

COMMUNITY EDUCATION THROUGH MEDIA: GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

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ABSTRACT/RESUME

In 1975, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan contracted with Frontier College for the development of a regional communication system to serve nine small native communities. The writer reviews the history of the project as an exercise in community development. He then analyses the project in terms of development strategies, with some attention to the positions and interests of civil servants, community residents, and central (southern) governments.

En 1975, le Ministère du nord de la Saskatchewan a conclu un accord avec le collège Frontier concernant le développement d'un système de communications régionales, en vue de desservir neuf petites communautés indigènes. L'auteur rappelle l'histoire du projet comme exercice de développement communautaire. Ensuite il analyse le projet du point de vue des stratégies du développement, se référant aussi aux fonctions et aux intérêts des fonctionnaires, des résidents de la communauté, et des organismes gouvernementaux du sud du Canada.

INTRODUCTION

Canada does not have a truly public broadcasting network that would make its programming and production facilities available to people in communities across Canada.

(Chapin, 1977, p. 1)

Attempts to assuage assertions such as the above have preoccupied government policy makers for the past decade. During that time numerous experimental and community media projects have been initiated amidst great fanfare. By a community media project we mean a non-profit organization generally managed by the communities it serves. Today, Canadian society remains in the grip of an increasingly centralized state and privately-owned broadcasting industry. Most of the community media prototypes of the Seventies lie abandoned, their utility eclipsed by the harsh realities of recession economics, political backlash and dominant macro-economic planning policy.

This article will present a case study of the Area 3 Regional Communication Centre (RCC) project and its bi-monthly newspaper, *Natotawin* (Na-thok-thawin: Listen to Me). The RCC was established in Beauval, Saskatchewan by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan (DNS) in 1975 through a contractual agreement with Frontier College. The project was cost-shared under the federal-provincial Interim Saskatchewan Northlands Agreement. The contract with Frontier College was terminated on March 31, 1978.

There are two reasons for choosing to examine this project. First, *Natotawin* and the Centre may be used to illustrate some of the obstacles impeding the application of community media and "purposive social change" (Warren, 1977) in Northern Saskatchewan. Second, the project will permit an examination of the many problems associated with government sponsorship of community development and "participatory democracy" oriented programs in Canada during the Seventies.

Before reviewing various aspects of the RCC project this article will highlight some of the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of Northern Saskatchewan.

THE NORTHERN CONTEXT

Northern Saskatchewan is a vast region which comprises almost 40 per cent of the total land area of Saskatchewan. Its estimated population of 24,500 is equivalent to 2.5 per cent of Saskatchewan's total. Euro-Canadians comprise only 23 per cent of Northern Saskatchewan's population. The remaining 77 per cent is made up of 10,000 Metis and 9,000 Treaty Indians. This numerical superiority and the predominance of either Cree or Chipewyan as the first language of the majority of people, has no parallel in the north of any other province in Canada (McArthur, 1978).

It is useful, indeed essential to interpret the context of Northern Saskatchewan in neo-colonial terms. This region has been rendered totally dependent

upon and subservient to the metropolis of Canadian industrial capitalism.

The economic forces which transformed Northern Saskatchewan into a colonial territory date from the 18th century fur trade. Gradually at first, then rapidly following the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Co. monopoly in 1821, Indian and Metis society became sedentary, dependent on a foreign-based market economy, alienated from the means of production, and exhibited increasing social differentiation. Aboriginal land fights were extinguished via Treaties Six and Ten, by the mismanagement and subsequent swindling which accompanied the Metis land settlements after 1885, and by the failure of most Metis to qualify for land under the terms of the 1920 Homesteading Act. Eventually this process turned most indigenous northerners into either "wards" of the state or squatters on crown land — the "Road Allowance People" (Tymchak, 1975; Campbell, 1973; Elias, 1975).

The extension of "welfare colonialism" and government social services into the north has deepened and perpetuated the dependency of Indian and Metis society on southern Canada. Metropolitan Canada's imperialist policy towards Northern Saskatchewan has destroyed the subsistence economy, led to the exporting of staple materials and the net importing of finished manufactured goods, created a large-scale dependency on welfare, denied the people access to capital to develop a productive base, and transformed the Metis and Indian population into a proletarian class of under, and unemployed labour. The statistical evidence presents an alarming story of neglect and marginalization of Indian and Metis people (Cohnstaedt, 1978; McArthur, 1978).

The government's decision in 1972 to create a separate Department of Northern Saskatchewan demonstrated its concern at the lack of social and infrastructure development in the north. But DNS has also thwarted the expression of autonomy and self-determination which northerners felt they had been promised. It has been accused by the former Deputy Minister of DNS of being an unimaginative, traditional bureaucracy which, by adhering to the existing corporate capitalism model of development, will relegate northern society to the permanent welfare rolls (McArthur, 197B).

A PROFILE OF AREA 3

Area 3 is an administrative region of DNS on the north-west side of the province. The nine communities which make up Area 3 are predominately Metis in composition, with a total population of about 3600. Area 3 was chosen by DNS as the site for the RCC project because all the communities are accessible by road. Yet the Area is far from being homogeneous.

At least two dialects of Cree are spoken in Area 3, along with Chipewyan, English and some French. For decades northern Metis have lived a lifestyle similar to their Indian ancestors. Like their Indian neighbours Metis socialization is based on a limited communal orientation. Settlement development has necessitated the rapid evolution of community life from units based on the family or groups of families to a system of broader daily social contacts, roles and responsibilities.

A high degree of intermarriage among Metis is very common. The pervasive nature of the extended family allegiances has led to the observation that social organization in many northern Metis communities has a "gang-like" structure. As social differentiation has accelerated class distinctions have also clearly emerged in Metis communities if not on the reserves as well.

It is characteristic of the north as a colonized region, and of Area 3 as a portion of that region, to find that Euro-Canadians dominate the upper socio-economic and professional classes. The presence of Metis and Indian psychological colonization has been manifested by their low self-esteem (Campbell, 1973) and a perpetuation of the "white-ideal" (Adams, 1972;1975). Despite the virtual "caste-like" class-ethnic divisions (Buckley, et al. 1962) recent years have seen the emergence of an indigeneous, strong hierarchy of predominantly male influentials in Northern Saskatchewan.

These influential leaders can be compared to the "legitimizers" and the "effectors" in the Freeman, et al. (1963) leadership typology. In addition to exercising social power and authority via their positional roles, they act as "gatekeepers" (Lewin, 1947) in the flow of information and ideas into and throughout the communities. In the past decade indigeneous northern leaders in many communities have consolidated their local positions and have created what might be termed a "petty-bourgeois" social class. While this stratification within the social system is not dissimilar to trends in other communities, it is particularly critical in an underdeveloped, neo-colonial situation. As northern leaders obtain special privileges for themselves via government positions or better access to programs such as Special ARDA, they develop an investment or a class interest in the status quo. This inhibits their willingness to promote change. They also become individually vulnerable to pressure from the government.

THE COMMUNICATION CENTRE CONCEPT

The not/on of a community media project in Northern Saskatchewan did not originate from the communities which became the site of the project. They were "consulted" approximately one and a half years after the project was conceived, and two months after it officially had started. Nor did the push to initiate the project come from any Native association or Northern Municipal Council. Rather, the RCC project was conceived, planned and initiated by civil servants in DNS's Extension Services branch.

Several major developments and issues influenced the decision of DNS to start the project. The National Film Board's "Challenge for Change" program started in 1967 may have had the greatest single impact on the creation of joint federal-provincial sponsored community media-development projects (Riley, personal communication). To a certain extent the DNS project was modelled after the Information-Communication Program in northern Manitoba. Other experiments, such as the Radio and Visual Educational Network (RAVEN) in British Columbia, had demonstrated the application of various media techniques in remote areas (Martin, 1975).

A major consideration of the Saskatchewan Government in 1974 was the total lack of northern broadcasting originating from within the province. Regina's decision that northern residents should learn first-hand about their government's services provided the necessary impetus for the project (Meyers, interview). One secondary issue was the general concern at both the federal and provincial level during the early Seventies to define and implement "participatory democracy" in Canada. This objective was emphasized in the report *To Know and Be Known* (1969). Academics such as Black (1971) and Axworthy (1971) concurred, and placed the onus on government and the commercial media to initiate a more effective flow of government information to the public, especially those labelled as "outsiders" (Canada, 1969). The DNS project proposal for the RCC also stressed the participatory rationale.

Another issue given considerable attention at the federal level was the general underdevelopment of communication hardware in Canada's remote regions (Canada, 1971; 1973; Campbell and Simmonds, 1972). The theoretical explanation from the Sixties that a well developed communication system would facilitate broader social development (Schramm and Lerner, 1976), was attractive to some macro-planners. This concern was often manifest with regards to northern regions in ways described by Albert Memmi (1967) as "paternalistic" or "charitable racism". Though government documents often contained statements, as if mandatory, pertaining to the necessity of preserving the cultural identity of the underdeveloped minority group, these statements seldom meant a great deal when it came time for practical application.

The zealotry of government mandarins during the Seventies to extend an electronic mantle of sovereignty over the northern frontier, and in the process to inform the indigenous cultures of what their government could do for them, made any media project a valuable component in a development plan. Inevitably conflict arose, as in Saskatchewan, between federal and provincial officials concerning jurisdiction for the provision of northern communication services (Meyers, personal communication). In time technically oriented media needs supplanted whatever communication needs the participating public might have had.

Colin Low's principle at the NFB of ensuring that control of the media remained within the community was easily compromised once government departments became directly involved. The "community" in community development came to denote the "target" and not the "partner". Some Native groups might choose the label "victim". Clearly the manner in which DNS handled the implementation and evaluation of the RCC project raises many questions about government involvement in projects of this nature.

FRONTIER COLLEGE'S ROLE

Frontier College was invited to participate in the RCC project on the strength of its reputation for working with undereducated adults in remote Canadian settlements. DNS bureaucrats hoped Frontier College would contribute a measure of respectability to the project by creating a separation between

the government and the day-to-day operation of the Centre. This would give the illusion, if not the reality, of local autonomy. DNS and DREE felt a sense of local autonomy was essential to ensure the project's success (Saskatchewan, 1975).

Frontier College had previous experience with the type of project DNS was contemplating for Area 3. In 1968-69 the College had provided a team of adult education instructors for the Ojibway Reserve at Fort Hope, Ontario. With help from Challenge for Change, the instructors developed a program of community awareness and information exchange using electronic media.

The College's new president, Jack Pearpoint, saw the RCC project was a high risk venture. The decision to proceed with a contractual agreement with DNS was made despite the strong reservations voiced by several members of the College's staff. Their concern related to the lack of grass roots involvement prior to implementation, and an over-emphasis of technical considerations by DNS. College personnel recognized the importance of emphasizing change objectives which would build self-confidence and competence among the local staff (Hoggarth, 1975).

Pearpoint found DNS's lack of concerns about the potential political ramifications of the RCC projects somewhat disconcerting (personal communication). One Frontier College staff member skeptically wrote: "How many ideas and opinions will come out before the lid is put back on" (Frontier College, n.d.).

Despite these concerns Frontier College proceeded with the DNS contract and hired a Program Developer, Robin Hill. He arrived in La Ronge, Saskatchewan in October 1975 and toured the Area 3 communities for the first time toward the end of November.

THE HIDDEN AGENDA

DNS and DREE intended the RCC to be a pilot project to assist officials to determine how information and communication services could be improved in Northern Saskatchewan. The Extension Service's Director, Brian Cousins, intended to incorporate four more communication centres into a long range development plan titled Northern Communications Incorporated.

The goal of the pilot project was "to develop and involve northern residents in a mutual communication process related to social and economic development" (Saskatchewan, 1975:1). The objectives were to

1. Initiate information and communication projects.
2. Respond to information requirements identified by individuals, organizations and government.
3. Encourage public participation through awareness, confidence, self-expression and action. (ibid:1)

In addition to these formal objectives government officials also hoped the Centre would strengthen the cultural identity of northerners (Taylor, 1977:10).

Government planners basically wanted the Centre to make "government visible in the north" without creating an obvious government presence (Meyers, personal communication). Extension Services envisaged the RCC would function as a conduit for questions from Area 5 residents to DNS. It would then disseminate the DNS response and would mobilize the people to act accordingly.

The development of local autonomy through self-expression was in fact not really in the game plan. A "catch clause" in the Frontier College Implementation Contract stated that DNS could be directly involved in the project "if considered necessary by the department to ensure the Centre maintains its intended role of fostering communication in the interest of positive social development" (Saskatchewan, n.d.: 3, emphasis added). Thus local control and free expression were in fact tied to a yo-yo string which could be jerked back at any time. DNS was only willing to pay lip service to the "participatory" objectives. In time the need to control the project became an impulse which DNS civil servants could not resist.

Frontier College, meanwhile, decided to implement its own objective for the project. Pearpoint believed that "the means to changing the north must be the people themselves" (Pearpoint, personal communication). The focus of the College's efforts thus became the development of leadership skills within the Advisory Board of the Centre.

The Advisory Board was initially conceived by DNS in 1974 as a loosely knit group which would meet periodically with government officials to review the project's progress. Pearpoint insisted that the group be legally constituted as a board. DNS argued for the addition of the word "advisory".

In early 1976 Cousins tried to persuade Hill not to proceed with forming the Advisory Board, even though it had been written into the contract. The membership consisted of representatives chosen by the councils in each Area 3 community as well as individuals from the government and the project. The gradual emergence of the Board as a political force in the north was one very visible result of the project. The Taylor evaluation (1977) resulted in the body becoming a full Board of Directors.

PROJECT CONSTRAINTS

There are characteristics inherent to Area 3 which provided major constraints for the implementation of the RCC project. Despite the accessibility of all the Area 3 communities by road, poor road conditions and lengthy distances made travel costly. It also impeded supervision of short-term projects which were established by the Centre in various communities away from the office in Beauval.

Another problem was mistrust of DNS and whites in general among Metis and Indians in the north. Willingness to participate on the Advisory Board was tempered by past experiences. Native leaders had become accustomed to sitting on bodies which gradually lost what little power they had, and where their ideas and opinions were ignored by domineering whites. Robin Hill found that his own effectiveness was hindered by the suspicion most people harboured

about him as a white outsider.

The economic and political colonization of Northern Saskatchewan has created a deeply rooted situation which counteracted the objectives of the Centre. A Frontier College report noted that

There exists a high level of paranoia among both the native peoples and DNS employees with both groups exceedingly wary of openly criticizing or challenging government policy. Some government officials have stated that they must get clearance from La Ronge before releasing any statements to the press.., and that a memo had been circulated warning DNS employees not to give 'irresponsible statements' to the press.... There is an acceptance by many northern residents of the idea that open criticism of DNS policy and actions, even valid and constructive criticism, will result in some sort of backlash from the government, i.e. DNS employees may well lose their jobs, communities may have public works projects postponed, or funding may be withdrawn. Since most, if not all northern communities, are subsidized one way or another by the provincial government, such a belief is tantamount to censorship. (Frontier College, 1977: 2)

THE VOICE OF CONTROVERSY

The establishment of Natotawin as the project's first on-going media program was viewed as a short-term function at the first Advisory Board meeting in March 1976. A newspaper was the easiest media program to start. Replacing it with community radio or television programming proved considerably more difficult than had been expected.

Green Lake initiated its own community radio station CHGL-FM in 1977 after two years work. Other Area 3 communities did not express the same interest in community radio or show sufficient initiative that Robin Hill judged was acceptable before the Centre's staff should intervene.

CBC Frontier Coverage Package transmitters were not operating in Area 3 until late 1976. Efforts to obtain permission to preempt national programming with community broadcasts, an arrangement used by the La Ronge Communications Society, were rejected by the CBC. The La Ronge group had found that the Metis and Indians in its area had not responded enthusiastically to the general use of video port-o-pack technology. Thus apart from several specific summer projects the Centre staff used VTR sparingly.

The second factor was that the work required to prepare an issue of Natotawin placed a heavy burden on the project staff's time. It thus became virtually impossible to undertake any other long-term media commitments without hiring extra staff through a Canada Works or similar grant scheme.

The project was able to overcome the constraints it faced by developing, for a time at least, into a forum of ideas and concerns affecting Area 3. In the fall of 1976 Natotawin's editors printed an open letter from Advisory Board

vice-chairman, Peter Buffin, to the DNS Minister. The Honourable Ted Bowerman. The letter complained about problems faced by the local post cutting cooperative assisted by DNS, of which Buffin was also the chairman. This marked the first time the newspaper had brought to light an issue which local people were concerned about, and which government considered sensitive.

A major breakthrough in the development of the Advisory Board occurred at the January 19, 1977 meeting. Ernestine Laliberte of Dore Lake and Richard Lafleur of Sled Lake brought to the attention of the Board what they considered to be discrimination in hiring practises at Dore Lake. The subsequent investigation by NMC1 staff showed that there was no basis for the charge.

However, the issue marked the first time a Board member had spoken out on an issue of concern to a particular community. The Advisory Board and the Natotawin staff took the opportunity to act on other issues after the Dore Lake incident. These included the reported delay in the installation of the Ile a la Crosse water system and the seizure of nets from Patuanak fishermen. The newspaper continued to report local and northern news, to publicize community meetings and print information about jobs, training courses and government programs. Advertisements however began to significantly decline through to late 1978.

In February 1977 the Saskatchewan Government announced the formation of a public board of inquiry into the development of uranium mining at Cluff Lake. Of all the issues about which Natotawin took a stand, uranium development was by far the most controversial. By this time Simon Paul, a 29-year-old Chipewyan from Patuanak who had been hired in July 1976, was the sole editor. He took a strong anti-nuclear stand in the newspaper and developed links with anti-nuclear groups in Regina and Saskatoon. Though his activity was initially in response to a request from an Advisory Board member, the vengeance with which he attacked the issue earned him the wrath of DNS and alienated some of the local readership.

In response to the Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry conducted by the provincial government Simon Paul wrote: "I feel the uranium should stay in the ground." Paul suggested northern people were being misled and confused on the uranium issue by "profit-oriented companies [which] support the money-minded people and pretend that this will be good for everyone. Such a theory of 'development' has been harmful to people, especially in our North, benefiting a few at the expense of the many" (Natotawin, July 1, 1978).

Paul did not limit his editorializing to what he termed government's exploration of the north for uranium. He supported the demonstrators at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre and was critical of the correctional system's treatment of Indians and Metis. He also criticized various Indian Affairs policies, what he considered to be the deplorable state of northern formal education, and joined with the local fishermen in condemning the policies and tactics of the DNS Resource Management branch. Reaction throughout Area 3 to his editorials was mixed. His editorials on education in mid-1978 generated considerable local discussion. Letters to the editor were plentiful and were both in support of and opposed to his viewpoint.

ANALYSING THE CHANGE STRATEGY

Jack Rothman (1968) has developed a three-part typology of social change which has been widely used to analyse field projects. The Rothman typology consists of the locality development model, the social planning model, and the social action model.

The locality development model utilizes the process approach to social change based upon the broad participation and initiative of as many people in a community as possible.

The social planning model, usually associated with government activity, emphasizes the problem-solving approach to social change with regard to specific community problems. This relies on the collection and manipulation of data, and the creation of support for specific projects or programs.

The social action model identifies the target group as victims or an "out community". It attempts, by use of conflict or confrontation strategies, to create basic institutional change by shifting resources and altering relationships. Saul Alinsky was a practitioner of this strategy. Taylor (1977) used this typology in his evaluation of the RCC project. He concluded that the Program Developer had concentrated the Centre's activity in large part around the elected community bodies and had primarily utilized the social action model. Taylor noted the political dilemma of this strategy for a government sponsored organization. In advising against using the social action tactic Taylor suggested that a better conceptualization of the situation would be to view Indians and Metis as "consumers" as opposed to producers, and to use the social planning model of community development. This would "contribute to positive social development" (ibid: 16), and would thus meet government's expectations.

The Program Developer's use of a social action approach may largely have been the ad hoc result of his trying to implement Frontier Colleges a priori decision to concentrate on the organizational development of the Advisory Board. Pearpoint had expected DNS to terminate the contract with the College much sooner than it did. He had hoped that by working with a smaller group greater results would be achieved in a short time span. While the Board did begin to speak out on issues the utility of this objective can be questioned.

The Board was comprised of people appointed by, and usually members of, the local elected councils. This factor alone limited the ability of developing the Board into a separate entity. Members brought to the Board their experiences and biases which tended to channel the Board into the norm for northern organizations. Clearly the Board did little to broaden the leadership base in Area 3.

Robin Hill has, on looking back, doubted the wisdom of creating so political a structure to supervise the Centre (Hill, personal communication). Without the 'victim' identity the Board had little cohesiveness. Attendance at meetings was poor and few actual leadership skills appear to have been imparted. The Board was never fully capable of discharging the management function Hill had hoped it could perform.

The result, at times, was chaos. Simon Paul in particular was accused of

absenteeism and erratic work habits, alleged misappropriation of funds and equipment, and a disregard for the Board's decisions. This in turn exposed the Board and Natotawin to censure by DNS (Hurly, 1979).

Frontier College must bear a certain responsibility for the project's difficulties. It disregarded advice from at least one source and chose not to hire a graduate of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology media program which has trained numerous Indian and Metis from across Canada. By failing to adequately train the local staff to maintain an accounting system, something which DNS finally did in July 1978, the Centre was exposed unnecessarily to government criticism.

Once Hill adopted a non-directive approach to dealing with people he limited his ability to intervene at crucial points. To his credit he did avoid becoming the white okimaw (boss) and succeeded in giving the newspaper's staff the self-confidence and freedom to express their ideas, inevitably a certain price had to be paid for this non-directive approach.

Rothman has suggested that it is reasonable to expect a certain merging of the three typology models in various social situations. Specifically pertaining to underdeveloped regions he has suggested that an application of the locality development and the social planning models is common. Had this approach been used Natotawin's activity might have been more effective.

The editor, Simon Paul, felt that people in the north needed "shaking up". The result was that the content and pedagogical style of most articles failed to engage readers in a dialogue to decodify their own subjective reality, in time the editor tended to preach to the converted and cater to southern interest groups (Hill, personal communication).

Readers frequently reported that the vocabulary and syntax of the writing was often difficult to comprehend. Readers also demonstrated a lack of understanding of ideas and subjects which Natotawin tried to convey. Perhaps if the editor and staff had had a clearer understanding of the audience's characteristics; of the roles a newspaper can play; of the limitations created by "gatekeepers" and interpersonal communication factors, and, of the use of a well defined strategy for change, their work would have reached more people in Area 3 in a form to which they could better relate.

Paul does deserve credit where credit is due. Natotawin was the first northern media in Saskatchewan to openly express the concerns people had about uranium and other issues on which people disagreed with government. The newspaper did reflect the hostile sentiments of many Metis and Indians. Ordinarily these sentiments are hidden. It is this expression of northern animosity toward DNS which, more than any other problem such as the management of the Centre of Natotawin which the civil servants publically cited, motivated the government to stifle the voice of Natotawin.

THE POLITICS OF EVALUATION

Evaluation is not a neutral tool. Its appropriation from other fields by an austerity conscious government bureaucracy has caused many community

groups and non-governmental organizations to fear the very mention of the word. Three observations concerning government-conducted evaluations can be made.

First, governments have tended to use evaluation to justify public expenditure and have minimized the formative contribution of improving program design which a good evaluation can facilitate. Second, the results of an evaluation are as much a statement about the objectives and methods of that evaluation as they are a measure of a project's performance. Government evaluations which exclusively utilize cost-benefit analysis and which emphasize short-term, brick-and-mortar indicators of success are worthy of close scrutiny and critique. Third, by defining success in terms of conforming to dominant norms, i.e. that which is in the public's interest and therefore which coincides with government policy, an evaluation can logically argue for the discontinuation of a project which is innovative and nonconformist in its goals and strategies.

Early reaction from DNS, primarily the concerns of Cousins, indicated that the government was not satisfied with the rate of progress or the direction of the project. Pearpoint suggested that this might be due to a conflict of expectations. At an evaluation meeting in 1976 Cousins stressed to Pearpoint and Carriere that "unless more 'results' were achieved he did not feel government support would continue" (Frontier College, 1976); that Robin Hill was possibly not experienced enough for the job, that the Centre had not done a great deal to respond to local requests or to identify new initiatives.

The first evaluation of the RCC project was conducted by a mail questionnaire in February 1977. The wording of one question, which was designed by Cousins, caused Advisory Board members and staff to suspect the motives of DNS and to believe it was looking for an excuse to terminate the contract with Frontier College. When the results of the survey prevented that from occurring, DNS unilaterally decided to cut the Centre's budget by about \$20,000. Only a threat by the DREE representative, Art Carriere, that federal funds would be withheld unless DNS increased its budget, guaranteed that the RCC would receive sufficient funds for the 1977-78 year.

The 1977 contract stipulated that DNS would conduct an evaluation of the Centre. Cousins had by now become obsessed with slamming Frontier College for not developing the project as DNS had intended. Carriere again intervened and suggested that a third party, Vic Taylor and Associates, conduct the evaluation rather than Extension Services. The survey of the nine Area 3 communities was completed in three days. Interviews with 50 Area 3 residents were completed using a non-systematic method of selection.

The report stated there was "no problem in recommending the continuance of the project . . ." (Taylor, 1977:34). Likewise Natotawin was given a favourable assessment although several steps for improving the newspaper were recommended. The evaluator recommended that more experimentation with electronic media be conducted as this format might be more culturally appropriate.

Taylor's report, despite its constructive, positive tone, 'became a justification for several punitive moves by DNS. The Board of Directors budget request

for \$91,991 for 1978-79 was rejected by Cousins. Instead he proposed a budget of 552,300, a reduction of \$26,000 from the 1977-78 budget. The contract with Frontier College was also terminated.

An unofficial evaluation of the Centre occurred on July 25, 1978. M. Stabner from the DNS Accounting Department visited the Centre in order to set up an accounting system. The report of her visit left a lasting and unfavourable impression on the new Director of Extension Services, Tim Meyers.

An analysis of Natotawin during 1978 raises some questions about the precision and reliability of the DNS evaluations (Hurly, 1979). Stabner's claim that no issues of Natotawin had been printed since June 1 proved inaccurate. Meyers repeatedly stressed his own disappointment at the lack of local news coverage in Natotawin. Content analysis showed, however, that Area 3 news coverage ranked fifth out of fourteen content categories in terms of total space in the newspaper in 1978 (ibid).

DNS officials unfortunately neglected to specify what quantity of local news they felt was sufficient. Meyers, like Taylor, was also willing to overlook the natural tendency of any small town newspaper reader to have a fairly parochial, restrictive view of the role he or she wants the local paper to play (Edelstein, et al., 1964, 1966). It could be argued that it also suited DNS's purpose to accept the imprecise demands of the Area 3 residents for "more" local news. While some issues of Natotawin were filled with reprinted stories, DNS's criticism of this must be tempered with a realistic perspective. Given constraints inhibiting coverage of the entire Area on a weekly basis, and realization that most dailies rely heavily on wire news copy, the reprinting of appropriate stories which would not be otherwise seen by most readers in Area 3 had its merits.

In the end, DNS by virtue of its financial control, had the final say in defining what level of service it felt was suitable for Area 3 residents.

CAGING THE RAVEN

The symbol of the RCC is a kakakhow (raven), the messenger of the forest and Cree folk lore. By 1978 DNS's reaction to the raven's free expression had reached the repressive stage. In a confidential memo to Bowerman in April 1978 Cousins wrote:

Regretably the (Regional Communication Centre) project has become an item of potential public controversy.... Unfortunately the problem which we have experienced in Area 3 will likely inhibit our future efforts to support the development of independent communication services. (Saskatchewan, 1978:1)

DNS used its interpretation of Taylor's evaluation as sufficient justification to insert several new clauses into Schedule B of the 1978-79 contract. These stipulated that Natotawin must be more community oriented and less dominated by staff editorial opinion. These changes, plus the other actions mentioned

above, led to a bitter and protracted fight between the Board and the government. At one point Bowerman allegedly informed all Board members by letter that unless they accepted DNS's budget the project would be terminated. The Board finally capitulated and the contract was signed in June 1978.

As noted earlier, Meyers' reaction to Stabner's report of her visit to Beauval in July 1978 unleashed a further wave of pressure on the Board to harness its editor. At the November 10, 1978 Board meeting Meyers explained that "I'm not telling you how to run your newspaper, I'm just saying that if you can't get your house in order I can no longer approve the funding for the newspaper." Though the Board accused DNS of "financial blackmail" and of "holding a gun to our heads", the issue had in fact already been resolved.

On November 16, 1978 the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* ran a six-column article on page 28 with the headline: "Newspaper editor says DNS wants views silenced." Paul, frustrated and bitter at the turn of events in Area S, had found himself a new position as northern correspondent for *New Breed*, the magazine of the Association for Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan.

MUST GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE FAIL?

Since the Thirties large-scale intervention by federal and provincial governments into social programs has been widely welcomed and tolerated. However, the result of government sponsorship of community development and media programs has largely been a disappointment. We must now ask ourselves: was this inevitable?

We can formulate an answer by working through the levels of understanding concerning social change that have accumulated. First, the lessons of economic development theory. Economists inform us that "poverty... is the result era causal process of which enrichment is a major but not exclusive component", and can best be understood by focusing on three processes: "the process of selection, which determines socio-economic status: the intra-group competition which determines which individuals within the group acquire control over resources: and inter.group competition, which determines how resources are divided between groups with obviously different interests" (Elliott, 1975:10). Simon Kuznet's seminal publication, *Modern Economic Growth* (1955), postulated that the analysis of growth and development ultimately depends upon understanding the complex interplay between technological and institutional change.

This emphasis of structural elements has been reflected in such new development strategies as the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation's "Another Development" paradigm. The national bureaucracy is identified by this analysis as a key group in the inclusion-exclusion selection process. It has been argued that it is in the interests of the socio-economic status of the bureaucracy's members to ensure that sufficient nutrients reach the system. *Failure* to do so will result in downward mobility (Elliott, 1975).

It is noted earlier that DNS has accepted the role of corporate capitalism in the development of Northern Saskatchewan. It might be argued that since

90 per cent of the DNS bureaucracy is from the south its orientation and allegiance will be strongest towards the values, goals and needs of the metropolis as opposed to those of the hinterland.

Some of the second level observations concerning the conduct of DNS as a bureaucracy are generalizable to other situations involving marginal groups. Civil servants in the north exhibit a tendency toward cultural segregation and elitism. Role merging, and both social and professional discord, may lead to the importing of "extrinsic" affective and cognitive elements into the bureaucratic role (Worsley, 1964). Finally, political constraints on various areas of public policy generate compromises which may have little to do with problem-solving (Metton, 1957).

This last point connects with the third level of this analysis, the nature of community development. Biddle and Biddle (1965), Roland Warren (1977) and Murray Ross (1955) have defined community development as a change "process" which occurs within the community as a social system. This process involves the fullest possible participation of the members of the community in all aspects of the problem solving tasks, learning and re-education; and changes in interrelationships. Community development utilizes a synthesis of social, economic and cultural goals and a variety of change strategies.

The crucial objectives, if we are speaking in terms of the impoverished, are those which relate ultimately to political issues. It is this which confounds government sponsored community development programs. Wass (1975) and Lurie (1974) have noted that government community development workers are constantly caught in the contradictions between what the government states are its objectives and what in fact it will permit. Either the worker identifies with the community group, which will likely result in dismissal, or will be content to dispense government services meant to soften the most harmful impact of exclusion and marginalization, and will thus perpetuate the existing status quo.

Community groups and non-governmental organizations have become trapped in a similar paradox. Believing their mandate and status has ensured a certain liberty they usually proceed to develop programs to best suit the special needs of their clientele. This may involve diverging from the existing practises or policies of a government department. If the organization does not return at some point to the norm described by the mandarins to be "in the public interest", then public funding of the organization is often curtailed. If the organization adopts a self-preservation policy by conforming to government guidelines it may realize in time that it is ineffective and may also alienate its more progressive members.

To attribute this autocratic reaction by the public bureaucracy solely to its own class interests would be an oversimplification. There are other factors which relate to the public bureaucracy's need to maintain an acceptable public image. The demand for public accountability of funds is one factor. The other is the natural desire of politicians to limit criticism of their actions. By this line of argument government funding must lead to control over community groups and development programs. This will hinder the application of "process"

methods and goals.

The government's need to limit criticism also stifles the type of two-way communication which the Area 3 RCC project was to have implemented. There are other projects which have also exposed the limitations and contradictions of public participation programs. Pearpoint maintained that DNS could have employed Natotawin to diffuse the hostility which existed in Area 3 toward the government (Pearpoint, personal communication). Although the belligerence of Simon Paul would have made this coexistence difficult, DNS officials clearly were intimidated by the hostility and complaints which Natotawin communicated. Instead of dealing with the reality of the relationship between government and northern people, DNS chose to "stonewall" and dominate the situation.

Can government sponsored community development programs succeed in creating the necessary economic, social and structural changes to facilitate the emergence of marginal groups into the enriched social strata? It seems highly unlikely. What options then still remain open?

Change agents and community groups can continue to visit the government larder and accept the fact that they are probably compromising their principles, or are likely to be either coopted or coerced in the near future. By emphasizing effective pedagogical objectives and strategies, funding crises might become a means of developing greater political awareness and group solidarity for the future. Canada is conspicuous in its lack of private funding sources to sponsor community organizations. This in part reflects Canada's own economic domination. But perhaps there may still be further forms of self-reliant and private funding sources which could be cultivated.

Should these alternatives be inadequate the only means of overcoming the crushing plutocracy of a centralized bureaucracy and the multinational corporations may perhaps be violent struggle. The enriched classes surely have witnessed the limitations of government sponsored "purposive social change". They must come to recognize that transforming the under- and unemployed into welfare supported consumers will not sufficiently stem the pressure of rising expectations and frustration at their lack of access to power. The inability to satisfactorily redress the major inequities in our society will someday no longer be peacefully tolerated by the poor, the exploited and the disenfranchised.

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