

## **THIRTY-FIVE DOLLARS: THE POLITICS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON NIPISSING RESERVE <sup>1</sup>**

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### ABSTRACT/RESUME

Indian reserve communities are becoming increasingly integrated with the larger Canadian society at the same time they are attempting to maintain a distinct identity. This process involves either the development of community resources or personal resources or both. For the people of Nipissing Reserve, thirty-five dollars symbolizes a fundamental change in their relationship with reserve land as a direct result of community resource development. The Band land leasing program has enabled the community to participate in the regional economy on a new footing. This paper explores the development of reserve land as a community resource and what it represents to those responsible for its management and to the membership as a whole.

A l'heure actuelle, les communautés indiennes des réserves s'intègrent de plus en plus à la société canadienne, tout en s'efforçant de maintenir une identité culturelle distincte. Ce double processus exige le développement des ressources soit communautaires, soit personnelles, sinon les deux. Pour les habitants de la réserve Nipissing, la somme de trente-cinq dollars symbolise le changement fondamental qui s'est opéré, à la suite du développement des ressources communautaires, dans leur relation avec les terres de la réserve. Le programme de location à bail de ces terres a facilité de nouvelles formes de participation dans l'économie régionale. L'auteur de cette étude a examiné le développement de ces terres à titre de bien communautaire, ainsi que son importance pour ceux qui s'en occupent et pour la communauté entière.

## INTRODUCTION

Gerber has argued that Canadian Indians are renewing "their efforts to survive within the context of the modern world" (1979:404), both as individuals and as reserve-based communities. This process must involve either the development of group resources to enhance the viability of the community, or the development of personal resources to prepare individual members for mainstream life, or the development of a balance between group and personal resources (*ibid.*: 404-405). Recent developments on the Nipissing Reserve in Ontario illustrate one strategy for group resource development that is becoming popular with bands situated in the recreation areas of heavily populated regions of Canada. I am referring to the practice of leasing reserve land for residential purposes. This practice not only establishes a revenue base for the band but it also alters the band members' relationship with the land. The implications of the land leasing program on the Nipissing Reserve are discussed in this paper.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF NIPISSING RESERVE

Nipissing Reserve No. 10 is situated on the north shore of Lake Nipissing approximately 200 miles north of Toronto and 70 miles east of Sudbury Ontario. The Lake is well-known for its pickerel fishing attracting anglers from across Canada and the United States. The reserve is flanked on both east and west sides by urban areas. The eastern boundary coincides with the city limits of North Bay (population 57,000) while the western boundary coincides with the municipal township of Springer in which the Town of Sturgeon Falls (population 6,500) is located.

The reserve is the tenth in the schedule of reserves appended to the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850. The original land allotment consisted of 80,640 acres (27 3/4 miles from east to west, 15 9/10 miles at its deepest point and 7 3/4 miles at its narrowest point from north to south). However, two surrenders for sale, in 1904 and 1907, and rights-of-way for the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways, the Trans-Canada Highway and a natural gas pipeline have reduced the acreage to one quarter of its original size, approximately 24,000 acres, situated along the shoreline of Lake Nipissing. In the late 1970's, the Band entered into tripartite negotiations with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to revoke the 1907 Surrender for Sale and return approximately 33,000 acres of unsold surrendered land to reserve status. Under the terms of the 1907 Surrender, 59,651 acres of reserve land north of the CPR (which runs from east to west through the reserve) were to be sold for the benefit of the Band. When negotiations were initiated in the 1970's, two-thirds of the surrendered land had not been sold. The Band wants this land restored to reserve status so it can be managed and developed under the terms of the Indian Act.<sup>2</sup>

The members of Nipissing Band identify themselves as Ojibway (Anishnabek). It is possible that a few of the members are descendants of the group identified as Nipissing Indians who frequented the area at the time of contact

in the early 1600's, although I was unable to trace any of the current families beyond the third or fourth ascending generation. Consequently, I have an idea of the number of people who frequented the area at the time of Treaty but not before. This is probably as much a result of the government's insistence on assigning last names (patronyms) to groups of related people for administrative purposes after Treaty as it is a reflection of the people's perceptions of their kinship affiliations.

With the movement of white settlers into the area and the economic decline of the fur trade (the Hudson's Bay Post on the Sturgeon River was closed in 1879), exploitation of the forest resources surpassed the fur trade in economic importance. The Band members responded to the changing circumstances and found seasonal employment in the lumber camps, lumber yards or on river drives throughout the period from 1880 to the 1920's. Construction of the CPR in the 1880's and the CNR circa 1910 also provided the men with wage labour when track was laid through, and in the vicinity of, the Reserve. Tourism developed into a major industry prior to and after World War I, and guiding during the summer months was combined with bush work or trapping during the winter. While the men were acting as guides, their wives and children sold fresh berries and handicrafts to the tourists. After 1920, they were hired as domestic help in the tourist camps around the Lake.

Throughout this early period of wage labour, which ended with the economic depression of the 1930's, subsistence activities were carried out in conjunction with seasonal labour opportunities. Hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping made significant contributions to household economy and were relied upon even more during and after the Depression when wage labour became increasingly difficult to secure.<sup>3</sup> Band members generally did not possess the requisite skills for employment in post World War II industries and lacked the financial resources to go into business for themselves. Trapping, guiding tourists and working in logging camps, the regime established in the earlier period, was continued with dependence on subsistence activities and relief payments from the government until the 1960's.

The older Band members (50 years and over) continue to follow this pattern of seasonal employment, with one or two exceptions, as do a number of the younger residents. Forestry, mining and railroad work provide almost year-round employment with lay-offs in the spring or the middle of winter, when unemployment insurance payments are relied upon. Employment programs and development projects on the reserve present opportunities for tax-free wage labour for a few months each summer and winter for those who lack saleable skills and are not employed off the reserve. Welfare payments and/or short-term employment in unskilled positions off the reserve are resorted to at other times of the year. Fishing and hunting (to a lesser extent) may be undertaken to provide food for the household or, alternatively, supplementary income through sales to outsiders when the household head is not working.

The employment profile of reserve residents is changing, particularly for those under 40 years of age. Skilled labourers and tradesmen such as iron worker, boiler maker, mechanic and machinist, office workers such as secretary

TABLE 1: INCOME AVERAGES

SOURCE	AVERAGE
1. off-reserve	\$13,000/year
2. on & off-reserve	4,600/season or \$9,000/year
3. on-reserve	
- self-employed	11,000/year
- full-time Band employee	12,000/year
- part-time Band employee	4,000/season or \$8,000/year
-- average earned income from all sources is \$8,920	
per capita earned income is \$2,027	
-- average income (includes transfer payments) is \$10,220	
per capita income is \$2,525	

and clerk, and professionals, such as nurse and school teacher, have emerged. Opportunities for education and training are more accessible and are perceived as providing opportunities that are more remunerative than the semi-skilled and unskilled occupations of the previous generation.

Nipissing Band's current population is just over 600 people of whom approximately 60% live on the reserve in one of five settlements. The largest settlement, with sixty-two households, is Garden Village. It is located in the west end of the reserve along the lakeshore. Duchesnay Village (22 households) is the second largest and is at the opposite end of the reserve, adjacent to North Bay. The other three settlements are on the Highway, averaging five to six households each. The Village children attend school in Sturgeon Falls while those from the east end go to schools in North Bay. Post-secondary educational facilities are also available in North Bay.

Signs of upward mobility are most marked among the residents of Garden Village. While nearly every house is financed by the Welfare Subsidy Housing Program, there are a number with basements or brick exteriors or specially ordered doors and windows that have been paid for by the homeowners. Each house has indoor plumbing and is connected to a system of wells and pumps to provide it with running water. This system, built in the early 1970's was in the process of being replaced with a central high pressure water distribution system in late 1982. The gravel road running through the Village has street lighting which was installed in 1967. Plans are underway to provide the Village with cable T.V. connections. The Band office, health clinic, community hall, Catholic church and municipal garage are centrally located in the settlement.

The Band Council consists of six councillors and a chief who are elected every two years in accordance with the Indian Act. The position of chief has been held by the same person since 1978 when it became a full-time salaried position. The Band currently employs eight other Band members on a full-time basis. The office manager, clerk, secretary, band planner, education councillor,

TABLE 2: EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

Job Description	# Employed off Reserve		# Employed on & off Reserve		# Employed on Reserve	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
heavy equipment operator	4				1	
boiler maker	1					
iron worker	2					
smeltor worker	1					
machinist	2					
mechanic					1	
labourer (construction)	4		8		6	
" (forestry)	2				5	
" (railroad)	5					
" (pulp mill)	2					
electrical technician	1					
UIC training officer	1					
DIA	1					
contractor			1			
teacher	1	1				
officer worker	1	2			4	3
bus driver		1				1
nurse		1				1
waitress		1				
guide	4					
janitor		1				2
	32	7	9	0	17	7

public works supervisor, lands manager and community health representative are paid with funds provided by external agencies for the various programs on the reserve, unlike the chief who is paid with Band Revenue funds. Band constable, a member of the neighbouring reserve across the Lake, is paid by the Ontario Provincial Police.

RECENT GROUP RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has been pursuing a policy and developing associated programs that are intended to lessen Indian dependence on government and encourage self-sufficiency at the local level on reserves across Canada (cf. Ponting and Gibbons, 1980; Weaver, 1981). Implementation of this policy during the past two decades has had a marked impact on Nipissing Reserve. It has created a new source of revenue for

the Band and provided a solution to the desire of non-Band members for access to reserve land that is both generally acceptable to Band members and whites and preferential to the earlier solution of selling reserve land. Approximately one-quarter of the reserve's shoreline has been surrendered for lease and developed into residential subdivisions for summer cottages. The surrendered-for-lease status makes it possible for non-Band members to sign twenty-five year leases with the federal government on behalf of the Band that entitle them to use and occupy a lot in the subdivision. In return, the Band receives the revenue produced by leasing and retains an interest in the land surrendered for that purpose. Ideally, the revenue so produced can be channeled into further development and projects on the reserve and reduce the Band's financial dependence on outside sources.

The first major development project initiated by Indian Affairs was Beaucaje Point Park. It was started as a "co-operative Band project" in 1958 under the direction of an employee from the district office of Indian Affairs. The plans for the Park were developed by this employee in consultation with the Band but were not implemented until the mid 1960's because the key figure was transferred out of the district and none of the Band members were interested in or capable of taking on the project. The idea for the Park was revived in 1965 as a Centennial Year project by the present deputy-chief, and took seven years to complete. Funds were readily available through numerous grants and make-work schemes but the Band's inexperience and poor planning prolonged the project. After the Park was officially opened in 1972, the Committee responsible for its management encountered financial difficulties. Grants for maintenance and further development were increasingly difficult to obtain and the Band members who were hired to look after the Park's facilities were inexperienced. As the facilities and services deteriorated, patronage also declined, further reducing the available finances. Then in 1979, the Park Committee decided to lease the Park on a percentage-of-the-profits basis. Only one Band member and his wife were interested in the proposition and they signed a ten year lease with the Band. Their rent is based on a percentage of the annual Park revenue rather than a flat rate so in the event that they experience a poor year, they pay a reduced rent to the Band. This arrangement has proven satisfactory. The leaseholder is not under the direct supervision of the Park Committee, which was a major complaint of the earlier caretakers, and since his income depends on his own efforts, he is willing to invest the necessary time and effort required to maintain and improve the Park, unlike the caretakers who were paid whether or not the Park made a profit.

If the Park was intended by Indian Affairs to be a major source of revenue for the Band, then it failed. However, under the new arrangement, the potential for revenue production is greater than it was. The Park has also failed as an employment scheme. It did provide short-term employment during its construction for a number of Band members but has since provided employment for the two or three men who have been hired as caretakers over the years. The Band has been able to relieve itself of the financial and management burdens of the Park by leasing it to a member who now bears the responsibility of making it a

viable enterprise.

A more successful program is land leasing. In 1962, the Band surrendered for lease a parcel of lakeshore frontage known as the Jocko Point Subdivision. It has 300 residential lots, stretching from the mouth of the Little Sturgeon River to Jocko Point on the west side of Great North Bay (approximately 4 1/2 miles). Indian Affairs promoted this surrender for lease as a means of replenishing the Band's dwindling revenue funds.

Initially, the Band was not involved in the leasing program beyond providing the labour to build the road through the Subdivision. The Department was, until early 1982, responsible for the administration of the leases on behalf of the Band and approached the Band Council only when it required signatures on resolutions to enter into leasing agreements with outsiders. Consequently the Council was not familiar with the administrative aspect and did not feel obligated to become directly involved with the management of the Subdivision.

This attitude persisted until the mid 1970's and a change in local leadership. For example, when the Department suggested that the Band should pass by-laws for the Subdivision, Chief Paul replied that he did not want to discuss establishing by-laws. Since the Department was administering the leases, it should also be responsible for making by-laws if it felt them to be warranted. On another occasion, when the leaseholders asked the Band to make improvements to the Subdivision road, Chief Paul replied that it was the responsibility of the federal government to undertake road improvements, not the Band's, since the leases were between the Crown and the leaseholders, not the Band and the leaseholders. When the Subdivision residents inquired about the possibility of a variety store and recreation grounds, Chief Paul responded that the rent they paid did not entitle them to such services.

Chief Paul has been criticized by Band members as "too conservative" during his six years in office. They say he is a hard worker and good provider for his family but while he was Band chief, he would not consider making any decisions or taking on any programs which might benefit the Band but would mean extra work for himself. He is said to have dominated the councillors and was usually successful in gaining their support for his decisions on matters concerning the Band.

By the mid 1970's, however, the district lands supervisor was able to convince the Band Council that the requests of the leaseholders could be dealt with by the Band. The road maintenance problem was solved by charging the leaseholders a yearly fee for the service which, in turn, would finance the maintenance by the Band. Garbage pick-up was handled in the same fashion and by-laws were passed to establish health regulations, dog control and to regulate the speed of traffic on the Subdivision Road.

A second surrender for lease was signed in 1976. Beaucage Subdivision, located on the east shore of Great North Bay, had originally been proposed by the Park Committee. Chief Paul was not interested in surrendering more land for leasing purposes and suggested that the Committee form a corporation to manage the proposed subdivision. When the Committee approached Indian Affairs for funds to survey the subdivision, the Department informed the Band

Council that reserve land could not be leased without first being surrendered for that purpose.

The Council eventually agreed to the surrender and a Band referendum was held. Coincidentally, the Economic Development Planning Committee arranged for a feasibility study of the entire reserve which was conducted the same year (1976). One of the suggestions presented by the firm conducting the study was to develop the entire shoreline around Great North Bay as a residential subdivision for summer cottages.

Two men, the Band Chief and the Deputy-Chief, are the central figures responsible for the current pace and trend in development on the reserve. The elected position of chief has been a full-time salaried position, paid from Band Revenue funds, since 1978. This allows the chief to devote more time to Band affairs than was possible before 1978. In addition, the position has been strengthened by the fact that it is both an elected position and a full-time salaried position, and by the fact that the chief is also the general band manager. This places him in an administrative as well as a political position. Chief Paul had to rely on the band manager and Indian Affairs to handle the administration of Band affairs but Chief Phil has become intimately familiar with the bureaucratic intricacies of finding and securing funds for the Band and he does not have to rely on the Band's office manager or Indian Affairs to provide him with the necessary information. Consequently, the decision-making process at the local level is more expedient than it was when the Band chief had to hold down an outside job as well as operate in his capacity as chief. The same person has held office since it became a full-time position. Chief Phil is ambitious, believes that his ideas will benefit the Band, and approaches the whole question of managing the Band's affairs as a corporate business.

The chief is supported by the deputy-chief who is also the current chairman of the Economic Development Planning Committee. When Chief Phil presents a new idea to the Council members, he depends on the deputy-chief's support to convince the councillors that it is a feasible proposal.

The deputy-chief is employed by the district office of Indian Affairs as an economic development training officer and is thus familiar with the ins and outs of obtaining funds and preparing proposals that will be accepted by the Department. He also believes his ideas will benefit the Band but because of his position with Indian Affairs, it is difficult to determine whether he is promoting his own ideas or the Department's general policy for reserve development. However, he is sceptical of the Department's resource personnel and their expertise and promotes the hiring of external expertise whenever possible.

Both men are in favour of developing and expanding the land leasing program but recognize that they cannot initiate too many changes too quickly because the Band members are generally more cautious and prefer to make changes gradually. To these two, the leasing program represents a major source of revenue and a greater degree of economic autonomy in the future.

During the past three years, the new subdivision at Beaucage has been surveyed and divided into sixty lots. a road has been built to connect it with the Park road leading to the Highway, a minimum value has been placed on the

improvement of the lots and the cottages to be erected by the leaseholders, and it is ready for leasing in 1982. These particulars have been worked out by the Planning Committee and Chief Phil.

This Committee has also been working on plans to expand the number of industrial lots available for leasing and thereby establish an industrial park on the reserve. An independent consultation firm was hired by the Band in 1979 to develop proposals for an industrial subdivision that would incorporate the two existing leases in the east end of the reserve, adjacent to North Bay. A concrete plant and a trucking terminal have been leasing land from the Band for more than a decade. Both firms had approached the Band with proposals to lease land and since then, there have been five or six more inquiries from other small industries. The Band has been unable to accommodate them, however, because there are no surveyed or serviced lots currently available.

The Planning Committee recognizes that there is a market in the area for serviced industrial lots and hopes to be in a position to enter this market in the near future. Both the feasibility study for reserve development, completed in the mid 1970's, and the 1979 study for the industrial subdivision confirm that such a market exists. Backed by these studies, the Band approached Indian Affairs two years ago with a request for funding to finance the first stage of the proposed industrial subdivision. The Planning Committee is confident that the revenue produced from the first phase will enable further development and eventual completion of the project but Indian Affairs has not yet committed any funds for this purpose.

As mentioned, the leases were administered by Indian Affairs until recently. The Band has become more involved in the leasing program in the past few years and the Council, in conjunction with the Planning Committee, now determines rent increases, has worked out the details of the lease terms for the new subdivision, and has initiated plans for the expansion of the industrial lot leasing program. The local leadership would like to see the Band become even more involved and believes that the program would be more efficient if it were managed at the local level. The district office of Indian Affairs handles the affairs of thirty-plus bands as well as those of Nipissing Band and the routine administrative tasks of land leasing are slowed down as a result. Band leadership believes that in order for the leasing program to attain optimum success, it must be dealt with on a daily basis by someone who is intimately familiar with the subdivisions, their residents and the terms of the leases.

In the course of working out the details for the Beaucage Subdivision, Chief Phil suggested that the Band hire the real estate agent who had done an appraisal of the lots to promote the new subdivision as well as the fifty lots that have not been leased in the Jocko Point Subdivision. Band Council was hesitant at first but eventually agreed when the deputy-chief indicated his approval. The chief then approached Indian Affairs with his proposal. The district lands supervisor was also not receptive to the plan at first. His office administered the leases and he could not see any advantages to hiring an outsider to promote the new subdivision, especially since such a move represented a threat to his position.

The chief persisted and eventually persuaded the lands supervisor to present the proposal to his superiors. The reply exceeded the chief's expectations. The Department was prepared to transfer the administration of the leasing program to the Band and provide the administration costs for the first three years. Consequently, the Band is now in a position to employ a Band member as lands manager, a move that had been considered for a number of years. However, the Department will not provide the funds for the real estate agent's salary and the Band will have to allocate funds for this purpose. The agent's contract with the Band involves training the lands manager so she will be prepared to take over when the real estate agent's one year contract is completed.

## IMPLICATIONS

Land leasing represents one strategy for group resource development. The reserve's area is not large enough to support the on-reserve population by means of traditional resource exploitation. Additionally, the settlement of the surrounding area has reduced the territory available for use by Band members and provincial regulations restrict the types of activities that can be undertaken in these areas. In other words, even if they wanted to, Band members could no longer depend exclusively on natural resources for their subsistence. Over the past one hundred years, reserve households have been dependent on a combination of wage labour, transfer payments and, to an increasingly limited degree, subsistence activities for their support. Their subsistence relationship with the land began to change when the lumber companies moved into the area and started logging around the reserve in the mid 1800's. Then the Band surrendered their timber for sale in 1868 and the loggers moved on to the reserve itself.

The majority of Band members concede that it is no longer economically viable to live off the land, although this is still regarded as the ideal situation by many. They have gradually accepted that the land can be used in other ways and still leave enough open space for them to carry out their limited subsistence activities. By leasing the land, the Band is provided with a guaranteed yearly revenue source. All Band members share the financial benefits of this form of land use when they receive their per capita share of the yearly revenue distribution, known locally as Christmas Pay.<sup>4</sup> It has been increasing steadily since the Jocko Point Subdivision was started, from \$8 in 1967, to \$16 in 1974, to \$32 in 1976, to \$35 in 1979. Thirty-five dollars symbolizes a new relationship with the land, a new way of using the land. It may also represent the beginning of a financial resource that can be channeled into further development.

Many of the Band elders and the "conservative" element are still hesitant about the leasing program. They recognize and appreciate the financial benefits but are concerned about the future. They wonder if the land will still belong to the Band when the surrenders for lease expire. Their fears are perhaps justified since the Jocko Point Subdivision was surrendered for an indefinite period.

On the other hand, the "progressive" element regards the leasing program as a business venture. The Band has extensive areas of land that are not occupied by Band members but when they are placed on the open market, revenue is

produced. In addition, it is a means of preserving an area of the reserve at no expense to the Band. The residential subdivisions are located in a low-lying area that often floods in the spring so the leaseholders are forced to raise their lots above flood level to protect their homes and subsequently help to slow down shoreline erosion.

The land leasing program currently provides Nipissing Band with approximately \$90,000 a year in revenue. When the new subdivision is leased, an additional \$40 - 50,000 in revenue is anticipated. Completion of the proposed industrial subdivision could conceivably produce twice the current revenue income. This resource thus represents a substantial financial base for a band the size of Nipissing, that could be channeled into further development but which is presently used for other purposes.

The largest single debit in the yearly revenue budget is the per capita distribution of Christmas Pay. In 1979, the \$35 share paid to every Band member represented 23% of the revenue budget for that year. The second largest debit is the chief's salary, representing 17% of the budget. The remaining 60% is divided into small amounts (from less than \$1,000 to \$6,600) and used for maintenance, repairs to Band buildings, drainage ditches, legal fees, travel expenses for Council members, land appraisals, honoraria for councillors, and financing long-term plans. For example, \$5,000 was set aside every year for four years until enough was accumulated to build a municipal garage for the storage and maintenance of Band-owned equipment.

These small budget items are part of the infra-structure that is either not completely funded by outside agencies or not funded at all. The Band's present revenue level is substantial but it is not adequate to replace the funds that are currently received from outside sources for programs that benefit the people living on the reserve. In addition, the administrative costs received with these programs, such as Social Services, Roads and Education, allow the Band to employ members to administer these programs.

Employment on the reserve is dependent on outside sources of funding as are Band projects, and the local bureaucracy has become quite adept at preparing and submitting applications to various government agencies. The local leadership realizes that the majority of the projects funded by external agencies are make-work projects but it also professes a responsibility to the people living on the reserve, many of whom depend on these short-term employment opportunities, to continue to secure the funding for these projects. In addition, the Band electors tend to judge a Council's effectiveness in terms of the amount of work it is able to provide.

At the same time, the Band government is attempting to co-ordinate these make-work projects with long-range plans for reserve development. For example, the road into the new subdivision was financed with funds from a winter-works program and the federal Local Employment Assistance Program (LEAP). Long-range planning entails the accumulation of funds over a number of years (such as occurred with the municipal garage), conducting feasibility studies and developing detailed plans in advance so that when the necessary funds are available, time and money are not lost in the planning phase. Long-range plan-

ning also involves the co-ordination of make-work projects with development plans so that outside funds rather than Band funds finance the infra-structure as much as possible.

Expansion of the land leasing program could eventually result in a greater degree of autonomy at the local level. The substantial anticipated yearly income could reduce the Band's current dependence on outside funding and thus provide a greater degree of economic autonomy. With it would come increased political autonomy, provided Indian Affairs did not interfere with decisions made at the local level on how to utilize the reserve's resources through development and expansion.

Despite the local elite's aspirations for independence, full economic autonomy is not likely to occur. Band members currently rely upon goods and services from the outside that are not produced locally and will continue to do so. They also depend upon the income earned from employment off the reserve. Should the Band be successful in attracting industry to locate on the reserve, it is unlikely that all the residents could be, or would want to be, employed on the reserve. In this sense, the Band is well-integrated with the wider society. However, it is now able to participate in the regional economy on a new footing as a result of the land leasing program. Individual members are, and will continue to be, wage labourers in the wider system but the leasing program has drawn part of this system on to the reserve. The Band is providing a commodity - land - to outsiders who in turn are providing the Band with a revenue base. The question that remains to be answered is: who is benefiting the most from this arrangement, the Band or the leaseholders?

## CONCLUSIONS

Thirty-five dollars symbolizes the strategy for group resource development on Nipissing Reserve. As a result of the land leasing program, the Band has established a guaranteed yearly income that is shared among the Band members and could be channeled into further development. If the proposed expansion of the leasing program is carried through to completion (this depends on the local leadership and the availability of funding), then the Band will hypothetically be in a position to exercise a greater degree of economic and political autonomy. Development, so far, has been achieved at minimal cost to the Band but it is conceivable that external sources of funding for further development will no longer be as accessible nor as numerous in the future and that the Band will have to invest some of its own finances to maintain the system at its present level or to stimulate increased revenue.

The land leasing program is essentially an external program that has been internalized by the Band. The local leadership has been able to legitimize the idea in the eyes of the Band members so successfully that it is now regarded as the Band's business. Initiated by Indian Affairs in the 1960s, this program has been incorporated by the Band leadership, particularly in the past four or five years, as the central component of its economic development plans for the reserve. It has become the Band's program, not Indian Affairs', and the financial

success achieved so far has legitimized it in the eyes of the Band members.

They, in turn, have also incorporated the program as their own. It is their land that is leased as a result of their vote in favour of the surrender for lease and, as such, they are entitled to share the benefits that result. Thirty-five dollars symbolizes their claim to the land, their right to share in its development, and the local leadership has not denied them their right. It is in the best interests of those who are elected to Band Council, particularly the chief, to redistribute what appears to be the Band's wealth among its members and to increase the per capita share of this redistribution periodically. This creates the impression that the Band Council is "doing things" for the Band. Of course, "doing things" for the Band also entails providing one more house than the previous year or employing two more men on a winter works project than the year before.

Both the local leaders and the Band members will acknowledge that the leasing program originated with Indian Affairs when pressed to discuss its early development. Otherwise, they convey the impression that it is the Band's business and with the recent transfer of administrative responsibility from Indian Affairs to the Band, the leasing program has become the Band's business in fact.

To the Band Council, the program represents a group resource that it manages on behalf of the Band as a whole. As such, it is a business manager as well as a local government for, in addition to handling routine Band affairs, it is also concerned with managing the reserve's assets and developing plans that will expand the existing resource development for "the benefit of the Band." For a minority of Band members, the program represents a loss of reserve land although they appreciate the financial benefits that result, particularly since their per capita shares have been increasing. For other Band members, it is a revenue source and a Band business. And for a limited few, the leasing program also represents an opportunity to go into business for oneself. Several proposals have been put forth by members for small service enterprises in the subdivisions but, so far, only one individual has been able to follow through with his proposal and established a variety store in the Jocko Point Subdivision.

The overall impression of land leasing as a successful strategy for group resource development on Nipissing Reserve could well prove to be a veneer. I question to what extent this program will provide a long-term solution to the need for development on this and other reserves. Land leasing was introduced by Indian Affairs as a means of producing revenue and thus reducing the Band's financial dependence on the Department. As mentioned, the yearly revenue is not sufficient to replace the funds provided by external agencies and depended upon by the Band. The revenue from land leasing is currently redistributed to the Band members, used to pay the chief's salary and channeled into small infra-structure expenses. These represent necessary expenditures but do they provide long-term benefits? Will the proposed expansion of the leasing program produce sufficient revenue for other types of reserve development and will they in turn provide long-term benefits for the people living on the reserve? To what extent can Indian reserve communities such as Nipissing become financially independent and is land leasing a viable means of achieving this independence?

I also question to what extent this strategy for development benefits all the

residents of the reserve. The overall impression of the past two decades of development is that Band members are becoming "middle-class." Will the land leasing program assist all Band members in achieving their "middle-class" aspirations and life-style or will it assist only those who are directly involved in managing the program? In the final analysis, the elite may maintain their middle-class position, either through direct involvement in the program or through employment off the reserve, while the average Band member's income will remain relatively constant. The current trend may very well be towards underdevelopment rather than development.

#### NOTES

1. A slightly different version of this paper formed a part of my Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Toronto in 1982 and was presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Ethnology Society in Vancouver, British Columbia in May 1982. I am especially indebted to Dr. Peter Carstens of the Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, for his many helpful suggestions. The views expressed in this paper are the opinions of the author only, and do not represent the views of the University of Toronto, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, or the Nipissing Band.
2. See Hansen, *Revocation of Surrender and Its Implications for a Canadian Indian Band's Development*, *Anthropologica*, forthcoming, for details of negotiations.
3. This pattern of wage labour combined with subsistence activities was prevalent throughout this resource area of Ontario at this time. See Mortimore, 1974; Knight, 1978; Van Wyck, 1979.
4. The Christmas Pay used to be known as Timber Pay when the Band's revenue came from the dues paid by the companies logging the reserve at the turn of the century. But the timber eventually disappeared and the revenue fund dwindled until there was nothing left.

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