

# **THE JAMES SMITH RESERVE CREE COUNTERBALANCE I.Q. TEST**

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## **ABSTRACT/RESUME**

This paper presents an outline of the function of the more commonly used "intelligence" tests of North America. The author begins with a brief history of such tests, and goes on to consider their present status in research and policy. Recognizing the cultural bias inherent in these tests, the author and his Saskatchewan Cree students developed their own local test, designed to rectify what they perceive as disfunctional aspects of the usual WASP-oriented tests. The new test is presented for the reader with a scoring key.

Cet article décrit à grands traits la fonction des tests d'intelligence les plus communément utilisés en Amérique du Nord. L'auteur commence par un bref historique de ces tests, puis considère leur statut actuel dans la recherche et la politique. Après avoir mis en évidence le parti pris culturel inherent à ces tests, l'auteur et ses étudiants Cree du Saskatchewan ont développé leur propre test local, qu'ils ont créé afin de rectifier ce qu'ils percevaient comme des aspects disfonctionnels des tests habituels, créés pour les WASP (Blancs anglo-saxons protestants). Le nouveau test est présenté au lecteur avec ses modalités de chiffrage.

## **A LITTLE INTRODUCTION: INTELLIGENCE BEFORE I.Q. TESTS**

Before passports and driver's licences people could travel relatively easily and just about anybody with a car could drive. The same

goes for I.Q. tests. Before society became divided into rich and poor, it was assumed that most people could do most things. In a preclass society, like the Cree of some years back, it was just "natural" that everyone would find out how to hunt, or make clothes, and everyone would learn most of the songs, legends and so on. Though a few outstanding people might become chiefs or shamans everyone was more or less equally "smart." But in slave societies it was considered just as "natural" to believe that slaves were "talking cattle," hardly smarter than goats and possibly not as smart as horses! Similarly in the feudalism of the middle ages few believed that common peasants could ever learn how to read and no one published any books for them.

### THE PROBLEM IN MORE RECENT TIMES

The political revolutions that announced the victory of modern, capitalist industry also promised much more democracy. So when the French revolution of 1789 promised "liberty, equality and fraternity," it had to try to deliver on the promise by providing education for everybody so that they would have at least a chance to get equal.

### THE DOUBLE-BIND OF MODERN "DEMOCRATIC" EDUCATION

After their revolution the French started out to try to educate everyone, but they soon ran into the double bind that troubles all modern capitalist countries - if everybody gets well-educated, then who the- heck will do the dirty work, the boring work, the heavy work, the seasonal work and the dangerous work? Besides, all that education costs money that could be better used for making businessmen rich rather than wasting it on the "lower classes."

### PROFESSOR BINET'S ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM - THE I.Q. TEST

By the mid 1800's a French professor called Binet devised a solution - a test for an "Intelligence Quotient" that he claimed would scientifically distinguish between those able to benefit from advanced schooling and those on whom such education would be

wasted. It took him several years but he finally made a scale where the "average" was 100, smart people scored over 100 and dumb people scored under 100. Even today a lot of naive people still believe that the I.Q. scale is just "pure math" with no social or racial bias. But Professor Binet had a couple of tricks up his sleeve.

## THE FIRST TRICK

By sheer "coincidence" the scale works out just right for the demands of modern private industry. After all, there are only a few slots for "A's" needed to be doctors, lawyers, executives, etc., a few more "B's" as skilled workers, lots of average "C" types to do the ordinary work, some "D's" to do the more unpleasant work -and always room at the bottom! The I.Q. trick makes it all look "natural," just like slave society looked natural to people who lived in it.

## BINET'S OTHER TRICK

Everyone in a modern democracy knows you shouldn't dis-criminate on the basis of class, sex or race. Except for private schools, no one is supposed to be refused an education just because they are children from a working class family. We even have laws and Human Rights Commissions to make sure that women and racial minorities aren't discriminated against. But there are no laws to stop discrimination against the stupid! So generation after generation of working class and Indian families have been kept at the bottom of society by I.Q. tests and education systems designed for white, middle class families. This whole boondoggle goes right back to Professor Binet, who perfected his test amongst the middle and upper class children of Paris and - to and behold - found that working class kids didn't do so well at it.

## THE PROBLEM IN CANADA TODAY

Right into the 1970's Indian Reserves and Metis communities regularly had half of their children labelled as "retarded" by tests like that invented by Binet. It is long past the time for recognizing that all such tests (and educators are always scrambling to invent "better" ones, or pretending to "phase them out") *are political to*

*the core. After all, it was a political decision in the 1920's to improve American I.Q. tests so that women were no longer discriminated against. Before that women scored so low that they were treated as a separate group entirely. All that was done to correct this was to add some questions that girls were especially good at answering, and to drop some of the questions that boys answered better than girls. So it is absolutely clear that it is also a political decision that I.Q. tests have not been changed to bring up the ratings of ethnic minority children and working class children.*

### A BABY-STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The following I.Q. test is designed to "even the score" for Cree kids. Although it is tongue in cheek, it is probably not much more biased than the present tests that discriminate against Cree people.

### DANGER: DO NOT PROCEED FURTHER WITHOUT READING THIS WARNING

Sure one can design an I.Q. test to even the odds a little for Cree kids, but does that mean that you are going to accept the rules of the I.Q. game - that there is only room at the top for a few who succeed in the mad scramble to get there? Or the rule that most people will end up labelled dull-normal and spend the rest of their lives intellectually suffocated and deprived of mankind's greatest treasure - a full culture? Or the rule that the wonderful, many sided things that humans are can be boiled down to a barbaric number that will determine one's slot in society? All this goes against every-thing that is supposed to be at the core of Indian culture and its respect for people as people. So maybe a "serious" Cree I.Q. test is not possible!

Yet I fear there will be pressure for a "serious" Cree I.Q. test. It seems that the policy of all governments in Canada is to create a new elite of a few native people as businessmen, professionals and administrators while the majority remain more or less where they have been for several generations. Perhaps we will yet see a new "serious" Cree I.Q. test which will prove that the new elite has above normal intelligence while the rest were so "dumb" that they just kept living on fishing, trapping, hunting and welfare.

## PART I: VOCABULARY TEST

Even the dullest student should be able to get a few of these. Most of the words are used everyday in Saskatchewan, so it is no excuse if you don't speak Cree.

1. Muskison (hint: worn on foot)
2. Bannock
3. Tipi
4. Mosotaiskan (hint: 40 miles west of Regina)
5. Moswa
6. Chitek (as in Chitek Lake)
7. Sheho (northwest of Yorkton)
8. Cabri (northwest of Swift Current)
9. Nokomis
10. Ministik (beach at Madge Lake)
11. Nipawin
12. Kinistino
13. Ogema or Okimaw
14. Sakimay
15. Muskwa
16. Sikak
17. Amisk (as in Amisk Lake)
18. Sisip
19. Sipy (as in Mississippi)
20. Nipy
21. Tansi
22. Napao
23. Iskwao (in cowboy movies "squaw")
24. Towow
25. Astum
26. Awas
27. Atim
28. Mistik
29. Payak
30. Soniyaw
31. Napasis
32. Namoya nantow
33. Mispitohn
34. Siwitakan

- 35. Kesekaw Pesim
- 36. Mistikwan
- 37. Simakanis
- 38. Muskikowapoy
- 39. Kiskinohamakao
- 40. Kiskinomatohwikamik

## PART II: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

1. Nanabush and the Dancing Ducks is:
  - a) a rock group
  - b) people
  - c) an Indian legend
  - d) a fairy tale
  
2. On Treaty Day a Registered Indian receives:
  - a) \$500.00
  - b) \$1.00
  - c) \$5.00
  - d) \$10.00
  - e) \$25.00
  
3. You can say Tansi in the:
  - a) morning
  - b) afternoon
  - c) night
  - d) all of these
  
4. The Saskatchewan Indian is:
  - a) a song
  - b) a poem
  - c) a magazine about Indians
  - d) a T.V. show of Indian Affairs
  
5. The Indian Act is:
  - a) a play put on by Indians
  - b) a jig done by Indians
  - c) a paper where the rights of Indians are listed
  - d) a paper where Indians sign their names

6. Pow-wow means:

- a) a meeting
- b) dancing
- c) a dog's bark
- d) a ceremony
- e) a feast

7. Which is a language Indian people speak:

- a) French
- b) English
- c) Cree
- d) Yiddish
- e) Chinese

8. A tomahawk is:

- a) long beads
- b) a weapon
- c) a string
- d) a stick
- e) a hawk

9. Treaty Six was signed in the year of:

- a) 1976
- b) 1811
- c) 1876
- d) 1869
- e) 1870

10. A Status Card is for:

- a) American Express cardholders
- b) Whites
- c) Ukrainians
- d) Indians
- e) cadillac owners

11. When you "tan" you're:

- a) laying in the sun
- b) hunting
- c) drying meat
- d) making a hide
- e) painting

12. "Beadwork" is:

- a) Throwing beads around
- b) using moose hair on hides
- c) sewing beads on hide
- d) sewing grills on moose hair

13. An Indian used this for hunting:

- a) club
- b) machine gun
- c) bow and arrow
- d) six shooter
- e) bomb

### PART III: ATTITUDES "WHAT TO DO IF"

1. What would you do if you got lost in the bush with no food and didn't know where you were?

- a) cry loudly so someone would hear you
- b) run as fast as you're legs could carry you
- c) build a big fire
- d) build a distress triangle and wait there. There's always someone who misses the person and starts looking.

2. What would you do if your parents couldn't buy the bike (horse) they promised you?

- a) get a job and buy it yourself
- b) throw a tantrum
- c) accept something else
- d) wait and ask again
- e) save up some money from your weekly allowance

3. What do you do if you run out of gas on the reserve:

- a) walk to the nearest town for gas
- b) wait in the car till a fuel truck comes
- c) wait till dark and then go borrow some gas
- d) wait till somebody drives by and helps you out
- e) phone to the nearest garage

4. What do you do if you were taking part in a peace pipe ceremony and you don't smoke?
- a) hand it over to the next person as fast as you can
  - b) put the pipe to your lips without puffing
  - c) tell the other person you do not smoke
  - d) tell the other person to get lost
5. What would you do if a friend asked to borrow five dollars and that's all you had?
- a) tell him to get lost
  - b) tell him you need it too
  - c) lend it to him
  - d) tell him that you don't have any
6. If you saw someone having trouble on the road you would:
- a) stop and see if you could help him out
  - b) wave and pass him by
  - c) tell him you can't help him out and leave
7. What would you do if you see an Indian walking, going to town?
- a) drive by and wave
  - b) honk your horn
  - c) stop and give him a ride
  - d) run him off the road
8. What do you do if a black cat crosses your path?
- a) sit down
  - b) turnaround
  - c) run for it
  - d) go around it
  - e) turn around and go around the other way

**PART IV: CREE COUNTER BALANCE TEST - WHICH DOESN'T BELONG?**

Which doesn't belong?

- 1. canoe, boat, raft, ship, kayak
- 2. muskrat, beaver, mink, gopher, squirrel

3. Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Ukrainian, Cheyenne
4. fishing, trapping, hunting, sailing, canoeing
5. board, nails, starch, pelt, string
6. flour, water, wood, chocolate, frying pan, lard, baking soda
7. canvas tent, lean-to, teepee, brick house, log house
8. water, clothes, soap, dryer, tub
9. wigwan, tipi, tent, trailer, sweat lodge

## AFTERWORD

This test was largely built up by the students of the teacher trainees class at James Smith Indian Reserve in the summer of 1978. Professor Daniels was teaching Sociology 100 and the test was a group assignment which he has amended and reworked for use here. Professor Daniels teaches sociology at the University of Regina, where he specializes in nationality questions, colonialism and underdevelopment.

Readers who wish to follow up on this whole question should look at the following materials, amongst others:

A. Gartner, C. Creer, F. Riessman, *The New Assault on Equality: I.Q. and Social Stratification*, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, Toronto, 1974.

Lome Elkin, *A Question of Rights. Saskatchewan's Mentally Retarded Move from Institutions to the Community*, National Health Study, 1976.

*Racism, Intelligence and the Working Class*, Progressive Labour Party, 1974. This excellent pamphlet begins with rhetoric but has a very solid, useful and readable core. A few copies are available from the author at .75 cents each.

THE JAMES SMITH RESERVE CREE COUNTERBALANCE I.Q.  
TEST:

ANSWERS

PART I:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Moccasin                                       | 21. hello, good day                                       |
| 2. bannock  | 22. man   |
| 3. tipi   | 23. woman   |
| 4. Moose Jaw                                      | 24. your welcome, come in<br>(literally "it's wide open") |
| 5. moose  | 25. come here   |
| 6. pelican  | 26. go away   |
| 7. prairie chicken                                | 27. dog   |
| 8. antelope                                       | 28. tree or wood  |
| 9. my uncle                                       | 29. one   |
| 10. island  | 30. money   |
| 11. a place to stand                              | 31. boy   |
| 12. the three of us                               | 32. not bad   |
| 13. someone who excels<br>(later manager or boss) | 33. arm   |
| 14. mosquito                                      | 34. salt  |
| 15. bear  | 35. sun   |
| 16. skunk - just like it sounds!                  | 36. head  |
| 17. beaver  | 37. police  |
| 18. duck  | 38. medicine soup   |
| 19. river   | 39. school teacher  |
| 20. water   | 40. school  |

COMMENTARY - If you think this vocabulary test is unfair, consider the following one from a "real" I.Q. test:

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. orange   | 23. shrewd    |
| 2. envelope | 24. mosiac    |
| 3. straw    | 25. stave     |
| 4. puddle   | 26. bewail    |
| 5. tap      | 27. ochre     |
| 6. gown     | 28. repose    |
| 7. roar     | 29. ambergris |
| 8. eyelash  | 30. limpet    |

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 9. Mars              | 31. frustrate    |
| 10. juggler          | 32. flaunt       |
| 11. scorch           | 33. incrustation |
| 12. lecture          | 34. retroactive  |
| 13. Skill            | 35. philanthropy |
| 14. brunette         | 36. piscatorial  |
| 15. muzzle           | 37. milksop      |
| 16. haste            | 38. harpy        |
| 17. peculiarity      | 39. depredation  |
| 18. priceless        | 40. perfunctory  |
| 19. regard           | 41. achromatic   |
| 20. tolerate         | 42. casuistry    |
| 21. disproportionate | 43. homunculus   |
| 22. lotus            | 44. sudorific    |
|                      | 45. parterre     |

This test makes the mistake of confusing intelligence with "bookishness." It thus discriminates against children from blue collar working families and certainly against people like the Cree with oral cultures.

## PART II:

1. C - an Indian legend
2. C - \$5.00
3. D - all of these
4. C - a magazine about Indians
5. C - a paper where the rights of Indians are listed
6. B - dancing
7. C - Cree
8. B - weapon
9. C - 1876
10. D - Indians
11. D - making a hide
12. C - sewing beads on hide
13. C - bow and arrow

## PART III:

1. D - Build a distress triangle and wait there. There's always someone who misses the person and starts looking.
2. Acceptable answers - C - times may be hard, and something smaller or cheaper is better than nothing; the others have to be thought of.
  - Unacceptable answers - A - because no jobs available (eg., mowing grass, newspaper routes, deliveries)
    - B - you'll only be ignored or punished for this type of behavior
    - D - nagging, persistent attitude
    - E - you don't receive weekly allowance
3. D - Wait till somebody drives by and helps you out.
4. B - Put the pipe to your lips without puffing.
5. C - Lend him. An Indian will always give his last to a friend.
6. A - Stop and see if you can help him out.
7. C - Stop and give him a ride.
8. E - Turn around and go around the other way.

COMMENTARY - People may argue that this section is unfair because it measures values instead of "intelligence." But so do the "real" tests! They reinforce the values of competition, private property and self interest (the values of capitalism) as opposed to co-operation and collective values. An example from a "real" test:

Q. What's the thing to do when you have broken something that belongs to someone else?

Correct answers: "I'd be scared that I had to buy another for them." "If I have one I'd give it to him." "Pay for it." "Give them something."

Wrong answers: "Be ashamed." "Tell my mother." "Tell them I did it." "My mother will spank me." "Feel sorry."

## PART IV

1. Ship, because it is not individually built.
2. Gopher, because its fur is not commercially sold.

- S. Ukranian, because it's not a native tribe.
4. Sailing, because it is not done for a living
5. Starch, because they didn't use starch for preparing hides.
6. Chocolate, because it is not used to make bannock.
7. Brick house, because all others are used by Indians.
8. Dryer, because Indians hang out their clothes and don't have dryers.
9. Trailer, because Indians don't live in trailers.

## PART V:

1. There are no car dealers, nice showrooms or paved streets on any reserves that we have seen.

2. Motors don't belong on a canoe. (This is quite funny. The James Smith teacher trainees were sure of this, yet any Indians along the Churchill River know that everyone uses a motor on a canoe, and only a foolish person would paddle! Perhaps we need a special I.Q. test for *Northern Cree* too?)

## PART VI: B is obviously prettier

If you think this is unfair, consider the following question from a "real" I.Q. test - it's just too bad if your mother or father or other people dear to you don't fit the middle class WASP stereotype of prettiness.

QUESTION: "Which is prettier?"



