

Les Indiens du Québec
Of La Tuque Student Residence
Discover Switzerland and France
A hockey tour for 18 players
February 19th to march 5, 1974

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My letter of June 1997 to Dr J.R. Miller, author of the book		
SHINGWAUK'S VISION,		
A HISTORY OF NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS		

INTRODUCTION.

A trip to Switzerland for a group of 18 Indian boys, (10 to 13 years old)...!

What a strange, extravagant and utopic idea!

Why should such an idea occur to anyone?

And how could it ever be more than a pleasant dream?

Any father, who left in his native land overseas bright memories of a happy childhood in a country of beauty and charm, will, (I believe), dream of some day taking his children back to his homeland; he will look forward to re-living, through them and with them, some of the experiences he has known, re-discovering with them the towns and villages, the landscape where he lived as a child, and so, introduce them to the customs and values with which he grew up.

An impossible dream, perhaps, yet one which came true, and the primary reason why I toyed with the idea for quite a while before it became possible to realize it.

Furthermore, of course, such a trip was bound to be an unforgettable experience to the boys who would take part in it, literally opening up their eyes to a new world, to a different society and environment, allowing them to make friends with Swiss boys of their age, and discover that they had the same interests and the same problems as themselves.

Perhaps the boys who went on the trip were a little young to enjoy all the aspects of such a trip, particularly the cultural and historical wonders of Switzerland, but we were limited by the fact that the participants had to be of PeeWee age to be part of the team, even though, (as it turned out), they generally played against boys quite a bit older than they were.

Furthermore, the purpose of the trip was not primarily to study the culture and history of Switzerland but, through sport and singing, to create meaningful human contacts between Swiss families and our boys, and to expose them quite simply to life in Switzerland and its divers aspects.

I believe that our goal was reached beyond all expectations.

Chapter I.

Planning Stages.

The year 1970 saw a first timid attempt to investigate the possibility of taking the PeeWee team to Switzerland. At the time, I did not even know whether there was such a thing as Minor Hockey in Switzerland. My first inquiry by mail remained unanswered, and I interpreted the silence as evidence that minor hockey did not exist there.

Early in 1972, it came to my attention, quite by accident, that one of my cousins was President of the Lausanne Hockey Club. I wrote to him, mentioning my dream to, one day, bring a team overseas. In his reply, my cousin mentioned that the Committee of the Lausanne Hockey Club was interested, and might consider inviting us, if a way to finance such a trip could be found.

Another year passed before the Lausanne Hockey Club was in a position to extend to us a formal invitation on the following terms:

The Lausanne Hockey Club would defray all expenses incurred by our team while in Switzerland, namely transportation, board and lodging.

We, in turn, would be responsible for the airfare (Montreal-Geneva), as well as expenses such as passports, transportation from La Tuque to Montreal, pocket money and other incidental expenses.

During a holiday in Switzerland in July 73, several details were discussed with the President of the Lausanne Hockey Club, such as:

Number of participants,
Duration of our stay,
Number of games to be played,
probable date of the trip, etc.

As soon as school reopened in September, things began to move at a faster pace:

1./ The team was formed.

Most of the players we were counting on returned from the Reserves to La Tuque Residence.

From Mistassini Lake:

Harry Coonishish
Reggie Neeposh
Wally Rabbitskin
Richard Bosum
Billy Mianscum

From the **Waswanipi Band:**

Roméo Saganash
Johnson Pat Happyjack
John Otter
Peter Icebound
Matthew Happyjack
Henry Gull
Robert Ottereyes
Charly Teddy Gull

From the **Abitibi Dominion Band, (Amos)**

Ronnie Trapper (captain)

To complete the team, Mr Ludger Picard, the coach of *Les Indiens du Québec*, (the official name of the team), had recruited two good players at the **Huron Village** (Loretteville):

Sylvain Picard (goaltender)
Daniel Sioui.

In addition to being a good hockey player, Daniel was also endowed with a beautiful voice, which later proved to be a considerable asset to our singing program in Switzerland.

Both the parents and The Department of Indian Affairs agreed that those two boys could spend a year in our Residence. That also meant that the team would better deserve their name *(Les Indiens du Québec,)* by having representatives from 4 Québec Indian Bands.

2./ **All parents were informed** of the project in detail, and a written authorisation for their son to participate requested and obtained without any trouble.

3./ **The Department of Indian Affairs** was approached, and gave us the green light for the project, while pointing out that they would be unable to make any direct grant to help us finance the project.

4./ **Financial campaign.**

That, obviously, was a very big item.

Travel agencies contacted in early Fall, quoted a price of \$225.- for each youth, and \$ 434.- per adult in addition to the group leader; (Mr and Mrs Picard were to accompany the team, 16 players and 2 trainers.)

That would mean a staggering total of close to **\$ 5,000.-**

Where would the money come from?

Tucked away in a special Bank account, a fund made of various donations to the Residence had grown over the years and would guarantee about 50% of the target of \$ 6,000.- , which was our first estimate taking into account the cost of passports and other incidental expenses.

It appeared that the difference could be made up with a grant from the International Exchange Program of the Department of the Secretariat of State. An application in due form was forwarded to the proper authority. Great interest was expressed by the people concerned. However, our hopes for a grant were shattered, when it was revealed that the minimum age of participants to qualify for such a grant had to be 14.

Other sources had to be tapped.

The Québec Association of Indians and the Councils of the Bands concerned were contacted; the interest they expressed in the project materialized in grants of several hundred dollars.

An article was published in the local press, (*Echo de La Tuque*), which asked for help, suggesting as one scheme, that interested organisations could sponsor one (or more) player by paying his airfare.

The Knights of Columbus caught the idea and, indeed, paid the amount suggested of \$ 250.- , while several other organisations, friends of the school, businesses and suppliers of the Residence made donations which also totalled several hundred dollars.

In the meantime, the boys themselves did not remain idle. Assisted by their pals in the Residence, they sold hundreds of chocolate bars, collected hundreds of empty bottles, and distributed pamphlets in town, which brought in another \$500.-

Our target was reached and overshot, for which we were particularly grateful when we were advised by Cook's Travel Agency, that airfares had increased by 10% in November, and another 10% in January, which, in cold cash, meant an additional \$ 1,000.- for the group ticket.

Additional funds also proved of considerable worth in allowing *Les Indiens du Québec* to express their gratitude to their hosts in various ways, (as will be read later), as well as permitting an unscheduled side trip to Paris and Versailles.

PASSPORTS.

If raising sufficient funds involved a great deal of effort and considerable correspondence, it was the establishing of passports which gave us the worst nightmares.

Only the Father of a child can apply for a passport, and when fathers are scattered all over the bush, trapping over a huge area in Northern Québec, where communication facilities are next to non-existent, the difficulty of obtaining a form signed by the father can be very considerable. It also required help and cooperation from a number of people, who might be in touch with the trappers.

In addition to that problem, several questions asked on the passport form are irrelevant to Indian people: exact birthdates of parents, for instance, may never have been recorded nor their place of birth, (somewhere in the bush). If those data were ever recorded, chances were that the records had been lost or burned.

Finally, required birth certificates, or certificates of baptism were non-existent for more than half of the children. Certificate of Indian Status, issued by the Department of Indian Affairs were reluctantly accepted as sufficient for only a one year temporary passport.

Three trips to the Passport Office in Montreal were needed, and the last passport delivered only a few hours before plane departure on D day. It is true to say that it was for a boy who had joined the group late in the planning stage.

TEAM PERFORMANCE.

Les Indiens du Québec, duly registered and part of the PeeWee A league of La Tuque, started the season so well, (winning all their games but one for the first two months), that the Minor Hockey Association of La Tuque requested that they withdraw from the league, and played games with teams which presented more of a challenge to them, such as the Bantam B or the All Star team of La Tuque.

Although our boys were somewhat disappointed that they would thus be deprived of the honour of winning the PeeWee championship and trophy at the end of the season, they agreed that the scheme had merits; it would toughen them up and prepare them better for the Québec International PeeWee Tournament and the games in Switzerland, where we expected to face older players.

When the students returned from their Christmas holiday, we were very sorry to find out that two players were missing:

Johnson Happyjack, one of our good and strong defensemen, had followed his father to the trap line, and would spend the rest of the Winter with him.

Charlie Teddy Gull's family had suffered a terrible tragedy between Christmas and New Year. The *tent house* in which his and another family lived, had caught fire during the night. Nine of its 15 occupants had to be rushed to hospital. A little 4 year old girl subsequently died of the burns she had suffered. Charlie Teddy was not too badly hurt, and hospital authorities assured us that he would be released in time to join his friends for the trip, although he probably would be unable to play.

To replace Johnson Happyjack, it was decided that **Gordon Mianscum** would go on the trip. Gordon, although of PeeWee age, lacked the skill to become part of the team, and that had been a severe disappointment to him. So it was with great joy that he learned that he would nevertheless go to Switzerland as one of the trainers, (the other being William Neeposh, a physically handicapped boy .)

The few weeks between New Year and D day were busy, if not frantic ones, all preparations for the trip getting into high gear: hockey practices, choir practices, problems of equipment, clothing, correspondence, passports, as well as the last stages of our financial campaign through letters and publicity in the Press and on the Radio.

A team of reporter and technician from Radio Canada came up one day from Montreal to prepare a broadcast on our project, consisting of interviews with the participants, and singing in 3 languages, (French, English and Cree), both by the choir and our soloist Daniel Sioui. It was to go on the air in a Trans Canada morning broadcast, as well as on the international shortwave network.

The *Canadian Churchman* wrote an article about our project under the title: *A Skating Choir*.

INITIATION PROGRAM.

During those weeks, an effort was made to prepare the boys for the trip by giving them various information about Switzerland. That was done through talks, (with written summary and questionnaire) on such topics as the history and geography of Switzerland, as well as some of its customs, dwelling particularly on the parts we would visit, namely the 5 French speaking cantons of Vaud, Geneva, Valais, Neuchâtel and Fribourg.

Slides were also used, as well as several good 16 mm films obtained from the Montreal Film Library. It goes without saying that those films were shown not only to the PeeWees, but to all the students in residence, as well as in both English and French schools in town.

Audio-visual equipment, (super 8 mm camera and tape recorder), was purchased in order to make a record of the trip as complete as possible for all those who might be interested, particularly the parents of the PeeWees and the Bands they represented.

THE QUEBEC INTERNATIONAL PEEWEE TOURNAMENT.

The great rehearsal before our trip overseas was our participation in the Québec International PeeWee Tournament, which *Les Indiens du Québec* have attended for ten years.

Our first game in the regular series for the C Division was scheduled for Feb. 8 th against St Joseph de Beauce. The team left La Tuque by bus on Feb. 7 th., and I joined them on the following day to be present at the game. To play in the Tournament in the huge Québec Coliseum before thousands of cheering spectators is quite an experience for the boys; furthermore, to meet and make friends with players of other teams coming from all over Canada, the U.S.A, and, this year, France, Sweden and Finland, is also something the boys enjoy.

The game was quite exciting and close, but *Les Indiens du Québec* won by a score of 4 to 3, and thus, qualified for the quarter finals. An additional bonus, which may have explained in part their great will and determination to win, was that a victory meant staying in Québec, (and out of school), for a whole week, as the following game was not scheduled to take place before Feb. 12 th., and the game for the Indian Cup on Feb. 15 th.

In the quarter finals, the team went down to defeat, (6 to 0) against Greenwood, a strong team from Ontario but, to compensate, for the first time in five years, they won the Indian Cup with a decisive victory, beating the Caughnawaga Mohawks 6 to 3.

It was with great pride and glee that *Les Indiens du Québec* carried their precious trophy back to La Tuque on February 16 th.

Chapitre 2

D Day.

Charlie Teddy Gull, released from the Matagami Hospital earlier in the week, was supposed to be back in La Tuque that same day, (Feb. 16 th.) Unfortunately I learned upon my return from Québec that, at the last minute, Charlie had refused to leave his home, and would not return to La Tuque. He was probably still upset by the tragedy he had witnessed, and the fact that his Mother was still in hospital.

A few weeks before, fearing that he might not be released from hospital in time for the trip, I had obtained a passport form, duly filled and signed, for another boy, **James Neeposh**,.... just in case. But, would there be enough time to obtain his passport on such short notice? The Passport Office, consulted by phone on Monday morning , (D day -1,) said *yes*, if we came to their Office before noon on the next day.

And so, while the team was not due to leave by bus before 1:30 on Feb. 19 th., I planned to leave early in the morning with James and some of his friends; Harry, Gordon, Richard, and Reggie, (James' brother.) At the last minute, James asked if he could bring his guitar, which I encouraged him to do.

The boys were excited and in the best of mood. Accompanied on the guitar, they sang and sang in the car most of the way to Montreal, a *recital* which was taped and played over and over again later in the trip.

We reached the Passport Office by noon and, after lunch at the restaurant, we did some shopping and sightseeing in the city before returning to get James' passport. Although it was only 4 PM, and the plane was not due to leave until 9:40, we proceeded directly to Dorval Airport.

For the boys, it was the first time that they saw the airport, and they were quite amazed by everything they saw around them: the immensity of the buildings, the crowd, the various boutiques and, of course, the huge planes taxiing around the terminal.

Following supper at the Airport Restaurant, we watched for the bus bringing the rest of the team from La Tuque. It arrived shortly before 6, having travelled part way through a blinding snowstorm.

We had over 3 hours to wait before boarding the plane, but the time passed quickly. The boys had a great deal to discover and investigate in the terminal, and when they got tired of it, they ended up watching their favourite program on coin TV sets in the lounge. They were interested by the procedure of checking our luggage, (all 42 pieces of it), and they spent some of their pocket money in the various boutiques. A friend of the Saganash family, named Roger, (a singer and guitar player), had come to see them off, and he stayed with us until the last minute.

Some of the boys managed to irritate a cantankerous porter simply by going over and over again through the doors operated by a *magic eye*, something they had never seen.

Another incident, pleasant this time, was the conversation with a man who came to me, and asked where we had bought our bright red toques with Canadian crests. He went on to say that his company made them, and that he would send us a new set at no charge, if we would send him a picture of the team. (In due time, we did, and he kept his promise)

Swissair officials also came with a photographer, just before we boarded the plane, and, for their publicity, took a picture of a number of our boys.

Shortly before 9:30, we boarded the plane, which, we were disappointed to see, was a DC 8, and not a Jumbo DC 10, as we had hoped. Still, the boys were quite amazed by its size. They soon settled in their seat waiting for take off, some with a measure of anxiety. We left on time.

Then, they relaxed, and began looking forward to their second supper, asking all sorts of questions about the flight, the plane, and the time change.

The night was very short, of course. The sunrise over the sea of clouds was a magnificent sight. Alex Blacksmith, sitting next to me, kept repeating quite earnestly: *We are not moving, just hanging up in the air*, and that, even though, for quite a while, he could see another jet travelling a course parallel to ours. Only briefly, between Land's End and the Continent, did the sea appear dimly through the haze.

The captain soon afterwards announced that, thanks to a very strong tail wind, we had travelled part of the way at a ground speed of 720 mph, and that landing in Zürich would be 20 minutes ahead of schedule.

Breakfast was served, and the boys had a first taste of Swiss cheese, which some liked, and most did not. We broke through the clouds in our descent only a few hundred feet above the ground, touched softly on the runway, and soon came to a stop in front of the terminal.

Chapter 3.

Lausanne - Rochers de Naye.

From Geneva to Lausanne, (38 miles) on the shore of Lake Lemman, the road passes several towns and villages I know very well, (including my native town of Aubonne), through a landscape of rich farmland, orchards and vineyards.

Lausanne itself is a sprawling city of 135,000 inhabitants overlooking the lake from its many hills.

In the bus between Geneva and Lausanne, Mr Höfliger, an official from the Lausanne Hockey Club, brought us up to date as to the boarding arrangements and the program which had been prepared for us.

I discover with a measure of concern that, with one exception, each of our boys would be boarded **alone** in a Lausanne home. I had strongly suggested that the boys be boarded in pairs, (as it is the custom in Canadian Tournaments), for companionship, and to ease the tremendous change in environment, food, customs, and language they would have to face anyway. But I was told that it had been planned that way for two main reasons: first, because so many families had expressed the wish to have a PeeWee in their home, and, secondly, because few families, living in small apartments, had room for two boys.

I was assured that efforts had been made to find English speaking homes for the 7 boys who spoke English, but the efforts had only limited success.

The program prepared for the team was very attractive, but also very heavy. Whereas it had been suggested that our team play 6 games in the course of our visit, a total of 8 had been scheduled, which meant only one day of rest between the day of the first game and the last one 9 days later.

Here were the details:

			Visits		Games
Friday	Feb.	22nd		Morges	19h30
Sat		23		Neuchâtel	17h30
Sunday		24	Castle of Chillon	Sion	17h30
Tuesday		26		Lausanne	19h
Wed		27	Bretaye	Villars	17h30
Th.		28	Glass factory, Geneva	Geneva	17h30
Fr	March	1		Fleurier	17h30
Sat		2	Bern	Fribourg	17h30

When we got to Lausanne, our bus headed directly for the open air rink of Montchoisi, where lunch was served to the team. The boys hardly touched the fine meal, partly because they were not hungry after all the food they had on the plane, partly because they found the food so different from what they were accustomed to.

During the meal, the foster parents began to arrive, usually accompanied by a son, himself a hockey player in the *Minimes* league of the Lausanne Hockey Club. Everyone was anxious to get acquainted with our boys, and was firing questions, which showed a tremendous desire to make our boys happy and at home in their families. One question we heard over and over again was: *What do they like to eat, what should we give them?*

(I learned the next day that, just to make sure, one Mother took her PeeWee to the grocery store, and asked him to pick what he wanted to eat.

There were a few linguistic problems. The two families, who had been attributed the two boys who hadn't come, (Charlie Teddy Gull and Johnson Happyjack, both francophone), discovered that their replacements, Gordon Mianscum and James Neeposh were anglophone, and would have definite problems, (or so they feared), communicating with them. Still the boys agreed to try it, at least for one day; in both cases, it was very successful. I was particularly happy that it was so in the case of James Neeposh, who had been grumbling loudly, when he heard that he would be alone in a Swiss home.

To be complete on this matter of boarding, we did have one problem, later in the week, with two students, who had to be placed in a different home, one for linguistic reasons, and the other because of an apparent conflict with the Swiss boy he was boarding with.

Still, the boarding program can be considered a considerable success. My fears did not materialize, and the fact that they were paired with a Swiss boy precipitated their integration in that family, in the Swiss way of life, while at the same time, permitting the creation and strengthening of bonds of friendship, which became very real and ever stronger as the days passed.

One by one, the PeeWees left the skating rink with their family to go to their home. However, partly to ease the shock of *breaking up* the team, partly to give them some exercise after the long trip during which they had been confined in a plane, it was decided that a practice would be held at 6:30 that same day, with their new Lausanne friends. That took place at another rink uptown. It was evident, when I talked to the parents during the practice, that the first contact had been very promising, and that there had been no problem.

Nothing was scheduled for the next day, (Thursday February 21 st). We knew that, after their long trip, and because of the change of hours, our boys needed a long rest. However it was suggested to the parents that those who so desired could gather at the skating rink of Montchoisi after lunch, and that I would take the group on a little sightseeing tour of Lausanne.

Ten of our boys and four of their Lausanne friends came along. First we went to the lakeshore at Ouchy, walking through the beautiful *Parc Denantou*. When the boys discovered the swans and other lake fowls, they were delighted, and one at least, expressed his regret not to have his slingshot with him! It came as a surprise to them to discover that some flowering trees and shrubs were already in bloom. The boys had earlier commented on the fact that there was no snow on the ground, and that the lake and rivers were not frozen, like it was back home.

On we walked to the harbour, where we boarded a little cogwheel train which took us uptown, close to the oldest part of the city of Lausanne.

We stopped in front of the City Hall to watch a charming show of figurines which, every hour, move to the tunes of patriotic music, and tell some of the main events of the history of the *Canton de Vaud*.

Then, we climbed the 176 steps of the famous *escaliers du Marché* leading straight up to the gothic cathedral. We had hoped to climb to the top of the tower as well but, unfortunately, it was closed for repairs. We visited the interior of the cathedral, where the PeeWees admired the stained glass windows, and were impressed by the tombstones, some dating back several centuries. They were even shown the bones of a skeleton, which had been recently discovered, and were told that it was over 1,000 years old.

After a short walk to the *Gymnase* (Junior College) I attended several years ago, and a quick visit to a cousin, secretary for the Faculty of Law at the nearby University of Lausanne, we headed back for Montchoisi via the *Pont Bessières* and the main business street called *la rue de Bourg*, to *La place Saint François*.

There we boarded a trolleybus, a type of electrical vehicle which, for days, never failed to make our boys giggle and laugh out loud... *What a queer bus with antennas!*

At Montchoisi we met the families, who took the boys back home for supper and the night. It appeared that everyone else also had a good day, and got well acquainted with their new friends.

Les Rochers de Naye.

Our first game was scheduled in **Morges** for 7:30 PM on Friday 22nd with departure at 6:00 PM from Lausanne. As nothing else had been planned for the rest of the day, I had the idea that we could take the team to see a bit of the Alps, (and some snow!) by taking a cogwheel train, which winds its way up to the top of the **Rochers de Naye**, a 7,000 ft high Prealp within a reasonable distance from Lausanne.

It was further thought that the Lausanne boys should be invited to the excursion, partly to show our appreciation to the Lausanne families for their hospitality, partly to encourage the budding friendship between the two groups.

A number of phone calls and quick formalities were needed to realize the project at such short notice but, on the next morning, we were 33 strong boarding a train at the Lausanne station: the full Canadian contingent, plus a dozen boys from Lausanne.

The fast train stopped at Vevey, then at Montreux, (20 miles from Lausanne), where we switched to the little cogwheel train, (a special unit for us), which, in 55 minutes, slowly climbed the steep hills from an altitude of 1000 ft to about 7000.

In Montreux, the weather was dull with light rain falling. As we rose in altitude, we reached the cloud cover at about 3,000 ft, travelled in the fog for quite a while until, at about 5,000 ft, we broke through, to be faced with the glorious landscape of the Alps in bright sunshine and under deep blue sky. There were cries of delight from the team at the sight of the towering mountains and... at last, snow everywhere.

The train terminal is also a restaurant, where our lunch was served. Then we spent the afternoon climbing to the nearby summit, playing in the snow, watching the skiers, buying souvenirs, and just admiring the great spectacle before our eyes.

All too soon, we had to board the little train again, and return to Montreux and Lausanne, which we found drenched by heavy rain.

Would we play our game in Morges, (an open air skating rink) or would it have to be cancelled?

That was the question present in everyone's mind, as they gathered for a snack in the Montchoisi restaurant prior to leaving for Morges.

Chapter IV.

The First Three Games:

MORGES - NEUCHÂTEL - SION.

Before the game, William Neeposh and Gordon Mianscum came with me to visit my old farm school of Marcelin, a mile or so above Morges.

When we arrived at the skating rink, the team was already getting dressed. Several people from Lausanne had come to watch the game, and cheer for our team. The coach of the Neuchâtel team had driven all the way to Morges to watch our performance, in order to decide on a strategy for his team the next day. A press photographer was there as well, and took several pictures of the team and of individual players in the dressing room.

Rain was still pouring mercilessly when the teams were called on the ice. *Les Indiens du Québec* soon appeared, wearing each a headband and feather, and the captain a very impressive war bonnet. That bit of showmanship never failed to have a big success, especially when, lined up on the ice, and facing their counterparts, the players skated towards them and presented each Swiss boy with their headband as a gift. In addition, each player of every team we met, received a Canada pin on behalf of the Ambassador of Canada to Switzerland.

The game in Morges had been well advertised by posters all over town announcing an

INTERNATIONAL HOCKEY GAME,
OPPOSING THE MINIS OF THE MORGES FORWARD CLUB
AND
LES INDIENS CANADIENS PEEWEE.

In spite of the inclement weather, a small crowd had made a point of coming to see the game.

The Morges team appeared to be quite a bit older and heavier than ours, particularly two boys, who turned out to be ... 15. The coach gave the excuse that, because of a holiday, a number of his regular players were missing, and he had to replace them with older boys.

Those two boys, (Midgets, in fact), made a difference in the game, as well as the fact that our players were somewhat baffled by the condition of the ice, drenched with rain.

Still, they opened the score, and led most of the way, only to lose quite honourably by a score of 5 to 4.

It was the responsibility of each visited team to provide supper for our team following the game. This took place downtown in a picturesque old *café*, where we were served soup and a delicious plate of Swiss cold meat with Russian salad.

While the Morges players were not present, a number of members of the Forward Hockey Club were there. In spite of their loss, our players were in a cheerful mood, and the atmosphere was excellent and relaxed. It became even more so, when Daniel Sioui closed the evening by singing a few songs, as a way of thanking the people of Morges for their hospitality. That was an instant and considerable success, which would be repeated everywhere we went.

It was close to 11:30 PM before we got back to Montchoisi, where the parents had been waiting patiently to take the boys home and to bed.

Neuchâtel.

On the next day, the boys had a chance to sleep in most of the morning, as departure for Neuchâtel, (about 60 miles to the North), was not scheduled until 3 PM. As always, the bus was filled to capacity with members of the Lausanne families in addition to our group. The trip through the Vaudois Plateau and along the Lake of Neuchâtel was most pleasant. Our boys, accompanied on the guitar by James Neeposh, sang all their repertoire of English Western songs, then Daniel took over with his French songs.

We arrived in Neuchâtel with a good deal of time to spare, and enjoyed the scenery of the park, very pleasant in the bright Spring weather.

Soon the teams got ready, and were called on the ice. It was immediately apparent that the Neuchâtel coach had decided not to take any chances. Two of his players were... 16, (one of them towered above our boys from his height of 6' 2", figure we checked later.) Two of them were 15, and one 14. Here again, the coach claimed that he had no choice; to offset the difference in size and age, it was decided that the four older players would not be allowed to score.

Our team didn't seem to be terribly impressed by the size of their opponents. They played like demons a fast game with good passes, and ended up winning the game 4 to 2, to the great delight of their Lausanne friends.

After the first period, I had the visit of the coach from the Fleurier team, (where we were to play on March 1st.) He claimed that he was shocked to see the size of the Neuchâtel players, and assured me that this would not be the case in Fleurier, (an assertion which proved to be only partly true once we got there.)

After the game, three officials from Fribourg also came to see me. They freely expressed their *disgust* about the lack of fair play the Neuchâtel coach had shown by including such *big horses* on his team. They promised that only PeeWee age boys would be lined up against us in Fribourg... and this time, the promise came true.

They also discussed the program they had planned for us, such as a guided tour of the city and the visit of a ... brewery. I thanked them, and agreed for the first item, but advised that time would be too short for the brewery!

Indeed, I had just learned something I did not know, namely that we had all been invited on the same day as the game in Fribourg to lunch at Canada House in Bern, a very kind gesture of the Ambassador.

One point to the credit of the Neuchâtel people was that they had arranged to have all their boys eat with our team at a very good restaurant, which indeed was the right move to create a friendly relationship between the members of both teams. The service at the restaurant was quite slow, and the boys had plenty of time to get to know one another, and exchange autographs and little gifts.

Once again, we were back in Lausanne way behind schedule... shortly after midnight.

Sion.

Time of Departure on Sunday was scheduled for 1 PM, when we would be heading for Sion, about 60 miles to the East up the Rhone Valley. The road first follows Lake *Léman* along the foot of the steep vineyard of *Lavaux*, famous for his many stone walls retaining the soil. It looks as if the wine growers had put their precious soil in boxes and stacked them up.

Our first stop was at the Castle of *Chillon*, well known through Byron's poem *The Prisoner of Chillon*. Built in the Middle Ages on a rock sticking out of the lake in a very strategic location, it is also located in a most beautiful landscape of lake and towering Alps, particularly the *Dents du Midi*.

The visit appealed to the boys, who were delighted to roam through dungeons, halls and towers of the castle, admiring the knight's armours, the spears, swords and other weaponry of the time. It took some time to get everyone back to the bus, but eventually, we resumed our trip to Sion, enjoying the scenery of the Rhone Valley and its crown of Prealps and Alps, all the way to Sion.

The welcome in Sion was something which still sticks out in the minds of our boys. The hospitality of the people was most thoughtful and generous, showing itself in so many little touches: a Canadian flag, flanked by the flags of Valais and Switzerland in the arena restaurant, posters from Canada, including NHL hockey players, all this to make our boys feel at home. Not to be forgotten: the many gifts for the players and the adults accompanying the team.

But, what the *Indiens du Québec* appreciated most of all was that, for the first time, they would be playing PeeWee age players. The coach told me that he had resisted pressures from members of his Hockey Committee, who wished to boost the team's strength by including older boys.

He added: *We have lost every game this season, but our team is happy and proud to be playing against you. I want to "play the game" and give each member of my team the joy and pride of playing against your Indian PeeWees. We will most likely lose by a big score, but that does not matter at all.*

His fair play and sportsmanship was indeed in tune with the careful preparations which had gone into every aspect of our visit.

Before the game, in addition to the now customary parade and presentation of headbands to each player, (and receiving a present in return), the teams were to stay at attention on the ice, while both national anthems would be played. Between periods, young figure skaters were to show their skill on the ice, and, each time, one of our youngest players, (Matthew Happyjack and John Otter), would present the figure skater with a bouquet of flowers, and receive a kiss in return. Pictures of both teams together would also be taken on the ice.

The game went well for our team with a final score of... 16 to 1. In spite of the obvious superiority of the *Indiens du Québec*, it was a beautiful game, as the Sion players never gave up, but fought back to the best of their ability.

The supper which followed in the arena restaurant, was also in tune with the rest of the program. Small Canadian flags, (in addition to the large one on the wall,) had been pinned in oranges on the table. The boys of both teams mixed very well, and were soon carrying a lively conversation.

At the end of the supper, the Sion coach made a very fine speech, welcoming us, and dwelling on the great pleasure and pride it was for them to have a Canadian Indian team as their guest. As an additional token of their appreciation, a splendid book (SION VALAIS) was presented to the manager and to the coach of the *Indiens du Québec*, as well as to the representative from the Lausanne Hockey Club.

His speech was duly answered with expressions of gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to us in Sion, as well as the hope that we, in turn, would have the pleasure of welcoming the Sion team in Canada and/or return another year to Sion. To close the evening, the Sion coach asked permission to make presentation of prizes to members of his team, as that was their last occasion to be together. Attractive little goblets were presented to several boys, for best sportsmanship, best attendance at practices, most smiling player, etc.

The bus headed for home late again, (it had become a tradition to be at least one or two hours behind schedule back in Lausanne.) However all participants felt that it had been the greatest day of their trip so far. They were very vocal in expressing their myrth by singing to the top of their voice all the way back, the English singers trying to out-sing the French ones.

Chapitre V.

Aubonne and Lausanne. (Feb. 25-26th)

Monday was a day of rest with no game scheduled. While the boys stayed at their homes in the morning, I finalized the plans for our side trip to Paris and Versailles.

The idea had occurred to me shortly before leaving Canada, that, since the program in Switzerland ended on Sunday March 3rd, we could leave for Paris on that same day, spend 36 hours in the French capital, and fly home from Paris to Montreal. I had written to one of my cousins in Versailles, asking if it would be possible to find there board and lodging at a reasonable rate, as well as transportation to and from the airport.

In the meantime, the travel agency, contacted in Montreal prior to departure, almost killed the project by advising me that our group had to travel both ways with the same airline. As we had flown Swissair to Zürich, we could not fly Air France or Air Canada from Paris to Montreal. It seemed that the plan would have to be scrapped. But, when I arrived in Switzerland, I received such a hearty invitation from my cousins to come to Versailles that I couldn't resist, and further tackled the problem of airlines.

The final solution was that we would travel by train from Lausanne to Paris on March 3rd, and on March 5th fly Swissair from Paris to Zürich to board the flight Zürich-Montreal. I should add that the flight Paris-Zürich was a courtesy of Swissair at no extra cost to us, for which we were very thankful.

It had been decided that the Monday afternoon would be used for an excursion to my hometown of Aubonne, as well as for a choir practice in preparation for a *recital* to be given in church on Sunday. Our faithful bus driver met us all in Montchoisi at 1:30. A short ride brought us within view of the old town of Aubonne, perched on a hill overlooking the river of the same name, its ancient castle, (now a school), towering over the rest of the town.

The minister, Mr Jean Stooss, was an old school friend of mine. He came with us to the church, and first explained to the group the history of the church, which dates back 4 or 5 centuries. What interested the boys most was a large plaque behind which, we learned, lay the heart of Admiral Duquesnes who commanded the French Navy during the reign of Louis XIV.

After the choir practice was held under the direction of Mr Picard with Mrs Picard at the organ, we drove to my family home, now occupied by my sister Annette, who uses one of its large room as a pre-kindergarten class. The boys were intrigued by the architecture of the house, (at least 400 years old), which looks like a small castle with its tower.

They were interested by all the fruit trees located in the garden: cherry, plum, pear, quince, apricot and peach trees; but, most of all, they enjoyed being in the open, and soon launched into all sorts of games on the lawn. A copious snack was served and, shortly afterwards, the bus took the group back to Lausanne.

A few Lausanne boys had come along with us, as was their custom, but it seemed that one, especially, by the name of Patrick Ferini, was most popular with all our boys, who seemed to have adopted him. He had obtained from his parents and school a week's holiday, in order to be with his friends as long as they stayed in Switzerland.

Thinking about it in the course of the following night, it occurred to me that it would be a nice gesture to invite him to return to Canada with his Canadian friends. Our finances were such that the *Indiens du Québec* could pay his airfare. But, would his parents agree to let him come?

They were contacted on Tuesday morning and, although they were somewhat flabbergasted by the invitation, they immediately gave their consent. I asked them not to mention anything to their son. He would hear about it only when it would be announced over the loudspeaker at the end of the game to be played in Lausanne that night. They promised to keep the invitation secret.

Lausanne. (Feb. 26th)

This was to be the big day of the game opposing the *Indiens du Québec* to their hosts and friends.

To start the day, a special invitation had been extended to all our boys to visit the *Belvédère College*, (Grade 6), and there, to be the guests of a class for the afternoon. It was a pleasant and interesting afternoon under the direction of a professor of Canadian origin. He first spoke to his class about Canada, and Québec in particular, with the help of slides.

Then Mr Picard and myself spoke about La Tuque and the life there and at the home of our PeeWees. A period of questions and answers followed, and the Swiss pupils in turn explained their way of living and talked about the sports they liked and their various activities. An excellent exchange.

A few of our boys, (particularly John Otter and Alex Blacksmith) had also attended classes with their Lausanne host for a few days, and that was quite a success. It turned out that it had been impossible to do it on a larger scale, as planned, because of our constant late coming every night after game, and the necessity of our boys to recuperate.

The game in the evening was to be attended by His Excellency, the Ambassador of Canada to Switzerland, as well as by the Mayor of the city Lausanne.

Prior to the game, the Mayor of Lausanne, Mr Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, (who later became President of the Swiss Confederation), had invited the authorities of the Lausanne Hockey Club, as well as myself, to attend a civic reception at the City Hall. Thus he wished to honour the Ambassador and his wife, who had travelled from Bern to Lausanne to attend the game. It was an impressive, yet very cordial event, at which kind words of welcome were exchanged.

There was quite a crowd in the Arena of Montchoisi when the teams appeared on the ice for the opening ceremony. Mr François Bonnard, President of the Lausanne Hockey Club, presented each player with a booklet and souvenirs. Ronnie Trapper, captain of the *Indiens du Québec*, in turn offered a pair of Indian snowshoes to Mr Bonnard.

Then the captain of the famous Lausanne Soccer team, presented the captain of the *Indiens du Québec* with a soccer ball bearing the signatures of all the members of his team. Finally, the players of our team skated towards the line of the Lausanne players to offer them their usual gifts of a headband and a Canadian pin.

Soon afterwards the game started. Much to our chagrin, and that of a large number of Lausanne people, we discovered that the Lausanne team included two six foot tall boys, for whom our PeeWees were no match. They opened the score with one, then a second goal.

The public was highly displeased, and booed loudly. Even though the *Indiens du Québec* managed to tie the score before the end of the first period, The President of the league then ordered the coach to keep those two players off the ice. That was appreciated, not only by the public, who liked to see a fair game, (and cheered our team as much as their own,) but, of course, by our players.

During the second period, our team moved ahead to a score of 5 to 2. The public was quite impressed by their way of playing, and particularly by their long slap shots. That was mentioned in the Press accounts on the following day.

After the second period, both the Ambassador and the Mayor of Lausanne both came to meet our players in their dressing room, to the great delight of our boys.

Mayor Delamuraz made a very fine speech, which greatly impressed the team. It was taped.

Here is the translation of what he said:

*My dear friends of the PeeWee team;
To-night, I would like to thank you for three things:*

First I would like to thank you for your sportsmanship. You have shown on the ice during the first two periods a will to win, but never did your determination to win become aggressiveness or harshness against your opponents; you have been loyal, you are loyal.

Then, you have been, you are good sportsmen, because you know what team spirit is. You know, in life, it is necessary to have team spirit, not only on the ice, not only in sport, but in everything we do in life - to respect the neighbour's opinion, to help him sometimes, to withdraw and let the other go in order that the team may win.

Thirdly, I would like to thank you, my dear friends, for the willingness you had to come, and pay a visit to this little Switzerland so far away on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, you who come from such a big country.

Your smile, your pep, your kindness give us all a very great pleasure.

And when one speaks of peace among people, about brotherhood among men, believe me, it is not only the official diplomats who make it; peace among nations, understanding between men around the Earth, it starts just like you have known so well how to do, by these contacts, so direct and open, with your Lausanne friends.

We are very happy about the way you are making these contacts, and the way you are with other people. I am sure that, beyond your excursion, beyond the beautiful trip you are making in Europe, you are also contributing, for you now, and in years to come, to a better understanding among people.

Next October, when I shall go and represent Switzerland and my modest City of Lausanne in your country, when I shall visit Canada for the first time, (because you came to Switzerland before I ever went to Canada), the image I shall have in my mind upon arriving in your vast land, will be the image you are giving me to-night: an image of smile, of friendship, of generosity.

*So, hurrah for youth, hurrah for sport,
Hurrah for Canada and hurrah for Switzerland!*

To that speech, the Ambassador added the following words in English:

My dear friends,

We are very proud of you, we are proud to see you here. We like the way you are playing, for the sake of playing the game well, not for the sake of winning only.

You are making friends, you are gaining experience, you are meeting youngsters who have the same interests as you have; I think it is good all around. You are doing very well and we are proud of you.

We are looking forward to seeing you on Saturday in Bern.

Soon after the speeches, the game resumed: the last period saw one goal scored by each team for a final result of 6 to 3 in our favour.

After the customary handshakes on the ice, and with both teams still on the ice, I was handed the microphone for a *special announcement*.

On behalf of the *Indiens du Québec*, I expressed our gratitude for the invitation extended to us by the Lausanne Hockey Club; I thanked all those who made our trip to Switzerland possible, the teams in all the towns who had welcomed us so warmly, and particularly the parents who had shown to our boys such generosity and affection in their home.

And I added:

*In return, we would like to invite all the players to Canada, as soon as possible. But the **Indiens du Québec** have decided not to wait that long, and NOW wish to invite one of you to return to Canada with them next Tuesday. As we are in a democracy, the player has been chosen by our team. They have selected ...*

Patrick Ferini.

At the end of the announcement, the *Indiens du Québec*, who had formed a circle on the ice, started banging their stick on the ice, while chanting loudly:

We want Patrick, we want Patrick, we want Patrick!

Then they got hold of Patrick, surrounded him, and kept cheering while the public kept clapping. As it was mentioned earlier, Patrick had not known anything about it beforehand.

He was just beaming. His Mother told me later that, on that same morning, he had expressed the wish of going to Canada with his PeeWee friends, never thinking that such a dream would ever come true.

Before leaving the ice, *Indiens du Québec* sang their Indian song, and Daniel Sioui a solo. Even though the singing was quite distorted by the P.A. system, and choir and soloist not in the best singing condition after a hard game, their singing was greatly appreciated by the public who cheered and clapped for a long time.

The evening had been a success, not only hockey-wise, but in every way, and the organisers were quite pleased with the excellent climate which prevailed from beginning to end.

Later in the evening, a fine reception was held for the adults at the home of Mr Höfliger, a pleasant and fitting conclusion to our *Lausanne Day*.

Chapitre VI.

The Next Three Games:

VILLARS (Feb. 27 th.)

GENEVA (Feb. 28 th.)

FLEURIER (Mars 1 st)

VILLARS is a well-known holiday resort, (both Summer and Winter), in the Vaudois Alps, about 3500 ft above sea level. Although small in population, (2 or 3,000), it is very interested in hockey. Their senior team even became Swiss Champion last year. There is always, as we learned, fierce competition between the teams of Lausanne, (the capital of the canton), and those of Villars, both at the Senior and the Minor hockey levels.

It so happened that, a few days before our game in Villars, the Lausanne Minnies had lost 7 to 3, much to their chagrin. They had therefore asked their friends of the *Indiens du Québec* to avenge their defeat by hook or by crook, and particularly to *kill* the terrible Villars # 9, who apparently, was a very rough player. Our boys had sworn that justice would be made, Villars soundly beaten, and the *dirty* # 9 receive a proper thrashing. The pact, of course, had been kept secret by the boys, and I knew nothing about it.

Departure from Lausanne was scheduled for 1:30, as a trip up the mountains above Villars had been scheduled to take place before the game.

February 27 th. was also Harry Coonishish's 13 th. birthday. One of my cousins, at whose home Harry was staying with Roméo Saganash, had prepared a lunch party for him, to which I had been invited.

When the table was ready and everyone seated, Harry was called in, to discover several presents on his plate, offered by my cousin and the three children in the family: Jacques, (# 15 in the Lausanne Minimes), François and Florence (10). (At the game on the night before, Florence had cheered for Harry and NOT for her brother!)

A *Fondue bourguignonne* was ready, and the boys seemed to enjoy it immensely, quite amused by the custom of each one dipping a piece of beef in the same pot of boiling oil. Following dessert, Florence presented Harry with a chocolate cake, lit with 13 candles. Harry seemed quite overwhelmed by the party prepared for him, and I am sure that he will remember his 13th birthday for years to come.

The party lasted a little longer than expected, and I had phoned to say that the bus should leave without us; I would take the boys to Villars by car.

We drove along the scenic road of *La Corniche* overlooking the *Lac Léman*, and caught up with the bus just as it was getting into Villars.

Mr Panchaud, (coach of the Lausanne Minimes team), who was accompanying us that day, soon made the necessary arrangements for our group to go by telecabin to *Roc d'Orsay*, (6500 ft), upper terminal of a number of ski slopes. It was, of course, a new experience for our boys to be locked up, by groups of 4, in a cabin hanging from a cable. But they were quite amazed by the landscape of splendid mountain peaks surrounding them and becoming more and more glorious as they went up. They were delighted to be back in nature, in the snow and in such surroundings. They ran down the slopes from Roc d'Orsay to Bretaye, where we boarded a cogwheel train after a good hour spent playing in the snow and watching the skiers all around us.

When planning for the trip a few months earlier, I had hoped that the PeeWees could enrol in a ski school for a few days, but time and heavy hockey schedule had not permitted it. It will be something for another year!

(it was done on the trips which took place in 77 and 78)

Back in Villars, we headed for the rink which, for a change, was a covered rink, (i.e it had a roof but the sides were left open.) After the usual opening ceremony, the game started, and it soon became apparent that something unusual was taking place. The *Indiens du Québec* seemed to play a much rougher game than usual, which was soon translated into an avalanche of penalties, (at least a dozen, five of which to our #11, Wally Rabbitskin.) James Neeosh, our biggest player, had assumed the responsibility of *handling* the Villars # 9. He did it with such a lack of restraint that, after a first warning, then a penalty, James was expelled from the game by the referee.

I was, at the time, highly displeased by that style of play, which might create a poor impression in the minds of the Villars people, and seemed in such contradiction to the fine tribute the team had received in Lausanne from the Mayor of Lausanne only the night before.

But, when I learned later about the pact our boys had made with their Lausanne friends to beat Villars by hook or by crook, when it appeared that this was indeed the style of play traditionnal in Villars, and when the Lausanne spectators voiced the opinion that the referees were somewhat biased, I was able to see the incident with less concern, and appreciate its humoristic aspect. In any case, after the game, Villars did not seem to hold any grudge against us.

As for our our boys, they were as pleased as their Lausanne friends were delighted: Villars had been beaten 7 to 3, the very same score by which they had defeated Lausanne 4 days before. The vendetta was complete!

As I had a family commitment, I left before the end of the game, and did not attend the supper which followed. But I was told that it was quite cheerful, and that Harry Coonishish got further recognition fort his 13 th birthday.

Geneva. (Thursday, February 28 th.)

After 3 days of gorgeous weather, it turned a little colder and it snowed, to the delight of our boys. We left Lausanne early in the afternoon in order to have ample time for the visit of a bottle factory in St Prex, a little town on the way to Geneva. There we split in two groups, and were initiated in, and witnessed the whole process of glass making from the unloading of the components to the mixers, ovens, bottle making, testing, packing and storing, all under the direction of a competent guide.

It was the first time that our boys had ever visited a factory, and they showed great interest by asking a number of questions, and showing great reluctance to move on.

The bus driver had been instructed to give us a tour of the City of **Geneva**. We saw the International Labour Office, the Ariana Palace, (UNO), the International Red Cross, and other international agencies before driving on across the Rhône River to the old part of the City surrounding the cathedral of St Peter. The bus eventually stopped at *Place Neuve* to give us a chance of walking to the well known *Wall of the Reformers* displaying the statues of Calvin, Farel, Bèze and Knox.

A few boys followed me to the wall, but the others seemed to vanish into thin air. We eventually traced them to a nearby exhibition of rabbits, chickens and other small game which, of course, was a far greater attraction to our *hunters at heart*, than any historic monument or World Organizations buildings. We had quite a job to pry them away from those giant rabbits, whose size was enough to make them drool and wish that, some day, one of them could be a target for their slingshots or .22 rifle.

The Arena, or Sports Centre of Geneva, is quite a large complex, including a vast covered skating rink, which is used mostly for figure skating. We learned upon arrival that, much to the dismay of the Geneva coach, we would not be able to play on it, as it was apparently too much work to put up the sides necessary for hockey, not to mention the fact that it had been booked by a figure skating group. An open air rink was adjacent to the Centre, and that is where we played.

In 1973, the Geneva PeeWee team had travelled to Canada, and played at the Québec International PeeWee Tournament. At the time, we had hoped to play an exhibition game against them, but had been unable to arrange it. It was basically the same boys we were to face in Geneva that evening, which meant that they were, by then, a year older than our boys!

Still the *Indiens du Québec* opened the score, and took a comfortable lead of 4 goals, before Geneva team woke up in the last period, and scored two goals for a final score of 4 to 2 in our favour. It was a good fast game, one of the hardest our team had to play, according to the players themselves. That was due, perhaps, to the fact that the Geneva PeeWees had a Canadian coach.

Before we left the Sports Centre, a Geneva City Councillor presented the team with an attractive stained glass plaque with the crest of the City bearing the inscription: *Hommage de la Ville de Genève*. Then each of the boys received a cute little cow bell in exchange for their gift of a headband.

An excellent supper was served to the team in a restaurant owned by a man who had spent several years in Québec, and had kindly offered the meal. It was unfortunate that the Geneva organizers had not invited their players to share the meal with ours, a feature which was most popular, and helped create a very pleasant climate everywhere it was done..

Before leaving the restaurant, our thanks were expressed as usual in songs by the choir followed by Daniel Sioui's solo, always in great demand. The parents were waiting patiently at Montchoisi when we returned, late as usual.

Fleurier. (Friday, March 1st.)

While in Geneva, I had received a phone call from Mr Cuhat, (one of the parents), advising me that he had arranged for our group to be heard on a live broadcast at Radio Lausanne at 1:30 on Friday.

We all gathered at the radio station a few minutes earlier for a bit of briefing and practice, and soon, we were ON. The interviewer asked me a number of questions about the team and about the Indians in general. Then he inquired about how our choir was formed, and interviewed our soloist Daniel Sioui. In the course of the 20 minute interview, Daniel sang twice, and the choir twice, accompanied by Mrs Picard on the grand piano,

Then on we drove to Fleurier.

Fleurier is a small town (3,000 pop.) tucked in a deep valley in the Neuchâtel Jura mountains, in the watch making country. The shortest road to reach it climbs to the *Col des Etroits* at an altitude of 3,200 ft. It is a lovely scenic road offering a splendid panorama stretching beyond the Plateau to the whole range of the Alps... when the weather is clear. Unfortunately, it was snowing more and more thickly as we climbed, and the bus driver had to stop at a garage on the way, to install chains on the wheels before we could continue.

We were late getting into Fleurier, and we wondered whether the game could be played on open ice in such a blizzard. But the people of Fleurier, probably used to such weather conditions and, as soon as we were ready, the game started.

The ice, which had been cleared just before the game got under way, soon became covered with snow again, which became so thick that passing worthy of the name became impossible; it was a game of finding the puck under the snow, and following its trajectory by the telltale displacement of snow.

There was still no score after the first period. The Fleurier players, in spite of the promise made to us at Neuchâtel, were quite a bit older and taller than ours, at least as far as the main line was concerned.

The snowstorm abated somewhat during the second period, which saw the Fleurier team open the score, soon to be tied 1-1, thanks to a goal by Ronnie Trapper. The game became a lot more exciting during the last period, when Fleurier took a lead of 3 to 2. Our players fought back with all their skill and strength, which was met by the Fleurier *Big Guys* with a great deal of roughness. One of them was expelled from the game for fighting, and several others received penalties one after another. At last Harry Coonishish managed to score the goal which tied the game shortly before the end.

The reception and supper which followed largely offset the disappointment of having had to face big players once more. A fine welcoming speech, the presence at the restaurant of all the Fleurier officials and players, the exchange of gifts and the traditional singing by Daniel and the choir, all contributed to create a very cheerful mood, which continued all the way home, long after we had left our Fleurier hosts.

Chapitre VII

Our Sojourn in Switzerland Comes to an End.

Bern and Fribourg. (Saturday March 1 nd.)

Aubonne. (Sunday March 3 rd.)

Because of the kind invitation of our Ambassador to come to Canada House in Bern for lunch, departure had been set at 9:30 AM on Saturday.

The trip from Lausanne to Bern normally takes about one and a half hour, but we made an unscheduled stop at Avenches, about half way. Avenches used to be a very important city in Roman times, and it is rich with ruins of all kinds. Some of the buildings have been partially restored, particularly the theatre which is right in the middle of town. That is what we visited. The boys seemed quite impressed when they heard that the theatre existed since the time of Jesus, and delighted in walking all around it and down the degrees to the centre.

Then, on we went, through the old city of Morat, and finally reached Bern, the capital of Switzerland. We drove past the Federal Palace, (The Parliament), and parked next to the gothic cathedral for a quick tour of the old part of the city, the arcades and, on the stroke of 12, the *Zitglocke*, the clock which has all sorts of figurines moving every hour on the hour.

We were expected at noon at Canada House, so we rushed back to the bus. In the meantime, our bus driver had discovered two addresses in the phone book under *Canada*: the Embassy and the Residence of the Ambassador. Not knowing which one we should head for, we stopped to make enquiries by phone next to the place where the City of Bern keeps the precious bears, which gave its name to the city. That gave a chance to the group to see the bears, and to throw them carrots and peanuts until the arrival of a staff member from the Embassy, who guided us to the Ambassador's House.

We were formally welcomed by the Ambassador, Mr Côté, and a number of Embassy officials and friends. Flowers were presented to Mrs Côté by Patrick Ferini, (our *Swiss* PeeWee) and John Otter, our youngest player.

Various drinks and superb food were soon passed around, while our hosts spared no effort to make everyone, big or small, feel at ease. The *Indiens du Québec* were particularly impressed by the insistence of the Ambassador in saying:

This is not MY House, it is Canada House, it is YOUR HOUSE.

And what a sumptuous house it was, thousands of miles away, in more ways than geographically, from the log cabins of Mistassini, or the tent houses of Matagami.

It was for me a very special joy that our young Indian boys, fresh from very simple homes in the bush, would be welcomed with such warmth and affection in that splendid Residence, (thanks to the kindness of the Ambassador and his wife,) and also that they behaved so well, and felt quite at home in such surroundings.

His Excellency had shown great interest in our plan to invite Patrick Ferini to Canada. I learned later that he had personally intervened with the proper authorities to ensure that Patrick would be issued a passport without delay. At the reception, he also honoured him, (as well as his Mother, who was present), by pinning on them a Canadian pin. It goes without saying that our appreciation was shown by singing; and a great deal of singing there was, mostly by Daniel, accompanied at the piano, first by Mrs Picard, then by the Ambassador himself.

All too soon, according to the boys, we had to get on our way to Fribourg, where we were expected at 2:30. Pictures were taken and, until the bus disappeared around the corner, the Ambassador waved good-bye to us. Impressed by his kindness, and out of a sense of loyalty to him, James Neeposh suddenly exclaimed with the determination of a soldier going to war under the command of a beloved general:

To-night we HAVE to win... for the AMBASSADOR!

Fribourg.

Fribourg is a lovely old city, build on the banks of the *Sarine* River. The hockey authorities had arranged for us a tour of points of interest under the guidance of a qualified person. Anxious to promote between the members of both teams, as friendly a relationship as was possible during the few hours of our visit, they had also asked a number of their players to join ours on the city tour, an offer which they had eagerly accepted.

It wasn't long before lively conversations rolled on between the two groups, largely on the subject of hockey, and their common experiences with teams like Villars, Geneva and Neuchâtel.

That very thoughtful initiative immediately set the tone for our visit in Fribourg, showing us that, like it had been in Sion, the people felt proud and privileged to have an Indian PeeWee team within their walls, and had spent a great deal of time, imagination and effort to make it the crowning day of our tour. The game had been well advertised in the Press and by posters all over town. As a result, quite a crowd had come to watch it. Needless to say, the Fribourg people had been fair and had decided to line up against our team, players of exactly the same age as ours, the only place with Sion where that was done. To provide more colour and sound in their covered arena, they had invited a band to play before the game end between the periods.

The game was played in the same sort of happy and friendly mood. At the same time, it was an excellent exhibition of PeeWee hockey, which pleased the crowd. True, our players showed a clear superiority but, thanks to the brilliant performance of the Fribourg goalkeeper, the score did not reach the high figure it had in Sion.

After the second period, we were winning 6 to 0, and the Fribourg coach told me that his team had a terrible complex playing against one of those *famous* Canadian hockey teams. I don't know what he told them in the dressing room, but his players got much bolder and better during the last period, especially after scoring a first goal, which showed them that the *Indiens du Québec* were not supermen after all.

The final score was 8 to 2.

Needless to say, supper had been prepared for players of both teams. The ice had already been broken between them and, in the course of the meal, happiness and enthusiasm of all participants became more and more evident and boisterous. Perhaps also, the *Indiens du Québec* sensed that it was the last banquet of their tour, and they wanted to make the most of it.

There were spontaneous cheers and hurrahs for various players, particularly for the great Fribourg goaltender, for the coaches, for our bus driver, (who was presented with a gift thanking him for his good driving and great patience). They even sang *Happy Birthday* to me, (a few months out of date), and everyone seemed to wish that the evening should last for ever.

But there is an end to every party.

The coach of the Fribourg team made a fine speech, which was wildly applauded. He thanked us for coming, for giving the Fribourg PeeWees the honour of playing against our team; and he went on to say how sorry they were that we could not stay longer in their City and Canton of Fribourg, adding that they were somewhat jealous of Lausanne, whose families had the joy of playing hosts to our boys.

As a last token of their appreciation for our visit, they presented each player and adult with a ... cheese, (about 7 lbs of Coraule de Gruyères), a very touching idea and a most generous gift. That last gesture, of course, brought the roof down.

The return trip to Lausanne, (our last late return,) was quieter than usual, perhaps because of a touch of sadness caused by the thought that the magic of the past ten days had come to an end, and that we would soon leave behind all those who had made our trip such a tremendous experience by their warmth and their generous affection.

Aubonne.

Hockey was over, yet there was one more performance scheduled for the *Indiens du Québec* in my home church in Aubonne, (about 15 miles from Lausanne). Most parents had indicated that they wished to attend the service to hear the boys sing again, and to spend those last precious moments with them in church.

The local Press had announced *an unusual visit: Indians from Québec,,* and the church was filled to capacity with parishioners and friends.

The service was conducted by my friend the Reverend Jean Stooss, except for the Scripture lessons read by young people. The new Testament lesson, (the story of the Prodigal son), was read by Daniel Sioui, who had volunteered.

It was in the course of the service that I had the joy of baptizing my niece Sophie-Caroline, at the request of my brother. Three months earlier, in the school Chapel at La Tuque, I had baptized my son Christopher. At the service, the same PeeWee choir, as well as Daniel, had sung on several occasions. It was of particular significance to me that the same choir and soloist would sing the same hymns for the baptism of Christopher's cousin Sophie in the old church of Aubonne, thousands of miles away.

The choir, indeed, sang twice, (*Assemblés en un même corps" et Vous le reverrez en Galilée,*) while Daniel, for his part, sang *Je crois en Toi*, during the baptism service.

Following the service, the children of the Sunday School were invited to join the congregation to hear a number of songs of a more secular nature while, between numbers, I gave brief information about Canadian Indians in general, and our students in particular.

The Lausanne parents enjoyed being with the group in church. One Mother wrote later:

You brought your stay to a close with a true climax. Personally I appreciated that something was done on a spiritual level. I appreciated a great deal the fact that, together, we were able to take part in the service in Aubonne, and that, in worship and prayer, we were able to hear once more the extraordinary voices of our boys 'choir, and particularly, that of Daniel...

Following a short reception at the Rectory, (kindness of Mr Stooss), the parents returned to Lausanne for a last farewell meal, while I had lunch with my family at Morges.

Everybody was to gather at the Central Hall of the Lausanne Station at 3 PM. A few parents had told me, half-seriously, half-jokingly:

Don't be surprised if we don't show up; we want to keep our PeeWees for a few months!

But, of course, they were all there on time.

Earlier in the morning, I had thought that it would be a nice gesture if each PeerWee presented his Lausanne Mother with a plant. In spite of the fact that it was Sunday, it proved possible to arrange it, thanks to connections with the florists' Union.

When all the boys had arrived, they were asked to follow me to the florist's shop while the parents remained in the hall.. And soon, they returned, each one carrying a pot of white cyclamen, which he presented to his Mother. Tears started to flow quite freely, (both adults' and children's), and a number of boys kept weeping long after we had waved our last goodbye from the train.

One of the boys, Richard Bosum, kept repeating in amazement:

We made them cry, we made them cry, we made them cry... because they loved us!

The train ride from Lausanne to Paris lasts about 6 hours.

The boys eventually recovered from the emotions of the parting, but kept talking about their experiences of the past ten days, about their Swiss family, and about all the gifts they had received; they displayed them with great pride, particularly their new watches.

Supper was taken in the dining car, (another new experience), a couple of hours before the train pulled into the huge *Gare de Lyon* in Paris.

We were met by 3 of my cousins, who had the good idea of coming with two cars. Our 50 pieces of luggage and hockey equipment were loaded in, and on top of them, and soon the cars left for Versailles with Mrs Picard and two boys, Alex Blacksmith and John Otter. As for the rest of the group, following the 3rd cousin, they boarded the subway, then, at the *gare St Lazard*, a suburban train for Versailles.

Chapitre VIII.

Versailles et Paris.

Versailles was reached shortly after 11PM. A snack was ready for us at my cousin's home, and the boys devoured it with great relish before going upstairs to bed. While Mr and Mrs Picard stayed at another cousin's home, the 19 boys and I shared 3 rooms, sleeping on beds, camp cots, rubber mattresses or, simply, the rug.

The boys were quite excited about their train trip and ride on the *Métro*, and so obviously pleased to be back together as a group, that it took them quite a while to go to sleep.

Still, on the next morning, everyone was up and ready to go by 9:30. The plan was to go to the Palace of Versailles in the morning, and to Paris in the afternoon.

A quick walk of 45 minutes brought us to the golden gate of the impressive palace. The *Indiens du Québec* were awed by its size more than anything else, but also by the sculptures they could see everywhere in the park. What amused them most was the fact that most statues were nude, which never failed to make them giggle and laugh.

A group of adult tourists seemed to be quite intrigued by the jackets and toques the boys were wearing; finally, one man came to me and asked if, by any chance, the boys were Canadian hockey players. He added that the tourists he was guiding were Russians, and were inquiring about them. After I had told him where we came from, and where we had played, (information which he translated to his group), he told me that the men wanted to know how they had done *hockey-wise* in Switzerland. They seemed quite pleased with the results I communicated to them, and commented by repeating: *Brave kids, Brave kids!*

From the palace, we walked through the park to the Great *Trianon*, with the intention of visiting at the same time the museum of old carriages which, we thought, would be of interest to the boys.

Unfortunately, it was closed, and so was the great *Trianon*. Apparently, now that it is fully renovated, it is used on the occasion of visits by foreign Heads of State: it seemed to be the case that day, as luxurious limousines were parked in front of the building. Still, we spent some time admiring the pink marble architecture of the *Trianon* and its lovely *colonnade*, before starting the long trek back to my cousins's home.

A gorgeous lunch had been prepared by my cousins for the large family which we were, and it was ready when we arrived.

Our itinerary for the afternoon was discussed and finalized. Soon we all left by train, (the new fast subway RER), for the *Arc de Triomphe*. Its massive shape amazed the boys, as well as the great sculptures on it.

We visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which seemed to impress them a great deal; they remained silent, looking at it for several minutes.

When they heard that they could climb to the top of the Arc, they rushed to the stairs, (the elevator was out of order), and paused at the museum half way up to give it a passing glance, and buy souvenirs and postcards. An unfortunate incident occurred when William Neevosh was cheated of 8 F.F. by the lady in the booth, and was quite upset about it. The boys were then advised to boycott the booth, so up to the top they went, where the great sights of Paris all around delighted them, particularly the Eiffel Tower in the distance.

They were pleased to hear that it would be our next stop, which we soon reached by subway. Before climbing the tower, (this time, by elevator), the boys assaulted another souvenir booth, and had a quick snack, which some of them shared with the tame pigeons begging at their feet.

The view from the second floor of the Tower was something they will remember for a long time, even though the many historical buildings pointed to them, did not mean much to them because of their scant knowledge of French History. What amazed them most was the immensity of the City, then the River Seine and its many bridges.

Our quick tour of Paris was, in fact, going to end with a one hour boat ride on the *Seine*. By then, we were all pretty tired of walking, and it was felt that a boat ride was the ideal, allowing for additional sightseeing, while sailing in a comfortable *bateau-mouche*.

It was, of course, a guided tour, which took us from the foot of the Eiffel Tower past famous buildings like the Invalids, the Louvre, up *l'Île de la Cité* beyond the imposing cathedral of Notre Dame, and through the other side of the island for the return trip.

Back at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, we boarded the suburban train heading for *Porchefontaine*, and we reached home on time for supper, worn out, yet truly amazed by all that we had been able to see.

Tuesday March 6.th. was to be another very long day with 6 additional hours tacked onto it because of the time differential between Paris and Montreal. Still, the boys insisted on seeing the first movie films on their trip which I had just received; then, once in bed, they continued being so excited, that I had to raise my voice to calm them down.

At 6 next morning, it was pretty hard to get them out of bed, but our chartered bus was due to pick us up at 7, and there was breakfast and clean up to do. Luckily, the bus was late, and we were ready when it arrived.

We thanked the Serfass family for their great kindness in allowing their home to be taken over by such a big crowd, and for cooking for us such lovely and copious meals.

Once at Orly Airport, we discovered that our flight to Basle and Zürich was delayed for 45 minutes. We were a little concerned that the flight Zürich-Montreal would not wait for us, but we were assured that it would. Never did I make such a quick plane connection, as we were all rushed to the Montreal flight ready for take off, and just waiting for us to board.

Our boys were, by now, seasoned travellers, and quite at home in a plane, but it was the first time that Patrick Ferini had ever flown, and he was delighted by the experience. I had hoped that he would have a chance of phoning his Mother from Zürich Airport, but there was no time. Maybe it was just as well, as hearing his Mother's voice might have caused a bout of homesickness.

The flight was very pleasant. The boys kept changing seats to talk to all their pals in turn, play little games, and get acquainted with other passengers. They got quite interested, when we neared the Canadian shores, to see the ice fields, and then the land in the Gulf of the St Lawrence. This time, Alex Blacksmith admitted that we were indeed moving.

We were late landing in Dorval, but we went through customs very quickly, except for the delay caused by one bad-tempered officer, who pestered Peter Icebound with absurd questions, threatening to keep us there until midnight if need be.

Alex Blacksmith had been sick in the plane, shortly before landing, and was also running a temperature. Although he seemed to have somewhat recovered after landing, it appeared wise not to impose on him another 4hr bus ride. So, while the team boarded the school bus for La Tuque, I stayed behind in Montreal with Alex, Patrick and Daniel.

We had a very poor night at the Holiday Inn, partly because Alex's temperature flared up again through the night, partly because our system still ran on Swiss time. By 3:30 AM (9:30 Swiss time), we were all wide awake and so, we decided to head for La Tuque, which we reached by 8 AM.

Chapitre IX.

Re-entry at La Tuque.

One of the fears of the school authorities at La Tuque, when I had mentioned to them our Swiss project, had been that it would take a long time for the boys to *re-enter* their school routine after the excitement and the freedom of their trip overseas. Actually, their fears did not materialize, and in a very few days, it seemed that all the boys had successfully completed the process of *re-entry*. Even the school reports, which were issued for the third quarter a month after their return, generally showed no evidence that their absence had been detrimental to their study.

True, for a long time, they were still full of what they had seen and lived; they missed their Swiss family, (as it will be seen below in some of the letters they wrote), but they also knew that it was important for them to catch up with the work they had missed.

Patrick Ferini became an instant attraction for the students... particularly for the girls. He, in turn, was living an experience similar to that of the PeeWees, but in reverse. It was the first time that he had left home where, (according to himself), being an only child, he could do just as he pleased. Group life in an institution such as ours was very different, and I feared that he would find it very difficult to adjust to it. But, in spite of the fact that he found it trying at times: that cafeteria food was not as good as Mother's cooking, or that he couldn't watch the TV channel he wanted, he was nevertheless a good sport, and accepted his new lifestyle.

It is true to say that he openly enjoyed his popularity, both in the Residence and at Jacques Buteux School, where he was enrolled in Grade 6. The Press was interested in his story, and his picture appeared in the *Trois Rivières Nouvelliste*.

As luck would have it, two groups of boys from the Residence had been scheduled to go and watch the Canadians play at the Montreal Forum since the previous Fall. So, two Saturdays in a row, Patrick was able to go to the Forum, and he was excited about it. In addition, he also had three chances to go to Québec City and, finally, on the day of his departure, (April 8 th.), he visited Ottawa.

He left La Tuque with regret, and expressed the hope, if not the conviction, that he would return the following year. He also expressed his gratitude for the opportunity he had of realizing his dream of coming to Canada, of seeing and learning so much in such a short time. His friends also were sorry to see him go, as he had never ceased to be very friendly and sociable with everybody.

The experience was a success which, I trust, went even beyond giving a boy a chance of making a marvellous trip: it showed him a style of life quite different from the one he knew at home, taught him the importance of getting along in a group, to accept rules and discipline, all things which may help him later in life

The return of *Les Indiens du Québec* to La Tuque, and their successful *re-entry* into normal school and residence life did not mean the end of our relationship with Switzerland.

Correspondence between the boys and their Swiss family was a steady stream, including the sending of pictures and parcels.

Here are extracts of letters the boys asked me to forward to Switzerland:

...I will always remember you and the rest as long as I live, and I thank you for taking care of me in Lausanne and, I think, I appreciated it....

*... I am a little bit sad over here; thank you for keeping me in your house.
I almost cry when I write this letter, and I want to see you again.
Good bye, God bless you!...*

... I was crying when we left Lausanne for Paris. I would like to go back to Lausanne to stay with you. Good bye, God bless you all!...

... I am not happy, I am unhappy. I cried yesterday thinking of you, of the games I played with Robert. Then I thought of Robert, and cried again. I cried in the plane, then I fell asleep. And when I woke up, I said: "Robert, come play with me".. Kisses to you all.

...I thank you for all the presents you gave me, for my Mother and for myself. I would like to go to Switzerland again next year. Say hello to Florence, Jacques and François. I would like to see them again but I don't know if I will be coming back next year; I would be happy if you could come to Canada. I hope you will write to me soon.¹

From Switzerland, I received a number of letters from the parents giving me their impressions on the visit by the PeeWees. I believe that, better than anything I could add, they point to the true success of our trip, the friendship which spontaneously sprang up and grew between our boys and their host family; they also show how quickly they had adjusted to their new situation, met its challenge with an open heart and mind.

From one parent, who had two boys, Richard, Harry, and later also Roméo, I received these lines:

¹ **Note de juillet 1997.** Roméo had to wait **21 years** before he was able to return to Lausanne in 1995. By that time, Roméo Saganash was a high official in the James Bay Grand Council of the Crees, a true leader of his people. That year, he had been sent as a delegate to a United Nations Conference on Native Affairs to Geneva. Unannounced, he came to the home of his 1974 hosts, (Dr Claude Perret) for what he thought would be a very short visit -just to thank them for their hospitality...21 years before. François, his contemporary, by now a medical student, (who had played hockey against him in 74 as #15 of the Lausanne team,) was so overjoyed to see his Indian friend again that Roméo stayed for... three days!

...It is true that this sojourn has been extraordinary for us also. What joy did these children give to us, by their kindness, their spontaneity and their openness of mind and heart to this land so new for them. It was with a sad heart that we saw them leave, and it was not just the emotion of a moment. We are lonesome for our little Indians, we love them, and we would like to see them return to our home.

As for anecdotes, I remember their first night, when we had just welcomed Harry and Richard. We had prepared for them (our son) François's room, and added a second bed. Gone during their bedtime, I wanted to see upon my return whether they were asleep in their bed. I opened the door, and I saw, cuddled close to one another, just under the comforter, with all their clothes on, and with the light on, my two little men, who had felt the need of their mutual presence and warmth at the end of their long voyage.

On the second day, I was able to make them put on their pyjamas. After a few days, (Roméo had by then taken the place of Richard), they slid under the sheets. And on the last day, at bedtime, Roméo looked at me with a little smile, and, hop, he jumped into the second bed, as if to say: "Now I feel at home here, I feel secure, I can sleep alone in my bed."

... I also liked the big game with Lego bricks on the 2nd day, when one could see, kneeling on the rug, 2 black heads with 2 blond heads, close to one another, building with great concentration, a superb moon rocket, complete with launching pad, while a conversation rolled on ... in French and Cree. At no time did there appear any sign of incomprehension between them. It was immediate agreement, the same fun, the same interest, a total absence of barriers.

And from another parent:

...We also have lived an extraordinary experience in welcoming your young people but, alas, too short...

I had no difficulty whatsoever with Sylvain. I acted with him just as I did with my own children. I appreciated in him his spontaneity, his frankness and, I am convinced that at no time did Sylvain have the blues. From the time he arrived, he felt at ease in our family.

As a Mother, I had no problem with him whatsoever. I like to say also that, without having to be reminded, Sylvain took the trouble every day to make his bed and wash, two things I must, alas, regularly remind my own sons to do.

I may also add that I felt the same stomach cramps and aches for Sylvain when he was in the goal, as I did for my son Philip, goaltender for the Novice team. So... I must have taken my role as adoptive mother quite seriously.

The relationship between my 3 children and Sylvain were of a very positive nature. Spontaneously, they considered him and treated him as a great friend. Never have I had to intervene or punish.

The whole family had considerable pleasure watching the games played by the PeeWees. We appreciated their way of playing from a technical point of view; we admired their fair play, as well as their behaviour, composure and discipline outside the rink.

Three children also wrote their impressions:

...As soon as we heard that you would come to our country, we were very excited. When you arrived at Montchoisi, I was very happy, but a bit disappointed on one score: Although I knew that you wouldn't come with feathers on your head and war paint on your face, (now I believe it is folklore)... but still I would have liked it... let's pass on.

Being a girl, I had much less contact with you than my brothers, and I believe that Sylvain did not even say Hello to me when he arrived.

Immediately I considered Sylvain as a friend, as well as Matthew, who often visited us. I was really fond of you. The proof? Every time you played a game I couldn't watch, when my Daddy came to wake me up in the morning, my first thought was for you, and my question: "What was the final score?"

And in the evening, going to bed, I couldn't help but say a little prayer for you, and keep my fingers crossed.

An older brother wrote:

... What I particularly admired was your team spirit; I have also enjoyed the day up the mountain above Villars, when we saw snow, so you couldn't say there was no snow in Switzerland. Unfortunately, away for a tournament in Zürich, I was unable to be present when you left, but I can believe that it was very moving both for you and for our family...

And a younger brother:

...As soon as you entered the restaurant at Montchoisi, I liked your uniform, (jackets, toques), and I also noted the fact that you had attractive "Indian heads", which are not common in Switzerland.

Occasionally, I had a bit of trouble understanding you, because of your accent, and because you use words I was not accustomed to hear.

As I am very fond of hockey and singing, it was a great pleasure for me to see you play, and hear you sing. As I still have the tapes of most of the songs Daniel sang, I enjoy listening to them, and sing them myself.

Thanks to the afternoon we spent together at my school, I was able to get to know Canada better, as well as learn about the Residence in La Tuque. I often think of you, and hope that, one day, we shall meet again.

To conclude:

As you have been able to read it for yourself, both *les Indiens du Québec* and the people who welcomed them overseas, lived a unique experience which they will never forget. It opened the minds of both guests and hosts to a new world, to a new culture, through sport, singing, and a climate of warm friendship which was constantly and everywhere evident.

I believe that our main purpose, of creating meaningful human contacts, was indeed reached beyond all expectations.

In closing, I wish to thank all of you who showed interest in our *Swiss project 74*, and thus contributed to its remarkable success.

Needless to say, we feel that the experience is well worth repeating. I am sure it will be... if only the necessary funds become available!

Rev. John-Maurice BONNARD
Administrator of La Tuque Student Residence (1968 -1978)
Manager of *Les Indiens du Québec*

Postscript, July 1997.

The **story** of the trip to Switzerland of *Les Indiens du Québec troubadours*, was written in both English and French, shortly after the return of the team to La Tuque Student Residence. Its intention was essentially to tell the story of the trip to all those who had helped us in so many ways and to the boys' parents.

A **super 8 film** of the trip was also made and shown on many occasions, not only to all the students of the Residence, but also in the La Tuque schools, the parents of the peewees on the reserves, Indian Affairs officials, the *Swiss parents*, etc.

Two other trips to Switzerland took place in **1977** and **1978**. Because a new absurd regulation of the Canadian Hockey Association unfortunately forbade players under the age of 14 to play abroad, the team went ... skiing in the Alps. In addition they visited Paris, Versailles, Amsterdam and London. The story of those trips has also been written and filmed.

John-M. Bonnard
1170 Aubonne
Switzerland

My letter of June 1997 to Dr J.R. Miller, author of the book

SHINGWAUK'S VISION,

A HISTORY OF NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Dear Dr Miller

Thank you for you e-mail reply to my letter concerning the error about La Tuque Student Residence. I am glad to know that it will be corrected in the next printing.

I have now read your book with the greatest interest, and I am duly impressed by the tremendous amount of research, interviews and readings it implies.

At the end of the reading, my feeling is above all one of sadness,

- sadness for all that was wrong in the residential School system, right from the beginning,

- sadness for the incredible amount of harm that was done through it to generations of Indian children,

- sadness for so many examples of insensitivity, cruelty, sadistic behaviour, which too often prevailed in so many schools...

I could go on, but my last cause for sadness is that, in my view, your book, while occasionally mentioned the bright side of residential schools, the care, the compassion, the dedication even sacrifices of a great many staff members, principals, Church and Government persons, gives to it such a very small place, as compared with the errors, failures, sins and abominations which, it is true, (I am not questioning any of them), did occur.

I wish there had been more pages like page 341 (for instance), more time and place given to positive impressions and memories of former students and staff to give a more balanced and complete view of what the schools, really were, particularly, for some at least, at the end of their life.

It was of interest to me to me that the chapter dealing with food, clothing, and extra-curricular activities ends in the early sixties, when indeed it was grim, but fails to report the considerable improvement in the late sixties and seventies. It is all the more intriguing to me that, when you come to the subject of sexual abuses suffered by the students, we are brought right up to date... all the way to 1995.

I believe that the subtitle of your book . A History of Native Residential Schools should further read: " Part one: Its sins, horrors and failures , (or something like that), and that a second book, smaller in size , (I grant), be written showing its positive sides, its successes, etc. I know I am dreaming, as the general public does not want to know about it. I am also aware that the media are not interested in hearing the positive side and that, all too often, the former students who wanted to speak about it were refused occasions to speak or be heard.

I did appreciate, however, towards the end, your judgement that the Canadian people as a whole were bearing the responsibility for what happened, and that the attitude "we, the whites, know better than you", is still very evident in too many circles.

I came across a few inexactitudes.

When the Government, in the late 60's granted the Churches the right to continue appointing Principals or Administrators of their confession, (which you mentioned), it also extended the right for Administrators to appoint child care workers of their denomination (without going through the normal Public Service procedure of competition), if they so desired. (p. 393)

On p. 430 , you mention several former residential school students FROM THE INTERWAR PERIOD who have emerged.... Your list includes the present Grand Chief of the Crees, Matthew Coon Come, who was still in his early teens at La Tuque Student Residence when I became its Administrator in 1968.

I may add that he was one of the key speakers at a La Tuque Student Residence Reunion held in that town during the Summer 1987, (9 years after its closing in 1978), an initiative taken by a Committee of former students under the chairmanship of Robert Ottereyes. Well over 100 students and staff attended the weekend. Among the speakers were Chief Abel Bosum from the Doré Lake Band, Roméo Saganash, (who held a responsible position in the Grand Council of the Crees,) and Matthew Coon Come already named. The reunion did not make headlines, as none of the speakers or participants voiced any of the harsh criticisms and condemnations reported at great length in your book.

Perhaps I should say a bit more about my involvement in Indian Education.

Born in Switzerland, I came to Canada in 1951 at the age of 23. While studying for the Anglican ministry at Huron College, I accepted to spend the Summer 55 at the Indian mission of Big Beaver House 250 miles

North of Sioux Lookout. I was to be the first resident theological student, and later resident priest, in that small community of trappers.

In that settlement not one adult or child had ever spent one day at school. But a few days after my arrival, the catechist, William Winter, (now Dr William Winter), asked not IF I would start a school, but WHEN I was going to start a school. In the minds of the people, it went without saying that I should do so, even though I had no teacher's training, could not speak their language, while the children could not speak mine. In addition, there was, of course, no school building and no teaching material whatsoever.

Still, I opened what I pompously called "The Academy of Big Beaver House". Classes were held in the old log church, 65 pupils between the age of 5 and 25 flocked to it, (until I divided them in two classes), and we did what we could.

I returned in 56, then, once ordained in 57, when the DIAND, realizing someone was interested in teaching Indian children, eventually built a school and appointed a qualified teacher in 1958, at which time I moved to Wunnumin (25 miles to the East) to start a school there too..

My first contact with Residential School was a short visit to Pelican Lake school while waiting for the seaplane to fly me up north in 1955, and again, occasionally in subsequent years, particularly while Mr Eric Barrington was Principal.

In August 59, while I was attending a Cree course at the Lands and Forests establishment in Sioux Lookout, I was called by Mr Barrington out of the classroom. He told me that family and business reasons required his immediate return to England, and asked me to take his place as interim principal of Pelican Lake School. He had already obtained the necessary authorisation from Ottawa. I acted as Principal from August 59 until Easter 60. What I lacked in administrative experience was somewhat compensated by my knowledge and understanding of Indian children. I would go as far as to say that I considered that the most important part of my role was to protect the children from harsh policies and unsympathetic staff members.

From 1964 to 1968, I was missionary-priest in the Anglican Mission at Norway House. As such I also had something to do in the Rossville United Church Residential School, as it had a number of Anglican Students in residence. While in Norway House, with a few other interested people, we organized a trip to Expo 67 in Montreal for about 20 teenagers both from the settlement and the two residential schools.

It was not until 1968 that I was asked to become principal and administrator of La Tuque Student Residence, where my knowledge and experience with Indian children plus my knowledge of French, (my native language), was to be an asset.

What I wish to stress is that, at the time, I was fully aware that Indian residences had bad press and displayed a multitude of sins. I was also aware that they were on the way out.

If nevertheless I accepted the position, it was precisely because I felt that my years of living on reserves, of working with Indian children and their parents on their home ground, of understanding and loving them, would allow me to make life for them more bearable in a bad situation. That was constantly present on my mind in setting policies at the residence during the 10 years I spent there.

Whether I succeeded, at least partly in doing so, or not is not up to me to say. But I do believe that, if you had a chance to interview a large cross section of former students of La Tuque, you would get a picture of a residence very different from that of the majority of schools described in your book.

With my best greetings.

Sincerely.

John-M Bonnard

