

Reserve and Urban Indians in British Columbia: A Social and Economic Profile

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Despite the fact that there has been "in the last few years . . . a very significant increase in the concern for the welfare and well-being of the Indian and Inuit populations in Canada,"¹ there has been relatively little "hard data" available to policy-makers about the social and economic characteristics of native people. In an effort to partially fill this "information gap" I have been engaged in a study of urban Indians (those living off reserves) in British Columbia. The culmination of this work, and the primary source from which this summary paper is drawn, is W. T. Stanbury, assisted by Jay H. Siegel, *Success and Failure: Indians in Urban Society* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975).² The major part of the data was obtained through extensive interviews with a sample of 1,095 "status" Indians³ living off reserves in the summer of 1971. Those interviewed amounted to a one-in-six sample of the off-reserve population between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four. Some 84% of the sample lived in cities or towns of 2,500 or more.⁴ The sample data

¹ Statistics Canada, *Perspective Canada: A Compendium of Social Statistics* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), p. 237.

² The copyright for this book is held by the University of British Columbia Press. I have also drawn extensively from W. T. Stanbury, *The Social and Economic Conditions of Indian Families in British Columbia*, A Study Prepared for the British Columbia Family and Children's Law Commission (Vancouver, 1974), (mimeo, 66 pp.).

³ By "status" or "registered" Indians I means those defined to be Indians under the *Indian Act* and who are recorded on a Band List by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. There are currently about 51,000 status Indians in British Columbia. The B.C. Association of Non-Status Indians estimates there are between 50,000 and 60,000 non-status Indians in the Province. These are "person(s) who, although genetically and culturally an Indian, (are) not registered as such by the Department of Indian Affairs. . . ." If the estimate of the number of non-status Indians is accurate, then native people constitute about 5% of the B.C. population.

⁴ The Census of Canada (1971) defines "urban" as a centre of population of 1,000 or more. From the Band Lists maintained by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) we were able to obtain the date of

was supplemented by a canvass of a number of public (published and unpublished) sources. Much of the data obtained either related to the entire status Indian population of the province or only to the reserve population.

I. *Urbanization*:⁵

(i) Growth of the Off-Reserve Population

Throughout Canada, an increasing proportion of the Indian population is no longer living on reserves. British Columbia is no exception. The total off-reserve population increased from 5,460, or 14.2% of the total, in January 1962 to 16,251 or 32.8% of the total Indian population in January 1973. During the entire period 1962-1973, the *absolute* size of the total on-reserve population stayed remarkably constant at about 32,000 to 33,000. At the end of 1965, 25.6% of the Canadian Indian population was living off reserves or on Crown land. By the end of 1972 the percentage off reserves was 36.3%. In addition, another 8.6% were living on Crown land. Therefore by the end of 1972 the proportion of Indians living off reserves in B.C. was below the average for all of Canada, but above that for Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. In both Ontario and Quebec, in which over 41% of the Indian population lives off reserves, a sizeable proportion lives on

birth, sex, marital status, and the registration or family number of Indians living off-reserve. However, the Band Lists do not give the place of residence (even the region) of those living off-reserve. At our request regional officials of DIAND attempted to determine the location, occupation and length of time off reserve for those recorded as being off-reserve on Band Lists. For one-third of the individuals in our "target population" they were not able to provide such information. Regional and town sampling quotas (by age and sex) were derived from the information obtained, supplemented by the "guesstimates" of the principals and some of our interviewers. Contacts were made with individual potential respondents through what we call a "multiple-source, linked-respondent" technique. By this we mean interviewers were provided with a fairly long list of individuals and organizations who would know how we could meet Indians living off reserve. By using multiple, and hopefully independent, sources of contact we believe we avoided significant biases in the sample. The phrase "linked-respondent" means we viewed each respondent as a potential contact with others. However, interviewers were instructed to interview only one member of any nuclear family in a household. While the sample cannot qualify for the appellation "random," the evidence we have suggests it is "representative," at least in terms of a number of significant population characteristics. Additional details can be found in *Success and Failure*, chap. I.

⁵ W. T. Stanbury, *Success and Failure: Indians in Urban Society* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), chap. II.

Crown land. At the end of 1972 the proportion in Ontario was 7.8% and in Quebec it was 16.0%.

While there has been a substantial movement of Indian population in Canada from reserves to urban centres, the 1971 census still classified 69.3% of Indians as rural (farm and non-farm) compared with only 23.9% of the total population. Of the three-quarters of the total Canadian population who lived in urban centres in 1971, 35.2% lived in the nineteen cities of 100,000 or more. Only 30.7% of the Canadian Indian population lived in urban centres. Just over one-half of these lived in cities of 100,000 or more.⁶ The 1971 census also revealed that one-third of Canada's urban Indians lived in twelve cities, each of which had a population of 1,000 Indians or more.⁷

(ii) Age - Sex Composition of the Off-Reserve Population in B.C.

The age distributions of the on- and off-reserve populations are generally similar, but there are some differences. Some 44.5% of those on reserve, compared with 45.6% of those living off reserve, are *under* the age of fifteen. In 1971, we find that 44.9% of the total B.C. Indian population are *under* the age of fifteen and 30% are under the age of ten. In comparison, 27.9% of the total B.C. population are under fifteen, and 17.7% are under ten. Proportionately, more women in the age range fifteen to sixty-four live off reserves than men (36.6% vs. 30.7%). The proportion of people living off reserves in 1971 varied substantially by age group within the potential economically active population (fifteen to sixty-four). The highest proportion living off reserves was found in the twenty-five to twenty-nine age group, where 42% were off the reserves. In the thirty to thirty-nine age group, the proportion was 39%. In every age group, the percentage of women living off reserves was greater than that of men, and the difference was greatest in the age range of twenty to thirty-nine, where there was at least an eight percentage point difference.

⁶ The 1961 census indicated that only 12.9% of the Indian and Inuit Population lived in urban centres. Statistics Canada, *Perspective Canada: A Compendium of Social Statistics* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974), p. 243. It is important to note that "the Census of Canada counts as Indian anyone who calls himself Indian, whether registered or not, and also anyone who can trace Indian ancestry through the father's line" (*ibid.*, p. 238). The 1971 census reported 295,215 Indians in comparison to the 257,619 registered Indians recorded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The 1971 census recorded 231,120 "Band Indians" (*ibid.*, p. 240 notes to Table 12.3).

⁷ Derived from Statistics Canada, *Perspective Canada*, pp. 243, 244.

(iii) Reasons For Living Off Reserve

The single most important category of responses to our question "Why do you live off the reserve?" was related to employment and economic opportunities. Twenty-eight percent of our respondents said that they lived off reserve because there were no jobs on the reserve, or because the distance to their job was too great to permit them to live on the reserve. The proportion of men giving this response was 35.0%; for women, it was 19.7%. For men between the ages of twenty-five and forty-nine, economic necessity (or opportunity?) accounted for 42% of the reasons for living off reserve. For women in the same age group, the proportion in the response category "no job/distance to job" was only one-half of that for men.

In overall importance, the second most frequent reason given by our large sample of B.C. Indians living off reserves was that they "generally prefer life off reserve." Twenty-three percent gave answers that were recorded in this category, with 25.4% for men and 20.1% for women.

The lack of housing on reserve was the third most important reason for living off reserve. This reason was given by 13.9% of the women and 9.7% of the men. The lack of housing is relatively more important for women aged twenty-five to twenty-nine (16.7%) and fifty to sixty-four (28.8%), and relatively less important for younger people.

About one-tenth of our sample lived off reserves because their parents or spouse did so. Not surprisingly, this reason was important for the fifteen- to nineteen-year-olds in the sample, where the proportion was one-fifth. For women, the percentage giving this reason was 15.9%, for men 4.2%. Our evidence indicates that the women follows the man, who leaves the reserve because he finds it economically necessary to do so.

One respondent in eleven lived off reserve either because of school or because of children's schooling. Eighteen percent of the women and 12% of the men aged fifteen to nineteen gave this response. Between 1962/63 and 1971/72, the proportion of Indian pupils enrolled in provincial schools (as opposed to Indian day schools on reserves or Indian residential schools) increased from 45.3% to 76.9%.⁸

The remaining four categories jointly accounted for 19.1% of all responses. These were "bad conditions on reserve" (4.3%), "no friends on reserve" (5.0%), "personal reasons/medical care" (6.0%), and "other" (3.8%).

⁸ *Annual Report of the Indian Advisory Committee and the Director of the Indian Advisory Act* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1963, 1972).

II. Demographic Characteristics⁹

(i) Birth Rates and Population Growth

Between 1944 and the beginning of 1973 the total status Indian population increased from 25,515 to 50,262, a total increase of 97% or at an average annual rate of 2.45%. Between January 1963 and January 1973 the average annual rate of increase of 2.3% was compared with 1.8% for the total Canadian population and 2.9% for the total Indian population in Canada. Both Indian and non-Indian birth rates have been falling over the past decade. B.C. Vital Statistics reports that the status Indian birth rate declined from 47.3 per 1,000 population in 1961 to 27.0 in 1971; during the same period the total provincial birth rate fell from 23.1 to 15.7 per 1,000 population.

Despite these declines, the rate of natural increase (births minus deaths) of the Canadian Indian population is about *three times* that of the total population. The rate of natural increase of the Indian population is similar to that of underdeveloped countries, for instance, Mexico (1969) 33.1 per 1,000 population, Peru (1967) 24.3, and Venezuela (1968) 34.4.¹⁰ As a result of the sustained high rates of natural increase the Indian population is very young. The median age of the total B.C. population in 1971 was 26.95 years, while that of the Indian population was 16.40 years (1972).¹¹

(ii) Dependency and Support Ratios

Proportionately, each Indian person aged fifteen to sixty-four has twice the number of young mouths (fourteen and under) to feed as each non-Indian in the total population.¹² If we define the economically active

⁹ *Success and Failure*, chap. IV.

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, *Vital Statistics, 1969*, p. 38.

¹¹ Derived from Statistics Canada, *Population Single Years of Age, 1971 Census of Canada*, vol. 1, part 2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1973), pp. 14-1, 14-2. Figures for B.C. Indians from unpublished tabulations provided by Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa (Departmental Statistics Division).

¹² The youth dependency ratio is defined as:

$$\frac{\text{population 0-14 years}}{\text{population 15-64 years}}$$
 The old age dependency ratio is defined as

$$\frac{\text{population 65+}}{\text{population 15-64 years}}.$$

The ratios for the B.C. population in 1971 were .445 and .150 respectively, while those for the status off-reserve Indian population in 1972 were .857 and .036. The ratios for the total B.C. Indian population in 1972 were .846 and .074. (Derived from Statistics Canada, *Perspective Canada: A Compendium of Social Statistics* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974), pp. 12, 246 and unpublished data provided by Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.)

population as people between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four, and if we assume the same labour-force participation rates for both Indians and non-Indians in British Columbia, then, on average, each Indian in the labour force must support 3.5 people, while each non-Indian must support 2.8. But if we adjust for the very great difference in unemployment rates between the two groups to obtain the average number of people who must be supported by each *employed* person, the result is that each employed Indian must support an average of 5.5 people, whereas each employed non-Indian must support an average of 3.5.

(iii) Illegitimacy

The proportion of illegitimate Indian births has increased more than sixfold since the early 1930's. By 1972, some 56.5% of status Indian births and 37.7% of non-status Indian births were illegitimate. These rates were 6.3 and 4.2 times the rate for non-Indians in 1972.¹³ In 1961 the illegitimacy rate for status Indians was 34.6%; for non-status Indians it was 22.9%.

The provisions of the *Indian Act* may partly explain the higher incidence of illegitimacy and common law marriages among the Indian population. Under section 12(b) of the Act, an Indian woman who marries a non-Indian is "not entitled to be registered" under the Act. The effect of these provisions is that an Indian woman who marries a non-Indian loses her Indian status, and her children, born in such a marriage, do not have Indian status.

(iv) Marital Status

The 1971 census indicates that 66.2% of the B.C. population (aged fifteen or over) is married (or separated), but only 42.6% of the total B.C. Indian population and 38.3% of all B.C. Indians living off reserves are married.

Only one-quarter of the B.C. urban population is single, in contrast to half of the total B.C. Indian population and 55.6% of the total off-reserve population. Our sample of 1,095 Indians living off reserves in 1971 was apparently slightly under-representative of single people. The category "single" includes unwed parents, but by tradition attention has been paid to "unwed mothers." Neither the census nor the Indian Affairs

¹³ See Table 4-4 in *Success and Failure*, p. 331.

Branch publishes information on the proportion of single women who are unwed mothers, but unpublished data for 1971 indicates that 39.5% of all single Indian women in B.C. have one or more children.¹⁴

A minute percentage of B.C. Indians are divorced (0.4%) compared with the general B.C. population (2.2%). We found that 1.5% of the people in our sample of off-reserve Indians were divorced, which is more than double the percentage for all Indians living off reserves in 1971. The proportion of widowed people is the same in the Indian and in the non-Indian population — that is, 6.7% and 6.6% respectively.

Marriage, in fact, is *not* “quasi-universal among Indians,” at least among B.C. Indians living either on or off reserves. In each of the three age groups (fifteen to twenty-four, twenty-five to thirty-nine, and forty plus) the proportion of single Indians is substantially above that of the total B.C. population. Overall, we found that while one-quarter of the total population is single, the proportion for the Indian population was double that. Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson’s 1954 data on B.C. Indians indicate that 24.9% were single, 9.1% were living common law, 57.9% were married, and 2.6% were separated at the time of interview.¹⁵ Such data clearly indicate that in the past two decades the preference for marriage has declined significantly among B.C. Indians. This is in contrast to the stability in the proportion of the total B.C. population that was married or single in 1951, 1956 and 1971.

(v) Number of Children

It is common knowledge that Indians have larger families than non-Indians. In our sample of Indian woman (of all ages) living off reserves, one-third have six or more children. Only 5.5% of all B.C. women have had six or more children. Almost one-sixth of all Indian women living off reserves have had eight or more children. The average number of children for all B.C. women is 2.30, compared with 4.34 for the sample of Indian women. The difference is greatest in the age group forty to forty-nine where the average for all B.C. women is 2.80 children, compared with 6.23 for the sample. For both groups, the average number of

¹⁴ Derived from data provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Overall, 18.2% of B.C. Indian women aged fifteen and over were unwed mothers in 1971.

¹⁵ H. B. Hawthorn, C. S. Belshaw and S. M. Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1955), vol. II, pp. 588-92.

children increases in every age group up to and including forty to forty-nine.¹⁶

One of the most common findings of studies of migration from rural or urban communities is that average family size declines in succeeding generations. Unpublished data derived from the 1971 census indicate that urban Indian families are significantly smaller than rural (reserve) families in British Columbia. The average number of children born to Indian women ever married in rural communities was 4.66, whereas the number for those in urban communities was 3.57.

Two-fifths of the rural Indian women but only 23.2% of the urban Indian women had six or more children. Over one-sixth of the rural women had *nine* or more children. In contrast, only one-tenth of all B.C. rural women and 5.5% of all urban women had six or more children. The average number of children was 2.71 and 2.28 for non-Indian rural and urban women ever married respectively.

(vi) Household and Family Size¹⁷

B.C. Indians living off reserves have an average of 5.4 people in each household, compared with 3.1 for the total B.C. urban population. Some 41.1% of the Indian households consisted of six or more people compared with 9.4% of the total B.C. urban population. Over one-fifth (22.2%) of the people in the Indian sample lived in households of eight or more, yet this figure excludes collective households in which a significant proportion of the young Indians lived. Urban households were also substantially larger than those of the B.C. rural farm population, which had an average size of 4.0 people in 1971.¹⁸

The average household of B.C. Indians living off reserves, counting only family members, contained 3.7 people, compared with 2.7 for the total B.C. urban population. The average for the B.C. rural farm population in 1971 was 3.7.¹⁹ Proportionately, three times as many Indian households contain six or more family members as non-Indian households. Fifteen percent of the Indian households had eight or more family members in them. On average, non-family members account for only one-

¹⁶ The average is *less* for both groups, however, for women of fifty or more in 1971. A high proportion of these women will have spent part of their child-bearing years in the depression of the 1930s when birth rates were low.

¹⁷ The definitions used were those found in Statistics Canada, *Dictionary of the 1971 Census Terms* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1972), p. 6.

¹⁸ Statistics Canada, *Households by Size*, (Cat. No. 93702), pp. 2-7.

¹⁹ *loc. cit.*

eighth of the size of the non-Indian household, compared with almost one-third for the average Indian household. In absolute terms, the average number of non-family members in non-Indian households is 0.4, in contrast to 1.7 for Indian households. One-sixth of our sample of Indian households contained four or more non-family members. Less than 1% of all urban B.C. households had this number of non-family members.

III. *Housing*²⁰

(i) On Reserve

For the most part, the quality of housing available to B.C. Indians living on reserves compares unfavourably with that of the general population. Yet in terms of the proportion of houses with various utilities and amenities the housing situation has greatly improved between 1963 and 1973 in B.C. The proportion with electricity increased from 56.5% to 86.7%; that with sewer or septic tank increased from 17.0% to 64.9%; and that with running water from 35.9% to 77.5%. The proportion of houses with indoor toilets and baths increased from less than 20% in 1963 to over 60% in 1973. The proportion with a telephone increased from 11.5% to 32.0%.

However, the various measures of *quality* of reserve housing are conflicting. The percentage of occupied houses needing "major repairs" increased from 7.9% in 1963 to 10.0% in 1969, to 17.6% in 1973. Indian Affairs rated 21.7% of reserve houses as being in "poor condition" in 1963. In 1973 the proportion was 25.9%. On the other hand, the size of houses on reserves appears to be increasing. The percentage of houses with only one to three rooms decreased from 38.8% in 1963 to 23.9% in 1973. Those with six or more rooms increased from 16.0% to 21.9% of the total over the same period. Although the average number of people per house has declined slightly between 1963 and 1973 (from 6.15 to 5.62) the number in absolute terms is high, given the average size of reserve houses.

More importantly, between 1965 and 1973 the "proportion of families needing new houses" has grown from 15.7% to 40.3%. Despite a rapid rise in housing expenditures by the Indian Affairs Branch, the combination of very rapid population growth *and* the ubiquitous nature of rising

²⁰ From *Success and Failure*, chaps. II and III.

expectations means that the backlog of unfulfilled demand for housing on reserves has increased.²¹

(ii) Off Reserve

By type of accommodation, we found that 34.8% of our off-reserve sample were renting a house, 17.3% were renting an apartment, and 14.1% were renting a room or rooms in a house. Five percent were living in a hotel or motel. A good proportion of these were effectively permanent residents using the hotel or motel as an apartment. Just over 2% lived in a boat, school, or trailer, and 2% lived in a cannery house or in a camp. Some 7.6% lived in other types of rented accommodation.

Although we were not able to ascertain the quality of accommodation, we did determine the number of bedrooms in each person's abode, which provides a rough measure of the size of the accommodation. Overall, 9.5% of our sample lived in one-room accommodation with no separate bedroom. Thirty-seven percent had one bedroom, 26.6% had two bedrooms, and a similar percentage had three or more bedrooms. Of those who were owner/occupiers, 34.3% had three bedrooms, and 36.0% had four or more bedrooms. Those living in rented houses had substantially smaller dwellings.²²

Overall, only 20.4% families of two or more of our sample of Indians living in urban centres were owner/occupiers. This proportion is far below

²¹ In considering the housing variable in the context of the decision to stay on reserve or to move off, we must recognize that an Indian does *not* receive the shelter portion of welfare payments while receiving social assistance on reserve. While using the provincial schedule of welfare payments, Indian Affairs takes the position that housing is already provided for reserve residents. One of the effects of the federal government's policy of providing housing on the reserves in kind, is that it makes the transition to obtaining housing for cash in the market place off reserves more difficult. There is simply no cash housing market on reserves. For most Indians growing up on the reserve, housing "just exists," whatever its quality. When new families are formed, a request is made to Indian Affairs to have a house built. The potential occupier may agree to make a contribution in money or in labour toward the construction of the house, but Indian Affairs is expected to provide. If a new house is unobtainable, the young couple simply "doubles up" with friends or relatives.

²² We did not obtain data on the monthly rents of status Indians living in rental accommodation, but we do have such figures from the survey of non-status Indians. These data indicate that 16.1% of the households paid rents under \$50 per month, 23.0% paid between \$50 and \$74, 19.6% paid between \$75 and \$99 per month, 21.7% paid between \$100 and \$124, and 19.6% paid \$125 or more per month. These rents seem very low, even for communities in the interior and northern sections of British Columbia in 1971, before the rapid appreciation in rents and property values. See W. T. Stanbury, "Summary of Major Results, B.C. Association of Non-Status Indians Survey, Summer 1971," University of British Columbia, Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration, 1971 (unpublished paper), p. 26.

that for the nation as a whole (66.0%).²³ More significantly, the proportion of status Indian owner/occupiers is far below that of non-status Indians in B.C. A survey of 864 non-status Indian households, also carried out in the summer of 1971, indicated that 43.2% consisted of owner/occupiers.²⁴ Some 18.1% of the off-reserve sample owned a house on the reserve.

IV. *Education and Vocational Training*²⁵

(i) Level of Attainment

One-quarter of our sample had completed the sixth grade or less, and only one-sixth had graduated from high school or better. In fact, only 2.3% of our sample completed one or more years of university, and only four people out of the total sample (1,095) had acquired a university degree. The level of education of B.C. Indians is inversely related to age. The simple correlation coefficient for our off-reserve sample was -0.53.

Data from the 1971 census permit us to compare the educational attainment of our sample to that of the total B.C. population aged fifteen and over. Some 52.1% of our sample had completed Grade VIII or less, 47.2% had completed from Grade IX to Grade XIII and 0.7% had gone beyond Grade XIII. In contrast, 22.6% of the total B.C. population had schooling up to Grade VIII, 64.5% had received Grades IX to XIII and 12.9% had gone beyond Grade XIII, i.e. university.²⁶

The education gap is rapidly being closed. The median is 4.1 grades for those aged fifty-five to sixty-four in 1971, but this level is more than doubled to 9.9 grades for those in the age group twenty to twenty-four. In this group, the median for Canada's native-born population is 10.5 for men and 10.8 for women. For the Indian women in our sample, the

²³ The difference is not so great for those with incomes of over \$7,000. Forty-one percent of such Indian families were owner/occupiers, compared with 69.3% of all Canadian families.

²⁴ See footnote 22.

²⁵ From *Success and Failure*, chap. V.

²⁶ Derived from Statistics Canada, *Population-School Attendance and Schooling*, 1971 Census of Canada, vol. 1, part 2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974), p. 36-1 and *Population Single Years of Age*, 1971 Census of Canada, vol. 1, part 2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1973), pp. 14-1, 14-2. The former source gives the level of schooling, by province, of persons aged five and over. By deducting the number of persons five to fourteen years of age from the number with an elementary education (Grade VIII or less) we obtained the educational attainment of British Columbians aged fifteen and over.

median number of grades completed almost doubled in the decade between the fifty-five to sixty-four and forty-five to fifty-four age groups.

Non-status Indians also show a very significant increase in the level of education among their young people, but the gap between the non-status population and the total population is still very great. A sample of 1,309 non-status Indians collected in 1971 indicates the median number of years of schooling was 7.32 and the average was 7.17.²⁷ The difference between the non-status average and that of the off-reserve sample (8.15) was statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

While we found parents' aspirations for their children's level of education rose with their own level of education, the gap between aspiration and reality is large. Retention rates are very low — only 12.5% of B.C. Indian students enrolling in Grade I in 1958/59 entered Grade XII in 1969/70, in contrast to 82.6% for the province as a whole. By Grade VII, only 57.0% of the Indian students who began school in 1958/59 were still in school.²⁸ The Indian enrolment in Grade XII in 1971/72 represented only 23.9% of the number of eighteen-year-old status Indians in B.C. as compared with 82.9% for the total population.²⁹

(ii) Vocational Training

Of our total sample of 1,095, we found that 385, or 35%, had taken a total of 559 special courses or vocational training courses of various duration. We found that 125 people had taken two or more courses, and thirty-six had taken three or more courses. Some 231 or the 385 people had taken one or more full-time trade courses. In all, three-quarters of the special courses taken could be fairly described as vocational training. Adult education and upgrading courses together accounted for one-fifth of the people who had taken one or more special courses. Some 65% of all the courses lasted six months or more, and 69% of the vocational

²⁷ See W. T. Stanbury, "Summary of Major Results . . .", *op. cit.*

²⁸ Derived from data provided by the Departmental Statistics Division, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa, 1973.

²⁹ The figure for status Indians was derived by taking the number enrolled in Grade XII in 1971/72 and dividing by the total number of status Indians eighteen years old in 1972. For the province we obtained Grade XII enrolment figures for public schools in 1970/71 (30,830) and private schools in 1971/72 (1,199) and divided the total by the number of 18 year olds in the B.C. population in 1971 (38,650). The data came from *Public Schools of the Province of B.C., 101st Annual Report, 1971/72* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1973), p. D93; Statistics Canada, *Statistics of Private Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1971/72* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1973), p. 5 and Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, *Population Single Years of Age*, vol. 1, part 2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1973), p. 14-2.

training courses were of six months' duration or greater. Just less than one-half of all the courses were between six and twelve months' duration. Data from the 1971 census indicate that 9.9% of B.C. residents aged 15 and over whose formal educational attainment is Grade VIII or less also have vocational training. The proportion of those with Grades IX to XIII also having vocational training is 8.9% and for those whose formal education extends beyond Grade XIII it is 16.6%.³⁰ Comparisons between these figures and our own are difficult to make, but even if we count only full-time trades courses, which were reported by 21% of our sample, Indians appear to compare very favourably with the total population with respect to vocational training.

V. Health and Hospitalization³¹

(i) Life Span

Although we do not have published life tables for B.C. Indians, we can observe significant differences in the Indian and non-Indian distribution of ages at the time of death. In 1971, the median age at death of status Indians in B.C. was forty-four. The median for all British Columbians was 71.6 years.³² For Indian men, the median age at death was forty; for women it was forty-seven. The comparable figures for the total population were 69.5 and 75.3 respectively. Even if we adjust for the differences in the median age of the two populations the difference in the median age at death is almost two decades.

(ii) Infant Mortality

The most significant change in the Indian vital rates was the halving of infant mortality rates (deaths of children under one year of age per 1,000 live births) between 1960 and 1970. The rate for B.C. Indians declined from 89.5 to 41.1 per 1,000. The decline is impressive, but the absolute level of infant mortality among B.C. Indians in 1970 was almost *double* that for the nation. In 1960, the national rate was 27.3 per 1,000

³⁰ Derived from Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, *Population-School Attendance and Schooling*, vol. 1, part 2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974), p. 36-1 and *Population Single Years of Age*, *op. cit.*, p. 14-1.

³¹ From *Success and Failure*, chap. VI.

³² Derived from Province of B.C. *Vital Statistics* (Victoria: Queen's Printer), various years.

and in 1970 it was 18.8 per 1,000.³³ Data provided by B.C. Vital Statistics do not indicate a halving of the infant mortality rate for status Indians in B.C. Rather, the rate calculated by B.C. Vital Statistics dropped from 84.5 (versus 21.6 for non-Indians) in 1960 to 56.7 (versus 17.2 for non-Indians) in 1971.³⁴ Data provided by the Department of National Health and Welfare's Indian Health Service indicate an infant mortality rate of 58.9 per 1,000 live births 1972, but the figure for 1973 dropped sharply to 40.7.³⁵

(iii) Causes of Death

Between 1961 and 1970, one-quarter of the Indian deaths, compared with only 8.0% of all British Columbia deaths, were caused by accidents. In terms of the incidence rate (number of deaths per 100,000 population), the Indian rate was 3.5 times that of the total population. Accidents and violence accounted for 32.1% of all Indian deaths in 1972, and for 35.8% in 1973. In contrast, accidents and violence accounted for only 11.8% of all the deaths in B.C. in 1971. Indian deaths caused by accidents and violence in 1972 stood at 260 per 100,000 and at 322 in 1973, compared with 96.5 for all British Columbians in 1971.

Three times as many non-Indians die of diseases of the heart as do Indians in British Columbia. Such diseases accounted for 47.4% of all British Columbians' deaths between 1961 and 1970, but only 13.4% of all Indians' deaths. Cerebrovascular diseases and malignant neoplasms jointly account for 28.8% of all deaths in B.C. but for only 9.4% of all Indian deaths. Their incidence rate among non-Indians is over two and one-half times that among Indians. On the other hand, the incidence of congenital anomalies as a cause of death among Indians is 2.5 times the incidence among non-Indians. Some 9.1% of the Indians who died between 1961 and 1970 were less than seven days old. Such perinatal mortality accounted for only 2.5% of all the deaths in British Columbia.

Pneumonia as a cause of death was 3.4 times as prevalent among Indians as among non-Indians in B.C. The rate for death by suicide among B.C. Indians during the period 1961 to 1970 was 1.4 times that

³³ Statistics Canada, *Vital Statistics, 1970*. The infant mortality rate for B.C. in 1960 was 20.7 and in 1970 it was 16.9 (Statistics Canada, *Vital Statistics, 1970, Vital Statistics, 1960*).

³⁴ See Table 6-3 in *Success and Failure*.

³⁵ Department of National Health and Welfare, Medical Services "Annual Report, 1973, Pacific Region," Appendix B and "Annual Report, 1972/73, Pacific Region," Appendix B.

for all British Columbians. The Indian suicide rate was 30.6 per 100,000 in 1972, and 25.8 in 1973, compared with 17.4 for all British Columbians.³⁶ And we believe that the Indian suicide rate is understated. At least some proportion of the drownings, motor vehicle accidents and deaths on railroad rights of way are effectively suicides.³⁷

(iv) Hospitalization

It is not difficult to document the proposition that B.C. Indians spend more time in hospital than do other British Columbians. Status Indians spend more time in hospital than do other British Columbians. Status Indians "consume" twice as many patient days of hospital care, per capita, as do non-Indians — 3,117 per 1,000 in 1971, compared with 1,539.³⁸ In 1972, the average length of stay for Indian patients was only slightly longer than that for non-Indians. The number of patient days per 1,000 of the Indian population declined by 13% between 1963 and 1972, from 3,571 to the 3,117 given above. The number of patient days per 1,000 of the non-Indian population declined during the same period by 9%.

In fourteen of the seventeen major diagnostic classes, the incidence rate of cases per 100,000 population in 1972 was greater for Indians than for non-Indians. In five of the classes, the Indian rate was more than three times the rate for non-Indians. In the diagnostic class perinatal morbidity and mortality, the Indian rate in 1972 was 6.4 times the non-Indian rate, yet this represents an improvement over 1963 when it was 8.8 times the non-Indian rate. Hospital cases diagnosed as diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue were 5.8 times as prevalent among Indians in 1972, compared with a 9.2 higher prevalence in 1963. Hospitalization of Indians for diseases of the respiratory system in 1972 was 4.4 times the rate for non-Indians, which was slightly above the rate for 1963. Hospitalization for infectious and parasitic diseases among Indians in 1972 was 4.5 times the non-Indian rate, but this ratio is an improvement over that of 1963, which was 6.6 times. Indians are hospitalized 3.7 times as frequently as non-Indians for diseases of the nervous system and sense organs. Hospitalization of Indians due to accidents, poisonings, and violence was "only" 2.4 times the non-Indian rate in 1972. On the other

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ The rate of Indian deaths (per 100,000 population) due to motor vehicle accidents was 69.4 in 1972, and rose to 89.5 in 1973. The rate for all B.C. in 1971 was 34.2 (*Ibid.*)

³⁸ Data from Table 6-7 in *Success and Failure*.

side of the health ledger, the rate of hospitalization of Indians due to neoplasms (cancer type growths) is less than two-fifths the rate for non-Indians. The Indian rate of hospitalization for diseases of the circulatory system (heart disease) is only four-fifths the rate for non-Indians. The same is true for diseases of the genito-urinary system.

(v) The Off-Reserve Study

We estimate that Indian women visited doctors, on average, 6.14 times per year, compared with 3.34 times for men. Comparable figures are not available for the general population.

The average number of visits to doctors increased with age and decreased with the level of education. For example, respondents aged fifteen to twenty-nine averaged 3.86 visits while those aged fifty and over averaged 6.85 visits. People who had completed seven or fewer grades averaged 5.65 visits, whereas the average for high school graduates was only 2.84.

Despite the existence of "universal" medical care insurance, and despite the partial or complete subsidization of premiums of low-income families or individuals, 17.3% of our sample did *not* have medical insurance. The average number of days in hospital for those with insurance was 5.14 days, and for those with no insurance it was 5.12 days. There was a difference, however, in the average number of visits to the doctor. Those without insurance averaged 2.74 visits; those with insurance averaged 5.02 visits in the previous year. The difference was statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

On average, each man in the sample spent 4.48 days in hospital and each woman spent 5.85 days. In comparison, the average for all British Columbians in the age range fifteen to fifty-nine was 1.07 days for men and 1.67 for women.³⁹

VI. *Economic Position*

(i) Occupational Structure of the Indian Labour Force⁴⁰

It has been argued that "by far the most important measure of the economic status and future of the Indians of British Columbia, as a group in modern society, is their occupational distribution by industry and

³⁹ Derived from B.C. Department of Health Services and Hospital Insurance, *Statistics of Hospital Cases Discharged During 1972*, Victoria, 1974, pp. 14, 16.

⁴⁰ *Success and Failure*, chap. VIII.

trade.”⁴¹ We shall show that the rapid growth of the off-reserve population, combined with rising levels of education, has resulted in major changes in the occupational structure of the status Indian labour force in the province.

An extensive survey of B.C. Indians living on reserves, carried out in 1954, indicated that 62.9% of the sample of over 6,000 persons were in Primary occupations, primarily fishing and farming. Some 19.7% were in Production/Craftsmen occupations, but 90% of these persons were production workers in fish processing plants. Only 1.4% of B.C. Indians held white collar jobs in 1954. Data from our survey of Indians living off reserves in the summer of 1971 indicated that only 23.3% were in Primary occupations while 15.2% were in Production/Craftsmen jobs and 30.2% were working in White Collar occupations.

While there has been a vast “occupational upgrading” among B.C. Indians, they remain substantially “under-represented” in the white collar ranks, and in the Production/Craftsmen occupations (15.2%) as compared with all Canadians (24.1%). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the proportion of the B.C. urban Indian labour force in the Labour/Unskilled occupational group is only one percentage point greater than that for the nation as a whole. In the Transportation/Communication group, B.C. Indians are “over-represented” — 12.8% as compared to 5.4% for Canada.

Data for the summer of 1971 indicate that only 10% of the non-status labour force is in white collar occupations as compared to 30% for the off-reserve status Indians. At the other end of the spectrum, 23.7% of the non-status labour force was in the Labour/Unskilled group as compared to 5.3% for the off-reserve “status” or “registered” Indians. Substantially higher proportions of the non-status labour force were in the Service/Recreation (22.7%) and Production/Craftsmen (21.5%) occupational groups in comparison to the status off-reserve sample (13.1% and 15.2% respectively). Despite the fact that a significantly higher proportion of the non-status sample was obtained from north of Prince George, only 16.7% of the non-status labour force was in the broad Primary occupational group. This was almost seven percentage points less than the status off-reserve sample.

(ii) Unemployment and Labour Force Participation⁴²

We have no satisfactory measure of the unemployment rate among

⁴¹ Hawthorn, Belshaw and Jamieson, *op. cit.*, (1960 edition in one volume), p. 72.

⁴² *Success and Failure*, chap. VII.

Indians living on reserves.⁴³ Counts of "unemployed employables" by the administrators of social assistance payments are, at best, a crude proxy of the extent of unemployment among reserve residents. Similarly, the proportion of the reserve population dependent upon social welfare, which we will describe below, is a poor substitute for measuring the unemployment rate as is done in the Monthly Labour Force Survey. In terms of public policy, we need detailed micro-studies of the behaviour of Indians in the labour market, including periodic measurements of the extent of unemployment and labour force participation.⁴⁴

We do, however, have estimates of the unemployment and participation rates of B.C. Indians living off reserves for the summer of 1971. The methodology used in the official estimates of unemployment and labour force participation rates is of particular significance in estimating the unemployment and labour force participation rates of Indians and other disadvantaged groups. We refer to the problem of "discouraged workers."⁴⁵

We define discouraged workers as those who are without work, but are not actively seeking work because of prolonged periods of unemployment and the futile search for suitable employment they have experienced. These workers would have actively entered the labour market if suitable job opportunities were available. The result is that discouraged workers are *not* included in estimates of the labour force and consequently the official unemployment and labour force participation rates *understate* the "true" rates.

⁴³ A recent newspaper article based on data provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to the House of Commons Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development gives an estimate of the national level of unemployment among Canadian Indians. Of the total population of 275,000, "almost 75,000 are potential members of the labour force." At the time of the survey only 40,000 were working. This represents an unemployment rate of 47%. The article goes on, "even more sobering, the data on 'man-months in a year' that Indians were employed, averages out to 5.5 months." The author points out that "the largest block of those working were classified as 'other' work; this is defined as 'social services, band management and other social and community work programs.'" He states that such data "demonstrate that the majority of the jobs are provided by bureaucracies related to the Indians themselves, that a huge majority of the jobs are funded or sponsored by federal or provincial programs and that very few Indians . . . are gainfully employed in the so-called private sector of the economy." (Douglas Fisher, "Indian unemployment is staggering," *Vancouver Sun*, April 14, 1975, p. 4).

⁴⁴ A more comprehensive discussion can be found in W. T. Stanbury, "Urban Indians in the Labour Market" in Larry F. Moore (ed.), *Readings in Manpower Management for Canadians*, Vancouver, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of British Columbia, 1975, pp. 192-217.

⁴⁵ The term "inactive seekers" is used in Sylvia Ostry and Mahmood A. Zardi, *Labour Economics in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), p. 9.

To deal with the problem of discouraged workers, we defined two measures of unemployment among persons in our sample. The broader definition U_1 is equal to the sum of persons unemployed and indicating that they are looking for work *plus* those who are unemployed but who indicated (for whatever reason) that they were not looking for work. The narrower definition, U_2 , is the number of persons who were unemployed *and* who stated that they were seeking work. In a parallel fashion two participation rates (P_1 , P_2) were defined. We believe that U_1 and P_1 are the more appropriate measures of the unemployment and labour force participation rates among B.C. Indians.

The most significant result we obtained from our study was the very high rate of unemployment among B.C. Indians who lived off reserves in the summer of 1971. Using the broader definition U_1 , the overall unemployment rate (M + F, aged 16 and over) was 46.5%. Using U_2 , the narrower definition, the overall unemployment rate was 26.9%. These rates must be compared to rates of 7.1%, 6.2% and 5.4% for the months of June, July and August of 1971 for the total population of B.C.⁴⁶ Exact comparisons are not possible as our interviews were collected in June (75), July (527), August (463) and September (30) of 1971. This slight difference in methodology cannot obscure the principal result that unemployment (using the U_1 measure) among B.C. Indians living off reserves is at least four times the overall B.C. rate. The combined male and female participation rate of B.C. Indians (using the broad measure P_1) was 69.7% as compared to 59% for all of B.C. Using P_2 , the narrower measure, the combined participation rate of B.C. Indians living off reserves in the summer of 1971 was 51.5% or eight percentage points below that of the total B.C. rate.

(iii) Level of Income

(a) On Reserve

We are fortunate to have some unpublished data from the 1971 census with respect to the incomes of Indian families living on reserves. These data indicate that in 1970 the average family income was \$5,808.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁶ Data provided by S. L. Young, Regional Economist, Department of Manpower and Immigration, Vancouver.

⁴⁷ These data were made available to me by Miss M. Rice of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, B.C. Region, Vancouver, and by Data Dissemination Division, Census Field, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, 1974. See Table 10 in W. T. Stanbury, *The Social and Economic Conditions of Indian Families in British Columbia*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

average ranged from \$3,096 in the East Kootenay Census District to \$8,070 in the Stikine District. The average census family income for Indians living on reserves in the Greater Vancouver Census District was \$7,928. For the province as a whole, 32.8% of Indian families had incomes under \$3,000, 28.9% had incomes between \$3,000 and \$5,999, 24.6% were in the range \$6,000 to \$9,999, and 13.8% had incomes of \$10,000 and over. These figures represent a vast improvement over the results from the 1961 census, which reported an average income of \$2,441. In terms of the distribution of income in 1960, 27.1% of B.C. Indian families on reserve had incomes under \$1,000, 24.4% were in the range \$1,000 to \$1,999, 30.3% had incomes of \$2,000 to \$3,999 and 18.2% had incomes of \$4,000 or more.⁴⁸

Between 1960 and 1970 per capita personal income in B.C. increased by 88% — but the average income of B.C. Indian families on reserves increased by 138%. However, in 1970 the average Indian family income was only 58% of the B.C. average (\$10,019). Some 42.5% of all B.C. families had incomes of \$10,000 or more, but only 13.8% of Indian families living on reserves enjoyed such a level of income. Over three times as many Indian families had incomes under \$3,000 in 1970 as compared with all B.C. families.

(b) Off Reserve⁴⁹

In 1970 some 54% of B.C. Indian families and unattached individuals living off reserves had incomes from *employment* of less than \$2,000. The most closely comparable data that could be obtained is for non-Indian individuals in B.C. for 1971. Only 26% had incomes of less than \$2,000. The income cohort "under \$2,000" hides the important fact that 35% of the families and unattached individuals in the off-reserve Indian sample had *no* income from employment in 1970. In comparison 10.5% of all individuals in B.C. had incomes in 1971 of under \$500.

Seventy-six percent of the Indian sample had incomes from employment under \$6,000 in 1970. Only 52% of all individuals in British Columbia had 1971 earnings of less than \$6,000. The comparison is even less favourable when we note that the data for Indians is for families and unattached individuals and therefore includes multiple earners, while that for the total B.C. population is for individuals only. The average

⁴⁸ D. B. Fields and W. T. Stanbury, *The Economic Impact of the Public Sector Upon the Indians of British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973), p. 200.

⁴⁹ *Success and Failure*, chap. IX.

earnings of all earners in B.C. in 1971 was \$6,242 compared with \$3,032 (1970) for our sample of B.C. Indians living off reserves.⁵⁰

For comparative purposes we derived estimates of *total income* for B.C. Indians by adding to income from employment estimates of transfer payments received by each family or unattached individual.

The inclusion of transfer payments sharply reduces the proportion of Indian families and unattached individuals with incomes of less than \$2,000; from 53.7% to 28.1%. However, for all B.C. families and unattached individuals the comparable proportion is 12.9% (1969). While 52.9% of Indian families and unattached individuals had incomes of less than \$4,000 in 1970, only 27.6% of all of B.C. is in this income class (in 1969). Just over one-quarter (27.1%) of Indians had incomes of \$6,000 or more as compared to three-fifths (60.1%) of all B.C. families and unattached individuals. Twenty-seven percent had incomes in 1969 of \$10,000 or more, but only 5.9% of B.C. Indians enjoyed a five-figure income.

For status off-reserve Indian families of *two or more*, we find that with the inclusion of transfer payments only 10% received incomes of less than \$2,000 in 1970. Some 39% had total incomes of less than \$4,000. In comparison we find that in 1969 less than 4% of B.C. families of two or more had incomes of less than \$2,000. Thirteen percent received incomes between \$2,000 and \$3,999 and 56% received incomes of \$8,000 or more in 1969.

(c) The Poverty Line Off Reserve

The poverty line concept has the advantage over income distribution data of incorporating family size into the estimate of the proportion of persons or families that have total incomes below the line, i.e. are defined to be "poor." For 1969, the Report of the Special Senate Committee on Poverty specified the following annual total incomes to be the poverty line for the number of persons in the family indicated in the brackets: \$2,140 (1); \$3,570 (2); \$4,290 (3); \$5,000 (4); \$5,710 (5); \$5,430 (6); \$7,140 (7); \$9,290 (10).⁵¹

We used these figures to estimate the proportion of all Indian families living off reserves whose income in 1970 placed them below the poverty line. We found that 67.5% of all Indian families were below the poverty

⁵⁰ B.C. data from Statistics Canada, *Earnings and Work Experience of the 1971 Labour Force* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974), p. 35.

⁵¹ Special Senate Committee on Poverty, *Poverty in Canada* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), p. 212.

line compared with 25.1% of all families in Canada in 1969. By family size the proportion of off-reserve Indian families below the poverty line in 1970 (with the comparable percentage of all Canadian families) was as follows: one, 60.3% (38.7); two, 72.3% (28.4); three, 53.4% (16.8); four, 49.5% (15.6); five or more, 76.4% (28.5).⁵²

Significantly we should note that government transfer payments — in particular social assistance — had little effect in closing the gap between earned incomes and the poverty line. On the basis of income from employment alone, 67.5% of the sample of B.C. Indian families were below the poverty line adjusted for family size. After government transfers were included, the proportion of families below the poverty line was reduced to 62.8%. Transfer payments do not raise Indians to the poverty line because the level of social assistance payments is low and because welfare programs in 1970 did not cover the “working poor.”

(iv) Welfare Dependency

(a) On Reserve

Throughout 1972/73 one-half of the total on-reserve population in Canada was dependent upon social assistance payments. By region, the welfare dependency ratios were: Maritimes 78.7%, Quebec 41.6%, Ontario 23.0%, Manitoba 56.7%, Saskatchewan 70.3%, Alberta 67.8%, and British Columbia 37.8%.⁵³ For 1973/74 the average annual rate in B.C. was 33.2%, indicating that, on average over the year, one-third of the reserve population was dependent upon social welfare payments. Welfare dependency on reserves appears to have increased in B.C. since the late 1960s when the average annual rate was about 26%.⁵⁴ We estimate the average annual percentage of the total population of B.C. receiving social assistance to be 4.70% in 1969/70, 6.37% in 1970/71, 5.74% in 1971/72 and 4.78% in 1972/73.⁵⁵ If we compare the last

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵³ Derived from Statistics Canada, *Perspective Canada: A Compendium of Social Statistics* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974), p. 252 and *Success and Failure*, Table 2-1.

⁵⁴ Fields and Stanbury, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵⁵ Derived from Annual Report of the Department of Human Resources, 1973, *Services for People*, (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1974), p. 69; “Report of the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement, Part IV, Statistical Reports and Tables, Fiscal Year 1970/71,” Victoria, mimeo., p. 46, and Statistics Canada, *Quarterly Estimates of the Population for Canada and Provinces* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1974), p. 2.

figure to the rate for Indians on reserves, we find that the rate for Indians was almost *eight* times that for the province as a whole.

(b) Off Reserve⁵⁶

We found that 28% of the individuals and families in our sample were not self-supporting in even one month in the two and one-half year period upon which we obtained data.⁵⁷ However, the distribution was bipolar — 24% of the sample were self-supporting for the *entire* period January 1969 through summer 1971. We found that 48% of the families and unattached individuals were self-supporting for one-half or more of the approximately thirty-month period. Some 39% were self-supporting for three-quarters or more of the entire period, while 41% were self-supporting (at whatever level of income) for one-quarter or less during the period January 1969 through summer 1971.

A set of regression equations seeking to identify the “determinants” of the ability of men to be self-supporting found that the following variables had positive coefficients and were statistically significant: age in the twenty-five to forty-nine-year range compared with men of sixteen to twenty-four; high school graduates compared with those with four or fewer grades completed (in only one equation); the presence of a wife in the labour market; union membership; all current occupations, except those in managerial/professional/technical occupations (compared with those not currently employed or in the labour force); individual perception of the job situation as “good”; the Tsimshian/Haida cultural/linguistic group compared with the reference group (Interior Salish).

VII. *Child Welfare Problems*

Children come into the care of the provincial Superintendent of Child Welfare under the provisions of the *Protection of Children Act* principally

⁵⁶ *Success and Failure*, chap. IX.

⁵⁷ To obtain data on the ability of B.C. Indians living off reserves to be self-supporting, we asked the following questions:

— “During 1971 (1970, 1969) in which months were you or your wife/husband able to support yourself and your family with money *from your job*?”

— “During 1971 (1970, 1969) in which months did you have to get help to support yourself/family from Welfare, friends, etc.?”

The second question was asked some time after the first as a check on the replies to the first question. Interviewers were instructed to ensure that the answers to the two questions were exactly complementary, i.e. in any month an individual or family was either self-supporting (not receiving any social welfare payments or gifts from friends at *any time* during the month) or they were to some extent dependent upon social assistance or friends and relatives.

because of maltreatment or neglect by their parents. In the care of the Superintendent, or of the three Children's Aid Societies,⁵⁸ which perform parallel functions, all children are not lodged in government institutions. An analysis of the caseload of children in care on 30 September 1972 indicated that 77.9% of status Indian and 59.2% of non-Indian children were living in foster homes for which the government provided financial support. An additional 13.9% of status Indian and 23.3% of non-Indian children were in "free homes or independent." The remaining 8.2% of status Indian children and 17.5% of non-Indian children in care were lodged in "subsidized homes and special resources."⁵⁹ The latter term is a euphemism for various government institutions. In 1952 the province extended its services to Indians and by 1955 there were 29 Indian children in care.⁶⁰ By 31 March 1962 some 438 status Indian children were in care. In addition, Indian Affairs had placed another 194 children in foster homes. At that date, 1,100 children of "Indian racial origin" were in the care of the Superintendent; consequently more than one-half of these children might be described as non-status Indians.

The number of children of "Indian racial origin" increased from 1,100 in 1962 to 2,825 in 1973, an increase of 157% in just eleven years. During the same period, the total number of children in care of the Superintendent or the three Children's Aid Societies increased from 5,652 in 1962 to 10,274 in 1972, an increase of 82%. Between 1962 and 1973, the number of status Indian children in care either of the Superintendent or of Indian Affairs increased from 632 to 1,267, an increase of 100%.

In the aggregate, 2,761 status and non-status Indian children were in care in 1972, out of a total of 10,274 of all children in care. While representing 27% of the total caseload, however, the Indian children numbered only about 5% of all the children resident in the province. This relatively narrow measure (children in care of provincial agencies) of the incidence of child welfare problems among native people (status and non-status) in B.C. indicates a problem five times as large among Indians as among the total population.

⁵⁸ See chap. IX of *Success and Failure* for more detail.

⁵⁹ These figures are derived from information provided to the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs by the Hon. Norman Levi of the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement (letter, Feb. 9, 1973). (The title of the Department was changed later in 1973 to the Department of Human Resources).

⁶⁰ Gene Elmore, Sharon Clark, and Sharon Dick, "A Survey of Adoption and Child Welfare Services to Indians of B.C." A Report presented to the B.C. Department of Human Resources, Feb. 18, 1974 (mimeo.), pp. 3.

The proportion of *status* Indian children, nineteen years old or under, in care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare increased from 2.84% in 1962 to 3.25% in 1966 to 4.43% in 1972. The comparable proportions for the non-Indian population were 0.84%, 0.98%, and 1.14% respectively. Proportionately, the status Indian rate grew from 3.38 times to 3.89 times the non-Indian rate between 1962 and 1972.

Using a broader definition, the number of children representing child welfare problems amounted to 10.41% of the total status Indian population up to nineteen in 1972.⁶¹ The comparable percentage for the non-Indian population was 1.31%. For 1966, the two percentages were 7.18% and 1.07% respectively. Using this overall measure of incidence, therefore, we can state that child welfare problems in the late 1960s and early 1970s were from 6.7 to 8.0 times as prevalent among Indians as among non-Indians.⁶² Why do children come into the care of the provincial government? How do the incidence rates compare? The incidence rate for admission into care because the "parents were unable to provide necessary care" was 679 per 10,000 for status Indian children (under the age of 20), compared with eighty-nine per 10,000 for B.C. minus status Indians. The rates for desertion or abandonment were 321 and thirty-three per 10,000 for Indians and non-Indians respectively. For delinquent behaviour, the incidence rates were ninety-nine and thirty-four respectively, and for adoption placement they were 121 and twenty-three per 10,000 respectively. The overall incidence rate was 1,777 for

⁶¹ We define a "global" measure of the child welfare rate among B.C. Indians as:

$$\frac{a + b + c + d}{\text{Indian population 0 - 19 years}} \quad \text{where,}$$

- (a) = the number of Indian children in care of the Provincial Superintendent of Child Welfare (SCW). This will include children actually lodged with any of the three Children's Aid Societies in the province.
- (b) = the number of children placed by Indian Affairs in foster homes.
- (c) = the number of children living with relatives but supported by Indian Affairs.
- (d) = the number of children attending Indian Residential Schools because of problems in the home.

A comparable measure for the total population of the province would be:

$$\frac{e + f}{\text{total population 0 - 19 years}} \quad \text{where,}$$

- (e) = number of children in care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare and the three Children's Aid Societies, and
- (f) = number of children living with relatives for which the Province pays support.

⁶² Additional detail is given in Table 9-10 of *Success and Failure*.

status Indians (on and off reserve) compared with 303 per 10,000 non-Indian children (B.C. total minus status Indians).

Far more Indian children are coming into care and are available for adoption than there are Indian parents willing to adopt them. Figures provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development indicate that between 1961/62 and 1970/71 a total of 472 status Indian children in B.C. were adopted. Only 18.9% of these children were adopted by status Indian parents. Between April and August 1973 the province placed eighty Indian children in adoption, but only two were placed with Indian parents.⁶³

VIII. *Conclusion*

We believe that we have presented a considerable body of evidence which would support the conclusion that the social and economic position of Indian people in British Columbia has improved over the last decade. However, there remains a considerable disparity between the position of Indian people in the social and economic spectrum and that of all but a small proportion of non-Indians.

⁶³ Hon. Norman Levi, B.C. Legislative Assembly, *Hansard*, October 2, 1973, p. 386.