In summer 1981, at the request of Alberta Education, an evaluation study was undertaken of all learning resources presently listed in "Alberta Social Studies Learning Resources for Elementary Schools" and "Alberta Social Studies Learning Resources for Secondary Schools," including recommended and required resources, as well as teaching units, Kanata Kits, and Alberta Heritage Learning Resources. A total of 246 named titles are included in the evaluation. The basis for the evaluation was the way native people are portrayed in the curriculum, and the way native-related issues are dealt with. This summary report discusses several kinds of problems which were noted in the evaluation of individual learning resources: errors of fact; errors of representing theory, speculation, or approximation as fact; errors of attribution; errors of implication; problems of context; stereotyping repetition; the American border; periods and problems; historical reinterpretation; ideologies; and problems related to the inquiry approach. The report also shows the Alberta Heritage Learning Resources posed serious problems that required editorial revision; supplementary editorial introduction for teachers, students, or both; or in the case of six titles, outright abandonment. (AH)
NATIVE PEOPLE IN THE CURRICULUM

Report Summary

A Report Prepared for Alberta Education By:

A. DePore, R. Carney, and C. Urion

February, 1982
GENERAL EVALUATION

For summary purposes, individual evaluations of all but the Heritage Learning Series were reviewed and each title was assigned one of five categories (the details of the categorization are shown in Table 1). The five categories are as follows. The percentages shown reflect the issue only generally, and are not absolute measures.

1. **Missing observations** - The titles were not available from any source at the time of the presentation of the formal report. These titles are thus not included in the summaries, though most of them have since been evaluated.

2. **Good** - The inclusion of native issues is appropriate to the resource, to the grade level, and to the theme; the treatment is factual and unbiased. This category comprises 12.95% of all evaluated titles, and 18.80% of those titles which include native issues.

3. **No relevance** - The resource does not address native issues as such, nor does the topic legitimately demand explicit reference to native issues. This category includes 31.09% of all evaluated titles.

4. **Acceptable** - Some problems with the resource were identified, but those problems were not serious enough to compromise its use in the curriculum (12.44% of all evaluated titles, and 18.04% of those titles which include native issues).

5. **Problematic** - Problems documented in the resource, or in the context of its use, are serious enough to require specific remediation, either by revision or by direction to teachers in a teacher's guide (32.12% of all titles, but 46.62% of those titles which deal with native issues).

6. **Not acceptable** - Such serious problems exist with the resource that it should have no place in the curriculum (11.40% of all titles; 16.54% of those titles which address native issues).

Thus, approximately 43% of all titles reviewed were found to pose some definite problem. When one looks at only those titles which are directly relevant to native issues, however, the figure is higher: 63% of all materials which deal with native issues were found to be either seriously problematic or completely unacceptable (summarized in Table 2).

When distinctions are made between grade cohorts, the pattern is generally repeated (see Table 3). Distinguishing between kinds of learning resources, however, reveals distinct patterns; required resources pose more problems than recommended resources. The teaching units are, by comparison, more highly evaluated. Of particular note, the Kanata Kits were judged to be excellent by comparison (Table 4).

Table 5 distinguishes between types of resources, but includes only the 123 titles of all grade levels which are directly or implicitly addressed to native issues. Of all the titles which include reference to native issues, between 60% and 70% are deficient in some way, some gravely; in this comparison the teaching units fare somewhat better and the Kanata Kits are relatively highly evaluated.
During the summer of 1981, at the request of Alberta Education, an evaluative study was undertaken of all learning resources presently listed in Alberta Social Studies Learning Resources for Elementary Schools and Alberta Social Studies Learning Resources for Secondary Schools, including recommended and required resources, as well as teaching units, Kanata Kits, and Alberta Heritage Learning Resources. A total of 246 named titles are included in this evaluation. (Thirty-eight titles were not available at the time of the study, but have since been separately evaluated.) The study includes more than 246 separate works, because series of resources are sometimes evaluated as one title, rather than as individual titles. Thus, approximately 342 separate works were reviewed.

The basis for evaluation was the way native people are portrayed in the curriculum, and the way native-related issues are dealt with. There are definite implications in such a survey for the applicability of the resources for use in schools with native children. The broad categories for evaluation were:

1. factual validity of the treatment of native peoples;
2. adequacy of coverage, given general topic and statement of goals (that is, omissions in treatment);
3. stereotyping; and
4. interpretive bias.

After those specific categories are considered, there are some evaluative categories which are more general and address the relationships between learning resources and the learning resources as a whole. Those categories, which cut across grade levels and themes are:

1. the context, by level and topic (for example, development of concepts, level-to-level);
2. the context, by theme (that is, as ideology, history, or social science); and
3. the pedagogical effects of the resource (for example, the misuse of the inquiry approach by posing questions for which only stereotypic answers will suffice).

A research team of five experts in history, sociology, anthropology and curriculum development reviewed each resource, making specific citations and general evaluations, based on the evaluative scheme for content analysis shown in the appendix. The learning resources were evaluated individually with reference to those headings, but the findings are reported in general categories which seem more appropriate when considering the total corpus of learning resources.

Normally studies of this nature address only one evaluative aspect, and include far fewer titles. This study is unusual in that so many different kinds of resources at all levels were evaluated, and so many categories of evaluation were included. Because of the scope of the study, and because the study focused upon probable remediation of problems, not just documentation of them, the results of the study were not expressed in abstract ranked values. Rather, both specific and general citations were made of each resource. A lengthy appendix submitted to the Department of Education, with the body of the main report, documents the basis upon which these general statements are made.
The Alberta Heritage Learning Resources pose a different array of evaluative judgments. Table 6 documents the evaluation of the *Books for Young Readers and Western Canadian Literature for Youth*. Such serious problems were found in those series that well over two thirds of the total titles would seem to require editorial revision, supplementary editorial introduction for teachers, students, or both, or in the case of six titles, outright abandonment.

Table 7 is a documentation of the kinds of literature included in the *Alberta Literature for Senior Students and Adults* series. The problems with that series were of a different nature, because those are selected titles of existing literature. The problem there is one of balance, and the acceptance at face value of a body of literature as representing "fact". Five of the 30 titles are of direct native relevance, and 11 of the titles deal indirectly with native-related issues. Of those 16, nine demand some editorial address if they are to be used effectively as part of a curriculum.
SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS

Several kinds of problems were noted in the evaluation. The following categories are summaries of more elaborate discussions in the formal report. The first six categories of problems come from the evaluation of individual learning resources. The last six categories are generalizations about the learning resources as a whole, considering level and theme.

Errors of Fact

The most obvious type of problem in the materials is errors in fact. Sometimes the errors are peripheral to the intent of the material (for example, the Inuit boy who tells about "summer when it gets warm and dark soon"). But there are fundamental errors as well: a discussion of a reserve in Jasper, Alberta, which does not exist; and the theme that, north of the North Saskatchewan River, no material change in the way of life took place for native people when Europeans established trading posts (in fact, the economic base altered more dramatically than ever before); that native people have recommended against the building of a pipeline in the North at any time; or that Federal government policy once was to persuade large numbers of Inuit people to move to the islands of the High Arctic.

There are many such errors, and the direction in which they occur is unpredictable. The consequences of such errors of fact is that students will doubt the veracity of other material in the resources, or worse, will accept erroneous information as true.

Errors of Representing Theory, Speculation, or Approximation as Fact

On occasion, theory or speculation is represented as fact. Instead of prefacing a discussion with "historians or geologists think that ...", the information is presented as indisputable. For example, anthropologists speculate about the effect of the acquisition of the horse on Blackfoot leisure time. That speculation is translated into a simple statement of fact several times in the resources: for example, the horse gave the Blackfoot the time to develop a rich culture, period. Some anthropologists have typified the acquisition of the horse in that manner, but that can in no way be considered "fact". A related instance of the uncertain being represented as certain occurs in relation to dates: for example, the buffalo disappeared in 1875, 1877, or some other specified date, when in fact the disappearance took place over a period of time. Combining those errors, the resources often give fairly specific dates for Amerindian migration to the Americas over the Bering Land Bridge.

In this summary, citations to specific works are omitted. Full references are found in the formal report submitted to Alberta Education.
In representing the uncertain as certain or the gradual as instantaneous we lose an opportunity to convey to children an understanding that knowledge is sometimes tentative, that there are often competing theories about what or how something happened and that change is a process which occurs over time and is often detectable only over longer time periods.

**Errors of Attribution**

In many of the resources there is a failure to distinguish various Indian tribes or native groups. For example, "The first governments in Canada were those belonging to the native peoples. Members of a tribe would gather together to decide on matters of war or of the hunt. In these meetings chiefs were elected to lead the tribes for short periods of time." There is no distinction here between groups, which is perhaps just as well, for this kind of "government" was not characteristic of any known tribe at all. Pre-contact housing styles, residence patterns, and clothing are often represented as a kind of pan-Indian primitive, and misattributed (for example, Kwakiutls wearing animal skins, when they in fact wore clothes made of cloth).

Another example of the failure to attribute culture-specific practices occurs in the recounting of myths, legends and stories: they are often identified as only "Indian" legends, rather than Cree, Blackfoot, or other (and for the most part are only European simplifications of plots). The consequence of this failure to make appropriate attributions is that students perceive all Indian groups to be the same where, in fact, there was and is a great deal of diversity.

**Errors of Implication**

Inadequate development of contextual information or inappropriate construction of events may lead to misinterpretation. The curriculum generally holds that warfare with Indians was a threat to settlement in New France, and that Jesuit missionaries in New France were martyrs. In fact, of course, military alliances, the Hurons with the French and the Iroquois with the British, predict the patterns of warfare between all the groups, including the Europeans. Failure to specify the alliances predicts that students will surmise that the Indians were inexplicably warlike, or that the martyred missionaries died because of their religious belief instead of their nationality.

There are numerous accounts of Indians having no resistance to disease. Of course disease did pose problems, but the implication that Indians were unique in their susceptibility ignores the high incidence of disease in settler populations as well, and gives Europeans a germ theory of disease far before any such thing had been developed.

As well, there is the example drawn from a discussion of Blood Indian initial success, then failure, in farming: the resources have it that cultural and educational background militated against participation in the "fast pace" of modern farming. In fact, it was rapid capitalization of agriculture and incredible bureaucratic constraints on Indians which forced so many of them out of farming.
Problems of Context

Appropriate information may be given, and appropriate questions asked, but a difficulty arises when not enough information is provided, in context, for student readers to reach an adequate understanding of the way in which the issues are interrelated. In addition to the errors of implication cited above, there are statements to the effect that "some native people have not been able to adapt to modern society". The problem exists (not just specific to Indians), but without an adequate explanation the elementary student will at best interpret this as an indication of "stone age man" unable to adapt to technological change.

In the Grade 8 resources, when the establishment of Manitoba is discussed, there is a general focus upon the execution of Scott. By posing the struggle as one between Scott and Riel, with equal coverage to both, the execution is made paramount to the largely, unconsidered context of French-English, Orange Ontario-Roman Catholic Quebec, and Canadian-American conflicts. It is an implicative error, but it is the context and the scanty information base provided which leads to a conclusion of simple racial or personal conflict.

In some resources, gratuitous comments are made out of context. One discussion of the signing of Treaty 7 calls the treaty rights "permanent welfare".

Stereotyping

Stereotyping is pervasive in the curriculum and is a serious problem, for example, in such global claims as that "the Indians seemed to acquire the white man's faults more readily than his virtues". Generally, Indians "massacre" or "murder" whites, while Indians are "killed" by whites, usually "in battle". There are accounts that Indians never learned to domesticate the buffalo, without pointing out that the only animal native to North America that has been domesticated by Indians or whites is the turkey.

Stereotyping is reinforced by repetition. Here stereotyping occurs through repeated recounting of material, including factual material, which through repetition implies a stereotype of native people. A clear example of this is in the many accounts of Indians' warlike behaviour, or the many accounts of the whisky trade which occur repeatedly in different contexts from elementary grades to high school. There was a whisky trade, but the inordinate emphasis on it, and the failure to point out that the whites who drank liquor also got drunk, serves to insure that the image of the drunken Indian is well ingrained.

The stereotypes are not always negative. "Carefree", "happy-go-lucky" Metis are stereotypes which do not coincide with the mounting of two rebellions. In several accounts, as well, Indian people speak to each other in quasi-poetic pidgin English. This surely reinforces a stereotype of language deficiency.

Repetition

A major problem with the learning resources is the repetition of themes: on occasions when native content is called for, very often the same limited information is restated, so that the materials on native peoples is not cumulative. This is worse in many ways than omitting the material, because:

1. the author of the material and the teacher both believe they have dealt with native content in a responsible manner;
2. the student comes to believe that he knows all there is to know about native peoples, since the same materials are covered each time the subject comes up; and

3. the student's interest in the subject is murdered.

Indians in Eastern Canada are given some attention (the same restated themes, from grade to grade) in discussing early French-English relations in Canada. The same undeveloped themes of the whisky trade, the N.W.M.P., and Jerry Potts appear time and time again.

Another aspect of repetition is that the continuous inclusion of the same exotica leads children to believe that the eating of moose nose and buffalo hump, for example, is of central cultural significance to Indians.

The problem invoked is one of where to deal with native issues, and how to provide for development of more thorough treatment through advancing grades.

The American Border

The learning resources reflect some popular myths about the differences between the United States and Canada. The "peaceful" expansion of settlers into the Canadian West is compared to the bloody wars in the United States. Yet we would have our "rip snortin'" heroes and excitement in conquest as well. The learning resources generally do not reflect the history of the relationship between the two countries' development, for example, in the struggle for the Oregon Territory, and the effect which native people had on that struggle, or their part in it.

By ignoring the continental nature of native issues, we have failed, by and large, to explore a period of central importance in particularly Western Canadian history. In addition, the inclusion of a continental perspective, as opposed to a Canadian perspective only (which would be insular by definition), seems very important when the international boundary separates tribal groups arbitrarily, and when modern pan-Indianism is an international fact. When discussing land claims, for example, the American experience with land claims becomes an important issue for Canada.

Periods and Problems

From the time of the second Riel rebellion to the present, the resources do not discuss native realities in any significant or comprehensive manner. That is probably because there is a tendency to deal with Indian content only during the contact and interdependence stages of Canadian history. The image of the Indian appears, then, in modern times to be a result of a failed policy, and is dealt with in terms of intractable social problems. It is probably because Indian-Eurocanadian contact has been so poorly documented and interpreted in history generally, that the Indian drops from sight in the learning resources in the last half of the last century, to emerge as a modern phenomenon presenting social problems.

That observation presents a problem in identifying when native content is relevant to a social studies topic.
Historical Reinterpretation

Another problem is that in dealing with native issues, the issues are interpreted in non-native frames of reference. For example, in some texts the Riel rebellions are not analyzed in terms of native resistance, but are couched wholly in terms of "Western alienation" or as manifestations of "French-English" conflict.

Characteristically the frontier is perceived in a European context only: it is "sparsely settled", a "frontier of achievement" and largely unexploited. Significant actors in Canadian history are thus ignored, and their perspectives denied validity.

Ideologies

A common theme in the learning resources is that western man, through rational behaviour and appropriate technologies, sustains and improves his environment, and extends the benefits of his systems to other, less developed, societies. This liberal perspective has three important implications in the social studies curriculum. Canadian participation in colonial or imperialistic ventures is not documented, so that students cannot relate Canada's position in relationship to the third world to a past in which the country colonized vast tracts of land.

A second implication is that in some treatments of third world development, atypical solutions are permitted to be advanced because of unique cultural, political and economic conditions of the host country. The same flexibility is seldom tolerated in the few references to native people in Canada.

A third implication is that when the occasional, and vague references are made to the belief systems which native societies possess, the reluctance of native groups to abandon them is seen primarily as a reaction against the complexity of the modern world, rather than as a credible attempt to sort out and order human affairs.

Some Problems Related to the Inquiry Approach

The examiners have found many instances of violation of intent of the inquiry approach in the learning resources, particularly with respect to native content. The inquiry approach itself is an effective pedagogical tool. Generally, there is a much too limited information base presented in native-related content areas for there to be an effective use of the approach. It is tempting to suggest that authors sometimes ask questions which they do not wish to address themselves or which they cannot address because they attempt to cover too much material in limited space. Some questions are addressed to students which bring up contentious issues such as land claims and treaty rights. Such issues deserve thorough treatment, not questions to students who are not given enough information to make reasoned judgments.
This study is not comparative of ethnic groups, yet the conclusion may be clearly stated than no ethnic group is as consistently stereotyped in the curriculum as are native people. We pose tentatively general answers to the question of why that is so.

1. Native people have not been represented as users or developers of general curriculum nor of learning resources. Due partly to high drop-out rates of native students, and to the relatively few numbers of native people involved in education professions, until recently, it seems reasonable to state that had there been any number of native people involved as users or developers of resources, there would have been some monitoring of the more or less unremitting stereotypic treatment, some more protest at the personal compromise and discreditation that the stereotyping effects.

2. The social science disciplines have not articulated a significant knowledge base upon which to build a social studies curriculum which deals adequately with native issues. The social theory of the social sciences defines native issues in terms of problem, or as representative of native culture; "culture" in that context refers to a component in social theory, not to the everyday life of people. Canadian historians have been preoccupied with other issues, and there has only recently been a significant address to native issues in history which were not tangential or adjunct to Canadian political history in general.

3. Attitudinal surveys document a relatively high degree of anti-Indian racism in the middle-latitude towns and cities of the Prairies, generally, and in Alberta specifically. That context is the one in which native students go to school, and in which learning resources are developed. That is an unavoidable fact of Alberta life. Learning resources can explore that social fact, in an effort to understand it; or those resources can perpetuate it.

4. Finally, it would appear that the educational establishment, at all levels; publishers, academicians, writers and evaluators; often do not know their subject matter well enough to convey it without a variety of errors.
APPENDIX A

CATEGORIES FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

1. Reference
   a. No reference to native people
   b. Some reference would be appropriate
   c. No reference needed
   d. Offending pages

2. Type of material
   a. Texts
   b. Illustrations
   c. Films
   d. Filmstrips

3. Temporal context of material
   a. Precontact period (East to 1550; West to 1625)
   b. Interdependence period (East to 1700; West to 1860)
   c. Dependence period (East to 1850; West to 1885)
   d. Reserve period (to 1950)
   e. Contemporary

4. Substantive content of material
   a. Folklore
   b. Governance
   c. Tribal distinctions -- cultural groups
   d. Knowledge systems
   e. Native people as members of Canadian society

5. Contextualization of content vis-a-vis
   a. Dominant whites
   b. Indian culture(s)
   c. Underdeveloped peoples
   d. Presuppositions about children
      1) curricular
      2) theoretical-developmental
   e. Curriculum objectives and overall content

6. Bias/Accuracy
   a. Sins of omission
   b. Sins of commission
      1) stereotypical terms and/or description
      2) positive, negative, weak, moderate, strong
      3) native cultures as exotica
      4) native cultures as static entities
   c. Sins of interpretation
   d. Imputation of meaning
   e. Rendering of judgment
### Table 1

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Table 1 - Number of Learning Resources Evaluated, By Evaluative Category, Grade and Type of Resource.

1 = Required Learning Resource
2 = Recommended Learning Resource
3 = Kanata Kit
4 = Teaching Unit
5 = Total Learning Resources in Evaluative Category
### Table 2

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(Missing Observations = 38)

**Table 2 - Proportions of Learning Resource Titles In Each Category: Total Corpus and Resources Which Address Native Related Issues.**

### Table 3

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(Missing Observations = 38)

**Table 3 - Number and Proportion of Examined Learning Resources In Each Evaluative Category, Grade Cohort.**
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<th>Resource</th>
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<td>2 (4.26)</td>
<td>9 (19.15)</td>
<td>22 (46.80)</td>
<td>6 (12.77)</td>
<td>47 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended</strong></td>
<td>47 (39.82)</td>
<td>12 (10.17)</td>
<td>12 (10.17)</td>
<td>34 (28.82)</td>
<td>13 (11.02)</td>
<td>118 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kanata Kits</strong></td>
<td>1 (6.25)</td>
<td>10 (62.50)</td>
<td>0 (62.50)</td>
<td>4 (25.00)</td>
<td>1 (6.25)</td>
<td>16 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Units</strong></td>
<td>4 (33.33)</td>
<td>1 (8.33)</td>
<td>3 (25.00)</td>
<td>2 (16.67)</td>
<td>2 (16.67)</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Missing Observations = 38)

Table 4 - Number of Titles examined and Proportion Within Evaluative Categories, By Type of Resource.

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>PROBLEMATIC</th>
<th>NOT ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required</strong></td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>56.41</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended</strong></td>
<td>16.90</td>
<td>16.90</td>
<td>47.89</td>
<td>18.34</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kanata Kits</strong></td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Units</strong></td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 - Titles Deemed Relevant, Proportion of Titles Within Evaluative Categories, By Type of Resource.
Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO RELEVANCE</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>PROBLEMATIC</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books for Young Readers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Canadian Literature for Youth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(% of Total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO RELEVANCE</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>PROBLEMATIC</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books for Young Readers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Canadian Literature for Youth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(13.63%) (18.18%) (40.91%) (27.27%) (100)

Table 6 - Evaluative Categories Heritage Series: Western Canadian Literature for Youth and Books for Young Readers.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVELS</th>
<th>BIOGRAPHIES</th>
<th>FOLIOS</th>
<th>GENERAL NON FICTION</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Native Issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes Native Issues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Relevant to Indian Issues</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 - Of sixteen titles focusing on or including native issues; 9 present a definite problem; 7 seem appropriate inclusions as they stand.