

Native Dancing To Set A Convocation 'First'

What is believed to be the first Indian dancing group to perform at a British Columbia college convocation, will dance in Nanaimo Sunday.

Mrs. Douglas White Sr., has trained boys and girls in inter-tribal dancing which will be a feature of the first Malaspina College convocation at Bowen Park.

Mrs. White, an instructor at Malaspina College this year in Indian history, culture and written language, said directors of Tillicum Haus felt that the group should take part in the convocation to show the college that "we appreciate the opportunities given to the Indians by Malaspina College."

Fourteen Indian boys and girls, wearing Tillicum Haus drill team costume will take part in the ritual dancing and songs of various west coast tribes. Mrs. White said that the group composed one song in the form of an Indian prayer for the graduating students.

Other songs which will be sung by Mrs. White and her group include an "entering song" which she described as a love chant which belonged to her late father. Another song, of her own, she called "The Flight of the Eagle."

All participants in the dancing are Indian students at secondary school level who are sent to Nanaimo from Indian bands from Prince Rupert to Port Alberni. Tillicum Haus was started as a friendship centre for all Indian students and was established, Mrs. White said, with the help of various churches and professional people in the area.

Convocation ceremonies take place at 2 p.m. The public is invited and more than 300 are expected to attend.

The young dancers, after their show Sunday, will prepare for another appearance May 26 at the Indian Day centennial celebration in Victoria, and on May 31 at Coal Tyee Day in Nanaimo.