

THE FIRST CITIZEN'S FUND:  
AN INDICATION OF CULTURAL TREND.

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In 1968 the British Columbia government passed legislation to create the First Citizen's Fund. The purpose of this fund was to support projects "involved with the advancement and expansion of the culture, education, economic circumstances and position of persons of the North American Indian race who were born in and are residents of the Province of British Columbia". The moneys available represent the interest from a \$25 million investment, which amounts to approximately \$1.7 million per year. The fund is administered in Victoria by a committee of five cabinet ministers, known as the Cabinet First Citizen's Fund Advisory Committee.

The First Citizen's Fund can be used as a means of finding out about the present state or current trend of Indian culture in B.C., by virtue of the reaction exhibited towards the Fund by the Indians of B.C. Two different levels of reaction will be discussed in this paper. The first reaction is that taken by the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs, a political organization considered by many to be representative of the Indian population of B.C. The nature of this reaction has been determined from public statements made by the B.C. Union. The second reaction is that demonstrated by the whole Indian population of B.C. towards the Fund, and is manifest in the manner in which Fund moneys have been used by the Indian population. In other words, the manner in which the Fund has been utilized by the Indian population is considered to be a reaction of theirs towards the Fund. Both the reaction of the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs and the reaction of the whole Indian population of B.C., towards the First Citizen's Fund, indicate certain characteristics of the Indian culture in B.C. today.

In 1970, criticisms were made of the policies and administration of the First Citizen's Fund by the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs. (Unity, Sept., 1970) In fact, the Union felt so strongly about the criticisms it was making, that as of July 1970, it refused to accept any more grants from the Fund.

The first criticism which the B.C. Union had of the First Citizen's Fund in 1970, was that it was not wholly administered by Indians, and as a matter of fact no Indians at all were involved in its administration. The last part of this criticism, that Indians were not even partially involved in the administration of the Fund, is no longer applicable, as a six member Indian Advisory Committee has been set up and participates in all meetings of the Cabinet Advisory Committee. The first part of this criticism indicates that the Union felt that the Fund should be handed over in its entirety to the Indians of British Columbia, so that they could administer it themselves. Their argument is based on a sentence in one of the pamphlets about the First Citizen's Fund (Appendix 1), which says: "It is intended to be a programme of self-help designed, initiated, and administered by bona fide British Columbia Indian bands, organizations, and individuals...". The Union, however, seems to ignore an article from another pamphlet (Appendix 2, p.2, item 16) which states that "allocations from the Fund represent trust moneys, and an accounting must be made by all recipients of disbursements from the Fund". In other words, the Fund consists of public money and should be administered by a government body, such that it may be clearly accounted for and carefully used. This whole issue seems to have been created by the first statement quoted, which is merely a poor piece of writing, being imprecise and unclear in its meaning. Presumably, that which is supposed to be "designed, initiated, and administered" by native Indians are the projects themselves, rather than the entire program.

The second criticism which the Union had of the Fund was that the full yearly revenue of \$1.7 million was not disbursed to the Indians every year, but that only about \$600,000 was disbursed. And the third criticism was that the applications for grants "have been handled in a manner that plays off one (Indian) organization against the other and thereby perpetuates the "divide and rule" principle...". One assumes that by this is meant the Indian organizations are forced to compete against each other for available Fund moneys and hence are divided or played off against one another.

These two criticisms are best discussed together. A recent telephone conversation with Rod <sup>McInnes</sup> McGuinness, the civil servant in charge of the First Citizen's Fund, revealed that about 90% of all moneys requested are granted by the Advisory Committee. Applications are turned down when they do not adhere to the originally stated guidelines and limitations set for the Fund. (see Appendix 1 and 2) The principle <sup>al</sup> limitation is that Fund money cannot be used to duplicate or replace projects already supported by other government bodies. The point is, that virtually all requests for money are granted, and still only about one-third of the available money is ~~requested~~ every year. This would indicate that the Indians of B.C. do not make enough requests for enough money to even approach the limits of Fund money available to them. The causal factor in the under-use of money available in the First Citizen's Fund would therefore appear to be the low Demand generated by the Indians, rather than any restrictive or selective policy on the part of the administrators of the Fund. Hence, criticism of the administration of the Fund by the B.C. Union on the basis of the under-use of the Fund moneys is not valid. Furthurmore, the criticism of the administration of the Fund by the B.C. Union on the basis that organizations are played off against one another because of competition for money, must also not be considered valid; with such an excess of money left

in the Fund, competition can hardly be said to exist. It should be mentioned that recently the Fund's administrators have attempted to remedy the under-used state of the Fund moneys, by hiring Ross Moddest<sup>Modeste</sup> to travel around to Indians in B.C., educating them as to the availability of resources offered by the Fund. It seems that they too have recognized low Demand as the determining factor in under-use of the Fund.

The present study indicates that the criticisms made of the First Citizen's Fund by the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs, do not stand up under further investigation. However, the fact that the B.C. Union did not approve of the nature of the Fund, that they wished to be more independent and self-directed, did not like to have the money doled out to them, and demanded responsibility, can be appreciated. In fact, this reaction is probably very expressive of the present state of Indian culture in B.C. It is expressive of the current re-awakening and revitalization which is happening within the Indian culture, and which is causing Indians to be more aware of their culture and their needs, and more outspoken on their own behalf.

Before closing this discussion, it should be noted, that as recently indicated by Bill Mussell, the present Executive Director of the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs, the Union's present position towards the First Citizen's Fund, is much more moderate than the extreme position taken over a year ago. The B.C. Union's position towards the First Citizen's Fund is moderate, in that it condones the Fund enough to place a delegate on the Fund's Advisory Board, and to accept grants from the Fund. In spite of this recent modification of their position, the initial reaction of the B.C. Union of Indian

Chiefs, still remains as an excellent expression of the present trend in B.C. Indian culture.

The second reaction elicited by the First Citizen's Fund which is also expressive of the current trend within the Indian culture in B.C. is the use which has been made of Fund moneys by the Indian population of B.C. The question to be asked is: how has the money been used, and what trend does this indicate?

To answer the first part of this question, each item in the schedule of allocations of the First Citizen's Fund from June 15, 1969 to March 31, 1971 (Appendix 3), was placed in one of six categories. The six categories are: Social, Artistic, Athletic & Recreation, Education, Economic, and Political & Communication. The derivation of these six categories was based both on the demand imposed by the nature of the items in the schedule of allocations, and the guidelines for projects given by the pamphlets (Appendix 1 and 2). In order for the reader to understand the meaning of and the area included by each category, a description of each one follows.

The Social category includes both social activities and social services. By social activity is meant an activity which involves interpersonal contact and association on a community level. Activity such as this is likely to occur in a longhouse or community hall, both as an end in itself, and as a byproduct of other artistic, cultural, and recreational activities. Hence, a grant used to build a longhouse would be considered to fall into the Social category. By social services is meant any organization or agency which gives aid or assistance to other people in order to help them survive in society. For example, the Friendship Centres in various cities in B.C., are considered to be social services, and hence fall into the category of Social.

Grants were placed in the Artistic category if the use to which they were

put fell into the realm of Fine Arts. This includes: painting, sculpture, weaving, dancing, music, and drama.

The Athletic and Recreation category is rather self-explanatory. Grants placed in this category most often were grants given to Recreation Commissions, or grants given directly for athletic projects such as buying equipment or financing tournaments.

The fourth category is Education. Projects were placed in this category if they involved in any way the present or future functioning of the school system for the Indians of B.C. Hence scholarships for students, the Indian teacher program, kindergartens, home-school co-ordinators, and curriculum studies are included. Also placed in this category were projects involving linguistics, legends, and cultural history, as it is felt that such material will eventually be included in school curriculums for Indian children.

In the fifth category, Economic, is placed any project leading to increased economic, industrial, or business development, and hence includes such things as in-service job training, land-use studies, and capital with which to start businesses. The major project in this category was that initiated by the Pacific North Coast Native Co-operative to study the possibility of starting up a cannery.

The last category is Political & Communication. Projects were categorized under this heading if they appeared to deal with the study of government or the relationship of the Indian people with different governmental bodies. They were also categorized under this heading if they were projects involving the mass media, such as newspaper or film. The two -- political and communication-- were categorized together, because the media quite often comes across with political overtones, or often contains information of political interest, or

is directed by political forces.

Using these six categories, each item in the schedule of fund allocations was placed into one category. Results of the categorization are shown in Table 1. Given for each category are the following measures: total amount of money allocated to each category, total number of projects in each category, and average grant size.

For the purposes of this paper, the total amount of money allocated to each category appears to be the measure which provides the most significant and clearcut indication of cultural trends. Here we will deal with two points: the emphasis given to the realm of Art, and the emphasis given to the realm of Social activities and services. These two areas, Artistic and Social, on the basis of the objective measurement of total amount of money allocated, are clearly differentiated from the other categories, and receive in the region of two to three times more money. ✓

Considering the past strength which the Indian cultures of the North-West Coast displayed in the realm of Art, it is not surprising that Art is today a particular area of interest for Indians in B.C. This has traditionally been an area of great importance, and from the indication of this data, Art appears to be returning to a position of great importance in Indian culture today.

It is also possible, that besides the Indian culture itself, another factor leads to the spending of a large amount of money in the Artistic category. This factor is the provincial government, working by means of suggestions and encouragement to influence the Indians of B.C. to direct their efforts and projects, perhaps slightly more than they otherwise would, towards the development of their Art. In a pamphlet published by the B.C. government as a guideline to those applying for grants, under the heading of Project Policy (Appendix 2, p.3&4), more articles are directed specifically towards



encouraging projects in the area of Arts, than in any other area. Furthermore, just a week before the writing of this paper, legislation was passed to set up a province-wide Native Indian Arts and Crafts Corporation, which will be involved in the wholesaling and retailing of Indian arts and crafts. Certainly this represents a direct form of encouragement by the provincial government towards the development of Indian Art in B.C.

But this governmental influence must be considered a minor factor in the determination of money utilization, as compared to the major factor of the Indian culture itself. As was established earlier in this paper, the major determinant of the allocation of First Citizen grants is the Demand raised by the Indian culture. Government policies, other than the original limitations placed on the Fund can have only a minor influence on the nature of the distribution and use of Fund money; no matter how much encouragement the government offered, projects would not be directed towards the Arts if the Indians did not have interest and skill in this area. It is the assumption of this paper that the nature of requests for grants made by individuals or organizations are a function of the culture from whence they come, and so are indicative of the current state of that culture. Therefore, from the weighting given to projects in the Arts, it can be said that at the present time, as in times of the past, Art holds a position of importance in the culture of Indians of B.C. In light of the "long, low period" of Indian culture, when the traditions of Art were all but lost to the Indian people (Duff, lecture notes), the present emphasis given to Art seems to be indicative of the present rebirth or revitalization of Indian culture which is occurring in B.C.

In terms of total amount of money allocated, a heavy emphasis was also placed on the social category. This would seem to indicate a number of things about

the present state of Indian culture.

Social activities have been defined as interpersonal contact and association on a community level. The most simple interpretation of the emphasis of spending in this particular area, is that previously, Indian communities lacked any sort of facilities in which to meet and interact at the community level, and with this sudden appearance of resources, are now constructing such facilities and using them. Of course there must be a need or demand for such facilities, before the energy and time is expended by people to build them. Thus, this emphasis would also indicate that in the Indian culture of B.C. at present, there is a need for greater community life and identification. This also perhaps indicates a need for and movement towards greater cultural identity. For it is by interacting with other members of his culture that an individual becomes knowledgeable about and is able to identify with his culture. If cultural identity is weakening, and if a culture is being changed or lost in an acculturation process, by increasing social interaction within a group or community, that culture and the identification of individuals with that culture, will be reinforced and strengthened. This process can be seen to occur with different ethnic groups in Vancouver.

The emphasis on both social activities and social services also indicates the likelihood that the Indians of B.C. are bringing about change in their life situation, both on the Reserve and in urban centres. By getting together within their communities, becoming aware of themselves as a group, and working with other such groups, the Indians will be more likely to implement change in their life situations. Also, the large amount of money associated with Indian operated social agencies in urban centres in B.C., indicates the desire for and the likelihood of change occurring in the life situation

of those Indians within the cities.

Basically then, it is felt that the emphasis given to the Social category is indicative of two characteristics of Indian culture today: the need for a greater and richer community life and cultural identification or awareness, and the change which the Indians are bringing about in their life situations. Both of these characteristics of Indian culture reveal the current trend of change in Indian culture, in that they both seem to point to the fact that Indians are becoming increasingly aware of and involved in their own culture, and the people and issues unique to their own culture.

Thus the emphasis given to projects falling into the social category, as with the emphasis to projects falling into the Artistic category, points to the rebirth and new growth of Indian culture which is presently occurring. This is based on the evidence that the largest total sum of money from the First Citizen's Fund is spent on projects in the realms of the Social and Artistic. ✓

In an attempt to look at the data presented by the schedule of allocations in a slightly different manner, the projects in each category were subdivided into three groups: those which originated from or represented a distinctly Indian culture; those which originated from or represented the White culture; and those for which it was impossible to say. The results (see Table 2) show that three categories -- Social, Arts, and Education -- showed a significantly high proportion of projects which were distinctly Indian in origin, in terms of total amount of money allocated and total number of projects. For the remaining three categories, it was implssible to say whether projects originated from and were representative of Indian or White culture; acculturation would appear to have had most effect in the areas encompassed by these last three categories.

Education contained a large proportion of projects which were distinctly Indian, due to the fact that research in linguistics and legends were included under the heading of Education. Other than that, one would have to admit that the mere application of the present education system to Indians is the result of acculturation, and hence projects involved in this area would not be distinctly Indian.

However, the project areas represented by Social and Arts seem to be predominantly of Indian in origin and representation. This would support the previously made conclusion that the preference given to the Artistic and Social categories in terms of total amount of money spent, is representative of the current rebirth of the Indian culture in B.C. For it is seen that the strong tendency is for projects in these areas to be distinctly representative of Indian culture. One could not say that the emphasis on Social and Arts represented a rebirth of Indian culture, if under further examination, the projects were not found to be distinctly Indian in nature.

Hence a conclusion can be made: the reaction of B.C. Indians to the First Citizen's Fund, determined by an analysis of the use to which they put the resources of the Fund, shows that a strong trend in Indian culture at present is an interest in or emphasis on Social and Artistic activities. As projects in these two areas seem to strengthen and emphasize Indian culture from within, and since under further analysis, projects in these two categories alone, are distinctly Indian in origin and representation, this is considered to be symptomatic of the current revitalization of Indian culture. ✓

Two levels of reaction of the Indians of B.C. to the First Citizen's Fund have been looked at. The first was the public, overt reaction of the B.C.

Union of Indian Chiefs to the policies and administration of the First Citizen's Fund. The second was the general reaction which the Indian people exhibited towards the Fund, by the use they made of it. This reaction, although also overt, was less direct, and required categorization before being analysed. Both reactions are expressive of the current trend of Indian culture in B.C. today; both reactions show that the Indians are becoming increasingly aware of themselves and of what is Indian; both reactions are indicative of the cultural re-awakening which is occurring, bringing with it a new richness, strength, and vitality to the Indian culture of B.C.

Table 1:  
Distribution of Grant Money.

	CATEGORY					
	Social	Artistic	Athletic & Recrea.	Education	Economic	Political & Communication
Total amount of money	\$620,108	\$581,709	\$293,938	\$265,943	\$230,594	\$228,133
Total no. of projects	97	103	122	92	38	31
Average grant size	\$6,393	\$5,648	\$2,409	\$2,912	\$6,068	\$7,359

Table 2:  
 Subdivision of Categories According to Cultural Origin  
 of Project.

		Total Amount of Money per Subdivision
Social	Indian	\$560,734
	White	\$52,149
	Can't Tell	\$7,225
Artistic	Indian	\$458,104
	White	\$123,605
	Can't Tell	
Education	Indian	\$161,564
	White	\$28,998
	Can't Tell	\$55,381
Athletic & Recreation	Indian	\$23,350
	White	\$36,648
	Can't Tell	\$233,940
Economic	Indian	
	White	\$230,594
	Can't Tell	
Political & Communication	Indian	
	White	\$228,132
	Can't Tell	