

that such leaders are invariably dishonest. The consequence of extraordinarily limited employment opportunities is lack of the kind of leadership that would be an important factor in developing a viable reservation community.

The charges of the non-representative nature of the RBC members may now be considered in context.

The RBC is the major link between the Ojibwa of the reservation, the tribal government, and the various governments and agencies of the white man's world. The type of person elected to the RBC is, to some degree (more than most) knowledgeable about the white man's world and has demonstrated some aptitude for operating in it. He is socially the descendant of the pre-reservation chief who dealt with the fur traders, the Army, the Indian Commissioners and Agents on behalf of his band. Not necessarily the best hunter, warrior or medicine man, he was best in his ability to talk and negotiate with the agents of the white man—and so the RBC is chosen now. The member is subject to criticism for being successful or different, as noted above, but is nevertheless essential for those very qualities. Dissatisfaction may be increased by an implicit recognition that there are few individuals who are interested in, or capable of, assuming the responsibilities of RBC membership.

It seems reasonable to assert that the RBC members are chosen, in effect, as a "ministry for external affairs." An equivalent ministry of the interior exists but on an informal level as there is neither formal organization nor, at present, the basis for internal government.

The CAP came to White Earth with an RBC already in existence. Politicians with only the trappings of government, they were suddenly given responsibility for administration of the largest Government program in White Earth history. A government without substance was given substance and the opportunity to be genuine. With this context we may turn to the advent of the CAP.

3. *Impact of the Community Action Program*

BIA census figures indicate an Ojibwa population of 2050 living on the White Earth Reservation, and approximately three hundred living in predominately white communities adjacent to the original reservation boundaries. This total of 2350 compares to a figure of 9300 in the 1950 census—a decline indicative of movement in search of employment, since few have moved by preference.

The extent of Indian poverty at this reservation is indicated by a few of the available statistics:

1. Of 512 Indian families, 371 (or 72%) had incomes of less than \$3000.
2. The BIA estimates the average per capita Indian income is approximately \$700.
3. Of a labor force of 664, 125 were employed in full-time, permanent positions, 137 were seasonally employed, and 402 (60%) were unemployed.
4. 87% of houses were classified as sub-standard by the BIA.
5. 80% of students did not complete high school.

Thousands of rural whites are nominally included in the White Earth CAP, but are marginal. In general economically better situated, there are many rural poor among them.

During the preceding years, visits by representative of the State Legislature and state commissions, the governors, and representatives of the Federal Government had been made periodically. The visits and studies were frequently followed by the preparation of a plan for improvement of Indian welfare or the development of a viable economic base for the reservation, but in no case had anything of substance materialized.

a. *Formative Period Preceding CAP*

With this history, a representative of the President's Task Force visited the reservation in the late summer of 1964. Forest Gerard, of the PHS, was accompanied and introduced by Robert Treuer of the BIA, whose assistance was utilized by Gerard elsewhere. The meeting at White Earth was held at White Earth village and had been given some advance notice. Fewer than forty individuals attended the meeting and the resident anthropologist noted that there were more white observers present than Indians. Gerard presented a straightforward account of the legislation about to be enacted. When questioned, he answered honestly, often indicating that a question could not, at that time, be answered definitely. Discussion between the anthropologists and various Indians indicated that little faith was placed in still "another plan," and that results would have to be seen.