

## **Doctrine of Discovery Research**

**Quotations from the A&P and WMS Annual Reports  
(and some additional sources\*) which reflect a colonial attitude  
towards Indigenous people by The Presbyterian Church in Canada**

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\* The quotes noted are essentially a large sampling. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive; nor is it intended to reflect all aspects of the history of the Church's interactions with Indigenous people. The A&P and WMS annual reports have been used as they reflect more or less official statements by the General Assembly and the WMS. Aside from these, there are a few quotes from Synod and Presbytery minutes, as well as quotes from the letters of Rev. James Nisbet which shed light on the early years.

## **Abbreviations**

PCC – The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
CPC – Canada Presbyterian Church  
FMC – Foreign Mission Committee  
HMC – Home Mission Committee  
HMB – Home Mission Board  
GBM – General Board of Mission  
WFMS – Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society  
WMS – Womens’ Missionary Society (Western Division)  
A&P – Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

## **Note**

All quotations are from materials housed within The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives.

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## 1866

The Presbyterian Church in Canada first began mission work with Indigenous people in Canada in 1866. In that year, the Rev. James Nisbet, with assistance from George Flett and John Mackay (both of whom would later be ordained to the ministry) established a mission in the area around the North Saskatchewan River, at what is today Prince Albert.

This was the second mission to non-Christian people to be established by Canadian Presbyterians. The first was founded in 1846 when the “Secession Synod of Nova Scotia” sent the Rev. John Geddie to what is today Vanuatu. Throughout the latter half of the 1800s additional missions, aimed at the evangelization of non-Christians (generally referred to by the Church as “heathen” or “pagans”), were established. These were in Trinidad (1868), Taiwan (1871), India (1877), China (1888), Guyana (1896), and Korea (1898).

### **Quotes re: the first meeting between Rev. James Nisbet and the Indigenous people living along the North Saskatchewan River, near what is today Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**

“Our great anxiety now is to find a band of Indians willing to receive us and the message which we shall take to them”

*[FMC report. CPC Synod minutes 1866, page xviii]*

“In that letter, he [George Flett] describes the reception he met with from the Indians whom he visited: some entirely hostile to a mission; some indifferent; and none inviting us... The fact is that the chiefs hope to get large payment for the lands on which we may settle; but this we shall not give to any. Our plan must be to pitch upon a place eligible for settlement, and when the Indians are disposed to leave their children for instruction, one place will suit them just as well as another, considering that they are very seldom to be found on what they call *their own lands*.”

*[Letter of Rev. James Nisbet dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 1866. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 1, Vol. VI (Nov. 1866) pgs 13-14]*

“Mr. Flett and I sat down among them, and as a preliminary to conversation (according to Indian fashion) we gave to each a bit of tobacco, after the whole company had their pipes in “full blast” I made a little speech to them... Mr. Flett added a few words telling them the places he had visited, and how he had been received, and that we came here because none of the people at the other places had invited us to live among them, although they would not hinder us, that we did not wish to go where we were not desired, that some of their people had invited us to come and live here, (naming the persons) that we had accepted the invitation, and he hoped they would allow us to live quietly among them”

*[Letter of Rev. James Nisbet dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1866. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 2, Vol. VI (Dec. 1866), pg. 47]*

“The head man of the party – whom we knew to be unfriendly to our object - then spoke. He said we had come to their land that we wished to take possession of the land and live on it and work it; that if he should go to England or to Canada he would have to pay for whatever he took, and it was only reasonable that we should pay for their lands when we come to live on them. We told him that the land belonged to the Cree Nation, and that if we paid him, every other Cree had a

right to come and ask payment, that we had no authority to buy land and had nothing to buy it with. He said it was not us alone, but he knew whenever a mission is established that other settlers soon come, and they not only take their lands, but their buffalo also.”

*[Letter of Rev. James Nisbet dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1866. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 2, Vol. VI (Dec. 1866), pgs 47-48.]*

“Then another of the old men gave quite a long speech. He said he quite agreed with the others, he liked our talk very much, he thought we were kind, and he hoped we would live peaceably together and help one another; nevertheless he must say a few words. Then he spoke of the white man coming into their territory; driving away their buffalo, so that they are now few and confined to a small space; that the Indians were driven farther and farther away, as the white man advanced, so that they were now in narrow bounds, etc. . . . In reply to his long speech we said that all he said about the white man was perfectly true, and that was one reason why the friends in Canada had sent us to teach them a better way of living than to depend altogether on the buffalo, and that they may learn other things whereby they may be blessed for ever.”

*[Letter of Rev. James Nisbet dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1866. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 2, Vol. VI (Dec. 1866), pgs 49-50.]*

## 1867-1874

Between 1867 and 1874, James Nisbet's mission at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan was the only mission work being conducted by the Presbyterian Church with Indigenous people. The original intent for the mission as presented by James Nisbet, and supported by the Foreign Mission Committee and the wider Church, was that it should be an itinerant form of mission, whereby the missionary would have a home base, but would travel widely, visiting with Indigenous people as he travelled from camp to camp. In other words, conducting mission efforts by entering into the Indigenous community.

The expectation was that a young, unmarried man, who could quickly acquire the language, would step forward. Sadly, no one did, and so James Nisbet, by this time in his mid-40s, married and with a small child, offered himself; the Committee accepted. Although Nisbet assured the Foreign Mission Committee that the mission would still largely be an itinerant one, it was unreasonable for them to expect that this could now be carried out. Instead, the mission became more of a settled compound, with family dwellings, farm and school. Interactions with Indigenous people, therefore, happened to a large degree not in their world, but in the setting of a "Euro-Canadian" mission.

James Nisbet was born in Scotland, and had a colonial attitude towards Indigenous culture and religion, and believed Protestant Christianity and European culture were superior. Education was also important to him and the idea of a boarding school, in which indigenous children would live at the mission away from the influence of their home life, appealed to him. In other ways, however, his approach to mission efforts with Indigenous people differed from the approach the Church would begin to take in the 1880s and onwards. It was an approach that seemed to focus more on the sharing of Christianity and Euro-Canadian culture with those interested, rather than on forcing change on everyone. He also felt it was important to conduct services and teach his school in the language of the local Indigenous people. One of his greatest regrets was his inability to learn the Cree language.

The period between 1866 and 1874 when Nisbet conducted his mission was a time of great change. Settlers were beginning to arrive into the Prairies in increasing numbers, including the area around Nisbet's mission. The buffalo were being pushed further west, precipitating the collapse of the herds that would occur in the near future. And, most significantly for Indigenous people, in 1870, the ancestral land on which they lived was sold by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Canadian Government, causing a large degree of anxiety amongst them.

### *Quotes re: transfer of territory from Hudson's Bay Company to the Canadian Government*

"Rumor says we are now part of the Dominion. What effect is the change to have on this quarter. Are settlers from the provinces to flock in here. I hope that before such shall be the case the government will make a proper arrangement with the Indians & appropriate proper reserves for them. The Indians here have often spoken to me about such a movement as one that they dread fearing that they will be crowded out of their own country as Indians in other parts have been."  
[Letter from James Nisbet to William MacLaren, July 6 1869. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-3.]

“For a month past we have had sixteen tents of Indians beside us (over 100 persons). On the 30<sup>th</sup> of August they asked to have a talk with me about the opening up of the country that they have been hearing so much about of late. They greatly fear the coming of foreigners to drive them out of their country – they have no objection to ourselves being here, for they know we are seeking their good, but they don’t wish a great many white people to come to crowd them out of their lands. I told them all that I knew about the transfer of the territory to the care of the Canadian Government, and I said that in my letters to people in Canada I had frequently said that if that Government should get the charge of the territory I hope the interests of the Indians will be attended to, proper reserves made for them, strong measures taken to prevent the bringing of strong drink among them, and assistance given by Government to such Indians as wish to settle on the land – at least for the first few years. And now that the transfer has actually taken place, let me express my earnest hope that the Canadian Government will lose no time in looking after the interest of the Indian population in some such ways as above indicated.”

*[Letter from James Nisbet to the Editor, Sept 15, 1869. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 3, Vol. IX (January 1870).]*

“I hope that government will make proper terms with the Indians before there be any movement towards colonizing the country and that intending settlers will make up their minds to be friendly with the natives.”

*[Letter from James Nisbet to William MacLaren, January 7, 1870. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-4.]*

“To the Sabbath Schools of the Canada Presbyterian Church. My Dear Young Friends: - The beginning of the year reminds me that I should send a few lines specially for the young people of our Church who take an interest in the Mission to the Indians. Now that this whole territory belongs to Canada, it is reasonable to expect that you and your parents will take an increased interest in everything that will advance the welfare of the Indians who dwell here, and so prepare the way for the hundreds or thousands of young Canadians who will before long flock into the territory...But then there are the Indians! Well, the Indians will be your friends, if you are friendly to them. I have no fear of the Indians of this quarter if they are only treated with fairness, and I dare say the Canadian Government will look well to that.”

*[Letter from James Nisbet to the Sabbath Schools of the Church, dated Jan. 20, 1871. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 9, Vol.X (Sept. 1871).]*

“The Indians of this place sent an address to Governor Archibald last August...enquiring into the truth of the report that the Government means to take up this part of the territory for a white settlement. A reply has been received from His Excellency of a very friendly nature, in which it is stated that it is possible that the Government will treat with the Indians here soon for some portion of the land, and the strongest assurances are given that the Indians will be fairly and liberally dealt with.”

*[Letter from James Nisbet, dated Jan. 19, 1872. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 5, Vol XI (May 1872).]*

“The unsettled state of the Indians in reference to the manner in which their territorial rights may be dealt with by the Canadian authorities has also exerted an unfavorable influence for the time being upon efforts for their good. Notwithstanding these difficulties, good work has been done during the year, partly among the white population and partly among the aborigines”

*[FMC report. CPC Synod Minutes 1874, appendix pg. 57.]*

“It is evident that this portion of the territory in particular is in a transition state. The uncertainty that exists in the minds of the Indians regarding the intentions of government with respect to them is a barrier to progress among them. So much land has been taken up by whites and half-breeds that the Indians begin to feel impatient about their rights.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to the FMC dated Jan 20, 1874. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-5.]*

**Quotes re: presumed inferiority of Indigenous culture and/or superiority of Euro-Canadian culture; use of terms such as “heathen”, “pagan”, etc.**

“It would be very easy for many of your schools to furnish the means of maintaining one or two Indian children, each, at the Mission... By doing this you cannot imagine what a blessing you will confer upon these children, and through them, on the whole Indian population in this country. Instead of being poor, wandering, half-starved, painted, feathered savages, entertaining all the ancient superstitions of their race, they would be settled, civilized, educated, and we hope Christian men and women, exercising an influence for good on all their people”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to the Sabbath Schools of the Church, dated Jan. 12, 1869. The Home and Foreign Record of the CPC, No. 6, Vol. VIII (April 1869)]*

“I cannot describe to you the difference between your condition and the condition of the poor wandering Indian children here. They have no settled homes, nothing but leather tents to live in, which they are constantly shifting from place to place even in the dead of winter; often their clothing is very scanty, and their supply of food is very precarious, as they depend altogether upon hunting. I need not tell you they have no schools, and none to teach them about the blessed Saviour who came from heaven to save children, not only white children like you, but children with red skins and black skins as well.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to the Sabbath Schools of the Church, dated Jan. 16, 1868. The Home and Foreign Record of the CPC, No. 6, Vol. VII (April 1868)]*

“After the expression of opinion given at last Synod, your Committee [FMC] did not feel warranted in taking immediate steps to break ground in any other portion of the heathen world”  
*[FMC report, CPC Synod minutes 1868, appendix pg. liv.]*

“That China be chosen as a field for a Mission to the heathen”

*[FMC report, CPC Synod minutes 1869 pg. lxix]*

“Although the Indians camped here are friendly, and many of them attend our services, they have by no means given up their superstitious and heathen vanities. They have had quite a number of feasts and dances during the past month, and some of them connected with their heathen superstitions, but they say themselves that they are not attended with anything like the zeal that existed in former years, and most of them freely express their belief that the Christian religion will prevail, although they themselves are not prepared to give up the religion and custom of their fathers.”

*[Letter from James Nisbet to the Editor, Sept 15, 1869. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 3, Vol. IX (January 1870).]*

“To the Sabbath Schools of the Canada Presbyterian Church. My Dear Young Friends, - As this is the last opportunity I expect to have of sending letters this year, I must send a few lines to thank you for the interest you have taken in this mission. The Treasurer has informed me that you have contributed six hundred and eighty dollars during the past year towards our work here... Could you see the number of Indian children who are camped about us at this time, few of whom as yet care to be instructed, and who are being brought up amid the follies and superstitions of Indian heathenism, you would allow that your efforts are not misspent, if only you may be the means of raising a few of these from their present degradation. While they are camped here – although comparatively few of them have yet taken it into their heads to attend school – they are constantly seeing and hearing much that will remain in their hearts. They see many things here that cause them to wonder, and must fill them with an idea of the superiority of the white people, and that may induce them to think well also of the religion white people bring to them.”

*[Letter from James Nisbet, Sept 16, 1869. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 3, Vol. IX (January 1870).]*

“To a certain extent, the man knows the Christian religion, and to a certain degree he seems to have embraced it; so far, at least, as abandoning the common superstitions of the heathen, professing to worship the one true God”

*[Letter from James Nisbet, June, 1870. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 12, Vol. IX (Oct. 1870).]*

**Quotes re: the need to “civilize” Indigenous people through a change in lifestyle, language, appearance, names, etc.**

“In my correspondence on the subject I stated fully to the Committee the objects that I thought should be aimed at, viz.: to fix on some locality for a Mission Station removed from the ordinary war path of the Indian tribes; to endeavour to induce Indian families to settle around the Mission Station and learn to cultivate the soil; to gather Indian children and youths into school – to teach them the arts of civilized life, together with the ordinary branches of a Christian education; and in order to carry out these two last objects, to set on foot a Mission farm that would be an example to the Indians, and also go some way towards rendering the Mission self-supporting.”

*[Report by James Nisbet “Three and a Half Years of An Indian Mission”. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No.7, Vol IX (May 1870).]*

“we have taken charge of six additional children since the opening of Spring... Four of them have not yet been baptized. I have deferred the baptism in expectation of the arrival of Mr. McKay to assist in Cree – I intend to give one of the boys the name of Donald McVicar – in accordance with the wish of the Cote Street S.S. One of the girls I mean to call Elizabeth Esson. No person deserves better of this Mission than our worthy friend Mrs. Esson. The other boy and girl I am thinking to name after Mr. and Mrs. Black of Red River.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to William MacLaren, dated June 30, 1871. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-4.]*

**Quotes re: schooling of Indigenous children as a means of “civilizing”**

“My idea is that if we remain there we shall do the most good to the Indians, *ultimately*, by endeavouring to collect as many children as possible, and have industrial schools for them – teaching them the ordinary branches of a common and Christian education, but also training them to farming, cattle-keeping, carpenter work, and whatever other branches of industry may be found convenient. The girls would be taught house work, needle work, etc. I would bring children from any quarter, who may be willing to come to us. The expense of keeping and clothing them would not be great if once farming operations were fully established... The boys I would clothe in moose leather and canvas garments, and the girls in print frocks. We should take them at as early an age as possible – orphans, and such children as have none to care for them, should be sought after, as we may be more certain of their being allowed to remain than others.”  
[Letter of James Nisbet, dated Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1866. *The Home and Foreign Record of the CPC*, No. 3, Vol. VI (Jan. 1867)]

“the work on which I think we must chiefly depend for doing permanent good among the Indians, is taking children into the Mission and giving them a proper Christian training. The Mission must take the whole charge of them; must feed, clothe and educate them, and teach them how to work and make a living for themselves like white people; but especially strive to win them to Christ that they may be saved.”  
[Letter of James Nisbet to the Sabbath Schools of the Church, dated Jan. 16, 1868. *The Home and Foreign Record of the CPC*, No. 6, Vol. VII (April 1868)]

“The mission to the Red Indians at Prince Albert, on the Saskatchewan, has been prosecuted with zeal and success... Instruction has also been given in the Cree language to six Indian children... In the working on the farm it is intended to make use, to some extent, of the Indian lads who may be sent to the Mission for education, who will in this way acquire such a knowledge of agriculture as will enable them hereafter to engage successfully in the tilling of the soil... Every encouragement is given by Mr. Nisbet to the Indians to settle in the neighborhood of the Mission and engage in farming, and the prospects are that during the present season a goodly number will make experiment of a settled mode of life. Until this is accomplished, and even afterwards, it will be very desirable that means should be provided to enable the Mission to board and educate Indian children from a distance. It is estimated that by making their labour available on the farm, and practicing the strictest economy, one Indian child can be trained at the Mission for the sum of fifty dollars per annum. Your Committee believe that if the attention of Sabbath Schools were directed to this department of missionary exertion, it would have the happiest results...”

[FMC report. *CPC Synod minutes 1868*, appendix pg. liii.]

“We shall not be doing what we ought to do for the Indians until we have some such separate establishment for the Indian children and that they may be taught in their own language.”  
[Letter of James Nisbet, dated June 1869. *Nisbet Papers*, File #2014-5020-1-3.]

“so that despite your low funds I am resolved to engage a teacher, and who will also be able to interpret, read and pray in Cree in Mr. McKay’s absence”  
[Letter of James Nisbet, dated July 6, 1869. *Nisbet Papers*, File #2014-5020-1-3.]

“Having given you Mr. Black’s statement, I must also give you my answer “I am just as much alive to the importance of these things” (more visits to the camps, more children in the school) as any one either at Red River, or in Canada. You say “other matters being simply secondary and

auxiliary” – I simply ask – how could we have children without accommodation, or the means of feeding them? We have not refused any children that have been offered since I returned from Canada – although we have no special accommodation for them, nor any person to take special charge of them...[the] Indians have not come the length yet of desiring to have education either for themselves or their children. They are learning much in a kind of side way, but they seem to dread coming to school. I hope this prejudice will soon give way, for there are really some smart boys and girls among them...The children must be given freely to us or we shall not receive them at all. It would be a great risk to do otherwise. I have often said to the whole company of our Indians that the school is free to any who like to attend, and they know that we are willing to take into our house as many children as we can keep. What more can I do?”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to William MacLaren, convener of the FMC, dated Jan 7, 1870. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-4.]*

### **Quotes regarding Nisbet’s view on the importance of communicating with Indigenous people in their own language**

“If we are permitted to receive any considerable number of Indian children, we shall make separate provision for teaching them, using the Cree alone, but taking advantage of the English school for such as may manifest an aptitude for acquiring our language”

*[Letter from James Nisbet, January 1868. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 7, Vol. VII (May 1868)]*

“I am resolved to engage a teacher well acquainted with the Cree characters as Indian teacher, and who will also be able to interpret, read and pray in Cree in Mr. McKay’s absence, when he and I may go off on such visits as we have talked so much about.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet, dated July 6, 1869. The Home and Foreign Record of the CPC, No. 12, Vol. VIII (Oct. 1869)]*

“In the absence of my interpreter, I can do but little among the Indians; but I have plenty of work among the English-speaking people, and in the school, where I teach reading in Cree as well as the English branches.”

Nisbet to Reid Sept 1870

*[Letter from James Nisbet, dated Sept. 13, 1870. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 2, Vol X (Feb. 1871).]*

“to do justice to the school, we ought to have a person capable of teaching both Cree and English. At present, the burden of the school falls upon myself, and thus prevents my attending to other work”

*[Letter of James Nisbet, dated Jan. 19, 1871. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No.4, Vol X (April 1871).]*

“Perhaps Mr. Mackay [George Leslie Mackay, going to be sent as missionary to Taiwan] may be more fitted for India or China than for the North American Indians, but if he is apt at languages (as I gather from your letter) he might get employment for that talent here. The scriptures ought to be published in pure Cree... Mr. Mackay or any other good linguist might do a great service to the cause of Christ by acquiring a thorough knowledge of the Cree language and translating the scriptures thereinto.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to William MacLaren, dated April 14, 1871. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-4.]*

“There is nothing grieves me more than that I cannot communicate with the natives in their own language”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to the FMC, dated Jan 20, 1874. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-5.]*

**Quotes re: Nisbet’s approach of sharing Christianity and Euro-Canadian culture (technology, medicine, agricultural practices, etc.) with Indigenous people, but not necessarily forcing change**

“On the 26<sup>th</sup> of May I considered it proper to receive into the Church by baptism the lame man I have spoken of with his wife and child. He took the name of James, his wife Mary, and the infant they called Jane, all the names in our little family – it was their wish – not ours. Another Indian with whom we are well acquainted also desired baptism for his child, but he has not been baptized himself, although he says he has been seeking after the Christian religion for a long time. I told him that if we had an opportunity of giving him instruction and that he came to be fully convinced of the truth of Christianity I would be happy to baptize both himself and child, but he is off again to the plains and I know he was disappointed. I know that other missionaries make no scruple about baptizing all applicants whether children or adults...But I want to have the opinion of the Committee on this question – I know that I am counted singular on this subject even by the Indians.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to Robert F. Burns, dated June 3, 1867. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-2.]*

“if we wish to encourage Indians to settle we must at the outset furnish them with seed, and help them to build little houses, & plough the land. A considerable number have already spoken to us on this subject, & in all probability a beginning will be made next Spring & should all come who have spoken to us about it we shall be ill prepared to receive them.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet, dated Oct. 1st, 1867. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-2.]*

“In former letters I informed you that several of the principal men among the plain Crees have been here to consult with us on the subject of becoming settlers, and to learn what encouragement we would give them. We have told them to lay up as much provisions as possible during the winter, to come here in the spring bringing their provisions with them, and we shall assist them as far as we are able in ploughing the land, and that we shall furnish them with such seed as we can spare. We have also promised to lend them oxen to haul timber, and that we shall direct them in building homes.”

*[Letter from James Nisbet, January 1868. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No. 7, Vol. VII (May 1868)]*

“Dinner discussed & the pipe of peace lighted I said to them that I had been told that there were some among them who wished to speak to us about some things connected with the mission, & I had invited them all to come that all might hear what is said, and that each one might have an opportunity of saying what he pleased; that we are here to do as much good as we can to as many Indians as we can, & we shall be glad to hear what they have to say that we may be directed how

to act. For five long hours we were listening to Indian speeches of more or less merit... All the speakers acknowledged the superiority of the white man, none of them would say anything against his religion, perhaps it would yet become the religion of the whole of them; but as white men encroached on their country their means of living became less, & the white men must teach them how to live otherwise than by the chase, & help them to do so: - who could they look to but the minister to teach & help them; he was sent to do good to the Indians, & the great book out of which he reads teaches to be kind to the poor... They all agreed in saying that they see no hope for them but in farming – but how can they farm who have never been taught & have no tools? They looked to the minister to teach and be kind to their children and grand-children – they put them under his care. They did not want foreigners to come & crowd them out of their land, but they had no objection to the minister & his people staying among them... I made a general reply to all that was said. I repeated all that I had said to them when we first came here; our great object in coming, to teach the Christian religion; but the people who sent us know that the wild animals are becoming scarce & they are willing that we should teach such as wish to become farmers & help them at the first to plow, & lend them oxen to haul fencing & logs for houses, & show them how to put them up... I explained to them fully how they should proceed in the event of any of them wishing to make a trial of farming next season. I said I would be glad to do all in my power for their children & would teach any of them (young or old) to read & write in their own language who desired it. I trust and pray that good will come of this conference – some predicted trouble, but I do not apprehend any. I found a great deal more of the conciliatory spirit than I expected & more appreciation of our work than I thought existed, & I thank God for it.”  
[Letter from James Nisbet to Rev. William McLaren, Sept. 29, 1868. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-3.]

“A few Indians have been asked to be baptized, but their ideas of that ordinance are very defective, derived chiefly from the practice of Roman Catholics, so I find it necessary to decline such applications till there is opportunity for instruction”  
[Letter from James Nisbet to Rev. William McLaren, Jan. 12, 1869. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-3.]

“This has been a bad winter for them of account of so little snow – they could not approach the game, & they have been very scarce of provisions in consequence. See then the hand of God in giving us such an abundant harvest from the small amount that was sown & planted. It is no uncommon thing from ten to fifteen (sometimes as many as twenty) Indians to eat in our kitchen daily; and they are constantly getting wheat, turnips, & potatoes to keep their families from starving – and some of them do work at the Mission to pay for these supplies.”  
[Letter from James Nisbet to Rev. William McLaren, March 23, 1869. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-3.]

“It is a year [1870] that will be long remembered in the Saskatchewan district, not only because of the political changes affecting the whole north-western territories, but specifically on account of the fearful scourge of small-pox that has swept over the western portion of the district... Most providentially, we had received in 1869 one or two scabs of vaccine matter, and on the first sound of the existence of small-pox in the west reaching us, we commenced vaccinating all the Indians and others who were in our neighbourhood... we have all been mercifully preserved from small-pox thus far”  
[Letter of James Nisbet, dated Jan. 19, 1871. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No.4, Vol X (April 1871).]

“There are now fourteen families of Indians and half-breeds living in the neighbourhood of the Mission. There are twenty-five children in these families capable of attending school, while altogether, there are, in more or less regular attendance, twenty-two children. The majority are greatly in want of clothing, and we have not to give them... Three Indian families have got houses put up at a fishing lake 20 miles north-west from this, and others are talking of following the example thus set. We ploughed up some land for them there last Spring, and may add to the same the coming season, to enable them to farm a little more extensively.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet, dated Jan. 19, 1871. The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, No.4, Vol X (April 1871).]*

“To clothe the destitute around us we have been obliged to strip our own wardrobe and that of our children as bare as possible, some of the children attending school are literally in rags”

*[Letter of James Nisbet to William MacLaren, dated Dec. 14, 1870. Nisbet Papers, File #2014-5020-1-4.]*

**Quotes re: Nisbet’s (and the Church’s) feelings on the importance of conducting mission work by travelling to, and visiting with, Indigenous people in their own encampments and tents.**

“I have often expressed my regret that I am able to pay so little attention to the visiting of Indian camps on the plains. You are perhaps not aware that even *one* such visit would involve perhaps from 500 to 800 miles of travelling, and that it is sometimes very difficult to find the camps of Indians in the plains... Yet these drawbacks would not deter me from undertaking that sort of work, had I any responsible person to leave at home while Mr. McKay and I would be absent, perhaps for six or eight weeks at a time. Since Mr. Flett left the mission I have been so situated that both Mr. McKay and I could not be away from home together for any length of time. But I believe that even this inability has been widely ordered. Had I begun at once that sort of work as a stranger, I would have been received with suspicion and spurned by the majority, just as Mr. Flett was when he was searching out a location for the mission.”

*[Letter of James Nisbet, dated July 6, 1869. The Home and Foreign Record of the CPC, No. 12, Vol. VIII (Oct. 1869)]*

“A second ordained Missionary is urgently required for the Mission, who could visit the Indians in their encampments on the plains... Could a suitable man be found, who would learn the language of the Plain Crees, and who would be prepared to devote himself to this work, your Committee believe that the efficiency of the Mission would be more than doubled... and your Committee hope the Assembly will authorize their successors in office to look out for a suitable labourer to engage in this work.”

*[FMC report. CPC General Assembly minutes 1871, appendix pg. xcv.]*

## 1875-1883

The 1870s and 1880s were a time of devastating change for Indigenous people on the prairies. In a very short time their whole way of life was changed, and not of their own choice.

First, in 1870, the ancestral land on which they lived was sold by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Canadian Government, which wanted to develop its resources and open it up to immigration. To do this the Government entered into treaties with them, and passed the Indian Act of 1876. These together saw First Nations people become wards of the Government and moved onto small reserve lands. At the same time the buffalo, on which so much of Indigenous culture on the prairies depended were being wiped out through commercial hunting, overcrowding, and disease. It was a time of great anxiety, uncertainty, anger, and fear.

With the creation of the Reserves especially, the Church's view of the work begins to change, with what seems to be an increasing emphasis on cultural change as well as the sharing of the Gospel.

Until just before his death in 1874, James Nisbet was the Church's only missionary appointed to work with Indigenous people in Canada. However, this would soon change as the Church began to expand these efforts. Initially, the first few missionaries to follow Nisbet were individuals with mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and a strong familiarity with Indigenous language and culture.

James Nisbet's interpreter John Mackay (who was also his brother-in-law) was ordained by the Church and entered into work at Mistawasis, while George Flett, who had served as Nisbet's initial interpreter (and was the brother-in-law of Rev. John Black of the Red River) was also ordained and began work on the Okanase Reserve. The Church's other missionary at this time was the Rev. Solomon Tunkansanicye, an Indigenous man ordained as a Presbyterian minister by the Church in the United States, and encouraged to come north of the border to serve the Indigenous people of the Bird-Tail Creek Reserve, near the town of Birtle.

The approach used by these missionaries seems to have largely focused on the sharing of the Gospel, although Rev. George Flett himself was an early proponent of boarding schools. By the end of this time period the Church's efforts begin to place greater emphasis on forcing cultural change, as well as the spreading of a Christian message.

### **Quotes re: presumed inferiority of Indigenous culture and/or superiority of Euro-Canadian culture; use of terms such as "heathen" and "pagan".**

"As soon as the Indians in the North-West are gathered into *Reserves*, the work among them will assume another and more hopeful character. Until that time arrives, it will always be difficult to operate successfully among them. Their migratory habits render it almost impossible for those who do not follow a similar mode of life to have constant access to them. This obstacle, which has constantly impeded the progress of this department of the work, will ere long, it is hoped be taken out of the way."

*[FMC report. CPC Synod Minutes 1875, appendix pg 158.]*

“It is too soon to look for fruit, but from the promising auspices under which this mission [at Bird-Tail Creek Reserve] has begun, we may hope that many of those savages who, goaded on by the wicked treatment of evil men, become a terror to their civilized neighbours, will, under different treatment, listen to the gospel message, and in due time be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind”.

[A&P 1878, FMC report, appendix pg lxxii]

“The other field is Sturgeon Lake, on the north side of the north branch of the the Saskatchewan, and about twenty miles from Prince Albert. The Indians settled on this reserve are heathen, and have hitherto refused to permit missionaries to settle among them. Mr. Mackay is personally acceptable to them, and there seems every reason to believe that they will allow him to labour permanently among them.”

[A&P 1879, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxxiii]

“the Indians were much more inclined now to put themselves under Christian training than formerly and were abandoning their former habits of life and devoting themselves more to the cultivation of the soil.”

[Report of Rev. George Flett. Presbytery of Manitoba minutes, Sept 18, 1879, Microfilm #2014-8033]

“Rev Geo. Flett continues to reside at Okanase, and from this centre he travels over a field two or three hundred miles in extent, preaching to the Indians in their own tongue, and administering, as occasion requires, Christian ordinances... He is constantly coming in contact with heathen Indians, and finds many opportunities of commending to them the Gospel of Christ”

[A&P 1879, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxxiii]

“At Sturgeon Lake, where the Indians are heathens and had formerly refused to allow Missionaries to come to their reserve, Mr. Mackay has been able to maintain regular services, and been cheered by the tokens of the divine blessing.”

[A&P 1880, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxxii]

“The Indians in this Reserve are not advanced in the arts of civilized life, as far as those of Okanase and of the Sioux Reserve, on the Bird Tail Creek. Indeed, it could scarcely be expected, as it is only about three years since they settled upon their lands... The Chief himself is a notable example. When the Convener visited him, he had ready to harvest about twenty-four acres of excellent wheat, and his farm gave evidence that he had entered on his new mode of life with energy and success.”

[A&P 1883. FMC report, appendix pg. xcvi]

“The majority of the Indians on this Reserve [Bird-Tail Creek Sioux] have comfortable log houses, neat gardens, and good farms... The ploughing seen on these farms was equal to any which the Convener saw in any part of the North-West. There are on the Reserve eighty head of cattle and a number of horses. These Indians are probably, upon the whole, in advance of any in the North-West. The missionary, Rev. Solomon Tunkansuiciye, is doing good work... He is aided by three elders in his work. When Mr. McKellar and the Convener visited the Mission, they had a very interesting meeting with the Indians in their church. Nearly the entire population, old and young, turned out to welcome them. The Chief, Enoch, was present and showed much

cordiality. The meeting was opened with devotional exercises by the pastor. It was pleasing to listen to the grave, sweet melody of their hymns, and to hear those who had once worshipped dumb idols, one after another, lifting their voice in prayer to the living God. With the aid of two intelligent interpreters, it was found possible to have a somewhat free and pleasing interchange of sentiment with these Christian Indians.”

*[A&P 1883, FMC report, appendix pg. xcvi and xcvi]*

### **Quotes re: schooling of Indigenous children as a means of “civilizing”**

#### Quotes re: the first attempts at a partnering of the Presbyterian Church and the Government to provide schooling for indigenous people

“During the year a school was erected, chiefly through the liberality of friends in Manitoba, upon the Roseau Indian Reserve, near Pembina. The Canadian Government have promised a liberal annual grant to sustain it. Your Committee have also made a grant of \$150 per annum, which along with the Government grant will, it is believed, be sufficient to support a teacher. “

*[A&P 1877, FMC report, appendix page lxviii]*

“The school established among the Indians on the Roseau Reserve near Pembina, has been continued with a measure of success, but from a variety of causes, the attendance did not average more than twelve and a half during the year. The Government grant which was originally expected to be \$250 per annum, has been reduced to a sum equal to about \$150. Should the attendance not increase or some more economical method of conducting the school not be discovered, it may become a question whether it should not be discontinued.”

*[A&P 1878, FMC report, appendix pg lxvii]*

“Upon his return to Winnipeg, the Convener [of the General Assembly’s Foreign Mission Committee] called upon the Indian Commissioner, Lieut.-Governor Dewdney, and submitted for his consideration a proposal that the Government should pay one half of the salary of a teacher for this Reserve [Bird-Tail Creek Reserve], and that the Foreign Mission Committee should pay the other half of the salary and provide a residence for the teacher. The proposition he received with kindly interest, and promised to submit it to the favourable notice of the authorities in Ottawa.”

*[A&P 1883, FMC report, appendix pg xcvi]*

#### Quotes re: interest of indigenous people in having local schools on their reserves

“The chief at Fort Pelly and his Indians expressed a strong desire to have a school established among them. The committee of the Presbytery of Manitoba considered that the prospects of a successful school at this point were such as to warrant the outlay necessary, and steps were taken to meet the wishes of the Indians. A grant of \$100 was made to aid them in the erection of a school-house.”

*[A&P 1881 FMC report, pg. ixv]*

“The Indians [at Mistawasis] are also engaged in making preparations to erect a school-house for themselves which will also serve as a church”

*[A&P 1881 FMC report, pg. ix xv]*

“Mr. Tunkansanuiyce said that he and his people strongly desired to have a school opened on their reserve for the training of their children. . . Great satisfaction was then expressed by several of the members of the Presbytery at the visit of the missionary, and the favourable nature of his report. . . the Clerk and Mr. Wellwood were appointed a committee to ascertain what assistance the government could give to maintain a school on the Sioux Reserve.”

*[Presbytery of Manitoba minutes, March 15, 1882, Microfilm #2014-8033]*

“These Indians [at Okanase] have made very decided progress towards material comfort since they settled on their lands. Many of them have comfortable houses, good gardens and excellent crops. During the visit of the deputy [ie. Rev. MacLaren, convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, who visited the year before], it was found that a great *desideratum* of the community is a good school. The Government is pledged by treaty to give them one, but, up to that time, no school had been maintained. The support offered by the Government is so inadequate that no teacher will accept it. Steps were taken to meet this want, which the Committee have since sanctioned. A school is now in operation at Okanase, under the care of Donald McVicar, a young Indian, who has been educated by your mission.”

*[A&P 1883, FMC report, appendix pg. xc vii]*

“They [Bird-Tail Creek Sioux Reserve] expressed an earnest desire to have a teacher sent to them, who could instruct their children in the English language. And they showed their practical interest in the matter by offering to get out all the timber for a teacher’s house, and to do all the work upon it, if the sawn lumber, sashes, doors and nails were provided for them. They would also give the teacher as much land for a garden as he desired to cultivate.”

*[A&P 1883, FMC report, appendix pg. xc vii and xc viii]*

**Quotes re: the work of McKay, Flett and Tunkansanuiyce, missionaries with Indigenous ancestry and familiar with First Nations culture, customs and language, in developing Christian communities.**

“During the year new ground has been occupied [ie. new work begun] by the appointment of Mr. George Flett to labour among the Indians in the neighborhood of Fort Pelly. Mr. Flett, on account of his thorough familiarity with the Cree language and acquaintance with Indian habits and modes of thought, has very special adaptation for usefulness in this field of labour. He has been very highly recommended to the committee as an earnest and devoted Christian worker.”

*[FMC report. CPC Synod Minutes 1874, appendix pg 58]*

“Mr. Mackay has been connected with the Mission from the beginning and his familiarity with the Cree language and his high personal character, have enabled him to exert a wide influence for good over the Indians on the Saskatchewan. . . Hereafter it is expected that the charge of the work among the Cree Indians in the neighbourhood of Prince Albert will devolve specially upon him”

*[A&P 1878, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxii]*

“They are among the most intelligent, as well as the most warlike and vigorous of the Indian races. Rev. Solomon Tunkansuicye, an ordained missionary of the Presbyterian Church U.S., himself a Sioux, was secured to labour among this branch of his tribe. The brethren who have met with him have been very favourably impressed with his character and ability.”

*[A&P 1878, FMC report, appendix pg lxxii]*

“From his intimate knowledge of the language, character and habits of the Cree Indians, there seems good reason to hope that, through the divine blessing, he will accomplish much good.”

*[A&P 1879, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxxiii]*

“Rev Geo. Flett continues to reside at Okanase, and from this centre he travels over a field two or three hundred miles in extent, preaching to the Indians in their own tongue, and administering, as occasion requires, Christian ordinances... He is constantly coming in contact with heathen Indians, and finds many opportunities of commending to them the Gospel of Christ”

*[A&P 1879, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxxiii]*

“At Sturgeon Lake, where the Indians are heathens and had formerly refused to allow Missionaries to come to their reserve, Mr. Mackay has been able to maintain regular services, and been cheered by the tokens of the divine blessing.”

*[A&P 1880, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxxii]*

“Mistawasis, the Cree Chief who had formerly resided at Prince Albert and had received instruction from the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church was anxious that the Presbytery should establish a mission among them in their present place of residence...the Presbytery express satisfaction with the work done by Mr. Mackay instruct Mr. Mackay to take steps to accede to the request of Mistawasis and assure him that the Church will do its utmost to plant a mission”

*[Presbytery of Manitoba minutes, Minutes, Mar 11, 1880, Microfilm #2014-8033]*

“Last winter a second council was held, and the old chief Mistawasis himself was sent as a delegate to Mr. Mackay, to urge their request for a minister. In a lengthened conversation he referred to the time, fourteen years before, when Mr. Mackay began to teach them. He and his followers were then upon the war path. “He wondered” writes Mr. Mackay, “that I was not afraid to go among them, when danger impended... He wished me to tell the Committee that they wanted no other than the native who speaks their own language, and , who first taught him to know God, meaning myself.”

*[A&P 1880, FMC report, appendix, pg. lxxxii]*

“Rev. John Mackay removed his residence from Prince Albert to Mistawasis Reserve in the beginning of last July, and received a very cordial welcome from the chief and his band...When he arrived he found that few of the Indians from the prairies could read or write the syllabic character, having forgotten what they had learned at Prince Albert before they removed to their Reserve. Mr Mackay began at once to teach them, and at the end of six months he was able to report that “in almost every house the heads of families can read and write with ease in their own language”. The parents are now also teaching their children, and thus soon the entire population will have a ready access to the Word of God in their own tongue. Mr. Mackay conducts divine service twice every Lord’s Day, and holds a prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings. In winter, the congregation ranges from sixty to one hundred. The services have, during the winter, been

held in Mr. Mackay's house, as there is neither church nor school-house in which the people can meet." *[A&P 1882, FMC report, appendix page lxxxi]*

"Solomon, accompanied by an Indian who acted as his interpreter, attended the March Meeting of the Presbytery of Manitoba. He reports the number of communicants in his Mission as forty-one, and the number of persons attending Sunday school as twenty. He has two weekly prayer meetings... the whole band appears to be making satisfactory progress in religious knowledge and material comfort. They are becoming successful farmers. A pleasing token of the growth of the right Christian feeling among these Indians was afforded this year by their first contribution to the Schemes of the Church. It amounted to the respectable sum of \$13.30, of which \$7 were given to Foreign Missions."

*[A&P 1882, FMC report, pg lxxxi]*

"The majority of the Indians on this Reserve [Bird-Tail Creek Sioux] have comfortable log houses, neat gardens, and good farms... The ploughing seen on these farms was equal to any which the Convener saw in any part of the North-West. There are on the Reserve eighty head of cattle and a number of horses. These Indians are probably, upon the whole, in advance of any in the North-West. The missionary, Rev. Solomon Tunkansuiciye, is doing good work... He is aided by three elders in his work. When Mr. McKellar and the Convener visited the Mission, they had a very interesting meeting with the Indians in their church. Nearly the entire population, old and young, turned out to welcome them. The Chief, Enoch, was present and showed much cordiality. The meeting was opened with devotional exercises by the pastor. It was pleasing to listen to the grave, sweet melody of their hymns, and to hear those who had once worshipped dumb idols, one after another, lifting their voice in prayer to the living God. With the aid of two intelligent interpreters, it was found possible to have a somewhat free and pleasing interchange of sentiment with these Christian Indians."

*[A&P 1883, FMC report, appendix pg. xcvi and xcvi]*

## 1884-1889

Beginning around 1884 the Presbyterian Church's missions with Indigenous people began to expand rapidly.

In 1883 the Church had just 5 individuals employed in this work (3 missionaries and 2 teachers). Just seven years later, in 1890, they had 23 (7 missionaries and 16 involved in teaching). Although in some cases individuals with Indigenous ancestry were employed, the majority of missionaries and teachers sent to the reserves from 1884 onwards were Euro-Canadian, with little or no understanding of Indigenous culture, language or customs.

At the same time, the North-West Rebellion of 1885 occurred, which had a profound impact on the psyche of the Canadian population, and especially those Europeans and Canadians flooding into the prairies as settlers. An "Indian War" scared them and, sadly, heightened adverse feelings towards Indigenous people themselves; this in turn galvanized ideas that Indigenous people needed to be "civilized". As a result there is a noticeable shift by the Church away from mission work "with" Indigenous people, towards mission work "to" Indigenous people, in which Euro-Canadian culture, as much as the Gospel, was being preached.

The biggest impact of this shift in direction was the establishment during this period of the residential school system, and the solidifying of the belief that removing children from their homes was the best method to bring Christianity and "civilization" to Indigenous people.

### Quotes re: the North-West Rebellion

"Where peace so recently prevailed, there has been the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. But, even amid the strife and the bloodshed, it may be seen that the Gospel of peace has prevented what might have been even more widespread disaffection, for the Indians who have been under the care of our own Missionaries, or of those of other Churches, have proved themselves loyal and law-abiding, notwithstanding many temptations to fall in with the insurgents. And your Committee believes that, in the sad events which we now deplore, the Lord is calling us to greater diligence and greater fidelity in imparting to those poor benighted tribes the knowledge which alone can lead them in the way of peace and everlasting life."

*[A&P 1885, FMC report, appendix cvii.]*

"Writing from Round Lake (Broadview) on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, Mr. Mackay says "On the last of March I had to close my school a week earlier than I had intended. The parents were so much excited and so much afraid of trouble that they wished to have their children at home... On the following Tuesday, this message was sent to me by the Indians of these reserves: "We regard you as our friend ; and for that reason we advise you to leave your home for some time, as we would not like to see anything happen to you." I thought over this message much. The Indians apprehend that they may be compelled by the insurgents to aid them in driving off or exterminating the white people. Over night I was alone... The morning dawned fair and bright, and all was well. The path of duty was clear. It seemed to me as if I could hear the direction, "Stay: There are scattered along the line of railway many unprotected homes of the white man.

What could these families do, if the Indians near them should rise in rebellion? They would only be an easy prey to the scalping knife of the savage. These Indians are ignorant, they have little idea of what is right, and they have no one to advise them, but those who are their greatest enemies. Stay, and exert the little influence you have in persuading them to remain at home.”  
[A&P 1885, *FMC report, appendix cvii.*]

“At sunset I went into the wigwam of Ke-wis-ta-pa, a chief twenty miles from Broadview, and had tea with him. After conversation he promised to remain loyal if possible. On Friday, I went to another village, and met an Indian coming to see me. He had bad news, he said they must go to war. I went with him to the village, and found the women and children gathered together; the women crying aloud, and saying that they would never again see those about to leave them; and the men preparing their guns, knives, and dirks : great excitement among them all. I said to them, “Don’t go.” They said, “The soldiers are coming, and will take us prisoners ; and we would rather fight and die on the battlefield”. I said “If you put away your guns, and remain at home, there is no danger from the soldiers : if they take you they take me, and I will go with you.” I was not a little astonished to see them take my advice and remain at home.”  
[A&P 1885, *FMC report, appendix cvii.*]

**Quotes re: presumed inferiority of Indigenous culture and/or superiority of Euro-Canadian culture; use of terms such as “heathen” and “pagan”**

“When Mr. Flett entered on his labours [10 years ago] the Indians were pagan and uncivilized, and now they are a Christian community, living in comparative comfort, and, in the regularity and interest of their Church attendance, giving a good example to their white neighbours. Mr Flett has spoken of handing over his Reserve to the care of the Home Mission Committee, and the time is not far distant when this step should be taken.”  
[1886 A&P, *FMC report, appendix pg. xcii*]

“when we contrast the present condition of our older reserves with what they were when we began our labours upon them, we are struck with the change. Barbarism has in several of them given place to civilization, paganism to Christianity. The transformation may not in any case be as thorough as we could wish; but that it is as marked as it is at such missions as the Mistawasis, Okanase and Bird-Tail reserves, gives encouragement for the future.”  
[A&P 1887, *FMC report – quoting the report of the FMC of the Synod of Manitoba and NW, appendix pg. ix*]

“This band presents in some respects one of the most striking instances of progress shown by any of our bands. They are Sioux...As reported last year, this is to a large extent a Christian community. There are about 140 souls on the reserve, and there are thirty names on the communion roll. They have prayer-meetings, Sunday schools, and family worship, and contribute to Church schemes... Notwithstanding the acknowledged excellence of their missionary, the Rev. S. Tunkansuiciye, the desire seems to general to have a white minister in his place... Our school on this reserve, under Mr. J.G. Burgess, is doing excellent work. The number on the roll is twenty-seven, with an average of a little over half that number.”  
[A&P 1887, *FMC report – quoting the report of the FMC of the Synod of Manitoba and NW, appendix pg. xii*]

**Quotes re: the need to “civilize” Indigenous people through a change in lifestyle, language, appearance, names, etc.**

“We have therefore but little more than one tenth of our Indian population, in any sense, under the care of our Church. This proportion must appear far too small when we consider what is done by the other leading Churches of the Dominion... We have the proof of successful experiment, as presented in this report, that the Indian can be brought under the power of the Gospel, and the larger experience of the Church in the United States bears similar testimony. We have therefore, abundant encouragement to continue our labors among our Indian fellow Country men. Let us, then go forward in this work, in the name and spirit of our Master, until no Indian heathen are left in our Land. Then shall the wilderness be glad and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

*[Synod’s FMC report by Prof. Hart, Synod of Man and NW minutes, May 18, 1887]*

“Where peace so recently prevailed, there has been the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. But, even amid the strife and the bloodshed, it may be seen that the Gospel of peace has prevented what might have been even more widespread disaffection, for the Indians who have been under the care of our own Missionaries, or of those of other Churches, have proved themselves loyal and law-abiding, notwithstanding many temptations to fall in with the insurgents. And your Committee believes that, in the sad events which we now deplore, the Lord is calling us to greater diligence and greater fidelity in imparting to those poor benighted tribes the knowledge which alone can lead them in the way of peace and everlasting life.”

*[A&P 1885, FMC report, appendix cvii.]*

**Quotes re: schooling of Indigenous children as a means of “civilizing” and the beginnings of the residential school system**

“Rev. Hugh Mackay opened a new school for the winter months at Broadview. Concerning this school Mr. Mackay writes: “On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January I engaged, J. Bras, one of our own members, as interpreter; he speaks good English, also reads and writes well. With his aid I succeeded in getting a few children from their wretched homes, brought them to the mission, washed them, the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society clothed them, and so our school was opened with fourteen scholars. One little girl, whose mother died last summer, attends the school. She cried many days for her mother, for she was left almost an orphan; the father is a worthless man. The poor girl seemed so pleased to go to the school; and now she says she will cry when she has to return to her home... I have also a little boy, who was sold some time ago for two pails of potatoes, and the man from whom I got him offered him to me for a good dinner””

*[WFMS Annual Report 1885, pg. 21-22]*

“For the last two winters Mr. McKay has, at his own expense, maintained a school at the mission house. This school has been very successful. The children receive, to a large extent, both food and clothing, as well as instruction from the missionary”.

*[A&P 1886, FMC report, appendix pg. xciii]*

“In closing the report of his [Rev. Hugh McKay’s] school, Mr. McKay says “... We have been much encouraged in our experiment (i.e. of a school in which poor Indian children are both boarded and taught) during the past two winters; and we feel that we can recommend a school of

this kind on a large scale to the sympathy of the Church. We have read of asylums for dogs and cats ; and the work is spoken of as a work of mercy. Are not these little children better than they? Is it a work to be despised to take these little ones, and lift them up from the poverty and filth and paganism in which we find them to become useful citizens of our country, and sharers with us of the bright hope of a better life beyond? No, no. Let us rather prize the privilege of engaging in such work. I feel that this work needs only to be made known in order to our receiving and sympathy and cooperation of the Church. We think schools of this kind should be established in many places ; schools in which the children could be kept, fed, clothed and educated. They would thus be under our control, and away from the pernicious influence of the pagan. We should have regular attendance, which cannot be secured in any other way, as the Indians are still fond of wandering about. They would be taught, not only in the ordinary subjects of common school education, but also how to make a living in accordance with the manners and customs of the white people. If this plan were adopted, we feel assured that, in a few years, instead of wandering pagans, we should have industrious and happy communities and many true Christians.”

*[A&P 1886, FMC report, appendix pg. xcvi]*

“Professor Hart then submitted and read the Report of the Foreign Mission Committee. The said report is thus summarized “This Report shows that we have under our care thirteen (13) Reserves, with a population of about three thousand two hundred (3,200); that the number of communicants is one hundred and fifty-six (156); that we have five (5) ordained missionaries, nine (9) teachers and nine (9) schools. There are some thirty-two thousand (32,000) Indians in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, included in the seven (7) treaties [?]. Only one-tenth (1/10) of these is in any sense under the care of our Church. This number must seem far too small when we consider what is done in this field of missionary enterprise by the other denominations of the Dominion, when we reflect upon the necessities and claims of the Indians and listen to the Macedonian Cry coming from eight thousand (8,000) Pagans at our very door. The Roman Catholic Church has three (3) bishops, forty-seven (47) priests, and seventy-five (75) lay agents employed in the work of Indian missions in this country. The Church of England employs three (3) bishops, thirty-seven (37) clergymen, and a large number of lay agents in this work at an annual cost of Sixty-seven thousand (\$67,000) dollars. The Methodist Church maintains then (10) ministers and eleven (11) lay agents at a cost of over twelve thousand (\$12,000) dollars, while our Church employs only five (5) ordained ministers and nine (9) lay agents, and expends about seven thousand (\$7,000) dollars. By more thoroughly working the Reserves already occupied by us, and taking up new Reserves, we should as rapidly as possible extend this important [work] to the heathen of our own land. We should, when the next annual report is submitted have twice our present staff of laborers in the field.” He thereafter moved the Report submitted to be received and its Recommendations considered seriatim. This was seconded by Mr. Hugh McKellar and adopted. Before doing so, however, the Moderator [asked] Mr. Solomon Tuncansuiciye, Indian Missionary at the Sioux Reserve, Beulah, to address the Court. Mr. Tuncansuiciye spoke in his native language and his remarks were interpreted by Mr. Ben Matthews, one of his band of Indians. Thereafter Professor Hart introduced Mr. Joseph Bear, the helper to Mr. Hugh McKay, missionary on the Broadview Reserve, who gave an interesting account of the mission on the said Reserve. After this, Mr. Hugh McKay above named, Mr. George Flett, Indian Missionary at Okanase, and J Bear sang in the Cree language the hymn “Son of my Soul” to the tune of Old Hundred. Professor Bryce then moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. William Hodnett, and adopted: “That the number of schools at present in operation is too small; that the education given in them is too

elementary, the attendance irregular and the results not as satisfactory as the amount of money expended might secure". The hour having arrived when the Report of the Special Committee appointed to consider the Overture from the Presbyteries of Brandon and Rock Lake...The Synod then resumed consideration of the Report of the Foreign Mission Committee, interrupted by reception of the foregoing report. Mr. James Robertson moved the following Resolution, which was seconded by Mr. James C. Quinn, and adopted: "That in order to remedy existing defects and evils it is desirable that Schools be established at which the children may be boarded and so removed from the injurious influences of their home life; that teachers of competence and character be placed in charge of these Schools – men who could teach the Scholars gardening, farming and the use of tools; that as far as practicable the teachers employed be married men; and that provision be made that their families may reside on the Reserve with them and so help to Civilize the Indians by their example." Mr. Daniel M. Gordon moved, seconded by Principal King, and it was resolved, "That the Synod gratefully recognizes the work already being done by the Government in connexion with the education of the Indians; that the Synod is of opinion more Industrial Schools should be established in Central localities for advanced pupils and that pupils might be drafted into such schools from the more elementary schools; that the Synod press this matter upon the attention of the Government, believing that the expense of supporting these schools might be materially lightened by utilizing the produce of gardens and farm and by serving out the food allowed the Indians through officers in charge of the Schools, and by such donations of clothing as people in Ontario and elsewhere may be disposed to contribute". At the request of the Moderator, Messrs. Hugh McKay and George Flett addressed the Synod on the subject of Indian Missions.

*[Synod of Manitoba and the North-West minutes, May 20 1886, Microfilm #2014-8033]*

"Mr. Hugh MacKay, missionary at the Broadview Reserves addressed the Court in reference to Indian Missionary Work, whereupon Mr. James Robertson moved, and it was duly seconded by Professor Bryce and resolved that the Synod has heard with much satisfaction the account of his work among the Indians by Mr. Hugh MacKay; expresses sympathy with him in his efforts to establish a boarding school for Indian children; approves the steps taken by him in obtaining means for the erection and furnishing of the same; expresses sympathy for all our Indian missionaries and directs them to consider and report upon the possibility of erecting and establishing Boarding Schools in Central reserves for Indian boys and girls."

*[Synod's FMC report. Synod of Manitoba and the North-West minutes, May 19, 1887, Microfilm #2014-8033]*

"This reserve [Okanase] is under the charge of the Rev. George Flett – our oldest missionary to the Indians. This band may safely be described as a Christian community... Mr. Flett speaks very gratefully of the assistance he received for the school from the ladies of the Winnipeg Woman's Foreign Mission Society, and others, and testifies strongly in favour of the boarding school system."

*[A&P 1887, FMC report – quoting the report of the FMC of the Synod of Manitoba and NW, appendix pg. xii]*

"Professor Hart submitted the Report of the Foreign Mission Committee... Mr. McKay, Indian Missionary at Broadview then addressed the Synod on Indian Mission work. Mr. Farquharson moved, seconded by Mr. McKay and it was agreed "That the Synod earnestly recommend the adoption of a system of Boarding Schools upon the Indian Reserves in place of day schools: that the Foreign Mission Committee be authorized to make Overtures to the Government through the

General Assembly's Foreign Mission Committee with the view of having such Schools established by the Government and placed under the care of the Church".

*[Synod's FMC report. Synod of Manitoba and the North-West minutes, May 17, 1888, Microfilm #2014-8033]*

**Quotes relating to the apparent paradox that just as the older missions conducted by Flett, Mackay and Tunkansuiciye were showing positive results from a mission standpoint, the Church began claiming that the only hope of the "Indian" race was in Christianizing/civilizing the children away from the parents.**

Quotes reflective of the generally positive results of the older missions in developing Christian communities

"Since their settlement on the Reserve [Bird-Tail] their progress has been very satisfactory. They are now in comparatively comfortable circumstances, and for several years they have contributed to the schemes of the Church. They are regular and attentive in their Church services. They have prayer meetings and Sabbath services; and family worship is kept up in almost every family on the Reserve. There are three elders and a communion roll of about thirty. We have a good School on this Reserve under the care of Mr. J.G. Burgess, with an attendance of about twenty-five....Many people on the Reserve now speak English. It might, therefore, with advantage be joined to Beulah, and placed under the charge of a white Missionary."

*[1886 A&P, FMC report, appendix pg. xcii]*

"When Mr. Flett entered on his labours [10 years ago] the Indians were pagan and uncivilized, and now they are a Christian community, living in comparative comfort, and, in the regularity and interest of their Church attendance, giving a good example to their white neighbours. Mr Flett has spoken of handing over his Reserve to the care of the Home Mission Committee, and the time is not far distant when this step should be taken."

*[1886 A&P, FMC report, appendix pg. xcii]*

"when we contrast the present condition of our older reserves with what they were when we began our labours upon them, we are struck with the change. Barbarism has in several of them given place to civilization, paganism to Christianity. The transformation may not in any case be as thorough as we could wish; but that it is as marked as it is at such missions as the Mistawasis, Okanase and Bird-Tail reserves, gives encouragement for the future."

*[A&P 1887, FMC report – quoting the report of the FMC of the Synod of Manitoba and NW, appendix pg. ix]*

"Rev. John Mackay reports progress in the material prosperity of his people... the Indian Department reports that "this band has substantial houses, well fenced fields, large numbers of cattle, etc." and is making "most commendable progress"... The Sunday-school is taught by Mrs. Mackay, and her two daughters. The Government school on this reserve is taught by Miss Christina Mackay, and is very favourably noticed by the Department; and most of the grown up people on the reserve can read and write their own language with ease. The Chief paid a visit to

Ontario last summer, and was greatly amazed at what he saw, and much pleased with the reception given him by those of our church people in the east whom he met.”

[A&P 1887, *FMC report – quoting the report of the FMC of the Synod of Manitoba and NW, appendix pg. x*]

“This band presents in some respects one of the most striking instances of progress shown by any of our bands. They are Sioux...As reported last year, this is to a large extent a Christian community. There are about 140 souls on the reserve, and there are thirty names on the communion roll. They have prayer-meetings, Sunday schools, and family worship, and contribute to Church schemes... Notwithstanding the acknowledged excellence of their missionary, the Rev. S. Tunkansuiciye, the desire seems to general to have a white minister in his place... Our school on this reserve, under Mr. J.G. Burgess, is doing excellent work. The number on the roll is twenty-seven, with an average of a little over half that number.”

[A&P 1887, *FMC report – quoting the report of the FMC of the Synod of Manitoba and NW, appendix pg. xii*]

#### Quotes reflective of the boarding school being the only way forward

“It is now conceded by all interested in the well-being of the Indian that a new departure must be made, in the methods heretofore generally adopted by both the Church and the Government, for the education of Indian children. The ordinary day school must give place to the boarding school. The children must be taken from the wigwam with its pagan and barbarian surroundings, and placed in something like a Christian home, and brought under the influence of the life-giving and ennobling principles of the Gospel. And the boarding school is the only method that affords a reasonable prospect of the accomplishment of this end. But boarding schools are costly, and the adoption of this system implies the expenditure of much larger sums of money than those which have heretofore been deemed sufficient, and it will tax the energies of both the Church and the Government to the utmost to establish them, and afford accommodation to all the Indian children that can be induced to take advantage of them. But the end is worthy of the means – the removal of a foul blot upon our civilization, the redemption of a race, and its incorporation into the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

[A&P 1888, *FMC report, appendix pg xiv*]

“Mr. McKay [Hugh McKay] has not been quite four years at work on these reserves, yet in that time he has accomplished a great deal. He was the first in our church to show us how an Indian boarding school could be carried on. His work is on the only line along which the highest success is possible.

[A&P 1888, *FMC report, appendix pg xv*]

“While the spiritual necessities of the adult Indians have occupied the time and thoughts of our missionaries to as great an extent as ever before, our chief work has been with the young. Our confidence in the wisdom of the course indicated a year ago has been deepened. It is in the school, and especially in the industrial school, that the great work of the Church for the elevation of the Indian must be done. In the industrial school the children are withdrawn for long periods – and the longer the better – from the degrading surroundings of their pagan homes, and placed under the direct influence of all that is noblest and best in our Christian civilization. They are taught the elementary branches of an English education, and in addition, the boys are trained in

farm work, tilling the ground, and caring for cattle, and in some instances in the elements of carpentry and smithing, and the girls in knitting, sewing, baking, cooking, and general housework, and all are taught to sing the psalms and hymns of the Church in English or Indian, sometimes in both, and to commit passages of Scripture to memory ; while the day is begun and ended with reading the Word, and prayer round the common family altar. From scenes like these results of the best kind are springing, and we may confidently expect that the generation trained under these influences will be immeasurably superior to their parents, and that in a comparatively few years our work as missionaries to heathen Indians will be accomplished.”  
[A&P 1889, FMC report – quoting Rev. Andrew B. Baird, appendix, pg. xvii]

### **Quote re: Principal Caven’s resolution to the General Assembly regarding the treatment of Indigenous people by the Dominion of Canada**

“Dr. Caven called attention to the misconduct of public servants in the North West in their dealings with the Indians. He spoke plain and earnest words that found a full response at the Assembly. As suggested by Principal Grant the Assembly adopted Principal Caven’s resolution by a standing vote. It is as follows: “The General Assembly, whilst disclaiming all political party aims, feels bound to give expression to its convictions regarding the treatment of the Indians in the North West by the Dominion of Canada. No judgement is here expressed on our general policy towards the Indians, and the meritorious character and services of many servants of the Government in the Indian Department are gladly recognized, but it seems to be established by irresistible evidence that in too many instances a people who are wards of the Government have been wronged and defrauded by those who are specially appointed to care for them and promote their interests, whilst flagrant immorality is too often chargeable upon public servants as well as upon traders and other whites who come much in contact with the Indian population. Thus the missionary efforts of the Churches are counteracted and hindered, many sufferings brought upon Indians and a state of disaffection towards the Dominion is even to some extent engendered. The General Assembly would earnestly represent to the Government of Canada the imperative necessity of at once cancelling all appointments of agents or instructors who are known to be tyrannical, unjust, or immoral, and of filling their places with men of integrity, sobriety and purity. Further, the Presbyterian Church pledges itself to co-operate with the public authorities in promoting the social improvement and the temporal well-being of the Indians, whilst in common with other churches, seeking to bring them under the holy influence of the Christian religion. A copy of this resolution, signed by the Moderator and clerks of the General Assembly, shall be respectfully transmitted to the Honorable the Minister of the Interior, and to the Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

The Church is the proper guardian of the weak, the distressed and oppressed. The discussion was Christian, generous, and manly in tone and temper. Dr. Caven’s remarks deserve to be quoted. He said that the resolution was founded upon evidence that had been brought distinctly and directly before them by members of that court, by ministers of their Church and by judicatories of their Church. Mr. Hugh McKay had told them that Indians said, when he entered their tents to bring the Gospel to them, that their ears were filled with lies. Mr. McKay said that to some extent at least the Indians had not been well treated. Rev. James Robertson had also spoken. In any member of the court, if any man in Canada, if any many belonging to any political party, or to no political party, was entitled to speak, it was their superintendent of missions in the North West. The court knew what he had said and written. His indictment – not of the Government, but of the agents of the Government – was so distinct and heavy that no

Government that had any respect for its character and the moral well-being of the community would wish it to be passed over. The the Presbytery of Brandon and the Synod of the North West had issued deliverances perfectly free from political animus. They they had the statement of their brother lately sent out Rev. Dr. King. He (Dr. Caven) maintained that there was a case before them, because the testimony was uniform, and to the effect that while many of the Indian agents, were men of high character, esteemed Christian gentlemen, and many sub-agents of like character, there were many others whose character was of a different description, and who were treating the poor Indians with shameful cruelty, defrauding them in the dole of food and other things to which they were entitled, and irritating them by treatment which he would not describe. If that was the state of things it behoved their Great Church, which was just, which was righteous, and which had its eye on the administration of God's moral law throughout the Dominion to say something not against the Dominion Government – because he wished to emphasize with all his might the statement that he had no political object, either obvious or covered – but something that would sustain the Government, something that would strengthen the hands of the Government in dealing with a practical question which he knew to be surrounded with very considerable difficulties. If they asked him what proportion of men were censurable, what proportion were capable of acting tyrannically or unjustly or with immorality – with shameless immorality, as was a certainty – he was not in a position to say, but so many instances had come to his knowledge and could be attested that he thought it would be the duty of the Church not to pass the matter over. These things were an obstruction and positive hindrance to the work of the Church, and it was their duty to do what they could to rectify these matters.

Referring to the political aspect again, he said he hoped the Assembly would not show any timidity of being misconstrued or refrain from uttering its voice through fear of intimations of political partiality. A nation capable of spending five millions in the work of destroying disturbers of the peace and which would not be capable of redressing wrongs would not be worth to stand. He would not venture to express an opinion upon the necessity of political parties, but he would say that party organization as it is, with us, under its present conditions, and with its present history, contains a great deal that is offensive to a Christian man. It was party that sent Garfield to his grave. The motto there was “The spoils to the victor”. He would not say the same of Canada, but he would say that neither the on political party or the other, if they read its history sufficiently far back, could clear its skirts in this regard. Honourable public servants had been passed over by one and the other, and inferior and men of tainted reputation had been preferred through the intolerable force of party combination. That was something to which he would never submit. Whether these men had been sent out under the teaching that to the victors the spoils or by mistake, as soon as the country finds out they are bad they should be put aside. This work should be placed in the hands of men in whom the country had abundant confidence.”

*[Article reporting on the General Assembly, The Presbyterian Witness and Evangelical Advocate, June 26, 1886 (Vol. XXXIX, No. 26)]*

## 1890-1911

During this time period, the concepts of the industrial school and the boarding school systems were developed and put into practice. Some day schools on reserves continued, but increasingly, the focus shifted to boarding schools (still relatively small at this time, with about 20-30 children on average). During this time period, however, the Regina Industrial School was opened, which took the boarding school model to a new level with a capacity of over 100 children. The aim of this new, larger industrial school was to take in only older children and train them in various technical skills and trades, as well as classroom work.

Very quickly, the industrial boarding school system began costing the Government a lot of money. The Regina School alone cost \$40,000 to build. As a result, the system of financing the schools was changed in 1893 from one where the Government simply paid the expenses, to one in which they provided a per capita grant to the Church, based on the numbers of pupils enrolled in the school. It was a system that never seems to have worked, and was a major factor in the closure of the Regina Industrial School in 1910. And yet, it continued to be the method for funding residential schools for decades.

Compounding this situation was the fact that all of the boarding schools operated by the Church, not just the Regina school, suffered from poor attendance. Parents simply did not wish to part with their children, and sadly the Church neglected to listen. Instead, with the funding system based on the number of students in attendance, the Church began pushing for compulsory attendance.

As more boarding schools developed, and some day schools closed, the Church's approach focused less on sharing the Gospel with adults on the reserves, and more on removing children and educating them in the boarding schools. A reserve such as Bird-Tail Creek which for a number of years was largely a Christian community, with its own church, day-school, and a majority on the reserve professing Christianity, was now being asked to send their children to a boarding school twelve miles away at Birtle.

At the beginning of this 1890-1911 time period, the Church also expanded its mission efforts to Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.

**Quotes re: presumed inferiority of Indigenous culture and/or superiority of Euro-Canadian culture, and the need to “civilize” Indigenous people through a change in lifestyle, language, appearance, names, etc.**

“After consultation with the teachers arrangements have been made by which the industrial boarding schools will be open all the year round. The main reason for the establishment of these schools was that the children might be withdrawn as much as possible from the counteracting influence of their heathen homes, and as it undoubtedly happened that a week's absence from the school often more than neutralized a month's work in it, all the children who are willing to remain will be made welcome.”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, appendix xxix]*

The only hope of the Indian race is that it should be finally merged in the life of the country. We cannot afford to perpetuate separate nationalities and separate languages within our borders. Our nation, if it is to be a nation at all, must be homogenous.”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, appendix xxxi]*

“There are undoubtedly communities in other lands in which the missionaries of our Church are at work, where it is possible to evangelize the people and develop in them a very considerable degree of Christian life without interfering with their language or changing materially their means of livelihood; but that method cannot be pursued among our Indians”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, page xxii-xxiii]*

“In former days, before the advent of white men in considerable numbers, the Indians lived by hunting, and most of those in the North-West by the hunting of the buffalo. That means of support they have now lost, and they are pensioners on the bounty of the Canadian nation. No robust Christianity can ever be developed in a people who live on what comes to them in the guise of charity. It is more important here than in most missions that civilization should go hand in hand with Christianization.”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, page xxiii]*

“The expense to the country of the Indians is increasing every year, and is already a very formidable sum. What hope is there of decreasing it until by education in industrial pursuits as in letters (both of which are taught in every efficient Indian school) the child grows up with an ambition for independence, and an ability to achieve it in the midst of competition?”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, pg xxx]*

“The country has already had a severe enough lesson to prove what a menace to its peace there is in these bands whose untrained minds and whose ungoverned passions alike fit them to become the dupes of designing men.”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, pg xxx]*

“This indicates, also, what is to become of the pupils in our industrial schools when they have passed through the curriculum. Only in exceptional cases will it be advisable that they should return to the reserve... The only hope of the Indian race is that it should be finally merged in the life of the country. We cannot afford to perpetuate separate nationalities and separate languages within our borders. Our nation, if it is to be a nation at all, must be homogenous.”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, pg xxx]*

“No report of the committee would be complete without the grateful acknowledgement of the help received from the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society. The large sums of money which it raises year by year for the evangelization of heathen women and children, has made possible the recent extension of our work in the way of boarding and industrial schools – a system of training which is already achieving an improvement in the morals, the manners and the intelligence of the children, such as never could have been expected by means of day schools, where the teaching during the day, however good, is too often neutralized by the blighting influences to which the pupil is subject morning and evening in a pagan home.”

*[A&P 1893, FMC report, pg. xliv]*

“Ten years ago we had three day schools, and these were all the schools we had. Now, in addition to three day schools, we have eight industrial and boarding schools, in which latter class it can easily be seen that the moral and religious training are greatly superior, because the missionary has control of the child all the time, and does not send him back every afternoon to the uncivilized and often filthy and pagan surroundings of the reserve.”

*[A&P 1895, FMC report, pg. xviii]*

### **Quotes re: what it meant to be “civilized” in the eyes of the missionaries and the wider Church**

“On Osoop’s reserve we also had fortnightly services at the house of Gaddie. Here we always meet with a nice gathering of civilized people. They come to meeting dressed as white people... Most of the people are settled down on their farms, and are doing well. They will no doubt soon be in comfortable circumstances.”

*[A&P 1891, FMC report, pg. xxviii]*

“The appointment at Gaddie’s is different. Here we meet with a Christian gathering. The people come clothed like white people – no paint, no smoking during time of service; they come to worship; they bring their books; they take part in the service; the Sabbath is observed; all are interested and seem to enjoy the service. We also find worldly prosperity blessing them. The houses and home are clean, the fields are cultivated and the people are not in want... In Cheepaooase’s band we find more of the ways of the pagans... This is one of the saddest pictures we see in our mission. The people live in little huts – no glass windows, no floor, no chair, no table, no bedstead – only filth, and poverty, and sickness, and paganism.”

*[A&P 1895, FMC report, section on the Round Lake mission and school, pg. xxii-xxiii]*

“We are glad to be able to report a perceptible departure from heathen customs. Heathen dances are by no means so common, and the medicine man has less influence. Of course there is a great deal of superstition yet, but it will take generations to clear that away. There is a great improvement in the industry of the people. Many work very regularly and to good purpose. The homes show many signs of advance towards civilization... Between the keeping of cattle and the work they can get, many are quite able to support themselves, and they do not require nearly as much assistance as they have received in the past.”

*[A&P 1896, FMC report, pg. xxiv]*

### **Quotes re: the taking of the land from indigenous people and the resulting duty of the Church**

“Encouraging is perhaps not a word to use in looking back over the year’s work among the aborigines of our country... But we must do our duty toward these red-skinned people whose land we have taken”

*[A&P 1908, FMC report, pg. 87]*

“When the Dominion of Canada was extended westward so as to encompass its widened sweep the great prairies between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains... No one could think for a moment of leaving half a continent in the possession of a race incapable of extracting from it

more than the merest pittance of its wealth. Our race took from the Indian that which is enriching us. At our approach the buffalo and the elk, on which the Indian had lived, vanished, and he was left without food... We destroyed his living. Were we not bound to help him regain what he had lost? Does not that same bond hold us to our task still? It is vain to say that he belongs to a race of weaklings, and ought, therefore, to be allowed to sink to ever lower depths till he vanish from the earth. Are we not here to help him to become strong? Equally vain is to plead that all our means and more are required for the stronger races, and therefore, this weak one should be left alone to perish. Rather is not this the little one, the weak one for whom we must care for the sake of Him who pitied our weakness, and bore it that we might become strong?"

*[A&P 1908, FMC report, pg 87]*

### **Quotes re: schooling of Indigenous children as a means of “civilizing” and the residential school system**

#### Quotes re: the belief that children are the only hope in work with indigenous people

“We have been speaking of the Jews and of Abraham, Joseph, Moses and the Israelites in Canaan, and we are now at the story of our Saviour. I see little change in the people as far as religion is concerned. They appear to give good attention to what is said during the service, but I fear there is not the least desire on their part to know of the Saviour. They seem so very dark. My impression is that the children are our only hope.”

*[A&P 1892, FMC report, paragraph about the File Hills School, appendix pg. xxvii]*

“No report of the committee would be complete without the grateful acknowledgement of the help received from the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society. The large sums of money which it raises year by year for the evangelization of heathen women and children, has made possible the recent extension of our work in the way of boarding and industrial schools – a system of training which is already achieving an improvement in the morals, the manners and the intelligence of the children, such as never could have been expected by means of day schools, where the teaching during the day, however good, is too often neutralized by the blighting influences to which the pupil is subjected morning and evening in a pagan home.”

*[A&P 1893, FMC report, pg. xliv]*

#### Difficulty in securing pupils and desire for compulsory attendance

“The time must come very soon when the compelling of Indians to send their children to school will be a pressing practical question.”

*[A&P 1890, FMC report, pg xxx]*

“...the most important change is the proposal to adopt a system of compulsory education. Hitherto pressure of many kinds has been brought to bear upon chiefs of bands and upon parents to send their children to school – moral suasion has been employed, rations have been withheld from those who refused, and they have been deprived of some of the favours which it is in the power of the officers of the Indian Department to give. But, in spite of influences such as these, there still remain many Indian children almost within sight of school who are growing up not merely in ignorance and doomed to be shut out of many of the avenues of earning a living, but

they are growing up into a condition in which they will be a prey of interested demagogues and a menace to the peace and good government of the country. In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Protestants who are interested in Indian mission schools are unanimously in favor of compulsory education, and knowing that many of the officials of the Government are ready to introduce legislation on the subject, they have passed resolutions of approval.”

*[A&P 1893, FMC report, appendix xxxi]*

“In all the boarding and industrial schools the attendance has increased, both by enrollment of a larger number of pupils and by the more regular attendance of those already enrolled. The improvement is due partly to the greater experience in successful methods of which the principals and teachers are gaining and the greater confidence the Indians have in the schools, and it is partly due also to the compulsory education clauses in the Indian Act. These clauses have not in any case been actually put into effect, but the indirect pressure brought to bear upon the Indians, through the knowledge that such regulations are on the Statute Book, has produced this desired effect in a milder and more satisfactory manner.”

*[A&P 1896, FMC report, pg. xx]*

“In connection with Industrial school work, the chief difficulty lies in securing pupils. As the revenue of such institutions is derived from a per capita grant from the Department, a gradual reduction in the number of pupils gradually reduces revenue below the living point. This has been the experience of the Regina Industrial School, where the attendance has been steadily falling for some years, with the result that a deficit has accumulated, requiring a readjustment of per capita arrangements with the Department, or a complete surrender of the school. This falling away in attendance is not owing to want of efficiency in the administration of the school, but in part to the unwillingness of the parents to send their children to an industrial school at a greater distance, when Boarding Schools are nearer home”

*[A&P 1904, FMC report, pg. 109]*

“At a conference of representatives of Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, Toronto, April 6, re Indian Schools, the following resolutions (substantially the same as passed on by a similar conference held in Winnipeg) were approved...5. While realizing the difficulties of administering a policy of compulsory education we are convinced that such a principle is in the best interests of all concerned, - of the parents of the children, of the children, and of the State, - and should be enforced so far as can be wisely and rightly done. If this becomes the accepted policy of the Government, is it too much to expect that the influence of the Government employees be brought to bear in the kind but firm enforcement of the law. The policy of funding the treaty money for children attending Boarding of Industrial Schools, having been found to operate against securing pupils for these schools, should be discontinued, and all Government donations in excess of Treaty obligations should be withheld from such parents as refuse to send their children to school.”

*[A&P 1907, FMC report, pg. 163]*

#### Quotes re: perceived need of teaching farming at boarding schools

“The Indian problem consists largely in turning the attention of the Indians to the cultivation of the soil.... With very few exceptions, the Indians of this or of the next generation cannot

compete with the white men in the industrial or commercial world, nor do they seem to be able to stand alone in Christian work and leadership amongst their own people”

[A&P 1904, FMC report, pg. 109]

“Land enough for the boys to work ought to be regarded as an essential of every Indian Boarding School.”

[A&P 1907, FMC report, pg. 165]

“The experience of the Indian Schools led to the unanimous conclusion that the best that can be at present done for the Indian is to train him for the farm and such out-door occupations as the locality in which he lives may provide the means of carrying on.”

[A&P 1907, FMC report, pg. 78]

“The Indian Department and for that matter most if not all workers among the Indians, have abandoned the idea of fitting Indian boys for becoming mechanics, an idea which first found expression in the Industrial Schools; and have resolved to concentrate their efforts in preparing them for working on the farm. This leads to abandoning the Industrial Schools.”

[A&P 1910, FMC report, pg. 138]

Quotes re: desire of Indigenous people for schools on the reserve rather than sending their children to a boarding school; anxiety and fear over sending children to boarding schools

“From Yellow Calf’s reserve [Round Lake mission] we have not a child at present attending a school. There are over 20 children of school age there attending no school. The only reason they give is that their children are too small to leave home, and they wish to have a school on their own reserve so that they may see their children often.”

[A&P 1892, FMC report, pg. xxx]

“The people are wishing to get a school on the reserve. They do not want to send their children away from home.

[A&P 1893, FMC report, pg. xxxv]

“The *Day School* [at Alberni, B.C.] mentioned in last report as being begun by my sister was conducted by her under difficulties but with great success... A room in the Mission House was used until the first of May, after which an old log house fitted up by Mr. McKee was converted into a school house... We expect soon to have a new school house erected. Last fall the Indians agreed to build a schoolhouse for themselves, towards which they subscribed \$50 for material and the work of the building”

[A&P 1893, FMC report, pg. xcii]

“Shesheep’s band [Round Lake mission] is more backward than they were last year. Then we were able to gather a meeting and have service, but now they refuse to come to a meeting, and they tell us they would like it better if we would allow them to enjoy their own religion. We do not know why, unless it is on account of hearing about compulsory education : they are very much afraid that one of the objects of our meetings is to take their children from them”

[A&P 1896, FMC report, pg. xxii]

“We visited the Indians at the west end of Crooked Lake. Here we find Shesheep and his band. Those Indians do little or no farming; their only permanent means of support is cutting hay and feeding cattle. They are very much attached to their pagan religion. The women and children seem to be very much afraid of a school. We sometimes hear such expressions as the following – “Mother, I am afraid he has come to take me away to school.” “I wish he would not take my children from me”.

*[A&P 1895, FMC report, section on the Round Lake mission and school, pg. xxii]*

“The long, and in some cases, bitter opposition to the sending of children to school has at last broken down under the growing confidence which the Indians entertain towards the Mission family and the Christian faith, and ten children have been sent to school from the reserve – five to Birtle and five to Regina”

*[A&P 1896, FMC report xxvi]*

“Mr. Alex Skene reports in regard to the school [File Hills Boarding School]... The general health is good... We made an attempt to send two of our boys to Regina, but the mothers would not consent, and I do not think it would be wise at the present stage to act without that.”

*[A&P 1894, FMC report, pg. xxiv]*

“There are still about twenty treaty children on the reserve [Round Lake] who are not attending school, and the only opening for them is in the Regina school, but the Indians are urging upon the Government that provision should be made for their maintenance in the Round Lake school, which is much nearer home, but this the Government has not agreed to do.”

*[A&P 1897, FMC report, pg. 166]*

“the most discouraging part of the field is Shesheeps. The people there do not want a missionary... They are much troubled about compulsory education; they are afraid of it, and the women think, when they see the missionary, that he has come for their children, hence they dread and hate him”

*[A&P 1897, FMC report, pg. 166]*

“The Indians of Sheshep’s Band are becoming more friendly. A few attend meetings, and would be willing to have a school if one were established. There are about 20 children of school age”

*[A&P 1904, FMC report, pg. 184]*

“the difficulty in recruiting the ranks of the pupils is not caused by a scarcity of pupils but rather by the indifference of the parents who have to be visited several times before they will consent to their children going to school. Hence to keep up the numbers makes a drain on the Principal’s time and strength he can ill afford to give up.”

*[A&P 1906, FMC report, pg. 223]*

“A complaint as to the difficulty of recruiting pupils has been heard so often that the ease with which the classes at Portage La Prairie and one or two of the other schools, are kept up to their strength, is a surprise to us. Yet here the principal and his assistants find it necessary to take every opportunity of getting the Indians pledged to send their children to the school. The children are watched from the time they are babes in their mother’s arms. On every opportunity some reference is made by the representatives of the schools to the child attending school some day.

Thus the parents get accustomed to the thought of the child going to school until on reaching school age the child is quite naturally committed to the care of the teacher.”

*[A&P 1907, FMC report, pg. 165]*

“Mr. McKenzie , the missionary [Hurricane Hills Reserve] is most anxious that a day school should be opened on the Reserve, but the Indian Department, being of the opinion that the children should be sent to the Regina school, refuse to provide a grant for the erection and maintenance of one”

*[A&P 1907, FMC report, pg 168]*

“In the earlier days of the school [File Hills] there was difficulty in getting the paernts’ consent to their children going to school, now the parents come to school, asking to have their children attend.”

*[A&P 1908, FMC report, pg 187]*

#### Quote re: keeping children from their homes

“This mission is still under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Skene. From the beginning they have aimed at separating the children as much as possible from their old heathen surroundings, and there are now in the school boys who have not been absent from it for a single night for nearly three years.”

*[A&P 1895, FMC report, pg. xxi]*

#### Quotes re: efforts to change the language of the children

“There never was a period in our history as a school when so little Indian was spoken. I have not heard an Indian word for many days.”

*[A&P 1893, FMC report, section on Lakesend School, pg. xxxiv]*

“We are pleased to say that during the last month English has been used by our pupils entirely”

*[A&P 1893, FMC report, section on File Hills School, pg. xxxiv]*

“English is the language of the school [Portage La Prairie Boarding School] during play hours as well as during study house. The only time when the children are heard talking Sioux is when their parents come to see them”

*[A&P 1894, FMC report, pg. xxxi]*

#### **Quotes re: health/deaths of children in Residential Schools**

“We [Round Lake Boarding School] have had, on the whole, good health during the year; only in the month of January we had measles, and our school was more like a hospital than a school... In regard to those who are diseased with scrofula, it is a question in my mind whether it is right or not to allow them to remain in school with the healthy ones. We have two who are so diseased.”

*[A&P 1893. FMC report, pg. xl]*

“The health of the children during the year has been fairly good, although at present time five of our children are sick at home, and apparently in decline. Two of them are very sick just now, and we fear that they will not live very much longer.”

*[A&P 1894, FMC report, pg. xxviii]*

“Mr. Alex Skene reports in regard to the school [File Hills Boarding School]... The general health is good... We began the year with twelve children, but two of them were taken Home [ie. died], one in April, the other in May.”

*[A&P 1894, FMC report, pg. xxiv]*

“Two of the children were transferred to the Regina Industrial School. Three were discharged, three died, and one is away on sick leave. The present attendance is forty, but other children are in sight who will bring up the number to what it formerly was.”

*[A&P 1904, FMC report, section on Birtle School, pg. 187]*

“The one discouraging feature of the work is the diminishing number of pupils [at Regina]. Seven were graduated, some went home on sick leave, and five died, consumption being the cause of death”

*[A&P 1906, FMC report, pg. 223]*

“Two deaths from spinal meningitis in the early winter [at the Cecilia Jeffrey School] again scattered the pupils, but when the school was re-opened in the beginning of the year there was a larger attendance than under the circumstances was expected”

*[A&P 1908, FMC report, pg. 184]*

“A room in the attic [at the Portage La Prairie School] was fitted up for children suffering from infectious diseases.”

*[A&P 1908, FMC report, pg. 185]*

“It [the Department] also contributed \$600.00 towards building a new wing to be used as a hospital, and isolated rooms for cases of infectious diseases.”

*[A&P 1908, FMC report, pg 186]*

**Quotes relating to the apparent paradox that although the older missions were showing positive results from a mission standpoint, the Church continued to expound the idea that the only hope for Indigenous people was in Christianizing/civilizing the children away from the parents.**

“It is clear that these Indians, many of whom were only gathered in from their nomadic life on the plains in 1884, are undergoing a great change in respect to both civilization and Christianization. The former is evidenced in the fact that they own over fifty wagons, purchased with their own money, besides mowers, rakes and other agricultural implements. They sold five hundred tons of hay last year and about two hundred cords of firewood, and they receive almost no assistance from the Government in the way of food. Their progress towards Christianity is indicated in the number of baptisms reported [20 infants and 34 adults]. This, be it noted, is a record made among the adults – the generation that was brought up to a nomadic life. What may

one not expect from the young people trained in Christian industrial schools!” [A&P 1891, FMC report, pg. xxxiv]

“Great progress has been made at Okanase since Mr. Flett settled among these people as their first missionary. They may now be fairly regarded as a Christian community.” [A&P 1893, FMC report, pg. xlii]

“The Sioux Reserve... is proving itself a mother of missionaries. Several of these Indians have shown themselves to be men of a high type of Christian character, and three of them, John Thunder, Jason Ben and Peter Hunter, are now engaged in mission work in different parts of the country” [A&P 1894, FMC report, pg. xxx]

“One of the pupils, Maggie Pratt, illustrates favorably the teaching of Rev. Mr. Moore of Mistawasis Reserve, from which congregation she comes. Her clear knowledge of the way of life makes her a valuable interpreter.” [A&P 1904, FMC report, pg. 183.]

“This Reserve [Bird-Tail Creek] is associated with two English-speaking stations... It is one of the best known and most advanced of Indian Missions, and their prosperity continues. They were favored last year with a good harvest, which, with exceptionally high prices, increased their comforts. Farming is encouraged, and some of the most enterprising have considerable wealth. They possess an attractive church, which is kept up in a good state of repair. The Auxiliary of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society is particularly devoted, meeting every Thursday, and spending nearly the whole day in sewing and in the manufacture of such articles as will meet with ready sale. The returns go to the Society... In addition \$25.00 were contributed to the schemes of the Church... All the children are away, there being no school on the Reserve [it closed when Birtle was opened].” [A&P 1905, FMC report, pg. 171]

“The Rev. J.A. Macalister resigned his position as missionary [at Okanase Reserve] in September and Chief Boyer was appointed to take the spiritual oversight of his band.” [A&P 1908, FMC report, pg. 185]

“Some reserves have been so far Christianized that, judged by attendance at the sanctuary and general bearing they will compare favorably with ordinary communities of white people” [A&P 1909, FMC report, pg. 109]

### **Quotes re: the benefits of using Indigenous language, and/or accepting aspects of Indigenous culture, in sharing the Christian message**

“At the beginning [of the mission work] the grown up ones could not be induced to meet in any one place, no matter how often invited. Wherever a few could be found together a short service would be held. Sometimes they would all slip away before the first hymn was finished... For about a year this went on. Then a meeting was held in a *tipi* of one who cared not which side won. After a time, more were willing to lend their *tipis*; then a little later on one began as interpreter, then another was induced to read a hymn. These were little things, but oh, how they

gladdened our hearts. God's blessing was given and the work continued, and continues to improve. Now we have a church *tipi* easily filled – an average attendance of fifty.”  
[A&P 1893, FMC report, pg. xliii]

“The Rev. A. Wm. Lewis, B.D., has carried on his work with much energy during the year... When last August he was suddenly deprived of his interpreter, he resolved, although he had only been eight months in charge of the mission, to conduct the Cree service without the aid of any such go-between. From that time with the help of a female member of his congregation, who is mistress of both languages, and with the help of the Cree prayer-book of the Church of England, he has managed to make such preparation beforehand as enables him to conduct a service in their own tongue, to the edification of the congregation. Mr. Lewis says, “The good old chief [Mistawasis] is always pleased to have me visit him in his house, to read and pray with him... Old Hundred is a great favourite of his to the words ‘*ita neso apo nesto*’, ‘*Where two or three together meet*’... The old chief always seemed to love me, just because I was a minister of the Gospel, and all seemed pleased with my poor pronunciation of their jaw-breaking language”  
[A&P 1894, FMC report, pg. xxii]

“Mr. Alex Skene is in charge of this school [File Hills Boarding School] but for two periods during the year he has had help from Mr. Jacob Bear, the Rev. Hugh McKay's native assistant. The Indians welcome with a good deal of pleasure a teacher who can tell them the story of the cross in their own tongue, and a friend of their own race.”  
[A&P 1896, FMC report, pg xxii]

“Meanwhile the missionary himself [Rev. C.W. Bryden, Mistawasis Reserve] is making progress in the Cree language in which he is now able to lead in prayer. At a funeral at which there was no interpreter present he, for the sake of the bereaved mother and the other women who did not understand English, attempted to read the Scriptures in Cree, and was pleased to learn afterwards that he was understood.”  
[A&P 1907, FMC report, pg. 170]

### **Quote re: hindrance of mission efforts because of cultural intolerance**

“Because of offence given in suppressing heathen dances, some refuse to attend Christian service.”  
[A&P 1904, FMC report, section on Pipestone Reserve, pg. 188]

### **Quotes re: “White” Civilization actually being a problem to Spreading the Gospel**

“The difficulties are very great [at Ahousaht]. The white men with whom the Indians have come in contact have, generally speaking, added to rather than lessened their sinfulness and degradation. They have not taught them morality, but rather the reverse. They have brought to them the curse of intemperance and gambling. They have taught them to use God's name in oaths. We have to deal with uncivilized people who have acquired the vices of civilization.”  
[A&P 1896, FMC report, section on Mission to Indians in British Columbia, pg. lxxxvi.]

## 1912-1925

In 1912 the Church moved the oversight of its mission work with Indigenous people from the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) to the Home Mission Committee (HMC).

In 1914, a further change was made, when an agreement was reached between the Church and the Government, whereby the Women's Missionary Society, long a primary financial supporter of the work, would become responsible for the Residential Schools (with the Government providing the capital equipment and maintenance); the Government would be responsible for the Day Schools; and the HMC would be responsible simply for mission work on the various reserves.

These changes would prove significant in many ways, not the least of which seems to have been the decreased visibility of (and support of) the mission efforts being conducted by the Church on the Reserves. With the transfer from the Foreign Mission Committee to the Home Mission Committee, the status of the work dropped, and it became simply one small part of a Home Mission Committee overwhelmed with trying to meet the needs of a wave of immigration (including large numbers of "non-Anglo Saxon" immigrants) pouring into the Prairie provinces.

At the same time, the WMS (which for years had been a significant partner in promoting and supporting the mission work with Indigenous people) was now only responsible for operating the residential schools. As a result, this further decreased the visibility and support of the mission work on the Reserves, while at the same time heightening the visibility of the residential schools, which would expand rapidly during this time period.

With the enforcement of compulsory education in 1920, the relatively small boarding schools (30-80 students) became large residential schools with between 100 to 150 children. During this time, farming operations also began to be prioritized, and large industrial farms were established at most of the schools with the aim of teaching students agricultural skills. Financially, however, the schools would become dependent upon these farms, and the work done on them by the students.

**Quotes re: presumed inferiority of Indigenous culture and/or superiority of Euro-Canadian culture, and the need to "civilize" Indigenous people through a change in lifestyle, language, appearance, names, etc.**

"The evils of the "Potlach" have lingered longer on some of our British Columbia reserves. The Indians on the Coast earn their livelihood mostly by fishing, sealing and working in the canneries, and frequently their whole summer earnings would be wasted in a short time by the Potlach. It has been the cause of much sickness and poverty among the tribes and almost impossible to bring them under the influence of the Gospel. We are pleased to report that at last the Government has passed a law prohibiting inter-tribal potlaching."

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1914-15, pg. 57]*

“The work here [at Portage La Prairie] has made fine progress under the efficient superintendence of Mr. Hendry. Paganism has disappeared from the Sioux band near Portage la Prairie, while the Long Plains reserve, within six years, has changed from strong opposition to hearty sympathy and support.”

[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba, pg. 24]

“We should expand the Indian work, while 20,000 pagans remain in our land and several reserves are without Gospel priveleges or schools for their children.”

[A&P 1917, HMB report, Report of the WMS, pg. 36]

“It is worth while from a financial standpoint alone to make these aborigines into good citizens of our fair Dominion and, instead of leading the savage teepee life, to see them settled in cleanly homes, tilling the soil and sending their children to school.”

[A&P 1917, HMB report, Report of the WMS, pg. 36]

“In consideration for the surrender of the greater part of their country they were promised a yearly sum of money, also education for their children and farm instructors to teach the older people farming... What we are doing for the Indian is just a debt and should not be looked upon in the light of charity.”

[WFMS Annual Report, 1914-15, pg. 57]

“Nor must we forget the work faithfully carried on among those who have the best right to be called Canadians of us all – The Red Men.”

[A&P 1922, HMB report, Northern Saskatchewan report, pg 34]

“The greatest need in our Indian work to-day is to follow our graduates to their homes when they leave school. It is the duty of the Church to see that a suitable, properly equipped place of worship is erected and maintained on each reserve. The Government should provide a practical farmer so that the young men, leaving school, would have someone to teach and guide them on their home reservations. If these essentials are not provided, many will lapse into the primitive methods of their parents”

[WFMS Annual Report, 1920, pg. 89]

## **Quotes re: schooling of Indigenous children as a means of “civilizing” and the residential school system**

### General Quotes

“Indian work in Canada is as truly Foreign Mission work as that carried on overseas, and as such, is of slow development. Children of seven or eight years, many from homes of pagan superstition, without knowing one word of English, are placed in our Boarding Schools for a period of about ten years, and it is on the influence of these children’s lives on their parents, that we are building our hopes for the future.”

[WFMS Annual Report, 1920, pg. 89]

“In most cases it is the children of our first graduates who are attending school now, and the difference in their life is easily discernable.” [WFMS Annual Report, 1922, pg. 92]

“There is yet a wide gap to be bridged before conditions on many of the reserves are fit to have our graduates return to them. A system of follow-up work must be carried on by the Government and the Church before the Indian will have a chance to take his place with other men.” *[WFMS Annual Report, 1922, pg. 92]*

“With the right man for farm instructor and missionary, aided by a matron-nurse who would have access to the homes and keep in close touch with their daily life, much should be accomplished.” *[WFMS Annual Report, 1922, pg. 92]*

“It is indispensable that a church be erected on each reserve, and the Indians taught to reverence the house of God. In no other way can the work be permanently successful” *[WFMS Annual Report, 1922, pg. 92]*

“Secular education is always accompanied by moral and religious training. Thus the pupils, while receiving practical training, are having the foundation laid for Christian citizenship.” *[A&P 1914, HMB report, pg. 5]*

“The Cecilia Jeffries school on the Lake of the Woods stands a beacon light in the midst of a large body of pagan darkness. Some of the bands strongly oppose both education and religion” *[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba, pg. 24]*

“So long as education is not compulsory, the potlatch permitted, the Siwash doctors allowed to practice and the Indians not trained to make their living by some industrial activity, the work of the church must remain comparatively ineffectual.” *[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of British Columbia, pg. 49]*

“Experience teaches that the best results are obtained in the Boarding Schools, chiefly owing to the nomadic life of the Indians. Our hope is in the children and already we have had promising results from many of our graduates.” *[A&P 1915, HMB report, Report of the WMS, pg. 10]*

“The secular education and industrial training given these girls and boys cannot but assist them to a higher standard of living and place them in a position to make their way in life alongside of their white brothers as respectable citizens in our Western country” *[A&P 1920, HMB report, WMS report, pg. 49]*

#### Quotes re: “recruiting” of children and difficulty of getting pupils for the schools

“The parents are looking favourably on the school [Birtle] and recruiting is less trouble.” *[WFMS Annual Report, 1919, pg. 98]*

“Recruiting last autumn was not without success, and in due time the enlarged building, with capacity for about seventy will be filled.” *[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba, pg. 24]*

“At Swan Lake the Misses Bruce are rendering splendid service in the day school and on the reserve. Though there will be no systematic recruiting for the school at Portage la Prairie on this reserve the Indian Agent will make persistent non-attendance at the day school legal ground for removal to a boarding school, and accommodation is being provided at the Portage school for any such delinquents”

*[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba, pg. 24]*

“The school at Birtle also had to be enlarged and improved. This school will now accommodate eighty-five pupils. Its recruiting ground is Okanase, Beulah, Rolling River, Lizard Point and Valley River.”

*[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba, pg. 24]*

“Both Chief and Interpreter at Rolling River [reserve] have professed conversion. When an effort was made last fall to recruit for Birtle, at this reserve, the old Chief said ‘Now that I have God in my heart I want to see all the children on the reserve educated’

*[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba, pg. 24]*

“Ucluelet the only day school is irregularly attended as the children are away from the Reserve during the greater part of the summer... the work is as efficiently done as is possible under the unfavorable conditions prevailing. If the Government adopted the principle of compulsory education, the day school might have a chance.”

*[A&P 1914, HMB report, Synod of British Columbia, pg. 49]*

“The Crowstand Mission is undergoing a most radical change, the Boarding School... is now giving place to a day school situated on the reserve. Whether this experiment will prove more efficient than the old method remains to be seen, but the difficulty of getting a sufficient number of children for the Boarding School made it imperative that some change be made.”

*[A&P 1916, HMB report, Northern Saskatchewan report, 52]*

“If the difficulties of recruiting could be overcome we believe that Birtle would more than hold its own”

*[A&P 1916, HMB report, WMS report, 64]*

“about twenty new pupils were recruited during the last quarter of the year which entailed considerable expenditure of money, thus causing deficit for the year. The increased grant for the present year from the extra pupils will be a great help to the finances of the school [at Birtle].”

*[A&P 1918, HMB report, WMS report, pg. 51]*

Quotes re: the effect of compulsory attendance enacted in 1920 in boosting the size of the residential schools

“A new regulation of the Indian Department which came into force last year requires the enforcement of compulsory education of Indian children. Our schools are all overcrowded. The Presbytery of Portage la Prairie has asked that representations be made to the Department of Indian Affairs with a view to doubling the capacity of the school at Portage la Prairie”

*[A&P 1921, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba report, pg. 31]*

“For the first time in the history of our Indian work in Western Canada, accommodation in almost every boarding school is inadequate. Our workers, with the aid of Government officials, have been largely instrumental in bringing this about. It will be necessary therefore to have, especially, more dormitory space for the children. We have about 600 children under our care in Boarding and Day schools and, if we had more room, could easily have 700.”  
*[WFMS Annual Report, 1921, pg. 97]*

“With an attendance of about 90 [at Portage La Prairie RS], and many more waiting for admission, the Government has agreed to provide more accommodation, so that it will be possible to have 150 in attendance in the near future.”  
*[WFMS Annual Report, 1921, pg. 97]*

“Attendance at all the Schools has greatly improved. Compulsory school laws, enforced by the Government, are proving a benefit.”  
*[WFMS Annual Report, 1921, pg. 99]*

“The schools are all overcrowded and children are waiting to be admitted for whom there is no room”  
*[A&P 1922, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba report, pg. 28]*

“Our Indian Schools are almost all crowded beyond their capacity and many children cannot be accommodated. The Government has estimated for the enlargement of several of the schools during the coming summer.”  
*[WFMS Annual Report, 1922, pg. 92]*

“The attendance in almost all our Boarding and Day Schools has increased because most of the Indians now realize the benefit of education.”  
*[WFMS Annual Report, 1924, pg. 79]*

“We [Portage] have 96 pupils and are greatly in need of more room. If there were accommodation it would be an easy matter to secure forty more. This is an excellent point to establish a good plant for 125 or 130 pupils.”  
*[WFMS Annual Report, 1924, pg. 81]*

“Perhaps the most encouraging part of the year’s operations has been the number of new pupils...The Department built two new class rooms during the year. These are already full, so also are our dormitories. We are hoping that an extension to the main building will be erected this summer.”  
*[WFMS Annual Report, 1924, pg. 81]*

“The Birtle School, enlarged three years ago has been passing through a trying period of its history. The staff has been efficient but the attendance has been too low for satisfactory finance. The farm is situated too far from the school for best results...Could the attendance be raised to capacity (70) financing would be possible.”  
*[A&P 1916, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba report, pg. 42]*

Quotes re: the apparent paradox that many of the older missions had established Christian communities and yet the children still had to be sent to Residential School

“The children of some of our early graduates are now attending school, and it is to this generation that we turn for lasting results.”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1914-15, pg. 57]*

“On several of our reserves there is a native Church, which has its own elders and managing board.. The spirit of liberality is decidedly on the increase... The total givings of the Birdtail Indian Church was \$354.00 for the year, the WMS contributing \$154.00, in addition to \$7.50 towards the China Famine Fund”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1920, pg. 89]*

“A new church [at Crowstand] built entirely by the Indians themselves was opened for worship about the first of December”

*[A&P 1915, HMB report, Northern Saskatchewan report, pg. 36]*

“The work at Mistawasis, where is now found the band of Cree Indians to whom James Nisbet and John McKay ministered, has had one of the best years in its history. Under the guidance of the missionary the Indians themselves undertook the repairing of the church with the result that the building both inside and outside has been thoroughly renovated... The day school, where Mr. Smith, our missionary, teaches is well attended, and the children are making excellent progress.”

*[A&P 1916, HMB report, Northern Saskatchewan report, pg. 51]*

“Three Elders were ordained [at Crowstand] and few white men take their duties more seriously. There were six additions to the Communion roll and the weekly collections have been double those of any previous year”

*[A&P 1917, HMB report, WMS reportwan report, pg. 38]*

“On the reserve [Crowstand] interest in Church work has increased during the year, and the Indians are undertaking to raise \$75 for this year towards support of their Missionary.”

*[A&P 1922, HMB report, Northern Saskatchewan, pg. 34]*

**Quotes re: health/deaths of children in Residential Schools**

“The condition of Alberni Boarding School was never better... The health of the pupils, of whom there are fifty, is very good. The panic, caused by the ravages of tuberculosis a few years ago has ceased, the much dreaded disease having been reduced to a minimum, through the steps taken to fumigate and put the premises in a good sanitary condition”

*[A&P 1912, FMC report, pg. 145]*

“The health of the pupils has been good, not one death during the year”

*[A&P 1912, HMC report, WMS report, pg. 64]*

“At Crowstand our faithful missionary, Rev. W. McWhinney, was laid aside for several months during the summer with a very severe illness... The new buildings promised by the Government [Improved Day School] have not been started and consequently the work is still carried on under

very adverse conditions. To continue much longer in the present buildings is not only to hamper the work, but to menace the health of the staff and the school children.”

*[A&P 1915, HMB report, Northern Saskatchewan report, pg. 36]*

“The health of the pupils and adults has been exceptionally good; the death rate is decreasing each year [Round Lake Boarding School].”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1917, pg. 70]*

“The health of pupils and adults has been exceptionally good; the death rate is decreasing each year”

*[A&P 1918, HMB report, WMS report, pg. 50]*

“Several of our schools have been in quarantine owing to influenza. The staff and pupils have suffered in consequence, but we are thankful to report that owing to good care and proper sanitary arrangements there have been very few fatalities among the school children. The Indians on the reserves were not so fortunate, and many lives have been lost. ”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1918, pg. 86]*

“The Cecilia Jeffrey school has had a trying year. Rev. F.T. Dodds, the efficient principal for years, resigned. Almost immediately after, Mr. Matthews, the assistant principal took charge, influenza became rampant on the reserves. It invaded the school and every pupil contracted the disease – though only one case proved fatal.”

*[A&P 1919, HMB report, Synod of Manitoba report, pg 26]*

“The health of the children has been good and few deaths have been reported during the year”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1919, pg. 96]*

“File Hills Boarding School reports sixty-eight pupils and the health of the children good, on the whole, although they had an outbreak of smallpox, which necessitated a strict quarantine for two months.”

*[A&P 1919, HMB report, WMS report, pg 53]*

“The health of the children has been remarkably good, and few deaths have occurred, except as the result of “flu”.”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1920, pg. 89]*

“The health of the children has been good and very few deaths have been reported”

*[A&P 1920, HMC report, WMS report, pg 49]*

“With the exception of one death during the year the health of the children has been good [at File Hills Boarding School]”

*[A&P 1920, HMB report, WMS report, pg 49]*

“This is the first year in which death has visited our flock [Ahousat Boarding School, B.C.]”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1924, pg. 80]*

“An epidemic of measles left several children with badly impaired health, two of whom have since died. Serious cases cannot be kept in the school indefinitely, suitable hospital accommodation for them is badly needed.”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1924, pg. 80]*

“The lack of medical care, when illness occurs in the school [Cecilia Jeffrey], has been almost disastrous, not only for children, but also for staff members. There is no doctor nearer than Winnipeg about 100 miles distant. Several of the pupils had to be taken to Winnipeg Hospital.”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1924, pg. 80]*

### **Quotes re: the benefits of using indigenous language, and/or accepting aspects of Indigenous culture, in sharing the Christian message**

“The Indian has always worshipped “The Great Spirit” by instinct, but the Christian Church must bring home to him the power of the Gospel in all its truth and love”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1914-15, pg. 57]*

“The great need in the Indian work to-day for better spiritual results, is educated native workers, who can speak in their own language directly to the hearts of the people, instead of through an interpreter.”

*[A&P 1915, HMB report, Report of the WMS, pg. 10]*

### **Quote re: “White” Civilization actually being a problem to Spreading the Gospel**

“The liquor curse lies at the door of the white man and not the Indian. The contact of the Indian with ungodly white settlers has been a great detriment to some of our missionaries in their work.”

*[WFMS Annual Report, 1914-15, pg. 57]*

### **Quote re: questioning aspects of the residential schools.**

“A paper on Indian work was given by Mr. R.B. Heron. This paper displayed thought, originality and purpose and an acquaintance with the problem. It contained suggestions which the committee in charge of the work might well consider. The thanks of the Presbytery were conveyed to Mr. Heron and it was suggested that the paper might be published in the Presbyterian Witness.”

*[Presbytery of Regina minutes, May 8, 1923]*

“Compulsory school attendance is quite familiar to us, but as applied to the Indian children it means something quite different from the law which governs the attendance of white children at the ordinary public school... Indian children are compelled to leave their homes at the age of seven – to remain in school, with only an occasional holiday, until they are eighteen. The parents have no voice in the selection of the teachers, nor in the selection of the course of study the children are to pursue, nor in the number of hours they attend the class room. The Indians, as a rule, are anxious to have their children educated, but they complain that they are not kept

regularly in the classroom; that they are kept out at work that produces revenue for the school; that when they return to the Reserves, they have not enough education to enable them to transact ordinary business – scarcely enough to enable them to write a legible letter... The Presbyterian Church is conducting a number of Indian schools in Saskatchewan and Manitoba; it is most important that, as a Church, every possible effort be made to fulfill our obligations to these parents whose children we have taken, and that we give their children the training that will equip them for a place in the citizenship of the country.”

*[Article by R.B. Heron, The Presbyterian Witness, Sept. 26, 1923]*

## 1925-1969

At the time of Church Union in 1925, there was uncertainty over which Church (the new United Church, or the continuing Presbyterian Church) would be responsible for mission fields and properties, including the residential schools and the work on the reserves. This uncertainty lasted for several years until 1927. Of the Residential Schools, only Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey continued to be Presbyterian. Of the missions on reserves, the Presbyterian Church continued to conduct work at Mistawasis, Bird Tail, Lizard Point, Okanase, Rolling River, and Sioux Village.

In the years following 1925 the Presbyterian Church struggled to maintain both its finances and its supply of ministers. Many congregations and mission stations on the Prairies were left vacant. As a result, mission efforts on the reserves, already suffering from a decreased lack of awareness and wider support from administrative changes in 1912 and 1914, suffered further. The Depression of the 1930s, further exacerbated this situation, as did the Second World War.

To compensate for this, some of the missions on the reserves were linked with “white” congregations as 2 or 3 point charges, while others were combined together to bring the work on multiple reserves under the sphere of just one missionary; in a number of cases missions were simply left vacant. As a result, mission efforts on the reserves were generally poorly funded, poorly supported, and the overall awareness of the work by the National Church was minimal.

The residential schools, however, were funded by the Federal Government and administered by the Women’s Missionary Society, and so Church Union affected the work to a lesser degree. The per capita grants for pupils (never sufficient) were decreased for a time, and stable staffing was always a problem, but unlike the work on the reserves, this work continued to maintain some prominence within the wider mission efforts of the WMS.

Beginning in the 1950s, a small shift in mission philosophy seems to begin, with greater emphasis on supporting existing Christian communities on the Reserves – through pastoral visitation, Church services, weekly group meetings, and provision of medical assistance – and less emphasis on the need to change culture and customs.

This small shift continued in the 1960s. Although the WMS continued to administer the Residential Schools, some within the Church began raising concerns over the poor conditions faced by many Indigenous communities in Canada. However, the blame for these conditions, was primarily laid at the feet of the Government, rather than any strong acknowledgement by the Church of its own involvement.

Changes were also beginning to happen within the Residential Schools themselves. Day schools on more local reserves meant that by the 1950s and 1960s many of the children attending both the Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey schools were brought from remote northern regions where no day school existed. Integration programs were also begun whereby the children began attending classes in the local schools. By the early 1960s, therefore, Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey became residences for the children, but no longer schools. Finally, in 1969, the Church’s two residential schools were transferred over to the Government.

**Quotes re: presumed inferiority of Indigenous culture and/or superiority of Euro-Canadian culture, and the need to “civilize” Indigenous people through a change in lifestyle, language, appearance, names, etc.**

“There are yet many Indian boys and girls without school privileges in pagan homes, and each year sees more of these recruited.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1931, pg. 65]*

“The influence of the new school [at Birtle] is very great and opportunity is greatly increased of helping and leadings these original Canadians to our Lord Jesus Christ”

*[WMS Annual Report 1932, pg. 69]*

“To understand the work you must first get an idea of the life of the Indians on the Reserves. Here we find land set apart by the Government for these people, for which they pay no money and no taxes – school, municipal, provincial or federal... From these Reserves and these homes come the children that we have in our school. They come with their inherited tendencies to indolence and to looseness of morals. We like to get them at seven years of age.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1933, pg. 69-70]*

“Having been, with their parents, wards of Church and Government, small wonder that they feel lost and bewildered when through school.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1935, pg. 58]*

“The greatest handicap is the lack of contact and follow-up work when school days are over and the youth must go back to a reserve, where the tribe, not the individual, owns land, and initiative is therefore lacking”

*[WMS Annual Report 1935, pg. 58]*

“The lowering of the school age to 16, except in very special cases, shortens the period of training just at the age when the inferiority complex so often found in Indian youth may be more successfully combated. One would almost prefer delaying school entrance for a time, if the Government feels that the grants are required for too many years. The separation for nearly the whole year is a sore trial in any case to parents and child, while the latter is so young, - this added to the fact that in many ways Indian boys and girls are one or two years behind white children, while far surpassing them in deftness of hand and in the skill which is based on eye and ear.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1935, pg. 57]*

“The Indians come to us with their troubles and sicknesses... So the days pass by, each with its own particular bit of work; sick visiting, burying the dead, patching up quarrels, etc... Our visiting among the Indians continues and always we are welcomed. The readiness with which they will hear the Word of God is encouraging; if only they would clean up physically, morally and spiritually.”

*[A&P 1943, GBM report, section on Indian Work, Waywayseecappo Reserve, pg. 20]*

“Moral conditions on the Reserve leave much to be desired. There are some exceptions, however, I have found fellowship with the Chief and his wife. Although I have to converse through an interpreter, we receive great blessing when we visit him. He is praying that the

Indians will be freed by God's power from the sin and its consequences, which has crept into this Reserve."

*[A&P 1944, GBM report, Section on Indian Work, Okanais Reserve, pg. 19]*

"The Indians idolize their children, but neglect the older people, not caring about their temporal condition. Only the transforming power of God's love can bring change to these poor creatures. Without Christ, the white man's efforts to improve the Indians' way of living accomplish little."

*[A&P 1944, GBM report, Section on Indian Work, Okanais Reserve, pg. 19]*

"On my return to this field, where I had served previously, I found the same friendliness on the part of the Indians as before, but during the interval the love for the church and the things of God appears to have grown cold, and Paganism among the Indians seems to have increased in strength. Repeatedly, the Indian has been heard to say, "This is the white man's Church". To counteract this, the effort has been made to show that God is the only God, and that we all came from the one stock."

*[A&P 1945, GBM report, Section on Indian Work, Rolling River Reserve, H. Crump, missionary, pg. 18]*

### **Quotes re: schooling of Indigenous children as a means of "civilizing" and the residential school system**

"When Church and State thus strive to do their best, surely God will bless these efforts to equip the Indian boys and girls for happy useful Christian service."

*[WMS Annual Report 1930, pg. 70]*

"The lowering of the school age to 16, except in very special cases, shortens the period of training just at the age when the inferiority complex so often found in Indian youth may be more successfully combated."

*[WMS Annual Report 1935, pg. 57]*

"I should like to express the deepest gratitude to all members of the staff who have worked so faithfully to help these Indian children become good Canadians and followers of Jesus Christ"

*[WMS Annual Report 1943, pg. 60]*

"In both these schools [Birtle and CJ] the Indian children are receiving a good Christian training. Besides the regular work, they are being taught useful trades, farm work, hair-cutting, mending shoes, sewing, cooking, as well as music and art, in which they show great talent."

*[A&P 1943, WMS report, pg. 71]*

"In all three schools the main object has been kept in view – to help these Indian children to become good Christians and followers of Jesus."

*[A&P 1944, WMS report, pg. 60]*

## Quotes re: health/deaths of children in Residential Schools

“The present Principal Mr. H. B. Currie, took over his duties in May 1927. He found the building [Birtle] in poor condition and the health of the children seriously impaired...More cows were bought to provide an adequate supply of milk for the children, new pillows were provided to replace those that had to be burned.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1927, pg. 60]*

“Early in 1927 an epidemic of “flu” swept the School [Cecilia Jeffrey] but since then the health of the pupils has been good.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1927, pg. 60]*

“Particular care is taken of food, and building up strength of these growing boys and girls. Since May 1927, there have been only two deaths, and general health is very good”

*[WMS Annual Report 1929, pg. 63]*

“Health conditions are better although 20 cases of chicken-pox developed. There were two or three cases of pneumonia sent to the local hospital.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1932, pg. 69]*

“The health of the pupils has been excellent. There have been no deaths and very few sick”

*[WMS Annual Report 1935, pg. 58]*

“The close of 1936 found the school in the throes of an epidemic of influenza, which laid low both staff and pupils (108 were ill at one time), taxing the energies of those able to be about and completely disorganizing work for a time. We are grateful that no cases were serious and no lives lost.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1936, pg. 67]*

“Dr. Wahl, Trachoma specialist, visited the school in November and under his instructions the nurse is working hard to stamp out this serious condition. There are twenty positive cases.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1939, pg. 58]*

“A T.B. clinic was held in October – results were encouraging. No pupils had to be removed from the school. There were a good many cases of whooping cough after the holidays. Typhoid inoculations in December caused much discomfort. Trachoma treatment was given to 21 cases – sulfanilamide five-grain pills – and much improvement has been noted. Measles, colds and broken bones keep the nurse busy.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1940, pg. 51]*

“Miss Carruthers [nurse at Cecilia Jeffrey] has had a busy year. Flu, 37; mumps, 106; scabies, 40; pneumonia, 2; Preventorium (tuberculosis), average per month, 13; transferred to sanatorium, 7; deaths, 2. General diseases, 70; accidents, 3; operations, 3; deaths, 1. Miscellaneous: Doctor’s visits, 5; complete X-ray in October; Indians treated on Reserve, 25; First-aid groups (classes), 25.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1941, pg. 57]*

“The following is a summary of the hospital report: General: pneumonia 2; fractures 4; injury 4; tonsillitis 4; observations 18; otitis media 6; general infections 9. Contagion: flu 39; chicken-pox 14. Preventorium (Tuberculosis): active cases 1; preventorium case 16; transferred to San 1; discharged from school 1; returned from San 2. Epileptic 1, transferred to Woodstock, Ont. Doctors visits 9. Complete X-Raying 1; additional X-Raying 16.”  
*[WMS Annual Report 1944, pg. 50-51]*

“We have been severely handicapped in our Indian Mission and in our Hungarian work by the shortage of ministers. A situation which can be described only as calamitous exists in much of our Indian work. Children are brought into our schools and are instructed in the Christian religion. They return to the reserves where we have no Christian follow-up work, and where the population is almost totally pagan. There is no minister to baptize them or to perform marriages”  
*[A&P 1947, GBM report, report of HMConvener Western Canada, J. Allan Munro, page 11]*

### **Quote re: positive view aspects of Indigenous culture, custom and tradition**

“This celebration [Diamond Jubilee of the signing of the Carleton Treaty No. 6] has given them renewed pride in their own wonderful past and was unique in that it was a happy combination of the finest Christianity has to offer, namely substitution of the Christian religion for the former heathen practices, retaining their old traditions in dress and song.”  
*[Quote by Rev. Moore of Mistawasis, WMS Annual Report, 1936, pg. 68]*

### **Quotes re: beginning to question aspects of the residential schools and the need for change.**

“May we also say a word reminding ourselves that these Indian parents deny themselves much in being separated from their boys and girls except for six weeks in the summer. We realize our stewardship and responsibility to them”  
*[WMS Annual Report 1932, pg. 70]*

“The lowering of the school age to 16, except in very special cases, shortens the period of training just at the age when the inferiority complex so often found in Indian youth may be more successfully combated. One would almost prefer delaying school entrance for a time, if the Government feels that the grants are required for too many years. The separation for nearly the whole year is a sore trial in any case to parents and child, while the latter is so young, - this added to the fact that in many ways Indian boys and girls are one or two years behind white children, while far surpassing them in deftness of hand and in the skill which is based on eye and ear.”  
*[WMS Annual Report 1935, pg. 57]*

“An innovation which should improve the school work is the all-day classes for the first two forms. This gives the children a better start and enables them to complete the public school work in a reasonable time.”  
*[WMS Annual Report 1943, pg. 57]*

“At Birtle the innovation of all-day school is being tried out. A third teacher has been engaged and an extra matron for the junior girls to help with the sewing, mending, etc. The Indians whose

children come to this school are demanding that they be given the same chance as the white children.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1944, pg. 49]*

“Our school-age children are all at the Indian Residential School at Birtle, Manitoba. This year they were allowed home for Christmas Holidays. Everybody enjoyed these days very much indeed. It was the first time our Indian people had their families home at Christmas time.”

*[A&P 1948, GBM report, Section on Indian Work, Waywayseecappo Reserve, pg. 19]*

“The ‘half-day system’, as favoured by the Department, was continued [at Cecilia Jeffrey]. However, we endeavoured to extend the ‘full-day’ to the younger and the more backward pupils, and the two who were to try the Entrance examination were in all day. We hope next term to keep Grade III all day too.”

*[WMS Annual Report 1944, pg. 49]*

“The Indians went to Birtle for the Christmas concert at the Residential School. When they came back they were very happy because of this visit. Then, too, they were allowed to bring their children home for the Christmas holidays, on condition that the children were returned at the opening of the school, with everything in order. This is the first time since 1924 that this privilege was granted”

*[A&P 1948, GBM report, Section on Indian Work, Rolling River Reserve, pg. 19]*

“The last two weeks of the year were exceedingly busy ones for us. As the preparations for our Christmas tree and entertainment were a special treat for the folks of this Reservation, as it was the first year in which they had a school of their own on this Reservation, we were therefore, desirous to make the very best possible time for our pupils and their parents. The time was really good.”

*[A&P 1952 GBM report, Section on Indian Work, Waywayseecappo Reserve, pg. 26]*

“With all other Canadians we share a feeling of shame that this original population in these preset years lacks all the rights and privileges of citizenship in a free country...Canadians, Indian and non-Indian, must not relinquish this struggle until all Indians and part-Indians can live and move and have their being on an absolute equality of rights and responsibilities with all other Canadians.”

*[WMS. Executive Director of National Missions: PCC Brief to Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs 1960, File No. 1988-7004-21-1.]*

“Moreover, the Church is jealous for the fine contribution the culture, lore, and character the Indians of Canada may make to this nation, which nation is now being developed from many and varied ethnic groups.”

*[WMS. Executive Director of National Missions: PCC Brief to Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs 1960, File No. 1988-7004-21-1].*

“We feel that much more ought to be done in the matter of adult education. With scholarships (Canada Foundation or other special funds), selected Indians should be encouraged to gather and put into forms which can be preserved, histories of tribes, their customs, their lore, their artistry, their language, and other marks of their culture, all of which would return to the Indian some of

the dignity of which he was shorn by those processes of Government and relationships with non-Indians which have tended to have detracted from the dignity of the people. This should be done while Indians still living can relate the present generation back to Indians of former generations who live more or less according to their historic manner and custom. This would not only be a matter of pride with the Indian, but would enrich the general culture of Canada and would be the means of correcting histories written for non-Indian consumption with a severe bias against the Indian.”

*[WMS. Executive Director of National Missions: PCC Brief to Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs 1960, File No. 1988-7004-21-1]*

“There is need for the re-writing of the text-books of Canada to give a proper record of the Indian, non-Indian relationship, and a truer picture of Indian character and behavior”

*[WMS. Executive Director of National Missions: PCC Brief to Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs 1960, File No. 1988-7004-21-1]*

“Students of equal ability may have different experiences in progress because of background and contrast between their environment before and after they take up their senior studies. We feel that a regular liaison should be set up and developed between the Department and the Churches or other agencies so that these students will have “ports in case of storms”. These should not be paternalistic. Rather they should be people knowledgeable about Indians, preferably Indians themselves, who are available at times of depression or uncertainty.”

*WMS. Executive Director of National Missions: PCC Brief to Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs 1960, File No. 1988-7004-21-1]*