

3952 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

Final settlement of the claims of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians was provided for in a treaty made 2 October 1892, which was amended and approved by Congress 21 April 1904. By the terms of this treaty the Turtle Mountain Band ceded claims to all territory except two townships within the Turtle Mountain area. The treaty further provided for a cash payment of \$1,000,000 to the Tribe for the land ceded (9,000,000 acres). Provisions were also made for the allotting of the reservation and the allotting of such other lands within the Public Domain as might be necessary for the members of the Tribe unable to secure land within the designated reservation.

2. *Recent Conditions and Present Context*

Turtle Mountain Reservation covers an area six by twelve miles, adjoining additional trust lands. The population estimate for the reservation proper as of March 1966 was 7,131. Total number of Indians in Rolette County is considerably in excess of this. The area in which the reservation is located is far from any commercial or industrial center, the Dakotas as a whole representing an industrially undeveloped area with little to encourage such development.

The present complex social system of the Turtle Mountain Reservation has not been analyzed hitherto, although such analysis might be considered urgent in ethnological terms. Forest and Plains Ojibwa have been studied, but the Ojibwa are a minority of the reservation population. Of the 7,131 individuals on or near the reservation, it is estimated that only twenty to two hundred are full-blooded Indians. The majority as noted above are mixed bloods, or Metis—combinations of Ojibwa, Cree, Assiniboiné, and French-Canadian plus some Scots, Irish, and English; if any one element is dominant, it is possibly the French-Canadian. The comments that follow must be viewed as tentative, based upon limited observations over a limited period of time by individuals not primarily concerned with examination of social structure per se.

The elements that went into the formation of the Turtle Mountain Band were combined under the following socio-economic conditions. The Plains Ojibwa, after moving from the forest areas, adopted many of the characteristics of Plains Indian culture, as did the Cree. The Assiniboiné underwent similar adjustment. The French-Canadian element, however, entered as a consequence of the fur trade. Historical events of the 19th Century seriously attenuated the fur trade in areas adjoining these Indian groups, impoverishing the French-Canadian trappers, while virtual extermination of the buffalo and expropriation of Indian lands put an end to the economic base of Plains Indian culture. No replacement of this base other than the "hunting" of Government programs has so far evolved.

The smallest unit of Turtle Mountain society is the nuclear family (father, mother and minor children) living in independent households. Among more Indian-oriented members of the reservation, the nuclear family household is located in the vicinity of other closely related households. The groupings probably represent kindreds (groups of nuclear families linked by sibling ties). There is no evidence of the persistence of totemic groups or clans, nor of any organization beyond this level. The less Indian-oriented Metis are said to place emphasis upon kinship ties, but to a still lesser degree.

The present economic status of Band is poor. As estimated seventy households depend upon agriculture for subsistence in whole or in part. Seasonal farm labor was, in the past, more important than at present, as the increasing mechanization of farms tends to render unskilled labor superfluous. Seasonal construction work remains, but is limited. The low level of local or regional employment has been the cause of thousands leaving the reservation. An estimated six thousand enrolled members live away from the reservation.

The only developed political institutions of the reservation are those established under the tribal constitution, pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Under the present constitution, adopted in 1959, the tribal government consists of a Tribal Council (including a Chairman, elected by the entire reservation, and eight Councilmen, two elected from each of the four districts established for this purpose), and a Chief Judge and Chief of Police who are not members of the Council. In addition, each of the electoral districts has a three-member "sub-district council," the members of which are elected from the district. The function of the sub-district councils is to meet prior to the monthly Tribal Council meeting and to convey local proposals to the Council. In the event of the death or resignation of a Council member, the sub-district council concerned selects his successor.