



**EIGHT-YEAR-OLD** Trina Pelletier sits on the lap of Chief Dan George who is a house guest of her parents, chief and Mrs. Leonard

Pelletier of the Fort William Mission. Trina, the 1973 Tammy, will be presenting flowers to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth today, Chief George,

who Monday night officially opened Indian Days, will also be introduced to the Queen.

Staff Photo

## At 74, Chief Dan George Isn't Set To Retire Yet

By FLOR-ANNE FAULKNER

Seventy-four on July 24, Chief Dan George of North Vancouver harbors no thoughts of retirement just yet.

The philosophy behind this, explains the silver haired chief, is based on an old Indian legend, personified in the movie "Little Big Man" where as Old Lodge Skins, a Cheyenne chief, he prepares for his own imminent death, only to learn it isn't time to go.

A Salish Indian, he was born Dan Sholte, but was forced to change his name to Dan George when a teacher was unable to pronounce his surname. The George is his father's Christian name, while the "chief" is an honorary title conferred on him by the British Columbia Council of Chiefs on the premiere in 1970 of his movie "Little Big Man" in Vancouver. He did however serve 12 years as chief of the Tesallwate tribe in Northern B.C. prior to launching a career in the movies.

Chief George began making his mark as an actor late in life, having worked most of his years as a stevedore and part time logger.

### STARTED ON TV

It started with the role of Ol' Antoine in the CBC television series Caribou Country.

When the lead actor, a white man, took sick Chief George's eldest son, who was also part of the cast, suggested his father for the key role as the old Indian.

Chief George was auditioned and given the part. "The white man wouldn't come back," chuckled Chief George, who starred in the remaining seven segments.

One chapter of the 12-part series, entitled "How to Break A Quarter Horse," was later sold to Walt Disney who made it into a full-length movie, renaming it "Smith." Much to his surprise, Chief George was hired to co-star with Glenn Ford in the movie, filmed in the B.C. interior, near Williams Lake.

### NOMINATED

From there, he went on to co-star with Dustin Hoffman

in "Little Big Man," filmed in Montana and Calgary. His portrayal as Old Lodge Skins earned him an Academy Award nomination as best supporting actor.

"I was kind of scared working with Dustin Hoffman—he's tops in my books," recalled Chief George. "I thought maybe I'd ruin the part for him . . . but the script was well-written for me. The person who wrote it, wrote it just the way I liked to play it."

As for his Oscar nomination, he says, "I didn't have no hopes for winning."

However, he did receive the New York film critics group award for best supporting actor for the same movie which he commented, "I liked better. The critics are always hard."

A quiet spoken gentleman, Chief George became vehement when asked about Marlon Brando's refusal of an Oscar last March. Brando's spokesman, who appeared before the Academy Awards audience, was an Apache woman, who said Brando could not accept because of Hollywood's treatment of the American Indian . . . and because of recent happenings at Wounded Knee.

"According to our culture that was wrong," said Chief George, explaining that an Indian never refuses a gift, no matter how small or insignificant.

### MADE MISTAKE

Bringing politics into such an occasion was also wrong, according to Chief George's standards. "He also made a mistake sending an Indian girl," he added.

Chief George is also adamant about education for his people, frowning upon segregated reserve schools. Indian children should be integrated within the white man's schools as early as Grade 4, he suggested.

Indian culture should also be made part of the curriculum for both white and native children, if not on the regular program at least at night school. Similar programs of this nature in B.C. have proven successful, he noted.

Chief George's family-centred life (he has two sons and four daughters) has had to undergo change in the past decade, since his rise to fame. His time is mainly taken up now with movie-making (he starts filming "The Bears and I" with John Wayne in a few days, followed in August with another movie, "Little Chief" which will also be filmed in Canada.) In between there's promotional work, such as that he's done for CP Air, Lake Tahoe or an eye glass company and speaking engagements, mainly to U.S. universities and colleges. He's also been patron for such observances as Young Canada Book Week and Brotherhood Week

### RELEASE SOON

Two other movies, "Alien Thunder" with Donald Sutherland which was filmed near Saskatoon and "Cold Journey" with Buffy Ste. Marie and Johnny Yesno are both scheduled for release within the not too distant future.

He has had to hire a lawyer to look after investing his money in various stocks, a fulltime secretary and a travelling companion who has accompanied him everywhere since his wife of 52 years Amy died in 1971. But, other than that, his life hasn't changed too much, he grins.

He's still the same man who prefers quiet gatherings to the tinsel-life of Hollywood and anything, he is almost embarrassed by his fame. Acting to him is a job, he said, and he isn't in it for fame or glory.

As soon as a movie is filmed, he retreats back to his humble home in North Vancouver. Even his automobile before it was demolished in an accident, could be gauged by Hollywood standards, he said, although he explained he much prefers horse for transportation.

Looking ahead to the future, Chief George is negotiating a contract to star in a movie based on the life of Geronimo — "But only if I get the right story. He was a renegade. He did a lot of fighting but it was in self defence."

## Annual Snow Taffy Parties Entice Many Sudden Friends

A Times-News reporter's visit to the sugar bush on the Fort William Indian Reserve on the slopes of Mt. McKay to garner a story on the annual Maple sap harvest (April 15 issue) brought memories flooding back for Schreiber correspondent Mrs. Inez McCuaig. Her tale follows



MRS. INEZ McCUAIG

SCHREIBER — "When we were very young, my sister and my brother and I, the moon of our popularity with our friends waxed and waned, according to circumstances, as did our friends!

Sometimes the experience was gloried in, and at other times, grimly endured, for usually, we suffered as a unit . . . and seemingly, our parents were never aware of our being put in 'coventry', for apparently, during those early years, parents considered that kids' affairs WERE kids' affairs — a sensible attitude, for the most part, and remained aloof from such small wars . . . although they could have been alerted at a certain time in spring by a curious smugness which surrounded us, like an aura, so confident were we that shortly — we'd be the most popular kids on the entire west end — their ranks augmented by kids from other parts of town.

Our self-confidence was due to the fact that just when the snow began to disappear from the town the ample syrup from eastern Ontario began to arrive. And, although many others received standing orders, our father was the only person who made Snow Taffy!!

Possibly, because he grew up on a farm, when all the family were necessarily engaged in its various seasonal occupations, this was a fond celebration of an earlier custom, when, the day and night task of 'sugaring-off' completed, children were rewarded for their efforts by a Snow Taffy Party.

Whatever the impulse was, the invitation was an open one, with only one stipulation; each child had to arrive with a clean pan of packed snow — the size of the pan as large as the guest could muster for the occasion.

And, because, at that time of year, any snow within the town was dirty, grimy, completely unacceptable, further excitement was created by the guests having to search on the hills surrounding the town, for clean, white snow. While this search was going on, papa was boiling the syrup in a huge pot, and when the horde of kids arrived — some with small pie tins (scornfully regarded by wiser guests) others came with roasting pans, and, best of all, those long pans then called 'dripping pans' — all filled with clean, hard-packed snow, and severally, came to the shed steps, where papa stood, with the big pot of hot syrup, and generously ladled it in lacy patterns on the icy snow.

Then, with the fork which they brought, each kid, twisted up the luscious candy in great globes, and, returned for 'seconds' which were always ready, with 'slurping and smacking' acceptable since the half-frozen candy stuck to one's teeth, until it dissolved. Granted, few, if any of the small gourmets, replete with their feast, could eat any supper at home, but no reprimands were given, mothers being lenient, remembering this was the day of the annual Snow Taffy Party."

## Mechanics' Institute Hall Was Early Social Centre

The Mechanic's Institute in Schreiber, the forerunner of the present town hall was a building of many parts.

It housed the public library, a barbershop and two cubicles containing bath tubs (the first in the town) rented, usually on Saturday nights, at a modest 25 cents with the bather bringing his own towel and soap.

There was an auditorium where the first movies were shown. The walls of the auditorium were liberally covered with pictures of the Bluebird girls. Here were enjoyed the many popular serials.

There were the Girl and The

Game, featuring Helen Holmes, a railway tale; The Red Circle about the various adventures of Pearl White; The Iron Claw in which Wu Fang was featured, and The Voice On The Line.

The audience followed a set pattern in seating arrangements, seldom varying and never questioned. Youngsters occupied the first three rows, noisy, shoving and jostling during musical interludes (this was the silent movie era).

In the next three rows, seats on either side of the aisle were tacitly accepted as belonging to six older ladies whose attendance was guaranteed. Behind

these rows were the younger folk, always there, but unwilling to admit their interest laughing as the older ladies shouted warnings during the play's progress.

Films broke, and other minor accidents occurred, but the audience waited patiently, enjoying a round of social exchanges until the repair was done. Somehow not the biggest longest, nor most starstudded spectacular of today can recapture the spirit of those long ago movie goers.

The Schreiber Mechanic's Institute so far as is known, was the only one built in the district