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Article abstract

This article explores the unique circumstances surrounding the provincial school at Telegraph Creek in northwestern British Columbia, which was initially established for white settler children by Presbyterian missionaries in 1906. Local public school trustees permitted the attendance of Indigenous (specifically Tahltan) children year after year to maintain the minimum enrolment required to receive provincial funding. Combined with an annual tuition grant from the Department of Indian Affairs for the schooling of status Indian children, the Telegraph Creek public school functioned as an integrated school until provincial, federal, and missionary authorities interfered in the 1940s. This paper demonstrates how decisions made by both provincial and Indian Affairs officials leading up to the 1949 cost-sharing agreement to build a new school at Telegraph Creek were far from benign. Indigenous children in northwest British Columbia became the objects of a post-war educational policy that promoted integrated schooling and, ironically, facilitated segregation.

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Abstract

This article explores the unique circumstances surrounding the provincial school at Telegraph Creek in northwestern British Columbia, which was initially established for white settler children by Presbyterian missionaries in 1906. Local public school trustees permitted the attendance of Indigenous (specifically Tahltan) children year after year to maintain the minimum enrolment required to receive provincial funding. Combined with an annual tuition grant from the Department of Indian Affairs for the schooling of status Indian children, the Telegraph Creek public school functioned as an integrated school until provincial, federal, and missionary authorities interfered in the 1940s. This paper demonstrates how decisions made by both provincial and Indian Affairs officials leading up to the 1949 cost-sharing agreement to build a new school at Telegraph Creek were far from benign. Indigenous children in northwest British Columbia became the objects of a post-war educational policy that promoted integrated schooling and, ironically, facilitated segregation.

Résumé

Le présent article s'attarde aux circonstances uniques entourant l'école provinciale de Telegraph Creek, dans le nord-ouest de la Colombie-Britannique, qui a été fondée en 1906 par des missionnaires presbytériens pour les enfants de colons blancs. Les conseillers scolaires publics locaux y ont permis l'inscription d'enfants autochtones (nommément de la bande Tahltan) année après année pour maintenir le nombre d'élèves minimal donnant droit à un financement provincial. En ajoutant une subvention

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annuelle du ministère des Affaires indiennes pour l'éducation des enfants indiens de plein droit, l'école publique de Telegraph Creek a fonctionné comme une école intégrée jusqu'à ce que les autorités provinciales, fédérales et missionnaires interviennent en 1940. Cet article montre que les décisions prises par les fonctionnaires provinciaux et ceux des Affaires indiennes qui ont mené à une entente en 1949 sur le partage des coûts de construction d'une nouvelle école n'avaient rien d'anodin. Les enfants autochtones du nord-ouest de la Colombie-Britannique ont été en butte à une politique d'après-guerre en matière d'éducation qui favorisait l'ins-truction intégrée mais qui, ironiquement, facilitait la ségrégation.

In September 1950, an article in British Columbia's *Daily Colonist* newspaper praised provincial education authorities for opening public school doors to Indian children living on reserves.¹ "Action to give native Indian children full educational equality with white children is well underway in British Columbia," the newspaper reported, giving particular credit to British Columbia's Education Minister, W.T. Straith, for his efforts to remove "the allegation that there are any 'second-class citizens' in British Columbia." Agreements had been concluded between the federal government and the Campbell River and Terrace school districts that would "permit Indian children to attend elementary and high schools with white children." Similar agreements were being negotiated with school districts in Ashcroft, Telegraph Creek, and Prince Rupert.²

The self-congratulatory sentiments expressed in the article did little to explain the provincial government's socio-political motives to integrate Indian children into the public school system after the Second World War. Until 1949, when British Columbia amended the *Public School Act* to legalize cost-sharing agreements with the federal Department of Indian Affairs, provincial education authorities showed no inclination to alter the two systems of education that officially functioned in the province. A federal system consigned Indian children to denominational residential and day schools, whereas a provincial system of public schools "conducted under strictly non-sectarian principles" restricted attendance to the children of white settlers.³

Curiously, the annual reports of Indian Affairs from 1900 to 1945 reveal that the dual system of schooling in British Columbia, seemingly embodied in government policy, was in practice not applied consistently to all regions of the province by either federal or provincial authorities. This article explores the unique circumstances surrounding a provincially-established school in British Columbia's remote northwest region where Indigenous and settler children learned together for almost a half-century before federal and provincial governments intervened in the immediate post-war years. As such, this paper forges new lines of historical inquiry into the critical — but overlooked — role played by provincial authorities in the schooling of Indigenous children.

The historical record shows that in 1949 the provincial Department of Education negotiated an agreement to share costs with the federal government to build a new and larger school for the children residing in Telegraph Creek. However, this article reveals that the official political rhetoric to offer Indian children “educational equality” belied the province’s complicity with an agreement made between Indian Affairs and the Catholic Diocese of Yukon and Prince Rupert to build a new residential school at Lower Post, 240 miles north of Telegraph Creek, just south of the Yukon border. Funded by the federal government and administered by the Catholic order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), Tahltan Catholic children were transferred from the public school at Telegraph Creek to the Lower Post residential school when it opened in the autumn of 1951.

Integrated Schooling

After World War II Indian leaders and returning veterans petitioned the federal government for enfranchisement, health, and welfare services equal to those received by the white population.⁴ Andrew Paull, leader of the North American Indian Brotherhood, stressed the urgency of settling land claims, hunting and fishing rights, and the need for more on-reserve schools for children and vocational programs for adults, if the government genuinely intended to improve Indian health and welfare.

J.R. Miller has shown that in addition to attitudinal factors,

integration was driven by financial concerns. In 1944, Indian Affairs Superintendent of Welfare and Training R.A. Hoey alerted government officials that the number of Indian pupils in both residential and day schools was expanding at a rate of 300 per year. He projected that to meet the growing demand for schooling, the federal government would need to build five day schools and one residential school annually. According to Miller, integration enabled federal authorities to avoid capital start-up expenditures on new schools and simply pay operating costs on a per capita basis to provincial schools and districts.⁵ John Milloy supports Miller's view, arguing that the rationale for the Canadian government's shift from segregated to integrated schooling was based on two factors: policy makers' longstanding goal to assimilate Native peoples into Canadian society, and "mundane financial considerations."⁶

The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons hearings of 1946–48 appeared to represent a concerted effort between federal members of Parliament, Indian Affairs officials, social justice groups, and Indigenous leaders to arrive at a consensus on how to improve socio-economic conditions for the Indian population. The final report of the committee, however, reflected the views of government authorities. Their recommendation to integrate Indian children into provincial school systems overlooked Indigenous demands for more on-reserve day schools and better teachers. The federal government adopted, *inter alia*, a policy of integrated schooling, which was legalized in 1951 with revisions to the *Indian Act*.⁷ Nevertheless, local practices were more diverse than the legislation of the day would suggest. In the province's isolated northern region where Indigenous groups outnumbered settler populations well into the mid-twentieth century, local school trustees depended on the attendance of Indian children to meet the minimum enrollment requirement for provincial funding.

In some cases, the push for Indian integration preceded government legislation to enable it in part because many provincial rural schools and church-state Indian schools were in a state of decay from years of reduced spending. "Joint federal-provincial funding for the construction and renovation of schools was certainly a driving force behind

integration,” according to Helen Raptis, but specific socio-economic conditions of regional communities were also critical factors.⁸

In a case study of integration in the historic town of Port Essington on the northwest coast of British Columbia, Raptis has illustrated how decisions made by federal and provincial policy makers, far removed from local contexts, were shaped by the short-sighted consideration of economic efficiencies and savings to the public purse. As Raptis discovered, the integration of Indian children from the Methodist Indian day school into Port Essington’s public elementary school took place for reasons that were rooted in the economic demise of the community itself and certain war-time decisions made at the federal level.⁹ The decline of the fishing canneries in the 1930s, combined with the removal of Japanese residents (almost half of the town’s population) to internment camps during World War II, made it economically unfeasible to maintain two elementary schools in the town.¹⁰ In 1947, the Indian day school was closed and students were moved into the public school in order to boost its student population. According to Raptis, “[a]lthough human rights concerns shaped the integration discourse at the federal level, there is no evidence to suggest that such matters played a major role in developments at Port Essington.”¹¹

By the early 1950s, when integrated schooling was underway in some regions of British Columbia, Anglican and Catholic clergy continued to advocate for segregated Indian schooling and, as Michael Marker pointed out, “the power of the churches to influence policy confounded the efforts of both Native leaders and politicians to reform and transform the residential schools.”¹² The revised *Indian Act* of 1951 enabled provincial and territorial governments, public and separate school boards, and religious or charitable organizations to make tuition agreements with Indian Affairs for the education of Indian children.¹³ Marker emphasized that because of the “Canadian ambiguity about changing policy, the residential schools continued to operate in parallel to a muddled approach to integration.”¹⁴

Telegraph Creek: Background

Telegraph Creek sits at the junction of a creek and the Stikine River in the northwest corner of British Columbia. Located some 160 miles upriver from Wrangell on the Alaskan panhandle and more than 1,000 miles by road from Vancouver, Telegraph Creek is currently home to 350 members of the Tahltan First Nation and 50 people of other ancestry.¹⁵ River boats, horses, and bush planes were the principal modes of transportation into the Stikine region until the Stewart-Cassiar Highway (#37) from the Alaska Highway (#97) to Terrace was completed in 1972.¹⁶

Historically, the Tahltan fished and hunted game in the Stikine region. However, the Tahltan population was reduced from an estimated 1,500 in the early 1830s to approximately 325 by the late 1840s due to settler-borne diseases to which they had no immunity.¹⁷ When British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871 it assumed jurisdiction over Stikine country. A gold strike near Dease Lake led to the Cassiar gold rush in 1874; the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) also established a trading store at Glenora, a boat landing flat a few miles downstream from Telegraph Creek. To resist the encroachment of white miners, Tahltan clans came together and settled in a village at the confluence of the Tahltan and Stikine Rivers, 14 miles upriver from Glenora and Telegraph Creek.¹⁸

J. Frank Callbreath, an entrepreneur and Telegraph Creek's first Indian agent, set up a trading and outfitting store at Glenora during the Cassiar rush. When the Klondike gold rush of 1898–1899 brought a second influx of 3,000 to 3,500 miners, Callbreath and the HBC relocated their stores to Telegraph Creek. In 1897, the Dominion government had cleared the telegraph trail north from Telegraph Creek to Atlin and it became a major transportation route and supply location for miners and government agents. Between 1899–1901, the government completed a working telegraph system from Dawson City, Yukon through Telegraph Creek to Quesnel.¹⁹ Though disease and alcohol had drastically reduced the Tahltan population during the gold rushes, those who survived continued their traditional subsistence activities and trade with the HBC. Some found waged work as guides, packers, and cooks for miners and out-

fitting companies. After the Klondike rush ended, Tahltan men readily transferred their skills to the business of big game hunting that steadily grew in the early 1900s.²⁰

At this time, several Tahltan families based themselves in Telegraph Creek because of opportunities to prosper in the new wage economy. They bought European goods and foodstuffs at the HBC store and a few families purchased lots and built log homes at the west end of the Telegraph Creek town site.²¹ Known as “Dry Town” because there was no access to the creek water that serviced the rest of the town site, its Tahltan residents hauled their water directly up the steep bank of the Stikine River.

In 1905, the Dominion government set aside two reserves for the Tahltan. The larger 375-acre reserve encompassed the village of Tahltan established in 1898, roughly 12 miles upriver from the town of Telegraph Creek; a smaller 40-acre parcel located north of the village served as a winter pasture for horses and a hunting camp.²² Though less than 50 non-Indigenous people ever settled permanently in Telegraph Creek, those who did so in the late 1800s and early 1900s developed a mutually beneficial relationship with the Tahltan people. What would prove to upset the balance in Tahltan-settler relations was the imposition of increasing government regulation of schooling and the eventual power struggle between Protestant and Catholic missionaries competing to save souls and acquire the necessary government monies in support of their efforts.

Early Missionary Activity, Settlement, and Schooling

Just as the fur trade and gold rush activities had led to settlement and natural resource development in southern British Columbia, a similar pattern played out in the remote northwest in the 1870s and again in the late 1890s when gold was discovered in the Cassiar and Klondike regions. Protestant and Catholic missionaries, following on the heels of miners and capitalists, established churches and schools for the salvation of both settler and Indian communities.

In 1896 Bishop Ridley of the Church of England (Diocese of Caledonia) made his first visit to the Stikine region. At Telegraph Creek he held services for whites and Indians and learned the Tahltan

language before returning to the mission at Metlakatla on British Columbia's northwest coast. Ridley appointed the Reverend F.M.T. Palgrave to establish a mission at the Tahltan village.²³ From 1897 to 1901 Palgrave concentrated his efforts on converting the Tahltan to Christianity. On a return visit in 1898, Ridley estimated that 3,500 miners were travelling between Wrangell and Telegraph Creek on their way to the Klondike gold fields. He was highly critical of the behaviour of the miners who continued to prospect in Stikine country and travelled to and from Telegraph Creek:

... the miners after a season's work is done, decoy from their homes the young women and provide them with the tawdry finery dear to their hearts. Telegraph Creek is their winter quarters and their drunkenness and debauchery are so established by long usage that no one seems to see the sin of it. Young Indian men ape the manners of the whites.²⁴

In the spring of 1905, Presbyterian medical missionary Dr. F. Inglis arrived in Telegraph Creek. He was surprised to find: "no church, no school, no hospital, no public institutions of any kind, except three saloons all driving a good trade."²⁵ The priority of the Presbyterian mission was to provide church, medical, and school services to the white population at Telegraph Creek; however, in a community which averaged a settler population of 25–30 whites and around 150 Tahltan (depending on the season), the needs of the majority could not be overlooked.²⁶

By the fall of 1905, Dr. and Mrs. Inglis had secured the use of a large floored tent where two services were conducted on Sundays: "a native service with interpreter in the morning, and an English service in the afternoon."²⁷ School was held on weekday mornings. In 1906, the Presbyterian Church purchased four buildings in the centre of town. A former saloon was converted to a church, while an outfitter's store became the Telegraph Creek public school. In January 1907, 21 pupils were enrolled and school trustees appointed. Under the terms of the *Public School Act*, the trustees obtained a grant from the provincial treasury, which designated the school as "assisted."²⁸ Mr. R.H. MacInnes, from Victoria's Normal School, was hired to be the first

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CREEK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1906-1951

teacher. With only a handful of school-aged white children in town and no denominational Indian day school in the near vicinity, school trustees welcomed the attendance of local Tahltan children and those of mixed ancestry to meet the province's minimum requirement of ten children. By 1912, enough funds had been raised to build a new log school house with a classroom on the first floor and teacherage above. Inglis reported, "school books are supplied free to the Indian as well as the white children, while the progress made by the pupils, both white and Indian, has been excellent."²⁹

In the meantime, Anglican missionaries negotiated the required funding from the Department of Indian Affairs to revive their mission day school at the Tahltan village. In the summer of 1909, Anglican Reverend Palgrave made a return visit to the Tahltan mission. He discovered that some of the Tahltan had moved from the village to the town of Telegraph Creek "so that their children may not be deprived of the R's."³⁰



School at Telegraph Creek (established in 1906) as it appeared in 1952, BC Archives collections, I-31887

In 1910, the Anglican Bishop Du Vernet (Diocese of Caledonia) announced in a letter to Palgrave that the Department of Indian Affairs had promised a teacher's grant of \$500 for the day school and a \$250 per annum rental fee for the use of the mission school building in the Tahltan village. With the Dominion funding and Church Missionary Society donations, Du Vernet was able to offer a salary of \$1,000 per annum for Palgrave's replacement, the Reverend T.P. Thorman.³¹ Assisted by the Tahltans, Thorman refurbished the dilapidated mission school house and, by July 1910, opened it with 15 students.

Thorman reported to Palgrave in February 1911: "I have eighteen in school now, mostly boys — six girls only — and so far have earned the full Government grant."³² But by October, school attendance had fallen to four children as most of the Tahltan were out on their fall hunt. When T.P. Thorman retired, and his son Fred P. Thorman took over the Tahltan mission in August 1912, the problem of erratic pupil attendance would continue at the mission day school. For Fred Thorman, the Tahltans' "migratory habits seriously handicap the teacher and their own advancement."³³

By 1913 another gold strike led again to an influx of miners. Thorman petitioned the Department of Indian Affairs for an Anglican "Industrial" school, which he saw as the long-term solution for educating the Tahltan youth.³⁴ From 1913 to 1916, Fred Thorman and his brother Robert managed to keep the day school running at Tahltan and minister church services to the Tahltan in Telegraph Creek one Sunday per month.³⁵ Yet, in the midst of the First World War, the Department of Indian Affairs — operating with a reduced budget — withdrew the tuition grant for the Tahltan day school when Thorman reported poor attendance rates for the 1915–16 school year. The school was closed.³⁶ In turn, many of the Tahltan moved closer to Telegraph Creek where their children could attend the provincial school.

After World War I ended in 1918 Fred Thorman returned to the Tahltan mission but did not reopen the day school. Instead, he turned his attention to establishing an Anglican presence in the town of Telegraph Creek. By 1924, when his successor Captain Hodgson took over, Thorman had constructed a new parsonage and church

(St. Aidan's) in Telegraph Creek; a new church at the Tahltan mission was also underway.³⁷ The Anglicans remained the only missionaries ministering to settlers and Tahltans in the town of Telegraph Creek and at the Tahltan village until 1930, when the Oblate Fathers built a church for the Tahltan in Dry Town.³⁸

In the fall of 1907, the first public school teacher at the Telegraph Creek school, R.H. MacInnes, had appealed to Frank Callbreath, acting Indian Agent for the Cassiar Agency, to obtain funding for the Indian children attending the school. MacInnes had learned that the Department of Indian Affairs was willing to grant \$30 per month if the Anglicans returned to run their mission day school in the Tahltan village. MacInnes requested the grant, but was ultimately turned down by Indian Affairs administrators in Ottawa who had little patience for the local socio-economic realities of the isolated Telegraph Creek.

Matters were further complicated in 1915 when the McKenna-McBride federal-provincial commission to investigate Indian lands in British Columbia heard testimony from Tahltan Chief Charlie Quash who claimed the Tahltans had purchased the land at the Tahltan village in 1898 and in Dry Town. Indian Agent Scott Simpson verified that ten to 12 Tahltan men and their families had purchased lots in Dry Town and paid annual property taxes, which legalized their children to attend Telegraph Creek's public school.³⁹ Despite this reality, both provincial and federal authorities generally neglected the situation, distant as it was from the epicenters of policy making at the time. In particular, the Department of Indian Affairs had no intention of paying tuition for children who did not attend school regularly (no matter the reasons), nor was it prepared to pay for children who were not considered status Indians under the terms of the *Indian Act*.⁴⁰

The Push for Residential Schooling

By the 1930s, with the Telegraph Creek school physically deteriorating and the classroom overcrowded with settler and Tahltan children, Simpson's replacement, Harper Reed, pressed the Department of Indian Affairs to fund the construction of a residential school to

ameliorate the school problem. In his first report to W.E. Ditchburn, the federal Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, Reed explained that the number of school-aged children in the Stikine region had grown to 155 and that discussion of a residential school was “becoming a vital and much talked of question amongst the Indians themselves.”⁴¹ He claimed the Indians were encouraged by the Roman Catholic clergy engaged in mission work in the Agency, and in part by:

the general trend of affairs, by which the Indians see that it is to the advantage of their children to have them read, write and add figures. Eaton’s catalogues [likely shipped to the HBC store for settlers in Telegraph Creek] have also had a lot to do with this line of thought.⁴²

According to Reed, the Indians were less concerned about religious instruction than with the overall quality of their children’s education.⁴³ Agent Reed recommended locating a residential school at 6 Mile Creek, six miles downstream from Telegraph Creek. This location had good water, salmon fishing, and was “on a main line of travel.”⁴⁴

In August 1930, C.C. Perry, the federal Assistant Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, met with veteran school trustee Mrs. Hyland who blamed the provincial Education Department for not providing sufficient school desks and books. While provincial treasury funds paid the salary of the teacher, no additional school taxes were collected from the district to pay for classroom supplies and equipment. Agent Reed advised Perry to ask the DIA for authorization to purchase the needed books and desks. In Perry’s opinion, “No doubt, lack of school taxation in Telegraph Creek is responsible.”⁴⁵ We can find no evidence to show why taxes were not collected from local residents of Telegraph Creek, but it is probable that by 1930 the community was feeling the impacts of the Depression which — among other things — reduced demand for furs, big-game hunting expeditions, and natural resource extraction on which the Stikine region depended.

Perry wished to address “the long standing controversy between the representatives of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Anglican

Churches respectively, as to which church merits an ascendancy in regard to residential school facilities.”⁴⁶ He thought it important to examine the Stikine Agency’s official census to sort out the religious affiliation of the Indians who claimed to be baptized into the churches. When the census book was examined “Family by Family” to determine religious affiliation, Perry learned that Indians in Stikine country had been baptized in past years by the Anglicans and re-baptized later into the Roman Catholic Church and vice versa. He expressed distress for the “division through baptism, by the respective clergy, of families.”⁴⁷ In a conciliatory gesture toward the Indian families concerned, he stated that any agreement reached between the churches as to religious affiliation was “subject of course to the acceptance of such status by the respective Family heads.”⁴⁸ In the Telegraph Creek vicinity, including the Tahltan village and Dease Lake, Perry reported that 130 Indians were of the Roman Catholic faith and 150 were Anglican Indians. In the entire Stikine Agency the total population of Indians was 812. Of these, Anglicans claimed 372, and the Catholic Church claimed a total of 440 adherents to the faith.⁴⁹

It is notable that no provincial education official, school trustee, or Tahltan individual attested to the relative success of the Telegraph Creek school wherein Tahltan and settler children had learned together for more than 20 years regardless of their religious affiliation. The proposed residential school would clearly have segregated Indian children and possibly created a permanent religious divide in their home communities. In 1930, Father Allard (OMI) and Reverend Hodgson (Anglican) demonstrated no particular concern for a religious division of the Tahltan; instead, they continued to argue over which denomination had the right to establish a school in the region. Allard had recently constructed a church with the assistance of the Tahltan in Dry Town, but Hodgson considered the town of Telegraph Creek and vicinity to be Anglican missionary territory given their early efforts at the Tahltan village. The fact that the Tahltan mission day school had been closed since 1916 did not weaken Hodgson’s resolve to reclaim Anglican territory.⁵⁰

By 1930, the concept of an “inter-denominational” school was not acceptable to all parties. Perry reflected, “while approved by

Reverend Hodgson for the Anglicans, it is not received with satisfaction by Reverend E. Allard, O.M.I. of the Catholic Church.”⁵¹ The archive reveals, however, that the Department of Indian Affairs took no immediate action after receiving Perry’s report in August.

In September 1930, the provincial Department of Education, likely apprised of Perry’s findings at Telegraph Creek, dispatched school inspector H.C. Fraser.⁵² Fraser met with the teacher, Mr. McDevitt, who informed him the school enrolled only three white children and 32 of “mixed blood” in the previous year.⁵³ Fraser described the Telegraph Creek school as a log building with teacher’s quarters on the second floor that needed “repairs to make the upstairs floor safe.”⁵³ The building and outdoor toilets were clean, but there was running water only in the summer. In winter, water had to be carried from the creek. Fraser’s final remark that a “new library of \$100 worth of books is now ready for use” indicates that either the province or the Department of Indian Affairs had responded to demands for new textbooks voiced by school trustee Mrs. Hyland.⁵⁵ The province would not send another school inspector to Telegraph Creek until 1949. Settler and Tahltan children — Anglican and Catholic — continued to attend the Telegraph Creek school for another two decades.

Conditions at the Telegraph Creek school rapidly deteriorated after 1936. Until he resigned his post in 1942, federal Indian Agent Reed wrote a continuous stream of reports to Ottawa about problems at the school. In February 1939 he blamed the increasing attendance of Indian children and the limited provincial funding for the poor conditions.⁵⁶ The Tahltan were struggling to bring in enough furs to the HBC and were moving closer to the town site to access relief provisions from the store:

As fur generally is vanishing the outside Indian families in the near district wish to come into town, send their children to this school, and as they cannot support their families, apply for relief, and practically live on store provisions.⁵⁷

Reed claimed that the Indians had access to the Anglican summer day school on the Tahltan reserve and a winter day school at Klappan (Iskut) run by the Catholic priests.

Due to the Depression in the inter-war years, provincial treasury funds were limited, but Reed was hopeful the province would take action after the provincial Minister of Health dispatched Dr. Meyer, a resident physician, to report on the conditions of the Telegraph Creek school:

The school building was condemned years ago, and since that time the youngsters in the Town have greatly increased, so that today it is a matter of over-crowding. This is rather serious in a community where T.B. [tuberculosis] is known to exist and the home conditions of the various half-breeds and Indians are not any wheres [sic] up to a standard of decent living.⁵⁸

In response, R.A. Hoey, Indian Affairs Superintendent of Welfare and Training, showed no sympathy for the Indian families to which Reed referred.⁵⁹ He argued that applications for relief from Indians who moved to town to send their children to the Telegraph Creek school were invalid. Hoey instructed, that “unless the resident Doctor and yourself approve of any family coming to live in Telegraph Creek Townsite for the winter, no relief will be allowed by this Department to such family.”⁶⁰

Reed repeated his complaints in his 1939 November and December reports to Ottawa. Hoey made no further suggestions as to how Reed should proceed, but there was no action forthcoming from the province to improve conditions in the school. By August 1940, Reed was beside himself:

The situation in this Townsite is extreme. Most of the children attending this school are halfbreeds, or straight Indians ... This is certainly one place in British Columbia at which the Provincial School authorities should take the whole matter upon themselves and supply the necessary housing and equipment to carry on their Provincial School education.⁶¹

One year later, Reed pursued the matter with Bishop Coudert (OMI), Catholic Diocese of Yukon and Prince Rupert, who was conducting his annual inspection of the seasonal schools in the Stikine

region. Reed suggested that the Oblates start up a winter school for the Catholic Indian children “who were living within the Township during the winter, and did not attend the local Provincial School,” though he made it clear that such a school should not be located in the Telegraph Creek town site.⁶²

Finally, Indian Affairs dispatched inspector Coleman to do a thorough review of schooling conditions at Telegraph Creek.⁶³ Arriving in September 1941, he found the teacher to be “very competent” but the schoolhouse with the teacher’s residence above was:

in very poor condition ... Five fires have occurred in the building in recent years. Sanitation consists of two dilapidated latrines. The only ventilation is from the wall and window leakages ... Due to the general conditions of the building, colds among the pupils are very prevalent with the usual lowering of resistance of the Indian pupils to pulmonary affections.⁶⁴

Coleman recommended that a new one-room Indian day school with a teacher’s residence be built at the Casca reserve on the left bank of the Stikine, a half-mile south of Telegraph Creek. Coleman undertook an informal survey of the local Tahltan families and determined that they were almost equally split between Catholics and Anglicans. In Coleman’s opinion, a nondenominational teacher should be employed to teach the Anglican children from November to April and the Catholic children from May to October. “The respective missionaries,” he suggested, “could be given full access during their respective periods, for reasonable religious instruction.”⁶⁵ Coleman did not explain how the proposed schooling arrangement would suit the seasonal hunting and fishing activities of the Tahltan, nor did he claim to have consulted them. Indian Affairs officials took no immediate action on Coleman’s proposal, although D.M. McKay, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, followed up with a note to Ottawa in the fall of 1941, arguing that “this project should be given consideration as soon as funds can be provided.”⁶⁶

The schooling situation gained urgency in the summer of 1942 with the construction of the Alaska Highway. The Tahltan, who had survived the onslaught of miners in the nineteenth century and

adjusted to a permanent presence of white settlers in the Stikine region since the early 1900s, were not initially affected during the construction phase. During the war, fur prices had rebounded and the Tahltan continued to trap and trade with the HBC as well as maintain their traditional subsistence practices.⁶⁷ Well aware of the ill effects from contact with the thousands of military and civilian workers bulldozing their way through the northwest in 1942, Bishop Coudert began pressing Indian Affairs for a residential school that would serve Indians of the Stikine and Yukon Agencies:

With the Alaskan [sic] Highway now connecting Lower Post with Teslin or Tagish Lake, the realization by the Department of our long cherished project of an Indian Residential School and Preventorium at Teslin Lake or at Tagish Lake would afford a considerable help for the education and civilizing of the Indians of Lower Post and Frances Lake; moreover destitute, backward, orphan children from other parts of the Stikine Agency and the Yukon Territory could also greatly benefit by such a school.⁶⁸

Since the mid-1920s, the Oblates had been operating winter day schools in the Tahltan villages at Dease Lake and Iskut Lake (Klappan); in neighbouring Kaska country, a summer school was located at McDame and a winter school at Caribou Hide.⁶⁹ Coudert argued that while the Department of Indian Affairs supported the Anglican boarding school at Carcross, 74 miles south of Whitehorse:

... nothing is being done for the children of the Catholic Indians of the Yukon, and so little is done for the Catholic Indians of the Stikine Agency ... We rely on the spirit of Justice and Fairmindedness [sic] of the Officials of the Indian Affairs Branch to see that a better treatment be granted to the Indians of the North, and we dare to insist that Justice be done to our Catholic Indians through a more adequate support of the existing day schools.⁷⁰

Coudert also claimed that the Oblates had been approached “time and time again by the Indians in Atlin [British Columbia], Tagish, Carcross, and Whitehorse [Yukon Territory] for a Catholic Boarding

School ... several of our Catholic Indian children had to be sent to the Anglican school at Carcross in the past, much to their detriment.”⁷¹

Hoey replied to Bishop Coudert in early October, explaining that Coleman’s report had been carefully reviewed by Indian Affairs officials. Suggestions for an appropriate school in the Stikine Agency had been sent on to D.M. McKay, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, who was advised to discuss the matter with the Bishop.⁷² He enclosed a copy of the letter for Coudert to review. In defense of the department and the fair treatment given to Anglican and Catholic organizations, Hoey attached a list of all the residential schools in Canada to illustrate that “while no Catholic residential school [had] been established in the Yukon, the number of Catholic schools in operation in the Dominion” was proof that there had been “no discrimination on the part of the Government at any time in the establishment of residential schools—certainly no discrimination against the Catholic Church.”⁷³

Coudert informed Hoey that he was highly insulted by inspector Coleman’s proposed nondenominational Indian day school, which he claimed was “illegal and unpractical Why should our many Catholic children of the Stikine Agency be compelled to frequent an undenominational school when by right they are entitled, according to the *Indian Act*, to a Catholic School?”⁷⁴ He argued that Coleman displayed a “thorough ignorance of the local conditions” in the region. The Bishop questioned how Indian children were expected to reach a day school at 6 Mile Creek from their outlying camps; Dease Lake was 80 miles away and Caribou Hide 200 miles distant.

Bishop Coudert favoured the possibility of Lower Post or Watson Lake as the most central points to serve the Indians of north-western British Columbia and Yukon. In closing, the Bishop explained his intention to work with, rather than against, Indian Affairs officials to achieve “the best possible treatment of the Indians entrusted to our common care I dare to maintain that a good ‘entente cordiale’ between Church and State over the education of the Indians should by all means be fostered and encouraged by both sides.”⁷⁵ Indian Affairs would eventually concede to Coudert’s demands; his wish for a Catholic boarding facility would be realized after World War II ended.

In the meantime, provincial authorities did little to advance the condition of rural schools until they acted on the recommendations of the *Cameron Report* after 1945, and consolidated school districts to increase tax revenues.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, isolated Telegraph Creek remained an “unattached district” dependent on local property taxation.⁷⁷

From Integration to Segregation

After the Alaska Highway was completed in 1942 and World War II came to an end, Stikine country became a target for mining exploration companies and big-game hunters, which led to more government regulation of natural resources and traditional Indigenous subsistence activities. While some employment opportunities opened up for the Tahltan, more settlers also took up waged work in the region. As birth rates began to increase rapidly in the late-1940s, federal post-war social programs, such as the Mothers Allowance, premised on children attending school regularly, pushed governments to build new schools and/or expand existing ones. Tahltan families wishing to receive federal benefits moved closer to Telegraph Creek in an effort to send their children regularly to school. As a result, the provincial school became increasingly crowded and by the spring of 1949, some 81 pupils were crammed into two rooms — the downstairs classroom and the former teacherage upstairs.⁷⁸

In April 1949, Indian Agent R.H.S. Sampson met with the local school board to address the dire schooling situation. In a letter to W.S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, Sampson claimed that everyone agreed that something had to be done to accommodate the 25–30 Indian children living in the vicinity, “in addition to fifteen Indian children whose parents are tax-payers and who are therefore entitled to attend the provincial school.”⁷⁹ Based on agent Sampson’s count, there were 44 white and 54 Indian children aged six to 15. He also noted that of the total number of Indian children, 35 were Protestant and 19 were Roman Catholic.⁸⁰ It was time, Sampson suggested, that the provincial Department of Education be consulted as to the possibility of building a new and larger “combined white and Indian school” in conjunction with the province.⁸¹

In 1948, the final report of the Special Joint Committee had recommended that Canada's *Indian Act* be revised in the sections that pertained to education, "to prepare Indian children to take their places as citizens Wherever and whenever possible Indian children should be educated in association with other children."⁸² At the end of the 1948 hearings, the Protestant churches agreed that denominational schooling should be gradually phased out, but wished to retain residential schools for orphans and neglected children. On the other hand, Catholic clergy expressed firm opposition to any form of integrated public schooling during the hearings and beyond, arguing that denominational institutions were critical for Indigenous students' "healthy moral development."⁸³ They continued to petition the federal government for assurances that proposed changes to the *Indian Act* would not usurp the right of Catholic Indian children to receive Catholic education in separate schools.⁸⁴ Until the churches were satisfied with the revisions made to the "Schools" section of the final bill legalizing changes to the *Indian Act* in 1951, Indian Affairs authorities could do little to fully integrate Indian children into the public school system.

For provincial and federal education officials negotiating a new school at Telegraph Creek in 1949, the children's religious affiliation was indeed the principal factor that would shape the final cost-sharing agreement. In May 1949, Indian Commissioner Arneil contacted Bernard Neary, Superintendent of Education for Indian Affairs. Based upon Sampson's school population figures forwarded by Arneil, Superintendent Neary replied:

It is presumed that the children concerned will be mainly Anglican We should explore the possibilities of entering into an agreement with the Province for these Indian children who can attend this new Telegraph Creek Provincial School. I presume that the R.C. [Roman Catholic] children will still continue to attend the seasonal school at Klappan.⁸⁵

Neary advised Arneil that R.F. Davey, Indian Affairs Inspector for British Columbia, should be the one to "approach the Provincial Authorities accordingly."⁸⁶

Meanwhile, F.T. Fairey, provincial Superintendent of Education in Victoria, sent provincial school inspector S.J. Graham to Telegraph Creek. As a provincial representative, Graham appeared to be as uninformed as the Indian Affairs Commissioner. His report did not acknowledge that the Telegraph Creek school had been condemned in the late 1930s. In a report to Fairey dated 4 July 1949, he found the physical condition of the school “appalling” and described it in detail:

Forty-nine pupils are enrolled in the senior room which occupies the class room space on the ground floor ... Pupils are seated in double and triple desks. Lighting is totally inadequate. The attic of the school, which was formerly used as a teacher’s residence is now used to house the grade one pupils who range in age from 6-12 years. Access to this room is secured by means of very steep stairs attached to the rear of the school ... TWENTY-TWO [emphasis in original] youngsters are taught in this room. Conditions of sanitation and of fire hazard are unbelievable.⁸⁷

In a review of attendance figures supplied by the teachers and agent Sampson, Graham stated that 79 children had been enrolled in 1948, with an average attendance of 77. Two teachers were employed, “neither of whom have had any teacher training.”⁸⁸ Estimating the school attendance for the following year, Graham believed that 104 pupils would attend grades one to eight. He reported that “at present, 25 children are wards of the Indian Department” and he expected this number to double in five years, “which would indicate that the Indian Department should be involved in the financing of any school construction undertaken.” Graham recommended that a three-room school be built to accommodate all the children and estimated construction to cost roughly \$100,000.⁸⁹

In July 1949, R.F. Davey attended a meeting in Victoria with the Deputy Minister of Education; in a second meeting two weeks later, he met with agent Sampson and inspector Graham.⁹⁰ After the meetings, Davey wrote a lengthy memorandum summarizing the situation at Telegraph Creek based on Graham’s report, and followed

with recommendations to Indian Affairs.⁹¹ On 2 August 1949, W.S. Arneil forwarded Davey's report to Ottawa. In his cover letter, Arneil was careful to mention that he had no knowledge of the fact that, "Indian children of both religious denominations had been attending the Provincial School for some years."⁹² Davey explained,

Now apparently because a new building is to be constructed, a segregation is to take place which will deny the right of attendance of the Catholic group of this Band, which is doubly unfortunate in that it will also segregate part of the Indian population from the white group. This is because the Indian Affairs Branch will not assume the responsibility for the cost of educating the Catholic children in this Provincial School, although it does so at other points. The reason for this is apparently that at some later date there is likely to be a request for the construction of a separate school for the Catholic children.⁹³

As the historical record indicates, Indian Affairs had paid tuition fees for the status Indian children enrolled at the Telegraph Creek school, regardless of their religious affiliation, for over four decades. They had also paid tuition for Indian children who had attended the Anglican mission day school at Tahltan, and the seasonal schools administered by the Oblates in remote regions of the Stikine agency. The provincial grant given to the local school board was based on a minimum required enrolment number; whether a child was Protestant or Catholic was of no consequence. However, as Davey correctly pointed out, the Catholic children at Telegraph Creek would now be segregated.

Knowing full well that Indian Affairs was bound to the terms of the existing *Indian Act*, Davey took a pragmatic route with officials in Ottawa and Victoria. Based on his projection of the school-aged population, he saw no reason why the Anglican and Catholic children could not be accommodated in a three-room provincial school until 1952, when an extra room would be needed for the increase in the Indian population.⁹⁴ Davey recommended that Indian Affairs permit the admission of Catholic and Protestant children in the new public school:

and if necessary provide a separate school for the Catholic population in about three years' time when we would undoubtedly be approached by the Province to bear the cost of an addition made necessary by the increase in the Indian population.⁹⁵

In November 1949, a new three-room school was opened in Telegraph Creek.⁹⁶ On 1 March 1950, a formal agreement was signed by the federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Charlie Callbreath, representative for the Telegraph Creek School District. After four decades of providing the minimal treasury funds to assist the Telegraph Creek school as per the terms of the *Public School Act*, the legal "amalgamation" of Indian and white children occurred in 1949 by authority of provincial Order-In-Council #1749.⁹⁷

The school board received the greater percentage of funding for the new school's construction cost and the Department of Education continued its oversight of curriculum, teachers, and administrative personnel.⁹⁸ Whether or not Indian children attended integrated or segregated schools, provincial curricula were not adapted to reflect Indigenous cultures or values. During the post-war era, Indian and immigrant children alike were expected to adopt Canadian liberal values claimed essential for citizenship.⁹⁹ Indian Affairs agreed to pay the larger share of construction costs, the annual tuition fees of the status Indian children, and were expected to: "maintain a standard of health, cleanliness and clothing among these Indian pupils such as would be comparable to that of White children attending the school."¹⁰⁰ In the entire text of the Order-In-Council, no reference is made to the religious affiliation of pupils and there is certainly no hint of the discriminatory actions taken by education authorities.

In 1951, the federal government, in partnership with the OMI, opened a residential school at Lower Post to serve the Catholic Indian children of the Stikine and Yukon agencies. Catholic Tahltan parents at Telegraph Creek were compelled to send their children to a segregated school 240 miles away from home or renounce their Catholicism. The provincial and federal governments and the Catholic and Anglican churches acting in their own self-interests, implemented a policy that enforced segregated schooling for Indian

children in the northwest. The residential school at Lower Post remained open until 1974.

Conclusion

The story of integrated schooling at Telegraph Creek magnifies the short-sightedness of policy makers in Victoria and Ottawa who demonstrated little historical knowledge or understanding of the community's efforts to school both Tahltan and settler children. When the Alaska Highway paved the way between British Columbia's north and south, government authorities awakened to the untapped potential of the region's rich natural resources. To encourage business interests and attract a more stable work force in the area, provincial politicians realized the value of improving the region's rural schools. After the Special Joint Committee hearings concluded in 1948 and recommendations were made to school Indian children together with white children, both provincial and federal officials were quick to see the advantage of sharing costs with Indian Affairs to replace overcrowded and crumbling rural schools, including the one at Telegraph Creek.

The revised *Indian Act* of 1951 legalized agreements between Indian Affairs and the provinces and territories, and religious and charitable organizations, for the tuition of Indian children. Though church officials were mollified, the lack of federal political will to relieve denominational organizations of their role in schooling led to ambiguous policy. Unlike other provinces, which had established separate public systems for Protestants and Catholics, British Columbia had "no provision whatsoever to meet Catholic objections to attending the so-called non-sectarian public schools."¹⁰¹ British Columbia's first *Public School Act* in 1872 clearly stated that all public schools were to be conducted "upon strictly non-sectarian principles" and that the "highest morality shall be inculcated."¹⁰² Despite Indian Affairs' avowed adoption of integrated schooling as the preferred policy direction for Indian pupils, Canada allowed denominational residential schooling in a province that neither acknowledged nor supported sectarian schooling.

Provincial and federal authorities intervening at Telegraph Creek

in 1949 missed the opportunity to genuinely integrate all of the Tahltan children into the public school system. Whereas Canada's postwar policy was to educate Indians with mainstream children, Telegraph Creek moved from integration to segregation as a means of accommodating the demands of Catholic Church authorities. More importantly, federal and provincial officials' indifference to the separation of Catholic children failed to safeguard them from the abuses they were to suffer in the residential school at Lower Post.¹⁰³

Scholars have largely focused attention on the historical church-state partnership that controlled and administered the segregated residential schools. These studies have made a vital contribution to our understanding of how Indian Affairs policy encouraged the coercive and ultimately destructive ways of educating Indigenous children.¹⁰⁴ Yet, the intense focus (which continues to this day) on the legacy of residential schooling has led to a view that most Indigenous children in Canada attended these schools until the revised *Indian Act* of 1951 legalized their entry into provincial public schools. As Michael Marker has opined: "a single-minded focus on residential schools as the core problem for indigenous education has cemented a conflated telling of the past in public consciousness."¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, the emphasis on the failings of federal policy has glossed over the role of provincial policy makers whose actions (or inactions) also contributed to an education system that, in the post-war era, never fully integrated Indigenous children into the public schools nor safeguarded them from the abuses the segregated system itself perpetuated. Combined with the indifference of provincial education authorities, the federal policy shift to school Indian children with "white children wherever possible" was poorly implemented in northwest British Columbia.

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Endnotes:

- 1 This paper uses the term 'Indian' reflecting the historic period under study. Wherever applicable we refer to the specific name of the Indigenous peoples concerned in this article, primarily the Tahltan whose traditional territories and life-ways in northwest British Columbia were disrupted by gold seekers, settlers, and missionaries in the nineteenth century and government officials in the twentieth century.
- 2 *Daily Colonist* (13 September 1950).
- 3 British Columbia's *An Act Respecting Public Schools* (1872) stated: "All Public Schools established under the provisions of this Act, shall be conducted upon strictly non-sectarian principles. The highest morality shall be inculcated, but no religious dogmas or creed shall be taught. All Judges, Clergymen, Members of the Legislature, and others interested in education, shall be school visitors." See full text at *Homerom*, www.viu.ca/homerom.
- 4 John F. Leslie, "Assimilation, Integration, or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943-1963" (PhD thesis, Carleton University, 1999), 87.
- 5 J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 383.
- 6 John Milloy, *A National Crime. The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 192. For other researchers who contend that integration was simply a mechanism for forced assimilation, see Sonia Brookes, *An Analysis of Indian Education Policy, 1960-1989*, (unpublished master of arts thesis, University of Calgary, 1990), 51, and Brian Titley, "The Education of the Canadian Indian: The Struggle for Local Control," *Journal of American Indian Education* 20, (1980), 1.

- 7 Helen Raptis and Samantha Bowker, "Maintaining the Illusion of Democracy: Policy-Making and Aboriginal Education in Canada, 1946-1948," *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 102 (27 March 2010), 17.
- 8 Helen Raptis, "Implementing Integrated Education Policy for On-Reserve Aboriginal Children in British Columbia, 1951-1981," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 20 (Spring 2008), 121.
- 9 Helen Raptis, "Exploring the Factors Prompting British Columbia's First Integration Initiative: The Case of Port Essington Indian Day School," *History of Education Quarterly* 51, No. 4 (November 2011), 541-543.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 539.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 520.
- 12 Michael Marker, "Indigenous Resistance and Racist Schooling on the Borders of Empires: Coast Salish Cultural Survival," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, No. 6 (December, 2009), 769.
- 13 The revised *Indian Act* of 1951 also protected the rights of Protestant and Catholic Indian families to send their children to corresponding denominational schools.
- 14 Marker, "Indigenous Resistance," 764.
- 15 Tahltan territory encompasses 93,500 square miles (11%) of British Columbia. The northwestern border runs parallel to the Alaskan-Canadian border, and the southeastern border includes the upper Nass tributaries and western half of the Stikine plateau, including the sacred headwaters of the Stikine, Nass and Skeena rivers. Approximately 1,300 Tahltan currently live in the villages of Telegraph Creek (Tlegohin), Dease Lake (Talh'ah), and Iskut (Luwe Chon). See "Territory," Tahltan Central-Council, www.tahltan.org.
- 16 The Tahltan people claimed the sovereign right to their territory with the "Declaration of 1910" signed by Chief Nanok and 83 members of the Tahltan nation. To this day, however, no treaty has been established between the Tahltan Nation and provincial or federal governments. See Appendix 1, "1910 Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe," in *Out of Respect: The Tahltan, Mining, and the Seven Questions to Sustainability*, Report of the Tahltan Mining Symposium, April 4-6, Dease Lake, British Columbia (The Tahltan First Nation and International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2003), 42.
- 17 Sylvia L. Albright, *Tahltan Ethnoarchaeology* (Simon Fraser University Publication Number 15, 1984), 16-17.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 20 Jonathon W. Peyton, "Red Gods in the Sportsman's Eden: Wildlife Conservation and the Ordering of Land in the Stikine Plateau, 1905-1918" (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 2006), 52.
- 21 Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 68.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 220.

- 23 Jan K. Krueger, Shane Conn, and Beth Moreau, "Tahl Tan Mission Study" British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), MS-2052 undated typed transcript 153 pgs, Opportunities for Youth Project (1971), 52.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 BCA, Vertical Files, D-19/140, "Telegraph Creek Mission and Hospital," report published by Women's Home Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (1912), 2.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid., 3.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Yukon Archives (hereafter YA), Jan Kees Krueger fonds 18 79/85, MSS 101f. 18, F. Palgrave, Letter to the Editor, 1909 in *North British Columbia News* (London: Church Missionary Society), xxxi.
- 31 YA, F.H. Du Vernet, Letter to Palgrave, 18 April 1910 *North British Columbia News*, xxxiii.
- 32 YA, T.P. Thorman, Letter to Palgrave, 11 February 1911 *North British Columbia News*, 80.
- 33 YA, F.P. Thorman to Bishop Du Vernet 10 March 1913, *North British Columbia News*, 45.
- 34 YA, F.P. Thorman to Mr. Robinson, 23 August 1913, *North British Columbia News*, 45.
- 35 Krueger, Conn, and Moreau, "Tahl Tan Mission," 70.
- 36 Ibid., 74.
- 37 YA, "Telegraph Creek and Tahl Tan — Be Anxious for Nothing" 1924 *North British Columbia News* 140; "Light After Darkness — a Cheering Note from Mrs. Thorman," January 1923 *North British Columbia News*, 74.
- 38 A precise date could not be located, but the historical record indicates no Presbyterian missionary activity in Telegraph Creek from 1913 onward. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) was ministering to the Tahltan at Klappan (Iskut) and Kaska peoples in isolated parts of Stikine country by the mid-1920s.
- 39 Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC) Indian Affairs, School Files RG10, Volume 6417 File 849 part 1–4, "Stikine Agency, Telegraph Creek Day School," Mflm C-8750, Letter MacInnes to Callbreath, 12 October 1906. There was no further discussion between Scott and the commissioners as to the ownership of land at Tahltan village as it had been allocated a Crown reserve in 1905. Indian Agent Simpson estimated that 10–15 Tahltan children legally attended the Telegraph Creek public school. See also testimonies in the digital collection: *Our Homes Are Bleeding - Agency testimonies from the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, 1913-16*. Union of BC Indian Chiefs <http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/>.
- 40 Leslie, "Assimilation," 79–80.
- 41 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1–4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750,

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- Letter Harper Reed (Indian Agent) to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for BC (DIA), 29 August 1928.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Extract from report of C.C. Perry, Assistant Commissioner for BC, 30 August 1930.
- 46 Ibid., 1.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid., 2.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid., 4.
- 52 BCA, GR-0122 British Columbia Department of Education, School Inspector Reports, Telegraph Creek, 14 September, 1930. Only the 1930 school inspector report by Fraser was found in the archive. No other reports were found for the period 1918-1948.
- 53 Ibid. McDevitt held a second-class certificate and was in Fraser's opinion, "of good personality and apparently of sound judgment." Fraser noted that McDevitt's former experience teaching Indian children in Ucluelet "should be of help to him."
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Report, Reed to DIA, 13 February 1939.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Report, Reed to DIA, 12 March 1939.
- 59 In 1936, Indian schooling came under the direction of the Superintendent of Welfare & Training when the Department of Indian Affairs became a branch of the Ministry of Mines and Resources.
- 60 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Letter, R.A. Hoey to Reed, 27 March 1939.
- 61 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Report, Reed to Indian Affairs, 14 August 1940.
- 62 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Report, Reed to Indian Affairs, 8 August 1941.
- 63 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Report, Coleman to Indian Affairs, September 1941.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Note, D.M. MacKay, Indian Commissioner for BC, to Indian Affairs, October 1941.

- 67 Albright, *Tahltan Ethnoarchaeology*, 20.
- 68 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1–4, “Stikine Agency,” Mflm C-8750, Letter, Bishop Coudert to Phil Phelan, Welfare & Training (Indian Affairs Branch) 23 September 1942, 2.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 1–2.
- 70 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 71 *Ibid.*
- 72 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1–4, “Stikine Agency,” Mflm C-8750, Letter, Hoey to Bishop Coudert, (Diocese of the Yukon and Prince Rupert, Whitehorse, YT) 8 October 1942.
- 73 *Ibid.* Hoey’s list of residential schools is not shown in this file. See Indian Affairs Annual Report, “School statement for the year ending March 31, 1943”, 168. Listed are 13 denominational residential schools in British Columbia: nine Roman Catholic, two Church of England, and two United Church.
- 74 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1–4, “Stikine Agency,” Mflm C-8750, Letter, Bishop Coudert to Hoey, 12 November 1942, 2.
- 75 *Ibid.*
- 76 Raptis, “Implementing Integrated Education,” 121.
- 77 BCA, British Columbia Council of Public Instruction orders-in-council GR-0138, Box10, File 2, 29 August 1947. Signed G. M. Weir, Minister of Education.
- 78 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1–4, “Stikine Agency,” Mflm C-875 Letter, R.H.S. Sampson to W.S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for BC, 13 April 1949.
- 79 *Ibid.*
- 80 *Ibid.*
- 81 *Ibid.*
- 82 LAC, Volume 71, RG26-A-2-a. Government of Canada, Minister of Mines and Resources. Memorandum to Cabinet — Educational Sections in Proposed Revision of Indian Act, 4 December 1948.
- 83 Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 391.
- 84 Leslie, “Assimilation,” 169–201. Leslie explains in detail how testimonies from Protestant and Catholic Church representatives during the Special Joint Committee hearings reflected competing views of integrated and segregated schooling motivated by divergent ecclesiastical interests but similar economic considerations. See also Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*, pages 390 to 392.
- 85 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1–4, “Stikine Agency,” Mflm C-8750, Letter Neary to Arneil, 25 May 1949.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1–4, “Stikine Agency,” Mflm C-8750, Report, S.J. Graham to F.T. Fairey, Deputy Minister and Superintendent of Education (Victoria, BC), 4 July 1949.
- 88 *Ibid.*

- 89 Ibid.
- 90 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, Memorandum, R.F. Davey, District Inspector of Indian Schools in BC, 26 July 1949.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 LAC, RG10 Volume 6417, File 849 1-4, "Stikine Agency," Mflm C-8750, W.S. Arneil to Indian Affairs Branch, 2 August 1949.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Ibid., 5.
- 96 ARPS, 1949-50.
- 97 BCA, British Columbia. Provincial Secretary GR-1955, Mflm. B06497, Order-In-Council #1749, 4 August 1950, 1.
- 98 Ibid. The total cost of the new school was \$40,322.61. Indian Affairs agreed to pay \$22,177.43 and the province \$18,145.18, which represented the 55% — 45% split Davey had recommended in 1949.
- 99 Milloy, *A National Crime*, 196-198.
- 100 Ibid., 3.
- 101 J. Donald Wilson, "The Evolving School: A Canadian Historical Perspective," in *Teaching, Schools and Society*, eds. Evelina Orteza y Miranda and Romulo F. Magsino (Basingstoke: The Falmer Press, 1990), 25.
- 102 Jean Barman, "Transfer, Imposition or Consensus? The Emergence of Educational Structures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Education History*, eds. N. Sheehan, J.D. Wilson, and D.C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig, 1986), 253.
- 103 To date, there is no published historical study of the Lower Post residential school administered by the OMI from 1951 to 1974 and staffed by the Sisters of St. Ann and federal civil service employees (boys' supervisors). Evidence of student abuse beginning in 1953 is drawn from a recently published report by Marcel-Eugène LeBeuf, *The Role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police During the Indian Residential School System, Report on behalf of the RCMP* (Ottawa: RCMP, 2012). The report indicates that, in 1957, RCMP conducted an investigation of the "Boys Supervisor" at the Lower Post residential school. Forty male pupils were interviewed and four charges of sexual assault were laid. The case was dismissed when witnesses refused to testify. After more complaints were made in the 1980s, RCMP from the Watson Lake (Yukon) detachment interviewed 45 students from 1990 to 1993 regarding incidents that occurred from 1953 to 1963. Boys Supervisors, B. Garard and G. Maczynski were found guilty on several counts of sexual assault and sentenced to four years and 15 months, and 16 years respectively.
- 104 Studies with a focus on Indian Affairs policy and residential schooling include: Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 1996; Milloy, *A National Crime*, 1999; and Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986).

The experiences of former residential school students are discussed in collaborative publications such as: Celia Haig-Brown, and the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, *Resistance and Renewal* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988); Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992). Terry Glavin, and Former Students of St. Mary's, *Amongst God's Own: The Enduring Legacy of St. Mary's Mission* (Mission: Longhouse Publishing, 2002).
105 Marker, "Indigenous Resistance," 771.