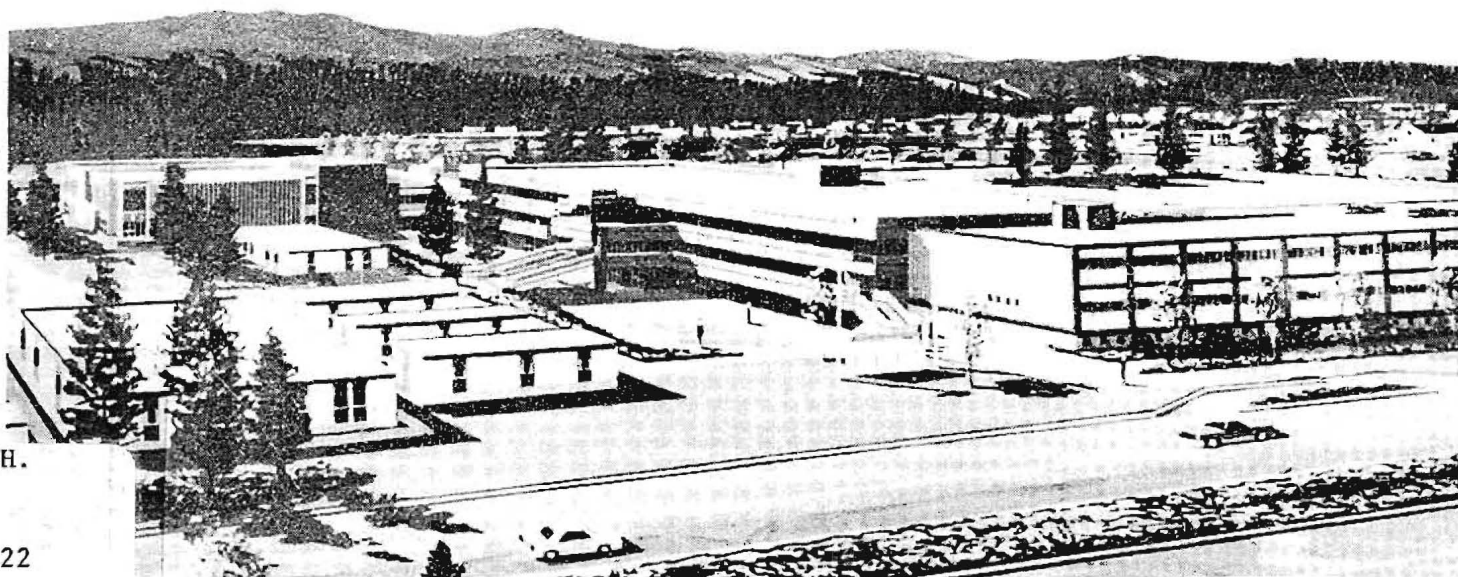
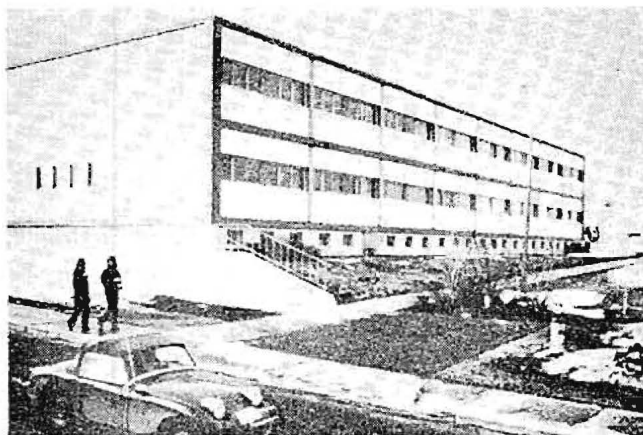
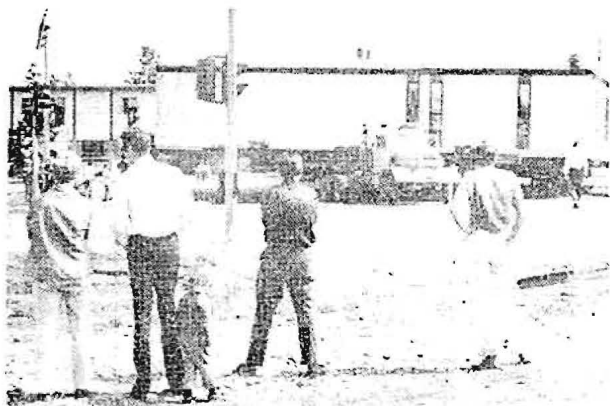


THE ORIGINS OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW CALEDONIA

BY
ANN HOWARD



The Origins of the College of New Caledonia

The community college concept which emerged on the Canadian scene over thirty years ago has changed post-secondary education, and in turn the quality of Canadian life. Officially opened in September 1969 and later merged with the B.C. Vocational School in 1971, the College of New Caledonia has become a comprehensive regional college offering university, career, trade and vocational programs much like other institutions in the province of British Columbia and across Canada. Many factors contributed to the establishment of this College, paralleling a pattern of post-secondary development occurring across Canada after World War II.

The province of British Columbia had little diversification in higher education prior to 1964, the only post-secondary institutions being the University of British Columbia, its satellite campus in Victoria and a small private university in Nelson. A limited number of high schools offered Grade 13, enabling students to obtain credits that were transferable to a university.

A plan for a comprehensive college system had been developed as early as 1932 by J.W. Knott, a researcher who felt that there was a need for junior colleges in British Columbia due to the large number of high school drop-outs. Knott prepared a systematic rationale for junior colleges modelled after the California college system. These junior colleges would

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provide a stimulus for students to continue with their education by providing local post-secondary institutions. Although his work was not appreciated at the time, the colleges Knott suggested became realities thirty-five years later.

1958 saw the amendment of the Public Schools Act to allow for the establishment of colleges. The act permitted the Council of Public Instruction to authorize the organization of school district colleges, in affiliation with the University of British Columbia. The affiliation clause ensured that academic quality of the new colleges was maintained. However, the burden of costs fell to the school boards, who shied away from the magnitude of such a financial commitment.

Next, a 1960 Royal Commission on Education, known as the Chant Commission, recommended the addition of Grade 13 to all high schools in the province with a two-stream curriculum, one leading to university and the other to employment or advanced training. This was proposed as an alternative to establishing costly new post-secondary institutions, but the plan received little support from the University of British Columbia or from the government.

The University appears to have been negative to any new post-secondary developments until the arrival of its new President, Dr. John Macdonald in 1962. In his first year in office, Dr. Macdonald wrote a report entitled "Higher Education in British Columbia and A Plan for the Future", concerning the post-secondary education needs of the province. He toured through the interior of British Columbia and found that poor transportation and communication systems among small communities and economic factors made a university education in Vancouver or Victoria remote. Macdonald received advice from the B.C. School Trustees

Association as well as the Senate of U.B.C. The school trustees wanted a community-based institution, while the Senate wanted independent colleges containing multi-purpose curriculums. Unlike universities, the new institutions would be instruction-oriented rather than research centres.

Macdonald realized that the University of British Columbia could not accommodate all post-secondary students and thus made two recommendations - first, that there should be two additional universities in the province, one serving the Fraser Valley and another in Victoria; and secondly, that colleges be established in Prince George, the South Cariboo, the Kootenays and the Okanagan. The following year the provincial government adopted this report and set about establishing the new institutions. It began work on Simon Fraser University and made the existing College in Victoria into a university. In the mid 1960's the government endeavoured to obtain the interest of the various regions in the community college concept.

If School Districts wished to have a community college, they had to submit an application to the Minister of Education and then establish a College Steering Committee, composed of school trustees, business and community leaders, and educators. The first task of the Committee was to conduct a publicity campaign and then a plebiscite in all co-operating districts. The plebiscite required a 50% majority for success and determined the extent of support of the new institution. If the populace accepted the plebiscite, then the formal establishment of a regional college could begin.

The next step entailed the presentation of a funding by-law requiring a 60% majority to be accepted. This referendum would provide

capital financing for the college. In all but the West Kootenay Region, the first referenda failed. Although capital expenditures were not approved, operating funds became available through co-operating school districts and leasing arrangements were made for facilities to house the new institutions. Many colleges began with evening classes in high schools and similar locations.

The College of New Caledonia's "Regional College Committee" was created in 1963 by the Northern Interior Branch of the B.C. School Trustees Association and chaired by Dr. A.W. Mooney. This energetic and persistent group included prominent individuals such as Harold Moffat and Galt Wilson from Prince George, Bernice Haggerty from Burns Lake and Marion Knorr from Smithers. Working towards their goal of creating a two-year community college in Prince George, the Committee followed accepted procedure and encountered many of the same difficulties as other districts.

After preparing numerous briefs to the Department of Education, the Committee was finally given approval to hold a plebiscite on June 12, 1967. The announcement was made at a press conference held in May at the Simon Fraser Hotel in Prince George. At the time, Dr. Mooney also introduced the name of the new college. The name was chosen by the Committee because the proposed college's region would encompass the same vast region that had been called "New Caledonia" by the early explorer, Simon Fraser.

An effective campaign led to the success of the plebiscite in five of the six School Districts where it was held. Support in these Districts went as follows: McBride 90%, Vanderhoof 83%, Prince George 72%, Smithers 57%, Burns Lake 52% and Quesnel 24%.

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 57 (Prince George)

NOTICE OF PLEBISCITE

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17 (p) of the Public Schools Act, and Rule 23.02 of the Council of Public Instruction, the following question is to be submitted to the electors of School District No. 57 (Prince George).

"Are you in favour of School District No. 57 (Prince George) participating in the establishment and operation of a Regional College within the Central Interior Area?"

TAKE NOTICE

That the above is a true copy of the proposed question upon which the vote of the electors (owner electors, resident electors, and tenant electors) will be taken on June 12th, 1967 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight time at the polling stations listed hereunder:

BEAR LAKE SCHOOL
BEAVERLY SCHOOL
BLACKBURN ROAD SCHOOL
BUCKHORN SCHOOL
FORT GEORGE SOUTH SCHOOL
GISCOME SCHOOL
HART HIGHWAY SCHOOL
HIXON SCHOOL
KILLY ROAD SCHOOL
LONGWORTH (Berg Residence)
MACKENZIE (Municipal Admin. Office)
MELTOD LAKE SCHOOL
NECHAKO NORTH SCHOOL
NURKO LAKE SCHOOL
PEDEN HILL SCHOOL
RED ROCK SCHOOL

REID LAKE SCHOOL
SALMON VALLEY SCHOOL
SHELLEY SCHOOL
STONE CREEK SCHOOL
SUMMIT LAKE (Winnar Residence)
UPPER FRASER SCHOOL
VANWAY SCHOOL
WILLOW RIVER SCHOOL
CONNAUGHT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
DUCHESS PARK JR. SEC. SCHOOL
FORT GEORGE CENTRAL SCHOOL
HARVIN SCHOOL
QUINSON SCHOOL
SEYMOUR SCHOOL
SPRUCELAND SCHOOL
CITY HALL, PRINCE GEORGE

M. A. CARPENTER, Secretary-Treasurer,
School District No. 57 (Prince George)

The failure of the plebiscite in Quesnel may be attributed to the fact that the Mayor of Quesnel, Alex Fraser, was openly opposed to the idea. He questioned the cost of the new college and also its suggested location, in Prince George and not Quesnel. Later, on November 7, 1968, Quesnel held another plebiscite and this time the community voted 82% in favour of a college. The change in attitude was due to an extensive campaign conducted by College and School District officials in Quesnel schools. The campaign made the residents aware of the benefits a college would bring.

The first vote allowed the five successful School Districts to proceed and appoint a College Council. The Council, consisting of representatives from Burns Lake, McBride, Prince George, Smithers and Vanderhoof, was officially formed in November of 1967 and held its first meeting in March of 1968, at which time Mr. Sam Evans of Prince George was appointed Chairman. In the following months, the Council worked to a hectic schedule, drawing up concrete plans and budgets for the college, arranging for capital funding referendum in the fall and interviewing and hiring a President for the new institution. Mr. Wolfgang Franke, a former President of the College of Applied Arts and Technology in Sarnia, Ontario, was hired and assumed the position as the College's first President (Principal) in September.

On December 7, 1968, the capital referendum requesting \$411,500 was held. Unfortunately, the money by-law, which needed a 60% majority to pass, failed in four of the six Districts. Only Quesnel and McBride accepted the proposal, other Districts voting as follows: Vanderhoof 53%, Prince George 51%, Smithers 48% and Burns Lake 37%.

In Prince George, strong opposition came from Mayor Garvin Dezell and Robert Gracey, a former Secretary-Treasurer of the Prince George

A Regional College For Central B.C.?

WHY?

- So that all Central Interior graduates can get higher education.
- So that a wide variety of career choices will be open to them.
- So they can be educated near home at lower cost.
- So that we can train our own technical manpower.
- So that drop-outs can have another chance.
- So that adult education and community enrichment can be enjoyed.

WHERE?

In or Adjacent to Prince George.

WHAT WOULD A REGIONAL COLLEGE OFFER?

- (1) First and second year academic courses leading directly to third year university or technological institutes.
- (2) Two-year terminal technological courses designed to meet the needs of the region.
- (3) College preparatory courses for adult and other students who may be deficient in the prerequisites.
- (4) Adult general education and community programs.
- (5) Continuing education for secondary school graduates who have no clear career goals, offering the opportunity to transfer into other programs offered by the college.

HOW WILL COSTS BE SHARED?

The Province of B.C.	About 50%
Prince George S.D. No. 57	About 34%
Quesnel S.D. No. 28	About 6%
Vanderhoof S.D. No. 56	About 4%
Smithers S.D. No. 54	About 2.5%
Burns Lake S.D. No. 55	About 2.5%
McBride S.D. No. 58	About 1%
TOTAL	100%

WHAT WILL THE STUDENTS PAY?

Tuition	About \$250. (Compared to \$460. at U.B.C.)
Room & Board	About \$280. (Compared at \$720. at U.B.C.)

WHO MAY VOTE?

All Electors! Not Just Owner Electors.

School Board. Dezell was concerned about the cost, while Gracey argued that voting for a college would jeopardize the city's chances of getting a university. The university question had not been raised before and seems to have taken the community by surprise. Other opponents included the thirty-six members of the Prince George Farmer's Institute, who felt that the College Council was underestimating the costs that would be required for completion of the institution, and an anonymous "Committee for a University," which sponsored advertisements in the Citizen urging residents to vote against the referendum.

Prince George District Superintendent of Schools, David Todd, may have unknowingly committed a tactical error in the campaign. In attempting to explain how much the referendum would cost residents, Todd argued that a regional college in the city "would cost less than three bottles of liquor" per capita and therefore suggested that children tell their parents to vote "yes" to the referendum. Todd's remarks resulted in several editorials in the Citizen and caused a negative community reaction.

Why did the majority of voters oppose the referendum? In the first place, people felt that they did not know how much money they would be committing themselves to. They also wanted the provincial government to assume more of the cost. The electorate wanted the province to pay 80%, but the province was only willing to pay 60%. Other uncertainties included whether or not courses would be transferable to the universities, whether the college would be able to attract quality instruction, whether there would be sufficient enrollment, and whether the college would be able to offer the kind of curriculum suitable to the needs of the community.

People also feared that the money requested would be used to create a glorified high school, as funds were to be allocated towards the purchasing

SOME REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD...

VOTE NO!!

ON COLLEGE—AND PUSH ON FOR A UNIVERSITY

1. Too great a tax burden on residents of the region as the province does not assume a large enough share of the taxes
2. Duplication of some services now available in the region, like grade 13 and technical courses at the Vocational School. The Vocational School could and should enlarge its scope to cover the full spectrum of technical courses.
3. The universities of B.C. are overcrowded and plan extensive expansion programs. Every effort should be made to establish a University in the Prince George Region. The provincial government may use the college if established as an excuse for not building a University here. We are paying for Universities now. So let's go after one as advocated by the Minister of Education in June 1968.

Sponsored by the Committee for a University in the Region

The Prince George & District Labor
Council Urges You to Vote

YES!

8:00 a.m.

to

8:00 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 12th

Eligible Electors Are Owner Electors,
Resident Electors and Tenant Electors

POLLING STATIONS ARE LISTED BELOW

BEAR LAKE SCHOOL	RED LAKE SCHOOL
BEAVER SCHOOL	SALMON VALLEY SCHOOL
BLACKBURN ROAD SCHOOL	SHELLEY SCHOOL
BUCKHORN SCHOOL	STONE CREEK SCHOOL
FORT GEORGE SOUTH SCHOOL	SUMMIT LAKE (Walter Residence)
GISCOMB SCHOOL	UPPER FRASER SCHOOL
HART HIGHWAY SCHOOL	VANWAY SCHOOL
HIXON SCHOOL	WILLOW RIVER SCHOOL
KELLY ROAD SCHOOL	CONNAUGHT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LONGWORTH (Berg Residence)	QUINNESS PARK JR. SEC. SCHOOL
MCENTZIE (Munich Residence)	FORT GEORGE CENTRAL SCHOOL
MCCLEOD LAKE SCHOOL	HARWIN SCHOOL
MCHARD NORTH SCHOOL	QUINSON SCHOOL
MURDO LAKE SCHOOL	SEYMOUR SCHOOL
REDEN HILL SCHOOL	SPRUCELAND SCHOOL
RED ROCK SCHOOL	CITY HALL, PRINCE GEORGE

This message is sponsored by
The Prince George and Regional Labour Council

Support

The Establishment
of a Comprehensive

Higher Education Institution

In Central
British Columbia

VOTE

Regional College

JUNE 12th



NORTHWOOD
PULP LTD.

of books and equipment to be housed in the Prince George Secondary School. The existence of Prince George College, a private Catholic college in the city, also created confusion in the minds of some residents as to why "another college" was needed.

The defeat of the referendum did not stop the growth of the College. The College had been accepted in principle at the time of the plebiscite and could therefore be established. The major problem at the time was a lack of money with which to fund the institution. The College could not expend any money on capital items because of the defeated referendum, but it did have the right to request operating expenses from the School Boards and taxpayers.

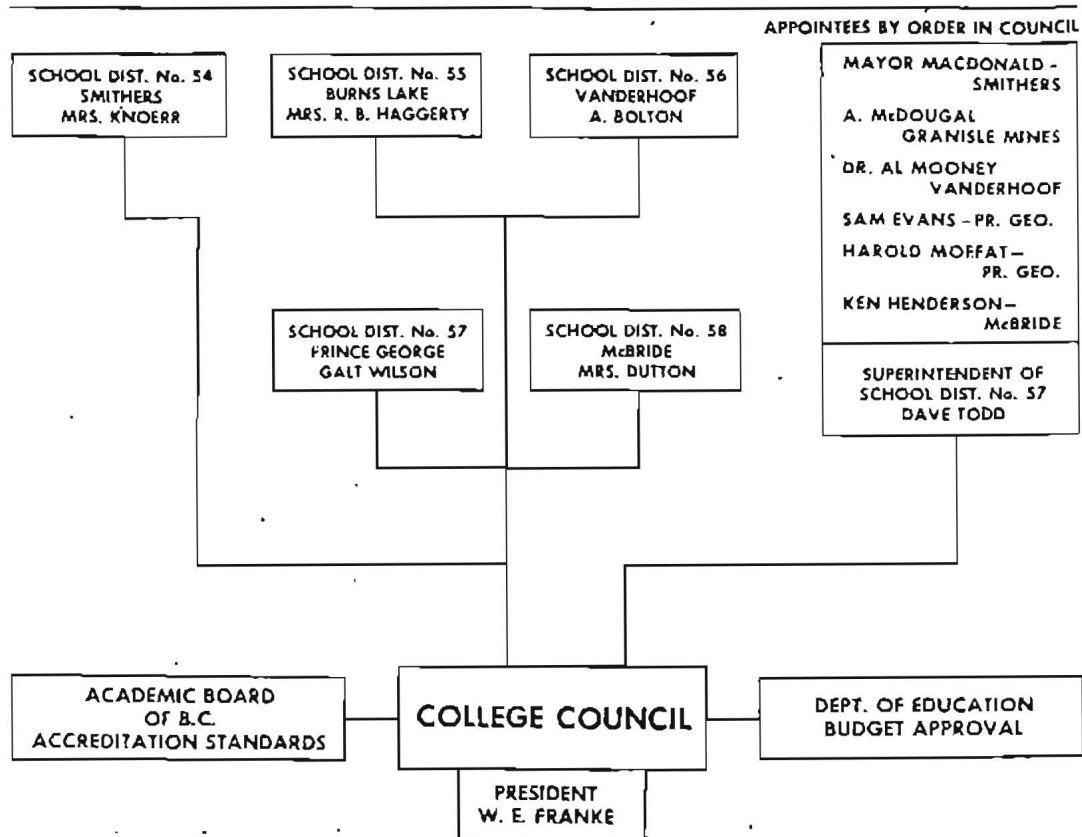
The 1967 plebiscite gave the Council the authority to establish and operate a regional community college, but the fact that it began operating without referendum approval was a controversial point. As time progressed, however, the benefits of a college became evident and people changed their attitudes.

In Prince George, the provincial government aimed for a college which would be housed in the facilities already present. These included the modern Prince George Senior Secondary School and the B.C. Vocational School. The government sought to incorporate the College into the Vocational School to provide the physical facilities for a combined institution.

The B.C. Vocational School in Prince George had opened in 1962 and by 1971 had in excess of 250 full-time students in more than a dozen vocational programs. The courses ranged from Commercial Bookkeeping to Welding, from Heavy Equipment Operation to Dental Assisting.

The First College Council

Appointed November 1967



When the College of New Caledonia opened in the Prince George Secondary School, it offered academic and technical courses. Classes were held in the evenings and on weekends, working around the Secondary School's schedule. A temporary portable building was moved from the Secondary School to the present campus in the fall of 1971. Another portable was completed in 1972, and the library which had been located on the mezzanine floor of the School moved into the new structure. More portables followed, but permanent facilities were being planned. In 1974, the provincial government spent over ten million dollars on a major building expansion, adding permanent library and shop facilities, a gymnasium, a food services facility and more classrooms. The expansion was completed in 1977.

From the moment the College opened, it grew rapidly. The best measure of growth would be the number of students enrolled. From 1969 through to 1975, enrollment in vocational programs increased from 242 to 821 full-time and part-time students. During the same period, total enrollment in university and career programs increased from 274 to 1,229 students. There have been steady increases since that time, but nothing to match the level of growth that the institution experienced in those early years of development.

The College's early history was marked by excitement and no small measure of controversy. While the provincial government provided direction and support, the College owes its existence to the many dedicated individuals in the community who had the strength and vision to make the College a reality.

Ann Howard is a second-year student
in the University Transfer Program
at CNC who has been researching
the founding of the College.