

SAME/DIFFERENCE: THE MEDIA, EQUAL RIGHTS AND ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN CANADA, 1968

Barbara M. Freeman

School of Journalism and Communication
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada, K1S 5B6

Abstract / Résumé

In 1968, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women toured Canada. The hearings were dominated by White, middle-class women who complained of many legal, economic and social inequalities, but Native women also expressed their views. Using archival radio, television and press material, this article explores journalists' stories concerning the boundaries between White and Aboriginal women in the south, and calls for more sophisticated analysis of the media and Native women's issues that are available to date. Although the media's overriding message touted "sameness" as a condition for equality, it also allowed for cultural "difference".

En 1968, la Commission royale d'enquête sur le statut de la femme tenait à travers le Canada des séances qui, grâce à de leur couverture médiatique, devinrent un forum sans pareil sur la question de droits des femmes. Il ne s'agit pas pour l'auteure d'avancer qu'une divergence culturelle entre les femmes blanches et aborigènes séparait la société canadienne dans les années soixante, mais plutôt de souligner la complexité des ces deux notions et la façon dont celles-ci semèrent la confusion parmi les journalistes à cette époque.

Introduction

In 1968, the federal Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada held public hearings across the country. It had been established the year before when an *ad hoc* committee of 32 groups representing mostly anglophone, White women brought pressure to bear on the minority Liberal government in Ottawa. During the spring and fall of 1968, seven Commissioners, five women and two men, travelled across the country asking Canadians if the political, economic and legal status of women could be changed for the better. In December of 1970, after several delays, the Commission brought down its report, containing 167 recommendations (Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970).

The Commission's proceedings had, from the start, focused almost entirely on the experiences of White, middle-class women, but Native women did present briefs or otherwise make their views known. Their grievances, as those of the White women, caught the attention of the media, which regularly covered the hearings. Using the Commission as a case study, this article addresses a need for broader and more sophisticated interpretations of news media coverage of Native women's issues, especially in a Canadian historical context, than are available to date. Journalists' representations of these issues in 1968, while they sometimes exploited stereotypes, resulted in complex messages to Canadian audiences about the similarities and differences between Aboriginal and White women, and among Native women as well. The media often followed the assimilationist line then favoured by the federal government, yet, even so, there were "leaks" in which the importance of cultural differences were stressed.

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women is considered a milestone in the history of Canadian women, coming as it did when many women felt that changes in the law were long overdue. In the 1960s, as the economy continued to expand and many women became better educated, they found that the social mores of the post-war era, which valued middle-class domesticity, had fallen well behind their own experiences of what they could achieve, especially now that they could control the size of their families using the birth control pill and other methods. Although more and more married women were either rejoining the workforce or remaining in jobs they had taken during the war, they were still devalued in relation to men in the eyes of the law and the state and this had a serious impact on

their economic status and freedom (Prentice *et al.*, 1996; Vickers, 1992; Burt, 1993; and Ursel, 1992).

The women were pressing their cause during a period of political unrest and change. At the time, the struggles of various minority groups in the United States and Canada, including people of colour, Quebec separatists and the Aboriginal peoples, were competing for media attention with New Left campus politics, the peace movement, the "hippie" counterculture and the so-called "sexual revolution."¹ The fact that 1968 was the United Nations' International Year of Human Rights gave journalists a handy "hook" for just about any story that involved personal freedoms. The Commission saw women's rights in relation to the U.N. principle that all humans are free and equal in the same way, regardless of the differences in their identities and interests. This liberal, humanist model of sexual equality focused on individual rights and merit, and touted "equal opportunity" rather than "equality" between men and women.² As the chairwoman, Florence Bird, explained at the time, the Commission's investigation might result not only in Canadian women receiving "equal opportunity" in all areas of their lives, "but maybe help to create a society in which people will be judged on *merit*, not by the colour of their skin, or their religion or their sex."³

The women, mostly White and middle-class, who appeared at the hearings challenged the status quo: that education for young women was predicated on the idea that they would become wives and mothers, equal pay and minimum wage laws were applied inadequately and unequally across the country, marital property was assumed to belong to the husband regardless of the labour the wife put into the household, abortion was illegal except to save the life of the mother, access to birth control information and devices was limited by law, and the lack of childcare services was preventing mothers from earning needed income for their families. These were among the many issues they brought to the Commission.⁴

The Commissioners, all of whom were White and most of whom were professionals, also explored one area with which they and most reporters were not familiar—the lives of Aboriginal women on Reserves and on city streets. Native women also felt discriminated against in Canadian society as women, and within their own communities at times as well. But they also were the targets of racial antipathy, as were Native men. Consequently, in many Aboriginal cultures such as the Mohawk, where the women have traditionally held positions of great influence, they have seen it as their responsibility to fight to improve the lives of all of their people, believing that they, too, would benefit from an improvement in the status of their men.⁵ Several Aboriginal women appeared at the Commission hearings to plead

for better living conditions on their Reserves, help for their youngsters going to the cities, and a change in the federal law which at the time stripped First Nations women of their "Indian status" if they married White or non-status men.

At the time, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics did not keep population records for Native people. But some unpublished studies written for the Commission suggested that there were about a quarter of a million registered, or "status" Indians in Canada, about half of whom were women. It was much more difficult to track the non-status population, including the Métis.

Method and Theoretical Approach

While scholars have noted the important role that journalists and broadcasters played in the Commission's successful bid for public and political attention, they have not discussed it in any great detail.⁶ The media, including the Canadian Press news agency (CP) and the country's public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), covered the hearings regularly, relaying to their audiences the concerns of the people who presented briefs. Aside from 1,500 newspaper and magazine clippings and 16 hours of radio and TV programs preserved on TV film and audio tape, other primary sources include the papers of the Commission and two of its members, and audio tapes of the actual hearings.⁷

This article is an exploration of the English-language media's perception of "equality" and "status" in relation to Native women in the south. Two dozen articles and 30 minutes of programming were examined, and these checked against two hours of audio tapes of the original hearings at which the Aboriginal women presented their briefs. The relatively small amount of media coverage reflects the minority position of the Aboriginal participants in the Commission proceedings and in the country as a whole. Consequently, I considered all of the coverage given to these few briefs important to this analysis.

Several media scholars, although they take different approaches, see the news as socially constructed. They argue that journalists' claims to "objectivity" are naive, if not spurious, and that their real biases can be determined by examining various aspects of the ways in which news is produced. These aspects reflect the ways in which news is organized, controlled and presented, including the interplay between journalists and their sources; and how newsworthiness is based on values imbedded in the overall culture. These values include conflict, often between two oppositional sides in a dispute; unusualness, which introduces a person, an argument or an event appearing to clash with the usual social expectations

or norms; timeliness, which suggests a connection with other events or issues happening at the same time; proximity, that is, a geographical or philosophical connection with the audience; an emphasis on elites or hierarchies, that is, prominent men or women who represent expertise or authority, or otherwise pique audience interest; a focus on "personalities" or ordinary people to whom audiences can presumably relate; and a story's relevance or familiarity to editors, journalists and audiences, a familiarity founded in the story-telling conventions of our culture (Schudson, 1991; van Zoonen, 1991; Ericson *et al.*, 1992; Galtung and Ruge, 1981; Sigal, 1986; Gans, 1980; Gitlin, 1980, Bird and Dardenne, 1988). Another scholar, Teun Van Dijk, has listed the same general news values, but in a way which makes them central to his thesis that news as discourse involves cultural understandings that what is "new" is understood in the context of what has gone before by journalists, editors and audiences. He names these values as novelty, recency, presupposition, consonance, relevance and proximity (van Dijk, 1988). The finished journalistic product can thus include cultural stereotypes, and quotes which are over-emphasized, misworded, or taken out of context, especially when a journalist is reporting on issues of importance to people of another culture (*Ibid*).

Similarly, gender and race are a socially constructed categories; in other words, regardless of obvious physical differences, the ways in which women, White and Native, are perceived are products of the power relations in society, and, as such, are tied to specific historical and cultural contexts. How women of any race are expected to behave, or how much freedom they have, depends on time and place; yet, there is some continuity to these cultural expectations and similarities in how their defiance or acquiescence is regarded.⁸ The more that Native people are perceived to be the "same" as Whites in their lifestyles and aspirations, the more sympathy and acceptance they receive. Differences in skin colour or general outlook are not necessarily negative, however; they can be perceived as "exotic", or "noble." Whether perceptions are positive or negative, they are, as Mary Ann Weston points out in her new study of the media and Native people, always seen in relation to White values and norms. Weston discusses, for example, the good Indian/bad Indian prototype. By the 1960s, when Native people were resisting government attempts to assimilate them into mainstream society, the media often focused on the "degraded" Indian, who was alcoholic and poverty-stricken, and had supposedly adopted only the worst elements of White culture. Weston's work does not specifically examine Native women in detail, however (Weston, 1996).

Those studies are few and far between, especially for the 1960s, and much of it is presented in the oral history tradition. A recent article by

Marlene Brant Castellano and Janice Hill on Native women in Ontario points out that media images have relayed Aboriginal identity as "a single category of people on the margins of Canadian society" (Castellano and Hill, 1995; McNab, 1995; Cruikshank, 1990; Crnkovich, 1990).

Another brief discussion about more recent events suggests that the media still tend to frame Native women according to a simplistic princess/squaw dichotomy. Weston describes the "princess" icon as the Pocahontas model of beautiful, maidenly, self-sacrificing virtue. Native women were expected to be shy and self-effacing.⁹ Her princess' counter-foil, the "squaw", was, in the words of Canadian writer Daniel Francis, culturally regarded as everything the princess was not, "ugly...debased, immoral, a sexual convenience," and often living "a squalid life of servile toil."¹⁰

Background: Native People In Canada

At the time of the Commission hearings, Native peoples were gathering strength to resist the federal model of assimilation. Castellano and Brant tell us that, from an Aboriginal perspective, "the understanding of nationhood is rooted in a spiritual world view that recognizes a unique bond between the land as the source of sustenance and the people whose responsibility it is to take care of the land." This is seen as a covenant with the Creator. But years of colonial and church rule, which robbed them of their land and tried to separate the people from their spiritual beliefs and heritage, constituted a serious assault on their culture and heritage (Castellano and Hill, 1995).

During the 1960s, the federal government continued to cling to its acculturation model as desirable for the Aboriginal people, that is, it assumed that improved living standards and an adequate education were the tools that would help them both survive and achieve equality with other Canadians. From this White perspective, all "Indians," "Eskimos" and Métis¹¹ naturally aspired to the same housing, education, work opportunities, and medical services as other Canadians. Aboriginal children who came under federal jurisdiction were given a "White" education in schools on the Reserves or in their villages, or were sent to White-run residential schools away from their families. This education not only caused wrenching alienation between the generations, it did not prepare the girls to take on jobs any more financially rewarding than a nurse's aide, hairdresser or domestic worker. Since there was little work for them on Native Reserves or territory, they went to the cities, which many experienced as alien and frightening.¹²

The media responded with stories, some of them quite sympathetic, peppered with statistics about the degrading conditions under which Native

people lived.¹³ In November 1968, for example, journalist Barbara Frum wrote a feature that was very critical of the federal government's "custodial" attitude and underlined the Native leaders' belief that they would never be equal until they could control their own destinies. This and other articles pointed out that "federal spending on Indians was less than half that spent on other Canadians" and that many others who fell outside of federal jurisdiction had little support at all. They also chronicled the living conditions on the Reserves and blamed crowded homes, less than ten per cent of which had plumbing, for the high incidence of disease and death. While the birth rate was twice as high as that for Whites, increasing by four percent versus two percent a year, the maternal mortality rate was roughly five times higher. Generally, White women outlived Native women by a decade, 76 to 66 years. Very few of the people lived above the poverty line, the unemployment rate was ten times the national average, and the high school dropout rate was ninety percent.¹⁴

The Aboriginal people formed provincial, regional and national associations, such as the National Indian Brotherhood, the better to bargain with the federal government over conditions on the Reserves, treaty rights, land claims and the changes they wanted to the *Indian Act* of 1951 which was just being revised. The *Act* gave the federal government control over reserve land, money, the system of government and even who was legally designated an "Indian." The government resisted giving these groups political power, arguing that the Aboriginal people did not speak with one voice and were divided among themselves. Native critics of the federal government said it still behaved as a colonizer, giving lip service to collaboration with the Aboriginal people but not really listening to them. Aboriginal organizers and writers were also very much concerned with "Indian" identity, and were resisting any attempts at cultural assimilation, which they saw as a by-product of the ideal of "equality" within the "Just Society" philosophy of the new Liberal prime minister, Pierre Trudeau. The Prime Minister had been insisting that all Canadians, including the Aboriginal peoples, be considered "equal" under the law, part of his attempt not to set a precedent that might favour Quebec's status in Canada. In 1969, a government White Paper proposed that Indian status, the *Indian Act* and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs all be abolished. But the Native peoples insisted that they deserved "Citizen Plus" status, in other words, their legal status under the Indian Act should be retained and, in addition, their "special history, rights and circumstances" should be recognized (Miller, 1991; Patterson, 1972; Dickason, 1992; Jamieson, 1978; Francis, 1992; Cardinal, 1969).

First Nations and Métis women, who were forming their own associations at the same time, asked for equality within the broader legal system, as did White women. But, from their perspective, decent housing, education that would not rob their children of their languages and cultures, and, for some on reserves, equal status with First Nations men, took priority.

The issue of "status" was a difficult one. The women who married non-Status men did not want to lose their rights as status Indians, arguing that White women who married the men were considered "status Indians" automatically. Others who did not present briefs to the Commission disagreed with them, arguing that a change in the law would only serve to speed assimilation, partly through increased intermarriage and the birth of more mixed-race children, and would result in a strain on Native resources and overcrowding on the Reserves.¹⁵

The Media, Aboriginal Women and the Royal Commission

The journalists who covered the Royal Commission on the Status of Women framed most of their stories according to the conflict model, often between White bureaucracy and Native reality, Native women and men, and "modern" and traditional ways. As Weston has pointed out, this, along with the "unusualness" approach, is a most common framework for media stories about Native people (Weston, 1996). Accounts of Aboriginal "new women" who were becoming better educated than their mothers overlapped with dramatic portrayals of Native women activists and less-flattering stereotypes of those who deviated from so-called "White" moral and family values. Several stories focused on their common-law marriages, high "illegitimacy" rate and the addiction, sexual exploitation and imprisonment of "tragic" and "destitute" Aboriginal women on urban "skid rows."

The journalists also allowed well-meaning White authorities to provide "expertise" about the lives of Native women, to claim that they wanted the same things other Canadian women wanted. This approach invoked the "proximity" model of newsworthiness in that it could be said that women of vastly different cultures had common concerns which fit the Commission's "human rights" mandate. Aboriginal voices demanding agency over their own social welfare, health and education filtered through, however, along with similar supportive comments from sympathetic Whites, including journalists, lending a more nuanced message to the one which equated human rights with sameness.

The word "racism" did not appear in any of the media coverage considered here, which suggests that it was not used then as commonly as

it is now, but some stories and commentaries linked the struggles of Canada's Aboriginal peoples with those of Black people in the United States and Canada. Denial of their human rights, these articles said, could result in violence at worst and at the very least was unfair. Native leaders at the time looked to the civil rights struggles of Black people for inspiration, but the media tended to conflate their issues, partly because journalists and others used the Black struggle as a symbol of the fight against all kinds of inequalities, including those faced by White women. Journalists were also quick to pounce on threats of violence, real or imagined, regardless of which group was under discussion.¹⁶

During the Commission hearing in Edmonton, concern about violence was briefly expressed by one, apparently sympathetic White man, Jack Thorpe, who, together with his wife, fostered several teenage Métis girls. Thorpe, a businessman, said that he had also interviewed over 70 Métis and "Indian" women living on "skid row." The federal government, he was quoted as saying, did not "give a damn" about the Métis, who did not even have the admittedly inadequate protection that "treaty Indians" did. Drawing a parallel with the recent riots involving Black people in the United States, he predicted "violence" if something was not done. Rosemary Speirs of Canadian Press, who travelled across the country with the Commission, quoted him:

Metis and Indian men are not going to stand by much longer and watch their women become the scum of White society... If we do nothing, in ten years we will have problems that will make the Watts and Detroit riots look like small stuff.

The story ran in several newspapers with startling headlines which drew attention away from the point of his brief, the problems facing these women: "Violence forecast at hearings: Metis problems serious, says Edmonton manager," in the Regina *Leader-Post*; "'Metis will explode,'—They can't take much more degradation (sic)", in the Calgary *Albertan* and "Help Metis now or face a Watts riot in 10 years, he warns," in the *Toronto Daily Star*¹⁷. The quote used in the CP story was a close approximation of what Thorpe actually said, according to the Commission's own audio recording of the hearings. But the threat of violence was not something Thorpe dwelled on during his testimony. He seemed most concerned that the women be helped which, in turn, would help their families.¹⁸ In their coverage, neither the local newspaper nor Ed Reid of the CBC, who regularly reported the hearings for "CBC Matinee" on radio and "Take 30" on TV, apparently made any reference to Thorpe's predictions of violence, but rather concentrated on the plight of the women as he had described it.¹⁹

CP also ran a related story about "Mary," a woman Thorpe interviewed, using his tape recording as a reference. She had run away from her home in Lac la Biche, Alberta to find a new start in Edmonton after she and her mother became pregnant by the same man. She wanted to be with her own people in the city and wound up on "skid row," where she lived with a procession of men who often beat her. The story reinforced the image of the Métis woman as a tragic figure, or, in the words of the headline in the *Fredericton Gleaner*, "Commission Hears Tragic Story Of Destitute Metis Women."

Thorpe also claimed that 75 per cent of the women in the Fort Saskatchewan jail, where prisoners from Alberta were sent, were Aboriginal or Métis, a claim later confirmed in a brief to the Commission from the Saskatchewan government, which also said most of them were there because they could not pay liquor fines.²⁰ At the time, the federal government kept few statistics distinguishing White from Native inmates, but police often arrested Aboriginal people of both sexes if they were drunk.²¹ They could also pick up any young woman they suspected of being a prostitute on a charge of "vagrancy," even if she was just walking down the street. When the women couldn't pay their fines, they were jailed.²² The media exposure of this situation led an editorial writer on the *Red Deer Advocate* of Alberta to exclaim, under the heading, Our Colored Problem:

It is hard to imagine a more damning indictment of Canadian Indian and Metis policy, White society's values or the judicial process... and this in a country which pretends to be horrified by other countries' treatment of colored people.²³

This kind of coverage, although sympathetic, tended to reinforce the stereotype of the Aboriginal woman as "squaw", a hopeless drunk with loose morals, and again conflate the issues of Native people in Canada with those of Blacks in the United States.

The media image of the Native woman as a tragic victim overlapped, however, with more admiring accounts of young women who were trying to "make something" of themselves, and of women of all ages who were fighting for better housing, education and health standards on the Reserves. These women complained to the Commission about their living standards, but the media focused on the question of how they could survive without compromising their chastity. In Edmonton, Emily Yellowknee, then 19, appeared on behalf of her mother, Clara Yellowknee, who was secretary of the local Métis-Indian association on the five Wabasca Reserves about 250 miles northeast of Edmonton. Through her daughter, the elder Yellowknee said that local women were dying of poverty and asked for training for "Native girls" so that they could become cooks, nurses or teachers on the

Reserves, rather than quit school and live common-law. "How can girls raised in such conditions become respected Canadian mothers of tomorrow?"²⁴

At the hearings, the media spotlight turned on Emily, who was the eldest of twelve children and in Grade 12 in a school in Edmonton. She wanted to get a degree so that she could teach, which the media represented as evidence that the key to solving the problems on the Reserves was education. In fact, many Native women desire a balance between White and Native-oriented education for their children, one that would help them cope in a White world but still impress upon them the values of their Native elders and spiritual leaders.²⁵ The following exchange among Emily, Commission chairwoman Florence Bird and Floyd Griesbach, a White, provincial development officer at Wabasca, brought this out on CBC TV's "Take 30." The American-born Bird, a tall, white-haired journalist and broadcaster of liberal democrat persuasion, listened sympathetically as Emily, filmed in close-up, said that she wanted to complete university and go back to the Reserves to teach.

Bird: What do you think your friends feel about this? Do they have that kind of dream or hope?

Emily: Not the friends from back home, I don't think.

Bird: What do they dream about?

Emily: I don't know.

Griesbach: I think if you want to get some light here you ask Emily about the girls who were with her in grade eight.

Bird: What happened to them? Please tell us.

Emily: I'm the only one that doesn't have a baby. They've been shacking up, all my classmates from grade eight.

Bird: Shacking up... with any old person?

Emily: Mm-hmn.

Bird: Any time?

Emily: Yes.

Bird: I understand.²⁶

Of the media who covered Emily's brief, only the local *Journal* gave Emily the space to explain their circumstances. They dropped out of school because there were no jobs for them to go to, they had to take care of younger children in the family, or because they didn't want to be sent away to a residential high school. Even so, the headline implied that they were on a one-way street to an immoral lifestyle: "1-Way Street Leads To

Common Law." Taken together, the media coverage of Emily Yellowknee presented her as a "Princess" foil for her "immoral", former classmates back on the Reserves. The story not told was that she wanted them to be able to go to school in the place where they lived.²⁷

Media coverage of Native groups presenting briefs to the Commission did not always present these women so negatively, or with such contrast. There was space for a Native-centred point of view, especially when the women concerned used the same "human rights" language that the Commission, the reporters, and their audiences understood. A month before the Commission began its hearings, there had been a gathering of over three hundred women at the Alberta Native Women's conference in Edmonton. Mary Ann Lavallee, a Cree from the Cowessess Reserve, 90 miles east of Regina, helped lead a protest march to the Alberta legislature when the women heard that the federal government might cut off health care funds to treaty Indians. They wanted the province to intervene. At the conference, she urged the gathering to find out how the Royal Commission on the Status of Women would affect them "in regard to equal job opportunities, equal pay for equal work, divorce and abortion laws." That list would have sounded familiar to White feminists and the reporters covering the Commission hearings, but then Lavallee went on to list the specific problems that she felt the Aboriginal women could help solve: school dropouts, alcohol abuse and the Native infant mortality rate.²⁸

Alice Steinhauer, who had chaired the conference, another Cree, June Stifle, and a Métis, Christine Daniels, took these ideas to the Commission when it sat in Edmonton the following month. Their brief, Wayne Erickson of CBC News reported, would deal with health care, education and housing, rather than issues White women were concerned with such as equal pay and daycare. Steinhauer told him that Native women were not very familiar with the Commission, although some of them had been involved with White women's organizations. She said: "I don't think the Native women are ready for this type of advancement or whatever you call it." Erickson ended his report by saying rather condescendingly that although the Commission was a "mystery" to the Aboriginal women, Steinhauer felt they could bring their problems to it. They would accomplish nothing, she said, by being silent.²⁹

Steinhauer and her two companions told the Commissioners that the women were tired of federal interference in their lives, a message that came through in the media coverage. They no longer wanted to see their families torn apart when their children were sent to residential schools away from their Reserves and villages, an experience which stripped them of their language and heritage. The three women also asked for better living conditions on the Reserves, but they also made it clear that Aboriginal and

Métis women were working together to find solutions to their problems. Steinhauer was quoted as saying, "No one else can do that for us, nor do we want them to." In a local version of the story, June Stifle asked for half-way houses for Aboriginal women coming to the city, but specified that they should be run by "Indian counsellors... Otherwise it will be just another do-good program." Clearly, the Aboriginal spokeswomen were demanding agency over their lives, and the media coverage was beginning to reflect this point of view.³⁰

Ed Reid of the CBC apparently did not cover their brief, but he paid a great deal of attention to Mary Ann Lavalée, who seemed to surprise and impress him when she appeared before the Commission in Regina, Saskatchewan. Reid, who liked to personalize the issues by focusing on the stories of specific women, described her to his audience as "the short Indian woman in a simple, purple dress." Florence Bird, clearly expecting Lavalée to be hesitant and shy, tried to reassure her: "So could you just try to tell us very simply, and we will listen with the greatest interest." But Lavalée stunned the reporters and won their sympathy with a hand-written, last-minute submission, which Reid called "the most eloquent brief of the week." Her "very moving" and "fighting" presentation, he said, had many women in the hearing audience in tears.³¹

Lavalée's speech embodied some of the human rights discourse that would have been familiar to the White women there, even though she was speaking in a specifically Aboriginal context. Her opening remarks, which Reid used on "Matinee," captured that spirit.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I will say concerns the people of the Reserves but particularly the Indian women. As Canada lit a flame to light the way to her centennial year, may this brief presented to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women light a flame for Native women, to light the way for her emancipation, her recognition and acceptance as an individual on her own merit. As an ally and partner for the struggle for the human rights for the Indian and Eskimo and Métis. [Pause] And last but not least it is secretly hoped that this brief and the moral support it can earn will help open the way for Indian man, to give to Indian woman the dignity and respect and recognition which is hers by virtue of birth, by virtue of being wife and mother, and individual, and by virtue of 20th century standards.³²

The local press appears to have distorted her message, however. Ruth Willson of the *Leader-Post* saw her brief mainly as a plea "for status for Indian men," and, in one version, contrasted this approach to White

women's demands for equality *with* men. She also paraphrased Lavalée as saying that Indian women wanted respect from their male partners. Lavalée actually saw the problem as one of economics, which affected all her people; she also saw Aboriginal women as the key to helping the larger Native community. She said the *Indian Act* "emasculated" the men of the Reserves and overprotected them to the point where they could not provide for their families themselves. This system had led to "favoritism, apathy, alcoholism and local political patronage." The women, she said, had been silent for too long; it was time for them to act.³³

Rhetorically, one of the strongest comments Lavalée made was: "It is a well-established fact that the Indian woman has been the workhorse, the doormat and the baby machine." On "Take 30," Reid started his segment of Lavalée with a medium-shot of her reading these same words from her brief, while some newspaper editors picked up on her "doormat" comment in the CP version and put it in the headlines; for example, the story appeared as "Indian women just doormats status commissioners told," in the *Toronto Star* and "Society uses Indian women as doormats, commission on women's status is told," in *The Globe and Mail*. In her story, Speirs of CP focused on the women's lives on the reserves and quoted Lavalée's contention that they were expected to "blend with the scenery."³⁴

Her strong sentiments and the way the media highlighted them served again to underline a stereotype of the Native woman as inadequate, a risk which Lavalée acknowledged. Speirs of CP quoted her as saying: "But for Indian women my description of them as subordinated in an extreme way, carries an extra sting and a deeper hurt than is apparent."³⁵ In an interview with Reid, after her presentation, Lavalée added, more colloquially, "I don't know why it is that before Indian people are noticed, before anybody pays attention to what they say, they have to... expose their dirty laundry."

In the same interview, Reid asked her about her dreams, a question he put in the context of the Martin Luther King's dream for the Black people of the United States. The "Take 30" TV version of her reply assumed the context of the substandard living conditions on the Reserves and suggested that Lavalée aspired to the values of the White, middle-class housewife. "Sometimes I dream that I could own a beautiful house and it has red brick tiles on all the floors and there's elegant furniture, and that we could live graciously, and that I could be the lady of the house."

The longer "Matinee" radio version casts a more complex light. After "lady of the house", she added: "...author, Nobel Prize winner [she laughed]. I'd like to win a Nobel Prize some day."³⁶ In this rendering, Lavalée did not fit any handy media stereotype of the Aboriginal woman. She was not a tragic figure and certainly no doormat. Reid made a point of

saying that she was the mother of five well-educated children, one of whom had won a scholarship to medical school, but he and the other reporters at the hearings did not mention that she was writing two books at the time and completely missed the fact that she was already known as an activist among the Aboriginal women of the Prairies. For her part, she told Reid that Native women had taken note of the publicity White women were getting for their demands. "Well, we see through the TV and the radio and all the news media where certain women are doing this, and women are doing this across the country, you know, so we wanted in on it, too."³⁷

In the media coverage of the Lavallee brief, then, there are different and overlapping constructions of the lives of Native women for whom she became a symbol. Their relationships with Native men were contrasted to those of White women with their men, they were seen both as "doormats" and as potential Nobel prize winners, and were considered to be inspired by the same dreams as Martin Luther King had for the Black people of America. For Aboriginal women like Lavallee, using the same human rights language and media-wise tactics of White feminists to get her own message across on behalf of Native people had both advantages and disadvantages. Her day in the media spotlight generated some very mixed messages.

Lavallee and the other women from the Alberta Native conference were not the only women with fighting spirit to appear before the Commission, even though, in at least one case, it put them at risk. In Ottawa, six months later, three women from the Kahnewake Reserve outside of Montréal led a delegation of 30 Mohawk women to the hearings. They came to complain about the section of the *Indian Act* which stripped them and their children of their treaty status if they married White men. The *Act*, in line with other White legislation, assumed that a woman would take the nationality of her husband but it also gave Band councils the right to pass laws which further separated these Aboriginal women and their children from their communities.³⁸

The media reported that Aboriginal wives or widows of White men had no voting, property or burial rights on the Reserves and were often threatened with eviction, even from property they had inherited. The children could not go to school on the Reserve, or even swim in the community pool with their friends who had Aboriginal fathers.³⁹ There is no CBC record of this brief, but the print reporters had essentially the same angle on the story: the women were in conflict with their Band councils, as much as with the federal bureaucracy, and were demanding the same rights for themselves and their children as First Nations men who had White wives.

The women, Mary Two Axe Earley, Betty Deer Brisebois, Cecilia Ouimette and Charlene Bourque, who was just 15, made it clear that they

were risking eviction from the Reserve by complaining. As Wendy Dey of *The Ottawa Citizen* put it in her lead: "Thirty Mohawk women are afraid they'll be 'kicked off' their reserve for bringing their beefs to the Royal Commission..." The *Toronto Daily Star* mentioned that the Native women had asked two prominent White women, Grace MacInnis of the New Democratic Party, then the only woman in the House of Commons, and Thérèse Casgrain, a leader of the Quebec Federation of Women, to sit with them. From the media accounts, they were reaching out to these and other White women for moral support.⁴⁰

The "pretty" and "attractive" Bourque, the daughter of a Mohawk mother and francophone father, also caught the eye of the reporters, who framed her as a youthful advocate of Aboriginal pride. Although the journalists stopped short of describing her as an "Indian Princess," Dey of the *Citizen* mentioned that she was wearing a headband and CP noted that the women who accompanied her and her companions were "sporting headbands and feathers." Dey said Bourque made a "passionate plea"⁴¹ to the Commission, which the *Toronto Daily Star* quoted at length:

I look like an Indian. I feel like an Indian. I want to be an Indian but this law says no... I want my rights—I want my heritage. I am very proud that I am an Indian and that is what I am in my heart.

This quote was, however, only a rough approximation of what Bourque, who was "50% Indian" actually said at the hearing. It was either phrased this way for dramatic effect, or was actually a quote from an interview done immediately afterwards, but that is not indicated in the story. The *Star* headlined the story, "Indian women want to be Indians," which could have either been a simplistic play on words, or an acknowledgement of the Native demand for special recognition as well as their rights under the *Indian Act*.⁴² A *Montreal Star* headline writer, on the other hand, used strategically placed quotation marks to question the women's contention that they were discriminated against: "Discrimination in Indian Act aired by women."⁴³

The coverage and commentary of the Mohawk women's brief, taken as a whole, reveals both journalists' sympathy with their demands for "equality" and consciousness of their differences, especially in appearance. The references to headbands and feathers were included, presumably, to add "colour" to the story, and underline the idea that while these women wanted legal acknowledgement of their marital status, they were otherwise exotically different from the White women in the room. Those descriptions could also be read, however, as an acknowledgement of their insistence on their "Indian" identity.

The reporters' efforts to emphasize the very real fears the Mohawk women had about being ejected from their homes for complaining to the Commission inevitably set up a conflict model which centred on the women versus the men and any White or Métis woman who had married a First Nations man. The *Standard-Freeholder* in Cornwall, Ontario, for example, did a follow-up story, using the "proximity" model of reportage to localize it. The rather limp lead read, "Indians from the St. Regis Band are not getting themselves involved in the fight being put up by 30 Mohawk women of the Caughnawaga Band outside Montreal." The Band administrator at St. Regis (now Akwesasne), said it was a national matter and would not comment, but the federal agent, Ralph Whitebean, did so. He was quoted as justifying the *Indian Act* by saying that as far as an Aboriginal woman's status was concerned: "It goes back to Bible times and the story of Ruth wherein the woman took the nationality of her husband's people."⁴⁴ The conflict approach underscored the idea, as the *Sudbury Star* editorialized, somewhat snarkily, that "discrimination is not entirely a White man's failing."⁴⁵

In reality, both the Band councils and the federal government were working together at that point to resist any changes in the *Indian Act* which would have given the women back their status.⁴⁶ After the hearing in Ottawa, Earley wrote to the Commission, saying that the women had been harassed on their return home and that Bourque had been given such a hard time by other young people, some of them "Whiter" than she was, that the women arranged for her to leave the Reserve for awhile.⁴⁷

Between the time the Commission hearings ended that week, and its *Report* was released two years later, Native women continued their different battles for recognition and equality. The women of Kahnawake who wanted to keep their Indian status formed an organization called "Equal Rights for Indian Women" and appealed through the media for support from other Native women across the country. They met twice with the Minister of Indian Affairs and brought their issues to Native conferences. Harassment continued, apparently from White women who had married Aboriginal men, as much as from anyone, and they cautiously asked the media not to use their names.⁴⁸

Two years later, when the Commission's report was presented to the government, there was very little in it about Native women and the few relevant recommendations made were integrated into other chapters which primarily concerned White women. For all their sympathy during the hearings, and their attention to Native rights issues afterwards, the media did not even pick up on this anomaly. The exception was Margaret Weiers of the *Toronto Daily Star*, who, in her assessment that the recommendations in general were "too little, too late," suggested that the setting up of Native

friendship centres in the cities was hardly enough to help Aboriginal women cope with poverty.⁴⁹

Conclusion

The print and broadcast coverage of the hearings of the Royal Commission were brief media flashes in the overall history of women's issues in Canada. Public hearings are one-day events, hit-and-run exercises for busy journalists who must sort through a dozen briefs a day and decide which one would most interest their audiences. Because of that, and because the story of the country's Aboriginal women is still largely untold outside of Native circles, the events discussed in this article represent only a fragment of the picture.

Any conclusions must be tentative at this stage, but the media coverage of the Commission hearings does suggest that historians and other scholars must go far beyond examining simplistic princess/squaw images of Aboriginal women in order to understand how they are treated in the media and what it means. In the case of the Royal Commission coverage, those motifs were present but there was also a complex interaction between Native women's needs and the media's interpretation of them, however flawed. The discourse used, that is, what the Aboriginal women said, and what the media said they said, is important, especially when the women concerned used a language of human rights that White women understood, or appeared to want the same things as White women did, such as gender equity. At the same time, it is abundantly clear that while the Native women did want to be considered "equal", they also saw themselves as separate from White society, and legitimately so, with their own particular needs as Native women. This was consistent with the approach that their people as a whole were taking towards the federal government's attempts to assimilate them (Francis, 1992).

There were occasions where Aboriginal women presented themselves successfully as positive role models and did get their point across, on their own terms.⁵⁰ But, as Mary Anne Lavalley and the delegation from Kahnawake knew, courting the support of the mainstream media for their grievances could have repercussions. With the best of intentions and all the sympathy in the world, the reporters could conflate their issues with those of other minorities, such as Black people in the United States. Or they could exaggerate the concerns of White authorities like Jack Thorpe. Or frame Native women as "doormats" and "tragic figures" disenfranchised from their Native heritage, adding to the sense of betrayal in Aboriginal communities. For every educated "Princess", like "Emily" who was striving to do the best

for her people, it seemed that there was a destitute "squaw," or "Mary" waiting in the media wings, vying for White sympathy and attention.

Given the difficult conditions under which most Native people were living, the journalists' interpretations did have some basis in reality. But their general emphasis on conflict and violence, tragedy and redemption, and the "good" versus the "bad", also meant that one Aboriginal woman or a few of them became a symbol for many and the real issues were lost. This article will, it is hoped, contribute to a growing body of research on how the news media has covered Aboriginal issues, and now Native people have responded. In future historical and contemporary studies of the media and Native women, historians and other scholars should go far beyond examining simplistic princess/squaw images or emphasizing only their conflicts with White culture. Other issues may be just as important, including the value of Aboriginal traditions. Analyzing Native media on their own or in juxtaposition with non-Native media are other approaches.⁵¹ This is not to say that Native sources should always be considered as accurate, or a White journalist as automatically unsympathetic. Rather, it can be accepted that Aboriginal people have real grievances, and that the most open-minded, non-Native journalist is still going to have blind spots exacerbated by unfamiliarity with their cultures. That there are blatant instances of racism in the media there can be no doubt, but there are subtleties to be examined as well, not the least of which are journalists' culturally-biased perceptions of what being a Native woman really means.

Notes

1. For an overview of Canadian politics and society at the time, see Bothwell, Drummond and English, 1989.
2. *Report* (1970), "Criteria and Principles", xi-xiii. Consequently, there was no separate chapter for Aboriginal women among the Commission's recommendations. Their concerns were integrated with those of other women. See *Report* (1970), chapter of education, 210-215; on marital status, 237-238; and on poverty, 328-331. On the RCSW's analysis and approach, see Arscott (1995).
3. Her emphasis. National Archives of Canada, CBC Television Collection, "Take 30" 68-04-22 (April 22, 1968) ISN# 99106, Print Master 751, RCSW hearings in Victoria and Vancouver. See also her emphasis on democracy in (no byline), "Women' status study would break barriers," *The Tribune*, Winnipeg December 11, 1967; and on "merit" in Eugene Weise, "Status study a probe into society's future," *The Tribune*, Winnipeg, June 1, 1968, 3.

4. The briefs are in National Archives of Canada, Papers of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (hereafter NAC RCSW) RG 33/89, on microfilms C-4878 to C-4883 and C-6798 to C-9803.
5. For a discussion in relation to the media coverage of the so-called "Oka crisis," see Roth, Nelson and David (1995).
6. For a brief account of these events, see Bégin (???). One Ph.D. thesis includes some discussion of the media, but the samples and analysis are limited (Morris, 1982).
7. Two of the seven Commissioners made a separate trip to Whitehorse in the Yukon, and Yellowknife and several villages in the Northwest Territories, which will be discussed in my overall study. These clippings are in the Commission collection, NAC RCSW Vols. 40-45, and are also preserved on microfilms, filed under the name of the relevant publication in the National Library of Canada. The audio tapes are also in the NAC RCSW collection. Other primary sources include NAC Florence Bayard Bird Papers, MG 31 D 63; NAC Elsie Gregory MacGill Papers, MG 31 K7; and Media Club of Canada Papers (formerly the Canadian Women's Press Club), NAC MG 28 I 232. The broadcast media records include two national programs with a primarily female audience, "CBC Matinee" on radio and "Take 30" on TV. Most of the "Matinee" and "Take 30" programs on the Royal Commission have been preserved. See National Archives of Canada, Film and Sound Division, CBC Collection, "Take 30"; and CBC Radio Archives, Toronto, "CBC Matinee". The TV news record is spotty, but there are several radio news reports about the Commission in the CBC Radio Archives in Toronto, filed under CBC Radio News or Radio Direct Reports for the dates in question. Private broadcasters appear to have preserved relatively little material at all. In addition, I have conducted interviews with about 30 people who either worked on the Commission or who covered it as journalists and broadcasters.
8. On this method of analysis as applied to the history of women, see Scott (1988); see also Van Zoonen (1991). Pierson (1991) discusses the problems of defining cultural differences.
9. See Harris (1991). During Canada's centennial, the Native Council of Canada held "Indian Princess" pageants at Expo '67 in Montreal, which suggests that some Aboriginals had internalized or appropriated this image.
10. Francis (1992). For a broader discussion of stereotyped images of Aboriginal women in relation to White women, see Burgess and Valaskakis (1992).
11. The old terms for Native people are used here in historical context, that is, as they were described in the mainstream media at the time.

Today, the nomenclature has changed. First Nations refers mainly to those Bands who have treaty or registered status with the federal government. The Métis have mixed "Indian" and White heritage, and may or may not be registered, while Inuit has generally replaced the disparaging term, "Eskimo". In Canada, all these peoples, and those who do not fall neatly into any of these categories, refer to themselves generally as Aboriginal people and sometimes as "Native". See McNab (1995) and Dickason (1992).

12. Castellano and Hill (1995). For a first hand account of the alienation experienced by a Métis woman, see Campbell (1973).
13. On this tendency in the US, see Weston (1996).
14. Barbara Frum, "Canadian Indians 1968: How Ottawa (And We) Slept," *Chatelaine* magazine, November 1968, 48-55, 109-111; Marvin D. Lipton, "Current Events," *The Leader-Post*, Regina, Saskatchewan, May 2, 1968, 20. Similar statistics also appeared in *The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (1970).
15. Jeannette Corbiere Lavell and Yvonne Bedard eventually went to court over the issue in 1971. See Lavell's story in Castellano and Hill (1995). The law was changed, after a long struggle in 1985. See Weaver (1968) and Miller (1991) and the comments of Mohawk activist Kahn-Tineta Horn from the Kahnawake reserve, as quoted in a news brief in the *Telegraph-Journal*, Saint John, September 20, 1968, 2; see also, CP, "Miss Horn Has Many Opponents: 'Indians Your Landlord—Pay Up,'" *The Evening Times-Globe*, Saint John, September 16, 1968, 10. Horn was vilified by at least one columnist for not living up to the proper "Princess" image. See Charles Lynch, "Ladies raise hell for justice," *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 4, 1968, 7.
16. For a discussion of the Native response to the Black struggle, see Weston (1996). During the Commission hearings, several speakers and the reporters present tended to make the same simplistic parallels between the demands of American Black people and those of White, middle-class, Canadian women, who also wanted their "freedom". Freeman (1995).
17. CP, "Violence among Metis feared," *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 26, 1968, 40; Rosemary Speirs, "Violence forecast at hearings: Metis problems serious, says Edmonton manager," in *The Leader-Post*, Regina, April 27, 1968; CP, "'Metis will explode,'—They can't take much more degradation (sic)", *The Albertan*, Calgary, April 27, 1968, 7; CP, "Help Metis now or face a Watts riot in 10 years, he warns," *Toronto Daily Star* April 27, 1968.
18. What Thorpe actually said was: "If we do nothing, I guarantee you that within ten years we will have problems that will make the Watts and

Detroit riots look like snowballs. I guarantee you that. Because the Métis and Indian men are not going to stand by and see these women become the victims of the scum of white society." RCSW audio tape #9918, Edmonton, April 26, 1968.

19. "CBC Matinee" Tape #680426-7 on #681216-3, RCSW hearings from Edmonton and Calgary, April 26, 1968. The only surviving TV clip of Thorpe shows him telling the Commissioners that the federal government didn't "give a damn" about the Métis, and that the women were the worst off. It was shown during a retrospective sequence about the hearings two years later. "Take 30" ISN #99083 1970-12-08, (December 8, 1970), RCSW recommendations. See also "First-Hand Probe Urged for Metis," *The Edmonton Journal*, April 27, 1968, 21.
20. CP, "Commission Hears Tragic Story of Destitute Metis Women," *The Gleaner*, Fredericton, New Brunswick, April 27, 1968, 2; CP, "Recorded in brief: Metis girl's life," *The Montreal Star*, April 29, 1968, 12. The Saskatchewan government brief was included in an overview story of that day's hearings. Ruth Willson, "Day care centre: Sask. would share program," *The Leader Post*, Regina, Saskatchewan, May 1, 1968, 22.
21. This harsher treatment had been written into the *Indian Act* and was commonly applied against non-Status Natives as well. Jamieson (1978).
22. See CP, "But treatment needed: Offenders jailed," *The Montreal Star*, May 4, 1968; (no byline), "Status of women enquiry begins session in Saskatoon," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, May 2, 1968, 12; Michele Veilleux, "Status Commission Asked To Aid Women in Jail," *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 1, 1968, 21; Rosemary Speirs, "Says former inmate: Jails promote more troubles," *The Montreal Star*, June 3, 1968, 12 and (no byline), "Jail breeds crime, ex-inmate claims," *The Tribune*, Winnipeg, June 1, 1968, 13. The CBC apparently did not report on these briefs but it and the press covered several other hearings where the problems with the laws were aired, although they did not focus on Native women specifically. CP, "Branding prostitutes criticized," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 31, 1968, 33; Margaret Weiers, "Status probes told of discrimination," *Toronto Daily Star*, June 6, 1968, 78; Yvonne Crittenden, "The female offenders' plight," *The Telegram*, Toronto, Oct. 2, 1968, 65; Rosemary Speirs, "Are Our Courts Pushing Youngsters?" *Nelson Daily News*, B.C., Oct. 3, 1968; CBC Radio News Tapes #681001-0(1) and #681002(1) on #681002-4, Oct. 1 and 2, 1968, Gail Scott reporting for "The World At Six."
23. Editorial, "Our Colored Problem," *Red Deer Advocate*, Alberta, April 29, 1968, 4.

24. "1-Way Street Leads to Common Law," *The Edmonton Journal*, April 27, 1968, 21.
25. See the first person accounts of four Aboriginal women in Castellano and Hill (1995)
26. "Take 30," (Dec. 8, 1970). Also, CP, "Metis Seeking Home Schools," *The Calgary Herald*, April 27, 1968, 32. Bird's professional name was Anne Francis but she did not work as a journalist while she chaired the Commission. She wrote about her time on the Commission in Bird (1974); see also NAC Florence Bayard Bird Papers.
27. Her brief was apparently not covered on "CBC Matinee." No byline, "1-Way Street Leads to Common Law," *The Edmonton Journal*, April 27, 1968, 21. See also, AP(CP), "Women ask for schools on reserves to protect language, customs," *The Globe and Mail*, April 27, 1968; CP, "Metis Seeking Home Schools," *The Calgary Herald*, April 27, 1968, 32. Griesbach said he was there as Emily's chauffeur and moral support. Their exchange was recorded on RCSW audio tape #9918, Edmonton, April 26, 1968.
28. CP, "Indian women silent too long—speaker," *Regina Leader-Post*, March 16, 1968 and CP, "Indian women send second telegram to PM," *Regina Leader-Post*, March 18, 1968. Lavallee addressed White women's and public service groups as well. "Lack of Indian Health care laid to 'yards of red tape,'" *Regina Leader-Post*, April 18, 1968, 3; CP, "Indians suffer from callous indifference of white man," *The Montreal Star*, April 29, 1968, 13.
29. Direct Reports, CBC Radio News, Tape #680422-0(2) April 22, 1968, Wayne Erickson reporting for "Canadian Roundup."
30. AP(CP), "Women ask for schools on reserves to protect language, customs," *The Globe and Mail*, April 27, 1968; CP, "Metis Seeking Home Schools," *The Herald*, Calgary, April 27, 1968, 32; (no byline), "1-Way Street Leads to Common Law," *The Journal*, Edmonton, April 27, 1968, 21. One CP analysis drew a parallel between the isolation they felt to that of another group who had spoken to the Commission, White farm women living in remote areas whose children also left for the city. Rosemary Speirs, "Women ask help to overcome isolation," *Regina Leader-Post*, April 29, 1968, 18. Most stories reflected the Native women's concern for their own autonomy. RCSW audio tapes #9918 and #9919, Edmonton, April 26, 1968.
31. On radio, Reid discussed her twice; briefly on the phone on May 2, 1968 and with full coverage the following day. "CBC Matinee," 680502-6 on 680910 (to 681004-10) and Tape #680503-8 ON 681216-4, May 2 and May 3, 1968, RCSW hearings in Saskatoon; and in Regina.

- "Take 30," ISN #9914, Print Master 751, 68-05-06 (May 6, 1968), RCSW hearings in Regina and Saskatoon.
32. "CBC Matinee," RCSW hearings in Regina. 1967 was Canada's centennial. The flame is literally that, a permanent symbolic fixture on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.
 33. Ruth Wilson, "Plea made for status for Indian men," and "Indian woman's brief asks status for men," in two different editions of the *Regina Leader-Post*, May 2, 1968, 11 and 16. RCSW audio tape #9926, Regina, Sask. May 2, 1968. Similar views on the damage White acculturation has done to gender relations among the Aboriginal peoples were expressed by Jeannette Lavell and Sylvia Maracle, in Castellano and Hill (1995).
 34. "Take 30," RCSW hearings in Regina and Saskatoon. CP, "Indian women just doormats status commissioners told," *Toronto Daily Star*, May 2, 1968; published as CP, "Society uses Indian women as doormats, commission on women's status is told," *The Globe and Mail*, May 2, 1968.
 35. Rosemary Speirs, "Society uses Indian women as doormats, commission on women's status is told," *The Globe and Mail*, May 2, 1968.
 36. "Take 30," RCSW hearings in Regina and Saskatoon; "Matinee" in Regina.
 37. "Matinee," and "Take 30," RCSW hearings in Regina, Sask., broadcast respectively May 3 and May 6, 1968. Lavallee was apparently writing her autobiography and an account of Reserve life. A profile of Lavallee, whose husband farmed on the Reserve, was included in Frum, "Canadian Indians, 1968," 54.
 38. Jamieson, Chapter 14, One of the women, Mary Two Axe Earley, first approached the Commission in 1967, after reading about it in *The Montreal Star*, saying Mohawk women would like to present a brief. NAC RCSW, Vol. 1, File SW 1-5-2-1, "Requests for information from private individuals," letter to the RCSW from Mary Two Axe Earley, Caughnawaga, Quebec, September 19, 1967.
 39. This was only a partial list. See Weaver (1968).
 40. Wendy Dey, "Status of women: Indians tell of fears," *The Ottawa Citizen*, Oct. 3m 1868m 43; (no byline), "Indian women want to be Indians," *Toronto Daily Star*, Oct. 3, 1968. See also CP, "'Discrimination' in Indian Act aired by women," *The Montreal Star*, Oct. 4, 1968, 16 and Sheila Arnopoulos, "Status of women roundup: Hearings are over, but public support is still needed," *The Montreal Star*, Oct. 5, 1968.

41. Wendy Dey, "Status of women: Indians tell of fears," *The Ottawa Citizen*, Oct. 3, 1968, 43; Canadian Press, "'Discrimination' in Indian Act aired by women," *The Montreal Star*, October 4, 1968.
42. CP photo and (no byline), "Indian women want to be Indians," *Toronto Daily Star*, Oct. 3, 1968. The relevant statements from Bourque were: "I want my Indian rights. Why? Because I am 50 per cent Indian. It is my right, it is my privilege and it is my HERITAGE. As a child I believed I was Indian, then I was separated from my friends and my relatives. Why? Because they told me I wasn't Indian." She described some of the privileges she cannot enjoy on the Reserve because of her status. Then she added: "I don't know where I stand. I don't know what I am. Am I Indian. Am I not Indian? I mean, it creates a problem... all of us children are being deprived of our childhood joys and our childhood rights. Again I ask, is it right? No. Because we ARE Indian, each and every single one of us. Please, I BEG of you, give me back my heritage." RCSW audio tape #10001, Ottawa, Oct. 4, 1968.
43. Canadian Press, "'Discrimination' in Indian Act aired by women," *The Montreal Star*, Oct. 4, 1968.
44. "By Indians: Rights of Women Debated At Meet," *Standard-Freeholder*, Cornwall, Ont., October 4, 1968.
45. Editorial, "Discrimination in Canada Not Always 'White' Failing," *Sudbury Star*, Ontario, Oct. 4, 1968.
46. Jamieson, Chapter 14; Jeannette Lavell's account in Castellano and Hill (1995); Weaver (1968)
47. NAC RCSW Vol. 36, File marked "Relations with Participants - Miscellaneous - 2," letter to Monique Bégin of the RCSW from Mary Two Axe Earley, November 26, 1968.
48. Sheila Arnopoulos, "Indian blood loses status when women marry whites," *The Montreal Star*, June 4, 1969, 83. See also NAC RCSW Vol. 36, file marked "Relations with Participants - Miscellaneous - 1", an unsigned letter to Commissioner John Humphrey from an Aboriginal woman, April 15, 1970 asking the Commission for its support on the issue.
49. Margaret Weiers, "One woman's view: Too little...too late," *Toronto Daily Star*, Dec. 12, 77.
50. Native women have sometimes appropriated positive stereotypes of themselves for their own purposes, as Burgess and Valaskakis have pointed out (1992).
51. For a recent example of a more inclusive approach, see Roth, Nelson and David (1995).

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