

Countering the “Kingsclear blunder”: Maliseet Resistance to the Kingsclear Relocation Plan, 1945-1949

MARTHA WALLS

Au cours des années 1940, le gouvernement fédéral entreprit des projets visant à déménager dans des établissements centralisés les membres des Premières nations des Maritimes qui vivaient dans de petites réserves. À compter de 1945, les Malécites du Nouveau-Brunswick furent ciblés par la centralisation, alors qu’Ottawa planifiait de relocaliser les habitants des réserves de St. Mary’s, de Woodstock et d’Oromocto à Kingsclear, au nord-ouest de Fredericton. Toutefois, la centralisation au Nouveau-Brunswick échoua en raison, dans une large mesure, des actions menées par les Malécites. En dénonçant publiquement la centralisation, en remettant des pétitions aux représentants du gouvernement fédéral et en formant un nouveau collectif politique des Malécites de la vallée du fleuve Saint-Jean, les Malécites firent échec au plan de centralisation d’Ottawa au Nouveau-Brunswick.

In the 1940s the federal government undertook schemes to relocate Native people in the Maritimes from smaller reserves to centralized settlements. Beginning in 1945 New Brunswick’s Maliseet were targeted with centralization, as Ottawa planned to relocate the people of the St. Mary’s, Woodstock, and Oromocto reserves to Kingsclear, northwest of Fredericton. New Brunswick centralization, however, failed in large part due to the actions of the Maliseet. By denouncing centralization publicly, by petitioning federal officials, and by reconstituting a Saint John River Valley Maliseet political collective, the Maliseet successfully stymied Ottawa’s New Brunswick centralization plan.

DURING THE 1940s CANADA’S FEDERAL GOVERNMENT undertook schemes to “centralize” Native people in each of the three Maritime provinces. Grounded in Ottawa’s quest for economical Indian Affairs administration as well as public pressure, Maritime centralization plans also emerged from a mid-20th-century impulse to raise the standards of living in impoverished communities to levels deemed appropriate to a “modern” Canada. The Maliseet of New Brunswick’s Saint John River Valley were one target of these centralization initiatives. Beginning in 1945, federal officials advocated that people in three Maliseet communities in the lower Saint John River Valley be relocated to an existing reserve at Kingsclear, ten kilometres northwest of Fredericton. A study of Ottawa’s New Brunswick

Martha Walls, “Countering the ‘Kingsclear blunder’: Maliseet Resistance to the Kingsclear Relocation Plan, 1945-1949,” *Acadiensis*, XXXVII, 1 (Winter/Spring 2008), pp. 3-30.

centralization plan demonstrates the extent to which the federal government believed itself to be both entitled to and justified in dictating what happened in terms of the lives of these Maliseet and the land on which they lived. Strong Maliseet opposition to the scheme, however, demonstrates the limits of state power as, in the face of federal machinations, the Maliseet, with some assistance from non-Native supporters, mobilized against centralization. That centralization did not happen in New Brunswick was the result of this opposition.

An analysis of Maliseet opposition to centralization between 1945, when the plan was first proposed, and 1949, when talk of the plan waned, offers an important addition to what is a sparse (but growing) historiography concerning 20th-century Maliseet-state relations.¹ It also serves as a corrective to a prevailing misunderstanding about eastern Canadian Native political activity during this same era. In Canadian scholarship, there has been a tendency to ignore 20th-century Native political action as it existed at the community level and to herald pan-Indian movements in the 1930s and 1940s, such as the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB), as the “birth” of Native political action.² Despite the existence of numerous studies highlighting the myriad ways in which Native people at the local level resisted the imposition of federal policy (which often had important political results), this focus on pan-Indian political organizations as the measure of Native political activism has reinforced the notion that Native people were, in their day-to-day lives, politically inactive.³ Scholars’ treatment of this so-called “birth” of Native politics has not only

- 1 Tellingly, the index of E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise’s edited collection, *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993) – the standard university text – has no entry for “Maliseet.” The same is true of J.R. Miller’s important survey of Native-White relations in Canada – *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). Other key texts also give the Maliseet short shrift. Olive Dickason’s *Canada’s First Nations: A History of the Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992) and Arthur J. Ray’s *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada’s Native People* (Toronto: Lester Publishing and Key Porter Books, 1996) both limit their considerations of the Maliseet to the pre-Confederation era, saying nothing about their history in the 20th century. There are, however, exceptions to this dearth: Robert John Cloney, “Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief . . . : Dependency among the Maliseet and the Impact of the Indian Act” (master’s thesis, Saint Mary’s University, 1993); Bill Parenteau, “Care, Control and Supervision: Native People in the Canadian Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867-1900,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 79, 1 (March 1998), pp. 1-35; Bill Parenteau and James Kenny, “Survival, Resistance, and the Canadian State: The Transformation of New Brunswick’s Native Economy, 1867-1930,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 12 (2002), pp. 49-71; and Ken Coates, *The Marshall Decision and Native Rights* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000). Appreciation is extended to Jean Dragon for her permission to use the archives of her grandfather, Edwin Tappan Adney. Thanks as well to colleagues who commented on an earlier version of this paper: “‘There was and still is much to say’: The Maliseet and the Special Joint Committee, 1946-48” (presented to the Atlantic Canada Studies Conference, Fredericton, May 2005).
- 2 See J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, p. 318. The chapter entitled “The Beginnings of Political Organization” (pp. 311-35) in this survey text features Native political organizations that emerged in the interwar period.
- 3 Several examples demonstrate this widespread and more local resistance. Paul Tennant, in *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1990), notes that although the British Columbian rise of “big province-wide Indian organizations” in the 1960s and 1970s revitalized the quest for land claims, this era was not the genesis of this fight as Native political leaders on the British Columbian coast had

obscured the continuity in Native politics generally, but it has particularly failed the history of eastern Canadian Native people by errantly casting these 20th-century political organizations as solely western Canadian movements.⁴ Written out of these emergent groups, the political activism and successes of eastern Native people, including the Maliseet, have been ignored. As this article illustrates, the Maliseet were politically active in the 1940s and their actions were far from ineffective and inconsequential; they directly influenced the federal government's decision to suspend its New Brunswick centralization plan.

In 1945 New Brunswick's Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, like all Native people in Canada, were administered by the Indian Affairs Branch (IAB) of the federal Department of Mines and Resources.⁵ New Brunswick had three Indian agencies: the Northeastern agency based at Rexton, the Northern, centred at Perth, and the Southwestern, at Fredericton. Each was headed by a full-time Indian agent. Accountable to Ottawa and not the Native people they administered, Indian agents monitored and reported on virtually all facets of Native life. Agents' reach into communities was extensive; they supervised schooling and band governance, coordinated health care services and economic initiatives, and acted as "moral watchdogs" by enforcing temperance.⁶ The Maliseet lived on six New Brunswick

been "constantly" involved since 1849 in resisting federal policy that denied them land title recognition (pp. ix-xiii). Similarly, historian Douglas Harris in *Fish, Law and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) explores how Native British Columbian fishers used resistance to political ends to minimize, delay, and avoid the imposition of the federal fishing rules. Likewise, Katherine Pettipas's *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994) explores how western Natives, when faced with a federal ban on their ceremonial dances, defied federal policy by continuing to hold these ceremonies either clandestinely or publicly (as part of non-Native exhibitions). Mary-Ellen Kelm's *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998) demonstrates how Native people resisted state efforts to impose modern "scientific" healthcare on Native communities through their continued adherence to traditional healing practices. Finally, with regard to the Maliseet, Bill Parenteau and Jim Kenny's "Survival, Resistance, and the Canadian State" explores the ways in which New Brunswick Native people actively resisted both the usurpation of their lands and harsh game and resource laws. Collectively, these studies show that Native people (including the Maliseet) wielded political clout outside of formal organizations through everyday actions.

4 For example, in his *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens* and in his more recent *Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004), p. 79, J.R. Miller stresses the westward orientation of interwar political organizations. He characterizes the North American Indian Brotherhood, for instance, as "primarily a British Columbia organization" and does not acknowledge that the Mi'kmaq were founding members who inaugurated a Nova Scotia arm of the organization at the time of national movement's inception. Regional works have also disregarded eastern Natives' political activities in the 1940s. Ken Coates, for example, errantly asserts that "the Maritimes were [*sic*] the last region in the country to develop Aboriginal organizations, for the first ones did not appear until the 1960s." See Coates, *The Marshall Decision and Native Rights*, p. 49.

5 Over the years, Indian Affairs had several administrative homes within the federal government. In 1880, Indian Affairs became its own federal department, a status it maintained until 1936. Between 1936 and 1949, Indian Affairs was a branch of the Department of Mines and Resources and, in 1950, it was transferred to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

6 For more on reserve administration, see Cloney, "Doctor, lawyer, Indian Chief. . ." as well as the annual reports of the federal department of Indian Affairs. Until 1916 these reports were quite detailed

reserves in 1945.⁷ Because the IAB did not record the populations of individual reserves, and because not all Maliseet lived on reserves, it is impossible to determine with certainty the distribution of New Brunswick's Maliseet. However, the most populous reserve was Tobique; its approximately 450 residents equaled the Maliseet population from the other five reserves combined.⁸ The ample and sparsely settled Kingsclear reserve was slated to become a centralized hub of Maliseet settlement. Located on the shores of the Saint John River, Kingsclear had long been a Maliseet camping and fishing place and had, since 1792, been designated as a reserve.

In relocating some Maliseet to this site, the centralization programme promised to halve the number of Maliseet reserves in the province. Of the six Maliseet reserves in New Brunswick, three – Oromocto, St. Mary's (Devon), and Woodstock – were slated for relocation. All three were situated on the immediate outskirts of non-Native municipalities. The federal government first purchased 200 acres at Woodstock in 1851.⁹ At St. Mary's a small grant of 2.5 acres was allotted in 1867 and an additional 328.5 acres were added in 1928. Oromocto became a federally recognized reserve of 125 acres in 1895.¹⁰ The history of these and other reserved lands suggests that interference in Maliseet land was not a new phenomenon in 1945 and that the Maliseet of New Brunswick were all-too-accustomed to the unjust expropriation of reserve land. Historian L.F.S. Upton has shown that before Confederation squatting was an endemic problem to which all three Maritime governments turned blind eyes despite Native people's protests and petitions.¹¹ Indeed, New Brunswick's colonial government was known to facilitate the appropriation of Native land.¹² The scope of expropriation in New Brunswick is conveyed in the numbers – in 1810, 110,000 acres of reserved land was designated in New Brunswick for Native people but, by 1927, the total acreage had shrunk to 37,000 acres. The experience of the residents of the

and contained a report from each agency. From 1917 on, individual agencies' reports were not included and provincial summaries were offered instead. These annual reports are now available online and are searchable by keyword and date at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs/index-e.html>. By 1945, 2,047 Native people were subject to the watchful eyes of New Brunswick Indian agents. Although the Maliseet were not counted as a distinct group, they comprised approximately half of this entire Native population. See Canada, Department of Mines and Resources, "Report of Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1946," p. 224.

7 The Maliseet reserves were: Tobique, Kingsclear, Madawaska (St. Basile), Oromocto, St. Mary's, and Woodstock.

8 Richard H. Bartlett, *Indian Reserves in the Atlantic Provinces of Canada*, Studies in Aboriginal Rights, no. 9 (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1986), pp. 19-20. Edwin Tappan Adney makes this point in his notes. See E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 8, number 9, University of New Brunswick – Archives and Special Collections (UNBASC). In 1946 solicitor H. H. Gunter noted that the Oromocto reserve was home to 21 families. See H.H. Gunter to Hon. H. Francis G. Bridges, 29 October 1946, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

9 Bartlett, *Indian Reserves in the Atlantic Provinces of Canada*, p. 17.

10 Vincent O. Erickson, "Maliseet-Passamaquoddy," in Bruce Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 15: The North East* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), p. 125.

11 L.F.S. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979).

12 For example, in 1838 the New Brunswick government dispossessed the Mi'kmaq of Kent County of their land. See Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, p. 100.

Woodstock reserve underscores this legacy of shady land dealings. The 1851 purchase of the Woodstock reserve land was necessitated by illegal squatting on another nearby tract of reserved land. As was typical, the New Brunswick government chose in 1851 not to dislodge the illegal squatters but rather to purchase a smaller tract of land closer to the town of Woodstock. The sale agreement acknowledged this circumstance, explaining that the new Woodstock reserve was for “Public uses: that is to say, for the use of the Melicette Tribe of Indians at the Meductic . . . in Lieu of a Tract of land of which the said Indians have been wrongfully deprived as is alleged.”¹³

Like the custom of usurping Native land, the pattern of settling Native people at limited, specially selected sites was longstanding. Although the practice of centralizing Native people was more common in western Canada, where Ottawa administered larger Native populations, the idea of centralizing Native people had for decades been part of New Brunswick’s Indian policy.¹⁴ In 1840, more than a century before the 1945 centralization plan was proposed, Moses Perley, the man charged with New Brunswick’s colonial Indian Affairs, proposed a “civilization” program that would have seen the colony’s Maliseet moved to Kingsclear where, under the tutelage of a superintendent, adults would be taught to farm and children encouraged to attend public schools. The scheme, he proposed, would be funded by the sale of vacated reserve land.¹⁵

Perley’s 1840 centralization plan did not materialize, but later schemes did. In 1897, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) – the federal department then in charge of matters pertaining to Indians – considered relocating the Maliseet living at the Woodstock reserve. In September, DIA secretary J.D. McLean asked Fredericton Indian Agent James Farrell for information about the Woodstock reserve. Proposing that the people there be moved to the reserve further upriver at Tobique, McLean asked if it would be in the Maliseet’s “interest that the [Woodstock] Reserve should be disposed of” and, if so, “would they give surrender for that purpose?”¹⁶ Agent Farrell responded that the eight families (40 people) who called the Woodstock reserve home were poor but “quiet and harmless.” He also predicted that they would be unwilling to surrender their land and move, noting that “when Indians live for an age in any locality they have their friends and acquaintances with whom they trade.”¹⁷ Farrell’s response convinced McLean that, given the community’s small size and disinterest in leaving, it was “not considered advisable to interfere with these Indians or make any disposition of their Reserve.”¹⁸ For the time being, the Woodstock Maliseet and their land were spared federal interference.

Subsequent proposals for Maliseet relocation were, however, put to Ottawa. In

13 Bartlett, *Indian Reserves in the Atlantic Provinces of Canada*, pp. 17-20.

14 To refer to New Brunswick policies before Confederation toward the Native people within its borders as “Indian policy” is something of a misnomer as the colony altogether lacked both a consistent policy and a department charged with Indian administration. Government “policy” was decidedly ad hoc, sporadic, and almost entirely confined to the occasional granting of modest relief. See Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, p. 101.

15 Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, p. 105.

16 J.D. McLean to James Farrell, 7 September 1897, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

17 James Farrell to J.D. McLean, 9 September 1897, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

18 J.D. McLean to A.R. Colter, 14 September 1897, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

1910 Father F.C. Ryan, a priest serving the Maliseet at Tobique, recommended to the DIA that the Maliseet of the province be centralized at the Tobique reserve. He argued that “to my mind justice can only be done the Indians in gathering them together at least the different bands of the one tribe on a good Reservation. The Gov[ernmen]t will then be better able to concentrate all their energy to one instead of different Reservations.” Father Ryan continued:

The Millicette Tribe is scattered all over the Western part of the Prov[ince] of NB and parts of the state of Maine. Now if the Gov[ernment] could bring St Mary’s, Oromocto, Edmundston, Tobique and other bands of the same Tribe together on one Reservation, and erect a large convent school (since all the Indians here are Catholics), a work house, [i]ntroduce manual training, erect a jail, provide them with a magistrate, post office police force etc. [then] . . . the Gov[ernment] will be working on a sure basis for the advancement of the Indians.¹⁹

Interestingly, however, Ryan’s 1910 centralization plan was dismissed by federal officials as being an action “more drastic than the Government would be inclined to entertain” and one that would “involve restriction of the liberty of the Indians to a degree that has not yet formed any part of the Policy of the Government.”²⁰

By 1929, however, the time was apparently right for such a “restriction of liberty.” During that year, the DIA decided to relocate the Maliseet community of St. Mary’s from the shores of the St. John River in Fredericton to an inland site near North Devon, on the outskirts of the provincial capital. The relocation of the so-called “St. Mary’s Indians” was a decades-long process. It was initiated in the early 1900s at the behest of non-Native Frederictonians who opposed the presence of the Maliseet “parading the streets of Fredericton” and who also favoured acquiring for the city the riverside “recreational” land that the Native people occupied.²¹ In 1918 the mayor of Fredericton, R.B. Hanson, advocated the relocation of St. Mary’s, explaining that “the Reserve is in the heart of the town and is an impediment to the progress of the Town. It is not a desirable location for an Indian Reserve, as it is not sufficiently removed from certain evil interests surrounding it. In addition to that, the Reserve is more or less untidy and uncleanly, and is in fact an eye sore.”²² For its part, the DIA justified the removal by arguing that the crowded conditions, “poor sanitation,” and ill-health of the Maliseet community could only be rectified through relocation.²³ By this time, the DIA had legislative support in the form of a 1911 Indian Act amendment that enabled municipalities to expropriate reserve land

19 F.C. Ryan, Pastor for Tobique, to Hon. Mr. Oliver, 19 November 1910, RG 10, vol. 3163, file 373,757, LAC.

20 DIA to F.C. Ryan, 26 November 1910, RG 10, vol. 3163, file 373,757, LAC.

21 H.F. McLeod, MP, to D.C. Scott, 7 March 1919, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252, part 2, LAC; Joseph Ryan, Superintendent Indian Schools, to J.D. McLean, 17 May 1911, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252, part 2, LAC.

22 Mayor R.B. Hanson to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 4 December 1918, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252, part 2, LAC.

23 Memorandum on “Indian Settlement in Town of Devon, York Co.,” George C. Melvin, Chief Medical Officer, to D.C. Scott, 16 September 1919, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252, part 2, LAC.

for public purposes.²⁴ For a time, the Kingsclear reserve was part of the St. Mary's relocation plan. In 1918 DIA Deputy Superintendent General Duncan Campbell Scott advised Fredericton Indian Agent B.J. Griffiths to ascertain the feasibility of moving the St. Mary's Maliseet to Kingsclear.²⁵ This plan was scuttled in the face of opposition from people at the St. Mary's reserve. At a meeting held in the community in February of 1919, residents "emphatically refused to consider going to Kingsclear under any circumstances" and argued their case on several grounds – grounds that would be restated in 1945. The residents contended that they and the Maliseet living at Kingsclear were not on good terms and that discord would result from their relocation.²⁶ They also argued that Kingsclear's isolation from non-Native settlements would make it difficult for men to find employment and noted that the softwood stands of Kingsclear would provide an inadequate source of fuel.²⁷ Later that month, 32 people from St. Mary's petitioned Ottawa, repeating their refusal to relocate while adding to their earlier reasons for opposition to relocation their belief that coerced relocation was illegal and constituted a breach of their treaty rights.²⁸ Despite such opposition, St. Mary's was, nevertheless, removed a decade later to land outside Devon town limits. This move had no more support among the Maliseet than had the earlier proposals; residents were upset as much by the location of their new settlement as they were at having to leave their old one. In a petition to the DIA, the St. Mary's community insisted that another new reserve be created, this time "on the bank of the St. John River" where they would have access to the fish and the transportation system the river provided.²⁹ Undoubtedly, the much-opposed St. Mary's relocation was fresh in the minds of the Maliseet when the federal government showed renewed interest in relocation in the post-war period.

Despite these relocation antecedents, the 1940s, more than any other decade, can be considered the era of relocation for Maritime Native people. The plan to create a centralized reserve at Kingsclear was just one of three planned relocation schemes for the Maritime provinces, all of which ultimately failed. Prior to the Kingsclear relocation plan, an Order in Council of 2 April 1942 authorized Ottawa to relocate Mi'kmaq living on Prince Edward Island to a single provincial reserve at Lennox Island and to move Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq to one of two sites: Shubenacadie on the

24 John Leslie and Ron Maguire, eds., *The Historical Development of the Indian Act* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1978), p. 108.

25 D.C. Scott to B.J. Griffiths, 20 November 1918, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252, part 2, LAC.

26 The reason for this alleged discord is unclear. It may, however, have been connected with a dispute over band elections that stretched back to June of 1905. For a time the two communities shared a chief, and this was apparently a source of discord as each community wanted to be home to the chief. See Petition of St. Mary's to DIA, June 1905, vol. 7935, file 32-56, part 1, LAC.

27 J.D. Chene to D.C. Scott, 5 February 1919, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252, part 2, LAC.

28 Petition of St. Mary's to DIA, 16 February 1919, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252, part 2, LAC.

29 Petition of St. Mary's to DIA, 2 January 1927, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252-1A, LAC. North Devon townspeople likewise opposed the new site and also petitioned the department, stating in part: "We the residents of North Devon, living above the CPR station protest having the Indians taken from their native (river) environment where sanitation with very little expense is easily available, and being located 'on the hill' where there is pasture land and rocky ledge causing [*sic*] the sanitary drainage from bathrooms etc almost impossible." Not entirely preoccupied with the well-being of the Maliseet, the citizens of North Devon also feared property devaluation and the "considerable unhappiness and annoyance" they believed their new neighbours might bring. See Residents of North Devon to Indian Relief Dept, Gov't of Canada, 5 June 1929, RG 10, vol. 1945, file 4252-1A, LAC.

10 *Acadiensis*

mainland and Eskasoni on Cape Breton Island.³⁰ The federal rationale in all three Maritime relocation plans was similar. The Indian Affairs Branch asserted that centralized communities would be more efficient and would facilitate greater Native self-sufficiency. Cost was also a major consideration. While economy had always been a hallmark of Canada's Indian administration, increased wartime expenses strengthened Ottawa's desire to reduce IAB costs. Branch officials believed that there was clearly room for fiscal improvement in the Maritimes, where the per capita spending on Indian Affairs eclipsed the national average. In 1939, following what amounted to two full decades of recession in the Maritimes, the annual cost of administering Indian Affairs stood at \$34.51 per capita in Nova Scotia, \$37.26 on Prince Edward Island, and \$35.46 in New Brunswick, compared to a national per capita average of \$8.70.³¹ The fact that Native populations were on the rise – in New Brunswick the Native population had grown by 18 per cent between 1935 and 1945 – added to the desire of Indian Affairs officials to cut per capita costs.³² Less openly enunciated by federal officials, but clearly a factor in these wartime centralization plans, were the petitions of non-Native Maritimers who wanted Native people removed from the vicinities of their towns. In Nova Scotia, for example, this impetus was palpable, and both Lisa Patterson and Mi'kmaw historian Daniel Paul assert that non-Native insistence fueled IAB centralization plans.³³

Maritime centralization plans, however, were borne of more than just a long-standing IAB commitment to cost-cutting or a nod to public pressure. By the mid-1940s, in the wake of the Great Depression and the Second World War, Canadian governments at all levels faced immense pressure to increase Canadians' standards of living, particularly for those groups who were perceived to have been previously neglected by state-funded "modernization." Such communities, lacking employment opportunities and what had come to be considered basic amenities such as electricity, sewerage, and other municipal services, were earmarked for state intervention. The relocation of whole communities became a favoured means of "modernizing" them. Native communities were among these, but they were not the only ones. The year

30 J.E. Daly, Quarterly Report Ending March 1945, PEI Indian Agency, RG 10, vol. 6486, file 42057-3, part 3, LAC; Lisa Lynne Patterson, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy" (master's thesis, Dalhousie University, 1985), p. 56.

31 Patterson, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy," pp. 44-6.

32 According to DIA annual reports, the New Brunswick Native population was 1,734 in 1936 and 2,047 in 1946. These figures are probably underestimated. As James C. Saku has pointed out, the values, assumptions, and biases that determined what data was collected reflected the priorities of Euro-Canadians and not those of the Native people being counted. See James C. Saku, "Aboriginal Census Data in Canada: A Research Note," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 19, 2 (1999), pp. 365-79. Bill Parenteau and James Kenny note that DIA reports give no indication of the data collection methods used by agents or whether certain methods were used consistently over time. The census-taking of Indian agents indeed, leaves a "variety of other unanswered questions." For example, the time of year in which agricultural and livestock data were gathered is extremely important, and yet agent reports do not disclose this information. See Bill Parenteau and James Kenny, "Survival, Resistance, and the Canadian State," p. 54 (n.14).

33 Patterson, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy," p. 63; Daniel Paul, "The Failure of Centralization," in Ken S. Coates and Robin Fisher, eds., *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), pp. 340-1.

1945, for example, also marked the first stirring of interest in relocating the neglected African-Canadian community at Africville, which was along Halifax's Bedford Basin.³⁴ Similarly, Toronto's Regent Park public housing initiative was also born in the mid-1940s.³⁵ In the case of the attempted centralizations of the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, these "benevolent" aims of relocation meshed nicely with both the parsimony that had always been part of Indian policy and the longstanding practice of ousting Maritime Native people from their land.

By late 1945, as the Nova Scotian and Prince Edward Island centralization plans were underway, the IAB was calling for a similar centralization plan for New Brunswick. That December, Agency Inspector, Maritimes and Quebec, R.A. Hoey had advocated the centralization of the lower Saint John River Valley Maliseet to the Kingsclear reserve. Earlier that autumn, after touring New Brunswick's Maliseet reserves, Hoey had advanced this plan in an official report. At that time, Kingsclear was home to 11 families and had a population of 60 people.³⁶ Hoey lauded the centralization potential of the small community, which had been a federal reserve since Confederation.³⁷ He wrote that he had found it "a real pleasure to inspect the clean, well-furnished homes on this reserve." The Kingsclear habitations, he noted, were "occupied by healthy, industrious, and happy people" who "live and behave just as well as any white people." Offering what he believed to be evidence of the necessity of relocation, he also described as deplorable the living conditions prevailing at Oromocto, Woodstock, and St. Mary's in Devon. These reserves, he insisted, featured "many poorly furnished, neglected, untidy, Indian houses."³⁸

Hoey felt that the Kingsclear site was not just the home of healthy, tidy, and happy people but that it had additional qualities to recommend it as a hub of centralization. The community had a Catholic church, river frontage, and was part of the province's rural mail delivery service. Perhaps most importantly, the reserve, at that time occupying an area of 460 acres, had growth potential.³⁹ C.C. Murray, an elderly farmer who owned an estimated 500 acres abutting the reserve, had expressed interest in selling his land to the IAB, which was pleased at the prospect of doubling the size of the Kingsclear reserve. Morris was also impressed with the type of land Murray was offering, as nearly 100 acres of it was cleared, fertile farm land. He reported that the acquisition of Murray's farm "would provide sufficient agricultural land to grow vegetables for the needs of all

34 In 1945, the Halifax Civic Planning Commission reported that "the residents [of Africville] must, as soon as reasonably possible, be provided with decent minimum standard housing elsewhere." See Donald H. Clairmont and Dennis William Magill, *Africville: The Life and Death of a Black Community* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1974), p. 63.

35 Alvin Finkel, *Our Lives: Canada After 1945* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1997), pp. 43-4.

36 Memorandum of IAB Director [Hoey], 12 December 1945, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

37 IAB Secretary J.B. McLean to Agent N.J. Smith, 26 September 1912, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

38 Memorandum of IAB Director [Hoey], 12 December 1945, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

39 The selection of Kingsclear because of its capacity for expansion echoes Lisa Patterson's study of Nova Scotia centralization where she finds that the centralized reserves at Shubenacadie and Eskasoni were chosen because they were geographically the largest in the province. See Patterson, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy," p. 54.

12 *Acadiensis*

the Indians as well as enabling them to augment their incomes by selling surplus garden products. Fruit trees and small fruits could be planted. There would be ample pasture for the grazing of goats and cattle to provide milk.”⁴⁰

The land’s agricultural potential was an attractive prospect to an IAB that had long been committed to transforming Native people into farmers, both as a means of encouraging them to assimilate to a Euro-Canadian way of life and as a way to foster economic self-sufficiency and reduce federal costs.⁴¹ The Murray property also had woodland, which promised to provide the Maliseet much-needed fuel and supplies for basket-making. Finally, the property was promising as a staging site for federal administrative offices. The farm had a series of barns and a house equipped with running water, indoor plumbing, electricity, and a telephone line – advantages not to be overlooked in New Brunswick during the 1940s. Hoey explained that the house could serve as both an office for agency administration and as living quarters for a resident agent and nurses.⁴² Meanwhile, the barns could act as a warehouse for storing items required by the agency. With these considerations in mind, Hoey declared: “It is my opinion that a centralization program for the Indians of the Saint John River Valley should be undertaken.” He affirmed that there was “no doubt in [his] mind that if this project is approved it would give the Indians of this Agency an opportunity to improve their standard of living.” Hoey confidently concluded his report on Kingsclear with the assertion “I do not feel that there would be much difficulty in obtaining the whole-hearted co-operation of the Indians in support of a centralization project.”⁴³

Hoey could not have been more wrong. From the outset, Maliseet throughout the lower Saint John River Valley adamantly opposed the planned centralization scheme and they mobilized in the face of the threatened relocation to Kingsclear to make clear their opposition to the plan. Three chiefs in particular led the fight against centralization: Oromocto’s John S. Paul, Tobique’s William Saulis, and Woodstock’s Oliver Polchies. The Maliseet opposed centralization in three ways. First, using what can best be described as a public relations campaign, they denounced the plan and sought the support of non-Native New Brunswickers. Second, they conveyed their opposition directly to officials in Ottawa. Third, they launched an anti-centralization campaign within their own communities, reconstituting a Saint John River Valley collective that they called the Wulastook (or Wulustuk) Tribe.⁴⁴ Using these tactics, the

40 Memorandum of IAB Director [Hoey], 12 December 1945, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

41 Considerable scholarship surrounds Ottawa’s policy of assimilation through farming. See Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990) and Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992). On this policy and Native people in the Maritimes, see Theresa Redmond, “‘We Cannot Work Without Food’: Nova Scotia Indian Policy and Mi’kmaq Agriculture, 1783-1867,” in David T. McNab, ed., *Earth, Water, Air and Fire: Studies in Canadian Ethnohistory* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1998).

42 R.A. Hoey to Mr. Mills, director, Lands and Development Services Branch, 25 February 1948, RG 10, vol. 6527, file 1-A-1156-7, part 1, LAC.

43 Memorandum of IAB Director [Hoey], 12 December 1945, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

44 The Wulustuk tribe refers to the Maliseet people of New Brunswick’s Saint John River Valley. This grouping politically distinguishes them from the Maliseet of present-day Maine and Quebec. See Vincent O. Erickson, “Maliseet-Passamaquoddy,” pp. 123-35. Eastern Native peoples, including the Maliseet, had long used organized political collectives to counter threats to their political integrity.

Maliseet ultimately succeeded in stymying Ottawa's planned centralization.

The Maliseet fought centralization using an elaborate public relations campaign from which they garnered much support among non-Native New Brunswickers. The Maliseet cause was taken up by some prominent New Brunswickers, particularly Native-rights advocate Edwin Tappan Adney. By the 1940s Tappan Adney was a retiree living in Woodstock with his wife Minnie Bell Sharp.⁴⁵ An amateur anthropologist of no mean ability, Tappan Adney was much interested in Maliseet culture and regularly visited local reserves, barraging the Maliseet with questions about their history and culture. Indeed, this was the topic of a series of letters exchanged between Tappan Adney and noted anthropologist Frank Speck. Tappan Adney was also keenly interested in the Maliseet's treatment by the federal government and he supported Maliseet political aspirations, particularly their fight with Ottawa over centralization. Tappan Adney was, in his own words, "determined to fight the iniquitous attempt by the Indian Affairs under the . . . scheme of Centralization to tear the Indians of the three lower river reserves from their homes for resettlement at Kingsclear" using "a campaign of full and wide publicity."⁴⁶ Tappan Adney conveyed his opposition to centralization in numerous passionate letters to editors as well as in regular correspondence with high-placed Indian Affairs Branch officials in Ottawa. Although he was at times immodest, styling himself a leader of the "Indians," Tappan Adney was also quick to point out that the Maliseet themselves were spearheading the anti-centralization campaign. When, for example, an Indian Affairs Branch official asked Tappan Adney to encourage the Maliseet to willingly relocate to Kingsclear, Tappan Adney replied: "I feel myself powerless to influence the Indians concerned in this matter."⁴⁷ Members of the Maliseet communities, drawing on the basic literacy afforded them by their past attendance at federal Indian schools, also wrote letters to the editor of regional newspapers – some published as far afield as Prince Edward Island.⁴⁸

For example, until at least the mid-18th-century, the Wabanaki Confederacy linked the Maliseet with their Mi'kmaq, Abenaki, Penobscot, and Passamaquoddy allies in efforts to counter British encroachment. Likewise, the Maliseet's Mi'kmaw neighbours had their own political organization, the Grand Council, which they used to coordinate collective political action from at least the 17th century. See Willard Walker, "The Wabanaki Confederacy," *Maine History*, 37, 3 (1998), pp. 100-39 and Leslie Jane McMillan, "Mi'kmawey Mawio'Mi: Changing Roles of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council From the Early Seventeenth Century to the Present" (master's thesis, Dalhousie University, 1996).

45 Tappan Adney was born in 1868 in Ohio and died in Woodstock in 1950. In 1898 he was sent to the Klondike to cover the gold rush for *Harpers Magazine*. This material led to a successful book and fueled a lucrative lecture tour. In 1899 he married Minnie Bell Sharp, the daughter of a prominent Woodstock family, and Woodstock became the home-base of the widely traveled Tappan Adney. After he retired in 1930, he lent his talents and convictions to studying and writing about Maliseet culture and to supporting their political aspirations. See Jim Wheaton, "The Edwin Tappan Adney Home Page: Tappan Adney and Minnie Bell Sharp: New Brunswick's Oddly Wonderful Couple," 15 May 2004, <http://www.siterrific.com/Adney/> (accessed 21 September 2007). For more on Tappan Adney's work with the Maliseet see Nicolas N. Smith, "Between the Lines: Notes and Insights from Forty-Eight Years among the Wabanaki," in John D. Nicholas, ed., *Papers of the Thirty-First Algonquian Conference* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2000), pp. 367-80.

46 Tappan Adney to J.D. McN[ichol], undated, MIC 572 A1, no. 2, reel 2, UNBASC.

47 E.T. Adney to R.A. Hoey, 24 June 1947, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

48 "Indians Reluctant About Moving to Enlarged Reserve," *Charlottetown Patriot*, 2 November 1946, p. 6. For an account of the federal day schools operated by Ottawa, see W.D. Hamilton, *The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes* (Fredericton: Micmac-Maliseet Institute, 1986).

While Tappan Adney was perhaps the most vocal champion of the Maliseet anti-centralization cause, the Maliseet also solicited support from other non-Natives, clearly targeting individuals with political influence and obtaining some success in this regard. One of these individuals was solicitor Herbert H. Gunter. In October 1946 Oromocto Chief John S. Paul visited Gunter, expressing his opposition to centralization and requesting that Gunter “take this matter up and see what could be done to ensure their remaining at their present location, and also what Government help they might expect.” Paul’s choice of ally was a good one; Gunter had connections in high places. The day after Paul’s visit, Gunter wrote a letter outlining the chief’s concerns about centralization to his friend and law partner and federal Minister of Fisheries H.F. Bridges.⁴⁹ Bridges, at the time the senior New Brunswicker in the cabinet of Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King, took an interest in the matter. He forwarded Paul’s concerns to J.A. Glen, the minister of the Department of Mines and Resources (the home department of the IAB) and requested information about the planned Kingsclear centralization.⁵⁰

A second tactic employed by the Maliseet was to convey their concerns about the proposed centralization plan directly to the IAB. The plan to centralize the Maliseet of the lower Saint John River happened at a time of unprecedented (if imperfect) federal willingness to directly consider Native people’s concerns about themselves and their communities. Prior to the 1940s, Ottawa had been loathe to entertain direct correspondence from Native people, and federal officials commonly scolded Native people for circumventing their local agent by writing to the department. In the post-war era Ottawa relaxed this stricture as it reformed the Indian Act, and this change in policy was precipitated by a number of forces. By the mid-1940s the Indian Affairs Branch and its policies were facing public criticisms, which, though not themselves new, found added resonance in post-war Canada. Nazi atrocities in Europe awakened Canadians to the injustices suffered by Native people in their own backyard and perpetuated by the Indian Act. The 1948 passage of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights reaffirmed public resolve to reform the Indian Act, which was increasingly viewed as insular, out-dated, and heavy-handed.⁵¹ At the same time, there emerged in the corridors of Parliament a new will to reform government policy in keeping with new social science theory; this, too, encouraged a rethinking of Canadian Indian policy.⁵² In response to the dual forces of public criticism and a governmental will to change, in

49 H.H. Gunter, Barrister and Solicitor, to Hon. H. Bridges, KC, Minister of Fisheries, undated, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC. Paul probably hired Gunter to pursue the matter. Gunter’s papers show that at least between the years 1950 and 1958 Paul was a client of the solicitor. It is possible that this working relationship stretched back into the 1940s. See Herbert H. Gunter Fonds, MG H158, box 19, UNBASC.

50 L. Heron, Private Secretary, Department of Fisheries, to W.J.F. Pratt, Private Secretary to Minister of Mines and Resources, 31 Oct 1946, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

51 Historian J.R. Miller notes “World War II seemed for a time to have blown Canadian Indian policy apart as it crushed the Axis powers,” and that Canadians were “seriously discomfited when, on rare occasions, they looked at the way in which they treated the aboriginal peoples of their country.” See J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, p. 220.

52 See Peter Kulchyski, “Anthropology in the Service of the State: Diamond Jenness and Canadian Indian Policy,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 28, 2 (Summer 1993), pp. 21-50 and Hugh Shewell, *“Enough to Keep them Alive”: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

May 1946 Prime Minister Mackenzie King appointed a 26-member Special Joint Committee of the House of Commons and the Senate to reform Canadian Indian policy.⁵³ For three years, the Special Joint Committee heard evidence from parties involved in Indian Affairs such as IAB officials, church leaders, and social scientists. The committee did its work in three venues – at Ottawa-based hearings held from 1946-48, through written submissions from Native people and other interested parties, and, most significantly for the Maliseet, via a traveling Royal Commission deployed to eastern Canada in the autumn of 1946.

The Special Joint Committee's work, including its traveling Royal Commission, was soundly criticized by Native people and, later on, academics for failing to heed the Aboriginal input it solicited.⁵⁴ The Maliseet were certainly well aware of flaws in the committee's consultative agenda. For all intents and purposes, the Ottawa-based hearings were inaccessible to the Maliseet. Reacting to the fact that no Maliseet representatives were invited to formally appear before the committee's hearings, Tappan Adney complained to the commission that "the Indians of the Maritimes have not been properly heard from."⁵⁵ The Maliseet were also not asked to submit formal, written briefs to the committee; of the 134 official briefs written by Native groups and appended to Special Joint Committee minutes only three were from Maritime communities, and none of these were Maliseet.⁵⁶ Outraged, Tappan Adney complained that the Maliseet had "not been given a fair hearing."⁵⁷ Not invited to Ottawa and discouraged from submitting written briefs, the sole official mechanism by which the Maliseet could make their concerns known to the Special Joint Committee was through the Royal Commission that toured eastern Canada in late 1946.⁵⁸

53 *House of Commons Debates* (13 May 1946), p. 1446.

54 The very composition of the Special Joint Committee indicates its weak commitment to Native people's concerns. It had just one Native participant, Brantford attorney Norman Lickers, who was the sole "Indian" chosen to represent Native interests. See Special Joint Committee, *Minutes and Proceedings of Evidence*, no. 2, 6 June 1946. The methods of the Special Joint Committee also discouraged Native input. Native witnesses appearing before Ottawa hearings were limited to a few specially selected "representatives" and the federal government refused to fund Native people's travel to the nation's capital. As well, the Native witnesses were not only allocated fewer sessions at the hearings, but also had less time to make their cases.

55 Edwin Tappan Adney to Norman Lickers, 5 July 1947, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 5, file 4, number 64, UNBASC.

56 "Report to the Senate and the House of Commons," Special Joint Committee, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 13 August 1946, no. 21, pp. 854-82. Shubenacadie (Indian Brook), Mill Brook, and Red Bank were the only three Maritime Native communities asked to submit written briefs.

57 E.T. Adney to Chief Saulis, Tobique, 5 July 1947, Edwin Tappan Adney Fonds, case 5, file 3, number 45, UNBASC.

58 The "Royal Commission on the Indian Act and Indian Administration in General," staffed by ten members of the Special Joint Committee proper, began its work in October 1946. The Royal Commission consisted of Senators J. Fred Johnston and W.H. Taylor as well as Members of Parliament Don F. Brown, W. Bryce, W. Garfield Case, Thomas Farquhar, Wilfred Garipey, D.S. Harkness, Walter Little, and Leon J. Raymond – all of whom were part of the Special Joint Committee. Commission member W. Garfield Case explained that the reason for the eastern Royal Commission was that the committee believed that "the Maritime Indians were not as well organized" as were communities in central and western Canada. As well, Eastern Native people, he explained, "were not possessed of band funds and therefore would have difficulty sending witnesses to Ottawa." See W. Garfield Case to Edwin Tappan Adney, 24 March 1948, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 5, file 4, number 58, UNBASC.

16 *Acadiensis*

The Royal Commission was closely affiliated with the Special Joint Committee. All of the commissioners were committee members and the mandate of the commission was precisely that of the committee proper.⁵⁹ Styled as a “fact finding” body for the Special Joint Committee, the Royal Commission held 18 days of hearings and heard from 170 witnesses across eastern Canada.⁶⁰ The commission was, however, a far-from-perfect means of documenting Maliseet concerns about their communities and Indian administration in Canada. The fact that it traveled quickly and paused only briefly at specially selected stops offended the Maliseet.⁶¹ Indeed, when Chief William Saulis of the Tobique reserve addressed the commissioners on 1 November 1946, he reminded them that in order to give full hearing to the concerns of his community much more time should have been allotted for their visit. He explained “I have many witnesses to be heard. But as you do not have the time to hear them, you will have to believe me when I speak for them.” In addition, the committee did not mitigate cultural barriers such as language. This also impeded full disclosure and annoyed the Maliseet. Chief Saulis voiced his displeasure at the fact-finding process, arguing that he would have been better able to present his case in his own language: “Gentlemen, we cannot write out what we have to say. I am speaking your language, not my own. I could say much better what I have to say in my own language.”⁶² Tappan Adney recognized Maliseet dissatisfaction with the commission and informed committee member J.D. MacNichol that, given these flaws, the Maliseet had little confidence in the commission’s work.⁶³

Although it was imperfect, the Royal Commission was nevertheless the only opportunity the Maliseet had to directly influence the Special Joint Committee’s work. Moreover, in light of the geographic distance that existed between the Maliseet in the Saint John River Valley and Ottawa, the Royal Commission was significant in that it gave the Maliseet a voice before important federal officials. The Maliseet recognized in the Royal Commission an unprecedented opportunity to raise their most pressing concerns, in person, to a federal body that just might listen; when it visited the Maliseet reserves on 30 October and 1 November, 1946, they seized the opportunity to air their grievances.⁶⁴ None were more important than federal plans to centralize them at Kingsclear.

59 Officially, the committee was appointed to “consider the Indian Act . . . and amendments thereto, and to suggest such amendments as they may deem advisable, with authority to investigate and report upon Indian Administration in general and, in particular, the following matters: 1. Treaty rights and obligations; 2. Band membership; 3. Liability of Indians to pay taxes; 4. Enfranchisement of Indians both voluntary and involuntary; 5. Eligibility of Indians to vote at Dominion elections; 6. The encroachment of white persons on Indian Reserves; 7. The operation of Indian Day and Residential Schools; 8. And any other matter or thing pertaining to the social and economic status of Indians and their advancement.” See Special Joint Committee, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 16 May 1946, p. 1.

60 *Report of the Royal Commission on the Indian Act and Indian Administration in General*, 8 July 1947, p. 2.

61 *Telegraph Journal* (Saint John), 31 October 1946, p. 16.

62 See undated notes of Edwin Tappan Adney, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 8, number 9, UNBASC.

63 Tappan Adney to J.D. McN[ichol], undated, Edwin Tappan Adney Fonds, MIC 572 A1, no. 2, reel 2, University of New Brunswick – Harriet Irving Library (UNBHIL).

64 Although the traveling commission generated a substantial report, these records have been lost.

The third way in which the Maliseet opposed centralization was through an anti-centralization campaign organized within their communities using a reconstituted political alliance they called the Wulastukw Tribe. Beginning in the early winter of 1947, the Maliseet undertook to revive a dormant political structure – a union of the “St. John River Tribe of Indians.” According to Tappan Adney, the Maliseet had decided upon a “reconstitution of the old Walastukw or St. John River Tribe of Indians consisting of a central council of representatives from the Chiefs of present reserves until special representatives are chosen by the reservations who will elect a chief or chairman . . . to deal with tribal affairs internally.”⁶⁵

The timing of the emergence of this political organization is significant. It followed shortly after the 1944 inauguration of the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB), a national organization headed by British Columbian Andrew Paull.⁶⁶ Although the NAIB has long been characterized as a western movement, Maritime Native people were involved shortly after its founding. In August 1945, 200 Mi’kmaq from across the Maritimes met at Big Cove, New Brunswick, “to organize Indian leaders to amalgamate with the North American Indian Brotherhood.” The Big Cove gathering endorsed the NAIB’s 21-point programme as well as working to “cover and remedy the ill treatment administered to Indians by government Agents especially in the Maritimes” and establishing the framework for a Maritime branch of the NAIB, which became the United General Indian Council of Nova Scotia (UGICNS) with Ben Christmas of Eskasoni as its first president.⁶⁷ It is not clear that the Maliseet were directly affiliated with the NAIB or involved with the UGICNS (which, despite its name, drew members from New Brunswick Mi’kmaq communities). However, as they observed the UGICNS fight centralization in Nova Scotia, the Maliseet no doubt recognized the potential of political mobilization in countering a similar federal plan in New Brunswick.⁶⁸

Specifically, the Wulastukw tribe was a response to Ottawa’s control over community governance. Since 1899 the Maliseet, like all Native people living east of Quebec, had been federally mandated to elect chiefs and councillors according to a three-year system of election known as the triennial system – a system of community governance that gave considerable control to IAB officials in Ottawa and in the field.⁶⁹ Tappan Adney explained that the Wulastukw Tribe was designed to “break up

65 E.T. Adney to Mr. Rosenhek, 16 February 1947, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 5, file 3, number 4, UNBASC.

66 Norma Sluman and Jean Goodwill, *John Tootoosis: A Biography of a Cree Leader* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1982), pp. 178-82.

67 Chief Thomas Gedeon of Dalhousie was chosen to represent the Mi’kmaq of the Maritimes and Quebec at the gathering. See Minutes of Maritime Indian Convention, 7-8 August 1945, Ben Christmas Papers, 92-1002-01-008, 1940-49, Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre of Nova Scotia (TARRCNS).

68 Ben Christmas was one of the strongest critics of centralization in Nova Scotia, particularly as it concerned his home reserve of Eskasoni. The NAIB supported his stance, and President Andrew Paull saw centralization in Nova Scotia as an issue of concern for all Native people, noting that the “enforced desertion of Aboriginal rights [in Nova Scotia] may be used as precedent in other parts.” See Andrew Paull, President, NAIB, to Ben Christmas, 7 November 1945, Ben Christmas Papers, 92-1002-01-008, 1940-49, TARRCNS.

69 Martha Walls, “‘The Maximum, the minimum or something in between’: The Mi’kmaq and Federal Electoral Legislation,” (PhD diss., University of New Brunswick, 2006).

the band government” as imposed by the triennial system and to compel the federal government to “deal with the tribes, not the bands and individuals by which Indian Affairs has destroyed tribal unity.”⁷⁰ Also at issue in the creation of the new political unit, however, was the extent to which Ottawa attempted to more generally control Maliseet communities through what Adney called “a very old rule of despots and dictators.”⁷¹ There was probably no more apt example of Ottawa asserting too much authority in Maliseet affairs than the attempt to force centralization.

The varied ways in which the Maliseet contested the proposed Kingsclear scheme suggests the depth of the opposition that existed in Maliseet communities to the centralization plan. Using these various means, the Maliseet voiced a convincing array of reasons as to why the Kingsclear centralization plan should be scuttled. One important source of dissatisfaction with the relocation plan was the fact that the move would threaten some important economic opportunities enjoyed by the Maliseet in their current communities. Woodstock, Devon (St. Mary’s), and Oromocto were adjacent to non-Native communities in which many Maliseet had jobs and other opportunities, such as ready markets for their handcrafts. Indeed, Ottawa’s own records bore out the importance of the work that Native people in New Brunswick secured off-reserve. According to these records, wage labour was the single greatest source of income for New Brunswick’s Native people in 1945. That year New Brunswick Native people earned \$72,800, or 63 per cent of their total earnings of \$115,470, through waged work. Given the dearth of on-reserve employment opportunities, these wages would primarily have been earned off-reserve.⁷² Agency reports suggest that, like New Brunswickers generally, many Native wage earners worked in lumber camps and sawmills. They also traveled to Maine in the late summer and autumn to help harvest blueberries and potatoes.⁷³ Second in importance only to wage labour, IAB records attribute \$26,700, or nearly a quarter of New Brunswick Native people’s annual wages, to a category called “other.” Although undefined, “other” probably included money earned from guiding and the production and sale of handcrafts as neither of these undertakings appears in income-generating activities despite their reputed importance and frequent mention throughout agents’ annual reports. The sale of farm goods, fish, and the spoils of hunting and trapping accounted for additional 3.8, 3.8, and 2.7 per cent of incomes respectively.⁷⁴ Although

70 E.T. Adney to Mr. Rosenhek, 16 February 1947, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 5, file 3, number 4, UNBASC.

71 E.T. Adney to Chief William Saulis, 11 July 1947, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 5, file 3, no. 74, UNBASC.

72 Department of Mines and Resources, “Report of Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1946,” p. 228.

73 Harald E.L. Prins notes that Maine potato farming peaked in the mid-1940s, the decade before mechanization drastically changed potato farming. At its peak, Maine farms required 40,000 pickers to harvest the crop. See Harald E.L. Prins, “Tribal Network and Migrant Labor: Mi’kmaq Indians as Seasonal Workers in Aroostook’s Potato Fields, 1870-1980,” in Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, eds., *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), p. 52.

74 This report noted that New Brunswick Native people “hunt and fish and act as guides” and “in certain parts of the Province they are engaged commercially in the manufacture of axe and pick handles and baskets.” See Department of Mines and Resources, “Report of Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1946,” p. 219, 228.

employment opportunities clearly took New Brunswick's Native people off reserves – a fact reflected in branch records – this consideration was ignored by the IAB in formulating the Kingsclear scheme.

It was, therefore, not surprising that in a petition to the Special Joint Committee, the Maliseet at Devon “entered strong protest against the removal plan on the ground that their jobs were at Fredericton and vicinity and the Kingsclear place was too far away from their jobs.”⁷⁵ As Tappan Adney relayed to Ottawa, the Maliseet's present communities were “convenient for the Indians who have local jobs.”⁷⁶ Tappan Adney re-iterated this point in a letter to the editor of Woodstock's *Sentinel Press* in which he charged that “Kingsclear is miles away from the natural markets of the Indians here at Devon who are to be removed.”⁷⁷ A month later, that same paper printed a similar argument from Oromocto Chief John S. Paul, who stated that “the work we are doing now and what we can pick up around in Oromocto is very important to us.”⁷⁸ Paul recognized that his people were “well-known in the community [of Oromocto] and able to obtain work in that vicinity without any trouble, and that they are also well thought of in that locality.” He feared that were “they moved to Kingsclear it would be more difficult to obtain outside work due to the numbers who would be living there” and, as he told solicitor H.H. Gunter, “there are better facilities for securing employment in the Oromocto district than there would be in the vicinity of Kingsclear or elsewhere.”⁷⁹

The Maliseet also had strong emotional and family connections to the communities in which they had lived for many years and were, for this reason, reluctant to leave. As the inhabitants of the Woodstock reserve made clear, they had lived “many generations” at their present location and did not want to move.⁸⁰ The same was true of the Oromocto reserve. In making his case against centralization to solicitor Gunter, Chief Paul explained that his community's opposition was vested, in part, in the fact that they had lived at Oromocto “for some 57 years.”⁸¹

Despite their fondness for their communities, the inhabitants of St. Mary's, Woodstock, and Oromocto did not harbour utopian visions of their situations. They recognized that housing conditions and unemployment, in particular, were problems, but they did not see relocation as the solution. At Oromocto, Chief Paul was well aware of the poor living conditions on his reserve, but he believed that improving the community, not abandoning it, was the best solution. In his complaint to H.H. Gunter, Chief Paul noted that their homes were “in a bad state of repair” and the community was in dire need of a water system. Paul also made clear the fact that the residents of the Oromocto reserve “had not been receiving any help financially from the

75 Petition of Devon to Special Joint Committee, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 10, UNBASC.

76 Adney notes, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 9, UNBASC.

77 *Sentinel Press* (Woodstock), 10 April 1947, p. 4.

78 John S. Paul, Oromocto, to E.T. Adney, reprinted in the *Sentinel-Press*, 8 May 1947, p. 4.

79 H.H. Gunter, Barrister and Solicitor, to Hon. H. Bridges, KC, Minister of Fisheries, undated, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

80 Petition of Woodstock to Parliamentary Committee, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 9, UNBASC.

81 H.H. Gunter, Barrister and Solicitor, to Hon. H. Bridges, KC, Minister of Fisheries, undated, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

Government and are in need of some assistance.”⁸² In a letter published in Woodstock’s *Sentinel Press*, Chief Paul argued that the “grounds and land here in Oromocto Reserve are just as good as anywhere.” Referring to IAB notions about the calibre of the houses at Oromocto, he continued that it was “only just because they [IAB officials] seen lots of shabby shacks they thought the land would be the same.” He claimed that branch officials were “try[ing to] condemn this Reserve, also Woodstock” and wondered “Why couldn’t they build houses here on Oromocto Reserve as well as Kingsclear[?] It would be very pleasing suggestion for Oromocto Indians.”⁸³

The Maliseet of the Woodstock reserve were also quite aware that (as the IAB pointed out) their community faced a serious problem in that it was becoming overcrowded. But for them, the solution rested not in relocation but rather in the resolution of a long-standing land issue. At issue in Woodstock was a land deal that had been struck in 1908, when the Indian Affairs Department allowed Coster Wetmore to purchase 43.75 acres of the Woodstock reserve for a price of \$585.50. In the aftermath of Ottawa’s brief 1897 contemplation of relocating the Woodstock Maliseet, Wetmore, who was clearly aware of this consideration, offered to buy the Woodstock reserve that adjoined his own farm. In 1898 he wrote to the DIA, explaining: “I live alongside of the Indian reserve here and am writing to know if it could be sold as the Indians or half breeds here are pretty troublesome in different ways.”⁸⁴ Informed by the Indian agent that the Maliseet would not want to sell or relocate, Wetmore’s offer was at that time declined.⁸⁵

However, the idea of selling Woodstock reserve land persisted. Two years later, Carleton County Member of Parliament F.B. Carvell raised the issue with Clifford Sifton, the minister in charge of matters pertaining to Indians. Carvell asked about the possibility of selling the reserve land, noting that “it is in the midst of a very flourishing farming community and the farmers on both sides of the Reserve are naturally anxious not only to get rid of the Indians but to have the land opened for cultivation.”⁸⁶ Wetmore himself continued to lobby Ottawa, explaining in a 1900 letter to the department that while he would “very much like to see the Indians somewhere else,” he would be satisfied with the ability to purchase part of the reserve and allowing the Maliseet to remain on another section where they “would still have a chance to live on a good road and . . . would be far enough away to make them much less of a nuisance.”⁸⁷ For the next few years, Wetmore persistently made his case that reserve land should be sold to him. In 1905, MP Carvell reiterated Wetmore’s proposal and asked for the DIA’s approval.⁸⁸ At that time the DIA refused the offer. Three years later, however, amid Wetmore’s and Carvell’s continued lobbying,

82 H.H. Gunter, Barrister and Solicitor, to Hon. H. Bridges, KC, Minister of Fisheries, undated, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

83 “Indians Against Kingsclear Move,” *Sentinel Press*, 8 May 1947, p. 4.

84 J.S.C. Wetmore to DIA, 1 September 1898, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

85 J.D. McLean to J.S.C. Wetmore, 15 September 1898, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

86 F.P. Carvell, MP, Carleton County, to Hon. Clifford Sifton, 24 March 1900, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

87 J.S.C. Wetmore to DIA, 23 December 1900, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

88 F.B. Carvell to Frank Pedley, Commissioner of Indians, 23 October 1905, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

Maliseet Noel Polchies of Woodstock informed Indian Agent Farrell that the “Indians here have agreed that we may as well sell that piece of land commencing above the Indians houses . . . as we don’t use it and the money would be of use to us.”⁸⁹ On 13 March 1908 Farrell presented to the department what he called a land surrender from the Maliseet. It contained the marks of six signatories and a notation by Farrell that two members who should have voted on the issue were absent from the community and had not offered their endorsement.⁹⁰ Later that spring, after a decade of trying, Wetmore paid \$585.50 for 43.75 acres of land belonging to the Woodstock reserve.⁹¹

The Wetmore land issue resurfaced in 1944 when Wetmore’s brother, who was then in the possession of the land, refused the IAB’s offer to purchase the tract for \$1,000 for return to the reserve.⁹² Clearly, the IAB recognized that the return of the land would do much to alleviate the crowded conditions prevailing on the reserve. It is telling that the IAB’s main rationale for Woodstock’s relocation was its shortage of land. Tappan Adney articulated the Maliseet’s belief that the IAB was using as its relocation “pretext . . . [the] lack of building space when there would be plenty [of] space but for a paper . . . signed in 1908 deeding about 40 acres from the middle of the 150 acre reserve to Coster Wetmore.”⁹³ The Maliseet, therefore, took issue with a relocation premised on a land shortage at Woodstock. Moreover, the Maliseet firmly believed that the 1908 land sale had been illegal in the first place; the federal government, they noted, was not legally entitled to dispose of reserve land without the full support of a band, and the six signatories of 1908 – a time when the community had no chief – did not represent a sufficient level of endorsement. Indeed, just four years after the transaction, the Maliseet were decrying the sale. In 1912, when Wetmore proposed that he be allowed to purchase more reserve land the Maliseet not only refused to concede to a further sale but also “express[ed] themselves as being sorry for the surrendering of the land that was sold some time ago.” The Indian agent, N.J. Smith, implored Ottawa not to allow a further sale and noted (with remarkable foreshadowing) that such a sale “will leave them without a place to get firewood or lumber if they should wish to enlarge their dwellings or build new ones.”⁹⁴ While the revocation of the Wetmore land sale promised to right an unlawful transaction, the Maliseet also saw the restoration of their reserve to its former size as an action that would negate the federal rationale for centralization.

The Maliseet also opposed relocation to the Kingsclear site in particular and offered a myriad of reasons as to why it was a poor choice for a settlement. In May 1947, when Tappan Adney was asked by the IAB to assuage Maliseet concerns and encourage them to relocate, he flatly refused.⁹⁵ Recognizing Maliseet opposition to the Kingsclear site chosen by the IAB, Tappan Adney wrote: “That I will not do. The

89 Noel Polchies to Jas. Farrell, undated, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

90 Jas. Farrell to DIA, 13 March 1908, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

91 W.A. Orr of the department’s Lands Branch noted that the sale of the Maliseet’s land was “for their benefit.” See Memorandum of W.A. Orr to Deputy Minister, 5 February 1908, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC and James Farrell to Secretary DIA, 28 May 1908, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

92 Coster’s brother had purchased the land in 1919. A soldier recently returned from war in Europe, this brother had applied for a loan under the Soldier Settlement Act and purchased this reserve land to serve as collateral for this loan. See Tappan Adney to Peter Paul, undated (likely 1946), Peter Paul Collection, series 1, file 1, UNBASC.

93 *Sentinel Press*, 10 April 1947, p. 4.

94 N.J. Smith to Secretary DIA, 6 February 1913, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-5, LAC.

95 Director IAB to E.T. Adney, 29 May 1947, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

place has been condemned by all the Indians, and it would be useless for me to try.”⁹⁶ What was the source of this condemnation? First, the Maliseet explained that Kingsclear lacked the heritage of their existing communities and had never been recognized as a bonafide Maliseet settlement. In a petition to the Special Joint Committee, likely penned in 1946, Chief Oliver Polchies of Woodstock explained:

Kingsclear used to be called French Village. . . . It was never a place the Indians picked out for a village. After the Indians at Ekapahak, the chief town of the Wulastook or St. John River Tribe were cheated out of Ekapahak and Indian Island where the Indians used to assemble for conferences, cheated by white man, they moved up to French Village where some of their old friends the French still lived. The Indians couldn’t make a living there. Three years ago there were only three Indian children in the school. Mostly old people left. The children when they grew up had to go away.⁹⁷

With strong words Tappan Adney described Kingsclear as a site with “nothing whatever to recommend it” – largely due to practical impediments.⁹⁸ The site selected by the IAB was not on the banks of the Saint John River. Instead it featured “houses perched at a steep hillside” in “no spot the Indians would have chosen.”⁹⁹ Like the fairly new inland reserve site at Devon, Kingsclear lacked access to the Saint John River and the transportation by canoe and sustenance through fishing that the river provided the Maliseet. In a letter to Tappan Adney, Chief John S. Paul of Oromocto made this clear. He wrote that Kingsclear was “unsuitable for man to make his daily living such as hunting in spring [of] the year also fishing and all such a lot of other things. What Indian,” he continued, “could make his living” at Kingsclear?¹⁰⁰ Paul’s poor opinion of Kingsclear was seconded by the Woodstock Maliseet, who argued against the proposed site in their October 1946 meeting with the traveling Royal Commission as well as in a petition delivered to the Special Joint Committee. In this petition they stressed the unsuitability of Kingsclear by detailing just how many Maliseet people had in recent years tried and failed to establish lives there, thwarted by the site’s distance from markets and lack of river frontage.¹⁰¹

The federal rationale for Kingsclear’s selection was also a source of Maliseet discontent. According to federal plans, the centralized Kingsclear was to become a farming community. Centralized families were to be provisioned with “three acres and a cow” to allow them to make their living, an idea that was soundly chastised by the Maliseet. Tappan Adney, clearly cognizant of mid-20th-century trends toward expansive, consolidated farms, proclaimed the federal plan “the craziest idea, that a

96 Tappan Adney to Chief S. Paul, 24 June 1947, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, MIC 572 A1, no. 2, UNBASC.

97 Chief, Woodstock Reserve, to Special Joint Committee, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 2, no. 7, UNBASC.

98 Adney notes, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 10, UNBASC.

99 Adney notes, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 9, UNBASC.

100 Cited in the *Sentinel Press*, 8 May 1947, p. 4.

101 Tappan Adney includes a copy of this undated petition in his papers. See E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 8 and case 4, file 2, no. 7, UNBASC. The petition of the Woodstock chief noted that “in all, 29 Indians born at Kingsclear went away.”

man and family can live on three acres of land, when the trend in farming is larger and larger tracts that will pay for operation by machinery.” The farming scheme was, he suggested “an impractical plan even if the Indian wanted to farm.” And this was an important consideration because the Maliseet made it clear that farming was not their preference. Maliseet men at Oromocto, St. Mary’s, and Woodstock were primarily wage-labourers within their communities as well as in the neighbouring non-Native communities of Woodstock and Fredericton. As one Maliseet woman matter-of-factly explained to Tappan Adney: “If we wanted to farm we would have farmed long ago.”¹⁰² Tappan Adney succinctly summed up this opinion: “Why in hell must they keep on trying to make an Indian here into a farmer, and how in hell can anybody farm on three acres, and who in hell wants the stink of goats?”¹⁰³ Despite generations of failed initiatives elsewhere, farming was the main “benefit” trumpeted by the IAB in reference to the Kingsclear site.

Also offensive to the Maliseet was the fact that the Kingsclear relocation plan, like the centralization scheme in Nova Scotia, was linked to another federal policy – the resettlement of returned Maliseet veterans.¹⁰⁴ A number of Maliseets from the Saint John River Valley had served in the Second World War. Tappan Adney compiled a list of 98 Maliseet enlistees, including 21 from Devon, 12 from Oromocto, 7 from Kingsclear, 14 from Woodstock, and 44 from Tobique.¹⁰⁵ On their return from war, the veterans expected to be provided a tract of land as was their right. For the Maliseet of the Saint John River Valley, however, the IAB made the veteran resettlement plan contingent upon relocation. The case of Woodstock chief and Second World War veteran Oliver Polchies stands as one example. After having served overseas for five years, Polchies returned to Woodstock believing that “he should receive reestablishment assistance on the same footing as a white veteran” in accordance with the Veterans Land Act. Rather than being allotted land on his own reserve at Woodstock, however, Polchies was informed that he would have to relocate to the centralized Kingsclear site to receive an allotment.¹⁰⁶ Polchies was not alone. Three other veterans, all from Oromocto, were likewise informed that any land they might receive would have to be at Kingsclear.¹⁰⁷

Other dubious tactics used by the Indian Affairs Branch to induce the Maliseet to move also served to deepen Maliseet discontent. They resented that they had not been consulted before the IAB purchased the Murray property at Kingsclear, a purchase that flew in the face of the Special Joint Committee’s alleged commitment to

102 Tappan Adney notes, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 10, UNBASC.

103 E.T. Adney to Chief S. Paul, 24 June 1947, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, MIC 572 A1, no. 2, reel 1, UNBHIL. A herd of goats had recently been moved from the Golden Lake reserve in Ontario to Kingsclear, with the idea being that “goats from this herd will be moved to other reserves in New Brunswick to provide additional supplies of milk.” See Department of Mines and Resources, “Report of Indian Affairs Branch for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1948,” p. 212.

104 In Nova Scotia, to encourage Mi’kmaw relocation, the Department of Indian Affairs refused to recommend Veteran’s Land Act grants to Native people who wished to live off of the centralized Shubenacadie or Eskasoni reserves. See Patterson, “Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy,” p. 83.

105 E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 1, no. 3, UNBASC.

106 E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 1, no. 1, UNBASC.

107 E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 1, no. 6, UNBASC.

consultation. Indeed, Tappan Adney believed that “the one great defect in this plan was that the Indians were not consulted as to its feasibility.”¹⁰⁸ More significantly, though, the Maliseet opposed the coercion that was part of federal centralization policy – coercion that was felt in a number of ways.¹⁰⁹ In Woodstock, Chief Polchies, when faced with the request to relocate, was reluctant to make a snap decision. He was, however, pressured by IAB officials to do so. Polchies explained to Tappan Adney that when federal officials asked his consent to have his community moved, he told them “he desired to consult members of the Band first, but was told they hadn’t time. Then he told them he wanted first to consult a person at Woodstock by phone, by the name being given ‘adney’; but they hadn’t time to wait.”¹¹⁰ The Maliseet were also pressured to move by federal threats; if they did not move, their own communities would lose IAB services. Chief John Paul of Oromocto, for example, testified in a sworn statement that Agent Edward Whalen and another IAB official had “discussed with me the subject of removals to Kingsclear and told me that if the Oromocto Indians refused to remove to Kingsclear and choose to remain on their reserve, they will be considered by the government no longer entitled to the allowances and services that we have been receiving as Indians. That we will be white people and will have to pay taxes.”¹¹¹ In addition to these overt forms of coercion, the chief at Woodstock alleged that his community was being subjected to more subtle methods. In his submission to the Special Joint Commission, Polchies alleged that the IAB was trying to coerce the Maliseet at Woodstock to relocate by renegeing on promised community improvement plans. Polchies wrote:

Since last fall the Indian Agent has failed the government’s promise to make improvements much needed. After building a house for a veteran and starting to renovate the house of another veteran, work stopped. Mrs. Minnie Paul, wife of Peter Paul, Indian constable was promised a small addition to her house right away. This stopped. Outdoor privies are in disgraceful condition. Every year the government has plowed a garden site on a low bench of the River and given us seed for planting. This year the government would not plow and told us we have to look after the gardening ourselves. We are told there is no chance to put cellars under our houses. . . . We think the government was intending to move us all down to Kingsclear, that is why they stopped work last fall.¹¹²

108 *Sentinel Press*, 12 February 1948, p. 4.

109 Lisa Patterson also suggests that coercion played a part in centralization in Nova Scotia as reserve school closures, threats of terminated federal services, and the destruction of vacated homes became the means by which federal authorities “encouraged” relocation. See Patterson, “Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy,” pp. 103-4.

110 Tappan Adney notes, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 13, no. 14, UNBASC.

111 “Sworn Statement of John S. Paul, Chief of Oromocto,” undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 7, no. 7, UNBASC. In Nova Scotia, Mi’kmaq who refused to move to centralized reserves were threatened with the prospect of enfranchisement and the loss of their status as Indians. See Patterson, “Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy,” p. 66.

112 Petition of “Chief Woodstock Reserve, Veteran of 5 years service overseas, Ex-officio Member of the Council of the Wulastook or St. John River Indian Tribe, also Malecites” to Special Joint Committee, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 2, no. 7, UNBASC.

The Maliseet at Woodstock, he felt, were being bullied into moving to Kingsclear.

Publicly the IAB denied these charges, claiming that any relocation would be strictly voluntary. For example, when Tappan Adney alleged to IAB Director R.A. Hoey that branch officials were using coercive and threatening tactics to force relocation, a memo from the Office of the Superintendent of Reserves and Trustees responded that “it is the intention that centralization would be on a purely voluntary basis and that it was not the intention to compel any family to move to Kingsclear against their wishes.”¹¹³ However, the attitude evinced by branch officials, including Hoey himself, lends considerable credence to the Maliseet allegations. When, in the fall of 1946, New Brunswick cabinet minister H.F. Bridges became involved in the controversial plan at Maliseet request, the response he got from the IAB seemed to confirm Maliseet fears that the IAB was committed to relocation even in the face of concerted Maliseet opposition. Responding to charges passed by Bridges to the IAB concerning the alleged coercion, the Minister of the Interior W.J.F. Pratt wrote:

It is noted that the Chief of the Oromocto Reserve is perturbed over the possibility that the Oromocto Indians may be moved to the Kingsclear Reserve and I can give no assurance that such a move will not be carried out in the future. The Indian Affairs Branch have under consideration a centralization programme for the Indians of the Saint John River valley and although no definite decision has been reached as to the inclusion of the Oromocto Indians it has been recommended that they be included and moved to Kingsclear next year and that decent houses be constructed for them on the new Reserve.

The minister then discounted the scope of Maliseet opposition: “It is only to be expected that some of the older Indians will oppose any proposal to move them from land on which they have lived all their lives, even though the move, if it takes place, cannot but improve their living conditions.” He went on to further justify the relocation, explaining that “any proposal of this kind must be considered from the point of view of future generations of the Band, as well as present members.” If the Oromocto Maliseet were moved, he stated, “such decision will be made on the grounds that the move will be of definite benefit to the Band as a whole.”¹¹⁴

In another instance, a charge levelled by Tappan Adney accusing Agency Inspector J.E. Morris of bullying the Maliseet met a response that likewise confirmed Maliseet allegations that the branch had a clear intent to move them regardless of the level of dissent. Morris opened his letter to Tappan Adney “*emphatically deny[ing] that the Indians in any way were threatened to persuade them to move to the Kingsclear area.*”¹¹⁵ However, as his letter continued, Morris demonstrated his and the IAB’s

113 Memorandum, Office of the Superintendent of Reserves and Trustees, 25 June 1947, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

114 W.J.F. Pratt to E. Bosse, Private Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, 8 November 1946, RG10, volume 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

115 J.E. Morris, Acting Inspector, to E.T. Adney, 21 June 1947, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

unwillingness to support any Maliseet who chose not to “voluntarily” relocate. Seemingly unable to recognize the contradiction between his concept of the “voluntary” nature of the plan and the assertion that the IAB would not support reserves that elected not to move to Kingsclear, Morris maintained that

the Indians at Oromocto and Woodstock were informed that there was a building program being undertaken to assist them in establishing themselves in decent, well-constructed houses with cement basements, thorough brick chimneys from the basement up and that I would not recommend the expenditure of public funds to make extensive repairs, putting in basements for houses at the Woodstock Reserve which is already overcrowded and would, undoubtedly, if a fire started in any one of them, completely wipe out the whole settlement if the wind happened to be high or in the right direction. Regarding Oromocto Reserve, the area does not lend itself to digging out cellars as the subsoil is slaty and rocky. Further at this reserve and it also applies to the Woodstock Reserve they have not sufficient acres of arable land in which to raise vegetables, fruits etc., nor have they pasture to keep a cow and other livestock. The intention of building new houses is to establish them on an area where they will have plenty of good land available for gardening, where there is pasture and water available as well as sufficient land to raise fodder for winter feeding. This office is very concerned about the present unsanitary conditions of the houses at these Reserves. We are undertaking, at considerable cost to the taxpayers, to assist these Indians and it is important for the success of the scheme that the Indians give us their full co-operation.¹¹⁶

Tappan Adney noted, referring to an exchange he had had with Hoey himself over federal plans to compel the Maliseet at Oromocto to move, that “Hoey indicated no intention of changing his mind nor remedying the complaints of Oromocto Indians.”¹¹⁷

Maliseet concerns about federal centralization tactics were not eased by the experiences of the few Maliseet who did agree to test the waters at Kingsclear. In the spring of 1947, a few members of the Oromocto reserve made the move upriver to the Kingsclear site. Things did not go well at the new community. In a letter to Chief William Saulis of Tobique, Oromocto’s Chief Paul complained about how they had been treated following their relocation: “We were told last spring that if we move to Kingsclear Reserve we’d be looked after. But things turn out just the opposite way.” Promised farm stock failed to materialize, and the homes constructed were cold and drafty. As a result, all of the families who moved to Kingsclear soon wanted to return to Oromocto, but some were unable to do so. Three Oromocto families, according to Paul, were “stuck” at Kingsclear because branch officials had dismantled their

116 J.E. Morris, Acting Inspector, to E.T. Adney, 21 June 1947, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

117 Adney to J.D. McNichol, 18 February 1948, MIC 572 A1, no. 2, reel 2, UNBHIL.

Oromocto homes while they were away. Paul also suggested that the Oromocto community was being “punished” with the closure of its school and the cutting of relief. Aghast at their treatment, Chief Paul remarked: “I don’t believe Indians ever experience[d] anything like this before.”¹¹⁸

Despite the fact that a few families tried their luck at Kingsclear, it never became the centralized home of the Saint John River Maliseet as per Ottawa’s plan. As in Nova Scotia, there is no one defining moment marking the end of the centralization plan in New Brunswick.¹¹⁹ By 1949, however, talk of Maliseet centralization had waned. In 1950, the names of the province’s Indian agencies were changed to reflect Ottawa’s interest in establishing Kingsclear as a place of prominence in Indian administration, but the Maliseet did not move there en masse nor did it become the hub of Indian affairs administration.¹²⁰

Factors external to the Maliseet community doubtless contributed to the plan’s abandonment. Lisa Patterson suggests that changes in the upper echelons of the federal government in 1948 created an administration less committed to centralization. That year, Louis St. Laurent replaced Prime Minister King as Liberal leader, J.A. MacKinnon was named head of the Department of Mines and Resources, and Major D.M. Mackay replaced centralization’s great supporter, R.A. Hoey, as director of the IAB. Patterson notes that federal correspondence after this date reflected a move away from the advocacy of total centralization in Nova Scotia. That Nova Scotia centralization limped on past this date, she argues, was the result of the fact that so much of that program’s infrastructure was already in place.¹²¹ In New Brunswick, however, centralization had not progressed as far, and so perhaps with this changing of the guard it was more easily halted. The New Brunswick plan was also undermined by the fact that by the end of the 1940s the ambitious Nova Scotia scheme was recognized as a failure – not just by the Mi’kmaq who had long been decrying it, but also by branch officials. The centralized reserves of Shubenacadie and Eskasoni were overcrowded and isolated from sites of waged labour (just as Kingsclear was for the Maliseet) and, as a result, their residents were unable to find work. Federal officials were also disillusioned by the fact that centralization did not reduce branch spending. Much to the dismay of officials at the IAB, relief costs did not fall but instead increased.¹²²

The scuttling of the New Brunswick plan may also have been connected to the fact that the IAB found itself preoccupied with the pressing task of drafting the long-awaited Indian Act revision, the end result of the Special Joint Committee and its

118 *Sentinel Press*, 12 February 1948, p. 4.

119 Lisa Patterson notes that, although no formal memo or statement marked the end of the IAB’s Nova Scotia centralization policy, it was “unceremoniously scuttled” and, by 1949, Indian agents in that province were being instructed not to encourage further Mi’kmaq moves to Eskasoni or Shubenacadie. See Patterson, “Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy,” p. 146.

120 The IAB’s report for 1950 states: “During the year the nomenclature of the three agencies of this Province was changed in order to eliminate the confusion that arose as a result of their old designations. Northeastern Agency became Miramichi, Northern became Tobique, and Southwestern, Kingsclear.” See Department of Citizenship and Immigration, “Report of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1950,” p. 61.

121 Patterson, “Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy,” pp. 87-8.

122 Patterson, “Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy,” pp. 149-59.

eastern Royal Commission.¹²³ Between 1948, the year the Royal Commission completed its work, and 1951, the year the new Indian Act was passed, the future of Canada's Indian policy remained unclear. In the interim, IAB officials were probably little interested in committing time and energy to a new centralization program, particularly in light of the less-than-satisfactory results in Nova Scotia.

Credit for the scuttled Kingsclear plan, however, must also be attributed to the Maliseet.¹²⁴ Their anti-centralization campaign had the desired result of swaying both public and federal opinion. First, it is clear that the Maliseet's publicity campaign paid off; it won for them not only the support of well-placed advocates such as Edwin Tappan Adney and federal cabinet member H.F. Bridges, but also the support of many non-Natives in the province as well. The success of this public campaign was demonstrated by an April 1947 editorial appearing in the Woodstock *Sentinel Press*. Commenting on letters the paper had received from both Tappan Adney and Oromocto's Chief Paul, the newspaper's editors publicly backed the Maliseet in their opposition to centralization. The editors wrote that they were compelled "to add our voice to that of Mr. Adney's in protest against the move." The editorial continued: "The Indians are undoubtedly wards of the Government but that they should be moved to a region which they consider less advantageous than their present site without their full consent, seems to us an unreasonable viewpoint on the part of the Department. After all we all have a certain responsibility toward the Indians. Let's make sure that in carrying out this responsibility we take some consideration of the Indians' feelings in the matter."¹²⁵ Tappan Adney himself certainly believed that the public opinion was being swayed by the Maliseet campaign against centralization. In a letter to IAB Director R.A. Hoey, Tappan Adney stated that "as publicity is giving to these proceedings, the people at large are becoming aroused, their sympathy with the Indians denied even human rights."¹²⁶ The power of public opinion helped dissuade Ottawa from proceeding with its plan.

The Maliseet also succeeded in their bid to make officials in Ottawa aware of their opposition to centralization. First, they drew on the political strength of their newly reconstituted Wulastook Tribe to make their case against centralization in an impromptu meeting before several members of the Special Joint Committee in Ottawa. In July 1947 Chief William Saulis of Tobique, a key player in this re-formed political organization, funded his own trip to Ottawa, where he met with members of the Special Joint Committee and introduced them to the new political structure. Saulis

123 In 1948, the federal government began to revise its Indian policy in light of the Special Joint Committee's findings. By early 1950 top officials at the IAB believed that this task was near completion. Indian Act amendment proposals were incorporated into Bill 267 and introduced into the House of Commons in June 1950. These proposals, however, elicited a hailstorm of criticism from parliamentarians and Native people alike, and the government was forced to withdraw them. The following year, a revamped Indian Act, tabled as Bill 79, received parliamentary approval and was enacted in September 1951.

124 In Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw opposition also undermined centralization. Lisa Patterson notes that although Mi'kmaw concerns were entirely disregarded in the early years of the Nova Scotia centralization plan, by the end of the 1940s their opposition had weakened the IAB initiative. See Patterson, "Indian Affairs and the Nova Scotia Centralization Policy," p. 91.

125 *Sentinel Press*, 10 April 1947, p. 2.

126 E.T. Adney to R.A. Hoey, 16 May 1947, RG 10, vol. 7760, file 27056-2, part 1, LAC.

had in hand a letter that was signed by all of the other members of the new political body – a tactic he thought would be valuable as the joint effort in writing “in one body” would “pack a final punch.”¹²⁷

It was, however, in their representations before the traveling Royal Commission that the Maliseet made their strongest case against centralization before federal officials. The anti-centralization messages they conveyed to the commission clearly deflated federal enthusiasm for the Kingsclear plan. At each brief stop it made, the Royal Commission faced a volley of anti-centralization arguments from the Maliseet: they depended on the economic opportunities of their home reserves and were committed to their towns’ heritage and connections to family, past, and present; they adamantly opposed the coercive tactics of the IAB; and they believed that a settlement at Kingsclear, which was centred on small-scale farming, was doomed to fail as indeed initial efforts there suggested. Tappan Adney was impressed with the force of Maliseet representations before the commission and he believed that the commissioners were moved by them. Of Chief William Saulis’s testimony before the commission, he wrote (with characteristic melodrama) that after the chief spoke “there was a silence from the Committee. They were profoundly impressed by the dignity and earnestness of the unlettered savage. At length the Committee said that they would accept his spoken word for fact.”¹²⁸

The traveling Royal Commission also relayed Maliseet concerns to the Special Joint Committee sitting in Ottawa. Committee member and commission member D.S. Harkness assured Tappan Adney that the members of the Royal Commission had brought the centralization issue before the Special Joint Committee proper where the offensive aspects of the policy were challenged: “The matter of the removal of Indians from their various Reserves along the Saint John River was raised in the meeting of the Committee, held yesterday, by Mr. John MacNichol. I also took up the question and protested against the compulsion which in my opinion has been put on these Indians, particularly the veterans, to move to Kingsclear. I trust that as a result of the representations made the Department will be more careful in the methods they use to persuade the Indians to concentrate at the Kingsclear Reserve.”¹²⁹

For his part, Tappan Adney, in a letter to an editor, remarked that “government cannot be unaware of the unanimous wishes of the Indians and at the same time allow this new policy of its Indian department to go right on into execution.”¹³⁰ It seems he was right. Officials in Ottawa did not merely hear the Maliseet position on centralization – they were convinced by it. In Ottawa, Special Joint Committee member John R. MacNichol took up Maliseet concerns about the alleged coercion that was part of the centralization plan, compelling IAB Director Hoey to declare that there is no governmental authority for the department “to ask any body of Indians to remove from their present reserves.”¹³¹ Commissioners who traveled to the east were

127 Chief William Saulis to E.T. Adney, 7 July 1947, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 5, file 3, no. 67, UNBASC.

128 Tappan Adney notes, undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 4, file 8, no. 9, UNBASC.

129 Colonel Harkness to E. Tappan Adney, 28 July 1947, reprinted in the *Sentinel Press*, 4 July 1947, p. 4.

130 Tappan Adney, undated letter, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, MIC, 572, A1, no. 2, reel 1, UNBHIL.

131 *Sentinel Press*, 15 January 1948, p. 4.

30 *Acadiensis*

particularly convinced of the soundness of the Maliseet anti-centralization representations. In a radio address that was printed in the Hartland *Observer*, Special Joint Committee and Royal Commission member W. Garfield Case dismissed the viability of a centralization scheme, noting that “its apparent weakness is the idea of taking these Indians back into the hinterland so to speak, whereas we have already commented on the fact that they are making their greatest progress near the white settlements.” Tappan Adney recognized the importance of this statement and, in the margins beside his newspaper clipping of the article, he wrote, prophetically, “This cooks the goose of the Kingsclear blunder.”¹³²

132 Clipping from the *Observer* (Hartland), undated, E. Tappan Adney Fonds, case 3, file 4, UNBASC.