

in agriculture as well as books, even though for most Native people, life back home wasn't necessarily suited to farming. It made it, Dieter remembers, "difficult to get an education. They kicked us out of school to seed; we had maybe 100 head of cattle, and horses to look after."

Some, like Dixon, admit to rather liking the escape from the classroom. But the sacrificing of book work in order to run the farm was sometimes overdone. In 1935, for example, a United Church commission visited nine of the schools. At Round Lake, they pointed out drily, "it has been found necessary, in the case of most Residential Schools, to have a farm attached to them, but in this particular instance we have. . . the School attached to a farm. . . the minds of the principal and the outside staff. . . too entirely taken up with the development of a show herd of Holsteins" which weren't suitable, in any case, for conditions on the Reserve.

But the main problem was that removing children from their homes, to be "unhampered by the influence and traditions of the older Indians on the reserve," as one writer of the time put it, was an act of overwhelming arrogance. A 1939 report, for example, by T.B.R. Westgate on behalf of several Canadian churches, declared that "it is the solemn duty of the white man with his advanced knowledge, to interpret to those less privileged than himself, the Indians included, the higher values of this present world. . . ."

The United Church was not exempt. Even Affleck, while she saw clearly the schools' terrible gap between Christian theory and practice, didn't note that Native people had, in Bull's words, "our own systems, which were not recognized. We had our own spirituality."

Few did see that spirituality. Katharine Hockin, later a missionary with the Woman's Missionary Society, was recruited as a recent university graduate to teach at the residential school at Ahousat, B.C., in 1929. She was deeply angered by the principal's lack of "respect for Indian heritage and culture. His concern was to produce Canadian Christians!" He was, she remembers, highly regarded by the WMS at the time.

Back to when the little boy, Wilf, was in school. The 1935 United Church commission on Native education reported that "at the present time