

TOTAL EDUCATION AT
CROSS LAKE

A REPORT PREPARED FOR THE CROSS LAKE
EDUCATION AUTHORITY

5 AUGUST 2020

WILLIAM OSBORNE, MICHELLE
UMPHERVILLE, AND GREG
HALCROW; COMPILED BY ANNE
LINDSAY

Cross Lake

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge Anne Lindsay and Michelle Umpher-ville for their great contribution and support in this project, the Cross Lake Education director for his support and encouragement, the Mikisew School and the Otter Nelson River school administrators and all of their staff for their welcome and support, and the Cross Lake Band members for their sharing stories and pictures. I would also like to thank the local IRS office and staff for their respect and courtesy. A big thank you to Elder Annette Ross for sharing school pictures and to Corrine Halcrow for providing statistics and computer-generated graphs. Also to Jeremy Ross for his help.

FOREWORD

I was always shown in a dream about schools and children, and one day I had strong feeling that I must go to the school and offer my help and support to the administrators and staff. When I got there and when the school's receptionist told the principal that I had come to see her, I walked into the principal's office; she asked

what she could do for me, and I said I had come here to offer my help to the school. She immediately responded that I could not have come at a better time than today. She asked me to come to work and help the next day.

I said I will go and see Greg, and I will tell him I will help with the school's behavioural issues and concerns. I did visit the Cross Lake education director, and sure enough he welcomed me in helping and supporting the high school. I said to him that I would like to do research about this social and behavioural school issues and concerns from there by making the necessary and appropriate structural, protocol, and process in a short term and in the long term. This is how this research and wellness work and project came about.

But in doing it, we found that we had to reach back to how it all began, tracing the path from the 1800s to now. So here is "Total Education at Cross Lake" – know the past to understand the present, to plan for the future. To make the reading easier and more understandable, we have included a chronological

timeline of the day and residential schools that form part of the path to today's schools. The goal and the objective are that each person will be able to think back and retrace their own school path and experiences; and knowing what happened, and that it should not have happened, and learning about an accepting the past, to be able to move forward in a good way, thinking: what can we do better, what can we plan and create, how can we make and build a safe and effective school wherein all pupils are respected and accepted in order for effective learning to happen, as respectfully so desired by the community and the parents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the early 1880s, the type of education Pimicikamak families and their children have had access to has shifted from family and community-focused land-based learning toward increasing amounts of time spent in western-style classrooms where students were exposed to curriculum designed, and in many cases delivered, by non-Indigenous educators. While this trend was experienced differently by different children and their families, in general, access to traditional ways of learning and knowing, based in relationships and centred within families and the land declined gradually from the late nineteenth century until the end of World War 2. It was not until the 1940s, when a number of changes, including the introduction of the Family Allowance Program, that Cross Lake day schools saw marked increases in school attendance, however, some families' children attended school full time before this period.

From the 1890s until the 1970s or 1980s, children might find themselves in one of two broad streams of classroom education; day schools or boarding,

industrial, or residential schools. For children attending residential schools, either the Roman Catholic School on the Cross Lake Reserve or more distant schools at places such as Norway House and Brandon, western education was a totalizing experience well-documented by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). For students attending day schools on the reserve, attendance could be, and often was, sporadic, and was balanced by long periods on the land learning with family and community at least until the end of World War 2.

Despite these differences, from the beginning, both day schools and the residential school on the Cross Lake Reserve were funded and supervised by Canada, while being operated by two different religious denominations: the Roman Catholic and Methodist (later United Church). Curriculum reflected that of the colonial state, as did the structure of the learning environment. While parents took an interest in their children's education, funding and infrastructure tended to be below that of southern schools, a situation

that probably exacerbated problems with staff retention. The sudden increase in the number of pupils after World War 2 only added to the challenges students and their families faced.

Changes to the Department of Indian Affairs' educational policy in the 1970s and 1980s made space for increased participation by bands in the education process. The Cross Lake Education Authority was created in 1987, 105 years after the first school was held in the teacher's home on the reserve, when the community decided to take control of the school system their children were attending. As a part of this, the community committed to expanding the number of grades offered at the school, so children could receive a higher education without having to leave their families. However, funding continued to be targeted to certain kinds of infrastructure, course delivery, and curriculum. In the late 1990s, funding caps that did not accommodate changes in total population or reflect real inflation exacerbated an already existing divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous education spending. This pattern of under-resourcing can be traced back through the

entire history of classroom education at Cross Lake. In 2016, the CBC reported that, according to one economist, First Nations students received 30 per cent less funding when compared to non-Indigenous students.

Looking back over the more than 100 years of schooling at Cross Lake, it is clear that, despite many challenges, parents have wanted and supported education that respects relationships between family, community, and Aski, and that offers students the opportunity to learn in ways that are meaningful and useful to students and their families and communities. Especially before World War 2, families chose to combine family and community-centred education with periods in the classroom to learn the skills that could help students succeed in their changing world. This balance of traditional values and skills with western subjects continue to reflect in a local vision of what respectful modernity can look like; at present, the community's schools have the capacity to be an important resource in preparing for a brighter shared future. But to do this, certain key issues must be considered.

Today the community consists of 8,790 members, with 6,288 living on reserve and 2,482 living off reserve, as well as 20 living on crown land. Of these, there are 1,741 registered students ranging from Nursery to Grade 12. In grades 6 to 12 alone there are 732 registered students. However, according to band membership population statistics, of youth aged 11 to 17, only 671 out of a possible 892 are registered for school, raising the important question: where are the remaining 221 school age young people, and how can schooling respond to their needs as well as to the needs of already registered students in ways that will invite all of the community's youth into a positive and useful education.

Because community and educational success are necessarily enmeshed, current community social issues must be considered in any sort of future planning. By surveying court records, the community has identified 5 key social issues:

Alcohol abuse,
crimes against persons,
impaired driving,
domestic violence.
and sexual abuse.

Certainly related to the above issues, other community social concerns include:

Unemployment,
critical safe housing shortages
homelessness,
health issues,
and deaths and dying.

All of these concerns have clear impacts on the school climate and on the ability of children and youth to realize their full learning capacity. By looking back at the educational history of Pimicikamak and using that information in the present, it is possible to find a positive vision of community education that can inform a better future.

Lessons from the past, from the history of Day schools, of the Residential Schools System, can offer invaluable insights that can help avoid past traumas and point to effective alternatives and a brighter future for the next generations and the community as a whole. They can offer hope and take advantage of current opportunities to create a better, a balanced future for our community and our children, by designing a new

school system with our own local resources by combining certified specific areas and non-certified customary knowledge and experiences. But to do this there needs to be a new structure, new protocols and policies that are sound and respectful of the needs and hopes of the community and the people.

Given the community's social issues, and the complex factors that surround children and youth today, it is more pressing than ever that we create and implement a collaborative, consultative program and services approach to education. To do this, school administrators and staff must be supported so that they can be well and strong, so that they can then share this wellness and strength in their roles as supportive and welcoming influences in their students lives. Staff must know all of their students and be empowered to work within a network of school-wide support services that reaches out and connects with other local and outside-of-the-community organizations and their resources; they must be able to refer students to appropriate community support services

and programming. Within the schools there needs to be school restorative programs and services to deal with day-to-day behavioural issues and inappropriate school-related incidents such as fighting or bringing drugs to the school. As well, the use of school suspensions should be reviewed, as they do not seem to serve a purpose where there is no consequence at home or in the community.

THIS VISION MOVES EDUCATION AWAY FROM THE STRUCTURES AND APPROACHES THAT HAVE DOMINATED THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (A CRYING PLACE) AND MUCH OF THE DAY SCHOOLS SYSTEMS TO A PLACE OF LEARNING ABOUT, AND CENTRED IN, WAKOTOWIN AND THE FUTURE.

School climate and culture must be seriously considered when meeting the needs of the student. Therefore, the school's vision, mission, goals and objectives must be to provide a year-round school for all students that can offer culturally relevant, appropriate education that follows the seasons when setting semesters. This approach will provide the framework that will allow the schools to create and develop a balanced school system that

respects the importance of age/grade-appropriate level education for all students, that offers over-age students hospitable and attractive educational space in which to learn, and that respects the community's cultural values and traditions, the student's future career hopes, including possible college and university goals, as well as other plans they might have.

This vision moves education away from the structures and approaches that have dominated the Residential School (a crying place) and much of the Day Schools systems to a place of learning about, and centred in, wakotowin and the future. This vision foregrounds a new school structure, a new system, hope and opportunity-based programs and services, a school to be proud of, a school to call your own, a school wherein every child is accepted and taught with generosity and learns first-hand about wakotowin, a place where the western and the Pimicikamak ways of living, learning, and knowing are integrated in lived and taught ways. It will be the school our people wanted in the first place long ago, the school that Bello Ross wanted for his kids, a

place that is inclusive and informed by a genuine desire to prepare students to be strong participants in their own futures, where time in school will be used to foster excellence in valuable skills and ways of knowing, skills for a strong tomorrow such as reading and writing, and a solid knowledge of their nation's identity and values, rather than focusing on potentially distracting and divisive subjects such as the western way of praying. And in doing so, things come full circle, back to the education that the parents and community have always wanted for their children, an education that connects them to their past so that they can learn in the present what they will need for a bright future.

KEY POINTS

Day schools have operated on the Cross Lake Reserve since 1882.

From the early 1900s until the 1970s or 80s, day schools were operated by the Roman Catholic, and Methodist (later United) churches under the funding, oversight, and control of Canada.

From the early 1900s until the late twentieth century, children might also attend residential school, either on reserve or at distant locations. The consequences of these schools have been well-documented.

Until the end of the 1940s, many families with children in day schools were able to combine learning on and from the land, their families, and community with periods of time in the classroom where they hoped that their children could learn some of the skills that would help them in their adult and modern lives.

Following the introduction of the Family Allowance system shortly after World War 2, school attendance skyrocketed. This reflected a number of changes that had begun even in the interwar years but meant that children were receiving less of their education from family, and spending more time in often crowded, and always underfunded classrooms.

Changes to Indian Affairs policy in the 1970s and 1980s led the community to take over classroom education in 1987.

Chronic underfunding has continued to dog education, by 2016 one economist estimated that Indigenous students were receiving almost a third less funding when compared with non-Indigenous children.

From the first classes held in the teacher's home in 1882 until today, 136 years, or almost seven generations have passed.

Through all that time, the community has supported a vision of education that combines respectful relationships and wakotowin with classroom exposure to the skills needed to live a good life.

INTRODUCTION

From time before memory, the Pimicikamak people have cared for and raised their children into adulthood as part of a rich network of relationships and values. Early contact with non-Indigenous people may have made slight changes to the material and practical aspects of childrearing and education, but as contact was often from a distance and brief, during this period children continued to grow and learn surrounded and supported by family and community. As time went on, and missionaries moved into the area, some children began to attend western-style schools for variable, but often short, periods of time when their families were in the area of a school. For many children, the most important influence in their development remained their families, with whom they were in almost constant contact, so that the education they received in the western classroom was only a small part of a much larger picture. In this context, families were able to access elements of western education they felt would benefit their children, while framing their experiences in the context of the larger meaning of what it means to be fully human, to be a part of the larger Pimicikamak world.

For some children, this balance began to change when the federal government cre-

ated the Indian Residential Schools system. Concerned that children were not being adequately assimilated into western culture when they lived with their families an attended day schools for part of the year, developed with the express intention of separating children from their families and their culture, the profound and lasting impacts and legacies of this system are today well-documented. At the same time, with the political, environmental, and economic changes following World War II, even students attending day school were increasingly under pressure to spend more time in the classroom and away from family. The balance between learning through the influence of family and community and learning through a western curriculum in a school room shifted drastically during this period, especially after the changes that the introduction of Family Allowances brought about.

With a school environment that separated them from family and community, that reflected outside values, and a school schedule that broke students' learning experiences into metered blocks of time in and out of school, students experienced a significant culture shift when they attended school full time, and so were no longer able to live and travel with their families and learn on the land for much of

the year. Compulsory attendance in classes that ran for set periods of the day, week, and year posed a challenge to the traditional way that families learned and worked together, disrupting relationships and parenting skills. Planned and administered from outside, for many years, and especially after World War 2, if parents wanted their children to receive the potential benefits of a classroom education, it was families and communities who were forced to adapt to accommodate the needs of the western system. At the same time, western education in the community was defined by a long history of underfunding that has challenged educators trying to provide a solid foundation for students' adult lives. In total, the history of non-Indigenous education in Cross Lake has been defined by an increasing sense of separation, loneliness and powerlessness for families during much of the 20th century, a feeling that continues to inform interactions between community, family, students, and school.



N3818.tif

Société historique de Saint-Boniface_OMI

Crises (groupe) devant une tente à Cross Lake, juin 1935. Description SHSB-2007: Dans cette photographie, il y a un groupe de femmes et d'enfants devant quelques tentes. Derrière elles, devant une des tentes, il y a deux hommes. À la gauche de la photographie, derrière les tentes, il y a des arbres. À la droite de la photographie, derrière les tentes, il y a un corps d'eau. N3818 St. Boniface Historical Society.

“SO THIS IS A TOTAL EDUCATION:”¹ TRADITIONAL CREE EDUCATION.

Describing traditional education, Cree Elder Louis Bird begins with language. Critical for understanding everything that family, community, and Elders have to teach a child, language has always formed

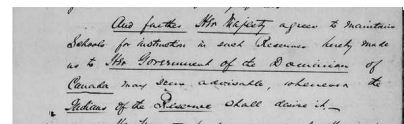
¹ Louis Bird in Bird, Louis, Jennifer S. H. Brown, Anne Lindsay, Paul W. DePasquale, Roland Bohr, Donna G. Sutherland, and Mark F. Ruml. *Telling Our Stories: Omushkego Legends and Histories from Hudson Bay* ([Peterborough, Ont.]: Broadview Press, 2005), 40.

² Total Education at Cross Lake

the basis of all other learning in Innuak life. With language, the child could learn the ways of knowing, skills, and spiritual knowledge in the context of the guidance and support of their family and community. Particularly in terms of spiritual development, the role of Elders, perhaps a grandparent or uncle, was especially important as children grew with a combination of physical and spiritual training, and a program of storytelling that was presented in age appropriate and developmentally graded ways. Through this integrated and holistic child, family, and community-centred process, children grew into adults through education that

taught them respect through example, through legends and other stories, and through the respectful response of older members of their world to their needs. Education in this context was all around, constant and consistent, a “total education.”²

THE 1875 TREATY



Credit: Library and Archives of Canada

Treaty Five, signed in 1875, provided for government-funded local education providing that “the Indians of the reserve shall desire it.” Writing

“And further, Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves hereby made as to Her Government of the Dominion of Canada may seem advisable, whenever the Indians of the reserve shall desire it.”³

² Louis Bird. 0030-Our Voices-Traditional Education, *Our Voices* website, available at <https://www.ourvoices.ca/filestore/pdf/0/0/3/0/0030.pdf>

³ Treaty Five, text available at http://collectionsCanada.gc.ca/ourl/res.php?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_tim=2020-04-23T14%3A06%3A28Z&url_ctx_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffm

EARLY WESTERN EDUCATION AT CROSS LAKE: DAY SCHOOLS

“ONLY THE FRAME
OF THE SCHOOL
HOUSE WAS ERECTED
LAST SUMMER... THE
LOGS FOR THE WALLS
WERE LYING CUT IN
THE WOODS.”⁴

In the beginning, schooling was something that was available if families wanted to send their children to learn things like reading and writing, but made up a very small part of children’s total education.

BAND SCHOOL:

In his report covering 1882-1883, the Indian Agent reported that

“The Indians ask for a school teacher. They have not put up the school house as they had promised to do, on account of scarcity of provisions.”⁵

t%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=3974500&rfr_id=info%3Asid%2Fcollectionscanada.gc.ca%3Apam&lang=eng

4 “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Dominion of Canada, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year ended 31st December 1883*. (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.) 140.

5 “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Dominion of Canada, Annual Report of the Depart-*

The next year, the Agent reported that:

“Only the frame of the school house was erected last summer, but the logs for the walls were lying cut in the woods. The agent hired George Garrioch, the councillor, to teach in a private building.” Garrioch, who was one of the men who had signed Treaty Five, may have learned some reading and writing at the Anglican mission school at Red River, would continue to teach on the reserve until 1891.⁶

As their world changed, parents recognized that being able to read and write, and do some written math could be helpful skills for their children to add to the education they still received from their family and community. In 1900-1901, the Indian Agent wrote that the band’s school teacher had left the last spring, so there was no school being taught on the reserve, and that people were asking for a new teacher. The Agent also noted that parents in

ment of Indian Affairs for the Year ended 31st December 1882. (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co., 1883)., 188, 46.

6 “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Dominion of Canada, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year ended 31st December 1883*. (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.) 140.

the agency were still taking their children with them when they went fishing, so some children were attending classes some of the time, but all the children were still living with and learning from their families.⁷

By 1901 the band was building a new school house, but still did not have a teacher to run it. By 1903, there was a school at Cross Lake again, but, Indian Agent John Semmens noted: “Attendance at the day schools is also very unsatisfactory, owing, principally, to the migratory character of the parents who live largely by the chase and must needs be here and there.”⁸

In his 1904 annual report, The Indian Agent T.J. Fleetham noted that the Catholic mission had recently opened a day school on the reserve. About twenty children, under the supervision of the missionary, who ensured they attended regularly, were taught in a school room about 20 by 21 feet. An inspection report that year noted that the building was too small for the number of students. In 1905 the Agent wrote that there were two day schools on the reserve, one

7 “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Canada, Sessional Papers* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1901), 108..

8 “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Canada, Sessional Papers*, (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1905), 131.



Cris (groupe), campement de cris pendant la visite pastorale à Cross Lake vers juin 1935. N3817. St. Boniface Historical Society.

Catholic, the other Methodist, and that both were well attended. Throughout this period various agents also remarked that the community did well fishing, hunting and trapping. In 1904, the Agent also stated that there was no problem with alcohol in the community.⁹

⁹ See file of documents relating to this at Library and Archives Canada: NORWAY HOUSE- CROSS LAKE ROMAN CATHOLIC DAY SCHOOL - RETURNS AND GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE. (INDIAN COMMISSIONER FOR MANITOBA AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES available at http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/ourl/res.php?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_tim=2020-04-23T14%3A35%3A40Z&url_ctx_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=2061960&rfr_id=info

Through the next few years the Methodist and Catholic day schools continued to operate on the reserve; in 1908 the Indian Agent wrote that parents took a strong interest in school matters, but also noted the “irregular attendance of pupils.”¹⁰ In 1912, the Indian Agent complained that there were about 125 children in the Cross Lake Band, but the two day schools on the reserve each had an average attendance of only about 8 pupils, or 16 students in total. The Methodist School

<http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/apam&lang=eng> See also “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Canada, Sessional Papers, year ended June 30th, 1904* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1905), 87, 123.

¹⁰ “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Canada, Sessional Papers, year ended March 31st, 1908* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1908) 100.

had a poor building but a good teacher, he wrote, while the Catholic day school had a good building but a poor teacher.¹¹

In 1913-1914 the Indian Agent described the community as living in tents much of the year, moving into log buildings only for the winter and spring.¹²

Making their living at hunting, fishing, trapping, and freighting, the Agent characterized the community as “not progressive as yet,” that is they lived a fairly

¹¹ “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Canada, Sessional Papers, year ended March 31st, 1912* (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1912), 351.

¹² “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in *Canada, Sessional Papers, year ended March 31st, 1912* (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1912), 351, 102.

traditional life. In 1914, the average attendance at the Methodist day school was 15, at the Catholic day school it was 4. By 1916, average attendance was 23 and 5 respectively, and the Catholic School was described as a “semi-boarding” school. In 1917 the average attendance at the Cross Lake Methodist school was 15, while the Catholic boarding school, where many of the students stayed year-round, and which took in students from other communities, had an average attendance of 70.¹³

With the addition of a boarding school, where students could remain year-round rather than attending school only for the few months their family was near a day school each year, and where children attending the school had little ongoing contact with their families, the impact of western education on family and community relationships and structures was increased significantly. For some children, western ways of knowing were replacing traditional relationships and understanding.

13 See Indian Affairs Annual Reports for these respective years. Available at Library And Archives Canada <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/first-nations/indian-affairs-annual-reports/Pages/search.aspx>

“ALL MY CHILDREN LIKE I SAID WERE SENT OUT TO SCHOOL. AND I WAS ALL ALONE, IN MY HOUSE. I USED TO BE LONELY.”¹⁴

Off-Reserve Education: Even before the residential school at Cross Lake was built, other children from the community were being sent away to residential schools far from home. Annuity paylists



Brandon Industrial Institute, c. 1910. UCCA, 93.049P/1396. <https://thechildrenremembered.ca/school-locations/brandon/>

show children being sent to Brandon before 1900. When George Frog died at the Brandon school in 1903, he had already been a pupil there for over 5 years.

The 1900 Annuity Paylists show six children from Cross Lake away at boarding school, four boys and two girls, all of them at Brandon. Of these children, George Frog, Isbester Ross, and Alice Frog had all passed away at the school before 1904.¹⁵

14 Anne Chartier interview, Cross Lake Treaty Five Oral History Project, Archives of Manitoba. Available at http://pam.minisisinc.com/scripts/mwimain.dll/144/LISTINGS_WEB2_INT/LISTINGS_DET_REP_FULL_GR/SISN%20390740?sessionsearch

15 See Appendix A for brief life stories of these children and of Betsey Osborne, who died in the 1940s after attending the Cross Lake Residential School.

Residential school education was disruptive to families and communities, tended to disconnect students from not only traditional skills that would help them in their adult lives, but from traditional ways of thinking about things, about respectful relationships, and about problem-solving strategies that had long served the Pimicikamak people. Separation from their children was hard on parents, and could be hard on their relationships with their children. In 1903, the Indian Agent recognized this when he wrote:

Some of the children who have been favoured with industrial school training come home and find that advantage gained at school is of small account in practical life as it is in the wild north-land. They have been educated for agriculture and commerce; and must live where there is neither agriculture nor commerce. They are taken from fishing and hunting at the formative age, and after years of careful training for a different mode of living, return to fish and hunt. In some respects they are worse off than if they had continued in normal conditions. Of course it is admitted that intellectual training gives mind-power, and mental force is of value in any line of life. So far so good, and yet it is clear to my observation that strong elements of discontent are introduced into the lives of those who but for a brief space enjoy advantages which can never be

theirs again. It is an important question whether the boarding school on the reserve is not after all likely to accomplish the greater good.¹⁶



N5261.tif Société historique de Saint-Boniface_0MI

St. Boniface Historical Society Archives, "Deux femmes et deux enfants," Fonds 0484, N5261

1912 BOARDING SCHOOL OPENS ON RESERVE

Roman Catholic Mission:

Day School: The Roman Catholic mission operated a

¹⁶ "Indian Affairs Annual Report," in *Canada, Sessional Papers year ending June 30th, 1903* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1904), 82.

day school at Cross Lake long before 1912 when it opened its first boarding school.

In 1912 there were five boarders and 28 day pupils, who attended off and on. Throughout the school's operations, students at the school came from a number of different communities.

Until 1916, the school operated out of the mission buildings. In 1916 a purpose-built residential school building opened.

In 1918 there were three deaths from influenza at the school.

IN 1920, AMENDMENTS TO THE INDIAN ACT REQUIRED THAT ALL CHILDREN IN TREATY ATTEND SOME SORT OF SCHOOL UNTIL THE AGE OF 15.

For children living on reserve near a school, this could be a day school, but for children who lived too far away to come and go every day, this meant boarding school.

Some families, living on the land, avoided sending their children to school, or sent their children only when they were in the area of the day school; but over time officials



V1307.tif

Société historique de Saint-Boniface_OMI

À l'arrière-plan est une vue de l'École de Cross Lake et quelques bâtiments. Au premier plan on voit deux hommes dans un canot sur un lac, un quai est au centre de la photographie. V1307. St Boniface Historical Society.

enforced the mandatory education provision of the Act more and more.

This resulted not only in more children receiving some sort of non-Indigenous education, it represented a much greater separation of children from their families and communities as the total number of hours each year these pupils spent away from home was significantly higher than the hours a child attending a day school for a few weeks each year experienced. The impact of this separation went both ways, children missed their families terribly, while families missed the children they were separated from. The

separation did not necessarily end when children returned home, many had lost so much of their language and culture they were like strangers in their home communities.

BETWEEN 1916 AND 1923, THERE WERE AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 86 PUPILS AT THE CROSS LAKE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL.

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL: 1912-1969 [OFFICIAL DATES AS AGREED TO IN THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT WHERE

CANADA CONTROLLED THE SCHOOL THROUGH FUNDING].

In 1969 control of the Cross Lake school was transferred to Manitoba, and the Jack River Annex, which had opened after the 1930 school fire became a separate institution. From 1929 to 1930, about 110 students were registered at the school.

1930 FIRE

Fire: In 1930, the Cross Lake Residential School was destroyed in a catastrophic fire that took the lives of twelve children and closed the school until it could be rebuilt. During this time some children were taken to a make-shift facility at Norway House to continue their education. There they lived in a converted building and attended a day school at Norway House. In 1930, after the fire, there were about 12 students at Cross Lake, and 12 at the Jack River Annex. In 1932 to 1933 there were about 6 students at Cross Lake and 5 at Jack River Annex. These numbers rose to about 30 students between the two locations from 1933 to 1940. The ongoing history of deliberately set schools fires at Cross Lake suggests the disconnection and strain between community and school that continues to challenge educators today.

Dead

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-119.01-e.php?q2=2&q3=239&sqn=964&tt=1794&PHPSESSID=6mj7g4mgt2d755811acro6jte6>

CROSS LAKE INDIAN SCHOOL

Sister Superior Marguerite-Marie (nee Bedard, St. Boniface)

Charlotte Mercredi 12 years

Hyla Moose 11 years

Nancy Fleet 11 years

[Martha] Scott 9 years

Ila Crait 8 years

Ann Crane 8 years

Clemence Cook 7 years

Christie Ross 7 years

A young girl, unidentified

A boy, Emile Dumas, 7 years



<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-119.01-e.php?q2=2&q3=239&sqn=967&tt=1794&PHPSESSID=6mj7g4mgt2d755811acro6jte6>

Sister Superior Margaret Mary Bedard

Emile Dumas

Mary Ann Francois

Ila Moose

Clemence Cook

Martha Scott

Agnes Thomas

Nora Blacksmith

Christie Ross

Ila Crate

Annie Crane

Nancy Flett

Charlotte Mercredi



Image: Cross Lake Indian Residential School burned stone building and white frame building, Cross Lake, Manitoba, March 3-4, 1930. Library and Archives Canada.

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-119.01-e.php?q2=2&q3=239&sqn=990&tt=1794&PHPSESSID=6mj7g4mgt2d755811acro6jte6>



Number	Name	Band
97	Emile Dumas	Nelson House
84	Mary Ann Francois	Nelson House
87	Clemence Cook	Cross Lake
97	Martha Scott	Cross Lake
99	Nancy Flett	Thicket Portage or Split Lake
100	Charlotte Mercredi	Thicket Portage
106	Hyla [Ila?] Moose	Nelson House
108	Agnes Thomas	Cross Lake
109	Nora Blacksmith	Cross Lake
111	Christie Ross	Cross Lake
112	Hyla [Ila?] Crait	Cross Lake
114	Annie Crane	Norway House

Image: Pensionnat indien de Cross Lake, édifice en pierre incendié avec deux hommes dans la neige, Cross Lake (Manitoba) 3-4 mars 1930]. Library and Archives Canada.

1940 BOARDING SCHOOL REBUILT

From 1940 to 1943, all boarding students lived at the rebuilt Cross Lake Residential School. In 1943, some children returned to the Norway House facility because of overcrowding at Cross Lake. In 1960, the Jack River Annex was separated from the Cross Lake operations, and declared a "hostel," where children lived while attending local day school. During this time, the number of students at Cross Lake Residential School ranged from about 85 to about 95.



Photographie de cinq jeunes filles autochtones qui boulangent du pain dans une salle de l'ancienne école de Cross Lake au Manitoba. On voit des immenses plats à pain qui contiennent huit pains et les filles qui pétrissent la pâte. N1826. St. Boniface Historical Society.

During the 1940s, doctors linked the spread of serious illnesses at the school to overcrowding in the dormitories.¹⁷ From 1948, the average attendance was about 120. From 1954 to 1960 about 149 students were enrolled at the school each year, from 1960 to 1967 the number of students dropped to about 110. 1968 to 1969 an average of 52 students lived at the Cross Lake student residence.

“SCHOOL ATTENDANCE GREATLY INCREASED DURING THE YEAR. THIS WAS LARGELY DUE TO THE REGULATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH FAMILY ALLOWANCES”¹⁸

17 See Betsey Osborne' story in Appendix A.

18 “Indian Affairs Annual Report,” in Canada, *Sessional Papers*, “Report of the Depart-



Groupe d'élèves dans une salle de classe. La photo a été tirée de l'enveloppe intitulée Cross Lake. Description SHSB-2007: Élèves dans une salle de classe assis à leurs pupitres. Au fond de la salle, on trouve une soeur religieuse et trois élèves debout. Il y a des fenêtres sur le mur à la droite de la photo. Sur le mur du fond, on retrouve des affiches et des dessins. N5324 St. Boniface Historical Society.

In 1945, Canada introduced Family Allowances. For families to receive Family Allowance benefits, children had to attend school regularly.

In 1947, the Indian Agent in charge of the Norway House Agency reported that:

“All schools are filled to capacity, and additional accommodation will be supplied as materials become available.... School attendance greatly increased during the year. This was largely due to the regulations in connection with Family Allowances....”¹⁹

ment of Mines and Resources for the year ending March 31, 1947,” (Ottawa: Edmund Cloutier, 1948), 210.

19 “Indian Affairs Annual

Education.—All schools are filled to capacity, and additional accommodation will be supplied as materials become available. Six new schools were opened in the Norway House Agency. In the Portage Agency, a new day school was opened at Dauphin River on a share basis between the Provincial Government and the Department. This was operated under a board of three Indians and one half-breed with excellent results. School attendance greatly increased during the year. This was largely due to the regulations in connection with Family Allowances. Family Allowances have been most helpful to the Indian

1950s AND 1960s, DAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Despite the coercive financial pressure changes in the late 1940s brought to the community, Chief Bello Ross continued to assert his community's control over local educational matters, at the same time reminding Ottawa that educational matters were strictly between Ottawa and the band.

"Dallas Man

Aug. 1st, 1955

Dear Sir:

The following is a submission sent me by Chief Bello Ross of Cross Lake, Man.

Last year a band meeting was held and those present were Mr. White and Superintendent Mr. Stanton to discuss the school site in my reserve, a site was chosen and a foundation was dug, and now Father [Chamberlain?] of the RC Mission removed the school site and we strictly object to the movement made by the Roman Catholic Priest, we made the agreement with the Dept. of Indian Affairs and not the missionary, therefore Report," in Canada, *Sessional Papers*, "Report of the Department of Mines and Resources for the year ending March 31, 1947," (Ottawa: Edmund Cloutier, 1948),210.

we a [urging?] our request that the school be built where the chief council and Band have chosen for its site."²⁰

In 1957, the newly constructed Roman Catholic Saggitawuk Day School building, which had only been completed about 1950, was destroyed by fire. Fortunately, the 38 pupils in the school at the time were all safely evacuated. The teacher and her husband relocated to the nearby church building and resumed teaching almost immediately.

By 1960 there were, once again, a Catholic and a United Church day school on the reserve, although some Catholic students were attending the United Church School as the Catholic school was full.

20 Library and Archives Canada, RG10, volume 7193, file 511/25-1, NORWAY HOUSE AGENCY- WESTERN MANITOBA EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT- CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING INDIAN EDUCATION IN GENERAL, part 1. Available at http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c9700/45?r=0&s=1

"THE INTEGRATION OF INDIAN CHILDREN INTO PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS, ONCE SO HOPEFULLY REGARDED, HAS NOT SETTLED THE ISSUE."²¹

Beginning in the late 1950s, the federal government began to shift its emphasis away from residential schools to having younger students attend day schools on reserve. Older students in the higher grades still had to leave the reserve, but now they were increasingly either boarded at a student residence or with a private family and attended provincial public schools. But as the Hawthorne Report noted in 1967, these moves did not meet the needs of children, families, or communities.

The integration of Indian children into provincial

21 H.B. Hawthorn, A *Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: A Report on Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*. (Hereafter: *Hawthorne Report*)(Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1966), 7. Available at https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/ai-arp-ls-pubs-sci3_1326997109567_eng.pdf

schools, once so hopefully regarded, has not settled the issue. While it offers an identical education to the Indian child, some of his needs are different from those of most non-Indian children and are not met by the existing programs. The case set out in the first volume of the Report that the Indians be treated as citizens plus because they needed and were entitled to that status becomes stronger for the child. He needs more than equality or similarity of education at this point. We shall set out that in some ways he needs more and in some ways different schooling. Yet this need not mean schooling apart. It appears possible for his special needs to be supplied within provincial school systems and most desirable that the benefits of attending school with other Canadian children be retained. The goal of making school better for the failing and unhappy Indian child appears to be approachable in a number of ways in which parents, home, teachers, classroom procedures, other pupils and parents, curriculum and administrative arrangements might all figure.²²

22 *Hawthorn Report*, part 2, 7. Available at https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/ai-arp-ls-pubs-sci3_1326997109567_eng.pdf

The report went on to note that

One simple and partial definition of schooling is a community vehicle for socialization. Through it the child is provided with controlled opportunities for learning elements of the roles, including occupational ones, he will fill later on. The definition is too simple to be fruitful for all purposes, because the child in school is also living in his present world, not merely preparing for his future, and he is entitled to a schooling that he likes and finds interesting, but it entails the statement that schooling should be integrated with the values and the totality of a culture. Obviously neither the contemporary provincial school nor the schools that operate specially for Indians are at all closely integrated with the values and the other aspects of the Indian child's culture.²³

These issues, clearly identified more than 50 years ago continue to manifest in Indigenous education today.

23 *Hawthorn Report*, part 2, 7. Available at https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/ai-arp-ls-pubs-sci3_1326997109567_eng.pdf

1968 RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL CONVERTED TO STUDENT RESIDENCE

Student Residence: In 1968, the Cross Lake Residential School became the Cross Lake Student Residence, where students lived while attending day school. From 1968 to 1969 an average of 52 students lived at the Cross Lake student residence.

1969 STUDENT RESIDENCE CLOSURES

Closure: The Cross Lake Student Residence closed its doors as a federal student residence 30 June 1969.

1971 FIRE

The stone residential school building, which had been repurposed into a junior high school, burned down in January 1971, displacing about 22 students in grades six to nine. A new building was under way by March of that year.

1975 FIRE

In 1975, a fire that destroyed the new Cross Lake Junior High School left about 400 of the community's 790 students studying in make-shift classrooms, and attendance dropped to about 70% from a pre-fire rate of 75% to 80%. The community worried that the loss of classroom space might end with students sent out of the community for their education at a time when they had been adding grades to the schools each year so students would not

have to leave their homes to get an education. Of the 24 teachers in the community, three were from Pimicikamak, five student teachers were from the community as well, while 11 more community members were enrolled in teacher training at Brandon University.

1980s TAKING BACK EDUCATION

During the late 1970s, many communities began taking back more and more control of the education of their children. By the early 1980s, education control was shifted to bands, and Indigenous-led education services over saw programs like private home placement. By 1987, Pimicikamak had established the Cross Lake Education Authority to administer education in its community. By 1988, the Cross Lake Education Authority was advertising for teachers in local newspapers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The historical evidence shows that parents were interested in and supported their children's attendance in western-style schools when this education offered their children the chance to learn additional skills like reading and writing that would position them for a good adult life in their changing world. Increasingly, however, this education came at the cost of separation and loneliness for all family members, and disconnection from family and community, as well as from important skills and values. At the same time, legislation increased the control of government over families' lives and coerced attendance at schools at the expense of communities. For many, the loss of culture and relationships, as well as useful traditional skills was a high price to pay for the limited education their children received. The coercive measures government took

to force children into desks and away from families only served to emphasize the disconnections schools represented as families lost touch with their children and were reminded of their powerlessness to decide how their children would be educated. Schools that separated children from families became associated with loneliness rather than possibility. Where land, community, and family-based education in the past reflected a family's beliefs and values, centralized education is called upon to do this for a diverse range of beliefs and value systems. This legacy of disconnection and increasing centralization continues to challenge educators today as they work to find approaches in the classroom that must not only prepare children from a rich range of backgrounds for lives today, but somehow address the negative experiences and feelings about education that have come, through this history, to define many families' interactions with

schools, administrators, and teachers. As a study of local education, from the highly effective pre-and-early contact practices of Pimicikamak people, through the still-successful controlled integration of some western skills learning, and on to the coercive and increasingly separate education of the mid-to-late 20th century shows, feelings of loss, of loneliness, and of separation from family that began with mandatory attendance and were magnified by the return of children from residential schools who were strangers to their families, or worse, the deaths of their children at the schools, continue to inform the interactions families have with the schools, and to impact the experience students have in the classroom today.

1950s that "there was no love, there was no feelings, it was just supervisory."³⁹ Lydia Ross, who attended the Cross Lake school in Manitoba, said, "If you cried, if you got hurt and cried, there was no, nobody to, nobody to comfort, comfort you, nobody to put their arms."⁴⁰ Stephen Kakfwi, who attended Grollier Hall in Inuvik and Grandin

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. 2015, 42. <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/weekly_acquisition_lists/2015/w15-24-F-E.html/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-7-2015-eng.pdf>.

THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN CROSS LAKE

Over the past year, we have conducted research on the history of western education at Cross Lake. We have looked at day schools and residential schools, we have looked at the impact of these educational systems on individual students and their families, and we have looked at efforts by community leaders to bring respectful, responsive, and useful education to the people in their community. Across all of this research, a number of over-arching themes appear.

First, it is clear that, for over 130 years, parents have wanted their children to be able to be able to gain knowledge of western culture and systems that could help them to thrive in a changing world throughout their adult lives. The evidence clearly points, however, to parents wanting this knowledge to be something that their children could add to the traditional skills and knowledge that their families and community have shared with them since time before memory. Up until the introduction of family allowances, some families

were able to accomplish this by travelling in extended family groups on the land, teaching their children in traditional ways, and sending their children to day school when they stayed at Cross Lake for a few weeks or months during the year. There is no evidence that parents ever sought the spiritual and cultural assault that frequently came with the skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics that parents wanted for their children.

It is also clear that, at many points and for many families, western education came hand-in-hand with disruption and separation, and with profound loss. In some cases this came about through the long periods family members were forced to spend at residential schools, in other cases, separation came through student deaths. Children were separated from families psychologically through assumptions in the western system of superiority and that the education families could provide their children was necessarily inferior. In a wide range of ways, western education, with its regimented environment

and scheduled learning, compulsory attendance, and assertion of an authority greater than that of families or community, has been associated with feelings of powerlessness, of separation, and of loss.

And finally, through the administration and funding for education available through Canada, education has been chronically underresourced, administered arbitrarily, unpredictably, and haphazardly, and delivered through an overcrowded, and frequently physically inadequate, physical plant and infrastructure. Despite the best efforts of leaders and the individual and collective efforts of families and the community, on-reserve classrooms have been scattered and impermanent, poorly lighted, falling apart, cold, and not infrequently a fire hazard. At Cross Lake and at other Residential Schools, students have literally perished while attending school or later, as a result of illnesses caught at school.

For generations, parents have wanted to be able to offer their children the chance to learn skills that could stand them in good stead in their adult lives, but instead have found themselves forced, through the *Indian*

Act to send their children to schools that delivered poorly on that hope, while at the same time separating students from their language, their culture, their history, and from their families and community physically, socially, psychologically, and in many cases spiritually. Outside educators have intervened in the lives of students and families in ways they have never wanted, as well as, at times inserting themselves politically in the community. The net effect has been to place many families in an impossibly difficult position where they have been unable to influence the system enough to be able to offer their children the useful classroom education they would like for them, and instead have had to endure a great deal of hardship and heartache with no choice or recourse.

This process has, to a greater or lesser degree, repeated itself for over six generations now, through government policy, federal administration, and chronic under funding. In short, the history we have been studying through archival records over the past year has revealed patterns in the way the people of Cross Lake have experienced in-school education that could and

should have been expected to produce feelings of alienation, separation, disrespect, loss, and powerlessness in families and the community. This in turn has led to a gulf between home and school that continues to undermine current efforts to provide the respectful, relevant, and empowering community, family, and child-focused education that embraces Pimicikamac's history, traditions, and values, including those of curiosity and innovation, as a framework for adding new skills and knowledge that will allow students to grow and thrive and that their families have always wanted for them.

Today, those people aged from 0 to 21 years old represent 42% of the Cross Lake Band's membership, both on and off reserve. The community cannot afford to see these eligible school pupils continue to be displaced and dispossessed today, as has happened in the past. Today, the school's biggest challenge may be to find innovative and responsive ways to speak to and mitigate the alienation families feel and that is preventing so many members of the eligible student population from coming to school and staying in school, from wanting to come to

school everyday and take ownership of their education and their futures. Cross Lake today cannot afford to keep losing eligible and enrolled students day by day. Through a richer understanding of the history of education at Cross Lake and the impact of that history on feelings about education, paired with skillful assessment and program development, today and into the future educators can be the force that creates a sea change in schools-based education. And through this change, educators can look forward to a time when they can be engaged with meeting student needs and not with wondering why their students are not in school.



One of the halls at Cross Lake Indian Residential School, Cross Lake, Manitoba, February 1940. Canada. Dept. Indian and Northern Affairs / Library and Archives Canada / e011080278

APPENDIX A

STORIES OF STUDENTS WHO DIED AT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

ISBISTER ROSS
STRANGER

Born about 1883 to Queskinneskunam [Donald William Ross aka Donald Stanger] and his wife Mary Jane, Isbister Ross was the brother of Queskinnipinweskam [Peter Ross] who married Jane Ross, the daughter of the legendary Pimicikamak leader and chief Tapastanum [Donald William Sinclair Ross]. Peter served as Cross Lake Chief for over 2 decades in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The 1901 census shows Isbister's name with his parents, Donald and Mary Stanger at Cross Lake. Although the 1902 paylists for the family do not show a wife in Donald Stanger's family, there is no explanation of why, Isbister Ross entered the Brandon Industrial School in the fall of 1901; his application for admission in August 1901 shows that he was 5 feet 6 inches tall, weighed 125 lbs.. [a healthy BMI of 20.2], had good eyesight and hearing, and was generally in good health. His discharge form indicates that he entered the school already having attained "Standard I," suggesting he had some previous education. A year and 9 months later, on

May 9th, 1903, Isbister Ross died at the school. On the Admissions and Discharges form for the school for June 1903, Isbister Ross, who had attained Standard II and was training in farming while at Brandon was one of five children who were discharged due to death in that reporting period. In total, during the 1902-1903 school year, six pupils died at the school. In the 1903 Indian Affairs annual report, the principal of the school wrote:

Health and Sanitation. - While a larger percentage than the average number of deaths has occurred during the year, the general health of the pupils has been good.

The school physician, Dr. Frazer, has been faithful in his attendance. We have also had the services of a trained nurse for eight months of the year, and special attention has been given to the physical well-being of the pupils. The school is in a satisfactory sanitary condition, the ventilation and drainage system being up to date and in perfect order.

Isbister Ross' mother disappeared from the annuity lists somewhere between the summer of 1901 and 1902,

during the same year that Isbister left for school.

Family notes:

Born ca. 1883 [school records suggest ca. 1888, but baptismal records are probably more accurate], Cross Lake Band; baptized 23 August 1884, age 1 year.

Died 9 May 1903, Brandon Industrial School.

Father and mother: # 40 Queskinneskunam [Donald William Ross aka Donald Stanger/Stranger] and Mary Jane. They were married by a Methodist missionary on the 10th of January 1877 at the house of George Garrioch, Cross Lake, "having lived together, and having one child." Donald and Mary Jane were baptized at the time of their church marriage, her age in the baptismal register is given as 23, suggesting she was born about 1854. Donald's was given as 25, suggesting he was born around 1852. By 1902, the paylists show no wife in Donald Stanger's family, but the payroll notes that Isbister Ross is at Brandon.

Sibling: Brother # 66 Queskinnipinweskam [Peter Ross] married Jane Ross, daughter of Tapastanum. Chief ca. 1899-1922.

John Henry, baptized in January 1877, age 4: born about 1873.

Possibly also Anna, age 8 months in June of 1877. Jane age 4 months in August of 1880.

GEORGE FROG AND ALICE FROG

“when we moved there all my children like I said were sent out to school. And I was all alone in my house. I used to be lonely”

Interview with Anne Chartier of Easterville, 1988

George Frog was born about 1890 to John and Sarah Frog of Cross Lake. When he died in the Brandon Hospital at the age of 13 on 17 February 1903, he had been a student at the Brandon Industrial School for 5 years, 5 months, and three days. George was one of six Brandon students who died during the 1902-1903 school year, and he was one of three children of John and Sarah Frog who attended the Brandon school. George (#84) Ritchie (#85), and William (# 86), all children of John and Sarah attended the Brandon school around the same time. The 1903 annuity paylists for Cross Lake indicate that William, Richard, and George were at Brandon the

year George died. In departmental correspondence, there was confusion about whether two other boys from the family, Peter and James were also attending the school. William would be discharged in 1905 due to poor health.

Alice Frog [student 078, Cross Lake Band 102] daughter of Mary Frog, and granddaughter of Sarah and Robert Frog, was an orphan when she was sent to the Brandon school. When she passed away, her grandmother Sarah, wife of Robert Frog (#8) put in a claim for Alice's savings account through the school. When Alice died in 1904, the discharge form showed her as age 16, and having spent 5 years at the school.

Sarah Frog, #8 of Cross Lake Band also put in a claim for George's savings, suggesting the children were related, however George's mother was also Sarah and she was married to #9 John Frog, so this application may have been incorrectly filled in.

Family Notes:

George Frog:

Born ca. 1890

Died Feb. 17, 1903, age 13

Age 13, 5 years, 5 months, 22 days at the school,

“Died at general Hospital”

Parents: Cross Lake #9 John Frog, born ca. 1851, and Sarah Frog, born ca. 1851.

Siblings: John, James, Elizabeth, Peter, Ritchie [Richard], William.

ALICE FROG

Born ca. 1888

Died 1904, possibly August

Age 16, 5 years at the school

Parents: Mary Frog Cross Lake Band #102; grandparents Robert and Sarah Frog, Cross Lake #8

Entered School ca. 1888

Fanny Whiskies [Keeper]

Fanny Whiskies Keeper was born about 1889 to St. John Whiskies. Her mother was probably Sarah Saunders, who St. John had married around 1885-1886, the year after his previous wife had died. Although St. John Whiskies received his annuity payments through the Norway House annuity paylist, he and the family lived in the area around Cross Lake and had close connections in the community. About 1892-1893, Sarah passed away, and the following year St. John married Nancy, daughter of James Tait from Trout Lake. Within a year

St. John died, leaving Nancy a widow, at which point Nancy's name and number were transferred to Cross Lake for payments. Within another year, Nancy died and in the 1896 payroll for Cross Lake, Fanny was assigned her family's treaty number. In 1897, Fanny's annuity was paid to her guardian, Walker Keeper [husband of Matilda] of Norway House. In the summer of 1897, Fanny was admitted to the Brandon Industrial School. In 1899 Joseph Keeper, son of Walker and Matilda, was admitted to the school. In 1902 Fanny was described as "friendless," that is, she was judged to have had no immediate family to care for her. Fanny remained a student at the school until her death there on the 26th of September 1904 [115 years ago on the 26th of September, 2019].

Family Notes:

Date of birth ca. 1889 [age 15 in 1904]

Date of Death 26 September 1904

Parents:

Birth and/or step: Sarah daughter of Saunders, Nancy daughter of James Tait. St. John Whiskey was also married to another woman before 1875. This woman died between summer 1885 and summer 1886. Based on the age given for Fanny in school records, it is possible that this was her mother, however, given the softness of date recording in all of these records, it is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that her mother was Sarah, daughter of a non-treaty man named Saunders. Joseph Benjamin Keeper's date of birth was recorded in his military records is 1886, so he and Fanny might have been siblings or step siblings, but he may well have been the child of Fanny's guardians, Walker and Matilda Keeper.

Adopted father/guardian: Walker Keeper (Norway House) [and his wife Matilda]

Siblings:

Maggie (married John North), St. James Whiskey who died in WW1 at Vimy Ridge. In his file, he indicates that Maggie North is a half sister.

<http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?op=pdf&app=CEF&id=B10275-S026>

Joseph Benjamin Keeper, WW1 Veteran and long-distance runner, member of the 1912 Olympic Team was a child of Walker and Matilda Keeper, who became Fanny's guardians after the deaths of her father and step-mother Nancy.

St. James Whiskies/Whiskey born 3 May 1894, died 15 August 1917, Vimy Ridge.

Maggie Whiskies North born ca. 1881.

Joseph Keeper born 21 January 1886, died 29 September 1971. Walker Lake, the family's traditional territory, was named for his father Walker Keeper.

Connections with Cross Lake:

St. James Whiskey identifies as being from Cross Lake. He gives John Whiskey of Cross Lake as his uncle; correspondence relating to Fanny indicates her family is from the area around Cross Lake, as well.

BETSEY OSBORNE

Summary

When Betsey Osborne was examined prior to entering the Cross Lake (St. Joseph's) Residential School just after Christmas in 1939, she was 8 years old, 4 feet and ¼ inches tall, and weighed 55 lbs. According to the BMI calculator at the Centres for Disease control, but today's standards, this places her as entering the school in the 65th percentile, that is, at a healthy weight. The examining physician noted that she did have head lice and scabies, but said, in his opinion she did not have tuberculosis, and that her general health was good.

To the
Director of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, Canada

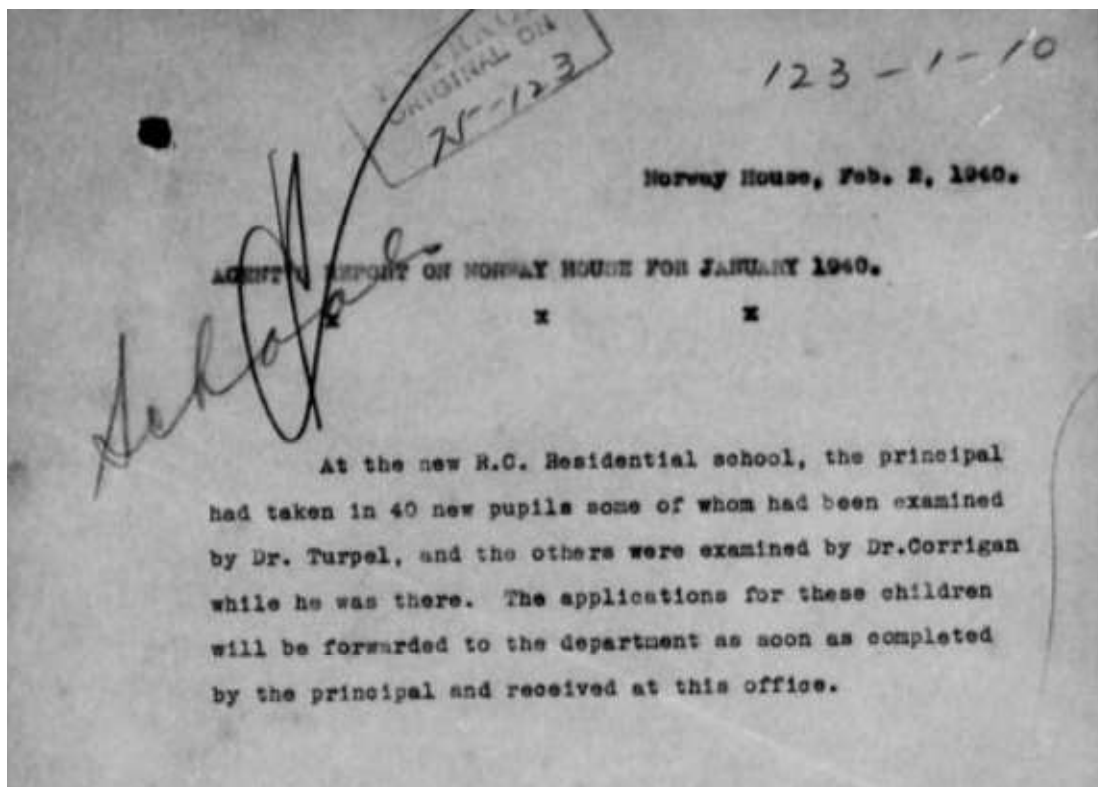
Dec. 28th 1939

Sir,— I hereby make application for admission of the undermentioned child into the St. Joseph Indian Residential School; to remain therein under the guardianship of the Principal for such term as the Minister of Mines and Resources may deem proper:

Indian name of child Osberne
English name Betzie
Age 8 ¼ years
Name of Band Cross Lake
No. of ticket under which child's annuity is paid 398
Father's full name and No. Salomon Osberne 398
Mother's full name and No. Sarah Jane Wiskey 398
Parents living or dead Living
State of child's health Good

Agency Narway House Band Cross Lake
Child's name Betzie Osberne Age 8 Weight 55 lbs.
Height 4' ¼" Is child undernourished? no Has child
any defect or deformity of body or limb? no Any defect of vision? no
of hearing? Any cutaneous disease or eruption?
Any signs of mental deficiency? Any enlarged or broken down glands? no
If child has any of the above defects, describe them
Scabies - Pediculosis Capitis
Pulse rate 80 Temperature 98 If feverish, from what cause?
Has this child active tuberculosis in your opinion? no
If so, of what part of the body and in what stage?

At the time Betsey was admitted to the school, the large residential school building had only recently been rebuilt, and the school was anxious to fill the spaces that were now available. Betsey was only one of forty children admitted to the school in early 1940.



Betsey's admission to the school was officially approved by Canada on 19 January 1940.

What happened next is summarized by Paul Hackett in his article:

Tuberculosis Mortality among the Students of St. Joseph's Residential School in 1942-43: Historical and Geographical Context

https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/2292/2558/RALe_03.pdf;sequence=1

Death at Cross Lake

It was in this context of unequal access to TB treatment that events unfolded at St. Joseph's between the spring of 1942 and the following summer. It began in May of 1942 with the death of a young girl, Margaret B., the first of four children from St. Joseph's Residential School 15 (Figure 4) to die of TB over a thirteen-month period. She was six years old in December of 1940 when she was admitted to St. Joseph's from God's Lake, a small, isolated, community to the east of Cross Lake. There is no evidence of earlier illness, but on March 17th she complained of feeling ill. Margaret B. looked sufficiently so to the school's nurse, Sister Francoise Therese, that the girl was placed on bed rest in a private ward, and given abundant food and cod liver oil.¹⁶ At that time St. Joseph's Principal, Father

G. E. Trudeau, did not deem that she appeared ill enough to call the doctor, who in any event, it was argued, would not have been able to come to the school at that time of year due to poor travelling conditions. The Principal's evaluation notwithstanding, when Dr. Cameron Corrigan finally arrived from Norway House on the 24th May, her condition was considered too far advanced for treatment at the closest hospital at Norway House, and so Margaret B. was left to recover or die in the school. She died of an undifferentiated form of TB on May 29th at the age of nine. 17

The second to die of TB was an eight-year-old girl, Lilly R., who was a member of the local Cross Lake band. She had entered the school in April of 1940, at the age of five or six. In her case the quarterly returns¹⁸ indicate that she missed no school prior to her death on February 25, 1943, however the inquest that followed her passing revealed that she first fell ill at 4pm on the 8th of that month.¹⁹ As with Margaret B., Lilly R. was seen by the nurse, Sister Therese, and was immediately placed in the infirmary. She was given one half tablet of aspirin every four hours, and an ice bag for her head. Once again, Corrigan was not

called, this time because the Principal believed that the doctor would arrive "any day." 20 Corrigan never saw her before her death.

Unlike the earlier case, neither the quarterly returns nor the memorandum of inquiry mention the cause of death of Lilly R. Instead, they simply state that she died on February 25th. Even so, the treatment prescribed by the nurse, and a letter later written by Corrigan to Dr. Percy E. Moore, are strongly suggestive that the girl died of tuberculous meningitis, a disease that may cause persistent headache, neck stiffness, nausea and fatigue.²¹ It is not clear why the principal and Indian Agent declined to specify the cause of death, however it is possible that there may have been some feeling of liability or responsibility for inadequately treating the girl and for not informing the doctor, especially after the earlier death of Margaret B. due to TB.

The third child to die of TB during this thirteen-month period was Mary D. Though still young she was a few years older than the others, aged eleven when she was admitted in September of 1941. She, too, had come to St. Joseph's from God's Lake.

Her entrance examination notes that the chest x-rays taken prior to admittance were negative, and that there were no signs of TB at that point. 22 However, it was reported that her mother was thought to have died of the disease. With the infection present in her home she certainly would have been exposed, and there was a possibility that she had acquired a latent infection.

The first sign of her illness is found in the quarterly return for the period ending June 30, 1942. She appears to have been absent from class for the entire three-month period, and was discharged as sick the following quarter, suggesting a very severe disorder.²³ In this, Mary D. was likely sent to her home in God's Lake, as the entry for the quarter ending December 31, 1942 noted that she "Was sent back to the Doctor, though she had been discharged on his advice." She returned to St. Joseph's and must have recovered somewhat, as she managed to 121 attend classes on forty of the seventy days she was registered. A bout of influenza during the period January to March, 1943 kept her away from class for 38 days. 24

The memorandum of inquiry into Mary D.'s death provides

some insight into the final period of her life.²⁵ She had fallen ill on May 17, 1943, and, as with the others, she was seen by the nurse and placed in the infirmary. In her case, though, Dr. Corrigan saw her on the 24th and was able to indicate a course of treatment to the school personnel. According to Principal Trudeau, the doctor prescribed no medicines but simply directed that Mary D. be kept on bed rest until June 2, when she could be transported by canoe to the hospital at Norway House. From then until her death due to tubercular meningitis on June 11th she was under Corrigan's care. She was twelve years old. ²⁶

Less than two weeks later, on June 24th, Martha R., the last of the four girls, died. Here was another young girl from Cross Lake, who had been admitted to St Joseph's in February of 1940 at the age of six. Interestingly, the quarterly returns attributed no sickness to her during the year and a half prior to her death, unusual given that she had TB.²⁷ She had first been ill on April 14th, and reported initially to the nurse. In her case, however, the doctor arrived the following day, and immediately prescribed bed-rest, but again specified no medicines. This in itself would

not have been remarkable during these pre-antibiotic days, as tuberculosis was generally treated through rest, diet and, for some forms of the disease, surgical techniques. Martha R. saw Dr. Corrigan again on May 24th when he returned to the school. By that point her condition had improved somewhat, however she took a turn for the worse on June 1st²⁸ Three weeks later she died at the school of tubercular meningitis (with pulmonary TB contributing).

The quarterly returns hint at much more in the way of death and disease than just these four, and from them we can get a picture of a very unhealthy situation.²⁹ These girls were not the only ones to be have active TB. In the quarter ending June 30, 1942, one student was sent home with TB. The following quarter another was discharged with TB, and several others discharged for no given reason. Their fate is unknown, however it seems unlikely that they received medical assistance upon their return home. Two other boys died of unknown causes over the summer holiday period in 1942. During the quarter ending March 31, 1943, all of the children were afflicted with influenza. Such epidemics

had been known to trigger outbreaks of reactivated latent TB among those who were infected. ³⁰ Finally, during the three-months ending June 30, five boys and eight girls were discharged for no given reason, several had operations, and a large number were listed as "sick." Again, there is no evidence whether they recovered or not, nor of what their illness was. Any number of those discharged could have been ill with TB, as the policy in the Norway House Agency at the time was to send those suffering from that disease back to their homes, despite the possibility of infecting others and the absence of appropriate medical care.³¹

To this point there had been no sign of conflict or controversy in the school records concerning these deaths. This changed with the death of Martha R. In the section of the memorandum of inquiry into her death filled out by Dr. Corrigan, he showed obvious frustration with the staff of the school in their attention to his instructions. When asked whether they had taken all reasonable care with respect to the girl's death and whether they had followed his instructions, he replied in the negative.³² When asked to expand on this, the doctor

explained that they had failed to carry out his order to have Martha R. placed on bed-rest for a period of six months to a year. Corrigan did note that he doubted that it would have made a difference had they followed his instructions, as he considered the meningial form of TB to be “a [chance] and that it occurs even with the best of care.”³³ Prior to the development of anti-TB medications, meningial tuberculosis was almost invariably fatal.

Evidently, this was not an isolated incident. In a letter written in July of 1943 to Dr. Percy Moore, the acting Superintendent of Medical Services for the Department of Mines and Resources, Corrigan complained that Trudeau and his staff had failed to carry out orders for bed rest for other students at the school.³⁴ More importantly, the doctor laid out two other broad failings of the school with respect to the health of the children. First, he had ordered that all students from communities other than Cross Lake appear at Norway House during the summer break in order to be x-rayed for TB. While the Island Lake students had travelled to the hospital, none from God’s Lake had appeared. As such, he was unable to determine who among them had the disease.

The second issue identified by Corrigan was overcrowding. It had long been understood by the medical community, and by the Department of Indian Affairs, that placing too many students in a school led to increased opportunities for spreading pulmonary TB should one or more students be infective with the disease. This was particularly so with respect to crowded conditions in the sleeping dormitories. Since 1892, the amount paid to the residential schools had been set according to the number of students enrolled during the term, and some principals argued that it did no harm to accept admission of infected children since the disease was already present and widespread in the schools. Nevertheless, there had long been school-specific guidelines in place for each residential school as to the upper limit of enrolment, based on the size of the sleeping quarters and the cubic footage of air available. Dr. Corrigan noted that St. Joseph’s was designed for eighty students, but that they had had one hundred enrolled during the previous year.³⁵ In fact, the St. Joseph’s quarterly returns for the period from January 1942 to June 1943 show an average enrolment of 99, with a variance between 96 and 104.³⁶ Corrigan observed that in order to fit

the surplus students in the dormitory, the beds had to touch side to side and head to foot, ideal circumstances for spreading the infection.³⁷

Corrigan’s recommendations suggest that the problem of TB in the Cross Lake school was substantial, that it was due in part to negligence, and that major changes to the school’s operations were required.³⁸ For one, he asked that the students who had been identified as having TB in his incomplete survey not be allowed to return the following fall. Although this request may now seem obvious, as it would have prevented infection in the school, the situation was somewhat complex in 1943. Simply put, there was no space in the Norway House Hospital for long-term care of more than a few people with TB, and there were no funds to send them south to another TB hospital for treatment. The doctor’s order simply sent the victims back to their home communities, where they were liable to spread the disease to others.

Moreover, Corrigan implored Moore to immediately direct Principal Trudeau, through Indian Agent P. G. Lazenby, to limit the number of students to eighty.³⁹ This was hardly a radical request as he was

asking the Department only to enforce its own regulations. Similarly, he insisted that all students be given x-rays before entering the residential school. The fact that he did so “in order to protect [himself] and the Department,” is strong evidence that things were going particularly wrong, and that questions of liability might one day be raised.⁴⁰ If Corrigan is to be believed, and there seems no reason not to believe him, significant numbers of children were contracting TB while at St. Joseph’s. He wrote that: “I have brought over [to the hospital] from Cross Lake enough children whom I had x-rayed a year or two years ago, to know that many of them must have developed tuberculosis in the school during the first year.”⁴¹ His words echoed those of a predecessor at Norway House, Dr. W. N. Turpel, who wrote in 1930 that: “Many of them remain for years and some of them get broken down in health in the schools. A yearly check up on them would enable one to weed out those likely to break down.”⁴²

Again, this was hardly a shocking demand. X-ray equipment had been installed at the Norway House Hospital

in 1931 or 1932 for just such a purpose, at the cost of \$2,264.35.⁴³ Indeed, Indian affairs had required prospective residential school students to submit to a physical exam by a qualified doctor for several decades, and in recent years that order had been amended to include a chest x-ray. The doctor would subsequently fill out an entrance examination report, and would recommend either rejection or acceptance based on the child’s health. In practice this program was often ignored. Officials in Ottawa knew that many students gained entrance to residential schools without a legitimate exam, and many others were admitted with signed examinations of dubious quality (Milloy 1999:89). Each time that a circular was issued by Ottawa reminding church authorities that such examinations were required, replies immediately came back stating that it was impossible to comply with the directive. Often, Ottawa took a conciliatory approach and allowed the schools to make some other arrangement.⁴⁴

Finally, Corrigan called for a ban on admitting children from Island Lake to either St Joseph’s or the United Church’s residential school in Norway House. His rationale

for refusing them admittance was based on his perception of their lack of resistance to the disease. He noted: “the Island Lake people have very little immunity to tuberculosis and I do not believe they should be brought out and mixed with people who have practically 100% infection.”⁴⁵ Again, on the face of it this is sound reasoning. This directive is similar to that of another of Corrigan’s predecessors at Norway House, Dr. E. L. Stone, who wrote in 1925 that the isolated Island Lake Band was not “severely infected with tuberculosis,” and that the best policy would be to leave them alone until such time as it would be necessary to interact with them (1989:237-56). Despite Corrigan’s beliefs, however, it is not clear that the disease was all that rare at Island Lake at the time. In December of 1941, the Reverend Arthur McKim, the United Church missionary at Island Lake, commented in a letter to his supervisor, John Comrie, that “Many cases of T.B. die [at Island Lake] for lack of a little rest and nutritious food.” More directly, he observed that “two children were sent back [from the Norway House Residential School] for active T. B. who are around here now quite normal.”⁴⁶

Ottawa accepted some, though apparently not all, of Corrigan's recommendations, and passed them along to the Oblates, along with the doctor's original letter. On July 13th R. A. Hoey informed Bishop Martin Lajeunesse that there would be no more than eighty pupils allowed in residence at St Joseph's for the upcoming 1943-44 academic year.⁴⁷ He also relayed the Department's directive that no child was to be taken from Island Lake during that academic year. There had been six such students at the school as of March of 1942. In reply, Lajeunesse agreed to follow these regulations, stating that "We are more than anybody else interested in the physical welfare of the children and no doubt the Department will appreciate that since the last four years we have a registered nurse in permanence to take care of the health of the children." ⁴⁸

At the same time, the Bishop accused Corrigan of lying in his report. It is readily apparent that the Oblates held a different view as to the cause of the underlying health problems among the Indians of the Norway House Agency. They pointed to problems inherent in the administration

of the schools and the provision of health care by Indian Health Services, both the responsibility of the federal government. With regard to overcrowding, Principal Trudeau argued (as many others had before him) that with eighty students the per capita grant was inadequate to run the school; with one hundred they were able to break even.⁴⁹ Should the federal government increase the value of the grant, Trudeau argued, they would be able to maintain a healthy number of students rather than filling the dormitories to overcapacity.

A more telling criticism was that the health services provided by the federal government to the Indians living north of Lake Winnipeg were far from adequate. The lack of medical attention was a longstanding issue in the area. As early as April of 1922 the people of Cross Lake had petitioned Ottawa for the construction of a non-denominational hospital near the site of the school. In reply, A. F. MacKenzie stated that "The Department is maintaining a Hospital at Norway House for the benefit of the Indians in the district, it is considered that this institution furnishes ample

opportunity for the Indians of Cross Lake Band who require Hospital treatment." MacKenzie also noted that Cross Lake benefited from "frequent" visits by the M.D. stationed at the hospital.⁵⁰ This policy remained in place in 1942, although the number of visits by Dr. Corrigan was far from adequate for any of the reserves save Norway House. ⁵¹

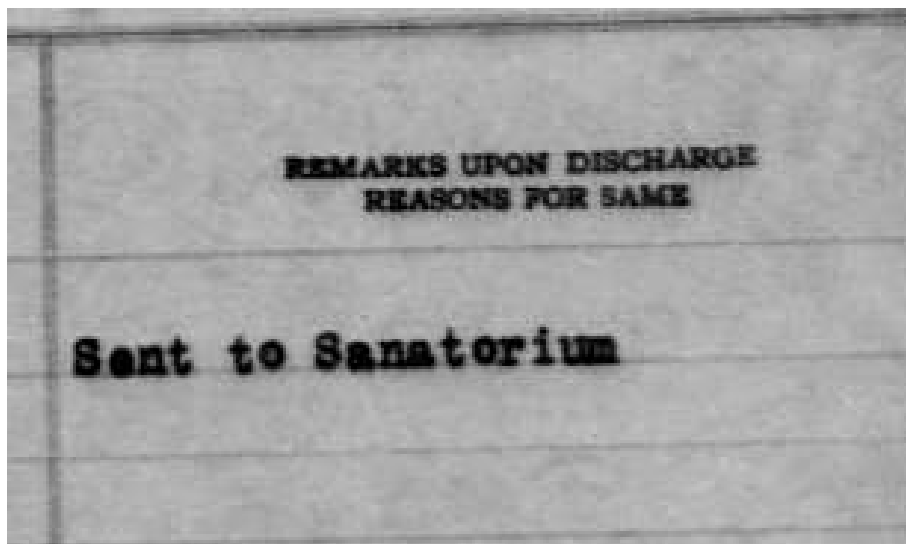
Lajeunesse's comment was in keeping with ongoing criticisms expressed by both himself and Protestant officials in the Norway House Agency. Earlier, in August of 1941, he had lectured the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, T. A. Crerar, on the nature of TB in the Norway House Agency. Noting that there were four thousand Indians living within the five reserves of the Agency, the bishop observed that they received no medical care for the disease.⁵² When any person was diagnosed with TB they were simply returned to their communities, "to die a miserable death after having spread the germs of his disease among his own people at home and neighbourhood."

Rather than dispute the bishop's general argument, Crerar replied: "I fully realize

that there are many cases of tuberculosis among the 4,000 Indians of the Norway House Agency who are not receiving treatment.” 53 Still, he pointed weakly to the twenty-two Indians who were under treatment at the Norway House Hospital at the time as something of a success story, and held out hope that Indian Affairs might free up funds to expand the hospital, should they become available.

In the case of Margaret B., he went further and stated “everything possible is being done at this school for the health, safety and welfare of the pupils,” a glowing recommendation given the doctor’s concerns.⁵⁵ In light of the animosity between Corrigan and the Oblates, and the accusations being tossed

For documents relating to the above, see “Cross Lake Residential School: Deaths of Pupils” at frame 601 and following at <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=2240951>



It was in these conditions that Betsey lived, ate, and slept in the dormitories at the Cross Lake Residential School until, at some point during the March, 1946 school quarter, she was discharged

Nevertheless, the number of TB beds in place at the hospital was so small as to be almost meaningless, and in fact capacity had only recently been increased from sixteen to twenty-four beds. 54

Of those individuals concerned with the deaths of the four girls at St Joseph’s, only one appears not to have criticized the circumstances behind their occurrence. In each case save one the Indian Agent, P. G. Lazenby, signed off on the official inquiries without comment.

against each other, it seems odd that Lazenby would not weigh in on the matter, particularly with the issue of potential liability in question. However, it is possible that the agent was indeed satisfied that everything had been done given the limited health resources available and the dynamics of travel in the region. Improved conditions would require something more substantial than tweaks to the practices of either church or hospital, and he may have been reticent to remind Ottawa that the fault lay with them.

with the notation “Sent to Sanatorium.” (see “NORWAY HOUSE AGENCY - CROSS LAKE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL - ROMAN CATHOLIC - ADMISSIONS & DISCHARGES. “ volume 6261 File 577-10 Part 2 frame 2268 at <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=2238642> for this and image above)

Quarterly Returns from the school offer a further glimpse of Betsey's health while at the school. The September 1945 quarterly return indicates that Betsey was at the school and attending classes for the maximum total days during that period:

0157	Betsey Osborne	14	1	*	*	1	1	*	*	75	28/12/39	92	21
------	----------------	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----------	----	----

BY DECEMBER OF 1945, SHE WAS MISSING CLASS DUE TO ILLNESS, BUT STILL LIVING AT THE SCHOOL:

0158	Betsey Osborne	14	1	*	*	1	1	*	*	125	28/12/39	92	30	Was ill.
------	----------------	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----	----------	----	----	----------

In the quarter before her discharge in March of 1946, she was only at the school a total of 36 out of 90 days, and able to attend classes on only seven of a possible 60 days. From this it seems likely that Betsey may have left the school by the middle of February. Copies of these returns can be found through Library and Archives Canada's Schools Files Series, or by searching for Betsey Osborne through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at nctr.ca

LAST NAME: OSBORNE

GIVEN NAMES: BETSY

DATE OF DEATH: 13/05/1946

AGE: 12

UNITS OF AGE: YEARS SEX: FEMALE

PLACE OF DEATH: RM CROSS LAKE

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1946,004144

REGISTRATION DATE:

Source: Government of Manitoba, Vital Statistics database at <https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/Query.php>

Betsey was transferred to the Clearwater Indian hospital. The facility had only recently been converted from an American military facility, and was lacking a great deal of medical equipment as it was being changed over. See:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=o9gQDAAAQBAJ&pg=PA65&lpg=PA65&dq=clearwater+indian+hospital&source=bl&ots=nDwMLL_b3e&sig=ACfU3U2_rHq2dqCnOKTf1qr9qVqvOewbfQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZyoact8zjAhVqj1QKHfliBcA4ChDoATAGegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=clearwater&f=false

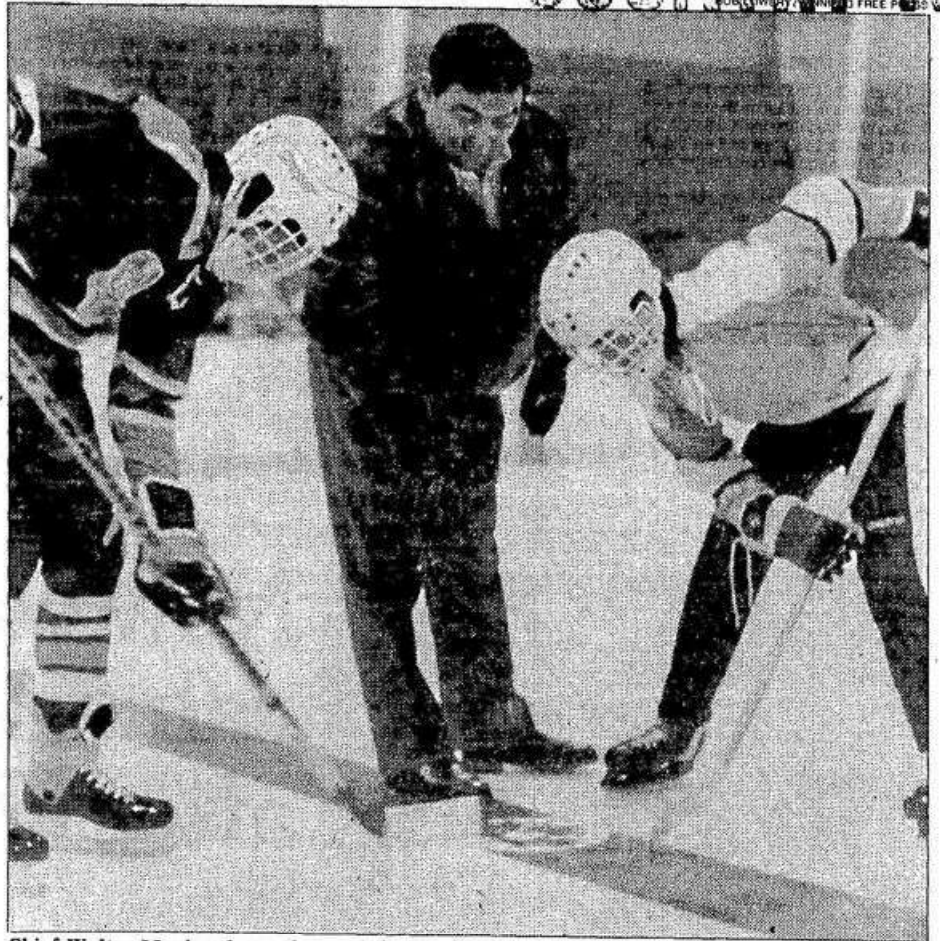
therapy regime, particularly for Aboriginal patients. In Manitoba IHS contracted with the private corporation Sanatorium Board of Manitoba to provide tuberculosis treatment for Aboriginal patients in three segregated institutions: Dynevor Indian Hospital near Winnipeg, the former American military hospital at Clearwater Lake at The Pas in northern Manitoba, and the redundant Brandon Military Hospital.⁸⁸ The arrangement relieved IHS of providing tuberculosis treatment while providing the Sanatorium Board with a steady income of more than \$800,000 annually.⁸⁹ Treatment at Dynevor and Clearwater Lake Indian hospitals consisted of bed rest, while patients requiring surgery were transferred to what became known as the Brandon Indian Hospital.

Following her death, Betsey was buried at the Catholic cemetery in The Pas.

APPENDIX B

WALTER MONIAS: "I NEED NO NOTES, BECAUSE I
SPEAK THE TRUTH"

'I need no notes, because I speak the
truth.'



Chief Walter Monias 1932-1995

Walter Monias: 'I need no notes, because I speak the truth.'¹

Walter Alfie Monias was born at Cross Lake, Manitoba, 29 September 1932 to Sandy Monias Sr. and Adele Monias. He married Hazel Ross 12 April 1955, and together they had six daughters and four sons. As a young child, Monias attended the Norway House Residential School. After leaving school, he worked as a guide, a fisher, a hunter, and as a bombardier driver for local schools at Cross Lake. For more than three decades, Monias contributed to the health and well being of his community, and to Northern Manitoba, as a Chief, Band Councillor, chair of the Northern Flood Committee, and through his work with the Awasis Child Care Agency.²

Everybody says they want grassroots consultation

Throughout his career, Walter Monias was keenly aware of what we today refer to as the social determinants of health, so it is no surprise that, in 1974, he told the *Winnipeg Free Press* that the underlying cause of alcohol issues on reserves was "human despair."³

1 Glenn Sigurdson, *Vikings on a prairie ocean: the saga of a lake, a people, a family and a man*. (Winnipeg, MB : Great Plains Publications, [2014]) Available at <http://prairieocean.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Hopes-and-Fears-Drive-Decisions.pdf>

2 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 22, 1995, 3; *Winnipeg Free Press* Nov. 30, 1983, 2.

3 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 23, 1974, 8; Monias' position did not

Consistent with this, Monias' was always a strong voice for self-determination and meaningful community participation in decision making and in staffing projects operating on or impacting Cross Lake with Cross Lake workers, a position that got him into a very public battle early in his career. At a meeting of Northern Chiefs in 1970, Monias noted that Indian Affairs and Manitoba Indian Brotherhood representatives had only made brief appearances

Everybody
says they
want
grassroots
consultation

at the conference. "There is so much talk about partnership.... Everybody says they want grassroots consultation. Why is it that these men are so busy that they can't take time to be with us on this occasion which is the first time in history that the northern chiefs have held a conference of their own."⁴ And even earlier, as

give government and police carte blanche enforcement powers, rather he was an advocate for addressing underlying issues, for instance, in 1978, Monias raised concerns that the provincial government was selling liquor at Hydro's Jenpeg site, then police would arrest people on the road between Jenpeg and Cross Lake, which was a dry reserve. *Winnipeg Free Press*, Feb. 04, 1978, 3.

4 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Feb. 02,

Chief, in 1969, Walter Monias had told Members of the Manitoba Legislature during a hearing of the province's Northern Task Force that the then Transportation Minister Joe Borowski had denied jobs to Cross Lakers because, he said, Borowski had told him "you Cross Lakers only gave me 50 votes....The men from Nelson House... are going to have the jobs from now on because they are the ones that voted for me."⁵

The remarks, reported in the newspaper, sparked ill will from Borowski, who, in 1970, accused Monias of selling out his people for \$5000, at the same time refusing to allow the Amisk Corporation to subcontract clearing work to Cross Lake Band members under a contract the company held with the province. "All I want to do is sit down with Joe and reason with him," was Monias' response to questions from the *Winnipeg Free Press* when asked about the accusations. Ultimately, the Premier Edward Schreyer stepped in, and band members were hired under the contract. That same month, November 1970, Cross Lake took a seat at the table of the New Start program which was aimed at upgrading local skills to prepare workers for steady employment.⁶ Monias'

1970, 10.

5 *Brandon Sun*, Dec. 20, 1969, 3; Borowski denied these statements, but Monias pointed out that the statements were made in front of other band members.

6 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 04, 1970, 61; *Winnipeg Free Press* Nov. 02, 1970, 6; *Brandon Sun*, Nov 06, 1970, 2; *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 09, 1970, 12.

commitment to finding ways that members of the Cross Lake community could find meaningful employment continued in 1971, as he led the band council in applying for federal and provincial winter works projects funding.⁷ In 1973, the community was preparing to share in a Provincial Employment Project (PEP) grant.⁸ But for all of his work, in 1974, Monias told the *Free Press* that, of 500 people on the reserve who were ready and able to work, only 150 had employment.⁹ And it was not only wage labour Monias was concerned about. Worried about the lack of progress on a bridge over the Minago River, in 1975 Monias told an Interfaith conference on Northern Flooding: “without it, our route to some of the best fishing and trapping areas is blocked off.... If the government doesn’t start building that bridge soon, we will block the road to Jenpeg with a barricade of canoes.”¹⁰

“You never get what you want; its just what the resource people want.”

At the same time, in 1973, Monias, as Chief, was pushing back against Premier Edward Schreyer and the provincial government of the day, claiming that the Premier had broken an election promise to provide a

7 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 24, 1971, 79.

8 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 13, 1973, 7.

9 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 12, 1974, 42.

10 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sep. 30, 1975, 8.

rock crusher needed to improve local roads.¹¹ By December of 1973, acting as Chief of Cross Lake, Monias, along with Chiefs from God’s Narrows and Oxford House were negotiating with the province to allow the group to develop a winter road system between the three communities.¹² By the spring of 1974, a provincial program to provide necessary repairs to the homes of local pensioners and work for local workers had somehow become part of a larger concern about vote buying in the North, while local workers struggled to get paid for the work they had completed. “5 Gallons of Tar for Roof Seen as Possible Vote Buying,” cried one headline in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, in April of that year.

You never get what you want; its just what the resource people want.

At the centre of the claim that the program amounted to vote buying was an off-hand remark by the local mayor that the Schreyer government was the “first he had known to try to help people.”¹³

11 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 13, 1973, 74.

12 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Dec. 03, 1973, 104; *Winnipeg Free Press*, Dec. 13, 1973, 99.

13 *Winnipeg Free Press*, April

All this was happening as Monias and other Northern Chiefs were considering their future as part of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. Monias had already walked out of a Brotherhood meeting because the group had voted down a core funding proposal that would have benefitted northern reserves while increasing local control. The measure proposed that core funding should go directly to band councils to be administered by them, allowing the bands not only more direct and responsive control of projects, but to hire community members.¹⁴ This theme, that community capacity and wellness should be increased through local control of programs and funding, would be consistent throughout Monias’ life.

Oh, you’re crazy; you’re talking about a million dollars

As early as 1970, Monias had expressed publicly his frustration with the bureaucracy that dogged every aspect of life for the people at Cross Lake and Indigenous people across Canada. In an article titled “Indians Attack Bureaucracy Gap,” Monias told *Free Press* reporter Ron Campbell “You never get what you want; its just what the resource people want.” Speaking about the need for a vehicle bridge rather than a proposed suspension foot bridge that parents feared would be dangerous for their children to cross to get to school in the community, Monias stated that “When we asked them about

08, 1974, 70.

14 *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 08, 1974, 34.

a vehicle bridge, they said 'Oh, you're crazy; you're talking about a million dollars.'" Even more seriously, Monias noted, the community's water supply, as a result of development in the area, was now overwhelmed by fine silt in the water, causing the local nurses to believe it was the cause of serious illness in the community, and leading to everyone having to boil their water before use.¹⁵ Indian Affairs' Director for Manitoba responded to the article by claiming that Monias had only made the complaints about the bridge because of local pressure, but

Monias' concern for the well being of his community extended to food security as well. At a meeting focused on discussing solutions to the high cost of food in the North, Monias argued for price equalization through out Manitoba. "Beer is the same price all over the province...Why can't we do the same for food," he asked.

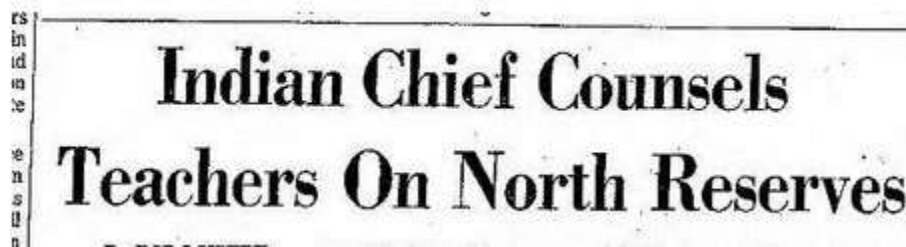
Don't forget we only scalp heads in Canada

In November of 1971, Monias' articulated his awareness of the importance of respect for local control combined with his

he quipped, while reminding the teachers that their role was in the classroom and not intervening in community affairs.¹⁸ Speaking to the Assembly of Native Teachers 17 years later, in 1988, Monias would tell the group that "The assembly provided people and communities with a chance to learn from one another which has always been the strength of our traditional society."¹⁹

where men could learn to construct a road that goes somewhere and serves people

In January of 1971, in the aftermath of the loss of the main school at Cross Lake to fire, Monias prepared to meet with James Wright, superintendent



allowing that, if the Federally employed nurses were concerned about water quality issues, "I suppose it is a problem."¹⁶ In June of 1971 a suspension bridge connecting the mainland community to the island where a large school was located was opened to foot traffic.¹⁷

15 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 02, 1970, 15.

16 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 07, 1970, 14; Monias was still advocating for his community on issues around water quality and winter transportation in 1972. *Brandon Sun*, February 10, 1972, "Indians seek assurances on lake plan."

17 *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 09, 1971, 83; in 1975, Monias was still trying to find a way to get a bridge put

concerns about excellence in education in a speech to a meeting of teachers from across the larger education division. In this speech, Monias warned against arrogance and against arriving in a community, setting up shop, and interfering politically. "They say or at least think I happen to be the most educated person in here, so I shall be boss. I will organize some associations and these people will do my bidding," Monias told the group of assembled teachers, interjecting a little humour in his message by noting that, during the French Revolution, teachers were beheaded. "Don't forget we only scalp heads in Canada," over the Minago River.

of education for Indian Affairs' Western Division to discuss how the loss of the school could be addressed. The band wanted a 22 classroom K to 12 school, while Indian Affairs wanted a smaller school that would only offer classes to grade ten. At the time, the Cross Lake Band was moving toward taking over their own job preparation and research programming. The move, Monias told the *Free Press* was important, because, up to this point, at Cross Lake the funds allocated for education were often

18 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 22, 1971, 55.

19 *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 22, 1988, 2.

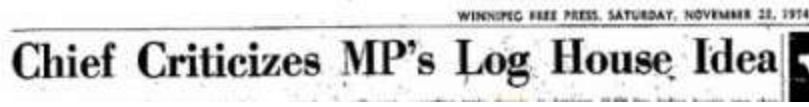
consumed in administrative costs, leaving few practical benefits at the community level. His vision was that the Band would develop trades training in the community that would prepare workers who could then work on building homes on the reserve. Setting his sights on having the heavy equipment operator program moved from The Pas to Cross

Lake, he noted that at Keewatin College where the program was running, students built a road only to have it levelled for the next class to build again. "Why can't such training be given in our community... where men could learn to construct a road that goes somewhere and serves people," he asked.²⁰ In 1972, Manitoba formed a Crown Corporation, Minago. The corporation was intended to provide opportunities for northern workers through its oversight of services such as contracting, clearing and logging for Manitoba Hydro's Nelson River Project. Monias was named to the board of directors.²¹

I feel your proposal somewhat racist in that you suggest that Indian housing should not be to your "white" standard

In April of 1971, Monias was one of the local voices who argued in front the Air Transportation Commission hearings that the north in general, and the Cross
 20 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Jan. 21, 1971, 43.
 21 *The Brandon Sun*, September, 01,1972, 2

Lake/Wabowden area in particular needed better air service.²² By 1974, Monias was engaged in a debate with Churchill MP Cecil Smith, who had suggested that a more realistic solution to the reserve housing crisis in the north was to return to building the "old log house," rather than increasing



funding for modern housing units. The idea, wrote Monias in a letter, was "certainly not acceptable....I feel your proposal somewhat racist in that you suggest that Indian housing should not be to your "white" standard... and if we insist to be treated as citizens of this country we should not be having any (housing)." Describing the proposal as "stereotyping of Indian people," Monias also noted that the idea suggested that Canada was proposing that "if Indians do not accept the standard we have set for them, there just does not seem to be any housing available"²³

In 1972, Monias was advocating for access to proper telephone communication and television. Even more, the chief pressed for electricity hook ups for all Cross Lake homes to Manitoba Hydro's diesel generating station, noting that only half of the 300 houses in Cross Lake were connected to Manitoba Hydro, forcing the rest to use fuel oil lamps to light their
 22 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Apr 29, 1971, 18.
 23 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 23, 1974, 8.

homes. Worse than the damage the lamps were doing the homes the community was building, the fuel oil lamps posed a health hazard. "It's not healthy but what can they do? They have to burn fuel oil and it is slowly killing them."²⁴ In 1974, Monias would still be advocating for funding

for housing and education that at least kept pace with inflation, noting that while funding levels had remained constant, the value of the funding was now half what it had been.²⁵ In 1976, issues around health and housing touched Monias' life even more directly when his daughter and granddaughter perished in a house fire, prompting community officials to note that the community had no trained fire fighters, no fire fighting equipment, and no access to fire prevention training.²⁶

For a hundred years, progress has only meant poverty and hardship for our people

In early 1972, Monias was present at many meetings relating to the impacts of Hydro development and regulation in the north.²⁷ During this time, too, Monias stepped away from his position as Chief of Cross Lake to head the
 24 *Brandon Sun*, 12 January 1972; *Winnipeg Free Press*, Jan. 12, 1972, 1, 5.
 25 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 12, 1974, 42.
 26 *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 19, 1976, 9.
 27 See, for instance, *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 03, 1972; February 09, 1972, February 10,1972.

Manitoba Indian Brotherhood's Local Government Committee. In March 1972, he was present at meetings with then Indian Affairs Minister, Jean Chretien as Chretien visited a number of reserves in Manitoba.²⁸ A year and a half after resigning his position as Chief of Cross Lake to work with the Brotherhood, in October 1973, Monias returned to Cross Lake and was elected Chief again.²⁹ In 1974, he was advocating over concerns about the impacts of the Churchill River Diversion. Significantly, at meetings in April of 1974, Chiefs and mayors representing the communities facing the greatest impact from the diversion came together to act as a single bargaining unit.³⁰ In May of the same year, Cross Lake's Band Council passed a Band Council Resolution banning employees involved in the diversion from their reserve, effectively preventing exploratory work on Churchill/Nelson River projects. Monias further requested that Indian Affairs "take whatever procedure necessary to enforce this resolution."³¹ In June of 1974, Monias, as a member of the Northern Flood Committee executive, met with Jean Chretien at Cross Lake.³² At the meeting,

28 *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 03, 1972, 17; *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 10, 1972, 10.

29 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 05, 1973, 28.

30 *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 25, 1974, 93.

31 *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 09, 1974, 45; *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 09, 1974, 96.

32 *Winnipeg Free Press*, June

Monias told the assembled group that "For a hundred years, progress has only meant poverty and hardship for our people. We have not shared in the great affluence of North American society. The people of northern Manitoba are not opposed to the idea of progress but we believe that only through cooperative development can true progress be assured."³³ In November, Monias expressed his frustrations about the Hydro process to the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Citing a lack of "real" information about Hydro plans and projects, and noting that legislatively, through the *Indian Act*, the minister for Indian Affairs had the ultimate decision making power over matters that impacted people in Northern Manitoba, and that Crown Corporations could override local objections through an Order-in-Council, Monias speculated that the only avenue that appeared to be open to Indigenous people was to assert their Aboriginal Rights. The lack of community control meant that planning was impossible. With projects including a shopping centre, arena, and a school pending, the band could not designate locations for any projects if those locations could ultimately end up under water.³⁴ At an Interchurch conference on Northern Flooding, Monias continued to point out the problems inherent in allowing

22, 1974, 12.

33 *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 26, 1974, 96 ff.

34 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 12, 1974, 42.

outside people to decide the lives and futures of Indigenous people. At issue was the question of whether an independent arbitrator should be allowed to resolve issues the community had with Hydro. Monias rejected the idea that such an arbitrator should "decide the future of the Indian People."³⁵

You have heard the will of the people

In 1975, as Chief of Cross Lake, and president of the Northern Flood Committee, Monias found himself faced with a challenge to the mandate of the committee by Ed Schreyer, then Premier of Manitoba, when Schreyer sent a letter to residents of Norway House, Cross Lake, Nelson House, Split Lake, and York Landing, challenging the right of the Flood Committee to represent them. At a meeting of residents a vote on whether the residents wanted the Flood Committee to represent them affirmed the desire of the residents to continue to be represented by the Committee. Turning to the Hydro representative present at the meeting, Monias said "You have heard the will of the people. ...They don't want to deal with hydro individually. The consensus is that we are all with the flood committee and their legal counsel. We hope this meeting will be a precedent."³⁶

35 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 23, 1975, 5.

36 *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 05, 1975, 10.

We on the reserve have got to understand the agreement because we are the ones, not the lawyers, consultants, and government people, who have got to live with it for years to come

As the chair of the Northern Flood Committee, throughout 1975 Walter Monias was involved in negotiating compensation packages for the people of northern Manitoba whose lives and livelihoods were impacted by Hydro development with Hydro and a super-committee of provincial deputy ministers that advised Hydro. Monias was there not only to be part of the negotiations but also to ensure that those most impacted understood what was being said and agreed, acting as translator for those more comfortable in their own language. In February he was part of negotiations for compensation for fishers that had gone so badly the fishers were considering withdrawing from negotiations. In November of 1975, he was at the meetings that resulted in a compensation package for trappers.³⁷ In October of 1975, Monias was replaced as Chief of Cross Lake by Frances Ross.³⁸ Throughout 1976, under Monias' chairmanship, the Northern Flood Committee continued to press for compensation that

37 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 26, 1975, 77; *Winnipeg Free Press*, Feb. 18, 1976, 87.

38 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 03, 1975, 13.

We on the reserve have got to understand the agreement because we are the ones, not the lawyers, consultants, and government people, who have got to live with it for years to come

sought, in the words of lawyer D'Arcy McCaffrey, to "seek true dignity" for the communities that had not only been impacted by Hydro's actions, but now had to fight over and over again for promised compensation.³⁹ The process was complicated and demanding for legal counsel, for average people, who would be those who had to live the consequences of what ever would be decided, it was completely opaque. Not satisfied with a top-down leadership model, Monias insisted that everyone impacted had to have the opportunity to fully and completely understand what was being offered, and what

39 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Aug. 13, 1976, 7.

the likely consequences would be. Significantly, he noted that the proposed compensation package "failed to put money in the band where people can control it," did not include annual payments and royalty provisions for what would be the ongoing presence of Hydro on the land, and, particularly, noted Monias, to average people, the legal language used in the agreement was meaningless. "It wouldn't mean a damn thing to trappers or fishermen or anyone else in our communities. We refuse to have our chiefs sign a document they cannot understand. We on the reserve have got to understand the agreement

because we are the ones, not the lawyers, consultants, and government people, who have got to live with it for years to come," he stated.⁴⁰ The agreement, Monias noted, promised badly-needed jobs, training, and community development funds to the impacted communities.⁴¹

I need no notes, because I speak the truth

In July of 1977, after years of hard work, and days of round-the-clock negotiations, the Northern Flood Committee reached an agreement in principle with Hydro. At 4:00

40 *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 12, 1977, 2.

41 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Aug. 12, 1977, 2.

am 31 July 1977, following lengthy discussion in Cree by representatives of impacted communities, Walter Monias told the committee's lawyers that the communities would sign, but the lawyers needed to sign first. Of course, this signing was not the end of the process, each community now needed to ratify the agreement. "The Chiefs will not sign the agreement until their people understand it and have expressed themselves in a vote," noted Monias.⁴² Travelling to all the communities, legal counsel Glenn Sigurdson recalls "I can still hear Chief Walter Monias booming out on more than one occasion. 'I need no notes, because I speak the truth.'"⁴³

Throughout 1977, negotiations relating to the Northern Flood Agreement dragged on. In October of 1977, Monias and the Flood Committee met with then Premier Edward Schreyer when Schreyer accepted their invitation to visit northern communities.⁴⁴ At stake was a controversial clause that gave an arbitrator final power to decide on matters that would directly impact northern communities, a clause that could impact hunting and fishing rights. With the clause redrafted, the modified agreement could go to communities for ratification, Monias noted.⁴⁵

42 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Aug. 04, 1977, 63.

43 Sigurdson, *Vikings on a prairie ocean*, <http://prairieocean.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Hopes-and-Fears-Drive-Decisions.pdf>

44 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 08, 1977, 11.

45 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 11,

In October 1977, with a new provincial government in place, Monias requested an early meeting with Sterling Lyon's government.⁴⁶ That same month, he was elected Chief of the Cross Lake Band.⁴⁷ In December 1977, Monias told reporters that he was hopeful an agreement could be signed soon. Lyon agreed that an agreement was close.⁴⁸ Soon after, the flood pact was signed by representatives of the impacted communities and the province. It then required ratification by communities, noted Monias, who expected that process to begin in the next two months.⁴⁹ Monias' commitment to consensus rather than top-down leadership, and to the power of collective action was clear when he told a reporter that "I never thought I'd see this day when we first got our people together to try and solve this problem... If we had done this individually I don't think we would have ended with a satisfactory agreement."⁵⁰ Meanwhile, amidst concerns about the degree of representation northern communities could affect in the organization of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, the northern chiefs left the federation. At issue was what Monias considered

1977, 3.

46 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 25, 1977, 12.

47 *Brandon Sun*, Oct. 12, 1977, 3.

48 *Brandon Sun*, 12 December 1977, 2; winnipeg-free-press-dec-12-1977-p-6

49 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Dec. 16, 1977, 139.

50 *Regina Leader-Post*, 17 December 1977, 51

"backstabbing," as the MIB determined that the Northern Flood Committee would have to repay money given the Committee by the Federal Government to negotiate the Northern Flood Agreement. The still unsigned agreement provided \$5 million to be shared by five reserves, as well as additional land to make up for land lost to Hydro works.⁵¹

They would understand what our real needs are

In 1978, Monias was part of a group of Northern Manitoba Chiefs advocating for changes to the *Indian Act*. "In one section," noted Monias, "the chiefs are given responsibility for health, education and social development, but in another section we're told everything is subject to approval of the minister of Indian Affairs." The *Act*, Monias stated, had to change, to make chiefs responsible for their communities.⁵² In an interview, Monias advocated for meaningful local control of programs and administration, which he felt would provide many needed jobs while costing less to operate, and delivering more. "We feel Indian people administering programs for our people would be of great assistance They would understand what our real needs are."⁵³ Monias' ongoing concerns about sovereignty extended to the impact of policing on Cross Lake, pushing back against the

51 *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 16 November 1977, 66.

52 *Brandon Sun*, Feb. 04, 1978, 2.

53 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov-30, 1978, 26.

practice of the police who were stopping vehicles on roads outside of the reserve and confiscating any liquor they found. The practice was so intimidating to residents that Chiefs, including Monias were calling for a policing inquiry by 1979. Noting that the practice of stopping people and searching them and their vehicles appeared to have little impact on bootlegging on the reserve, Monias stated that “People are living scared when they come back across the winter road or the Genpeg road for fear they’ll be picked up by the RCMP. Some even get their liquor confiscated at the airport.”⁵⁴

we never gave up our rights to self-determination to any level of authority

In 1985, issues relating to sovereignty intersected with questions around alcohol consumption once again, when a court ruling determined that dry reserves were in fact unconstitutional. As a result, the RCMP were no longer enforcing alcohol regulations on reserve. At Cross Lake, Monias, concerned about the social cost of drinking on the reserve, continued to have the band constable enforce Band regulations. “I don’t really mind if I wind up in jail over the issue... One thing is clear, we never gave up our rights to self-determination to any level of authority,” he noted.⁵⁵ In 1987, when a retired judge advocated for establishing

54 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Dec. 13, 1979, 4.
 55 *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 07, 1985, 4.

liquor outlets on reserves, Monias responded that “Often our bylaws are looked on as second-class laws.... a majority of our people on the reserve have passed our liquor control bylaws.”⁵⁶

At the same time, Monias continued his work with the Northern Flood Committee, including the Committee’s work researching the impact the Flood Agreement had on Indigenous

we never gave up our rights to self-determination to any level of authority

and non-Indigenous hunting and fishing rights.⁵⁷ By May of 1978, Monias was also dealing with the issues that were arising as a result of the Federal Government holding back funds that they had committed to support the Northern Flood Committee, as soon as the agreement had been signed. The money, Monias told reporters, was intended to support researchers going forward, noting that since the agreement had been signed, little had happened on the government end of the

56 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 02, 1987, 4.
 57 *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 09, 1978, 11.

commitments included in the agreement. As well, Ottawa was no longer dealing with the Flood Committee, instead dealing with bands individually.⁵⁸ In 1979, the provincial government announced it would deal directly with individual bands to develop “individual flood pacts.”⁵⁹ In 1981, Monias won a landslide victory and was elected Chief of Cross Lake.⁶⁰

and then we have to run into one more screw-up

In 1981, Monias’ commitment to education and to meaningful work were foregrounded as the community seemed to be coming closer to a resolution of issues around adequate and appropriate educational infrastructure that had dogged the reserve at least from the 1950s when higher enrollments and loss of infrastructure meant that classes had to be held in scattered buildings and rooms across the reserve.⁶¹ When, due to weather, Indian Affairs Minister John Munro failed to attend a long-awaited funding announcement promising the resources to build a dedicated school building on the reserve, Monias noted his disappointment, stating “We have been waiting and struggling to get this school for more than 15 years and then we

58 *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 26, 1978, 12.
 59 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Feb. 24, 1979, 30.
 60 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 28, 1981, 5.
 61 See biography of Bello Ross, Appendix C in this report for more about this.

have to run into one more screw-up.”⁶² The promised new school, Monias hoped, would speak to the impossibility of providing the best education in Cross Lake where 761 students were squeezed into 22 different buildings spread over the reserve and adjacent Metis community. “Some of these places were built in 1947 and are real fire traps,” noted Monias. The proposed building project, Monias hoped, could also be an opportunity for skilled workers from the community to find meaningful employment. Monias told reporters that

We are convinced under a joint venture we could cut the construction period to two years instead of the four years it would take public works to do it... That would mean a lot of saving to the government. We would be sure the school was built right to prescribed standards and there would be no cost overrun like there has been on quite a few projects the department has been involved

62 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 31, 1981, 17.

in in northern Manitoba

But the biggest thing about the joint venture is that we could make damn sure that every skilled worker in Cross Lake and a lot more of our people would have a job on the construction.⁶³

because of the tremendous loss of recreation in our community due to the Jenpeg Hydro dam

In 1982, the Cross Lake Band, under Monias’ leadership, faced financial challenges when they realized that their critical expenditures out weighed their resources. While approaching Indian Affairs for a loan to cover immediate needs, the Band also undertook a financial review that revealed that the source of the problem stemmed from delayed payments owed by Ottawa.⁶⁴ In 1983, Monias pushed back against criticisms levelled by politician Brian Ransom that a planned Cross Lake arena was too lavish. “Ransom may not want to face the fact that our arena is a direct result of an agreement that his government signed in December, 1977... Is Ransom saying that the

63 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 18, 1981, 17.

64 *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 09, 1982, 2.

agreement his government signed is stupid., or is he saying that it doesn’t have to be lived up to because it only involves a bunch of stupid Indians...” The arena was awarded to the community, noted Monias, by the arbitrator agreed to in the Flood Agreement, “because of the tremendous loss of recreation in our community due to the Jenpeg Hydro dam,” stated Monias.⁶⁵

After all, [Indian Affairs] turned back \$1,422,688 unused education dollars to the Treasury Board from the 1982-83 budget

Issues around the construction of a new school and a related vehicle bridge that had plagued the community since 1971 came to a head again in 1983, when the community decided to keep their children out of school until a meaningful solution could be found. The decision was difficult for many, the move was a concrete statement of the depth of the concern and frustration the community had endured for decades, frustration with students attending classes in 30 classrooms scattered in buildings all over the reserve, classrooms that were poorly maintained, hot in summer, cold in winter, with breaches in structure that allowed snow to blow in, and where children had to wear their parkas in class in the cold months. But the move also represented the community’s

65 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Jan. 23, 1988, 13.

commitment to finding the best possible educational options for their young people. "Our people are just completely fed up with endless red tape, broken promises, and runaround... In 1967 our...school building burned to the ground. It was a temporary building and we've been waiting ever since for a replacement, Monias noted.

As well, because of the malfunction of the sewage plant that served the teachers' residence, raw sewage was pouring into the adjacent channel. "The department isn't that hard up that it has to delay repairing the plant... After all, it turned back \$1,422,688 unused education dollars to the Treasury Board from the 1982-83 budget" he told reporters. "Our people have been waiting 17 years for the new school and they have given the band council a mandate to keep the schools closed next fall until construction begins." Despite government commitments and assurances, concerns over water quality, a bridge to safely transport children to school (fluctuating water levels caused by Manitoba Hydro were making ice crossing all the more dangerous, and the need for a bridge more pressing), and appropriate educational infrastructure in 1983 would have looked familiar to anyone who had been on the reserve in 1971.⁶⁶ In August 1983, the long-awaited bridge was announced,

66 *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 09, 1983, 2; *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 14, 1983, 4; *Victoria Times Colonist*, March 10, 1983, 36.

Canada committed to repairs to the temporary classrooms on the reserve that could make them workable for the short term, however outstanding issues relating to the construction of a dedicated school facility and resolution of the issues surrounding the release of raw sewage from the teacherage sewage plant were ongoing, so that classes could not resume for the fall.⁶⁷ Parents reluctantly kept about 800 students out of classes in September 1983, and asked other reserves to join their boycott if the issues were not resolved soon.⁶⁸ At the end of September, during a visit from Manitoba's Premier Howard Pawley, Monias raised the issue of education and facilities on the reserve again. Taking the Premier on a tour of some of the classrooms, Pawley later told reporters that these were the "poorest" educational accommodation he had seen, the *Free Press* reported, with rooves leaking, cracks around doors big enough for snow to blow in, and a hole in floor of at least one classroom big enough for child to catch their foot and break a leg, the Premier observed.⁶⁹ In October, with repairs still not done, Indian Affairs told reporters that engineering staff had been on holidays, but that the band had recently been given a contract for small repairs that would make

67 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Aug. 04, 1983, 2; *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 01, 1983, 5.

68 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 03, 1983, 2.

69 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 29, 1983, 4.

the temporary classrooms usable again.⁷⁰

They've got a hell of a poor track record, and they've got unfinished work all over the place

In October of 1983, as Monias negotiated joint action support with Manitoba's Southern Chiefs, Canada announced that a new school for Cross Lake would be placed on the Treasury Board's Agenda. Cross Lakers, perhaps recalling that this school had been on the table for well over a decade, were sceptical. And as it turned out, their caution was well founded; by the middle of October, the new school was still not on the Treasury Board's agenda.⁷¹ By November 1983, work was finally scheduled to start on a new school, and Monias warned that if the government could not keep to its timetable, he would "talk to Indian Affairs capital management branch and arrange a different contraction" (the department had been awarded the contract by Public Works).⁷²

In the end, the construction of the school again raised issues with Monias and the community about Canada's process. While Treasury Board had approved a budget of \$18 million, by modifying the plans, cutting the cafeteria, and accepting the lowest bid,

70 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 01, 1983, 2.

71 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 05, 1983, 4; *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 07, 1983, 5; 14 October, 1983,

72 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 22, 1983, 5.

Canada would only have to spend about \$11 million on the project. “They’ve got a hell of a poor track record, and they’ve got unfinished work all over the place,” Monias stated, noting the residue from the approved funding amount would be used by Indian Affairs for projects in other communities. “What makes us so damned mad is that Treasury Board gave that money for our school and not to public works to catch up on their mistakes of the past.... They tell us if we don’t go along with these low bids we won’t get our school.” Canada responded that, calculating in administrative fees and costs, the project really only reflected an additional \$3 million Indian Affairs could spend on other projects, and that much of this was due to lower costs than anticipated because of the state of the economy at the moment.⁷³ In 1988, Cross Lake took over control of the operation of their schools. “This is a moment we have been waiting for since we began planning to take over education on the reserve in 1978,” Monias said.⁷⁴

Also on Monias’ plate in October of 1983, alarm bells were ringing as the Band saw the government roll existing commitments and responsibilities into and under their commitment under the Flood Agreement. Of particular concern for Monias was the province’s decision to use Flood Agreement

⁷³ *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 22, 1984, 3.

⁷⁴ *Brandon Sun* June 16, 1988, 24.

funding for the band’s proposed sawmill, a move, he felt, that could allow the province to pull out of their commitment to invest in the project. A lack of local input into how money would be used was a critical issue for Monias and the community.⁷⁵ In late November 1983, Monias, as Chair of the Awasis child care agency was advocating for Canada to produce the over \$700,000 it was behind in payments to the agency over the past two months.⁷⁶ In April 1984, Awasis announced it was about to open a sub office in Winnipeg.⁷⁷ In July of 1984, as Awasis was incorporated, Monias noted that the agency was receiving requests from people and families seeking information about what had become of family members taken from their communities under previous children’s aid regimes.⁷⁸

They should clean up their mess first

On December 27, 1983, Walter Monias dropped the puck for the first game at the community’s new arena. The arena, part of the community’s compensation under the Flood Agreement,

⁷⁵ *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 08, 1983, 7.

⁷⁶ *Winnipeg Free Press*, Nov. 30, 1983, 2.

⁷⁷ *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 10, 1984, 5.

⁷⁸ *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 26, 1984, 5.

had been constructed by the band’s Midnorth Development Corporation. The construction provided work for 21 local workers.⁷⁹ By summer of 1984, concerns about outstanding issues relating to Hydro’s previous commitments combined with their plans for further work had come to a head, prompting Walter Monias to tell reporters that he was seeking legal advice about how to get Hydro to honour their existing commitments before

They should clean up their mess first

proceeding with the Limestone Generating Project. “They should clean up their mess first... They should deal with the communities that were affected under the previous projects.

I instructed my lawyers to make sure that happens before any further development takes place.”⁸⁰ The Band instructed their legal counsel to apply for an injunction that would block further development until outstanding claims were satisfied.⁸¹ In January 1985, Cross Lake Band members turned down a \$12 million offer from Hydro to settle outstanding issues, Monias noting that this decision reflected the community’s concerns that the

⁷⁹ *Winnipeg Free Press*, Dec. 27, 1983, 2.

⁸⁰ *Winnipeg Free Press*, -jul-07-1984-p-2

⁸¹ *Winnipeg Free Press*, -jul-18-1984-p-23; *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 19, 1984, 12.

offer came with provisions that might prevent them from seeking compensation in the future for as yet unanticipated harms.⁸² Also at issue, the band wanted monies to be placed in the Band's bank accounts, not into a trust account administered by Indian Affairs. As Monias stated: "I don't believe Indian Affairs should get their hands on this money, which was paid to us for damages to traplines, commercial fishing and other things that do not happen on the reserve land."⁸³

Outstanding concerns about unfulfilled promises were not the only thing that worried Monias about how Hydro operated as a corporate citizen. The substantial compulsory performance bonds Hydro required of its contractors virtually guaranteed that Hydro contracts would go to large concerns, some from as far away as Alberta, and not to companies that would be much more likely to generate local employment.⁸⁴ Similar concerns about using local skilled workers and local resources were behind a decision in June of 1985 to suspend work on the new school infrastructure until the concrete for the project could come from the community's concrete business, which was in the process of getting a new gravel crusher online that would allow it to supply the required concrete.

82 *Calgary Herald* 12 January 1985, 42.

83 *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 10, 1985, 10; *Brandon Sun*, June 11, 1985, 3.

84 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Oct. 19, 1984, 12.

⁸⁵ In 1985, as Chiefs prepared to boycott the Limestone Generating Project, Monias expressed the group's shared frustration that, by it is own reporting, Hydro was not living up to its commitment under the Northern Preference Clause of its agreements.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, in 1986, Monias was elected to the board of the Manitoba Trappers Association.⁸⁷ In 1987, Monias was elected Chief once again, although his closest opponent announced he would appeal the result to Ottawa.⁸⁸ In 1988, Monias added his voice to the call for an Aboriginal Justice inquiry, "because the police haven't done anything to find out what really happened."⁸⁹

Hydro pointed their finger at Indian Affairs and said: it is your problem

In April of 1988, with a provincial election pending, Monias, with the backing of his community, was still pressing Manitoba and Ottawa to fulfill their Flood Agreement promises. "Its more than ten years since the signing, and not too much has happened," noted Monias.⁹⁰ By summer, with lake levels falling exposing rocks

85 *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 02, 1985, 2.

86 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 10, 1985, 3.

87 *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 17, 1986, 5.

88 *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 04, 1987, 4.

89 *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 17, 1988, 3.

90 *Brandon Sun*, April 12, 1988, 24; *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 12, 1988, 2.

and mud, fishers from Cross Lake were having to wade through mud, dragging their boats to get to their fisheries, and the heavily silted water was impossible to render potable. Faced with having to truck water in, Cross Lake was searching for containers. With the situation deteriorating, Monias summed up the bureaucratic hurdles the band faced by saying that "Hydro pointed their finger at Indian Affairs and said: it is your problem."⁹¹ At the Manitoba Chiefs' annual conference, Northern Affairs minister Jim Downey was on the hot seat. As Monias outlined the pressure the water treatment plants at Cross Lake were under to maintain potable water supplies, he pressed Downey to consider running a pipeline to the community from two spring-fed lakes near by as an alternative water source. "Winnipeg has two rivers, neither of which are used for drinking water. They pipe their water 160 kilometers. We think Cross Lake should have equal treatment," Monias reasoned.⁹² In August of 1988, at a meeting of Chiefs in Winnipeg, Monias walked out in protest when it became apparent that the Premier Gary Filmon was not attending, instead sending provincial minister responsible for Indian Affairs, Jim Downey. As Downey promised that the Filmon government would live up to the former NDP government's

91 *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 21, 1988, 4.

92 *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 02, 1988, 2.

responsibilities, Monias was quoted as saying: "I am not listening to that BS anymore."⁹³

Walter Monias passed away 17 September 1995 while on a visit to Hobbema, Alberta at the age of 62. At the time of his passing, he was serving as a Band Councillor for Cross Lake. During a sitting of the Manitoba Legislature, 24 October 1995 the Honourable Eric Robinson noted that he, the Honourable Maryanne Mihychuk, and the Honourable Steve Ashton had attended Monias' funeral to show their respects to the Monias family. "Chief Monias was one of those people who had ultimate respect for all people and elders and his fellow leaders," Robinson stated. Throughout his life, he was a strong voice for Indigenous self-government and sovereignty, and a tireless worker for his community. He was an eloquent speaker, and a shrewd negotiator who travelled extensively through

⁹³ *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 12, 1988, 8.

Canada and the United States, meeting with politicians and heads of state, leaders of industry, and with his own people on equal terms.⁹⁴



⁹⁴ *Winnipeg Free Press*, Sept. 22, 1995, 33; Manitoba, *Hansard*, 24 October 1995. Available at https://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/36th_1st/hansardpdf/54.pdf

APPENDIX C
BELLO ROSS



Bulls Ross.

PLANE
of Indian Reserve No. 52

CROSS LA

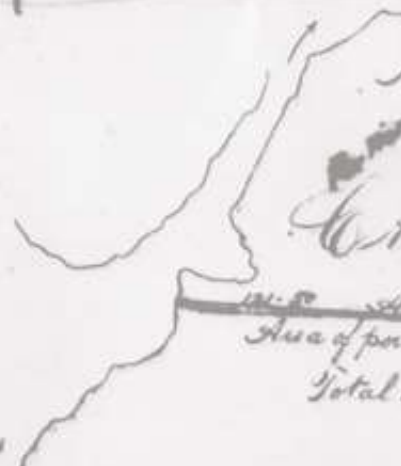
KEEWATIN

according to the provision of TREATY
and Surveyed under instructions from
Surveyor General by Duncan Sinclair
Winnipeg 18th

Scale 40 Chains to 1 Inch

Hans P. Allen
Superintendent General

J. P. Moran
Chief Surveyor
of Indian Affairs.



1909 - 29 November 1969

Bello Ross occupied the position of elected Band Chief in Cross Lake for two terms, from 1953-1955, and again from 1963-1965. But his leadership in the community reached beyond that role and included his role in creating a co-operative-run community centre, advocating for appropriate education for students in Cross Lake, and asserting his community's sovereignty over land and natural resources. He provided a clear voice for his community in dealing with Indian Affairs, while being realistic about his community's options. In all, Bello Ross displayed astute and skilled statesmanship as he worked for the best life for his community.

In 1946, seven years before he would take on the responsibilities of Band Chief for the first time, Bello Ross wrote a careful letter to the Special Joint Committee on the Indian Act in Ottawa, arguing that proposed changes to the Indian Act should do away with the religious domination of Indigenous education. In this letter, Ross outlined his concerns about the system of church-run schools that dominated Indian Affairs' education program. Having attended a Catholic-run Residential School for nine years as a child, Ross was only too aware of the shortcomings of a system that focused much of its resources on assimilation and religious training, leaving little time for the academic education

Indigenous parents wanted for their children.

Ross also raised the problems that running two essentially separate day school systems on the reserve created, one Catholic, the other operated by the United Church. This would be an ongoing problem throughout the 1950s and 1960s. But he also identified the political problems that the power structure set in place by Ottawa posed on reserve. The Catholic Priest in charge of the Catholic Schools on the reserve was threatening families with excommunication from the church if they did not choose to place their children's education in the hands of the Catholic educational authority on the reserve.



St. Boniface Historical Society, "Mission de Cross Lake." Fonds 0484, N4794, ca 1940.

Bello Ross' father Thomas Kisiastão-kanum (Ross) was born in the 1850s, a hunter from around John Scott's (Setting) Lake who almost certainly travelled to Norway House in 1875 with Tapastanum as part of the group who negotiated Treaty Five. Records from this time indicate that Thomas' father was Kisiastão-kanum, who was practicing a traditional life in 1875, and that he had a brother named John Scott Kisiastão-kanum. Around 1880-1881, Thomas Kisiastão-kanum entered into a relationship with the daughter of Margaret Heckenberg. This was probably Suzette, who he formally married on 23 December 1884, the marriage record indicates they had been living together already. Although Thomas had been baptized in the Methodist Church in 1875, when Thomas and Suzette were married by a Methodist missionary in 1884, the missionary noted that they had been living traditionally, what the missionary called "as Pagans." Thomas' last name was not changed to Ross in the paylists until 1892. Thomas and Suzette had a number of

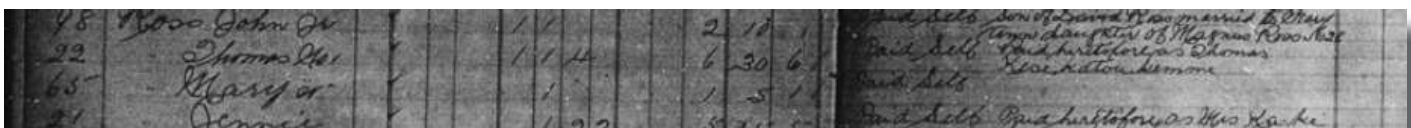
children through their long life together. By the early 1900s, many of the family had converted to Catholicism, as Catholic missionaries moved onto the reserve offering the promise of a western education for children in the community at the same time that the Methodist school was being under resourced.

Bello Ross was born in 1909 and attended residential school (probably St. Joseph's at Cross Lake) for nine years. Given his age, this was probably somewhere around 1915 to 1924. He married Irene Frances Jack, who died 1987. She was the daughter of Baptiste and Edith Jack, and they had a large family. Throughout his life, Bello Ross demonstrated his commitment to his family through his hard work, his commitment to supporting a healthy and strong, and self-determining community, and his clear-eyed advocacy for a high quality western education for his children and the children of the community that focused on academic excellence and left religious practices to families.



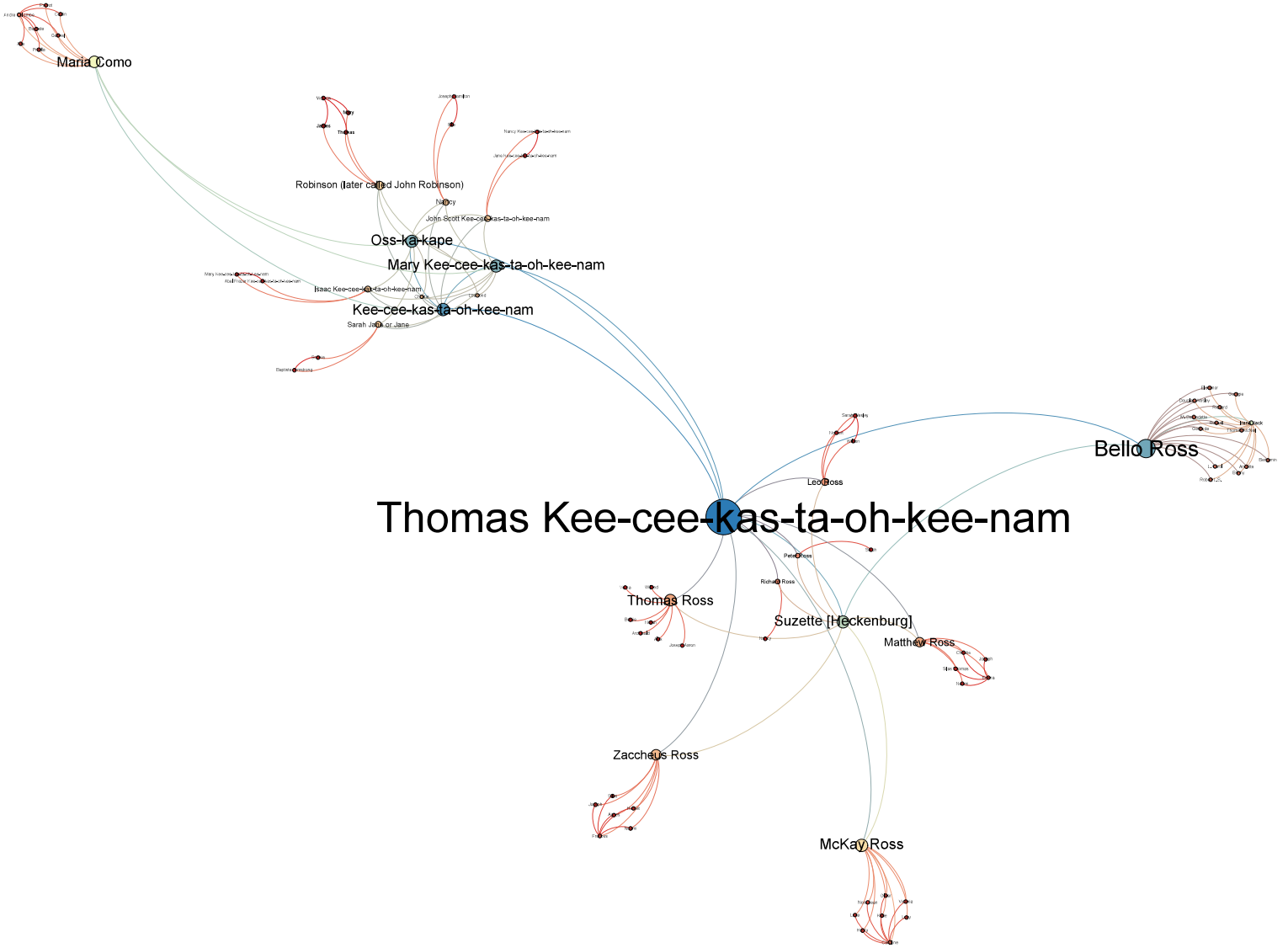
<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/26759898/boxoffice-march171951>

See later in this essay to read article



http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c7137/319?r=0&s=2

Thomas Kee-cee-kas-ta-oh-kee-nam



We wish the government should take all the Schools away from the Churches here in Cross Lake.

[to] Joint Committee
Indian Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa Ontario
Nov 19 1946

W Bryce M.P.

As we have heard and chance to talk about this meeting that they are go to have in Ottawa and we heard that you are going to talk for us this committee I have some thing to tell you to bring before the meeting

We are Indians we are mixture up in this Indian Act.

About the School

It say Indian Act, that Catholic child should go in a Catholic School and protestant in School.

This Indian Act is not Just at all.

We wish the government should take all the Schools away from the Churches here in Cross Lake.

Father principle is putting the protestant children in a Catholic day School and he does not want us to let our children in a protestant day school - he said he will put us out of church, we Catholic The government that put the day school in the Reserve and was [runned] by a protestant

Joint Committee
Indian Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa Ontario
Nov 19 1946

W Bryce M.P.

As we have heard and chance to talk about this meeting that they are go to have in Ottawa and we heard that you are going to talk for us this Committee I have some thing to tell you to bring before the meeting we are Indians we are mixture up in this Indian Act. About the School It say Indian Act. That Catholic child should go in a Catholic School and protestant in School. This Indian Act is not Just at all. We wish the government should take all the Schools away from the Churches here in Cross Lake.

Schools away from the churches. we could all see the children that did not when in a catholic school they have English to talk and good education and here in Cross Lake boarding school they make the children learn to pray and make them learn they Creek Language to write and hope that the government will here the school that he had give the Indian children we dont blame the government for it is the once that run the school is the preste and the sisters please talk for us and try succed to take all the schools away from the churches. I hope you will come an answer me soon

I had put my children in it

The Father had made [lots] a talking about it fighting me I let my children in a protestant day school

I was nine years in a Boarding school all I learn prayers the children that went in that school they have no orderly education

I have children I put them in school when the Government will run the schools himself and if he will take all the Schools away from the Churches we could all see the children that did not when in a Catholic school they have English to talk and good education and here in Cross Lake Boarding School they make the children learn to pray and make them learn [Errek??] Language to write [?] hope that the Government will here the school that he had give the Indian children we don' plame the Government for it is the once that run the school is the priests and Sisters.

Pleas talk for us and try [?] to take all the schools away from the Church. I hope you will come an answer me soon

We hope that the Indian Actt in by law should be change this coming year Next year if the Catholic run the day school again

I will put my children in a protestant day school. I will not care if he put me out the church as long as my children will not learn prays. I want them to learn something that will help them future to talk good English.

So long

from

Your

truly

Bello Ross

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=2236848>

See page 1225

II

Father princple is putting the protestant children in a ^{day} school. and he, does not want us to let our children in a protestant day school. he said he will put us out of church. we catholic The Govenment that put the day school. in the Resevard. and was unward by a protestant I had put my children in it. The Father had mad lots a talking about it fighting me I let my children in a protestant day school. I was nine years in a Boarding school all I learn. prayes. the children that went in that school. they have no. ardey education. I have children I put them in school. when the Govenment will run. the schools himself and if he will take all the

III

we hope that the Indian actth. in by law should be change. this coming year. next year. if the catholic run. the day school again. I will put my children in a protestant day school. I will not care if he put me out the church. as long my children will not learn prayes. I want them to learn some thing that will help them future. to long. to talk good English.

from
yours
truly
Bello Ross.

P.S. A show hall is being built at Sakitawak by Bello Ross. It will be finished in a week. He will be ready to rent it for classroom until the Sakitawak school construction will be finished, if the Dept. is interested?

*received from
Father Trudeau
Cross Lake (217/6-2)
Sept 12/57*

http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t10041/1110?r=0&s=3

In the early 1950s, a group of about 20 people from Cross Lake got together and pooled some of their trapping money to create a co-operative that included a community store and a theatre and community club located in a newly built log building that could seat 200 for movies. Bello Ross not only built the building, he took on the responsibility of president of the community club, as well as running the movie projector, and travelling to Winnipeg to get movies for the theatre.

Forestry Association...
Community Club
Here the enterprising redmen have formed a community club, run a co-operative store and a theatre.
The organization was started in 1949 when 20 men donated part of their fur catch to start the community club. The club holds regular dances and meetings in a log building that doubles for the movie house.
Music for club dances is played through an amplifying system from a record player in the tin-lined projection booth. Bello Ross, president of the Cross Lake Community club, who operates the projector for the weekly movies, attended to the musical part of the programme while we were getting our films ready for the show. At the opening he played the "Maple Leaf." The showing was officially ended with a recording of "O Canada."
The movie hall seats 200 persons on plain wooden benches. Admission is 35 cents for adults and 25 cents for children.

Winnipeg Tribune
12 February 1951
Page 3

The Company of Twenty

Winnipeg Free Press
17 July 1951
Page 10

North Indians Dispatch 'Envoy' For New Films
Bello Ross, president of the community club at Cross Lake, about 50 miles north of Norway House, visited Winnipeg last week to arrange for supplies of films to be sent to the remote northern settlement.
Twenty Indians run their own theatre at Cross Lake reserve settlement. They built their own hall with their own power saws. Film are shown weekly and profits go to the development of the community. Each member gives 15 muskrat pelts to the fund each year to cover depreciation of equipment.
Club members are anxious to prove to the Dominion government they are "anxious to help themselves to help provide better living conditions and education" for all occupants of the settlement.

Bishop Dumouchel
The Pas, Manitoba.

UNDERSTAND SHOW HALL AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL AT SAGITAWACK STOP ARE YOU WILLING TO RENT TEACHER LIVING QUARTERS AT CHURCH STOP MISS DUNE BEING APPOINTED

G. H. MARCOUX
Regional Inspector of School (Indian) for Manitoba

This building would also be used as a temporary classroom in the 1950s, as over crowding and school construction slowed by political debates meant that many students were moved from one makeshift classroom to another during the period.

http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t10041/1109?r=0&s=3

Re: BUILDING SITE - R.C. INDIAN
DAY SCHOOL - CROSS LAKE.

I would refer you to our recent interview at Cross Lake Reserve with Father Chamberland and Chief Bello Ross concerning the site for a proposed new R.C. two-room Indian Day School. You will remember that the Chief and Father Chamberland did not see eye to eye on the location of the site and it was left in your hands to refer to the Department. Apparently, since we left the reserve, Father Chamberland has again been talking to the Chief and I gather the Chief is not very pleased about it. Attached please find copy of a letter from Chief Bello Ross addressed to me, which is self explanatory.

Some time ago Father Chamberland requested, from the Cross Lake Band, the use of a piece of land for the purpose of erecting a new Church on the reserve. This request was submitted to the Department at Ottawa, through the regular Band Resolution form and signed by the Band Council.

http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t10041/1524?r=0&s=3

In the 1950s, during his first tenure as Chief, Bello Ross again came up against the local Catholic school authorities. Ross and Indian Affairs had selected a site for a Catholic day school on the reserve, but Father Chamberlain has disagreed with the decision, and had asked Indian Affairs to change the location. Clearly understanding the deeper implications of this change embodied, Bello Ross pushed back, asserting his leadership in the community's control of the land and the on the reserve as valid and stating "I gave you a piece of land... I am taking this land back." His choice of the matter would be settled provides a further insight into Ross' understanding of the relationships involved as being nation-to-nation, to be resolved between Chief and the representative of the Crown, "no Church before treaty."

"I gave you a piece of land... I am taking this land back."

http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_t10041/1526?r=0&s=3

Norway House, Man.
Aug 2/54.

Mr. J. Staunton
Indian Afferece Branch

I am. Very Very sorry to tell you, on this we, had, meet at R C. Mission with Mr. Davis and you. About Day School. I had put up what I think. and say. Still Father Champerland is after me. on this try still to go overn me as he know that he. has nothing to do on reserve.

I when to church. after church. he. call me. again on the same proplum we start talking again Now. I told him I try to please, him asking me for. a peice of land for. is Church. I agreeet with him he-sent letter he sent a letter a The pas. Just on this proplum. I told him I was kind. enought to give you a peice of land for your Church. As you dont look on this. I told him I am taking this peice of land back Becuse you are to much. on me. try to step over my head.

This will be settlt at tread time. no for giveness on it please pass this to Ottawa if not --- I will. pass it my self. If they want to know why I will tell them.

No Chuch befor. tready !
I mean it.

from Chef Bello Ross

51

Bello Ross continued to hold his ground on this point:

Dear Sir:

The following is a submission put
me by Chief Bello Ross of Cross Lake, Man.
Last year a band meeting was held and those
present were Mr White and Superintendent Ross
plan to discuss the school site in my
power, a site was chosen and a foundation
was dug, and now Father Chamberlain of the
R. C. Mission removed the school site and we
strictly object to the movement made by the
Roman Catholic Priest, we made the agreement
with the Dept of Indian Affairs and not the
missionary, therefore we are urging our request
that the school be built where the Chief
Council and Band have chosen for its
site. A request is also made that the Doctor
to examine all the cripples of the reserve
for many are disabled and should get the
disability pension hoping that this matter be
looked into.

I shall be looking forward to your
due consideration. Yours very truly
Robert E. Thompson

http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c9700/45?r=0&s=1



Chief Bello Ross and Conservation Officer Don Linn come to an agreement at an RTL meeting in Cross Lake, 1954.

<http://digitalcollection.gov.mb.ca/awweb/pdfopener?smd=1&did=12098&md=1>

The 2005-2006 Trapping Guide published by the Province of Manitoba includes a picture of Chief Bello Ross coming to some sort of agreement with the province relating to the Registered Trapline System in 1954. The implication from this picture, and the cutline, seems to be that natural resource management in Manitoba is born out of agreement and accord between Indigenous people and government. Yet, if you look closely at the faces of the people in the picture, there might be another way of understanding Indigenous-Government relations and wildlife management in this period.

An article in the Winnipeg Free Press (21 September 1954, page 14) confirms this, reporting that Bello Ross and his two councillors denied assertions in a northern newspaper that claimed that they agreed with government wildlife laws. In fact, noted Ross, they had refused not agreed to paying license fees, and that they had received a promise that they would be exempt from the fees. They also, he noted, did not feel bound by the Migratory Bird Act. Also noteworthy in the article is Ross' concern about the standing his community had in the eyes of other northern communities.

eral good crops. |places to prevent election frauds. nor
it
wat
get

Indians Deny Agreeing With Fish, Game Laws

Another Indian war appeared to be in the making at The Pas last week when three leaders from the Swampy Cree band at Cross Lake denied a story that they agreed with white men's laws governing game and fish.

Chief Bello Ross and two councillors from the tribe said that reports in a weekly northern paper were not true.

The publications printed the exact reverse of what happened at a meeting on Aug. 26 when the Indians had refused to pay trapline fees, Chief Ross said.

He said the Indians had been told in 1949, when they took over the traplines, that they wouldn't have to pay fees unless the amount of fur taken was over \$1,800 worth. The chief said

the average yield from a line was about \$100.

An RCMP officer was a witness to the promise by the game and fish officers then, he said.

The chief also complained about the manner in which the games branch left poison lying about. He said the poison was effecting the fur yield and had been known to kill sleigh dogs.

Game department officials promised to investigate the complaints. The Indians also refuse to accept the Migratory Birds act, he said, because if they did they would have nothing to eat.

The three Indians who travelled to the meeting by canoe said the impression left by the story published by the paper injured the tribe's prestige among northern Indian bands.

the
say
been
ctors,
be-
ould

last
len-
heat
heat
been
linu-
that
es it

Gar-
ad-
fully

S
o get
hing;
ernal
Stops
and
sore
work
with
glist.
Advt.

Ross also advocated for increased sturgeon quotas in 1955, the last year of his first term as Chief.

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjH04z5to7nAhU6JzQIHQvRab8QFjACegQICRAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmspace.lib.umanitoba.ca%2Fbitstream%2F1993%2F1047%2F1%2Fmq23399.pdf&usg=AOvVaw12Q0R9XW5sdKQKb-T7Ylj4>

On June 22, 1955, Bello Ross, chief of the Cross Lake Band, requested that the sturgeon quota for the Nelson River be increased. J.F. Heard, Inspector of Northern Fisheries, denied the request based on the following: 10,247 lbs had already been taken that year, a good percentage of which was taken by Cross Lakers (the chief had listed 13 Cross Lakers that were fishing); fishing was slowing down; and, the fishery was still being conducted on an experimental basis. A trapline report from Split Lake notes that high water levels during 1955 would likely restrict the catch to lower than expected. The

On the surface it might seem that Bello Ross was an accomplished business man and a wwstrong advocate for his community in areas such as education, land rights, and natural resources management. But this view misses what underwrote his arguments, a clear sense of the sovereignty of his community, and their right to make good decisions for themselves. At the same time, Ross was aware of the power structures that existed, and worked in a statesmanlike manner to deal with these realities when it came to the community's relationship with the Crown. As changes to the Indian Act were under study, he wrote persuasively to Ottawa asking that education be severed from religion. The ongoing issues his community was dealing with local Catholic educators would be resolved between the Band and the Crown as part of their Treaty relationship and responsibilities. The land on the reserve was under the community's control. Each time, his solution was underwritten by the understanding that Cross Lake was a legitimate political entity engaged in a treaty relationship with the Crown, a relationship that required nurturing and negotiation, but that ultimately defined the two parties' relationship with each other.

A Muskrat Pelt Gets You Season's Pass At This Unique Canadian Wilds House

WINNIPEG — Canada's strangest motion picture theatre, at remote Cross Lake, 180 miles northeast of The Pas, and about 50 miles north of Norway House, is operated by the "Company of 20" under the leadership of Belle Ross, president of the Cross Lake Community club. The "Company of 20" is a group of Indian trappers which has demonstrated modern business methods to scattered neighbors and aroused admiration in most northern trappers. A fur dealer's license has been incorporated into the expanding business, and the theatre's customers can buy a season ticket for a muskrat pelt, while the original "Twenty" each give 15 muskrat pelts annually to the treasury to defray the cost of expenses and cover depreciation of equipment.

The unique business venture started one summer, when 20 Cross Lake Indians pooled their share of a 10,000 muskrat catch on the Minago river, which flows into Cross Lake.

While other Indians bought outboard motors and canoes, this group purchased power saws, cut down their own trees, hewed their own logs with their saws and erected a log building and purchased a motion picture projector with built-in generator.

"Club members," says Ross, sparking of the project, "are anxious to prove to the Dominion government that they are equally anxious to help themselves to provide better living conditions and education for all occupants of this reserve settlement."

The long winter nights made the motion picture exhibition business boom and the returns were reinvested to expand the business to include a small refreshment concession. North Indians could now munch peanuts, popcorn and other white man's delicacies, while they watched their favorite wild west show. Cowboy pictures find an appreciative

audience here, "Hopalong Cassidy" being a favorite among adults as well as youngsters.

The returns from the double investment have been put into a nearby store, so that Indian trappers from outlying districts could buy necessities as well. With their fur dealer's license the "Company of 20" is attempting to do business with their neighbors without the medium of money. Last year's record muskrat catch on the Minago river spelled comparative prosperity for Cross Lake residents and marked an improvement in the lot of the natives.

Five years ago, half the fur-rich waterway was held by white trappers. The Manitoba government traded registered lines elsewhere for white holdings near Cross Lake, or bought outright the white trapping rights to provide the natives with a steady income.

At periodic intervals, young, married, progressive Ross, head of the "Company of 20," journeys to Winnipeg, visits with Harold Riley of General Films, and arranges playdates of Paramount and 20th Century-Fox pictures for this unique all-Indian theatre in Manitoba's northlands.

Government Permits Rise In Wool Carpet Prices

WASHINGTON — Manufacturers and wholesalers of wool carpets and rugs have been granted a 15 per cent increase in price by the government, and retailers are allowed to pass the exact increases along to customers.

The order was issued Monday (12) by Michael V. DeSalle, price director. He attributed it to higher costs of wool which constitute about 30 per cent of the price of the manufacturers' finished product.



N4743.tif

Société historique de Saint-Boniface_OMI