

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

FIFTH ANNUAL SCHOOL  
COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

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1968



C O N T E N T S

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R E P O R T

FIFTH ANNUAL SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL COMMITTEES' CONFERENCE

April 24 and 25, 1968

Starlight Room - Sheraton-Cavalier Motor Inn, Saskatoon

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Registration: Mrs. Gladys Johnston

Invocation: Dr. Ahab Spence

Welcome: His Worship Mayor S. Buckwold welcomed the Conference and recalled that Saskatoon's motto is "Education, Industry and Commerce", with education listed first.

Miss Opekokew brought greetings from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians.

Dr. F. Gathercole, Director of Education, Saskatoon, listed matters of high priority. Indian education was on the list. He spoke of equality, giving privileges to Indians as well as anyone else. There is a need to give our Indian people the kind of educational program which is good for them and which will help to weld them into the education system. We need to work with non-Indians who have to learn to accept Indians at face value.

Mr. W. Karashowsky, Regional Superintendent of Schools, Indian Affairs Branch, indicated that there are now 31 school committees in Saskatchewan. Indians elsewhere are looking to Saskatchewan to solve the problems: attendance problems, drop-out problems, create better school and community relationships, to set the pace for joint schools in Saskatchewan, to chart the course for Indian Education in Canada.

Mr. Gooderham brought greetings on behalf of the Indian Affairs Branch at Headquarters, Ottawa.

Appointment of Resolutions Committee

Mr. Bean suggested that the Resolutions Committee have three people to receive resolutions, make some up, encourage others, and be prepared to present resolutions to the total group so people can discuss and vote on them.

Nominees: Ed. Pinay  
Lawrence Stevenson  
Freda Greyeyes  
Ed. Laliberte  
Mrs. Ewack

Mr. Ed. Laliberte moved that nominations cease and Mr. Campbell Brass seconded the motion. The five then acted as a Resolutions Committee.

Nominees for Nomination Committee:

Mrs. Lafond  
Mrs. Roberts  
Frances Desnomie  
Walter Wolfe

Mr. Ed. Pinay moved that nominations cease and John Head seconded the motion. The four were elected.

PANEL: PURPOSE AND DUTIES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES/SCHOOL BOARDS

Chairman - Ed. Pingay.

Mr. John McLeod spoke of a code of ethics and passed out copies of the Saskatchewan code. He also spoke of the need for committees to learn all they can about education.

Mr. F. M. Frey spoke of duties of school committees. The duty of the individual member of a school committee is to become informed about school matters. School committees are playing a more important role. Decision-making becomes a very important matter involving financial management, expenditure of money, setting priorities for expenditure.

School attendance and truancy: The importance of education must be sold to every parent who has children attending school. Parents must see the value of sending children to school. We have to involve parents, teachers and educational authorities. We must reach them through meetings, discussions, social gatherings. Speakers at band meetings could help them to understand the system and realize the importance of education for children.

The committee should make contact with the school staff. Success of the school program depends on good faith and good will on both sides.

Scholarships are an important item on list of committees' duties to interest children and parents to strive for success. Children's values are built by parents, therefore parents must set the right example.

School committees are important organizations as an advisory body. They should become informed in school matters by attending meetings, by visiting schools, talking to people, reading, and becoming involved in an active manner.

The role of a school board is assisting in developing or planning for school accommodations, making recommendations regarding assistance of students who require assistance, making recommendations regarding joint schools, making recommendations regarding school bus routes.

Lawrence Stevenson, School Committee Chairman, stated that School Committees can give leadership by attendance at meetings and taking messages to people back on the reserve. Committees can help overcome lack of co-operation, lack of communication. Parents must encourage their children to go to school. People of Indian origin are being left further and further behind.

Mr. Logie, Director School Administration, Department of Education, Saskatchewan. Mr. Logie explained that the Department changed legislation so people of Indian origin can take part in school matters. The Saskatchewan school system is different from other provinces. The province is divided into blocks called school districts. These are combined into groups called school units. People in them are called ratepayers. A ratepayer is anyone who has lived in a certain school district for a certain period (6 months prior to June 1, no land needed, must be 18 years of age). Under the new legislation a reserve may become a school district and reserve ratepayers will have the same rights as anyone else in the province.

Mrs. Lavallee, Steering Committee member. Have Indians had a say or voice in education? Some reasons why not: --

- 1) Because of treaties they have been subject to reserve system. Indian Act has made it necessary for Indians to be subject to government administration.
- 2) Being under an administration has weakened will power, initiative, and fighting spirit. It is safer and easier to keep silent.
- 3) No matter what changes we try to make, we are bound by legislation, but changes must be made.

Times have changed. How much progress is made is up to the Indian parents. Indians must take an active part in education by encouraging children to do their best in school.

The school committee program is the voice of Indian parents.

Mr. Smith, Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association.

People on a reserve can now elect a school board. Trustees have realized that when Indians come into provincial schools the teachers must make some adjustments. We must have integration. There is a need to educate the non-Indian as well as the Indian.

QUESTIONS:

- |                 |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mrs. Greyeyes   | - Can we vote for a unit board member now?                                                                                                                           |
| Mr. Smith       | - No, you have to form a school board first.                                                                                                                         |
| Mr. Logie       | - The school committees should do some study on this matter of forming school boards.                                                                                |
| Mr. Karashowsky | - As soon as copies of legislation are available, they will be distributed. There is a need to have study groups and draw on certain people who are willing to help. |
| Dr. Spence      | - How can people on reserve be elected to a school board?                                                                                                            |
| Mr. Logie       | - Two procedures, - form reserve into a district and the district becomes part of a unit, or add reserve to an existing district.                                    |
| Mr. Zakreski    | - Can someone explain that becoming part of a school district won't affect the reserve?                                                                              |
| Mr. Logie       | - Does not change reserve in any way.                                                                                                                                |
| Mr. Karashowsky | - Does not affect treaty rights at all.                                                                                                                              |

EDUCATION IN PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS - Chairman, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. Sinclair, District School Superintendent. "Creating Understanding Between Non-Indians and Indian Parents and Students".

Culture is a matter of habits, with action acquired or learned by inter-action with other members of the group, factors which permit us to live together in an organized society.

The idea of society is people with common ends. People doing things with and to and for each other in the interest of each and all in ways that these people have come to accept.

One block is lack of understanding on the part of the persons in the dominant group. Whites tend to take the major culture for granted - based on science and being right. They see other cultures based on ideas and superstitions as wrong.

There must be mutual understanding. To understand a person one must know and appreciate the culture into which he is born. Understanding can be helped by more public relations prior to joint school agreements such as contact and talks with church groups, parent-teacher associations, buddy system at beginning of school year - assign non-Indian to Indian student to show them around, familiarize them with school.

Indian children being bussed must be brought into town when functions are being held after school. Invite non-Indian students to the reserve. Indian parents should try to attend parent-teacher interviews and parent-teacher meetings. The Indian parent has not developed a feeling of self-confidence to meet the school staff. Educators should contact and talk to parents to create a feeling of self confidence.

Readjustment of the curriculum is needed. Teacher visitations to children's parents on the reserve will provide understanding and insight.

There is a need to develop empathy. Both groups should try to know each other - non-Indian and Indian. We need to walk a few miles in another fellow's moccasins to know what the other fellow feels.

Mr. Carr, Superintendent of Schools, Northern areas, spoke of education in the North and some problems of teaching in the North. Some reasons for difficulty were lack of experience in background, no T.V., no books, language problem between teacher and pupils, shyness, poor attendance, teacher inexperience, teacher turnover.

Steps are being undertaken to overcome some of the problems. Kindergarten classes and adult classes are being developed. A special summer class will operate at Beardy's this summer. The plan is to have an Indian aide for the teacher. A centre for Indian studies and culture has been developed at the University. Student travel is sponsored. In May three groups will visit other parts of the province. The Board is building an auditorium gym at La Ronge. Provincial education has some advantages - better communication. The Northern School Board has eight trustees - four are Indian.

Mr. McBeath, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, spoke about curriculum adaptation in integrated schools. Involves all teachers, adapted by the teacher, built on student interests and aptitudes.

#### COMMENT

Mr. Lameman spoke of difficulties on Onion Lake Reserve - no High School within 30 mile radius. Want to keep children at home. Parents are beginning to realize that education is necessary for their future.

Allan Akenakew. Problem is getting people to understand what it is all about. We over look reserves on relief. We must find out what we need and know what we have to do and do something about it.

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Report on 1967 Resolutions by Mr. R. Bean

Report on 1968 National Conference at Edmonton, Alberta, by the Steering Committee.

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Miss Opekokew and Mr. Ahenakew spoke on behalf of Mr. Dieter.

Mr. Ahenakew - We find it hard to run a reserve where 80% of the people do not realize the importance of education.

Miss Opekokew spoke of the communication problem and how the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians set up a communication workers' program to assist Indians to help themselves.

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Banquet           - Chairman, Mr. Tony Tawyaka  
                  - Introduction of Speaker by Mr. John R. McLeod  
                  - Speaker - Mr. R. H. Gent, District School Superintendent  
                  (See attached copy of Mr. Gent's speech)

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April 25, 1968.

HOME AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUPIL SUCCESS

Group A

"Parents and Pupil Success" - Miss Opekokew reported for the group.

- not enough concern about children's education
- truant officer - will be able to talk to parents
- report cards, - if parents pick them up then there is an interest
- 25% only - not interested
- Indians are naturally kind so when their children refuse to attend, they don't push it
- truant officer - elected by Band - should have a keen interest towards education
- parents lack understanding of education - value of it
- more should be stressed on the parents' point of view of the value of education
- commented on the Women's Conference on how the lack of encouragement to students was brought up by students. They found that the lack of encouragement given to them by parents is one of the reasons why students quit and get discouraged.
- students should be complimented by parents
- school committees should be the ones to stress the importance of education field trips. If children see the outside world then they will see the value of education
- students are a link to the parents
- parents should support teaching staff, should listen to the teacher's side of the story and not be over-protective towards the children
- Duck Lake, - there were about 40 students on Easter holidays that stayed in homes around the area
- Parents and Teachers' meetings. Teachers went to the reserve and hoped to discuss report cards
- Adult Education - held for two years before it got any results - almost all parents attend
- P.T.A. meeting - brought a resource person which caught an interest with the parents.



- parents do not ensure homework is done
- Junior upgrading - if more parents took upgrading, there would be more interest in education
- lack of education in the Northern reserves presents a problem
- parents afraid to lose their treaty rights because of the school committee
- parents should discuss their children's progress with them
- parents should exercise reasonable discipline over their children - cannot discipline your children if you do not discipline yourself - drinking, gambling and leaving seven or eight year olds to baby-sit. Parents should set a good example.
- There should be more foster home care - a bigger step should be taken to place children in private foster homes instead of residential schools. There needs to be a close check on private foster homes and residential schools so there wouldn't be any abuse - Band Councils should look into this.

Group B

"Community Organizations and Pupil Success" - Mrs. Greyeyes was the reporter.

- Band council's responsibility. It is up to the Band Council to select school committee
- What are responsibilities of the committee and council? - Anything which is discussed on the school committee - anything they recommend.
- Do not like agency involved with school committee - time we managed our own money.
- Mr. Ahenakew - What are your responsibilities as a chief?  
Mr. Laliberte - Got involved with helping kids at school. Started giving scholarships three years ago - seems to be working, encourages children in school.
- Mr. Brass - We could put money in our band budget and let kids have it for tours, lunches, etc.
- Relationship of treasurer - funds would be put into account of the Band, school committee writes cheques. Secretary-Treasurer should not have to send accounts to agency.  
This is new to some. A committee was formed last year but not functioning well - dictatorship - chief and councillors do not agree with committee.
- Mr. Laliberte moved that school committees have control of funds.  
Seconded by Mr. Brass.
- School committee should be experienced. Most people do not understand work of committee.
- Mr. Laliberte - Band councils should be more involved in education.
- Mr. McLeod - Duty of the council is to go by what the people want - regulations - you could be elected by the Band Council.
- Mr. Laliberte - Doing this at Meadow Lake Agency.
- Need someone to talk Cree - poor people do not understand what education is.
- Red Earth - using  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton truck to bus 17 students. Went to Indian Affairs Branch two years ago about this - need a bridge.
- Truant officer - joint school unit board hires truant officer for the reserve and has to get permission from the council if there are any charges to be made.

Mr. Rickert - May I recommend that an investigation be made in regard to setting up a short course for Attendance Officers or Public Relations Officers at the University.

Mr. Brass - "Attendance Officer" better than "Truant Officer".

Group C

"Success for the Atypical Child" - reported by Mrs. Lavallee

- Saskatchewan School Act makes no provisions for special schools and treatment of retarded children;
- Indian Affairs Branch should reduce assistant Indian agents who have outlived usefulness and use positions for needed staff;
- Committee needed to study retardation - executive body to apply pressure where needed;
- Indians and Indian Affairs Branch to get together to discuss the problem.

Mr. Pinay - Survey taken from last year -	-	Indian retarded children:
- Severe learning difficulties	-	77
Physical handicaps	-	35
Mental retardates	-	<u>58</u>
Total		170

- 21% are being maintained at \$ 28,000
- Mental retardation causes: German measles, hepatitis, others
- Among retarded, learning slower
- Nine times more common than cerebral palsy and ten times more common than crippling polio
- Confuse retardation with mental illness.

Recommendations and Findings:

- More comprehensive survey should be taken both by Indian Health Services and Indian Affairs Branch;
- Approximately 18,000 retardates in province of Saskatchewan
- a) Long waiting lists for admission to training schools - shortage of qualified staff;  
Need for more community facilities - research needs more support.
- b) Children's programs - no in-patient facilities for children;  
-inadequate clinic facilities, no program for retardates,  
- recommend Indian Affairs Branch build training school to help rehabilitate children.

Aims of a group interested in retarded children:

- 1) Develop better understanding of the problem of mental retardation
- 2) Encourage establishment of adequate facilities for retarded
- 3) Develop plan of assistance for rural families and Indian reserves and communities
- 4) Encourage research into the causes of mental retardation
- 5) Co-ordinate activities for the mentally retarded
- 6) Gather and spread information about mental retardation.

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Report of Resolutions Committee (See attached copy)

Report of Nominations Committee for Regional Consulting Committee:

Mrs. Mary Ann Lavallee )  
Mr. Albert Favel ) These were nominated by the Nominating Committee  
Mr. Gordon Albert )  
Mr. John McLeod )

Open for nominations from the floor:

Wilfred Greyeyes nominated Freda Greyeyes,  
Mary Worm nominated Roderick Cote

Mr. Ed. Laliberte moved that nominations cease and Wilfred Greyeyes seconded the motion.

The following were elected to serve on the Steering Committee:

Mrs. Mary Ann Lavallee - Broadview, Sask.  
Mr. John McLeod - Box 91, Kinistino, Sask.  
Mrs. Freda Greyeyes - Box 32, Marcelin, Sask.  
Mr. Albert Favel - Box 511, Kamsack, Sask.

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CONFERENCE APPRAISAL - By Dr. Ahab Spence

- congratulated people who arranged accommodations and Steering Committee
- agenda, - all important topics. e.g. education in provincial schools
- list of speakers - all important people
- impact of change is terrific
- suggested using these topics for discussion at meetings
- spoke of relationship between school committee and staff of joint school
- congratulated white people and members of establishment who kept verbal participation to minimum. Commented on Mr. Karashowsky's remark "Set the pace; Chart the course".
- impressed with sincerity and intelligence of Indian people
- impressed by Chief Ahenakew's remark that the "most important thing is education"
- reminded delegates that to be respected you have to be respectable
- commented on Mrs. Lavallee's words regarding the green light for school committees - Indian parent has voice for her child.
- optimistic about future of Indian education
- leadership and potential on reserve, nucleus is there - took courage to come - problem is to develop nucleus and take advantage of potential.
- wisdom and intellectual will be pursued
- "Go slow, set your pace and I think that we have the wisdom and intelligence to set the speed and quantity and quality of change".

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Note: Re Resolution No. 5.

Moved by Ed. Laliberte that Ed. Pinay be given the Chairmanship and responsibility of selecting a committee left to his discretion.

Carried.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE - Saskatoon, Apr. 24, 25/68

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Chairman: Mrs. Lavallee.

- (1) WHEREAS the present set-up of the local school committee does not provide school committees to completely manage their own affairs in that expenditure of funds budgeted for school committees must always be channelled through local Indian Agencies,

BE IT RESOLVED that this conference go on record as requesting that necessary changes be made to make these funds available directly to the school committees, and they in turn would handle these funds through a local bank, and with the necessary proper bookkeeping procedures.

Seconded by Ed. Laliberte - Carried.

- (2) WHEREAS after two previous conferences this same subject regarding allowances for all high school students of Grades IX to XII, regardless of where they are attending, to get an allowance of \$ 10.00 per month during school term for personal use, as it might improve and encourage students to continue with their education,

BE IT RESOLVED that Indian Affairs give this request their immediate consideration and action.

Carried.

- (3) WHEREAS conditions warrant the building of a bridge and grid road to facilitate the transportation of school children at present numbering seventeen on the Red Earth Indian Reserve, and  
WHEREAS no vehicle has been provided for this purpose,

BE IT RESOLVED that a school bus be provided to Red Earth Indian Reserve, and a bridge and grid road be built as soon as possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all bus routes on all reserves be all-weather roads.

Seconded by Mrs. Ewack - Carried.

- (4) WHEREAS present Indian Affairs policy requires Indians of Treaty status must be responsible for providing school books and supplies for their children, and  
WHEREAS this policy tends to penalize Indians who are attempting to find employment outside the reserve,

BE IT RESOLVED that Indian Affairs change the present policy and that all Indian students living off the reserve receive educational assistance comparable to that given to reserve residents.

Seconded by Mr. Laliberte - Carried.

- (5) WHEREAS we have been given at this conference a comprehensive report of the plight of the retarded children of Indian descent,

BE IT RESOLVED that this conference appoint a committee of four and that this committee be provided with funds to cover expenses and that this committee be charged with duties of making a further study of the retarded and making the necessary recommendations to Indian Affairs.

Seconded by Mrs. Freda Greyeyes - Carried.

- (6) WHEREAS the Steering Committee members would provide a valuable service if they could make field trips to the various school committees to assist in settling complaints and problems,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Regional Office of the Indian Affairs make funds available to cover the expenses involved to make these field trips, that is \$ 15.00 per day for services rendered, plus mileage and meals and accommodations incurred during such trips.

Seconded by Marius McLeod - - Carried.

- (7) BE IT RESOLVED that the Department of Education be approached to have representation of Indian descent at the Steering Committee level of Curriculum Development as recommended by the Regional Educational Consulting Committee - to be left to the discretion of the Steering Committee.

Seconded by Ed. Laliberte - - Carried.

- (8) WHEREAS there is great concern for the poor attendance of children from problem families,

BE IT RESOLVED that School Committees and Indian Affairs take measures to provide more qualified guidance and counselling for problem families.

Moved by Ed. Laliberte - - Carried.

- (9) WHEREAS "Truant Officer" creates a barrier on most reserves,

BE IT RESOLVED that the title, "Public Relations Officer" be used.

Seconded by Mrs. Ewack.  
Left to Steering Committee.

- (10) WHEREAS the Government of Saskatchewan has now changed the School Act of Saskatchewan thereby making it possible for Indian parents to become more actively involved in education,

BE IT RESOLVED that this conference, through the Steering Committee, communicate to the Premier of Saskatchewan expressing the appreciation of the Indian population of Saskatchewan for this forward step in the legislation of our Province.

BANQUET ADDRESS

Presented by

MR. R. H. GENT, DISTRICT SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH  
School Committee Conference, April 24,25/68

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I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak to this group tonight, which over the past five years has grown in stature to the point where it can be honestly said that Saskatchewan is setting a pattern and an example to the rest of Canada. To set the tone of my remarks I should like to tell you a story: (Balloon Story - not color but stuff inside which makes them float).

I think that you have demonstrated over the past five years that if given the opportunity, you have the stuff inside that counts.

When I first came to the Branch in 1960 I believe there were seven active School Committees in Saskatchewan. Late in 1963 Mr. Connelly obtained funds for the first conference and asked his field staff to help him plan the agenda. Because of the limited budget (I believe it was about \$ 500) the facilities of Prince Albert Residential School were used. Twenty-two delegates registered in the Marlboro Hotel, and some of you will remember the shuttle service between that point and the school using whatever vehicles were available.

If the recommendations that came out of this were any indication of its success, then it was indeed successful. I was given the job of arranging these recommendations in some semblance of order for presentation to Ottawa (five legal size typewritten pages), and I should like to read you just a few because I think in retrospect they will give you some idea of how the delegates felt at that time:

Comments

"We, as the first Canadians, expect the very best in education for our students so that on completion of their studies they will be able to stand on their own two feet, be able to meet each new challenge unafraid, with full self-confidence in their own abilities to make decisions. They should also retain the respect, dignity and pride of race which is their own rightful heritage but for which they must work."

"I have never felt so free to say what I thought needed to be said". "It was a completely open Conference". "We certainly were given every opportunity to express our opinions".

One suggested that we were all human after all and that having the opportunity of meeting Branch Officials informally had done a great deal to allay some of the suspicions that some Indian people have. "

This conference was such a success that a second one was planned. I might add that the budget was increased considerably and we were able to obtain the Coronet Motor Hotel. Its theme was "Indian Education Today" and most of the time was devoted to an explanation of the various educational programs available to youth at that time. The number of delegates increased to thirty-two, three of whom were from Manitoba as observers.

It is interesting to note that it was at this 1965 conference that delegates asked the Branch to investigate the possibility of having suitable legislation passed that would enable Indians to serve on non-Indian School Boards. In view of the discussions today, I don't think this requires any further comments other than to say it has passed, I believe, the second reading and is now in the committee stage. This is not a gimmick to obtain tax revenue from reserves but a sincere piece of legislation designed to fulfill wishes expressed by yourselves.

Some of the most notable changes in my opinion began to appear at the third conference. From the discussion and the resolutions two things became apparent:

- (a) A Provincial executive should be set up so that future conferences could be planned with little or no help from Indian Affairs Branch.
- (b) More information should be obtained from outside sources rather than relying entirely on Indian Affairs Branch educational staff.

The latter was very evident at last year's gathering and also here today. Discussions centered on outside agencies and what they could do co-operatively with you to assist.

And now, if I may be so bold, I would like to suggest that the next three or four years will be exciting ones for School Committees in Saskatchewan and for the people they represent. In view of the new Provincial legislation and the remarks made about it today, it will be up to you to find ways and means whereby the School Unit Boards, schools and their teaching staff on and off reserves, the community, and increasingly the parents may work together in close harmony in order to give the best in educational opportunity to your children. This is primarily a problem in communication or being able to meet and talk together.

We can hold all the conferences we like such as this one, but in the end it will be up to you and the School Committee to arrange this relationship at the local level. All, but especially the parents, must be well informed so that when they are asked to make a choice concerning their child they will be in a position to make the correct one.

You have heard today a number of speakers who referred to what we call joint schooling. You have also heard delegates ask for expensive school buildings on the reserves. All I ask is that you be realistic in your approach and assess sincerely and carefully all factors that are involved.

Educational change today in all schools is very rapid. In the province the trend is to larger and more complex buildings. This is being done for a number of reasons that I think you should know about:

- (a) A large school can get better teachers because they are able to teach only one subject and this is usually the one that interests them most.
- (b) A large school can have Guidance Counsellors right on its staff

- (c) They can do what we call streaming. Not all children can go to University. Thus some can take training in trades along with the usual subjects and therefore are more interested and stay in school longer.
- (d) More subjects can be taught. I'm thinking here in terms of music and art...(Comments here on Prince Albert's planned new complex).

May I conclude by saying that leadership from both the Indian people and their non-Indian friends is required. School Committees I think realize that no matter how good a program is, if the people do not feel it belongs to them it will not work.

I think we are all prepared to smoke the pipe of peace. I hope it won't be too long before we're both prepared to inhale.

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