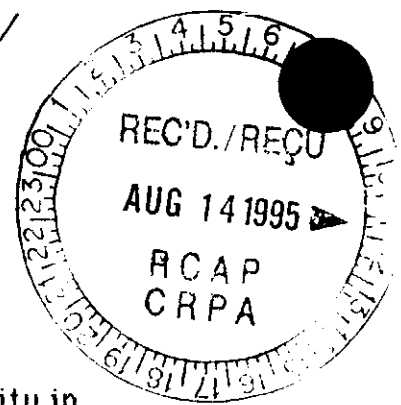


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FRACTURED VISION:
FRUSTRATION AND HOPE IN FORT RESOLUTION, N.W.T.*
by Lynda Lange



This is a case study of public spending in an aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories. Fort Resolution is a mixed Dene/Métis settlement of roughly 500 people, with a comparatively long history. The site has been on a fur trading route since the late 18th Century, and had a major Roman Catholic Mission which was founded in the second half of the 19th Century. Three local bodies which used to combine their budgets have recently separated -- the Dene Band, the Métis Nation local, and the Government of the Northwest Territories settlement council. Treaty 8, based in Fort Resolution with membership extending from the N.W.T. to the north of the four prairie provinces (primarily Chipewyan people), is seeking negotiation of claims with the federal government. As a result of this movement, a number of individuals have applied for re-instatement to Band membership under C-31.

The purpose of this project was to document the thoughts and feelings of the people in a northern aboriginal settlement about public spending, and discover how they envision that public spending could serve them better under aboriginal self-government.

The report presents comments in sections on social assistance and local public education, using comments on housing, health, and local economic development to help fill out the context.

In "Social Assistance", it was found that crucial change, which has severely damaged the peoples' self-sufficiency, has occurred since the 1950's when programs began to be introduced. Circumstances have made income support programs necessary, yet a majority of individuals think that the design of these programs has robbed people of initiative and self-esteem, and even contributed to problems of substance abuse. The traditional extended family with its values of hard work and the teaching of skills, has been undermined by the structure of benefits paid to individuals. Men of working age seem to suffer relatively more severe cultural dispossession than any other group. There is evidence that initially the people had to be tricked and coerced to accept government programs designed to compel them to live in year round settlements. Despite its necessity, the majority perceive social assistance as an external force which contributes a great deal to powerlessness.

In "Local Public Education", it is reported that most people consider

Formal education very important for the future of the people, even though few at present complete even high school. Although the people complained of the problems of a culturally alien school system, there was mixed opinion about the value of teaching Chipewyan language and culture. Many are more disturbed now by the low standards of the school, lenient discipline, and parental indifference. Even though the elders value education, they consider the local public school, and parental neglect of children, to be the two main things undermining traditional values.

A number of problems were identified by the people as obstacles to development and betterment of the community, and even potential problems for aboriginal self-government. The most significant was alcohol and drug abuse. The next was factionalism and favouritism, which seems to affect every aspect of settlement life, including social programs.

It was found that while the vast majority favour self-government, their support was usually qualified by several concerns. One was that "the people must work together" and overcome factionalism and favouritism. Another given equal importance was a concern that local affairs are dominated by a tiny elite who are not adequately accountable, either financially or politically. The need for participation of the people was emphasized. When asked what is needed for a healthy community twenty-five years from now, academic and technical education was frequently mentioned, along with dealing with the problem of substance abuse, and overcoming widespread unwillingness to work for the betterment of the community.

Some reflections from political theory suggests, among other things, that a too strongly held politics of communitarianism is in tension with the realities that even remote aboriginal settlements are now part of the modern world, and that the colonization process has displaced populations and created relatively mixed settlements. It is suggested that respect for communities which define people's identities need not require complete unity and the absence of debate, but should encourage forms of participation that enable those involved to make a difference.

The report concludes that the policy option of the Government of Canada that is prior to everything else is aboriginal self-government. Four policy options which take that as a given are presented: (1) structures of political and financial accountability, (2) income support programs, (3) local public education, and (4) the relationship between healing, and institutional reform.

August, 1995.

**Fractured Vision:
Frustration and Hope in Fort Resolution, N.W.T.***
by Lynda Lange

Introduction

This is a case study of public, or government, spending in an aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories. Fort Resolution is a mixed Dene/Métis settlement of roughly 500 people in total. It has a long history compared to some more isolated settlements, since the area it occupies has been part of a major fur trading route since the late 18th Century. In addition, there was a Roman Catholic Mission in what is now Fort Resolution, founded in the second half of the 19th Century, eventually growing to a very large establishment of residential school, farm buildings for livestock, gardens, and residences for nuns and priests. All that remains now is the Church built in the 1920's. The language of the Mission was originally French, but the community has long since been anglicized so far as education and public programs are concerned. Elders of the settlement, both Dene and Métis, speak Chipewyan. Some also speak French, and/or other Dene languages. The non-aboriginal population is a small minority.

Until recently, Fort Resolution had a community council which combined the budgets of the local Dene Band, the Métis Nation local, and the Government of the Northwest Territories settlement council. With the collapse of the western arctic Dene/Métis comprehensive claim, a movement developed for members of Treaty 8 (primarily Chipewyan people) to seek negotiations with the federal government on behalf of a membership that extends from the Northwest Territories to the northern parts of the four western provinces. Several years ago, the Band withdrew from the community council and obtained its own budget and offices. This resulted in the Métis Nation local separating as well. At present, therefore, there are three distinct bodies, with distinct concerns and very different types of power, responsibility, and resources, comprising the formal leadership of this community. One result of these changes is that quite a few individuals in Fort Resolution who have considered themselves Métis for practical purposes, have applied for re-instatement to Band membership under federal legislation C-31. The Métis seem at present to have lost a lot of their

*A community consultation under the heading "Rethinking Public Spending: Solutions From the Communities", for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

negotiating power as a result of these changes. At present, the Métis Nation local is the least active of the three community bodies.

The purpose of this project was to document as accurately as possible the thoughts and feelings of a northern aboriginal settlement about public or government spending -- which includes any program of money or services available to individuals or communities from any level of government. Since "public or government spending" will continue to be necessary under aboriginal self-government, the idea was to discover how one community envisions that, under aboriginal control, spending programs could serve them better than they have been served in the past. While the perspective of aboriginal people in Fort Resolution on the effects of various public spending programs, and on the ways in which they should be different, is consistent with that of other aboriginal people (as reported, for example, in the preliminary documents of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples), there were several special problems which became themes of the interviews in Fort Resolution.

This report will first present in detail comments on two public spending programs -- "Social assistance", and "Local Public Education". Housing, health, and local economic development were also discussed in interviews, but these will only be used to help fill out the context. The examples of social assistance and local public education, which received by far the most comment, serve to illustrate, first, some of the results of cultural impact and Euro-Canadian domination, and second, the special problems in the community which seem to stand in the way of change by making it very difficult for the community as a whole to organize effectively on its own behalf.

The next section will be a discussion of the "Special Problems" that directly impinge on the conduct of public spending or government programs in Fort Resolution.

The Section "Aboriginal Self-Government and the Future" includes local comments on aboriginal self-government as a means of improving spending programs, as well as some observations about the people's vision of the future. This vision is found to be damaged by frustration and despair, yet retaining a core of hope and a strong desire for the betterment of the community for all of its members.

In "Some Reflections from Political Theory" I present in brief outline some ideas from political theory that seem relevant. I do not present these ideas as definitive for an aboriginal community (or any other community), but merely as thoughts that are useful for reflecting on the issues. A short list of books is included in this section.

A "List of Policy Options" drawn from consultation with the community concludes the report.

Social Assistance

The particular program which received by far the most comment was social assistance. There is a sense that crucial changes have occurred in the settlement since W.W. 11. A pattern of change can be discerned in what the elders say:--hard-working lives of self-sufficient poverty, with few consumer goods but plenty of fresh food, were undermined by various government "hand-outs". This led to dependancy, then rising expectations or "greed" for consumer goods. However, this period led in turn to encounters with the limitations of government programs, then cut-backs, resulting in dashed expectations and frustration. This was accompanied by inability to recover the self-sufficiency of an older way of life, due to circumstances of development beyond the control of individuals.

In spite of the fact that everyone recognizes the need for some sort of program of income support in an environment with very few waged jobs or other opportunities to make a living, fully two-thirds of the individuals interviewed gave the opinion that the system is "abused". These individuals even included a few who had themselves recently applied for social assistance and received it -- they were of the opinion that it was "too easy". These negative views were expressed by saying that people are "spoiled", "taking advantage", "no longer looking for work", "unwilling to go to school", or "having no initiative".

It is important to clarify at once that these remarks were not an accusation of actual welfare fraud. That is, there was no suggestion that people are receiving assistance who actually have jobs, or are disqualified for other financial reasons. The comments have to do with the degree of dependancy on social assistance in the community, and the attitudes that have grown up because of it.

There is a minority political opinion (reported by two individuals as an opinion held by "some people") that social assistance is their due, a kind of compensation for paying taxes to governments to which they do not consent, or for the use of their land.

A number of individuals linked social assistance abuse with the problem of alcohol and drugs. The link was made in two distinct ways. A

Some individuals suggested that a small minority of social assistance recipients are actually using their regular cheques to fund bootlegging operations (illegal but still not "welfare fraud"). The common opinion was that substance abusers are especially likely to become dependant on social assistance, and be unable or unwilling to work or study.

I see people in the community who will drink what money they have until it's all gone. Then they sit and say they will be alright because they will get help from welfare anyway. That is true, too, so what can you say? Before the days of welfare, no one would think of doing something like that. They would have kept their money, knowing that they would need it for food. That's the way we grew up.

- Ft. Resolution elder

Regret was frequently expressed, especially by older individuals, that the combination of substance abuse and apparent easy availability of social assistance, is destroying both traditional skills and traditional moral values. Traditional land-based activities have been undermined in a variety of ways. Objectively, fur prices dropped some time ago, and the cost of consumer goods has steadily risen, making trapping much less viable economically. Yet hunting and trapping continue to have powerful symbolic value in northern aboriginal communities, signalling values of hard work, pride, and independence characteristic of traditional Dene/Métis cultures. In Fort Resolution, even though it has much more weakened connections to the land than many more remote northern communities, to say that someone "just stays in town", whether unemployed or on social assistance, is to speak of cultural loss and even a certain sense of shame. This is especially true for men in the prime of their working life.

The people that are on assistance just stay in town and do nothing. There are not many jobs in the community either so it's hard to work.

- Ft. Resolution elder

Since welfare started giving assistance to the people, the people don't go out in the bush like they used to. Long ago they were content with their lives and did not seek help anywhere else. But now they know that welfare is there, so they no longer care to hunt and trap. They spend most of their time in the community because they know they will still have good money without having to go out to work for it. [...] There's a combination of causes, not only the welfare, but the

whole government system, the way they change things for people. People are not as happy and they don't live like they used to, but it's not entirely their fault.

- Ft. Resolution elder

Public spending programs such as social assistance and housing have "changed things for people" in ways both subtle and direct. One group which has experienced a relative increase in choice as a direct result of social assistance is adolescents and youths. For example, a very young woman, single with one child, asked for help for a damage deposit to get her own place to live. She was told it was "no problem". She also reported that "most of her friends" have children and have their own place. For better or worse, the authority of elders in the traditional Dene/Métis extended family has been undermined by the access of youth to personal independence, by means of social assistance which is delivered directly to them as individuals. Of course, there are other contributing factors which may be more serious. The conduct of public education is perceived as the major factor by most elders, in spite of the fact that they value education.

It is not surprising that older members of the community do not see this increase in choice by the young as a good thing. Several older individuals expressed their amazement and disapproval at the loss of traditional values and skills by the youth.*

It seems now that children just barely get out of diapers and they already team up and live together. It wasn't like that in the past.

-Ft. Resolution

When people started getting welfare, it seems they no longer looked for work like they used to. Now even young people live together and get social assistance. I don't think some of them even know how to start a fire.

-Ft. Resolution elder

One senior male elder put it far more strongly:

People do not try to help themselves (because of social assistance), and that is why the young people are being destroyed.

-Ft. Resolution elder

*Compare the remark of an elder in Fort Franklin, that "it seems that the government is paying young women to have babies by themselves".

Understandably, young single women with children are most likely to get social assistance. Unemployed younger single men, prior to middle age, do not necessarily get social assistance (it is also much more difficult for them to get housing). This uncertainty, in a setting of considerable social assistance dependancy, combined with the lack of jobs, and the many ways in which they are cut off from traditional sources of livelihood and self-esteem, adds up to a poisonous environment for younger men. At least the need to care for the home and children continues for most women. Men in the prime of their working life may be the most dispossessed group of people in the community, which can be nothing short of a catastrophe for Dene/Métis cultures.

An outward sign of this process of cultural dispossession, is that men in Fort Resolution are no longer provided by their wives or mothers with the fancy jackets and footwear using tanned hides decorated with beading or embroidery. One interview contact spoke with warmth of the Easter season in the past being "like a fashion show" for the men, saying it seemed that the women competed with each other to see who could make the most beautiful and intricately decorated clothes for their men. This has not happened for some time. Moose hides are available -- one elder spoke of large numbers of hides simply being discarded -- but there are only a few people who can or will tan hides in the Dene way. It appears that to a greater extent than in more isolated northern communities, many traditional skills have virtually disappeared, or least passed out of use, for most families in Fort Resolution (e.g. drying fish and meat, preparing hides, sewing traditional clothes).

Hunting is still an important activity for the people of Fort Resolution, yet the dynamic of it has changed. For example, people will hunt by driving out in trucks for the day, but it is rare for anyone to go out on the land for an extended period of time. There is a basic economic reason which partly explains this. Travelling in the bush to hunt and trap requires a considerable initial outlay of money for gear, which presents a big hurdle to anyone considering this activity who has not been employed. While social assistance is available to one degree or another, what is not available to those without jobs is enough money at one time to set oneself up for land-based economic activities. This was mentioned by a number of men as a reason why more people do not pursue these activities.

The apparent easy availability of social assistance gives little sense of ease to anyone of mature years (if it does to anyone), because they are aware of the frequent arbitrariness of the system from their point of view, and the lack of community control over terms of eligibility. An individual

With considerable leadership experience commented that "people who really need it sometimes don't get it". One elder spoke with bitterness of how his dying brother was denied assistance, in spite of his enormous efforts to get help for him. The denial was completely senseless to him.

I felt really bad against Social Services because of this. They will probably do the same to me when I am dying. When I think about it now and see people getting help and not making good use of it, I get really upset yet.

-Ft. Resolution elder

I used to really bug them before they gave me anything. There were very few jobs and some would get assistance and some wouldn't. People without jobs had a hard time since they couldn't depend on welfare for help. They only helped certain people.

- Ft. Resolution elder

Lack of community control and a perception of arbitrariness contribute a great deal to feelings of dependancy and powerlessness. This is made worse in Fort Resolution by the widely held perception of favouritism in virtually every area of community life, including granting of social assistance (see section on "Special Problems").

It was primarily younger people who made the accusation of "abusing the system", and "taking advantage". While the elders lament the loss of traditional values and skills, and the loss of initiative, they also show a gentle tolerance born of their long concern that basic needs must be met somehow. There is understanding of the extreme vulnerability of the Dene/Métis communities prior to the gathering of some political strength since the early 1970's. As one elder remarked with simple eloquence:

We have to do something to survive. We can't let ourselves starve to death.

- Ft. Resolution elder

With the exception of only one elder, it was younger people who reported a politicized view that public spending programs were the means of colonization. It is younger people who have chosen to remember stories told about the attitude of the elders when these programs were first introduced (1950's and early 1960's). An individual who is 50 reported being told by the elders: "that's not the way--you can't get something for nothing." A yet younger individual reported that family elders said people at the time these programs were first introduced did not want to take social

assistance, and "thought it was a trap to lure them into the government system". It is easy to imagine that back then these elders were "voices crying in the wilderness". Yet their opinion back then was consistent with contemporary analyses of the colonization process.

One elder described in detail his impression that the people in a real sense were tricked or seduced into taking social assistance in the first place. He described a program of grocery distribution and vouchers in the 1950's which took place at the federal day school. Provisions were brought in, and the whole community was invited to help themselves, with no questions about need being asked. In addition those who came were given "a green slip that you brought to the store". A great deal was left over the first time, because people were suspicious of the meaning of this program.

People were kind of scared to take stuff, they're not used to getting something for nothing.
- Ft. Resolution elder

But it was repeated, and after the third time, everything was taken. Still, no questions were being asked about need. After a while, people had to apply for social assistance.

Why was this grocery program done?? It was probably part of the federal governments policy of trying to get northern aboriginal parents to settle in year-round villages and send their children to the federal day school. There is considerable evidence that the federal government used both social assistance and family allowances (rights of all Canadians) to coerce northern aboriginal peoples into year-round settlements. However, in Fort Resolution, there had been a Roman Catholic residential School since before the turn of the century. It was reported to me several times that the priest and nuns had told the people that the federal day school was the work of the devil, and that if they sent their children there they could not return to the Roman Catholic church. The grocery program may also have been a strategy especially for the Fort Resolution area, to counteract this campaign by the Roman Catholic Mission.*

Solutions? About one-third of younger individuals between their 20's and early 60's, as well as some of the leadership, are of the opinion that people should have to do something to get social assistance. Community service, assistance to elders, teaching of traditional skills, academic

*The pressure to abandon old privately owned houses, and move into subsidized rental units, is part of this process. Only one elder in Fort Resolution complained that families' old houses were systematically burned so that they could not return to them, but this story can be corroborated by the experience of other communities.

Grading and training, were put forward as suitable activities. However, when asked if there would be community support for this, discussion immediately turned to the problems of the community. Two things stand in the way of this type of local reform. It seems clear that so long as social assistance is perceived as outside community control, tending to arbitrariness, and representing a force external to Dene/Métis cultures, people would be likely to protest strongly if asked to work or study in exchange for assistance. Yet the special problems of this community also stand in the way of effective resistance to external forces, that is, of being able to take action to improve the community.

This situation points to the need for far more fundamental solutions, not only to the problems created by social assistance programs, but to community government in general.

Local Public Education

There can be no doubt that concerned members of the community, of all ages, consider formal education to be of outstanding importance for the future of the people. It is a very frustrating situation, considering that, according to G.N.W.T. Minister of Justice and Aboriginal Affairs Stephen Kakfwi, only 3 per cent of aboriginal students in the N.W.T. finish high school.*

The experience of Fort Resolution does not contradict what has been widely published about aboriginal education:--that its failure is ultimately due to an alienating Eurocentric curriculum, absence of knowledge of, and pride in, aboriginal history and skills, far too few aboriginal teachers, and lack of community influence and control over the methods of education. Numerous individuals in Fort Resolution also mentioned shortage of money and resources, even when innovative ideas are developed for the local school. Fort Resolution has actually lost Grades 8 and 9 recently, which used to be offered in the community. It is widely felt that Grade 8 is too young to go away from home to school. The need to leave the home community to pursue secondary education is another well known source of problems.

However, although none of these problems were disconfirmed by interview contacts in Fort Resolution, they had many other things to say about children and education in the local school. Some effort has been made to include local cultural programs in the school. However, three quarters of

*Overview of the Second Round, p. 51. This is coupled with the claim that these are the best schools in any aboriginal communities in North America!

those aged 20 - 50, with children presently or recently in school, complained that the standards of the school in the community have deteriorated, and are too low, discipline is too lenient, and children are not well enough prepared to go on in school elsewhere. Several parents noted that children who appeared to be doing well in the local school, had academic difficulties when they moved to the next stage of schooling.

In an open discussion in an adult education class (consisting of ten individuals between the ages of 21 and 45, all of whom are parents themselves), there was unanimous and vigorous agreement on several points:-- that the standards of the school are too low, that teachers are too lenient, and that parental indifference is a serious problem. Contrary to what might be expected, there was some admiration expressed of the old federal day school (Peter Pond School), said to have strict discipline with corporal punishment. (This particular view was corroborated in one additional individual interview with an individual in her late 30's, who said that Peter Pond School had been "pretty good" and that she had a good education there). There had also been a "school monitor", a local person who went to children's homes to collect truants. Most likely, this admiration of the past is due to the frustrations of the present, especially among a group of adults who have decided to return to their own education after dropping out. This opinion was expressed with a sense of irony that the relative harshness of the old system would now seem better than the present system. It did not seem to be the case that anyone seriously wanted to return to that system. However, they very definitely want a higher standard of education for the children, and more discipline.

There is some mixed feeling about the teaching of Chipewyan language and culture in the school. Many individuals interviewed want Chipewyan language and culture included in the school curriculum. A few interviewed believe it is now irrelevant, or that it should be taught only at home. A person of Métis background complained that it was discriminatory, since some families speak French at home and not Chipewyan. The Roman Catholic Mission in Fort Resolution was French speaking originally, a history that lives on in the French surnames of much of the village. It was reported second hand that some parents tell their children they do not have to learn Chipewyan, so the children will not listen in class.

The issue of discipline of children is not related solely to school hours, but the situation outside of school hours clearly has effects on children's performance in school. People are aware of children playing outside until the small hours of morning, and of behaviour which causes

difficulties. To the elders, this is symptomatic of significant cultural change, which they tend to lay at the door of the public school. When asked about the current state of education, these were some of the elders' replies:

Long ago children lived a good life. They never bothered things and were quiet. They did not stay up all night or play outside at night. Now most children are a problem. - Ft. Resolution elder

If children are taught what is right, given good advice and maybe taught a bit of bush life, they will have a good mind. It's not like it was before. People had respect for their parents and elders.
- Ft. Resolution elder

As soon as children start reading they learn swear words and such. [...] They always seem to do what is wrong instead of right. When you talk to them they reply by using English swear words.
- Ft. Resolution elder

It is curious that with such extensive interviewing in this area, no one mentioned television as a possible source of "bad behaviour" among the children (particularly the use of "English swear words"). What accounts for this? It could be that the removal of children from the home to a school which is centred in European culture, for purposes of education, seems to be a much more significant cultural shift to the elders than anything that children do while in the home, including watching television. Traditionally, like all land-based peoples, families worked together and children were taught by parents and other relatives as a natural part of family life. In this way they learned necessary skills and cultural values as part of a seamless whole. This would have been the experience of everyone presently older than their late 40's (except for those placed in the Roman Catholic Mission residential school).

The influence of television on children is, of course, an important current issue all over Canada. In a non-aboriginal urban setting, it is presumed that this influence can be separated from other influences, such as school. In the setting of a relatively isolated aboriginal community, however, it seems to me that the views of the elders are not necessarily just a matter of confusing two separate things. Any Dene elder will confirm that traditionally children, and even young adults, were very obedient to their parents. The removal of children from the Dene family setting for learning in English, with the relative loss of Chipewyan, opened the door

le to other cultural influences (such as television). Schooling and television are to some extent part of the same external cultural influence, not so separable as they may seem in other settings, helping to make Dene children more like children of European cultural origin (or at least of urban origin). In the long view of the elders, these things happened quite close together in time, and children are different as a result.

However, there is another side to this story. It is not just children that have changed, but parents as well. One constructive way to deal with the cultural shift mentioned above would be extensive parental presence in the local school. Unfortunately, there is considerable feeling that parental indifference is a serious problem. For example, the children's curfew of 9:45 PM is not enforced. A member of the Community Education Committee said that they had asked the R.C.M.P. to enforce the curfew for children up to fifteen years, but they would not do so. When asked why parents did not organize themselves to enforce the curfew on a volunteer basis, this individual said it was not possible for lack of funding, because "nobody is willing to do anything for nothing anymore". Numerous others noted parental indifference as well. It was stated that it was not practical to take children home if their parents were not home anyway. "Too much cards and bingo" was the common explanation for this. It appears that child neglect is a factor in both lack of academic success and discipline problems.

One very senior elder woman said:

There are a lot of changes taking place and I think that with the education and other things coming in, the women that have children, they run to bingo and children are neglected, and that was unknown when I was younger. There were no such things, that started after the education came. To me, it's not good as it was in the older days. [...] Whatever my mother told me I always tried to do, I never talked back and she only had to tell me once. I never went against her wishes. Children are not like they used to be when I was growing up. [...] the parents don't talk to them like they should, kids are running wild because nobody looks after them, they are neglected and they talk back to their parents, which was never known in my days.

-Ft. Resolution elder

About half of those of parenting age who were interviewed, expressed the view that part of the problem is that some of the local leadership "does not care" about these problems with education and child care. Whether one

lacks of the present formal leadership, or the possibility of any respected member of the community taking leadership initiative to respond to these problems, it is not happening at present in Fort Resolution. There are deeper issues that seem to prevent effective community action, whether concerning education, the effects of social assistance, or any other program of public spending in the community.

In the next section, I report on special problems of the community that became a theme of the interviews.

Special Problems

There were several issues which were mentioned by the great majority of interview contacts, which relate to public spending programs at the community level. Alcohol and drug abuse was stated by almost everyone as the most important issue facing the community, affecting even political questions of self-government. The majority also mentioned lack of participation or interest in community affairs, and factionalism and/or favouritism, in the administration of every sort of program.

It was frequently said that it is "impossible to do anything to make things better" (or words to that effect) on account of one or more of these problems. This section will report on community perceptions of these special problems. Fortunately, the following section concerning self-government and the future will provide some balance to this negative situation, although it must be admitted that some negativity remained about those subjects as well.

a. Alcohol and Drug Abuse:

There is no controversy that this is a serious problem. Twenty-seven of twenty-eight non-elder interview contacts identified alcohol and drugs as the biggest problem of the community. (The one dissenter identified favouritism as the biggest problem, but also acknowledged that substance abuse is a serious problem.) Seven of twelve elders explicitly identified substance abuse, especially alcohol, as the biggest problem of the community, and four of the five others spoke of it as a serious problem.

It appears that substance abuse occurs in all age groups, including children and elders. This is undermining the traditional relationships of caring and respect between the generations. Children suffer neglect, and respect for leaders, parents and elders is diminishing.

One youthful interview contact observed that: "Its hard growing up

... because you can't see opportunities. It becomes a way of life to grow up with parents that drink and have problems." Another said: "A lot of elders are drinking. I don't know where to turn. Who's going to respect an elder who's coming on to you when he's drinking?" Another youthful interview contact noted that the Band Council and the Community Council are perceived in the community as having alcohol and drug problems.

A very youthful individual described the community situation as follows:

There's no place for young people, nothing to do, no where to go. Adults play cards and gamble, and have taken over the community hall. At dances, people only dance when they have alcohol. We used to have jam sessions and singing. Teenagers have the biggest problem with alcohol -- there's too much violence. Our parents' generation is hooked on gambling, maybe not drinking as much as they used to. I still respect the elders, although I see them drinking sometimes.

- Fort Resolution youth

Elders had much to say about the problem of substance abuse, and problems related to it. Here are a few examples:

Young people get together and try things that are harmful to them. Young girls are also to blame and not only the boys. In the past people drank home brew but were never as bad as today. It is totally out of control now. People are going crazy. This includes young people as well as elders. Even little children smoke drugs.

-Fort Resolution elder

Nowadays elders would see young people drinking and they would laugh at them and say they don't listen and just make a joke of it. A lot of the blame should go on the parents because the parents drink and don't talk to their children and prevent them from doing drugs and alcohol. [...] parents play a major part in all of these problems. I'm sure there are a lot of people who are supportive [of more prevention or treatment programs], but there are also those who don't seem to care one way or another.

-Fort Resolution elder

Children are neglected because parents drink... Alcohol abuse is the downfall of the people.

-Fort Resolution elder

Several elders are of the opinion that all other problems and troubles stem from the major problem of alcohol and drug abuse. Others frequently made connections between this problem and other problems, and the issue returned again when interview contacts were asked about a possible future for public spending under aboriginal self-government.

Everyone was asked their opinion of the causes of this problem. This revealed a distinctive psychology about substance abuse. Only a few gave answers of a socio-economic nature. Each of the following opinions was given by only one individual:-- substance abuse is caused by "loss of culture and identity", "too sudden change", or the colonizing process because it is disempowering to individuals, as well as to families (because of programs geared to individuals). One person blamed social assistance programs, and one blamed the Roman Catholic church. One individual also observed that for economic reasons "people found themselves in a situation where there was not much they could do to help themselves. They felt helpless."

The greatest majority of the answers, however, showed a blend of passivity and victimism about the causes of alcohol and drug abuse. Of thirty-five other answers, eleven people said that people abuse alcohol because "the government sells it". It is true, of course, that there was no alcoholism in aboriginal culture before alcohol was introduced by non-aboriginals. Several people also pointed out that, even after the people learned to make home brew, it was only done for a few special occasions and had "natural limits". For very many, however, their opinion about the cause of the problem was simply that alcohol is available. Five said that bootleggers and drug dealers are the cause. Bootleggers operate because, although Fort Resolution is not a "dry" community, there is no liquor outlet. "Not enough to do" was stated four times as a cause. Four elders said that the original cause of the problem was the lifting of the legal ban against Treaty Indians having alcohol. Lack of jobs, television, the road built into the community, and R.C.M.P. failure to arrest people, were each mentioned twice as the causes of alcohol and drug abuse.

Everyone was asked what sort of government spending program might help the people with this problem. There were a variety of answers to this question, some people giving more than one answer. Twenty answers stated a need for good local treatment programs with well qualified counsellors and/or stated that the local centre is not effective. (The ineffectiveness of the local centre is linked to the next set of Special Problems, discussed below.) Four people said that treatment programs away are not effective, and no one said that they are effective. Naturally, opinions about ways to solve the problem tended to reflect individual's perceptions of the cause of

There were seven answers of "don't know" what would help, or "nothing" would help.

Ten people think that an enforced ban on alcohol, more R.C.M.P. arrests, or other intervention, is the only thing that would work, even for individuals. When it comes to drug dealing and bootlegging, there is a perception that people are "getting away with it". In such a small village most people know very well who the drug dealers and bootleggers are, yet they are not arrested and charged. Some people complain that the R.C.M.P. are not doing their job. According to the R.C.M.P., people are not willing to cooperate by giving evidence in ways that can be used in court.

There were eight answers that seemed to the researcher to show a distinctive cultural attitude toward the individual. It is beyond the scope of this project to interpret this attitude, but for those within the culture who understand it, it may be something that should be recognized in any healing program if it is to have any hope of success. It was expressed by various age groups as the opinion that "it is up to the individual", "people have to make their own decisions", or "people have to help themselves". Four elders expressed it as follows:

I think people could quit if they really wanted to and put their minds to it. Even if people go for treatment they will still keep on drinking if they want to drink. Its hard to change people, there are a lot of people and they don't think the same. - Fort Resolution elder

Its pretty hard to do anything to help them. A lot of people may drink but you can't really stop them. - Fort Resolution elder

People won't drink if they don't want to. People could quit if they wanted. They are their own bosses and no one makes them drink. - Fort Resolution elder

The Creator made all people, but there are no two exactly alike. One person may think one way but the other person would think another way. Not all people think alike so there are people who want to quit and will quit. Others may want but will not, and there are those who don't want to quit at all. - Fort Resolution elder

Four people stated that giving the young people something to do would help, but one lamented that "Youth groups might be good, but its so hard to get them involved. Even a \$5.00 fee is too much because they want

everything free."

Seven individuals spoke about various aspects of community involvement as the only thing that would really help. Here again there was pessimism that parents had little enthusiasm for organizing themselves. It was mentioned that elders, and the younger leadership, should be setting a good example. The most senior elder expressed this point as follows:

I think it would take community involvement to start with, maybe the older people and then the younger generation. Speak to the children and have more counselling for the people that are involved. Train people to help these younger people. If the parents are not drinking, they would serve as an example for their children, and they in turn would pass it on to their children. But it has to be done as a group with community involvement.

- Fort Resolution elder

b. Other Community Problems

Factionalism and favouritism were the most frequently mentioned problems, but other issues came up as well.

Of twenty-eight non-elder interview contacts, all but four noted that factionalism and favouritism are constant features of the community. Of the four remaining, one who did not comment directly on favouritism was someone that others often blamed for favouritism. Three of the elders interviewed also spoke about favouritism. Jobs and housing were most frequently mentioned as areas where favouritism was practiced. Quite a few people said that individuals were not hired by qualifications, but by who their friends and relatives were, or that "housing is supposed to be on a point system, but its who you know."

This criticism was not especially directed at any particular body. People complained more bitterly about local representative bodies (Band Office, Settlement Council...), but it was clear that the problem is everywhere. There is great lack of confidence in the allocation at the local level of jobs, contracts, housing, and even social assistance. Although a few people said that the problem was due to differences between the Dene and the Métis, there were more that said it was not. They said it was "more personal", a question of friends and relatives, or that certain families are dominant in the community and always favour their own family members.

Lack of participation, and indifference, was mentioned again in this context, as was the problem that "people want to get paid for everything."

It appears that factionalism helps to disempower the community. One

Unger interview contact stated that even existing community resources are not used because "they all side up and won't work together". Another said "People are afraid to speak up for themselves, because some people are really against you." Another said "[Fort Resolution] is like a lion's den because of the back-biting and bickering. People don't seem to want change." Yet another: "This is not a community. There are too many factions, people won't work together."

While the difference between the Dene and the Métis was not considered a significant factor in relation to the administration of existing programs, it was considered very significant at the political level. These were some remarks: "More fighting might be the biggest result of self-government" and "self-government would mean a fight between the settlement council and the Métis versus the Band".

There are other divisions as well, which also result ultimately from colonial bureaucracy. One division has assumed a new importance, namely that between members of the local Band, and individuals who are status Indians but members of other Bands. One elder said:

I am a Treaty but belong to [another] Band. I was born and raised in Fort Resolution and yet they say I don't belong to the Band here and cannot attend their meetings. In the past I attended Band meetings. It is no longer a happy place because of the split.

- Fort Resolution elder

It is possible for an individual with Indian status to transfer from one Band to another. This requires the consent of the Band the individual wishes to join. Here again there were many accusations of favouritism, especially that, at least up to the time of interviewing, acceptance was denied to those who were critical of the Band leadership. There is some talk of the possibility of forming a local sub-band, a development that would further complicate what is already a very complex situation.

What was apparent, simply on the basis of what was found through extensive interviewing, is that the recent political direction attempted by the Band was, at the time of the consultation, quite divisive, and the object of some cynicism about its motivation. This was an obstacle to the development of local solutions to the difficulties of the community. Unfortunately, none of these issues can be strictly separated from the question of self-government as it might affect public spending programs, and will be discussed further in the following sections.

Aboriginal Self-Government and the Future

The practice of the Government of the Northwest Territories has been to set up programs for settlements that are accessible to everyone. Housing is one of the most important examples of this. However, individuals who are status Indians, and members of a treaty group, in principle have a claim to infrastructure and public spending programs exclusively for their members, that should come directly from the federal government. This is the position taken by the local Chief. This Treaty group, extending over several settlement areas in the NWT, as well as northern parts of the four western provinces, is currently engaged in negotiations with the federal government. These negotiations, which re-open discussion of provisions of the Treaty which have gradually been abandoned by governments, are now informed by the desire for self-government. The Territorial government establishes local committees for such things as housing, education, alcohol and drug treatment, etc. However, these committees are strictly advisory, and have no authority regarding the allocation of services. According to the Chief, the Métis have been dominant in the community, and the Treaty people have not been getting their share of the services. It was claimed that the Dene and Métis have always felt animosity toward each other, but this was not confirmed by any of the elder or middle-aged interview contacts. The negotiation process itself presently gives the Dene of Treaty 8 access to additional funds from the federal government. This, in combination with the number of people who have been motivated by present developments to regain their status under C-31, and the return of a few more educated individuals also interested in this process, has greatly raised the profile of the Dene locally. The Métis Nation local is the least active of the three community bodies at present.

Since the local Band separated from the community council, its politics are sharply differentiated from those of other groups in the settlement. However, the local Band has begun some new efforts to work with the various groups in the settlement on a different basis. An "environmental working group" has been established with representation from all sides. Deep concern for the environment is something everyone can agree on (at least in principle) and may therefore hold the most hope for cooperation among different groups.

Many elders explained that the Dene and Métis in the Fort Resolution area used to get along perfectly, that there were no differences between

them that mattered. Nevertheless, present factionalism is rooted historically in the necessity for everyone to be labelled, which is imposed by negotiations with the Canadian government for aboriginal claims. In this particular community, this necessity had a major impact on the community when the local Dene Band withdrew from the combined community council in order to get involved in Treaty 8. Quite a few people stated that conditions in the community deteriorated after the split. The difficulty is that, since the membership of Treaty 8 covers an extensive territory which includes the northern parts of the four western provinces and other N.W.T. communities, the agenda of Treaty 8 cannot possibly be made to coincide with strictly local concerns. Nevertheless, the local community has lost something as a result of this split. The Métis, in particular, find themselves in a situation of great uncertainty regarding the possible effects of self-government.

Among other issues, the "C-31's" (people who have had their status re-instated under Bill C-31) are accused of shoving aside those who have always been status Indians and members of Treaty 8. This seems to spring from resentment at some better educated people who have reclaimed their status and returned to Fort Resolution in anticipation of new negotiations under Treaty 8. At present, people from this group seem to have seized the Dene leadership, and the local community has yet to feel the potential benefit of these individuals returning.

Interview contacts were asked three questions about the general subject of self-government. The first was a general question: what is your opinion about aboriginal self-government? Then they were asked: what do you think would be the biggest change in the community if there were an adequately funded, well set up, form of self-government? Finally they were asked: if Fort Resolution is to be a healthy community, and a good place for your children or grandchildren to live twenty-five years from now, what needs to start happening (or continuing) now?

The vast majority of people (90%) favour self-government in principle. However, in their responses to the three questions above, they did not isolate the political question of self-government from the other issues concerning public spending at the local level already discussed in this report. The same themes re-appeared again in their responses. Although thirty-six of forty interview contacts spoke in favour of self-government, and clearly felt that it could help the community with many of its present difficulties, nineteen of these individuals qualified their approval by stating certain conditions that would have to be met in order for self-government to be a good thing.

When expressing qualified support for self-government, two concerns were mentioned more than others and equally often. (They were mentioned seven times each just in response to the questions in this section, but also mentioned frequently in other contexts.) One of these was that "the people must work together". Sometimes it was explicitly mentioned that the Dene and Métis must work together, or that "it will never work unless there is a joint agreement". However, this should be balanced against the fact that many people do not see the factionalism or favouritism of the community being primarily caused by a Dene/Métis split, but by other factors. There were five more answers to the effect that self-government would not be a good thing unless favouritism is ended (particularly in connection with the administrative jobs that would need to be filled for self-government). One individual explained that self-government would mean working together on issues of common concern to the community, rather than in factions.

The other thing mentioned equally often was a need to reform the leadership of the community. One person who supports self-government said that people are afraid to speak up. When asked why self-government would change this, the reply was: "Maybe new people will be running things, maybe things would change." Another person said: "We need to focus on the goals of the whole community, and not just the goals of the leaders. There are some power-hungry and crooked people." Favouritism for acceptance into the local Band was mentioned again several times as something that would have to change. Closely linked to the issue of leadership is the observation that for aboriginal self-government to work, there must be participation by the people. An individual who supports self-government in principle nevertheless stated: "Self-government in Resolution is scary because there is just a handful of people running Res."

A major worry among those who otherwise support self-government is a fear of misappropriation of funds. Those who expressed this fear usually also said that if this happened the people would be worse off than they are now. The sense that the people would be "worse off than they are now" arises from a fear that there will not be adequate mechanisms of accountability to deal with the problem should it happen. It is feared that the financial accountability of the leadership will be less than it is at present, and it is already perceived as less than adequate.

When asked what would have to happen for Fort Resolution to be a healthy community twenty-five years from now, the answers tended to blend with other remarks about self-government, and other subjects of the interview. Several people said that self-government would require that people deal with the alcohol and drug problem, and a few mentioned

"healing" in general as a necessity. An equal number said that the people would need more and better education, and particularly that they would need education in their own history and culture in order to give them something to be proud of, and an awareness that their people used to be self-governing. Academic and technical education was frequently mentioned as necessary, although several people mentioned a need to return to traditional moral values of respecting people for their character and skills, and not "for money or [formal] education". Some mentioned once again the problem that people are no longer willing to do anything for the community without being paid, and said this would have to change. There was a lot of spontaneous pessimism expressed when this question about the future of the community was asked. Yet hopeful idealism turned out to be an equally strong element.

These are some of the remarks of non-elder interview contacts that were unique:

I'd like my grandchildren to learn their language and culture. If we don't know that, why negotiate with the government to keep it and not be assimilated? The elders have to find it first. They are confused themselves...

First tear down the Roman Catholic Church. The Mission started here before the turn of the century and colonized and assimilated us. We are still suffering from the treatment of previous generations. [...] The person up front is nine times out of ten an alcoholic or a child molester. There are very small signs that people are searching [for aboriginal spirituality].

I pity my children, the future does not look good. It's not just what this community needs, it's what the whole country needs -- to clean up the environment. The whole world needs that. The rest will follow. If we have a clean healthy environment, what can harm us?

There should be cultural respect for everyone, for difference...

We need to go through a healing process in the native way. People preach the native way but they don't practice it. We need to stop running people down for lack of money and education. The Roman Catholic Church stopped native spiritual practices. They would have to be brought back in from other native communities. We'd have to get elders from the south.

It cannot be denied that respect for the elders in the traditional sense has diminished. Yet a number of elders had forceful things to say about self-government. These are a few examples:

Yes, I think self-government would be good for the people. I'm happy you asked that. Since the government started helping people we have had nothing but problems. When we did things for ourselves, we lived a good life with only Dene people. [...] They should leave the land as it is. I will tell you what I think, and whether you like it or not, I was asked what I thought, and I have done just that.

- Fort Resolution elder

We should have self-government, that's the answer to everything. When we are in control we could help each other to solve some of the problems instead of always depending on others.

- Fort Resolution elder

A very old elder held up a happy vision of a healthy community rooted in experience of the people's past values and customs:

I know that before the government came, we were governing ourselves, we always lived a good life... Twenty-five years from now this community will be a real healthy community if people live together in harmony and try to be good to each other, treat even the young people with respect, and they in turn will respect the older people... Long ago, there was no difference whether you were Dene or Métis. When we would come in from the bush, George Norn used to play the fiddle. We used to have dances, and we learned the different square dances, jigs, and that. I really used to love to dance. We danced all night right up to 5:00 a.m. and there were Dene and Métis all mixed. It didn't matter who you were, there were no fights. Of course, there was no alcohol. Nowadays, there are always fights at the dances. It's because of the drinking. It wasn't like that before whether you were Dene or Métis. We all got along.

- Fort Resolution elder

Some Reflections From Political Theory

The following ideas help us to understand the process of events in communities like Fort Resolution. However, the reader is urged not to see

them as definitive ideas from "experts", but simply to hold them in mind alongside the distinctive self-understanding of Dene/Métis cultures, for what they may help to reveal. After all, an appreciation of the effects of colonization and the need for self-government implies that the cultural self-understanding of a people is just as important as any analysis that may be made of it by others, no matter how well-intended.

Fort Resolution may be thought of as facing the need to reconstitute a traditional (though much changed) community under conditions of modernity.

From the perspective of political theory, the politics of the movement for aboriginal self-determination is "communitarianism". Communitarians are critical of the liberal insistence on the independence and freedom of the individual, and argue that it is an illusion. They point out that our various identities are created by our membership in certain cultural communities, and that the problems of individualism, egotism, and alienation in modern societies can only be solved by a recovery or a revitalization of some coherent value scheme. This is a pretty accurate description of the values of many movements for cultural preservation and self-determination, including aboriginal self-determination. This approach has been termed "reconciliationist communitarianism". It is easy to see the potential relevance of this approach to a community such as Fort Resolution, since it is often presumed that aboriginal communities (were it not for the problems created by the process of colonization) have quite a homogeneous concept of what is good for individuals and the community as a whole.

Communitarians can be criticized, however, on the ground that their values are not practical except in a mythical vision of small, homogeneous, undifferentiated social units, that are almost never found in reality. They are accused of being prone to intolerance, exclusivism, or prejudices such as gender discrimination. This is no longer acceptable to many. In spite of the fact that they want cultural preservation, they do not wish their culture to be "frozen in time" and not open to constructive change. For example, in Fort Resolution, a few people complained that recent efforts at cultural activities excluded girls and young women on traditional grounds. This type of communitarianism can be faulted for an uncritical use of appeals to "tradition", not grounded on sufficient community consensus. Another example of this is the widespread skepticism and dissatisfaction in Fort Resolution concerning the Chief's claim to have been installed "by custom election".

"Reconciliationist communitarianism" may tend to a rather romantic or idealized view of aboriginal communities, perhaps tapping into a certain nostalgia, or sense of loss of community for themselves, among

non-aboriginal supporters. It has been this writer's observation, however, that (not just in Fort Resolution but in many other northern aboriginal communities) actual community members often have a more practical and realistic view of the problems and internal conflicts of their communities. Many are ready and willing to come to terms with the fact that, small and seemingly remote as their communities may be, they are now in a very real sense part of a modern world. This includes the reality of population displacement and somewhat mixed communities.

There is an alternative view of communitarianism called "participationist". According to this view, the problems of modernity do not lie particularly in the loss of a sense of belonging or oneness in the community. The problem of modernity is more with disempowerment and the absence of political agency, problems which many think are present in the whole of developed societies like Canada. However, this absence has been much more acute for aboriginal communities in Canada. Self-governing and economically self-sufficient peoples have had modernity imposed on them through a process of colonization. They not only lacked participation in the decisions that affected their lives, but until about twenty-five years ago they literally lacked even basic political rights in the system that governed them, such as the right to vote.

The problem of disempowerment rings true to the experience of an outsider speaking with many different people about all these different issues in a community like Fort Resolution. The people have pointed out two problems for political development that will need to be tackled if and when the opportunity for self-government arises. One is frustration and deep-seated feelings of personal disempowerment, and the other is internal conflict and tension partly due to the mixed populations somewhat arbitrarily placed together during the colonizing process. However, it should be emphasized that, critical as people may be, or frustrated and disillusioned, they do not question that they belong in the community, or even ultimately that they have more interests in common than otherwise. For one thing, on account of the smallness of the community, relations with relatives and friends often cut across factional differences. In addition, it is a strongly held Dene/Métis cultural value, mentioned again and again, that "people should work together".

At present in Fort Resolution, internal tension is made worse by local "power plays" and attempts to silence differences. The differences that have developed cannot be eliminated by artificial insistence that they do not exist, or are not important. People in Fort Resolution cannot even agree on basic facts. Some insist it is a majority Métis community, founded by

Métis. Others insist that it is a Dene community, with the Métis entitled to no more than "input".

Respect for communities which define people's identities need not require complete unity and the absence of debate. "On the participation model, the public sentiment which is encouraged is not reconciliation and harmony, but rather political agency and efficacy, namely the sense that we have a say in the economic, political, and civic arrangements which define our lives together, and that what one does makes a difference... A vibrant, participatory life can become central to the formation and flourishing of one's self-identity." (S. Benhabib, see last paragraph)

Fort Resolution is a good example of people who may once have enjoyed traditional unity, but are now faced with fracture and the disempowerment of all but a tiny elite. The restoration of aboriginal self-identity and self-government will depend on a satisfactory re-casting of custom and tradition to meet the needs of the community in a modern world. This cannot be imposed by a few individuals. Many individuals in Fort Resolution stated that the success of self-government, and even the healing process they believe is required, both depend on full participation. This, however, cannot happen without challenge to certain kinds of leadership, and open discussion of existing differences.

Lack of participation and indifference to community affairs seems to be at one and the same time the cause and the result of the current problems in Fort Resolution, whatever their ultimate origin in colonization. Recovery from indifference and despair, and the substance abuse that sustain them, depends on the belief of individuals that their participation can "make a difference". Only genuine re-empowerment through participatory, accountable, self-government, could reasonably give individuals this belief.

This is a short list of books for those who would like to pursue some of these ideas:

Seyla Benhabib, *SITUATING THE SELF: GENDER, COMMUNITY AND POSTMODERNISM IN CONTEMPORARY ETHICS* (Routledge, 1992) see especially "Autonomy, Modernity, and Community".

Avineri, Shlomo, and Avner de-Shalit, editors. *COMMUNITARIANISM AND INDIVIDUALISM*. Oxford (England); New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Delaney, C.F., editor. *THE LIBERALISM-COMMUNITARIANISM DEBATE*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, c.1994.

Kymlicka, Will. *LIBERALISM, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Peden, Creighton, editor. *COMMUNITARIANISM, LIBERALISM, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY*. Lewiston: E. Mellon Press, 1991.

Rasmusson, David, editor. UNIVERSALISM VS COMMUNITARIANISM: CONTEMPORARY DEBATES IN ETHICS. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990.

Young, Iris. JUSTICE AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Policy Options

These policy options are drawn from, or inspired by, consultation with the community.

The policy option of the Government of Canada that is prior to everything else is aboriginal self-government. This is taken as a given in considering all of the following ideas, which are policy options which presume participation and choice on the part of aboriginal peoples in Canada in the formation and maintenance of institutions of self-government:

(1) Structures of political and financial accountability: These should be removed enough from local influence to enable effective local appeals against abuses (although not so remote as to be alienated from regional realities and concerns). Bodies to whom such appeals might be made must have sufficient power to make full public inquiries, and to take whatever action may be necessary to correct abuses. They should be part of the structure of aboriginal self-government, and be themselves accountable to a higher body in aboriginal self-government, and/or to an appropriate court of law.

(2) Income Support Programs: Income support programs should not be national in design, but regional or even local. (The acceptability of local design depends on structures of accountability removed enough from local influence to enable effective local appeals against abuses.) Income support programs may or may not include requirements of community service, job training, educational up-grading, or treatment programs. To be effective, programs with requirements must be under the control of aboriginal self-government, and perceived as such. (The perception that they come from an external force is at present at the heart of the harm they have caused.) Their effectiveness for community development will further depend on adequate local and regional participation in decision-making about them.

(3) In local public education, the importance of sensitivity to the community, and the teaching of aboriginal skills and language, should not be

showed to become *an alternative* to education which gives individuals the preparation, and therefore the choice, of going on to higher education of any type, in any other location. Children around the world grow up exposed to two or more languages or cultures. There is no reason *in principle* why aboriginal children cannot be well educated in their own language and tradition, and at the same time well educated in the necessary background to study to become teachers, principals, doctors, lawyers, and so on. The failure of the educational system to provide excellent standards for aboriginal children is the basic reason why these different emphases in local public education have tended to become alternatives, rather than enrichment that fosters personal and community development.

(4) The relationship between healing and institutional reform: In the areas of substance abuse, parental neglect of children, and indifference to the community, it may be a familiar observation, (but nevertheless worth re-stating until it actually happens on a widespread basis), that special steps are needed to promote the healing of many individuals from the effects of abusive residential schooling, cultural domination, disempowerment and hopelessness. Aboriginal moral and spiritual traditions, alone or in combination with other resources, contain within themselves means of healing. However, healing will inevitably be limited unless individuals begin to believe that their healing and participation in the community "make a difference". Their ability to begin to believe this will depend ultimately on whether or not it begins to be true. Putting in place participatory, accountable, self-government is the foundation of both individual and community healing.

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Appendix 1 - Outline of Work and Interview Plans:

Two separate visits were made to Fort Resolution, one of seven days, and one of five days. An outline of the project was sent about three weeks before the first visit, to the heads of the different representative bodies in the community. The researcher spoke with the Chief of the local Band, the President of the Métis Nation local, the Mayor of the settlement, and the Treaty 8 Liaison Officer, before the project was completed. A draft of the final report was returned to each of them for comment.

There were forty interview contacts, ranging in age from 20 to 83. One interview plan was made for non-elders (attached). There were 28 individuals in this category. Interviews were conversational style, each one lasting one to one and one-half hours. Twelve elders were interviewed on tape, with Chipewyan interpretation, using a slightly modified interview plan (attached). See Appendix 11 for further information about elder interviews.

Comments from interview contacts were systematically assembled for each section of the report, with names omitted. The names of individuals are not used in the final report. Some vagueness in the report is not due to the absence of more exact documentation, but to the need to protect anonymity in view of the sensitivity of some of the findings.

A group discussion was held on the first visit with an adult education class consisting of 10 individuals ranging in age from 21 to 45. On the second visit, the interim report was presented to the same class for discussion. There was unanimous agreement with the interim report.

Appendix 11 - Elder Interview Tapes and Transcripts

Top quality tapes and equipment were used to record interviews in Chipewyan with twelve elders in Fort Resolution. There were two purposes for this. One was to record the thoughts and memories of the elders. The other was simply to record the Chipewyan language as it is spoken by the most fluent speakers in this community.

One set of tapes has been sent to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, and one set has been sent to the Dene Cultural Institute in Hay River.

Transcripts of verbatim translations of these interviews are included with the submission of this report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

INTERVIEW PLAN FOR NON-ELDERS

● subject: year of birth, place of birth, how long resident

- level and place of education
- employment
- do you consider yourself Dene or Métis?

2. general discussion of programs:

- what are the programs you are most interested in/concerned about at present?

- how good are these programs?
- are there problems?
- could they be improved? if so, how?
- have they been different for the Dene and the Métis?

- e.g. HOUSING, WELFARE, EDUCATION, TRAINING, HEALTH, LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3. solutions to special problems:

- are there special problems in the community?
- why have these things happened?
- what would help?
- how could a government sponsored program help?

4. vision of the future:

- (although we do not know at present how aboriginal self-government might be set up) are you in favour of it? should the people in the community be making their own decisions about government spending programs in the community?

- if it were set up in a way you consider good, what do you think would be the biggest change in the community?

- (when you are a grandparent or elder 25 years from now) - if Resolution is to be a healthy community, what needs to start (or continue) happening?

ELDER INTERVIEW PLAN

1. personal history -

- name, age, year of birth, place of birth
- how long resident in Fort Resolution
- do you consider yourself Dene or Métis?
- what services are you receiving now?

2. the past -

- do you remember a time when the people received nothing from the government?

- how did you make your living? was it a good living?
[opportunity for stories about the way of life back then]

- what was the first thing you or members of your family received from the government?

- what do you remember about the first government programs and how they affected the people? were they useful? were there problems? did people welcome these programs? were some people opposed to them?

- were these things different for the Dene and the Métis?

- what are the possibilities for cultural renewal now? would it be a good thing? could government spending help?

3. programs at present (or the recent past) - general discussion of:

- housing
- welfare
- pensions
- health
- education
- local economic development

- HOW HAVE THESE PROGRAMS AFFECTED THE COMMUNITY?

- COULD THEY BE IMPROVED? IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?

- WERE THEY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES FOR THE DENE AND THE METIS?



Elder interview plan.

4. solutions to specific problems

- ARE THERE SPECIAL PROBLEMS IN THE COMMUNITY? IF SO, WHAT?
- WHY HAVE THESE THINGS HAPPENED?
- ARE THERE PROGRAMS (OF GOVERNMENT SPENDING) WHICH COULD HELP THE PEOPLE NOW WITH THESE PROBLEMS?

5. vision of the future

- (although we do not know at present how aboriginal self-government might be set up) are you in favour of it? should the people in the community be making their own decisions about government spending programs in the community?

- if there were aboriginal self-government, what do you think would be the biggest change in the community?

- if Resolution is to be a healthy community 25 years from now (one where you would want your children and grandchildren to live) what needs to start (or continue) happening?