

COLONIZING MINDS:

Public Education, the "Textbook Indian," and Settler Colonialism in British Columbia, 1920-1970

SEAN CARLETON*

ON THE EVENING OF 1 JULY 1967, more than thirty-two thousand people packed Vancouver's Empire Stadium to celebrate one hundred years of Canadian Confederation. The audience was treated to a dynamic program, including a parade and history pageant, a giant birthday cake complete with candles, and a fireworks display to cap off the evening. The capacity crowd even sang, according to one newspaper, "Happy Birthday, Dear Canada,' like they meant it – from the bottom of their hearts."¹ It was not all pomp and ceremony, however. As part of the centennial festivities, actor and outspoken indigenous activist Chief Dan George, and members of his family from the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation located across Burrard Inlet in North Vancouver, performed a powerful soliloquy entitled "Lament for Confederation." In the performance, George spoke personally of the traumatic and enduring legacy of settler colonialism. He began: "How long have I known you, Oh Canada? A hundred years? Yes, a hundred years ... And today, when you celebrate your hundred years, Oh Canada, I am sad for all the Indian people throughout the land." He explained: "In the long hundred years since the white man came, I have seen my freedom disappear like the salmon going mysteriously out to sea. The white man's strange customs which I could not understand pressed down upon me until I could no longer breathe. When I fought to protect my land and my home, I was called a savage. When I neither understood nor welcomed his way of life, I was called lazy." George continued: "My nation was ignored in your history textbooks – they were little more important in the history of

* I thank Mary-Ellen Kelm, Mark Leier, Deanna Reder, Penney Clark, Graeme Wynn, and two anonymous readers for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this work. Thanks are also due to Simon Fraser University and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for financial support.

¹ George Dobie, "Twas a Happy Birthday," *Vancouver Sun*, 3 July 1967.

Canada than the buffalo that ranged the plains.”² According to another news report, George’s sharp words left the audience “a little incredulous and silent.”³ Indeed, George powerfully and eloquently called settler colonialism and its many tools of oppression into question.

What is fascinating about “Lament for Confederation” is that George identifies textbooks as important sources of colonial power in British Columbia. If George’s lament was among the first challenges to racist stereotyping of indigenous peoples in textbooks, it was soon followed by many scholarly and political studies.⁴ Among early analyses that quantitatively highlight omissions and count overtly racial slurs in Canadian textbooks are *Teaching Prejudice: A Content Analysis of Social Studies Textbooks Authorized for Use in Ontario* by education writers Garnet McDiarmid and David Pratt, and *The Shocking Truth about Indians in Textbooks!*, a more politically charged document produced by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood.⁵ Continuing this critical tradition, although not focused solely on representations of indigenous peoples, are recent studies by Colin M. Coates and Cecilia Morgan, Amy von Heyking, and José Igartua, which place more emphasis on qualitative analysis of bias and narrative structure in textbooks.⁶ Similarly, Harro Van Brummelen, Timothy J. Stanley, Penney Clark, Elizabeth Furniss, and Daniel Francis examine textbooks authorized by British Columbia’s provincial government for use in public schools, the latter four authors paying careful attention to the ways in which indigenous peoples are rep-

² Dan George, “A Lament for Confederation,” *Vancouver Sun*, 4 July 1967.

³ Mike Bolton, “Chief Silences Birthday Crowd,” *Province*, 3 July 1967.

⁴ Anthropologist H.B. Hawthorn was one of the first people in British Columbia to place biased textbooks in the public spotlight after the Second World War. In 1948, he helped organize the Native Indian Affairs Conference at the University of British Columbia, which produced a report recommending to the Special Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee to Reconsider the Indian Act that, among many other things, the government call for the authorization of textbooks that presented a more “fair picture” of indigenous peoples and their history in Canada. See BC Indian Arts and Welfare Society, *Report of the Conference on Native Affairs at Acadia Camp* (Vancouver: BC Indian Arts and Welfare Society, 1948), 51–52.

⁵ Garnet McDiarmid and David Pratt, *Teaching Prejudice: A Content Analysis of Social Studies Textbooks Authorized for Use in Ontario* (Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1971); Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, *The Shocking Truth about Indians in Textbooks!* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1974). See also Emma LaRocque, *Defeathering the Indian* (Agincourt: Book Society of Canada, 1975); Patricia V. Ofner, *The Indian in Textbooks: A Content Analysis of History Books Authorized for Use in Ontario Schools* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1983).

⁶ Colin M. Coates and Cecilia Morgan, “Lessons in Loyalty,” in *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Vercheres and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 164–94; Amy von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta’s Schools, 1905 to 1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006); José Igartua, “Values, Memories, Symbols, Myths, and Traditions,” in *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945–1971* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 63–88.

resented.⁷ In particular, Francis introduces the concept of the “Textbook Indian,” which helps us to make sense of Chief Dan George’s indictment of textbooks.

In his exploration of national myths and the representations of indigenous peoples, Francis identifies what he calls the “Imaginary Indian” – an overarching construct representing the popular images of indigenous peoples in film, literature, and dominant culture that Canadians “manufactured, believed in, feared, despised, admired, and taught their children.”⁸ Francis argues that the Imaginary Indian played an important role in Canadians’ self-identification, functioning as a “stick with which [Canadians could] beat their own society.”⁹ One such manifestation of the Imaginary Indian construct can be found in school textbooks that, Francis states, contain “a cluster of images which might collectively be labelled the Textbook Indian[, which] the anglocentric

⁷ Harro Van Brummelen, “Shifting Perspectives: Early British Columbia Textbooks from 1872 to 1925,” in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History*, ed. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig, 1986), 17–38; Timothy J. Stanley, “White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Educational Indoctrination: A Canadian Case Study,” in *Children, Teachers, and Schools: In the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman and Mona Gleason (Calgary: Detselig, 1995), 39–56; Penney Clark, “‘Take It Away, Youth’: Visions of Canadian Identity in British Columbia Social Studies Textbooks, 1925–1989” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1995); Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999); Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 1992); Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 1997). For a more detailed overview of the literature on textbook analysis and indigenous peoples, see Penney Clark, “Representations of Aboriginal Peoples in English Canadian History Textbooks: Towards Reconciliation,” in *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*, ed. Elizabeth A. Cole (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 81–120.

⁸ Francis, *Imaginary Indian*, 5. Francis draws primarily on Robert Berkhofer Jr.’s, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1979); and Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978) and Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993). For other works looking at colonialism and the representations of indigenous peoples in North America, see, for example, Brian Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982); Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2004). For Canadian writing on the subject, see Ronald Graham Haycock, *The Image of the Indian: The Canadian Indian as a Subject and a Concept in a Sampling of the Popular National Magazines Read in Canada, 1900–1970* (Waterloo: Waterloo Lutheran University, 1971); Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada’s ‘Heroic Age’ Reconsidered* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1985), 3–50; Furniss, *Burden of History*; R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man’s on the Warpath: The Image of the “Indian” and the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes from the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); John Lutz, “Making the Lazy Indian,” in *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 31–47; Emma La-Rocque, *When the Other Is Me: Native Resistance Discourse, 1850–1990* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010).

⁹ Francis, *Imaginary Indian*, 8.

view of Canada invented in order to justify its own hegemony.”¹⁰ Francis amasses a sprawling collection of appalling stereotypes of indigenous peoples found in Canadian school texts. Indigenous peoples were portrayed as war-prone, uncivilized savages who hindered the expansion of European civilization in North America. In short, Francis argues that the images of the Textbook Indian were “supposed to teach us a view of history which rationalized the assimilationist policies being carried out by our government. In effect, we were being educated for racism.”¹¹

While Francis’s discussion of the “Textbook Indian” is an important contribution to the literature on representations of indigenous peoples, his analysis is limited. Francis presents partial evidence to flesh out the concept of the “Textbook Indian”: he considers a few representations contained in a random scattering of textbooks published over a ninety-two-year time period in different provinces, with no discussion of the local politics of curriculum development. Thus, it is unclear to the reader whether the texts Francis examines were actually authorized for use in schools, in what provinces and time periods, and whether they were intended for elementary or secondary schools. More problematic is his lack of sustained critical engagement with the historical processes that subtly shaped the few representations of indigenous peoples he includes. Francis leaves the “Textbook Indian” as a vague and static construct disconnected from the larger projects of state schooling and settler colonialism as well as from the changing historical and material circumstances of settler society.

To contribute to the field of textbook analysis and to advance Francis’s idea of the “Textbook Indian,” I draw upon the literature examining the colonial representations of indigenous peoples. In particular, I take up Robert Berkhofer Jr.’s call for scholars studying the representations of indigenous peoples to:

Show both the continuity and the changes in the imagery. Ideally such a history would embody both (1) what changed, what persisted, and why, and (2) what images were held by whom, when, where, and why. On the whole, scholars of the topic attempt only one or the other of these approaches and adopt quite different strategies in doing so ... To oversimplify somewhat ... usually the former concentrates upon imagery and ideas, and the latter emphasizes policy and actual behaviour toward [indigenous peoples]. As a result of these differences

¹⁰ Francis, *National Dreams*, 71.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

in attention and explanation nowhere does one find a comprehensive history of White imagery.¹²

Such an approach has been adopted by historians R. Scott Sheffield and Paige Raibmon in their studies of indigenous representations in Canadian newspaper discourse and cultural performances, respectively.¹³ However, analyses of textbook representations of indigenous peoples tend to focus heavily on discourse – on imagery and ideas – and pay little attention to its relationship with the changing historical circumstances that partially shape such representations. Of course, textbooks are not accurate reflections of society. Yet, images and ideas are not created in a vacuum; nor are they static, objective, or apolitical. As Berkhofer suggests, it is important to examine the dialectical relationship between representations and social circumstances. Although I do not present a complete analysis of the “Textbook Indian,” I aim to clear a new path by analyzing colonial discourse found in textbooks in relation to changing educational practices and the shifting asymmetrical politics of settler colonialism in British Columbia – a politics that textbooks ultimately defended.

More specifically, then, I investigate the textual and visual representations of indigenous peoples in thirty-four history and social studies textbooks officially authorized by British Columbia’s Department of Education for use in secondary schools between 1920 and 1970.¹⁴ I examine how changing textbook narratives and representations of indigenous peoples justified settler colonialism in relation to shifting social conditions in the province over two time periods: 1920 to 1945 and

¹² Berkhofer, *White Man’s Indian*, 30–31.

¹³ In particular, see Sheffield, “Whither the ‘Indian’? The Special Joint Senate and House of Commons Committee to Reconsider the Indian Act, 1946–48,” in Sheffield, *Red Man’s on the Warpath*, 148–75; Raibmon, “‘The March of the Aborigine to Civilization’: Live Exhibits and the World’s Columbian Exposition, 1893,” in Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 34–49.

¹⁴ See Appendix for a record of textbooks with Canadian content authorized for use in British Columbia between 1920 and 1970. This record was constructed in consultation with the annual lists of prescribed and authorized textbooks published by the Department of Education in combination with the annual reports of the public schools of the Province of British Columbia. The textbook lists and annual reports are available in the Education Library at the University of British Columbia, which also holds a vast archive of textbooks. Note that I examine the time period of 1920 to 1970 in order to trace the changes in education in British Columbia after the First and Second World Wars and after the reports of the Putman-Weir (1925) and Chant (1960) commissions on British Columbia education. I have also chosen to focus on the growing importance of secondary schooling in British Columbia as a means of training more knowledgeable and responsible subjects. For more on the educational history of British Columbia, see, for example, Henry F. Johnson, *A History of Public Education in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Publications Centre, University of British Columbia, 1964); Clark, “Take It Away, Youth!”

1945 to 1970. While an important body of literature has analyzed the ways in which residential schooling sought to colonize the hearts, bodies, and minds of indigenous children, teaching them that colonialism was natural and inevitable, this work considers how the textbooks authorized for use in British Columbia's public secondary schools played a vital role in justifying colonialism to non-indigenous students.¹⁵ In short, I argue that public secondary education was not a neutral project and that textbooks, and, in particular, their representations of indigenous peoples, were intricately connected – whether intentionally or not – to the process of representing to non-indigenous students as commonsensical both settler colonialism and the continued existence of a capitalist settler society in British Columbia.¹⁶

British Columbia was defined by struggle between 1920 and 1945. As soldiers who fought for the British Empire in the fields of Europe returned home, they sought re-entry into the provincial economy. This re-entry, however, proved difficult as many workers fought to subsist and to find jobs in depressed conditions. At the same time, indigenous peoples battled for land, existence, and political recognition against the popularly held belief that they were members of a vanishing race doomed to disappear in the face of an advancing, and superior, settler civilization.¹⁷ Moreover, governments at all levels worked to maintain

¹⁵ On residential schooling in Canada, see J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988); Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 1992); Jean Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children," in *Children, Teachers, and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson (Calgary: Detselig, 1995), 57-80; Paige Raibmon, "A New Understanding of Things Indian: George Raley's Negotiation of the Residential School Experience," *BC Studies* 110 (1996): 69-96; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *The Letters of Margaret Butcher: Missionary-Imperialism on the North Pacific Coast* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Note that, in practice, what was actually taught in schools undoubtedly differed from the official knowledge of authorized textbooks. However, the goal of this project is not to document how students read their textbooks; rather, it is to highlight the knowledge about settler society, the process of colonization, and the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples that the state officially sanctioned by authorizing specific textbooks. I agree with Michael W. Apple and Linda Christian-Smith's point that "any text is open to multiple readings." See Apple and Christian-Smith, *The Politics of the Textbook* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13. Acknowledging the possibility of alternative and contradictory interpretations, I offer my reading of the textbooks authorized for use in British Columbia between 1920 and 1970 as one analysis, as a contribution to a broader discussion on the politics of education and textbooks in Canada and beyond.

¹⁷ For more on the concept of the "vanishing Indian," see Dippie, *Vanishing American*.

order and control in a volatile economy.¹⁸ In addition to maintaining social order during the interwar period, the provincial government continued to dispossess indigenous peoples of their lands in the hope of meeting the growing demands of settler society by freeing up as much space as possible for settlement and economic development. As a result, throughout the period, and in defiance of the stipulations of the Indian Act, the illegal encroachment upon indigenous lands in British Columbia persisted.¹⁹

British Columbia's Department of Education instituted massive reforms in public schooling after the First World War, the most significant of which involved a vast expansion of the province's public secondary education system to keep up with the needs of a growing population. Following the recommendation of the 1925 Putman-Weir Commission on state schooling, the Department of Education began to develop a secondary system of public education composed of junior and senior high schools. The population of students attending secondary schools in British Columbia rose from 5,806 in 1919 to approximately 41,000 in 1945.²⁰

¹⁸ For an examination of how these issues intersected at the municipal level in British Columbia, see Jordan Stranger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver: City Planning and the Conflict over Indian Reserves, 1928-1950s," *Canadian Historical Review* 89, 4 (2008): 541-80. On indigenous peoples' political struggles, see Paul Tennant, "Native Indian Political Organization in British Columbia, 1900-1969: A Response to Internal Colonialism," *BC Studies* 55 (1982): 8-9; Peter Kulchyski, "'A Considerable Unrest': F.O. Loft and the League of Indians," *Native Studies Review* 4.1 and 2 (1988): 96-97; Peter McFarlane, *From Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the Making of the Modern Indian Movement* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993); Hugh Shewell, "Jules Sioui and Indian Political Radicalism in Canada, 1943-1944," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34, 3 (1999): 211-42.

¹⁹ The process of reducing, or "cutting off," previously allotted reserves without indigenous consent, as was suggested by the 1916 report of the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission, was ratified by the passing of the British Columbia Indian Settlement Act in 1920. The McKenna-McBride Commission was officially called the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia. See British Columbia and Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia* (Victoria: Acme Press, 1916). For background on indigenous peoples' political struggles over land in British Columbia, see Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 84-96; Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

²⁰ British Columbia, Department of Education, *Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, 1918-1919* (Victoria: Don McDiarmid, 1920), A10; and British Columbia, Department of Education, *Seventy-Forth Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, 1944-45* (Victoria: Don McDiarmid, 1946), 9; George M. Weir and Harold J. Putman, *Survey of the School System* (Victoria: Printed by C. F. Banfield, 1925); Jean Barman, *The West beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 429. Note that the total population of British Columbia in 1919 was approximately 500,000 and that the total schooling population was 72,006. By 1945, the total population of British Columbia was approximately 800,000, and the total schooling population was approximately 125,135. I note that, although indigenous students often enthusiastically at-

The general purpose of the province's secondary education system during these years was expressed in the "Aims and Philosophy of Education in British Columbia," included in the *Programme of Studies for the Junior High Schools of British Columbia*. The document states: "From the point of view of society, the schools in any state exist to develop citizens, or subjects, according to the prevailing or dominating ideals of the state of society. Any society desires to transmit its culture. All states seek to ensure their safety, stability, and perpetuity."²¹ In other words, public secondary schooling in British Columbia sought to manufacture subjects of good character and to teach students to take their place in society and to safeguard its continued existence. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the curriculum for social studies in junior high schools, the purpose of which was to produce "intelligent, responsible, and socially conscious citizens."²² In the words of one textbook: "It is a self-evident fact that the state ought to teach its future citizens the worth of our civilization and the ways of preserving it from impairment, and of assisting its progress ... There must be a means sought for training our people in social and civic responsibility."²³ Towards this goal, the "Aims and Philosophy of Education in British Columbia" urges the promotion of respect for the following "Right Ideals and Attitudes":

1. Love for the other nations of the British Empire and for our constitutional monarchy.
2. An appreciation of the necessity for government; the

tended provincial public schools in the late nineteenth century, by the early twentieth century such attendance was rare. Evidence that indigenous students were admitted to public schools is revealed in correspondence between Superintendent of Education Alexander Robinson and a secretary from an unidentified school board in British Columbia in 1919. In the outgoing letter, Robinson reminds the secretary that the schooling of indigenous children living on reserves was the responsibility of the federal government. Yet Robinson went on to state: "I may say, however, that this Department will offer no objection whatever to your board admitting these children [on the condition that it be ready to] admit others that might seek admission later." See British Columbia Archives, *Superintendent of Education Correspondence Outward 1872-1919*, GR-450, 8476, 1 October 1919. However, by 1900, the majority of indigenous students had been funnelled into segregated residential or day schools subsidized by the federal government and run, for the most part, by local Christian missions. While acknowledging the sordid and admittedly more complex history of educating indigenous peoples in the province, my research focuses on British Columbia's public secondary school system and its target audience during the period under review: settler students.

²¹ British Columbia, Department of Education, Curriculum Development Branch *Programme of Studies for the Junior High Schools of British Columbia* (Victoria: Charles F. Banfield, 1936), 8.

²² British Columbia, Department of Education, Curriculum Development Branch, *Programme of Studies for the Junior High Schools of British Columbia, 1927-1928* (Victoria: Charles F. Banfield, 1927), 18.

²³ R.S. Jenkins, *Canadian Civics: British Columbia Edition* (Toronto: Copp, Clark Company, 1918), preface.

- meaning of liberty, of citizenship, and of co-operation.
3. A sincere appreciation of our great pioneers of empire, government and reform, science and invention.
 4. Tolerance and respect for other nations and races.
 5. A willingness to submit to the rule of the majority and a respect for the rights of the minority.
 6. A recognition of civic responsibilities and a willingness to respond to them with the appropriate action.
 7. A respect for the rights and property of others.
 8. An appreciation of the dignity of labour and its part in the development of character.
 9. Recognition of the fact that the British and Canadian tradition is to abide by the law, and that when one desires changes to be made in the law he should employ only lawful and constitutional methods of effecting such changes.
 10. Recognition of the fact that every Canadian, whether he be such either by birth or by adoption, should have a whole-hearted love for Canada, a reasoned but deep-seated patriotism, and that a Canadian can best serve the other nations of the British Empire and the rest of the world by doing what it is in his power to do towards making Canada greater and nobler.²⁴

To make responsible and useful citizens, public education attempted to instil a respect for rules and values that would defend settler society. While such “Right Ideals and Attitudes” as numbers 4, 5, 7, and 9 might be used by indigenous groups and their allies in political struggles for land and recognition, as historian Hugh Shewell reminds us, in the early twentieth century, alternative indigenous interpretations of such social codes were either ignored or actively neutralized at all levels of government.²⁵ Indeed, because the legitimacy – the “safety, stability, and perpetuity” – of settler society was tenuous and incomplete, it had to be actively constructed and vigorously promoted.

Authorized textbooks were one tool used by the state to school children in the logic and legitimacy of settler colonialism. Similar to the “Right Ideals and Attitudes” document, authorized textbooks linked a respect for law, labour, and liberal democracy in Canada to the importance of loyalty to Britain and the British Empire. Indeed, most

²⁴ British Columbia, *Programme of Studies*, 18.

²⁵ Shewell, “Jules Sioui.”

of the twenty-five history and social studies textbooks authorized for use in British Columbia during the 1920 to 1945 period enthusiastically promote the history of British imperialism. Two focus on geography and four discuss issues of civics and citizenship; the remaining nineteen are history texts, and they inform secondary school students that the British Empire was, as one textbook states, the “greatest and the freest that the world has ever known.”²⁶ According to textbook author George M. Wrong, Britain had even surpassed Rome in that, while the latter “conquered, she did not, in any real sense, colonize.”²⁷ Thus, the existence of Canada as a settler society is rationalized as part of a larger benevolent process of British imperialism: spreading British civilization around the world.

This imperial narrative framed the roles for indigenous peoples in the unfolding drama of colonial expansion depicted in authorized textbooks.²⁸ Textbook discussions of indigenous peoples are often treated as an “undesirable interruption of the narrative,” usually included in brief introductory chapters describing the “Discovery of the Americas” or outlining the geography and natural resources of Canada.²⁹ According to Duncan McArthur’s textbook *History of Canada for High Schools*, when the Europeans first “encountered the Indian” they found him an “undisputed master of the forest and the plain.”³⁰ In such descriptions, indigenous peoples are also often described as animals. For example, W.L. Grant, in *History of Canada*, states that, “when the white man first came to our country, over the greater part of it ranged small bands of dark-skinned men of good features and athletic form.”³¹ Furthermore,

²⁶ James McCaig, *Studies in Citizenship* (Toronto: The Educational Book Co., Ltd., 1930), 152. Many authors of history and social studies textbooks authorized for use in British Columbia between 1920 and 1970 were professional English-Canadian historians. See Appendix. For more on the politics of history writing in the early to mid-twentieth century see Donald A. Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

²⁷ George M. Wrong, *The British Nation: A History* (Toronto: Morang and Co., 1905), 1. See also, George M. Wrong, *A High School History of England* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1925).

²⁸ For more on imperialism, schooling, and representations of minority groups – including indigenous peoples – in British Columbia textbooks during this period, see Stanley, “White Supremacy,” 39–56.

²⁹ William Kingsford, a prominent nineteenth-century English-Canadian historian, once said that, in writing a history of Canada, a detailed account of the “Indian races of North America” would “only lead to an undesirable interruption of the narrative.” See W. Kingsford, as quoted in J.R. Miller, *Reflections on Native-Newcomer Relations: Selected Essays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 13.

³⁰ Duncan McArthur, *History of Canada for High Schools* (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1927), 9.

³¹ W.L. Grant, *History of Canada* (London: Heinemann, 1916), 8. The textbook accounts of the early encounters with the original inhabitants of North America were very similar to the accounts of the “degraded aborigines” of Australia and the “virile natives” of New Zealand,

students are told that, in these early times, it was “impossible to separate the life of the Indian from his surroundings. He was, as it were, a part of the landscape.”³² In short, whether included in a brief introduction, described as animals, or transformed into part of the landscape, indigenous peoples are used to establish the setting for the more important story of British imperialism.

These textbooks also depict all indigenous peoples as inferior to Europeans. This universal “Indian” is judged by the standards of European civilization and subsequently described in terms of deficiencies.³³ In *The Story of Canada*, a textbook written by prominent historians George M. Wrong, Chester Martin, and W. N. Sage, students are treated to a four-page litany of things that indigenous peoples lacked. The authors claim that indigenous peoples “had no iron to make axes or swords or spears ... Not a horse, nor cow, nor sheep, nor goat, nor pig, was to be found in America when it was first reached from Europe. Though the Indians had canoes large enough to carry a dozen men, they had not learned how to make or use a sail.”³⁴ Although this text points out that indigenous peoples in Central America had made wonderful cities and that some groups in Canada were established farmers, these achievements were exceptions. According to *The Story of Canada*:

There was no school in any Indian village in Canada; no training or reading, or writing or arithmetic ... The Indians had no written laws ... When home from hunting or war, men lounged round these fires and children and dogs ran in and out freely ... At meals, the men sprawled on the ground near the fire ... the plates were chips of wood or of bark; there was no knives or forks; and the eaters seized their

who were living in “savage isolation” until the coming of the white man (Wrong, *High School History of England*, 564, 568).

³² McArthur, *History of Canada for High Schools*, 9.

³³ Note that textbooks make racial differentiations between indigenous peoples in Canada; Métis peoples, or “half-breeds,” are often not considered “original inhabitants” of the Dominion of Canada, while “Eskimos” are considered to be “another native race” separate from “Indians,” or First Nations peoples. According to W. L. Grant’s *History of Canada*, before the coming of Europeans the Eskimo were “much fiercer and more cruel than they are now” as they were constantly at war with the Indians to the south (20). Yet, Grant claims that with the coming of “gentle Christian missionaries” in the eighteenth century, the Eskimo embraced civilization, “cast their cruelty of war aside,” and “became the peaceful race we know today, fighting only with nature and the wild beasts, living quietly in little settlements with names like Nain and Hebron, taken from the Bible” (20).

³⁴ George M. Wrong, M. Chester Martin, and W.N. Sage, *The Story of Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1929), 4.

food with their hands and wiped these on their hair or on a dog if one happened to be near.³⁵

The daily practices and customs of indigenous peoples undoubtedly differed from those of many Europeans. However, that indigenous practices are described largely as deficiencies highlights their barbarism in comparison with the triumphs of Euro-Canadian “civilization” that the textbooks go on to describe.

Many of the textbooks under review also attribute an inherently violent disposition to indigenous peoples. For example, textbooks contain examples of fierce and cruel, “suspicious and blood thirsty,” male Indians – usually the Iroquois – raiding and pillaging French and English settlements.³⁶ *The Conquest of New France* describes the “savages” of New France from the view of French commander Louis-Joseph Montcalm:

It filled him [Montcalm] with disgust to see them swarming in the streets of Montreal, sometimes carrying bows and arrows, their coarse features worse disfigured by war-paint and a gaudy headdress of feathers, their heads shaven, with the exception of one long scalp-lock, their gleaming bodies nearly naked or draped with dirty buffalo or beaver skins ... It was a costly burden to feed them. Sometimes they made howling demands for brandy and for *bouillon*, by which they meant human blood. Many of them were cannibals. Once Montcalm had to give some of them, at his own cost, a feast of three oxen roasted whole. To his disgust, they gorged themselves and danced around the room shouting their savage war-cries.³⁷

Such examples suggest that uncivilized and potentially violent Indians had to be civilized if settler society were to grow, mature, and progress. In *Readings in Canadian History*, George Brown provides students with a collection of historical documents, including passages from the journal of Captain James Cook. One such entry informs readers that indigenous peoples often stole items from Cook’s ship once they came on board to trade furs and sea otter pelts. Thus, in Cook’s words: “Sometimes we found it necessary to have recourse to force.”³⁸ Indeed, the struggle to

³⁵ Ibid., 4-5.

³⁶ Ibid., 214.

³⁷ George M. Wrong, *The Conquest of New France: A Chronicle of the Colonial Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), 183-84. See also William Bennett Munro, *Crusaders of New France: A Chronicle of the Fleur-de-Lis in the Wilderness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920).

³⁸ *Readings in Canadian History: Original Sources from Canada’s Living Past from Discovery of America to British North America at the End of the Eighteenth Century*, eds., George Brown,

civilize indigenous peoples and ensure the continued existence of settler society is, ironically, portrayed as a process requiring consent and, if necessary, coercion.³⁹ In *A New History of Great Britain and Canada*, Stewart Wallace states that, as American settlers gradually invaded the Oregon Territory and then British Columbia searching for gold, “they quarrelled with the Indians, debauched them with liquor, and seized what land each one might desire.”⁴⁰ In *History of Canada*, Grant claims that, with the discovery of gold in British Columbia, “fierce fighting broke out with the Indians, whom the newcomers wished to treat as they had the natives in California and Australia.”⁴¹ Yet, Wrong explains in *History of Canada* that, in their conflicts with settlers, “the natives resented the intrusion and there was cruel bloodshed.”⁴² Indeed, in his British Columbia supplement to A.L. Burt’s *Romance of Canada*, Arthur Anstey states that, although indigenous peoples in British Columbia at first showed themselves to be of a “peaceable and friendly disposition,” in an attempt to prevent further intrusion and in response to the “harsh and ruthless methods” of some traders, they turned to violence, destroying trading ships and even taking some newcomers prisoner.⁴³ The fate of these captives is left to the imagination of the reader. Although authorized textbooks reflected an awareness of tolerance, many ultimately cast indigenous peoples as violent threats to the civilizing project.

While textbooks often emphasize the violent nature of indigenous peoples, many claim that the process of colonization and the spreading of British civilization, particularly in British Columbia, was relatively peaceful. In *Canada: An Actual Democracy*, James Bryce states that there was room for everyone for generations to come in “this land in which settlers ... ha[d] been called to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the

E.C. Woodley, V.L. Denton, J.J. Talman (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1940) 318.

³⁹ In the background of this discussion is an awareness of the ruthless nature of “primitive accumulation,” which sought to separate indigenous peoples from the land, enabling their incorporation as a willing labour force for sawmills and mines. As Karl Marx argues in Volume 1 of *Capital*, the processes of clearing original inhabitants off their lands – through such means as “settlement,” usurpation, or just plain theft (the methods of colonialism) – are actually the “idyllic proceedings” of primitive accumulation and the basis of the capitalist system. For more on primitive accumulation, see Karl Marx, “Part Eight: So-Called Primitive Accumulation,” in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Vintage, 1977), 1: 873–940.

⁴⁰ Stewart Wallace, *A New History of Great Britain and Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936), 91.

⁴¹ Grant, *History of Canada*, 263.

⁴² George M. Wrong, *History of Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1921), 320.

⁴³ Arthur Anstey, “British Columbia,” in A.L. Burt, *The Romance of Canada* (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1948), 7 and 21. For more on indigenous-settler conflict in British Columbia, see Barry Gough’s *Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and the Northwest Coast Indians, 1846–90* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984); Gord Hill, *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 2010).

earth ... and in which the ground [was] cumbered by few injustices to be redressed, no sense of ancient wrongs to rouse resentment."⁴⁴ While this statement likely reflects popular opinion at the time, it is nevertheless grossly inaccurate and ignores the growing movement of indigenous political organizing in British Columbia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, specifically around the injustices associated with stolen land and further "cut offs" from established reserves.⁴⁵ Although for the most part downplaying the many incidents of violence between indigenous peoples and newcomers to the Pacific Coast mentioned in other books, *Canada: An Actual Democracy* does briefly state that there were a few occasions for the employment of armed force to suppress indigenous threats.⁴⁶

In characterizing indigenous peoples as uncivilized and potentially violent, textbooks promote the view that the forced separation of indigenous peoples from their lands and savage practices and the gradual creation of a settler society were inevitable and natural parts of the history of British imperialism and the progress of humanity. In *Lessons on the British Empire*, students are told that, in addition to furthering the principles of "freedom, justice, and democracy," the history of the British Empire is also the story of "bringing civilization, enlightenment, and progress to the backward peoples of the earth ... what Rudyard Kipling has called 'the white man's burden.'"⁴⁷ Students are also informed that "Britain, because of her empire, has shouldered the lion's share of this burden."⁴⁸ Although appearing more humanitarian and tolerant, scholar H.F. Angus reinforces common perceptions about indigenous peoples when, in his textbook *Citizenship in British Columbia*, he reminds students that it is "one of the duties of Empire" to ensure that "primitive peoples" are not exploited and are, for the most part, treated with tolerance and respect by "civilized communities."⁴⁹ In this example, settler colonialism is presented as a largely benevolent process connected to the larger project of British imperialism, which aims to raise indigenous peoples up to a British standard of civilization. That the colonial project in British

⁴⁴ James Bryce, *Canada: An Actual Democracy* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1924), II. According to Skelton, "the extension of Canadian sovereignty beyond the Rockies came about in a quieter fashion." See Oscar Douglas Skelton, *The Canadian Dominion: A Chronicle of Our Northern Neighbor* (New Haven: Yale University, 1921), 156.

⁴⁵ For more on the politics of indigenous activism during this period, see, for example, Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics*.

⁴⁶ Bryce, *Canada*, 32.

⁴⁷ *Lessons on the British Empire*, Department of Education (Victoria: British Columbia, 1936), 30.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ H.F. Angus, *Citizenship in British Columbia* (Victoria: Charles F. Banfield, 1926), 206.

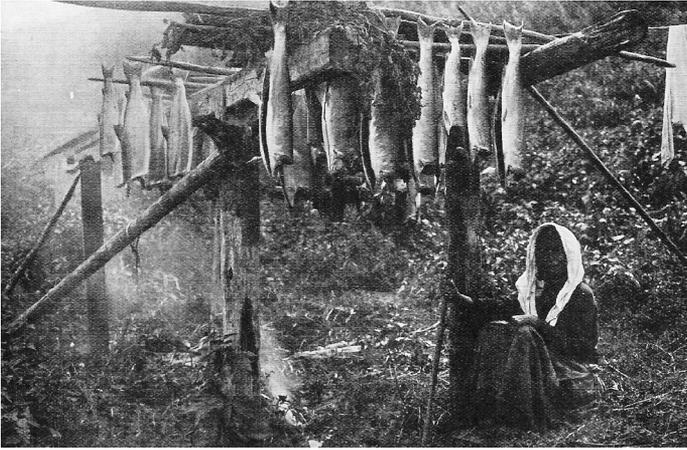


Figure 1. “Indians Smoking Salmon Along the Bulkley River, B.C.,” in George Cornish, *Canadian School Geography*, 468. Source: Canadian Science and Technology Museum.



Figure 2. “An Indian Camp At Tête Jaune Cache, B.C. The Indians are Shushwaps,” in George Cornish, *Canadian School Geography*, 257. Source: Canadian Science and Technology Museum.

Columbia is gradually bringing civilization to indigenous communities was further suggested by two photographs (Figures 1 and 2) included in George Cornish’s geography textbook.

James McCaig’s *Studies in Citizenship* combines both these themes – the grandeur of British imperialism and the presentation of stereotypically inferior and violent, or at least potentially threatening, indigenous peoples. In explaining how civilized society was formed to provide settlers with a “sense of security,” McCaig states:

You will learn from your study of Canadian history that when the French began to take up farms in Canada during the seventeenth century, they [settlers] settled close together along the banks of the principal rivers ... The country at that time was filled with savage Indians, who, time and again, swooped down upon the settlements, destroyed the crops, burned the buildings, and killed men, women, and children ... By settling together [settlers] found protection against these raids. When one person raised the alarm, all could gather quickly to defend their homes ... We can imagine, however, that even with these measures of protection, the settlers and their families did not lead very happy, peaceful lives. They had little sense of security for life or property.⁵⁰

When *Studies in Citizenship* was first authorized for use in British Columbia, one of the history books then in use was George Wrong's *Conquest of New France*. True to McCaig's claim about the study of Canadian history, Wrong's text asserts that, in the early days, "a pioneer might go forth in the morning to his labour and return in the evening to find his house in ashes and his wife and children lying dead with the scalps torn from their heads as trophies of savage prowess."⁵¹ McCaig concludes his discussion by informing students: "We are to-day much more happily situated. We know that our persons are safe from attack, that our property is guarded against theft ... Without this confidence, there would be little rest, happiness, or progress among us."⁵² It is possible to see in this example how invoking the images of uncivilized and potentially violent savages could be used to rationalize settler colonialism as a natural, commonsensical process of creating a safer and more secure society for non-indigenous settlers. Such representations form part of the "prevailing and dominating ideals" that the state sought to "transmit," and, for this reason, they reveal much about the governing morals and values of settler society during the early twentieth century.⁵³ Although the textbooks under review are not primarily concerned with indigenous peoples and their histories, the images of the "Textbook Indian" that they present are tangled up with taken-for-granted rationalizations of colonialism, the narrative of Canadian history as an extension of British imperialism, and the constantly shifting politics of settler society.

⁵⁰ McCaig, *Studies in Citizenship*, 38.

⁵¹ Wrong, *Conquest of New France*, 187-88.

⁵² McCaig, *Studies in Citizenship*, 38.

⁵³ British Columbia, *Programme of Studies*, 8.

In the years after the Second World War, public education in British Columbia was refashioned. Indeed, contemplating the future of public education in British Columbia in 1944, municipal inspector of schools and future Superintendent of Education H.L. Campbell reminded the Department of Education that, “as society changes, the school must change and adjust itself to the needs of the times.”⁵⁴ As changes were made to the education system in British Columbia in the postwar period, changes in curriculum and textbooks soon followed. As textbook narratives shifted to reflect changing historical circumstances, so, too, did the ways in which indigenous peoples were portrayed in the social studies textbooks authorized for use in the province between 1945 and 1970. Thus, the representations of the “Textbook Indian” must not be viewed as static; we need to pay careful attention to the dialectical relationship between changes in textbook narratives and representations of indigenous peoples and larger social shifts.

The years between 1945 and 1970 saw great economic growth and significant political realignments in British Columbia. Indigenous peoples were granted the right to vote and were clearly not going to “vanish,” as earlier theories had suggested was inevitable. Rather, the indigenous population in Canada and British Columbia grew exponentially during this period, and many indigenous children were integrated into an expanding provincial public school system.⁵⁵ On the surface it appeared that both national and provincial governments were softening their racist policies; however, as several scholars point out, although some government officials discouraged blatantly coercive methods, assimilation remained the fundamental goal of Indian policy in the postwar period.⁵⁶ Indeed, assimilation of all indigenous peoples

⁵⁴ H.L. Campbell, “Report of H.L. Campbell, B.A., M.Ed., Municipal Inspector of Schools,” in British Columbia, Department of Education, *Seventy-Fourth Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, 1944-45* (Victoria: Printed by Authority of the Legislative Assembly, 1946), 89.

⁵⁵ In 1949, the Public Schools Act in British Columbia was amended so that indigenous peoples could, once again, officially attend provincial public schools. Partly as a result of the promotion of integrated education and partly because of the rising indigenous population in the province, the number of indigenous children in British Columbia’s public schools jumped from approximately 311 in 1945 to 8,160 in 1970. Note also that approximately 5,012 indigenous children were still attending residential or day schools in British Columbia. See British Columbia, Indian Advisory Committee, *Twenty-First Annual Report of the British Columbia Indian Advisory Committee and of the Director, Indian Advisory Act for the Year Ended December 31st, 1970* (Victoria: Queen’s Printer, 1971), 8-9. Quoting numbers from 1969, the report states that there were 243,427 indigenous peoples living in Canada and that, of this number, 46,911 lived in British Columbia.

⁵⁶ See Sheffield, *The Red Man’s on the Warpath*; Bryan D. Palmer, “The ‘Discovery of the Indian,’” in *Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto

became a crucial component of Canada's plan for postwar prosperity. At the same time, the British Empire was being dismantled and Canada was becoming increasingly independent and yet simultaneously threatened by the growing global presence of the United States. In other words, the keystone of the traditional Canadian rationalization of settler society was dislodged just as the privileges of settler society were threatened by the expansion of the corporate American Empire.⁵⁷ Thus, Bryan D. Palmer argues that, by the 1960s, a new uncertainty marked Canada's sense of national identity.⁵⁸

With regard to schooling, the launch of the satellite *Sputnik* in 1957 and the perceived supremacy of Russian science spawned public concern about the quality of secondary education in Canada. In British Columbia, the government responded by establishing the Chant Commission to examine the quality of the province's education system. In line with the suggestions of the 1925 report of the Putman-Weir Commission, the 1960 report of the Chant Commission called for the further expansion of secondary education as a means of ensuring a more intelligent, productive, and loyal citizenry. With a renewed emphasis on secondary education in the postwar period, the number of children attending public secondary schools in British Columbia – now including a small number of indigenous students – rose dramatically, from approximately 41,000 in 1945 to approximately 190,000 in 1970.⁵⁹ At the same time, public

Press, 2009), 367–411; Joan Sangster, “Aboriginal Women and Work in Prairie Communities,” in *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-War Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 199–232.

⁵⁷ There is an abundance of literature that attempts to grapple with the new challenges to Canada in the post-Second World War period. See, for example, George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965).

⁵⁸ Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 5. In fact, the postwar period, during which English Canada began to shed its sense of Britishness, has been identified by historian José Igartua as the “Other Quiet Revolution.” See Igartua, *Other Quiet Revolution*, 1. On Canada's identity crisis and education, see, for example, George Richardson, “Nostalgia and National Identity: The History and Social Studies Curricula of Alberta and Ontario at the End of Empire,” in *Canada and the End of Empire*, ed. Philip Buckner (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 183–95; Francis, *National Dreams*.

⁵⁹ See British Columbia, Department of Education, *Ninety-ninth Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, 1969–70* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1970), 13. The total population of British Columbia in 1945 was approximately 800,000, and the total schooling population was 125,135. The total population of British Columbia in 1970 was approximately 2,000,000, and the total schooling population was 513,079. See Barman, *West beyond the West*, 429. Of the 8,160 indigenous children enrolled in integrated education by 1970, between 3,000 and 4,000 were attending secondary schools. See British Columbia, Indian Advisory Committee, *Twenty-First Annual Report of the British Columbia Indian Advisory Committee and of the Director, Indian Advisory Act for the Year Ending December 31st, 1970*, 15. It would be misleading to claim that providing indigenous students with improved education in secondary schools was a major concern for the Department of Education. For example, in 1967, when

demands for better education pressured the Department of Education to modify and adapt the secondary school curriculum. One of the key shifts in the postwar secondary curriculum involved shifting attention from British imperialism to Canadian nationalism as the framing historical narrative.⁶⁰ Indeed, according to Leslie Peterson, British Columbia's Minister of Education between 1956 and 1968, an important aim of the province's changing public education system was to "build[] ... a spirit of desirable Canadian nationalism."⁶¹ Thus, the Department of Education tried to refine ideas about Canadian nationalism by authorizing new social studies textbooks, including *This New Canada*, *Canada in the World Today*, and *Our Canada* (See Appendix). In total, nineteen social studies textbooks were authorized for use in British Columbia between 1945 and 1970: two civics texts, three geography books, and fourteen history textbooks. Ten of these works were originally authorized for use in the years between 1937 and 1944, and they reveal the emergence of a new perspective on Canada's past – a perspective shaped by growing feelings of Canadian nationalism. This new perspective was then vigorously promoted in the new textbooks, which were first authorized after 1949. Considered together, the textbooks prescribed for use in British Columbia during the postwar period present a new spirit of Canadian nationalism.

Textbooks reframed the narrative of Canadian history to promote nationalism. Arthur Dorland's *Our Canada* and Margaret McWilliams's *This New Canada* serve as cases in point. Dorland explains that the goal of his new textbook is to "tell the story of Canada's development in a way that will permit every Canadian reader to feel the high adventure

Superintendent of Education Franklin P. Levirs asked Assistant Superintendent of Instruction J.R. Meredith for a report on "any methods by which this Department assisted native Indian peoples during this year," the latter had very little to report. Meredith responded: "In reply to your memo ... there were no particular actions taken that directly and immediately resulted in assisting native Indian peoples." See British Columbia Archives, *Council of Public Instruction 1954-1970*, GR-0899, Letter Levirs to Meredith, 14 November 1967. This is not to suggest that the integration of indigenous students into provincial public schools had no effect on educational realities in British Columbia classrooms; rather, it is more appropriate to suggest that integrated education did not radically alter the goal of the public education system: to school settler students.

⁶⁰ Indeed, George Brown states in *Canadian Democracy ... in Action* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1953), 324, that, while the British Empire was being dismantled, "imperialism cannot be replaced by nothing," 119. John Bradley's *World Geography* (Toronto: Ginn and Company, 1945) further discusses Canada's new relationship with Britain, arguing that maintaining economic ties would be "profitable and pleasant" for both countries (325).

⁶¹ British Columbia Archives, GR-0152, *Dept. of Education Executive Records*, 1060-1963, box 5, file 2 – Curriculum 1961, Outgoing Letter, Leslie Peterson, Minister of Education, 27 January 1960.

that is experienced by all who further and strengthen their country's nationhood."⁶² McWilliams identifies nationalism as the "love of one's country," which "makes [Canada's] citizens willing to serve her best interests, eager to see the condition of all her people become better and better, and willing to subject individual interests to the common good."⁶³ To become a great and unified nation, Canada, claims McWilliams, would need "more and more citizens possessed of knowledge and understanding, animated by love of and pride in their country and eager to enter into her service."⁶⁴ She is unequivocal in proclaiming that, without this "good form of nationalism[,] no nation can become great." She continues:

When Canadians gain a true picture of their country in their minds and hearts, when they realize what she can do for them and they for her, they will stand erect, heads high and eyes flashing, and in ringing tones sing those words, "O, Canada, we stand on guard for thee" and they will mean them. Those words will live in their hearts and in their minds betokening that Canadians are determined to guard the liberties and privileges their fathers won for them, to make those liberties and those privileges grow even greater.⁶⁵

Furthermore, McWilliams insists that understanding contemporary Canada "and the foundation upon which its further progress is based" requires a historical appreciation of "the road by which its peoples have travelled and the obstacles which they have overcome."⁶⁶ And as the dominant narrative of Canadian textbook history shifted, so, too, did the representations of indigenous peoples.

Within the new national narrative indigenous peoples were portrayed as an obstacle to nation building. Like the textbooks of the 1920-to-1945 period, settler colonialism was justified in the nineteen social studies books authorized for use in postwar British Columbia classrooms through the use of broad generalizations that depicted all indigenous peoples, when they were mentioned at all, as male, uncivilized, and violent, and thus as illegitimate in the presence of a civilized, settler society. However, unlike the pre-war textbooks, in which the dominant narrative of British imperialism justifies the theft of indigenous peoples' lands as part of the responsibility of civilizing ignorant and backward

⁶² Arthur Dorland, *Our Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1949), v.

⁶³ Margaret McWilliams, *This New Canada* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1948), 36.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 36 and 307.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

peoples, the national narrative found in postwar textbooks talks about dealing with indigenous peoples as part of the task of overcoming obstacles on the road to nationhood. Settler colonialism was not inevitable, as was previously suggested; instead, it was absolutely necessary to have indigenous peoples accept colonialism and assimilate into the new Canadian nation.

Textbooks authorized for use in British Columbia in the postwar period continued to represent indigenous peoples as inherently uncivilized. For example, Louise Capen's world history textbook, *Across the Ages*, portrays the "barbarous and beastly manners" of the "wild, godless, and slavish Indians" living in North America.⁶⁷ Similarly, accounts of Jesuit missionaries in New France, included in *Our Canada*, give readers an image of Canada before the coming of Europeans as a desolate place "swarm[ing] with dogs, children, and half-naked savages."⁶⁸ The following account is quoted at length in *Our Canada* and presents a powerful view of an "uncivilized" Canada:

One must expect to have all his senses martyred daily; the sight, by the smoke – I have almost lost my eyes from it; the hearing, by their annoying yells and wearisome visits; the smell; by the stench that is incessantly exhaled by the oiled and greased hair of both men and women; feeling, by the cold; and finally taste, by the unsavoury and insipid food of the savages, of which it is enough to say that the daintiest and most delicate of it would be refused by dogs in France.⁶⁹

Another missionary was said to believe that, as indigenous peoples "live only from day to day[,] they do not desire much, and all their wishes end in having something to eat."⁷⁰ On the basis of these accounts, Dorland states that, "accustomed to long periods of privation with little or no food, the Indian, when he feasted, ate like a famished animal in an orgy of gluttony."⁷¹ Most textbooks of the postwar period explain that the diet of the Indian consisted mostly of the spoils from the hunt, but *Our Canada* claims, without any evidence, that "most of the Indian peoples at one time or another in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries practiced cannibalism either as a religious sacrificial observance or as a war custom."⁷² This statement is accompanied by a reminder that "we must

⁶⁷ Louise I. Capen, *Across the Ages: The Story of Man's Progress* (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1954), 149.

⁶⁸ Dorland, *Our Canada*, 14.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Dorland does not provide the original citations for the Jesuit quotations he introduces.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 18.

be careful not to apply – even to the Indians – the standards of right and wrong of our own time;” however, the book’s reference to cannibalism in a section entitled “Indian ‘civilization’” only serves to reinforce the impression of indigenous peoples as uncivilized obstacles to the creation of a civilized settler society.⁷³

Textbooks also represent the male Indian as a violent threat to the process of nation building. Consider figures 3 and 4. Figure 3 is included in *Our Canada*’s explanation of the missionary enterprise in New France and depicts a group of feathered, loin-cloth-wearing Iroquois attacking a priest. The accompanying caption describes how the apparently bloodthirsty “savage” Iroquois “scourge,” “shrieking with triumph,” let out “hideous war-whoops” as they fell upon the French missionary and “massacred him.”⁷⁴ That indigenous peoples violently resisted the intrusion of newcomers in North America is undeniable; however, that textbooks like *Our Canada* chose to emphasize accounts of indigenous violence with very little context provides a one-sided view of the colonial project. Figure 4 depicts Thayendanegea, or Joseph Brant, acknowledged as a “gifted chief” of the Mohawk nation as well as a British Loyalist, in a pose similar to that of the violent “savages” depicted in Figure 3. The illustration’s caption repeats the legendary story that, while in London representing his people, Brant was invited to attend a masked ball. At this event, a high-ranking diplomat apparently pulled on Brant’s nose in the mistaken conviction that Brant was wearing a costume. Whereupon, it was said, “the haughty chief drew his tomahawk and brandished it above the diplomat’s head, at the same time shouting a blood-curdling warwhoop which struck terror into the hearts of all present.”⁷⁵ Apparently Brant was just having fun with the diplomat. Yet, presented in *Our Canada*, such stories play on the images of indigenous peoples as potentially violent and bloodthirsty savages who could, at any moment, revert to a primitive, threatening state.

Textbooks also emphasize the violent nature of the Canadian frontier and the potential for conflict during Canada’s western expansion. They unanimously present the frontier experience from the settler perspective. In *Canada from Sea to Sea*, historian W.N. Sage draws upon the work of Frederick Jackson Turner to remind students that the Canadian frontier was, after all, “a meeting point between savagery and civilization.”⁷⁶ Similarly, Carl Wittke’s *History of Canada* states that, in Canada, the

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 128.

⁷⁶ W.N. Sage, *Canada from Sea to Sea* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1940), 17.

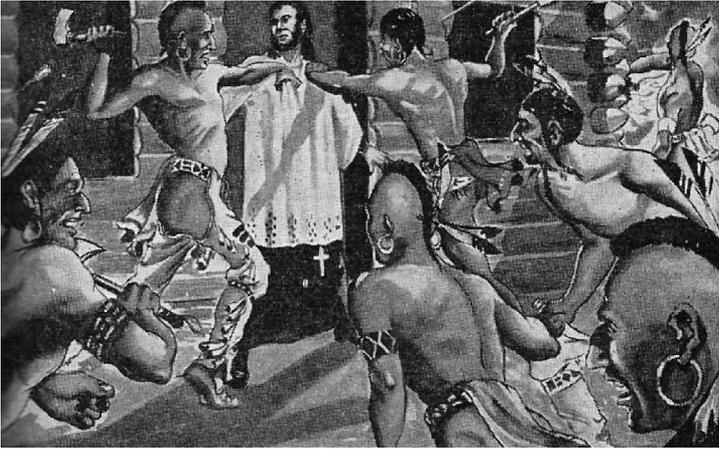


Figure 3. "The Iroquois Scourge," in Arthur Dorland, *Our Canada*, 55.



Figure 4. "A Mohawk Chief in Mayfair," in Dorland, *Our Canada*, 128.

frontier was "in an almost continual state of excitement."⁷⁷ And another book claims that, in his conflicts with non-indigenous peoples, the "Indian" was fighting for "living space."⁷⁸ *Canada in the World Today* explains to students that, after the Hudson's Bay Company's 1869 sale of Rupert's Land to the newly formed Dominion of Canada, many settlers and potential investors perceived the vast western wilderness

⁷⁷ Carl Wittke, *History of Canada* (New York: F. S. Croft and Co., 1928), 33.

⁷⁸ Dorland, *Our Canada*, 18.

as the home of “roving bands of restless and suspicious Indians.”⁷⁹ They were described as “hostile” to settlers, and it was said that they “could be depended upon to oppose the building of the railway.”⁸⁰ The resistance of indigenous peoples to the invasion of settlers and to the building of the railway that would bring them was thus represented as a dangerous threat that needed to be neutralized in order for the project of nation building to succeed.

Yet, these textbooks also stress that the conquest of the Canadian frontier was relatively peaceful. They explain that, when violence erupted on the plains, the conflict was quickly defused and that there was little bloodshed. This relatively peaceful occupation was attributable to the “red-coated riders of the plains,” the North-West Mounted Police, who, students were told, “prevented a general Indian uprising” by imposing a “restraining yet beneficent control over Indians.”⁸¹ According to A.L. Burt’s *The Romance of Canada*, one of the “miracles” of Canadian history was that the police had “won the confidence of the Indians” and, as a result, were “able to help the Dominion government clear the country for settlers.”⁸² Indeed, the coming of law and order to the Canadian West guaranteed that the process of nation building could be completed. In Edgar McInnis’s *Canada: A Political and Social History*, the “defeat” of the “Indian” is symbolized by an image depicting the surrender of Poundmaker in 1885 (see Figure 5).

Postwar textbooks also claim that indigenous peoples could participate in the nation-building process, but only if they accepted the loss of their lands and were integrated into settler capitalist society. According to George Cornish’s *Canadian School Geography*, indigenous peoples living in the present, having been “reduced by war and disease” and “deprived of most of the land,” were forced to adapt and seek out new ways of making a living, including acting as “guides for the white man during his hunting, fishing, or exploring expeditions.”⁸³ *A History of Canada* tells students that, since the early years of the frontier, many indigenous peoples had become “peaceful and law abiding people” who now “find work in the lumbering and canning industries, on farms, and

⁷⁹ Lester B. Rogers, Fey Adams, Walker Brown, Carl S. Simonson, Gordon W. Lackie, and R.W.W. Roberstone, *Canada in the World Today* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, and Co. Ltd., 1950), 173.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Dorland, *Our Canada*, 316; Edgar McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History* (New York: Rinehart, 1947), 335 and 338.

⁸² A.L. Burt, *The Romance of Canada* (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1948), 316 and 318.

⁸³ George Cornish, *Canadian School Geography* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1931), 142.



Figure 5. “The Surrender of Poundmaker,” in McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 318.

in the mines.”⁸⁴ In essence, textbooks suggest that indigenous peoples had been given numerous opportunities to contribute to the capitalist economy and to the progress of the Canadian nation. Nevertheless, Dorland’s *Our Canada* summarizes the situation, reflecting the assimilationist policy of the postwar period: “Adaptation or extinction seems to be the hard alternative facing the North American Indian to-day.”⁸⁵

The notion that indigenous peoples had to choose between extinction and assimilation was powerfully reinforced by two images in *Canada: A Political and Social History*. The first, “Mask Dance by West Coast Indians by Paul Kane,” portrays a secret ceremony performed by an indigenous group from Vancouver Island, circa 1846 (see Figure 6). As it appears, such an image can be viewed as a visual representation of Canada’s primitive past that needed to be overcome on the path to nationhood. Indeed, according to *Our Canada*, Kane’s work is not “great art” but is “a priceless documentary record of the Indian life that has now

⁸⁴ Wittke, *History of Canada*, 57. Indigenous peoples have a long history of working for wages in British Columbia. See Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star, 1978); Andrew Parnaby, “‘The Best Men That Ever Worked the Lumber’: Aboriginal Longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, BC, 1863-1939.” *Canadian Historical Review* 87, 1 (2006): 60; Lutz, *Makúk*.

⁸⁵ Dorland, *Our Canada*, 20.

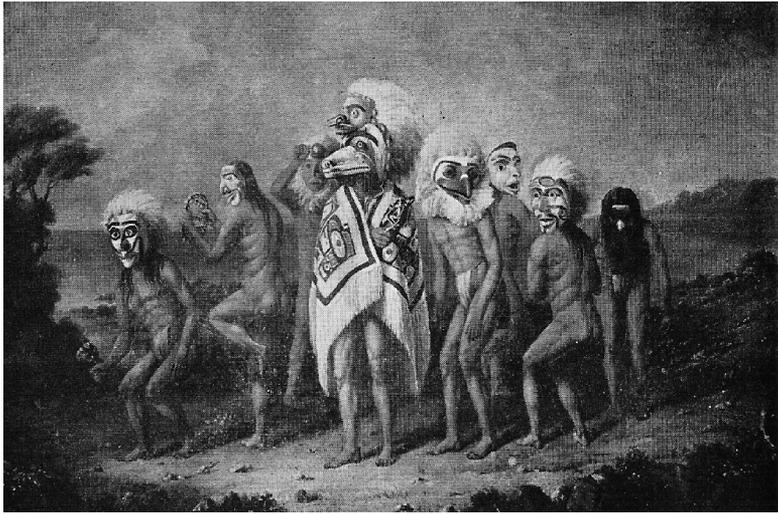


Figure 6. "Mask Dance by West Coast Indians by Paul Kane," in McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 30.

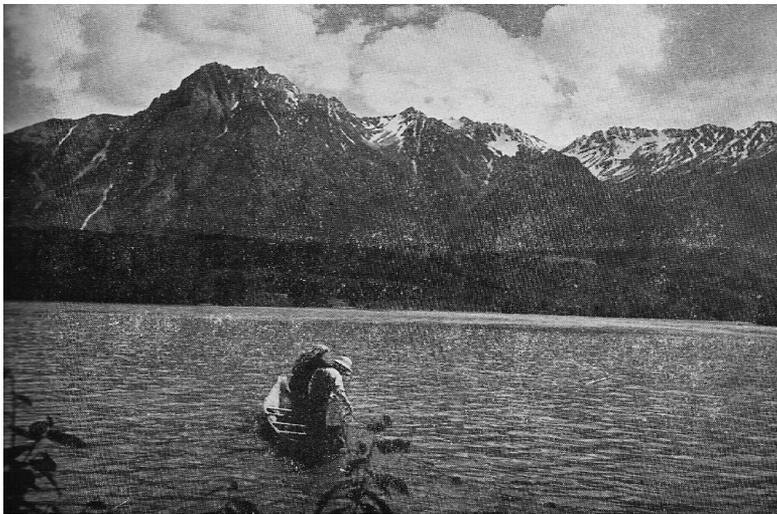


Figure 7. "Indians Fishing Off the Coast of British Columbia," in McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 30. Source: National Film Board.

vanished."⁸⁶ The second image, in contrast, depicts modern, civilized, and ambiguous figures, identifiable as indigenous peoples only by the title "Indians Fishing Off the Coast of British Columbia" (see Figure 7). The juxtaposition of these two images suggests that the desirable path

⁸⁶ Ibid., 468.

for indigenous peoples was to abandon their uncivilized ways and to adapt, thus serving as a symbolic testament to the final triumph of the colonial project in Canada and British Columbia.

Although Chief Dan George began his 1967 Canada Day performance with a blazing critique of Canadian colonialism, he did not end on the offensive; rather, he reassured his audience that the solution to the “Indian Problem” was for indigenous peoples to “humbly accept the new culture of the white man and rise up and go on.”⁸⁷ George proclaimed: “I shall rise again out of the sea; I shall grab the instruments of the white man’s success – his education, his skills, and with these new tools I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society.”⁸⁸ According to a Vancouver newspaper, “the people gave George and his family a tremendous cheer” as he vowed: “before I follow the great Chiefs who have gone before us, Oh Canada, I shall see these things come to pass.”⁸⁹ In this he failed. Chief Dan George died in 1981, and, more than forty years after he performed “Lament for Confederation” and criticized the tools of settler colonialism – including the racist representations in school textbooks – many indigenous peoples throughout Canada continue to struggle for existence, dignity, and land.

Textbooks, then, need to be examined not as dead, dusty books but, rather, as George identified them – as vibrant tools of colonial power, prestige, and privilege. In analyzing authorized British Columbia textbooks and their representations of indigenous peoples as political artefacts, I have attempted to bring into focus the ways in which the settler state harnessed public education between 1920 and 1970 in order to safeguard asymmetrical relationships of social and economic inequality as well as to regenerate itself “not only in ... material foundations and structures but in the hearts and minds of people.”⁹⁰ In British Columbia, public secondary education was part of the process that sought, whether intentionally or not, to colonize the hearts and minds of non-indigenous students to make them good subjects. In this process, textbooks played the important role of representing the past in general, and indigenous peoples in particular, in ways that justified colonialism and rationalized the development and continued existence of a capitalist settler society as natural, inevitable, and commonsensical. In short, non-indigenous pupils were not simply “educated for racism,” as Daniel Francis contends, but

⁸⁷ Dobie, “Twas a Happy Birthday.” Calvin Helin has reinvented this position in his work *Dances with Dependency: Out of Poverty through Self-Reliance* (Woodland Hills, CA: Ravencrest, 2008).

⁸⁸ “A Lament For Confederation,” *Vancouver Sun*, 3 July 1967.

⁸⁹ Dobie, “Twas a Happy Birthday.”

⁹⁰ Apple and Christian-Smith, “Politics of the Textbook,” 15.

racist representations of the “Textbook Indian” also helped to school students in the logic and legitimacy of colonialism and capitalism and encouraged them to take their rightful places in settler society.

Over ten years ago, Jean Barman and Cole Harris, editors of the special edition of *BC Studies* entitled *Native Peoples and Colonialism*, argued: “We should not forget that British Columbia has been, and largely remains, a highly successful colonial society, one that has generated such self-congratulatory stories about its past that colonialism has been invisible to most people who live here.”⁹¹ They continued: “For most of us, colonialism happened elsewhere, and the recognition of it here, and of ourselves as its agents, suddenly qualifies our fulsome accounts of the progress and development of an immigrant society while connecting us with a much less comfortable past.”⁹² Yet, in accepting our uncomfortable connection to the long history of colonialism in North America, non-indigenous settlers must not be satisfied with awareness. We must devise ways to move beyond a strategy of simply deconstructing and criticizing racist representations and colonial ways of thinking. What is needed – what has always been needed – is for us to connect our analysis of ideas and images to a ruthless and radical critique of the always shifting asymmetrical social relationships and material inequalities of a capitalist settler society that deploys racist discourses to justify its existence. Colonialism did happen here and, like capitalism, it will continue to shape our daily lives until we chose to work together to create new social relationships.

APPENDIX

Textbooks with Canadian Content Authorized for Use in British Columbia, 1920–1970.

Angus, H.F. *Citizenship in British Columbia*. Victoria: Charles F. Banfield, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1926. Authorized: 1927–1928.

Anstey, Arthur. “British Columbia,” in Burt’s *The Romance of Canada*. Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1948. Authorized: 1937–1950.

Bradley, John Hodgdon. *World Geography*. Toronto: Ginn and Company, 1945. Authorized: 1950–1970s.*

British Columbia, Department of Education. *Lessons on the British Empire*. Victoria, British Columbia, 1936. Authorized: 1936–1939.

⁹¹ Cole Harris and Jean Barman, “Editorial,” *BC Studies* 115/116 (1997/98):

⁹² *Ibid.*

- Brown, George. *Canadian Democracy...in Action*. Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1953. Authorized: 1952-1966.
- Bryce, James. *Canada: An Actual Democracy*. Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1924. Authorized: 1924-1927.
- Burt, A.L. *The Romance of Canada*. Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1948. Authorized: 1937-1950.
- Capen, Louise I. *Across the Ages: The Story of Man's Progress*. Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1954. Authorized: 1952-1955.
- Cornish, George. *Canadian School Geography with Supplementary Chapter on British Columbia* by V.L. Denton. Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1922. Authorized: 1927-1946.
- Currie, A.W. *Canadian Economic Development*. Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942. Authorized: 1943-1950.
- Denton, V.L. and A.R. Lord. *A World Geography for Canadian Schools*. Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1936. Authorized: 1937-1950.
- Dorland, Arthur. *Our Canada*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1949. Authorized: 1952-1970s.
- Grant, W.L. *History of Canada*. London: Heinemann, 1916. First published 1914. Authorized: 1919-1920.
- Jenkins, R.S. *Canadian Civics, British Columbia Edition*. Toronto: Copp, Clark Company, 1918. Authorized: 1919-1923.
- King, H.B. *A History of Britain*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1937. Authorized: 1937-1950.
- Lower, R.M. *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada*. Toronto: Longmans, Green & Company, 1946. Authorized: 1949-1950. *Colony to Nation* was also strongly recommended for school libraries.
- McArthur, Duncan. *History of Canada for High Schools*. Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1927. Authorized: 1928-1937.
- McCaig, James. *Studies in Citizenship*. Toronto: The Educational Book Company, 1927. Authorized: 1927-1938.
- McInnis, Edgar. *Canada: A Political and Social History*. Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1948. Authorized: 1956-1970s.*
- McWilliams, Margaret. *This New Canada*. Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1948. Authorized: 1952-1970s.*
- Munro, William Bennett. *Crusaders of New France*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920. Authorized: 1927-1932.
- Platt, Nathaniel and Muriel Jean Drummond. *Our World*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956. Authorized: 1956-1970.
- Readings in Canadian History*. Edited by George Brown, E.C. Woodley, V.L. Denton, J.J. Talman. Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1940. Authorized: 1942-1950.
- Rogers, Lester, Fay Adams, Walker Brown, Carl S. Simonson, Gordon W. Leckie, and R.W.W. Roberston. *Canada in the World Today*. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, and Co. Ltd., 1950. Authorized: 1950-1970s.*
- Sage, W.N. *Canada from Sea to Sea*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1940. Authorized: 1944-1970.
- Skelton, Oscar D. *The Canadian Dominion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921. Authorized: 1927-1931.
- Wallace, W. Stewart. *A New History of Great Britain and Canada*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1928 and 1936. Authorized: 1927-1938.

- Wittke, Carl. *A History of Canada*. New York: F.S. Crofts and Co., 1928. Authorized: 1940-1956.
- Wrong, George M. *The British Nation: A History*. Toronto: Morang and Co., 1905. Authorized: 1919-1922.
- . *The Canadians: The Story of a People*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1938. Authorized: 1940-1949.
- . *Conquest of New France*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920. Authorized: 1927-1932.
- . *High School History of England*. Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1924. Authorized: 1924-1927.
- . *History of Canada*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1921. Authorized: 1923-1927.
- Wrong, George M., Chester Martin, and W.N. Sage. *The Story of Canada*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1929. Authorized: 1930 (it is unclear when this text is no longer authorized for use).

*In the early 1970s, the textbook authorization lists in British Columbia change and it is unclear when texts authorized before 1970 stop being officially sanctioned for use.