

## Establishing the Residential School System

insensitive Euro-Canadian missionaries. Significantly, Peter Jones, champion of residential schooling for Ojibwa children, tireless fundraiser and worker in their cause, promoter of the new manual labour schools at the grand council at Orillia in 1846, never sent any of his sons to an Indian residential school.

## FOUR

### 'Calling In the Aid of Religion':<sup>1</sup> Creating a Residential School System

'It now remains for you to say whether these girls will be good Catholics or worse than ordinary pagans,' wrote Father McGuckin to the Superior of the Sisters of Saint Ann in Victoria. His struggling school at St Joseph's Mission at Williams Lake in the Cariboo country consisted of fifteen non-Native male boarders and '3 Halfbreeds,' but he expected as many as twenty 'boarders before next Christmas' and he was sure 'there are at least 15 or 16 girls waiting' for instructors. McGuckin hoped to establish a school for Indian children later, but in the meantime he worried about getting help to serve his mixed flock. Above all, the sisters should send workers so as to avoid another 'Den of —' (by which McGuckin meant a 'boarding school' of another denomination), such as the one rivals had established at Cache Creek to try to lure away young people whom the Catholic missionaries had already baptized.<sup>2</sup> The Sisters of Saint Ann were prevailed upon to commit their order to work in and support the Oblates' Williams Lake boarding school and mission in 1876, and they laboured there under increasingly difficult circumstances for over a decade.<sup>3</sup> Brittle relations with the Oblates led them to seek formal definition of their rights and obligations in 1884,<sup>4</sup> and declining enrolments finally forced them to a painful decision in 1888. Because 'for several years' the sisters had had few girls, they decided they must close their establishment in the Cariboo. They were willing to contemplate a return should numbers increase, 'but at the moment we must say, with regret, we find scarcely any encouragement.'<sup>5</sup> When the Oblates got government support for a proper Native school at Williams Lake in the 1890s, they secured the assistance of the Sisters of the Child Jesus.

The origins and troubled early years, if not necessarily the fate, of

St Joseph's Mission at Williams Lake epitomized the early history of residential schooling for Native students in British Columbia. The Christian missions, including residential schools, of the three major de-nominations in British Columbia were always dominated by rivalry among creeds, financial adversity, and, in some instances, Indian resistance. Sectarianism played an important role in shaping the extent and distribution of schools along the Pacific coast, as rival missionary bodies struggled to outflank and leapfrog their brothers and sisters in Christ. What the indigenous population of the future province of British Columbia made of this competition, aside from recognizing the opportunities to exploit the situation for their own ends, is by no means clear.

The Roman Catholic banner was carried on the Pacific by the body that was to dominate the residential school effort from the late nineteenth century onwards, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Given their origins, it was ironic that the Oblates should have come first to British Columbia and played such a prominent role in evangelical campaigns among the Indians and Inuit of North America. The order had been founded by a Frenchman, Eugène de Mazenod, principally to minister to the urban poor of France. He was concerned about both the growing number of unchurched among the cities' less fortunate and the Roman Catholic hierarchy's tardiness in responding to it. Established with the explicit intention to 'evangelize the poor,' the Oblates were to spread from Western Europe to a number of continents, including North America, by the middle of the nineteenth century. They took to missionary work among the Native peoples with particular zeal, both on the prairies after 1845 and on the Pacific, recognizing in them people who were 'poor,' if not precisely in the manner their founder had meant, and in need of the Christian message. After a difficult campaign in the Oregon country from 1847 onwards, they established themselves north of the international boundary, first at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island, and later at New Westminster on the lower Fraser River.

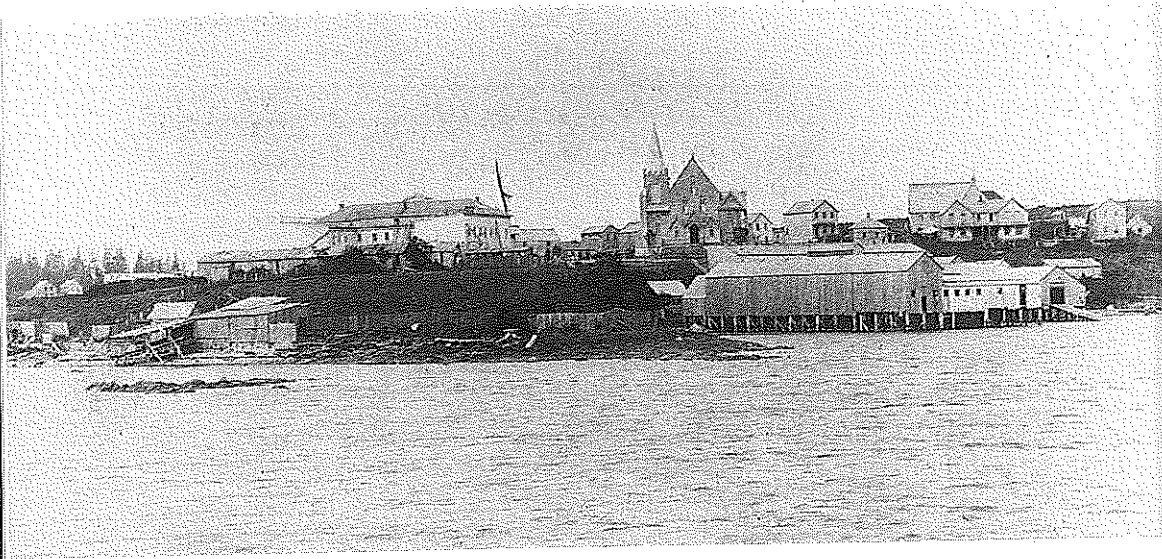
From New Westminster and St Mary's Mission, fifty-six kilometres upriver, Catholic missions expanded. St Mary's Mission was founded by Oblate Father Léon Fouquet in 1861, and it evolved in 1868, as many such establishments of all churches did, into a boarding school as well, thanks to another band of intrepid Sisters of Saint Ann.<sup>6</sup> It was to St Mary's Mission that untried Oblates from abroad came to study Indian languages, before moving on to their posts in the interior or

on the coast. It was to Mission City that Indian groups increasingly repaired to partake of mission services, and to participate in gaudy new rituals such as the annual staging of the Passion (or crucifixion) of Christ that Oblates organized and promoted in conscious imitation of methods their Jesuit colleagues had pioneered in their *reducciones* in Paraguay and elsewhere. And it was at Oblate missions that an important innovation, 'the Durieu system,' was elaborated and entrenched.

This regime, named after Oblate Paul Durieu, employed methods of total control over mission Indians for the purpose of effecting a permanent conversion to Christian religious values and practices. The Durieu system aimed at eradicating all un-Christian behaviour by means of strict rules, stern punishments for transgressors, and use of Indian informers and watchmen or proctors to ensure conformity and to inflict punishments as necessary. The second, more positive, phase emphasized symbolism and spectacle, and treated the celebrations of Catholicism as marks of community and acceptance. Major occasions such as the annual Passion Play, with their communal gatherings and feasting, were an essential part of this more upbeat side of a potentially oppressive, totalitarian regime.<sup>7</sup>

The emphasis on control and manipulation was a feature that the Catholics shared with the most prominent representative of the second most active missionary body on the Pacific, William Duncan of the Church of England's Church Missionary Society (CMS). Duncan is the model missionary for sociologists of religion who emphasize the class motivation of evangelism. Born of humble parents in England in 1832, he gravitated to the CMS training school at Highbury in 1854 after a brief but successful career in the commercial world. A prodigious worker and a *dévoté* of mid-Victorian doctrines of self-help, Duncan strove constantly to improve himself morally and materially. After spending three years at Highbury, he was dispatched to the Pacific coast of British North America in 1857 as a missionary to the Indians.<sup>8</sup>

After false starts in Victoria and Port Simpson, Duncan established himself among the Tsimshian at Metlakatla, which was to become synonymous with a style of missionizing and instruction of which residential schools were but a pale reflection. Like the Durieu system of the Oblates, Duncan's Metlakatla was conceived as a regime of near-total control and mastery of the mundane features of life by Indians acting under missionary inspiration and leadership. Metlakatla, led by Duncan and assisted by a team of Indian watchmen and enforcers,



12 William Duncan's Metlakatla

attempted to impose an austere Christianity and a rigidly Euro-Canadian way of life on its convert citizenry. Individual homes replaced the great houses to which the Tsimshian were accustomed, and a rectangular layout of streets arose in place of the traditional settlement oriented to the oceanfront. Duncan also took the industrial school system one step further at Metlakatla by developing industries that would make its inhabitants self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency not only conformed to the European way of life that Duncan sought for the Tsimshian; it also spared them the need to repair to Victoria and its notorious dens of vice.

But even in a Church Missionary Society utopia, there still were dangers that pushed the cultural remodellers towards residential training institutions. Duncan established a boarding house for girls, presided over by himself, to remove young women from what he regarded as the moral dangers of the village and to place them in a setting in which they would learn proper behaviour. But the evangelist soon found that it was impossible to impose totally Euro-Canadian ways of doing things. Even he had to bow, for example, to the Tsimshian caste system: some of the boarders were daughters of chiefs and had to be exempted from the menial chores that the other women were expected to perform.<sup>9</sup> But Duncan and the CMS had nevertheless

made a beachhead for Anglicans at Port Simpson and Metlakatla. Soon their presence in the Pacific mission theatre was augmented by a fledgling boarding school among the Kwagiulth.

The final missionary presence on the northwest coast, both chronologically and in numbers, was that of the Methodist Church. Although a number of Methodist clergymen over the years laboured to establish missions and schools, the Wesleyan initiative soon became identified principally with Rev. Thomas Crosby of Port Simpson.<sup>10</sup> Crosby, like William Duncan and most of the Oblates, was a European from a modest social background. He had immigrated in the 1850s from England to British North America, where he underwent an intense conversion experience at a Methodist camp meeting. He soon became ordained and moved to Vancouver Island where the Methodists assigned him to a mission at Nanaimo. However, it was not at Nanaimo on Vancouver Island but at Fort (later Port) Simpson that Crosby was to make his mark while establishing the first of the Methodists' residential schools.

Significantly, the development of the Methodist mission at Port Simpson in 1874 was the result of Tsimshian initiative. Kate Dudoward, a mixed-blood Tsimshian woman who had been influenced earlier by Duncan's preaching, converted to Methodism in 1873 as a result of exposure to evangelism at Victoria. She and her husband, Alfred, also of mixed blood and descended from a chiefly family, were the heart of a group that subsequently invited the Methodists to send a missionary to Fort Simpson.<sup>11</sup> So it was that Crosby and his wife, Emma, came in 1874 to work among the Tsimshian. Much like Duncan at Metlakatla, Crosby strongly influenced the mores and practices of the Tsimshian during the early years of his ministry. He, too, soon concluded that it would be necessary, even with a 'convert' population that had invited him among them, to establish residential facilities to protect some of the young Tsimshian from others. In 1879 he and Emma established the Crosby Girls' Home 'to save some of the girls from a life of utter wretchedness and infamy.' In his 'Home for Indian Girls ... they would be under Christian oversight and ... protected from lawless violence.'<sup>12</sup> Like Duncan's boarding house at nearby Metlakatla, the Crosby Girls' Home, which was run largely by Emma Crosby, offered instruction in sewing, cooking, and other domestic skills – all in the hope that its trainees would become the centre of Port Simpson hearths that would be even more irreproachably Christian than the rest. A little more than a decade later, in 1890, a Boys' Home was added to the Methodist establishment under Crosby's care at Port Simpson.

Port Simpson quickly developed into one of the centres of Methodist, and later United Church, residential school effort in British Columbia. In Kitimaat, some 196 kilometres to the south, another man who had been converted to Christianity in Victoria spearheaded an effort to bring missionaries and education to his settlement. In 1883 the Christians at Kitimaat had managed to persuade the teacher of Port Simpson's day school to relocate among them, and the seed of what would grow into another Methodist residential establishment, this time an orphanage, was planted.<sup>13</sup> The other centre of Methodist activity was Coqualeetza Institute, near Chilliwack in the lower Fraser Valley, where the missionaries, Rev. and Mrs C.M. Tate, opened a day school in 1886.<sup>14</sup> But not all the Methodist establishments were the result of church initiative. When the Methodists' mission boat put in at Cape Mudge on Quadra Island, Billy Assu told the missionary that the people 'wanted a teacher and a school,' and 'asked for a missionary to be sent here to teach and preach. He hinted that if this didn't happen fairly soon he might have to go elsewhere!' The Kwagiulth well knew that in 'those days the Anglicans, Methodists, and Catholics really hated each other, though they seemed to be doing the same thing.' But the local people knew what they were doing. 'We chose the Methodist Church before 1892,' his son later recalled, and the Kwagiulth community put up with a missionary who at first could not speak their language, Kwakwala. 'He spoke English in the school, and we soon got on to it. We could speak our own language in the playground or anywhere else. There was no problem about it like there was up at Alert Bay, where they thought Indians could only learn English if they forgot their own language. Having a school at Cape Mudge meant the children didn't have to leave home and go away to [boarding] school at Alert Bay.'<sup>15</sup> The Methodists' gain was the Anglicans' loss.

Within a generation of British Columbia's joining Confederation in 1871, the Pacific province had developed a range of missions and boarding schools, often as a result of Indian initiative, that would make it distinctive among the regions of Canada. The Roman Catholics, their standard borne by the Oblates and the Sisters of Saint Ann, were well planted in the southern coastal regions and were rapidly spreading into the interior valleys. Later in the century they would also make their mark, again thanks to Oblate effort, in the northern interior.<sup>16</sup> The Anglican CMS had broken with their headstrong missionary William Duncan, who had taken his charges to New Metlakatla, Alaska, rather than submit to church or national authority in any event. But

after an abortive attempt at Fort Rupert on the northern tip of Vancouver Island, the CMS had established a respectable mission among the Kwagiulth at Alert Bay in 1880, as well as another in the Fraser Valley at Lytton. Like the Catholics, the Anglicans in British Columbia operated their missions and schools from the European metropole, whether in England or in France. The Methodists, in contrast, regarded their institutions at Coqualeetza and Port Simpson as the furthest extensions of a vast evangelical structure that was anchored to church headquarters in Toronto. The presence of all these denominations in British Columbia made that province one of the most fiercely contested regions, as Billy Assu and the other Kwagiulth at Cape Mudge had shrewdly realized. In the mission and residential schools in British Columbia, Native groups sometimes took the initiative to draw missionaries among them for their own purposes.

In the prairie west, the mission school pattern that developed as the region was being drawn within the ambit of the new Dominion of Canada was different from that on the Pacific coast. As noted earlier, the Church Missionary Society had already established a brief presence at Red River in the 1820s, and somewhat later under one of John West's pupils, Henry Budd, at The Pas. Catholic missions and day schools dated from 1818 in Red River. The Oblates laboured in the region from 1845 onward, and from the late 1850s the Grey Nuns were to be found at a number of sites in what would become Alberta. Prior to the time of Canada's acquisition of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870, the Roman Catholic presence had not yet taken on the form of a boarding school. Rather, the Oblates and sisters operated rudimentary day schools, or the priests travelled with and worked among the Indian and Métis groups of the plains without stressing education of the Aboriginal peoples.

The Methodists, for their part, were quietly developing a string of missions through the prairie region on which they would build their own schools. At Norway House in northern Manitoba they had had a mission presence since 1840, thanks to James Evans, Peter Jacobs, and Henry Steinhauer – the latter two themselves ordained Indians. It was at Norway House that Evans developed the Cree syllabics that were to be one of Methodism's greatest contributions to evangelical work. An energetic group of Methodist women would take the initiative to establish and run at their own expense a residential school at Portage la Prairie in 1886.<sup>17</sup> And in Alberta, first Robert Rundle and later the



13 Early missions, such as this Oblate establishment at Bocket, often developed small boarding schools on their own.

father and son team of George and John McDougall had followed in other Methodist footsteps, the latter pair working especially among the Stoney, a Siouan people in the foothills of the Rockies. Even the Presbyterians had a toehold in the Qu'Appelle chain of rivers and lakes, in a small mission establishment at Round Lake.

The developing pattern of rival denominational missions and schools that was growing up in the western interior would, however, be profoundly altered by the direct and massive intervention of the new federal state in the 1870s and 1880s. Ottawa's presence among the large numbers of Indians in the region would give the prairies their own distinctive pattern of missions and schools, and would influence indirectly most of what was done in residential schools elsewhere as well. The first stage in the growing federal presence was the making of a series of treaties in the 1870s in the region from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. The treaties, including their limited schooling provisions, had both remote and immediate origins. British and Canadian relations with the Aboriginal population had a well-established tradition of taking a pragmatic approach to gaining entry to Natives' lands. As early as the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the United Kingdom had prohibited individuals from treating with Indians for land, reserving that role for the crown as represented by its governors. During the development of Upper Canada, the lieutenant governor had repeatedly, though not invariably, negotiated acquisi-

tion of and entry to lands of various Ojibwa groups, both to relocate Mohawk allies who had fought with the crown during the American Revolution and to facilitate the establishment of European agricultural settlement. This policy of preceding settlement and economic development with treaties that government thought gave them title to Indian lands was refined further in the two Robinson Treaties of 1850 that secured access to regions with mineral potential in northern Ontario. By the time Canada came to sort out how to prepare the western plains for development in 1870 and afterwards, it had a well-entrenched tradition to which to refer.

But there was more to the process of making treaty in the 1870s than either long-term British and Canadian practice or the purposeful actions of the dominion government: the western Indians took a leading role, too. The immediate stimulus to negotiating with various Indian groups for access and title was the resistance that certain Ojibwa bands manifested towards the passage of troops through their territory on the way to Red River, in the aftermath of Louis Riel's resistance to Canadian authority during the winter of 1869-70. In the event, no treaty was concluded with the Ojibwa of the Fort Frances-Rainy River area until 1873, in large part because the Natives' demands were so stiff. Similarly, it was the Indians in the Fort Garry region who urged Canada's newly appointed and recently arrived governor to make treaty.<sup>18</sup> Indians on the North Saskatchewan River complained in 1871 when they heard about the conclusion of a treaty that they feared might affect them. Chief Sweet Grass and others informed Governor Archibald of Manitoba: 'We heard our lands were sold and we did not like it; we don't want to sell our lands; it is our property, and no one has a right to sell them.' At the same time they stressed that the decline of the hunting economy made their people anxious for assistance from Canada. 'We invite you to come and see us and to speak with us. If you can't come yourself, send some one in your place,' Sweet Grass and the other petitioners concluded.<sup>19</sup> These invitations did not produce results, but soon other leaders in the Saskatchewan country applied pressure. It was largely because the Cree of that region interfered with the movement of Canada's Geological Survey, a Canadian Pacific Railway survey crew, and those erecting a telegraph line through their territory in 1875 that Treaty Commissioner Alexander Morris visited them the following year to conclude a pact.<sup>20</sup> As all these instances clearly indicate, western Indians also initiated the treaty-making process in the 1870s.



Western peoples were instrumental in ensuring that some of the seven treaties that emerged from that process included measures that would assist them in making a transition from a declining hunting economy to one more compatible with the farming economy that was invading their territories. Among these provisions were schools. Native motivation appears to have been similar to the strategy that earlier moved Indians in Upper Canada to cooperate with plans for manual labour or industrial schools. What is clear is that it was the Natives who proposed the inclusion of guarantees of schooling in the treaties, although they likely had day schools in mind. For example, the draft of Treaty 1 that Canada's negotiator presented to the Indians at Lower Fort Garry in 1871 said nothing about education, but the text that emerged a few days later included a promise 'to maintain a school on each reserve hereby made, whenever the Indians of the reserve should desire it.'<sup>21</sup> Certainly, Ottawa was not opposed to schooling. As Alexander Morris, who negotiated most of the treaties in the 1870s, put it during talks that led to Treaty 4 in 1874, 'The Queen wishes her red children to learn the cunning of the white man and when they are ready for it she will send schoolmasters on every Reserve and pay them.'<sup>22</sup> The government agreed to schooling, but it was the Native negotiators who suggested it and insisted on its inclusion in the earliest treaties.

That the demand for schools was part of a larger strategy of adjustment emerged in speeches by leaders such as Mistawasis (Big Child) and Ahtahkakoop (Star Blanket), Cree headmen prominent in the negotiation of Treaty 6 in 1876. During a caucus of chiefs, Mistawasis tied together the disappearing buffalo economy and the alternative that treaty with Canada offered. Mistawasis thought that in a treaty 'the great White Queen Mother has offered us a way of life when the buffalo are no more.' Unlike the United States, where traders and cavalry had crushed Indians, the Canadian 'prairies have not been darkened by the blood of our white brothers in our time. Let this always be so. I for one will take the hand that is offered.'<sup>23</sup> Star Blanket agreed 'that the Queen mother has offered us a new way.' He believed that 'the mother earth has always given us plenty with the grass that fed the buffalo. Surely we Indians can learn the ways of living that made the white man strong and able to vanquish all the great tribes of the southern nations.'<sup>24</sup>

Ahtahkakoop, like Mistawasis, was in a long line of Indian leaders who perceived in the European's learning an alternative for desperate

---

### The Magic Art of Writing

We youngsters were playing tag nearby when someone called me. I stood still and hesitated to approach my elders until my grandfather, Panapin, called me by name.

As I stood before them, one of the elders pointed to the tattoo I had on my left cheek beneath the eye and said to my grandfather:

'Panapin, mark that tattoo on your grandson's cheek. You are fortunate indeed to have that mark of identification on your grandson's face. One of the redcoats at Fort Walsh told me that when the westward migration of the white-men begins in earnest, they will come in swarms like the grasshoppers in flight. They will occupy all of our buffalo country and will build centers like the anthills. When these things have come to pass [Okne Sha] the Redcoats told me that we would not be able to identify our own people!

'And, furthermore,' he continued, 'our children and grandchildren will be taught the magic art of writing. Just think for a moment what that means. Without the aid of a spoken word our children will transmit their thoughts on a piece of paper, and that talking paper may be carried to distant parts of the country and convey your thoughts to your friends. Why, even the medicine men of our tribe cannot perform such miracles.'<sup>25</sup>

---

people. While Treaty 6 was being negotiated in the Saskatchewan country in 1876, Indians at Shubenacadie in Nova Scotia were also petitioning Ottawa for a school for their band.<sup>26</sup> A similar point to Ahtahkakoop's had been made three years earlier by the chief of the Lac Seul band, though in this case it was much to the chagrin of other negotiators who were holding out for better terms. What he sought was a treaty that would include a commitment that 'a school-master [was] to be sent them to teach their children the knowledge of the white man,' including agricultural matters. This man told the commissioner that if the queen assured them of economic support, 'the time may come when I will ask you to lend me one of your daughters and one of your sons to live with us; and in return I will lend you one of my daughters and one of my sons for you to teach what is good, and after they have learned, to teach us. If you grant us what I ask, although I do not know you, I will shake hands with you.'<sup>27</sup> It was as a result of such thinking, and pursuant to Aboriginal rather than government prodding, that a provision was inserted in each of the seven treaties signed in the 1870s promising a school on their reserve 'whenever the Indians shall desire it.'<sup>28</sup>

That Plains Indians did not make requests for day schools on reserves lightly was demonstrated a few years later during a tour of the prairies by the governor general.<sup>29</sup> A visit from Lord Lorne was eagerly looked for by prairie Indians, not least because the governor general was the son-in-law of Queen Victoria. During his travels in the summer of 1881, Lorne received heated representations by a number of western chiefs who were dissatisfied with the implementation (or non-implementation) of the treaties they had signed not long before.<sup>30</sup> At Qu'Appelle the Dakota chief Standing Buffalo, after pointedly noting that 'I feel very sorry I have not seen The Queen and her daughter,' went on to detail some of his band's needs. 'Please give me a Church on my Reserve for I want to live like the white people - I and my children - also a school where they can be taught.' At Fort Carlton Mistawasis explained, 'We want teachers for schools.' Although Ahtahkakoop stressed the need for farm implements and emergency aid, chief John Smith commenced: 'The first thing is a school teacher to teach my children[. W]hy I want a teacher is to learn the English language and to teach it to my children.' Lorne resisted the pressure to renegotiate the treaties in the Indians' favour, and deflected many of their entreaties for immediate aid and farming assistance. But on the educational question he informed them that 'the Government are also endeavouring to make places for schools.'

What was not clear to the chiefs of Treaty 6 (or, for that matter, to the governor general) was that Ottawa was in the process of shifting from its treaty commitment to establish a school 'on the reserve ... whenever the Indians' wanted one, to the provision of residential schools, off reserve, instead. What intervened and led the government to deviate from its commitment to western Indian education were both economic and social factors. First and foremost, the virtual disappearance of the buffalo by 1879 brought home to government and Natives the fact that immediate action would be required to assist Plains Indians in making a transition from a hunting economy to an agricultural one. Dominion policy was a mixture of altruism and cynicism. As David Laird, the lieutenant governor and Indian superintendent of the North-West Territories bluntly put it in 1878, after the collapse of the buffalo economy, Ottawa's choices were 'to help the Indians to farm and raise stock, to feed them, or to fight them.'<sup>31</sup> Teaching Indian children to become sedentary farmers, at the same time as their fathers were being encouraged to the same end by government farm-

ing instructors on reserves, could best be done at well-equipped 'industrial' schools, preferably well away from reserves.<sup>32</sup>

Some government officials, and most of the missionaries of the Christian denominations to which Ottawa looked to carry out many of its treaty promises inexpensively, also preferred off-reserve residential institutions to the day schools the western treaties had promised. Underlying these attitudes was a racist predisposition, one that was widely shared in Canadian society, that Aboriginal peoples had to be controlled and have decisions made for them because they were incapable of making what non-Natives considered sound choices on their own. Edgar Dewdney, a Conservative cabinet minister and supposed expert on western Indians, despaired of the poor attendance at day schools that resulted from 'the indifference and in many instances absolute refusal on the part of parents to allow their children to attend school.' To counter such problems, he counselled a number of initiatives to improve day schools, and concluded 'that where no suitable schools are in operation on a reserve as many children as possible should be taken from such Reserve, and be placed in the Industrial Schools in the success of which I have every confidence.'<sup>33</sup> Missionaries usually took the same view, although most of them doubted that the day schools could be rehabilitated sufficiently to achieve the churches' and the government's educational objectives. The Presbyterian missionary on Wasis reserve in Saskatchewan told a superior that, although there were forty-seven children of school age on the reserve, the average attendance at his day school was fifteen.<sup>34</sup>

To prepare a plan for off-reserve residential schools, Sir John A. Macdonald's cabinet in 1879 appointed a backbencher, Nicholas Flood Davin of Regina, to carry out an investigation of residential institutions in the United States and to recommend steps to create 'Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds.' Davin was much taken by the American schools, which he regarded as an especially successful aspect of the American policy of 'aggressive civilization' that had been implemented by the Grant administration in 1869. While he seemed somewhat perplexed about the mixture of church- and government-run schools, he was unequivocal in his view that the role of mixed-blood people in these schools was an important part of their success. Turning to Canada, Davin applied the same lesson: 'the mixed blood is the natural mediator between the Government and the red man, and also his natural instructor.' In order to understand why this was so, it was essential to appreciate 'Indian character.' The individual Indian

was not, as some contended, a child, although the 'race is in its childhood. As far as the childhood analogy is applicable, what it suggests is a policy that shall look patiently for fruit, not after five or ten years, but after a generation or two.' Holding to the developmental notions of his time, Davin opined that western Indians were merely at an earlier stage of evolution than their white brothers and sisters. 'The Indian, I repeat, is not a child, and he is the last person that should be dealt with in a childish way. He requires firm, bold, kindly handling and boundless patience.'<sup>35</sup>

Davin's specific recommendations for western Canada were quite straightforward. Because of the Indians' potential and the critical mediatory role that the Métis occupied, education for the children of both groups should be provided in some form of residential establishment. Existing mission schools, including boarding establishments, should be used wherever they existed, and up to four 'industrial boarding schools' should be added to their number in the prairie region. These new establishments should be denominational in character for two reasons. First, it would be irresponsible to deprive Indians of 'their simple Indian mythology' by a process of 'civilization,' without putting something positive and uplifting in its place. Second, reliance on churches would make it less difficult to find teachers with the essential combination of learning and virtue, and, moreover, to secure their services at a rate of remuneration less than the teachers' qualifications, pedagogical and moral, would otherwise command. 'It must be obvious that to teach semi-civilized children is a more difficult task than to teach children with inherited aptitudes, whose training is, moreover, carried on at home. Missionary instructors were essential. The advantage of calling in the aid of religion is, that there is a chance of getting an enthusiastic person, with, therefore, a motive power beyond anything pecuniary remuneration could supply. The work requires not only the energy but the patience of an enthusiast.'<sup>36</sup>

It was simple and logical for the government to embrace the principal elements of Davin's report. At the very time Ottawa was considering his recommendations, there were no fewer than twelve boarding institutions in Ontario, Manitoba, the North-West Territories, and British Columbia being operated by the various Christian denominations with 'results ... sufficiently satisfactory to prove the superiority of such establishments over ordinary day schools.'<sup>37</sup> And, although the superintendent of Indians in Manitoba, Ebenezer McColl, favoured operating schools 'on strictly nonsectarian principles' so as 'to prevent

dissension among the Indians and complications with the Department in the future,'<sup>38</sup> Prime Minister John A. Macdonald certainly believed that clerical operation of Indian schools was a good idea. Only a couple of months before his government embarked on its ambitious new program in 1883, he told the House of Commons that 'secular education is a good thing among white men but among Indians the first object is to make them better men, and, if possible, good Christian men by applying proper moral restraints, and appealing to the instinct for worship that is found in all nations, whether civilized or uncivilized.'<sup>39</sup> And Ottawa favoured residential schools that ensured the Native child would 'be dissociated from the prejudicial influence by which he is surrounded on the reserve of his band.'<sup>40</sup> In keeping with the strongly androcentric attitudes that were also disseminated widely through Canadian society at the time, the new schools would house only male pupils.

It was hardly surprising, given these attitudes, that the plan, when the cabinet approved the first of the new industrial schools, had a decidedly denominational and masculine air about it. The \$44,000 that parliament voted for 'three Industrial Schools in the North West' would be distributed among an Anglican institution at Battleford under the principalship of Thomas Clarke; a Roman Catholic institution 'at or near Qu'Appelle, at a fitting place ... the selection of the Principal [to] be left to the Archbishop of St Boniface'; and 'a Roman Catholic Industrial School ... in Treaty number Seven ... the selection of the Principal [to] be left to the Bishop of St Albert.' The Anglican establishment would utilize the facilities formerly used by the territorial government before it relocated to Regina, whereas the Catholic schools would require new buildings. Each school was to consist of a principal, assistant to the principal ('a layman carefully selected for his qualifications'), a matron, a farmer, and a cook. Once 'a sufficient number of pupils are collected means [should] be adopted for teaching some of them trades or occupations other than that of agriculture. The two most serviceable trades in the North West seem to be those of carpenter and blacksmith.' It would be up to the Indian commissioner located in the region to 'determine whether the pupils be taken from one tribe or indifferently from all the bands in a given area.'<sup>41</sup> Significantly, no reference was made to recruiting Métis students or employing Métis staff, as Davin had so emphatically recommended. Although some Métis and non-status Indian children were quietly admitted in the early years of the new residential system, by the 1890s Ottawa was

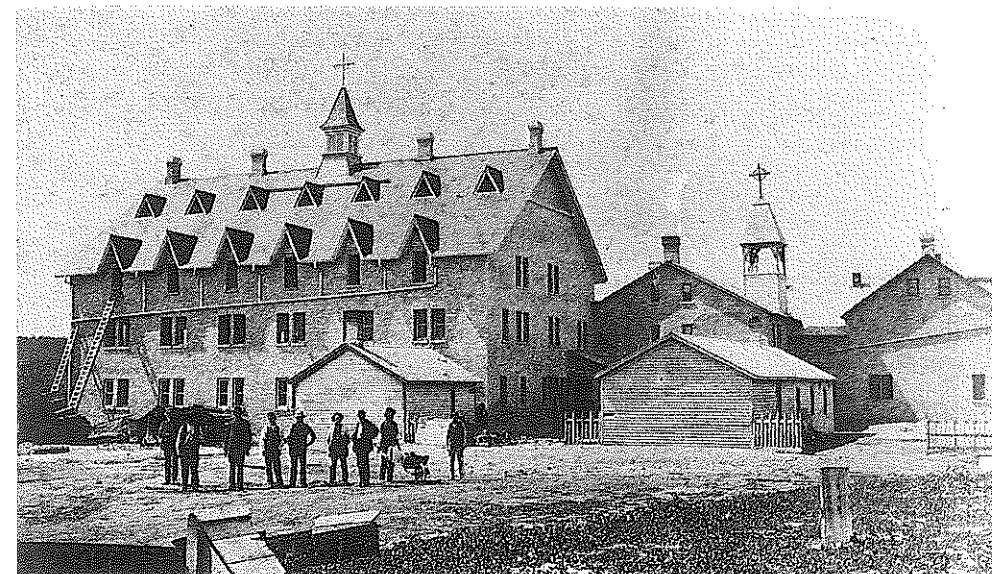




14 Graduates of the Mohawk Institute, 1880

insisting that it would provide grants only for the children of status Indians, for whom the federal government had constitutional responsibility.

By the following year, a trio of the most ambitious boarding establishments that had been seen since the New England Company's establishment of the Mohawk Institute in Upper Canada fifty-five years earlier came into existence in Saskatchewan and Alberta. In the territory of Assiniboia the Oblates established Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School at Lebret in the Qu'Appelle Valley, under the principalship of the French missionary Father Joseph Hugonnard, OMI. He was to oversee its development and operation for over three decades, and to establish it as the most durable of the modern residential schools. (In the 1990s it continues to operate as a boarding school, now under Indian control.) At Dunbow, near High River in the territory of Alberta, the Oblates opened St Joseph's school, which was to be far less successful and enduring than its Saskatchewan counterpart. These schools were in addition to the pre-existing boarding schools for which Oblates were responsible in St Boniface, Île-à-la-Crosse, Lac la Biche, Lake Athabasca, and Fort Providence.



15 The first Qu'Appelle Industrial School, 1880s

The problems of residential schooling in late Victorian western Canada manifested themselves much more quickly at the first Anglican institution opened in 1883. The Battleford Industrial School, which serves as a case study of the new industrial institutions, ironically appeared at first to have the most advantages of the three fledgling institutions. First, it inherited a number of buildings that had earlier been used for the territorial government when Battleford was the capital. Second, its founding principal was a Church Missionary Society cleric, Thomas Clarke, who had served in CMS missions in the nearby Eagle Hills and in Battleford and vicinity since 1877. Although Clarke was a relatively young man of twenty-nine in 1883, he possessed a number of promising qualities. He claimed he had been a teetotaler for over a decade, he was working at learning Cree in accordance with the instructions he had received from the CMS when he came out to Saskatchewan, and he was ordained a Church of England priest the month that the Battleford school opened. He was better prepared theologically than pedagogically: though he had taught day school, he had no formal teacher training or background in educational administration.<sup>42</sup> Finally – though this would take some time to come to the surface – Battleford enjoyed the nurturing and special support of the acting assistant Indian commissioner in the North-West, Hayter Reed, an Anglican.



16 The second, larger, Qu'Appelle school, 1907

Thanks in no small part to Reed's efforts, the Battleford Industrial School opened in October 1883 with a handful of male pupils from reserves in the region, and with expectations of the early arrival of others from the Prince Albert district. Indian Affairs thought that the 'school will open with 30 Boys between the ages of 6 and 17,' and it expected that pupils would 'be taken and kept until they arrive at the age of eighteen.'<sup>43</sup> Resistance was encountered from some parents, who 'show a reluctance to have their children separated from them.' Until communities came to see the value of having their children educated in residential schools, a start could be made 'with orphans and children who have no natural protectors.'<sup>44</sup> The department confidently expected the school to operate at a capacity of thirty boys the first year, and instructed Clarke that 'Orphans and children without any persons to look after them, should first be selected.'

Ottawa recognized that not everything would operate precisely as intended right from the beginning. Clarke was told to concentrate on 'imparting a knowledge of the art of reading, writing and speaking the English language rather than that of Cree, and as matters during the coming winter will not be in such a state as will enable you to fully carry out the intentions of the Department relative to giving a Mechanical

Education to the children much can be done towards their advancement in the school rooms.'<sup>45</sup> In particular, it was important to prepare quickly to teach agriculture. A sound, if rather elderly, Tory from Ontario was hired as a farming instructor, and the new principal was told firmly that he was 'to see that the field adjacent to the Government House buildings is properly ploughed at least twice this fall.'<sup>46</sup> In 1884 the twenty-five boys in the school reportedly included some who 'have already passed the preparatory classes of reading, and writing, and are now engaged in the higher ones of mathematics and history.'<sup>47</sup>

The school was barely in operation when it began to encounter problems. The initial twenty-five students might have been mastering English, but 'the greatest difficulty against which' the principal had 'to contend is to induce them to use English in preference to their own language in daily intercourse.'<sup>48</sup> The farming instructor's infirmities made him 'incapable of performing the duties necessarily devolving upon him,' and the Regina Indian commissioner's office feared in the spring of 1884 that 'when field work begins there will be trouble because he cannot cause the boys to attend to work.' The farming instructor was discharged.<sup>49</sup> The principal's difficulties in getting the number of students that Indian Affairs expected was compounded during the 1884-5 school year by growing student resistance. A minor flurry of disobedience developed in January 1885. On New Year's Day, 'Edward No. 19 left the school for being made to stand in the Principal's office, for disobeying orders viz. would not mark time with the other pupils.' Two days later some of the staff began to get cranky; the cook 'took too much "Pain Relief," and had to retire from the scene.' The principal's effort to nip the truancy, if not the staff morale problem, in the bud took the form of having a judge and an Indian Affairs employee come to the school to explain to the pupils 'the many advantages they were receiving from the govt by being allowed to come to the school,' and also to warn them 'that if any boy left the school he would give the Principal an order to bring him back, and if that was not sufficient he would send the police after him.' In March three boys deserted, forcing Clarke to rise at four in the morning to search for the truants. Visits to two reserves and a settlement turned up no missing students, but Clarke was relieved to note that the 'Indians appear to be well disposed towards white men' despite rumours of Indian and Métis unrest.<sup>50</sup>

With the eruption of the Northwest Rebellion a few days later, Clarke found himself faced with more unruliness among the pupils.

On 27 March, shortly after an outbreak of hostilities at Duck Lake between Mounted Police and armed Métis resulted in a dozen fatalities and many others wounded, Battleford Industrial School pupils were 'rebellious' and they remained highly excited by rumours of troubles. When at the end of March the townspeople of Battleford retreated to the Mounted Police barracks and fortified it against the expected Indian attack that their overheated imaginations had conjured up, the school stood isolated and exposed to depredations. Although the Indians from Poundmaker's and other nearby reserves looted abandoned houses and helped themselves to some food supplies at the school, they did little damage. 'Very few articles [were] removed from the School.' More serious were the losses to the embattled police and townspeople, who supplied themselves from the Hudson's Bay Company post and the school. Moreover, when Canadian troops were stationed at the school later in the summer, more damage was done to the institution than anything the Indians had wrought.<sup>51</sup> The final serious blow to Battleford Industrial School was delivered in the autumn of 1885, when Ottawa instructed the principal to find temporary accommodations for the remnants of his school elsewhere, as the buildings were needed for winter barracks for a gunnery battery.<sup>52</sup>

The pupils, of course, were scattered by the rebellion. Early in the conflict two of the schoolboys had been apprehended in the company of six Métis, others fled to various bands, and some were never seen again. One encouraging note was the fact that the Battleford pupils 'would not join the rebels, as their parents were loyal and resided at' the Ahtahkakoop, Mistawasis, and John Smith reserves.<sup>53</sup> When a discouraged principal arranged for renovations for a temporary abode in mid-summer, he noted there were but '7 boys in the school.'<sup>54</sup> Still, he observed, one 'certain result of the unfortunate troubles' would be that 'there will be many orphans and children of both sex [sic] whose fathers have lost their lives. In view of this, I beg respectfully to suggest that the Industrial School principle be extended to include females, with power to take and bind for a term of years orphans and others without fathers to these institutions.'<sup>55</sup>

The Northwest Rebellion precipitated all manner of problems on Battleford's principal. Even after Clarke and his charges were back in renovated facilities at the former Government House, the headmaster could not get the enrolment up to revised departmental expectations of thirty boys and thirty girls. 'I find it very difficult to obtain pupils as the Indians have been advised, by parties from whom a different atti-



17 Battleford Industrial School, late 1880s or 1890s

tude should have been expected, not to send their children to this institution.'<sup>56</sup> The Department of Indian Affairs denied a report in the *Montreal Gazette* in 1886 that one pupil, 'Charlie No. 20' in department records, had left the school because of mistreatment. On the contrary, according to his statement, he left during the rebellion and went to work first for a farmer and later for the Hudson's Bay Company. 'I am now eighteen years of age,' he explained in a statement 'signed' with his X.<sup>57</sup>

Whether or not Charlie No. 20 left because of mistreatment, it was becoming clear by the later 1880s that Indian parents were turning against the Battleford school. When Clarke visited Poundmaker's reserve and the Eagle Hills 'to obtain pupils,' he encountered 'great opposition.'<sup>58</sup> An agent in the Battleford region reported that 'when the question of sending children to the industrial school is brought up, universal dissatisfaction is evinced by both parents and children.' He reported the Indians as objecting 'that the boys have been kept longer than was agreed to keep them,' but later success in obtaining three girls of fifteen, by making 'a special agreement that after they have made suit-



able proficiency in the art of cooking, sewing or any industry that is required of them they are to receive wages' at a rate to be established by the Indian commissioner in Regina, raises the possibility that parents balked at what they considered exploitation of the student body.<sup>59</sup> The fact that it was not uncommon to have one or more girls 'at service' in the principal's house or in a town family's home might have contributed to such apprehension.<sup>60</sup> Chiefs in the Prince Albert area complained that they 'they were unable to remove their children from the Battleford Industrial School, whenever they desired,' but all of them clearly wanted one closer to their reserves.<sup>61</sup> When Police Superintendent Perry, at Clarke's request, spent two hours with two chiefs from the Duck Lake region, he learned that 'their sole reason for removal was that they were lonesome and homesick.'<sup>62</sup>

Other frequent complaints concerned diet and medical attention. Clarke attempted to deflect the blame for allegations of insufficient food onto an Indian Affairs official. 'There is not a meal without the children asking for more bread. In spite of Macrae's orders, I have given it to them,' he explained to the commissioner.<sup>63</sup> The agent at Carlton reported that Indians in his agency complained of their children's treatment, especially that the sick were not looked after properly. A couple that he authorized to visit Battleford to satisfy themselves 'brought back worse reports; and considerable excitement arose among those who had children at the school which could only be allayed by giving them leave to visit their children.' Those visits, in turn, made matters still worse: 'all who have been there have stated on returning that they would remove their children if permitted.' The reasons were many: 'that the children are left alone in the sick ward, are insufficiently fed, and are ill-clad and dirty. Also that insufficient surveillance is given to the children when playing, of which advantage is taken by the the elder boys to bully and ill-treat the younger children.' This agent found such reports hard to believe, but conceded that they emanated from 'Indians whom I have generally found worthy of credence, and the circumstantial nature of some of the stories gives them an air of truth.'<sup>64</sup>

To exacerbate Clarke's predicament, by 1890 he was coming under criticism and attack for his management of his staff and his lack of fiscal control. The need to sack the farm instructor and to cope with the cook had been merely the first of Clarke's many staff complications. Although he had problems with a variety of employees, he seemed to have more difficulty with female workers than with the

men. Mrs Ashby complained to the Indian Affairs department in 1889 that her duties as 'governess' required her attention during most of the period from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.<sup>65</sup> And Mary E. Parker found that after she became engaged to another member of the staff, the principal made her life extremely difficult, even though the Indian commissioner's office 'consented to our marrying.' She had 'done a great deal of extra duty since I came here nor did I complain of it,' because she recognized that the school was short-staffed. But of late 'Mr. Clarke began to come around finding fault with everything, changing my arrangement of work and interfering [sic] with all my plans.' Just a few days earlier 'he reprimanded me very shortly in the hearing of the girls and in such a loud tone that one of the Employees came from her room to ascertain what was the matter.'<sup>66</sup> More generally, Indian Affairs officials found Clarke 'disposed to be dictatorial,' and his unpopularity caused as much trouble with the Indians from whom the school had to recruit students as it did with school staff.<sup>67</sup>

Church as well as state found fault with Clarke's administration in the early 1890s. Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed found that the 'discipline is not what it should be, neither is proper regard to making the children speak English. During the whole time of my visit, there appeared to be a marked lack of endeavor upon the part of the officials to see that they used English in preference to the vernacular, and I did not observe that degree of tidiness which should exist in such an Institution.' He had 'warned the Principal that it was desirable that he should devote more time to the school.'<sup>68</sup> The fact that Clarke arranged for the construction of a costly residence for himself and his family put him in the bad books of the penny-pinching Indian commissioner in Regina.<sup>69</sup> An incident in 1891 during which a student, 'Lazarus Charles,' was confined to specially built 'cells' in the basement of the school and subsequently became ill touched off an internal flurry in the Department of Indian Affairs in which principal, school inspector, and Indian commissioner wrangled about responsibility for the misguided initiative.<sup>70</sup> For his part, the Anglican bishop of Saskatchewan and Calgary confessed, 'I have never been satisfied with its management, & more particularly with its religious tone. It is not I feel the nursery for the Church, which, if it is a Ch. of England institution, it ought to be.' During a conversation with Clarke, the bishop 'remonstrated with him about his habit of drinking to excess, of which I have heard for years, and he has promised to be more on his guard in future.'<sup>71</sup>

Criticism of Clarke was summed up in 1892 by the Indian Affairs official with whom the principal had differed over the children's diet. J.A. Macrae alleged:

As to endearing the school to pupils, he is failing; as to getting the good wishes of the Indians, there is failure; as to moral & religious training, there is failure; as to good (that is sufficient) results in the class room there is failure; as to training the head as well as the hand in technical pursuits there is failure; as to developing character in pupils individually and as a school community there is failure; as to agricultural pursuits there is failure; as to any definite well laid plans being developed I find failure. One pupil of six or seven years standing had to be sent back from Onion Lake; another is reported to me as doing little or no good, & has become a Roman Catholic recently I believe. Very few of the oldest pupils could answer the simplest questions about the most ordinary matters of everyday life, manners, or duty, & that few could only answer occasionally.<sup>72</sup>

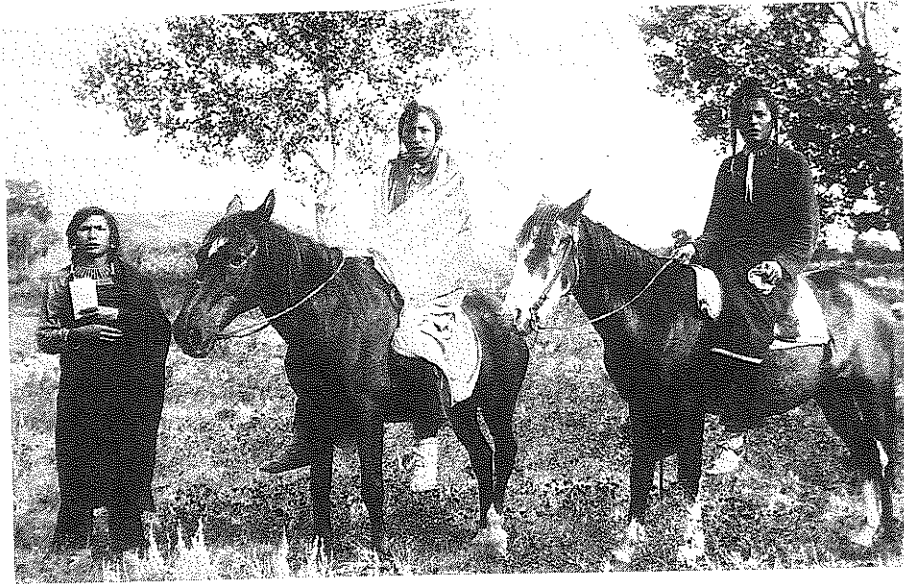
In spite of this indictment, Indian Affairs was still willing to have Clarke soldier on.

However, the principal's failure to keep his promises and his continuing sloppy administration led to his sacking in 1894. As Inspector McGibbon summarized the indictment: 'The fact is the thing got too big for his capacity to manage, and this coupled with his drinking and a crowd of people as bad as himself around him the school has been allowed to lose prestige.' What was especially damaging about the situation was its indirect effect on its Indian clientele. The school 'has a bad name all over the Reserves, although I must say the educational work was found to be in good shape, and it would be better if the pupils were allowed to attend regularly but he has always some wild scheme on hand when all hands have to turn out.'<sup>73</sup> Significantly, when Reed wrote the ex-principal privately to explain that the official's best efforts to protect his co-religionist did not avail because Clarke would not heed warnings, he stressed financial mismanagement, abuse of alcohol, and alienation of the Indians. Against orders, Clarke had employed people without authorization, and he and some of his male subordinates 'have been most injudicious in your use of liquor.' Finally, the 'Indians from Prince Albert District have sent in a remonstrance against the conduct of the School.'<sup>74</sup>

Fortunately for both Natives and bureaucrats, the other industrial schools authorized in 1883 did not have as severe problems as Battleford. Nor did Ottawa allow its difficulties with the Anglicans to sour it on pursuit of its program of covering the west with industrial schools. In fact, industrial schooling would soon spread beyond the prairies to British Columbia, and at least one of the original schools in the territories persevered in spite of obstacles. The Qu'Appelle school under Father J. Hugonnard was not seriously disturbed by the Northwest Rebellion, but its principal for some years did have troubles with the Indian commissioner because of denominational friction.<sup>75</sup> What was of concern to Hugonnard, though, was continuing resistance on some reserves. Although it was true that enrolment increased impressively, that was 'chiefly due to their [agents'] endeavors' and it unfortunately was true that 'still there are several reserves from which not one pupil could be got.' The problem was that the 'Indians are afraid that their children after leaving the school will not go back to the reserves, and that they will stray away from them; they also do not wish their children to acquire the habits of the white people.'<sup>76</sup> One of the Indian agents in the recruiting area for Hugonnard's school reported that his efforts ran up against this attitude. 'One old man told me in confidence,' Agent Keith reported, that 'if my children go to school and learn the ways of you white people, when they die they will go to the heaven you talk of, while I, an Indian, will go to the happy hunting ground, I love my children, and want to see them again after I die.'<sup>77</sup>

The other Oblate school, St Joseph's at Dunbow, Alberta, also struggled along, albeit minus the most spectacular of the problems Battleford had. Because the first principal, the famous Father Albert Lacombe, initially 'could only get a few orphans,' Dunbow had had to take in 'boys fifteen to eighteen years of age.' The result was numerous runaways, and during the rebellion in 1885 near total desertion of the school. At the height of unease on reserves in southern Alberta, the school 'was left at one time with but one pupil.'<sup>78</sup> Not even financial inducements, apparently, could make the parents on the Blackfoot, Blood, and Peigan reserves surrender their children.<sup>79</sup> A new principal appointed in 1887 'to reinforce the authority and impart new energy towards good order and progress in the school' reported that, by 1886-7, it was experiencing stability, if not necessarily unqualified success. While a number of parents removed their children during the summer of 1886, they were replaced by an identical number drawn





18 Three of missionary John Maclean's Blood students in 1892

mainly from Cree in the Treaty 6 area rather than the Blackfoot population of the school's Treaty 7 recruitment region.<sup>80</sup> One of the exceptions to the rule of early Blackfoot resistance was significant. Red Crow, a powerful chief in the Blood nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy, sent his son to St Joseph's in 1894 rather than to the closer non-Catholic boarding schools, even though the chief had a tenuous link with the Church of England. Red Crow did so because he believed that the industrial schools held the key to the survival and future prosperity of Indian peoples. During a tour of eastern Canada in 1886 he and several of his fellow chiefs had been greatly impressed by the attainments of Indian youths at the Anglican Mohawk Institute. Red Crow decided that St Joseph's would educate his son, Shot Close, whom the priests promptly renamed 'Frank Red Crow, Number 166.'<sup>81</sup>

The rest of the industrial and boarding schools that were established between 1883 and the turn of the century came into existence both in accordance with federal government policy and as a result of the continuing initiatives of the various church bodies. Some of them were the new, elaborate industrial schools; others merely boarding schools. Some, like the Catholics' institution at Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island, were pre-existing schools that obtained government support as



19 The first groups of Sarcee students at the Anglican school in 1895 retained their traditional hairstyles.

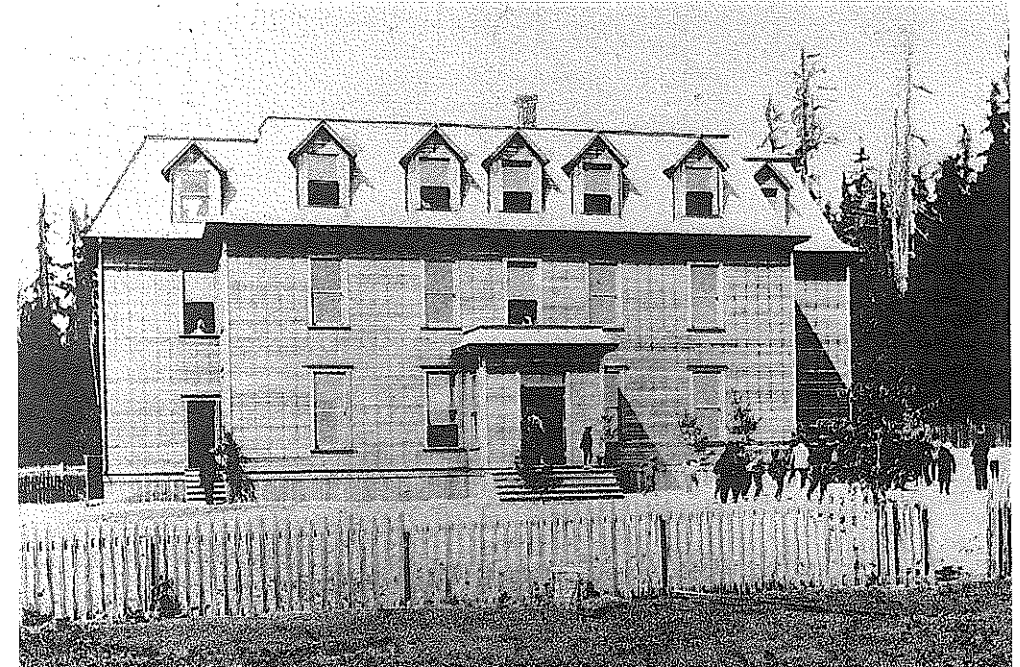
'industrial' schools, in Wikwemikong's case in 1887. Metlakatla began to be funded as an industrial school in 1895. Yet others such as the Anglican at Alert Bay; the Roman Catholic at Kuper Island, at Kamloops, and in the Kootenays; and the Methodists' Coqualeetza Institute near Chilliwack were new institutions. (Williams Lake reopened as an industrial school receiving government grants in 1891, too.) On the prairies, Church Missionary Society principal E.F. Wilson of Sault Ste Marie and his son branched out, setting up another industrial school at Elkhorn, Manitoba, with the financial assistance of Ottawa from 1888 onward. The Roman Catholics expanded little in industrial schooling on the prairies, although they did succeed in attracting government financing for their St Boniface institution in 1891. The Methodists did better, opening Red Deer Industrial School in 1893. The Presbyterians started Regian Industrial School in 1895. But boarding schools continued to flourish with Ottawa's approval and support, too. Five such – including St Mary's at Mission City, an Anglican school at Yale, and



20 By the late 1890s, when this photograph was taken, Anglicans had been operating their school at Alert Bay for some time.

Emma and Thomas Crosby's Port Simpson operation – were to be found in British Columbia, and on the prairies there were no fewer than twenty-eight such institutions. Throughout the entire country, Indian children were being housed and taught in a total of eighteen industrial and thirty-six boarding schools by the end of the century.<sup>82</sup>

Various church groups continued to establish schools for a variety of reasons. Several denominations lobbied Indian Affairs ferociously for grant-supported schools, especially in regions such as the prairies and on the Pacific coast where their rivals were present. Occasionally an institution, like Elkhorn, was the product of individual efforts. The Methodist women in Manitoba who set up what later became the Portage la Prairie Industrial School did so out of concern for the poverty and suffering of Dakota Indians in their area following the Northwest Rebellion, which had the effect 'for a time' of making them 'very fearful' and restive.<sup>83</sup> On rare occasions the possibility of the creation of



21 The Sechelt boarding school was built and, for two years, provisioned by the Coast Salish people, who asked the Catholics to establish it.

an industrial or boarding school could evoke the efforts of civic boosters, who saw its potential to generate employment, a demand for goods, and revenue for their community. When Methodist missionary James Woodsworth visited Brandon in 1891 accompanied by Hayter Reed, he discovered that the city's leaders were most interested in securing a school. The city was prepared to offer a site free, on the understanding that Brandon would get replacement land from the federal government; 'a representative meeting of our leading citizens ... called at the instance of the Mayor and the President of the Board of Trade' lobbied Methodist headquarters in favour of their community as a location.<sup>84</sup> The material benefits flowing to the non-Indian population from industrial schools might be surmised from the fact that a ministerial candidate seeking re-election in the federal election of 1891 pointed out that two of British Columbia's industrial schools for Indians were located in the constituency he had the honour to represent.<sup>85</sup>

[Significant local initiatives sometimes emerged from the Indian]

population as well. Efforts by widely separated Indian bands on the Pacific and in northwestern Ontario at century's end showed that some Natives continued to desire European-style schooling, albeit sometimes now with safeguards and often in the form of day schools. Natives around Alberni on Vancouver Island asked the Presbyterian missionary to provide boarding facilities during the sealing season at least, and one member of the community offered the use of his house 'for school purposes' while he was away sealing.<sup>86</sup> At Sechelt, north of Vancouver, the Coast Salish people who would later call themselves the Sechelt Nation had long pursued efforts that were part of a strategy of accommodation and adaptation to the strange ways taking over their lands. It had been they who had sought out and invited to their community the Oblate missionaries who ministered to them through the later decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup> In 1900 the visiting bishop informed them that they could have a school if they were willing to construct and support its operation. The Indians fell to with a will and erected the Sechelt residential school, supporting its operation entirely from their own resources for its first two years.<sup>88</sup>

Much further east, in the middle of the continent, the Ojibwa of Shoal Lake took the lead in obtaining what would evolve into the Cecilia Jeffrey Presbyterian school at Kenora. In 1898 the band petitioned the Presbyterians to set up a school for their children, and two years later the missionary on the spot reported that they were 'not only willing but *anxious* for a boarding school.' He warned his superiors in Winnipeg that the band members would turn their back on the Presbyterians if the church did not accede to their wishes.<sup>89</sup> However, the Indians were not willing to accept a boarding school on missionary terms. Before construction started, they succeeded in negotiating a contract with the Presbyterians that spelled out certain protections for them and their traditional ways. The document limited proselytization and the amount of work children could be required to perform, guaranteed that pupils could be removed one at a time to participate in traditional Ojibwa rituals, and promised that the police would not be used to force runaways to return to the school. Its first clause, for example, stipulated 'that while children are young and at school they shall not be baptized without the consent of their parents,' and the sixth ensured that 'little children (under 8 years) shall not be given heavy work and larger children shall attend school, at least half of each



22 Shoal Lake school, the precursor of Cecilia Jeffrey school near Kenora, opened at the turn of the century on terms acceptable to Chief Red Sky and his council.

school day.' Perhaps the most revealing article was the one that said that 'a number of children shall be sent now and if they are well treated more shall be sent.'<sup>90</sup>

The contract between Shoal Lake Ojibwa and Presbyterian missionaries was an extraordinary document, considering the motives that drove the European champions of residential schools. The federal government conceived of these schools primarily as instruments of economic and cultural assimilation of the Indians in a period of rapid transition and dislocation. The likes of Durieu and Duncan had seen them as social laboratories in which a people's beliefs and ways could be refashioned. The actions of the Ojibwa at Shoal Lake suggested that they knew nothing – or too much – of the ends for which government and missionaries had developed residential schools in the latter decades of the nineteenth century in Canada. With both the Shoal Lake Ojibwa and the Coast Salish at Sechelt, there obviously were advantages to be had from missionary schools that compensated for any disadvantages that came from evangelical



zeal and racial insensitivity. Aboriginal communities such as those at Cape Mudge, Port Simpson, Sechelt, and Shoal Lake apparently had their own motives for 'calling in the aid of religion,' ambitions that had little to do with the goals of either churches or the federal government.

FIVE

'Dressing Up a Dead Branch  
with Flowers':<sup>1</sup>

The Expansion and Consolidation  
of the Residential School System

So long as the Indians remain a distinct people and live as separate communities,' wrote the deputy minister of Indian Affairs at the turn of the century, 'their attitude towards education will in all likelihood remain much as it is today, which means that they will not be anxious for further education for their children than will serve as a convenience and protection with regard to such dealings as they have with the white population.'<sup>2</sup> Even though Ottawa was contributing to the upkeep of more than fifty industrial institutes, boarding schools, and 'homes' that also provided some education, clearly there was considerable doubt in government circles that these schools were making the progress predicted when they were established in the early 1880s. In fact, concern about the operation of the schools had developed soon after the industrial school experiment began in 1883, and over the years that anxiety deepened into opposition. Several factors combined to sow doubt about the wisdom and efficacy of residential schooling at the very time that the system was growing dramatically. In spite of efforts by the federal government and some of its missionary partners to overhaul and reduce the apparatus of residential schooling, all that was accomplished in the two generations after Battleford Industrial School opened was an administrative reorganization that did little to overcome the manifold problems with industrial institutes, boarding schools, and homes. Because the changes to residential schooling were largely cosmetic, 'the increasing difficulty experienced with regard to recruiting pupils' that the deputy minister noted in 1900 persisted.

Although the federal government was legally responsible for the education of status Indian children, in fact many other parties were

Ottawa resp. for Indian children legally,  
but still other parties were involved

doubt for residence  
schools by Ottawa