

Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500. (Toronto: Collier-MacMillan, 1972.)

5 This situation has largely been corrected with the recent publication of Paul Tennant's *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: the Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1990), which reviews Indian response to land policy in British Columbia from 1849 to 1989.

6 See Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, pp. 2-19.

7 If the Indian experience in the fur trade was typical, British Columbia's handling of the land question was atypical, not just to Canada, but throughout the British Empire. Elsewhere Britain acknowledged the existence of an aboriginal title to the land, in British Columbia the policy was to deny title, and to arbitrarily establish reserves. This practice is at the root of Indian protest in British Columbia.

land question once and for all. In 1874 he introduced an act to address the problem of crown lands. This Act denied the Indian's right to land, and in so doing opened the province to settlement.(8) Trutch's career has been reviewed by Robin Fisher, who rightly attributes much of British Columbia's intransigence on the Indian land question to Trutch, but he stops short of examining the legacy of protest that Trutch bequeathed to the province. Fisher does however, identify a number of protest actions and petitions that came out of the Interior as a response to the work of the Indian Reserve Commission in the eighteen-seventies.(9) Fisher's *Contact and Conflict* ends in 1890, just as the land question was emerging as the dominant political issue for native people in the province. In the years after 1890 the land question would act as the unifying issue in the developing political struggle. The story of protest, post-1890, is a complex one, and one, that until recently, had not been entirely, or satisfactorily dealt with.

Laviolette and Patterson have written on the twentieth century, but both are based on superficial research and are of limited value. What value these studies do possess lies in their attempt to develop a comprehensive picture of the

8 Robin Fisher, " Joseph Trutch and Indian Land Policy", in *BC Studies* 12 (1971-2): pp. 3-33.

9 Robin Fisher, " An Exercise in Futility: The Joint Commission on Indian Land in British Columbia, 1875-1880." Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers*, 1975, pp.80-85.

native experience. Both authors, however, raise more questions about the relationship between the state and its wards than they answer, particularly with reference to how the Indians sought to create a place for themselves in a society hostile to their presence.

Historians have been slow to accept the challenge laid down by the work of Patterson and Laviolette. A few academics are attempting to fit the pieces into the overall picture, and out of these attempts has come a small, but valuable body of literature as historians, and others, have sought to complete the complex puzzle that passes for Indian Affairs in British Columbia.(10)

Until 1989 the most wide ranging examination of Indian protest in British Columbia was Leslie Kopas', " Political Action of the Indians of British Columbia."(11) Kopas was the first to examine the native reaction to white society, tracing the interaction between natives and whites from the colonial period to modern times. He presented a number of important conclusions about native organizations, many of which remain valid. He acknowledged the importance of the

10 Two very different interpretations of Indian policy in British Columbia can be found in Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin's, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast*. (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990.), and Paul Tennant's, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990.

11 Leslie Kopas, " Political Action of the Indians of British Columbia," M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1973.

Native Brotherhood as the first organization initiated by Indians, but notes that it was unable to overcome the perpetually divisive problems of culture, religion and regional economic differences. (12)

Kopas' comments on the Native Brotherhood echo those of the American ethnographer Philip Drucker. (13) Drucker concluded that the Native Brotherhood failed to attain many of its stated objectives, and thus, was ineffectual in its use of white political tools. Drucker's findings were heavily influenced by his familiarity with the Alaskan organization, and so his conclusions on the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia do not acknowledge the political ambiguities of native administration in Canada. (14)

The early career and activities of the Native Brotherhood need to be reevaluated in light of more recent scholarship that acknowledges the ambiguities of dependence and aboriginal protest movements both in Canada and elsewhere. Paul Tennant has advanced the hypothesis that natives have to first win the respect of the administration

12 Kopas, " Political Action." p. 16

13 Philip Drucker, *The Native Brotherhoods: Modern Intertribal Organizations on the Northwest Coast*. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1958). pp. 112-125.

14 Drucker's work on the Native Brotherhood is valuable, however, his conclusions on the British Columbia organization fail to acknowledge the legal restrictions imposed upon Indians in Canada by an 1927 amendment to the Indian Act which outlawed political protest.

by adopting mechanisms and institutions that can be seen as coinciding with the political or administrative units of the majority, in short to embrace the political culture of the dominant society. (15) This point was acknowledged by Drucker, but what Drucker failed to recognize was that, even with political acculturation of this nature, success depends, not on how the tools are used, but on the attitudes of the majority toward the indigenous group, (16) a hypothesis that raises important questions about our earlier conclusions on the Native Brotherhood.

Tennant first explored this hypothesis in an 1982 article in which he examined the general phenomenon of native political protest in British Columbia. In this article Tennant briefly reviewed the success of the Native Brotherhood among native fishermen. These fishermen then provided the financial support that made the Native Brotherhood "the only substantial Indian organization in the province." (17)

Tennant later developed his article into a more complete study of Indian political protest in British Columbia. In *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics* Tennant sought to provide a comprehensive text on aboriginal protest and

15 Paul Tennant. "Native Indian Political Organization in British Columbia, 1900-1969: A Response to Internal Colonialism," *B.C. Studies*, 55 (Autumn 1982), p. 7.

16 Tennant, " Native Indian Political Organization." p. 9

17 Ibid., p. 29.

the land question.(18) As a result of this focus his discussion of the Native Brotherhood is limited as it does not fall within the purview of his study. Thus, Tennant's commentary on the Native Brotherhood adds little that is new to the story of the organization. Tennant does, however, acknowledge its significance in the continuum of protest, but he fails to shed any light on the forces that shaped the early political life of the Native Brotherhood. His work, however, stimulated the interest of University of British Columbia political scientist, Jacqueline O'Donnell, who examined the Native Brotherhood in terms of Hazel Hertzberg's work on pan-Indianism.(19)

O'Donnell's purpose was to review the organization and activities of the Native Brotherhood, and in so doing, isolate the forces that acted as impediments and incentives to extra-kin organization on the north-west coast. In so doing she traces the evolution of political protest in British Columbia and the shift from single issue, elite based organizations, such as the Nishga Land Committee, to the more general concerns of the Native Brotherhood. O'Donnell provides valuable insight into the forces that brought the Native Brotherhood together, but because of her focus she does not clearly address how the leadership hoped

18 Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*. pp. 112-124.

19 Jacqueline O'Donnell." The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia." M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985.

to further their concerns, or how they hoped to alter their relationship with the state in a particularly turbulent era.

We need, therefore, to look elsewhere for a conceptual framework to aid in our historical understanding of the political development of the Native Brotherhood. Fortunately other new world historians, particularly those interested in aboriginal responses to settler penetration, have explored this area and have identified a number of common themes with respect to indigenous protest movements. Among these are included the work of Hazel Hertzberg in the United States, Peter Walshe and Shula Marks in South Africa, and John Williams in New Zealand.

In her study of pan-Indianism in the United States Hertzberg identifies two strands of protest, one religious, and one more specifically political.⁽²⁰⁾ In her discussion of specifically political organizations Hertzberg argues that political protest in the United States grew out of the progressive era, and that the wider political climate manifested itself in Indian society through the emergence of a highly educated and acculturated leadership, in this case a leadership that was Christian and educated, and which on the basis of their experiences stressed accommodation to, not rejection of the dominant society. These elite based reform movements stressed the opportunities of education and

20 Hazel Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1971). p. 27.

hard work, and of course individual responsibility. These men were the products of a rapidly urbanizing and industrializing society, and they did not wish to be left behind. Their solution was to adopt the appropriate organizational forms so that they could communicate and cooperate with the federal government in bringing the Indian into that society.(21)

The traits that Hertzberg identifies in the United States are to be found in indigenous movements in other parts of the world. In South Africa Peter Walshe, and more recently Shula Marks, (22) have clearly demonstrated the influence of education and industrialization on the African response to the emergent South African state.(23) Walshe reviewed the influence of Victorian society, and its main emissary, the missionary, on the early African nationalists, and the policies that they advanced, most notably their belief in the moral responsibility of parliament to protect all its people. Like Hertzberg, Walshe demonstrates that the

21 Ibid., pp. 299-324.

22 While there are many differences in the nature of apartheid and Canadian Indian policy there are also many similarities, particularly with regard to the steps taken by the respective indigenous populations to overcome the colonial legacy of alienation and dispossession. Their political struggles also deserve greater scrutiny than the cursory discussion they are granted here.

23 Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971) pp. 1-24, and Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986) pp. 2-14.

emergent African middle-class leaders were willing to reject traditional society and its values to embrace what they perceived as the advantages of western civilization. (24)

Building on the solid foundation laid down by Walshe, Shula Marks discusses the methods advanced by this African middle-class in their quest for political recognition and autonomy. Marks is not interested in what motivated the early African nationalists, but rather how they interacted with, and sought to influence and direct Native policy. In her examination of this process Marks identifies what she terms the "ambiguities of dependence," ambiguities that come from the structurally dependent position of the indigenous population in the colonial political economy and the state. These ambiguities, when combined with the influences distinguished by Walshe, caused the emergent African nationalists to embrace the Victorian belief in progress and improvement while attacking the "antiquated tribal system." In reality, however, the activities of these nationalists continued to be curtailed by the colonial state, the attitudes of which forced the Africans to don the "mask of servility" while walking the "tightrope" of protest and cooperation. (25)

This idea of how the structurally dependent position of indigenous peoples affects political protest has been

24 Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, pp. 24-30.

25 Shula Marks. *The Ambiguities of Dependence*. pp. 1-5, 10-15.

further elaborated upon by John Williams.(26) Williams, who examined Maori political protest between 1891 and 1909, also identified the importance of protest and cooperation as central to Maori political agitation. In New Zealand the Maori sought to alleviate the impact of European settlement by asserting their own worthiness, they argued that they were equal to the European, and that they deserved to enjoy the benefits of European society.(27) This said, the Maori response was an attempt to select the advantageous elements of European society, and reject the disadvantageous in order to strengthen and preserve the best traditions in the face of dispossession and political subjugation. In their quest to achieve this goal the Maori adopted a number of strategies. They sought to create a separate Maori polity through the creation of a Maori parliament. When this organization was disallowed by the New Zealand parliament the Maori looked to other political solutions, including more politically acceptable organizations, organizations which stressed varying degrees of protest and cooperation. Many of these organizations proclaimed Maori nationalism and exclusiveness, but there were others that have been identified as more "assimilationist", among these was the Young Maori Party. The Young Maori Party was comprised of a highly acculturated, missionary educated Maori elite, an

26 John Williams. *Politics of the New Zealand Maori*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969).

27 Williams. *Politics*. p.7.

elite who like their contemporaries elsewhere in the colonial world sought to alleviate the social and economic disadvantages faced by the Maori through "accommodation" to the dominant society or assimilation. (28) As in the United States and South Africa this educated, anglicized elite sought to raise the Maori out of the slough at the expense of traditional culture. The means were the tools of the politically powerless, the delegation, the petition, and the memorandum. Williams argues that it through the use of these European political tools the Young Maori party sought to demonstrate the worthiness of the Maori to the dominant society. (29)

From these examples it is possible to identify a number of criteria that are common to formal, as opposed to symbolic, indigenous political protest movements of New World peoples. There is the missionary influence that gave rise to a christianized and Europeanized leadership, who realizing their disadvantaged position in society gave voice to their discontent. When dealing with the political and bureaucratic representatives of the dominant society these leaders stressed the familiar, they espoused the Victorian, liberal belief in "progress" and "development espoused by their missionary educators." This gave rise to a belief in an upward mobility that would lift the native out of the

28 Williams. *Politics*, pp. 150-54.

29 Williams, *Politics*, p. 8.

"slough of ignorance, idleness, poverty [and] superstition".(30) This philosophy often led to an attack on traditional values in favour of the structures and institutions of the dominant society. The leaders of the Native Brotherhood came out of this context, but instead of embracing "assimilation", they sought to encourage their people to select the best of both worlds and to demand access to the dominant society on their terms.

This thesis will examine how the Native Brotherhood sought to realize this objective. it will examine the origins of native protest in British Columbia through the political genesis of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, from its roots as a localized, self-help group to its being acknowledged as the premier native organization in the country.(31) It will examine the origins of the Native Brotherhood and the forces that led to consolidation at the provincial level, leading ultimately to the adoption of a strategy of protest and cooperation in an attempt to overcome the "ambiguities of dependence" created by their marginal position in Canadian society.

At first glance the telling of the story of the Native Brotherhood would appear to be a relatively straight forward

30 Marks, *Ambiguities*. p. 23.

31 Between 1946 and 1948 the Native Brotherhood was active in advancing its vision of "Indian policy" to a Special Parliamentary Committee. During this time many of the Committee members came to view the organization as the premier native organization in the country.

task. Unfortunately, as with many things in history, the apparently simple can be inherently complex. In any examination of the Native Brotherhood questions arise in a number of areas, some have to do with the nature of the organization, while others are indicative of the shortcomings of historical methodology.

To begin with there is the very nature of the organization. While this thesis seeks to highlight the political career of the Native Brotherhood, this was but one sphere where the organization was active, the Native Brotherhood also sought to advance native concerns in the social, economic and cultural spheres. Thus, it should be noted that the Native Brotherhood was, and remains, a multifaceted organization. In the period under examination its primary functions were as a political pressure group and as a trade union for native fishermen. Therefore to write a truly institutional history of the Native Brotherhood it is incumbent on the author to pay equal time to all facets of the organization. Due to a number of factors this thesis does not do that and therefore it should not be approached as an institutional history of the Native Brotherhood. Instead it is, as stated above, an attempt to review the "political" career of the Native Brotherhood and to elucidate the organizations attempts to suspend the "ambiguities of dependence" under which it was forced to operate in its struggle to bring the plight of native people

before the Canadian public in an effort to force changes in government policy.

However, before attempting such a task there are still a number of other problems, most notably in the areas of methodology and terminology that need to be addressed. In the area of methodology the primary questions relate to source material, what is available, and how reliable is it? These questions have plagued historians for centuries and they are of particular import to students of native history. Fortunately the Native Brotherhood left a considerable paper trail. While this trail is extensive it is far from all encompassing as it gives little indication of the internal workings of the Native Brotherhood, its constituents, or its activities as a trade union. Some of these problems could well be overcome through the use of oral history, but lamentably due to restrictions of time and finances this was not an avenue open to the author, and so the story told here is the one encapsulated in the documentary record. Unfortunately the available sources limit the scope of this study to the activities of the organizations political leadership and its relation with the representatives of the Canadian state. Again these problems restrict the thesis to a discussion of the organization's political activities.

There are also problems of terminology, including the use of language, and the historical, or contextual use of specific words. The most problematic word here is undoubtedly "assimilation". Assimilation is one of those

words that has a great many loaded connotations, some historical and some more contemporary. What is clear is that assimilation was the stated objective of the Indian Affairs Branch during the period in question. Given this I have chosen to borrow Christine Bolt's definition of assimilation. In her recent study of American Indian policy Bolt defined assimilation as "the desire of white institutions to see greater homogeneity in society with Indian individuals, indeed Indians as a whole, being persuaded to merge with the dominant Anglo-Saxon ethnicity." (32) This definition encapsulates the federal government's desire to bring the Indian into Canadian society, and as such it provides a clear enunciation of both the historical and analytical conceptualizations of "assimilation".

In examining the efforts of the political leadership of the Native Brotherhood this thesis will focus on the years from 1931 to 1951. In the first fifteen years of this period the Native Brotherhood developed and defined its means and ends, this process will be reviewed in chapter one. Chapter two will concentrate on the Native Brotherhood's appearance before the Special Joint Committee to review the Indian Act. This chapter will highlight the Native Brotherhood's experience and its attempts to overcome, or at least

32 See Christine Bolt, *American Indian Policy and American Reform: Case studies of the campaign to assimilate American Indians*. (London; Boston: Allan and Unwin, 1987.) p.4.

suspend, the ambiguities of dependence that arose from the competing ideologies of the Native Brotherhood, the Department of Indian Affairs, and the Churches, all of whom had a different vision of the Indian's position in society. Chapter three will then examine how the Native Brotherhood sought to continue its struggle in the period after the Special Joint Committee. It will discuss the strategies adopted to assure that its voice and its concerns continued to be heard. This will be followed by a concluding chapter that will try to evaluate the "success" of the Native Brotherhood in achieving their goals in relation to the "new" Indian Act of 1951.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM PORT SIMPSON TO OTTAWA: 1931-1945.

By nineteen thirty the native population of British Columbia had been protesting its treatment by the federal and provincial governments for over half a century. The natives' main source of discontent was the arbitrary alienation of Indian land. Native protests had reached their peak in 1927 when the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, a native coalition formed to combat further loss of land, presented its case to a parliamentary Committee. The Committee dismissed the Allied Tribes' case, and the following year the federal government introduced legislation which prohibited any future prosecution of the land question. The traditional assumption has been that this piece of legislation, in conjunction with the depression, completed the economic and political marginalization of British Columbia's native population. This is a dangerous assumption as it denies the early political experiences of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia.

The Native Brotherhood was founded at Port Simpson in December 1931. The organization was primarily a response to the economic despair of the depression, yet this was only one aspect of a complex set of incentives to organization. In order to understand the later career and actions of the Native Brotherhood it would be beneficial to try and unravel the factors that led the native fishermen of British

Columbia's north coast to Port Simpson in 1931.

Unfortunately there is a dearth of information on this period, and for that reason many of the conclusions presented here are speculative in nature, being but one possible interpretation of the forces that shaped the political ideas of the Native Brotherhood and its leaders. For this reason the the ideas presented in this chapter should by no means be viewed as definitive. Instead this section on the early career of the Native Brotherhood and its political antecedents should be approached as a stepping of point for future research. In the meantime here is one version of the formation of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia.

Throughout its career the Native Brotherhood would fulfil many roles, often operating on a number of levels at the same time, but when the Native Brotherhood was formed it was basically a simple, fraternal organization whose main objective was to ensure the economic survival of native fishermen. Over the next decade the Native Brotherhood expanded its scope of operations, both geographically, spreading outward from its northern power base, and philosophically, wrestling with the social, economic and political concerns of all Indians, until it was recognized as the foremost commentator on aboriginal issues in British Columbia.

Political organization was probably the last thing on the minds of native fishermen in the bad times of the

Depression, when survival itself seemed doubtful. This was especially true in the summer of 1931, a particularly bad time for all commercial fishermen in British Columbia. Among the hardest hit were the native fishermen who fished the northern waters. The problems created by the Depression were compounded by inclement weather which was keeping the fishermen's boats at quayside. As the summer passed so did the fishermen's chances for survival. Due to low prices and rising expenses they were working longer hours for less money. Economic desperation was the general refrain. It was under these circumstances that the fishermen would meet to discuss their plight. Euro-Canadian fishermen looked to their unions for answers, but the native fishermen, who mistrusted the unions, were on their own, and they were confused and frustrated by the changes taking place in the industry. The Indians were aware of their common concerns, primarily the need for economic relief, but were uncertain about how to tackle them. Into this atmosphere of despondency came Alfred Adams, a Haida from Masset. The native fishermen looked to Adams for guidance..." What can we do to better our conditions? How can we get more money for our fish?"(1) Adams response was simple, they had to organize, they must...

... come together, we must talk as one,
we must act as one. We will have an
organization by organizing into a body. Then
we will be able to talk to the government of

1 Native Voice, May 1960. p.5.

the land, for only through an organized,
united body will our voice be heard by the
world.(2)

In this way Adams laid the foundations for the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. He planted the seed of unity, but the challenge was to bring the general desire for unity to germination. The first step was taken that same fall when the native fishermen of the north coast, the majority of whom were Haida or Tsimshian, met in Port Simpson to review their options. They agreed to come together as the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, and elected Adams to the presidency of the fledgling organization. Under Adams' guidance the Brotherhood would strive to reach its potential, spreading down the coast and into the Interior by the close of the decade.

Thus was born the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. The Brotherhood was not the first native organization to emerge on the coast, but it marked a new phase in political organization in two noteworthy ways, it was a native organization born of native inspiration, and it marked a new direction in native political protest, stressing economic and political concerns in the absence of the land issue. Initially the concerns advanced by the Native Brotherhood were almost purely economic, and they reflected those of many labour unions, to safeguard the position of its members in an increasingly hostile environment. While the Native Brotherhood often acted as a

union it very quickly became more. Historians, however, have tended to overlook the political evolution of the Native Brotherhood. Instead they, and others, have tended to examine the Native Brotherhood in isolation, occasionally acknowledging its existence in the continuum of protest. It is not enough to simply acknowledge the Native Brotherhood's place in the continuum, (3) and so in order to understand the Brotherhood it is necessary to understand where it came from.

Though it was a new organization, this chapter contends that the Brotherhood was but a new link in the long chain of native protest in British Columbia. Despite the argument that European settlement forced the Indian into the background of our society and history, the post-contact experience of Indians in British Columbia was one of persistent resistance to European encroachment and domination as they fought to have specific political and legal rights recognized. This resistance was particularly prominent in the economic sphere. (4) With the demise of the

3 The Native Brotherhood has been discussed in a number of general histories. See E.P. Patterson, *The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500*, pp. 170-72, and Leslie Kopas, "Political Action of the Indians of British Columbia," M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1973, pp. 96-116. but these studies view the Brotherhood in isolation, discussing what the organization did. In his recently published book, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, Paul Tennant acknowledged the importance of the Brotherhood in the chain of protest, but his focus was on the Land Question, and so his discussion of the Native Brotherhood is brief, pp.114-24.

fur trade Indians were obliged to seek alternative economic pursuits, which led, in varying degrees to their participation in the province's resource economy.(5) This process of economic diversification was particularly successful in the fishing industry, an industry which allowed many coastal groups to maintain a degree of economic independence, while introducing them to the concepts of trade unionism and labour politics.

Whereas the fur trade had been monopolistic in nature the commercial fishery was highly competitive, both in terms of labour and capital investment.(6) Initially the coast Indians enjoyed a comparatively favorable position, but by the 1890's they were facing increased competition from Euro-Canadian, and later Japanese fishermen. Increased competition for cannery contracts had a disruptive effect on

4 The degree to which Indians participated in the post-colonial economy is open to debate. Robin Fisher argues that the Indians were pushed into the background after settlement, whereas Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An informal history of native Indian labour in B.C.* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978), pp. 9-10, 78-100, argues that Indians continued to participate in all facets of the province's economy. Knight, while advancing an interesting thesis, overstates his argument. Although there is evidence that Indians did make a successful transition in some industries, i.e. fishing.

5 Percy Gladstone, "Native Indians in the Fishing Industry of British Columbia", in *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 19 no.1 (February 1953): pp. 156-174.

6 Unfortunately the literature on Native participation in the fishing industry is somewhat dated and needs to be revised in light of more recent scholarship on the nature of the fishing industry in British Columbia. See for instance Dianne Newell, *The Development of the Pacific salmon-canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game*. (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.)

the industry, as is evidenced by the catalogue of strikes that rocked the industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.(7)

These attempts at organization were weak and haphazard, and as a result the early strikes typically failed from a lack of solidarity. Indian fishermen suffered several betrayals, further heightening their mistrust of Japanese, as well as Euro-Canadian fishermen's organizations.(8) The obverse of this situation was an increase in mutual trust among native fishermen, a trust that transcended previously divisive tribal and linguistic differences. By World War One native fishermen were beginning to experiment with collective action to prevent being squeezed out of the industry.(9) Competition fostered native militancy as Indian attitudes became increasingly embattled with native fishermen seeing themselves engaged in a war for economic and political survival. The competition for fishing licenses was accompanied by a need for greater capital investment as technological innovations altered the face of the industry.

7 Gladstone and Jamieson identify Indian participation in labour disputes as early as 1893. Indians also participated in strikes in 1894, 1896, and 1897, 1900, 1901, 1904, and 1907, as well as throughout the war years. For a more detailed discussion of labour disputes in the fishing industry see Gladstone, " Native Indians in the Fishing Industry.": pp. 245-50.

8 Gladstone, " Native Indians in the Fishing Industry," identifies the Indian's mistrust of Japanese and white organizations. p. 169.

9 Ibid., p. 165.

The economic problems of competition were particularly disastrous for native fishermen, who, because of their wardship status could not secure the loans necessary to keep up with the changes affecting the industry. With the onset of the Depression many native fishermen began to experience severe economic hardship, a hardship that was compounded by the federal and provincial government's reluctance to provide relief services. It was these economic concerns, along with political concerns arising out of the Indian Act, that caused native fishermen to seek a new, broader approach to their problems.

By 1930 the experience gained in the fishing industry had been mirrored by similar developments in the political arena, where Indians had been actively trying to get the federal government to recognize their political and legal rights to land. The pinnacle of this protest was reached in 1915 with the formation of the Allied Tribes of British Columbia. The Allied Tribes combined the energies of sympathetic whites with an articulate native leadership. Under the nominal leadership of Andrew Paull and Peter Kelly the Allied Tribes advanced an effective political campaign against the recommendations of the MacKenna-McBride Commission, culminating in their presenting their case to a Special Parliamentary Committee in 1927.

The Special Parliamentary Committee of 1927 marked the peak of the Allied Tribe's achievements, yet, ironically, it would also be the instrument of its demise. The Committee

was set up to investigate the Land question, and its conclusion that the Allied Tribes " had not established any claims to the lands of British Columbia based on aboriginal, or other title"(10), would be the death knell of the organization. The defeat of 1927 threw native political activity into disarray. Upon the demise of the Allied Tribes its leaders withdrew from political life, and they would not return to the political stage for almost twenty years.(11)

As mentioned above the trend has been to link the demise of the Allied Tribes to the death of Indian protest in British Columbia.(12) Historians have failed to recognize the importance of the Allied Tribes, and the fishermen's cooperatives and unions, for what they were, valuable apprenticeships. As the Depression acted as a catalyst for change in Canadian society with the pursuit of fresh political and economic ideas, so too did the events of the nineteen-thirties create a new sense of activism among

10 *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended March 31, 1927*, p.10.

11 With the demise of the A.T.B.C. Paull and Kelly withdrew from politics. Paull pursued a career in journalism, and did not become involved with Indian concerns until the 1940's. See E.P. Patterson, " Finding A Voice For The Indian", in *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology*, VI, 2. pp. 63-82. Kelly resumed his ministry and spent the 1930's travelling the British Columbia coastline on a missionary ship. See Alan Morley, *Roar of the Breakers* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967.) pp. 130-143.

12 This position has been advanced by Leslie Kopas, " Political Action of the Indians of British Columbia", pp. 96-116, and Jacqueline O'Donnell, " The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia", M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1982.

British Columbia's natives, as they too sought new solutions to the political and economic problems that they faced. The urgency fostered by the Depression was compounded by the callousness of the provincial government, a callousness that fostered mutual aid and a desire to maintain a separate native identity. Thus, the Depression was the loom that wove formerly disparate strands of native discontent into a single fabric, the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia.

Founded at Port Simpson in December 1931, the Brotherhood began as a simple, fraternal organization. In reality, however, it was a multi-faceted organization, and as with many organizations of this type it is difficult to untangle the disparate strands of its operations, and perhaps it is foolish to even try, but an attempt must be made if we are to understand the later experiences of the Native Brotherhood. For the purpose of this thesis, partly by choice, and partly due to the limitations of the source material, the discussion of the Native Brotherhood contained hereafter focuses on its political activities, largely to the exclusion of its activities in the economic realm of the fishing industry.

The advent of the Brotherhood was accompanied by an interregnum in government policy-making that provided an opportunity for the organization to advance its strategies for meeting the challenges of the 1930's. In the beginning the Native Brotherhood was somewhat tentative with its proposals, but as the organization consolidated its power-

base its objectives became more ambitious and confident; and the desire for local autonomy was a recurring demand by the nineteen-forties. As the Native Brotherhood advanced these demands it vacillated between a strategy of compromise and confrontation. This vacillation was, in part, due to the inherently conservative nature of the leadership, but it was also an acknowledgement of the very real ambiguities of dependence imposed upon native political leaders by the Indian Act.

As previously alluded to it is often difficult to isolate specific patterns and influences in the factors that gave shape to the Native Brotherhood. Philip Drucker argues that the organizational infrastructure of the Native Brotherhood was dictated by Alfred Adams' familiarity with the Alaskan Native Brotherhood.(13) Adams was the impetus for the Port Simpson meeting, but to ascribe credit for the Native Brotherhood to the Alaskan organization is to deny the unique experiences of the Tsimshian and Haida who made the journey to Port Simpson. Adams was but one of a number of traditional leaders who would use their influence to make the Native Brotherhood a reality.(14)

13 Philip Drucker, *The Native Brotherhoods*, pp. 100-107.

14 Among the leaders at the Pt. Simpson meeting were the Dudowards and Beynons, whose families had been active in local politics from the 1880's. See Clarence Bolt, "Thomas Crosby and the Tsimshian of Port Simpson, 1874-1897." M.A. Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1981.

These traditional leaders walked a fine tightrope between the demands of the dominant society, and the maintenance of traditional values in the face of that society. It has been demonstrated that many of these leaders had a history of utilizing Euro-Canadian institutions in an effort to be heard and have their claims recognized by the dominant society.(15) In his work on the Port Simpson Tsimshian Clarence Bolt clearly demonstrates that the adoption of European institutions was not a capitulation, but was, more importantly, a move toward self-determination and self-expression in religious matters. Bolt further suggests that this strategy had its parallel in virtually every facet of Tsimshian society.(16) When it became clear that involvement with the churches would not result in the realization of the desire for self-determination, the leading families, the Dudowards and Beynons, turned their attention to the political sphere, where they would utilize their familiarity with white techniques of group cooperation to overcome the age-old divisions that threatened to forestall the Port Simpson meeting.(17) These experiences would affect not only the structure of the Native Brotherhood, but they would also direct the strategies that the organization would adopt. This is most noticeable in the

15 See Clarence Bolt, " Thomas Crosby and the Tsimshian of Port Simpson, 1874-1897." p. xii.

16 Ibid., p. 187.

17 Drucker, *Native Brotherhoods*. pp. 105-107.

organizations belief in the moral righteousness of its grievances, which can be traced to the influence of the missionaries who inculcated their flocks with a belief in the moral responsibility of parliament.(18)

It was not long before these leading members of the Port Simpson community were called upon to display their diplomatic skills. While the Port Simpson convention had been called to promote unity, there were sufficient rivalries in the Salvation Army Hall to turn the meeting acrimonious. When it became clear that the general desire for unity would not be realized, the assembly, upon the recommendation of the traditional leaders, turned their attention to the nature of their grievances. The delegates were quick to recognize that they were economically and politically disadvantaged in Canadian society.(19) Their economic plight was being made increasingly difficult with each year of the Depression, a situation that further undermined an already tenuous political struggle.(20) The solutions advanced were nothing new, exhibiting the influence of missionary education, the delegates espoused the Victorian, liberal panaceas of education and

18 This practice has been demonstrated elsewhere, see Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971).

19 *Native Voice*. May 1960, p.5.

20 For an explanation of Drucker see earlier commentary, footnote 12, p. 7.

civilization. These objectives indicated a desire for equality, but it was to be equality without assimilation, equality with the retention of traditional values and the maintenance of a special relationship with the Crown.²¹

The problem was, of course, how to achieve this objective, how to persuade a paternalistic and hostile Indian Department that native grievances were just, and that their objectives were not antithetical to those of the Department. To achieve this the Native Brotherhood adopted the tools of the politically powerless the world over, the petition, resolutions, and memoranda. The aim was to establish a basis for cooperation through stressing the familiar, education and civilization, while subtly protesting the injustices and discriminatory practices of the federal and provincial governments.

The first palpable expression of these desires was the Port Simpson Resolutions, and the accompanying Petition. The resolutions reflected the fishermen's immediate economic problems. Among the requests were: access to traditional fishing sites, and " the privilege of fishing commercially without a license." These resolutions were supported by a request for the extension of " Old Age Pensions, and Mother's and Widow's Pensions " to the native population.⁽²²⁾ These resolutions were accompanied to Ottawa

²¹ Port Simpson Petition. RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

by the Port Simpson Petition. The petition, directed to the federal government began with a request for improved educational facilities on the north coast. This request was followed by appeals for a more liberal application of provincial game laws, as well as the granting of permission to gather timber off the reserves. This was followed by a plea for improved medical care. The petition closed with a request for a conference with the Minister of the Interior to discuss additional, unspecified concerns.(23)

The forces of accommodation, of protest and cooperation, are clearly evident in the language of the Port Simpson petition and resolutions. They combined traditional grievances, founded in aboriginal rights, with the economic concerns arising out of the Depression. The petition, while "humbly requesting" a "sympathetic consideration" of the Indian problem, also clearly enunciated solutions that were designed to create "a level playing field" by bringing an end to discrimination. The petition and resolutions also demonstrated a clear, if nascent, understanding of aboriginal rights. While not comparable to the modern understanding of aboriginal rights the enunciation of these rights, most noticeably those concerned with land use, hunting and trapping, ran contrary to both federal and provincial thinking on these issues. Yet the Brotherhood

22 Port Simpson Resolutions, RG 10 Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10. Pt.1.

23 Port Simpson Petition, RG 10 Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt.1

advanced them believing that they were essential to the economic integration of natives into the dominant society.

Given the official attitude to aboriginal rights the delegates realized that any chance of an objective hearing was minimal. Confronted with this reality the Brotherhood stressed the economic benefits of these "pursuits", that is, there would be less of a drain on the federal treasury if Indians were encouraged to become self-sufficient(24), and self-sufficiency was a central plank in federal Indian policy. To enhance the chances of a receptive hearing in Ottawa the Brotherhood combined these requests with the more palatable assimilationist policies of education and civilization, solutions that were in accordance with established government policy. Again the Brotherhood emphasized the benefits of equality, arguing that

in view of the fact that the Indians have to compete against the white man in their efforts for a livelihood and in order to meet this competition one of our greatest needs is a suitable [industrial] school to train and equip our young to meet this ever-increasing competition.(25)

In this way the Native Brotherhood began its protest against the marginalized position of the Indian in Canadian society. The message was one of discontent, but it was presented in the language of accommodation and cooperation.

24 Port Simpson Petition, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

25 Port Simpson Petition, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

There was nothing radical here, the new organization was simply expressing a desire to be allowed to enjoy the benefits of the society in which they lived. The petition was not a rejection of Canadian society, but a rejection of paternalistic and ethnocentric policies. These demands would be reiterated, in a variety of ways, throughout the next decade as the Native Brotherhood strove to realize its dual mandate of protecting native interests in the fishing industry, while advancing the general socio-economic concerns of all natives.

The Brotherhood directed its grievances to the federal government, arguing that it was failing to honour its responsibilities for the native population of British Columbia.(26) The federal government's response of hostility and suspicion, was hardly surprising since D.C. Scott was the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. Scott, whose hostility to Indian organizations has been reviewed elsewhere,(27) viewed the Brotherhood as a threat to the smooth functioning of his Department.(28) As with earlier organizations, Scott set out to undermine the credibility of the Native Brotherhood by attacking the leadership, and the representivity of the organization. Scott's initial

26 Scott Memorandum, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1

27 E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987). pp. 1-22.

28 Scott Memorandum, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

directive to his agents on the coast was to investigate the backgrounds and downplay the legitimacy of the leaders. He instructed them not to "encourage this movement; the prime movers are not Indians." (29) Despite the fact that the leadership of the Native Brotherhood rested with traditional chiefs, Reid, Beynon, and Adams, Scott would continually deny their legitimacy, or their right "to have any proper association with the Indians of British Columbia." (30)

Once the Department had assured itself of the dubious credentials of the Native Brotherhood it felt free to disregard the Brotherhood's grievances as "vague", "quite impossible", or as being met "by present requirements." (31) During Scott's regime, any form of expression by native organizations was viewed as regressive and hostile to the objectives of the Department. (32) Given this antipathy, and the general prohibition against land protest, the Native Brotherhood faced an uphill struggle against the Department of Indian Affairs.

These difficulties were somewhat reduced upon the retirement of Scott in 1933. Although Scott was gone his legacy lived on in the agents he had appointed. There was

29 Scott to Buskard, 21 March 1932, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

30 Scott to Collison, 20 March 1932, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

31 RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt.1.

32 Titley, *A Narrow Vision*. pp. 1-22.

also the ongoing battle against the paternalistic attitudes that permeated all levels of the Department of Indian Affairs. The leaders of the Native Brotherhood recognized these barriers, but refused to be put off by them, and the nineteen-thirties were dedicated to consolidation and expansion in order to challenge, and overcome, the preconceptions that dictated Indian policy.

The objective of the nineteen-thirties was to build on the consensus achieved at Port Simpson, while convincing the Department that the objectives of the Native Brotherhood were not contrary to those of the government. To realize its objectives the Native Brotherhood continued to borrow and adapt mechanisms from Euro-Canadian society, mechanisms that were familiar, and hopefully acceptable, to the Department of Indian Affairs.

The first phase in the struggle to gain credibility was the drafting and ratification of a constitution. It established the parameters of the organization, and specified the name, the purpose and the organizational infrastructure of the Native Brotherhood. It reiterated many of the precepts laid out in the Port Simpson petition, including the need for unified action in the struggle for the "betterment of our conditions, socially, mentally and physically." This objective was to be achieved by placing all Indians on "an equal footing [with whites] to meet the ever increasing competition of our times." A goal that was to be realized through cooperation with those " who have at

heart the welfare of the natives and to cooperate with the government and its officials for the betterment of all conditions surrounding the life of the Natives." (33) Through this statement of intent the constitution became a political manifesto reflecting a faith in white institutions that had been inculcated by missionaries and educators who stressed the moral responsibilities of government.

As with the constitution, the organizational structure of the Native Brotherhood reflected European influences. Drucker pointed out that it was based on "white fraternal orders", with an elected executive and local branches or lodges. (34) The hope might well have been that by adopting these political mechanisms, the constitution and political organization, that the Indian Affairs Branch would be more responsive to pleas for equality. It was believed that representations from a formally organized body with a clearly identifiable constituency would undermine the persistent criticism that Indian protests were the result of outside agitation. (35)

Since the initial response of the Indian Affairs Branch was to reject the Native Brotherhood out of hand, the Native Brotherhood was forced to consider other means of winning

33 N.B.B.C. Constitution, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt 1.

34 Drucker, *The Native Brotherhoods*. p. 130.

35 O'Donnell, " The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia." p.93.

the confidence of the bureaucracy. Given the hostility of Scott and his successors this would prove to be difficult. Their hostility required that the Native Brotherhood demonstrate that it represented Indian interests in British Columbia, no mean feat given the internecine struggles that had plagued earlier attempts at unified action.³⁶ Again the lack of evidence makes it difficult to ascertain exactly how the Native Brotherhood sought to recruit support from outside its northern power base. One thing that was clear, however, was the growing importance of the annual convention as a means of proselytizing, of spreading the message of equality.

From the sources available it appears that the annual conventions of the Native Brotherhood were an important forum for policy planning and review, and, in later years, as a means of educating both Indians and whites to the need for change. Until the mid-thirties the conventions were held at Port Simpson, where the Haida and Tsimshian continued to provide the impetus for action. But as the decade wore on it became increasingly clear that in order for the Native Brotherhood to realize any of its objectives it would require a wider, and more representative constituency. It was decided that the best way to achieve this was to vary the location of the conventions in the hopes of bringing in

³⁶ This problem has been reviewed by O'Donnell, and by Darcy Mitchell, "The Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia." M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1980.

new locals, and thus expanding the constituency of the Brotherhood. As with previous organizations the biggest obstacle to be overcome was the internal divisions in native society. To be successful the Brotherhood had to win over the Catholics of the south coast to an organization identified with Protestantism and the Protestant churches, and more difficult yet would be the challenge of convincing the Indians of the Interior that an organization which they perceived as a fishermen's union could be of benefit to them.

Despite these obstacles the Native Brotherhood was able to expand its sphere of influence beyond Port Simpson. By 1936 the six charter communities had been joined by eight new communities. This gave the Native Brotherhood 14 active branches, with an estimated membership of 474 men.(37) These additions were largely due to the efforts of Heber Clifton and Edward Gamble, who travelled the coast spreading the word of the Brotherhood, and inviting communities to send delegates to the conventions. Between 1936 and 1942 they shifted their focus south of Bella Coola in the hope of bringing the southern fishermen into the ranks of the Brotherhood. In 1938 Adams, Clifton and Gamble met with the Pacific Coast Native Fishermen's Association(38), in the

37 Drucker. *The Native Brotherhoods* p. 107

38 See Philip Drucker's discussion of the merger of the PCNFA and the NBBC. Drucker, *The Native Brotherhoods*. p.112-114.

hopes of a merger. The PCNFA endorsed the activities of the Native Brotherhood, but refused to merge with the northern organization.(39) Despite the reluctance of the southern fishermen to join the Native Brotherhood the organization continued to grow, and by 1942 it had locals in eighteen communities, with a membership of "approximately one thousand Indians." (40)

In the meantime the annual conventions continued to follow in the pattern established at Port Simpson in 1931. The delegates met and discussed the problems facing the Indian population, and looked for acceptable solutions. The concerns that were most commonly advanced were government acknowledgement of aboriginal rights, improved educational facilities, and, most notably, a desire for the abolition of residential schools and the establishment of accessible day schools with qualified staff.

By 1940 the leadership of the Native Brotherhood appears to have achieved a balance between the politics of cooperation and confrontation. It had successfully expanded its influence beyond the communities adjacent to Port Simpson, and had established a set of policies and concerns that it believed would be acceptable to the Canadian government. The leadership of the Native Brotherhood hoped that the ideas they advanced would help bring Canadian

39 Tennant. *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics* p. 110.

40 J. Gillett, Indian Agent to Major D.M. Mackay, 27 January, 1942. RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

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Indian policy into the twentieth century and make it responsive to the " changed conditions of today and the future." (41) Its protests were beginning to capture a sympathetic ear in Ottawa, where Indian Department officials were starting to acknowledge that established policy was not working. (42) All of this progress was brought to an abrupt halt with the outbreak of war in 1939 as the Indian question was once again pushed into the background by the federal government. The Native Brotherhood, while initially disheartened, continued to agitate for political change, and ironically the war years were its most effective in terms of growth and development. In 1942 the federal government handed the Native Brotherhood two issues, conscription and income tax, which would act as a catalyst for increased political activity, leading to a widening of support in both native and white society.

Both the conscription and income tax issues were addressed on moral terms, and were especially effective at a time when Canada was engaged in a war identified with morality, justice and democracy. The war, however presented a dilemma for the Native Brotherhood that was heightened with the introduction of conscription in 1942. The dilemma

41 Constitution of the Native Brotherhood in RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

42 John Taylor. *Canadian Indian Policy in the Inter-war Years* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs, 1978).pp. 2-17.

lay in the Brotherhood's attitudes to military service.(43) The leaders of the organization were reluctant to encourage Indian participation in a war for democracy when it was denied to Indians at home, but the problem was to refuse to serve could be construed as disloyal, leading to the criticism that Indians were still unfit for the responsibilities of citizenship.(44) Ultimately the Native Brotherhood supported the war effort, but it was to use Canada's participation as a counterpoint to her treatment of her native people, whom, it argued, remained subjugated by the Indian Act. The political and economic subjugation of the Indian was the backbone of the Native Brotherhood's critique of the federal government throughout the war. The Brotherhood emphasized the wardship status of the Indian and used it to question the morality of asking them to participate in a war being fought in the name of freedom and democracy while Indians were denied access to these privileges in Canada.(45) The fight over military service and conscription was doomed to failure given the ambiguous nature of the Native Brotherhood's attitude to the war. While it leant its support to the war effort it also

43 The conscription issue is discussed in Fred Gaffen, *Forgotten Soldiers*. (Vancouver: Theytus Books, 1985.)pp. 41-43.

44 Native Brotherhood telegrams to Ottawa, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

45 1942 Convention Report, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

educated Indians in the intricacies of the registration process, and whenever possible arranged deferrals for Indian fishermen.(46)

In the long run the income tax question would be of greater significance to the political life of the Native Brotherhood than the federal government could have anticipated. The income tax question served to consolidate native protest, and, as with conscription, it provided a moral platform from which the Native Brotherhood could launch anew its charges against the federal government. Unlike the conscription issue, however, there was no ambiguity attached to the income tax question, it could be challenged without fear of negative repercussions.

The income tax question united the Indians in a way they had not been since the defeat of 1927. It was perceived as a major threat to the economic survival of many Indian fishermen, and as a result it galvanized the Native Brotherhood into action. The Native Brotherhood had tried to accommodate the Dominion Government and its war effort. Its reward was the imposition of income tax on native fishermen. This development brought Andrew Paull and Peter Kelly out of retirement, and into the fold of the Native Brotherhood. Armed with the income tax issue Paull and Kelly expanded both the membership of the Brotherhood and the scope of its operations. Paull, and Dan Assu, made fresh overtures to the

Indians of the south coast, and in 1942 the Pacific Coast Native Fisherman's Association merged with the Native Brotherhood.(47) The effects of this merger were immediate. In terms of membership the Native Brotherhood now represented Indians along the entire coast.(48) More importantly the P.C.N.F.A. had considerable financial resources now became available to the Native Brotherhood. This new financial security allowed the Native Brotherhood to step-up its political activity,(49) and bring increased pressure to bear on the federal government. In this conflict the Native Brotherhood demanded a review of not only the taxation question, but the whole of the administration of Indian Affairs.

In the meantime the newly constituted Native Brotherhood of British Columbia persevered with its attacks on the federal government over income tax. Spearheaded by Andrew Paull and Peter Kelly the Native Brotherhood questioned the morality, and the legitimacy of taxing Indians on three distinct, but not unrelated fronts. They

47 The merger of these two organizations needs to be examined in more detail, but again the constraints of the available sources prevent this at the present time.

48 Tennant. *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, p. 110.

49 The increase in revenue allowed the Native Brotherhood to take the fight to Ottawa instead of fighting it through the postal system. In the period after the merger representatives of the Native Brotherhood sent delegations to protest the tax to Ottawa on a regular basis. See Patterson, *The Canadian Indian*, p. 171, and records of the Brotherhoods annual conventions in RG 10, Vol 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt.1.

began by identifying the tax as an attack on the income of the country's most hard pressed economic group. Furthermore the tax was identified as particularly unfair to Native fishermen who had no choice but to garner their income off the reserve. This line of argument was bolstered through reference to aboriginal rights, with the Native Brotherhood arguing that the fish belonged to the Indians anyway, and thus, they should not be taxed on income gathered in an aboriginal pursuit. (50)

The third principle on which the Native Brotherhood rejected the income tax was over the legitimacy of taxing a subjugated people, a people who were denied a voice in determining their own lives. In short, income tax was rejected on the ancient British principle of " No taxation Without representation." (51) The protests of the Native Brotherhood were well thought out and carefully argued but they fell upon deaf ears in Ottawa. The federal government was willing to admit the inadequacies of Indian policy, but it was not, as yet, ready to accept Indian criticisms of that policy. In a meeting with Paull and Kelly, held in Ottawa in 1944, The Minister responsible for Indian Affairs, Thomas Crerar, demonstrated the arbitrary and paternalistic attitudes for which the Department of Indian Affairs was famous. Crerar's response to the concerns raised over

50 1942 Annual Convention, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

51 RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

conscription and income tax was to reject them unilaterally on the grounds that the Indian was a British subject, and was subject to taxation and military service.(52) Crerar's decision may have been founded in law, but it completely denied any moral claim that the Native Brotherhood might advance.

Thus, at the end of the war, the efforts of the Native Brotherhood were being as disdainfully rejected as their first efforts had been in the early nineteen thirties. In the intervening years the Native Brotherhood had carefully managed its growth and development, only to be unceremoniously dismissed. This time, however, time and events were on its side. The Native Brotherhood's efforts to educate Departmental officials and politicians in Ottawa had failed, but these same efforts had struck a sympathetic chord in the conscience of many Canadians. As the war came to a close, the media, and many citizen groups began to echo the Native Brotherhood's cries for a royal commission to investigate the administration of Indian Affairs.(53) The Liberal government of Mackenzie King responded to these calls with the announcement, in the spring of 1946, of a

52 1944 Convention, RG 10, Vol. 6826, File 496-3-10 Pt. 1.

53 See RG 10, Vol. 6810, File 470-2-3 vol. 12 Pt. 2, cited in John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy." in Ian L. Getty and Anton S. Lussier Eds., *As Long As The Sun Shines And Waters Flow: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983). pp.39-55.

Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons to consider revisions to the Indian Act. The Native Brotherhood's response was one of optimism. It, like many Canadians, viewed the post-war period as a new era, one in which its calls for equality and justice would be heard and acted upon. In light of this they welcomed 1946 as a time of new beginnings, and they believed that the Special Joint Committee presented an opportunity to be heard, and to finally win the acceptance and recognition that they had been working for.

Thus, the war did for the Native Brotherhood what it had done for the rest of Canada. At the outbreak of the war the Native Brotherhood, while it had consolidated its power base in the province, had failed to win the attention of Ottawa. Since the Native Brotherhood had not succeeded in forcing Ottawa to review the administration of Indian policy the strategy of accomodation could be deemed a failure. With the war, a renewed interest in social conditions among Canadians, and the return of able and charasmatic leaders such as Kelly and Paull, the Native Brotherhood was able to capture the imagination of the Canadian public, and this accomplishment allowed the organization to complete the journey from Port Simpson to Ottawa.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE AND THE STRATEGY OF CONFRONTATION: 1946-48.

In the Spring of 1946 the Liberal government of Mackenzie King, pursuant to improving the socioeconomic position of Canada's native people instituted a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons to investigate the Indian Act.(1) The announcement was the result of years of protest and agitation by concerned citizens groups, both native and non-native.(2) This protest had been born out of the changes wrought by the Depression and the Second World War, changes that had seen increased state intervention in the day to day life of Canadians as government sought to improve the quality of life for the average citizen.(3) While these changes had been widespread they had failed to penetrate the " buckskin curtain " of the Indian Act which segregated native Canadians from the rest of Canadian society. The Special Joint Committee was to rectify this failing through an examination of the Indian Act and its administration. When this study was complete the Committee would be in a position to suggest revisions to the

1 F.E. Laviolette, *The Struggle for Survival* p. 158.

2 J.L. Tobias, " Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline of Canada's Indian Policy " in *As Long As The Sun Shines And The Waters Flow*. p. 51.

3 For a detailed discussion of the growth of social policy in Canada see J.L. Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins 1935-1957*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982.), and Doug Owram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State 1900-1945*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.)

Act that would eradicate the disparities by creating " a new deal for Canada's Indians." (4)

The Committee's mandate required it to hear testimony from a wide variety of witnesses: government officials, missionaries, social workers, and, for the first time, native organizations, all would appear before the Committee. The Committee would hear testimony from native groups from each province, with the Native Brotherhood and the rival North American Indian Brotherhood representing British Columbia. When the Committee announced its agenda the Native Brotherhood learned that it would not appear until 1947, after the Department of Indian Affairs and the representatives from the major churches. This development directly affected the strategy of the Brotherhood, forcing it to reject its preferred strategy of compromise and accommodation for a more aggressive, confrontational approach. The Native Brotherhood's delegation would stress the inadequacies of Canadian Indian policy in an effort to undermine the testimony of both the Department of Indian Affairs and the Churches, which they believed would prove hostile to the objectives of their organization. They were also concerned about the testimony of the North American Indian Brotherhood, an organization which was their main rival in British Columbia. While initially reluctant to adopt this strategy, the Native Brotherhood would ultimately

emerge from the Committee hearings a stronger organization, having been commended for its performance by the members of the Committee. Furthermore, in 1948 the Native Brotherhood could look at the Committee's final report and recommendations and recognize many of the concerns that the organization had been agitating about over the course of the Committee's lifespan.

The Committee's first formal meeting took place on Tuesday, May 28, 1946, and in it the Committee members established their mandate as,

... to examine and consider the Indian Act and the amendments thereto, and to suggest any amendments that they may deem advisable. (5)

Within this context the Committee was directed to pay special attention to: Treaty Rights and Obligations; Band Membership; the Liability of Indians to Pay Taxes; Voluntary and Involuntary Enfranchisement; the Eligibility of Indians to vote in Dominion elections; the encroachment of non-natives on Reserve lands; the operation of Day and Residential Schools; and, " any other matter relating to the social and economic status of Indians." (6) The identification of these concerns was welcomed by the Native Brotherhood. Of these areas of concern the questions of taxation, enfranchisement, and education would be selected

5 Canada. Parliament. Special Joint Committee to consider the Indian Act, *Minutes and Proceedings of Evidence*. 1946. p. 1. (Cited hereafter as Special Committee, *Proceedings*.)

6 Ibid., p. ix.

for special attention as they were identified as central to any real improvement of the position of the Indian in Canadian society. The question was, who was going to define what was acceptable, the Department of Indian Affairs, the Churches, the Native Brotherhood, the Special Joint Committee, or one of the other native organizations? The leadership of the Native Brotherhood was determined that its voice would be one of the loudest in any discussion affecting the future of Indian Affairs in Canada.(7) The task before it was to convince the Committee that the organization's vision of Indian affairs was the only viable alternative.

Upon clarification of its mandate the Committee turned its attention to creating an agenda that would help them realize that objective. It was decided that 1946 would be reserved for government witnesses, the majority of whom would come from the Department of Indian Affairs. In 1947 the Committee would hear from the churches, social workers, anthropologists, and finally the native organizations. 1948 was for review, leading to the preparation and presentation of the Committee's final report. It was argued that this agenda was the most efficient and logical way for the Committee to proceed, it would familiarize the Committee

7 In an effort to convey this determination to the Committee the Native Brotherhood sent representatives to the Committee's 1946 hearings. At this time Peter Kelly sought to familiarize the Committee members with the aims and objectives of the Native Brotherhood, and in so doing ensure that the organization would be invited back in 1947. See *Special Committee, Proceedings*, p. 419.

with the objectives of the Department of Indian Affairs before exposing it to "outside evidence." (8) Unfortunately for the Native Brotherhood this agenda also allowed the Department of Indian Affairs to establish its credibility before the Committee.

Despite this setback the Native Brotherhood remained optimistic about the opportunity that the Committee represented. The invitation to appear before the Committee was a victory in itself. To the leaders of the organization it was an acknowledgement of the organization's own credibility, yet they realized that it was only a beginning and that the real challenge was to translate these gains into concrete results: an Indian Act that brought native people into the Canadian family instead of legislating them out of it. The realization of this objective depended on successfully overcoming, or at least suspending the patronizing and paternalistic attitudes that dominated Canadian Indian policy. In short, while there were new opportunities, the Native Brotherhood would continue to operate under the "ambiguities of dependence" that had shaped its young political life.

Fortunately for the Native Brotherhood many of the Committee members appeared sympathetic to native aspirations, (9) viewing their participation in terms of a

8 Ibid., p. ix.

9 The members of the Committee were as follows: on behalf of the Senate; J. Fred Johnstone, Chair, A. Blais, V. Dupuis,

sacred trust. One member, G. Castleden, (Yorkton, C.C.F.,) described the Committee as ...

... a serious undertaking ... the amendment of the Indian Act will establish for years to come, the type of control which will determine the standards of life, training, and perhaps the very existence of these subordinated human beings to whom democracy is denied in Canada. (10)

Castleden's comment was typical of the sort of vision that guided the conscience of many of the Committee members. They had been drawn to the Committee because they were concerned about the social injustices that they saw in Canada, and they viewed their participation as a means of eradicating some of these problems. To the Native Brotherhood this social conscience was a two edged sword. While it assured the organization a sympathetic hearing in front of the Committee, it was also underscored by a paternalism that could undermine the Native Brotherhood's aspirations. This paternalism would be reinforced throughout 1946 as the Department of Indian Affairs presented its vision of Indians and Indian policy.

This fear was justified in light of the testimony that the Committee heard in 1946. The first year was, in large

I.C. Fallis, C.E. Fertrand, R.B. Horner, G.B. Jones, J.A. Macdonald, C. MacLennan, J. Nicol, J.J. Stevenson, W.H. Taylor. And for the House; D. Brown, Chair, B. Arsenault, J. Blackmore, H. Brunelle, W. Bryce, W. Case, G. Castleden, J. Charlton, T. Farquhar, W. Gariepy, J. Gibson, J. Glen, D. Harkness, W. Little, D. McNicol, H. McLean, J. Matthews, J. Raymond, T. Reid, G. Richard, F. Stanfield, G. Stirling. Ibid., p. x.

10 Ibid., p. ix.

part, a forum for the Department of Indian Affairs, as its spokesmen, Director R.A. Hoey, and the superintendants for British Columbia and Ontario, Major D.M. MacKay and S.A. Arneil, (11) used their time to explain not only the structure and function of the Department, but also to review the "Indian problem."

On a purely functional level the Department of Indian Affairs existed "to administer the affairs of the Indians of Canada ... in a manner that will enable the Indian to become increasingly self-supporting and independent." (12) To realize this objective the Department was divided into four sections: Welfare; Training, which included education; Reserves, responsible for land surrenders, sales and leases; and Trusts, which administered band funds and annuity payments. (13) These major divisions, along with the numerous regional and local agencies controlled the life of the Indian from the cradle to the grave. Yet, despite the existence of this large and unwieldy infrastructure native people continued to exist on the fringes of Canadian society

11 All three representatives were career civil servants, and they had all spent the majority of their careers in the Department of Indian Affairs. Hoey had been with the Department since the thirties, Mackay had been the Commissioner for B.C. for ten years, and Arneil had a similar record. Arneil went on to take over from MacKay as Superintendent for British Columbia in the 1950's. See Special Committee. *Proceedings*. p. 123, 375.

12 Special Committee, *Proceedings*, p. 2.

13 Ibid., p. 2.

as one of the most, if not the most disadvantaged members of that society.

This wide ranging bureaucracy existed for one purpose, to bring about the assimilation of the Indian into Canadian society, " the department had one policy, and that policy was assimilation." (14) Unfortunately while this was accepted as a noble objective, it was proving difficult to attain. The problem lay in the enormity of the task, and the Committee members were asked to be patient with the Department, as the failure was not the fault of the Department, but of the Indians who refused to stop being Indians, and so languished in the depths. (15) The Committee was told that the Indian was " not far removed from a state of savagery," (16) That the nomadic instinct was still strong in them, and for this reason, " they [the Indians] do not take intelligently to our ideas of life, and this should be borne in mind when we evaluate the progress, or lack of it," (17) in attaining the goal of assimilation. Thus the failure, if there was one, lay with the Indians.

The solution to this problem was a rededication to the goal of assimilation. Once this had been achieved the Department of Indian Affairs could then develop " a well

14 Arneil to Committee. Ibid., p. 376.

15 Ibid., p. 23.

16 Ibid., p. 123.

17 Ibid., p. 124.

thought out long range programme " that would lead to the " ultimate assimilation " of the Indian population.(18) Central to this programme must be a review of the education system as " the whole Indian problem was essentially an educational one." This contention was supported by Mackay who believed that the only way to alleviate the Indian problem was through education.(19) MacKay argued that it was time to overhaul the existing educational structure and replace it with one that would promote, not hinder, assimilation. He condemned the residential school system, dismissing it as counterproductive. To Mackay these schools promoted segregation, they exerted little influence on Indian children who " simply reverted to type on graduation." (20) In the place of residential schools Indian children should be encouraged to attend provincial schools where they would be more fully exposed to the benefits of Canadian society, and once they were exposed to these benefits would reject their primitive lifestyle in favour of integration into that society.(21)

These proposals were far reaching, and would necessitate a complete restructuring of the education system. This restructuring would be expensive, and for this

18 Ibid., p. 27.

19 Ibid., p. 148.

20 Ibid., p. 221-3.

21 Ibid., p. 228.

reason Mackay encouraged the continued involvement of the various churches in the education of Indian children. The economic imperative was strengthened with a moral one. Christianity was central to the assimilation process and therefore it was essential to promote the churches ongoing participation in Indian education. Time and again the churches would assert their qualifications in the field of Indian education and their importance in the struggle to turn the Indian into good, law abiding citizens.(22)

The implementation of these changes would alleviate many of the problems faced in the administration of Indian policy. With a more efficient education system the Department of Indian Affairs would be free to " devote its main energies to the social and economic advancement of the Indian so that they could be absorbed into the prevailing civilization." (23) This reiteration of the Department's belief in the desirability of assimilation concluded its formal testimony. Nowhere in this testimony was there any suggestion of it having consulted with the Indian people whose interests it was supposed to represent. Instead there was a cultural arrogance that prevented the recognition, or acknowledgement, of a separate Indian agenda.

Even this cursory examination of Departmental testimony makes it clear that the Department was convinced of the

22 Ibid., p. 230.

23 Ibid., p. 26.

righteousness of its mission. To the officials of the Department of Indian Affairs, Indians were immature and were therefore incapable of administering their own affairs. Given this they were a burden on Canadian society , and thus the Department would shed no tears when the Indian, and hence the Indian problem, ceased to exist.

This impression was not lost on the members of the Committee, who, without any evidence to the contrary, had been presented with a portrait of the Indian as a child-like and backward individual.(24) The effects of this portrait would be long lasting and would come back to haunt many of the later witnesses, particularly those from the native organizations. In fact the problem was further compounded by the next set of witnesses, representatives from the various churches, whose testimony would reflect many of the same biases.

At its inception in 1946 the Special Joint Committee had decided to invite submissions from the major Canadian churches. The churches were invited to attend because of their long, and ongoing involvement with native people. The testimony of the Churches, Anglican, Roman Catholic, United, and Presbyterian was, despite their theological and denominational differences remarkably similar. It was also just as paternalistic and assimilationist in content as that of the Department of Indian Affairs.

24 Ibid., p. 252.

The Anglicans were the first to appear before the Committee, and an examination of their brief provides an insight into the major concerns of the churches.(25) Like the Department of Indian Affairs, the Anglicans(26) tended to view the problem in socioeconomic terms: poverty, and nothing else was the problem. Thus, there was an immediate failure to address, or even recognize, Indian demands for decolonization and self-determination. This failing, like the earlier testimony on the Indian's immaturity, would return to haunt the Native organizations, undermining their ability to determine their own fates and administer their own affairs.

The Anglicans began with a review of their long history of interaction with the Indians of Canada. They considered the Indians to be " their Indians," and argued that they were concerned about them because " they are our Church of England people to whom we have a responsibility,"(27) a belief that was reiterated by the other Churches. Inherent

25 The Anglicans appeared before the Committee on 28 March 1947. The Roman Catholic delegation appeared on May 27, as did the United Church. The Presbyterians appeared on April 15, 1947. Special Committee, *Proceedings*. 1947.

26 The Anglican church was represented by the Rev. D.T. Owen, Archbishop of the Toronto Primate, Rev. H.D. Martin, Bishop of Saskatoon, Rev. H.J. Renison, Bishop of Moosonee, Rev. Canon H.A. Alderwood, the Superintendent of Indian school administration. *Proceedings*. p. 387.

27 Special Committee, *Proceedings*. p. 388.

in this stance was a degree of paternalism which, in turn, manifested itself in support of the status quo.²⁸

Once again the Committee heard that the root of the problem lay in the primitive conditions in which the Indian chose to live. The squalid conditions found on many reserves were the result of the primitive state and ignorance of many Indian communities.⁽²⁹⁾ To the Anglicans the "reserve system retarded assimilation and kept the Indian in a state of tutelage."⁽³⁰⁾ A familiar refrain was beginning to emerge; the Indian was improvident by nature, and so had to be protected from himself. The Church had a responsibility to "prepare them [Indians] for the White man's civilization which is inevitably encroaching upon them."⁽³¹⁾ While it was true that the weight of this moral responsibility fell to the Department of Indian Affairs, it had a longtime ally, the Churches, who were willing to help shoulder the burden.⁽³²⁾

If the discussion of the problem was all too familiar, the solutions advocated were similarly unimaginative. The Indian could best be stirred out of his slothful state through "proper education,"⁽³³⁾ a solution which tended to

28 Ibid., p. 389.

29 Ibid., p. 447.

30 Ibid., p.405.

31 Ibid., p.402.

32 Ibid., p. 1446.

be somewhat self-serving. In their discussion of education, the churches stressed the significance of their contribution, and the need for their continued participation in the educational process through the maintenance of residential and denominational schools.(34) Education was necessary " to prepare them [the Indian] for the white man's civilization that is fast encroaching upon them."(35) The Churches had to continue to be involved in the educational process because a strictly " secular education would not adequately prepare the Indian for the challenges of citizenship."(36) The Roman Catholic Church was particularly adamant in this respect, arguing that..

Canada is, we believe, a Christian nation, and its desire and its aim is to have all its citizens belonging to one or other of the Christian churches.(37)

Outside this desire to promote and maintain their influence over Indian education, the Churches were short on practical solutions to the Indian problem. There were the familiar calls for the federal government to establish clear, long range policies reflecting its obligations under the Indian Act.(38) The Churches were particularly critical

33 Ibid., p. 447.

34 Ibid., p. 447.

35 Ibid., p. 402.

36 Ibid., p. 390.

37 Ibid., p. 1474.

38 Ibid., p. 1456.

of the Department's fiscal policy. They argued that they were being asked to shoulder a burden that was not theirs, and one that was in turn crippling their efforts to make the Indian a productive member of society. (39)

Thus, it was clear that while the churches were philanthropic in their approach, it was a philanthropy heavily underscored by paternalism. Furthermore their paternalism inhibited their judgement of the Indian's ability to determine his own fate. The churches were no longer the powerful ally they had once been, and their testimony would prove detrimental to the aspirations of many native organizations. This was a new twist to an old tale. The Native Brotherhood, and many of its predecessors, had always viewed the Churches as a dependable ally, but now it was in the position of having to oppose not only the Department of Indian Affairs, but also the Church's view of the Indian Act and its impact on Indian society.

Thus, by the time that the representatives of the Native Brotherhood were scheduled to appear before the Committee its members had heard a considerable body of evidence that portrayed native people as primitive and child-like. They had been told that the solution to this problem was assimilation, to be achieved through increased state control and improved educational facilities. The challenge for the Native Brotherhood was to defuse this

39 Ibid., p. 1447.

evidence and to convince the Committee that the organization had a clearer understanding of the problem, and hence had a more viable solution.

This would not be an easy objective to achieve, and unfortunately the situation was complicated by the evidence provided by many of the native witnesses. This evidence came in two forms: written responses to a questionnaire the Committee had distributed to Indian groups across the country, and oral testimony from other native organizations. This evidence was extremely varied in its content. The variety of responses can largely be attributed to the diversity of native experiences in Canada. The main differences that emerge are in the attitudes of the different native organizations, especially between those from the Prairies and those from British Columbia. Many of the Prairie organizations, the majority of whom were Treaty Indians, based their concerns on issues arising out of Treaty rights. This attitude was problematic for the Native Brotherhood, who ironically, tended to view many of these organizations in terms similar to those expressed by the Indian affairs Branch, that is that these organizations were reactionary and regressive.

To the Native Brotherhood this was made clear in the questionnaires, many of which indicated a desire to be left alone, expressing sentiments such as a " wish to live as Indians with our separate identity and our traditional way

of life." (40) Others echoed this plea, arguing that they "did not want to be turned into white men." (41) These desires were often supported by an expression of faith in the Indian Act, arguing that it was not in need of revision. These appeals were reiterated in formal presentations to the Committee, as representatives from the provincial organizations stressed regional and local concerns, many of which had to do with the government's failure to honour treaties. (42) This focus on local issues was common to the majority of Indian representatives from the Prairies and Ontario. Their preoccupation with local concerns can partially be explained by the relative inexperience of these organizations, many of them had been formed as a response to the Special Joint Committee. When they did turn their attention to other concerns, much of what they had to say supported the maintenance of the existing system. This was particularly true in the case of education where the Prairie organizations advocated the maintenance of denominational residential schools. (43) It has been suggested that John Tootoosis' support for denominational schools was due to his close links with the Catholic Church, an observation that

40 See "Appendix Ef" Special Joint Committee, *Proceedings*.

41 *ibid.*, p. 166.

42 Special Joint Committee, *Proceedings*. Union of Saskatchewan Indians, pp. 930-1031, and Indian Association of Alberta, pp. 1265-1323.

43 Special Joint Committee. *Proceedings*. pp. 1250-55.

could also be held to be true for Andrew Paull, and which might explain their antipathy towards the Native Brotherhood.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The other source of antipathy was that they tended to view the Native Brotherhood's progressive stance as assimilationist, a label that the Native Brotherhood was having great problems shaking, both in the halls of the Special Joint Committee and back home in British Columbia. Because of this the Native Brotherhood tended to discount the testimony of the Prairie organizations. In the soon to be espoused hierarchical view of the Native Brotherhood the testimony of many of the Indian groups, while it demonstrated a burgeoning political awareness, was conservative. From a more modern perspective much of the testimony can be characterized as expressing dissatisfaction with the government's failure to honour the treaties, but many of the criticisms were vague and ill defined, and much of what was said ran contrary to the concerns being advanced by the leaders of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia.

Thus, by the time the Native Brotherhood appeared before the Committee on Tuesday May 1, 1947 its task had taken on mythic proportions. It was faced with the task of convincing the Committee members that Indians, contrary to the evidence that they had seen and heard were fully

44 J.R. Miller, Personal Communication, Spring 1988.

capable, " ready and able to shoulder the responsibility of Canadian citizenship." (45)

Their credibility was undermined, however, before they ever appeared before the Committee, when Andrew Paull, founder and President of the rival North American Indian Brotherhood of Canada, petitioned the Committee to disregard the testimony of the Native Brotherhood on the grounds that its constituency was restricted to a " few fishermen on the coast." (46) Peter Kelly responded on behalf of the Native Brotherhood. He argued that his organization had a large following, both affiliated and unaffiliated, that its delegation included spokesmen for all the Indians of British Columbia. In conclusion he stated proudly that the Native Brotherhood represented, in its own eyes, the " cream of the crop." (47)

To the relief of the Native Brotherhood, the Special Joint Committee accepted Kelly's explanation, allowing it to proceed with its presentation. Aware of the Committee's sensitivity to outside opinion and criticism, the Native Brotherhood had been conducting an extensive public relations campaign in the hopes that public pressure would influence the Committee members into giving the Native Brotherhood a sympathetic hearing. (48) All this work had

45 *Native Voice*, May 1947, p.10.

46 Special Committee, *Proceedings*. p. 760.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 764.

been threatened by Paull's challenge to the legitimacy of the organization.

Peter Kelly was the first spokesman for the Native Brotherhood, and he presented the Committee with a brief outlining his organization's feelings on the Indian Act. The general tone of the submission reflected the moral indignation and animosity that the Native Brotherhood felt towards the Indian Act. The Native Brotherhood ascended the moral high ground and proceeded to lob shells at the paternalistic and illiberal policies that dictated the nature of Indian administration in Canada. The Native Brotherhood's representatives were there to "familiarize the Committee with conditions that need to be made right." (49) In an attempt to lay the blame where they believed it belonged Guy Williams argued that "these problems [social and economic] are brought about by the lack of proper administration. As a result of this the Indian is a displaced person. He is not free ... he is segregated." (50) The solution was a new Indian Act. According to Williams the Indians were looking forward to an Indian Act that would

48 The Committee was monitored by the national press, particularly in the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*. Also, thanks to the Native Brotherhood's influence the Committee received extensive coverage in the Vancouver newspapers.

49 Special Committee, *Proceedings*. p.776.

50 Ibid., p.781.

liberate them, one that would " be an advancement; one that their children will actually benefit from." (51)

However, these attacks were tempered by the reality that, despite its political gains, the Native Brotherhood was still the representative of a politically powerless minority dependent on the goodwill of the Department which it sought to undermine. Yet again the Native Brotherhood was walking the tightrope between protest and cooperation in an attempt to bring an end to its dependent status.

As in the past, the Native Brotherhood was acutely aware of the need to cultivate the goodwill of the Committee members if it were to win changes in policy. It began its submission with an expression of thanks at being allowed to appear before the Committee, and despite its earlier assertion that " we are not beggars," the spokesmen asked for the Committee's indulgence, and " careful consideration" of what they were about to hear. (52) Given the placatory nature of the introduction, the brief that followed was well thought out. It was also confrontational, challenging the Department of Indian Affairs's vision of Indian affairs.

In the fifteen years of its existence the Native Brotherhood had carefully refined its position on matters affecting Indians, and by 1947 it was capable of presenting a brief that, while inoffensive to official ears, got the

51 Ibid., p.783.

52 Special Committee, *Proceedings*. p. 788.

point across nonetheless. The Native Brotherhood's presentation to the Committee reflected a concern and an astuteness that surprised many in the meeting hall. The tone may have been conciliatory, but it was also apparent that there were rights that the Native Brotherhood considered to be non-negotiable, and there were other issues where it would attack the federal government's record of insensitivity and complacency.

Before the Native Brotherhood presented its formal brief on the deficiencies of Indian policy it attempted to undo some of the damage it perceived as having been inflicted by earlier testimony. In an attempt to counter the vision of the Indian presented by the Department of Indian Affairs and the Churches, a vision that the Native Brotherhood's representatives felt had been reinforced by much of the testimony from other Indian organizations, the Native Brotherhood presented its rather hierarchical vision of Indian society. In the eyes of the organization there were three types of Indian. There was a group that "boasts of the fact that they are Indians and will die as Indians...They are suspicious of any advancement from the past." Then there was a group that wanted all the benefits that the government had to offer, but who were unwilling to work for it. Then there was a third class. This group was the more "virile type ... who want the rights of citizenship but do not wish to surrender their hereditary

rights." (53) The Native Brotherhood's approach was far from subtle, but it got its point across, and by the time the organization began its Brief, the Committee members were in no doubt that they were dealing with a new breed of Indian leadership, one that clearly viewed itself as the "cream of the crop."

Now that it had an attentive audience the Native Brotherhood began with a call for the federal government to honour its obligations to native people. Furthermore these obligations needed to be identified and protected under law, specifically under the new Indian Act. The Act also had to foster Indian self-reliance and equality, as opposed to promoting paternalism and dependence. (54) While the Native Brotherhood wished to end paternalism it was also mindful of protecting the special relationship between the Crown and native people. This desire was particularly true with regard to treaty rights, which the Native Brotherhood argued could not " be abrogated without the consent of both parties." (55) These concerns were, however, a distant second to the Native Brotherhood's recommendations on other important issues, issues such as band membership, enfranchisement, taxation, and education. These issues were to be given special attention by the spokesmen for the Native Brotherhood, as

53 Ibid., pp. 766-7.

54 Ibid., pp. 763-66.

55 Ibid., p. 764.

these were the issues that they identified as being central to the realization of the Native Brotherhood's belief in equality and progress. The realization of these objectives would lead to the integration, not the assimilation of the Indian into Canadian society.

All of these concerns, band membership, taxation, enfranchisement, and education were addressed in such a way as to encourage devolution of power to local native authorities without impinging on traditional rights and practices. In particular, enfranchisement and band membership(56) were attacked as being the most objectionable aspects of government policy. They were deliberate attempts at controlling Indian interaction with the rest of society. After all, what right had the federal government to arbitrarily decide who was, and who was not an Indian? These were decisions that ought to be made by local bands.(57)

56 The Indian Act of 1876 confirmed the legal status of Indians as wards of the federal government. Under this legal reality the government had the power to decide who was, and who was not an Indian. This was reflected in the Band Membership lists. The Native Brotherhood argued that native people, not the government, should decide who was an Indian. Enfranchisement was the carrot in the government's assimilation policy. It ended wardship and promised the franchise, individual land tenure and property rights, all at the cost of rights guaranteed to native people. The Native Brotherhood was opposed to this particularly paternalistic piece of legislation. Instead it argued for the extension of the franchise without any loss of aboriginal rights.

57 Ibid., p. 764.

To the Native Brotherhood enfranchisement and taxation were an attack on traditional rights.(58) It argued that these were the areas where the federal government sought to undermine traditional values and abrogate aboriginal right, specifically the Indian exemption from taxation. Taxation was attacked as being unjust as Indians " had no voice in the affairs of the country " and thus taxation was a " violation of the British principle, No Taxation without Representation." (59) Furthermore, not only were Indians being denied their democratic rights, but the imposition of tax was also an abrogation of aboriginal rights recognized and guaranteed at Confederation, and later enshrined in the Indian Act.(60) Despite these objections the Native Brotherhood claimed that it was not opposed to taxation, but if Indians were to be taxed then it was up to the federal government to honour its side of the bargain and redress the wrongs that had been done to Indian society.(61)

Having outlined its objections to taxation, the Native Brotherhood returned to the question of enfranchisement, using the government's attitude to taxation and representation to highlight the incongruities of Canadian

58 Under Clause 65 of the Indian Act Indians were exempted from personal and property taxes. This came to be viewed as a legal right. The Native Brotherhood felt that the government's decision to implement taxation was an unfair reversal of policy.

59 Ibid., p. 765.

60 Ibid., p. 765.

61 Ibid., p. 766.

Indian law. If, the argument went, the Indian had to pay taxes while being denied access to the democratic process, then why could they not hold Canadian citizenship without "sacrificing their hereditary rights as Indians." (62) The ability of the Indian to pay taxes was an acknowledgement of the economic maturity of the Indian, and in keeping with that acknowledgement the Indian deserved to be treated as an equal and contributing member of Canadian society. (63) Through this recognition Indians would then be free to administer their own affairs, and their own lands. This was important at the local level were recognition of the Indian's political and economic maturity would result in the devolution of power to band councils. (64) With devolution would come emancipation, as bands would then be responsible for the allocation of band funds, and the identification of band members, leading ultimately to a self-reliant Indian population, thus relieving the Canadian taxpayer of the burden. Naturally, all of this ran contrary to the testimony of the Department of Indian Affairs which had just finished describing the Indian as improvident and child-like.

This, then, was the picture that the Native Brotherhood painted for the members of the Special Joint Committee. Other commentators, most notably LaViolette and Drucker,

62 Ibid., p. 766.

63 Ibid., p. 766.

64 Ibid., p. 771.

have described this position as assimilationist, but it is the contention here that assimilation was not part of the Native Brotherhood's political lexicon. Its emphasis was on political and economic equality leading to integration. Like its political ancestors the Native Brotherhood wanted the freedom to choose what it wanted from Canadian society without prejudice to traditional native values. Nowhere in its brief did the Native Brotherhood reject traditional culture, what it wanted was for " the Indian to hold his aboriginal rights," while enjoying " all the rights of citizenship." (65)

Once the Native Brotherhood had established its vision of Canadian society it turned its attention on how to make this vision a reality. Not surprisingly it chose to emphasize education as the key to the new Canada. In its concluding statements the Native Brotherhood stressed education over and over again so "as to impress upon the Committee's minds that it is important." (66) Education, as had been argued by the Department of Indian Affairs, was the key to the liberation of the Indian. (67) With a proper education the Indian could take his rightful place in Canadian society. (68) A place of Indian choosing, not of government imposition.

65 Ibid., p. 767.

66 Ibid., p. 777.

67 Ibid., p. 783.

In presenting its brief on education the Native Brotherhood faced its first real challenge in front of the Committee. Up until this point, while it had been challenging the Indian Affairs Branch, it had been dealing with the theoretical, with the what might be, but when it came to education it was not only criticizing the existing system, it was rejecting it outright. Furthermore with the rejection of the educational system there was an inherent rejection of the churches' role in native society.

Ironically the Native Brotherhood, like both the churches and the Indian Affairs Branch, had long identified education as the main building block in its platform of emancipation, but its ideas had never progressed beyond asking for "better and improved facilities." (69) By the time of its appearance before the Special Joint Committee in 1947 it had developed a comprehensive critique of the failings of the existing system. The Native Brotherhood used its appearance before the Committee to present its alternative educational system.

Central to this alternative was an end to denominational and residential schools and segregated education. The Indian child must take its place in the classroom beside its white counterparts. Only then could the Indian be free. (70) This approach was a major departure from

68 Ibid., p. 785.

69 See earlier discussion on the Port Simpson Petitions and Resolutions. pp. 28-30.

the stance taken by many other native organizations, who stressed the importance of segregation as central to the preservation of native culture. The Native Brotherhood, on the other hand, believed that cultural autonomy could be enhanced by the economic advantages available through integrated education, specifically access "to the professions, and to the trades".(71)

In its concluding comments the Native Brotherhood took the opportunity to impress on the Committee that they were neither child-like, nor primitive. In an earlier section Peter Kelly had told the Committee that the Indian was " a little past that,"(72) and their closing brief was aimed at driving that point home. Thomas Gosnell argued that ...

Indians in British Columbia are not beggars;
they do not want to beg.(73)

Instead they wanted an end to segregation, to be able to enter into fair competition with their white neighbors, and to earn their rightful place in Canadian society.(74)

The end of the Native Brotherhood's appearance did not mark the end of the Committee.(75) The Committee met, off

70 Special Committee, *Proceedings*. p. 777.

71 Ibid., p. 777.

72 Ibid., p. 833.

73 Ibid., p. 788.

74 Ibid., p. 835.

75 For the remainder of 1947 the Committee heard testimony from a number of expert witnesses, anthropologists and social workers, as well as other native organizations. 1948

and on, for another year, during which time it dealt with various problems, many of them having to do with the general administration of the Indian Affairs Branch. In 1948 the Committee retired to prepare its final report, which was released at the end of June 1948. The preamble and the recommendations were far removed from the administrative tinkering that had characterized earlier reports. In its report the Committee highlighted the ...

... Many anachronisms, anomalies, contradictions, and divergences were found in the Act ...Your Committee deems it advisable that, with few exceptions, all sections of the Act be either repealed, or amended ... All proposed revisions are designed to make possible the gradual transition of Indians from wardship to citizenship and to help them to advance themselves...(76)

Given all of this, how should we evaluate the Native Brotherhood's experiences before the Special Joint Committee? As noted earlier it is particularly difficult to evaluate the success of a politically powerless group such as the Native Brotherhood. Bearing this in mind it would be foolhardy to argue that the Committee members had based their findings solely on the testimony of the Native Brotherhood. What is clear, however, is that the Committee members had been deeply shocked by what they saw and heard, and that the Native Brotherhood, along with many others had been active in awakening the Committee members to the plight

was reserved for review and the preparation of the final report.

of Canada's Indians. Thus, the Native Brotherhood does deserve a degree of credit for some of the recommendations put forth in the Committee's final report. The Committee's recommendations included...

1. The introduction of provisions to protect the Indian from injustice.
2. Provisions for greater responsibility and the introduction of self-government.
3. Financial aid for band councils.
4. As Indians advance reserves should be incorporated as municipalities.
5. The Indian Act should be brought into line with the Criminal Code.
6. A reminder that it is the Government's duty to advance the Indian toward citizenship. (77)

In conjunction with the preamble to the report, these recommendations were a serious challenge to the traditional values upon which the Indian Act was based. Again, while it is difficult to state definitively that the Native Brotherhood directly influenced the Committee's report there are sufficient similarities, especially with reference to education and self-determination, between the Committee's report and the Native Brotherhood's recommendations that the organization was able to argue that its efforts had not been in vain, and it applauded the Committee for its vision. (78)

In the closing months of 1948 the Native Brotherhood tried to maintain the momentum that it had built up in the preceding two years. Between 1946 and 1948 the organization had adopted a strategy of confrontation, and it had

77 Ibid., p. 186.

78 Native Voice, August-September 1948, p. 8.

successfully argued its case before the Special Joint Committee. Thus, the Native Brotherhood, contrary to Drucker's conclusions, had demonstrated its mastery of the Canadian political system. In so doing it won the respect of the Special Joint Committee and this allowed it to overcome the ambiguities of dependence. This success redefined the nature of the organization and the nature of its objectives. The challenge now, was to work towards realizing the promise of equality hinted at in the Special Joint Committee's report.

CHAPTER THREE

IT ALL COMES UNGLUED: THE FAILURE OF 1951.

The Special Joint Committee tabled its final report in the Spring of 1948, effectively ending the Committee's role in the policy process. In the wake of the Special Joint Committee the Native Brotherhood was faced with the question of how to continue its struggle without the advantage of the publicity generated by the Committee's hearings. Furthermore the end of the Committee terminated any participatory role that the organization had enjoyed in the policy-making process. It was now faced with deciding its next move; a decision that necessitated a choice between the traditional strategies of accommodation and the new found strength gained through confrontation. In contrast to their experiences in front of the Special Joint Committee the leaders of the Native Brotherhood elected to return to the traditional strategy of accommodation. In the short term this appeared to be the right decision, through moral suasion the organization was able to galvanize public support for its objectives. In the long run, however, this would prove to be a disastrous mistake. As the conflict over the form of the new Indian Act became increasingly embattled the weaknesses inherent in the Native Brotherhood's position became apparent. It could not match the resources of the Indian Affairs Branch and was easily outmaneuvered in the

struggle over Bill 79 and its passing into law as the 1951 Indian Act.

The closing months of 1948 found the Native Brotherhood, quite possibly for the first time since its inception, uncertain on how to proceed. As a result of this uncertainty the organization spent the closing months of 1948 reevaluating its political options. In the meantime it placed its faith in the government, namely the Indian Affairs Branch and the Department of Justice, to act promptly with regard to the new Indian Act.

As time passed and there was no evidence of a new Indian Act it became clear that the Native Brotherhood's faith had been misplaced. In light of this the organization embarked upon a campaign to win the support of the Canadian public in an effort to provoke a response in Ottawa. This campaign was based, not in confrontation, but, rather on a reaffirmation of the principle of accommodation. Without the platform afforded it by the special Joint Committee the Native Brotherhood was once again in the position of having to petition the Indian Affairs Branch for a sympathetic hearing of its concerns. In the months following the Committee the Native Brotherhood, did not demand, so much as plead for the ear, and support of the Canadian public. These appeals were expressed in letters, petitions, and delegations, all political tools that the Native Brotherhood had used throughout its career. To this inventory was added a new, and hopefully effective tool, Canada's first native

newspaper, the *Native Voice*. The newspaper would be central to the organization's campaign to educate and mobilize Canadians, native and white, in the struggle for justice.

The *Native Voice* was not a new addition to the Native Brotherhood's arsenal, but it would gain a new prominence in the months, and years leading up to the introduction of the new Indian Act. The *Native Voice* had come into being in December 1946, primarily as a response to the Special Joint Committee.⁽¹⁾ The paper operated under the guidance of a white benefactor, Mrs. Maisie Armitage-Moore,⁽²⁾ but the staff, which was drawn from the ranks of the Native Brotherhood, used it to take the protest movement to a new level. To the Native Brotherhood the *Native Voice* was the means whereby it could unite into "one solid body the Natives of Canada by keeping them in touch with affairs relating to our people."⁽³⁾ Initially this objective manifested itself in an attempt to motivate native people to appear before the Special Joint Committee. Thus in its formative years the *Native Voice* was intimately linked to Special Joint Committee, monitoring the hearings, and using its pages to inform all of Canada, native and non-native, of the harsh injustices that the Committee was uncovering.

1 F.E. Laviolette, *The Struggle for Survival*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963). p. 158.

2 For details on Mrs. Armitage-Moore's connections with the Native Brotherhood see, Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, p. 259.

3 *Native Voice*. December 1946.

Through this exposure the editorial staff of the *Native Voice* gained valuable insights into the power of the press, and they would use this experience to "win the full support of the Canadian people" in the battle against the political and economic injustices that were the result of Canadian Indian policy.(4)

Thus, the newspaper had a tradition of carrying political protests to Ottawa. Realizing their own limited political influence the leadership of the Native Brotherhood would draw on this tradition in an effort to force the Indian problem into the public consciousness as the nation prepared for an election. To reach the Canadian public the *Native Voice* had to turn its attention away from local issues to concentrate on educating sympathetic whites in the hope that this would translate into pressure on the Dominion Government to produce not only a new, but a just Indian Act.(5)

While the Native Brotherhood was prepared to demand action from the government on the Committee's report it remained unwilling to be critical, or engage in open conflict with the government. For fear of alienating Ottawa, the leaders of the Native Brotherhood found themselves operating, once again, under the strain of the ambiguities of dependence. While this decision is understandable given

4 For the editorial policy of the *Native Voice* see its inaugural issue. *Native Voice*, December, 1946.

5 *Native Voice*. January 1949, p.8.

the constraints under which the organization had to operate it would severely limit the organization's effectiveness.

With the calling of a Dominion election the *Native Voice* appealed to the people of Canada to "lend us your vote" in an attempt to effect change.(6) In a series of articles, aimed at non-native voters, the Native Brotherhood stressed the morality of its claims.(7) In an effort to win public sympathy it stressed the value of democracy, and used it to highlight the injustices experienced by Canadian natives who, despite being residents of Canada, were "denied a voice in their own affairs." In light of this discrimination the Natives of Canada were forced to rely on "their white brothers" to take their concerns to Ottawa in the hope of bringing an end to discrimination.(8)

While the Native Brotherhood highlighted the injustice of its political situation, it also apologized for having to ask the help of "their white brothers". It argued that it would not be necessary if the Dominion Government would replace the practice of enfranchisement with the extension of the "dominion franchise without prejudice to inherited aboriginal rights."(9) This was not a new request, the

6 *Native Voice*. February 1949, p. 10

7 It is by no means clear how effective the *Native Voice* was at spreading the Native Brotherhood's message as there is very little information available on its circulation figures.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 10

Native Brotherhood had been arguing for the franchise since 1931, but its requests had always been denied, the official reason being that Indians were not sufficiently advanced to carry the responsibility.(10) This argument was severely undermined when, in the Spring of 1949, the coalition government in the British Columbia Legislative Assembly extended the provincial franchise to native residents of the province. The province may have had its own political motives for such a move, but the Native Brotherhood was quick to attach its own significance to the province's decision to extend the provincial franchise, while preserving any rights that had existed in the past.(11)

The Native Brotherhood had traditionally eschewed contact with the provincial government, arguing that native people were a federal responsibility, and as such the dominion government was the rightful recipient of its protests. The leadership of the Native Brotherhood were nevertheless politically astute enough to recognize the political value of the province's decision. The provincial franchise was heralded as a "giant step forward,"(12) and as

... opening the door to the way that leads to everything ... it gives the Indians of

10 The franchise question was discussed in the House of Commons on June 19, 1950. Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1950, pp. 3810-17.

11 *Native Voice*, March 1949, p. 1.

12 *Native Voice*, March 1949, p. 2.

British Columbia the first real chance they ever had ...(13)

Guy Williams echoed this comment by Peter Kelly, saying

... Indians now will have a very powerful weapon in their hands to back up demands for the rights of full citizenship.(14)

To the Native Brotherhood the winning of the provincial franchise was a major coup, and more importantly it was a legitimization of the Brotherhood, and its agenda. If the country's most intransigent province, on the subject of aboriginal land rights, could extend the franchise, then how could the dominion government refuse to extend the same rights at the national level? Yet refuse it did. In 1950 when the question came up for consideration in the House of Commons it was defeated, despite strong public support, and once again the Indians were denied the federal vote because of " their primitive and child like status." (15)

In the months following the Special Joint Committee the Native Brotherhood had been searching desperately for an issue around which to renew its campaign. It had looked to the Dominion election of 1949, but it could not lay claim to having influenced the outcome and so it was still looking for an issue around which to build its strategy. This situation was seriously affecting the organization's morale. The winning of the provincial franchise was a major boost to

13 Ibid., p. 2.

14 Ibid., p. 2.

15 Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1950, pp. 3810-17.

flagging morale. The Native Brotherhood was rejuvenated, and this renewal sparked a flurry of activity on the national front.

Tired of the government's tardiness the Native Brotherhood turned its attention to the public domain, where it directed its energies to two distinct, but not unrelated fronts. It decided to take the battle out of British Columbia, it appealed to the Indians of Canada to "Awake and Unite," and join the Native Brotherhood in the fight for equality and justice.(16) The hope was that, by galvanizing native support across the country, enough pressure could be brought to bear to force the government to act upon the recommendations of the Special Joint Committee and completely rewrite the Indian Act.(17) This was a noble, but unrealistic aim. In reality the majority of Indian organizations were politically powerless. All too often they had to rely on moral suasion as a means of bringing their concerns before government, and so far this was a tactic that the government had been good at ignoring. Furthermore, while the Native Brotherhood was appealing to other native organizations across the country, many of them were still in their formative stages, and so were not necessarily capable of mobilizing mass support, if indeed the Native Brotherhood itself was.¹⁸ Thus the call for the "Natives of Canada to

16 *Native Voice*, July 1949, p. 4.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 4..

Awake and Unite " produced little in the way of clear results.

The second half of the Native Brotherhood's campaign proved more effective. In the closing months of 1949 the organization renewed its attacks on the Dominion Government, drawing particular attention to the lack of progress on the revisions to the Indian Act.(19) It stressed the democratic and humanitarian needs for reform.(20) Through the pages of the *Native Voice* it reminded the people of Canada, and their government, of the litany of injustice that was Canadian Indian policy. Its spokesmen decried their lack of rights, not just aboriginal, but the human rights which were outlined by the United Nations, an organization that counted Canada among its members. In conclusion the *Native Voice* attacked the government for its insensitivity and its paternalism, arguing that " rather than the Indians being backward, Canada's treatment of her Indians marks her as backward." (21) Despite the frustration that was emanating from the pages of the *Native Voice* in this period the Native

18 The early careers of the Indian Association of Alberta and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians is reviewed in Murray Dobbin, *The One-and-a-Half Men: The story of Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris*. (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981). See also Norma Sluman on *John Tootoosis: Biography of a Cree Leader*. (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982.), and Hugh Dempsey's biography of James Gladstone, *Hugh Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader*. (Saskatoon: Western Prairie Books, 1986).

19 *Native Voice*. August 1949, p. 6.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

21 *Native Voice*, November and December 1949.

Brotherhood continued to espouse faith in the political process and its ability to deliver a just Indian Act. It continued to eschew confrontation in favour of conciliation, and it appeared as though the organization was going to be proven correct.

The posturing and rhetoric of the Native Brotherhood struck a chord in the psyche of the Canadian people, resulting in public pressure being brought to bear on Ottawa. This pressure had the desired effect, and the Native Brotherhood was rewarded with the announcement, by the honorable J.L. Gibson (M.P. for Comox-Alberni), that the revisions to the Indian Act were prominent on the government's agenda for the 1950 session of parliament.(22) Gibson's announcement was warmly received by the Native Brotherhood, but it remained cautious about the government's motives. In an accompanying editorial the *Native Voice* raised this concern and urged that before any new Act be introduced the government should consult with representatives of the country's native population.(23)

Gibson's announcement had a similar effect on the political fortunes of the Native Brotherhood as the granting of the provincial franchise. The announcement bolstered the organization's confidence, it served to embolden it and acted as a catalyst for new initiatives, yet, despite the

22 *Native Voice*. January 1950, p. 4.

23 Ibid., p. 4.

ambiguous nature of the government's announcements the Native Brotherhood continued to stress conciliation. Its confidence in the government was further boosted when Gibson's announcement was confirmed by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, who, in response to public criticism of his administration's handling of the Indian question, sought to reassure all Indians, and concerned Canadians, that he would bring forward an Indian Act that "would allow our Indian population a chance to develop to the extent to which they are undoubtedly capable." (24) The Native Brotherhood thanked the prime minister for his concern, but went on to remind him that for the new Indian Act to be meaningful it would have to make provision for improved educational opportunities, as well as allowing for greater advancement of all Indians in Canada. (25)

While the Native Brotherhood was busy congratulating itself, Walter E. Harris, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, introduced Bill 267, the " new " Indian Act, to the House of Commons on 7 June 1950. (26) In his introductory speech Harris acknowledged the need for an Act that would " make policy reflective of the realities of Indian existence in the twentieth century." (27) In an attempt to

24 Ibid., p. 3.

25 *Native Voice*, February and March 1950.

26 Government of Canada, *Historical Development of the Indian Act*, Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs, 1978. p. 144.

deflect criticism, Harris admitted that the Bill did not adhere to the recommendations of the Special Joint Committee. He acknowledged that the Committee's recommendations had been helpful, but that " it must be remembered that Indians differed in racial and cultural backgrounds, and in their various stages of economic and social development." (28) As policy had to apply at all levels, protection and advancement had to remain central to the government's Indian policy. (29)

An examination of Bill 267 quickly revealed that it was intended not to reform policy, but rather to improve the administrative and bureaucratic features of existing Indian policy, and the agent of that policy, the Department of Indian Affairs. To this end Bill 267 proposed a new, and more restrictive definition of "Indian", to be followed by the creation of a registration list to help determine Indian status and band membership so that the government could more easily identify Indians for enfranchisement and assimilation. Pursuant to this the Bill retained the "involuntary enfranchisement" clause that was anathema to the various Indian organizations that had appeared before the Committee. (30) Thus, Bill 267 was clearly the product of

27 Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1950, p. 3936.

28 Ibid., p. 3936.

29 *Historical Development of the Indian Act*, p. 145.

30 Ibid., p. 145.

the Indian Affairs Branch, reflecting the testimony that its members had presented to the Committee and reiterating their belief in the old Indian Act and its goal of assimilation. This was a major disappointment to the leaders of the Native Brotherhood, but it also serves to illustrate the political realities, the ambiguities of dependence as discussed by Shula Marks, under which the organization was forced to operate.

Recognizing the potential for protest the Minister downplayed these aspects of the Bill. Instead he stressed the more " liberal " aspects of Bill 267, the liberalization of liquor prohibitions, and the changes in the election and powers of Band Councils.(31) But in reality these were little more than cosmetic changes, and Bill 267 left all the significant aspects of Indian policy in the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs.

Upon Bill 267's introduction to the House it had also been distributed to Indian bands and organizations across the country. The initial response was positive,(32) but as the contents of the Bill became known to native organizations there emerged a tidal wave of protest that swamped the government in the closing weeks of the

31 Ibid., p. 145.

32 In the days following the announcement of the Bill the Native Brotherhood was positive. Its optimism appears to have been based on the introduction of the Bill after two years of silence, rather than any familiarity with the Bill's contents.

parliamentary session. The protest began with the native organizations, but it was quickly joined by a variety of organizations, many of which put aside political and ethnic differences to derail a bill that was seen as perpetuating discrimination and racism.(33)

Bill 267 was denounced from one end of the country to the other, and among its most vociferous critics was the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. Viewing Bill 267 not so much as a disappointment, but as an insult, the organization's response was a militant rejection of the government, and its Bill. This shift is evident in the pages of the *Native Voice*, through which the organization launched its campaign against Minister Harris and his Bill. In the weeks, and months following the introduction of Bill 267 the *Native Voice* was anything but salutary of the government and its "new" Indian policy. The *Native Voice* denounced the Bill as "a disgrace to Canada." It was condemned for failing to "deal with any of the major injustices and neglects to our natives ... while ignoring many of the fine recommendations made by the parliamentary committee." The Bill was dismissed as a "Dead Rat.. that would be downright funny if it were not so pathetic." (34)

The popular press was quick to pick up on the *Native Voice's* reaction to the Bill, and it was the white media

33 *Native Voice*, May 1950, p. 4.

34 *Native Voice*. June 1950, p. 4.

that served as the catalyst in bringing pressure to bear on the government to withdraw Bill 267.(35) Throughout this initial phase of protest the *Native Voice* closely monitored the media, and attempted to keep it informed of the Indian's dissatisfaction with the Bill. Thus, the Native Brotherhood successfully enlisted the aid of the national media in getting its protests to Ottawa. This demand for withdrawal was accompanied by calls for the complete redrafting of the Indian Act, a process that, it was argued, would be meaningless without Indian participation.(36) This public outcry was echoed in the House, where Minister Harris came under attack from the opposition parties. Responding to his critics, both inside and outside the House, Harris defended the Bill on the grounds that the

Bill is what it purports to be, a revision of the Indian Act based on an appraisal of conditions as they really are, and a reexamination of the present act in the light of these conditions, it is a Bill which modernizes and improves existing legislation.(37)

Harris's arguments apparently convinced his colleagues and when the Bill came up for the vote on June 21, 1950 it was passed by a margin of 90 to 39.(38)

35 The *Native Voice* monitored the national media closely throughout this period and an examination of its pages provides a good index of what the major newspapers of the day were saying.

36 Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1950, p. 3962.

37 Ibid., p. 3938.

The Bill had received the blessing of the House, but the debate continued to rage on outside, and within twenty four hours of being passed the Bill was withdrawn. Harris explained that the withdrawal was a response to public concerns about the process. He went on to concede that " Canada's 130 000 Indians had had no opportunity to consider and discuss the Bill," and, therefore, it would be unfair to proceed with the Bill until this was the case.(39) Furthermore this problem would not arise again as the government intended to take the Bill to the people. Harris was going to take his show on the road, he was going to travel across the country and explain the Bill to the various Indian groups.(40) After these consultative meetings the Bill would be redrafted, at which time the various Indian organizations would be invited to a conference in Ottawa to discuss the contents of the new Bill.

The government's reversal was hailed as a victory by the Native Brotherhood,(41) but jubilation gave way to despair when it was learned that the government had no intention of allowing Indians to participate in the actual

38 *Native Voice*, July 1950, p. 13.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

40 Harris arrived in Vancouver in late June. The meeting was to familiarize native leaders with the contents of Bill 267, as such there was no room for a review of the Bill. The conference was covered in the July issue of the *Native Voice*, p. 1.

41 *Native Voice*, June 1950, p. 9.

redrafting of the Bill.(42) This was a painful blow to the Native Brotherhood. Native participation in the protest that led to the defeat Bill 267 was to prove costly as they would not be allowed time to organize a protest to the Bill's successor. The Indian Affairs Branch had not anticipated the public backlash to Bill 267 and it had been taken by surprise, but it was not going to repeat the same mistake twice. From this point on the Indian Affairs Branch would do all in its power to ensure the success of any future Bill. To this end while Indian organizations would be openly encouraged to participate in the process, their participation would not be meaningful. The Indian Affairs Branch would establish the criteria for any discussion and it would carefully manipulate the Indian organizations, and their white allies in the upcoming debate. These hearings would not be like those of the Special Joint Committee. There would not be any free flowing discussion, instead the Indian delegates would discuss the individual sections of the Indian Act, not its premise or objectives.

As the Indian Affairs Branch stamped its authority on the proceedings the Native Brotherhood found itself, along with the other native organizations, being excluded from the political process, and it responded in the only way it could, it used the *Native Voice*. In the months prior to February 1951 the *Native Voice* lobbied for a more

42 Ibid., p. 9.

sympathetic Indian Act. In an attempt to win favour the Native Brotherhood shied away from the negative, and instead concentrated on advancing solutions that would be acceptable, it argued, to both Indians and government. There was nothing new in these arguments, they included pleas for better education and political equality, but it was hoped that they would be echoed by the Canadian public, thus forcing the government to take note.(43) The Native Brotherhood continued to walk the tightrope between protest and cooperation in its struggle for justice. As with earlier native initiatives this approach had limited success. At a time when it needed to be at its most vigorous, the Native Brotherhood was being reduced to the role of passive observer by the actions of the Indian Affairs Branch. Furthermore the Indian Affairs Branch was presenting the Native Brotherhood's strategy of accommodation as a form of acceptance, and, in the eyes of the Indian Affairs Branch, approval of the policy process.

This problem was compounded by the Native Brotherhood's fear of alienating its "good white friends", a fear that was severely restricting the organization's political options. Instead of attacking policy, as it had done in front of the Special Joint Committee, the Native Brotherhood was seeking conciliation. As in the past, the Native Brotherhood adopted moral suasion as its primary weapon. William Scow, president

43 *Native Voice*, September 1950 - February 1951.

of the Native Brotherhood, appealed to Canada's sense of morality and justice. He acknowledged the positive aspects of Bill 267, but he argued, they were just a beginning. The Canadian people must urge the government to reject the traditional policy, and the premise on which it was based in order to " create a Magna Carta for Canada's Indians." Decisive action was needed to end discrimination, to promote equality, and in so doing elevate the Indian from the status of " second class citizens." (44)

While the Native Brotherhood waged its campaign for a just Indian Act the government was busily preparing a Bill which would be introduced to the House of Commons at the end of February 1950, after which it would be reviewed by Indian spokesmen at a conference in Ottawa. Walter E. Harris introduced the revised Bill, now Bill 79 to the House of Commons on February 27, 1951. In his introductory address he once again begged the indulgence of the House in its consideration of Bill 79. He admitted that the Bill was "basically the same ... with little new from the 1950 version " there were however, " improvements in some sections," (45) and therefore the House should accept the Bill, and trust that the government would make further " improvements " after it had consulted with the various Indian representatives. (46) Despite Harris's pleas Bill 79

44 *Native Voice*, December 1950, p. 3.

45 *Native Voice*, March 1951, p. 3.

received a hot reception in the House, with both the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and the Conservatives attacking Harris over what they perceived to be little more than cosmetic changes to the Bill.(47) Harris defended the government's actions citing expediency he argued the " sooner we deal with this, the better for the Indian." (48) After a long, and often acrimonious debate the Bill got through its first reading, but the objections it faced in the House were mild when compared to the native reaction to the Bill.

As with the previous Bill natives from across the country attacked the government for its insensitivity to their concerns, and as with the earlier protest the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia presented itself as the champion of native interests. The Native Brotherhood presented its objections to the Bill on two fronts, to the government at the Ottawa conference, and to the people of Canada through the pages of the *Native Voice*. In both arenas the Native Brotherhood criticized Bill 79 for " betraying the same basic weakness as Bill 267," in that it still left too much power in the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs, and that this ran contrary to the native desire for self-determination.(49) With the government retaining power

46 Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1951, p. 713.

47 Ibid., p. 714.

48 Ibid., p. 714.

for itself Indians and Indian bands could never realize their potential, a situation that would always be unacceptable to the Native Brotherhood. With this recognition of the limitations of Bill 79 the Native Brotherhood vowed to "do everything in its power to defeat the Bill." (50)

The Native Brotherhood decided that this would be a battle best waged at the Ottawa conference, which it viewed as "the last chance for the Native Brotherhood to say what we want." (51) Unfortunately for the Native Brotherhood it would not get much of a chance to say what it wanted as the Department of Indian Affairs, acting on Harris's belief that the "sooner we pass the Bill, the better for the Indian," had decided that the conference would have little impact on the contents of Bill 79. (52) Nevertheless Harris was fully aware of the significance of the Ottawa Conference and he went to great pains to stress the cooperative nature of the process. Harris identified the purpose of the conference as being "to discuss the provisions of Bill 79 to revise the Indian Act and to give the [Indian] representatives an opportunity to express their opinions." (53) He went on to

49 *Native Voice*, April 1951, p. 4.

50 *Native Voice*, May 1951, p. 3.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

52 Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1951, p. 732.

assure the delegates that " all of their representations had been noted... and that full consideration would be given to the suggestions made for alterations of those sections of the Bill found to be objectionable." (54)

With Harris's assurances ringing in their ears the Native Brotherhood proceeded to present a list of objections that were completely consistent with its criticisms of the Indian Act since 1931. It objected to the sections that curtailed its rights as Indians and to those that proscribed economic and political advancement. The Native Brotherhood asked the Minister to scrap these sections and instead produce an Indian Act, which restricted the power of the Minister and the Department of Indian Affairs rather than Indian initiatives. (55) The Native Brotherhood argued that Band councils deserved to be allowed to identify band members and be given the power to administer band funds, all of which would lead to greater local autonomy and equality. (56)

The Native Brotherhood's pleas were well founded, and well argued, but they fell outside the purview of the Conference as it had been established by Minister Harris. Thus, even if Minister Harris heard these objections and

53 Canada. Parliament. *Minutes and Proceedings and Evidence of Special Committee to Consider Bill 79, An Act respecting Indians*. 30 April, 1951, p. 287.

54 Ibid., p. 287.

55 *Native Voice*, May 1951, p. 13.

56 Ibid., p. 13.

suggestions, he was not obliged to act upon them when it came time to prepare Bill 79 for its second appearance in the House of Commons. This is abundantly clear in his presentation of the Bill to the House, where Harris argued that the Indian representatives felt that the changes that were made to Bill 79 had removed 75% of their objections to Bill 267, and that in the final reckoning the Indian representatives had unanimously endorsed 113 of the 124 sections of the Indian Act.(57) Given this endorsement of the Bill the House passed the Bill for the third time on 17 May 1951. The Bill was sanctioned by the Senate on 5 June 1951, and received Royal assent on 21 June 1951.(58) The "new" Indian Act came into effect on 4 September 1951.(59)

In the end Bill 79 passed into law rather quietly. Minister Harris and the Indian Affairs Branch had successfully controlled the political process and the Native Brotherhood was simply unable to respond. This failure on the part of the Native Brotherhood can be partially explained by the slowness of communications at this time. However, there were other important impediments that prevented any native organization, not just the Native Brotherhood from derailing Bill 79. Despite their limited successes in front of the Special Joint Committee the Native

57 Canada. Parliament. *House of Commons Debates*, 1951, p. 1351.

58 Ibid., p. 3043.

59 Ibid., p. 3106.

Brotherhood was still extremely limited with regard to its political activities. It was forcibly reminded of these limits in the fight over Bill 79.

While it is true that the Native Brotherhood was acting from a severely disadvantaged position its leaders must also be held partially responsible for the failures in 1950 and 1951. The organization, despite its earlier experiences, continued to place its faith in the Indian Affairs Branch, a monolith that, even as late as 1950, was still hostile to the Native Brotherhood's objectives. The Native Brotherhood failed to recognize this fact, and this severely undermined its ability to respond effectively to the Department's careful manipulation of the political process and the national media.

The passing of Bill 79 into law marked the end of the first phase of the political career of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. Its worst fears had been realized when the Ottawa conference, their last chance, had demonstrated that the government was not yet ready to abandon paternalism as the centrepiece of Indian policy. The Native Brotherhood had done its best but " the government went right ahead and most of the Indian views were ignored".(60) It had asked for a helping hand, but " had received a patronizing one." (61) To the Native Brotherhood

60 *Native Voice*, August 1951, p. 4.

61 *Native Voice*, September 1951, p. 9.

this was a "calamity and a disaster." It was an ignominious end to the "long and weary fight of those noble old chiefs who had sacrificed so much in their fight to win justice and freedom for the future young native Canadians." (62)

62 Ibid., p. 4.

CONCLUSION

Through the colonization process the indigenous populations of North America, New Zealand and South Africa were relegated to the periphery of these societies. Having successfully dispossessed the aboriginal inhabitants of their land, the colonial governments were then faced with the question of what to do about this newly created " native problem." Not content to let their aboriginal peoples exist on the margins of society, the colonial governments adopted increasingly coercive legislation to eradicate the problem. In Canada this legislation was the Indian Act, which promoted assimilation and was be administered by a Department of Indian Affairs. Through the Indian Act the Canadian government usurped the political and economic autonomy of the countries native people as a prelude to their assimilation into the dominant society. Not surprisingly native people did not receive the government's plans for them kindly, and the history of native people since the enactment of the Indian Act in 1876, has been one of resistance.

This resistance has been the most vigorous in Western Canada, and nowhere was it more vigorous than in British Columbia. Because of the unique nature of Indian policy in that province native groups were forced to be particularly imaginative in their responses to government policy. Their initial protests were directed at the province's arbitrary alienation of Indian land. When the land question was "resolved" in 1927 native people began to seek alternative strategies to win the justice that they had been denied.

When the Depression emerged as a very real threat to the continued existence of the native fishermen they turned to collective action in an attempt to ward off economic disaster. This union, the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, was primarily a response to the economic despair of the nineteen-thirties, but over the next two decades the organization expanded its constituency, and its mandate, to become more than a labour union, by 1951 the Native Brotherhood was being lauded as the leading native political organization in the country.

The political genesis of the Native Brotherhood fits into a pattern of indigenous protest common to native groups throughout the world. This pattern, as it is unveiled by Hertzberg, Walshe, Marks, and Williams, highlights the influence European institutions had on the development of aboriginal protest movements. This is not to do a disservice to aboriginal people, but rather, it accurately reflects the influences that shaped these early protest movements. Central to this process was the emergence of an educated elite, most notably Peter Kelly in the case of the Native Brotherhood, which reflecting the political leanings of their missionary educators, expressed a faith in, and knowledge of, the parliamentary process. They believed that if they operated in conjunction with the dominant society, they could win the political and economic equality that they sought. This pattern is evident in the early career of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. With the threat of the Depression a group of educated leaders, Adams, Dudoward and Beynon, promoted collective action to force Ottawa, which they

believed had a moral responsibility to all of its citizens, to safeguard its native wards.

To realize this objective the Native Brotherhood borrowed from, and adapted to its own needs, the political tools of the dominant society. In his 1951 monograph Philip Drucker argued that the organization was ineffectual in its utilization of these tools, and that this is demonstrated in the organization's failure to achieve any of its stated objectives. Contrary to Drucker's conclusion the Native Brotherhood was successful in its utilization of these tools. By 1951 the organization was more articulate, better organized and more effective in its use of these tools than any previous organization. Given the very tangible defeat over the Indian Act this may be difficult to believe, but any fair evaluation of the Native Brotherhood must take into consideration the ambiguities of dependence under which the Native Brotherhood was forced to operate. It was these ambiguities, argues Paul Tennant, that could only be overcome through the winning of the respect of the dominant society. To accomplish this the Native Brotherhood sought to educate, through the use of petitions and delegations, the Canadian public. It was further believed that education would result in the Canadian public lending its support to the efforts of the Native Brotherhood to have its voice heard. Unfortunately the leadership of the Native Brotherhood when faced with a hostile Indian Affairs Branch was unable to decide on the best strategy to attain its objectives. The leadership vacillated between cooperation and confrontation, and all too often they were forced

to use to cooperation and accommodation, especially in the battle over Bill 79, when confrontation would have been more appropriate. When it did embrace confrontation the Native brotherhood achieved an unprecedented degree of success. This success was often dependent on situational circumstances, as was the case on two important occasions, its influence on the Special Joint Committee, and again in the fight to derail Bill 267. At these times, however, the Native Brotherhood was able to respond to the opportunities that were offered to it, and in so doing it was able to capture the imagination of its audience, and as a result it was able to suspend the ambiguities of dependence. Unfortunately it lacked the political resources to completely dismantle them. This was made painfully obvious in the organization's relations with the Indian Affairs Branch. Although it had changed from outright hostility to grudging acceptance, the Department even in 1950, was convinced of its policy of assimilation, and as this belief was entrenched in the bureaucracy there was little the Native Brotherhood could do to undermine it. Furthermore, the Indian Affairs Branch, or at least its officials, retained the ear of government, and this fact, as much as any strategic error by the Native Brotherhood, contributed to the defeat of 1951.

Thus any discussion of the "success" of the Native Brotherhood, must acknowledge these ambiguities. Given this, an aura of ambiguity and vagueness then descends on any evaluation of the Native Brotherhood. There is no doubt that it failed in its stated objectives of winning equality and greater economic

opportunities for native people, but it did, through cooperation with its good white friends and other native organizations, win improvements in the provision of services, particularly in the areas of health and education. This was achieved through raising the level of consciousness of the average Canadian, and this is where the legacy of the Native Brotherhood becomes most evident. By raising the level of consciousness, both in the native and the non-native community, the Native Brotherhood paved the way for the emergence of national organizations, and the resurgence of native politics as part of the social revolution that rocked North America in the nineteen-fifties and -sixties.

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