

# UBCIC Newsletter Articles: Indian Child Caravan 1979-1981

## *Our Indian World: The Choice is Ours*

“Indian Homes for Indian Children.” Nov./Dec., 1979. Vol. 2, No. 7, p. 10-11.

B.C. Native Women's Society questions why 1500 BC Status Indian Children are being placed in non-Indian homes.

“Child of Two Worlds: Which Path Will You Follow?” Nov./Dec., 1979. Vol. 2, No. 7, p. 11.

Narrative on mixed blood. Personal. Quantitative. Poem about ‘Half Breeds’.

“The Right to Grow Up Indian” January, 1980. Vol. 2, No. 8, p. 18.

Department of Indian Affairs to conduct a Child Welfare Study of British Columbia. UBCIC statement, “We feel that our goal is to improve child care strengthening Indian government and its ability to deal with child welfare problems.”

“Child Welfare Study.” February, 1980. Vol. 2, No. 9, p. 38.

Announcement that a contracted position of, “Coordinator of the Child Welfare Study” through the Department of Indian Affairs will be conducted out of the UBCIC office, but is not an employee of the UBCIC.

“Indian Controlled Health Services Called For.” March, 1980. Vol. 2, No. 10, p. 8-10.

Subheading, “The Children Want a Better Future.” Children making a statement to the committee that they want a better future by participating more in the community and learning their culture.

“Care for your Children” / Xavier Eugene. March, 1980. Vol. 2, No. 10, p. 35.

Provides pointers on raising children with love and respect.

“Child Welfare Study” / Fay Blaney. March, 1980. Vol. 2, No. 10, p. 35.

Update from the coordinator of the Child Welfare Study stating the importance of document submission of terms of reference material.

“Child Welfare Study.” April, 1980, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 35.

Announcement regarding a three month extension conducting the preliminary study. Northern B.C. Communities participating through local meetings.

“Our Children, Our Survival” / Chief Wayne Christian. July, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 218-19.

A moving call to action to assert the rights of Indian governments to care for their own children. Challenges the provincial jurisdiction within the lands of the Spallumcheen Indian Band regarding the taking of children away from the reserve under the guise of protecting the children from abuse, when they are put into situations of non-Indian homes which Christian states, “lead to social chaos in our society.”

“Welfare of our Children.” July, 1980, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 28.

Announcement of completion of phase one of child welfare study.

“Child Apprehension: Judge Sends Children Back Home.” July, 1980. Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 28.

Summary of various child apprehension issues before the court; difference between welfare worker and community needs; judge makes statement in one case that the, “community should take responsibility for the welfare of their children.” In a separate note, Spallumcheen codifies their responsibility to their children, limiting outside influence on the care of their children.

“The New Family and Child Service Act: Bill 45.” August, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 33.

This bill was not in law at the time of printing, however, this was a briefing to the potential fall backs on Indian families. It was found that social workers were given greater discretionary powers in defining the more general terms for apprehension, which could lead to more Indian children apprehensions, rather than less.

“Interview Chief Wayne Christian - Leader of the Indian Child Caravan.” September, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 4-6

Interview conducted by Sadie Worn-Staff of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. Chief Christian discusses his own personal loss of his brother through suicide and the effects of “identity crisis trauma”, resulting from Indian children losing their identities through forced removal from the community. The official call for the caravan entitled, “A Call to Indian People to Join or Support our B.C. Province-Wide Indian Child Care-A-Van” laid out the plans of the caravan, leading to a rally in Vancouver for October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1980.

“Chief Council Meeting.” September, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 6, p 16.

Announcement for upcoming Chiefs Council meeting to include Chief Wayne Christian and the Child Caravan.

“Our Children-Our Homes” / Fran Smith. September, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 25.

Two foster homes for Native children run by Native people were created to keep Indian children within cultural reach.

“Letter to the Editor.” September, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 33.

Letter from Mrs. Irene Bryson from the Osoyoos Indian Band on Chief Wayne Christians July 1980 piece (Our Children-Our Survival p.18-19, July 1980). Links section 12 of the Indian Act discriminated against Indian women as another form of genocide in line with the taking of children to be placed in white foster homes.

“Indian Child Caravan.” October, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 7, p. 7-8, 15-18, 20.

Subheading: “A Victory for our people – the implementation of Indian Government”. Three legs to this caravan from Neskainlith Indian Government Hall, the Kootenays, Central Interior and northern regions made up the second leg, and the third started from Mount Currie, all converged in Vancouver, starting in Oppenheimer Park on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1981. “The caravan then travelled through Vancouver, with a police escort, to the home of Human Resources Minister Grace McCarthy.” On October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1981, Wayne Christian and UBCIC representatives met McCarthy, where an agreement was worked out that the band can reclaim children now in non-Indian foster homes as long as the children wanted to return to the reserve. “The mechanism is now in place for the implementation of Indian Government in the area of child welfare.”

“Indian Child Caravan Starts Assembly with Determination.” October, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 7, p. 16.

A small article indicating no time to rejoice for victory resulting from the Indian Child Caravan as the undermining pressure from the Constitution could remove all “we've fought so fiercely during the last 113 years.”

“Resolutions.” October, 1980. Vol. 3, No. 7, p. 20.

Part of “Resolutions” beginning on page 19, a series of resolutions regarding Indian Government over child care.

“Indian Child Caravan.” January, 1981. Vol. 3, No. 9, p. 28.

Chief Wayne Christian will be meeting with, on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1981, DIA Regional Director Walchli, to confirm and develop further the transfer payments so that Bands will have complete control of Child Welfare funds. This is the same agreement made with the province as a result of the Child Caravan.

“Child Welfare Laws?” March, 1981. Vol. 3, No. 11, p. 30.

Various issues presented through looking at America Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, and the Spallumcheen Child Welfare legislation, their uses, implementation and lack of resources.

“Indian Child Caravan” / Chief Wayne Christian. March, 1981. Vol. 3, No. 11, p. 30.

Thank you for the support letter, along with acknowledging the lack of follow up due to other pressures with the constitutional express in dealing with the agreement between Grace McCarthy and the Spallumcheen Indian Band.

“A Great Indian Power is Created” / Chief Wayne Christian. April, 1981. Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 12-13.

Chief Wayne Christian discusses both the Child Caravan, and the Constitution Express. He offers three main points: 1) Standing up with the leaders, the people won our first victory – here he discusses the Indian Child Caravan of October 1980. 2) The Constitution Express showed the people have the power of victory – here he discusses the Constitution Express and remarks on the danger each person had in leaving the non-Indian government to decide Indian fate. 3) The people's movement takes the Indian Constitution Express on to England – stating that the people want to continue the fight to England.

“Child Conference Focuses on Indian Values” / Ethel Gardner. May-June, 1981. Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 16-17.

An Indian Child focused conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 17-21, 1981, connected children and family issues through the United States and Canada within the various Indian Nations. Mentioned was that British Columbia sent delegates from the University of BC through the NITEP Program and the social services program, also were sent delegates from the Professional Native Women's Association.