

“PART OF THAT WHOLE SYSTEM”: MARITIME DAY AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLING AND FEDERAL CULPABILITY

Martha Walls

St. Francis Xavier University
Antigonish, Nova Scotia
Canada, B2G 2W5
mwalls@stfx.ca

Abstract / Résumé

The Canadian state's effort to assimilate Aboriginal people was served by both Indian day and residential schools. Through an investigation of day and residential schooling in the Maritime Provinces over the two decades surrounding the 1929 opening of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, this article reveals another aspect of the coercive nature of Canada's residential school policy. Ottawa's overwhelming commitment to the region's sole residential school contributed to the ongoing neglect of day schools. By allowing Maritime day schools to languish, the federal government was better able to compel students' attendance at the more strongly assimilative Shubenacadie residential facility.

Les efforts de l'état canadien pour assimiler les peuples autochtones ont bénéficié de l'établissement des externats et des pensionnats indiens. Par le biais d'une enquête sur les internats et les externats dans les Provinces maritimes pendant plus de deux décennies entourant l'ouverture en 1929 du pensionnat indien de Shubenacadie, l'auteure présente un autre aspect de la nature coercitive de la politique canadienne sur les pensionnats. L'engagement prédominant d'Ottawa en faveur du seul pensionnat indien de la région a contribué à la négligence continue des externats. En laissant stagner les externats de la région, le gouvernement fédéral a été plus en mesure d'obliger les élèves à fréquenter le pensionnat plus assimilateur de Shubenacadie.

On 13 June 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stood before the House of Commons and apologized for Canada's policy of residential schooling for children of First Nations. In its wake, a new Aboriginal lobby related to Ottawa's culpability in its Aboriginal educational policies emerged. Less than a week following Harper's apology, on 17 July 2008, a group of Maritime Mi'kmaq came before the media insisting that federal day schools—an educational model that preceded and coexisted with the residential school system—had been harbingers of the same damaging, assimilative policies that marred the residential school system. Consequently, they insisted, financial reparation along the lines of residential school payouts was warranted.¹ While the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) set about studying the issue, Ottawa quickly asserted that the Residential Schools Settlement (finalized in 2006) was applicable only to students of those institutions. Ottawa's assertion found little resonance with day school attendees, and in July 2009 a Winnipeg-based group, Spirit Wind Inc., launched a class action lawsuit seeking compensation for students who attended day schools and who "suffered the same" as residential school attendees.² Although this lawsuit is still pending, the lobby for recognition and compensation for day school students, and the statement by one of its Mi'kmaw advocates that "[a]lthough we didn't spend the nights there, we were part of that whole system," are important; they remind us that residential schools operated in a larger educational context—spatial and chronological—and that the interconnection between day and residential schools impacted the operation of both school models which, in turn, shaped the educational experiences of Maritime Aboriginal children.³

Day schooling certainly shared the assimilative mandate of residential schooling. Like residential facilities, on-reserve day schools aimed to replace Aboriginal cultures with Euro-Canadian cultural values and the English (or French) language.⁴ It warrants noting, however, that while both types of schools were aimed at assimilation, day schools—because they allowed students to remain at home—were, for Aboriginal people, a preferred, if problematic, educational model. A second area of interconnection between day and residential schools—one that is the subject of this paper—is the way in which federal support of residential schooling undermined day schools. Drawing primarily on evidence surrounding day and residential schooling in the Maritimes during the 1920s and 1930s—the decades preceding and following the opening of Nova Scotia's Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in 1929—this paper argues that the federal government's overweening commitment to the region's sole residential school contributed to the ongoing neglect of Maritime day schools.⁵ In this context, the coercive nature of federal

residential school policy is more fully revealed. By allowing day schools to languish, Ottawa not only found added justification to compel students' attendance at the more strongly assimilative residential facility, but, in offering abysmal day school conditions, coercively "encouraged" Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) families to enroll children at the residential school.

Maritime Day Schools

Until 1929, most Maritime Aboriginal children who were schooled received their education through day schools – an educational model with a long, if sporadic, pedigree in the Maritimes. As early as the late eighteenth century day schools operated in the region. In 1787, for example, the London-based New England Company set about "civilizing" New Brunswick's Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik using English-language day schooling, apprenticeship-based vocational training and conversion to Protestantism. Funded by the New England Company, this education scheme was administered by the colony's leading Anglicans.⁶ The original plan to establish a series of schools across the colony, however, proved too ambitious and by 1791 just one school was operating at Sussex Vale, New Brunswick. In 1826, facing Aboriginal reluctance to enroll pupils and in light of colonial officials' exploitation of moneys earmarked for the scheme, the New England Company withdrew its funding and the Sussex Vale School closed.⁷ The closure of the New England Company schools heralded an era of limited educational opportunities for Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik children. Reflecting the very essence of a Maritime colonial rule that largely ignored the region's Aboriginal population, the provision of Aboriginal schools concerned few colonial administrators and garnered no colonial funds – in spite of Aboriginal petitions calling for the creation of schools.⁸

When the British North America Act in 1867 granted the federal government authority over "Indians and Lands reserved for the Indians," the education of Maritime Aboriginals became a federal responsibility, though it was one that got off to a shaky start.⁹ Three federally-funded schools were established on Cape Breton in 1871 but they were short-lived; in 1872 a more enduring school opened at Bear River on Nova Scotia's mainland.¹⁰ In 1871, New Brunswick had two schools in operation, though both were closed within six years.¹¹ Lennox Island on Prince Edward Island was the sole Maritime Aboriginal community with a federal school consistently in operation from 1867. Established first when the Island assembly voted funds for the creation of a non-denominational school, it became a federal responsibility when Prince Edward Island joined Confederation in 1873.¹²

Usually located on designated reserves, federal day schools were built, staffed and monitored by the federal government's Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), which was established in 1880.¹³ The Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik had ambiguous relationships with the twenty-two federal day schools in operation on the eve of the opening of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in 1929. As they had before 1867, Maritime Aboriginal people saw value in academic training and after Confederation they insisted that Ottawa was responsible for providing them schools. Maritime Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik demonstrated their strong commitment to securing formal schooling for their children when, in frequent cases where Ottawa shirked its responsibility to provide schools, they established and maintained their own school houses. The Mi'kmaq of the New Germany Reserve in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, for example, operated their own school for three years before Ottawa finally provided a school building and teacher in 1886.¹⁴

While Maritime Aboriginal people valued formal schooling and insisted that Ottawa provide it, they did not support the assimilative objective of federal Indian education policy. Andrea Bear Nicholas has observed that day and residential schools were linked by a federal policy aimed at transforming Aboriginal people and argues that while day schools may have been "[l]ess well known than residential schools... [they were] just as genocidal in intent."¹⁵ Day schools, like residential schools, had as their ultimate goal the undermining of Aboriginal culture, something made abundantly clear by the federal Department of Indian Affairs. In its 1895 Annual Report, the DIA outlined the lessons that should prevail in day schools. It was a given that students were to be instructed in the English language and their lessons focused on such subjects as "obedience, respect, order and neatness," "The Citizenship of Indians, patriotism, and pauperism," "Indian and white life" and "Patriotism, the Evils of Indian Isolation, Enfranchisement."¹⁶ The intent of these lessons was not lost on the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik, and they contested this assimilative agenda of day schooling.

One way in which Aboriginal people challenged school programs aimed at their cultural assimilation was through their insistence that their own languages be used in the classroom instead of the mandated English. While the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik were quite able to communicate in English and doubtless valued the skill of English literacy, they also remained committed to their own languages and, in some instances, sought to have them used in the classroom.¹⁷ In New Brunswick, for example, five Mi'kmaw sisters who were day school teachers – Mary, Margaret, Martha, Rebecca and Alma Isaacs – were highly sought after by Mi'kmaw communities because they insisted that their classes be

conducted in the Mi'kmaw language – a clear contravention of Ottawa's English-only language policy. A 1915 petition of the Mi'kmaq of Elsipogtog (Big Cove) New Brunswick insisted that Alma Isaacs be hired because she "speaks the Micmac language and we know that more children will attend the School and that those who attend will make better progress in their studies with a teacher who is able to explain to them in their own language than they do now when all the teaching is done in a strange tongue." Community members further insisted that they would not send their children to school unless their teacher was proficient in the Mi'kmaw language.¹⁸

The Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik also recognized the myriad problems that afflicted the day school system. Day schools were obviously intended to impart only a rudimentary level of education. Until 1928, no Maritime federal day school offered classes beyond grade six, an educational offering that lagged behind public schools. In Nova Scotia common schools educated pupils to eighth grade and, while only a minority of children attended, high schooling was available for four more years. By 1918 schooling was mandatory for all children in Nova Scotia and in 1925-1926, 71.6 per cent of enrolled pupils attended on a daily basis.¹⁹ This stands in sharp contrast to the mere 42 per cent of Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik children who attended school regularly.²⁰ Attendance in Nova Scotia common schools was weighted to the lower grades and in 1926 roughly half of common school pupils were working in the lowest three grades.²¹ This trend was even more pronounced in federal day schools. In the decade before the opening of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, the vast majority of day school students—over 70 per cent in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island and over 80 per cent in Nova Scotia—worked at the lowest three grade levels.²²

Maritime day schools were also notoriously poorly provisioned, often short on such basics as desks and books. In extreme (but not rare) cases, the total absence of a school house necessitated that classes be conducted in private homes.²³ Such was the case in 1908, when classes at Eel Ground, New Brunswick, were held at the Chief's home. The local Indian agent, commenting on the school's insufficient resources, reported to the DIA that without teaching aids such as maps, black boards or lesson cards "it is impossible for the teacher to do any kinds [sic] of work."²⁴

Day schooling in the Maritimes also suffered from frequent and extended school closures, usually owing to a lack of teachers or heating fuel. In April 1907, for example, the Indian agent for Esgenoôpetitj (Burnt Church), New Brunswick, reported that the school there had been closed since the previous December because there was no teacher. Eight years

later the school at Elsipogtog likewise sat empty for want of a teacher.²⁵ Lacking access to fuel also compromised school operation. This was the consequence of both depleted timber resources on many reserves and a DIA reluctance to provide fuel sources in a timely manner when the need arose. For instance, in 1913, the school at New Germany, Nova Scotia, was closed due to a lack of wood supply.²⁶ This remained an on-going issue for federal day schools; as late as 1947, classes at Eskasoni, Cape Breton, were cancelled because there was no coal to heat the building.²⁷

In other instances, schooling was compromised because school-houses were structurally unsound. This was a real concern for teacher Mary Gillis in New Germany, Nova Scotia, and it prompted her in 1910 to complain to the DIA that she feared the walls of the school house were so badly cracked that the building would topple.²⁸ The stability and safety of day school buildings were a long-standing concern to DIA officials in the Maritimes who struggled in vain to properly maintain school facilities. As Nova Scotia Indian Superintendent A. J. Boyd explained to a concerned Mary Gillis, "I have been doing my best in the matter of repairs to Indian school buildings in Nova Scotia...it has been impossible for me to overtake all the work of that kind that requires to be done."²⁹

Day schooling was also impaired by a September-June school term. Ill-suited to the seasonal mobility of the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik—who travelled in pursuit of seasonal work and of subsistence activities—the schedules of day schools contributed to erratic and low rates of attendance.³⁰ One Indian agent reported in the spring of 1912 that, "at this season, after planting, many of the Indians move out – some to fish, and others to work in the towns and industrial centers." This, he asserted, "accounts for the small attendance at the [day] school."³¹ Moreover, schooling in the winter months brought particular challenges as poverty and the shoddy construction of school buildings made attendance difficult for children without adequate warm clothes. The teacher at Eel Ground, New Brunswick, like those on many reserves, made the connection between the want of clothing and school attendance when she noted that "the only cause of irregular attendance is when they are in need of some clothing."³² Federal officials who were disappointed with low rates of attendance received requests to alter the school schedule, but they steadfastly refused.³³

Given such dismal conditions—poorly built, poorly heated, and poorly attended—day schools tended to attract teachers of dubious commitment and ability. The region's best-trained teachers preferred positions in provincial schools where wages were higher, while Ottawa was committed to hiring less-qualified teachers for day schools who would work

for lower wages. A Nova Scotia Indian agent acknowledged this in 1912, stating, "at present there appears to be no particular desire among the successful class of our teachers to occupy such schools."³⁴ When the Nova Scotia Indian Superintendent complained of the calibre of teachers in the employ of the Department and suggested that "only Normal School graduates [serve] as teachers in Indian schools," his superiors dismissed the proposal as unfeasible.³⁵ The under-qualification of teachers contributed to the lack of academic rigor in the day schools.³⁶

Not only did day schools attract less able teachers, they were also infamously known for their high rates of teacher turnover. Nearly forty per cent of all teachers who taught in Maritime day schools between the years 1900 and 1951 remained at any one facility for just one school year or less.³⁷ It is little wonder. In addition to overseeing classroom activities, teachers were expected to complete an array of extracurricular tasks, including visiting families and acting as truant officers and nurses. A parish priest to the Wolastoqiyik at Tobique, New Brunswick, made clear the high expectations for teachers when he remarked in 1920 that educators at day schools must be, among other things, "pastor and teacher and advisor" in their communities.³⁸ For all this, teachers received meagre salaries with which they were consistently dissatisfied.³⁹

Ottawa was also administratively ill-equipped to adequately oversee its Maritime day schools and often relied on provincial school inspectors to investigate day school operations. However, day schools were rarely visited by provincial school inspectors for the simple reason that they had no authority over federal schools, and they knew that their efforts were wasted.⁴⁰ When, in 1912, the secretary of the DIA informed the superintendent of Nova Scotia's Department of Education that some day schools were "not visited at all" by inspectors, provincial inspector J.T. MacNeil replied that "[a] good many years ago I used to visit [federal day schools] till I found that I had little or no influence over them or control over their teachers; so I ceased to inspect them."⁴¹ In 1925, another frustrated school inspector, James MacKinnon of Cape Breton, complained that "[a]fter repeated visits to these schools followed by continued disregard for the recommendations made by me in connection with them, I came to the conclusion that nobody was taking very seriously the matter of the education of the Indians in this part of the country and I did not want to continue to be party to what appeared to me to be nothing but a farce."⁴² The issue of inadequate monitoring of day schools continued after the opening of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential school; in 1935 Ottawa employed only one federal inspector to assess the dozens of day schools in Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.⁴³

For this array of reasons, federal day schools failed to serve Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik communities adequately. Indeed, many Aboriginal people lived in communities without day schools at all, a situation that created even greater educational impediments. In 1928, for example, concerns about the Indian status of residents of the New Germany Indian Reserve in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, prompted Ottawa to close that community's school, leaving all Aboriginal children in the entire Lunenburg/Queen's County Indian Agency without one.⁴⁴ Eight years later, the Indian agent for Nova Scotia's Cambridge Indian Reserve complained that children there had no school and were "growing up without getting some education."⁴⁵

Off-reserve provincial public schools provided, in theory, an educational alternative, albeit an imperfect one. Provincial schools, like most day schools, were conducted in English and they were also located away from Aboriginal communities. Some Aboriginal parents probably opposed the English-language training of provincial schools (as they did in federal day schools), while others who desired an education for their children might have seen in public schools an educational opportunity. Certainly, the DIA thought so and occasionally facilitated the enrollment of Aboriginal children at public schools. Gaining access to provincial public schools, however, proved to be extremely problematic. Not only was Ottawa reluctant to foot the cost of tuition, but the isolation of many Aboriginal communities made the daily commute to public schools extremely difficult for would-be students.⁴⁶ Racism was also an impediment, a fact clearly demonstrated by a 1914 dispute between the DIA and non-Aboriginals at Rice Point, Prince Edward Island. Although P.E.I.'s Superintendent of Education insisted that rate payers who funded provincial schools "could not draw a color line...[and they] were legally bound to provide for all children of school age in the district," local school trustees refused to accept Aboriginal pupils.⁴⁷ Given such opposition, Ottawa acquiesced and the Mi'kmaw children with no access to a federal day school at Rice Point were also denied attendance at the local provincial school. Rejection of Aboriginal children at provincial schools was not infrequent and Aboriginal communities across the region recognized that their children were not welcome at certain public schools. While Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik parents desired education for their children, the bigotry of white communities, the distances between reserves and public schools, and the English-language mandate of these schools doubtless made on-reserve schooling a preferred option. It is not, therefore, surprising that in 1910 the Mi'kmaw residents of Red Bank, New Brunswick lobbied to have a community school built so that their children would no longer have to attend the public school at the nearby

community of South Esk. The petitioners noted that the growing number of school-aged children warranted the establishment of a day school in the community because their children were “not used right” at the “white” school.⁴⁸ In this context in which Ottawa failed to provide day schools and in which public schools were not welcoming of Mi’kmaw and Wolastoqiyik pupils, many Aboriginal children grew up without access to schooling.⁴⁹

The inadequacies of the day school system (and other educational options) in the decades preceding the opening of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School are reflected in rates of Aboriginal student school attendance. Between 1910 and 1930, fewer than 50 per cent of Aboriginal children in the Maritimes attended a day school regularly. In 1910, just 60 per cent appeared on school rolls and only 32 per cent attended regularly.⁵⁰ Although the percentage of school-aged children who were listed on school rolls had grown to 78 per cent by 1915 and while there was an increase in regular attendance, that figure only stood at 42 per cent.⁵¹ In 1928, the year before the residential school opened at Shubenacadie, just 66 per cent of Maritime Mi’kmaw and Wolastoqiyik children were on day school rolls and only 42 per cent attended regularly.⁵²

The Shubenacadie Indian Residential School

It was into this dismal educational context that the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School—the only such institution east of Quebec—was opened in 1929.⁵³ Staffed by the Roman Catholic order, the Sister’s of Charity, the school could accommodate 150 students and was, in complex ways, connected to the Maritime day school system.⁵⁴ Initially, the residential school was designed “for the education and care of the orphans and neglected children from the various reserves.” In short, it was intended to be a facility for select children facing extreme life circumstances.⁵⁵ By the eve of its opening in May 1929, however, the institution’s mandate had expanded. Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, noted that the new facility would have “the more important part” in Maritime Indian education. He explained that while the “provision for orphans, illegitimates and neglected children” would be part of its mandate, the residential school would also be open to “many Indian children [who] live too distant from Indian or public schools to attend regularly.” Not just an institution for “orphaned or delinquent children,” the residential school was to accept children for whom day schooling—if it existed—would have been an educational option.⁵⁶

DIA records suggest that even before its opening Ottawa privileged

the residential facility over Maritime day schools. Federal officials obviously expected the residential school to have a negative impact on day schooling and warned of such consequences. When, for example, in May 1928, the teacher of the Shubenacadie day school (one of the largest in Nova Scotia and located on the reserve which was approximately 10 kilometers from the residential facility) petitioned Ottawa for school supplies, she was denied her request on the grounds that “the future of the day school will be uncertain after the Indian Residential School is in operation.”⁵⁷

The 1929 opening of the residential school also coincided with a reduction of federal funding to Maritime day schools. Although such funding fluctuated according to the federal budget and had never been adequate, expenditure on day schools did increase steadily in the post-war boom years of the decade before the opening of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. In the 1910s, DIA expenditure on Maritime day schools averaged \$17,534 a year;⁵⁸ in the 1920s expenditures grew and by 1929 Ottawa spent \$32,858 on the facilities. During this decade, day school spending increased by an average of \$1,860 each year. The decade following 1929, however, tells a very different story. At no point in the 1930s was the 1929 level of day school expenditures again reached.⁵⁸ Moreover, the spending increases that characterized the 1920s collapsed in the 1930s when day school expenditures actually fell by an average of \$418 each year.⁶⁰ Doubtless, the Great Depression played a role as federal funds were diverted to relief expenditures.⁶¹ Yet, added to this fiscal pressure was most certainly the fact that the residential institution required massive spending – funding it received even during the difficult 1930s. Throughout the 1930s the new school at Shubenacadie was allocated far more revenue—nearly \$80,000 more— than all 22 Maritime day schools combined.⁶²

Reduced federal spending on day schools perpetuated and compounded day school problems and ensured that the educational options of the Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik students remained limited. In the decade following the residential school's opening, day schooling remained out of reach of many Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik children. In 1930, only 47 per cent of school-aged Aboriginal children attended day school regularly; in 1940 this remained essentially unchanged at 46 per cent.⁶³ At the same time, the educational attainment of those minority Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik students who did attend day schools regularly remained limited with 63 per cent of New Brunswick students, 76 per cent of Nova Scotia pupils and 70 per cent of Island day school students working in the first three grades. Very few children worked at the upper levels. During the 1930s just seven per cent of New Brunswick

day school students, 2.8 per cent of Nova Scotia pupils and 4.2 per cent of Prince Edward Island attendees were working beyond a seventh grade level.⁶⁴ The perpetuation in the Maritimes of what was obviously a flawed day school system proved a double edge sword. Not only did it give federal officials added justification for the enrollment of pupils at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, day school shortcomings also prompted some Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik parents to see in the residential institution a stronger educational prospect for their children.

Forced and Compelled Enrollment

The opening of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School—and the concomitant stagnation of day school services—shaped the educational experiences of Maritime Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik children. Especially profound was the federal government's legislated ability to force children to leave their communities to attend the Shubenacadie facility against the wishes of their families. Federal commitment to enforcing truancy laws at the Nova Scotia residential school exceeded those laws in place in the provinces' public school system. Residential school attendance was mandatory as of 1894, but it was twenty years later, in 1915, that public schooling became mandatory in Nova Scotian cities and only in 1918 that truancy laws were applied province wide.⁶⁵ While provincial school attendance was enforced by local truancy officials, Indian agents and residential school staff had the support of the RCMP in compelling Aboriginal children to attend. The school's ability to invoke RCMP support was routinely advertised by school officials to remind recalcitrant parents of the school's power to force attendance. In 1937, for example, school principal Father J.P. Mackey ominously warned an "obstinate" father who resisted the return of his children to the school at summer's end that if the children were "not back here within a week, you will have no one but yourself to blame for any trouble that may follow."⁶⁶ The power of DIA officials to compel attendance at the Shubenacadie and other residential schools was profound and former residential school students across the country have recounted the traumatic experience that was the "fall roundup" as each autumn DIA officials, backed by RCMP, collected truant students and forcibly returned them to school.

Although some families did successfully resist such compelled enrollment, instances of forced attendance nevertheless abound in the archives of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School.⁶⁷ Moreover, while admission forms stipulated that parent/guardian signatures were necessary on enrollment, this requirement was easily waived and many children attended the facility against their families' wishes. In 1936, the

practice of compelling enrollment in the absence of parental consent was openly endorsed when the federal Indian Affairs Branch's Superintendent of Welfare and Training, R.A. Hoey, acknowledged that "it will be possible to place [students] at the [Shubenacadie] residential school without [parental] consent."⁶⁸ Ottawa maintained that "during [students'] residence at the school and even during the summer holidays when they are at home" the principal is "their personal guardian."⁶⁹

Coerced enrollment at the residential school also took a more subtle form, one that involved Ottawa's ongoing neglect of Maritime day schools. By failing to improve day schooling, the federal government compelled Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik families to "choose" the residential school. Of course, such choice was a chimerical illusion and, as Roland Chrisjohn, Sherri Young and Michael Maraun have cautioned, was a "choice" only in so much as it was one "between bad education and no education at all."⁷⁰ Severely lacking educational options at home clearly precipitated the difficult decision to "willingly" send a child to the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. In 1936, one mother sought enrollment of her unschooled children at the Shubenacadie facility "on the ground that they will learn more there than at home."⁷¹ That same year a father wished to enroll his seven-year old because, as he explained, "I wanted to get her started to school but the school here is five miles from where I am living this winter."⁷² In 1938, 23 inhabitants of the P.E.I. Lennox Island reserve, concerned about the poor quality of teachers at their school, petitioned the DIA, stating that "on account of the manner in which our school is being conducted, [we] do hereby beg that you take steps to have all our children placed under the care of the school at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia."⁷³ Seven years later children were still leaving Lennox Island to attend the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School because of educational shortcomings at home. In 1945, the PEI Indian Superintendent explained to DIA officials that approximately twenty students from Lennox Island were attending Shubenacadie "that might well be going to our own school on the Reserve were there accommodation for them."⁷⁴ The enrollment of these children at the residential school spoke to the chronic and ongoing problems of the day school system and was by no means an endorsement of Shubenacadie's curriculum, policies or staff. These enrollments illustrate both Ottawa's utter failure to provide Aboriginal people the community-based educational opportunities for which it was responsible and also the subtlety of its coercive power.

Educational Shortcomings of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School

The academic offerings of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential

School were dismal and, like residential schools across the country, its educational mandate was decidedly unambitious. Specifically designed not to “overeducate” students, the Shubenacadie school’s academic curriculum was remedial and placed an inordinate emphasis on menial, unskilled labor – labor that would both prepare Aboriginal students for what were to be their limited stations in life and that would ensure the smooth and inexpensive operation of the school. The Shubenacadie institution, like other residential schools, adhered to a “half and half curriculum.” Manual labor, the primary concern of school staff, occupied half of each day; students studied only on the completion of labor.⁷⁵ In October 1936, one former pupil of the Shubenacadie institution described how her academic schooling suffered as the result of the manual labor required of her. She asserted that girls “had to start work at 5:30 [in the morning] in kitchen and were kept working til 6:30 p.m.... In the eleven weeks I was in the kitchen, I spent a total of two weeks in school.”⁷⁶ Agent W.S. Prince’s acknowledgment that “general reports from the children complain of too much work and not enough study” suggests that this girl’s experience was no anomaly. Indeed, that physical labor was an overriding consideration of the residential school is revealed by the fact that grade levels assigned to children often corresponded to their physical statures and their abilities to complete certain physical tasks and not to their academic capabilities. When, for example, the DIA questioned an agent about the enrollment of a six-year-old child (who was legally too young to attend the school), the agent explained that the child was in fact seven but that he had lied about the student’s age because of the child’s “very small stature.”⁷⁷ The boy was old enough to attend the school, but his age was fudged because officials were concerned that the student’s small stature would prevent him from completing the manual labor associated with seven-year olds in grade one.

Academic achievement was hampered in other ways as well. In theory, the residential school offered a curriculum through to eighth grade, but, as in day schools, most students worked in the lowest grades. Between 1931 and 1939, 64 per cent of all students were working in the first three grades, 32 per cent in grades four through six, and four per cent beyond grade six. Although the decade of the 1940s saw a more balanced distribution of students throughout the various grade levels, the first six grades, and especially the first three, remained over-represented. In that decade, 53 per cent of all residential students worked in the first three grades, 36 per cent in grades four through six, and only 11 per cent worked beyond grade six. It is also clear that students left the school after having advanced only slightly in the academic curriculum, a charge leveled by Agent Edward Harry in 1936. Harry lamented that he

was “rather disappointed with the results” of the residential school. Graduates of the facility, “bright and sharp children of 14 years,” were, he alleged, “doing only Grade five work.”⁷⁸ The Shubenacadie Indian Residential School offered an extraordinarily weak course of studies. Although it emerged—in the context of lacking day school options—as an educational alternative, and although some families were compelled to send their children there for want of educational alternatives, the residential school’s academic offerings left very much to be desired. No matter how capable or how dedicated Mi’kmaw and Wolastoqiyik students were, their educational attainment at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School was limited and they were destined to be trained to become unskilled laborers. The fact that some families saw educational advantage in the school despite its clear academic shortcomings is strongly indicative of the dearth of educational options available to Mi’kmaw and Wolastoqiyik children in their communities and illustrates the overwhelmingly coercive power of the state in shaping Mi’kmaw educational opportunities.

Conclusion

In August of 1930, just a year after the opening of the Shubenacadie residential school, Mi’kmaw Chief Dan L. Francis of Cambridge, Nova Scotia, wrote a letter to the Department of Indian Affairs. With a number of children from his community attending the residential school, Francis was displeased with the facility and he complained: “I thought that [the] School was built for Indian Children to Learn to Read and Write [and] not for slave and prisoner.”⁷⁹ Even as early as its second year of operation the residential school’s educational shortcomings—and other notable inadequacies—were apparent to Chief Francis, as they were to Aboriginal people from across the Maritimes. While it is unclear precisely *how* the children to whom the Chief was referring to came to attend the residential school, given Francis’ statement and the fact that Cambridge (as noted above) had no day school, it seems likely that they attended with the expectation of greater educational opportunity, and perhaps even with (coerced) parental consent. In order to understand this expectation, one must consider the larger educational context cultivated by Ottawa in Maritime Aboriginal communities during the 1920s and 1930s. Ottawa’s woefully inadequate Maritime day school system strengthened its ability to impose residential schooling on the Mi’kmaw and Wolastoqiyik people. Empowered by coercive legislation, as well as by the added—and, unfortunately, true—claim that many of the region’s Aboriginal children were without school alternatives—alternatives stymied by racist public opinion and by Ottawa’s own inaction—the federal

government forced pupils to attend the residential school against their families' wishes. Coercion also took a more subtle turn, as Ottawa's neglect of day schools effectively compelled some Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik families to place pupils "voluntarily" at the residential facility as a means of securing some education in the face of inadequate or absent day schooling options. Clearly, day and residential school policies of the federal government were two sides of the same coin, with the flawed day school system serving to reinforce the residential school model that promised most forcefully and dramatically to assimilate Aboriginal people into the Canadian mainstream.

Notes

1. An agreement in principle was signed between the Assembly of First Nations and the federal government on 23 November 2005 and was finalized in May 2006. Under the terms of the Residential School Settlement Agreement Act, former students of Indian Residential Schools who were alive on 30 May 2005 are eligible to receive a Common Experience Payment consisting of \$10,000 for the first year of residential school attendance and \$3,000 for each additional year. Those who were 65 years or older as of 30 May 2005 were entitled to an advance payment of \$8,000 (until December 31, 2006). Under the Agreement, former students can pursue claims for sexual and physical abuse through the Independent Assessment Process and receive 100 per cent of their settlements. In addition, a five-year Truth and Reconciliation Commission will allow former students the opportunities to tell their stories while research and its dissemination are to increase Canadians' awareness of residential schools. Funds have also been set aside for Aboriginal Healing Foundation and local commemoration projects.
2. Spirit Wind Inc. was founded in the mid 1980s and in December 2008 announced its plan to launch a class action case against the federal government representing those who did not qualify for compensation under the Residential School Settlement Agreement. On 31 July 2009, the organization filed a \$15-billion class-action lawsuit. "Indian day school survivors launch \$15B lawsuit." CBC News on-line, 31 July 2009, <<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/manitoba/story/2009/07/31/mb-day-school-survivors-lawsuit-winnipeg.html>>. Spirit Wind Inc. homepage, <<http://www.spirit-wind.ca/aboutus.html>>.
3. "Aboriginal day students deserve compensation too: former stu-

- dent." CBC News on-line, 17 July 2008, <<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/novascotia/story/2008/07/17/aboriginal-reserve-compensation.html>>.
4. Hope MacLean alerts us to the variations that have existed in state Aboriginal schooling models and that there were more "enlightened" educational options available to state officials. MacLean proposes that the bilingual schooling offered by Methodist missionaries in Ontario in the 1820s and 1830s represented "a remarkable experiment which demonstrates that the knowledge of how to create positive Native schooling was available, long before residential schools were established in the rest of Canada." Hope McLean, "A Positive Experiment in Aboriginal Education: The Methodist Ojibwa Day Schools in Upper Canada, 1824-1833," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 2002, XXII(1): 24.
 5. Several published works and graduate theses have considered the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. See Isabelle Knockwood and Gillian Thomas, *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia* (Lockeport, NS: Roseway, 1992); Martha Walls, "Native Responses to the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 1928-1951," MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1996; Marilyn Elaine Millward, "Researching the Devils: A Study of Brokerage at the Indian Residential School, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia," PhD. Diss, Dalhousie University, 1997; Briar Dawn Ransberry, "'Teach your Children Well': Curriculum and Pedagogy at the Shubenacadie Residential School, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 1951-67," MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 2000.
 6. Judith Fingard, "The New England Company and the New Brunswick Indians, 1786-1826: A Comment on the Colonial Perversion of British Benevolence," *Acadiensis*, Spring 1972, I (2): 29-30.
 7. The New England Company recognized that while the colonial executors of the program showed little humanitarian concern, they had a "superabundance of interest" in Company funds. Fingard, 36-42. See also Edward Winslow Family Papers, <<http://www.lib.unb.ca/winslow/schools.html>>.
 8. See L.F. S. Upton, *Micmac and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979). As early as 1841, Mi'kmaw Chief Samuel Paul of Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, petitioned the Nova Scotia assembly to establish a school in his community. Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM), RG 5, Series P, volume 41, number 4, Petition of Samuel Paul, 1846. After the failed New England Com-

- pany scheme, no schools would be established in the Maritimes until after Confederation. See Lynda A. Curwen Doige, "Literacy in Aboriginal Education: An Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 2001, 25(2): 120.
9. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick joined Confederation in 1867 and Prince Edward Island in 1873.
 10. W.D. Hamilton, *The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes* (Fredericton: The Micmac-Maliseet Institute, 1986), 12.
 11. Canada, *Sessional Papers* (SP), 1872, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA Annual Report), "Report of the Indian Branch of the Secretary of State for the Provinces, 1871," 27; Canada, *SP*, 1877, Report of L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 31 December 1876, 10, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
 12. L.F.S. Upton, "Indians and Islanders: The Micmacs in Colonial Prince Edward Island," *Acadiensis*, 1976, VI (1): 37-38. Canada, *SP*, 1875, DIA Annual Report, Report of T. Stewart, 5 January 1975, 52.
 13. See W.D. Hamilton, "Historical Sketch of Indian Education in the Maritimes," *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 1986, 13(2): 2-14. With the 1867 British North America Act the federal government assumed responsibility for "Indian" people and their territories; this included responsibility for Indian education. The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) was established in 1880 as an arm of the Department of the Interior. In 1936, it became a branch of the Immigration Department and was thereafter referred to as the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB).
 14. Canada, *SP*, 1884, DIA Annual Report, Report of John A. Macdonald, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 1 January 1884, xxxiv and Canada, *SP*, 1887, Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report, Report of John A. Macdonald, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 1 January 1887, xxxii, xxxvi, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
 15. Andrea Bear Nicholas, "Canada's Colonial Mission: The Great White Bird," in K.P. Binda and Sharilyn Calliou, Eds., *Aboriginal Education in Canada: A Study in Decolonization* (Mississauga: Canadian Educators' Press, 2001).
 16. Canada, *SP*, 1896, DIA Annual Report, Tabular Statements, "Programme of Studies for Indian Schools, 1895" 348-351, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>. Lynda Doige notes that day schools were not merely committed to imparting the English language, but more generally, the very concept of "civilization." Lynda A. Curwen Doige, "Literacy in

Aboriginal Education: An Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 25, 2(2001): 122.

17. The 1901 dicennial census indicates that while the vast majority of Mi'kmaq could converse in English, their own language remained important and the overwhelming majority of Mi'kmaq included in the census identified "Micmac" or "Indian" as their mother tongues. See Martha Walls, "The Maximum, the Minimum or Something in Between: The Mi'kmaq and Federal Electoral Legislation, 1899-1951," PhD Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 2006: 87-88.
18. Petition of Big Cove, 9 August 1915 and J.J. Ryan to J.D. McLean, undated telegram, LAC, RG 10, volume 6060, file 275-1, part 1.
19. It is worth noting that this percentage included "the older boys and girls who attended school when opened in August until they obtained employment in their life work, those who attend school for the winter months when employment may be slack, and the large number of pupils who attend for the first time in May until the school year closes at the end of June." Another attendance measure, termed "the percentage of those on the roll during the quarter in daily attendance" revealed a considerably higher average attendance of 78.2 per cent. Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM), file N 935E24, Nova Scotia Department of Education Report, 1925-26, Superintendent's Report, xxxiii.
20. DIA Annual Report, 1928, "Recapitulation – Census of Indians and Eskimos Arranged Under Provinces and Districts," 30 and "Summary of School Statement," 64, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
21. In 1926, 49,691 of Nova Scotia's 100,443 common school pupils were working in grades one through three. Of the rest, 35,933 (35.8 per cent) were working at grades four through six and 14,819 (14.8 per cent) in grades seven and eight. NSARM, file N 935E24, Nova Scotia Department of Education Report, 1925-26, Superintendent's Report, xxxiii.
22. Between 1920 and 1929, 76 per cent of New Brunswick Aboriginal students, 83 per cent of Nova Scotia Aboriginal pupils and 73 per cent of PEI Aboriginal students worked in grades one through three. In 1928 Nova Scotia and New Brunswick saw day schooling classes extended to grade eight. On PEI the extension of grades was delayed until 1934. Canada, DIA Annual Report, 1920, "Summary of School Statement," 68-69; Ibid., DIA Annual Report, 1921, "Summary of School Statement," 62-63; Ibid., DIA Annual Report, 1922, "Summary of School Statement," 58-59; Ibid., DIA Annual Report, 1923, "Summary of School Statement," 60-61; Ibid., DIA Annual Re-

- port, 1924, "Summary of School Statement," 82-83; *Ibid.*, DIA Annual Report, 1925, "Summary of School Statement," 66-67; *Ibid.*, DIA Annual Report, 1926, "Summary of School Statement," 67-68; *Ibid.*, DIA Annual Report, 1927, "Summary of School Statement," 63-64; *Ibid.*, DIA Annual Report, 1928, "Summary of School Statement," 63-64; *Ibid.*, DIA Annual Report, 1929, "Summary of School Statement," 92-93, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
23. In 1928-29, 5 per cent of pupils in New Brunswick were in high school, 10.4 per cent in Prince Edward Island and 11.3 per cent in Nova Scotia. NSARM, file N 935E24, Nova Scotia Department of Education Report, 1930, Superintendent's Report, xiv.
 24. Father J. Ryan to J.D. McLean, 5 October 1908, LAC, RG 10, volume 6062, file 277-1, part 1.
 25. W.D. Carter to McLean, 2 April 1907, LAC, RG 10, volume 6061, file 276-1, part 1; *Ibid.*, volume 6060, file 275-1, part 1, J.J. Ryan to J.D. McLean, 1 April 1919.
 26. A.J. Boyd to McLean, 14 August 1913, LAC, RG 10, volume 6024, file 42-1-1, part 1.
 27. Hazel Bissett to McLean 18 November 1946, LAC, RG 10, volume 6486, file 42050-2, part 2.
 28. Mary A. Gillis to McLean, 11 September 1910, LAC, RG 10, volume 6024, file 42-1-5, part 1.
 29. Boyd to McLean, 29 September 1910, LAC, RG 10, volume 6024, file 42-1-5, part 1.
 30. After Confederation, the Mi'kmaq took up farming (to varying degrees) and most lived on reserves for at least part of each year. According to the DIA census of 1900, for example, with the exception of 30 Mi'kmaq living in King's County, virtually all of the Mi'kmaq in New Brunswick lived on one of the province's 17 Mi'kmaw reserves. On Prince Edward Island, all of the 308 Mi'kmaq enumerated by the DIA lived on reserves. The situation was different in Nova Scotia where, in 1901, 599 (or 29.7 per cent) of the province's Mi'kmaw population reportedly lived off the province's 35 designated reserves. "Census Return of Resident and Nomadic Indians," DIA Annual Report (1900), 146-148, 173. Although most Mi'kmaq lived on reserved tracts for at least part of the year, mobility was nevertheless an important feature of Mi'kmaw life at the turn of the century. The Mi'kmaq, like many Maritimers, moved both within and away from the Maritime Provinces. Somewhat ironically given that all Maritimers were mobile people, the mobility of Aboriginals prompted a litany of complaints from the Indian agents charged with administering the

- Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik. In 1896, the agent at Antigonish and Guysborough Counties in Nova Scotia complained that "[t]he nomadic instinct is still strong in the Indian, and it is next to impossible to follow him in his various wanderings." W.C. Chisholm, 15 August 1896, DIA Annual Report (1897), 56.
31. Agent Report, St. Peter's school, May 1912, LAC, RG 10, volume 2910, file 185,723-8B. Potato and other harvests led to similar mobility that often conflicted with school schedules. In 1945, a federal inspector to Eel Ground noted that the school term was disrupted in September and October when children accompanied their parents to Maine to pick potatoes and then to harvest Christmas trees. Report of J.E. Morris, Welfare Division, October 1945, LAC, RG 10, volume 6062, file 277-1, part 2.
 32. *Ibid.*, part 1, Extract from Teachers report on Eel Ground school, for year ending March 31, 1910. Similarly, it was reported in 1925 that a family of children aged 14, 9, 8 and 4 were unable to attend classes "on account of lack of proper clothing." Report of Nurse Catherine MacDonald, 2 June 1925, LAC, RG 10, volume 3183, file 455,999.
 33. When, for example, the teacher, Chief and Indian agent at Burnt Church, New Brunswick, all agreed that the "severity of the winter" had a negative "effect on the pupils and teachers" and unanimously recommended that the winter term be replaced by summertime classes, Ottawa refused. E.J. Blakey to Indian Affairs Branch, 19 June 1947, LAC, RG 10, volume 6061, file 276-1, part 2.
 34. LAC, DIA Annual Report, 1912, 304, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
 35. Report of A. J. Boyd, 3 October 1908, LAC, RG 10, volume 6024, file 42-1-1, part 1; S. Stewart to Boyd, 15 October 1908, LAC, RG 10, volume 6024, file 42-1-1, part 1.
 36. In 1912, one Nova Scotia provincial school inspector was appalled that a "young man having neither license, experience nor professional training" was hired to teach a reserve school. J.T. MacNeil, School Inspector to McLean, 12 December 1912, LAC, RG 10, volume 6014, file 1-1-6-NS, part 1.
 37. A total of 269 individual teachers taught in Maritime reserve day schools from 1900-1950. Of these, 182 (67.6 per cent) taught for three consecutive years or less while 105 (39 per cent) taught for a duration of just one school year. Figures derived from W.D. Hamilton's *The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes*. The problem of teacher shortages in Mi'kmaw communities was especially acute in the 1940s. Because of World War Two, a region-wide teacher shortage and the resulting wage increases commanded by teachers made

- teaching stints in the lower-paying “Indian” schools an even less attractive career choice for would-be teachers. See for example, M.A. Harris, Kingsclear Parish Priest to P.H. Phelan, 9 November 1941, LAC, RG 10, volume 6064, file 280-1, part 2.
38. *Ibid.*, volume 6061, file 276-1, part 1, Report of F.C. Ryan, 2 June 1920. Hired in 1914, the teacher at Big Cove was also expected to play the organ in church on Sundays. *Ibid.*, volume 6060, file 275-1, part 1, R.A. Irving to McLean, 8 July 1914.
 39. Teachers constantly complained about their salaries. See for example Rena Donahoe to DIA, 18 October 1912, LAC, RG 10, volume 6064, file 280-1, part 1.
 40. Although the BNA Act made education a provincial responsibility, the administration of Aboriginal peoples and communities (including educational services) was allocated to the federal government.
 41. J.D. McLean to A.H. MacKay, Superintendent, Nova Scotia Department of Education, 19 June 1912, LAC, RG 10, volume 6014, file 1-1-6-NS, Part 1; J.T. MacNeil to McLean, 12 December 1912, LAC, RG 10, volume 6014, file 1-1-6-NS, part 1.
 42. Comments of Inspector James MacKinnon cited in A.H. MacKay to Russell T. Ferrier, 10 July 1925, LAC, RG 10, volume 6014, file 1-1-6-NS, part 1.
 43. Deputy Superintendent General to R.B. Hanson, 31 March 1935, LAC, RG 10, volume 7935, file 32-55-3, part 1.
 44. In 1926 Ottawa decided to keep the contested school open for just one more year, the 1927-28 school year. LAC, RG 10, volume 6024, file 42-1-1, part 1, D.C. Scott to Boyd, 21 October 1926.
 45. Clarence Spinney to DIA, 23 July 1936, LAC, RG 10, volume 6026, file 54-1-1, part 1.
 46. Because the Mi’kmaq and Wolastoqiyik were exempt from taxation, provincial school authorities exacted tuition. In 1948, for instance, a teenage girl with aspirations to become a nurse opted to attend the provincial high-school at Shubenacadie. Unfortunately, the girl found her academic performance hampered by her daily 10-mile walk to school. H.C. Rice to B.F. Neary, 6 November 1948, LAC, RG 10, volume 6486, file 42051-3, part 1.
 47. Rev. John A. McDonald to DIA, 9 December 1914, LAC, RG 10, volume 6026, file 57-2-1, part 1.
 48. Indians of Red Bank to DIA, 15 November 1910, LAC, RG 10, volume 6060, file 282-1, part 1. The racism that accompanied public schooling in the Maritimes is no anomaly. Historian Robin Jarvis Brownlie, drawing on the oral testimony of Tyendinaga women, illustrates that Aboriginal girls who attended public schools in southern Ontario in

- the 1920s and 1930s often experienced racism. Robin Jarvis Brownlie, "Living the Same as the White People': Mohawk and Anishinabe Women's Labor in Southern Ontario, 1920-1940," *Labor*, 61 (Spring 2008): 65-66.
49. As late as 1949, for instance, only 28 Aboriginal pupils in all of Nova Scotia were attending off-reserve day schools. H.C. Rice to B. F. Neary, 31 January 1941, LAC, RG 10, volume 6486, file 42051-3, part 1.
 50. DIA Annual Report, 1910, "Indians and Eskimos – Religion, ages, sexes, births and deaths by provinces," 104-121 and "Summary of School Statement," 368, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
 51. DIA Annual Report, 1915, "Recapitulation – Census of Indians and Eskimos," 60-61 and "Summary of School Statement," 154-55, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
 52. DIA Annual Report, 1928, "Recapitulation – Census of Indians and Eskimos Arranged Under Provinces and Districts," 30 and "Summary of School Statement," 64, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
 53. At the peak of Canada's residential school system there were 82 institutions in Canada. The last school closed in 1996.
 54. Most students at the residential school were Mi'kmaw and Maliseet children from the Maritime Provinces and eastern Quebec.
 55. J.D. Sutherland to McLean, 12 October 1925, LAC, RG 10, volume 6054, file 264-1, part 1.
 56. D.C. Scott to J.L. Ilsley, 1 March 1929, LAC, RG 10, volume 6054, file 265-1, part 1.
 57. A.F. Mackenzie to Mrs. A King, 15 May 1928, LAC, RG 10, volume 6052, file 260-8, part 1.
 58. Canada, DIA Annual Report, 1910, I10-I13; *Ibid.*, 1911, H68-H69; *Ibid.*, 1912, H68-H69; *Ibid.*, 1913, H76-H77; *Ibid.*, 1914, H55-H56; *Ibid.*, 1915, H52-H53; *Ibid.*, 1916, H49-H50; *Ibid.*, 1917, H49-H50; *Ibid.*, 1918, H45-H46; *Ibid.*, 1919, I41-I42.
 59. In 1930, the year following the residential school's opening, Maritime day schools were allotted just \$24,353.31, 25 per cent less than the 1929 day school allotment. Canada, DIA Annual Report, 1929, "Details of Expenditure," I-35-I-36; Canada, DIA Annual Report, 1930, "Details of Expenditure," I-34-I-35, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
 60. Canada, DIA Annual Report, 1930, I34-I35; *Ibid.*, 1931, I37-I38; *Ibid.*, 1932, I31-I32; *Ibid.*, 1933, I25-I26; *Ibid.*, 1934, I24-I25; *Ibid.*, 1935,

- I26-I27; Ibid., 1936, I24-I25; Ibid., 1937, 195; Ibid., 1938, L84-L85; Ibid., 1939, 223, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
61. In these dire decades, federal relief roles exploded and Maritime Aboriginals had increasingly to rely on DIA rations. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 172-73; Lisa Lynne Patterson, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy," MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1985, 31; In the 1920s and 1930s federal funds were channeled away from other areas and into relief. The DIA paid \$24,156.02 in relief to the Mi'kmaq in 1920, \$44,531.88 in 1925, \$78,064.66 in 1930 and 124,048.22 in 1935. DIA Annual Report, 1920, 80; DIA Annual Report, 1925, 71; DIA Annual Report, 1930, 94; DIA Annual Report, 1935, 61-62, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
62. Between 1930 and 1939, a total of \$346,871.58 was spent on the Nova Scotia residential school alone compared to just \$268,874.96 spent on all day schools in the region. Canada, DIA Annual Report, 1930, I34-I35; Ibid., 1931, I37-I38; Ibid., 1932, I31-I32; Ibid., 1933, I25-I26; Ibid., 1934, I24-I25; Ibid., 1935, I26-I27; Ibid., 1936, I24-I25; Ibid., 1937, 195; Ibid., 1938, L84-L85; Ibid., 1939, 223, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
63. In 1930, 74 per cent of Maritime Aboriginal children of school age appeared on a day school roll and 47 per cent attended regularly. By 1935, numbers were practically unchanged, with 70 per cent of Maritime Aboriginal children on a day school roll, but only 49 per cent attending regularly. At the end of the decade, 63 per cent of children were on school rolls and only 46 per cent attended regularly. LAC, RG 10, DIA Annual Report, 1935, "Table no. 1, Recapitulation – Census of Indians – Arranged Under Provinces, 1934," and "Statement of Indian Day Schools in the Dominion for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 1935," 28, 40 and DIA Annual Report, 1939, "Table 1 Recapitulation: Census of Indians – Arranged Under Provinces and Territories, 1939" and "Day Schools," 239, 267, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
64. DIA Annual Report, 1930, "School Statement," 88; DIA Annual Report, 1931, "Summary of School Statement," 61; DIA Annual Report, 1932, "Summary of School Statement," 59; DIA Annual Report, 1933, "Summary of School Statement," 56; DIA Annual Report, 1934, "Summary of School Statement," 78; DIA Annual Report, 1935, "Summary of School Statement," 52; DIA Annual Report, 1936, "Summary of School Statement," 62; DIA Annual Report, 1937, "Summary of School

- Statement," 230; DIA Annual Report, 1938, "Summary of School Statement," 233; DIA Annual Report, 1939, "Summary of School Statement," 267, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/index-e.html>>.
65. Truancy laws for residential schools were strengthened in 1920 and truancy became a crime under section 10 of the Indian Act. NSARM, file N 935E24, Nova Scotia Department of Education Report, 1920, Superintendent's Report, xvi.
 66. J.P. Mackey to Mi'kmaw father, 31 August 1937, LAC, RG 10, volume 6057, file 265-10, part 2.
 67. On the "fall round up" see Ernie Crey, "The Children of Tomorrow's Great Potlatch" in *BC Studies*, 89 (1991): 151. Although the school clearly exerted much power to compel enrollment, this is not to suggest that Aboriginal parents did not resist this power or that they were never able to mitigate state power when it came to forced enrollment of their children at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. For examples of Aboriginal resistance to the school and its policies and the impact of such resistance, see Knockwood, *Out of the Depths* and Martha Walls, "Native Responses to the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 1928-1951." Maura Hanrahan also asserts that geography played a role in families' ability to resist forced attendance at the Shubenacadie residential school. She contends that "many of the Mi'kmaq of southwest Nova Scotia did not want to send their children to residential school and often prevented it from happening." Maura Hanrahan, "Resisting Colonialism in Nova Scotia: The Kesukwitk Mi'kmaq, Centralization and Residential Schooling," *Native Studies Review*, 17, 1(2008): 27.
 68. R.A. Hoey to Agent MacNeil, 26 October 1937, LAC, RG 10, volume 6057, file 265-10, part 2.
 69. A.F. Mackenzie to Charles G. Spinney, 23 November 1936, LAC, RG 10, volume 6058, part 265-13, part 3. In one instance, the Indian agent reported that a family of children had been taken to school only after "a deal of persuading and threatening." Ed Harry to DIA, 14 September 1936, LAC, RG 10, volume 6056, file 265-5, part 7.
 70. Roland Chrisjohn, Sherri Young and Michael Maraun, *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada* (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books Ltd., 1997), 131. The authors go on to question whether, given a viable educational alternative, "a single Residential school would ever have been built."
 71. Dr. Thomas Robertson to DIA, 25 April 1936, LAC, RG 10 volume 6057, file 265-10, part 1.

72. Mi'kmaw father to IAB, 19 February 1936, LAC, RG 10 volume 6057, file 265-10, part 1.
73. Petition of Lennox Island Residents to DIA, 11 July 1938, LAC, RG 10, volume 6059, file 270-1, part 2.
74. J.E. Daly, Quarterly Report, 30 September 1945, LAC RG 10, volume 6059, file 270-1, part 2.
75. While girls completed domestic tasks, such as cooking and laundry, boys were responsible for grounds and building maintenance and farm-related duties.
76. Student to R.H. Butts, 3 October 1936, LAC, RG 10, volume 6057, file 265-10, part 1.
77. W.S. Arneill to Philip Phalen, undated, LAC, RG 10, volume 6053, file 260-10, part 2.
78. Edward Harry to DIA, 31 July 1936, LAC, RG 10, volume 6054, file 265-1, part 1.
79. Dan Francis to DIA, 27 August 1930, LAC, RG 10, volume 6054, file 265-1, part 1.

