

"Educational Paternalism" Versus Autonomy: Contradictions in the Relationship Between the Saskatchewan Government and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, 1958-1964

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ABSTRACT. The Saskatchewan CCF government led by Tommy Douglas had a close, long-standing relationship with Indian political organizations. This article examines the relationship between the CCF government and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians from 1958 to the government's defeat in 1964. It argues that the government was caught between two incompatible goals: the desire to assist the development of the FSI as a strong, self-determining organization and the desire to promote the integration of Indians into mainstream society. The government pursued both goals with the result that relations with the FSI were enmeshed in contradiction. The relationship worked, however, because there were advantages to both sides and because of the knowledge, sensitivity and strength of both non-aboriginal and aboriginal leaders.

SOMMAIRE. Le gouvernement CCF de la Saskatchewan, dirigé par Tommy Douglas, fut pendant longtemps en relations étroites avec les organisations politiques indiennes. Le présent article passe en revue la relation existant entre le gouvernement CCF et la Fédération des Indiens de la Saskatchewan depuis 1958 jusqu'à la défaite du CCF en 1964. Notre thèse est que le gouvernement se trouvait coincé entre deux objectifs incompatibles: le désir d'aider la FIS à devenir une solide organisation autonome, et le désir de faciliter l'intégration des Indiens dans la société dominante. Les relations qui s'ensuivirent, bien qu'empreintes de contradictions, furent cependant fructueuses, grâce aux avantages qui existaient des deux côtés, et aussi grâce aux connaissances, à la sensibilité et à la force des dirigeants concernés, autochtones aussi bien que non-autochtones.

The Saskatchewan CCF government led by Tommy Douglas had a close, longstanding relationship with Indian political organizations. The premier believed that the treatment of Indians was "one of the blackest pages" in Canadian history and that a new deal for Indians was long overdue.¹ When the residents of Carry-the-Kettle Reserve conferred on him the honorary title of Chief We-a-ga-sha (Red Eagle) in July 1945, he said he did not regard the chieftainship as an "empty honour," and he encouraged his fellow chiefs to share their problems with him.² True to his word, Douglas invited the Indians of the province to an assembly in Regina in January 1946 to discuss the formation of a single organization to represent Indian interests. The result was the merger of three organizations (the League of Indians of Western Canada, the Protective Association for Indians and their Treaties, and the Association of Indians of Saskatchewan) into the Union of Saskatchewan Indians under the leadership of John Tootoosis.³

The next major intervention by the Douglas government in Indian affairs

1 Regina *Leader-Post*, 22 March 1946.

2 *Ibid.*, 27 July 1945.

3 The formation of the Union of Saskatchewan Indians is discussed in detail in James M. Pitsula, "The CCF Government and the Union of Saskatchewan Indians," *Prairie Forum* 19, no. 2 (1994): 131-51.

came in 1958 when the government sponsored a conference of chiefs and councillors at Valley Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle. The delegates elected an Indian Advisory Committee, composed of one person from each of the nine agencies, to help plan the next conference and do "educational work" on the reserves. The Advisory Committee doubled as the provisional executive of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, an organization that was formed when delegates voted to merge the Union of Saskatchewan Indians with the Queen Victoria Protective Association.⁴

A joint meeting of the provisional FSI executive and the government's Committee on Indian Affairs was held on 12 December 1958. The latter had been established by cabinet in 1956 to deal with Indian issues and was chaired by John Sturdy.⁵ The meeting dealt with the transportation expenses of FSI executive members engaged in organizational and educational work. The government agreed to provide up to \$1,000 for this purpose.⁶ Following the joint meeting, the FSI executive met separately to draft the constitution and bylaws of the Federation. At their request, Dr. Morris Shumiatcher, a member of the Committee on Indian Affairs, acted as legal consultant.⁷ The constitution, which was approved by the FSI conference held in October 1959, stated that the FSI "would be a non-partisan organization with respect to matters of religion and politics." Its aims were to promote the welfare of Saskatchewan Indians by:

1. Protecting Treaties and Treaty rights; 2. Fostering progress in all fields of economic, education and social life of Indians; 3. Cooperating with all civil and religious authorities; 4. Constructively criticizing and discussing all matters; 5. Adhering to democratic principles and procedures; and 6. Promoting respect and tolerance for all.⁸

As is evident from the preceding discussion, the Douglas government

4 The members of the committee were J.B. Tootoosis (Battleford), Absalom Halkett (sub Rev. S. Cuthand, Carlton), Joe Williams (Crooked Lake), David Knight (Duck Lake), David Greyeyes (Shellbrook), John Gambler (File Hills-Qu'Appelle), Louis Quewezance (Pelly), John Skeboss (Touchwood), Ernest Dillon (Meadow Lake). Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), T.C. Douglas Papers, R-33.1 XLV 864d (49) 4/6, Provincial Conference of Saskatchewan Indian Chiefs and Councillors, Valley Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, 30 and 31 October 1958.

5 Members of the Committee on Indian Affairs attending the meeting on 12 December 1958 were John Sturdy, Lewis Thomas, Gordon Campbell, John Archer, M.C. Shumiatcher and W. Wuttunee. SAB, W.S. Lloyd Papers, R-61.1 I 34, joint meeting of the executive of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the government Committee on Indian Affairs, 12 December 1958.

6 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 XLV 864 (d) 49 4/6, Cabinet minute no. 8997 re: cabinet meeting of 9 January 1959.

7 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.1 I 34, joint meeting of the executive of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the government Committee on Indian Affairs, 12 December 1958.

8 Ibid., R-61.4 IX 130a (9-12), "Indian Outlook," May 1963.

played a role in the formation of both the Union of Saskatchewan Indians in 1946 and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians in 1958. This article examines the relationship between the FSI and the CCF government from 1958 to the government's defeat in 1964. It argues that the government was caught between two incompatible goals: the desire to assist the development of the FSI as a strong, self-determining organization — the recognized "voice" of Saskatchewan Indians⁹ — and the desire to promote the integration of Indians into mainstream society. The first goal implied that the CCF administration would not attempt to use the FSI to advance an agenda or for political gain. The second one prompted the government to steer the FSI to accept policies leading to integration. The government was torn between, on the one hand, scrupulously respecting the autonomy of the FSI and, on the other, promoting in a somewhat paternalistic way the CCF's program for the social and economic advancement of Indians. It tried to do both, with the result that Saskatchewan government/FSI relations were enmeshed in contradiction. Ironically, it would have been easier for the government had it been uncertain about what to do to improve the lot of Indians. The very clarity of its solutions created problems, because the desire to "do good" (as the government perceived good) tempted the government to stray from its avowed principle of letting Indians decide for themselves what they wanted to do.

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indians was in a vulnerable position because all of its funding came from the Saskatchewan government. Since the grant was not large enough for the FSI to hire its own executive director, it depended upon a government employee to do its administrative work. Thus, the liaison person between the government and the FSI doubled as the FSI's staff person. The closeness and dependency of this relationship created difficulties for the FSI. Suggestions came from the federal Indian Affairs Department that the Federation was "controlled" by the provincial government and was "essentially a political 'gimmick'."¹⁰ Leaders of rival Indian organizations, such as John Gambler of the Qu'Appelle Indian Advisory Council of Chiefs Independent, voiced similar criticisms, even suggesting that a presenter of the FSI brief to the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, though "an Indian by colour," "holds the status of a white man."¹¹ Analysis of FSI/Saskatchewan government relations from 1958 to 1964 reveals, however, that the one who pays

9 In the 1960 provincial election campaign, Premier Douglas promised that his government would "assist the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians to maintain a strong, democratic and positive organization devoted to the improvement and advancement of all people of Indian ancestry. Our relationship with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians will continue to be a non-political one and on a basis similar to our relationship with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities." SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 XLV 864e (49) 5/6, T.C. Douglas to "My Indian Friends," 30 May 1960.

10 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130b (9-12), R. Woollam to E. Wood, 12 September 1963.

11 Government of Canada, Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, No. 7, 26 and 27 April 1961, 226.

the piper does not always call the tune. The FSI expected to be treated respectfully and consulted seriously. It would not allow itself to be patronized or pushed around, and on the key issue of the early 1960s, the provincial government's desire to take over the administration of Indian affairs, the FSI resisted pressure and withheld consent.

The relationship between the province and the FSI needs to be understood in the context of the CCF's commitment to integration. The government wanted Indians to "move off-reserve and into the mainstream of Canadian economic and social life while maintaining traditional rights and preserving the economic and social security now provided by reservations."¹² An important factor giving rise to this policy was Indian population growth. Population on Saskatchewan reserves rose 9 percent from 1941-1946, 15 percent, 1946-1951, 18 percent, 1951-1956, and 21 percent, 1956-1959.¹³ Economic resources on the reserves — whether fish and fur in the north or agricultural land in the south — could not support existing residents at subsistence levels, let alone provide for future generations. The Saskatchewan government believed that the only solution was for Indians to move away from the reserves into permanent wage employment.¹⁴

The Saskatchewan government's brief to the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs in 1960 was devoted to suggestions to ease and facilitate the process of integration. The discussion of traditional Indian culture was cast almost entirely in terms of how it handicapped aboriginals who were trying to "get ahead" in modern society. "Traditional" Indians were described as permissive in their child-rearing practices, averse to established routines, lacking in reliability and punctuality, and given to sharing, rather than accumulating, wealth.¹⁵ The brief's message was clear — to succeed in the white person's world, Indians would have to adopt the white person's ways. The only hint that the Saskatchewan government recognized something positive in Indian culture came when John H. Sturdy, minister without portfolio in the Saskatchewan government and co-presenter of the brief, observed that the Indian philosophy of sharing lent itself to cooperative farming on reserves.¹⁶ Sturdy saw value in Indian ways when they dovetailed with his own enthusiasm for cooperative farm experiments, such as the Matador project, underway in Saskatchewan.¹⁷

12 Ibid., No. 12, 16 and 17 June 1960, 1071.

13 Ibid., 1033.

14 Ibid., 1071.

15 Ibid., 1034-36.

16 Ibid., 1110.

17 There is one communication from Sturdy that stands out because it contained a thought not usually expressed in the papers of Saskatchewan government ministers and officials during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Sturdy, in a letter to CCF candidates in the 1960 election, referred to a paper written by Fr. Leon Levasseur, O.M.I., which suggested that

Sturdy's belief in both the desirability and necessity of integration led to ambivalence about the future of reserves. He told the Joint Committee: "It will be a long time and then only with the expressed wishes and consent of the Indians before our segregated reservations pass out of existence and our native people are completely integrated into the social, economic and political life of our nation — if this is our objective — which I presume it is."¹⁸ In a revealing analogy, he compared reserves to the pioneer Ontario farm where he had been raised. Since the farm was large enough to support only one son, the other children had moved to cities and taken up professional jobs. However, they still had fond memories of the family farm and liked to return for occasional visits. Sturdy said it was the same with Indian people who had migrated to urban centres, but liked to keep the connection to the home reserve.¹⁹ He did not reflect on the inadequacy of the analogy — that the cultural distance from the reserve to the city was much greater than from his Ontario farm to Regina.

Notwithstanding the general thrust of the Saskatchewan brief, the CCF government's policy of integration should not be equated with a policy of assimilation. Ray Woollam, the executive director of the Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, who, together with Sturdy, presented the brief, addressed this question head-on:

On the one hand, we could proceed on the assumption that sooner or later Indian communities will die out. Our policies are then suited to the needs of *individual* [emphasis in the original] Indians. Or we might assume that their elimination as an ethnic group is not predictable — in which case we would treat them as members of communities, having community traditions. ... Anthropologists who have given this matter a great deal of thought no longer are deluding themselves that the Indian community will disappear. They say that the chances are that it will be with us a thousand years hence. Therefore any realistic program must take both the individual factor as well as the community factor into its shaping. This dichotomy of policy would seem to commend itself.²⁰

Woollam, when asked to choose between either integration for Indians or preservation of community traditions, answered "both."

To complicate matters further, Woollam testified that pride in ethnic identity could facilitate integration:

from the 'Indian' culture in preference to the 'white' culture. 'Integration' is a process of two-way change. Only in 'assimilation' is the accommodation made entirely by the recessive culture." There is no evidence the government acted upon this idea. SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 XLV 864e (49) 5/6, J. Sturdy to Candidate, 15 April 1960.

18 Government of Canada, Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, No. 12, 16 and 17 June 1960, 1081.

19 *Ibid.*, 1141-42.

20 *Ibid.*, 1141.

Yet with other ethnic minorities in Canada we have seen how the security provided by an “in-group” experience makes possible the confidence that is prerequisite to acculturation. This “in” feeling — this feeling of “ethnocentricity” — may be used to promote acculturation.²¹

For this reason he welcomed the revival of powwows on the Prairies. In a memo to Premier Douglas, he wrote:

I regard these as very wonderful opportunities for these people to regain the sense of dignity and worth of their culture. I feel that this rising “ethnocentricity” is prerequisite to any movement toward integration.²²

It should be noted that these statements in support of Indian culture (even if only as a bridge to integration) were not part of the official government brief. That document, as we have seen, mentioned Indian culture as a barrier to successful integration, not as something valuable for its own sake or worthy of emulation.

At the same time, the brief explicitly affirmed that traditional Indian rights should be respected — integration, yes, but not forced integration. The government maintained that “full integration” could be achieved “without curtailing the Indians’ traditional rights or reducing in any way the welfare and security they now enjoy.”²³ It said that to repeal the Indian Act would be a great wrong: “The rights and privileges and traditional securities provided in the Act and the Treaties must be preserved as an irreducible minimum.”²⁴ From today’s perspective, the Saskatchewan government seems to be contradicting itself. If one assumes that treaty rights imply the right of self-government and, perhaps, sovereignty, how can they be compatible with “full integration?” However, the CCF government did not understand treaty rights in that way. Douglas, for example, said in 1959 with reference to the treaties: “We think the Indian was short-changed. Anything he has, he should be allowed to keep. It’s little enough as it is.”²⁵ Similarly, Sturdy remarked that Indians should receive the privileges of any Canadian citizen, and, in addition, “whatever few additional privileges they enjoy under their treaties.”²⁶ They did not regard treaties as the foundation for separate development for Indians; rather, they thought

21 Ibid., 1103.

22 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 CXXXIII 961a (150) 1/2, R. Woollam to T.C. Douglas, 10 August 1960.

23 Government of Canada, Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, No. 12, 16 and 17 June 1960, 1032.

24 Ibid., 1042.

25 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 XLV 864 (d) 49 4/6, news release, Department of Travel and Information, 22 October 1959.

26 Government of Canada, Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, No. 12, 16 and 17 June 1960, 1101.

treaty rights conferred only minor advantages and were entirely compatible with integration.²⁷

In addition, the government assumed that Indians would choose full participation in Canadian social and economic life, and all the benefits of belonging to the mainstream, over the minimal security of the segregated reserve. The government's strategy was to avoid frightening Indians by threatening to take away the guarantees they enjoyed under the treaties and the Indian Act. To do so would not bring about integration, but quite the reverse. As Sturdy stated before the Joint Committee: "I think that federal, provincial and municipal governments have been remiss, and will continue to be remiss, if they cannot make life sufficiently attractive outside the reserve to attract a large body of the Indian population away from the reserves of their own volition. That is what we are hoping to achieve."²⁸ In other words, it would not be necessary to take away the securities to which Indians were accustomed; the Saskatchewan government hoped that Indians would give them up.

Saskatchewan CCF Indian policy of the early 1960s was reminiscent of a school of thought found in the United States in the 1950s. Brian Dippie, in *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy*, points out that the termination movement, which sought to free Indians from Bureau of Indian Affairs paternalism and give them status as equal citizens of the United States, drew support from two very different sources. One consisted of right-wing conservatives, who deplored ethnic rejection of the melting pot as "anti-American, un-Christian, outmoded, and perhaps disloyal or barbarous." On the opposite end of the political spectrum were liberals, who crusaded to abolish what they regarded as "artificial barriers blocking the way to a fully integrated society." They believed that "anything that serves to perpetuate the Indians' distinctiveness from the rest of the American community may serve also to perpetuate their second-class status in that community."²⁹ This was essentially the position of the Saskatchewan

27 A more complete discussion of how the CCF government viewed treaty rights can be found in James M. Pitsula, "The Saskatchewan CCF Government and Treaty Indians, 1944-64," *The Canadian Historical Review* 75 (1994), especially pages 48-52. Interestingly, the Hawthorn report, a major research project undertaken by a team of Canadian social scientists in the 1960s, shared this "minimalist" interpretation of treaty rights. It concluded in 1966 that the "substantive effects" of the treaties were "minimal," imposing "marginal obligations on the federal government." H.B. Hawthorn, ed., *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs, 1966), vol. 1, 247-48.

28 Government of Canada, Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, No. 12, 16 and 17 June 1960, 1100.

29 Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 342, quoting Robert A. Manners, "Pluralism and the American Indian," *America Indigena* (1962), reprinted in Deward E. Walker Jr., ed., *The Emergent Native Americans: A Reader in Culture Contact* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1971), 126.

CCF government, with one important caveat. CCFers wanted integration, but, unlike some American liberals, were not prepared to abolish "artificial barriers [for example, treaty rights] blocking the way to a fully integrated society." The Saskatchewan government wanted Indians to break through these "barriers" themselves. The goal was the same, but the method less coercive.

The CCF government's integrationist policy took shape in the provincial bureaucracy in the spring of 1956 when the cabinet established a Committee on Indian Affairs, chaired by John Sturdy. The committee produced a report recommending three specific initiatives: the granting of the provincial vote to Indians, removal of restrictions on the sale of liquor, and the transfer of responsibility for delivering programs to Indians from the federal to the provincial government. Underlying the proposals was the belief that equality of citizenship required the elimination of legal distinctions and uniformity in the ways citizens related to the government. It was by no means obvious that Saskatchewan Indians would favour these changes. William Wuttunee, the only Indian member of the Committee on Indian Affairs, sounded opinion on a number of reserves in the summer of 1958. He discovered that John Tootoosis, a key leader who had been active in Indian political organizations since the 1920s, viewed the franchise as "the thin edge of the wedge" leading to the destruction of treaty rights.³⁰

Despite this sign of opposition, the government pressed ahead in the fall of 1958 with a conference to which Indian chiefs and councillors from across the province were invited.³¹ A lineup of distinguished speakers who supported voting and liquor rights for Indians failed to sway the delegates, who opted not to make a decision about these touchy issues.³² They chose instead to debate the matter again at another conference to be held the following year. However, the second conference also failed to produce an endorsement for the vote and liquor rights. The government now faced a dilemma. It believed in equality, but should it force that equality on Indians who had not asked for it?

At this juncture, a new element entered provincial government policy making in the person of Ray Woollam, who was appointed executive director of the Provincial Committee on Minority Groups (as the Committee on Indian Affairs had been renamed) on 1 March 1960. Raymond Herbert Woollam was ordained a United Church minister in 1951 and served in that capacity in Smithers, Cranbrook and Duncan, British Columbia prior to joining the Saskatchewan government in 1959.³³ He was

30 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 XLV 864d (49) 4/6, W.I. Wuttunee to J.H. Sturdy, 6 July 1958.

31 Pitsula, "The Saskatchewan CCF Government and Treaty Indians," 33-35.

32 Ibid.

33 United Church Archives, Raymond Herbert Woollam pastoral service card, Accession No. 92.164c, File 31-3.

recruited by Gordon Campbell of the Adult Education Division of the Department of Education to work as an adult education consultant. The Adult Education Division had helped organize the Indian conferences at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1958 and 1959, and, by that route, Woollam had become involved in Indian issues. He believed strongly that the government was not acting quickly enough to give Indians equal voting and liquor rights,³⁴ and was so frustrated by what he perceived as government temporizing and foot-dragging that he submitted his resignation. The next day he received an invitation to have lunch with Premier Douglas in his office. The conversation that ensued was recalled by Woollam in a 1995 interview. "What's this all about?" Douglas asked.

I took a deep breath and I started in. "You've run this bloody administration here for 16 years or whatever it is, and you've got a mess of Indian goodies here that makes B.C. look like heaven. You've got pockets of unbelievable poverty and hunger here like I'm sure doesn't exist short of New Brunswick. Things are a mess wherever I look, and I've done my best to come to grips with some of it, and here's some of the places where I've tried to get something going, and each time I hit a brick wall. I don't know whether the brick wall is Campbell [Woollam's supervisor], or the deputy, or the Minister of Education. I don't know whether it's Jack Sturdy, but nothing happens, and I don't get answers." And I start going chapter and verse through all these things. ... At the end of 45 minutes I take a deep breath, sort of reaching for the next thing, and the first thing that he said in 45 minutes — "You should be careful. A guy could run out of material." It was the funniest thing I ever heard. ... And I looked at him, and I started to laugh. Like all the tension I built up for five months went into that laugh. And he started to laugh. And the two of us started to cry and laugh. ... It went on for 3 or 4 minutes. It was joyous. It was the finest moment I had in 6 months.³⁵

Following this interview, Douglas gave Woollam primary responsibility for coordinating the government's Indian and Metis policy. The province moved unilaterally to grant the vote and to allow Indians to patronize bars and purchase alcohol at liquor board stores.³⁶ As executive director of the Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, Woollam reported initially to committee chair, John Sturdy, and when Sturdy retired after the June 1960 election, to the new chair, Premier Douglas.³⁷ The committee grew out of the Indian Affairs Committee, but had an expanded membership and mandate. It included representatives from various government departments, as well

34 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.3 E-27 21/21, R. Woollam to T.C. Douglas, 15 January 1960.

35 Ray Woollam, interview, 24 August 1995.

36 Pitsula, "The Saskatchewan CCF Government and Treaty Indians," 38.

37 R. Woollam Papers (private collection), Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, Minutes, 25 April 1960.

as members at large.³⁸ Among its responsibilities were to assist departments and the cabinet in formulating policies and developing programs for Indians, Metis, and Hutterites (despite the name of the committee, these were the only minority groups it dealt with), identifying “duplications, contradictions, or omissions” in government services, gathering data and encouraging research, and maintaining contact with officials of other governments as well as voluntary and religious organizations. Of particular interest was the committee’s duty “to assist the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians to maintain a strong, democratic and positive organization devoted to the improvement and advancement of all people of Indian ancestry.”³⁹ This was at odds with the FSI’s stated primary aim of protecting treaty rights. Treaty Indians and “all people of Indian ancestry” were two different groups.

Woollam forged a close relationship with the FSI executive who invited him in November 1959 to be their “acting assistant secretary.” He continued in this role, which he also characterized as “helper” or “consultant,” until October 1964. He attended FSI executive meetings, asked questions, offered assistance, wrote speeches and letters, and helped organize conferences. He was the FSI’s staff person, while at the same time collecting his salary from the provincial government.

From the beginning of his involvement with the FSI, Woollam was not afraid to take an active role. For example, at the 27 November 1959 meeting of the Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, copies of the FSI brief to the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs were distributed and discussed. Woollam drew attention to the work done by Bill Wuttunee on the brief. Wuttunee was a lawyer employed by the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office and the sole aboriginal member of the minorities committee. Woollam asked if arrangements could be made to have Wuttunee accompany the FSI delegation as legal consultant when they presented their brief in Ottawa. Sturdy said that he had already advised cabinet of the good work done by Wuttunee, and they were most appreciative. The minutes then noted: “It was realized that the decision to have Mr. Wuttunee accompany the FSI as legal consultant would have to be approved by the FSI executive.”⁴⁰ At their next meeting, the FSI executive

38 The Provincial Committee on Minority Groups included representatives from the departments of Cooperation, Education, Agriculture, Social Welfare, Natural Resources, Municipal Affairs, Health, and the Economic Advisory and Planning Board. In addition, the following were members at large: John Archer, Lewis Thomas, Morris Shumiatcher and William Wuttunee. SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 CXXXIII 961a (150) 1/2, Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, attachment to Minutes, 4 December 1959.

39 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.7 I 291B, Lewis Thomas to T.C. Douglas, Report on a Permanent Organization for the Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, 26 January 1960.

40 R. Woollam Papers, Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, Minutes, 27 November 1959.

consented,⁴¹ and Wuttunee went to Ottawa, along with John Tootoosis, FSI president, and David Knight, vice-president.

The FSI brief did not have the emphasis on integration found in the Government of Saskatchewan brief. The theme was "the overriding desire of all Indians to be permitted to run their own affairs."⁴² The brief recommended the transfer of power from the Indian Affairs Department to band councils, more suitable remuneration for the chief as the "chief executive officer of the reserve," abolition of the permit system, and an end to Indian Affairs control over the wills of deceased Indians. The FSI's goal was to end paternalism and "the old vestiges of colonialism."⁴³ The Saskatchewan government brief had made many of the same points, but had presented them in a different context. It had argued that treating Indians as wards inhibited their integration into the community at large.⁴⁴ The FSI and the provincial government agreed that Indian administration badly needed reform, but they diverged in their hopes for what would replace the *status quo*.

The only area where the FSI brief had a clear integrationist component was education. The federal government was commended "for integrating Indian children with non-Indian children and we urge that this program be accelerated as much as possible."⁴⁵ With respect to health services, the FSI took a firm stand for treaty rights.⁴⁶ The brief criticized Ottawa for providing medical care on a welfare basis rather than as a legal obligation and for cutting Indians off from medical assistance if they had been away from their reserve for twelve months. It objected to the Saskatchewan hospitalization cards that had been issued to Indians and demanded they be replaced with treaty cards. A request was also made with respect to annual treaty payments. Their amount should be increased to compensate for monetary inflation since treaty signing.⁴⁷

When the FSI delegation testified before the Joint Committee, Wuttunee did most of the talking, Knight intervened several times, but Tootoosis said almost nothing. He spoke only twice, and his first words were: "When the treaties were made at Fort Carlton, the Indians were given an understanding."⁴⁸ By saying so little and emphasizing these words, Tootoosis

41 Ibid., 4 December 1959.

42 Government of Canada, Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Indian Affairs, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, No. 6, 25 May 1960, 440.

43 Ibid., 556.

44 Ibid., No. 12, 16 and 17 June 1960, 1040.

45 Ibid., No. 6, 25 May 1960, 449.

46 Ibid., 451-52.

47 Ibid., 455.

48 Ibid., 529.

made a point. As far as he was concerned, everything in the relations between Indians and non-Indians flowed from the treaties.

The FSI delegates addressed the Joint Committee in May 1960. Woollam, in the meantime, continued to make himself useful to the Federation. In his first "activity report" as executive director of the minorities committee, he stated that he had made arrangements for FSI letterhead and membership cards.⁴⁹ He wrote a lengthy memo setting forth what he hoped to accomplish in the next three years. This is an important document because in it Woollam expressed his ideas about his relationship with the FSI. He knew that the Saskatchewan government, as part of its integration policy, wanted to take over the administration of government services, including health, welfare, and education, to Indians. The province believed that separate administration under the Indian Affairs Department entrenched segregation and made it more difficult for Indians to become part of mainstream society. Indians were reluctant to move because they feared losing the secure benefits to which they were entitled as reserve residents. If Indians received the same services through the same government channels as did all other citizens, a barrier to leaving the reserves would be removed. The province, in effect, wanted to abolish the Indian Affairs Department and have provincial government departments take over its functions. The federal government would, however, be expected to compensate the province financially for assuming what had been, since Confederation, a federal responsibility.⁵⁰

Woollam's memo showed he was aware that the transfer of Indian administration from the federal to the provincial government was a sensitive issue for Indians. He saw as part of his job "to propagate a delicate interpretation of this merger to the Indian people, lest they regard it only as a 'breach of treaty'." He conceived his role as that of a guide, steering the FSI in the "right" direction. The Saskatchewan government would have to practice "educational paternalism":

I am well aware that the interest of provincial departments on behalf of Indian people are sincere interests. On the other hand, it is clear to me that the Indian people themselves are often initially suspicious concerning the motivation of provincial government planners. In short, although various departmental plans are made to favour the Indian and on his behalf, these plans are often misunderstood and may even be seen as "interference" by the Indian people themselves. I suggest that provincial administrators have frequently "set their sails hopefully" in expectation of some miraculous attitudinal response from the Indian people. Such a positive response, however, comes as a result of "planned change" — and it involves educational cost. A very carefully

49 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 CXXXIII 961a (150) 1/2, Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, Executive Director, Activity Report, 1 March to 22 April 1960.

50 Pitsula, "The Saskatchewan CCF Government and Treaty Indians," 39-52.

planned program of "educational paternalism" is, perhaps, prerequisite to the abandonment of "paternalistic programs."⁵¹

The Provincial Committee on Minority Groups discussed and approved the memo on 12 August 1960. Neither Premier Douglas nor any other committee member objected to its general thrust or to the specific passage quoted. Woollam was simply expressing what other provincial policy makers assumed concerning Saskatchewan government/FSI relations. The irony was that the province adopted a variation of the policy for which it condemned the federal government. The Indian Affairs Department had always acted as though it knew what was best for Indians. Now, the provincial government, in order to help Indians free themselves from Indian Affairs paternalism, was implementing its own form of paternalism.

The key was money. The FSI had no money other than what it received from the Saskatchewan government. Until budget year 1961-62 the province did not actually give the FSI a grant, but rather paid the travel and accommodation expenses of the chiefs and councillors who attended FSI conferences. The money was paid out of the premier's office, not out of FSI coffers. The Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, on 14 January 1961, decided to change this system. After much discussion, it agreed to give the FSI an outright grant of \$7,500 for their operations in fiscal year 1961-62. The step was taken with some trepidation. The minutes record that "Mr. Woollam reiterated his conviction, on point of questioning, that the executive was quite ready for this kind of responsibility and was as capable as any other group would be to handle its own finances."⁵² The committee recognized that \$7,500 was not an adequate budget for the FSI. It would cover the expenses of the annual conference and the cost of "Indian Outlook," the FSI publication, but that was all. There would not be enough money for the FSI to hire its own executive director. That the FSI wanted to do this was evident from a resolution passed at its June 1961 conference. The incoming executive was urged "to establish a central office of the FSI and to employ a Treaty Indian as an executive-director if or when this is made possible by financial grants to the Federation."⁵³ A companion resolution petitioned the federal government to match the \$7,500 grant given by the province and to allow bands to allocate funds for a small annual FSI membership fee.

Premier Douglas wrote Ellen Fairclough, the minister responsible for Indian Affairs, in support of these requests. He pointed out that the FSI was a democratic organization and that fifty-five of the sixty-seven Saskatchewan Indian bands had been represented at the last FSI conference.⁵⁴

51 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.7 I 291B, "Proposed Work Program, Executive Director, Provincial Committee on Minority Groups (Period of 1 March 1960 to 1 April 1963)."

52 R. Woollam Papers, Provincial Committee on Minority Groups, Minutes, 14 January 1961.

53 SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 XLV 864e (49) 5/6, Agenda and Resolutions of a Delegation from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, 26-27 October 1961.

54 *Ibid.*, R-33.1 XXIII 733b (23-12) 8/8, T.C. Douglas to E. Fairclough, 7 June 1961.

Fairclough replied that it was not her department's policy to provide financial subsidy to Indian organizations. She also ruled out the use of band funds for this purpose, arguing that individual Indians might belong to different organizations, and that voting band funds for a particular organization could lead to complications.⁵⁵

Compared with the federal government, the provincial government was generous in the support it gave the FSI. Tootoosis, during his many years as a political organizer, had encountered a great deal of opposition from the Indian Affairs Department and the RCMP.⁵⁶ It was a novelty for him to find a government eager to assist an Indian organization. Woollam recounted how the two of them used to travel the roads of Saskatchewan, visiting various reserves:

We'd be driving along and suddenly — he was a dour, old guy — but suddenly, he'd be chortling away, laughing like hell. [I asked,] "What is it, John?" [He replied,] "I can't believe this. My whole life goes into fighting these goddamn government people and stupid white men. Now I've got this stupid white man ready to drive me anywhere in a new government car and he's going to buy lunch and he's going to buy supper and he's going to put us in a hotel tonight. And he asks me where do I want to go next, and he knows all I'm doing is politically organizing my own people. I just don't believe it." He just felt that Tommy was a great good thing in his life, that I was a great good thing in his life. And he was delighted how it was all coming together.⁵⁷

Although Tootoosis and most of the FSI leaders of the early 1960s have passed away, Ken Goodwill, who served on the FSI executive in 1964-1965, was available for an interview in 1996. He confirmed that the FSI executive appreciated the help they received from the Douglas government: "First of all, they [the CCF] were the only group that it seemed were trying to help us, in spite of Indian Affairs, in spite of the federal government. They seemed to truly have some concern, some understanding, at least some concern, and probably compassion. And I think that grew out of Douglas himself and the people he surrounded himself with."⁵⁸

Nevertheless, provincial financial support was insufficient to allow the Federation to hire its own executive director, with the result that a government official continued to perform that role. Thus, even in the act of allowing the FSI more autonomy, it restricted that autonomy. The matter of FSI funding revealed the contradictory aims of provincial government

55 Ibid., E. Fairclough to T.C. Douglas, 13 July 1961.

56 Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman, *John Tootoosis* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications 1984), 159-65.

57 Interview, Ray Woollam, 24 August 1995.

58 Interview, Ken Goodwill, interviewed by Vera Delorme, Denita Stonechild, and James Pitsula, 24 July 1996.

policy. It both practiced "educational paternalism" to advance the goal of integration and sought to promote the development of the FSI as a strong, democratic organization. Woollam was the person who insisted that the FSI was "mature" enough to handle its own budget, but he also did the FSI's administrative work despite the fact that he was a government employee. In the memo outlining his three-year plan, he sketched his plans for the FSI:

I would work towards establishing the FSI over a period of several years, as a self-supporting non-governmental organization with whom our provincial relationships might be seen on a parallel to our relationships with the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. I would hope to make myself increasingly unnecessary to the welfare of the Federation.⁵⁹

After a period of tutelage, the FSI would gain its autonomy. But why wait? It seems fair to assume that the provincial government did not want to lose the leverage it needed for its policy of "educational paternalism."

The tension between empowering and controlling the FSI was also evident in the way conferences were organized. In a memo to the premier, Woollam noted that he had spent the better part of a month making arrangements for the FSI conference held 26 and 27 September 1960.⁶⁰ The conference was "small group oriented" and focussed on the theme, "Learning to Help Ourselves."⁶¹ Although most of the discussion group leaders were non-Indians from the Indian Affairs Department, the provincial Adult Education Division, the Department of Cooperation, and the Centre for Community Studies,⁶² Woollam tried to involve the delegates as much as possible:

Those of us who are "staff" should try to play background roles and our aim should be to encourage the fullest possible participation of the delegates — and to say as little as possible in bringing this about. It is suggested that we see ourselves as discussion group "helpers" rather than as discussion group "leaders."⁶³

59 Douglas Papers, R-33.7 I 291B, "Proposed Work Program, Executive Director, Provincial Committee on Minority Groups (Period of 1 March 1960 to 1 April 1963).

60 Ibid., R-33.1 CXXXIII 961a (150) 1/2, R. Woollam to T.C. Douglas, 11 October 1960.

61 Ibid., Federation of Saskatchewan Indians Conference Agenda, 26 and 27 September 1960.

62 Discussion group leaders included Orest Zakreski, placement officer, Indian Affairs Branch; Terry Phalen, Department of Cooperation; Dr. Peter Worsley and Walter Hlady, Centre for Community Studies; Peter Findlay, Gordon Campbell, and Billie McMath, Adult Education Division; Hon. O. Turnbull, Minister of Cooperation; John Webster, John Howard Society, and Fr. Bilodeau, principal of the Lebrét Residential School. In addition there were some group leaders of Indian ancestry: Bill Wuttunee, Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office; Eleanor and Alex Brass, Regina Native Society; Rev. Adam Cuthand, Prince Albert Indian and Métis Service Council, and David Greyeyes. SAB, Douglas Papers, R-33.1 CXXXIII 961a (150) 1/2, Discussion Group Orientation.

63 Ibid.

The FSI members appreciated this approach. At the next meeting of the executive in December 1960, Tootoosis said the fall conference was the best yet "in that the Indian people themselves had been very free to determine the agenda, resolutions, etc." The executive "felt that group resource leaders had been much less manipulative this year, but in this regard there is still room for improvement. It was suggested that Mr. Woollam might spend more time next year getting the 'helper' orientation across to these resource people."⁶⁴

The FSI conferences were typically held at Valley Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, but in June 1961 Woollam organized something different. On the morning of Thursday, 29 June, the delegates boarded buses for Regina. They toured the Department of Natural Resources museum at 8:30 a.m., the RCMP museum at 9:30, and arrived at the Legislative Building at 11 o'clock to present resolutions to the cabinet. Following lunch with members of cabinet in the Legislature's cafeteria, they departed at 2 o'clock for visits to CKCK TV station, Interprovincial Steel Company, and Imperial and Co-op oil refineries. They reassembled at the Legislative Building at 4:00 p.m. for payment of travel expenses. At 4:30 special buses left for Saskatoon and Prince Albert.⁶⁵ For chiefs and councillors from many of the more isolated reserves in the north, a visit to Regina was a special event.

The formal meeting with the cabinet was, as Woollam scribbled on his agenda, an "historic" occasion.⁶⁶ The gathering took place in the Legislative chamber, with members of the FSI executive and band chiefs occupying the desks of the MLAs. Councillors and other delegates sat in a reserved section of the chamber. The cabinet was seated in front of the Speaker's dais, while the main Indian speakers gathered around the clerk's table facing them. Bill Wuttunee and Ray Woollam, the "resource helpers," were positioned behind the delegation. Ernest Dillon opened the proceedings with a Cree prayer, followed by remarks from the newly elected FSI president, David Knight, and the outgoing president, John Tootoosis. A number of resolutions were presented, the theme of which was that the FSI wanted more provincial government services to improve the quality of life of Indians. The resolution concerning social welfare stated that provincial child welfare services should apply to Indians living on reserves. The health resolution implied that Indians wanted to be part of the new medicare plan being developed in the province. Other resolutions suggested that reserve Indians were interested in receiving provincial agricultural and co-op extension services and assistance in road building.⁶⁷ The general tenor of the presentations suggests that

64 Ibid., FSI Executive Minutes, 5 and 6 December 1960.

65 Ibid., R-33.1 CXXXIII 961 (150) 2/2, FSI Conference Agenda, Valley Centre, Fort Qu'Appelle, 26-29 June 1961.

66 Ibid., Outline of Procedure for FSI Delegation to the Cabinet, 29 June 1961.

67 Ibid., Resolutions to the Provincial Government from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, 29 June 1961.

Woollam was having some success in alleviating suspicions Indians might harbour about increased provincial involvement in their affairs.

Douglas resigned as premier in November 1961 to lead the federal New Democratic Party. This meant that the Provincial Committee on Minority Groups lost its chairman, but even if Douglas had stayed, a shake-up of the committee structure would have been likely. As Woollam explained to the new premier, Woodrow S. Lloyd, in May 1962, the committee had not functioned very well:

Premier Douglas did not have time for regular meetings of the Provincial Committee on Minority Groups. Latterly, the meetings which he called were called for a Saturday morning. Several of the members of the committee expressed resentment at this fact and attendance was sometimes limited. ... Most of these members, at points of a developing program, have been helpful and cooperative in terms of some particular interest shown or assistance to me. Together, however, it was seldom that any consensus of agreement could be reached, in meetings, with respect to particular problems.⁶⁸

Woollam advised that the committee be scrapped and replaced with a "people-to-people agency which would create local government structures and invest the responsibility in these people which must precede any fact of rehabilitation."⁶⁹ He said the best way to accomplish this would be through the establishment of a Community Development Branch of the Department of Municipal Affairs. This branch would extend its services in the north and to Metis communities in the south, "gaining experience toward the day when administration of Treaty Indian Affairs should be decentralized [that is, taken over by the province] by reason of an agreement with the federal authority."⁶⁹

The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Everett Wood, supported by his deputy minister, Meyer Brownstone, favoured this scheme. Wood recommended pilot projects in community development at Canoe Lake and Green Lake. He said that community development was a widely applied technique used in underdeveloped Third World areas, the essence of which was to hasten the pace of change "through the cooperation and involvement of the local people, with a view to achieving social and economic security."⁷⁰ Lloyd was won over, and the Community Development Branch was launched on 1 September 1962. Brownstone explained that the emphasis in the new Branch will be upon development of the community towards self-government and self-administration, rather than the former emphasis upon providing services to residents of the community.⁷¹ The Provincial Committee

68 SAB, Meyer Brownstone Papers, R-437 I 3b, R. Woollam to W.S. Lloyd, 25 May 1962.

69 Ibid.

70 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130a (9-12), E. Wood to W.S. Lloyd, J.H. Brockelbank, R.A. Walker, A.E. Blakeney, 3 August 1962.

71 SAB, Everett Wood Papers, R-420 II 5a, M. Brownstone to deputy ministers of Health,

on Minority Groups ceased to exist, its activities subsumed by the new branch.⁷²

Woollam spent some time doing community development work at Canoe Lake and Green Lake, but in February 1963⁷³ he left the employ of the government. He helped organize a consulting company, Group Resources Consultant Service, based in Edmonton, which received a Saskatchewan government contract to negotiate agreements with Hutterite colonies.⁷⁴ In addition, he continued his relationship with the FSI executive, who retained his services on a part-time basis for \$100 a month. The method of payment was that Woollam received a "loan-advance" of \$1,000, presumably to be paid back with ten months' work.⁷⁵

For the first time, the FSI had a staff person who was not an employee of the Saskatchewan government. Interestingly, the Federation, at this juncture, had a dispute with the government on the subject of money. On 8 February 1963 Wilfred Bellegarde, FSI secretary-treasurer, requested a grant of \$10,000 for 1963-64, up from the \$7,500 that had been given in each of the two previous fiscal years. He mentioned that the FSI was in debt, having overspent its 1962-63 allocation by \$1,400.⁷⁶ Cabinet decided on 19 March 1963 to keep the grant unchanged at \$7,500.⁷⁷ This provoked a remonstrance to the premier from Bellegarde, who said that the FSI had been repeatedly assured they would get \$10,000. They had already sent out notices to all the chiefs in Saskatchewan telling them the good news, as well as letters to service clubs referring to the increased grant in connection with a fund-raising appeal. Bellegarde accused the premier of breaking faith with Indian people: "We have found again and again that promises made to us by the federal government have been broken over the years. We have never before experienced an occasion when a promise of the provincial government was not kept."⁷⁸ The CCF government had always prided itself on being more

Treasury, Education, Cooperatives, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Industry and Information, and Mr. W.B. Baker, Centre for Community Studies, 1 October 1962.

- 72 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.1 I 37 (M-1), M. Brownstone to L.T. McLellan, 17 August 1962.
- 73 "When Ray Woollam left the employ of the Saskatchewan government in February...". SAB, Wood Papers, R-420 II 13b, President's Annual Report to the FSI, John Tootoosis, 7 October 1963.
- 74 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130a (9-12), Cabinet minute no. 2108, 5 February 1963; R-61.6 I 8e (4222b), R. Woollam to Don [Tansley], 13 October 1964 [sic] — the internal evidence of the letter makes it clear the date should be 1963.
- 75 The financial arrangements are not completely clear. See SAB, Wood Papers, R-420 II 13b, W. Bellegarde to E. Wood, 9 September 1963; Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130b (9-12), R. Woollam to E. Wood, 12 September 1963; Wood Papers, R-420 II 13b, E. Wood to W. Bellegarde, 16 September 1963.
- 76 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130a (9-12), W. Bellegarde to E. Wood, 8 February 1963.
- 77 Ibid., Cabinet Minute no. 2218, 19 March 1963.
- 78 Ibid., W. Bellegarde to W.S. Lloyd, 3 April 1963.

enlightened than the Indian Affairs Department. It must have nettled Lloyd to be lumped in the same category.

Municipal Affairs Minister Wood replied on the premier's behalf: "Apparently there has been some misunderstanding." Wood denied that he or any member of the government had ever promised a grant of \$10,000.⁷⁹ Brownstone also wrote, saying that as a deputy minister he could not make commitments on behalf of the government. He had merely told Bellegarde that he would support the FSI request to Treasury Board for \$10,000:

At no time during these steps did I indicate that the grant of \$10,000 would be available. ... I must also say that I found it embarrassing to be confronted with this situation in the presence of Mr. McGilp.⁸⁰

This last statement warrants comment. McGilp was the regional supervisor of Indian agencies in Saskatchewan. Brownstone was offended that an executive member of the FSI, who was supposed to be on the Saskatchewan government's "side," would expose a rift between the province and the FSI in front of the "opposition" — the Indian Affairs Department. The financial dispute was eventually resolved in September 1963, when cabinet agreed to give the FSI another \$2,500.⁸¹

Woollam apparently had no desire to continue indefinitely in the role of consultant to the FSI. In September 1963 he suggested that Jack Emms, an official in the Municipal Affairs Department, take over the function.⁸² Emms was a former Indian agent who had left the Indian Affairs Department to take up employment with the provincial government as the liaison officer in the Kamsack area, where his job was to try to ease tensions between the town and the neighbouring reserves. The position lasted one year, after which time work was found for him in the Community Development Branch. Martin Greenwood, the newly appointed director of the branch, vetoed the idea that Emms should take up the FSI work formerly done by Woollam. Greenwood was supported by G.J. Darychuk, who, in Brownstone's absence, was acting deputy minister of Municipal Affairs:

Mr. Greenwood's response in which I concur, is that the FSI should try to stand on their own feet and rather than have a provincial employee do the administrative work for them they would do better by hiring a full time secretary for this purpose. I cannot see how Jack Emms, or any other provincial public servant, could act both as an agent of the FSI and as a representative of this department. And while it is essential that liaison between the FSI and the government be maintained, I think we can accomplish this better by making it clear to the FSI that both Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Emms are agents of the province at all times.⁸³

79 Ibid., E. Wood to W. Bellegarde, 8 April 1963.

80 Ibid., M. Brownstone to W. Bellegarde, 8 April 1963.

81 Ibid., R-61.4 IX 130b (9-12), Cabinet Minute 2587, 24 September 1963.

82 Ibid., R. Woollam to E. Wood, 12 September 1963.

83 SAB, Wood Papers, R-420 II 13b, G. Darychuk to E. Wood, 23 October 1963.

Greenwood and Darychuk held that if the FSI had its own executive secretary, both the province and the Federation would benefit. The FSI would have more autonomy, and the province would avoid a conflict of interest.

Darychuk also frowned on Community Development Branch employees becoming overly involved in FSI conferences. He informed Wood that FSI secretary-treasurer Bellegarde had asked the Municipal Affairs Department "for the use of some of our staff at their Convention." Darychuk discouraged the idea: "I should hope that the Executive of the Federation plays an active part in the development of the agenda for the Conference and in conducting the Conference. I should not want to have our staff in the position of running the Conference for the Federation."⁸⁴ In his conference postmortem, Greenwood reported that the event had gone "pretty well (without too many obstacles arising) although here the work of Emms and Woollam was evident." Greenwood said that personally he wanted "to see more responsibility for the day-to-day work of the Federation taken over by the Federation executive itself." He also thought that the Saskatchewan government should "not try to push the Federation in any way, lest its usefulness to the Indian be vitiated." The Indians of Canada were being "pushed and urged" too much by outside agencies, and such a situation inhibited the development of sound leadership within the Indian community.⁸⁵

Greenwood, in theory at least, represented enlightened reform. In practice, he caused Saskatchewan government/FSI relations to deteriorate. Tootoosis complained to Premier Lloyd about the Community Development Branch director's conduct at a meeting at the Battleford Friendship Centre. His entire speech had been devoted to the work being done at Green Lake and Canoe Lake. Tootoosis pointed out that the Battleford Indian Agency didn't care about what was happening in Green Lake or Canoe Lake; they were interested in programs for the Battleford area. Furthermore, Greenwood, despite knowing that other people wanted to speak, ignored them and used up all the allotted time. The second area of grievance raised by Tootoosis was that Greenwood had not given the FSI executive sufficient time to study a government brief that had been prepared on the subject of medical care for Indians. He had called a meeting on one day's notice and then simply read the brief without leaving time for discussion. "Mr. Greenwood," Tootoosis concluded, "is shaking the trust between the Provincial Government and the Saskatchewan Indians." He asked that Greenwood be dismissed.⁸⁶ Although the director was not replaced, he

84 Ibid., G. Darychuk to E. Wood, 19 June 1963.

85 Ibid., R-420 II 19a, M. Greenwood to G. Darychuk, 7 November 1963.

86 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130c (9-12), O. Reiman to W.S. Lloyd, 13 January 1964.

resigned about a year later, following the election of the Liberal government under Ross Thatcher.⁸⁷

Tootoosis's comments were illuminating with respect to FSI expectations of the Saskatchewan government. The Federation expected the province to address Indian concerns and not waste time with irrelevant matters. It wanted to be heard, not drowned out by the voices of government bureaucrats, and to be consulted in a serious, not a perfunctory, way. Since Woollam had understood all this, his relations with the FSI had gone smoothly. Interviewed in 1995, he expressed admiration for Tootoosis's political skills: "John was as much a politician as Tommy Douglas was, in his own way. He was a great politician."⁸⁸ Woollam said that working with the FSI executive was a delight:

There's more sanity here than I find in any ten executive board rooms on the continent. There's not a flicker of anything in there that is other than dealing with reality, dealing with facts, and wondering what we can do about them.⁸⁹

He knew the FSI leaders on a personal level, partied with them,⁹⁰ and had great affection for them. His feelings showed in his farewell letter in October 1964. With the Liberals in power, he knew his usefulness to the Federation was at an end:

Getting to know, and to appreciate, each of you has given something of richness and meaning to my life, and for which I will always be thankful. I feel I can best serve you by no longer working in a consultant relationship to the FSI. ... I thank each of you for the memories which you leave me — Allan [Ahenakew] for his kind wisdom; Joe [Dreaver] for his humour and love of life; John [Tootoosis] for his stubborn determination to make things go — and his oratory; Wilf [Bellegarde] for his impatient ideals and his hard work; Emil [Gardypie] for his good nature and faithfulness; Sydney [Fineday] for his useful questioning approach; Ernest [Dillon] for his quiet and "earnest" ways; Roy [Musqua] for his warmth; Hilliard [McNab] for his friendship; Angus [Mirasty] for his concern about the North; Joe Williams for the depth of his feelings; John Skeebooss for having such a brave and kind wife! You are a real team of leaders. I pray that you will continue to believe in one another — and that every one of you will determine to give to the FSI "one more year" of everything you can put into it.⁹¹

Although Woollam saw his role as that of a guide, encouraging the FSI to accept provincial takeover of government services to Indians within the

87 Ibid., R-61.8 IX 38 (900) 1/2, M. Greenwood to R. Thatcher, 16 January 1965.

88 Interview, Ray Woollam, 24 August 1995.

89 Ibid., 25 August 1995.

90 Ibid., 24 August 1995.

91 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.8 IX 38 (900), R. Woollam to FSI Executive, 13 October 1964.

framework of a general policy of integration, his interpersonal skills were such that the FSI executive valued him. Greenwood, whose principles regarding FSI autonomy were perhaps more “politically correct,” did not have a “feel” for what Tootosis and the other FSI leaders considered acceptable behaviour. And yet, to compound the irony, on the main issue — the transfer of Indian administration from the federal to the provincial government — Greenwood had a better read of the FSI position than did Woollam.

Woollam was convinced by 1964 that the federal government was deliberately stalling what he called the “decentralization” process:

We are consequently faced, on every front, with stated policies of intention to decentralize jurisdiction, to cooperate with the province to this end — and at the same time with actions that orient to the single goal of a strengthened relationship between the Branch and “their” Indians. Yesterday, for example, I had discussions with Alberta’s regional suptdt. of the Branch — the day before with a leading Oblate priest in Alberta. In each instance, the story identical — “All this federal-provincial discussion will only end in the realization that the Indian is still 50 years away from any readiness for a ‘normal’ administration.”⁹²

Moreover, Woollam believed that the Indian Affairs Department had a strategy to neutralize FSI leaders by giving them jobs. David Knight had accepted federal employment, and Woollam feared Wilfred Bellegarde would be next:

Three years ago Mr. Douglas and I were both aware that the Branch would try to undermine provincial interests and the potential of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians by the “wooing” of David Knight into the federal camp. After one very vigorous Ottawa delegation was headed by David as FSI president, I learned that Saskatoon [at that time provincial headquarters for the Indian Affairs Department] was instructed to pull his fangs with kindness, and if possible, with employment. The former regional suptdt. told me this, and a lot of other such, one recent and drinking evening! — The FSI were seriously set back on their heels when David finally, and with reticence, accepted the job which his family so needed. I want to prophesy that Wilfred Bellegarde is about to depart down the same trail. As with Dave, I’ve put three years of sweat into the cultivation of Wilf’s current skills. ... Wilf has been our strongest CCF influence among Indians in the S. [south] of the province, and we are about to lose him.⁹³

Woollam advised the Saskatchewan government to take a more aggressive approach and demand a “complete transfer” [emphasis in original] of Indian services to the provincial level. “If these situations are to be

92 SAB, Wood Papers, R-420 II 13c, R. Woollam to M. Brownstone, 10 March 1964.

93 Ibid.

improved, at some point we must make a belligerent stand. Justice and idealism deserve an inning!"⁹⁴ Woollam assumed that "justice and idealism" were on the side of the province. Such conviction makes it easier to understand why the CCF government succumbed to the temptation to try to exert influence over the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians. It explains why Woollam wanted to "cultivate" FSI leaders like David Knight and Wilf Bellegarde, and why he regretted their "wooing" by the "federal camp."

Woollam believed he had made real headway in persuading the FSI of the desirability of provincial administration of Indian affairs. In a letter to Lloyd on 31 October 1963, Woollam said he was "convinced that we would not be hard pressed to generate a favourable response from the FSI on the matter of total decentralization."⁹⁵ The evidence suggests, however, that he was deceiving himself on this matter. Greenwood attended the FSI conference in October 1963 and came away with a different impression: "Some interest was shown on the possibility of a provincial take-over of Indian Affairs by a few, but this interest was not generally expressed."⁹⁶ Moreover, when Meyer Brownstone addressed the FSI executive meeting in January 1964 on the subject, the minutes record that he was asked many questions and that "no action was taken by the Executive on this issue but gratitude was expressed to Dr. Brownstone for discussing the matter so openly."⁹⁷

The most definitive FSI statement on the issue came from Tootoosis. His letter to Lloyd on 13 April 1964 was politically very astute. On behalf of the Federation, he first thanked the premier for seeking the FSI's thoughts regarding the proposal to extend provincial services to Indians. He then said:

We feel that we have not yet been given authority by our own membership to speak decisively with respect to these matters. We can say, however, that our executive members were pleased to note that both provincial and federal governments agree that the Treaties will not be broken in any way, that the views of the Indians will be sought, and that any changes with respect to our administration will take place slowly and carefully.⁹⁸

He went on to say that, while the FSI could not express an opinion as to whether it was in favour of provincial administration of Indian services, it wanted Lloyd to give very careful consideration to a number of points. First, the consent of any Indian bands affected by such changes should be secured before any changes were implemented. Secondly, before any changes were

94 Ibid.

95 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130c (9-12), R. Woollam to W.S. Lloyd, 31 October 1963.

96 SAB, Wood Papers, R-420 II 19a, M. Greenwood to G. Darychuk, 7 November 1963.

97 SAB, Lloyd Papers, R-61.4 IX 130c (9-12), "Indian Outlook," March 1964.

98 Ibid., R-61.4 XXII 534 (21-32-9), J. Tootoosis to W.S. Lloyd, 13 April 1964.

initiated, a thorough program of education should take place. Third, the "existing values and standards" of Indians should be integral to any programs made available to them. For example, child welfare services on reserves "should be initially oriented to our own values and standards." Fourth, it should be clearly understood that any program not specifically dealt with by agreement between the two levels of government should remain the responsibility of the federal government. And, finally, any existing program benefits (for example, provision of glasses, dentures, and other benefits by the federal Indian health services and not included in provincial medicare) should be maintained or raised. Although various specific concerns were mentioned, the bottom line was that the FSI withheld consent to the transfer of services. This was the net result of "educational paternalism." At the end of the day, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians held fast to its autonomy and stayed focussed on its first concern — the defence of treaty rights.

The provincial government had always said that integration did not threaten treaty rights, but the government's interpretation of treaty rights was very narrow. This was the buried issue that lay at the heart of the misunderstanding between the Government of Saskatchewan and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians. As the Indian political movement evolved during the 1960s and 1970s, the issue surfaced and became more sharply focussed. The federal government's 1969 White Paper was not the only factor, but it helped polarize the debate. The paper made no attempt to reconcile integration with the protection of Indian status and treaty rights. The ambiguity upon which Saskatchewan CCF government policy depended was dissolved.

In the wake of the White Paper, Indian organizations became more assertive and the drive for self-government gained momentum. The period 1958 to 1964, in retrospect, was a transitional one, in which the Saskatchewan government promoted both integration and treaty rights and was both paternalistic and supportive of FSI autonomy. The contradictions were smoothed over because there was an advantage to both parties. The FSI received funds with which to build their organization and had an ally in their resistance to Indian Affairs control. The Saskatchewan government had friends in the Indian community through whom it hoped to advance the twin causes of Indian self-assertion and integration. The relationship also worked because of the knowledge and sensitivity of people like Ray Woollam and Tommy Douglas, who attempted to influence, but never to dominate, the FSI. It worked because of the strength and determination of leaders like John Tootoosis and Wilf Bellegarde, who accepted help, but guarded their independence.

The later 1950s and early 1960s were a unique time in the history of the relations between aboriginals and non-aboriginals in Saskatchewan. The period contained elements of the past and the future; paternalism mingled with Indian self-determination. In the years that followed, the former yielded to the latter, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians emerged as

one of the strongest and most stable Indian political organizations in the country, and Saskatchewan government/FSI relations moved to a new plane. The Government of Saskatchewan came to regard the FSI as an autonomous body in no way subject to paternalistic control or influence. The change occurred because of what had been accomplished from 1958 to 1964, when the CCF government and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians established a relationship which, though riddled with contradictions, was based on reciprocal advantage and mutual respect.