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Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company

country, but also aspired to spend a comfortable old age in respectable circumstances, perhaps in the "civilized world." This aspiration, backed up by a display of top hats and silver cutlery in the wilderness, impressed contemporaries and continues to shape historians' perceptions of the social standing of senior officers in the heyday of the British North American fur trade.<sup>3</sup>

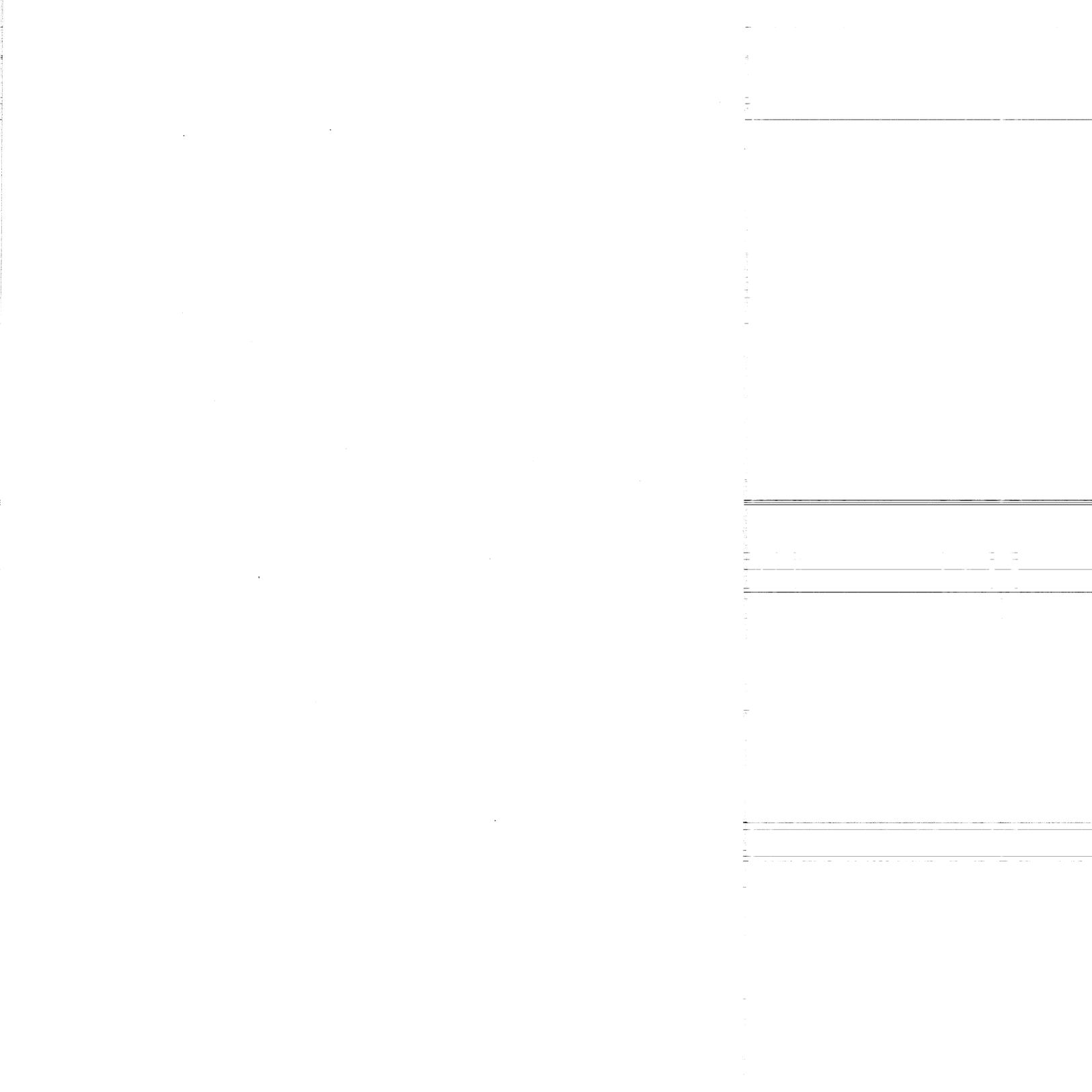
In the period examined here, the HBC's hierarchy was clearly articulated and its records were carefully kept. Modern scholars have constructed an image of what the Company's dominant figures hoped to make of "fur-trade society" and, not surprisingly, it resembled early Victorian middle or upper-middle class Britain. After 1821 steady profits from the fur trade, successful cost-cutting and the growth of the colony at Red River seemed to give Governor George Simpson scope to remake the society and economy of the Indian country. In this venture the Company made an effort to select and train a transcontinental élite corps of officers to manage its posts and govern its territory. It is possible, by simple quantitative techniques, to test how thoroughly Simpson and his contemporaries shaped the managerial class to match their early preconceptions.

### **Governor Simpson's Officers : The Sample Defined**

This analysis must begin with two caveats. First, a record of the HBC's behaviour in choosing and promoting men is an unreliable guide to how its policies appeared to the people they affected. The written record of perceptions and feelings is pitted with misinformation and self-deception; a statistical overview is needed. Nonetheless, statistics should be studied alongside written sources; subjective perceptions are also part of historical reality. The second and more serious reservation is that Governor Simpson's officers were only a small part of "fur-trade society." Any definition of that nebulous entity would have to include servants, wives, and free traders; arguably it should also include the heads of native trading bands.

This survey therefore tends to emphasize the HBC's traders in marginal roles, as intruders (albeit valuable ones) into indigenous societies, and as temporary exiles from Britain or Canada. As Jennifer Brown has argued, they did transcend these roles to form "a community in some important senses," linked in defiance of distance by intermarriage, letter-writing and shared responses to the institutions of the fur trade. The HBC made this sense of community possible even for traders, who were not related to each other, by moving officers around North America and by carrying private mail in official packets. Traders had to struggle vigorously to resist the derogatory connotations of their position as exiles beyond the fringes of the civilized world. The zeal some showed in collecting specimens for museums and their hunger for British books and magazines bespoke not only a genuine interest but also the officers' refusal to be hemmed in by pelts and trade goods. On the other hand, Chief Factor Alexander Christie





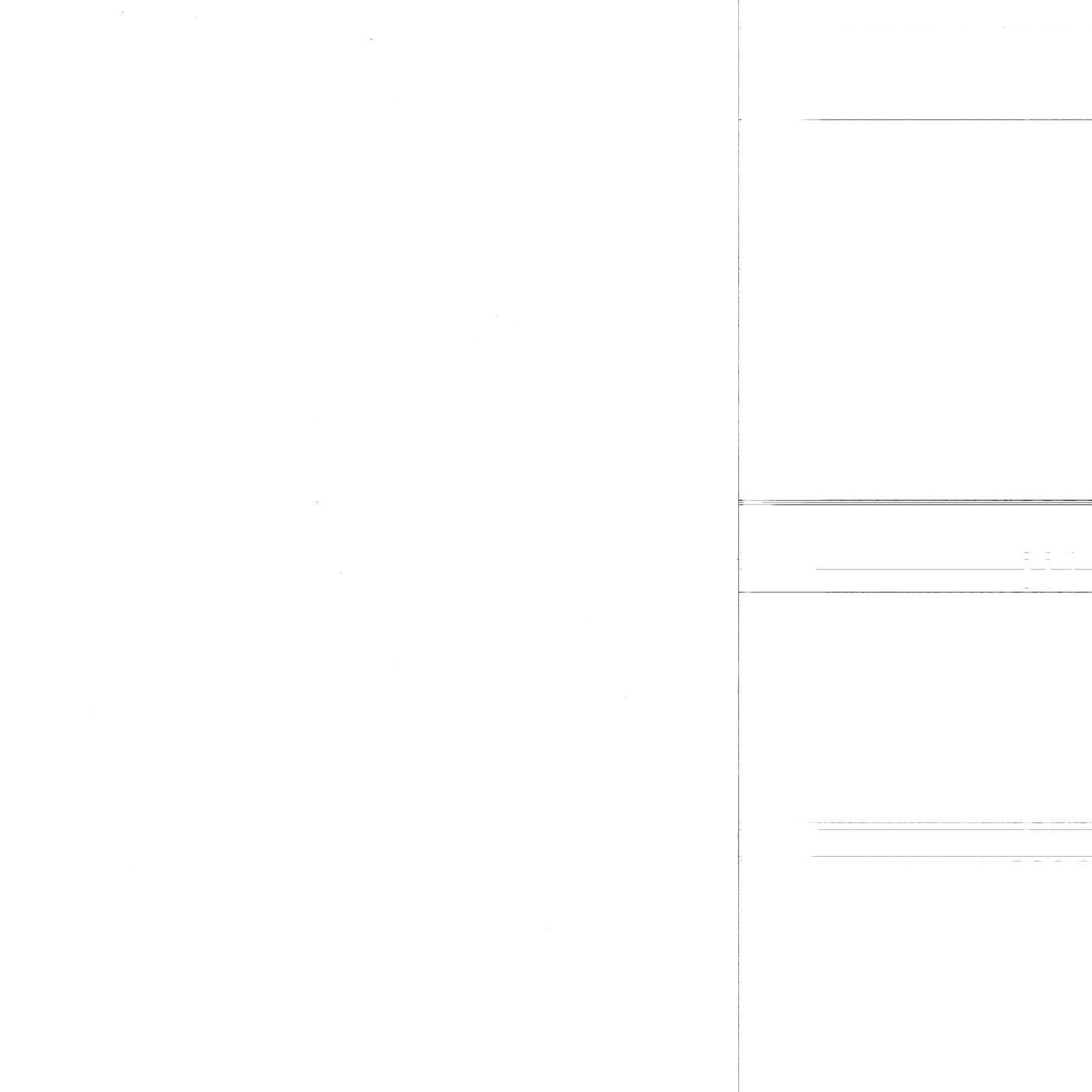
The HBC's patronage in this period had, from the perspective of the North American fur trade, a distinctly Scottish flavour. The old HBC trained officers in various ways, selecting some from servants' ranks and recruiting others from London's charity schools. The North West Company, by contrast, achieved surprisingly good results from kin-based recruiting. Under the prodding of Edward Ellice, Andrew Colville and George Simpson, the reorganized HBC leaned towards this system after the coalition.<sup>11</sup> Even if this form of recruitment was comparatively new to the English company, it was the normal method of appointment to positions in the Church of England, the East Indian Company, and government service at home and in the colonies. To radical critics of the system it was "Old Corruption";<sup>12</sup> to the senior British managers of the Hudson's Bay Company, proprietorial control of promotions was simply "mercantile usage and...the usage of public and private services."<sup>13</sup>

Though lay-offs and retrenchment followed 1821, the Company nonetheless recruited a few young gentlemen before 1830. Three cousins of Governor Simpson entered the service, Orkney-born Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy placed two of his many half-Cree sons, and native sons of two former officers (one dead, one retired) came in as apprentice clerks.<sup>14</sup> After 1830, for a time, appointments were more frequent but also more exclusive. Central control, rationalization and patronage were meant to go hand in hand, and the Deed Poll of 1834 stripped the Councils of the right to nominate new commissioned officers, while giving the London office new authority to dismiss incompetent or "burnt-out" officers. If these rights in practice were exercised largely under guidance from Simpson, the right to appoint apprentice clerks was jealously guarded by the Committee in London. In 1846, Simpson advised his superiors of plans to fill vacancies with "young gentlemen to be engaged in [Canada], with a view to saving the expense and inconvenience of forwarding them from England." He was twice rebuked for "an improper interference" with the prerogatives of the directors.<sup>15</sup> The secretary in London reputedly kept a list of candidates, which included British relatives of officers in the field, but the list was either fictitious or very flexible. Even when apprentice clerks were not closely related to directors or officers, patterns of political or social influence can often be traced. John Balsillie and Ewen MacDonald went out to York Factory in 1858 as "protégés of Mr. Edward Ellice." The following year the secretary informed an agent that the Committee could appoint apprentice clerks whether they were needed or not, and made such appointments "almost invariably as favours to those to whom the Governor and Committee give them." Gentlemen recruits of 1862 were put forward by a member of the HBC's committee, A.G. Dallas, and by Sir James Matheson of Ardrross, who owned one of the Company's main recruiting centres for labourers, was an associate of Dallas in the China firm of Jardine, Matheson and Co., and was a close friend of Dallas's fellow HBC director Alexander Matheson MP.<sup>16</sup> Such examples can be

multiplied to demonstrate patronage dispensed personally by the Company's secretaries in London, by the Orkney and Shetland agents, and by the directors. Associate Governor Eden Colvile was the son of a particularly active director; his father, Andrew Colvile, was a business partner of George Simpson's uncle. Chief Trader A.E. Pelly was related to the long-serving governor, Sir John Henry Pelly; and so on. The lines of kinship and interest running through Hudson Bay House after 1821 can hardly have been less elaborate or less important than the better-known Nor'wester tangle. Apprentice clerkships were almost as important in taking care of needy gentlefolk as in finding talent to manage the fur trade. That, after all, was a normal method of élite recruitment at the time.

Normal though it was, some in the system grumbled. Inept juniors irritated senior officers whose incomes depended on the efficiency of the fur trade. A queue of well-connected young Simpsons, Mactavishes and McKenzies blocked the appointment of some serving officers' sons, and slowed promotion of clerks whose influence was weaker. Comparative competence can be hard to assess, but Eden Colvile's brother-in-law, Henry Maxwell, doubtless deprived a better man of a commission, and promotion came remarkably easily to Dugald and William Mactavish. Few meritorious officers ended their careers on the list of clerks, and few commissions were flagrantly undeserved, but the timing of many appointments evoked wry or bitter comment.

The actual mechanics of promotion are not well known, in part because Simpson's councils in Rupert's Land and his frequent meetings with his superiors in London are poorly documented. (He visited London on ten separate trips between 1834 and 1857.) As Glyndwr Williams pointed out, the judgements recorded in Simpson's "character book" of 1832 offer no reliable forecast of promotions over the next dozen years. Men of whom the governor thought highly often had to wait their turn behind others he disparaged.<sup>17</sup> Typically the promotion process began when a patron in Britain or North America drew Simpson's attention to the merits of a senior clerk, one who had served at least one three-year contract at £100 a year. Chief factors had important roles as patrons; shortly after Simpson declared Thomas Frazer had "no prospect of advancement" he married a much younger woman, the daughter of John George McTavish, and his commission followed shortly.<sup>18</sup> McTavish's patronage also worried officers like James Anderson [a]. He noted in 1846 that all the chief factors he had worked under were retired except McTavish, who was bound to favour his nephews. Anderson did always serve in the shadow of the Mactavish brothers, but a decade after he got his chief tradership a friend observed that "I hope my old friend Mr. James Anderson will get his other foot in the stirrup, as he has many friends in the country who has done all they could for him."<sup>19</sup> The promotion occurred almost at once. Chief traders could also act as patrons: John Work was still at the lower rank when he successfully recommended Dr. John Kennedy for a com-





In surveying this trend one should not count officers in the service before the coalition, who went through diverse apprenticeships, then were winnowed as their contracts expired. Between 1821 and 1826 about two-thirds of all clerks retired or dropped to a lower grade. The men who outlasted this attrition to become chief traders cannot appropriately be compared with the less rigorously-screened recruits of the Simpson era.<sup>23</sup> This part of the analysis (see Figure 1 and Table 1) accordingly proceeds with a reduced sample of 91 men, recruited between 1825 and 1854 and commissioned between 1841 and 1869. In this reduced sample of 91 chief traders, only 56 percent—51 men—entered as apprentice clerks in the “normal” upward pattern. The other 40 used different routes. Out of these 16 were recruited as adults: 6 surgeon-clerks, 5 mature clerks, 4 ship’s officers and a surveyor began their careers with salaries above £50 a year.<sup>24</sup> These were men who had acquired skills outside the HBC service and jumped the queue for early promotion. In addition, 10 chief traders joined the HBC as postmasters or apprentice postmasters; as such they were officers but their pay, status, and prospects were all initially lower than if they had been apprentice clerks. Finally, 14 of the 91 chief traders entered as servants.

TABLE 1  
RANKS OF CHIEF TRADERS ON ENTRY TO SERVICE

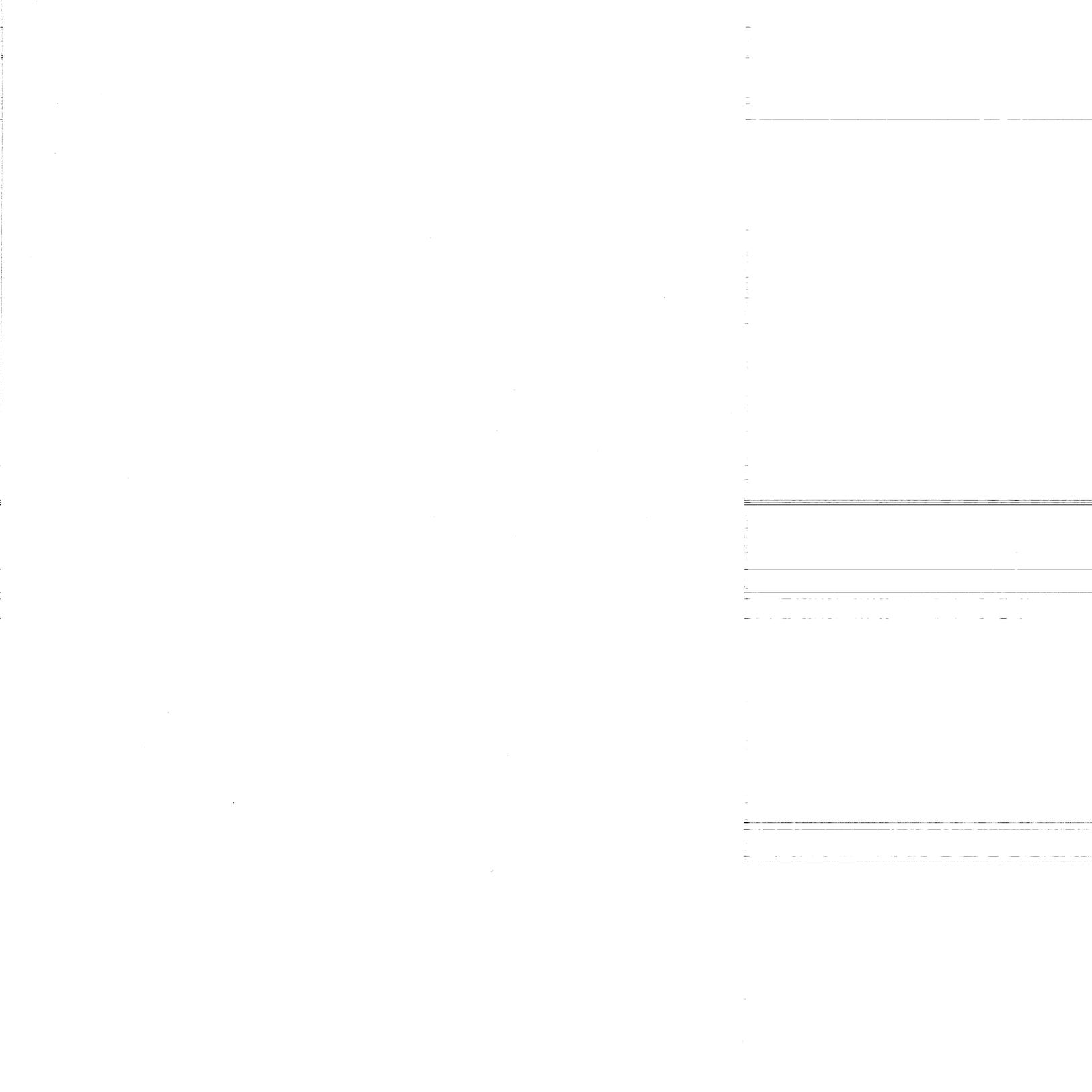
<b>Pre-coalition:</b>		
Hudson’s Bay Company	13	
North West Company	7	20
<b>Post-coalition:</b>		
<b>Officers:</b>		
Surgeon-clerk	6	
Clerk	5	
Ship’s officer	4	
Surveyor	1	
Apprentice clerk	51	
Apprentice postmaster	7	
Postmaster	3	77
<b>Servants:</b>		
Apprentice	5	
Labourer	4	
Apprentice sailor	1	
Assistant steward	1	
Shepherd	1	
General servant	1	
Seaman	1	14
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>91</b>

One-fifth of the chief traders under the 1834 Deed Poll entered below apprentice clerk's rank; this was more than a quarter of the group recruited after 1821. These socially anomalous officers were concentrated towards the end of our period: the earliest one commissioned was John Rowand Jr. in 1850. Fully one-third of the new chief traders between then and 1869 had joined the Company below the normal rank for élite recruitment. But scrutiny of individual cases suggests that this was rarely an approach to the "Horatio Alger" model of social promotion, but a humble ramification of the traditional system of patronage and influence.

Before 1870 there was little upward mobility for servants. Although one or two clerks in the 1860s had risen from the ranks without learning to read, servants had to have very unusual qualities to get even that far. Two who did so were Orkney labourers recruited in the 1830s and commissioned in the sixties. William Anderson had been a part-time schoolmaster at York Factory, and Magnus Linklater managed the warehouse at Fort Garry for many years before promotion to the Mess. Charles Stuart of Témiscamingue was recruited in Scotland as a labourer by his uncle, a chief factor. William McKay, labourer and general handyman at Fort Ellice in his youth, was a son of the mixed-blood clerk John Richards McKay; father and son were eminent figures on the prairies. George Blenkinsop was an ordinary seaman on a Pacific coast vessel before being taken ashore as a postmaster. Angus McDonald, a Scot, was enlisted in 1838 as a "general servant" but became a postmaster. Joseph W. McKay seems to have been the son of an undistinguished native clerk on James Bay. He was one of the mixed-blood lads sent from there by Simpson to a sailing apprenticeship on the Pacific in the forties. (Another of these boys did equally well; by the mid-sixties John Swanson earned more as a ship's master than McKay did as a chief trader.) Chief Factor Robert Campbell, an Argyllshire Scot, began as a shepherd at the Company's Red River farm. William D. Lane was an assistant steward for a year at Rupert River before a contract as an apprentice postmaster marked his "elevation to a seat at the Mess" at Moose Factory.<sup>25</sup>

A further five chief traders were first engaged as "apprentices," an omnibus grade of servant's rank from which a recruit might turn into a labourer, craftsman or officer depending on his aptitudes or connections. This route to a commission was followed by Samuel McKenzie, Peter Ogden Jr., and Arthur Pruden, all chief factors' sons, and by an obscure Scottish officer named Donald McLean [c]. Governor Simpson's own natural son, George Jr., rose from apprentice's rank at £8 a year, at Honolulu in 1841, to a chief tradership in Athabasca in 1858. Promotion of officers' sons by this route evaded the patronage of the Committee in London, allowing natives to rise to positions from which, as Simpson argued in 1860, it would be unjust to deny them further advancement.<sup>26</sup>





Irishman, 3 the sons of Canadians, and 3 chief traders had native mothers and fathers: Thomas Taylor Jr., William McKay [c] and Joseph William McKay.

The Scottish-born chief factors were almost a majority—15 of 31—among the officers in the sample who reached the higher rank before 1870. The small size of this group reflects the exclusiveness of the rank, but also the long period between entry to the service and a seat in Council. The chief factors in the sample were all recruited between 1809 and 1845, and received their chief factorships between 1840 and 1869. Aside from the 15 Scots in the group, a diluted Scottish influence may be seen elsewhere; James Douglas was Scottish in all but birth; 3 of the 7 English chief factors, 2 of the mixed-bloods, both the Canadians and an American in the group had Scottish surnames.

Although only two chief traders in every five, and one out of every two chief factors were actually natives of Scotland, the concentration of Scottish talent was higher in the much smaller group of governors and of chief factors in strategically important posts. Among governors in Rupert's Land, George Simpson (1821-60) and William Mactavish (1864-70) were actually born in Scotland, and Dallas (1862-64) grew up there. William Williams, governor in the Southern Department (1821-26) shared with Eden Colvile (associate governor in 1849-52) the distinction of being born south of the Tweed. The Boards of Management of the Columbia Department after 1845 had a sprinkling of non-Scots, the Irishman John Work prominent among them; but Scots emerged prominently there and among the chief factors in charge of York Factory, Red River and Montréal. The high-risk, high-profile work of Company-sponsored exploration was likewise almost entirely entrusted to Scots. It is in these spheres, not among the chief traders or the few dozen more ordinary chief factors, that *prima facie* evidence of a Scottish monopoly exists.

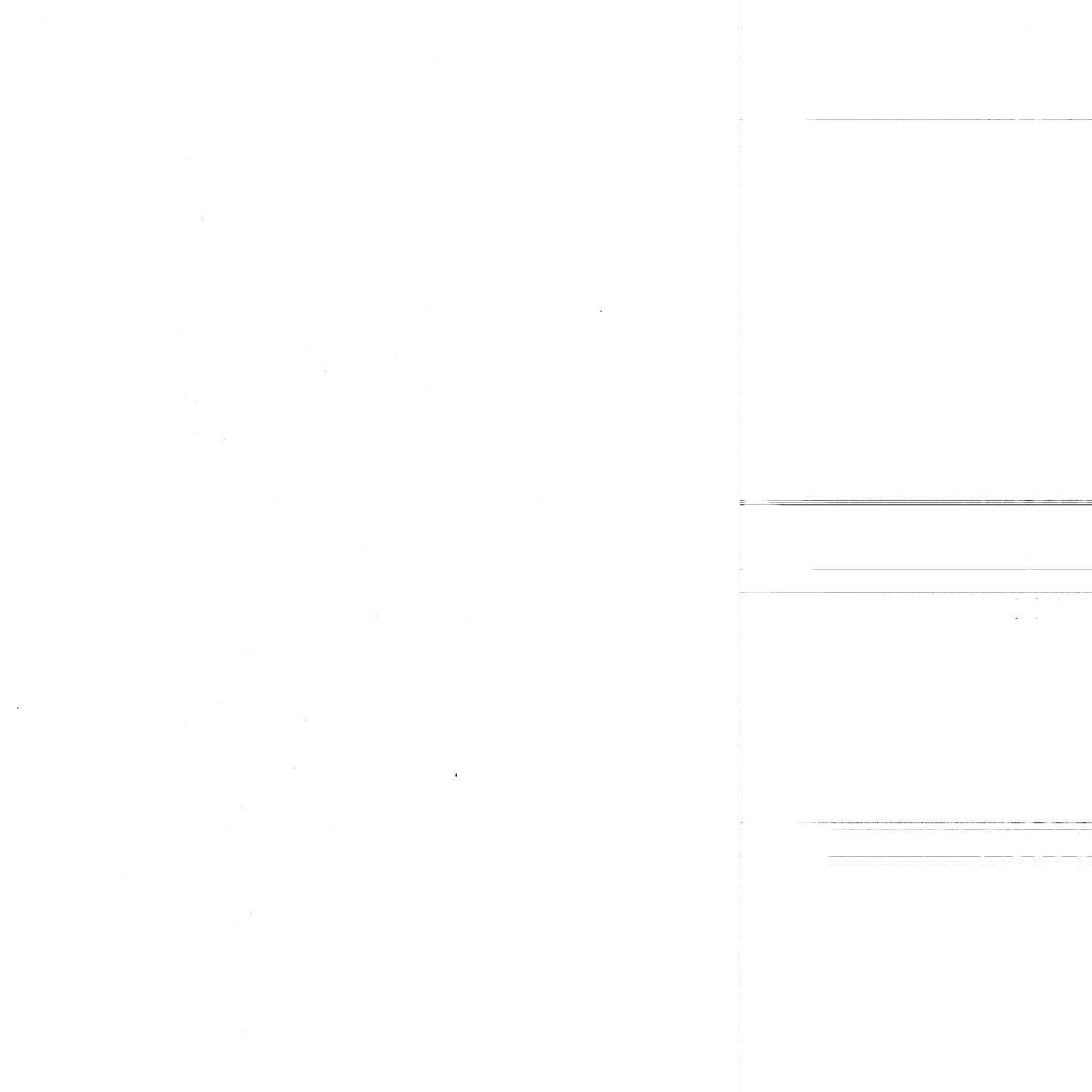
### **Patronage and Mixed-blood Officers**

After 1834, there was increasing pressure from serving officers to get their sons into the HBC as officers. Historical writing on this subject has been dominated by complaints of fathers who felt they were getting less than their share of patronage. Viewed from the colonial perspective—the young men's need for respectable employment—the complaints of mixed-bloods and their would-be patrons are easily understood. Reading the letters of James Sutherland or of Charles McKenzie one might suppose the Company had ample room for as many sons as its officers could produce, but perversely awarded the prizes elsewhere. These letters are accessible and eye-catching, but are unrepresentative or even mendacious.<sup>33</sup> From the opposite point of view—the HBC's need to screen competing candidates for the few really desirable jobs—it is easy to understand why the London directors resisted the questionable practice of packing the service with the sons of its old officers.

Mixed-blood clerks and commissioned officers were in the service from the coalition onwards. In the Northern Department, individual mixed-bloods were valuable enough to the Company through the 1820s to hold their proportionate share of positions at its 1821 level of about 11 percent. Talented or well-connected young mixed-bloods like Dr. James Rowand could maintain respectable status in new positions outside the Indian country. In the fur trade itself the net loss of a hundred élite positions (and the fact that free trade was not yet an option) meant that the normal process of downward social mobility<sup>34</sup> was accelerated by lay-offs and by the routine filling of some new élite positions from outside the country. Writers have tended to concentrate on the Northern Department: this rather distorts the picture, since Simpson tended to deploy native officers elsewhere. When Simpson penned his character sketches in 1832 only one clerk in every nine was a mixed-blood in the Northern Department, but across the service as a whole the ratio was one in five. And, in response to pressure from the fathers, Simpson used postmasterships, apprenticeships and a new rank of apprentice postmaster to bring mixed-blood officers into the élite stream through a side door, evading London's scrutiny of apprentice clerkships. This situation was not satisfactory to young natives who thought themselves superior to the British-born apprentice clerks,<sup>35</sup> and it reminded the fathers of their own marginal status as overseas employees without the ear of the Committee in London.

Just as marriage to mixed-blood wives came back into vogue after 1840, mixed-blood officers were frequently employed by the HBC in the last three decades of the monopoly era. As Jennifer Brown has remarked, both the women and their brothers were more acculturated to British norms than the generation which provoked Simpson's disdain in the twenties. The mothers of this later generation were more likely mixed-bloods than Indians, and the fathers had greater opportunities to educate their sons. Nonetheless, acculturation to British norms varied greatly among officers' children. Even if educated in Canada or Scotland, most of them had spent six to ten formative years in the Indian country, and had non-European influences in their upbringing. An extreme example was an apprentice postmaster named Edward John Harriott; his father and maternal grandfather were both English-born chief factors, but he grew up in the Saskatchewan district in the 1840s without learning a word of English until he was sent to school at Red River.<sup>36</sup>

Many of the more acculturated mixed-bloods clung to the belief that the cards were stacked against them because of their race. Nonetheless, increasing numbers of them seized their chance to succeed. A good example of the way talent could aid influence (and *vice versa*) was Chief Trader Thomas Taylor Jr., son of a mixed-blood clerk who used his talent and his father's influence with Simpson to become an apprentice clerk in 1847 and one of the youngest chief traders on record in 1860. But native officers, even after 1850, continued to be deployed mainly at points where





Company backgrounds. For other clerical vacancies (rapidly increasing because of competition), the HBC either promoted men from the ranks or recruited more British and Anglo-Canadian youths. The result was a down-turn, even before 1870, in the number of natives receiving commissions. If it is proper to speak of a colour bar at any time between 1820 and 1870 it existed after 1855, not before; but it was imposed for political and

**TABLE 2**  
**ELITE ENTRY PATRONAGE: NATIVE APPRENTICE CLERKS,**  
**1824-1867**

---

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>
1824	Alexander Kennedy Jr.
1825	William Davis William Gladman
1833	William Kennedy
1834	Alexander Christie Jr.*
1836	Allan McMillan
1837	A.R. McLeod Jr. John McLoughlin Jr.
1839	John Williams David McLoughlin
1841	John Miles
1842	William J. Christie*
1843	Thomas Charles*
1845	Ferdinand McKenzie Joseph E. McPherson*
1847	Thomas Taylor Jr.*
1848	William Manson*
1852	Peter Warren Bell*
1853	William Charles*
1854	John Manson
1861	Peter Ogden III
1862	Thomas Hardisty
1867	Alexander Christie [c]

Two natives were appointed directly to positions as surgeon-clerks:

1829	John Kennedy*
1844	Roderick Kennedy

Several officers were transferred to the rank of apprentice clerk after entering at a lower grade. Those who made the transition within the first five years of service included:

1846	Joseph Wm. McKay*
1849	John Charles George Miles*
1852	Richard Hardisty* Nathaniel Logan
1864	Thomas Anderson

Note: \* designates an officer commissioned under the Deed Poll of 1834

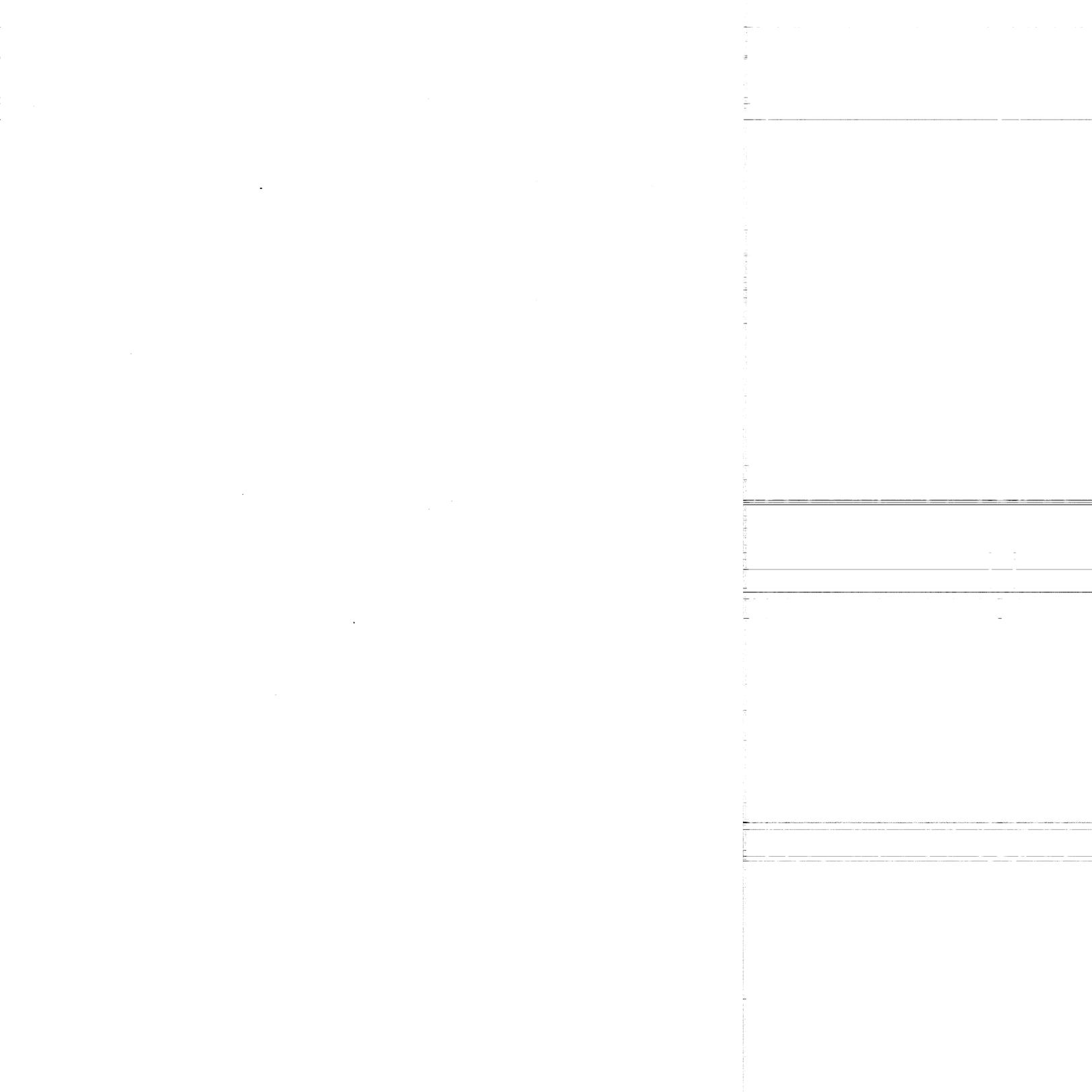
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economic reasons, not because of any real or imagined inferiority of native officers. Those who were already in the service before 1855 were unaffected by the new policy: four even became chief factors in the sixties. On the other hand, the sons of that generation were no longer given much encouragement to join the Company's élite.<sup>37</sup>

TABLE 3  
ELITE ENTRY PATRONAGE: APPRENTICE POSTMASTERS,  
1838-1870

Name	Origin	Year Appointed	First Department
Henry Connolly*	Native	1838	Southern
William Corrigan <sup>1</sup>	Native	1838	Southern
Alexander Kennedy Isbister	Native	1838	Northern
William McMurray*	Native	1838	Northern
Richard E. Corcoran	Native	1839	Southern
Hector Ae. McKenzie [b]	Native	1839	Northern
Patrick McKenzie	Native	1839	Northern
Robert Birnie	Native	1841	Columbia
Peter C. Pambrun Jr.	Native	1841	Northern
William Todd Jr.	Native	1841	Northern
William Lucas Hardisty*	Native	1842	Northern
James Pruden	Native	1842	Northern
James Todd	Native	1843	Northern
James Simpson	Native	1844	Northern
William Sinclair Jr.	Native	1844	Columbia
William Dahal <sup>1</sup>	Red River	1844	Northern
John Simpson	Native	1845	Northern
John Charles	Native	1846	Northern
Alexander McKenzie	Native	1846	Northern
Joseph Hardisty*	Native	1847	Columbia
George S. Miles*	Native	1847	Southern
Roderick McKenzie*	Scotland	1847	Southern
William McNeill Jr.	Native	1848	Columbia
Robert Miles [b]	Native	1848	Southern
Walter Ross <sup>2</sup>	[Native] <sup>3</sup>	1848	Columbia
John Fraser	Native	1849	Columbia
Richard Hardisty*	Native	1849	Northern
Nathaniel Logan	Native	1849	Northern
Robert Todd <sup>2</sup>	Native	1849	Northern
James McKenzie [b]	Native	1850	Northern
John McIntosh Jr.	Native	1853	Columbia
Charles Ogden	Native	1853	Columbia
Isaac Ogden	Native	1853	Columbia
P. McKenzie <sup>6</sup>	[?]	1853	[Southern]
John Norton	Canada	ca. 1854	Montréal
James S. Ironside	Canada	1855	Southern
Donald Ross Jr. <sup>4</sup>	Norway House	1855	Northern
John Sinclair	Native	1855	Northern
Thomas Swanston	Native	1855	Northern





were generally the sons of earlier officers, hence British and Protestant.<sup>44</sup> Most French-Canadian officers retired or were squeezed out of the service after 1821, and social class and education thereby ensured that only four French-Canadian families in the fur trade would have sufficient influence to secure entry-level patronage for mixed-blood sons. Chief Trader Pierre C. Pambrun placed his son Pierre Jr. as an apprentice postmaster in 1841; after some years of moderate success as a clerk, Pierre Jr. dropped out to become a free trader, and was described many years after his re-engagement as “a very old officer with an unfortunate record.” His brother Andrew Dominique served at least one outfit as a clerk at Nez Percé, earning £75 a year. Two other brothers were employed briefly as labourers.<sup>45</sup> Chief Trader Georges Deschambeault placed several sons as apprentice postmasters after 1850. By 1886, Pierre Jr. was chief trader in charge of Lac du Brochet and Georges Jr. was a postmaster nearby.<sup>46</sup> A third French-Canadian officer was the Columbia Department clerk Ovide Allard, presumably the father of Jason Allard, who was a postmaster in British Columbia for about a decade.<sup>47</sup> Further east, Louis de la Ronde spent half a century around Lake Superior, and was presumably the father of Henry de la Ronde, apprentice postmaster in 1861 and a junior chief trader when he retired in 1888.<sup>48</sup> Other Métis, some illiterate like the clerk Pierre Laliberté, managed to advance by their local influence with Indians; such officers do not seem ever to have been promoted beyond £100 a year.<sup>49</sup> Métis as a whole fared no better than other groups of equivalent education and lack of influence; they fared no worse either.

### **Class, Race and Patronage**

These considerations should help guide further research into class and race in the HBC's élite. The question of class is easily dealt with: some servants reached chief trader's rank, but most of these had some influential connections to aid them; they converted enlistments as servants into a risky, unofficial but successful entry into the officer class. Linklater, William Anderson and three or four West Coast officers seem to be the only examples of “Horatio Alger” promotion; further research might shorten even this brief list. Probably 90 percent of chief traders had received an education appropriate for a middle class or upper-middle class life in any part of British North America, and had tastes and social views to match. This is what one would expect in a prosperous concern like the HBC after 1830.<sup>50</sup>

The racial question is less simply dealt with. Mixed-bloods outside the HBC's service experienced the disadvantages common to natives in colonized places; but those who were inside the Company often internalized the values and possessed the skills which the HBC sought in its officers. They became chief traders. As such they occupied an unusual place in the context of colonial societies. Commissioned gentlemen earned two-and-a-half times as much as senior clerks; they had the right to beat

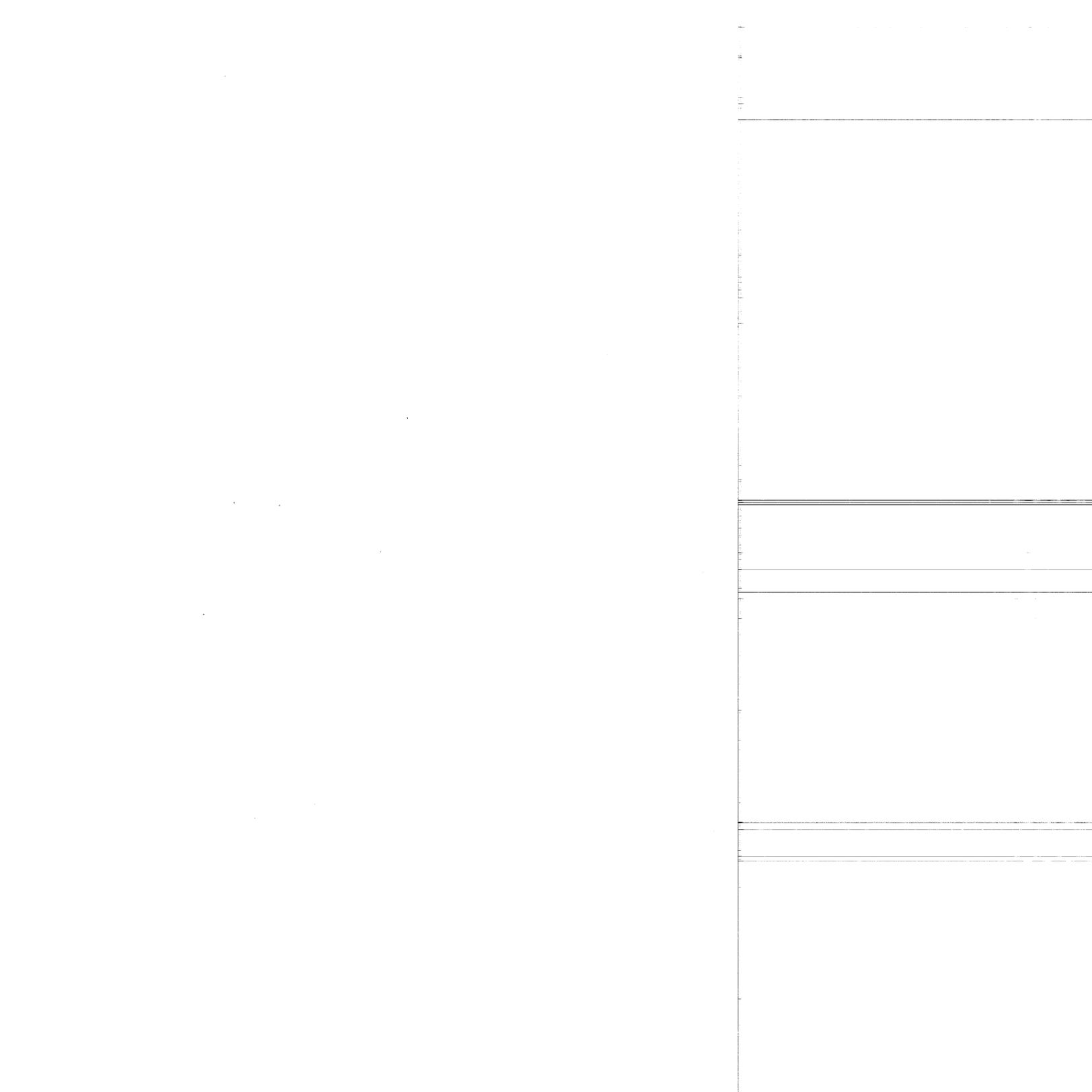
or to withhold rations from disobedient servants, 40 percent of whom were usually white.<sup>51</sup> They also supervised and helped train younger white officers. Although it is not uncommon for members of colonized groups to take supervisory positions over their own countrymen, no systematically racist organization could give mixed-blood colonials disciplinary powers of this sort over white men of significantly lower rank and standing. Of course, the test of a native's fitness to exercise this control was his conformity to the norms of the officer corps as a whole; but Walter Traill expressed a fact of considerable social interest when he noted that "white men are scarce in Hudson's Bay Service."<sup>52</sup> This state of affairs was allowed to exist because real authority resided in London, and was shared with only two or three influential men—invariably whites—in the Indian country.

Not all the reasons for this state of affairs—its existence, or its transitory character—can emerge from an analysis such as this one. Three main causes can be proposed. First, for practical reasons and to foster morale in the service the London and overseas governors surrendered much of their promotion patronage and a slice of entry patronage to the officers in the Indian country. Second, Governor Pelly honoured promises to employ the native élite if officers supported the Red River schools. Third, the demand for entry patronage fluctuated in the United Kingdom.<sup>53</sup> Therefore the authorities in London found it advantageous to delegate part of their power of appointment to the chief factors. Although senior officers persistently doubted the fitness of mixed-bloods for high rank, for two decades promotions in the HBC seem to have been decided on merit as much as is ever likely to happen in a colonial monopoly.

The evident gap between some high officers' opinions and the Company's actual behaviour invites the historian to remember Francis Ermatinger's advice that "We have from our isolated situations too often been led to form our opinions of man from Sir George Simpson and the few in his suit[e]." <sup>54</sup> Isolated by time, as Ermatinger's friends were by distance, historians need to detach themselves from evidence of broad complaints and hostile generalizations, and look at what was actually happening in the Indian country. In this particular context, this means looking beyond the dogmatism of statements in the historical record and scrutinizing the year-to-year administration of patronage. For the most part the socially exclusive character of the commissioned ranks was not threatened; it seems likely, however, that the HBC's service was never so open to the claims of well-connected and talented mixed-bloods as it was between 1840 and the end of the Company's trading monopoly in the Indian country.

### **Appendix: Selection of the Sample**

The idea of élite recruitment implies the existence of consistent criteria for defining membership in the élite. A general survey of status in





The dates given for officers' commissions preserve the arrangement in HBCA: A.31/9 fos. 33-4. Occasionally it took more than a year for an officer to learn of his promotion and get his acceptance back to London. Commissions offered but refused are not mentioned in Table 4.

It was a policy of the HBC to record annually the names, origins, locations, duties, earnings and expenditure of every officer and servant in an "Abstract of Servants' Accounts." Not all are equally complete but only a handful are actually missing. A complete listing of archival references and inclusive volume dates follows:

HBCA: B.134/g/1-45, Montréal 1821-71

B.135/g/1-53, Moose Factory 1821-71

B.153/g/1-6, North West River 1859-72

B.223/g/1-17, Fort Vancouver 1827-62

B.226/g/1-18, Fort Victoria 1853-71

B.239/g/1-47, York Factory 1821-71

Some overlap occurred between York Factory and Fort Vancouver records before 1854, and between Montréal and North West River after 1859.

**TABLE 4**  
**SUMMARIES OF CHIEF TRADERS' CAREERS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Entry rank</b>	<b>Entry and Promotion dates (1800s)</b>
1 George Traill Allan	Scotland	Clerk	30 32 44 —
2 Alexander C. Anderson	England <sup>1</sup>	Apprentice clerk	31 36 46 —
3 James Anderson[a]	England <sup>1</sup>	Apprentice clerk	31 36 47 55
4 James Anderson [b]	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	32 37 49 59
5 William Anderson	Scotland	Labourer	33 58 62 —
6 John Ballenden	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	29 34 44 48
7 George Barnston	Scotland	(NWC)	20 26 40 47
8 John Bell	Scotland	(NWC)	18 24 41
9 Peter Warren Bell	Native	Clerk	52 57 66 —
10 James Bissett	Canada	Clerk	53 53 59 —
11 John Black	Scotland	Clerk	39 39 48 —
12 George Blenkinsop	England	Seaman	40 46 56 —
13 Francis Boucher	England	Apprentice clerk	33 38 52 —
14 Alexander W. Buchanan	Scotland	Clerk	39 39 50 —
15 James Cameron	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	36 41 49 —
16 Robert Campbell	Scotland	Shepherd	30 40 52 67
17 Thomas Charles	Native	Apprentice clerk	43 48 59 —
18 William Charles	Native	Apprentice clerk	53 55 63 —
19 Alexander Christie Jr.	Native	Apprentice clerk	34 39 58 —
20 William Joseph Christie	Native	Apprentice clerk	42 47 54 60
21 James R. Clare	England	Apprentice clerk	45 50 56 62
22 Laurence Clarke	Ireland	Postmaster	51 57 67 —
23 James S. Clouston	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	42 47 53 63
24 Robert Clouston	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	38 43 47 —
25 Henry Connolly	Native	Appr. postmaster	38 49 65 —

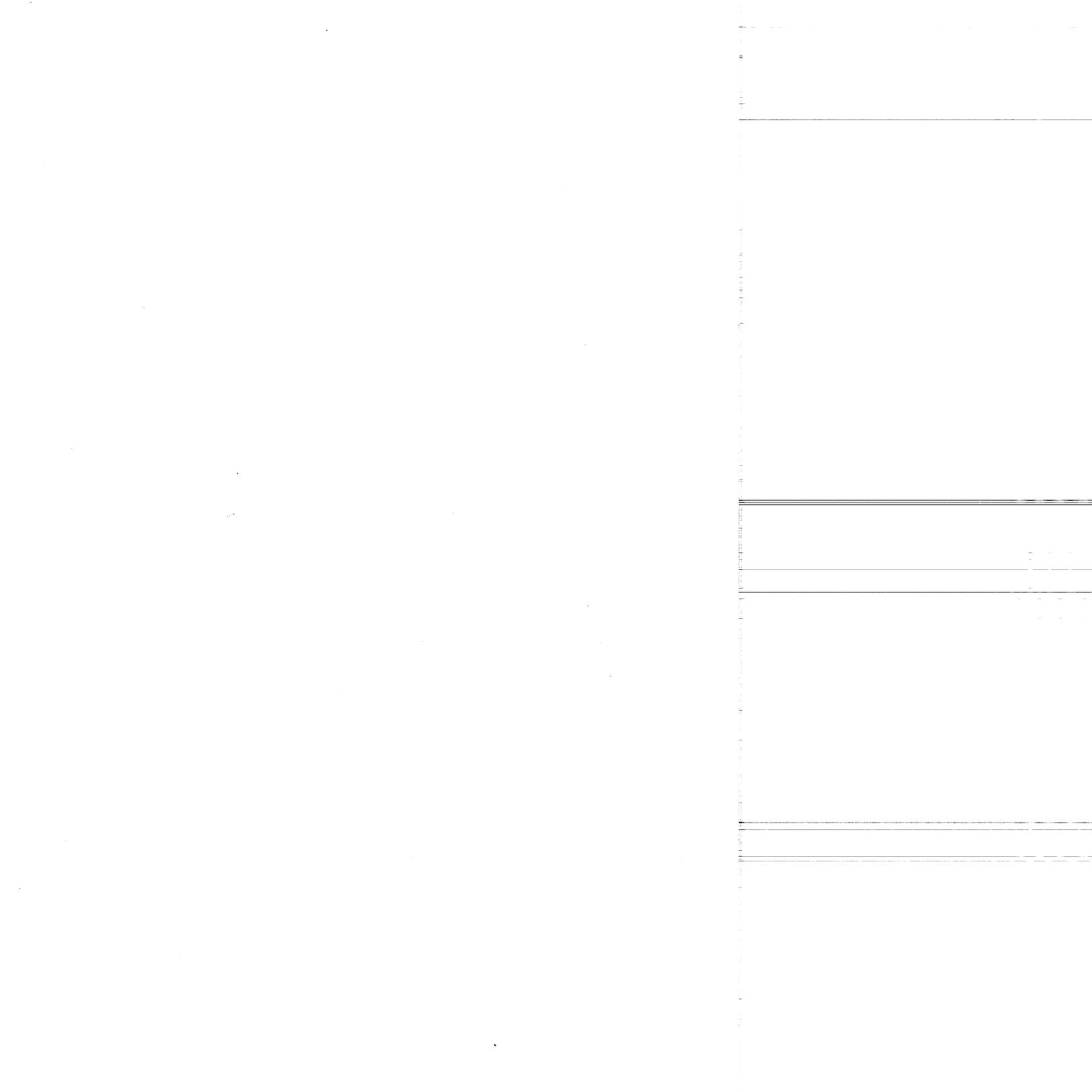
26	Thomas Corcoran	Ireland	[HBC]	18 23 41 —
27	William Cowan	Scotland	Surgeon-clerk	56 56 60 —
28	Robert Crawford	Canada	Apprentice clerk	54 58 67 —
29	Georges Deschambeault	Canada	[HBC]	19 31 47 —
30	Charles Dodd	England	Mate	36 36 52 60
31	James Douglas	Scotland <sup>2</sup>	[NWC]	19 25 34 40
32	Francis Ermatinger	England <sup>3</sup>	[HBC]	18 24 42 —
33	Roderick Finlayson	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	38 43 50 59
34	Henry Fisher	Canada <sup>4</sup>	[NWC]	16 24 51 —
35	Joseph Fortescue	England	Apprentice clerk	52 57 67 —
36	Paul Fraser	Canada	[NWC]	19 25 44 —
37	Thomas Fraser	Scotland	[NWC]	01 — 36 —
38	George Gladman	Native	[HBC]	14 — 36 —
39	Joseph Gladman	Native	[HBC]	14 — 47 64
40	James A. Grahame	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	43 48 54 61
41	Richard Grant	Canada	[NWC]	16 — 36 —
42	Charles Griffin	Canada	Apprentice clerk	45 50 58 —
43	James Hackland	Scotland	Schoonermaster	43 43 63 —
44	Robert Hamilton	Canada	Apprentice clerk	45 50 56 67
45	Joseph W. Hardisty	Native	Appr. postmaster	47 51 60 —
46	Richard Hardisty Jr.	Native	Appr. postmaster	49 54 62 —
47	William Lucas Hardisty	Native	Appr. postmaster	42 47 57 68
48	John S. Helmcken	England	Surgeon-clerk	50 50 63 —
49	Edward M. Hopkins	England	Clerk	41 41 47 54
50	John Kennedy	Native	Surgeon-clerk	29 29 47 —
51	William D. Lane	Ireland <sup>5</sup>	Asst. steward	43 52 62 —
52	Magnus Linklater	Scotland	Labourer	36 55 65 —
53	James Lockhart	Canada	Apprentice clerk	48 54 61 —
54	Alexander McDonald	Canada	Surveyor	55 55 66 —
55	Angus McDonald	Scotland	General servant	38 45 57 —
56	Archibald McDonald	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	54 59 69 —
57	Roderick McFarlane	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	52 57 68 —
58	Joseph Wm. McKay	Native	Apprentice sailor	44 50 60 —
59	William McKay [c]	Native	Labourer	37 59 65 —
60	Hector McKenzie	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	— — 46 51
61	John McKenzie [b]	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	30 35 44 54
62	Peter McKenzie	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	25 30 44 —
63	Roderick McKenzie	Scotland	Appr. postmaster	47 56 62 —
64	Samuel McKenzie	Native	Apprentice	27 53 64 —
65	Archibald McKinlay	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	32 37 46 —
66	Donald McLean [c]	Scotland	Apprentice	34 39 53 —
67	John McLean	Scotland	[HBC]	21 — 41 —
68	William McMurray	Native	Appr. postmaster	38 47 56 66
69	William H. McNeill	USA	Ship's officer	32 32 40 56
70	Joseph Edward McPherson	Native	Apprentice clerk	45 50 60 —
71	Dugald Mactavish	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	33 38 46 51
72	George S. McTavish	Canada	Apprentice clerk	49 54 59 —
73	William Mactavish	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	33 38 46 51
74	Donald Manson	Scotland	[HBC]	17 22 38 —
75	William Manson	Native	Apprentice clerk	48 54 66 —
76	Henry Maxwell	Canada	Apprentice clerk	35 40 57 —
77	George S. Miles	Native	Appr. postmaster	47 52 61 —
78	Hamilton Moffatt	Scotland	Apprentice clerk	49 54 63 —
79	William A. Mowat	England	Ship's officer	44 47 60 —
80	Alexander H. Murray	Scotland	Clerk	46 46 56 —



- individual biographies may be found in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, volumes 9, 10, 11, and in the appendices of several relevant volumes of the Champlain Society Series and Hudson's Bay Record Society. Older biographies and regional histories should not be ignored; more recently, several valuable biographies for a neglected region characterize E. Mitchell's *Fort Timiskaming and the Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). A wealth of relevant detail about Governor Simpson and his contemporaries may be found as well in Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, and in S. Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": *Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980).
4. Quoted in E.A. Mitchell, "The Scot in the Fur Trade," in *The Scottish Tradition in Canada* ed. W.S. Reid (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 41. For Brown on "community" see *Strangers in Blood*, xii. James Hargrave's efforts to cultivate his Scottish roots while at York Factory were described by Brown in a paper at the Scottish Heritage Festival, Guelph, Ontario, in May 1983.
  5. Suresh C. Ghosh, *The Social Conditions of the British Community in Bengal 1757-1800* (Leiden: F.J. Brill, 1970), 26-7; Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter HBCA): D.4/13 fo. 42d, Simpson to Bethune, 30 December 1826; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 120-23.
  6. HBCA: A.37/15 contains a copy of the Deed Poll of 1834, which replaced the one of 1821 and was replaced by a third in 1871. The term "Deed Poll" expresses the legal fact that the Company unilaterally offered promises and inducements to senior employees who individually bound themselves to obey regulations. Correspondence and annual councils gave the commissioned officers something approaching the corporate character they did not in theory possess, and they were sometimes known collectively as "the fur trade" or "the wintering partners."
  7. Along with Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, and Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, see M. Giraud, *Le Métis Canadien: son rôle dans l'Histoire des Provinces de l'ouest* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1945). A turning point for studies on this subject was J.W. Chalmers, "Social Stratification of the Fur Trade," *Alberta History* 17:1 (Winter 1969): 10-20. See also the wealth of anecdotal evidence in C.M. Judd, "Native labour and social stratification in the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Department, 1770-1870," *Canadian review of Sociology and Anthropology* 17:4 (1980): 305-14; also J.S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-1869* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), especially 22-3.
  8. B. Willson, *The Life of Lord Strathcona & Mount Royal G. G.M.G., G.C. V.O. (1820-1914)* (London: Cassell & Co., 1915), 617. Willson separated Scots into "110...of Highland and Canadian Scottish" origin and "70...of Acadian [i.e. Orcadian!] and Lowland Scottish" origin.
  9. Giraud, *Métis Canadien*, 1009. Many of the arguments in this paper suggest the need for critical reappraisal of parts of Giraud and of Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood*. These two books contain much of the best research now in print on the subject of the HBC's economic relations with the mixed-bloods. They set the standard against which other interpretations ought to be judged.
  10. Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 119, 138; S. Van Kirk, "Fur Trade Social History: Some Recent Trends," in North American Fur Trade Conference, *Old Trails and New Directions*, eds. C.M. Judd and A.J. Ray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 169.
  11. Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 120-23.
  12. W.D. Rubinstein, "The End of 'Old Corruption' in Britain 1780-1860," *Past and Present* no. 101 (November 1983): 55-86; and see Ghosh, *British Community in Bengal*, especially 9-32, "The Recruitment of Writers and Cadets and its Impact on the Social Origin of the Official Section of the British Community."
  13. HBCA: A.6/23 fos. 76-76d, Governor *et al.* to Simpson, 3 March 1834. This letter is mainly about promotion patronage and the right to dismiss officers, and points out that the Company's owners are "sole Proprietors of the Country, and of the Capital employed in the Trade."
  14. Simpson's cousins were Thomas, Alexander and Lt. Aemilius Simpson; the mixed-bloods were Alexander Kennedy Jr., Dr. John Kennedy, William Davis and William Gladman; see Table 2 for details. All data on appointments and service are, unless otherwise documented, drawn from the HBCA's "g" series, as explained in the Appendix to this paper.
  15. HBCA: A.12/2 fo. 518d, Simpson to Governor *et al.*, 4 May 1845; D.5/16 fo. 315, Pelly to Simpson, 2 March 1846. For a view of Simpson as "too able a modernist to allow his prejudice to interfere with his recognition of demonstrated merit," see J.E. Foster, "The Métis: the People and the Term," *Prairie Forum* 3:1 (1978): 87.
  16. HBCA: A.5/22 p. 10, Secretary to Clouston, 11 June 1858; *ibid.* pp. 284-5, same to W. & R. Morison, 3 May 1859; and A.5/23 p. 35, same to same, 12 July 1859; also A.5/26 pp. 9, 10, Secretary to Alexander Matheson, Lochalsh, and to Alexander McKenzie, Edinburgh, 14 May 1862.
  17. G. Williams, *Hudson's Bay Miscellany*, 165-6.
  18. E. Mitchell, *Fort Timiskaming*, 240-1.
  19. Provincial Archives of British Columbia (hereafter PABC): A-B-40-An32, James Anderson [a] to A.C. Anderson, 24 December 1846. The "[a]" distinguishes this man from others of the same name. See also Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC): MG 19 A 21 (hereafter Hargrave Mss.), 5735, Swanston to Hargrave, 2 September 1854.
  20. HBCA: D.5/16 fo. 214, Work to Simpson, 16 February 1846; and PABC: A-C-40-An32.3 p. 20, Anderson to Simpson, 27 November 1854.
  21. PAC: Hargrave Mss., 6350-3, Barnston to Hargrave, 1 July 1857.

22. HBCA: A.12/4 fos. 361-72; A.12/8 fos. 280 *et seq.*; A.12/9 fos. 48-77. Simpson to Governor *et al.*, enclosing ballots, 14 December 1848, 27 November 1856, and 13 February 1858. W.H. McNeill's chief tradership was pushed through by the London Committee to resolve his awkward status as an American citizen captaining a British vessel.
23. These early recruits appear in Table 4 as numbers 7, 8, 26, 29, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 67, 74, 81, 83, 91, 98, 103, and 111.
24. See Table 4, numbers 10, 11, 14, 27, 30, 43, 48, 49, 50, 54, 69, 79, 80, 87, 105 and 106.
25. For Stuart see E. Mitchell, *Fort Timiskaming*, 246; for McKay see I. Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), for native apprentice sailors see Giraud, *Métis Canadien*, 1008; for Lane see PAC:MG 19 A 40, W.D. Lane Mss., J. Gladman to Lane, 18 September 1844; for all others see Appendix.
26. HBCA: D.4/84a fo. 30, Simpson to Berens, 16 March 1860—a very important retrospective letter.
27. The relationship between Roderick and Peter McKenzie is apparent in two letters in HBCA: D.5/21 fos. 447, 468, R. Miles to Simpson, 13, 15 March, 1848. See also Hargrave to Mactavish, 5 September 1845, in *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave* ed. M.A. MacLeod (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1947), 205.
28. If an educated man enlisted at a servant's grade or associated generally with servants, his contemporaries feared he would identify too closely with his social inferiors; see Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 205; although Patrick McKenzie engaged as an officer, his father was disturbed to find that "They say Patrick is an active clever Voyageur, but fond of the Men's Company and groveling pursuits." HBCA: D.5/6 fo. 181, R. McKenzie to Simpson, 30 July 1841. These comments echo those of a contemporary Harvard undergraduate who engaged as an ordinary seaman on a merchantman: "Three or four years would make me a sailor in every respect, mind and habits, as well as body." See R.H. Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), 143.
29. For Christie see Mitchell, "The Scot in the Fur Trade," 41; for Ellice see Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers* 1857 (224.260 Sess. 2) XV "Report from the Select Committee appointed to consider the state of those British possessions in North America which are under the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company," 328; for Chipman see *Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 May 1906.
30. D. MacKay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1936), 231; E. Mitchell, "The Scot in the Fur Trade," 42; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 120-23.
31. Biographies of James Anderson [a] and his brother Alexander (*Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, volume 9, 185-6, and volume 10, 16-18) fail to explain how four cousins—two pairs of brothers—entered the service in 1830-31, but there must have been a patron in the background. The ten Scottish-born officers most clearly appointed by relatives are numbers 23, 24, 60, 61, 71, 73, 81, 88, 93 and 96 in Table 4. Thomas Fraser's promotion has already been noted. Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 121, noted that the service was "swarming with Finlaysons, Simpsons and McKenzies" but did not calculate their proportionate importance.
32. Notwithstanding J.E. Foster, "The Métis: The People and the Term" I have used the Northern Department accountants' term "native" interchangeably with the ugly but accepted neologism "mixed-blood." Accountants in other departments also used "Hudson Bay," "Rupert's Land" or "Indian Country" to designate the "parish" of origin of mixed-bloods.
33. Charles McKenzie's bitter and ill-informed criticism of HBC hiring is still regularly quoted although its value as evidence was discredited as long ago as 1905: A.G. Morice, *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905), 106. Sutherland's frustration is noted in F. Pannekoek, "A Probe into the Demographic Structure of Nineteenth Century Red River," in *Essays on Western History* ed. L.H. Thomas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976), 86.
34. P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Methuen, 1965), 196-201, especially 196.
35. In Simpson's "character book" 19 of the 88 clerks were natives. The superiority of natives is asserted in Pambrun's letter to Ermatinger, PAC:MG 19 A 2(2) volume 1, Ermatinger Mss., 264-74, 22 June 1858. See also E. Marwick, "Chief Factor James Sutherland and his Orkney correspondence," *The Beaver* (Winter 1966): 44-51.
36. I have assumed here that E.J. Harriott was one of the two sons mentioned by a schoolmaster, writing of six Harriott siblings newly arrived from Saskatchewan: "none...can speak English & all as wild & untamed as the Buffalo"; this was confirmed by the father in 1854, writing that his children "did not understand a word of English when I brought them here." See T. Bredin, "The Red River Academy," *The Beaver* (Winter 1974): 17, and PAC: Hargrave Mss., 5799, Harriott to Hargrave, 25 November 1854. The younger Harriott's short career as a trainee officer may be traced in HBCA: B.239/u/2 register #871, and in B.239/g/38-42; he retired in 1863. The study of mixed-blood women as mothers lags far behind studies of their roles as wives; for an abstract treatment see J.S.H. Brown, "Woman as centre and symbol in the emergence of Métis communities," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 3:1 (1983): 39-46.
37. See note 14, above, except for references to lists of officers, for which see HBCA: A.31/9 fos. 31-2, "Officers Under new Deed Poll O[utfit] 1872."
38. The title appears as "outpost master" in HBCA: B.239/f/11 fo. 2d, "Hudson's Bay Coy Clerks Northern Department 1821/22"; and see D.4/13 fos. 42d-3, Simpson to Bethune, 30 December 1826, advising him to rate one Sayer "in the Books as an Interpreter and Post Master but in every other respect he would be on the footing of a Clerk i.e. Mess at Table have allowances &c &c &c." And see G. Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany*, 232-6; curiously, Brown (*Strangers in Blood*,

- 206)cites this source as evidence that postmasters were not gentlemen and could not aspire to promotion. The notes on Benjamin McKenzie and Joseph Charles (233) both explicitly note their suitability to be promoted beyond clerkships.
39. This rather surprising fact is evident from analysis of the voluminous Northern Department Engagement Registers (HBCA: B.239/u/1-3); native labourers routinely received at least £1 above the European recruiting wage in 1836-48; half of them received £3 more in the disorganized hiring period 1849-58. This advantage was reversed in 1859-67 but the extra pay for natives had become general again by 1868-71. Natives were also able to get the preferred shorter three-year contracts while the Company continued to insist on five-year agreements with Europeans.
  40. Rubinstein, "End of 'Old Corruption,'" 57-8, 64; PABC: Add Mss. 635 file 139, "Observations on the class of apprentice postmasters, 1845," and several letters in the PAC: Anderson Mss. including volume 1 file 4 p. 38, to Eden Colville, 29 November 1855, and p. 71 to Bishop Anderson, 3 July 1856. Unsystematic research has produced evidence of 8 apprentice postmasters after 1870 in addition to the 62 identified through systematic checking of Abstracts of Servants' Accounts before that date; the latest was Roderick Flett, an apprentice postmaster at Fort McMurray in 1892: HBCA: D.25/16 p. 144.
  41. E. Mitchell, "The Scot in the Fur Trade," 41.
  42. Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 383; also E.E. Rich, ed., *John Rae's Arctic Correspondence* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1953), 365, quoting Rae on Hector McKenzie: "Like most of his countrymen he is somewhat thoughtless and careless about provisions"; even as a chief factor Richard Hardisty Jr. was rebuked for being too generous with foodstuffs: "The day has gone by for the Company to act as Almoner of the Saskatchewan"; Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Hardisty Mss., file 459, Grahame to Hardisty, 28 December 1874.
  43. See especially PAC: Ermatinger Mss. (2) vol. 1, 264-74, Pambrun to Ermatinger, 22 June 1858; also PAC: Anderson Mss., Anderson to Simpson, 16 July 1857, discussing the possibility of a native clerk going into opposition. Studies of free trade lag a generation behind studies of the social history of the major trading companies' officers; but see A.C. Gluek, *Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian Northwest* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965). Also indispensable are the empirical detail and theoretical insights of two papers by Irene Spry, namely "The Transition from a Nomadic to a Settled Economy in Western Canada, 1856-96," in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* volume 6, ser. iv (June 1968): 187-201; and "The Great Transformation: The Disappearance of the Commons in Western Canada," in *Man and Nature on the Prairies* ed. R. Allen (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1976), 21-45.
  44. Giraud, *Métis Canadien*, 1003.
  45. For Pambrun after 1870 see HBCA: D.24/4 p. 76. He was probably the father of John Pambrun, an apprentice postmaster in the mid-seventies; see B.235/g/3 fo. 6d, Winnipeg Abstracts of Accounts.
  46. HBCA: D.25/1 pp. 19, 50, Lac du Brochet and Pelican Narrows Inspection Reports: a third brother, Henry, was working as a labourer under Pierre.
  47. The relationship is assumed on the basis of propinquity and surnames.
  48. HBCA: A.31/9 fos. 51-3, lists of commissioned officers, 1888.
  49. HBCA: B.235/g/3 fo. 5, and B.167/e/1 fos. 1-5, re. clerk Pierre Laliberté.
  50. Nonetheless, W.J.S. Traill complained in the 1860s of being no better educated than Orkney labourers and tradesmen serving under him; see Mae Atwood, ed., *In Rupert's Land: Memoirs of Walter Traill* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 161.
  51. HBCA: A.10/42 fos. 2-10, Depositions taken in Lewis, November-December 1856; and Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Hardisty Mss., file 32, Christie to Secretary, 20 February 1864; both cases involve physical force directed at white employees by native officers, though Christie's actions were not brutal. For measurement of servants' origins see P. Goldring, "Papers on the Labour System of the Hudson's Bay Company 1821-1900," volume 1, Parks Canada Manuscript Report Series, no. 362 (Ottawa, 1979), 62-64.
  52. W.J.S. Traill, *In Rupert's Land*, 124.
  53. HBCA: D.4/84a fo. 120, Simpson to Berens, 16 March 1860.
  54. PAC: Hargrave Mss., 5814, F. Ermatinger to Hargrave, 6 December 1854.



## The Smithsonian and the Hudson's Bay Company

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ABSTRACT. In 1859 Robert Kennicott, a naturalist sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, began a journey through Rupert's Land which generated extraordinary enthusiasm amongst the fur traders. For the next decade natural history specimens flowed to the Smithsonian headquarters. Indeed in the Mackenzie district the influence of this American organization overshadowed the older scientific links with Britain.

RESUME. En 1859, Robert Kennicott, un naturaliste parrainé par l'institut Smithsonian entama un voyage à travers les terres du Prince Rupert, voyage qui provoqua chez les négociants en fourrures un enthousiasme extraordinaire. Pendant les dix années qui suivirent, les quartiers généraux du Smithsonian reçurent de nombreux spécimens de flore, de faune et de minéraux. De fait, dans le district du Mackenzie, l'influence de cette organisation américaine éclipsa les liens scientifiques plus anciens qui l'unissait à la Grande Bretagne.

As soon as Hudson's Bay Company clerk Roderick MacFarlane arrived at Fort Anderson in May 1862, he "at once set such Indians and Esquimaux as were about the place, to collect; and have since neglected no opportunity of directing their attention to this matter."<sup>1</sup> The natives near Fort Anderson, at latitude 68°30' — the Hudson's Bay Company's northernmost trading establishment — were not collecting furs, however. They were assembling specimens of birds, animals, mammals and fossils as well as Indian and Eskimo relics that MacFarlane would send more than three thousand miles by canoe, cart and railway to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.. Between 1861 and 1866 Roderick MacFarlane would oversee the collection and transportation of more than five thousand specimens to the Smithsonian, including "some of the choicest contributions to natural history and ethnology" in their collection.<sup>2</sup>

Roderick MacFarlane was not alone in his fascination with natural history. As historian Carl Berger has so explicitly illustrated in his study of *Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada*, the nineteenth century saw an astonishing extension and diversification of science, and natural history was in the forefront of this development.<sup>3</sup> In the mid-Victorian era natural history represented an encyclopaedic study of all objects in nature, which meant it incorporated approaches that eventually would become formalized into botany, zoology, ethnology and meteorology.<sup>4</sup> The primary mission of natural history then was to collect, describe and classify the flora and fauna and identify and trace the geological formations of new, unknown territories.

The study of natural history, in its early years, equated growth of scientific knowledge with the accumulation of information.<sup>5</sup> As Berger argues, it was this engrossing task of collection and the amassing of information which made science more "accessible and egalitarian" by the mid-nineteenth century; discoveries could be readily understood and contributions of permanent value could be made by rank amateurs.<sup>6</sup> As



Roderick MacFarlane

species were customarily named after the individual who discovered or first described them, even the humblest naturalist might aspire to scientific immortality.

The “humble naturalists” of the Hudson’s Bay Company are the focus of this article. In 1859, with the support and co-operation of the Hudson’s Bay Company, Robert Kennicott, a naturalist sponsored by the Smithsonian, began a journey throughout Rupert’s Land and Russian America which ignited an extraordinary enthusiasm among fur traders for collecting natural history specimens and compiling observations. For the next decade a flow of shipments containing birds and mammals, eggs, notes on life histories, Eskimo relics, meteorological records as well as Indian vocabularies and observations poured into the Smithsonian headquarters. In the Hudson’s Bay Company’s most remote area of trade, in the Mackenzie district, the influence of this American institution came to overshadow if not totally displace the older imperial links with Great Britain.<sup>7</sup>

This awakening of interest in natural history among Hudson’s Bay Company officers coincided with an important transitional period in the company’s history and the Canadian Northwest. The same year Kennicott arrived, the Hudson’s Bay Company’s licence for exclusive trade in British

North America had expired and was not renewed.<sup>8</sup> In 1860 Sir George Simpson died. He, more than any other man, symbolized the generation that for forty years successfully controlled and directed the company's operation. The correspondence of the company officers with the leading figures of the Smithsonian Institution provides a different perspective on this important transitional era. These are not the official letters prepared for the consumption of the London Governor and Committee, but the all-too-rare private expressions of company officers in the field. Not only does this valuable correspondence, which is housed in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, allow the historian to place this natural history "campaign" in the broader context of science in Victorian Canada, it provides some fresh insight into the cultural and social history of the Canadian fur trade.

The Hudson's Bay Company had a long tradition of support and interest in the field of natural history. When the Hudson's Bay Company was formed in 1670 four of the original Adventurers were Fellows of the Royal Society of London, the organization formed in 1682 "to extend not only the boundaries of Empire, but also the very arts and sciences."<sup>9</sup> The Royal Society envisioned the advancement of the sciences by enlisting the support of intelligent, practical men upon whose observations scientists could rely. Specimens of flora, fauna, and minerals were eagerly sought, both for the Royal Society's "Repository" and for the collections of individual Fellows.<sup>10</sup>

It was at the Hudson's Bay Company posts on Hudson Bay in the eighteenth century that Western Canada's first European naturalists began to assemble the earliest recorded natural history collections. To appreciate fully the work of these first naturalists, James Isham and Alexander Light, one must remember that the state of knowledge of North American natural history was at a very elementary stage of development. Only Catesby's study of the natural history of Carolina, Florida and the Bahamas was considered a serious publication.<sup>11</sup> It was in this atmosphere of biological darkness that a career company man, James Isham, wrote his famous *Observations while convalescing at Prince of Wales Fort during the winter of 1742-43*.<sup>12</sup> Alexander Light, on the other hand, was sent out by the company in 1741 specifically to apply his natural history knowledge. When Light and Isham returned to England in 1745 they entrusted their bird specimens to George Edwards, who included them in Part 3 of his famous 1750 publication, *Natural History of Uncommon Birds*.<sup>13</sup> Eight of Isham's birds had not been previously described by naturalists.

Interest in the natural history of the Hudson and James Bay area continued after Isham and Light's pioneer contributions. In May 1771, in compliance with a request from the Royal Society of London, the Hudson's Bay Company requested the governors of the various posts on the Bay to submit specimens of animals.<sup>14</sup> This request spurred a new wave of interest in natural history among Company officers. Humphrey Martin, the

Governor of Fort Albany on James Bay, sent home several hundred specimens as did Samuel Hearne who was considered to be an excellent naturalist. The most distinguished company naturalist of this era, however, was Andrew Graham, whose '*Observations on Hudson Bay 1767-1791*' made this career company officer one of the best known naturalists of that generation.<sup>15</sup>

By the early nineteenth century the Hudson's Bay Company had established a tradition of support for investigation and collection in the fledgling field of natural history. Their co-operation with the first Franklin expedition in search of the Northwest Passage was a case in point.<sup>16</sup> This 1819-1822 expedition, which was led by John Franklin, included a professional naturalist by the name of John Richardson who had studied natural history at the University of Edinburgh, and Robert Hood, a naval midshipman by training, but an avid naturalist and talented painter. John Richardson's experience on the first two Franklin expeditions resulted in the publication of four large volumes dealing with mammals, birds, fishes and insects, the *Fauna Boreali-Americana*, and two volumes describing the plants, the *Flora Boreali-Americana*.<sup>17</sup> Although the first Franklin expedition took the Yellowknife/Coppermine River route to the Arctic coast instead of travelling by way of the Mackenzie River, Richardson's observations on the region's natural history constituted the first published information on the zoology and plant life of this vast area.<sup>18</sup> When Robert Kennicott and the Hudson's Bay Company officers began to collect specimens in the 1860s, it was the published material of John Richardson which served as their basis of comparison and major reference.

Following the amalgamation of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies in 1821, the rejuvenated trading concern once again became involved in the field of natural history. In 1828 Governor George Simpson received a long list of queries from the recently formed Natural History Society of Montreal.<sup>19</sup> At the Hudson's Bay Company annual Northern Department Council Meeting at Norway House in June 1829, a directive from the London Committee stated "that Chief Factors, Chief Traders, and Clerks in charge of Districts and Posts be directed to prepare answers to certain queries connected with the Natural History of this Country as p. printed list, and deliver the same at the depot next year for the purpose of being transmitted to the Governor and Committee."<sup>20</sup> The London governors' determination to maintain control over natural history collections was reinforced in a letter to Governor George Simpson wherein they emphatically stated that this natural history was to be forwarded to them and not the the Natural History Society of Montreal.<sup>21</sup>

The reference to the Natural History Society of Montreal is an important one. Founded in 1827, the Natural History Society of Montreal was supported by members of the city's commercial élite—doctors, ministers, teachers from McGill College and, quite possibly, Sir George Simpson.<sup>22</sup> While this group in its early years concentrated on the necessary

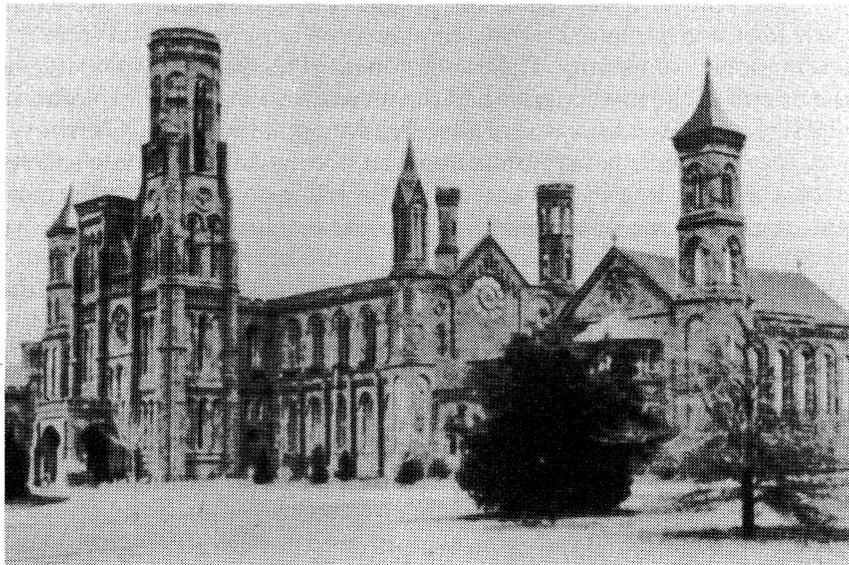
preliminaries such as buying scientific books, acquiring instruments for mineralogical observations, and assembling cabinets of geological and botanical specimens, its very existence indicated that the colonial society was beginning to establish its own cultural institutions, however fragile their support might be. Historians W.L. Morton and Carl Berger have both illustrated in their writings that the implanting and growth of science in Victorian Canada was but one strand in a complex fabric of transplanted British civilization overseas and, like other strands in that culture, the resulting pattern was by no means an exact duplication.<sup>23</sup>

The Hudson's Bay Company gradually recognized after 1821 that their fur trade domain, however remote, could not be isolated from the international community. The establishment of the Red River settlement, the arrival of the missionaries and the increasing number of exploration and scientific expeditions were all indications that the "Indian Territory" was approaching an era of transition which would alter fur trade society irrevocably. With respect to naturalists, the company's policy for the most part remained one of co-operation. In 1843 a naturalist arrived at York Factory with a commission to collect plants and animals in North America for the Earl of Derby and the Royal Botanical Gardens, then under the direction of Sir William Hooker.<sup>24</sup> Joseph Burke spent three weeks at York Factory, wintered in the Saskatchewan district and then crossed the mountains in the spring of 1844 to the Columbia region where he was described as an "eccentric fellow" who "lost everything" after "having been spilt into the river."<sup>25</sup> The following year the famous American naturalist John James Audubon was writing to solicit Governor Simpson's assistance for the collection of specimens for his book on the quadrupeds of North America.<sup>26</sup> Audubon, who offered to pay all the necessary expenses, was after specimens of the Barrens grizzly, the polar bear, wolverine, Arctic fox, Northern meadow mouse and the elusive musk-ox. One can only imagine how the Hudson's Bay Company might ship a complete specimen of a musk-ox by boat from the Arctic to Audubon's New York study.

This external interest in Rupert's Land as a source for the study of natural history coincided with a revitalized commitment to natural history by officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. Perhaps the company's most avid naturalist during the 1840s and 1850s was Chief Factor George Barnston, who during a long career with the company (1819-1862) served at York Factory, Fort Langley, Norway House, Ile Jérémie and Michipicoten on the north shore of Lake Superior.<sup>27</sup> For Barnston, horticulture and natural history were hobbies. While on furlough in England in 1844 he wrote to Simpson about his kind reception at the British Museum where he "handed over without reservation all (his) collections of insects."<sup>28</sup> Barnston was also delighted to learn from an Edinburgh naturalist attached to the British Museum that "one half of my specimens nearly are new."<sup>29</sup> During this same visit Barnston met with the Franklin expedition naturalist,

Doctor John Richardson, with whom he toured the British Museum and attended meetings of the London Entomological and Geological Society.

While Barnston and a few other interested company officers were pursuing the collection of natural history specimens, there was clearly no systematic attempt by the British organizations such as the British Museum or Industrial Museum of Scotland to exploit fully the Hudson's Bay Company territories as a vast reservoir for the study of natural science. Ultimately, this impetus did not come from the English museums but an American institution, the Smithsonian.



Hudson's Bay Co. Library

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

The Smithsonian Institution was established by an act of the American Congress passed on 20 August 1846.<sup>30</sup> The money to fund the institution was provided by the bequest of one James Smithson, a wealthy and well-connected Englishman who, while a student at Oxford, acquired an enthusiasm for the natural sciences and scientific research. A prominent member of the Royal Society, strangely enough, James Smithson never visited America. His strongly developed internationalist and republican philosophy, however, persuaded him to bequeath over half a million dollars to establish the Smithsonian Institution, "an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men...."<sup>31</sup>

The first Secretary of the Smithsonian was a well-known physicist and great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin named Joseph Henry.<sup>32</sup> From the outset the Princeton-educated Henry emphasized that he was more interested in science than the humanities.<sup>33</sup> He immediately began to enlist co-operators from around the world to assist the Institution in his first major project which was to organize a comprehensive system of

meteorological observations. While Henry focussed on placing the Institution on a firm financial and administrative footing, in 1850 Spencer Fullerton Baird was appointed Assistant Secretary. Trained as a biologist at Dickinsen College in Pennsylvania, Baird's broad basic training in the natural sciences made him a logical appointment as the museum curator.<sup>34</sup> During Baird's thirty-seven years with the Smithsonian, he directed the Institution's International Exchange Service, oversaw the Smithsonian publication programme and, most importantly, supervised the exploration programme.

Like its counterparts in Great Britain, in its early years the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History was dependent on contributions, and not an army of well-financed and supplied employees spanning the continent in pursuit of perfect specimens. Consequently, much of Baird's correspondence was devoted to stimulating and providing guidance for collectors.<sup>35</sup> There was no question about Baird's ability to work; in 1860 he wrote more than three thousand longhand letters on Smithsonian business to his network of contacts. One of Baird's correspondents in the early 1850s was a young naturalist from Chicago named Robert Kennicott.

Born at New Orleans on 13 November 1835, Robert Kennicott was the son of a well-connected Illinois physician and horticulturalist.<sup>36</sup> Plagued



Hudson's Bay Co. Library

Robert Kennicott

by ill-health from an early age, Robert was unable to carry on his education in the classroom. Consequently, he became an assistant to his father, who introduced him to the study of natural history. Young Kennicott's early and important observations on the habits of the quadrupeds of Illinois and of birds, especially of the crane and the grouse, attracted the attention of Dr. J.E. Kirtland of Cleveland, a well-known natural scientist.<sup>37</sup> During the winter of 1852-53 Robert pursued a regular course of study in natural history under Dr. Kirtland and, advised by his instructor, he began to correspond with Spencer Fullerton Baird at the Smithsonian Institution.

The following March Kennicott went to Racine, Wisconsin, where he continued his studies under the direction of Dr. P.R. Hoy, a leading ornithologist. Following this training, the youthful naturalist became the chief naturalist for a co-operative natural history survey of the state of Illinois. Besides gaining invaluable field experience, Kennicott's resulting publications gained the attention of prominent natural scientists such as Harvard's Louis Agassiz.<sup>38</sup> In 1857, at the age of twenty-two, Kennicott joined the faculty of Northwestern University as the first curator of its Museum of Natural History. That same summer, having decided to secure specimens from as wide a geographical range as possible, Kennicott decided to travel to Red River in what was then still part of British North America.<sup>39</sup> After reaching St. Paul, he joined a cart train for the long march across the plains to the Red River settlement, arriving there in August 1857.

The significance of Kennicott's first journey to Rupert's Land has been overlooked by historians. On this expedition of four months, he made the acquaintance of Hudson's Bay Company officers whose support was to prove invaluable to him during his later expeditions to British North America. For instance, during this trip Kennicott came to know Chief Factor William Mactavish who, as the company's senior officer in the Red River District, supervised the transportation system which linked the company's network of posts with St. Paul, Minnesota, and the eastern United States. Without the co-operation of Mactavish this young American naturalist would never have been able to co-ordinate the transfer of supplies and specimens to and from the remote Mackenzie district. Another gentleman Kennicott met on this first trip to Red River was a retired fur trader and Red River's first serious naturalist, Donald Gunn. By late 1857 Gunn had dispatched the first of what was to be a considerable collection of ethnological artifacts and animal and egg specimens, carefully preserved in alcohol, that he had gathered during his travels throughout southern Manitoba. Unfortunately, only two substantial records of Gunn's natural history exploits have survived; one an account of "Indian remains near Red River settlement"<sup>40</sup> and "Notes of an egging expedition to Shoal Lake, West of Lake Winnipeg."<sup>41</sup>

Shortly after his return to Chicago, Kennicott made his first visit to the Smithsonian Institution, arriving in December and remaining there until the end of April 1858. While residing in Washington Kennicott was

admitted to the Megatherium Club, composed of the young naturalists and explorers who were, like himself, analysing the results of collecting expeditions.<sup>42</sup> Kennicott's maturity as a naturalist coincided with the efforts by a number of prominent American scientists such as Spencer Baird, Lucien Turner, Louis Agassiz and Dr. Brewer to revise the general accounts of their specialties. One region which was more or less "terra incognita" for American naturalists was the Arctic region of British North America.<sup>43</sup> Little work had been done on the scientific investigation of the fauna and zoology of British America since the publication of Dr. John Richardson in 1831.<sup>44</sup> The geology of this region was even less documented. For American scientists, much to their chagrin, there was no means of determining how far geological formations, the area of which had been well defined for the Northern United States, might extend. Similar questions were puzzling American ornithologists, zoologists and meteorologists. It was to solve such "grievous blanks" in knowledge, and to open an almost unknown field of research, that Robert Kennicott resolved, under the patronage of the Smithsonian Institution, and with the assistance of the University of Michigan, the Audubon Club of Chicago, and the Chicago Academy of Science, to undertake a scientific expedition throughout central British America and a portion of Russian America.<sup>45</sup>

Kennicott and his Smithsonian sponsors realized that this expedition would not be possible without the support of the Hudson's Bay Company. Professor Joseph Henry, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, wrote to Sir George Simpson, requesting his assistance and information as to the best means of carrying out the enterprise. Simpson, willing "to promote the interests of science by all the legitimate means in its power,"<sup>46</sup> in early 1860 sent a circular to the company officers allowing Kennicott full co-operation and free transportation for any collections which he might make. This was an unusual concession for Simpson to make because throughout his forty-year career, he rarely provided free rides for anyone not connected to the fur trade. Attached to Simpson's circular to his officers was a memorandum of instructions signed by Joseph Henry.<sup>47</sup> This extraordinary circular outlined instructions for the Hudson's Bay Company officers covering the possibility that they might record their area's climatology, natural history, zoology and ornithology. When one reviews the records tabulated by the company's employees, there is no doubt that this was one circular they took seriously.

Kennicott set out on his expedition from Chicago on 20 April 1859. Arriving by steamer at Fort William, he collected specimens in that area until 19 May when he left for Lake Winnipeg with a brigade of three Hudson's Bay Company canoes. While waiting at Fort William, Kennicott met with "some gentlemen of the Red River Exploring Expedition" as well as George Barnston, now Chief Factor of the Lake Superior District.<sup>48</sup> The young American was impressed by Mr. Barnston whom he described as "a brick" and "a man of no small scientific acquirements."<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, Barnston, whose ties with the Natural History Society of Montreal and

the British Museum dated back to the 1840s, promised Kennicott that he would send part of his natural history collections to the Smithsonian Institution.<sup>50</sup> There appears to have been a spirit of co-operation developing among these observers and institutions that crossed international and cultural boundaries.

From the Lake of the Woods, the canoe brigade crossed to the head of the Winnipeg River and then journeyed down Lake Winnipeg to Norway House. Kennicott's arrival at Norway House was most propitious as it coincided with that of George Simpson, there for what proved to be his last meeting with the Northern Department Council. Kennicott was most impressed by Simpson whom he described in a private letter to Baird as "a regular Brick.— He is about 70, but active and energetic—not a bit old fogyish and very agreeable in his manners. Aside from his particular attentions to me I like him very much."<sup>51</sup> Kennicott tried to persuade Simpson to "get up" a museum at some point in the Territory but the governor felt that the constant changes taking place rendered this idea impractical.<sup>52</sup> However, Simpson did have his own private museum at Lachine, near Montréal, and had written to Mackenzie district Chief Factor Bernard Ross for a musk ox and goat.<sup>53</sup> Kennicott agreed to help in the preparation of Simpson's private collections and also wrote to Baird, asking him to forward specific rare bird specimens to Simpson's residence. This ability to meet the collecting ambitions of Simpson and the company officers was to benefit Kennicott immeasurably throughout his expedition.

While at Norway House, Kennicott met a number of company officers from throughout Rupert's Land who agreed to collect and correspond with the Smithsonian Institution.<sup>54</sup> Confident that his network was beginning to take shape, he left Norway House on 15 June with L'Esperance's brigade bound for Methye Portage and then on to Fort Simpson, the company's headquarters in the Mackenzie River district. While travelling up the Saskatchewan River Kennicott met a Mr. Bourgeau, "a French botanist sent out to collect plants for the botanical gardens at Kew" as well as specimens for the British Museum.<sup>55</sup> As Bourgeau had already been in the region for several years, as a member of the Palliser expedition, Kennicott clearly did not have a monopoly on Rupert's Land's natural history. Kennicott arrived at Methye Portage on 25 July, the same day as the Mackenzie River brigades.<sup>56</sup> Accompanying the Mackenzie brigades were three company employees who were to play an important role in Kennicott's expedition. Bernard Rogan Ross, the Chief Factor in charge of the Mackenzie district, led the entourage from the Mackenzie. A native of Derry, Ireland, Ross had joined the Hudson's Bay Company at the age of fifteen. Now thirty-two years old, Kennicott described him as "large, very strong and pretty corpulent" but "certainly very intelligent and well read."<sup>57</sup> "Like your humble servant he has a very good opinion of himself and is in fact *rather* conceited."<sup>58</sup> Ross was accompanied by two young Scottish clerks; James Lockhart, who had been appointed to take charge of Fort Yukon, and James MacFarlane, who was shortly to take

over the Fort Anderson area near the Arctic Coast.<sup>59</sup> Kennicott was delighted with his reception, particularly as Ross and the clerks all expressed a "lively interest" in forwarding many objects to the Smithsonian Institution.<sup>60</sup>

Bernard Rogan Ross, who was crucial to the success of Kennicott's expedition, was already heavily involved in the collecting field. While at Methye Portage to meet Kennicott, Ross wrote to Professor Henry, the Secretary of the Smithsonian, and forwarded three cases containing "fossils, plants, organic Remains and stuffed Birds" as well as a barren ground reindeer [caribou] skeleton from Fort Rae, a Rocky Mountain goat from Fort McPherson on the Peel River, and some tusks and bones from the Upper Waters of the Yukon River.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, Ross shipped a case to Professor Wilson at the Industrial Museum of Scotland containing articles of "Indian Industrial Art" procured at Fort Rae on Great Slave Lake from the Dog Rib or Kley-tinneh Indian tribe.<sup>62</sup> Ross, also a corresponding member of the Natural History Society of Montreal, had decided to send his natural history specimens to the Smithsonian Institution while his major interest, ethnology, would be reserved for the British museums.

In late July, the Mackenzie River brigade left Portage La Loche on the long return journey to Fort Simpson. From Lake Athabasca, the brigade descended the Athabasca River and proceeded to Fort Resolution at the mouth of the Slave River, and down the Mackenzie River to Fort Simpson where they arrived on 14 August 1859. Situated at the junction of the Liard and Mackenzie River district, Fort Simpson was not only the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters and supply centre, it was ideally suited for the pursuit of natural history. Professor Baird articulated this viewpoint in a letter to Chief Trader Bernard Ross:

Could we have had the selection of a point of all others likely to furnish materials of the most interest, both as adding to our collection species new to it, and as giving indications of geographical distribution, Fort Simpson would be the one. It is sufficiently near the Arctic circle to be within reach of its species and at just that point of the Interior where the faunas of eastern and western America would be likely to meet.<sup>63</sup>

The Mackenzie River district was the last great frontier of the Western Canadian fur trade, the last empty space on the map of British North America after 1821. The territory below Great Slave Lake was penetrated intermittently between 1789 and 1821, but had no systematic trade, transport, or administration before the North West and Hudson's Bay companies merged. Remoteness and sheer vastness discouraged any but a monopolist from laying down the lines of communication and establishing the posts that by the 1830s dotted this enormous territory. Headquarters was at the Forks of the Mackenzie and Liard, known by 1823 as Fort Simpson. Southwest was the fort of Rivière aux Liards, and northwest from Fort Simpson were Fort Norman at 450 km and Fort Good Hope, a further 250 km down the Mackenzie, just south of the Arctic circle. Another

550 km of the Mackenzie, the source of the Liard, and the whole basin of the Yukon lay largely unexplored and its fur resources unexploited.<sup>64</sup>

When Kennicott arrived in 1859, Fort Simpson was the headquarters both for the fur trade and the provision of food and supplies. The senior company officer resided there while company clerks and postmasters were stationed at Fort Good Hope, Fort Norman, Fort Rae, Fort Resolution, Big Island on Great Slave Lake, Fort Halkett on the Liard, as well as the Yukon sub-district which in 1860 consisted of Fort McPherson, Lapierre House on the Bell River and Fort Yukon at the junction of the Porcupine and Yukon rivers. The Mackenzie River district, through its wealth as well as its enormous size, had come into its own as the most valuable district in the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Department.

This article will not attempt to trace Kennicott's travels over the next three years in detail as his daily journal has been published.<sup>65</sup> Kennicott spent part of the first winter with the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Simpson, making excursions up the Liard River to Fort Liard in autumn, and again on snowshoes in January 1860. Before the close of the same winter he went up the Mackenzie to Big Island, and then northwest to Fort Rae, near the site of Fort Providence. From this point he travelled on the ice across Great Slave Lake to Fort Resolution, at the mouth of the Peace River, where he spent the summer of 1860. He next descended the Mackenzie to Peel River, and then travelled westward across the Rocky Mountains, down the Yukon River to Fort Yukon where he spent the winter of 1860-61 and the summer of 1861. The winter of 1861 was spent at Lapierre House, and in travelling from this point up to Fort Simpson and back to Fort Good Hope on the Mackenzie. When he received word that his father was seriously ill, Kennicott left Fort Simpson on 1 June 1862 and arrived home at Chicago that October.

One of the most important aspects of Kennicott's correspondence during his three years in this northern district was his commentary on the daily life of the fur traders. "Do you want to know how we live here" was one of the first lines Kennicott wrote to Professor Baird in a letter from Fort Simpson.<sup>66</sup> He described the hierarchy of the post which consisted of "four gentlemen," Chief Trader Bernard Ross, the clerk Mr. Onion, the Episcopal clergyman Mr. Kirkby who was nicknamed "Brother Tadger" from the character in *Pickwick Papers*, and Kennicott.<sup>67</sup> The Fort Simpson work force was composed of "8 or 10 workmen half of 'em with half breed Indian wives—the men are two Norwegians, three Orkneymen and the rest Red River French half breeds."<sup>68</sup> Kennicott was impressed with the "gentlemen's house" which had "a large kitchen behind and is divided into a mess room, a bedroom for Onion & I each, a library and bedroom for Mr. Ross."<sup>69</sup> On the second floor were the rooms used by the gentlemen in the autumn when they came in to meet the La Loche brigades. Kennicott also had no complaints about their diet which he described as "dry meat (tongues finished), potatoes, fish, tea and an allowance of sugar, bread



Hudson's Bay Co. Library

Robert Kennicott in the North

and butter with puddings of rice or raisins on Sundays & Wednesdays!—In fact we have quite enough.”<sup>70</sup> The employees at Fort Simpson obviously benefitted from the fact that potatoes and barley could be grown in the short growing season and that cows and oxen were maintained for dairy and meat supplements.

A recurring theme in Kennicott’s observations of life at the northern posts is the lethargy or laziness that overcame everyone in the community, particularly as winter settled in. Kennicott described this winter state of “intellectual hibernation” while at Fort Simpson and in a similar state of mind<sup>71</sup> during his winter season at Fort Yukon.<sup>72</sup>

I have been hibernating this winter—I’ve been in the most apathetic state you can imagine. I am in perfectly good bodily health—in fact never before in a long time was so long without being in the least sick. But my mind as I say has been in a state of hibernation—in fact I only awoken from this infernal apathy when I get hold of some interesting animal!<sup>73</sup>

Nearly twenty years earlier scientist Henry Lefroy had described a similar lethargy overcoming the habitants of the Northern posts during the winter.<sup>74</sup> Quite simply, there was not enough social and recreational diversion in these isolated communities. As Kennicott commented, “the

officers duty is almost nothing beyond his actual presence. A little less than two months in the year is sufficient for all the writing. No wonder then they become lazy.”<sup>75</sup>

If it was diversions that the fur traders needed to shake this lethargy, the company employees' enthusiasm for the pursuit of natural history and ethnological collections provided the necessary tonic. By early March 1860, Bernard Ross was already “into the collecting at a furious rate” with skins of bird specimens scattered throughout the Fort Simpson mess room.<sup>76</sup> But if Kennicott was to secure a representative collection from throughout the Mackenzie region he needed the support of the clerks and postmasters. With the exception of Bernard Ross, Lawrence Clarke, Strachan Jones, and James Onion, “all the gentlemen of the district are Scotchmen or half breeds.”<sup>77</sup> They were also young and energetic which meant they had much in common with the young American naturalist. Kennicott's closest friend among the younger generation was James Lockhart who was in charge of the Yukon sub-district.<sup>78</sup> At Fort Rae there was Strachan Jones, a graduate of Toronto College and “a gentleman by birth and education.”<sup>79</sup> At Peel River post there was postmaster Charles Gaudet, “though a gentleman is not well educated.”<sup>80</sup> Gaudet was described as a “wild boy” from Canada who had come to the Mackenzie at a young age and became “the best fur trader and voyageur” in the region.<sup>81</sup> Then there was James Flett, the postmaster at Lapierre House, who, while “quite uneducated,” became an excellent collector. At Fort Norman Kennicott could depend upon N. Taylor while his contact at Fort Liard was an Alex Mackenzie. Of course, a review of these burgeoning naturalists would not be complete without mention of Roderick Ross MacFarlane, the Scottish-born clerk posted at Fort Good Hope in 1859-60. MacFarlane was poised to launch his collecting career in the Anderson River area that would make him not only the company's most prolific collector in the Mackenzie region, but one of the most important contributors to the Smithsonian Institution in the nineteenth century.

Let us not assume that Kennicott and these company gentlemen were responsible for the collecting of natural history specimens. The native Indians and “Esquimaux” of the Mackenzie and Yukon region were the ones who went out in the back country gathering birds eggs, accumulating fossils and shooting animals. Kennicott did not attempt to hide his reliance on the natives:

For you must know that there is very little chance of my ever killing such things as musk oxen, barren ground bear & reindeer ... I can only hope to get them by hiring the Indians to bring them in from a great distance.<sup>82</sup>

Kennicott spent considerable effort training Indian assistants in the basics of specimen preservation and taxidermy. He also had to provide them with the necessary equipment and pay them for their work. This meant that Kennicott had to raise money through his American benefactors to pay for the goods demanded by the Indians for specimens. Kennicott's

papers contain a list of goods acquired to pay the natives to collect for the Smithsonian:<sup>83</sup>

- 5,000 common sewing needles
- 200 darning needles
- 3 lbs. good white & black linen thread
- Cheap colored silk ribbons
- 6 dozen common colored cotton handkerchiefs
- 5 dozen common pipe beads
- Cheap pocket knives
- Gold & silver tinsel hatcords
- Gold & silver sham "jewelry"
- Calico shirts

As long as the Indians and "Esquimaux" were receiving goods which satisfied them, they were not at all reticent about collecting for Kennicott and his company collaborators. Bernard Rogan Ross, who was particularly interested in ethnology, mentioned to Secretary Henry that he was experiencing difficulty in procuring a reindeer due to "the superstition of the natives" but this did not appear to be a common problem.<sup>84</sup> In fact, when one reviews the list and notes of "Industrial Art, Minerals; etc." forwarded by Bernard Ross to the Royal Industrial Museum of Scotland, most of the native groups are included.<sup>85</sup> From the Dog Rib Indians of the Fort Simpson area came a Reindeer Babiche, a goat-shank bag was gathered from the "Nehannay" Indians, a buffalo horn from the Chipewyan trading out of Fort Chipewyan and ivory fish from the Anderson River Esquimaux.<sup>86</sup> These collections by Bernard Ross were part of a larger work which he planned to write and publish on "the tribes of the north" and "illustrate by numerous photographic drawings."<sup>87</sup> It is not known if Ross ever did publish this work. Ross, and his company colleagues, William L. Hardisty and Strachan Jones, did eventually publish "Notes on the Tinneh or Chipewyan Indians of British and Russian America" in the 1866 Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution.<sup>88</sup> These accounts, which contain descriptions of the "physical character," "religious opinion" and "moral and intellectual characteristics" of these native groups, stand as important primary anthropological and ethnological documents not only because of the level of detail but the expressed attitudes of these mid-Victorian company officers about people with whom they had worked and lived a long time. For instance if Strachan Jones thought the Kutchin men were "intensely ugly," he was not reluctant to say so.<sup>89</sup> Nor were these company officers impervious to qualities of the native peoples which they admired.<sup>90</sup>

What motivated these officers and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company to become so involved in the esoteric world of natural history and ethnology? Contact and recognition in the outside world was undoubtedly important. The Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary, Spencer Baird, kept up a steady flow of supportive correspondence and advice which he backed up with books, newspapers and reports both on scientific and literary subjects.<sup>91</sup> These books were either housed at the Fort Simpson library or sent to the district outposts. If one item spurred the officers on,

however, it was alcohol. The Hudson's Bay Company made it clear to its officers in the Mackenzie shortly after Kennicott's arrival that alcohol was for use in the preservation of specimens and was not to fall into the "improper use of voyageurs and other labouring servants."<sup>92</sup> Shortly after his arrival in the Mackenzie district Kennicott realized to what lengths the company's officers would go "to procure the element of condemnation!"

Mr. Ross this fall used part of a keg of sugar in the attempt to make wine of mild black currants but tis worse than the hunger. Luckily Id poisoned all my alcohol & Rum! The gentlemen are by the regulations not permitted to import liquor though they manage to get in a little.<sup>93</sup>

Kennicott realized that a little alcohol for his Mackenzie mates would go a long way toward securing their support, so when he received liquor from home and Red River in the 1860 outfit, ostensibly to preserve specimens, he assiduously divided a good portion of it among "the gentlemen."<sup>94</sup> Kennicott could only comment: "I think they'll not forget it when the birds nesting season comes."<sup>95</sup> One could emphasize, however, that the company officers were under orders to give Kennicott every assistance. Alcohol was a pleasant bonus.

Liquor was also a factor in the competition for the loyalty of the traders. Although Kennicott was the only professional naturalist in the Mackenzie region, a Scottish naturalist named Andrew Murray "won the hearts of Mr. Ross and the others here by getting from the H.B.Co. permission to send liquor in such quantities as are actually required for preserving specimens of Nat. Hist. etc in to Mackenzies River and by telling Mr. Ross to order from York Factory whatever he requires."<sup>96</sup> Murray, indeed, did receive some specimens from the Mackenzie district but in the long run the Smithsonian was the major recipient. By 1861 Kennicott, who spent most of that year in the Yukon region, was having more difficulty keeping peace between Bernard Ross and certain of his officers.

By the second year of Kennicott's residence in the Mackenzie district there were frequent signs of growing tension between Chief Trader Bernard Ross, "absolute sovereign of his district," and some of his officers. There was little doubt that Ross was a good naturalist, particularly in the areas of ornithology and zoology.<sup>97</sup> He had an annoying habit, however, of funnelling all the collections through Fort Simpson where he often put his own labels on specimens collected by his junior officers. Kennicott admitted that he was partly to blame in that he had asked "that the labels should all be printed with Mr. Ross' name at the top."<sup>98</sup> This process pleased Ross but it infuriated clerks James Lockhart and Lawrence Clarke. By 1862 they refused to send any of their collections through Mr. Ross whom they felt was intent "to gobble everything for himself."<sup>99</sup> By 1862 William Hardisty at Fort Resolution, Lawrence Clarke at Fort Rae and Alex McKenzie at Fort Liard had all decided to send their collections directly to the Smithsonian Institution. These young officers, who were supervising the collection of eggs and animal specimens as well as native

artifacts, had the additional responsibility of transporting these collections to Fort Simpson.

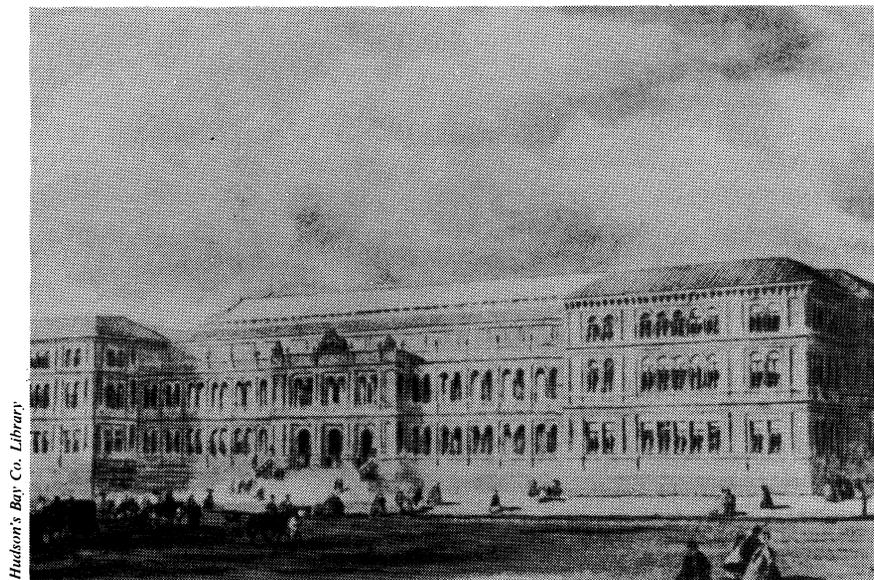
In the spring of 1862 Kennicott walked from Peel River to Fort Simpson, where he received word of his father's illness. He had planned to accompany Roderick MacFarlane to Fort Anderson, near the Arctic coast, for the summer collecting, but this family emergency persuaded him that he must return to the United States. Kennicott's departure from the Mackenzie district coincided with that of Bernard Ross who planned to take a furlough before assuming his new post in the Churchill district.<sup>100</sup> William Hardisty, who was now in charge of the Mackenzie district, "will do all he can to facilitate our objects though he does not take interest in collecting himself."<sup>101</sup> In keeping with the company's policy, clerks and postmasters were shifted about the district. James Onion, who was interested in botany, was now stationed at Fort Simpson. Lockhart had been promoted to chief trader and assigned to Fort Resolution, while Strachan Jones had been placed in charge of the Yukon district.<sup>102</sup> The really major change in the company's administrative structure, however, was the appointment of Alexander Grant Dallas as the new Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land to replace George Simpson who had died in 1860. Kennicott met Dallas at Red River on his trip home and was suitably impressed. He considered Dallas to be not only a "perfect brick" but a "man of scientific tastes who will do everything the Smithsonian Institution could reasonably desire."<sup>103</sup>

Robert Kennicott spent the winter of 1862-63 at the Smithsonian Institution engaged in cataloguing his enormous Arctic collection. He was pleased with the results of his trip to a region which he considered to be a "Naturalists Paradise."<sup>104</sup> He was "especially gratified" at continuing to find some of Sir John Richardson's species whose identity, or existence on the American continent, had been considered doubtful.<sup>105</sup>

In Washington, the senior officials of the Smithsonian were delighted with the results of Kennicott's expedition. The principal object of the expedition had been to collect materials for investigating the zoology of the Mackenzie and Yukon regions. Kennicott, however, had collected specimens of plants and minerals, given considerable attention to the ethnology and Indian vocabularies of the area, recorded climatic data and enlisted a number of people as meteorological observers.<sup>106</sup> But most significantly, Robert Kennicott had stimulated an interest in natural history which influenced a generation of Hudson's Bay Company employees in its most remote trading district.

The return of Kennicott to the United States did not terminate the relationship of the Smithsonian Institution with the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1863 collections filling forty boxes and weighing, in the aggregate, about three thousand pounds, arrived in Washington from the Hudson's Bay Territory. They "embraced thousands of skins of birds and mammals, eggs of nearly all the birds nesting in the north, numerous skulls and

skeletons of animals, fishes in alcohol, and preserved dry insects, fossils, plants & c.”<sup>107</sup> Not in any way “inferior in interest and importance” were those relating to the “ethnological peculiarities of the Esquimaux and different tribes of Indians inhabiting the Arctic regions.”<sup>108</sup> Assistant Secretary Spencer Baird bragged that “no such series is elsewhere to be found of the dresses, weapons, implements, utensils ... of the aborigines of North America,”<sup>109</sup> but the proud professor was probably not aware that Bernard Rogan Ross had sent off a similar ethnological collection in 1859-60 to the Royal Industrial Museum of Scotland.



Royal Industrial Museum of Scotland

The study and collection of natural history specimens in the Mackenzie district had entered a second phase which was to retain momentum until the end of the 1860s. By that time most of Kennicott's core of prolific company collectors had moved to different districts or left the company's service altogether. Professor Baird remained the main intermediary and inspiration throughout this period. By cajolery and presents, scientific reports, preserving alcohol, even novels and poetry, Baird sustained the zeal of the company men and ensured the flow of shipments. In his appeals to these officers, isolated in the wilderness but by their trade familiar with animal life, Professor Baird offered them some purposeful activity that would ensure their names a place in the annals of science.<sup>110</sup> The co-operation of Governor William Mactavish throughout this decade was another important constant in this second phase. Besides forwarding his own and other valuable notes, from his residence at Fort Gary he co-ordinated the transportation network between Washington and Fort Simpson “free of charges.”<sup>111</sup>

While the familiar names of James Flett, Charles Gaudet, James Lockhart and Strachan Jones continued to appear on the specimens sent to Washington, one officer became more prominent than the others and that was Roderick Ross MacFarlane. A minor contributor at first, MacFarlane became the biggest single Hudson's Bay Company benefactor to the Smithsonian Institution. In birds and eggs alone, he sent more than five thousand specimens southward.<sup>112</sup> MacFarlane's emergence as the "giant" among the Mackenzie collectors coincided with his appointment to establish Fort Anderson on the Anderson River in 1861.

A native of Stornoway in Scotland's Outer Hebrides, Roderick MacFarlane joined the Hudson's Bay Company as an apprentice clerk in 1852.<sup>113</sup> After stints at Fort Rae and Resolution, MacFarlane was sent north in 1855 to take charge of Fort Good Hope on the Mackenzie River. At that time, trade with the western Eskimos had already been carried on for some years at Fort McPherson, the company's most northern post on the Peel River. It was known from the Indians at Good Hope as well as from Mackenzie Eskimos that there was a considerable Eskimo population, possibly as many as a thousand at that time, residing along Liverpool Bay and the larger river known to drain into that bay. In 1857 MacFarlane was sent to reconnoitre the valley of this river, which was named Anderson, and to investigate the possibilities of trade with the Eskimo inhabitants. On the basis of this trip, which is an incredible story in itself, Bernard Rogan Ross agreed to the establishment of a trading post on the Anderson River.

MacFarlane remained in charge of Fort Anderson from 1861 to 1866, when it was abandoned. While trade with the Eskimos was the post's *raison d'être*, MacFarlane made an annual summer trip across the barrens to the shores of Franklin Bay to collect birds and eggs for the Smithsonian Institution. As mentioned, MacFarlane is reported to have collected over five thousand specimens of birds and eggs for the American museum, including specimens secured for him by natives. MacFarlane was intensely loyal to the Smithsonian, to the point where he defied an 1863 directive from Governor Alexander Dallas by sending a skeleton and skin of the barren ground bear directly to the Smithsonian Institution instead of to London as ordered.<sup>114</sup> MacFarlane was also intensely loyal to Kennicott. When he received word of Kennicott's premature death in 1866, MacFarlane fired off an emotional letter to Baird expressing his shock at the news:

Kennicott however was so much appreciated with us in all that we did in this way before and since his departure, - that his death has given a severe shock to my feelings, as to lessen considerably ones interest in past as well as future collections.<sup>115</sup>

Roderick MacFarlane recovered his zeal for natural history and, through a career with the Hudson's Bay Company that lasted until 1894, he continued to collect for the Smithsonian and the early Canadian natural history societies. Like his colleague James Lockhart, who wrote a very

respected paper entitled "Notes On The Habits of The Moose In The Far North of British America,"<sup>116</sup> MacFarlane eventually turned to writing about natural history when encouraged by Charles Bell of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba.<sup>117</sup> Like so many of Victorian Canada's "humble" amateur naturalists, however, MacFarlane never believed he was making an important contribution to science. When Professor Baird encouraged MacFarlane to write a book on the zoology of the Mackenzie district he became quite annoyed:

I could not presume to attempt anything of the Kind. Apart from your good opinion of me for which I feel grateful [sic] I know that I never could accomplish such a work as that, for want of the necessary ability and experience also; and as I never could do so to satisfy myself; and especially as I have no ambition to figure as an author, or to be thought other than I am - a mere collector - we will not again, if you please, recur to this subject.<sup>118</sup>

One of the biggest single contributors in the history of the Smithsonian Institution saw himself as "a mere collector."

Robert Kennicott had spent three years in the north. As important and enormous as his Arctic collections proved to be, his equally important contribution was the tremendous enthusiasm he stimulated among the Hudson's Bay Company officers and servants for natural history and ethnology. As company official Edward Hopkins surmised, "It is no easy part to play, going as a stranger into a territory inhabited by men bound to a foreign government and with exclusive views on many points. But Kennicott knew how to meet the circumstances."<sup>119</sup> One of his Smithsonian associates analysed Kennicott's ability as a motivator:

The advent of Kennicott, young, joyous, full of news of the outside world, ready to engage in any of their expeditions or activities and to take hardships without grumbling was an event in their lives. When he taught them how to make birdskins and collect Natural History objects and showed them how by means of their collections, their names would become known in the civilized world and even in books, they seized on the project with enthusiasm....<sup>120</sup>

For more than ten years, natural history collections arrived at the Smithsonian Institution from posts throughout Rupert's Land. Some observers might see this development as yet another example of Canada's cultural carelessness. That would be a misleading perception. It was only in the 1850s, as historian Carl Berger has so carefully illustrated, that the self-sustaining societies devoted to natural science matured after scattered and tentative beginnings in the 1820s.<sup>121</sup> There was no way that the revitalized Natural History Society of Montreal, which had solid fur trade contacts in George Barnston and Sir George Simpson, could support an expedition on a scale of Kennicott's. The Smithsonian Institution possessed the skills and the resources to fill a void while Canada's scientific institutions became established. Fortunately for the development of natural history in the nineteenth century, the Hudson's Bay Company, an organization with imperial links if ever there was one, chose to pursue a co-operative approach with the Smithsonian Institution which enhanced the common culture of the North Atlantic triangle.

## NOTES

1. Roderick Ross MacFarlane, Fort Good Hope, to Spencer Baird, 28 July 1862. Smithsonian Institution Archives, Research Unit 7215 Collected Notes, Lists, and Catalogues on Birds, 1839, 1849-1851, 1855-1865, Box 14, R.R. MacFarlane #9.
2. *Annual Report of the Secretary*, 1868, Smithsonian Institution, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
3. Carl Berger, *Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada*, The 1982 Joanne Goodman Lectures (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), xi.
4. *Ibid.*, xi.
5. *Ibid.*, 15.
6. *Ibid.*, 15.
7. *Ibid.*, 23.
8. E.E. Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870, Vol. XXX: 1821-1870* (New York: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1961), 810.
9. R.P. Stearns, "The Royal Society and the Company," *The Beaver* (June 1945): 9.
10. *Ibid.*, 9.
11. James L. Baillie Jr., "Naturalists on Hudson Bay," *The Beaver* (December 1946): 36.
12. See E.E. Rich, ed., *Isham's Observations on Hudson's Bay, 1743 and Notes and Observations on a Book Entitled a Voyage to Hudson's Bay in the Dobbs Galley, 1749* (Toronto: The Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Record Society, Vol. XII, 1949).
13. *Ibid.*, 119. Isham's new birds included the blue goose, surf scoter, little brown crane, purple martin, marbled and Hudsonian godwits, spruce and sharp-tailed grouse.
14. James L. Baillie Jr., "Naturalist on Hudson's Bay," 38.
15. See Glyndwyr Williams, ed., *Observations on the Hudson's Bay, 1767-1791* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, Vol. XXXII, 1969).
16. See John Franklin, *Narrative of A Journey To The Shores of The Polar Seas, In The Years 1819, 20, 21 and 22* (New York: Greenwood Press Reprint, 1969).
17. See George A. Dunlop and C.P. Wilson, "George Barnston," *The Beaver* (December 1941): 16-18; and Dr. John Richardson, *Fauna Boreali-Americana or the Zoology of the Northern Parts of British America: Second Part, The Birds* (London: John Murray, 1850).
18. See C. Stuart Houston, ed., *To the Arctic by Canoe, 1819-21* (Montreal & London: Institute of North America and McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974).
19. E.E. Rich, ed., *Minutes of Council, Northern Department of Rupert's Land 1821-1831* (London: Champlain Society for Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. 3, 1940), 248.
20. *Ibid.*, 248.
21. Hudson's Bay Company Archives (Hereafter cited as HBCA) A.6/21, fo. 167d., Governor and Committee to George Simpson, 7 June 1828.
22. Carl Berger, *Science, God and Nature*, 4-5.
23. *Ibid.*, xiii.
24. Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken*. Introduction by W. Kaye Lamb (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), 98.
25. *Ibid.*, 98.
26. HBCA, D.5/13, fo. 470, J.J. Audubon to Governor George Simpson, 29 April 1845.
27. See George A. Dunlop and C.P. Wilson, "George Barnston," *The Beaver* (December 1941): 16-18.
28. HBCA, D.5/10, fo. 28, George Barnston to George Simpson, 3 January 1844.
29. *Ibid.* After Barnston retired in 1862, he collected natural history specimens for the Smithsonian Institution, the British Museum and with his son, botanist Dr. James Barnston, became a charter member of the Natural History Society of Montreal.
30. Paul H. Oehser, *The Smithsonian Institution* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 23.
31. *Ibid.*, 15.
32. *Ibid.*, 27.
33. Geoffrey T. Hellman, *The Smithsonian: Octopus on the Mall* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1966), 56.
34. Paul H. Oehser, *Smithsonian Institution*, 41.
35. Geoffrey T. Hellman, *The Smithsonian*, 91-92.
36. James A. Alton, *The First Scientific Exploration of Russian America and the Purchase of Alaska* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1942), 1.
37. *Ibid.*, 1. The volumes given him for study were to influence his career. These were: Captain Cook's *Vancouver and Governor George Simpson's Overland Journey Round the World*. It was suggested by his instructor that the Russian American possessions offered a new and rich field for investigation by the naturalist.
38. *Ibid.*, 2-3.
39. *Ibid.*, 4.
40. Donald Gunn, "Indian Remains Near Red River Settlement, Hudson's Bay Territory," published in *Annual Report of the Secretary*, Smithsonian Institution, 1867, 399-401.
41. Donald Gunn, "Notes Of An Egging Expedition To Shoal Lake, West of Lake Winnipeg," *Annual Report of the Secretary*, Smithsonian Institution, 1867: 427-432.
42. James A. Alton, *First Scientific Exploration*, 5. It was called the Megatherium Club after certain yells and war dances the naturalists had seen practised in the American west by the Indians.

43. See Joseph Henry to Bernard Rogan Ross, 26 March 1859, Research Unit 7221, Bernard Rogan Ross Notebook, Circa 1860-1861, Box 1, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C. "a grievous blank still exists in our Collections and works; almost the entire region of Hudsons Bay being still unrepresented."
44. Some of the results of Dr. John Richardson's research were published in *Fauna Boreali-Americana or the Zoology of the Northern Parts of British America: Second Part. The Birds* (London: John Murray, 1831).
45. Report of the Assistant Secretary, *Annual Report*, 1859, Smithsonian Institution Archives: 66.
46. *Ibid.*, George Simpson, Hudson's Bay House, Lachine to Officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, 31 March 1860.
47. Joseph Henry, "Circular To Officers of the Hudson's Bay Company," 20 April 1860, in Research Unit 7002, Spencer F. Baird Papers, 1833-1889, Box 46, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
48. Robert Kennicott, Fort William, to Spencer Baird, 16 May 1859, and 18 May 1859, Research Unit 7215 Collected Notes, Lists, and Catalogues on Birds, 1839, 1849-1851, 1855-1865, Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. Robert Kennicott, Norway House, to Spencer Baird, 15 June 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
52. *Ibid.*
53. See Susan Stewart, "Sir George Simpson: Collector," *The Beaver* (Summer 1982): 4-9.
54. Those company officers who agreed to collect natural history specimens for the Smithsonian Institution included Andrew Murray at Fort Pelly, Archibald MacDonald, and William McMurray posted at Fort Alexander. They were to receive Patent Office and Smithsonian Reports with blanks and instructions.
55. Robert Kennicott, Saskatchewan River, to Spencer Baird, 27 June 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
56. Robert Kennicott, Methye Portage to Spencer Baird, 27 July 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
57. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 17 November 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Robert Kennicott, Methye Portage, to Spencer Baird, 27 July 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
60. *Ibid.*
61. HBCA, B. 200/b/33, fo. 24, Bernard Rogan Ross to Professor Henry, 25 July 1859.
62. HBCA, B. 200/b/33, fo. 23d, Bernard Rogan Ross, to Professor Wilson, Industrial Museum of Scotland, 25 July 1859.
63. Spencer Baird to Bernard Ross, 26 March 1859, Research Unit 7221, Bernard Rogan Ross Notebook, Circa 1860-1861, Box 1, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.
64. See Philip Goldring, "Papers On The Labour System Of The Hudson's Bay Company, 1821-1900," Parks Canada, Manuscript Report Number 412 (Ottawa, 1980), 114-116.
65. See James T. Alton, *First Scientific Exploration*, 1-135.
66. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 17 November 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*
71. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 23 March 1860, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
72. Robert Kennicott, Fort Yukon, to Spencer Baird, 23 June 1861, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
73. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 23 March 1860, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
74. See George F.G. Stanley, ed., *In Search of the Magnetic North, A Soldier-Surveyor's Letters from the North-West 1843-1844* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1955).
75. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 17 November 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
76. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 23 March 1860, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
77. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 17 November 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
78. *Ibid.*
79. Robert Kennicott, Fort Yukon, to Spencer Baird, 23 June 1861, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
80. Robert Kennicott, LaPierre's House, to Spencer Baird, 21 January 1862, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
81. *Ibid.*

82. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 17 November 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
83. Spencer F. Baird Papers, 1833-1889, Research Unit 7002, Box 46, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
84. HBCA, B. 200/b/33, fo. 24, Bernard Rogan Ross to Professor Henry, 25 July 1859.
85. "Notes on the Industrial Art of the Native Tribes of McKenzie River," Bernard Rogan Ross Notebook, Circa 1860-1861, Box 1, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
86. Ibid.
87. Report of the Assistant Secretary, *Annual Report*, 1861, Smithsonian Institution Archives: 60.
88. "Notes On The Tinneh or Chipewyan Indians of British and Russian America," *Annual Report*, Smithsonian Institution Archives, 1866: 302-327.
89. Ibid., 320.
90. Ibid., 304-5.
91. Robert Kennicott, Fort Yukon, to Spencer Baird, 23 June 1861, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
92. HBCA, B. 200/b/34, fo. 22d-23, James Clare, York Factory, to Bernard Rogan Ross, Fort Simpson, 12 December 1860.
93. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 17 November 1859, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
94. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 1 September 1860, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
95. Ibid.
96. Robert Kennicott, Fort Simpson, to Spencer Baird, 23 March 1860, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
97. Robert Kennicott, Fort Resolution, to Spencer Baird, 8 July 1860, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
98. Robert Kennicott, Fort Yukon, to Spencer Baird, 23 June 1861, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
99. Robert Kennicott, Lapierre House, to Spencer Baird, 21 January 1862, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
100. Robert Kennicott, Chicago, to Spencer Baird, 18 October 1862, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Robert Kennicott, Red River, to Spencer Baird, 8 September 1862, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
104. Robert Kennicott, Fort Resolution, to Spencer Baird, 8 July 1860, op. cit., Box 13, Kennicott #8, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
105. Ibid.
106. Report of the Assistant Secretary, *Annual Report*, 1863, Smithsonian Institution Archives: 53.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Carl Berger, *Science, God and Nature*, 23.
111. Report of the Secretary, *Annual Report*, 1865, Smithsonian Institution Archives: 61. Governor Mactavish's correspondence on his interest in natural history has not survived.
112. Report of the Secretary, *Annual Report*, 1869, Smithsonian Institution Archives: 31.
113. See E.O. Hohn, "Roderick MacFarlane of Anderson River and Fort," *The Beaver* (Winter 1963): 22-29.
114. Roderick MacFarlane to Spencer Baird, 6 May 1863, Research Unit 7215, Collected Notes, Lists and Catalogues on Birds, 1839, 1849-1851, 1855-1865, Box 14, MacFarlane #9, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
115. Roderick MacFarlane, to Spencer Baird, 27 November 1866, op. cit., Box 14, MacFarlane #9, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
116. See Grace Lee Nute, "Kennicott in the North," *The Beaver* (September 1943): 28-33.
117. MacFarlane was a major contributor to a volume by Baird, Brewer and Ridgeway on the Land and Water Birds of America published in 1874 by Little, Brown & Company of Boston. R. MacFarlane, "Notes On and Lists of Birds and Eggs Collected In Arctic America, 1861-1866," *Proceedings of the U.S. National Museum*, vol. 14, 1891: 413-446.
118. Roderick MacFarlane, to Spencer Baird, 18 May 1866, op. cit., Box 14, MacFarlane #9, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
119. James A. Alton, *First Scientific Exploration*, 11.
120. Ibid., 11.
121. Carl Berger, *Science, God and Nature*, 5.



# The Charismatic Pattern: Canada's Riel Rebellion of 1885 as a Millenarian Protest Movement

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ABSTRACT. This paper uses Michael Adas's *Prophets of Rebellion* (Chapel Hill, 1979) to provide a theoretical framework for a re-interpretation of the Riel Rebellion as a millenarian prophet-inspired protest. Riel's situation is compared to those of Birsa Bhagwan, Saya San, Te Ua Haumene and Antonio Conselheiro in India, Burma, New Zealand and Brazil.

RESUME. Cette étude se base sur l'ouvrage de Michael Adas *Prophets of Rebellion* (Chapel Hill, 1979) qui fournit un cadre théorique à une réinterprétation de la rébellion de Riel envisagée ici comme un soulèvement inspiré par un prophète millénariste. On y compare la situation de Riel à celles de Birsa Bhagwan en Inde, Saya San à Burma, Te Ua Haumene en Nouvelle-Zélande et Antonio Conselheiro au Brésil.

## 1. The Wider Context

On 20 October 1982 the police in Maiduguri (North-Eastern Nigeria) who tried to arrest members of a Islamic sect named "Dan Kabary" were met by gunfire. The following three-day battle cost more than five hundred lives. The group's leader, prophet and spiritual father, Mallan Muhammad Marwa, had been killed during riots in December 1980. The sect was outlawed by the Nigerian government.<sup>1</sup> This has been the most recent example of a millenarian protest movement.

These movements, which have emerged in many parts of the world over the centuries, usually occur during an era of rapid and intense socio-economic change. The intrusion of a "colonizing people" into the living space and way of life of a "native people"<sup>2</sup> usually precipitates a "culture clash." The symptoms are: decline of group identity, loss of self-respect, élite displacement, decline of social status and economic well-being (often seen in close connection with destruction of traditional ways of life and imposition of heavy taxes), disruption of community units and kinship bonds leading to growing frustration, violent resistance and a simultaneous rise of a prophetic leader.<sup>3</sup>

Historical publications in Canada have depicted Louis Riel as a rebel and traitor, a French-Canadian martyr, a frontiersman, and a Métis hero and saint.<sup>4</sup> In Thomas Flanagan's book *Louis "David" Riel* the author stresses the socio-economic side of the Riel Rebellions and the millenarian aspects of Riel's philosophy, or *Weltanschauung*. Flanagan suggests that Riel should be placed in the context of medieval visionaries, such as Joachim of Fiore and Bridget of Sweden and notes that the Métis resistance was similar to "religious resistance movements of the Third World."<sup>5</sup>

In his study of millenarian protest movements against the European colonial order, Michael Adas<sup>6</sup> establishes a number of structural elements common to those movements and their prophetic leaders. The Métis and Riel almost ideally fit into the general pattern. This becomes clear when Riel is compared to Birsa Bhagwan, Saya San, Te Ua Haumene and Antonio Conselheiro,<sup>7</sup> four major leaders of millenarian prophet-inspired protest movements in India, Burma, New Zealand and Brazil.

## 2. The Socio-Economic Context

In all of these examples the prophetic leader's people inhabit a relatively isolated, homogeneous, inaccessible and sparsely populated area. Following the intrusion of a foreign culture their (aboriginal) land rights are endangered.

Originally a valley people, the Mundas (Birsa's people), under pressure from various invaders, had been pushed to the highlands of Chota Nagpur in Central Eastern India. Following the establishment of British control "landlord exactions merely increased and the position of the Mundas ... worsened as long-standing methods of exploitation were intensified."<sup>8</sup> There were riots and a resistance movement culminating in continuous rebellious agitations among the Mundas in the nineteenth century.

In the second half of the last century Lower Burma was rapidly transformed from a frontier/wilderness country into a prosperous province of the British Empire. After an initial economic improvement the local population was faced with a web of problems, the question of land rights being among the most important ones. Economic depression and socio-cultural disruption (including the running out of living space and the loss of control of the peasant over his land) were main factors out of which Saya San forged his rebellion.<sup>9</sup>

The Maori (Te Ua's people) had lived in virtual isolation on the North Island of New Zealand where they had developed a sophisticated tribal system. The impact of Europeans upon them was sudden. After an initial short period of adjustment and well-being, the Maori became impoverished, were driven into emotional despair, and had to witness the factual abolition of their land rights.

Even government agencies created to protect Maori interests fed the settler's seemingly insatiable hunger for Maori land. In 1852, the Colonial Office hesitantly granted representative government to the people of New Zealand, which effectively meant the European settlers. It became increasingly obvious to the Maoris that they must organize and resist further encroachments or perish.<sup>10</sup>

In the Manitoba Act of 1870 the Métis were offered 1.4 million acres of land as a compensation for aboriginal rights. There were, however, practical problems: the Act did not state how the land was to be distributed, only Métis of the "third generation" and later generations were eligible, surveying had to be completed, the old river lot system was ignored, and

distribution of land did not begin till March 1873.<sup>11</sup> In 1876, when the final regulations were issued, those Métis who had endured often became the easy victims of land speculators. It seems fairly obvious that the vast majority of Métis, with their "simple characters"<sup>12</sup> as Bruce Sealey calls it, were not in a position to resist the discrimination of the white governmental and bureaucratic machine. Sealey sums up the situation of the 1870s:

It is clear that the law was prepared for the benefit of settlers who understood the value of the land, or for the profiteers in a western society based on capitalism. There was very little left for many Métis but to move away and attempt to re-establish the old way of life based on trapping and hunting.<sup>13</sup>

Just like the Mundas, the Métis were pushed out of their original area of settlement by land-hungry foreigners. Many Métis went across the border to the United States, others went west where they set up new settlements in Northern Saskatchewan. That migration only eased difficulties for a short period of time. The basic problems, however, remained unsolved.

By 1884 the situation in the Métis communities in Saskatchewan paralleled the one in Manitoba after 1870: decreasing employment opportunities, economic decline, insecurity about land titles and an increasing influx of white settlers, meant potential threats to Métis land ownership. As Flanagan notes, all in all the situation was even more desperate than in 1870: "...the half-breeds resident in the North-West had been allocated nothing, even though the Dominion Land Act of 1878 had allowed a distribution of land in the North-West."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, there was the problem of those Métis squatting on land reserved by the government for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).

The question of land, of effective (legal) control over "native" lands, was regarded by the native groups as essential to guarantee survival. Moreover, for some the land seems to have been more than just a source of income; it was associated with a way of life and identity. That those people had an understanding of the value of land, even if not all the legal implications, seems to be clear from the fact that they were willing to fight and die for their *Lebensraum*.

Economic order among the peoples considered here was basically pre-industrial and agrarian (or semi-agrarian/nomadic). Self-supply was the primary, yet not the exclusive goal. Socio-economic life was strongly community-orientated. The continuous impact of the colonizers brought accelerated change and relative deprivation for the native people. The deprivation stemmed from a feeling among the colonized "that a gap existed between what they felt they deserved in terms of status and material rewards and what they possessed or had the capacity to obtain."<sup>15</sup> A people which had had little contact with industrialized culture was suddenly overwhelmed by it and was forced to prove its identity on a collective and

individual basis against that foreign culture which was not willing to accept the “native” culture as equal.

The Métis were an idiosyncratic product of the fur trade and by the beginning of the nineteenth century they had established a distinctive way of life that was semi-agrarian/nomadic, combining petty farming with hunting. Others worked as HBC employees, salt miners, freighters or lime makers.<sup>16</sup> The core of the Métis economy was the buffalo. The annual hunts were carried out according to strict rules and were both economic and social events.

The last century in Western Canada was a time of enormous and continuous socio-economic changes and until about the 1870s the Métis had been well able to adapt to changing circumstances. The disappearance of the buffalo, though, was a most serious blow to the Métis economic system. Furthermore, the coming of the railroad made the old means of transportation largely superfluous. Those Métis who had migrated west were now further removed and in some cases completely cut off from the prosperous trade centres, most notably Winnipeg. The only alternative offered within the new Canadian way of life was to become a settler. That was the point where the Métis, product of social change, ironically became also victims of social change.

It is hard to assess why the Métis seemed unwilling and/or unable to adapt to the post-1870 capitalist system. They were illiterate, and legal proceedings necessarily involved written correspondence. Thus, most Métis had to leave it to their leaders to draft petitions for them, many of which were delayed in a slow governmental machine and in some cases not answered at all. The conclusion is that the Métis tried, but had no real fair chance, because (a) their starting position, against the white settlers for example, was weaker and (b) they were discriminated against in a number of vital areas, religious, racial, economic, linguistic.<sup>17</sup>

### **3. The Prophetic Leaders**

The lives of Birsa, Saya San, Te Ua and Antonio Conselheiro show remarkable parallels. As far as social background is concerned Adas establishes two major types of prophetic leaders:

At one pole are indigenous authority figures whose position is threatened by changes introduced by the agents of alien civilizations... At the other pole of the continuum are men of low birth, who are exposed to a high degree to alien but dominant civilizations. On the basis of my sample, this is the more common background for prophetic protest leaders.<sup>18</sup>

The four prophetic leaders outside Canada can be placed around that second pole: Birsa was born as the fourth son of a poor peasant family in Chota Nagpur. Since his parents were unable to support him as a young child, he was sent to live with his uncle. Te Ua, who belonged to the Taranaki tribe, was kidnapped at the age of three and was kept as a slave among another New Zealand tribe, the Waikato. Saya San was born

in Shwebo in 1882. Early in his life he moved away from his family and made a fairly poor living from fortune-telling and working as a medical healer. Conselheiro surrounded himself with the notion of the mysterious past of a mythic hero. He seems to have been wandering in the Brazilian backlands in his early life, living on alms.

Riel's early years have been covered in various biographies. For this paper suffice it to repeat that he was born in 1844 in St. Boniface where his father

farmed and raised livestock on a modest scale; he also operated at various times a grist mill,...But he was always in debt to the Hudson's Bay Company, and his best efforts did not succeed in elevating him above the bottom layer of the métis bourgeoisie.<sup>19</sup>

As far as family background is concerned Riel had a divided class identity of upper class (through the Lagimodière connection) and middle class (through his father). His social status was continually shifting. For example, during his time in Montréal he experienced a decline in social status and would have to be placed closer to the lower classes. As the other lower class prophets of Adas's system, Riel was exposed to a high degree of foreign civilization throughout his life. By 1870 he had certainly also become a Métis authority figure whose position was challenged. He could at that point be placed around Adas's first pole.

The prophetic leaders of millenarian movements are relatively well-educated and well-travelled. The leaders considered here received an uncommon, special education away from their original homes, an education which put heavy stress on religious matters. Besides that, the four leaders outside Canada studied with native people and acquired an extensive knowledge of native cults and shamanistic rituals as well as of Christian religions.

While attending school in his home village the special abilities of Birsa were recognized and he was sent to higher education in the town of Burja. "At Burja he became a Christian and was baptized with the name David. He soon advanced to a larger mission school, where he came into close contact with European teachers for the first time."<sup>20</sup> Te Ua was educated at the Methodist mission school at Kawhia Harbor on the West coast of New Zealand, where he too was made a Christian. Before that he had learned the magic art from one of the tribal priests.

Bishop Taché had arranged for Riel to be sent East to the Collège de Montréal with rich people covering the expenses. He was supposed to become a Catholic priest and return to the West as one of the first Métis missionaries.

Quite often the education is broken off or the overall result is not inclusive enough to secure the future prophetic leader a permanent place in the "colonizers'" society. Birsa was expelled from mission school after seven years. Te Ua too came back to his home village. Riel was dismissed for breaking the house rules, and after finally giving up his intention of

becoming a priest and having unsuccessfully tried to enter law, he returned to Red River.

These disappointing experiences left the future leaders with a feeling of ambivalence towards the colonizers' education and made them largely mistrust their culture and religion. After that initial rupture they came to regard their "native" culture and surroundings as their primary physical and spiritual home. Familiarity with both their own people's and the colonizers' culture and way of life enhanced the prophetic leaders' authority among their own people and enabled them to act as cultural middlemen, or as Adas calls them "cultural brokers."<sup>21</sup> Education was also an important factor, since the followers of the five prophets considered here, including the Métis, were in their vast majority illiterate people and among such people literacy "was also frequently seen as a sign of his [the prophet's] capacity to master the secrets of the European overlords."<sup>22</sup>

The question of the sociology of charisma is important. Bryan Wilson states that "Charisma is not a personality attribute, but a successful claim to power by virtue of supernatural ordination."<sup>23</sup> Since it is extremely hard to find objective criteria for the validity of such a claim to divine sanction, recognition by the prophet's followers becomes the decisive factor.<sup>24</sup> The successful relationship between prophet and followers can be described as "one of supreme personal trust"<sup>25</sup> or better and simpler: faith. That the prophets considered here had that trust and faith seems evident<sup>26</sup> and it makes them truly charismatic. To prove that point with Riel, witness an excerpt from a letter of Father Fourmond: "Notre population...dans sa simplicité, voyant ce singulier personnage, Métis comme eux, prier presque jour et nuit...elle avait en lui une confiance aveugle et le prenait pour un saint."<sup>27</sup>

Traditionally, charismatic leaders arise in times of social unrest and change. "Charisma is undoubtedly a case of social change: but it also appears to be a response to it, a response to social disruption."<sup>28</sup> Max Weber goes one step further by saying: "Within the sphere of its claims, charismatic authority repudiates the past, and is in this sense a specifically revolutionary force."<sup>29</sup> Riel did not repudiate the past, but there was a revolutionary trait about him, in that he combined the role of prophetic leader opposed to the Catholic priests in Batoche with the role of political leader opposed to established governmental authorities.

As far as the prophetic leaders' *Weltanschauung* is concerned, they developed a somewhat simplistic view of the world which they wrote down and/or preached to their followers with considerable success. Its core is a binary system made up of such primary dualities<sup>30</sup> as man/God, earth/heaven, good/evil and friend/enemy, a system which was evidently very appealing to the mostly peasant followers, especially as a strong in-group/out-group feeling, a feeling of solidarity, could thereby be established.

A so far neglected part of Riel's *Weltanschauung* is his "Monadism." In his typical philosophically distortive manner, Riel developed a crude mixture of Leibniz,<sup>31</sup> primitive Christian thinking and electromagnetism, as discovered by Oersted in 1820. In Riel's world, which is made up of "essences," the "monades" are the smallest indivisible entities.

Les essences se composent de 'Monades'... Les 'Monades' sont de deux genres; elles sont, les unes mâles, les autres femelles... Une monade est une électricité... Une monade mâle est une électricité positive. Une monade femelle est une électricité négative... Les monades sont de deux sortes. Les unes sont actives et les autres sont passives.<sup>32</sup>

In another document, probably a draft for a book on his religious/philosophical principles,<sup>33</sup> Riel writes more along the same lines and defines the relationship between man and God as a sort of magnetic field where the tension between the active essences of God and the passive essences of mankind contain the world in harmony. Religion is the magnet which draws together the divine and the human essences, which has been disrupted by man's original sin.<sup>34</sup> Living in harmony is a divine gift and a divine prerogative:

L'homme étant crée d'essences passives, ne peut pas, quand il a complètement rompu avec les essences actives, se remettre par lui même en harmonies avec elles. Car cette harmonie est un don des essences divines.<sup>35</sup>

Man has both negative and positive forces in him. Sin and rupture from God stem from man bringing up his negative forces against the negative commandments of God.

Et comme les électricités de même nom se repoussent, l'homme entre en dispute avec son Dieu. Lorsque les électricités *Négatives* divines nous défendent quelque chose, si nous nous interdisons toute autre chose que celle là, nous mettons aussi au jeu nos électricités *Négatives*; et comme les électricités de même nom se répugnent nous nous querellons avec les essences divines.<sup>36</sup>

There can be no doubt that in Riel's system of repulsing and attracting forces, of active and passive electricities, God remains the "magnet number one."

#### 4. The Prophetic Leaders and their Special Missions

As pointed out above, prophetic leaders derive their primary and principal legitimacy from divine authority. In most cases though, additional "secular" and other assistance is sought. Consequently, the five leaders considered previously were eager to attain the support of local and/or other authority figures. In Riel's case a letter from Bishop Bourget was of particular importance:

Mais Dieu qui vous a toujours dirigé et assisté jusqu'à présent ne vous abandonnera pas au plus fort de vos peines. Car il vous a donné une mission qu'il faudra accomplir en tous points.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, both Saya San and Riel claimed to be of royal descent, thus enhancing their claims to power and leadership.

Celui que le monde attendait dans la personne d'Henri cinq se trouve dans le Prophète du Nouveau Monde, Louis "David" Riel qui par sa mère Julie de la Gimodière est un des princes descendant de Louis XI.<sup>38</sup>

To keep up their prophetic claims the prophets had to "deliver," that is to say, they had to perform some sort of magical acts.<sup>39</sup> That Riel was very much aware of the nature of his prophethood and its wider implications can be illustrated by the following quotation from one of his writings in Regina prison:

C'est Dieu qui, par la grâce et la force divine de Jesus-Christ, a soin des missions extraordinaires. Les hommes envoyés du Saint-Esprit ne se caractérisent pas eux-mêmes. Ils sont environnés et accompagnés de marques qui les caractérisent. Leurs bons désirs, leur bonne volonté ont des sanctions indubitablement bonnes et saintes. Le doigt visible de Dieu les désigne par les résultats de leur conduite.<sup>40</sup>

Four of the prophetic figures considered here experienced an initial vision or a series of visions triggered off in an unusual situation. After having been shunned from his village Birsa was struck by lightning while walking through a forest. "This incident was followed by a series of dreams, the content of which Birsa interpreted as injunctions for him to return to his people and rescue them from their misery."<sup>41</sup> Te Ua had his first vision during a serious illness and claimed that the angel Gabriel had spoken to him.

Riel later stated that his mission began in St. Patrick's Church in Washington on 8 December 1875 with a sudden experience of a mystical ecstasy and a following powerful vision.<sup>42</sup> This in Riel's view marked the beginning of a new era, the *Heilswende* (turning point of salvation) leading to the Métis fulfillment of God's providential plan and to the second coming of Christ, a day so important that it marked the redemption of man's original sin in the Garden of Eden.<sup>43</sup>

In these visions the prophetic leaders were told by God or some other supernatural power that they had a special task to perform in the world, a sacred mission which would lead to the redemption of their people and their own personal glory. An important means to reach that goal was the establishment of a form of new church and generally speaking a new religious-political order.

Both Riel and Te Ua established parallels between the Jews and their own people, the Métis and the Maori, both seeing them as the new chosen people of God. Riel even created a mythic genealogy which made the Métis relatives of the Jews in both spirit and blood.<sup>44</sup> Another interesting parallel between Riel and Te Ua lies in the fact that both were considered to be insane by some of their friends and fellowmen at the time. Te Ua was taken away in chains and Riel was confined in the asylum at Longue Pointe.

An essential part of the visionary contents and the prophetic mission claim was the re-naming process. The prophets adopted special names for themselves<sup>45</sup> and their world.<sup>46</sup> This re-naming of course was not an end in itself, but meant re-defining, re-evaluating, attributing new meaning<sup>47</sup> and creating a utopian alternative to the modern world.

The re-naming factor corresponds with the futuristic tendency Guglielmo Guariglia discusses in his study of prophetic movements. He establishes three basic tendencies, a tendency towards the past, e.g. nativism; one towards the present, e.g. syncretism; and one towards the future, e.g. millenarianism.<sup>48</sup> Those major tendencies can be detected in the “missions” of all five prophetic leaders, that is to say, they were all looking back to a past golden age, working for the present which was to be seen as a time of hardship and testing, and looking ahead to the future to a perfect utopian-millenarian state.

W. E. Mühlmann gives the following definition of nativism:

Wir verstehen also Nativismus als einen kollektiven Aktionsablauf, der von dem Drang getragen ist, ein durch eine überlegene Fremdkultur erschüttertes Gruppen-Selbstgefühl wiederherzustellen durch massives Demonstrieren eines “eigenen Beitrags.” Das “Eigene” liegt in dem Wunsch und Willen, sich abzusetzen gegen den Eindruck übermächtiger Fremdkultur, es liegt in der Manifestierung des Gefühls: “Wir sind auch etwas!”<sup>49</sup>

Through the prophet’s personal appeal and divine authority a restoration of the shattered group identity and the overcoming of inferiority feelings was temporarily possible. Due to their superior intelligence and rhetorical abilities the prophetic leaders were able to restore their peoples’ pride and give them a “voice.”

The prophetic leaders were intelligent enough to know that they could not restore the past and were instead working to preserve certain well-respected values of the past and integrate them into their new system. All five prophets considered here mixed aspects of their “native” tradition with European thought and tradition, especially as far as religion is concerned.

That leads us to our next point, syncretism. The new religious doctrines and religions/political orders were basically eclectic and the truly original ideas in them were minimal.<sup>50</sup> Following the classic definitions of millenarian movements established by Talman and Cohn<sup>51</sup> the Riel Rebellion of 1885 was typical insofar as salvation was to be

- a. collective, to be enjoyed by all the nations of the world and especially the Métis as a community, God’s faithful and chosen people to redeem all peoples of the world;
- b. terrestrial, in the sense that Riel’s theocratic utopian state was to become reality in Canada;
- c. imminent, insofar as the mission of Riel and the special task of the Métis had already begun on 8 December 1875. Final salvation though was still many years away (to come in the year 4209);
- d. total, in the sense that everyone would be thoroughly affected and the final result would be a radical change in way of life for everyone. Again, that final stage of perfection would be the result of a process of continuous moral reform throughout many years;
- e. miraculous, because it would be brought about with the help of God. Riel’s belief in the direct influence and his complete trust in

divine providence are evident from a large number of his writings.

A common factor in the prophetic act are apocalyptic visions concerning the forces of the enemy who are opposed to the prophet and not among the “chosen.” Te Ua was talking about a great flood that would destroy all Europeans. Riel had similar visions in Beauport, but became more moderate later.<sup>52</sup> Conselheiro was the most radical of the prophets considered here, since in his millenarian visions the final catastrophe and the second coming of Christ were imminent: “In 1899 the waters shall turn to blood, and...the earth some place shall find itself in heaven. There shall be a great rain of stars, and that will be the end of the world.”<sup>53</sup>

After the apocalyptic times of extreme hardship and testing, probation and purification, the preparation time for the millenium or the millenium itself would begin. Except for the famous land division scheme<sup>54</sup> we have little knowledge of how in Riel’s case that preparatory millenarian state was supposed to look. The remark “Jesus Christ wants to perfect the government of His church and to make His apostles able to exercise charitable coercion on men”<sup>55</sup> gives us some idea of a theocratic oppression system. Further clues can be found in a notebook where Riel establishes an elaborate ecumenical council system:

...les trois conseils districts dans chaque nationalité pourraient se saluer et s’édifier en convention une fois tous les trente ans. Et ce triple conseil de toutes les nations du nouveau monde ferraient un grand acte d’amitié chrétienne et un grand pas vers la concorde universelle... Les chefs des chevaliers de chaque pays formeront un conseil à part... Les chefs des prêtres et ministres solitaires de chaque nation constitueront un autre conseil... Les dénominations religieuses du nouveau monde ont besoin d’être reliées ensemble d’une manière étroite. Il n’est pas impossible qu’elles entrent à cet effet dans une entente générale et qu’elles consentent toutes à former un ordre religieux dont le but serait de réformer sans cesse le clergé, les soldats et la congrégation et les simples fidèles appartenant à chaque dénomination.<sup>56</sup>

Obviously, like many other utopian states, Plato’s Republic for example, Riel’s future society was to have three major classes: prêtres, chevaliers and simple fidèles. It is not clear what he means by “chevaliers,” probably people with military and police functions. It seems evident though that the church’s hierarchical system was to be imposed upon the society as a whole and there would be “gouvernement des chefs,” government from the “top.” Also note the idea of a special religious reform order devoted to continuous reform in all spheres of the different social groups.

Like Riel, Birsa and the other prophets made it clear that victory over the colonizing powers was only the first step towards a new social, political and religious order. Generally speaking that new society would be theocratic in essence, and free of foreign oppression, moral digression, social injustice and economic hardship. In that respect all prophets thought in global terms and envisaged what Riel in the quotation above calls “la concorde universelle.” In Saya San’s millenarian ideology: “The totality of Burma’s people shall be made happy through an abundance of gold and silver and gems.[And the] people of the entire world shall equally

become Buddhist...people will be pious, freed from illness and shall have peace of mind and body.”<sup>57</sup> Saya San combined pagan/native, Buddhist and biblical thought. The prophetic leader Birsa acted similarly. Riel, Conselheiro and Te Ua, on the other hand, had a preference for biblical models. In Riel’s case we can speak of “biblical model-syncretism,” since he combined the roles of prophet, priest and messiah and saw himself in line with David, Daniel, Moses, and, especially towards the end of his life, with Jesus.<sup>58</sup>

Here is one of Riel’s typical visions from 2 October 1885, which articulates this biblical model:

[margin] C’est la main de Dieu qui m’a fait faire mon chemin autour de la montagne sainte,...l’italien vertueux et le canadien français m’aident à faire route dans les vallées et les endroits bas de l’humanité. C’est l’église qui parle en moi. [main text] Dieu m’a fait voir que je montais par degré la montagne sainte...les puissances mettaient le pied sur quelque machination internationale; passaient quelques foyers de conspiration diabolique,...ce chemin était étroit,...Le Dieu tout puissant en avait soin. “J’arrive au bout de mes difficultés...” [margin] L’italien humble et vertueux est d’une amabilité et d’une simplicité admirables. Il peut me conduire à une paix glorieuse.<sup>59</sup>

Both the margin and the main text start off with a special prophetic *Botenformel* (“announcing formula”), “C’est la main de Dieu” and “Dieu m’a fait voir.”<sup>60</sup> The prophet thereby announces the following words as being of divine origin.

As N. Frye has recently pointed out “the image of a Messianic figure flanked by two others”<sup>61</sup> is one of the well-established patterns of the Bible. Just like other prophets in the Old Testament<sup>62</sup> Riel is fascinated with the concept of trinity.

One picture immediately springs to mind here: the transfiguration of Christ.<sup>63</sup> Moses and Elias as the precursors and supporting figures of Jesus have counterparts in the French-Canadian and the Italian, who are the assisting figures for Riel’s New Church in the New World. As allegorical figures the French-Canadian represents French culture and the Catholic Church in Canada, the Italian represents the European immigrant who is willing to accept French superiority in Northern America. Besides that, his extreme friendliness and simplicity make him the ideal “simple fidèle” in Riel’s thinking. The Italian’s virtue probably refers to the virtuous state Riel believed the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican were in before 1870. Frenchman and Italian, who together form the basis for Riel’s new order and new church, are allegorically its moral support and individually its potential members. Riel seems very much aware that he needs human co-operation for his endeavours to “progress” and only in harmony between man and the almighty God, faithful co-operation between the two, lies the key to overcome the devilish conspiracies and achieve true salvation.

Another biblical image immediately comes to mind: the ascent of Moses to Mount Sinai.<sup>64</sup> Riel further enhances that parallel by saying:

“C’est l’église qui parle en moi.” Like Moses on Sinai receiving God’s commandments and thus establishing the basic minimal norms for the Jewish religion, Riel hopes through ascending his visionary mountain to achieve communion with God above and to establish some fundamental rules for his new church.

The mountain in general and the holy mountain in particular were favourite images of the biblical prophets<sup>65</sup> and the latter was often seen as the home of God.<sup>66</sup> Riel’s description of the setting gives this vision a distinct mystical touch. Talking of high and low, God and humanity, devilish conspiracy and glorious peace, mountain and valley, he creates the basic antagonism so typical of medieval visionaries.<sup>67</sup> Another biblical/mystical image is the “chemin étroit,” the narrow path of redemption.<sup>68</sup> Riel’s ascension step by step fits into the pattern of the medieval visionaries’ gradual ascension towards the *unio mystica*, the union with God.<sup>69</sup> At the end of the vision Riel can be seen as being on the *via illuminativa*, one step closer to God, and it is his semi-transfigured ego which now speaks.<sup>70</sup> The time of earthly hardship is coming to its end and paradise looms ahead.<sup>71</sup>

## 5. Rebellion

Before the rebellious movements were triggered by the prophetic leaders, their people were in an emotionally agitated state of mind. The leaders were able to exploit that state of mind and without this sort of special relationship, the movements would not have been possible. Confronted with a highly critical state of affairs, or at least with a perception of things being catastrophic, the people turned towards their prophet as a person who supplied both security and identity. Furthermore, the prophets were said to have supernatural powers<sup>72</sup> and were thus predestined to perform the extraordinary measures that seemed to be needed.

Prophetic leaders experienced their most ardent support and a willingness to go to war in times when, due to basically economic hardships and the general feeling that something is “wrong,” their people were in a psychological state which manifested itself in feelings of sadness, desperation and inferiority complexes combined with romantic dreams of a golden past.<sup>73</sup> That is exactly the state of mind the Métis were in in 1884-85 and it explains their devotion to Riel.<sup>74</sup> Flanagan describes the state of affairs thus:

The buffalo... vanished altogether after 1878, adversely affecting numerous trades in which the Métis had been prominent: buffalo hunting, trading with the Indians... and transporting these goods to market. The Métis cart trains and boat brigades also suffered from the advent of railways and steamboats in the Canadian West. Deprived of much of the income from traditional occupations, the Métis had to rely more on agriculture. As they began to make this transition, they were struck, as were all western farmers, by the economic depression and fall in grain prices which began in 1883.<sup>75</sup>

Besides that, "Their language and religion were jeopardized by massive English and Protestant immigration... And the benign neglect of the Hudson's Bay Company in local affairs was replaced by the stricter control of the Canadian state."<sup>76</sup>

Three main factors are involved in bringing on violence in a millenarian protest movement, (a) the decision of the prophetic leader, (b) the prophet's loss of authority and (c) the failure of established authorities.<sup>77</sup> The first two were of minor importance, if not irrelevant in the Rebellion of 1885, since Riel had not originally intended to start a second rebellion and since he remained the undisputed leader at Batoche. Although Flanagan is right in describing the controversy as a "train of mistakes, misjudgments and misperceptions on both sides,"<sup>78</sup> the inefficiencies of the Department of the Interior and the failure of the local missionary priests to function as "advisers and link"<sup>79</sup> constituted the decisive factors. In the end the government must take the blame, because it was basically the mishandling of the whole affair by the Canadian government and the tragic misunderstanding at Duck Lake which sparked the consequent violence. There can hardly be any doubt that Riel's principal and initial intentions were non-violent, directed at repeating the successful negotiation of 1869-70.<sup>80</sup> In July 1884 Father André described him in the following words: "Il a agi et parlé avec calme et bon sens... Tous ses efforts..., tendent à faire comprendre au peuple qu'en répondant à son appel il n'avait d'autre objet en vue que de l'aider par des moyens légitimes et pacifiques."<sup>81</sup>

Riel acted in full conviction of his prophethood and, as pointed out above,<sup>82</sup> thought in wider terms than the Métis did: global salvation was the final goal. Therefore Flanagan is right in saying that "Preexisting local grievances were only pawns in a complex series of maneuvers aimed at vindicating Métis ownership of the North-West as a whole"<sup>83</sup> and that Riel wanted "a massive settlement of aboriginal claims."<sup>84</sup> Louis Riel in 1885 was primarily a millenarian leader, not a political one. It was only after "constitutional" order and other agitation had proven fruitless that force was employed as an additional means by the "native peoples" considered here to make their pleas heard.<sup>85</sup>

For the sake of the "cause" Riel finally agreed to use force to fight force, and at one time even threatened a "war of extermination," but even after open violence had begun, his view of the confrontation remained distinctly religious/prophetic.<sup>86</sup> In a vision from April 1885 he again evoked the image of the road leading up a mountain: L'esprit de Dieu m'a fait voir le chemin d'en haut... C'est le chemin des Métis qui vont aux victoires d'ici bas: c'est aussi la route céleste qui conduit au paradis les âmes de ceux que le Seigneur a choisi sur le champs."<sup>87</sup> Riel leaves no doubt that he thinks God is actively involved on the Métis side and in the last sentence he seems to proclaim a concept close to that of the crusades and the Islamic notion of the *jihad*, or "Holy War."<sup>88</sup>

In the vast majority of millenarian protest movements there is what we might call “job-splitting” between the prophet and a military leader or a group of military leaders. As Adas has pointed out this often leads to internal fights for leadership and in the course of mounting violence “secondary leaders” often take effective control of the movement.<sup>89</sup> As far as Conselheiro and Riel are concerned, they both seem to have been in firm control over the entire movement till the end of the resistance. Even such a prominent leader as Gabriel Dumont asked Riel first to give him men when he wanted to make a military move<sup>90</sup> and against his better judgement gave up his guerrilla tactics to follow Riel’s trench warfare. “I yielded to Riel’s judgement, although I was convinced that, from a humane standpoint, mine was the better plan; but I had confidence in his faith and his prayers, and that God would listen to him.”<sup>91</sup> Dumont clearly states the point that in a millenarian movement “humane standpoints” are of secondary importance and belief in the prophet and his supernatural powers are absolutely imperative.

The job-splitting between Riel and Dumont had a tradition among their Indian relatives<sup>92</sup> as well as in the biblical/Judaic tradition of the Métis’ European forefathers where the prophets of the Old Testament hardly ever involve themselves in military activities.

## 6. Failure and Aftermath

After having instigated their movements the prophetic figures were faced with official persecution and were often forced to operate underground. After the Red River Rebellion Riel was driven into exile in the United States and even there had to fear for his life. In May 1885 he surrendered, obviously hoping to present his ideas to new and possibly sympathetic audiences.<sup>93</sup>

A common factor in the lives of the prophetic leaders seems to be what we might call “the big mistake,” a crucial blunder which severely shattered their individual and sometimes also their peoples’ reputation. Driven by hunger Birsa robbed a grave to steal jewels and was caught in the act. He was shunned from the village for this sacrilege. Te Ua failed to gain substantial and lasting respect among his fellow tribesmen and was rebuffed. In Riel’s case his military strategy in 1885 can also be regarded as a major mistake in judgement.

In view of the superiority, both in military/logistic and in economic/political matters, of the colonizing peoples, final failure of the rebellious movements was inevitable. Although guerrilla tactics often brought initial and impressive victories for the rebels,<sup>94</sup> it merely helped to prolong the movements for a limited period of time and raised the overall number of casualties.

Much has been written about Riel’s failure to form a workable alliance with the Indians. Although this would have certainly enhanced Riel’s

position, resistance through legal means appears to have been the only viable solution.

For all the rebel leaders with any vision...recognized that the day when they could sweep the white man from the prairies was gone, if it had ever existed. What they hoped for was that a strong alliance of native peoples, willing to take decisive action, could force the Dominion government to negotiate,...<sup>95</sup>

Whereas some of the native peoples revived their rebellions, legal action has been and still is the way in which the Métis continue to struggle for their rights.<sup>96</sup>

After the prophetic leader's arrest or death the movement for the time being is defeated and the leader later tends to become a sort of folk hero. Birsa was arrested in February 1900 and died in prison. "The prophet's capture ended the last and most serious Munda attempt to forcibly expel the invaders of their highland home."<sup>97</sup> Te Ua was captured in March 1866. Saya San was executed in August 1931. Antonio Conselheiro died in Canudos in August 1897. "...neither movement survived the loss of their prophet-instigators."<sup>98</sup> Prophets have always had a scapegoat and victim image<sup>99</sup> and it was imprisonment and death which finally turned four of the five prophets considered in this essay into martyrs and allowed them to become legends and folk heroes among their people.

There is, however, no doubt that Birsa is still remembered by the Mundas. His exploits are a popular theme of the Munda folk songs and stories. Many boys are named after him in the Munda country. By some Indian nationalists Birsa is hailed as an early "freedom fighter" and ardent Indian patriot.<sup>100</sup>

Something similar happened to Riel in Canada. As Margaret Atwood says: "Riel is the perfect all-Canadian hero—he's French, Indian, Catholic, revolutionary and possibly insane, and he was hanged by the Establishment."<sup>101</sup> He also fits in well with the classic tragic hero in Canadian literature who dies in the end resisting stronger powers—nature, Indians or the Mounted Police. Besides that, a minor but profitable folk industry of "Rieliana" has developed<sup>102</sup> which takes Riel into the realm of an Oberammergau religious tourism.

## 7. Conclusion

Riel can then be seen as a prophetic leader of a millenarian protest movement with strong bonds to the Bible and biblical mysticism. While almost all of the traditional elements of classical Third World resistance movements can be identified in the rebellion of 1885, it was also unique. It was modern in its attempt to integrate the means of political resistance, such as drafts of bills and petitions, with the establishment of a provisional government. It was also modern in its ambivalence about the use of violent militant force. In its national context it was typically Canadian, because it was built upon the participation of both Métis and Indians and because it produced quite different reactions in English-speaking Canada and in Québec.

Millenarian movements all over the world work according to similar patterns, because they are all born out of similar socio-economic circumstances of deprivation, cultural disruption, loss of economic wealth, political power and social status of a "native people" caused by the intrusion and discriminations of an industrialized, "colonizing people." These movements see the rise of a prophetic leader, who through his charisma strikes a supernatural chord in his mainly peasant or semi-nomadic followers and through his exceptional personality is able to inspire his followers with a desperately needed hope for the future and with the firm belief that with the help of God or god-like powers armed resistance will lead to the coming of a new era of peace, justice, wealth and universal harmony—a new golden age.

#### NOTES

1. Cf. M. Deltgen, "Neuer Mahdi bedrohte den Staat mit blutigen Gewaltakten," *Die Welt*, 16 November 1982, p. 6; *The Globe and Mail*, 20 November 1982, p. 4.
2. The terms "native people" and "colonizing people" are to be regarded in their broadest sense here. They will be used for reasons of simplicity for the Métis and the Canadians respectively, although more appropriate terms would be "semi-native" people and "colonizing-colonized people."
 

"The broad context of the second Riel Rebellion was the intrusion of Canadian society onto the Great Plains and the consequent disruption of the culture of the Métis." T. Flanagan, "Catastrophe and the Millennium: A New View of Louis Riel," in *Religion and Society in the Prairie West*, ed. Richard Allen (Regina, 1974), 44.
3. Cf. M. Adas, *Prophets of the Rebellion. Millenarian Protest Movements Against the European Order* (Chapel Hill, 1979), 92 f.
 

"... we may expect that agrarian areas subject to repeated catastrophes, either natural or social, will constitute particularly likely breeding grounds for millenarianism. However, the final necessary ingredient is salvationist doctrine articulated by a prophetic figure." M. Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium* (New Haven, 1974), 89 f.; "Any explanation of why the rising occurred must focus on Riel." T. Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered* (Saskatoon, 1983), 76.
4. For a summary of those developments and a bibliographical survey of the major works see D. Owrain, "The Myth of Louis Riel," *Canadian Historical Review* 63 (1982): 315-336.
5. T. Flanagan, *Louis "David" Riel: Prophet of the New World* (Toronto, 1979), 179.
 

Flanagan's article "Catastrophe and the Millennium" (cf. note 2, which was presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association in 1973, was the first work to analyze Riel's millenarianism. The approach was adapted by Gilles Martel who wrote that the Métis in Saskatchewan "reduits à une crise d'anomie suite à une crise d'évolution ambiante, ont réagi par un mouvement social de type plutôt réformiste et moulé dans une idéologie millénariste." G. Martel, *Le Messianisme de Louis Riel (1884-1885)* (Ph.D. diss. Sherbrooke-Paris, 1976), 2:632.

Flanagan again described Riel as a millenarian leader in chapter eight of *Louis "David" Riel*.
6. M. Adas, *Prophets*.
7. Unless indicated otherwise biographical facts about the first three prophetic leaders will be taken from M. Adas, *Prophets*, about Conselheiro from E. da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands* (Chicago, 1967).
8. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 23.
9. Cf. *ibid.*, 38 ff.
10. *Ibid.*, 17.
11. Cf. B. Sealey, *Statutory Land Rights of the Manitoba Métis* (Winnipeg, 1977), 67 ff. D.N. Sprague, "The Manitoba Land Question, 1870-1882," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 15 (1980): 74-84.
12. B. Sealey, *Land Rights*, 95.
13. *Ibid.* A notion of the original Indian concept of land as the totality of environment, having a divinity about it, also comes in here. On the other hand, both Indians and Métis quickly learned, and at least by the 1860s were pretty much aware of the title issue. Cf. W. L. Morton, *Manitoba, A History* (Toronto, 1967), 105 ff.
14. T. Flanagan, *David*, 122.
15. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 44.

16. Cf. E. Pelletier, *A Social History of the Manitoba Métis* (Winnipeg, 1977).
17. This analysis is supported by the facts and figures D. N. Sprague gives in "Manitoba Land Question." Cf. note 11. As far as terminology is concerned the Métis were often discriminatively referred to as simply "breeds." "There is very little talk about Riel.... There is no doubt at all the breeds swear by him and whatever HE says is law with them." Sargent W. A. Brooks to Crozier, Public Archives of Canada (PAC), Justice, 519.
18. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 117.
19. T. Flanagan, *David*, 5.
20. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 107.
21. *Ibid.*, 118.
22. *Ibid.*, 120.
23. B.R. Wilson, *The Noble Savages. The Primitive Origins of Charisma and Its Contemporary Survival* (Berkeley, 1975), 7. See also the classic definition of Max Weber in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago, 1968), 48.
24. "His charismatic claim breaks down if his mission is not recognized by those to whom he feels he has been sent." M. Weber, *On Charisma*, 20.
25. B.R. Wilson, *Noble Savages*, 6.
26. Cf. da Cunha, *Rebellion*, 180; M. Adas, *Prophets*, 93 ff.; K. Hatt, "Louis Riel as Charismatic Leader." A.S. Lussier (ed.), *Riel and the Métis. Riel Mini-Conference Papers* (Winnipeg, 1979), 25, is right in saying that the millenarian elements in the Métis resistance were not indigenous to the Métis, but to see the Rebellion of 1885 as basically an agrarian protest is not sufficient as millenarian elements, especially as far as Riel is concerned, became increasingly important during the rebellion and as in this case charisma and millenarianism are two sides of the same socio-religious coin.
27. P.V. Fourmond to Mère Gertrude de la Visitation, 15 June 1885, Archives Deschâtelets.
28. B.R. Wilson, *Noble Savages*, 27.
29. M. Weber, *On Charisma*, 52.
30. The notion of duality in religion is well-established, going back to the earliest cults, and in Christianity was most notably established by Augustinus who saw the world as eternally divided by the city of the world, ruled by Satan, and the city of God.
31. Cf. G.W. Leibniz, *Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays* (Indianapolis, 1965).
32. Prophéties de Riel, Archives de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface (ASHSB), Papiers de Riel, 11 f.
33. PAC, Justice, 2312 ff. et 2361-65. The individual paragraphs are numbered and subdivided into smaller "thought units."
34. Cf. PAC, Justice, 2312.
35. *Ibid.*, 2315.
36. *Ibid.*, 2314.
37. L. Pouilliot (ed.), "Correspondance Louis Riel-Mgr Bourget," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 15 (1961): 437.
38. Archives de l'Archêvêche de Saint-Boniface (AASB), Fonds Taché, T. 32703. T. Flanagan, *David*, 125, is uncertain about that claim. Since here we have it in Riel's own hand, the point can be regarded as confirmed. This document (AASB, T. 32703-10) is also important in another way: The October Diary ends: "Dieu m'a révélé qu'en s'unissant ainsi avec la grande république, l'Angleterre pourrait facilement rendre l'Irlande plus libre; et qu'en s'unissant avec la Grande Bretagne, les Etats-Unis se trouveraient en meilleur position qu'ils ne le sont maintenant de contribuer au bonheur de l'Irlande." "T.32703 (after the sentence in quotation 38 which Riel very likely added later and separated from the main text by a line) begins: "Dieu m'a révélé qu'après avoir joui des apogées de sa gloire, l'Angleterre aura à combattre, à chaque génération, des coalitions formidables; qu'elle fera face à ses ennemis pendant quatre siècles et demi;..." This document is not included in Flanagan's edition of the diaries. Yet it is evident from its continuity in content, style and handwriting that here we have the direct continuation of the October Diary, which breaks off for the simple reason that Riel's notebook was full. Flanagan's statement "The diaries end here" [T. Flanagan (ed), *The Diaries of Louis Riel* (Edmonton, 1976), 170] should therefore be modified.
39. Te Ua experienced that sort of pressure: after having been given credit for sinking a British ship and failing to produce similar miracles after that his power quickly passed over to his coadjutors and emissaries.
40. ASHSB, Papiers de Riel, 11.
41. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 108.
42. See description Riel gives in T. Flanagan, *David*, 49 f.
43. "Dieu m'a révélé qu'Adam et Eve ne sont sortis du purgatoire que le 8 décembre 1875." Public Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Riel collection MG 3 D1, 525, 74.
44. Cf. *ibid.*, 70.
45. Antonia Conselheiro named himself "counselor." Saya San proclaimed to be the "Sektya Min" (universal emperor).
46. Riel was practically re-naming the whole world. The continents were given new names, certain mountains, the days of the week, the zodiac etc., cf. PAM, Riel, 525, 64 ff., 72 ff.
47. Here the biblical tradition comes in: God re-naming Jacob into Israel, Saul into Paul, and Jesus

- naming Peter "rock," thus accenting their new direction in life. Also note this passage from Revelation, the "most millenarian" of the books in the Bible: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar on the temple of my God,.... and I will write upon him my new name." Rev. 3:12.
48. G. Guariglia, *Prophetismus und Heilserwartungsbewegungen als völkerkundliches und religionsgeschichtliches Problem* (Horn-Wien, 1959), 275.
  49. W.E. Mühlmann, *Chiliasmus und Nativismus. Studien zur Psychologie, Soziologie und historischen Kasuistik der Umsturzbewegungen* (Berlin, 1964), 11 f.
  50. Cf. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 92 ff.; T. Flanagan, *David*, 73ff.
  51. According to Yonina Talman's definition (Y. Talman, "Millenarism" in: *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 10) millenarian salvation is to be "imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly, and collective." In this essay we follow the adaptation and slight variation of that definition by Norman Cohn in N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millenium. Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1970), 13.
  52. "Londres et Liverpool descenderont au fond de l'eau. Et tout l'espace qui sépare ces deux grandes cités s'en ira dans la mer." Archives du Séminaire de Québec, carton Polygraphie 38, 8, p. 3.
  53. da Cunha, *Rebellion*, 135, quotes these lines from one of the notebooks found after the rebellion in Canudos.
  54. Cf. D. Morton, *The Queen v Louis Riel* (Toronto, 1974), 311 ff.
  55. Quoted from T. Flanagan, *David*, 95.
  56. PAM, Riel Family Papers MG 3 D 2, File 27, 229. The text has the title "Partie de Le Messianican" (Cree for "book"). We suggest that Riel was considering his writings as a whole as a sort of Métis bible that would, just like the original, be a compilation of prose, poetry, prayers, psalms and prophecies. Cf. this passage from a document in which he re-writes parts of Genesis: "Dieu m'a révélé qu'au temps de l'arche, il n'y avait que trois continents...Sa puissance excita les vapeurs intérieurs du globe; et...le sol du 'Nouveau Monde' sortit de la profondeur des eaux;..." AASB, T. 52982/3. It is typical of Riel's thinking that the fourth continent (mirroring the four corners of the earth in Revelation), the New World, was created last, thereby achieving special importance.
  57. Quoted from M. Adas, *Prophets*, 101.
  58. "Mon Dieu me ressuscitera le troisième jour" was Riel's conviction towards the end of his life. Glenbow-Alberta Institute (GAI), Dr. Augustus Jukes Papers, A/J93B.
  59. Archives du Séminaire St. Sulpice de Montréal, Riel, 3. Riel's model is Jes. 2, 1-5.
  60. According to Coté's statement in 1886 Riel began most of his speeches in Batoche with such a formula, "S'il commençait à parler il disait presque toujours: l'esprit de Dieu m'a dit, ...m'a fait savoir." PAM, Riel Family, 108.
  61. N. Frye, *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature* (Toronto, 1982), 179.
  62. For example Zechariah 4 ff.
  63. Cf. Matt. 17, 1-13.
  64. Cf. Exodus 19.
  65. Cf. Dan. 12:45; Zeph. 3:11; Zech. 8:3; Joel 2:1.
  66. Cf. Mic. 4:1.
  67. Cf. P. Dinzeltbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur in Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1981), 109 f.
  68. Cf. N. Frye, *Code*, 160.
  69. Cf. P. Dinzeltbacher, *Vision*, 56.
  70. T. Flanagan, *Diaries*, 144, wonders where the quotation is from. It seems very obvious though that it is Riel himself, a semi-transfigured Riel who now speaks.
  71. The mountain in medieval visions often represented paradise. Cf. P. Dinzeltbacher, *Vision*, 106.
  72. Saya San's and Birsas's followers believed that their leaders could protect them from bullets and that talismans and sympathetic magic would make their final victory certain.
  73. Cf. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 183 ff.
  74. "Les gens...le regardent comme un saint ou persécuté et nous comme les esclaves de l'ancienne Rome incapables de comprendre les grandes et infaillibles lumières de *Son Esprit*..." P.V. Végréville to Supérieur-Général, 13 May 1885, AASB. Sergeant Brooks put the state of affairs in the following simple words: "There is no doubt that every one is hard up and they thought they must do something to draw their attention." Letter to Crozier, 10 August 1884, PAC, Justice, 521.
  75. T. Flanagan, *Reconsidered*, 75.
  76. T. Flanagan, *David*, 182 f.
  77. Cf. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 123.
  78. T. Flanagan, *Reconsidered*, 15.
  79. *Ibid.*, 53.
  80. Cf. G.F.G. Stanley, *Louis Riel* (Toronto, 1963), 65 f.
  81. André to Dewdney, 21 July 1884, ASHSB.
  82. Cf. 17.
  83. T. Flanagan, *Reconsidered*, 77.
  84. *Ibid.*, 71.
  85. Cf. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 144 ff.
  86. Cf. G.F.G. Stanley, *Riel*, 310.

87. PAM, Riel, 636, 25. Riel wrote that the police could only kill their bodies and explained: "...nos consciences alarmés nous ont fait entendre une voix qui nous dit: *La justice ordonne de prendre les armes.*" PAC, Justice, 134.
88. For the biblical foundation of the idea of holy war see Joshua, especially chapter ten.
89. Cf. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 130 ff.
90. Cf. G.F.G. Stanley, "Gabriel Dumont's Account of the North West Rebellion, 1885," *Canadian Historical Review* 30 (1949): 251.
91. *Ibid.*, 257.
92. B. Wilson, *Noble Savages*, 48, points out that this sort of duality in leadership was common among North American Indian Movements (Pontiac, the Delaware prophet, Tecumseh etc.).
93. Cf. T. Flanagan, *David*, 150.
94. All in all the Conselheiro rebels killed nearly five thousand men and at one time wiped out a whole army unit.
95. G. Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont. The Métis Chief and His Lost World* (Edmonton, 1975), 184 f.
96. Cf. the Land Claims Series in *The Globe and Mail*, 5-11 March 1983.
97. M. Adas, *Prophets*, 25.
98. *Ibid.*, 180.
99. Cf. N. Frye, *Code*, 180.
100. S. Fuchs, *Rebellious Prophets: A Study of Messianic Movements in Indian Religions* (London, 1965), 34. The last sentence of the quotation also indicates the tendency to use the prophetic leaders to promote ideas which they in fact did not support at all or which were unknown at the time.
101. M. Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto, 1972), 167.
102. Cf. D. Swainson, "Rieliana and the Structure of Canadian History," *Journal of Popular Culture* 14 (1980): 286-297.

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## Rural Local History and the Prairie West

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**ABSTRACT.** While local history has made important contributions to European and American historiography, professional historians of the rural prairie west have left its writing to amateurs. The few scholarly exceptions that have appeared reveal antiquated notions about the value of local history; they are comprehensive, narrative surveys that take into account developments of regional and national significance. Elsewhere, the best local histories are interdisciplinary, often quantitative studies that tackle limited and precise problems concerning the structure of everyday life. While a few local studies of rural prairie communities share some of those features, a much greater appreciation of the modern aims and methods of local historians elsewhere is vital in order to exploit the great opportunities for research that prairie communities offer. Ironically, many of those opportunities are provided by the hundreds of community-written local histories already published by local history societies.

**RESUME.** Alors que l'histoire locale a beaucoup apporté à l'historiographie européenne et américaine, les historiens professionnels de la Prairie rurale en ont laissé la rédaction à des amateurs. Les quelques travaux qui ont été publiés par des spécialistes révèlent des notions dépassées concernant la valeur de l'histoire locale. Ce sont des études qui tiennent compte des développements de portée provinciale et nationale. Ailleurs, les meilleures histoires locales sont des études interdisciplinaires, souvent quantitatives, qui s'intéressent à des problèmes limités et précis sur la structure de la vie quotidienne. Bien que quelques études locales de communautés rurales de la Prairie partagent certaines de ces caractéristiques, il est essentiel qu'on s'intéresse de plus près aux buts et aux méthodes utilisées ailleurs par les historiens spécialistes d'histoire locale pour pouvoir exploiter les énormes possibilités de recherches offertes par les communautés de la Prairie. Paradoxalement, nombre de ces possibilités sont fournies par les centaines d'histoires locales rédigées au niveau communautaire et déjà publiées par des sociétés historiques locales.

Even a cursory look at local histories on the prairie west reveals some striking features. They now exist in huge numbers—probably over a thousand and increasing rapidly.<sup>1</sup> Most have appeared since the mid-1960s. Most concern rural communities and emphasize the period of agrarian settlement. Amateurs have authored the overwhelming majority, and “semi-professionals,” with some training in scholarly research and writing, nearly all the rest. Professional historians do not share the tremendous public enthusiasm for local history. Exceptions exist, of course, but most of them are recent biographies of large prairie cities that prefer to parade under the banner of “urban history” rather than the dreary rubric of “local history.” Partly because of professional neglect, then, the general quality of rural local histories on the prairies is abysmally low. By contrast, local history attracts highly talented scholars in other parts of the world and their books have forged important new interpretations.

This article has several purposes: to explain the rising importance of local history to scholarship generally, to account for its low status on the prairies, to assess in a general way the nature and quality of those prairie local studies that do exist, and to suggest new opportunities and the most appropriate ways to exploit them. Biographies of prairie cities are legitimate members of the local history family, but because urban historians assess them regularly, they are excluded from consideration here.<sup>2</sup>

A proper evaluation of local history on the prairies requires some understanding of its development elsewhere. At one time, professional historians mostly wrote about great events like wars and the rise of nation-states, and about the important people involved in great events. Historians, like other academics, sprang from privileged classes in structured societies where social deference still mattered. The illiterate masses seemed unimportant and seldom intruded into studies of great events and great people. Since most communities consisted largely of illiterate masses, local history seldom received serious attention. When it did, it focussed on places themselves of great importance: London or Paris or New York. And when a learned church cleric undertook a history of his rural locality, the life of the manor house filled its pages while thousands of peasants lived, toiled, and died in the unrecorded shadows.

But the age of the common man slowly dawned and as the twentieth century approached he stood in full sunshine for even the scholar to see. (The common woman would not be visible until much, much later.) This is not the place to explain the sweeping social and ideological changes that elevated the common man to new importance in the industrialized world, but its consequences for local history should be noted. As both the desire and the financial ability to educate the masses arose, they began articulating their views through formal organizations and written documents. Growing scholarly interest in the common man, coupled with the appearance of documents pertaining to his activities, boded well for local studies since almost every community contained people as common and ordinary as those anywhere else, and in a restricted setting they could be found in numbers sufficiently small to invite close scrutiny.

But historians did not lead the way. Social scientists did. They pioneered the "case study," investigating particular problems by using specific communities as (hopefully) representative examples. Sometimes their questions involved such a range of phenomena that a study of the community itself emerged, and for some of them, the very idea of community became important. Historians seldom shared in these adventures because the techniques of the social scientist permitted one to study only the present and recent past. Besides written documents, they relied on direct observations, and later, questionnaires and interviews. But the dead would not speak to historians, nor could the historians literally look into the past. And the time when common man remained illiterate and left no written documents comprised by far the longest stretch of history. Furthermore, the purposes of the social scientists seemed alien. Not for them the great events and great people: they studied population structures, family life, daily work, spatial relationships, and social activities, organizations, and classes. A frank pragmatism often motivated their work; many sought specific solutions to a variety of social and economic problems.

Even when historians did investigate the common man, they remained

committed to events and individuals—to the political revolts of farmers and workers and the lives of their leaders. By the 1930s historians of the French “Annales school” wearied of this focus. They argued that the structures of everyday life—the stuff of social science—shaped human history as surely as dramatic events. But unlike the social scientists they sought to measure them over time, to chart the tension between continuity and change.

The Annales school also broke the silence of the illiterate dead. They had, after all, left written records of sorts. Church, census, tax, and legal records listed names, dates, births, marriages, deaths, properties, agreements, and crimes. Studied separately the information told little, but when sorted and linked together, it revealed much. Sifting the new material took endless time and special skills, and the historian, without formal training in statistics, found himself less equipped for the task than the social scientist. As a consequence, some social scientists became historians, and the historians, of necessity, became interdisciplinary in method as well as objective. Because the new data existed in such bulk, some became local historians out of practical necessity. It remained for the English “Leicester school,” however, to make local history a focal point for the methods and aims of the Annalists.<sup>3</sup>

The electronics revolution of the 1960s greatly stimulated quantified local history. Although it increased research costs and demanded new technical skills, the computer could link mountains of mass data quickly and spit out complex statistical profiles of almost infinite variety. Although Europe had pioneered interdisciplinary, quantified local history, major activity now shifted to the United States, the nation most advanced in the new technology and best able to finance it. Merle Curti’s *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County* (1959), a history of Trempealeau, Wisconsin, marked the arrival of the new local history in North America. Others soon followed. Historians poured from the burgeoning university system in unprecedented numbers, and the social turbulence of the 1960s heightened academic interest in the common man. Local studies espousing the “new history” blossomed across the United States, but especially in New England, where a lot of historians lived, and where excellent local records existed in abundance.<sup>4</sup>

Canada lagged behind. Except for some French-Canadians trained at the Sorbonne or otherwise exposed to its influence, most of its much smaller population of historians received their training in Canada without instruction in the new methodology, and the crisis of Québec still riveted their attention on the history of French-English relations, nation-building, and regional protest. It took an outsider to launch the new local history, and Michael Katz’s *People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City* did not appear until 1975. While other large scale computer projects soon followed, notably on Peel County, Ontario, and the Saguenay region of Québec,<sup>5</sup> in prairie Canada the new

local history never arrived at all. The recently published *Genealogy of the First Métis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement, 1820-1900* (1983), compiled by D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye suggests only the most tentative probing in that direction.

But the professional historians of the west did not write much traditional local history either. The long scholarly interest in the Red River region that began with Alexander Ross's *Red River Settlement: its Rise, Progress and Present State...* (1856) and continued in the writings of Alexander Begg, W.L. Morton, and others scarcely counts, for historians did not study the area as a local community but rather as the focal point of western history itself. The almost total neglect of local history elsewhere on the prairies seems curious because professional historians often urged its writing,<sup>6</sup> and many directed graduate theses in local history. In fact the bulk of our academic local studies remain buried in that unpublished form.

Why did the professional historians hesitate to undertake the task themselves? Practical considerations may have dissuaded them. Every kind of historical research imposes difficulties, but rural local history offers particularly rugged ones. There are few document collections neatly catalogued and housed in institutions equipped for research and staffed by professional archivists. Instead, the local historian must spend huge amounts of time grubbing for materials in the community itself—if they can be found at all. There is no photocopying machine handy, and no convenient place to work. At night there are no big city amusements. The only hotel in town might be unpleasant, not to mention the local restaurants.

But the professional historians' own ideas about local history shackled them more. They seemed oblivious to its modern purposes, as their advice to local history writers frequently demonstrated.<sup>7</sup> Some argued that local history ought to reflect the major historical developments of the region and the nation.<sup>8</sup> Occasionally that approach is useful. The impact of Dominion settlement policies, the Great War, or the Great Depression can be viewed with profit through the lens of a single community. But if issues attain regional and national significance because they command the attention of politicians and governments, then they can never be satisfactorily explained at the local level. And many national issues must be excluded altogether. A study of Cardston, Alberta, will not illuminate us on the Northwest Rebellion, the Winnipeg General Strike, King's courting of the Progressives, or Diefenbaker's foreign policy. In short, local communities are not simply microscopic specimens of national history, but creatures deserving study in their own right. Everyone belongs to different kinds of spatial communities simultaneously—neighbourhood, town, province, region, and nation—and each shapes human existence in its own and different ways. And the history of the nation is hardly useful to the study of communities as communities.<sup>9</sup>

Advocates of local history as regional and national history writ small often warned the local historian to neglect nothing of “importance,” to shake every branch of historical inquiry and harvest everything the local community produced. If limits need be imposed, they should be temporal rather than thematic. But this approach is quite impossible for one can no more discover everything about a small place than about a whole nation. Such advice often stemmed from the notion that local studies should provide historians with factual building blocks to construct more general histories and new interpretations.<sup>10</sup> Reasonable as this argument seems, historiography more often develops the other way around. A general interpretation is proposed, subsequent monographs and local studies discredit it and, finally, another essayist pens a new theory.<sup>11</sup>

The holist approach also defuses any attempt to provide a coherent interpretation. Too often, a bland general survey results. Such books have their uses; students use them to chart unknown waters before plunging into more advanced study, and everybody uses them for references. An important market exists for general surveys of whole nations, and even regions, and perhaps even large prairie cities, but who needs or wants a textbook history of Outlook, Saskatchewan? Professional historians undoubtedly dispensed advice with good intentions, but perhaps they hesitated to write local history themselves because they vaguely sensed that following their own suggestions would result in a book unlikely to raise their professional standing. Besides, so many dramatic prairie events and fascinating individuals still cried out for serious study.

An investigation of those studies that did adhere to prevailing wisdom reveals the severe limitations of the comprehensive, nation as seen through the community, approach. Consider three examples: Margaret Morton Fahrni and W.L. Morton, *Third Crossing: A History of the First Quarter Century of the Town and District of Gladstone in the Province of Manitoba* (1946); Don G. McGowan, *Grasslands Settlers: The Swift Current Region During the Era of the Ranching Frontier* (1976); and Bodil Jensen's recently published *Alberta's County of Mountain View... A History*. These examples are particularly interesting for they are among the most scholarly local histories of rural prairie communities. The authors are knowledgeable and competent historians, and all present explanations for community development. And unlike most local histories, each presents a general interpretation. In fact, they share the same interpretation—all agree that their respective communities are products of the transplanted culture of the early settlers. But in their attempt to neglect nothing of importance—to keep mindful of events and themes of regional and national significance—their thesis is soon lost. It is not systematically pursued or convincingly substantiated in any of them. Thus, in spite of many merits, these books seem lacking in purpose; the failure to read them will scarcely impair one's knowledge of the prairie west or of communities generally. Most remarkable is how alike they are even though nearly forty years separate

their publication dates, a significant comment on how little the approaches to rural local history on the prairies have changed or progressed.

The foregoing critique itself suggests the earmarks of good local history. Particular questions must be posed and answered as in any good monograph. And the questions themselves must have a spatial component amenable to investigation at the local level. Achieving the proper "fit" in this regard is far more important than arbitrarily deciding how much or little territory legitimately constitutes local history. Furthermore, the topics pursued must have significance that transcends the boundaries of the study area itself. As with good fiction, universal themes must emerge from specific locality. And because such themes largely eschew events in favour of structures and processes, good local history cannot ignore other scholarly disciplines. The number of specific topics that might be suitably explored are almost endless, but the best local histories elsewhere have tackled the following ones in various combinations: property, agricultural production, demographic change, family structure, social class, class relations, social mobility, geographic mobility, social order, community conflict, community development and disintegration, and the impact of urban growth on nearby rural areas.<sup>12</sup> With few exceptions, we know almost nothing of the history of these developments in our rural west.

Some may object that the monographic approach is not local history at all, but really economic or social history. But there is nothing rigid about the sub-categories of history; they are merely convenient labels and the best history often defies easy classification. The last sentence of many book reviews pinpoints a further problem with the case study approach: "More research must be carried out on other communities before we can conclude that (such and such) was typical." Scholars in other countries sometimes heed this advice, especially in the field of historical demography where the same rigorously constructed hypotheses are applied again and again to local communities. This practice has prompted one student to argue that that discipline comes closer to true science than any other social science.<sup>13</sup> But Canadian historians will not likely take pleas for direct comparison seriously. Tradition dictates that one does not earn high marks for borrowing analytical frameworks only to find nothing new or different. Even so, local historians, like all historians, must keep abreast of developments in their field. Ironically, while the themes best suited to local history have little to do with issues of national importance, their universality demands an international perspective.

Sometimes the problem of "representativeness" cannot be overcome, yet the case study approach must be pursued anyway. Many analytical problems arise where comprehensive reporting is more appropriate than random sampling, and some topics simply cannot be studied at all except through the case study. How can the history of community development or neighbourhood social relations be explored except through specific communities?

The foregoing discussion might seem to imply that the Annales school offers an ideal model for the study of prairie communities. But such is hardly the case. Western Canadian historians simply do not have the time span to work with that many Annalists consider sufficient to explore significant social changes (often a century or more). But they do not need it to study many important topics. Nor must superior local history emerge only from quantitative analyses served up by electronic gadgets. A local study of changes in the concept of community spirit, for example, is probably best tackled through traditional methodology. The Annales and Leicester approaches serve better as inspirational designs for prairie research rather than precise blueprints.

Nonetheless, the local historian must pay closer attention to statistics than in the past. Prairie libraries are crammed with local histories that scarcely contain a number, leaving the most elementary questions unanswered. Some historians of the "humanist" persuasion violently oppose quantification, but if at bottom, quantification is nothing more than counting, then all historians count; traditionalists who favour such words as "often, sometimes, rarely, many, most, some and few" are merely being imprecise about it. Thus, there can be no legitimate opposition to quantification in principle, only to its shoddy application and inappropriate uses. The annoying habit of many quantifiers of wallowing in hieroglyphics comprehensible only to fellow cultists is a separate issue. Critics have now sufficiently exposed the pitfalls involved in quantification, and with a little study they can be recognized and avoided.<sup>14</sup> In short, bickering between quantifiers and traditionalists is no longer healthy. History is a difficult craft and it must be attacked with any and all weapons that promise to defeat the problem at hand. The local historian need not become a mathematical mastermind or a computer wizard, nor ever need touch an electronic keyboard; with only a little effort, he can readily put statistical information to good use.

For those who do plunge into advanced statistical analysis, the opportunities are great, for many themes in local history lend themselves readily to the new methodology and most prairie communities are rich in mass data.<sup>15</sup> Until very recently, escalating financial requirements and shrinking funding threatened to end this kind of research, but the microcomputer revolution now promises to sustain it. Home computers and new software packages useful to historians are rapidly coming within the financial grasp of most professional historians.<sup>16</sup>

If superior local history, then, has limited and definite purposes, shuns events and individuals in favour of structures and groups, and is interdisciplinary in theme and method, do any of the existing local histories on the prairies qualify? Unfortunately, none approximate the highest international standards. Indeed the best examples are not history at all. Few local studies on the prairies match Jean Burnet's *Next-Year Country: A Study of Rural Social Organization in Alberta* (1951), about the Hanna

region, for descriptive insight, but the book conveys little sense of how social organization in the 1940s originated and evolved. Emerging from history originally, the social sciences in Canada have steadily drifted away from the mother discipline. Thus, Burnet's book does not demonstrate the historical sensitivity of the sociologists and political economists who contributed to the "Frontiers of Settlement" series in the 1930s,<sup>17</sup> yet it is more historical than such recent offerings as John W. Bennett, *Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life* (1976), about the Maple Creek, Saskatchewan area; or Travis W. Manning and George Buckmire, *Economic Growth in Agriculture: A Comparative Analysis of Two Agricultural Areas in Alberta* (1967), two books practically devoid of history. By the same token, most prairie historians have not embraced the social sciences either.

Historical geography and ethnohistory provide the most common interdisciplinary exceptions; several such studies have made important contributions to prairie scholarship, especially for the pre-settlement era. Although few are local histories, the merits of the approach are recognizable in J.F. Nelson, *The Last Refuge* (1973), a history of the Cypress Hills and surrounding plain, or John Tyman's *By Section, Township and Range: Studies in Prairie Settlement* (1972) which examines southwestern Manitoba. Tyman's book also exemplifies a popular theme that has stimulated the best research in prairie local history: the settlement process. But much of this work lies dormant in theses or can only be sampled in widely scattered articles, some of such recent vintage that they are still in press.<sup>18</sup>

No general assessment of local history on the prairies should fail to note the phenomenal appearance of community-sponsored local histories.<sup>19</sup> The anniversary celebrations of Canada and the three prairie provinces in 1967, 1970, and 1980 ignited much of this growth because governments urged everyone to become more historically minded and provided funds for local history projects. Yet the roots of this popular genre run deeper. Individuals derive much of their personal identity from where they live, but after World War II extensive rural depopulation and the homogenizing force of mass communications and centralized bureaucracies threatened the existence of local institutions and identities on the rural prairies. Since most communities dated from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, death began claiming the last of the early pioneers at an alarming rate by the 1960s and 1970s. A desperate sense that important links to the past would soon be obliterated launched many local history societies. Not surprisingly, their attention focussed on the settlement period, the era most clearly threatened with loss and the one believed most important in fostering local identity. Thus, the purposes of community-sponsored local history differed radically from those of the scholar.

Residents of rural communities scarcely knew how to proceed with their projects. In most places no one had ever researched and written

anything as long as a book, but they turned to the prairie tradition of co-operative enterprise; co-ordinating committees asked members of the community to write brief histories of their own families, and they did so largely from oral tradition rather than documents. Sometimes the committee also asked contributors for brief institutional biographies; local teachers wrote about schools and local ministers about churches. The typical history book committee solicited four hundred contributions, two-thirds of them family biographies.<sup>20</sup> Professional historians scoffed at the results, but local history societies wrote for themselves and did not expect anyone outside the community to read their books, save former residents. And the books fulfilled local purposes admirably. Packed with names, landmarks, incidents, anecdotes, and pictures, they preserved grandmother's story, drew personal links between past and present, and bolstered local identity.

It is pointless to list all the shortcomings of the community-sponsored local histories, for they commit virtually every sin known to scholarship. A more useful approach is to ask if they offer anything of value to the academic historian. Hugh Dempsey has argued that foraging through them can uncover useful scraps of information. He offers by way of example an eyewitness account of the mood and condition of Sitting Bull's followers as the Mounted Police escorted him back to the United States border.<sup>21</sup> As Dempsey points out, the search yields more if one sticks to typically favoured themes: land settlement, transportation, agriculture, schools, churches. Anyone interested in architecture, technology, or other material history can also benefit from the thousands of photographs they contain.

It is also possible to distinguish the kinds of information most free from error. Memory can easily forget or confuse events and chronology, but emotional reactions are often more vividly remembered, if somewhat coloured by time. No one has written a book on the social psychology of prairie settlement or on the psychological impact of the Great Depression based largely on community-written local histories, but valuable books on such topics could be produced. Indeed, recent claims by some historians that launching new oral history projects will unearth hitherto hidden dimensions of the past seems curious considering that a tremendous body of oral tradition lies already transcribed, and unread, in a thousand prairie books.

Admittedly, scanning these local histories for buried treasure is painstaking work. Nor can the process be shortened much by seeking out the better books. In general, they vary little in quality, hardly surprising considering that the value of individual contributions varies enormously and that each book may contain hundreds of contributions. The rare book that stands out as a whole sometimes owes its success to professional assistance. A good example is *Our Foothills* (1975), on the Millarville-Priddis area of Alberta, which benefitted greatly from the aid and contributions of L.G. Thomas and Sheilagh Jameson. Occasionally a

superior one arises because some outstanding feature of the community inspires perceptive local contributors to work harder and more enthusiastically than usual. An example is *Sons of Wind and Soil* (1976), a history of the Nobleford-Kipp-Monarch districts of southern Alberta. This area once boasted one of the largest grain farms in the world, the Noble Foundation, and it also spearheaded the search for new techniques and technology to combat soil drifting on the southern prairies. Conscious of these developments and proud of them, the community produced a superior local history of interest to agricultural historians.

But the greatest value of community-written local histories lies in their potential contribution to quantitative research. And for that purpose, the typical books serve as well as the superior ones. They contain all sorts of random facts about individuals of no apparent significance in themselves: names, dates of arrival in the community, previous and subsequent occupations and places of residence, precise settlement locations, and the dates of births, marriages, and deaths of family members. These are the most commonly included items in each family biography, often because local history societies specifically ask for such information. Here is mass data on a significant scale, and with or without computerized sophistication, it can be linked to homestead files, railway land sales records, land titles, tax rolls, and court records to provide analyses of dozens of themes now commonly pursued in local history elsewhere. Ironically then, while community-written local histories are far inferior to existing academic ones in scholarly merit, their potential value for further research may be greater.

Single author memoirs set in particular communities constitute another form of non-academic local history. Since the authors are often professional writers with varying degrees of scholarly training, their books are more satisfying as history and certainly less painful to read than the community-written local histories. These characteristics are readily apparent in such superior examples as Wallace Stegner, *Wolf Willow, A History, A Story and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier* (1955), James G. MacGregor, *North-west of Sixteen* (1958), and Sarah Ellen Roberts, *Of Us and the Oxen* (1963). Richer by their length and articulate expression than the community-written family biographies, they are, like the best prairie fiction, more valuable to the historian for conveying the psychological climates of particular eras, but they seldom provide more in the way of new information. Indeed, lacking the vast quantities of minutiae found in the family biographies of community-written local histories, they open no new avenues for research.

The number of publications pertaining to rural prairie communities is huge, yet modern, scholarly local history has not yet reached infancy. It is still experiencing birthpains, and it is too early to tell if the small number of works in progress will produce healthy offspring. The opportunities are nonetheless great, and if more talented people can be attracted

to local history, it might be rescued from the stagnant backwaters where it now resides and thrust into the mainstream of prairie scholarship.

#### NOTES

1. Gloria M. Strathern, *Alberta, 1954-1979, A Provincial Bibliography* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982), lists 463 titles for Alberta alone up to 1979; Joanna E. Krotki, *Local Histories of Alberta: An Annotated Bibliography* (Edmonton: Division of East European Studies, University of Alberta, and East European Studies Society of Alberta, 1980), with an expanded definition of local history lists 813.
2. See Gilbert A. Stelter, "Urban History," in *A Reader's Guide to Canadian History, vol. 2: Confederation to the Present*, ed. J.L. Granatstein and Paul Stevens (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 96-113. Stelter's article also guides the reader to many other assessments.
3. Traian Stoianovich, *French Historical Method: The Annales Paradigm* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976); H.P.R. Finberg and V.H.T. Skipp, *Local History, Objective and Pursuit* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967).
4. See J.M. Bumstead and J.T. Lemon, "New Approaches in Early American Studies: The Local Community in New England," *Histoire Sociale-Social History*, 2 (November 1968): 98-112.
5. Ian Winchester, "Review of Peel County History Project and the Saguenay Project," *Histoire Sociale-Social History*, vol. 8, no. 25 (May 1980), 195-205; David Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).
6. For early examples see W.H. Atherton, "The Study of Local History," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Reports* (1924), 45-47; D.C. Harvey, "The Importance of Local History in the Writing of General History," *Canadian Historical Review*, 13 (September 1932): 244-251.
7. Most advice is directed at the non-professional. See in particular Gerry Friesen and Barry Potyondi, *A Guide to the Study of Manitoba Local History* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press for the Manitoba Historical Society, 1981); *Proceedings of the Local Archives and History Conference* (Regina: Saskatchewan 1980 Diamond Jubilee Corporation, 1980); Hugh A. Dempsey, *How to Prepare a Local History* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1969); Eric Holmgren, *Writing Local History* (Edmonton: Historical Resources Division, Alberta Culture, 1975); Jane McCracken, *Oral History: Basic Techniques* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, 1974). American guidebooks frequently urged on local historians in Western Canada include D.D. Parker, *Local History, How to Gather it, Write it, Publish it* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1944); Gary L. Shumway and William G. Hartley, *An Oral History Primer* (Salt Lake: Primer Publications, 1973); and many publications of the American Association for State and Local History including Dorothy W. Creigh, *A Primer for Local Historical Societies* (1976); Thomas E. Felt, *Researching, Writing, and Publishing Local History* (1976); James C. Olson, *The Role of Local History* (1965); Willa K. Baum, *Oral History for the Local Historical Society* (1974); and the many Technical Leaflets published frequently in the Association's journal, *History News*.
8. Hartwell Bowsfield, "Writing Local History," *Alberta Historical Review* 17 (Summer 1969): 10-19; H.C. Pentland, "Recent Developments in Economic History: Some Implications for Local and Regional History," *Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions*, 3d. ser., no. 24 (1967-68): 8; Richard A. Preston, "Is Local History Really History," *Saskatchewan History* 10 (Autumn 1957): 97-108.
9. See Finberg, *Local History*, 12-13; David J. Russo, *Families and Communities: A New View of American History* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1975), passim; Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, "The Community as Object and Sample," in their *Culture and Community* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), 7-27, argue that a distinction should be drawn between questions in which the community serves as a case study of a larger problem, and questions about communities themselves.
10. See especially, Harvey, "Importance of Local History," 244-251.
11. David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 5; Thomas H. Smith, "The Resurgence of Local History," *The Historian*, 35 (November 1972), 1-18.
12. See, for example, Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York: Norton, 1970); Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964); Philip J. Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970); Michael H. Frisch, *Town into City: Springfield, Massachusetts, and the Meaning of Community, 1840-1880* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, *Small Town in Mass Society: Class, Power, and Religion in a Rural Community* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, revised ed., 1968); Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Merle Curti, *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959); James T.

- Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976); Richard G. Bremer, *Agricultural Change in an Urban Age: The Loup Country of Nebraska, 1910-1970* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Studies, New Series No. 51, 1976); Stanley Norman Murray, *The Valley Comes of Age: A History of Agriculture in the Valley of the Red River of the North, 1812-1920* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1967); Michael P. Conzen, *Frontier Farming in an Urban Shadow: The Influence of Madison's Proximity on the Agricultural Development of Blooming Grove, Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971); Michael Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); David Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers; Louise Déchene, Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Montréal: Les Presses de la cité, 1974). For the best analysis of local histories and local history technique see Finberg, *Local History*; Russo, *Families and Communities*; Alan Macfarlane and others, *Reconstructing Historical Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978); Smith, "Renascence"; Van Beck Hall, "New Approaches to Local History," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 55 (July 1972): 239-248; Katherine A. Lynch, "Local and Regional Studies in Historical Demography," *Historical Methods* 15 (Winter 1982): 23-29; Bumstead, "New Approaches"; Robert P. Swierenga, "The New Rural History: Defining the Parameters," *Great Plains Quarterly* 1 (Fall 1981): 211-223; idem, "Quantitative Methods in Rural Landholding," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13 (Spring 1983): 787-808.
13. Marion J. Levy, "New Uses of Demography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16 (1974): 104-116.
  14. A convenient and readily comprehensible starting point for the non-specialist that offers concrete examples is Herbert G. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).
  15. Including homestead files, railway land sales records, land titles, tax rolls, and court records. Valuable guides to some of these records include Lloyd Rodwell, "Saskatchewan Homestead Records," *Saskatchewan History* 18 (Winter 1965): 10-29; D.M. Loveridge, "An Introduction to the Study of Land and Settlement Records," in Friesen, *A Guide*, 100-129; Robert A. Doyle, "Land Records as a Source of Historical Information," in Friesen, *A Guide*, 136-141.
  16. For the most recent guides, see Richard Jensen, "The Microcomputer Revolution for Historians," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14 (Summer 1983): 91-111; Robert McCaa, "Microcomputer Software Designs for Historians: Word Processing, Filing and Data Entry Programs," *Historical Methods* 17 (Spring 1984): 68-74.
  17. Although only one volume in the series focusses on a single area, others are based on statistical surveys of a number of specific communities. See C.A. Dawson, *The Settlement of the Peace River Country: A Study of a Pioneer Area*; idem, *Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada*; idem and Eva R. Young, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process*; W.A. Mackintosh, *Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces*; R.W. Murchie, *Agricultural Progress on the Prairie Frontier* (all volumes published in Toronto by Macmillan in the 1930s and 1940s).
  18. See Donald M. Loveridge, "The Settlement of the Rural Municipality of Sifton, 1881-1920" (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1977); Robin Barrie Mallett, "Settlement Process and Land Use Change: Lethbridge-Medicine Hat Area" (Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1971); Barry Potyondi, "Country Town: The History of Minnedosa, Manitoba, 1879-1922" (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978); Bruce Edward Batchelor, "The Agrarian Frontier Near Red Deer and Lacombe, Alberta, 1882-1914" (Ph.D. diss., Simon Fraser University, 1978); Paul Voisey, "Forging the Western Tradition: Pioneer Approaches to Settlement and Agriculture in Southern Alberta Communities" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1982); R.R. Voegesang, "The Initial Agricultural Settlement of the Morinville-Westlock Area, Alberta" (Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1972). For publications based on these theses see articles by Potyondi and Voisey in *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*, ed. Alan F.J. Artibise (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1981); See also articles by Voisey, John C. Lehr, James M. Ricktik, and David C. Jones in the forthcoming *Building Beyond the Homestead: Rural History on the Prairies*, ed. David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (Calgary: University of Calgary Press); and by Jones in the forthcoming *We'll All Be Buried Down Here: The Prairie Dryland Disaster, 1916-1926* (Calgary: Alberta Records Publication Board and Historical Society of Alberta).
  19. For many of the following comments on the nature of community-sponsored local histories, I am indebted to Joanne A. Stiles for permission to read her unpublished manuscript, "Popular Perceptions of the Frontier in Rural Alberta."
  20. *Ibid.*, 10, 15.
  21. H.A. Dempsey, "Local Histories as Source Materials for Western Canadian Studies," in *Prairie Perspectives* 2, ed. Anthony W. Rasporich and Henry C. Klassen. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 171-180.

## The Winnipeg Grain Exchange on Trial: The Case of the Grain Growers' Grain Company Reconsidered

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper examines the history of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange and its relations with the farmers of Manitoba during the first decade of the twentieth century. Of particular importance is the confrontation between the Exchange and the Grain Growers' Grain Company led by the agrarian crusader E.A. Partridge. For many years, Canadian historians have maintained that the grain merchants of Winnipeg went out of their way, as part of a well-conceived plot, to destroy the farmer-owned company before it was a success. In reviewing this event, it is argued that there was, in fact, no conspiracy among members of the Winnipeg Exchange, but rather that the merchant association was only upholding its by-laws when it suspended E.A. Partridge in 1906.

**RESUME.** Cette étude s'intéresse à l'histoire de la Bourse des grains de Winnipeg et à ses relations avec les fermiers du Manitoba pendant les dix premières années du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. La confrontation, à cette époque, entre la Bourse et la Compagnie des producteurs de grain menée par le militant agricole E. A. Partridge est particulièrement importante. Durant de nombreuses années, les historiens canadiens ont soutenu que les marchands de grain de Winnipeg ont tout fait — grâce à un complot bien agencé — pour détruire la Compagnie, propriété des fermiers, avant qu'elle ne s'implante avec succès. En réévaluant cet événement, on démontre qu'il n'existait en fait aucun complot parmi les membres de la Bourse des grains de Winnipeg, mais plutôt que l'association des marchands ne faisait qu'obéir à ses règlements lorsqu'elle suspendit E. A. Partridge en 1906.

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On a trip to western Canada in the autumn of 1925, several British journalists, after visiting Winnipeg, reported that they had witnessed the city's great Grain Exchange in action, "with men barking like dogs and roaring like bulls in a most undignified and excited manner."<sup>1</sup> It was their opinion that to trade grain this way was a "savage and inhuman procedure."<sup>2</sup> Such harsh and superficial judgements have been made of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange since it was first organized in 1887. Henry Gauer, an executive of the association, best summed it up at the organization's fiftieth anniversary celebration in 1937: "The Winnipeg Grain Exchange is an institution which very many people talk about but which not very many understand."<sup>3</sup>

Condemnation of the Exchange has, in fact, become a part of prairie folklore, a tradition which has been most recently immortalized on the stage in "Paper Wheat."<sup>4</sup> To some extent, Canadian historians have also helped perpetuate the view that the Exchange was the villain of the west, particularly when its relationship with farmers has been studied. It is a fact, as David Breen has recently pointed out, that "North American historiographical bias has immortalized the sturdy west-ward moving pioneer farmer as the emblem of democracy and progress."<sup>5</sup> But those, like the members of the Exchange, whose objectives were not always

agreeable to the western-moving producers, have been portrayed in a much more negative light. This is well illustrated in what has become perhaps the best known episode in the trading association's history, its expulsion of E.A. Partridge's Grain Growers' Grain Company in 1906, for violating its by-laws.

Over the years, historians have repeatedly portrayed the members of the Exchange as being involved in a grain trade conspiracy that was intent on keeping farmers, like those embodied in Partridge's own organization of producers, out of the marketing business.<sup>6</sup> In 1928, H.S. Patton, one of the first scholars to assess this Partridge incident, wrote of it: "Undoubtedly there were a good many members of the Exchange who were disposed to welcome any pretext for embarrassing, if not...driving out of business the aggressive company headed by Partridge."<sup>7</sup> Fifty-one years later Ian MacPherson reached a similar conclusion. He has asserted that the co-operative "principles along with the militancy of farmers antagonized the grain merchants of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange," and noted that "the new company was consequently denied a seat on the Exchange."<sup>8</sup> It seems quite possible that this anti-agrarian attitude was prevalent among some members of the Exchange, but was it in fact the consensus of the majority? Furthermore, did a grain trade conspiracy exist or was it rather that Partridge's company was guilty of breaking one of the Exchange's rules? Indeed, perhaps the central question in the events in Winnipeg during the early twentieth century was not whether grain merchants were set on destroying the farmers' company, but rather did the Exchange possess the legal right as a voluntary business association to regulate the private affairs of its members?

## I

The Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange was organized by the city's merchants in 1887. According to its constitution, the goals of the new association were:

To provide and regulate a suitable building or room for an Exchange and offices, in the city of Winnipeg, and to encourage the centralization of the produce and provisions trades of the city... To inculcate just and equitable principles in trade. To promote the establishment and maintenance of uniformity in business of its members and those dealing with them. To compile, record and publish statistics respecting the same. To promote the observance of such regulations and requirements as may be established, not being contrary to law, and to adjust, settle and determine controversies and misunderstandings between persons engaged in the said trades.<sup>9</sup>

True to these objectives, the Exchange pursued policies during its first two decades of operation which were directed at promoting marketing efficiency. It endeavoured to standardize commodities "by means of establishing a uniform grading and inspection system backed by federal legislation"; and it created by-laws and trading regulations which guaranteed the fulfillment of contracts and eventually led to the establishment of a grain futures market in Winnipeg in 1904.<sup>10</sup>



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Winnipeg Grain Exchange, circa. 1910

Yet from the time the Exchange was organized, western Canadian producers had suspiciously eyed the trading association, which they perceived as a “ring” that “arranged wheat prices” to the detriment of their economic interests.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, many producers did not support the institution of futures trading by the Exchange in 1904, which they considered to be speculative gambling, nor did they approve of the association’s attempt to regulate the grain business.<sup>12</sup> Farmers objected, for example, to the grading procedures implemented by the federal government in the 1890s at the request of the Exchange, because they believed that strict grain standards lowered the price they received from the local buyer.<sup>13</sup> In fact, complaints about inadequate “street prices” and unfair grading and weighing practices by country elevator agents were made by growers throughout the decade.<sup>14</sup> While it is certain that farmers were undoubtedly the victims of many injustices, the findings of a recent Master’s thesis by D.R.M. Jackson on the early western wheat economy suggests that this issue may not have been as black and white as producers and historians have believed.<sup>15</sup> In any event, the notion that

Winnipeg grain men made “inordinate profits” at the expense of grain producers was a view evidently entrenched in the western Canadian psyche from the day the first bushel of wheat was traded at the Exchange.<sup>16</sup>

Beyond this was the fact that by 1900 the western grain business was dominated by 5 large milling and elevator companies—the Ogilvie and Lake of the Woods Milling Companies and the Northern, Dominion and Winnipeg Elevator Companies—which operated 301, or 67 percent, of the country grain elevators in the north-west.<sup>17</sup> That year, the first Royal Commission on the grain trade discovered that, as a result of this consolidation, competition was limited at many country points.<sup>18</sup> Yet it should not be overlooked that even by owning 67 percent of the region’s country elevators the 5 companies only had exclusive control of 63 (or 30 percent) of the 210 railway points in the west.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, it cannot be denied that many farmers were indeed exploited by local buyers. The magnitude of the trade made the proper policing of it an impossible chore. “It is reasonable to believe,” stated the authors of the 1900 Royal Commission report, “that where there are so many elevators there will be employees who will take advantage of the farmers if in their power to do so.”<sup>20</sup> But while the Commission argued that “there had been no evidence to show that any elevator owners [had] been consenting parties to any acts of extortion,”<sup>21</sup> the perception was planted in producers’ minds that a harmful and corrupt grain trade monopoly nevertheless existed.

It was not only in the country where the consequences of this domination by the five companies were felt, but also at the Exchange itself. By the turn of the century, the line had been drawn between the large elevator and milling concerns on one side and the smaller independent commission men on the other. A commission dealer made his money by acting as an agent for the buyer or seller of grain. If a producer was not satisfied with the street price offered by the country elevator buyer, he had the option of loading his grain through an elevator or flat warehouse and consigning it to a commission merchant. (Flat warehouses “were essentially sheds which housed low bins. They were without elevating equipment or power, and grain could be loaded in or out, or moved from bin to bin, only by hand-powered shovels and trucks.” V.C. Fowke, *The National Policy and the Wheat Economy* (Toronto, 1957), 106.) It then became the latter’s duty “to secure for the principal the highest ‘spot price’ or ‘in store price Fort William’ on whatever date the principal elected to sell.”<sup>22</sup> The commission merchant supervised the transportation of his client’s grain to the terminal point, and often advanced the farmer a substantial sum of money (with interest) even before the grain was sold.<sup>23</sup> When the transaction was completed, the dealer was rewarded with a commission fee. Prior to 1902 this remuneration was not fixed but was set by the individual merchant.

It was in the commission man’s economic interest that there be a high degree of competition at country elevator points. This meant

particularly that railway cars should load grain both at elevators and flat warehouses. Most commission dealers were thus opposed to the Canadian Pacific Railway's (CPR) policy that restricted the use of flat warehouses at points where elevator facilities had been erected.<sup>24</sup> Until the late 1890s, the majority of Winnipeg grain merchants backed this opposition, since many still operated warehouses as well as grain elevators. For example, along the CPR's main line in 1892 there were 121 grain elevators: 25 operated by the Ogilvie Milling Company, 14 by the Lake of the Woods Milling Company with the remainder divided amongst numerous independent firms who also owned 70 flat warehouses.<sup>25</sup> There was, therefore, an early resistance to the CPR's elevator policy; consequently, in 1888 and 1895 the members of the Exchange passed resolutions which favoured the abolition of the railway company's restrictions.<sup>26</sup> But by the autumn of 1897, the situation had significantly changed. Once such firms as the Northern and Dominion Elevator Companies were in full operation, many flat warehouses were converted into elevators.<sup>27</sup> Now the thought that a "wild-cat speculator" could erect a warehouse for \$300 and possibly undermine these firms' \$7,000 to \$10,000 investment in steam or gasoline-powered elevators frightened many merchants.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, in October 1897, the Exchange's executive, now dominated by these new elevator concerns,<sup>29</sup> had no trouble defeating a resolution that called for the cessation of the CPR's practice of restricting the use of flat warehouses.<sup>30</sup> Soon after, these same merchants were as vocal in their opposition to R.L. Richardson's and James Douglas's demands to allow farmers to utilize warehouses and loading platforms.<sup>31</sup> (A loading platform was "a timbered structure with earthen ramps... beside the local siding on a level with the floor of a box car... so that the grower could load grain into the car directly from his wagon without putting it through an elevator." Fowke, *National Policy*, 106.)

After 1900, the power of the elevator and milling interests at the Exchange could be seen in other ways as well. Most notable was the campaign led by the executives of these companies to increase the grain association's control over the private business of its members.<sup>32</sup> This was evident from revised by-laws of 1902, which extended the power of its Council and imposed more severe penalties for by-law infractions.<sup>33</sup> It was also during this period that the Exchange adopted a "commission rule." An attempt to establish regular commission rates for handling wheat in the Winnipeg market had been proposed at a meeting in 1899 but had been defeated because many members of the trade believed that each dealer should be allowed to set his own terms.<sup>34</sup> But only three years later, on the initiative of the Council, a commission rule was passed. Under this new by-law "just and reasonable" commission rates were set at one cent per bushel for transactions on wheat, barley, oats and flax in carlots or quantities under 5,000 bushels; and half a cent for deals over 5,000 bushels.<sup>35</sup> (In August 1905, the Exchange revised this by-law and set the commission rate at one cent regardless of quantity.)<sup>36</sup> For a violation of the rule a



E. A. Partridge

member could be fined \$100 to \$500 for a first offence; \$500 to \$1,000 for a second offence; and suspension or expulsion for a third offence.<sup>37</sup>

The Exchange's executive maintained that the commission rule was designed to ensure business integrity.<sup>38</sup> But that rule became the focal point of a lengthy dispute over the next decade, when it was challenged in the Manitoba courts by independent grain dealers and the members of new agrarian associations; organizations which had been formed by grain growers to combat the powerful collectivity of their middlemen purchasers.<sup>39</sup>

## II

To repeat, it was the Exchange's commission rule, by-law 19, which was responsible for much of the ensuing controversy. Behind the rule lay the belief shared by many members of the Exchange that open and unregulated competition was "destructive of profits, security and business morality."<sup>40</sup> In their minds there was a clear distinction between competition which provided a "living profit" and that which was of "a cut-throat kind."<sup>41</sup>

By making the “quality of service” the determining factor in attracting business, rather than the amount of the commission fee, the Exchange’s intent was not to eliminate competition at country points but to regulate it.<sup>42</sup> In other words, the fixing of the fee at one cent per bushel would not enable merchants to take advantage of farmers by charging them unfair rates, and would also ensure that smaller dealers would not be driven out of business. At the proceedings of the 1906-1907 Royal Commission on the Grain Trade, the Exchange Council argued that:

if there was no...reasonable commission rule binding on all [the Exchange’s] members the commission charge would be cut to such a point by the larger dealers that it would practically drive out of business all smaller dealers, and so eliminate competition, the trade would be monopolized by the large dealers owing to the fact that the large volume of business handled by them would enable them to do business at such a small profit per bushel that the smaller firms could not exist.<sup>43</sup>

But even with these apparent benefits, the rule was not immediately popular among the independent Winnipeg merchants. Rather than being seen as a measure which improved the trade, the smaller dealers opposed the commission rule on the grounds that it infringed upon their right to conduct their commercial affairs in any manner they saw fit.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, the Exchange Council found that enforcing the rule was not easy. Commenting on the large number of infractions of by-law 19 brought to the Council’s attention, A.R. Hargraft stated at the association’s annual meeting in January 1904 that, “the general all round support of the members has not been as full and complete as it ought to have been. There is a tendency amongst some to study how close they can go without breaking the rule.”<sup>45</sup> Opposition to the rule was indeed considerable. But believing that “effective regulation of competition hinged on the ability to force would-be mavericks to obey the regulations,”<sup>46</sup> the Council was determined that the commission rule be respected. Violators found that challenging the by-law could result in severe consequences. One dealer who discovered this was W.T. Gibbins, a minor Winnipeg commission man.

Following the adoption of the commission rule in 1902 a group of discontented merchants had created the Independent Grain Company (IGC), which was not connected with the Exchange and was free from the restrictions of its by-laws.<sup>47</sup> Much to the dissatisfaction of the Exchange’s executive, the IGC operated independently throughout the autumn of 1902, buying and exporting Manitoba grain. But the Council soon discovered that the IGC was using the services of several commission dealers (who were members of the Exchange) to dispose of its grain and was not charged the one cent per bushel fee. Determined to stop such “illegal” transactions, a group from the Exchange led by W.L. Parrish, G.R. Crowe and H.T. Metcalfe warned one of the suspected commission men, W.T. Gibbins, to cease handling the IGC’s wheat.<sup>48</sup> Gibbins, however, refused to comply and maintained that “he would deal with whomsoever he pleased.”<sup>49</sup> Since Gibbins, upon joining the Exchange had agreed to abide by the association’s rules and regulations, his actions, if proven to

be true, were a clear breach of the Exchange's by-laws. Subsequently, he found that he was boycotted by the Council and by other members of the Exchange who believed that he was guilty. Faced with a serious loss of business, Gibbins filed a \$50,000 lawsuit in December 1902 against the group of traders led by Parrish and Metcalfe for maliciously conspiring against him.<sup>50</sup>

The court's decision (later sustained by the Manitoba Court of Appeal) was an important victory for the Grain Exchange. Although it could not be positively proven that Gibbins had in fact worked for the IGC, Justice C.J. Killam nevertheless ruled that there was also no evidence to show that the members of the Exchange had conspired against him.<sup>51</sup> Rather, the court held that the defendants' actions were based "solely by the desire to serve the business interests of themselves and...of the members of the Exchange generally, and in protection of the market created under the rules of the Exchange."<sup>52</sup> But more importantly the decision established that the commission rule was both "fair and just," a ruling which in a sense would nullify future challenges to the by-law.<sup>53</sup>

Supported by the legal judgement, the Council wasted no time in amending the rule to ensure further that it was properly followed. This was done by adding a clause to by-law 19 which stipulated that members of the Exchange were required to pay their country buyers a monthly salary of not less than \$50.<sup>54</sup> This prevented a Winnipeg commission firm from employing an agent at a country point which was too small to justify the \$50 a month remuneration. While intended to eliminate the practice of splitting the one cent commission among buyers scattered throughout the countryside, it also resulted in the dismissal of many agents, since firms could not afford to pay the required salary.<sup>55</sup> This was indeed a curious way of protecting the rights of the smaller merchants. By eliminating effective competition from independent agents, the established elevator firms were able to capture a larger share of the country business<sup>56</sup> — an outcome which the commission rule was supposed to prevent.

The addition of the "\$50 clause," as it became known, served to antagonize further many Winnipeg commission dealers, and the Council was kept busy during 1904 and 1905 investigating over a hundred complaints that the rule was being violated.<sup>57</sup> In March 1906 the members of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association (MGGA) also expressed their aversion to the one cent fee which they considered to be an excessive charge.<sup>58</sup> Disregarding this opposition, the members of the Exchange declared their intentions to punish violators with the maximum penalties allowed for in the by-law.<sup>59</sup> This meant that for a first offence a trader was to be fined \$500, for a second offence he was to be suspended from the Exchange for a period of not less than ninety days, and on the third occasion he was to be expelled.<sup>60</sup> Immediately following the adoption of this resolution one dealer was fined \$350, the Council believing that the particular infraction did not warrant a fine of \$500.<sup>61</sup>

Into the grain business at this rather turbulent time stepped Edward A. Partridge and the Grain Growers' Grain Company (GGG Co.). As noted, it has been assumed that the Exchange went out of its way as part of a well-conceived plot to destroy the farmers' company before it was a success. Indeed, the suspension of the GGG Co. has been portrayed by historians as being a conflict between the innocent farmer and the scheming grain merchant.<sup>62</sup> But placed in its proper perspective, the relationship between the Exchange and the GGG Co. unfolds perhaps more accurately as the story of one of many commission firms guilty of breaking the association's by-laws. The question, then, which requires further examination is whether or not the GGG Co. was treated unfairly or dealt with by the Council in a manner fitting any other company registered at the Exchange which had violated the commission rule.

The GGG Co. was organized under a Manitoba charter granted it in July 1906. The leader of the Company and its first President was E.A. Partridge, an Ontario farmer who had migrated west in the 1880s, settled near Sinaluta in the North-west Territories, and quickly involved himself with the transportation and storage problems facing western Canadian grain growers.<sup>63</sup> His reputation as a "fighter" was gained in 1905, when he was sent to Winnipeg by the local Sinaluta Grain Growers' Association to investigate the grain trade and the Exchange. It was this trip which convinced Partridge of the necessity for farmers to operate their own grain company.<sup>64</sup> As he later stated, "the object of the [GGG Co.] was to enable the farmers of the west to sell their...grain through the agency of their own company."<sup>65</sup> It was hoped that successful operations would allow them to return a portion of the normal one cent per bushel commission charge in the form of dividends. Beyond this, however, was the conviction that a farmer-owned company was the only guarantee that a fair price would be paid for farmers' grain. It was necessary, though, to join the Grain Exchange in order to compete on an equal level with other members of the trade. Therefore, the \$2,500 entrance fee was paid and the new company was registered under E.A. Partridge's membership.<sup>66</sup>

Partridge viewed the world in 1905 as a struggle between two main combatants. On one side were the trusts and monopolies with their vast fortunes and on the other side were their victims, the exploited producers.<sup>67</sup> There was, in his eyes, only one solution to this dilemma: producers also had to unite to effectively compete with their capitalist foes. In an impassioned plea for unity, Partridge told farmers in 1905 that:

Co-operation is in essence both sane and moral and only awaits the evolution of a population sufficiently enlightened to practice it on a large scale to become the most powerful weapon of defence against the financial buccaneers who employ it within narrow limits for their own enrichment; and needs only to be universally employed to bring about an industrial millenium.<sup>68</sup>

To Partridge, the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange (or to use his celebrated term "the house with closed shutters") represented the worst abuses of commercial power. Commenting on his own initial

investigation of the Exchange in 1905, he told members of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association that:

The Winnipeg Grain Exchange is an institution ostensibly created to regulate and systemize and prevent litigation, but is used to check and as far as may be judged extinguish competition among its members and conserve all the wheat business for themselves. In short, it is a combine with a gambling hell thrown in.<sup>69</sup>

It was not only the speculative characteristics of the Exchange which Partridge found distasteful; it was also its corporate structure. He could not understand, for example, what gave the Exchange the right to pass by-laws which he considered to be "vicious," "obnoxious," and detrimental to fair competition.<sup>70</sup> On the other side, the Exchange's attitude towards Partridge and the GGG Co. is less clear.

Throughout the conflict with the farmers' company the Exchange's executive assuredly claimed that there was not "in the past or present anything in the policy of the [association] antagonistic to...any reputable organization...whether composed of farmers or not."<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, C.N. Bell, the Secretary of the Exchange, told the officials of the 1906 Royal Commission on the Grain Trade that he considered Partridge to be a "friend," and had assured him that he "would find himself [and his company] most welcomed by the trade."<sup>72</sup> Farmers had been involved in the commercial side of the grain business since the early 1880s, when a group of producers had organized a joint-stock elevator company.<sup>73</sup> Over the next decade other producers followed suit. But these firms did not have the resources to compete with the larger elevator companies and for the most part confined themselves to storing and shipping wheat rather than purchasing it.<sup>74</sup> By 1900 there were twenty-six farmer-owned elevators (6 percent of the northwest's total) operating on the prairies and with representatives holding seats on the Exchange.<sup>75</sup> Certainly, however, the organization of the GGG Co. was quite a different matter. Now, farmers aimed not only to supervise the shipment of their wheat, but also to market it themselves. This was, despite the Exchange's claim to the contrary, a new departure for the Winnipeg grain trade. But this in itself does not necessarily signify that the Exchange felt threatened by the farmers' company, only that it was an unique business venture.

After six weeks of operation, in early October 1906, Partridge, as President of the GGG Co., was called before the Council of the Grain Exchange, "to answer the charges of having 'offended against the honor and dignity of the Exchange' through the issue of certain pamphlets 'reflecting on the methods adopted by certain members of the trade;' and of having violated the commission rule of the Exchange."<sup>76</sup> The cause of the latter charge was the discovery by the Council of a GGG Co. circular publicizing "its intention of distributing the net profits of the season's business to farmer shippers on a patronage basis."<sup>77</sup> As Patton has observed:

This was interpreted by the council [sic] of the Exchange as being tantamount to "splitting the commission with the shipper," and therefore in violation of the

commission rule, which established a uniform commission charge of one cent a bushel for handling grain for non-members.<sup>78</sup>

The Council based its decision on the fact that the proposed dividend was not to be distributed according to the number of shares held by each stockholder, but rather on the amount of grain delivered to the company by an individual producer. Since each shareholder of the GGG Co. was charged the one cent per bushel commission fee upon selling his grain to the firm and was promised that this would be returned in the form of a dividend, it is plain to see why the Council considered this plan to be a rebate and in violation of by-law 19.<sup>79</sup> In support of this view the Council pointed to two American court judgements which had established that this co-operative method of dividing profits was in violation of United States commodity exchange commission rules, regulations similar to those of the Winnipeg Exchange.<sup>80</sup>



*Provincial Archives of Manitoba*

C. N. Bell

While the first charge of publishing material "offending the dignity" of the Exchange could not be substantiated, the Council informed Partridge that if his company would amend its by-laws eradicating the patronage provision the matter would be closed. Convinced that "the relationship that existed between the members of the company or their arrangements for a division of profits was a matter concerning nobody but ourselves," Partridge refused to comply.<sup>81</sup>

The case naturally was a subject of debate at the proceedings of the Royal Commission on the Grain Trade, which had been appointed by the Laurier government in 1906, to appease western grain growers.<sup>82</sup> Appearing before the Commission in November 1906, Partridge maintained that the circular issued by his company had been distributed prior to his joining the Exchange, implying that the Council must have been aware of its existence.<sup>83</sup> He further insinuated that the Exchange had decided to ask him to explain the circular in October only because the GGG Co. had proved to be successful.<sup>84</sup>

In responding to this accusation C.N. Bell stated that, on the contrary, no knowledge of the objectionable circular was known to the Council until one of its members, J.G. McHugh, had brought it to their attention well after the GGG Co. had been granted its seat on the Exchange.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, if the milling and elevator interests in the association had knowledge of the circular and feared the entrance of a farmer-operated commission firm into the Winnipeg grain business, why had they not blocked the GGG Co.'s application for membership? As well, at Partridge's hearing before the Council, he was told that his company's trading privileges would be reinstated if he showed the Exchange that the proposed plan for the division of profits was abolished.<sup>86</sup> This suggests that the Council did not desire to drive the GGG Co. out of the grain business, rather that its members wanted the company to conform to the Exchange's rules. Seeing that Partridge, according to his own admission, refused to answer the Council's questions at his hearing,<sup>87</sup> the executive felt it had no alternative but to suspend the GGG Co.'s trading privileges. This punishment is open to question. Under the commission by-law, first offenders were normally fined a maximum of \$500, although there was a clause in the rule which gave the Council the power to also "censure or suspend" a member even on a first violation.<sup>88</sup> Taking into account the large number of infringements of the commission rule taking place during this period,<sup>89</sup> in addition to Partridge's antagonistic attitude towards the association, it is not wholly surprising that the full weight of the by-law's penalties was used against the GGG Co.

The effect of the suspension was very serious. It not only meant that the GGG Co. could not trade on the Exchange floor, but that, in accordance with another Exchange by-law, "any [other] firm dealing with such company would [also] be subject to penalties."<sup>90</sup> The consequence was that the GGG Co. "could not dispose of its patrons' grain through the

Exchange without itself paying the full commission charge of one cent per bushel."<sup>91</sup>

For a brief period following the suspension, the GGG Co. believed it could successfully function without the machinery of the Grain Exchange by declaring in various newspapers that "the world's markets are still open to us and we can secure...the prices which govern in these markets."<sup>92</sup> Many farmers did in fact rally to the GGG Co.'s call and shipped the company more grain than ever. At this point many Exchange members began seriously to question the wisdom of the Council's decision, since a large amount of business was flowing in the direction of the GGG Co.<sup>93</sup> But the latter's prosperity did not last long. Without the benefit of the Exchange the company was unable to sell its surplus grain, and was forced to borrow heavily from the bank to pay the loyal farmers who had shipped it their wheat. By December 1906, the GGG Co.'s liabilities to the bank equalled \$356,000.<sup>94</sup> It became increasingly apparent that reinstatement into the Exchange was necessary, and (as Frank O. Fowler, the manager of the Exchange's clearing association, later wrote) the company began "to move Heaven and earth" to gain it.<sup>95</sup> In a letter to the Council from E.A. Partridge, John Spencer and John Kennedy—the GGG Co.'s executive—it was finally admitted that the proposed patronage plan was indeed in violation of the Exchange's by-laws and the Manitoba Joint Stock Companies Act under which the company had been registered.<sup>96</sup> Partridge, Spencer and Kennedy nevertheless took this opportunity to definitely declare the commission by-law arbitrary.<sup>97</sup>

One of the conditions for reinstatement set down by the Council was a ceremonial censure of the patronage plan by all the shareholders of the company. This, however, the directors explained, could not be done before the end of January 1907.<sup>98</sup> Taking into consideration Partridge's public attitude towards the Exchange and the uncertainty of a future shareholders meeting, the Council rejected the GGG Co.'s application for reinstatement.<sup>99</sup> C.N. Bell explained the situation to the Premier of Manitoba, Rodmond P. Roblin, a short time later. "In the application for re-registration of the company," Bell wrote, "Mr. Partridge still left the question open as to whether the company would change its method or not. To have re-admitted the company under such conditions would have been recognizing a continuing breach of the commission rules."<sup>100</sup> In terms, then, of established business procedure, and as a protection for other Exchange members, the Council's actions need not be considered as being unduly severe.

Spurned by the Grain Exchange, Partridge's next step was to appeal directly to the Roblin government in view of the Exchange's incorporation under a provincial charter of 1891.<sup>101</sup> Certain that the Premier was not sympathetic with the grainmen's attitude, the directors of the GGG Co. presented a strong case for their reinstatement, and attacked the Exchange's unfair by-laws as being part of a grain trade conspiracy aimed at eliminating

them from further business.<sup>102</sup> With a provincial election in the near future Roblin could not lightly afford to antagonize hundreds of prospective rural voters. Accordingly, a week later he asked the Exchange Council to reconsider its position, stressing both the importance of the producer to the future of Manitoba and the intention of the GGG Co. to address the patronage issue in January.<sup>103</sup> The Exchange, sticking to its earlier arguments, informed Roblin it could not obey his wishes.

In a lengthy letter citing British, American, and Canadian legal decisions, Bell respectfully told the Premier that if the Exchange's by-laws, under which the GGG Co. had been suspended, were illegal, "it was a matter for the courts to settle and not for the interference of Parliament."<sup>104</sup> More significant, however, was Bell's warning that if the Manitoba Legislature took action against the Exchange it would result in either the formation of a voluntary association which was free from the immediate jurisdiction of the provincial government, or worse, it could precipitate the break up of the organization. In the case of the latter happening, the secretary wrote:

The elevator and milling companies would not be bound by the one cent commission rule...with the further result that all the commission and many independent dealers, being first wiped out of existence and the number of individual buyers and classes of buyers being thus reduced; there would be a much greater opportunity for the evils of monopoly; and if the Grain Exchange and the useful purpose it serves to the public were thus wiped out, there is no other system to substitute for it, and it would lead to the demoralization of the grain trade and all business connected therewith.<sup>105</sup>

In other words, if the government forced the Exchange to back down on its position towards the GGG Co., the entire structure and operation of the grain trade would be threatened. At stake were the fundamental principles which governed the Exchange's existence and the guarantee against "the growth of giant enterprises tending to monopoly."<sup>106</sup> Without the watchful rules of the association, the result would be "totally free competition," and this Bell believed, like other Canadian businessmen, could only "lead to the survival of the fittest in the form of either trusts or monopolies."<sup>107</sup>

On 5 February 1907, the shareholders of the GGG Co. accepted a resolution of their directors (passed 22 December 1906) and abandoned the proposal to issue patronage dividends.<sup>108</sup> (There is no evidence to suggest that the GGG Co. was pressured by the Roblin government to make this change.) It took, however, two more months for reinstatement to be granted and only after the company's membership was transferred from Patridge, "persona non grata," to John Spencer.<sup>109</sup> According to the members of the GGG Co., and the view held by the historian Patton, this reinstatement occurred only as a result of intense provincial government pressure threatening the repeal of the Exchange's charter.<sup>110</sup> The Exchange's version was quite different. As Bell declared in his letter to Roblin in January 1907, the Council had begun to plan for the possible reorganization as a voluntary association should the government terminate or amend its

charter.<sup>111</sup> The extent to which the Exchange's actions in readmitting the GGG Co. were affected by the government's demands remains unknown. But according to the head of the Exchange's clearing association, Frank Fowler, it was not the Manitoba government's ultimatum which led to the GGG Co.'s reinstatement; it was instead a letter of 13 April 1907 giving the Council formal notification of the 5 February shareholders meeting of the GGG Co. revoking the patronage plan.<sup>112</sup> The Council's insistence that Partridge be replaced by Spencer may well be explained by the former's repeated denunciations of the Grain Exchange, the most recent at that time appearing in the *Manitoba Free Press* on 7 February 1907. Significantly, Partridge was also publicly criticized by W.R. Motherwell, President of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA), and John Miller, the SGGA's Secretary and the Chairman of the Royal Commission of 1906 on the Grain Trade, for his "reckless bomb throwing" at the Exchange.<sup>113</sup>

### III

In the midst of the conflict with the GGG Co., the Grain Exchange was also forced to turn its attention and resources to defend three of its Councillors from charges laid by the GGG Co.'s fellow-farm organization, the MGGA. Angered by the suspension of the GGG Co., and evidence publicized at the Grain Trade Royal Commission hearings during the autumn of 1906, which confirmed farmers' beliefs that no competition existed at many country elevator points, the President of the MGGA, D.W. McCuaig, laid formal charges against three members of the Exchange Council on 3 December 1906.<sup>114</sup> J.C. Gage, John Love and J.G. McHugh were charged under section 498 of the Criminal Code with having "unlawfully conspired, combined or arranged with each other to restrain or injure trade and commerce in relation to grain."<sup>115</sup> All three apparently had had a hand in the GGG Co.'s suspension.<sup>116</sup> But despite the individual nature of the charges the case was, as Patton has observed, "one against the rules and practices of the Grain Exchange and the [North-west] Grain Dealers' Association (NWGDA),"<sup>117</sup> an organization formed by the elevator companies in 1901 and closely aligned with the Exchange.<sup>118</sup>

The preliminary hearing against the grain men opened on 13 December 1906, before Magistrate Daly in the Winnipeg Police Court. Throughout the month R.A. Bonnar, attorney for the MGGA, focussed on the "fixing of prices" by the NWGDA which he argued made competition at many elevator points non-existent.<sup>119</sup> In opposition N.J. Hagel, counsel for the three grain dealers, vigorously defended the constitution of the Grain Exchange and maintained that the price of grain was not fixed by any group of elevator companies or by any "inner circle" on the Exchange Council.<sup>120</sup> But Magistrate Daly was not convinced. Although he did not determine if the grain dealers were guilty or not, he stressed that the farming community believed that, to use his words, "something [was]

rotten in the State of Denmark.”<sup>121</sup> Accordingly, he recommended to the Attorney-General of Manitoba that the evidence put forward was sufficient to put the accused on trial in the Assize Court.<sup>122</sup>

Owing to the fact that a new trial in the higher court was not to commence until the end of April, the MGGA, aided by editorials in the independent *Winnipeg Tribune*, continued its assault on the Grain Exchange. All efforts now focussed on compelling the Roblin government to amend the Exchange’s charter. Even before Magistrate Daly had ruled on the question the *Tribune* had declared:

The charter [of the Exchange] is such as should never have been granted... Such a body as the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange is a menace to every man and woman in Western Canada. It prevents freedom in trade, thus preventing the farmer from receiving a proper return for his labour.<sup>123</sup>

Over the next several weeks, the paper carried on a vigorous campaign to discredit the Exchange.<sup>124</sup> Among other things, it questioned the grain association’s right to establish a uniform commission fee.<sup>125</sup> At the same time, J.W. Robson (Conservative MLA for Swan River and a member of the MGGA) introduced on 21 January 1907 a ten-point resolution intended to drastically curtail the power of the Exchange Council, to abolish such rules as the commission by-law, and to place the association under total government supervision.<sup>126</sup> In the short term, this action meant that the Roblin government would be forced to respond to the farmers’ demands or face possible disaster at the polls on 6 March, since over 60 percent of its seats were in rural constituencies. In the larger perspective, this signalled the agriculture community’s growing desire to replace the private grain business by a state monopoly.

Robson’s proposal, on his request, was referred to the Legislature’s Agricultural Committee which met for the next three weeks to discuss the issue. Appearing before the Committee, both the MGGA and the Exchange carried on with their war of words as reported daily on the front page of the *Tribune*.<sup>127</sup> One positive result for the farmers and the smaller grain dealers was that the Exchange’s executive agreed to reconsider the clause in the commission by-law which required that agents at country points be paid a salary of \$50 a month.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, so great was the opposition to this stipulation from the farming community as well as from members of the Exchange themselves that it was eventually repealed at a general meeting in April 1907.<sup>129</sup> (Both independent commission men and several key elevator executives such as G.R. Crowe of the Northern Elevator Company recognized that this clause in the by-law was unwarranted.)<sup>130</sup> But apart from this, the larger question of altering the Exchange’s charter was placed on the shelf. In the midst of the provincial election campaign the government-dominated Agricultural Committee proceeded cautiously and recommended that a conference be held to examine this important issue further.<sup>131</sup> Originally scheduled to be convened later in February, the Exchange’s unwillingness to attend, in addition to the fact that the day set for the conference (27 February) was nomination day, made such

a meeting impossible to arrange.<sup>132</sup> The MGGA reluctantly agreed to a postponement until after the election.<sup>133</sup>

In the *Tribune's* view the government's action in this matter proved beyond doubt that it was closely connected with the Exchange, and believed that this would be the determining factor in the coming election.<sup>134</sup> A month before the vote, the newspaper declared:

It is very widely suspected that the Roblin Government is so closely connected with the elevator and Grain Exchange interests that it does not dare amend the Exchange's character.<sup>135</sup>

Above anything else, the *Tribune* was incensed over the fact that the Premier and his senior cabinet minister, Robert Rodgers, were members of the grain association. According to the paper:

To injure the [grain] combine would be to injure the pockets of Messrs. Roblin and Rodgers and to injure all their friends and fellow members of the Exchange ... Must it not be obvious to all that the Grain Exchange and the Roblin Government are one... But as a vote for a Roblin candidate is a vote for the Roblin Government and as a vote for the Roblin Government is a vote for the Grain Combine the people of Manitoba should have no difficulty in deciding how to vote to break the Combine that is oppressing and fleecing them.<sup>136</sup>

While there is no documentation on either Roblin's or Rodgers's involvement in the Exchange during this period (or whether they continued to hold shares in any elevator companies), it is certain that both politicians, who were friends with many members of the Council, were kept informed of the Exchange's plans to reorganize as an unincorporated voluntary association if the Robson proposal was put into effect.

Throughout the election campaign the Liberal opposition joined with the *Tribune* to keep the public's attention on this link between the Conservatives and the Winnipeg grain establishment.<sup>137</sup> On 20 February the newspaper devoted an entire page to an article entitled "The History of a Great Crime" which detailed the Premier's past role in the grain business and his efforts in 1898 to uphold the so-called "CPR-elevator monopoly" designed to restrict the use of flat warehouses and loading platforms at country points.<sup>138</sup> But this strategy was to no avail. First, the Conservatives refused to address the issue; and second on 4 March 1907, two days before the election, the public declaration by the President of the MGGA, D.W. McCuaig, that "the government has acted fairly with the grain growers," served to confound the situation still further.<sup>139</sup> This, along with the Liberals' weakness on other key matters and the fact that their leader, Edward Brown, Mayor of Portage La Prairie, could not compete with Roblin's "genuine popularity" enabled the Conservatives to capture the majority of the seats in the election.<sup>140</sup> Disappointed with the results, the *Tribune* believed that the victory ensured that the Exchange's charter would not be amended for four more years and suggested that this would also compromise the position of the prosecution at the forthcoming trial of three of the association's members.<sup>141</sup> On both counts the newspaper was mistaken.

The case in the Assize Court opened on 22 April 1907 before Justice Phippen.<sup>142</sup> As would be expected, both parties presented their familiar arguments. The Crown argued that the by-laws of the Exchange which set margin requirements and commission fees, and the practices of the NWGDA, such as the sending of a joint daily telegram to country elevator buyers quoting prices to be offered to farmers, unfairly controlled the price of grain.<sup>143</sup> Denying these accusations, the Exchange's counsel, A.J. Andrews, claimed that the by-laws in question were "reasonable" and benefitted both the producer and the trader.<sup>144</sup> As well, it was pointed out that the NWGDA's daily telegrams "merely indicated prices to members and that there was no agreement or penalty against exceeding such prices."<sup>145</sup> According to Andrews, "the grain business in this country is now so great that it is next to impossible to form a combine that could restrain trade."<sup>146</sup>

On 21 May 1907, Phippen delivered a verdict of not guilty. Assessing the charges, he concurred with the Exchange's lawyers that the practices of the NWGDA and the rules of the Exchange assured grain men "reasonable" business protection.<sup>147</sup> In addition, every effort to accord producers a fair price had in his view, been made. The judge also singled out the Exchange and declared that:

The prosperity of the exchange [sic] has kept pace with the increased crop productions of the west...It has passed rules regulating the dealing of its members, looking apparently to the promotion and systematization of trade...By its by-laws it has...endeavored to eliminate speculation and establish a narrow but stable margin of profit affording facilities to the borrower, permanency and security to the dealer and the fullest value to the grain grower.<sup>148</sup>

In short, Phippen's judgement not only exonerated the Exchange, but commended it for its contribution to the development of an efficient and successful grain marketing system. The MGGGA was decidedly dissatisfied with the outcome of the case. Indeed, a year later its vice-president, R.C. Henders, even went as far as to suggest that Phippen, due to his earlier legal connections with the Exchange, had not acted objectively.<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, judgement in the Provincial Appeal Court unanimously sustained Justice Phippen's decision.<sup>150</sup>

Several months later, John Miller, Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Grain Trade, similarly praised the value of the Exchange. Evaluating its by-laws, Miller wrote:

The restrictions placed upon its members in providing for the fulfillment of contracts, the establishment of a clearing house in which contracts are protected day-to-day give the banks the necessary confidence...in advancing money to the trade with which to handle the crop. This has brought the producer much nearer to the consumer than he at one time was, and no doubt is of great financial benefit to him.<sup>151</sup>

Over the years, Exchange officials have praised both the verdict of the Manitoba courts and the Report of the Miller Commission as having confirmed their right to regulate the grain business.<sup>152</sup> They accepted without reservation the popular premise that up to a point combination

was necessary.<sup>153</sup> But it is clear at the same time that, given the Canadian position towards monopoly during this decade, these two judgements were quite predictable. Under Canadian law the question before both investigations was not whether the Exchange or the NWGDA “were operating as a combination in restraint of trade, but only whether their activities constituted *undue* restraint of trade.”<sup>154</sup> As long as the country’s policy makers were content with this distinction, the Exchange could maintain its by-laws without fear of legislative or legal intervention.

Undeterred by its loss in the courtroom, the MGGA turned to the Roblin government to support its bid to amend the Exchange’s charter. At a conference in June 1907, convened by Roblin to hear the MGGA’s complaints, a resolution was passed based on J.W. Robson’s proposal put forward to the legislature in January. Most importantly, the farm association demanded that the Exchange’s commission rule be abolished.<sup>155</sup> If this proposal was enacted, “no by-law, rule, or regulation of the Exchange [could] become operative until approved by the Lieutenant-Governor [in Council].”<sup>156</sup> Since Roblin had promised the MGGA that he would abide by the decision of the June conference, he had no alternative but to include an amendment in his 2 January 1908 throne speech which encompassed the farmers’ demands to change the Exchange’s charter.<sup>157</sup> But as suggested, seeing that Roblin was a member of the grain organization he must have been aware of the Exchange’s definite plan to reorganize as a voluntary association in order to escape the severe restrictions which would be imposed by the legislation.

On the other side, from the moment the amendment was introduced, the Exchange, supported by other members of the Winnipeg business community, strongly protested the government’s actions.<sup>158</sup> In a petition presented to the government, the President of the Exchange, John Fleming, declared that:

The Exchange has conferred great benefits upon the producer of grain and the trading community, given stability to the grain trade in Canada, been most helpful to banking institutions, which finance the business of the grain trade... and as a creature of a provincial character, has in keeping with the expansion of Western Canada, assumed national importance and is now recognized as one of the leading grain markets of the world.<sup>159</sup>

Furthermore, Fleming pointed out that if the amendment should pass, its financial ramifications would be great. Indeed, after the amendment to the Exchange’s charter had received Royal Assent on 26 February 1908, initial reports indicated that the price of an Exchange membership had dropped from \$2,650 to a low of \$1,000.<sup>160</sup> The Exchange consequently ceased all formal trading; for the next five months dealers and brokers traded “on the curb.”<sup>161</sup>

Reorganization plans were carried forward during the summer of 1908.<sup>162</sup> By early September the Exchange had obtained the cancellation of its provincial charter and reopened as a voluntary association, now simply called the “Winnipeg Grain Exchange.” Notably, all three hundred

members rejoined and similar by-laws were maintained.<sup>163</sup> It was also at this time that the Exchange moved into its "palatial" new quarters at the corner of Rorie Avenue and Lombard Street. Though the financing of the building had been in question due to the closing of the Exchange in February,<sup>164</sup> satisfactory arrangements were negotiated by May of 1908.<sup>165</sup> It was hailed by the *Free Press* as "a lasting monument to that product that has made Winnipeg famous throughout the world."<sup>166</sup>

In an address of September 1907, W.J. Bettingen had told his fellow grain traders that the past year had been one of the most "strenuous" in the Exchange's history.<sup>167</sup> Yet, despite the turmoil it remained a centre of prosperity. Trading records at the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Clearing Association, for example, reached all-time highs by that September, totalling approximately 430 million bushels, an increase of 140 million bushels from the year before.<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless, the attitude of the farming community towards the Exchange remained as hostile as ever. After more than a year of public debate which had strenuously dissected the Exchange by-law by by-law, many producers continued to believe that they were somehow being cheated by "the house with closed shutters."<sup>169</sup>

The fact that the Exchange was able to eventually escape the consequences of the government's action simply aggravated the situation. As the new *Grain Growers' Guide*, the organ of the GGG Co., commented in its first issue in September 1908:

It cost the farmers of Manitoba much time and considerable expense to induce the legislature to amend the charter. These people [the members of the Exchange] attempt to circumvent the provisions of the amended charter by reprinting their old by-laws and leaving out two words. Now we have "The Winnipeg Grain Exchange" in place of "The Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange"—Truly a distinction without a difference... This adds another example of the futility of attempting to control corporate greed by legislation.<sup>170</sup>

In spite of this animosity, which was not an unjustifiable response, the GGG Co. again took its place alongside other grain firms in the Exchange. But its leaders continued to challenge the domination of the association by the elevator and milling interests.

#### IV

Although the Grain Exchange's right to enforce its commission rule had now been sanctioned by the courts, it remained a source of controversy. During the reorganization proceedings in the summer of 1908, Exchange members representing the elevator companies recommended that the one cent commission be reduced by half a cent. But this proposal was defeated by twenty-two votes.<sup>171</sup> According to A.K. Godfrey of the Canadian Elevator Company, who introduced the motion, the rule was continually violated by brokers who split the commission with country agents who brought business to them. Godfrey and other elevator company executives reasoned that it would be wiser to give the half-cent per bushel to the producer rather than a rural middleman.<sup>172</sup> Beyond this, there was

another motive that prompted the elevator companies to put forward the amendment to the commission by-law. Patton has shown that as a result of changes to the Manitoba Grain Act (MGA) in 1908, which further ensured the right of producers to ship their grain via loading platforms, elevator companies were apparently losing business in the country to commission firms.<sup>173</sup> A reduction in the commission by half a cent could have halted this shift away from the elevators, since brokers in Winnipeg would no longer have been as anxious to split their commissions with country agents. And, as a consequence, the amount of grain shipped through loading platforms—which were used by commission men—would have decreased. Certainly Patton's argument seems plausible, for he further points out that the construction and renovation of loading platforms increased substantially in the months following the 1908 MGA legislation.<sup>174</sup> Many elevator company executives must have been concerned with the possible business ramifications of these developments. Still, it should be noted that the profits of the Northern Elevator Company, one of the largest corporations in western Canada, were quite lucrative during 1908.<sup>175</sup>

Whatever the full reasons behind their actions, the elevator company executives in the Exchange continued to press for changes in the commission rule. Their case was aided by the fact that among the eleven members of the Exchange Council six represented elevator firms. At meetings held in July 1909 to consider by-law revisions, the Council this time proposed that the commission rule be suspended for a period of one year; it passed on an open vote.<sup>176</sup> This put the trade, in the words of President Hugh Baird, "on a free for all basis."<sup>177</sup> Until 1 August 1910, the members of the Exchange were allowed to set any commission rate they desired to.<sup>178</sup>

This amendment did nothing to improve the Exchange's relations with the Manitoba agrarian associations. Immediately the MGGA and the *Grain Growers' Guide* considered this change in policy to be an attack on the farmers' company, since the GGG Co.'s livelihood was totally dependent on the one cent commission. The elevator companies, on the other hand, whose income apart from commission fees included revenue from handling and storing grain "could afford to handle farmers' cars for half a cent a bushel, or even for nothing."<sup>179</sup> Incensed by the Exchange's actions, the *Guide* embarked on an editorial offensive against the "elevator combine" which was seeking to drive the farmer-owned company out of business. In an unrelenting assault the *Guide* virtually blamed the "combine" for every irregularity affecting the Canadian grain industry and went as far as to suggest that the "combine" "fixed" the price of wheat in Liverpool.<sup>180</sup>

In response to this latter charge, Professor James Mavor, a political economist at the University of Toronto, told the *Guide* that "it is quite impossible to consider such a position seriously."<sup>181</sup> Nevertheless, leaders of the agrarian movement remained convinced that an Exchange con-

spiracy existed. Commenting on the suspension of the commission rule, George Langley, an official of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, declared:

This is not a fight between the elevator element and the commission element in the Exchange; it is one more move in the determination of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange to monopolize the handling of the whole of the grain exported from the West of Canada.<sup>182</sup>

But all was not lost to the agrarian cause, for the GGG Co. survived the year by appealing to its loyal farmers, who agreed to pay the one cent per bushel commission fee.<sup>183</sup>

On 1 August 1910 the commission rule was reinstated by the Exchange. The experiment had shown such firms as the GGG Co. that a fixed commission was in their best economic interest. If these dealers wanted to compete with the powerful elevator and milling concerns which dominated the Exchange, then it was to be on the latter's terms. Indeed it was clear that the view held by the Exchange's executive—that unregulated competition was detrimental to the grain business—was to be obeyed.

It has long been assumed by Canadian scholars that during the early twentieth century the Winnipeg Grain Exchange was intent on ruining the farmer-led GGG Co. A re-evaluation of the evidence suggests, however, that the Exchange's executives were rather upholding their association's by-laws than conspiring against farmers. This was, after all, one of the central objectives of commodity exchanges: "to provide uniform rules and standards for the conduct of trading."<sup>184</sup> The Winnipeg Exchange, like other such financial institutions in North America and Europe, saw itself as "an impartial referee"<sup>185</sup> responsible to its members and therefore justified in punishing violators of its regulations, whether they were farmers or merchants. Indeed, in an age when most Canadians generally favoured business organizations such as the Exchange which sought to "inculcate just and equitable principles in trade,"<sup>186</sup> Winnipeg merchants argued that some degree of internal regulation of the grain industry was an essential component of commercial stability.

#### NOTES

1. *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg), 14 September 1925 (hereafter *MFP*).
2. *Ibid.*, 14 September 1925.
3. Public Archives of Canada, MG 28 III 82, Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Papers, Vol. 63, Fiftieth Anniversary file, Speech delivered by Henry Gauer 17 December 1937.
4. *Paper Wheat: The Book* (Saskatoon, 1982). See particularly the song, "the grain exchange rag", 56-57.
5. David H. Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier 1874-1924* (Toronto, 1983), 51.
6. See for example, R.D. Colquette, *The First Fifty Years: A History of the United Grain Growers'* (Winnipeg, 1957), 41-56; H.J. Moorehouse, *Deep Furrows* (Winnipeg, 1918), 93-126; H.S. Patton, *Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada* (Cambridge, 1928), 50; L.A. Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements* (Toronto, 1924), 188-189.
7. Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 50.

8. Ian MacPherson, *The Cooperative Movement on the Prairies, 1900-1955*. Canadian Historical Association Booklet No. 33, (Ottawa, 1979), 5.
9. *The Commercial* (Winnipeg), 12 December 1887, 235.
10. C.F. Wilson, *Canadian Grain Marketing* (Winnipeg, 1979), 81.
11. *Commercial*, 2 September 1889, 1120; 11 November 1889, 166; 6 June 1892, 999; 21 October 1895, 117.
12. *Ibid.*, 17 August 1901, 1179; 27 February 1904, 603.
13. *Ibid.*, 10 February 1896, 462; 2 March 1896, 533; 28 September 1896, 54.
14. *Ibid.*, 2 September 1889, 122; 31 August 1891, 1228; 22 February 1892, 500; 2 May 1892, 857; 17 December 1894, 317.
15. D.R.M. Jackson, "The National Fallacy and the Wheat Economy: Nineteenth Century Origins of the Western Canadian Grain Trade" (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1982).
16. See note 11 above.
17. Canada. *Sessional Papers*, 1900, no. 812, "Report of the Royal Commission on Shipment and Transportation of Grain," 9.
18. *Ibid.*, 9.
19. Jackson, "National Fallacy," 120.
20. "Royal Commission." (1990), 9.
21. *Ibid.*, 9.
22. Exchange Papers, Vol. 51, Cash Grain Brokers File, "Commission Merchants Submission to Royal Grain Inquiry Commission," 31 March 1924, 1.
23. *Ibid.*, 3.
24. Exchange Papers, Vol. 1, microfilm C-10331, Minutes, Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange, 12 September 1888; 29 June 1895; 13 October 1897; 20 October 1897 (hereafter WGPE Minutes). See also, D.J. Hall, "The Manitoba Grain Act: An Agrarian Magna Charta?," *Prairie Forum* 4:1, (Spring 1979): 106.
25. *Commercial*, 4 January 1892, 368.
26. WGPE Minutes, 12 September 1888; 29 June 1895.
27. *Commercial*, 23 September 1895, 47.
28. *Ibid.*, 13 May 1899, 1027; *Winnipeg Tribune* (hereafter *WT*), 19 March 1896.
29. In 1897 the Grain Exchange's executive was as follows: Nicholas Bawlf, President (Northern Elevator Company); Robert Muir, Vice-President (Dominion Elevator Company); Council: F.W. Thompson (Ogilvie Milling Company); G.R. Crowe (Northern Elevator Company); Samuel Spink (Broker); S.A. McGaw (Dominion Elevator Company); W.A. Matheson (Lake of the Woods Milling Company); D.H. McMillan (McMillan and Company); H.D. Metcalf (Broker); Fredrick Phillips (Dominion Elevator Company); R.P. Roblin (Dominion Elevator Company); Stephen Nairn (Oatmeal Mills); and Joseph Harris (Dominion Elevator Company). WGPE, *Annual Report* (1897).
30. WGPE Minutes, 13 October 1897; 20 October 1897.
31. *Commercial*, 1 April 1899, 859; 13 May 1899, 1027-1033.
32. *Ibid.*, 11 January 1902, 450.
33. *Ibid.*, 450.
34. *Ibid.*, 30 September 1899, 105.
35. *By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange*, (Winnipeg, 1902), 35. Members of the Exchange were charged one-half these rates.
36. WGPE, *Annual Report*, (1906), 25.
37. *By-Laws*, (1902), 36-37.
38. *Commercial*, 6 February 1904, 527.
39. R.C. Brown and R. Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto, 1976), 145.
40. Michael Bliss, *A Living Profit! Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business 1883-1911* (Toronto, 1974), 43.
41. *Commercial*, 6 February 1904, 527.
42. *Report of the Royal Grain Inquiry Commission* (Ottawa, 1925), 138-141.
43. *WT*, 24 January 1907.
44. See the testimony of F.B. McLennan at the Royal Commission on the Grain Trade. *MFP*, 21 November 1906.
45. *Commercial*, 6 February 1904, 527.
46. Bliss, *Living Profit*, 50.
47. Gibbins V. Metcalf, *The Manitoba Reports* (Winnipeg), 15, (1904-1905), 570.
48. *Ibid.*, 571.
49. *MFP*, 6 March 1905.
50. Gibbins V. Metcalf, 561.
51. *Ibid.*, 572-73.
52. *Ibid.*, 572.
53. *Royal Grain Inquiry* (1925), 138.
54. *MFP*, 21 November 1906; See also WGPE, *By-Laws*, (1906), 44.
55. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1906.
56. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1906.
57. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1906.

58. *Nor-West Farmer* (Winnipeg), 20 March 1906 (hereafter *NWF*).
59. *MFP*, 21 November 1906.
60. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1906.
61. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1906.
62. See works cited in 6 above.
63. Wood, *Farmers' Movements*, 183-186.
64. *Ibid.*, 185-186.
65. Published correspondence in the *MFP*, 9 January 1907; Partridge to Roblin, 20 December 1906.
66. *MFP*, 21 November 1906; Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 48-49.
67. United Grain Growers' Company Archives, letter to farmers of Manitoba and the North-West from E.A. Partridge, 1 March 1905.
68. *Ibid.*, 1 March 1905.
69. *NWF*, 5 March 1906.
70. Partridge particularly detested the "\$50 clause" in the Exchange's commission by-law. See, Partridge to Roblin, 20 December 1906.
71. *MFP*, 9 January 1907, Bell to Roblin, 4 January 1907.
72. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1906.
73. B.R. McCutcheon, "The Birth of Agrarianism in the Prairie West," *Prairie Forum* 1 (1976); 89. See also, WGPE, *Annual Report* (1891), 23-37; *Commercial*, 23 May 1892, 943; 11 July 1892, 1140.
74. Although it should be noted that during 1883-1884, the short-lived Manitoba and Northwest Farmers' Co-operative and Protective Union experimented in the grain marketing field. But this attempt failed primarily because of a lack of capital. See, McCutcheon, *Ibid.*, 84-91. On farmers' elevator companies in the 1890s, see "Royal Commission", (1900), 7.
75. WGPE, *Annual Report*, (1900), 3-6.
76. Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 50. See also testimony of E.A. Partridge at the Royal Commission on the Grain Trade, *MFP*, 21 November 1906.
77. Circular of 5 September 1906 stated: "Our plan of dividing profits is to pay fair interest on the shares first, and then divide the remaining profits among the shareholders according to the amount of wheat we have handled for each. This is the cooperative method." As published in the *NWF*, 5 November 1906.
78. Patton. *Grain Growers'*, 50-51.
79. Bell to Roblin, 4 January 1907.
80. *Ibid.*, 4 January 1907. The cases cited were: Livestock Company V. Chicago Livestock Exchange, *Illinois Reports*. 170, 556 and the People V. Duluth Board of Trade (I was unable to locate correct citation but see *Exchange Papers*, Vol. 48, United Grain Growers, Ltd., 1921-1950. "The Exchange and the Grain Growers' Grain Company", n.d., 3).
81. Partridge testimony, *MFP*, 21 November 1906.
82. V.C. Fowke, *The National Policy and the Wheat Economy* (Toronto, 1957), 118-119.
83. *MFP*, 21 November 1906.
84. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1906.
85. Bell stated this fact under oath before the Royal Commission and given his reputation in the Winnipeg Community it may be contended that he was not perjuring himself. See, *Ibid.*, 22 November 1906.
86. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1906.
87. *Ibid.*, 21 November 1906.
88. WGPE, *By-Laws* (1906), 45.
89. *MFP*, 22 November 1906.
90. *By-Laws*, (1902), 7; Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 51.
91. Patton, *Ibid.*, 51-52.
92. Bell to Roblin, 4 January 1907.
93. *WT*, 26 October 1906.
94. According to Patton, only the Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society would "risk the disapproval of the Grain Exchange and support the newly formed western producers' cooperative, not only by buying a large portion of its wheat, but also by allowing it the regular commission of a cent a bushel." Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 52. There is no documentation of the Council's reaction to the Wholesale Society's policy.
95. *Grain Growers' Guide* (Winnipeg), 8 December 1909 (hereafter *GGG*).
96. *MFP*, 9 January 1907; Partridge, Spencer and Kennedy to Bell, 30 November 1906.
97. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1906.
98. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1906.
99. *Ibid.*, Bell to Partridge, 13 December 1906.
100. *Ibid.*, Bell to Roblin, 4 January 1907.
101. *Statutes of Manitoba*, 54 Vict. C. 31, 1891.
102. Partridge, *et. al.*, to Roblin, 20 December 1906.
103. *MFP*, 9 January 1907; Roblin to Bell, 26 December 1906.
104. Bell to Roblin, 4 January 1907.
105. *Ibid.*, 4 January 1907.
106. Bliss, *Living Profit*, 50.

107. *Ibid.*, 50; Bell to Roblin, 4 January 1907.
108. *GGG*, 8 December 1909, Spencer to Bell, 13 April 1907.
109. Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 56-57; Wood, *Farmers' Movements*, 193.
110. *GGG*, 8 December 1909. On 10 April 1907 Acting Premier Robert Rodgers sent the following telegram to the Exchange Council: "The action of your council [sic] in refusing trading privileges to the Grain Growers' Grain Company cannot be regarded by the government other than as an arbitrary and unjustifiable exercise of the powers conferred upon you through your charter...and unless remedied by the fifteenth of this month, the government will call the legislature together for the purpose of remedying this and other grievances by legislative amendments." Exchange Papers, vol. 5, microfilm C-10332, Minutes, Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange Council (hereafter Council Minutes), 11 April 1907.
111. Bell to Roblin, 4 January 1907.
112. *GGG*, 8 December 1909.
113. *MFP*, 28 January 1907.
114. *Ibid.*, 4 December 1906.
115. Under section 498 of the Criminal Code the thirteen charges against the grain dealers were: (1) By from time to time fixing the street prices of grain; (2) By fixing daily the track or cash prices of grain and the maximum that may be paid therefore; (3) By prohibiting dealers in grain from bidding for track or cash grain from the opening to the closing of the market each day; (4) By endeavoring to induce and by inducing railway and other transportation companies to withhold the means of transportation of grain at certain times in the year; (5) By elevator companies and the members thereof pooling receipts at country points; (6) By endeavoring to drive out of or ruin in business farmers, elevator companies and other independent elevator companies at country points; (7) By boycotting or endeavoring to boycott dealers in grain who are not members of the WGPE; (8) By endeavoring to create a monopoly in the grain trade; (9) By endeavoring to drive small cash or track buyers out of business; (10) By endeavoring to drive out of business all rival dealers of the elevator companies; (11) By devising, passing, and enforcing rules, regulations or by-laws of the (Winnipeg Grain and Produce Clearing Association) and the NWGDA (North-West Grain Dealers' Association) which are in restraint of trade; (12) By endeavoring to secure and securing knowledge of the business of rivals from the employees of telegraph companies, railways and terminal elevators; (13) By endeavoring to obstruct and obstructing the forwarding of the grain of rivals on railways and vessels. *WT*, 18 December 1906.
116. J.C. Gage was the manager of the International Elevator Company and a member of the Council since 1905; he would be president of the Exchange in 1916. John Love of the Winnipeg Elevator Company was a member of the Council since 1899, and president in 1905. J.G. McHugh of McHugh-Christensen Company, a commission firm, was a member of the Council in 1906 and apparently the one who had first laid the complaint against the *GGG Co.*, (Patton mistakenly refers to Gage as the president of the Exchange, but this office in 1906 was held by Cabel Tilt; Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 53).
117. Patton, *Ibid.*, 53.
118. The NWGDA was formed by the elevator companies at the turn of the century in order to reduce costs of supplies and telegraph expenses. Daily closing prices were wired to local agents who communicated them to members at the various delivery stations. "While the indicated street price was not binding on members, it more or less governed local buying." In farmers' view this eliminated competition at most elevator points. See *Ibid.*, 31.
119. *MFP*, 11 January 1907.
120. *Ibid.*, 11 January 1907.
121. *Ibid.*, 11 January 1907.
122. "The Exchange and the Grain Growers' Company," 4.
123. *WT*, 5 January 1907.
124. *Ibid.*, 23 January; 8, 13, 14, 18, 20 February 1907.
125. *Ibid.*, 23 January 1907.
126. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1907. The resolution was as follows: (1) Removing limitation on membership for Exchange; (2) Admitting to enjoyment of all privileges of the Exchange to all firms that have bought seats; (3) Provision that the right to a membership shall include the right to delegate the trading powers under the membership to anyone selected in the employ of the firm that holds the membership; (4) Prohibition of the practice of fixing the maximum price that members may pay for grain; (5) Elimination of commission rule; (6) Cancellation of power of Exchange to decide eligibility of any person to be an employee of any firm or corporation and power of Exchange to limit in any way salaries to be paid such employees; (7) Abandonment of the arbitrary interference with the business methods of individual members of the Exchange by the Exchange; (8) Exercise of the provincial government's right to inspect the minutes and accounts of the Exchange; (9) Construction of gallery and public viewing of trading; (10) Prohibition of gambling in futures.
127. *Ibid.*, 25, 26, 30, 31 January 1, 2 February 1907.
128. *Ibid.*, 31 January 1907.
129. WGPE, *By-Laws* (1906), Notice of 19 April 1907.
130. *WT*, 31 January 1907.
131. *Ibid.*, 12 February 1907.

132. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1907.
133. *Ibid.*, 18 February 1907.
134. *Ibid.*, 15, 16 February 1907.
135. *Ibid.*, 3 February 1907.
136. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1907.
137. *Ibid.*, 18 January, 13, 15, 21, 26, 27, 28 February 1907.
138. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1907.
139. *Ibid.*, 4 March 1907.
140. As of 8 March 1907 the Conservatives won 25 seats and the Liberals only 13, *Ibid.*, 8 March 1907. See also, W.L. Morton *Manitoba: A History* (Toronto, 1957), 293.
141. *WT*, 8 March 1907.
142. *MFP*, 23 April 1907.
143. *Ibid.*, 14 May 1907.
144. *Ibid.*, 15 May 1907.
145. Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 58.
146. *MFP*, 15 May 1907.
147. *Western Law Reporter*, 6, (Toronto, 1907), 19-30; WGPE, *The Alleged Conspiracy Case* (Winnipeg, 1907).
148. WGPE, *ibid.*, 3.
149. *Proceedings of Federal Grain Conference to Consider the Royal Commission of 1906*, 13 March-3 April 1908, Ottawa, 12. F.H. Phippen had acted as counsel for members of the Exchange during Gibbins V. Metcalfe in 1903-1905.
150. *MFP*, 2 March 1908.
151. Canada. Sessional Papers, 1908, no. 59, "Report of the Royal Commission on the Grain Trade of Canada, 1906", 4.
152. Robert Magill, "Private Business and Royal Commissions," *Dalhousie Review* 1 (October 1921): 235. Magill was the secretary of the Exchange from 1916 to 1930.
153. See, Michael Bliss, "Another Anti-Trust Tradition: Canadian Anti-Combines Policy, 1889-1910," in *Enterprise and National Development*, ed. G. Porter and R.D. Cuff (Toronto, 1973), 43.
154. Fowke, *National Policy*, 122; Bliss, *Ibid.*, 46.
155. *Farm Crops* (Winnipeg), June 1907, 12.
156. *MFP*, 6 June 1907.
157. *Ibid.*, 3 January 1908.
158. Provincial Archives of Manitoba [PAM], MG 10 A2, Winnipeg Board of Trade Papers, General Minutes, 21 January 1908.
159. Council Minutes, 13 February 1908.
160. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1908. See also, *Statutes of Manitoba*, 7-8 Edward VII, c. 79, 1908.
161. *MFP*, 27 February 1908.
162. Winnipeg Grain Exchange (WGE), *Annual Report* (Winnipeg, 1909), 26-27.
163. *Ibid.*, 26-27.
164. Council Minutes, 12 March 1908; 23 March 1908.
165. *Ibid.*, 4 May 1908. The financing of the new building was underwritten by a group called the "Traders Building Association" which consisted of several Exchange Council members. The Grain Exchange rented the building from this association.
166. *MFP*, 29 August 1908.
167. WGPE, *Annual Report* (1907), 35.
168. *Ibid.*, 34.
169. *Federal Grain Conference of 1908*, 12-15.
170. *GGG*, September 1908.
171. Exchange Papers, vol. 2, microfilm C-10331 Minutes of General Meetings, Winnipeg Grain Exchange, 29 September 1908 (hereafter WGE General Minutes).
172. *Ibid.*, 29 September 1908.
173. Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 73.
174. *Ibid.*, 73.
175. The Company's profit for 1907-1908 totalled \$240,000 as compared to \$60,000 in 1900. See, PAM, MG II C53, Northern Elevator Company Papers, Profit Sheets 1900-1908.
176. WGE General Minutes, 27 July 1909.
177. WGE, *Annual Report* (1909), 21.
178. *Ibid.*, 21.
179. Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 74.
180. See for example, E.A. Partridge, "Another Step in the Work of Creating a Perfect Monopoly in the Grain Trade," *GGG*, 14 August 1909. See also the *Guide's* editorials of 21 August; 4, 11, 20 September; 27 October; 3 November 1909.
181. *Ibid.*, 20 September 1909.
182. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1909.
183. Patton, *Grain Growers'*, 75-76.
184. T.A. Hieronymus, *Economics of Futures Trading* (New York, 1971), 13-14.
185. Jonathan Lurie, "The Chicago Board of Trade, 1874-1905" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1970), xii.
186. *Commercial*, 13 December 1887, 235.

## Plain Racism: The Reaction Against Oklahoma Black Immigration to the Canadian Plains

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**ABSTRACT.** The study of the reaction to immigrants to the Canadian Plains has been dominated by the concept of "nativism." There are weaknesses in this concept, and the purpose of this paper is to illustrate them by examining the exceptional response to black Oklahomans who migrated to the area prior to World War I. This paper is also a call for the application of other theories to the Canadian Plains' response to immigration.

**RESUME:** Les recherches sur les réactions de l'immigration dans les plaines canadiennes ont été dominé par le concept du "nativisme" (opposition à une minorité sous prétexte qu'elle pose une menace à la collectivité canadienne) Il existe des lacunes concernant ce concept, et le propos de cet écrit est de les illustrer. Nous examinerons cette attitude exceptionnelle envers les noirs de l'Oklahoma qui immigrèrent dans la région des plaines avant la première guerre mondiale. L'essai a aussi pour but de solliciter diverses théories possibles sur les réactions de l'immigration dans les plaines canadiennes.

Previous examinations of popular attitudes towards immigrants to western Canada have been dominated by the concept of "nativism."<sup>1</sup> One of the leading proponents of this theory has defined nativism as, "...opposition to an internal minority on the grounds that it posed a threat to Canadian national life."<sup>2</sup> The concept fuses prejudice and nationalism to explain why western Canadians reacted negatively to a wide variety of immigrants during the settlement period. Nativism is thus a general theory, and has proven to be useful in gaining an understanding of the general negative reaction to many immigrant groups.

Its strength as a general theory is also nativism's major weakness as a tool for understanding the reactions to particular groups. Proponents of nativism offer a hierarchy of acceptability to explain such differences, but this is insufficient because it does not explain where such attitudes originated, how they were transmitted, or why the level of antagonism varied from group to group. The purpose of this article is to draw attention to these problems by focussing upon the exceptional response to black Oklahomans who migrated to the Canadian Plains before World War I. This article is also a call for the application of other theories to the Canadian Plains' experience in order to gain new perspectives on the reactions to immigration.<sup>3</sup>

Nativism does not deal adequately with the existing prejudices brought to the Canadian Plains by the majority groups. Settlers from Britain, the United States, and eastern Canada had well-developed views on blacks long before they stepped down from the immigrant cars. Nor does nativism help to explain how such prejudice was reinforced, and transmitted throughout the developing society. In the case of the black Oklahomans, prairie newspapers were an important source of stereotyping before the blacks arrived, as well as of negative opinion when they appeared at the border. Finally, nativism does little to explain the variety of responses to

immigrants. The reaction to the black Oklahomans was qualitatively different from that directed at other groups. The intensity of the emotion generated was out of all proportion to the relatively small number of blacks who came north.<sup>4</sup>

The white, English-speaking peoples of the North Atlantic have a long history of racism directed at blacks. The origins of this prejudice are buried in the periods preceeding the first British contacts with Africa. These first contacts were not positive and, unfortunately, served as the basis for the development of a number of stereotypes, many of which are still in circulation.<sup>5</sup>

The Victorian era was a particularly negative one for the development of race relations. The world-wide expansion of the British Empire, made possible by technological superiority, served to confirm British views of their own racial supremacy. For example, when a band of Jamaican peasants rioted in 1865, the venerable London *Times* argued that,

It seems impossible to eradicate the original savageness of the African blood. As long as the black man has a strong white Government and numerous white population to control him he is capable of living as a respectable member of society... But wherever he attains to a certain degree of independence there is the fear that he will resume the barbarous life and the fierce habits of his African ancestors....<sup>6</sup>

Such attitudes were part of the milieu of Victorian Britain, and were brought to the Canadian Plains by British immigrants. These opinions fused with the virulent racism which emanated from south of the forty-ninth parallel, and was brought north by white American immigrants. The United States has a long history of racism, which need not be chronicled here. It is sufficient to note that white Americans disliked blacks, and during the late nineteenth century went to considerable lengths to segregate them. Indeed, some American immigrants saw the Canadian Plains as an escape from contact with blacks.<sup>7</sup>

Eastern Canadian immigrants to the Canadian Plains were not free from the taint of racism. While Canada's admission of escaped slaves prior to the American Civil War is often touted as an example of racial tolerance, the lives of the blacks once in Canada were in fact far from ideal. Blacks were subjected to economic and social discrimination in eastern Canada, imposed by a racially conscious society. At one time, both Ontario and Nova Scotia legislated racially separate schools.<sup>8</sup>

The extent of eastern Canadian prejudice towards blacks can be gauged from the fact that objections to black settlement on the plains were being raised in the east even before western Canadians voiced their disapproval of the idea. As early as 1899 the Immigration Branch of the federal Department of the Interior was replying negatively to the suggestion that blacks be allowed to settle on the Canadian Plains. The Branch informed its agent in Kansas City that "...it is not desired that any negro immigrants should arrive in Western Canada...or that such immigration should be promoted by our agents." When a black man from Shawnee,

Oklahoma Territory contacted Canadian authorities in 1902 on behalf of a group of blacks, he was informed by L.M. Fortier, Secretary of the Department, that, "...the Canadian Government is not particularly desirous of encouraging the immigration of negroes."<sup>9</sup>

In spite of such official disapproval, a few black settlers did find their way northward, apparently lured by Canadian government advertisements in their local newspapers. The Laurier government had undertaken an extensive advertising campaign in the American mid-West trying to attract farmers. These advertisements found their way into black newspapers in the Oklahoma and Indian Territories. They appeared in black newspapers such as the *Boley Beacon*, the *Clearview Patriarch*, and the influential *Muskogee Cimeter*. The black *Boley Progress* carried one item on 16 March 1905 stating that the Canadian Plains were warmer than Texas, and carried numerous other advertisements in subsequent years.<sup>10</sup>

These Canadian advertisements attracted a number of black farmers. Several black families located near Maidstone, in what would become the province of Saskatchewan, in the spring of 1905. They were joined by at least one other black family in the autumn of 1906.<sup>11</sup> This trickle did not attract much attention, however, nor did it generate comment in Canada. The reaction to black immigration did not begin until events in Oklahoma began forcing more blacks to look for a haven outside of the state.

The Oklahoma and Indian Territories became the state of Oklahoma in 1907, and the white controlled government immediately set about segregating blacks along the lines established by the older southern states. In 1907 a "Jim Crow" segregation law was passed, and in 1910 blacks were disfranchised. Racial violence accompanied these legislative moves, and while many black Oklahomans resisted, others began making plans to leave the state.<sup>12</sup>

A spurt of black migration followed each of the Oklahoma segregation developments. A black family moved to Wildwood, Alberta, from Oklahoma in 1908. Twenty black families from the state followed in short order. Several families added to the growing black population in the Maidstone, Saskatchewan, area that same year. In 1910 a black family, including ten children, arrived in Maidstone from Tabor, Oklahoma.<sup>13</sup>

Oklahoma's segregation policies were a major factor in Jeff Edwards's decision to move to the Amber Valley area of Alberta, just east of Athabasca. The blacks who went north to eastern Canada were fleeing slavery, he said, "We in Amber Valley are here because we fled something almost as hard to bear—'Jim Crowism'." Edwards left Oklahoma in 1910 and on the train to Canada met another black man, Henry Sneed, who was also heading north. Sneed later returned to Oklahoma to begin organizing a larger party of black emigrants.

Sneed returned to Clearview, Oklahoma, in August 1910. He had no trouble attracting prospects due to Oklahoma's racial policies. Meetings were held in various parts of the south, and in 1911 emigrants from Oklahoma, as well as Kansas and Texas, gathered in Weleetka, Oklahoma, to begin their trek. The first group consisted of 194 men, women and children, and no less than 9 carloads of horses and farm implements. Another group of 200 began gathering in the same town soon after the first band departed, but waited to hear if the first party was admitted before setting out.<sup>14</sup>

The Sneed party was stopped at Emerson, Manitoba, while a rigorous medical examination was carried out. Fearing that an attempt would be made to keep them out, one Oklahoma newspaper reported, the leaders of the group had appealed to Washington, and the United States Consul at Ottawa was directed to determine whether black Americans, as a class, could be excluded under Canadian law. It was decided that no Canadian regulation specifically relating to black immigration existed, so the group was allowed to enter. Still, prospective black emigrants had to be uneasy, especially when the Guthrie *Oklahoma Guide* reprinted the Kansas City *Journal's* notation that, "The exodus has been bitterly opposed by a large per cent [sic] of the white population of the Canadian provinces..."<sup>15</sup> That they were not wanted on the Canadian Plains would become increasingly clear to black Oklahomans in the months ahead as Canada served notice that it intended to keep the northern plains white.

The Canadian reaction to the black immigrants was plain racism. The dominant groups who settled on the Canadian Plains had well-developed views of blacks. This prejudice was confirmed, and transmitted throughout the developing society, by the racist portrayal of blacks in prairie newspapers. Blacks were the butt of jokes and cartoons which regularly appeared in western journals. Blacks were also negatively pictured in numerous advertisements. Minstrel shows were very popular at the time, and were frequently advertised.<sup>16</sup>

Far more serious were the sensationalist reports of exceptional contemporary stories involving blacks. For example, in the spring of 1910 the Edmonton *Capital* gave prominent coverage to the murder confession of a local black man. James Chapman had gone to the Mounted Police and admitted to having helped a white woman poison her husband in Stillwater, Oklahoma, over a year earlier. Chapman and the woman had then fled to Alberta. While there was no connection between this story and the arrival of the black immigrants, it is significant that this news item appeared in the same issue of the *Capital* as an item announcing the Edmonton Board of Trade's decision to try to stop black immigration. Given its portrayal of the two events, it is also not surprising that less than a week later the same Edmonton journal would editorialize that,

The Board of Trade has done well to call attention to the amount of negro immigration which is taking place into this district. It has already attained such

proportions as to discourage white settlers from going into certain sections. The immigration department has no excuse for encouraging it at all...we prefer to have the southern race problem left behind. The task of assimilating all the white people who enter our borders is quite a heavy enough one without the color proposition being added.<sup>17</sup>

By the spring of 1910, the Edmonton Board of Trade felt that it was time for action on the question of black immigration. At its monthly meeting on 12 April, the Board unanimously passed a resolution calling the federal government's attention to the "marked increase" in black immigration to the Canadian Plains. The Board said that it felt that the foundations for a "negro problem" were being laid. In the Board's opinion the blacks were a "most undesirable element," and it urged the authorities to take immediate action to stop more from entering the country.<sup>18</sup>

Canadian immigration authorities were in fact already concerned with the developing black influx, and were trying to stop it. At first they tried to stop immigration literature from reaching blacks in Oklahoma. When this proved haphazard, immigration officials tried using vigorous medical examinations at the border as a deterrent. This latter manoeuvre proved to be without value when healthy black men, women, and children presented themselves for admission. Henry Sneed's group shattered the medical examination idea late in March 1911 and this, plus their numbers, attracted considerable publicity. This publicity in turn provoked comment, and revealed the deep feelings on the Canadian Plains on the subject of black immigration.

When their Great Northern train arrived in Emerson, Manitoba, Henry Sneed's group immediately attracted attention. The local newspaper, the *Emerson Journal*, reported the arrival of "men, women and pickaninnies," and then commented that the town had been decorated with "coons" ever since. They had money, farm implements, and livestock, it continued, and were generally of a "good appearance." Yet blacks were not the most desirable class of settlers, in its opinion, although it would be difficult to reject them once they had come this far. The *Journal* then prophetically suggested that it would be better to stop the migration at its source. This is precisely what the Canadian government eventually did.<sup>19</sup>

The Sneed party's arrival and entry, once their medical examinations were completed, was noted across the Canadian Plains, and there was immediate comment. On the day the party arrived in Winnipeg, a Brandon woman, who signed herself "An Englishwoman Who Had Lived in Oklahoma," contacted the editor of the *Manitoba Free Press* with her concerns. She began by regretting the invasion of "thousands" of Oklahoma blacks into Canada. Since she was concerned with the welfare of the country, and had no great interest in Oklahoma's, she was sorry that Canada was being saddled with people that the southern states did not want. It was Canada's misfortune, if not the country's own fault, that it had not yet passed a law barring blacks. Since liberty was not to be confused with license, she continued, one would only enjoy true freedom by being

restrained. Yet everyone learned by sad experience, only usually too late. Those who had never lived in black inhabited areas and had only been in contact with “well-disposed” blacks, would find the disgust felt towards them unintelligible, she said. Those who did know their habits, however, could only see blacks as “undesirable”—they could never be colonists or settlers. In concluding, she argued that, “As negroes flourish in a hot country and do as little work as possible, it is hoped that Jack Frost will accomplish what the authorities apparently cannot.”<sup>20</sup>

No doubt because of the interest stirred, when the Sneed party reached Winnipeg the local *Manitoba Free Press* was at the station with a reporter. In his article, the reporter noted that not one of the 194 black homeseekers had been rejected at the border, and indicated that, “...a good deal of speculation is rife as to the outcome of the new movement.” He then gave a brief history of how the group came to Canada.

The reporter then turned his attention to the question of assimilation, after conceding that it was generally recognized that the best settlers were those who could easily be incorporated into the population. It was argued with some truth, he said, that the blacks must forever be unto themselves, and were therefore not the best class of settlers. Yet as the regulations then stood, “...there is absolutely no means by which the better class of negro farmer may be rejected.”<sup>21</sup>

A “...member of the much maligned and hated race...,” Samuel H. Gibson, contacted the *Free Press* after this article appeared to thank the paper for its “...fair, candid, and impartial statement....” He wanted to thank them, he said, because as far as he was aware they were the first western Canadian newspaper to get all of the facts and to express an “unbiased opinion.” He continued by asserting that, “Much has been said and written on the matter (black immigration); but, for the most part, I opine, it has emanated from persons whose minds are warped by blind prejudice, and who, therefore, are incompetent to sit in judgement on any question of which impartiality is the principal element.”<sup>22</sup>

Like its Winnipeg counterpart, the Edmonton *Journal* had a reporter waiting at the station when the Sneed group arrived, indicating once again the importance attached to their appearance. At five o'clock in the morning everyone on the train was very, very tired. Yet even then their spirits were not dampened, and one member of the party managed to have fun with the reporter. Alighting from the train, one black man announced to the newspaper man that he was so tired that he felt like he was turning yellow. The reporter said he, “...reeled, staggered, and leaning against the station building felt a little faint at coming on such a supposed revelation.” He said he had heard the expression “yellow coon” used in jest, but never thought he would come across such a type. Approaching the black jester, the journalist was able to see under the station's lights that in fact the black man had not changed colour, and he was able to inform the Oklahoman that, “...such an affliction had not overtaken him.”<sup>23</sup>

Mr. R. Jennings, editor and managing director of the *Journal*, noted that the black immigration was causing considerable uneasiness. He did not find this at all surprising, and in his words, "Whether well-founded or not, we have to face the fact that a great deal of prejudice exists against the coloured man and that his presence in large numbers creates problems from which we naturally shrink." Yet if the blacks met the existing immigration requirements it seemed impossible to deny them entry, in Jennings's opinion. Given these circumstances one could but wish them well in their new homes, and hope that they conducted themselves so that the ill-will directed at them was dissipated. They could become useful if they followed Booker Washington's idea of salvation through hard work. There would be plenty of that where they were going, he concluded, and if they were able to turn their wild land into productive farms they could prove more desirable citizens, "...than any of those who are now speaking so contemptuously of them and are loafing about the city streets."<sup>24</sup>

Not all Albertans, however, were willing to be quite so liberal. In a front page news item the *Calgary Herald* informed its readers of the large black party's arrival in the provincial capital. They were a much talked about group, it noted wryly, "Heralded throughout their entire journey by more widespread publicity than they would have received had they been the latest thing in a minstrel show...." The men were all strong and sturdy, and the immigration hall was full of "tumbling pickanninies" which promised another successful generation.

In the same issue, J.H. Woods, editor and managing director of the *Herald*, concluded that the black immigration was the first fruits of reciprocity with the United States. The "colour question" was soon going to agitate the public, and he found Frank Oliver's approach to the question "tepid." It seemed as if the Minister of the Interior was allowing the colony to establish itself, and that he somehow hoped to sweep them back southward. Teddy Roosevelt's question of what to do with the blacks was being answered, Woods said, by sending them to Alberta. "Reciprocity," he concluded, "means that Canada is anxious to take all that America does not want."<sup>25</sup>

The public was already agitated. On 31 March 1911, F.T. Fisher of the Edmonton Board of Trade had penned a seven-page letter to Frank Oliver. Fisher noted that the subject of black immigration had been broached a year before, but that the influx had grown considerably. It was time for "drastic action" since there was evidence that "bitter race prejudice" would develop in the areas the blacks were settling. There was no room for argument, and the contention that the blacks were good people and farmers was irrelevant. One only had to look to the United States to see what would happen if too many blacks came north. He had white settlers in his office, he said, the very best sort of settler, who would not go to where the blacks had located. In concluding, Fisher argued that serious trouble was brewing. In his words,

White settlers in the homestead districts are becoming alarmed and exasperated and are prepared to go to almost any length. People in the towns and cities...are beginning to realize the imperative necessity of effective action; and it only needs a slight effort to start up an agitation which would be joined in by practically every white man in the country. There is every indication that unless effective action is taken, such an agitation will be put in motion in the near future.<sup>26</sup>

Oliver did not need Fisher's warning for he was receiving other evidence of the white mood on the Canadian Plains. The Secretary of Edmonton's Municipal Chapter of the I.O.D.E., Mrs. A. Knight, forwarded a petition against black immigration from her organization to Oliver. She informed him that they had held an emergency meeting on 27 March to discuss the question of black immigration, and they were against it. As if to echo Fisher's assertion of possible trouble in areas where the blacks were locating, A.I. Sawley, Secretary of the Athabasca Landing Board of Trade, wrote to Oliver that, "When it was learned around town that these negroes were coming out there was great indignation, and many threatened violence, threatened to meet them on the trail out of town, and drive them back." Sawley also said that as there already were blacks in the area, and only a few whites had as yet located there, there was a danger of it becoming all black. He suggested that as a remedy the new black arrivals be segregated with a group that had already located near Lobstick Lake.<sup>27</sup>

For the time being Sneed's group was unperturbed by the controversy they were creating, as they joined one of their preachers in celebrating their apparent good fortune. The black minister gathered a group of seventy-five together in one of the outsheds of the Edmonton immigration hall, and sitting on wooden stumps and boxes they heard him say that God had made Canada a free country, but that it was up to them to make the best of it. The reporter covering the event was impressed by the fact that the preacher never mentioned or referred to the United States, and the journalist took this to mean that the group was very impressed with what they had seen on the northern side of the international boundary.<sup>28</sup> Their apparent satisfaction was to be short-lived, however, when an unfortunate accusation was made which further aroused anti-black prejudice on the Canadian Plains, and initially reflected upon the entire group, and any future black settlers.

Shortly after six o'clock on 4 April 1911, fifteen-year-old Hazel Huff was found by a neighbour lying unconscious on the kitchen floor of her Edmonton home. She had a handkerchief securely tied over her eyes and had apparently been drugged with chloroform. The neighbour immediately contacted a doctor and the police. When the girl regained consciousness she told the police that she had answered a knock at the door, and was grabbed by a black man who tried to drug her. She fought him but was overpowered, she said, and did not remember anything after that point.

When her parents returned home they searched the house and found that a diamond ring and some money were missing. According to one report, the father became so enraged that he took his daughter and went

searching for the assailant armed with a revolver. The police believed two black men were involved, although they only arrested one by the name of J.F. Witsue. He was charged with robbery two days later, but the police refused to elaborate when pestered by reporters.<sup>29</sup>

The news of the supposed attack spread as quickly as the proverbial prairie fire, but managed to pick up a few embellishments on the way. In addition, several newspapers immediately linked the black settlers with the incident. The Calgary *Albertan* assured its readers that no criminal assault other than the administering of the drug had taken place, and in a later editorial argued that, "The assault made by a colored man upon a little girl in Edmonton should open the eyes of the authorities in Ottawa as to what may be expected regularly if Canada is to open the door to all the colored people of the republic and not bar their way from open entry here." The Edmonton *Journal* apparently deserted its former moderate stance, since it reprinted this comment verbatim and with no rejoinder. The Calgary *Herald* argued that the attempts to colonize blacks north of Edmonton had to be carefully examined. The drugging of the girl in Edmonton could be taken as an indication of what could happen in Alberta as a result of American blacks being allowed to settle in Canada.<sup>30</sup>

On Saturday, 8 April, the Lethbridge *Daily News* published an editorial entitled "The Black Peril." It noted that the assault upon the Edmonton girl had come very soon after the arrival of the large party from Oklahoma, and argued that this was a warning to the authorities of what to expect if blacks were allowed to enter the country. Canada did not need a "negro problem." The blacks who were in the country had to be kept away from homesteads, it continued, for in the more isolated areas, where the women were often left alone, there would be an ever present horror. "Keep the black demon out of Canada," was its stand.

This was too much for a local black farmer, L.D. Brower, and he contacted the Lethbridge *Daily Herald* to reply. After noting the *News's* comments, Brower attacked its argument. He asked what that paper thought of the immorality of slavery, and whether it knew that black men had defended white women during the American Civil War? The source of the *News's* prejudice was its jealousy at the progress the blacks had made since 1865, and thus it would deny blacks the right to freely enter Canada. The Edmonton story was probably a fake, and while waiting for the truth he would farm his land and the blacks further north would tackle the wilderness. The *News*, in the meantime, could continue to supply its form of "intellectual food," but, he said, "I submit to the judgement of the fair minded Canadian citizen, which of us is best improving his God-given talents."<sup>31</sup>

The Saskatoon *Daily Phoenix* announced the incident to its readers in a front page item with a large headline: "A Negro Atrocity—White Girl Flogged and Assaulted by Late Arrivals at Edmonton." It said that the first black atrocity since the large party arrived from the United States

ten days before had been reported. The Regina *Morning Leader* carried substantially the same item on its front page, which prompted a comment from the Edmonton *Daily Bulletin*. Perhaps because of its close association with Frank Oliver, the *Bulletin* had remained strangely silent on the question of black immigration in general, and on the Sneed group in particular. The Regina report aroused the editor, John Howey, to state that,

Bad news not only travels fast, but like a snowball on the down grade, the further it goes the bigger it grows. This particular item picked up a second negro and a flogging between Edmonton and Regina. It can hardly have been less than a murder and a lynching when it reached Toronto, and a free-for-all race war by the time it got to New York.<sup>32</sup>

Even when it was determined that the black man charged had no connection with the settlers, feelings against the group in Edmonton remained high. Furthermore, the feeling was growing stronger, and in one journalist's opinion another such incident would push the "rowdy element" to the lynching point. Even the saner members of the community believed that the black influx had to be stopped. J.H. Woods of the Calgary *Herald* editorialized that the "negro problem" was the most serious then facing the United States. Edmonton had the sympathy and support of the whole west in protesting the black immigration, and it was hard to understand Frank Oliver's apathy to the situation.<sup>33</sup>

These reports would indicate that the age-old sexual mythology surrounding the black man was being reinforced in many white western Canadian minds. Indeed, when Fritz Freidrichs of Mewassin, Alberta, contacted the Immigration Branch on 12 April to voice his disapproval of black immigration, his major concern was that, "These negroes have misused young girls and women and killed them." This was tragic, but the full dimensions of the tragedy were not revealed until nine days after the supposed assault when the girl confessed to having fabricated the whole story.

According to the Edmonton *Journal* the young girl, "...had not been attacked and overcome by a big, black, burly nigger who was intent on robbing the house, as was first believed." The girl had lost the diamond ring involved, and fearing punishment, had made up the tale. She became frightened with the commotion caused and, when a man was charged, decided to confess. Interestingly, the Edmonton Chief of Police had known the truth for several days, but had sworn the family to secrecy. No explanation was given for this action.<sup>34</sup>

The girl's story had an impact, before she confessed, and cannot be divorced from the agitation against black immigration which continued to grow. On the night of 7 April, Mr. C.E. Simmonds of Leduc addressed a "representative gathering" at the Conservative Party club rooms in Edmonton. After discussing and deprecating the Liberal's reciprocity policy, he turned his attention to the subject of immigration. Just as British Columbia did not want to be called "Yellow British Columbia," Simmonds said, he did not want his province to be labelled "Black Alberta." It was

time immigration reflected personal rights; they all had a right to choose whom they wished to live near. He did not want Alberta to be black, he repeated, or even black in spots, and he believed that the province would not stand for a black invasion. "I can only see one way out of this difficulty," he concluded, "and this is to put the present government out of power and bring in one who will listen to our pleas... Way down in Ottawa they do not think of the matter as seriously as we do, and therefore the interest is lacking."<sup>35</sup>

The Edmonton Board of Trade was determined that Ottawa would listen, and it launched a vigorous petition campaign. After giving a brief account of early black immigration into Alberta, the Board's petition argued that these people were but the advance guard of several more hundreds, and that their arrival would be disastrous. It continued,

We cannot admit as any factor the argument that these people may be good farmers or good citizens. It is a matter of common knowledge that it has been proved in the United States that negroes and whites cannot live in proximity without the occurrence of revolting lawlessness, and the development of bitter race hatred... We are anxious that such a problem should not be introduced into this fair land at present enjoying a reputation for freedom from such lawlessness as has developed in all sections of the United States where there is any considerable negro element. There is no reason to believe that we have here a higher order of civilization, or that the introduction of a negro problem here would have different results.

It was then urged that immediate steps be taken to stop any more blacks from settling on the Canadian Plains.<sup>36</sup>

The Edmonton Board set up a special committee to oversee the distribution of the petition throughout the city. Copies were placed in several banks and hotels downtown and in the Board of Trade Office, and plans were made to canvass door-to-door. The committee was perhaps spurred by a newspaper report originating in Vancouver that a Colonel Tom J. Harris of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, was planning to bring more blacks into Canada. The Kentucky-born "Colonel" was quoted as saying he would bring five thousand "niggahs" north before the summer ended. Members of the Edmonton City Council may also have seen the item, for when a letter from F.T. Fisher of the Board of Trade was read at a council meeting on 25 April it was immediately acted upon. Only one alderman, Mr. McKinley, voted against endorsing the Board of Trade's action.<sup>37</sup>

Local blacks did not tamely submit to the Board of Trade's efforts, and tried to nullify the effectiveness of the petition campaign. The tactic used was to have several blacks follow a canvasser, interrupt any conversation he might have trying to get signatures, and try to dissuade anyone from signing. Secretary Fisher of the Board of Trade deprecated these efforts arguing that the blacks did not "appreciate the spirit" in which the petitioning was being done. The local blacks should recognize that the idea of excluding blacks was merely an attempt to prevent the recurrence of the situation in the United States, and that their own position would be vastly more intolerable with a larger black community. "Those negroes

who have been here some time," Fisher said, "have had a square deal and been treated as whites, but if you would get a few thousand more in, conditions would be much changed. They would then be treated as they were in the south." He also claimed that nearly everyone approached was signing and, while his 95 percent success rate is questionable, over 3,400 Edmontonians eventually did sign.<sup>38</sup>

The Edmonton Board of Trade also had considerable success when it contacted other such groups across the prairies, and by the end of May 1911 the Strathcona, Morinville, Fort Saskatchewan, and Calgary, Alberta, Boards of Trade had either endorsed or joined the Edmontonians in urging that black immigration be stopped. They were joined by their counterparts in Yorkton and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and Winnipeg, Manitoba. On 29 April, Francis C. Clare, Secretary-Treasurer of the Edmonton Chapter of the United Farmers of Alberta, wrote to the Immigration Branch to say that his group was, "...in full sympathy with the resolution passed by the Edmonton Board of Trade." On the same day, J.M. Liddell, Secretary-Treasurer of the Pincher Station, Alberta, Chapter of the UFA, also wrote to Ottawa to register his group's disapproval of black immigration, and to urge that they be excluded permanently. In his words, "...we consider negroes undesirable as fellow citizens in this Province...." The Edmonton Builders Exchange, an organization of many contractors' groups, sent a separate petition calling black immigration a "serious menace." A.I. Sawley of the Athabasca Landing Board of Trade again wrote to Frank Oliver stating, "Canada is the last country open to the white race. Are we going to preserve it for the white race, or are we going to permit the blacks free use of large portions of it?"<sup>39</sup>

In Saskatoon, the local Board of Trade's endorsement of the Edmonton position brought praise from the Saskatoon *Daily Phoenix*. The action may seem to have been rather harsh, the journal argued, but it was convinced that it was in the best interests of both Canada and the blacks. The two races could never have anything in common and, while the coming of a few might be all right, hundreds would be a far more serious matter. Several days later "Fair Play" contacted the newspaper to challenge its argument, and having lived in a black town this writer felt qualified to speak on the subject. He argued that the blacks could be as good citizens as whites, and included some statistics from a federal Department of Justice Report on prison inmate populations to prove his contention.

Unfortunately for "Fair Play," the data he cited was open to a challenge, as the *Daily Phoenix* noted two days later when an editorial appeared answering his letter. The statistics proved the opposite, the paper said, since they showed blacks to have a proportionately higher inmate population than whites. The *Phoenix* then went on to argue that the "problem of the negroe" on the North American continent was America's, and had no place in Canada. The agitation against the black man's entrance was due to the large numbers of Americans living in Western Canada,

for, "...there is no inherent unfriendliness towards the black man in this country...."<sup>40</sup>

The assertion that the anti-black feelings being expressed on the prairies were from white American settlers was not new, but it did not go unchallenged. When Estelle Coffee of Neilburg, Saskatchewan, contacted the Edmonton *Journal* at the height of the black immigration controversy she asked why "...the people of this country accept the negro as their equal socially and object to them as neighbors?" Obviously a former American, this woman attempted to poke a hole in the inflated Canadian claims of racial tolerance, and tried to get them to accept some responsibility for the agitation then underway. She found it hard to understand why the people of the north who believed, preached, and practiced social equality, objected to black settlers. It would be easy to understand why a white Southerner would object to living with blacks; "We do not accept them as our equals at any time or in any way...." She wanted to know if it was right to keep blacks from settling in Canada when everyone seemed so anxious for them to have every advantage. If Southerners could live with thousands of blacks, she concluded, surely Canadians could tolerate a few hundred.<sup>41</sup>

While western Anglo-Canadians displayed a degree of hypocrisy on the race question, this by no means indicates that other Canadians were somehow free from the taint of racism. Describing blacks as "...that special element, the worst of all," Arthur Fortin, LLB, of St. Evarist Station, Beauce, Québec, contacted Frank Oliver to assure him that any government action to stop the black influx would meet with the approval of that part of French Canada. He personally felt that they should try "...to prevent or at least control the immigration of Darkies into the Dominion. Just as it does for the Chinies— the Hindoes— and the Japs...." After the Winnipeg Board of Trade passed its resolution on the black immigration question, the German language *Der Nordwesten* of that city, after quoting from the document argued that,

...dass die vielen Faelle von Lynchjustiz im Sueden der Staaten, von denen wir fast taeglich lesen, und bei denen es sich fast ausschliesslich um Verbrechen handelt, die von Negeren begangen worden sind, wohl jeden, abgesehen von anderen Gruenden, ueberzeugen duerften, wie wenig wuensenswert ein solcher Zuwachs unserer Bevoelkerung ist.

Es waere zu wuenschen, dass noch andere oeffentliche Koerperschaften von der Art der hiesigen Handelskammer sich dem Protest der letzteren anschliessen.<sup>42</sup>

The commentary and agitation against black immigration could not but come to the attention of Parliament, and the subject was raised several times in the House of Commons. Even before the large Sneed party arrived, Frank Oliver was questioned on his Department's policy regarding black immigrants. The Minister of the Interior, in a blatant falsehood, assured the House on 2 March 1911 that "...there are no instructions issued by the Immigration Branch of my department which will exclude any man on account of his race or colour...." The subject was again broached a

few weeks later, and Oliver admitted that there was a strong sentiment against the admission of blacks. He again assured the House that blacks seeking admittance to Canada would be subject only to existing provisions regarding immigration.

Robert Borden, the Conservative Party Leader and Leader of the Opposition, noted that a great deal depended upon how strictly those regulations were applied, and he thought it would be very unfortunate if anyone were excluded because of their colour. Not all Conservatives were quite so sympathetic to the blacks, however, and on 3 April, William Thoburn, the Conservative member for the Ontario riding of Lanark North, asked Oliver whether the government was prepared to stop the developing black influx, and whether it would not be preferable, "...to preserve for the sons of Canada the lands they propose to give to niggers?" That black immigration was linked to other "coloured" immigration in many Canadian minds was again revealed in the comments of William H. Sharpe, the Conservative member for the Manitoba riding of Lisgar, who rose on 1 May to state that, like British Columbians, he wanted a "white west" and urged the government to stop the flow of blacks.<sup>43</sup>

Through its previous actions it is clear that the government, like many westerners and several Members of Parliament, did not want blacks on the Canadian Plains. Action on the problem was difficult, however, since the reciprocity negotiations with the United States had only recently concluded, and remarks by President Taft on the subject had fanned Canadian nationalism. A volatile subject like black immigration could easily become involved, upsetting an already precarious situation. Indeed, as has already been noted, one Calgary newspaper had linked the two subjects in a very negative fashion.

The American Government was likewise concerned with what was happening, but it too faced a delicate situation. The American Consul-General at Winnipeg, John E. Jones, had already intervened on behalf of one group of black Oklahomans in the spring of 1911, and later determined that the Commissioner of Immigration for Western Canada had offered the medical inspector a fee for every black he rejected. Late in April, Jones was in Washington to discuss the issue with Assistant Secretary of State Wilson, and to present a memorandum from Winnipeg Immigration officials saying Canada might bar blacks because they could not adapt to the climate and therefore were liable to become public charges. Since the United States had itself banned Asian immigration it had little room to manoeuvre. Given the already strained state of Canadian-American relations, the American State Department did not wish to pursue the matter. In addition, Washington's inability and reluctance to aid black Americans at home was implied by the influential New York *Times* when it commented on the Oklahoma migration and Canada's reaction to it. In its words,

... it is necessary to consider the facts as well as the opinions, and with a certain sentiment of toleration and humility. It is difficult to take any high view regarding the inhospitality of Canadians, both citizens and officials, toward 'nationals' who are fleeing from equal intolerance at home, and ill-treatment at the hands of both neighbors and legislators.<sup>44</sup>

Canada still faced the problem of how to stop the Oklahoma blacks from coming north. The most expedient answer, as the Winnipeg memorandum indicated, was simply to bar them, and that approach had already been suggested to Oliver. It had also been proposed by the *Calgary Herald*, whose Ottawa correspondent had noted that Section thirty-eight, subsection "c" of the Immigration Act of 1910 gave the government the power, with an order-in-council, to exclude for a period, or permanently, any race deemed unsuitable for the climate. There was a problem with this approach; the distinct possibility that it would deter white Americans from heading north once it was publicized. Indeed, Poynter Standly of the Canadian Pacific Railway Colonization Department in Chicago had written to Oliver on 28 April to complain that newspaper reports citing this argument had already stopped some whites from migrating. This did not stop the Minister of the Interior and on 31 May 1911 he sent a recommendation to the cabinet for an order-in-council barring blacks from entering Canada for a period of one year.<sup>45</sup>

The federal Cabinet passed the order on 12 August 1911. The order stated, in part,

For a period of one year from and after the date hereof the landing in Canada shall be and the same is prohibited of any immigrants belonging to the Negro race, which race is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada.<sup>46</sup>

The order was never implemented, however. It was repealed on 5 October 1911 on the pretext that the Minister of the Interior was not present when it had been passed.<sup>47</sup> The fact that the original was passed at all indicates the depth of Canadian feeling on the black immigration issue. This incident also underlines the intensity of the pressure emanating from the Canadian Plains to put a halt to the black immigration.

The chronology of events involving the order-in-council indicates that it was a "pocket order," to be used if the federal government's scheme to stop the migration at its source proved ineffective. In fact, the plan proved to be successful. At some point in April or May 1911, the federal authorities sent the first of two agents to Oklahoma to try to stem the black tide. His work was successful, and Canada decided to send a second agent, a black doctor from Chicago, in June 1911. The black doctor's efforts proved to be particularly effective, especially when coupled with the negative publicity regarding Canada's reception of their kinsmen which appeared in the black Oklahoma press.<sup>48</sup>

The reaction to the black Oklahoma immigration to the Canadian Plains was unique, and is not explained by the theory of nativism. As a general theory nativism has been useful in beginning to understand the

general negative response to many immigrant groups. Yet its strength as a general theory is also its weakness as a means of assessing the reactions to particular groups because it does not explain the origins of such attitudes, how they were transmitted, or why the reaction to some groups was stronger than to others.

Nativism does not account for the prejudice brought to the Canadian Plains by immigrants. The dominant groups which had settled in the area had well developed views of blacks before the Oklahomans arrived. Nor does nativism account for the way in which this prejudice was confirmed, and spread by the prairie press which portrayed blacks in a racist manner. The coverage of black immigration in western journals reinforced this prejudice, and insured that when blacks stepped down from the immigrant cars they were greeted by a virulent racism unlike that experienced by any other group of settlers. The intensity of the emotion generated against the blacks was out of all proportion to their relatively small numbers. The reaction on the Canadian Plains was also tinged with a sexual dimension not found in the reaction to other groups. In addition, prior to World War I no other group had an order-in-council passed to keep them out; even orientals were allowed to enter provided they paid a head tax. The response to the blacks was plain racism.

#### NOTES

1. For example, Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975); W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978); and Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).
2. Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 7. This book also contains the most complete discussion of the nativist theory, as it has been applied to western Canada. See 5-15.
3. There are at least three approaches which need to be tested. Given Canada's less nationalist traditions, a comparative study with the United States is overdue, and is likely to reveal the American bias of the nativist theory. A Marxian analysis would also be useful although, given the left's traditional emphasis on economic factors, there may be problems in explaining the virulence of the reactions to immigrants during a period of prosperity such as the settlement era. Finally, it would be interesting to apply to Canada the theory advanced by Charles Herbert Stember in *Sexual Racism: The Emotional Barrier to an Integrated Society* (New York: Harper and Row, Colophon Books, 1976).
4. It would appear that there were between 1,000 and 1,500 black immigrants. This estimate is based upon the 1921 Census which showed 1,444 blacks living in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Canada, *Census of Canada, 1921*, vol. 1, *Population*, 355.
5. An excellent analysis of the pre-contact ideas, and the English encounter with Africa is found in Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 3-43.
6. *The Times*, 13 November 1865. Two students of British racial thought have both argued that the Jamaican Rebellion had a major effect upon the development of Victorian racial attitudes. See Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 75-76; and James Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro and English Society 1555-1945* (London: Penguin Press, 1973), 172.
7. The extensive literature on American racial attitudes is too long for citation here. An excellent starting point for an examination of this question is the aforementioned Jordan, *White Over Black*. Of particular interest, because it deals with attitudes in an area which later produced many white American emigrants to the Canadian Plains, is Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1967, 1971).

That some white Americans thought of the Canadian Plains as refuge from contact with

blacks was revealed to me in a private conversation with a Saskatchewan homesteader who had come north with his parents after the turn of the century. He claimed his father had said the reason they left Iowa was "...to get away from the cyclones and the niggers."

8. The literature on black Canadians is not extensive, but it is growing. The standard is Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971). Also see, Frances Henry, *Forgotten Canadians: The Blacks of Nova Scotia* (Don Mills: Longman, 1973); Donald H. Clairmont and Dennis W. Magill, *Africville: The Life and Death of a Canadian Black Community* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); Headly Tulloch, *Black Canadians: A Long Line of Fighters* (Toronto: NC Press, 1975); Crawford Killian, *Go Do Some Great Thing: The Black Pioneers of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1978); and Daniel G. Hill, *The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada* (Agincourt, Ontario: Book Society of Canada, 1981). A particularly useful recent addition to this list is James W. St. G. Walker, *A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students* (Ottawa: Minister of State for Multiculturalism, 1980). See Walker, *History of Blacks*, 110 and 114 for the Ontario and Nova Scotia school segregation laws.
9. Canada, Public Archives of Canada, Department of the Interior, Immigration Files, RG 76, vols. 192-193, file 72552, part 1 (microfilm), letter to P.H. Burton from Lynwoode Pereira, 8 May 1899; letter to J.S. Crawford from L. Pereira, 23 January 1899; letter to Frank Pedley from W.H. Williscraft, 11 August 1902; letter to W.H. Williscraft from L.M. Fortier, 14 August 1902.
10. Harold Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply: Official Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the United States 1896-1911* (Toronto: Griffen House, 1972) is the best account of Canada's attempt to lure American farmers northward. Troper argues, however, that no advertising was submitted to the black press (124), and that because of their high illiteracy rate blacks had no way of becoming informed about Canada (123).

The existence of Canadian advertisements in black newspapers refutes the first claim. It is possible that Canadian officials were not aware of these advertisements, particularly if they contracted through a press service. As for the claim of black illiteracy, blacks in Oklahoma had a rate of only 12.4 percent by 1920. In any case, it takes only one literate person to read a paper to a group of illiterates, and once word of a movement is started it spreads rapidly.

For examples of Canadian advertisements in black newspapers see, *Boley Beacon*, 20 February 1908, 19 March 1908; *Clearview Patriarch*, 2 March 1911, 18 May 1911; *Muskogee Cimeter*, 8 January 1909, 4 February 1910, 2 December 1911; *Boley Progress*, 16 March 1905, 12 October 1905, 18 January 1906, 11 March 1909, 13 January 1910. On black literacy see Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619-1964*, revised ed. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961, 1964), 240; and *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920*, 11 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), vol. 3, *Population*, 814.

11. Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon, Homestead Files, files no. 974641, 932470, 932469, 86519A.
12. See R. Bruce Shepard, "Black Migration as a Response to Repression: The Background Factors and Migration of Oklahoma Blacks to Western Canada 1905-1912, As a Case Study" (Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1976), Chapters 2 and 3 for the background to these developments.
13. Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta, F.F. Parkinson File, Interview with Tony Payne by F.F. Parkinson, March 1963. SAB, Homestead Files, files no. 2244587, 1658268, 1977533. A number of other black Maidstone settlers arrived during this "Jim Crow" period, but since they did not list a last place of residence it is difficult to determine if they started their trek in Oklahoma. Given the preponderance of Oklahoma black settlers, however, the odds are that they too were from that state. See files no. 2134943, 1478445, 1544822.
14. Stewart Grow, "The Blacks of Amber Valley—Negro Pioneering in Northern Alberta," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 6 (1974): 17-38; *Calgary Albertan*, 24 April 1911; *Winnipeg Manitoba Free Press*, 27 April 1911.
15. *Kansas City Journal*, n.d., reprinted in the *Guthrie Oklahoma Guide*, 20 April 1911.
16. For contemporary examples see, *Winnipeg Tribune*, 3 April 1911, 22 April 1911; *Winnipeg Manitoba Free Press*, 8 January 1910, 4 March 1911; *Regina Leader*, 27 March 1911, 8 April 1911; *Edmonton Journal*, 17 April 1911, 10 May 1911; *Calgary Herald*, 1 April 1911, 4 April 1911; and the *Calgary Eye Opener*, 18 June 1910, and 11 February 1911.
17. *Edmonton Capital*, 13 April 1910, 16 April 1910.
18. PAC..Immigration Files...part 1, Unanimous Resolution of the Edmonton Board of Trade passed at the monthly meeting held on 12 April 1910.
19. Shepard, "Black Migration..." 95-97; *Emerson Journal*, 24 March 1911.
20. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 22 March 1911; *Saskatoon Daily-Phoenix*, 23 March 1911, 24 March 1911; *Regina Morning Leader*, 24 March 1911; *Lloydminster Times*, 30 March 1911; *Edmonton Journal*, 24 March 1911; *Edmonton Daily Bulletin*, 25 March 1911; *Calgary, Alberta Herald*, 24 March 1911, 25 March 1911; Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, *Negroes in Alberta File*, newspaper clipping, *Calgary Albertan*, 24 March 1911; Lethbridge, *Alberta Daily Herald*, 22 March 1911. *Winnipeg Manitoba Free Press*, 27 March 1911.

21. Winnipeg *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 March 1911.
22. *Ibid.*, 31 March 1911.
23. *Edmonton Journal*, 25 March 1911.
24. *Ibid.*, 27 March 1911.
25. *Calgary Herald*, 25 March 1911.
26. PAC...Immigration Files...part 3, letter to Frank Oliver from F.T. Fisher, 31 March 1911.
27. PAC...Immigration Files...part 3, letter and petition to Frank Oliver from Mrs. A. Knight, 21 March 1911.
28. *Edmonton Journal*, 30 March 1911.
29. *Ibid.*, 5 April 1911, 6 April 1911. Glenbow-Alberta Institute... *Negroes in Alberta File...*, *Calgary Albertan*, 5 April 1911.
30. Glenbow-Alberta Institute...*Negroes in Alberta File...*, *Calgary Albertan*, 5 April 1911. *Calgary Albertan*, n.d., reprinted in the *Edmonton Journal*, 8 April 1911. *Calgary Herald*, 5 April 1911.
31. *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, 11 April 1911. The *Daily News's* editorial is contained in Bower's reply to it.
32. *Saskatoon Daily Phoenix*, 5 April 1911; *Regina Morning Leader*, 5 April 1911; *Edmonton Daily Bulletin*, 7 April 1911.
33. *Calgary Herald*, 6 April 1911.
34. PAC...Immigration Files...part 3, letter to the Immigration Branch from Fritz Freidrichs, 12 April 1911; *Edmonton Daily Bulletin*, 13 April 1911; *Edmonton Journal*, 13 April 1911.
35. *Edmonton Journal*, 8 April 1911.
36. PAC...Immigration Files...part 3, Petition from Residents of Edmonton and Strathcona, 18 April 1911; *Edmonton Journal*, 19 April 1911.
37. *Edmonton Journal*, 22 April 1911, 24 April 1911, 25 April 1911, 26 April 1911.
38. *Edmonton Daily Bulletin*, 27 April 1911. John Edwards, "History of the Colored Colony of Amber Valley," 21 December 1970 (Unpublished paper in the author's possession), 3. Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply...*, 138-139. Troper notes that Edmonton's population in 1911 was 24,882.
39. PAC...Immigration Files...parts 3 and 4, Resolutions forwarded to Frank Oliver from the Fort Saskatchewan, 28 April 1911; Morinville, 29 April 1911; Strathcona, 3 May 1911; and Yorkton, 1 May 1911, Boards of Trade; letter to Frank Oliver from Francis C. Clare, 29 April 1911; letter to Frank Oliver from J.M. Liddell, 29 April 1911; petition to Frank Oliver from the Edmonton Builders Exchange, 4 May 1911; letter to Frank Oliver from A.I. Sawley, 17 April 1911. Glenbow-Alberta Institute...*Negroes in Alberta File...* *Calgary Albertan*, 20 May 1911. *Saskatoon Daily Phoenix*, 26 April 1911. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 19 April 1911.
40. *Saskatoon Daily Phoenix*, 28 April 1911, 6 May 1911, and 8 May 1911.
41. *Edmonton Journal*, 22 April 1911.
42. PAC...Immigration Files...part 3, letter to Frank Oliver from Arthur Fortin, 5 April 1911; ...part 4, newspaper clipping, *Winnipeg Der Nordwesten*, 26 April 1911.

...we would like to add that the numerous instances of lynch law in the southern states, about which we read almost daily and which deal almost exclusively with crimes likely each committed by Negroes, these instances should convince us, apart from other reasons, how undesirable such an increase is to our population. It would be wished that other public corporate bodies like the Board of Trade join in the protest.

43. Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1910-1911, 3: cols. 4470-4471, 2 March 1911; 4: cols. 5941-5948, 23 March 1911; 4: cols. 6523-6528, 3 April 1911; 5: cols. 8125-8128, 1 May 1911. Ernest J. Chambers, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1910* (Ottawa: Mortimer Co. Ltd., 1910), 105-106, 162 and 168. Also see Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, 306-307.
44. Winks, *Blacks in Canada...*, 301-311. *New York Times*, 2 April 1911.
45. PAC...Immigration Files...part 3, letter to F. Oliver from Poynter Standly, 28 April 1911; ...part 4, memo to Frank Oliver from W.D. Scott, 23 March 1911; Order-in-Council Recommendation, to the Governor-General from F. Oliver, 21 May 1911. *Calgary Herald*, 17 April 1911. Canada, *Statutes of Canada*, 9-10 Edward VII, Chapter 27, An Act Respecting Immigration, 4 May 1910, Sec. 38, sub-sec. "c". Also see Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply...*, 140.
46. PAC, Orders-in-Council, RG 2/1, vol. 269, no. 1324, 12 August 1911.
47. PAC, Orders-in-Council...vol. 772, no. 2378, 5 October 1911.
48. R. Bruce Shepard, "Diplomatic Racism: The Canadian Government and Black Migration from Oklahoma, 1905-1912," *Great Plains Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 5-16.

## The Reflective Value of Movies and Censorship On Interwar Prairie Society

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**ABSTRACT.** Concentrating on the prairies between the wars, this paper examines important aspects of the popular culture surrounding motion pictures—specifically, the nature and operations of movie censors and the case for and against censorship. Agencies of popular culture, modified by censors, are educational institutions which reflect contemporary social psychology, mood and values. This *reflecting* quality makes them particularly informative to social historians for whom they can illuminate other, related fields.

**RESUME.** Cette étude, qui se concentre sur la période de l'entre-deux-guerres sur la Prairie, examine d'importants aspects de la culture populaire entourant le cinéma, en particulier la nature de la censure, les procédés utilisés par les censeurs et le pour et le contre de la censure. Des instruments de propagation de la culture populaire modifiés par le censeurs deviennent des sources documentaires qui reflètent la psychologie, l'état d'âme et l'échelle des valeurs contemporaines. Le reflet qu'elles offrent les rend particulièrement utiles aux historiens sociaux pour qui elles peuvent éclairer d'autres domaines connexes.

\*The author invites critical commentary on the "reflective" thesis of this paper.

### I

Historians have only recently come to realize something of the full interrelationship of subjects they examine. Clearly the study of one theme can speak to another. Likewise, the analysis of one institution can throw light on the progress, legitimate expectations and impediments of another. In such a case a major problem is choosing a second, complementary institution. For educational historians this can mean selecting other social agencies which educate and then ascertaining their effect on children or schools. The problem may take the form of selecting a variable, such as the popular attitude which has a bearing on the success of a reform, perhaps in the school, and which is particularly well reflected in another institution. Theoretically at least, historians should be able to utilize conclusions drawn from what may be termed "reflecting institutions" to illuminate other fields of inquiry, to hypothesize what might be the case in these fields, and to confirm what preliminary research has already suggested is the case.

In an important sense, agencies of popular culture are educational institutions. They can convey attitudes, selectively propagandizing in favour of certain viewpoints while disparaging others; they usually present certain social facts which may or may not be known to the audience; and to the extent that they often engage characters or groups in predicaments, they can communicate both acceptable and unacceptable means of alleviating personal and social problems. That is, to a significant degree agencies of popular culture participate in the transmission of data, and more crucially, perhaps, of mores.

These agencies do more than entertain. They reveal aspects of their historical context, and they embody contemporary social psychology and

current values. Moreover, an analysis of societal reaction to popular culture can suggest how society has received other, related institutions.

The following study is an analysis of motion picture censorship on the Canadian prairies between the wars.<sup>1</sup> The purpose is to detail the case for censorship, the methods of censors and the attack on censorship, in an attempt to characterize an important educational agency affecting the masses of children. A second, and admittedly experimental purpose, is to relate these findings to matters in another educational agency, the school. The advent of motion pictures and motion picture censorship, it would seem, both influenced progressive education and delineated certain constraints within which its promoters operated.

## II

In July 1934 a memo from the Saskatchewan censor's officer read:

A Fox news reel seen this morning pictures the start of a good will air tour from Washington and included in its itinerary are Winnipeg and Regina the latter being pronounced by the announcer as Reegeena.

It is stated that the aviators are equipped with mosquito veils as it would be fatal in the case of a forced landing in the Northern wilds (presumably Winnipeg and Reegeena) without them.

I have heard them talk in Prince Albert about these insects being big and strong enough to push a telephone pole over but this is the first claim I have heard that they are capable of launching a murderous attack.

It is just another bit of evidence of the strange conception they have in the U.S. about Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The memo brought to light the longstanding Canadian anxiety about the influence of American media and culture. Four years earlier Alberta censor Robert Pearson examined fifteen news reels received in a ten day period. Of 88 items, 50 concerned the United States, 7 concerned Canada and 5, England and Scotland. Of 48 features received in January 1930, 27 were set in the United States, 4 in Great Britain and only 1 in the "North Country," likely Canada.<sup>3</sup> The same year Saskatchewan censor A.D. Gordon reported 2,987 pictures originating in the States and only 21 in Britain, figures which greatly exaggerated the non-American impact to that time.<sup>4</sup>

The reason for this predominance was the start the Americans had during World War I which gave them, said Gordon, "an almost undisputed monopoly of this important machine." The result was that "in the cinemas of the world the gospel of American superiority in every activity was preached and the audience made familiar with American products." Generally, observers felt, movies were the most influential medium devised since the printing press. As an economics student familiar with European conditions said, "American films abroad are performing the work of 100,000 salesmen of American goods."<sup>5</sup>

Since the effect in Canada was similar, many Canadians protested. The Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Authors' Association articulated the general feeling at the beginning of the thirties. As the secretary wrote,

The members...being naturally drawn to the expression of Things Canadian, feel...that the pictures at present exhibited lack entirely that inspirational note and national atmosphere (especially so essential in the present period) that should weld our people together in a vigorous healthy patriotic concord.

The association requested Alberta Premier Brownlee to give preference to films of Canadian and Imperial content with Canadian authors and actors. It deprecated the presentation to receptive youth of "a false and atrocious enunciation of the English tongue." And it asked for at least a smattering of continental films "to give our people a wider and more universal conception of other countries and to break the present stultifying and monotonous flow of doubtful art from the Pacific studios... which by no means reflect[s] the best phases of American life."<sup>6</sup>

When one added what Will H. Hays, President of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, called in 1927 the "industry's own not unnatural irresponsibility during its formative years," the cry for censorship, especially insistent after the war, was not surprising.<sup>7</sup> Before Hays's famous production code in 1930 imposing a form of self censorship, Hollywood had often strayed beyond the limits of even American propriety. From 1918 to the early twenties such pictures as "Men Who Have Made Love to Me," "Sinners in Silk," "Women Who Give," "The Price She Paid," "Rouged Lips," and "The Queen of Sin" all flashed across the American screen. Billings advertised these sensational "society" films with appropriate relish. The advertisement for "Alimony," for example, read: "Brilliant men, beautiful jazz babies, champagne baths, midnight revels, petting parties in the purple dawn, all ending in one terrific smashing climax that makes you gasp."<sup>8</sup>

A related factor linked to the demand for censorship after World War I was recurrent scandal in Hollywood. Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, the great and earthy comedian, was arrested for the rape and murder of actress Virginia Rappe, a woman later revealed to have had a history of abortions. After crucifixion by the Hearst press and three incredible trials, Arbuckle was finally completely exonerated. His career, however—thanks to a Hays fiat—was finished. In 1923 Wallace Reed, popular young star, died of morphine addiction. Also leading director William Desmond Taylor was shot to death after apparently becoming romantically involved with Mary Miles Minter, Mabel Normand and Mary Miles, Minter's mother, among others, a feat which historian Kevin Brownlow deemed "an outstanding achievement for a man thought to be a homosexual."<sup>9</sup>

Other factors were also conducive to censorship in the period. The submergence of personality in war time, Hays said, had "led to ready acceptance of Thou Shalt Not!"<sup>10</sup> Perhaps more significantly, the upheaval of the generation, its challenge to past regimes and past conventions, suggested to many the need for regulation and the speedy moral realignment of society. As Hugh Dobson, field secretary of the Evangelism and Social Service branch of the Methodist Church told the Saskatchewan Chief Inspector of Theatres in 1921, "customs, laws, modes of activity,

are plastic for a time, and before they become fixed again we have the opportunity of impressing the Stamp of Christ upon them."<sup>11</sup>

To more than just clerics the need for such a stamp was readily apparent. When Roger Babson of Babson Park, Massachusetts, drafted an article on the relationship between crime and the movies, it struck a responsive chord and the Alberta Chief Censor sped a copy to Premier Brownlee. Noting that "the movies are the greatest force today in molding character for good or evil," Babson pronounced unequivocally that his studies had led "directly to the movies as the basic cause of the crime waves of today." Sending a questionnaire to New England school principals, Babson asked which of the educative institutions—the home, the church or the school—was most decisive in forming the child character. Seventy percent of the principals "scratched off all three and replied: 'The movies!'" Babson wondered how a people could spend a fortune on schools and teachers, and then permit a gang of irresponsibles to peddle their vice and deceit-breeding pictures within the shadow of the school. "Such pictures in one night," he wrote, "uproot all the good seed which the schools can plant in a month."<sup>12</sup>

Across the Canadian West many similar reports were received. "The school and the church are working to build character and make our boys and girls," one writer told the Alberta censor board, "while the movie with all its attractive influence is spreading this crime atmosphere."<sup>13</sup> A Saskatchewan writer reported a case "where there could be no doubt that pilfering... perpetrated by boys was attributable to what they had seen on the screen."<sup>14</sup> When a Winnipeg police detective saw the picture "Angels with Dirty Faces" in Manitoba in 1938, he remarked, "if that was the kind of stuff that was going to be permitted...they would have to increase the police force considerably."<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, Saskatchewan Censor A.D. Gordon concluded in May 1934 that "the proper place for a child in the modern picture theatre is on the outside."<sup>16</sup>

A British legal journal in the period probably best summarized both the generality and the subtlety of the case for censorship. There were, it said, three principal reactions to movies:

Some see in them one of the most powerful demoralizing agencies of modern times, ascribing to them ills that are the outcome of mere human nature; for these the cinema is the mother of mischief and the exemplar of crime. Others recognize in them one of those social medicines at once stimulant and anodyne, without which masses of human beings assembled in great and, essentially, rather dull cities, and subjected to the monotony of repetition work, would be in danger of falling into wholesale viciousness; they say, with considerable truth, that without the vicarious adventure of the films, and the release,...of suppressed emotion, the crowds who, in the picture house, work off their steam harmlessly, would be apt to seek excitement in social disorder of all kinds; they point out the *Panem et circenses!* of the degenerate Roman plebs, and the *Pan y toro* of their modern Spanish representatives; the cinema, they argue, is our equivalent for the gladiatorial show or the bull fight, the unemployment benefit being the substitute for state distribution of bread. Yet another set of people dwell on the great effect of the film, its educational and artistic value. They say, and their saying cannot be gainsaid, that the appeal of the picture to the eye is infinitely

more vivid and immediate, and no less permanent in its effects, than the printed word.

Each of these types, the article concluded, suggested the need for some regulation of the medium: "The stimulation must not lead to beastliness; the anodyne must not entirely dull the people; the teaching must be of things desirable."<sup>17</sup>

### III

Not a great deal is known about those to whom the task of regulation fell. Perhaps the best known censor on the prairies was Howard Douglas. A native Ontarian and a Methodist, he had married in 1872 and had come west ten years later before being appointed superintendent of the National Park at Banff. There he once entertained Lord and Lady Minto and another time loaned the residence to Prime Minister and Mrs. Laurier. In 1910 the family moved to Edmonton, and a few years later Douglas became Chief Censor for Alberta.<sup>18</sup>

Douglas was one of those rare censors who was highly appreciated by the cinema interests. His pending retirement in 1923 was so regretted by the industry that John A. Cooper, chairman of the Advisory Board of the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors' Association, personally intervened with Premier Greenfield to extend Douglas's service. While Douglas had "occasionally condemned a picture which an exchange would have preferred to see passed," Cooper claimed that in two years the Advisory Board had "never had a disagreement of any kind with Mr. Douglas."<sup>19</sup> Apparently Greenfield was impressed, for Douglas stayed another five years.

Douglas's successor, Captain Robert Pearson, was a World War I veteran and presumably imbued with the "right" values. So too was Major A.D. Gordon, Saskatchewan censor in the thirties. Gordon, indeed, had been given the Order of the British Empire after service with the 118th Battalion. He had background as a board of trade secretary, a newspaperman and a school teacher.<sup>20</sup> Three other Saskatchewan censors had religious connections. Both Samuel Clarke (1913-1916) and Charles Robson (1916-1923) had been secretaries of the Regina Young Men's Christian Association while R.B. Milliken was an ordained minister.<sup>21</sup>

Appeal boards also operated on the prairies.<sup>22</sup> That in Manitoba in the late thirties was most representative and comprised twenty members from various organizations including the Men's Canadian Club, the Women's Canadian Club, the National Council of Education, the Manitoba Teacher's Federation, the Manitoba Trustees' Association, the local Council of Women, the Women's Institutes and the United Farm Women of Manitoba.<sup>23</sup> The first two clubs, fielding nine members, were most heavily represented. Members were called in rotation, three men and two women. "It is considered best to have the men in the majority," a procedure memo revealed, "as the women are in the majority on the Censor Board whose decision is being appealed."<sup>24</sup>

After a few years of operation, censor boards on the prairies moved to standardize their craft. Invited by Howard Douglas, western censors met at Calgary in 1919 to discuss problems and to formulate policy. After deliberation, they agreed to condemn pictures concerning:

1. White slavery, unless a true moral lesson is conveyed... The procurement and prostitution in all forms of girls and their confinement for immoral purposes. The seduction of women, particularly the betrayal of young girls. Assaults upon women with immoral intent. Scenes showing men and women living together without marriage and in adultery. Scenes dealing with abortion and malpractice.
2. Gruesome and distressing scenes including shooting, stabbing, profuse bleeding, prolonged views of men dying and of corpses, lashing and whipping and other torture scenes, hanging, lynching, electrocution and views of persons in delirium or insane.
3. Scenes dealing with venereal disease of any kind, unless shown as an educational feature under reliable supervision.
4. Gross and offensive drunkenness, especially if women have a part in [the] scene.
5. Exploitation of notorious characters.

The censors also agreed to disapprove of pictures concerning:

1. The drug habit, eg. use of opium, morphine, cocaine, etc. Views of women smoking, especially if shown in suggestive positions or if their manner of smoking is suggestive or degrading.
2. Scenes showing the modus operandi of criminals which are suggestive or incite to evil action, such as murder, poisoning, house breaking, robbery, pocket-picking, lighting or throwing of bombs, use of ether, chloroform, etc., to render persons unconscious, binding and gagging. Scenes showing burning, wrecking and destroying of property which may put like action in the minds of those of evil instincts or may degrade the morals of the young. Scenes which deal at length with gun play and use of knives and are set in the underworld.
3. Pictures which deal with counterfeiting.
4. Brutal treatment of children and animals.
5. Scenes dealing with ridicule or reproach of races, classes or social groups, as well as irreverent and sacrilegious treatment of religious bodies, or other things held to be sacred.
6. Vulgarities of a gross kind such as appear often in slapstick or other screen comedies, comedies burlesquing morgues, funerals, hospitals, insane asylums, lying in of women in houses of ill fame. Bathing scenes which pass the limits of propriety, lewd and immodest dancing, needless exhibition of women in their night dresses or underclothing. Studio or other scenes where the human form is unduly exposed. Sensual kissing and lovemaking scenes, vampire scenes, men and women in bed together whether in comedies or pictures of other classes.
7. Objectional titles, as well as subtitles of pictures, particularly if profanity be resorted to.<sup>25</sup>

In practice, the appearance of any of the above, unless sustained, resulted in specific eliminations but not necessarily condemnation of the whole film.

These lists of the forbidden and the deprecated were not unlike those annually handed down by the British Board of Film Censors, held in high esteem by western boards. If a shade of difference existed, it was that the British underscored other censorable matter which prairie censors sometimes took for granted. This matter included "Scenes and incidents calculated to bring public services or professions into contempt or ridicule[;] scenes tending to disparage public characters[;] British social life held up to ridicule [and] antagonistic relations between Capital and Labour."<sup>26</sup>

A catalogue of films not passed by prairie censor boards showed that Canadian censors were similarly disposed. "Oily to Bed" from Columbia Pictures suffered elimination in Manitoba in 1939 for "Burlesque and comic reference to 'Canada.'" Regal's "North of 50-50" was rejected in Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 1924 as a travesty of the Mounted Police. "Answering the Riot Call" was rejected in 1933 in Saskatchewan because the censor said it "emphasized international mob riots and brutal demonstrations of authority not in [the] public welfare at this time." The film "Bondage" was banned in Saskatchewan in 1933 because it threw an "undesirable reflection upon [the] conduct of rescue and reclamation institutions." RKO's "Boy Slaves" was snipped in Manitoba because of "Details of juvenile lawlessness and criminal acts with helpless forces of law and order." "Flying G-Men" was cut in Manitoba because it exhibited "rough behavior, contrary to the ethics of Federal Authorities." The same happened to "Blamed for a Blondie" because a law officer stooped to swearing.<sup>27</sup>

Censors also worried about fairness and justice. In Manitoba Empire-Universal's "Honour of the West" was cut in 1939 when it showed close-ups of a gangster shooting men who had surrendered and raised their hands. Regal's "Empty Arms" was condemned in Alberta in 1922 because it depicted a divorce "too easily obtained." Twentieth Century Fox's "Muscle Maulers" was rejected in Manitoba because of "injurious and unsportsmanlike methods," while in Saskatchewan First National's "Woman on the Jury" was forbidden because it suggested a "double standard of ethics and resultant evils."<sup>28</sup>

During the wars films injurious to national effort were banned. "Cheating the Public," with its suggestion of graft and rake-offs, was rejected in World War I, and at the beginning of the second conflict, the powerful anti-war drama, "All Quiet on the Western Front," was banned.<sup>29</sup>

For films requiring changes, there were often several cuts. In "Passion," a First National Film, Alberta ordered a kissing scene between characters Jeanne and Armand cut "where marked emotion is shown on both their faces." The censor also required deletion of a close-up of an executioner. "Cut out all scenes showing struggle between Jeanne and man taking her and putting her on scaffold," the report dictated, "leaving [a] distant view of her on the scaffold."<sup>30</sup> The next day the censor order the title of the movie changed to "The Passion to Win."<sup>31</sup>

In Saskatchewan some years later the branch manager of Vitagraph Ltd. instructed the manager of the Metropolitan Theatre in Regina about sound deletions in the film "Sweethearts and Wives":

...it will be necessary for you to have your projectionist 'fade-out' entirely on the following dialogues[:]

Reel #4 Dial out "Madam to the night of nights.[]"["Naughty naughty inspector."

Reel #5 Dial out "Oh you needn't be so virtuous. Remember when I unpacked your night bag I saw the color of your pajamas."

Reel #9 Dial out "Brandy? Oui, Monsieur. You know it is frequently necessary after the first wedding night."<sup>32</sup>

Provincial police were kept busy suppressing the advertising material which accompanied such shows. In 1920, for example, Police Inspector E.L.J. Sparkman of Saskatoon pronounced the malediction upon this 11" x 14" glossy photograph from "Her Naughty Wink": "Girls with abbreviated clothes in flooded room; man standing in water with periscope."<sup>33</sup>

Often eliminations required in serials must have left audiences completely befuddled. In a successful attempt to satisfy W. Mackay Omand, Saskatchewan film censor, Canadian-Universal Film Company suggested several deletions in the silent serial "Fast Express." In episode one reel one, criminals light a fuse and cut the wires at a railway station. In reel two robbers pile ties on the track to stop the train. And in episode two they blackjack at least two trainmen in the baggage car. These scenes were excised. Later, fully one hundred feet of film was cut when the malefactors, who are soon revealed to be primarily blackmailers, stage a jail break. After an incredible gap in which no one could guess what had happened, Omand and Law then agreed to show a girl and a prisoner suddenly springing out of jail. Said Law, no doubt hardly satisfied, "This will appear that the girl has saved [the] prisoner instead of [the] inference of...releasing [the] prisoner..." To climax this masterpiece of obfuscation, Law then agreed to delete throughout all sixteen reels all reference of blackmail—which was of course the essence of the film.<sup>34</sup>

#### IV

Since film exchanges went to such lengths to screen their products, it was little wonder that they were often up in arms over censor board fiats. In 1923 the Associated National Film Exchange, representing Fox, Regal, United Artists, Universal, Vitagraph, Famous Lasky and Famous Players, asked Saskatchewan Provincial Secretary J.M. Uhrich for "an immediate change in the provincial censor board." "Censorship on a fair and broad-minded basis," it said, "has not been meted out to us." Highlighting the need to "eliminate ridiculous and needless mutilation of our product," the exchange requested the appointment of "a man who is capable of using good judgment..."<sup>35</sup>

Charles Robson, the censor in question, later disclosed that over the above period censorship in Saskatchewan was more severe than that in Manitoba. In 1922 three features comprising nine reels were rejected by Manitoba and approved by Saskatchewan while ten features comprising thirty-two reels were rejected by Saskatchewan and approved by Manitoba.<sup>36</sup> Comparable figures do not exist for Saskatchewan and Alberta, but other evidence suggests that Saskatchewan was also much stricter than Alberta.<sup>37</sup> Because of ill health, worsened by the pressure of trying to appease bitterly opposed pro and anti censorship elements, Robson resigned within a year of the call for his ouster.<sup>38</sup>

Years later, after A.D. Gordon had become Saskatchewan censor, a reversal occurred. Informed through the press that some films in Regina had been badly over-censored and even rendered unintelligible, Gordon discovered that the identified films almost invariably had been exhibited in Winnipeg first, and were hardly touched by himself. Revealing some of the problems of having the Saskatchewan censor located in Winnipeg, a practice employed for most of the period, Gordon indicated that Manitoba in mid-depression had severely tightened its censorship. "... The Manitoba Board is composed of a chairman and two women members," Gordon wrote. "The latter have apparently[,] and it is alleged that their action is directed from some outside organization, taken the matter into their own hands and with a majority on the Board have slashed and reconstructed to their hearts['] content." The problem was that eliminations made for Manitoba and not Saskatchewan were not being replaced by the film exchanges in Saskatchewan bound prints. "The situation here [in Winnipeg] regarding censorship is in a turmoil," said Gordon. "The film exchanges are up in revolt over what they consider unwarranted and capricious eliminations to their films. The situation has got so bad that in some instances the exchanges are taking the chance of exhibiting uncensored films." Recently in Winnipeg Gordon had seen two such pictures.<sup>39</sup>

Given these and other experiences, the film industry launched a concerted counter attack on censorship. With the coming of sound in the late twenties and the threat of extensive deletions, *Motion Picture News* claimed that the industry would lose millions in retakes because entire casts would have to be recalled and the action redone. The old system of simply rewriting titles or captions was no longer possible. Writers claimed that if censor boards had their way the dialogue would become "unnatural, uninteresting and generally amateurish." "Inasmuch as the popular vogue is for underworld, backstage and night life stories, a wee bit of freedom in expression is required by dialogue authors," said the *News*. "Otherwise characters of waiters, gangsters, hoofers, truckmen, longshoremen, laborers *et. al.* will have to be endowed with 'a touch of lavender.'"<sup>40</sup>

In 1929 a Toronto film publication called *Capitol Entertainment* circulated in the West bearing research results of Joseph L. Holmes of the Columbia Psychology Department. After showing "hot" films to children, Holmes asked questions to elicit the youths' sympathy for evil-doers and evil conduct. "We made the startling discovery that even right after seeing the film, most of the children remembered almost nothing about it," said Holmes. "The movies are in the fairy tale class for most young people of to-day," Holmes quoted a teacher from his survey of professors, teachers and social workers. "They furnish an admirable vicarious adventure for the audience, are in fact an excellent emotional safety valve. But I don't think they influence their conduct for the worse. The villain gets his, and the hero gets the heroine—that's what they remember."<sup>41</sup>

When Will Hays became motion picture czar in the early twenties, he moved quickly to curtail Hollywood excesses and then to attack censorship. He argued that the limitations imposed on plays, books and other vehicles of expression were not nearly as stringent as those imposed on movies. Artistic freedom, moreover, was necessary for inspirational development. "To release the products of one's brain only after it has been strained through the sieve of a censor and has received his imprimatur is a discouragement and an affront to conscientious men," he pronounced.

Hays then concentrated his venom on the quirks and inconsistencies of censor boards:

The rules set up in one State often differ radically from those accepted in another. In several States, for example, it is regarded as unlawful to show a woman smoking a cigarette, a clause which might eliminate any scene of a social gathering happening in another State.

One censor board had a lawyer among its members, and the lawyer objected to the showing of any picture in which an unethical or "crooked" lawyer appeared. An inland State prohibited the display of girls in bathing suits; while a seacoast State, boasting one of the finest beaches in America, saw no impropriety in such scenes.

Scenes of strike riots were ordered eliminated from news reels in one State at the same time its newspapers were using photographs of the exact incidents recorded in the films. Another board, upset by the appearance in a picture of an employer who did not use safety devices to protect his employees, ordered insertion of a title reading: "Henry Jones, *a type of employer now happily extinct* who does not believe in safety devices."

How far personal opinion may govern a censor board's action is revealed in the following order issued in connection with a recent comedy: "This subtitle is to be inserted. . . : There are no legal reasons for rejecting this picture. However, I am unalterably opposed to making a comedy of serious, important, historical events."

For citizens worried about indecency in movies, Hays noted that statutes across the country had already defined obscenity as a crime and had fixed suitable penalties. Before 1921, added Hays, only seven states had passed movie censorship laws. After that a reaction against needless censorship had occurred, and in 1923 in all thirteen states which considered such laws the measures had been overwhelmingly defeated.<sup>42</sup>

On the Canadian prairies film representatives made censors very aware of these arguments. While provincial laws were much less divergent than state laws—since the three provinces used a common code—the movie interests were able to show that the three censor boards were not always consistent in applying the code. A common feature in letters appealing condemned pictures was any contradictory ruling by other Canadian censor or appeal boards. Despite these remonstrations, there was less popular reaction than south of the border. Aside from occasional newspaper comment about incomprehensible story lines, few complained. It almost took a maverick poured from the mould of Bob Edwards of the *Calgary Eye Opener* to expose the idiocy of some pro-censorship argument. Before the war Edwards composed this humorous dialogue:

"You say the boy's maternal grandfather was a train robber?"

"Yes."

"And his paternal grandfather was charged with murder?"

"Yes."

"And his Aunt is a shop-lifter and his Uncle a Calgary real estate agent?"

"Yes."

"And his father is suspected by the police of being a Grit?"

"Yes."

"Then to what do you ascribe his waywardness?"

"Why to moving pictures, of course."<sup>43</sup>

Interestingly, most prairie criticism against censorship was an attack on lax standards. Over and over influential people and groups requested not less but more censorship. In 1920 the Saskatchewan Provincial Council of Women representing the Registered Nurses' Association, the Homemakers' Clubs, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the women's section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and the local women's councils of Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Swift Current and Regina sent a resolution to Saskatchewan Censor Charles Robson. They demanded the suppression of movies dealing with infidelity, gambling, dubious methods of divorce and vicious underworld criminals.<sup>44</sup> Two years later, at an emergency meeting in the dead of winter, the Moose Jaw Ministerial Association drafted a pointed missive to Censor Robson about the disgusting film, "The Queen of Sheba." "The sacred and the sensual were related in such gross intimacy that it discredits the intent of Holy Writ," fumed the association. "It invests with beauty and attractiveness, and arouses sympathy and admiration for an act that strikes at the most sacred and vital of human institutions. It puts the language of devout piety on the lips of a man [Solomon] who is revealed as a complacent adulterer."<sup>45</sup>

In 1932 the Calgary Board of Trade endorsed a letter condemning the way the cinema crime atmosphere undermined the character building of the church and school. "I am convinced that our Provincial censor should be more strict..." the writer said. In the interests of the business man, he urged the extirpation of all crime pictures so that we "may never in Canada be subjected to racketeer and gangster terrorism."<sup>46</sup> Others complained too. Louise Gordon, secretary of the Calgary Parent Teachers' Federation asked for a stricter control of such films as "I'm No Angel."<sup>47</sup> The Colonel Commandant of the Canadian armed forces base at Calgary was miffed that Richmond, Virginia, was highlighted under the title "The Pride of Our Dominion." "Exhibitions under these misleading titles," believed the Colonel, "will have an adverse effect on the minds of subjects of the British Crown living in Canada."<sup>48</sup>

Reacting in general to criticism and, in particular, to that demanding greater purity in films, Alberta Censor Robert Pearson defended his policy and that incidentally of his western counterparts:

If only those pictures were passed which present the idealistic or which are based on sweet and pure scenes free from any moral lapses, I do not believe that 10% of the pictures presented would pass, as even our Westerns are really gangsters of an early day with the bad man and shooting, and sometimes the bad girl. If

this is to be the aim of censorship, then we might as well notify the theatre business to close almost all their houses, as the majority of the entertainments provided by the producers of pictures tell of someone going wrong or astray, or lapses of various kinds, and usually reconciliations. In fact, what our theologians refer to as the greatest "Parable" is the story of a boy who went away and wasted his substance in riotous living.<sup>49</sup>

One concludes from the files of prairie censors that they were frequently under fire, as the Saskatchewan censor said, from "those who object to any eliminations and those who do not think censorship is effective unless it reduces every picture to the mentality of a child."<sup>50</sup> In the West there were rather more of the latter than the former.

## V

How was the above related to the school in the period and particularly to progressive education? Consider first some remarks on the effects of the visual medium. Motion pictures were related to a fundamental feature of the new education—the proliferation of new courses and the practicalization of existing ones. The cinema often gave strength to the claims of promoters of the new fare. Movies provided a venue for the stuffy, airtight, unventilated and disease ridden environment health advocates wished to avoid. They offered an illustration of the artificial glitter, the baubles and veneers and the lack of substance of city life which country life advocates of the new education sought to avoid.<sup>51</sup> They encouraged the motionless, sedentary life which physical education proponents wished to counteract. They were part of the mindless and degrading excitement of contemporary life which coincided with and motivated the unprecedented expansion of junior club work during the war and after.<sup>52</sup>

Consider secondly the significance of censorship not only as a repressive mechanism but also as a manifestation of a broadly based cluster of popular attitudes. On the latter point it is important to see western censors as occupiers of some middle ground between arch-liberals, epitomized by the cinema interests, and arch-conservatives, epitomized by numerous social organizations from Canadian clubs to several women's groups. Though it is impossible to certify, the average westerner likely did not consider most of what censors did unreasonable. The presence of far more western correspondence advocating rather than damning censorship supports this hypothesis. So too does the fact that many of the same objectionable features entered into the 1919 code already existed in recently enacted western legislation outlining the duties of censors.<sup>53</sup> Many other Canadians also strongly supported censorship. In Ontario in the early twenties, for example, the Toronto Public School Teachers' Association, the Social Service League, the Toronto Rotary Club, the Toronto Board of Trade and even the Canadian Manufacturers' Association all voiced the need for censorship. Some even itemized exactly what western censors had codified into accepted standards in 1919.<sup>54</sup>

Now the essence of the censorship message and the supportive popular

attitude was partly an enormous respect for the State, its institutions and all forms of constituted authority. It was also partly an enormous limitation of the rights of individuals to experience life in all its aspects. The notion underlying the general principle of censorship, and the specific decisions of censor boards, was that too much reality could be harmful — the reality, for example, of human savagery, of gangsterdom, of sex, of roughness, shock, unsportsmanlike methods, childbirth, drunkenness and riots. These screen experiences were never allowed, even for adults, much less for children. Considering the progressive education principle of relating education to life, one gathers some impression of how much society was really willing to implement the principle. Moreover, the innumerable adjectival justifications in censorship decisions, including “vulgar,” “coarse,” “indelicate,” and “disrespectful” — all implied some very severe curbs on acceptable behaviour and on the use of language. Again, considering the progressive goals western schoolmen propounded, especially the importance of self expression, creativity and individual differences in students, one encounters in the censoring philosophy a potent, countervailing tendency. Certain kinds of free expression and spontaneity, after all, were not far from indelicacy and coarseness. Certain types of creativity could easily impinge on the contemporary sense of decorum. Many controversial issues existed which a thoroughgoing progressive might have wished to discuss but which important elements of society would not tolerate. Clearly the values clarification approaches and the sex education programmes of full-blown progressivism were an eon from this constrained atmosphere.<sup>55</sup> The notable representation of teachers on censor boards, appeal boards and in pro-censorship interest and pressure groups suggests, moreover, that many mentors not only felt comfortable in this atmosphere but also sought to perpetuate it.

Further, the idea of a conflict model of Canadian society, which some school reformers wished promoted in the schools, was systematically opposed by a powerful consensus view supported and operationalized by censors.<sup>56</sup> A society that banned a movie poking fun at mounted policemen, or depicting rough conditions in a penitentiary, or burlesquing a minister, was hardly one that would view sympathetically a critique of itself in some progressive classroom. A society so concerned with social cohesion and the maintenance of its institutions was hardly one that would countenance prolonged schoolroom discussion of social class antagonisms, or the existence of very many social reconstructionist teachers.

Conversely, a world so afraid of mental aberration that it banned “Jane Eyre,” was one that might well be expected to invest in forms of juvenile mental testing.<sup>57</sup> And a world so committed to the status quo and the state, in a period so inimical to these interests, might also be expected to consider test based vocational streaming to integrate youth into the work force with minimal dislocation.<sup>58</sup>

Of course, by no means everyone in interwar prairie society shared

these sentiments about social cohesion, the state and its institutions. But the notions surely obtained among a majority of the populace, and more to the point, among those middle class organizations most interested in schools and those groups most likely to generate teachers.

Significantly the study of movie censorship between the wars is in some sense a study of contemporary limits of personal freedom, acceptable discourse and behaviour. It is also an analysis of perceived societal needs and even imperatives. A social system haunted by a long list of proscribed activities and language was scarcely fertile ground for genuine self expression, spontaneity, creativity or child centred and directed progressivism. Alternatively a system transfixed by the need for personal, social and economic stability might well commandeer science, a new and promising servant, to delineate as precisely and fairly as possible the misfits and to direct them to appropriate institutions or work stations.

What is beginning to emerge from the period is a story of the limitations and even failure of what might be termed "Deweyan" educational innovation and at least the partial success of test and measurement based "Thorndyikian" innovation.<sup>59</sup> Given the attitudinal context adduced by an examination of movie censorship at the same time, this story, if adequately confirmed, should not be surprising.

The study of popular culture, specifically of movies and censorship, can be a reflecting experience. It can highlight the contemporary spirit of the times, its ideals, fears and obsessions. The spirit in turn can be a lantern to probe other aspects of social existence and other institutions which, however dimly lit, must surely be outlined, indeed clarified, by its casting light.

#### NOTES

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1. See D.H. Bocking, "The Saskatchewan Board of Film Censors, 1910-1935," *Saskatchewan History* 24 (Spring 1971): 51-62.
2. Memo in censor's files, unsigned, possibly A.D. Gordon, 17 July 1934, La. 3 4, Saskatchewan Archives Board (Saskatoon), hereafter SABS.
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4. A.D. Gordon to Deputy Provincial Secretary, 6 January 1931, report for year ending 31 December 1930, La. 3 4, SABS.
5. Ibid.
6. Mary L. Weekes to J.E. Brownlee, 10 January 1930, 69.289, f366, APA.
7. Will H. Hays, "Motion Pictures and Their Censors," *The American Review of Reviews*, April 1927, *ibid.*, f365.
8. R.S. Lynd and H.M. Lynd, *Middletown* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1929), 266; Kevin Brownlow, *Hollywood: The Pioneers* (London: Collins, 1979), 118-119.
9. Brownlow, *Hollywood: The Pioneers*, 111.
10. Hays, "Motion Pictures and Their Censors."
11. Hugh Dobson to W. Mackay Omand, 24 June 1921, La. 3 4, SABS.
12. *Babson's Reports*, special letter 9 April 1929, "Crime Waves," in Robert Pearson to J.E. Brownlee, December 1929 c., 69.289, f365, PP, APA.
13. Copy of extract from member's letter re law and order, etc. to Calgary Board of Trade, 1 June 1932, forwarded to censor board, *ibid.*, f366.
14. A.S. Wright to W.M. Omand, 17 June 1920, La. 3 4, SABS.

15. C. Rice Jones to W.J. Major, 8 December 1938, censor board file 1937-40, RG 11, A1, Manitoba Provincial Archives, hereafter MPA. Surviving Manitoba records concern only the thirties, largely the late thirties.
16. A.D. Gordon to J.A. Merkeley, 1 May 1934, report for year ending 30 April 1934, La. 3 4, SABS.
17. na., "The Film Censorship," *Justice of the Peace*, London, 2 October 1926, 545, 69.289, PP, APA.
18. John Blue, *Alberta: Past and Present* (Chicago: Pioneer Historical Publishing Co., 1924), 159-61.
19. John Cooper to H. Greenfield, 23 May 1923, 69.289, f364, PP, APA.
20. "Former PA Editor Passes," *Regina Leader Post*, 13 May 1958, 11.
21. Bocking, "The Saskatchewan Board of Film Censors, 1910-1935," 57.
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23. Municipal Commissioner memo re Manitoba Appeal Board of Censors for 1937, Old Appeal Boards file, RG 11, A1, MPA.
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28. List of Films Not Passed by Censor Board 1939, Censor Board File 1937-40, RG 11, A1, MPA; Pictures Condemned by Alberta Censor Board, 1 January to 1 September 1922, 1 September 1922, 69.289, f364, PP, APA; Moving Picture Censorship, Saskatchewan Rejections, 1924, W.M. Omand, La. 3 4, SABS.
29. S.C. Oxton to T.A.D. Bevington, 12 September 1918, La. 3 4, SABS; Censor Board to Empire Universal Films, 5 September 1939, Censor Board File 1937-40, RG 11, A1, MPA.
30. Elimination Report re "Passion," 12 December 1921, 69.289, f364, PP, APA.
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32. G.A. Mathews to G.D. Boland, 18 June 1930, La. 3 4, SABS.
33. Police Reports, Saskatchewan Provincial Police, Inspector E.L.J. Sparkman, 4 October 1920, D P 19, SABS.
34. G.F. Lay to W.M. Omand, 11 July 1924, La. 3 4, SABS.
35. Associated First National Film Exchange to J.M. Uhrich, 24 April 1923, *ibid.*
36. Charles Robson to Chief Inspector of Theatres, 3 March 1924, *ibid.*
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41. na., "The Manager," *Capitol Entertainment*, Toronto, vol. 1, 15 May 1929, *ibid.*
42. Hays, "Motion Pictures and Their Censors." Italics by Hays.
43. *Calgary Eye Opener*, 13 January 1912, 2. I thank Karen Bromley for uncovering this dialogue.
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55. Re sex education see J.H. Putnam and G.M. Weir, *Survey of the School System* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1925), 51-52.
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57. Re "Jane Eyre" see F. Kerr to E.J. Wright, 31 March 1916, La. 3 4, SABS.
58. T.A. Dunn sets the struggle for vocational education into precisely this context. See Dunn, "Vocationalism and its Promoters in British Columbia, 1900-1929," in *Schools Reform and Society in Western Canada*, Schnell et. al., 93.

59. For support for this thesis see Jean Mann, "G.M. Weir and H.B. King: Progressive Education or Education for the Progressive State," in *Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia*, ed. J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig, 1980), 91-118. See also Wilson's "The Historiography of British Columbia Educational History," 16. Most of my own work on agricultural education which exemplified several progressive characteristics also supports the above thesis. See especially, "Creating Rural-Minded Teachers: The British Columbian Experience, 1914-1924," in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West*, ed. D.C. Jones, N.M. Sheehan and R.M. Stamp (Calgary: Detselig, 1979), 155-178.

## The Alberta Corporation Income Tax Incentives: A Critical View\*

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**ABSTRACT.** Alberta withdrew from the federal-provincial tax collection agreements with respect to corporation income tax on 1 January 1981. Its publicly announced intention in withdrawing was to use the corporate profits tax as a policy tool. This paper examines "the state of the art" of investment tax incentives and attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of tax incentives in the province of Alberta. It is suggested that the costs of withdrawal far exceed its benefits. It is concluded that tax incentives in general, and in the case of a province in particular, are not and have not been successful in promoting economic policy objectives.

**RESUME.** Le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1981, l'Alberta dénonçait l'entente fédérale - provinciale régissant la perception des impôts sur le revenu des corporations. Son intention avouée, lors de son retrait, était d'utiliser l'impôt sur les profits corporatifs comme outil politique. Cette étude examine le statut de cette politique de taxation qui favorise l'investissement et tente d'en évaluer l'efficacité dans la province de l'Alberta. On y suggère que les inconvénients du retrait dépassent de loin les avantages. On y conclut, qu'en général, les réductions d'impôts favorisant l'investissement, et dans le cas d'une province plus particulièrement, ne réussissent pas et n'ont pas réussi à promouvoir les objectifs de politique économique.

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### Introduction

According to the British North America (BNA) Act, and now Canada Act, provinces are given the power to impose and collect direct taxes. Prior to the Tax Rental Agreements (TRAs)<sup>1</sup> there was no real co-ordination of federal and provincial tax systems. The pre-World War II period is often referred to as a "tax jungle." The TRAs were abandoned in 1962 and replaced by Tax Collection Agreements (TCAs). Under the TCAs the federal government administers "without charge" the provincial personal and corporation income taxes. In exchange, agreeing provinces are required to conform with the federal tax policy.<sup>2</sup> A corporate income tax act was first adopted by Alberta in 1932. It was replaced in 1941, and due to Tax Rental Agreements was re-enacted in 1962 as part of the Tax Collection Agreements.

Up to 1972, participating provinces were obliged to accept federal tax legislation which defined the provincial tax base. Since 1972, the federal government has allowed provinces to introduce provincial measures which, if acceptable to Ottawa, would be administered by Ottawa for a

small fee. Alberta took advantage of this new federal flexibility to introduce several special measures into its corporation income tax. Credits such as the Royalty Tax Credit, Royalty Tax Rebate, Political Contribution Credit as well as a new small business tax rate were accepted by Ottawa.

The federal government, however, has not always been overjoyed at the provincial schemes and started to refuse administering some of them. Apparently in response to these restrictions, but mainly due to the reasons that would become more evident in this paper, the government of Alberta started to consider a separate corporation income tax administration of its own. In 1974, two years after the first provincial credits were introduced, Alberta made public its intention to terminate its Tax Collection Agreements with respect to corporation income tax.<sup>3</sup> After this announcement a Corporate Tax Advisory Committee was appointed by the Provincial Treasurer to propose changes to the Alberta Income Tax Act. In 1980, just when the federal government started to have serious second thoughts about the wisdom of administering Provincial credits,<sup>4</sup> Alberta passed its own corporation income tax act to take effect January 1981. The objective of the new act was to build into the existing corporation income tax act a broad corporate income tax incentive package designed to promote private investment and economic diversification in Alberta.

In effect the Alberta Corporate Income Tax Act is just a shorter version of the federal Act. The Alberta Act is designed so that it automatically adopts federally legislated changes to corporation taxable income. Although the Alberta legislature has the option of introducing any amendment whenever it chooses not to follow a federal change,<sup>5</sup> it has not yet exercised that option.<sup>6</sup>

## **Ends and Means**

It is often argued that one of the basic duties of any government is to encourage those activities which can strengthen the economy and result in enhancing the social and economic well-being of its citizens. There are a number of policy instruments open to government to achieve these objectives. One such instrument involves granting indirect rewards to individuals and corporations through the tax system<sup>7</sup> in order to affect their economic behaviour in the desired direction.

Though Canada has had tax incentives in one form or another since the beginning of its present income tax system in 1917, the provinces, including Alberta, have long felt that they lacked adequate flexibility in their provincial tax systems to be effectively able to use "their own" tax policy measures to achieve "their own" socio-economic objectives. The government of Alberta in particular believed that Corporation income tax is an effective instrument which can be used to significantly affect individual and corporation decisions.<sup>8</sup> This would be possible only when the province takes over the administration of its corporation Income

Tax. This in turn provides the government with the necessary flexibility in the provincial tax system. Such flexibility enables the provincial government to directly pursue its economic objectives. As has been repeatedly stated by senior Alberta government officials "...it is our intention to use corporate income tax increasingly as a tool of economic policy" (Hyndman 1982, 7). Furthermore, it was believed that once the process was completed, the provincial government would not need to rely upon federal government initiatives to encourage desired economic activities within the province.

Based on such premises a series of objectives had been developed. In general, Alberta intended to use corporation tax incentives:<sup>9</sup>

1. To encourage expansion of small and locally-controlled businesses so that they would have a better chance to compete with large national companies.
2. To use natural resources including agricultural products to diversify Alberta's economy.
3. To assure that an increasing portion of the province's natural resources, particularly oil and gas as well as agricultural products, are processed in Alberta.
4. To ensure a balanced growth between smaller and metropolitan centres.

However, a host of other related and more specific objectives have been announced during the past eight years. These objectives range from economic diversification to encouraging research and development and upgrading of the resource industry in Alberta.<sup>10</sup> In order to achieve these objectives a set of proposed tax changes in line with the corporation income tax take-over have been made. Specifically these proposals include the following:

1. Small Business Deduction (SBD): to create additional internal funds to finance growth of the small business and thus help the economy to diversify.
2. Investment Incentive Corporation (IIC): to provide tax incentives to the corporations which have cash reserves and are willing to make these funds available for investment in targeted areas. Those investment funds will then be used to finance small domestic producers and eligible farmers as well as those new firms which wish to establish themselves in Alberta.
3. A reduced provincial corporation income tax rate: this rate would be applied to the taxable income of the group of manufacturing and processing firms.
4. A special deduction from Alberta taxable income: a deduction of corporation research and development costs undertaken in Alberta in approved programmes of particular interest to the province.
5. Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance (CCA): to be provided on new acquisitions of machinery and equipment used for the purpose of manufacturing or processing goods in Alberta.<sup>11</sup>

A review of these policy proposals indicates that the main purpose of taking over the corporation tax administration from the federal government is to use the corporation tax incentives to help overcome barriers to economic growth and further encourage the business community (Hyndman 1982). At the outset, this seems a logical and well-founded policy which should be welcomed by every citizen. However, two questions remain unanswered:

- 1) Generally speaking, is it an economically sound decision for a province to leave the TCAs?

2) Assuming that the answer to the above is affirmative, can corporation income tax incentives be effectively utilized to promote such a diversified list of economic objectives?

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Corporate Tax Take-over by a Province**

The 1960-1980 period was one of very rapid growth in the Alberta economy. This rapid growth is attributed to the expansion of energy related activities in the province. The result has been higher provincial government revenue from these sources and a more or less single product economy.<sup>12</sup> It was at the peak of the energy crisis and the concomitant rise in the world price of oil that the government of Alberta announced its intention to bring its corporation tax administration home.<sup>13</sup> There seems to be an obvious link between higher government revenue and the serious consideration of an independent corporation income tax system in Alberta. The fact that no attempt has been made to evaluate the costs and disadvantages of such a policy can be used as a proof of this claim. Due to the sudden jump in revenue and the never-ending boom in the provincial economy, the economic costs and possible disadvantages of such a repatriation were the last thing that the government had in mind.

The benefits or advantages of provinces administering their own taxes are very limited. While self-administration does provide provincial governments with freedom and flexibility to determine their own economic and tax policy objectives, provincial administration of taxes also makes it possible for taxpayers to identify the source of their discomfort thus encouraging them to exert influence or criticism at the proper level of hierarchy.<sup>14</sup>

The associated costs and/or disadvantages of withdrawal from Tax Collection Agreements can be both private and public. The first and most obvious cost to the public is the administration cost itself.<sup>15</sup> Apart from this cost, which can be estimated with some degree of accuracy,<sup>16</sup> one must take into consideration the loss of revenue through possible tax evasion "which could be substantial with separate systems." (Huggett, in Ontario Economic Council, 1977, 59). Tax avoidance and evasion will be further encouraged if there is little or no co-operation between the provinces in the form of joint audits or other aspects of co-ordinated tax administration. Recent experience in the United States has shown that a significant amount of tax liabilities are involved.<sup>17</sup> Not only are the administration costs increased due to duplication of collection offices, assessors and others, but the efficiencies due to economies of scale and the advantages of sophisticated computers and programmes are lost as well.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, differences in the tax laws between different jurisdictions would "absorb considerable amounts of scarce talent of lawyers and accountants in tax administration and compliance that would more productively be used in other pursuits" (Mclure Jr. 1982, 856).

An additional cost to the public sector is related to the process of introducing new tax measures (tax reforms) into the provincial system. Once a province starts administering its own corporation income tax, it has to go through the process of preparing complex income tax legislations — if not, there is no point in taking over. These changes and/or reforms prove to be very costly to the province.<sup>19</sup> The cost would be further increased if provincial governments started to offer tax concessions to attract industry or to favour local industries. The result would be changes in the distribution of the tax burden and possible substantial reduction in tax yield due to tax competition. Added to all these is the problem of legislating tax increases. This is, no doubt, a politically undesirable action that provincial governments can hardly afford.

Equally important is the estimation of private costs. First, there is an increase in the compliance cost to the taxpayers since they must file two returns instead of just one. Not only do those who prepare their own tax returns have to file more than one form but more and more taxpayers would have to seek professional help. This is especially true for businesses operating in a number of provinces, which could well be required to keep more than one set of books. In addition, the taxpayer has to plan for the interrelations between the two different tax systems. If there is no difference between the two tax systems there is no justification for the provincial withdrawals in the first place.

Most accounting systems are designed to provide information for a single tax system. “The cost of redesigning systems for multiple tax jurisdictions is inestimable.” (Huggett, in Ontario Economic Council, 1977, 60).<sup>20</sup> Finally, costs of appeals and advanced rulings and the possibility of different decisions made by federal and provincial authorities should also be considered.

There is no doubt that the short run as well as the long run costs and disadvantages of corporation income tax administration take-over by provinces far exceed the possible benefits and advantages. Despite this and despite the fact “that there are practical limits to Alberta’s flexibility, that there is considerable merit in a uniform tax system across Canada” (Hyndman 1982, 6), the government of Alberta chose to leave the TCAs with respect to corporation income tax in 1981.

### **The Past Experience**

Tax incentive measures were first introduced in 1939 in Canada.<sup>21</sup> Subsequent tax incentive schemes, prior to the major tax revision of 1971-72 were introduced in 1949, 1951, 1961, 1962.<sup>22</sup> Theoretically, there are a large number of tax policy measures that can be used to influence private sector investment decisions. Among these are changes to tax rates, the definition of the tax base, loss carry overs, and the relation between corporation and personal taxes (Bird 1980, 2). Although all tax incentives

may be labelled as tax expenditures, as Bird (1980) points out, one should not assume that all tax expenditures can be considered as tax incentives.<sup>23</sup>

The role of tax incentives as a method of achieving the government's policy objectives has been viewed with skepticism. Empirical evidence does not support the idea that such incentives can be of much help in achieving stated government policy objectives.<sup>24</sup> Though much has been written on tax expenditures in general, little research has been done in the area of tax incentives in Canada.<sup>25</sup> Acknowledging the limited information that we have on the effectiveness of tax incentives in Canada, Bird (1980) contends that "... what little we know does not suggest they do much good" (46). He concludes that incentives in general are neither efficient nor effective in achieving most of the objectives for which they were designed (2). "... the general conclusion to which one is led by both theory and empirical work is that it does not appear very realistic to expect investment incentives *alone* [emphasis added] to result in a *permanent* [emphasis added] increase in the rate of investment" (Bird 1980, 47). Even a very optimistic view on the strength of tax incentives in affecting economic decisions leaves us with no choice but accepting that it would be unrealistic to expect too much of tax incentives.<sup>26</sup>

As in any other economic analysis, the role of tax incentives ought to be analyzed with respect to their long-run and short-run impact on other economic variables. Theoretical arguments will convince us that any positive change in the direction of economic activities as a result of tax incentives is at best temporary. This is particularly true with the impact of incentives on investments since, in the long-run, no additional net investment is needed to sustain the capital stock at the new higher level (presumably resulting from tax incentives) to which it may be moved by the incentives (Hall 1968). It follows that, for the investment to continue to grow, within the policy objective framework, new forms of tax incentive provisions would have to continue to emerge in the long-run. The question, then, is how far can a government commit itself to financing an evergrowing tax expenditure system? Indeed, the manner through which the government can finance these incentive provisions has a lot to do with the effects of the incentives themselves as well as the responsiveness of private savings to these incentives.

The sources used by governments to finance their tax expenditures are directly or indirectly related to those available to the private sector. There are circumstances that will lead to less effective tax incentive measures. There is a possibility that saving may not increase in response to the government's action. The final result depends very much upon the way these incentives are financed by the government. First the government either reduces other expenditures (and thus total demand) or increases its deficit (thus absorbing more savings) to finance its tax expenditures. Either of these will put pressure on the rate of private investment and saving. Second, even if one assumes that investment rises in response to

an increased rate of return, induced by an incentive, this increased investment will be eventually cut short by the long-run increase in the interest rate. Even in a relatively short period of time, the effects of government incentives on investment demand may be reduced considerably if interest rates rise.<sup>27</sup>

Along the same line is an important policy question related to the costs and benefits of introducing such incentives. Based upon the impact of tax incentives on investment demand (the criterion used in evaluating those incentives),<sup>28</sup> it is difficult to justify their use on the basis of cost-benefit involved. Herman and Johnson (1978) conclude that "Canadian tax incentives policies have had an impact on the level of investment expenditures, but the revenue losses associated with the policies cast a cloud over their efficiency" (704). Bird (1980) also reaches a similar conclusion after reviewing a large number of empirical as well as analytical research in the area of tax incentives. He concludes that "Although incentives do *appear* [*emphasis added*] to increase investment in the favoured sector with a considerable lag, it is far from clear that the benefits achieved outweigh the cost incurred..." (ix).

One is left with no choice but to conclude that (1) tax incentives are not as effective as they are deemed to be in influencing the investment decision of the private sector and (2) there exists much doubt that the benefits of these policy measures can exceed the costs.

### **Tax Incentives in Alberta**

While Québec and Ontario have been outside the Tax Collection Agreements for some time, they have not used the system to compete for "economic activities."<sup>29</sup> Both provinces "have traditionally maintained base definitions and allocation rules that broadly conform to those used by other provinces." (Economic Council of Canada 1982, 90) However, with the decision to administer its corporation income tax for the purpose of providing economic incentives, Alberta has publicly announced its intention of using corporate profit tax as an incentive policy tool.

Although it was announced recently that Phase I of the Alberta corporate tax incentive is completed (Government of Alberta, Budget Address 1982, 23), so far no major new incentive has been introduced into the Alberta corporate tax system. The majority of incentives in effect are an extension of those already in effect through the federal Income Tax Act<sup>30</sup> (Economic Council of Canada 1982, 89). Besides Small Business Deduction (SBD),<sup>31</sup> the only other provision introduced so far is Small Business Tax Installment Waiver which exempts small businesses resident in Alberta from monthly installment payments effective 1 April 1982. This would bring only about \$6.5 million savings for small businesses (Alberta Government, Budget Address 1982, 23).

Most of the emphasis, however, has been put on providing incentives for oil and gas related industries. For example, effective 1 September 1982, the Royalty Tax Credit (RTC) was doubled from 25 percent of Crown royalties to 50 percent, and the maximum annual credit was raised from \$1 million to \$2 million (Alberta Government, Budget Address 1982, 23).

No thorough analysis of Alberta Corporate tax incentives has yet been carried out. In fact it is neither practical nor feasible to empirically test and evaluate the success or failure of corporate tax incentive schemes in Alberta. First, the withdrawal has not been in effect long enough to provide us with the type of information needed to conduct such an analysis. Second, Alberta has yet to introduce its "comprehensive incentive package."<sup>32</sup> However, the persistent emphasis of the Alberta government on the role and effectiveness of tax incentives leaves us with no choice but evaluating the possibility of success or failure for corporate tax incentives on the basis of the existing evidence. The analysis should be based upon: (a) the existing body of literature on tax incentives and related topics; (b) the existing empirical evidence on tax incentives; and (c) the state of Alberta economy, especially its tax system and incentive structure.

The provision of tax incentives is based on the assumption that such tax measures in effect lower the cost of production and hence potential output prices, resulting in higher private investment.<sup>33</sup> For this to be true, a relatively secure sizeable tax incentive has to be in effect. This requires a relatively large corporation income tax revenue to begin with. Such, however, is not the case in Alberta (Table 1). In the 1980-81 fiscal year, corporate taxes gave rise to only 27 percent of the total government tax revenue, whereas the same percentage was 59 for personal income tax. The corporate income tax as a percentage of total tax revenue is on the decline according to Alberta Treasury estimates.<sup>34</sup> The same percentage is estimated to be rising in the case of personal income tax. Not only is corporate tax revenue low as compared to total tax revenue, it is also negligible when compared with the total budgetary revenue. It constitutes only 6.6 percent of the total budgetary revenue for the 1980-81 fiscal year and continues to remain low (see Table 1). Table 1 also reveals that once Royalty Tax Credits are counted for the corporation income tax revenues will be negative. One wonders then on what basis the government of Alberta continues to insist that "The Provincial Government should use tax incentives much more aggressively to encourage activity and growth" (Alberta Government 1984, 57), when there is no more corporation income tax revenue left to be used for incentive purposes. After all, the behaviour that the Alberta government is trying to influence is that of the corporations. To this end a large corporation income tax relative to the corporate sector's profit or taxable income is required. There is no sense in trying to provide tax incentives if there is not already enough tax to be used in providing such incentives. Unfortunately corporation income tax in Alberta does not meet this criterion either. The total corporation income tax collected

**TABLE 1**  
**SELECTED ITEMS FROM THE ALBERTA BUDGETARY REVENUE**  
**(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)**

Item	1980-81 (Actual)			1981-82 (Actual)			1982-83 (Estimate)			1983-94 (Estimate)		
	Value	Corporate Tax as a % of	Personal Tax as a % of	Value	Corporate Tax as a % of	Personal Tax as a % of	Value	Corporate Tax as a % of	Personal Tax as a % of	Value	Corporate Tax as a % of	Personal Tax as a % of
Corporate Income Tax	435 (152)	—	—	547 (132)	—	—	631 (888)	—	—	506 (657)	—	—
Personal Income Tax, net	938	46	—	1,323	41	—	1,560	40	—	1,518	33	—
Total Taxes	1,587	27	59	1,947	28	68	1,556	41	100.2	1,723	29	88
Total Budgetary Revenue	6,578	6.6	14	7,084	8	19	6,520	9.6	24	8,840	6	19

Source: Alberta Government, Budget Address, March 1982 and March 1983, p. 59 and p. 39 respectively.

( ) = Royalty Credit

Note: The percentages calculated for the corporation income tax is exaggerated relative to those for the individual income tax since the latter is net of Royalty Tax Credit. For fiscal years 1982-83 and 1983-84 the corporate income tax is already negative.

relative to the total corporation taxable income is small (see Table 2). On the average corporation income tax constitutes only 10.9 percent of total corporate taxable income. This percentage has been on a decline during the period reported.

**TABLE 2**  
**CORPORATION TAXABLE INCOME AND**  
**CORPORATION INCOME TAXES**  
**(MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)**

Year	Ontario			Alberta			British Columbia		
	Taxable Income	Tax	%	Taxable Income	Tax	%	Taxable Income	Tax	%
1971	3,220.9	350.0	10.9	653.6	70.9	10.8	793.4	78.5	9.9
1972	3,804.2	515.0	13.5	796.3	83.7	10.5	934.7	109.3	11.7
1973	4,847.1	547.0	11.3	1,129.5	125.9	11.1	1,428.2	165.1	11.6
1974	6,444.4	817.0	12.7	2,221.4	333.0	14.9	1,703.8	250.0	14.7
1975	6,578.2	929.0	14.1	3,486.7	397.5	11.4	1,718.8	271.5	15.8
1976	6,443.9	989.0	15.3	3,251.8	332.0	10.2	1,852.4	252.6	13.6
1977	6,093.6	1,038.4	17.0	3,878.9	382.5	9.8	1,942.0	324.4	16.7
1978	7,148.7	1,256.0	17.5	3,942.7	425.0	10.7	2,376.5	432.3	18.1
1979	8,823.0	1,270.0	14.4	5,001.2	523.3	10.5	3,234.9	450.7	13.9
1980	10,285.6	1,514.7	14.7	6,051.1	546.0	9.0	3,461.3	579.9	16.7
			Ave=14.1			Ave=10.9			Ave=14.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Corporation Taxation Statistics (61-208) and Provincial Government Finance (68.205), different issues.

When other indices of Alberta economy are considered, the relatively small size of corporate income tax becomes more evident. For example, the government's 1982-83 capital construction programme was \$2.1 billion and the provincial corporations were expected to undertake major capital investments in the amount of \$3 billion during the same period (Alberta Government, Budget Address 1982, 9). The question is whether corporation tax incentives can be of any significant effect even if one goes so far as to assume that all corporation income tax is "expended" to finance the implementation of these incentives. Given the relatively limited corporation tax in Alberta, and in reference to the empirical evidence cited earlier, the answer to this question is more than obvious. The effectiveness of corporation tax incentives is further reduced due to the self-imposed limitation that the Alberta Corporation Income Tax Act will remain as a subset of the federal Income Tax Act.<sup>35</sup>

It may be correctly argued that Alberta relies upon its currently vast resource revenue rather than its limited corporate tax revenue to foster its economic policy objectives. By introducing resource revenue into the argument, one has shifted from tax incentives to direct government intervention in the economic domain. If such has been the intention of the Alberta government, it would then be very difficult to justify the

corporate tax administration take-over. Dealing with depletable resources, in this case, there would be no guarantee that the government would be capable of continuing its expenditures to motivate the private sector in Alberta. Added to this is the possibility of change in government and consequently policies. Related to this is the question of investors' expectations. For the tax incentives to influence effectively these expectations a relatively secure, long lasting, and significant in size, incentive programme has to be in effect. Besides, "...in a world of uncertainty there is a great deal about the behaviour of companies and their response to public policy that we do not as yet understand" (King 1977, 252).

One of the important structural differences between provincial and federal levels of government is that the former is typically a much more open economy and subject to more pervasive competitive pressure from other fiscal jurisdictions. The effectiveness of Alberta Corporation tax incentives will be further reduced if other provinces follow suit. Although Alberta can manipulate the net fiscal benefits that accrue to capital within its borders, there is no guarantee that other provinces will not follow suit in order to preserve their own tax base. The result would be a tax war in the short-run and a minimum impact of tax concessions on investment in the long-run. Such would be especially the case if one assumes perfect mobility of resources at least in the capital market. Obviously, differential taxation of business will do more harm than good in a federal system, especially if the long-run outcome is expected to be what was just described.<sup>36</sup>

One might argue that a free market has its dominant imperfections and tax incentives may well be used to correct these imperfections. In a purely theoretical sense one cannot demonstrate that the prevention of economic obstacles by the government would necessarily improve the allocation of factors of production. Besides, even if we agree that the government has to step in to correct market imperfections, there is no better candidate for this job than the federal government. Narrowing our focus on taxation, a provincial government would not be capable of correcting the tax system "distortion" all alone.<sup>37</sup> Most, if not all, of the existing distortions are caused more by federal than provincial tax legislation.

It is hoped that tax incentives affect not only the level but the composition of investment.<sup>38</sup> This argument may be used in support of employing tax incentives to diversify the Alberta economy. Even if one assumes that economic diversification has been recently experienced in Alberta, under no circumstances can one conclude that this is the result of tax incentives. First, not sufficient time has been allowed for the yet limited incentives to work their way into the economy, and second, "...a degree of 'automatic diversification' has occurred, and will continue to occur, in the Alberta economy" (Drugge and Veeman 1980, 223) independent of tax incentive measures in effect now or in the future.

Besides, the Alberta government must be well aware of that placing too much emphasis on tax incentives, in order for small businesses to promote investment and diversify the economy, is difficult to justify. Empirical evidence shows that a tax incentive is most effective in the case of large firms who can make sufficient profit to take full advantage of the incentives.<sup>39</sup>

In all, there are a number of factors which will minimize the already limited impact of corporation tax incentives on economic decisions of the private sector in a province. Despite these and the limited effectiveness of tax incentive in general the question is why Alberta went ahead and pulled out of the agreement. There is only one reason left for such an action; that of political consideration. Ever since the release of the public document "Basic Objectives and Terms of Reference for Alberta Business Taxation and Incentives" in 1975, a state of "wait and see" has prevailed within the Alberta business community. They are still awaiting the announcement of a "comprehensive incentive package" after eight years. This, the business community hopes, will improve their relative financing position. However, no major and comprehensive corporate tax incentive, other than those mentioned above, has been announced yet.

It seems that the main objective of the Alberta government is to convince the business community that the government is consistently concerned about their state of economic and financial well-being.<sup>40</sup> The prevalence of such an attitude within the business community (that is if the government can successfully do so) will result in a political gain for the government. Tax incentives provide a political justifiable way in which governments can respond to endless pressure of the business community for lower taxes, rather than trying to stimulate the economy for economic reasons. As Bird (1980) puts it "...perhaps the most useful approach to the political economy of tax incentives is to view them as simply one of the range of governing instruments at the disposal of governments. ...incentives may be used for all the usual purposes of government—not only to achieve economic objectives...but also, perhaps more importantly, to maintain the acceptability and influence of the governing party with important segments of opinion" (59). Elsewhere in his book he says "...since the economic evidence in support of incentives is so weak, the reason for their obvious and persistent popularity must lie more in the interaction between politics and economics than economics alone" (ix).

## **Conclusion**

The publicly announced objective of Alberta's withdrawal from the Tax Collection Agreements concentrates on the corporate tax system to be used as a policy instrument to achieve a series of socio-economic objectives. It was argued that, based on the approach used in announcing

the intention and introducing the incentives, political factors may have played a role in this process rather than economic consideration alone.

It was observed that the economic and social costs and disadvantages of pulling out of the Tax Collection Agreements far exceed the possible benefits and advantages involved, especially when the Canadian economy is considered in general. Both empirical and theoretical evidence to date show that tax incentives are neither efficient nor effective in achieving the kind of objectives for which they are designed. In the case of a province, the ineffectiveness of tax incentives is further enhanced due to the possibility of interprovincial competition and limited scope of corporate income tax base.

In the case of Alberta, less favourable response is expected to result from the use of corporate tax incentives since the approach has been piece-meal, consisting of scattered and unrelated incentives rather than a once and for all comprehensive incentive package. Furthermore, had the objective been economic and not political we would have seen, by now, a comprehensive and complete corporate tax incentive package in effect in Alberta.

#### NOTES

1. Tax Rental Agreements were introduced in 1941 to meet the need for more revenue to finance Canada's war effort. Under these agreements, the provinces withdrew from certain tax fields, namely personal and corporation income taxation, in return for payments from Ottawa. (See Perry (1984), 3; and Abizadeh and Hudson (1983), 653-55.)
2. Québec has no tax collection agreement. Ontario and Alberta have agreements only for personal income taxes.
3. See, Government of Alberta (1975), 2.
4. As a result of these considerations, the federal government announced the following conditions with respect to the acceptability of the new provincial tax measures: (1) The measures must be administratively feasible: (2) The measure must not significantly alter, or have the potential to alter, the essential harmony and uniformity of the federal and provincial income tax systems: (3) The measure must not jeopardize the efficient functioning of the Canadian Union by the erection of income tax barriers to normal interprovincial investment flows (McEachen 1981, 54).
5. See Hyndman (1982), 6.
6. Indeed, as will be discussed later, the Alberta government has not brought in any special measure (except for the waiving of small business tax installment payment) in addition to what the federal act already provides or could be administered by the federal government without withdrawing from TCAs.
7. This is known today in economic literature as "tax incentives" or in a broader sense "tax expenditures." For a clear exposition of these two terms see Bird (1981), 15-16.
8. See Government of Alberta (1975), 6.
9. See Government of Alberta (1975), 6 and Hyndman (1982) on these objectives.
10. See Premier Lougheed's statement to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in Alberta *Hansard* (1974), 888-892.
11. See Government of Alberta (1975), 10-18 for more on these proposals.
12. Although agriculture still plays a relatively important role in the economy "the relative contribution to overall output of the mining and finance sectors have increased whereas those of agriculture and manufacturing have declined between 1961 and 1977." (Drugge and Veeman 1980, 221.)
13. Following the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973. Actually, the Progressive Conservative government was elected in 1971. Mr. Lougheed seems to have a strong belief—perhaps purely ideological—in the value of tax preferences. (See Abizadeh and Hudson 1983.) The question of corporation tax withdrawal was in the mind of government prior to 1974. However, it was not until well after the energy crises that the government of Alberta seriously considered establishing its own corporation tax administration.
14. See Huggett, in Ontario Economic Council (1977), 58-59. The remainder of this section relies to some extent upon arguments presented by Huggett in *ibid.*, 55-62.

15. For Alberta the estimated cost of revenue collection and rebate administration (including the Corporate Tax Administration (CTA) branch) is around \$42 million for the 1982-83 fiscal year. Corporate Tax Administration cost is estimated to be over \$11 million for the same period (Government of Alberta 1982b, 181.) In addition to these current costs the overhead cost of administering the corporate tax system in Alberta has to be taken into account.
16. See Bird (1982) on difficulties in measuring as well as the actual estimates of these costs.
17. See, Economic Council of Canada (1982), 98.
18. Not only the provincial government will incur an additional cost of collecting and administering its own taxes, but the federal government may well continue to incur the same cost or even an increased cost of tax administration due to the loss of economics of scale.
19. As Bird (1982) has noted "Tax policy changes, as practitioners have learned repeatedly in recent years, are far from socially costless," 861.
20. The province of Québec was forced to adopt the federal capital cost allowance system through pressure from the business community which found it too expensive to maintain two different depreciation records. See *ibid*.
21. This was a 10 percent investment allowance (a deduction in addition to the normal write-off of original cost of carrying business against taxable income).
22. Bird (1980), 3. For more on the subsequent historical development of investment tax incentives see Bird (1961), Chapter 5, and Bird (1980), Chapter 2.
23. The definition as well as identification of these terms has long been the subject matter of debate and controversy among economists. It is not the intention of this paper to deal with these issues. For more on these, see Bird (1980) and McLoughlin and Proudfoot (1981).
24. See May (1979).
25. See Department of Finance (1980).
26. One of the most optimistic views is expressed by the National Council of Welfare (1979). Their conclusion reads; "some of these tax breaks 'work'—at least to the extent that they seem to encourage what they were meant to encourage (which isn't to say that they necessarily do so in the most efficient way possible). Others are very questionable as to their effectiveness. Some simply reward companies and individuals for doing what they would have to do even if there wasn't an incentive [emphasis added]," 16.
27. Adapted from Bird (1980), 46-47.
28. See, Bird (1980), 28.
29. The only possible exceptions are deductions and credits offered by Québec and Ontario, respectively, for capital invested in small businesses operating in their provinces. See, Economic Council of Canada (1982), 95.
30. The existing incentives in the federal Income Tax Act are large in number and relatively small in size and impact. See, National Welfare Council (1979), 16.
31. A 5 percent tax rate on taxable income for those firms qualifying for SBD.
32. Even in the absence of these obstacles the possibility of a meaningful empirical analysis will be limited due to the conceptual and other related problems. Bird (1980) has emphasized upon this aspect of empirical studies of Canadian tax incentive system and the impossibility of a thorough cost-benefit analysis. See *ix*.
33. There is a sharp difference between the results of empirical studies with respect to the effectiveness of these policies in Canada (see Bird 1980, 40).
34. Although part of the reason may be related to the introduction of incentives and the associated tax expenditures, it is still evident that the insignificant size of corporate sector's taxable income may not be an appropriate tool to be relied upon so heavily in order to achieve the stated diversified economic objectives. Indeed, the most recent estimates of corporation income tax for Alberta shows a negative value as evident from Table 1. (Also see Government of Alberta 1983, 39).
35. In addition to all these, the limited data available since Alberta withdrew from the Tax Collection Agreements in 1981, provides no more optimism as far as the effectiveness of corporate tax incentives are concerned. For example, the percentage of labour force employed in manufacturing has dropped from 9.5 in 1980 to 7.7 in 1984. The share of manufacturing value added in total provincial gross domestic product declined from 6.9 to 5.9 for the same period. Obviously neither one of these indicators point towards a positive effect of tax incentive on Alberta's economy.
36. Also see Huggett, in Ontario Economic Council (1977), 22.
37. The same argument holds true when one considers stabilization and redistribution policies. See McLure Jr. (1982), 849-851, for more on these.
38. As discussed earlier, it should be noted that such an impact does not necessarily lead towards higher absolute levels of investment. See Bird (1980), especially, 47-48.
39. For evidence see, Usher (1977) and Mendelsohn and Beigie (1976).
40. This kind of attitude is obvious when one carefully studies the Alberta public statements with respect to corporate tax incentive package. See, Hyndman (1982). Postponement of announcing a comprehensive package (as well as the piecemeal approach taken in introducing it) for about eight years is another proof to this claim. The Premier's televised statement of 7 September 1982 did not give any indication that the corporate tax incentive is even being considered.

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# Putting Renewable Energy on an Equal Footing

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**ABSTRACT.** This article suggests that perhaps Westerners should not continue their region's longterm dependence on nonrenewable energy sources or megaprojects. After citing studies calling for a renewable energy future and improved energy conservation, the author points out that the so-called hard energy path enjoys significant advantage over renewable energy technologies partly because of government policies, or lack of information in various sectors of the economy. He then proposes policies to remove these advantages and to allow an orderly transition to the "soft energy" path, should policy makers on all the evidence decide that this is desirable.

**RESUME.** Cet article suggère que les provinces de l'Ouest devraient cesser de compter à long terme sur des sources d'énergie non renouvelables ou sur des mégaprojets. L'auteur cite d'abord des études qui prônent dans l'avenir une énergie renouvelable et une conservation d'énergie améliorée, puis il souligne que si les énergies "dures" jouissent d'avantages considérables sur les technologies d'énergie renouvelable, c'est en partie à cause des politiques gouvernementales ou à cause du manque d'information qui existe dans divers secteurs de l'économie. L'auteur propose ensuite les lignes de conduite qui visent à faire disparaître ces avantages pour permettre une transition en bon ordre aux énergies "douces," si les personnes en charge d'élaborer des politiques decidaient, face à l'évidence, que ce changement est désirable.

## Introduction

Western Canadians often hold an overly optimistic picture about our region's conventional energy resources. Although reserves of conventional crude oil have been declining annually, huge quantities of natural gas are presently "locked in," and billions of barrels of heavy crude are available in the tar sands of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Mountain and prairie coal seem to offer energy security to generations of Canadians. Further, huge hydroelectric projects such as the Churchill-Nelson or the Slave River systems are either in production or else are under active consideration. Finally, Saskatchewan has significant uranium deposits should the nuclear option become more attractive for the prairie provinces.

We may, however, live in a "fuel's paradise." Perhaps we should take a second look at our assumptions of regional energy self-sufficiency and security. For the total social costs of continuing dependence on nonrenewable energy resources or megaprojects (including large scale hydroelectricity) may ultimately be too high to pay.

For example, issues of equity may arise in any frontier megaproject, renewable or nonrenewable. The total environmental and social impacts on the affected region may dramatically change the lifestyle or culture of its inhabitants. Moral dilemmas are presented when urbanized prairie Canadians solve their energy problems at the expense of people in remote regions who did not contribute to those problems. Nonrenewable energy megaprojects have much greater environmental impacts than do renewable projects. In fact, the Canadian House of Commons Special

Committee on Alternative Energy and Oil Substitution (1981) recommended that because of their heavy economic, social and environmental costs, Western Canadian tar sands and heavy oils should not be a dominant contribution to our energy supplies. The same committee noted that coal is "the least environmentally acceptable type of fossil fuel," and generally recommended against basing Canada's future energy system principally on the burning of hydrocarbons. As for nuclear energy, serious reservations exist about its economic viability, safety, especially regarding storage or disposal of wastes, and the civil liberties implications of the security system necessary to prevent sabotage or theft (Ayers 1975; Flood and Grove-White 1976).

The so-called hard energy path stresses the continued vigorous expansion of centralized high technology to exploit non-renewable energy sources (including uranium). It is oriented toward increasing supply, especially of electricity. The above brief discussion does not necessarily show that the hard path is undesirable; it raises the possibility that we should re-evaluate our choice of energy futures.

## **Removing Barriers, Creating Incentives**

### *Overview*

The change from a hard to a soft energy path would involve significant change and commitment from the bottom up, which would necessitate removal of various barriers, and from the top down by creating incentives. Some caveats should at once be lodged. Just because a particular technology, such as nuclear power, received huge incentives in the past, it does not automatically mean that its would-be challenger has to receive similar treatment today. The relevant comparison is between present levels of funding, remembering that different technologies may need different levels and types of support.

Similarly, it could be a mistake to criticize a higher depletion rate or other tax break for one form of energy over another. Overall, social costs and benefits should be compared. Perhaps one form is so superior that incentives for it are justified. The appropriate subsidy would then provide the amount of development indicated by the overall social costs and benefits of its deployment (Bezdek and Sparrow 1981), which may differ from those paid or obtained by an individual entrepreneur or user. Sometimes there are several possible options with no one clearly superior choice. It might be a serious mistake to subsidize any one technology or fuel in a big way. Several years ago, for example, active solar space heating looked far better than it does now in comparison with passive solar design and superinsulated, airtight houses.

In contemplating policy change, it is helpful to have a conceptual model of the process of technological diffusion. One useful rule of thumb is the proportions of money required at each stage of the process:

\$1 for basic research, \$10 for product and process development, \$100 for engineering and market studies, and \$1,000 for the manufacturing plant (Science Council of Canada 1979). Obviously, governments can afford failures in the first stages but once beyond "RD & D," their decisions had better be right.

We should draw the following conclusions from the above. First, removing barriers does not commit us to any particular options but merely removes some distortions in making choices. This also goes for certain kinds of economic incentives which give the advantage at the moment to the hard path. For example, "if the market is to resolve the problems, its distortions must be corrected so that all energy sources...will be able to compete on an equal economic footing" (Stobaugh and Yergen 1979, 225).

Second, there is not one conservation and renewable energy industry, but many. Therefore, in order to ensure selection of the best options, we may stress the creation of an adequate competitive supply and service infrastructure to transfer knowledge to individual buyers and to be sure they are adequately serviced (Pomerleau 1980, 8). We must remember, too, that policies have the best chance to succeed if at some level they are congruent with attitudes and values of the citizens.

Assuming that we have confidently identified a generic technology (for example, solar hot water heating or heat pumps), what are the prerequisites for its rapid diffusion?

New technology must be reasonably priced, convenient, desirable, easy to maintain, of acceptable quality, size and noise levels, aesthetically pleasing and effective (Foster and Sewell 1976, 88).

Programmes to encourage and coax innovation—it cannot be effectively coerced (Foster and Sewell 1976)—will have to help products meet these criteria.

Policy makers will be helped by generalized conceptions about the stages and actors in the diffusion process, so that appropriate programmes can be developed. Two or more stages can be going on simultaneously, but the object should be to develop a "product fit" between the industry and its environment to ensure the needed support network for the manufacture, publicity, sales, financing, installation and maintenance of the technology.

Obviously many different actors can be involved in the process but Foster and Sewell (1977) have suggested the following list for the diffusions of solar technology.

#### **Creators**

- \* Scientists, architects
- \* Manufacturers of components
- \* Construction industry

#### **Transmitters**

- \* Media
- \* Environmental and solar energy groups

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| * Influencers                                       | * Adopters                              |
| * Financial institutions                            | * Solar energy and environmental groups |
| * Unions  |   |
| * Government and utility officials, and politicians | * General public                        |
| * Real estate industry                              |   |

Three phases in the introduction of a new technology are creation or innovation, including verification and improvement of prototype performance (R & D); encouraging readiness among the industry and the public (through personal contact, use of the "transmitters" and demonstration); and a three-stage commercial diffusion. The first step of this diffusion entails large scale, realistic and dispersed demonstrations. These will help build up industrial and distributional capability, lower cost, produce performance data and enhance readiness among "influencers" and "adopters." The second stage in commercial diffusion is the "takeoff stage" where the industry further develops large scale production, distribution and servicing capability. As volume increases and price goes down, government incentives may be phased out. Companies become self-sustaining and significant competition develops. In the third, mature phase, sustained and profitable commercial activity continues, and government incentives should be at a minimum (after Schoen et al. 1975).

Marketing a new product is a complex task which involves communication, establishment of effective distribution and reasonable prices (Pomerleau 1980). Potential buyers want to minimize risk, which may involve demonstration and warranties, as well as assurances of adequate local skilled labour and parts. For "early adopters," performance may be more important than price and advertising and information programmes should stress this feature. Furthermore, buyers will want reassurance that the equipment will fit into their lifestyles (Shama 1981.)

Government aid may help greatly in the establishment of infrastructure to give comparative information about different products and to ensure quality through testing and certification.

Foster and Sewell (1977) conclude that the early adopters or pioneer users of a new technology are usually members of the élite. The spread of inventions from early adopters through early and late majority to laggards tends to be progression from higher to lower social status. For active solar technology, this could work out well, since the biggest markets will probably be in the commercial, industrial and institutional sectors, whose decisions are made by members of the élite. For domestic hot water or passive solar, however, it may be necessary to extend financial incentives to owners of expensive, custom designed homes as they will provide demonstration, leadership and aid to the development

of industrial capacity. Helping the rich offends equity considerations, but the installation of similar devices in subsidized housing could also be funded.

There are other strong influences on the choice of technology besides energy costs. In the industrial sector, energy costs are usually a small percentage of production costs. Therefore, energy intensity may seem preferable to higher labour or material costs. Also, buying more expensive equipment in order to save on home energy bills may seem impractical in times of high interest rates.

Furthermore, it may take a long time for a new technology to be adopted. Foster and Sewell (1978) suggest 30 years for a consumer product in the United States. Perhaps turnover of the automobile stock will take 7 years or more; a price increase in electricity may not achieve full effect for 9 years; industrial equipment may turn over in 10-20 years; and buildings may not be replaced for at least 40 years or more. For these and other reasons, long term strategies will have to be employed.

Another issue to be considered is what institutions should be used. There is considerable sentiment that where possible we should use existing institutions because it is easier (Stobaugh and Yergen 1979). On the other hand, we have to consider the social impact of institutional design. Our overall goals for society may indicate that giving more power to large, central, bureaucratically organized agencies, such as utility companies, takes us in the wrong direction. The ultimate criterion is: will this policy help or hinder the appropriate evolution of society? To paraphrase Winston Churchill, we shape our institutions and afterwards they shape us.

All things being equal, policy should be implemented with minimum effort and expenditure, using existing institutions. This would indicate that if education and information programmes will be effective, they should be used, rather than financial incentives or regulation. Choosing between the latter two, however, may be difficult. Sometimes, regulation can be too heavy-handed, since it is backed up by court enforced sanctions. Canadians would prefer use of "carrots" rather than "sticks" (Rosson and Sweitzer 1981). Furthermore, it may be too expensive and clumsy to require individual approvals. Direct regulation of a few manufacturers (pollution or energy efficiency automobile standards) will be far easier than of millions of individual consumers. If regulation seems too draconian, economic levers may be preferable even if considerably more expense is involved. People certainly understand and accept the use of subsidies, tax deductions, sales or luxury taxes.

Depending on the ease of implementation, and stage of development of various technologies, policy makers should consider techniques in roughly the following order:

1. Where possible, removal of undesired incentives or barriers by appropriate legislation (e.g., guarantee access to the sun, end subsidies to less important energy sources, change artificial or pricing structures which do not reflect marginal social costs).
2. Ensure all governments' purchasing policies reflect the desire to favour certain technologies.
3. Information, education and training programmes, including product labelling, advertising and demonstration.
4. Economic disincentives (taxes) to influence people against a course of action or particular technology.
5. Standards set by regulation, whether of performance (automobile or building energy consumption) or of construction materials or techniques.
6. Economic incentives (grants, low interest loans or loan guarantees, tax deductions, subsidies), using the government where possible as a backstop or guarantor rather than a prime funder.
7. Blanket prohibitions. If particular prohibitions are seen as minor (California has prohibited the use of electricity to heat swimming pools), they are preferable to economic incentives, although economic disincentives may work in a less visible way.
8. Mandatory action, such as compulsory retrofits of existing houses. This would involve inspection and certification.

### *Assessing Various Policy Techniques*

Various policy techniques presently exist. Economic incentives include income tax deductions or credits, forgiveness of property or sales tax, subsidies, low cost loans and outright grants. Other government mechanisms to encourage or prevent certain action include requiring warranties or certification programmes for equipment or contractors, standards for buildings, automobiles or appliances, purchase and demonstration programmes, insurance or reinsurance schemes, and planning or development laws covering such things as solar access.

There is no single best incentive or technique. Often a combination of techniques will best respond to each individual problem or sector.

The author has concluded that for major appliances and vehicles, compulsory energy efficiency standards will be both feasible and effective.

Some obviously desirable goals such as reduced emissions of pollutants and increased passenger protection in the event of accidents could not have been achieved as readily without uniform, across-the-board government mandates. In retrospect, I think it is fair to say also that the law requiring greater fuel economy in motor vehicle usage has moved us faster toward energy conservation goals than competitive, free-market forces, would have done (Henry Ford II, quoted in Stobaugh and Yergen 1979, 151-52).

Although performance standards for buildings can be complicated, and although administering them requires a larger and sophisticated staff, they concentrate on cost-effective savings, not specific hardware. Because of this flexibility, competition will encourage the development of new technologies. The simpler prescriptive standard for different building components is unlikely to ensure overall building performance. Hence, the author generally prefers performance standards to the

specification of particular products or techniques. Certainly, government standards are a well established policy instrument, and they are seen as fair. New products will require comprehensive warranties and market penetration will be furthered by some sort of financial incentive. High first cost can be dealt with by direct lump sum payments to buyers of the preferred equipment (Berkowitz 1977, 190). The general amount of the grant should be reduced over a fairly long period so that the earlier one installed the equipment, the more money one would receive. This phasing should also correspond to the decreasing price and risk of buyers.

Another cost-effective variant favoured by Bezdek et al. (1977) is the direct income tax credit for the consumer. Foster and Sewell (1977) agree that incentives to reduce the high first cost are best directed to the consumer. Because people in higher tax brackets benefit more from a tax deduction than do poorer people, the deduction system should be rejected out of hand in favour of the more equitable tax credits. Their self-administering nature may make them easier to implement in volume than grants. Like grants, it is impossible to predict their cost in advance and they can be a very high cost programme.

One problem with tax credits, of course, is that poor people may lack the necessary funds to buy an energy saving device, or in extreme cases may have no taxable income against which to claim the credit. In these circumstances, a tax "refund" would be necessary. Another problem with tax credits is the length of time between installation and the credit which will be calculated at the end of the tax year.

Possible disadvantages of both income tax credits or grants could be the encouragement of inappropriate applications of a technology (this is a risk for incentive programmes generally), and the possibility of administrative difficulty if eligibility criteria are complex. Grants also tend to go to those persons with the most initiative or knowledge, which raises possible equity problems.

Although the benefit-cost ratio per dollar spent is so favourable for loan guarantees, it is nevertheless hard to believe that such a modest incentive would stimulate mass commercialization. A modest decrease in interest rates, or extending credit to marginal credit risks does not approach the basic problem of high first cost or high interest rates.

As for subsidized interest rates, experience in respect of mortgages suggests a downpayment subsidy would be more effective (Regional and Urban Planning Implementation Inc. 1977). Loans are worth exploring, however, for utilities which wish to avoid the need to increase capacity by persuading customers to install cheaper conservation or soft energy technologies.

Rebates of sales or property taxes have also been used. In fact, by 1979, twenty-eight states in the United States had adopted the latter,

making it the most popular technique (Johnston 1979). But the cost effectiveness of these measures is relatively low (Bezdek 1977), and problems arise in defining passive systems, in treatment of backup and in deciding whether systems are personal property or fixtures (Wallenstein 1978).

## **An Implementation Strategy**

### *General*

First, governments should continue aid to research, development and demonstration. This would involve outright grants, tax credits and write-offs, as well as government procurement programmes to provide demonstration, show leadership and commitment, save energy and encourage commercialization. Any government building programme should require life cycle costing and the use of alternative energy technology in both new and existing buildings where economically feasible.

Second, vigorous information programmes are needed to persuade people of the desirability and feasibility of a change of direction. This would include advertising, technical and cost data for lay and professional public alike and education and training for commercial actors. This is considered crucial to success.

Bias against soft energy can be dealt with through the widespread dissemination of performance, reliability and cost data (including incentive programmes) of soft energy technologies. In terms of bias against soft energy within the civil service (Foster and Sewell 1977, 69, found more of that at the provincial than federal level), government policy should incorporate commitment to conservation and renewable energy within the civil service pay and promotion structure.

Consideration should also be given to increasing "lifestyle" advertising to persuade people that the conserver society can yield increased personal satisfaction rather than reducing our standard of living. Although advertising is ineffective at changing value structures, existing social values such as desire for prestige, fulfillment and saving money can be employed.

Third, all forms of energy should be priced approximately at their social cost (long run marginal cost of a significant increment in supply plus the cost of minimizing externalities such as pollution). To price energy at less than this involves an inefficient allocation of resources (Bezdek 1977, 152; Feldman 1980, 18; Kalt and Stillman 1980, 10). Any departures from the principle of efficiency should be carefully considered.

Fourth, various barriers exist because technologies have not yet reached a mature state of refinement and production. This situation

adversely affects attitudes, price and performance. Gattrill (interview, 1982) believes that the time is ripe for major commercialization programmes to deal with all these problems. He suggested stressing a substantial (50 percent) consumer tax credit programme to last 5 years, and claims that the solar industry would produce energy at a \$23.25 per barrel of oil equivalent ( $\$20.44/m^3$ ) at a cost to the government of \$250 million. He goes further. If commercialization is fully developed, 150,000m<sup>2</sup> of solar collectors could be installed annually and each year would displace an additional 50,000 barrels (7949m<sup>3</sup>) for a total of 20 years of 77 million barrels (about 12 million<sup>3</sup>).

Fifth, a vigorous commercialization programme for chosen technologies would have several aspects including encouragement of an information, distribution, sales, installation and service infrastructure. Various authors (Bezdek 1977; Foster and Sewell 1977; Sawer and Feldman 1978; and Sant 1980) have suggested encouragement for "energy bazaars" or comprehensive energy technology supply and service companies such as Canadian Tire offers for automobiles, coupled with competent advice or consulting services. As well as offering comprehensive information and equipment, such companies could make cost-effective energy installations and charge a percentage of the money saved, with provision for the owner to buy out the contract at a reasonable cost.

Other aspects of commercialization include training and certification of contractors, developing procedures for the prediction, testing and certifying performance of equipment or buildings and provision of comprehensive warranties of reliability and performance. These measures would improve consumer confidence and verify eligibility for government financial incentives. Government aid for these programmes should be considered. Where feasible (such as in new housing) new energy efficient performance standards should be imposed wherever cost-effective. The Saskatchewan "Conservation House" is a good example of the radical energy savings possible under "super efficient" design and construction of new housing (Besant and Dumont 1978).

Sixth, a package of financial aid must be put together by governments, including grants to industry and consumers and facilitation of capital formation. The development of the industry has been stimulated by installations on public buildings or those of individually selected applicants, but individual consumers and businesses also need financial inducements. In the case of home owners, grants such as the CHIP programme for retrofits should be expanded to include preferred alternative technologies, although the programmes should include energy audits to ensure the most cost-effective techniques are used. Alternatively, tax credits could be considered toward the same end. To encourage energy efficient housing, tract builders will have to be given

direct incentives, unless mandatory standards alone are chosen. As well as energy efficient standards in building codes, one possible new standard would require all new residences to be made "solar ready" by having the necessary pipe connections prepared. Snape (interview, 1982) estimates this could be done for \$50 per dwelling unit, and later retrofitting would be immeasurably easier.

Seventh, everything possible should be done to reduce the problems of obtaining mortgage or other loans. NHA and other government housing programmes should encourage, through lower interest, preference funding or guarantees, energy efficient housing and the use of soft path technologies. Rental and modest income housing should receive special attention for reasons of equity. Furthermore, if governments choose not to give significant grants or tax credits, they should encourage interest rate subsidization, or encourage utilities to implement lending programmes at their cost. In the case of utilities which would otherwise need to expand, it would make sense to make lower or even no interest loans to save energy.

#### *Conservation Considerations*

The commercialization programmes described above should be paralleled by major conservation efforts, specific aspects of which have been listed by Brooks (1981), Leach et al. (1979) and Marmorek (1981). Taxes should be imposed in order to bring energy prices up to marginal cost, mandatory efficiency standards on buildings, appliances and automobiles should be created, and a variety of other incentives should be implemented including the use of utilities to encourage conservation retrofits. The proposed taxes could be used to provide the major part of the funding needed for incentive programmes.

Consideration should be given to legislative changes to "deregulate" by easing the requirements for approval of small installations, and to ensure solar access and necessary planning for passive solar or energy-efficient subdivision.

#### *Institutional Considerations*

Many observers have concluded that a nation of diverse regions and interests like Canada needs maximum local autonomy in order to function successfully. Such observers include several provincial premiers, the Commissioner of the RCMP (*Saturday Night*, June 1982, 28), journalist Charles Lynch and astute scholars like Hooker et al. (1981). Such a scheme presents major constitutional and implementation difficulties. Hooker et al. have made imaginative suggestions for new decentralized institutions under some form of local control, but supported by flexible bureaucrats from other levels of government. These institutions in a democratic and participatory way would assess the local energy situation and potential, develop strategies and provide a framework of co-operative implementation. Regional energy offices

involving utility representatives as well would develop grass roots programmes and provide a focus for the decentralized implementation which soft energy paths will require.

Other new "criterial institutions" should be created somewhat like the Ontario Municipal Board or an expanded Ontario Energy Board, to apply broad sets of criteria created after a broad participatory process. Hooker et al. argue that this approach would leave legislators with more time to deal with fundamental policies.

Lovins (1980) and Pomerleau (1980) favour decentralized agencies with fieldworkers, extension services and "networks," instead of hierarchical bureaucracies to provide information. Again, local, decentralized decision making is prescribed.

Pomerleau (1980) and Yudelson and Parker (1979) also suggest using decentralized "third sector" or community-based organizations like co-operatives, non-profit corporations and community development corporations, as well as municipalities and small business. One of the advantages of such action is the building of a potentially powerful constituency to counteract the voice of the big corporations who have been pushing megaprojects (Benson 1981).

#### *The Role of Utilities*

Although much could be said about different roles of energy utility companies, merely the highlights can be mentioned here. They can delay or enhance the development of particular energy technologies through the setting of rates, their purchasing policies for energy generated by private installations, and their approach to future growth in demand. Will they continue to seek supply-oriented solutions involving massive new capital plant, or will they try to reduce demand through offering alternative soft technology to customers?

Generally, the author favours marginal cost pricing for energy, which could be made more precise through the use of higher peak load prices. The overwhelming utility problem lies in meeting peak demand, and both peak pricing and load management schemes, including interruptible power or "load shedding," can help even out demand.

The setting of rates is extremely complicated, involving different costs per unit of baseload and peakload power, and fixed as well as operating costs. These complex issues deserve careful scrutiny by utilities, particularly in light of the recommendation herein that pricing should reflect actual total costs of producing various forms of energy.

Conventional wisdom suggests that utility backup to alternative technology adds to their cost of providing power (because backup needs will often add to system peak, but reduce overall load factor). Nevertheless, various studies of actual utility systems, climates and solar heating possibilities show the contrary is possible. For some utilities (and not always summer-peaking ones), particularly when solar hot water

heating is in question, electric backup can cost less than conventional electric hot water heating (Feldman and Wirtshafter 1980; Bright and Davitian 1979; Bezdek and Sparrow 1981). Each specific utility and area may yield different results, and the need for detailed local study is obvious.

Nevertheless, Bright and Davitian's conclusion seems justified:

Consequently the rate design philosophy adopted by a utility regulatory commission can have a very substantial impact on the economics of solar systems using electric back-up: with average cost pricing, the pricing scheme commonly applied to the residential sector in the United States, the time at which solar HW becomes competitive with oil HW is delayed, perhaps by as much as several decades, compared to that under marginal cost pricing (1979, at 660).

Under the American Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA), utilities must pay private generators of electricity their "avoided cost" (Eisenstadt 1981, Lock 1981). This deceptively simple formula masks complex factual issues. For example, does the avoided cost include merely fuel costs for utilities with excess capacity? What happens if more power is offered than that capacity? Do the first vendors get fuel costs, and later ones avoided capital costs as well? Or can the utility apply again and again the same excess capacity to different vendors? What about a utility which would avoid cost of buying in bulk from a neighbour on the grid? How is that power to be costed? At actual price? Cost of the utility producing it? Does reliability of the production affect price, as different reserve capacity might be needed?

The Supreme Court of the United States has recently confirmed the right of small producers under PURPA to interconnect with utilities and to be paid the "full avoided cost" (*Renewable Energy News*, June 1983). Despite these considerations and some regulatory disputes, the policy has given significant encouragement to small producers. The principle of paying non-discriminatory rates for private producers is a desirable one. Perhaps for customers who usually consume about as much as they sell, a two-way meter and the customer's own rate could be used to settle the account either way. TransAlta Utilities Corporation currently allows connections of this sort but negotiates a somewhat lower rate for the power it purchases (Alberta Energy and Natural Resources 1982). Large scale promotion of conservation retrofits or renewable technologies can also reduce the need for expanded generating capacity.

Various American utilities have offered energy audits, low interest or no-interest loans, installation under lease or sale contracts of cost-effective devices, and repayment either when a house is sold or through the utility bill itself (Feldman and Wirtshafter 1981; Foster and Sewell 1978). More drastic measures have been tried as well. During the oil embargo of 1973, the Los Angeles utility set mandatory reduction targets for its customers, with 50 percent surcharge on the whole bill if the customer did not reduce consumption from the previous year. All

sectors met their targets and even a year later (after the programme had ended) electricity consumption was still down by 8 percent (Yergen 1979).

Another serious question is whether it is desirable to use utilities as the major diffusion mechanism for conservation and alternative technologies. Opinion is divided. The positive argument suggests that:

1. Unless they are "co-opted" into the programme, they can present a serious obstacle through pricing and other decisions. If they are included, they can set rates, manage loads and plan new expansion so as to integrate soft technologies in the most cost-effective way (Bezdek 1977).

2. They will be able to get cheaper prices from economics of scale (Bezdek 1977) and will be a major stimulus to the industry (Wallenstein 1978).

3. Utilities will be able to use their buying power to maximize product quality (Bezdek 1977).

4. They will be able to ensure consistently good installation and maintenance (Bezdek 1977). Customers would not have to worry about choice of system or warranties (Wallenstein 1978).

5. They are best able to "interface" soft technology and backup system in order to ensure compatibility (Bezdek 1977).

6. They can borrow money more cheaply (Wallenstein 1978), and through other loans or rebates can help overcome high first costs.

7. They have pre-existing sales service and billing networks in place (Wallenstein 1978) and reach nearly everyone (Kahn 1980).

8. If large conservative utilities went "soft," consumer confidence in the technologies would increase (Wallenstein 1978).

9. Costs of the programme can be spread among all customers if subsidization of users by non-user customers were deemed acceptable. Lovins and Lovins in a brief footnote claim that putting the costs of loans into the utility's rate base is in no one's financial interest (1980, 115).

The negative arguments are:

1. Because of the desire to maximize profit, "gold plating" might be emphasized. That is, high capital cost system would be chosen, both to minimize maintenance and to ensure addition to the rate base and hence profits (Kahn 1980). Low cost innovation would be discouraged (Gilmer and Meunier 1979).

2. The distribution of alternative technologies is inherently decentralized and there is no natural monopoly. Therefore, no monopoly should be created (Bezdek 1977). The possibility exists of creating monopoly profits by setting up utility subsidiaries to manufacture and sell the approved system to their parent at large mark-ups (Miller 1980). Presumably, pub-

licly owned utilities would not succumb to this temptation.

The independent soft technology industry might, therefore, disappear (*Canadian Renewable Energy News*, November 1981) and stand-alone systems or others which did not need, say, electricity backup would be ignored.

3. Utilities might choose "megaproject" type of technology of centrally located solar electricity generation and freeze out the simpler and perhaps more economical active systems (Wallenstein 1978). The advantage of more security against system failures would be lost (Kahn 1980).

4. Utilities such as Ontario Hydro, with large excess capacity, cannot fairly be expected to push soft path alternatives when their financial well-being depends on increasing load factors and thus decreasing average generating costs.

5. Home energy systems are well adapted to competitive enterprise. Service and maintenance quality should be improved by competition.

6. Social values of self-sufficiency, consumer control and social diversity would be enhanced by competition and a wide variety of products (Gilmer and Meunier 1979).

7. A hierarchical, bureaucratic institution is not as flexible or responsive to customer needs as small decentralized businesses.

8. Large utilities have proven very hard to keep under political control, and stressing soft technology goes against their historic mandate and mind set. Therefore, it would be naive to expect them to push this option (although American counter examples exist).

### *An Assessment*

Assessing the strength of these arguments is difficult. Foster and Sewell (1977) claim that:

...if solar home heating is to have any major impact on Canada's oil and electricity consumption, it will have to be promoted, installed, owned and maintained by the public utilities and their subcontractors (154).

Although the author takes seriously the social implications of using large utilities, we must be ingenious and seek to obtain possible benefits of utility involvement while minimizing possible disadvantages. For example, regulating agencies could prevent gold plating by calculating additions to the rate base on life cycle costing formulae to ensure the most prudent choice of technology.

One possible option would be to encourage local public utility commissions (the main retailing body for electricity in Canada) to establish separate "solar" or "soft" utilities. The separation ensures that the mandate to compete for cost-effective installations would be stressed, the utility status would give credibility to soft technology, and customers would be ensured high quality equipment through whatever

mass purchasing power these local corporations had. As well, "interface" problems would be minimized.

To back this up, however, the decentralized nature of soft installations offers perfect opportunities for "self-help" co-operatives to enter the same market, and private competition should be allowed too. The author can see no compelling reason to give utilities a monopoly over decentralized delivery systems.

While utilities have an important role in implementation of energy policy, they should not be the "gatekeepers" to new technology. Regulatory bodies responsible to governments must ensure that appropriate rates are set, and that no new construction of major generating facilities will be allowed until utilities can show that it is more cost effective than conservation or soft technologies. Regulatory hurdles should be eased for "mini-hydro," wind generators and industrially co-generated electricity to be approved, fed into grids and purchased at fair (marginal cost) prices. Utilities should not be allowed to monopolize the sale, leasing or installation of soft technologies.

## Conclusion

Above has been offered a general overall strategy for lessening the present imbalance between hard and soft energy paths. The most economical and least heavy-handed techniques should be looked at first, although where a tradition of detailed regulation exists, such as in the construction industry, rigorous energy efficiency standards should be created. Performance standards would be preferable to prescriptive ones, where they can be created and administered without undue complexity. Economic incentives should be a major part of the strategy, especially where mass commercialization is needed. What kind of incentive is less important than its monetary value. For example, if an 8 percent subsidy were sufficient to stimulate mass purchasing, it could be done through forgiveness of federal or provincial sales tax (depending on the provincial rate), tax credits or with outright grants. Far higher levels of incentives will actually be needed, at least in the short run, and this fact largely explains why commentators tend to reject some techniques such as the forgiveness of sales or property taxes. Establishing one overall incentive for the public is usually better than creating several. In choosing incentives, however, equity should be a prime consideration. Programmes should be made accessible for the poor.

The overall package of incentives suggested included the following major components:

1. Training and certification of contractors for installation and maintenance of soft technologies.
2. Government procurement programmes to stress soft energy.
3. Vigorous information programmes for potential buyers and designers.

4. Marginal cost pricing for all forms of energy.
5. Certification and warranties for equipment.
6. Grants for research and manufacturing (tax deductions or credits don't help a company without taxable income).
7. Grants or refundable tax credits both for retrofits and new soft energy installations.
8. Energy efficiency standards for major appliances, vehicles and buildings.
9. Establishment of industrial infrastructure, including integrated energy technology and consulting centres.
10. Utility low cost sales or leasing programmes to encourage retrofits.
11. Encouragement of loans for energy efficient housing or other soft energy installations.

Numerous actors—public and private—can help facilitate the implementation of a new energy policy. Many of the recommendations herein, taken alone, will not have much effect. In the aggregate, however, a series of apparently minor and decentralized decisions can change our energy future. There is no doubt that renewable energy will, one way or the other, become increasingly important to our industrialized society. It is important that the transition be orderly, not chaotic; that it be planned by us, not forced upon us; and that it be supportive of democracy, not threatening to it. This will take time, care and commitment, not only by government, but by all Canadians and their business enterprises.

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## **Research Note: Hungarians in the Canadian West**

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**ABSTRACT.** Although Hungarians have been active in the settlement and development of the Canadian West since the closing years of the nineteenth century scholarly research on them did not really begin until the early 1970s. Since that time a number of academics have done work on this subject and have published the results of their findings in articles and books. This study surveys the state of scholarly investigation of the Hungarian community of the Canadian West, explores some of the themes voiced by researchers, and comments on the need for further scholarly work in this field.

**RESUME.** Bien que les Hongrois aient depuis la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle participé à la colonisation, puis au développement de l'Ouest canadien, les recherches spécialisées les concernant n'ont pas commencé avant le début des années 1970. Depuis cette époque, un certain nombre d'universitaires se sont intéressés à ce sujet et ont publié les résultats de leurs recherches dans des articles ou dans des livres. Cette étude offre un tour d'horizon des recherches universitaires portant sur la communauté hongroise de l'Ouest canadien. Elle explore également quelques thèmes abordés par les chercheurs, et constate qu'il est nécessaire de poursuivre les recherches spécialisées dans ce domaine.

### **An Historical Overview**

Although the settlement of the first groups of Hungarian immigrants to Canada is traditionally dated from the mid-1880s, we know that Hungarians have been coming to this land from earliest times either as visitors or, occasionally, as settlers. The first known Hungarian traveller arrived as early as 1583. He was Stephen Parmenius of Buda, a scholar and poet who accompanied Sir Humphrey Gilbert on his ill-fated voyage to Newfoundland in that year. Parmenius was followed later by a handful of Hungarians: soldiers, priests or simple adventurers who, from time to time, made it to this part of the New World. We do not know for certain who was the first Hungarian to reach Western Canada. Andras Cassander, a fur trader from the town of Lócse, is known to have obtained a shipload of furs on a voyage to the Hudson Bay region around 1700. He may not have been followed by other Hungarians until the 1850s, when several members of the post-1849 emigration from Hungary visited various parts of what was then the western half of British North America.<sup>1</sup> Thanks mainly to the researches of Professor M.L. Kovacs, the story of the Hungarian settlers who came to the West during the mid-1880s is much better known. These newcomers were transmigrants from the United States, in particular, from the mining and smelting towns of Pennsylvania that had been hit at the time by recession and severe industrial strife.<sup>2</sup>

Some members of this Hungarian exodus from crisis-torn Pennsylvania selected the newly-opened coal mines of Medicine Hat and Lethbridge as their first destination in Canada.<sup>3</sup> Other Hungarian transmigrants from the United States headed for what is now southwestern Manitoba and southeastern Saskatchewan. Their very first colony was Huns' Valley or Hunsvalley near Minnedosa, Manitoba. Established in 1885, it did not



Hungarian Family circa 1900

become a centre of lasting Hungarian influence as most of the original settlers drifted away over the decades and were replaced by immigrants of Slavic background. More important was the colony established in the Qu'Appelle Valley in 1886 (south of the present-day Esterhazy, Saskatchewan). This colony, known first as Esterhaz and later as Kaposvar, had a rather precarious start, but it did become a centre of Hungarian influence in subsequent years.

In the 1890s, the flow of Hungarian immigrants from the United States to Canada was supplemented and then supplanted by their influx directly from Hungary. The result was that, by about 1900, the seeds of several other Hungarian settlements had been planted. These included Otthon (near today's Yorkton), Stockholm (near the original colony of Esterhaz), and St. Luke— all in Saskatchewan—and Manfred (near the present-day Bashaw) in Alberta.<sup>4</sup>

TABLE 1

THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION OF  
THE CANADIAN WEST  
1901-1981

Census year	All of Canada	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia
1901*	1,549	186	898	167	130
1911*	11,648	727	6,524	1,207	873
1921	13,181	828	8,946	1,045	343
1931	40,582	1,955	13,363	5,502	1,313
1941	54,598	2,418	14,576	7,892	2,893
1951	60,460	2,326	12,470	7,794	4,948
1961	126,220	5,443	16,059	15,293	12,883
1971	131,890	5,405	13,825	16,240	16,600
1981	116,395	4,160	11,080	15,170	15,920

Notes: The figures for 1901 and 1911 include Lithuanians and Moravians. The pre-1941 data is based on Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada 1931*, Vol. I., Table 35 "Racial Origin of the Canadian Population, 1871, 1881, 1901-31." Post-1931 data is based on the decennial census returns. The 1981 figures do not include people who reported "multiple" origins.

The establishment of Hungarian settlements on the prairies was followed by the birth of Hungarian colonies in the West's emerging cities. Inevitably, the largest and most influential of these came about in Winnipeg. Lethbridge's colony of Hungarian miners underwent further growth, and Hungarians also began appearing in other newly-established railway centres and market towns such as Regina, Saskatoon, Yorkton and Kipling.<sup>5</sup>

World War I and its aftermath proved to be a mixed blessing for the West's Hungarian communities. To most homesteaders it brought prosperity, but for the group as a whole it resulted in the disruption of

community life. The war saw the growth of nativism in Canada, resulting in the banning of the organizations of "enemy aliens." In the case of the Hungarian community of Winnipeg, this situation contributed to the departure by 1916 of several ethnic leaders to the still neutral United States.<sup>6</sup> Still another loss for the Hungarian-Canadian group of the West was the beginning of the migration to the more industrialized regions of Canada. It was probably not suspected at the time that these early transmigrants would be followed by thousands of others during the 1920s and 1930s.

Despite this incipient out-migration, on the eve of the 1920s the vast majority of Canada's Hungarians still lived on the Prairies. At the time of the first post-war census, about two-thirds of all Hungarians living in Canada continued to reside in Saskatchewan. Ontario, the only non-Western province with a Hungarian community of any consequence, was the home of only 11 percent of the Hungarian residents of the entire country.<sup>7</sup>

The interwar years were to change this situation dramatically. The continuing mechanization of agriculture, the growth of employment opportunities in industrialized Central Canada, and the unfortunate economic conditions throughout most of the Prairies, would result in the flight of thousands of Hungarians from prairie homesteads to other parts of the country. Still more important from the point of view of Hungarian-Canadian history was the influx, from 1924 to 1930, of close to thirty thousand new Hungarian arrivals from East Central Europe. Most of these newcomers, though directed to the Prairies by Canadian immigration authorities, were unlikely candidates for successful homesteading. The majority of them were penniless, while the costs of starting farming were going up rapidly. Many of the newcomers were also people who had much more exposure to urban life than the Hungarian immigrants of the pre-1914 period. Not surprisingly, many of them left the Prairies soon after their arrival, even before the Depression made their stay on the land next to impossible.<sup>8</sup>

The late 1920s and the first years of the Depression were characterized by the growth of the Hungarian colonies in Canada's cities. The most phenomenal growth was recorded in Montréal and Toronto, but most Western cities also experienced remarkable growth.<sup>9</sup> Winnipeg's Hungarian community emerged from the eclipse it experienced during the war and by the late 1920s had become one of the most influential in the country.<sup>10</sup> In Alberta, Lethbridge's Hungarian community continued to exist, but the greatest growth was experienced in Calgary. Elsewhere in the West, Saskatoon and Edmonton had incipient colonies of Hungarians at the time. The size and vitality of these two communities seem to have been very much dependent on economic conditions. On the West Coast, Hungarians began to settle in Vancouver, a city that was to see a continued, and at times substantial influx of them during the 1930s, the 1940s and the 1950s.<sup>11</sup>

Illustration A.1. The distribution of Hungarians in Canada's main regions, 1921

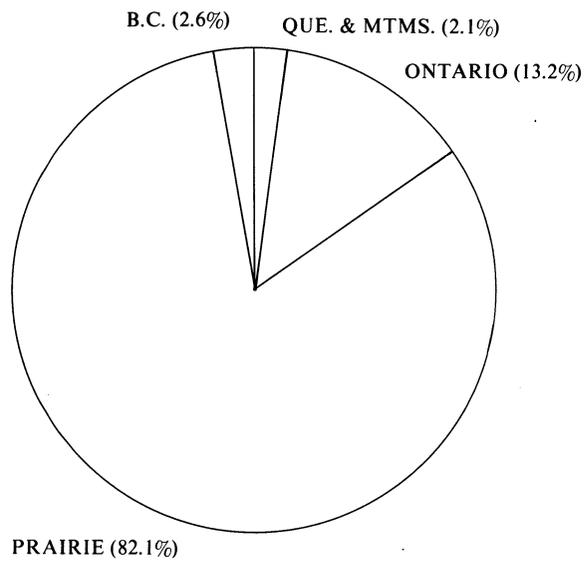


Illustration A.2. The distribution of Hungarians in Canada's main regions, 1941

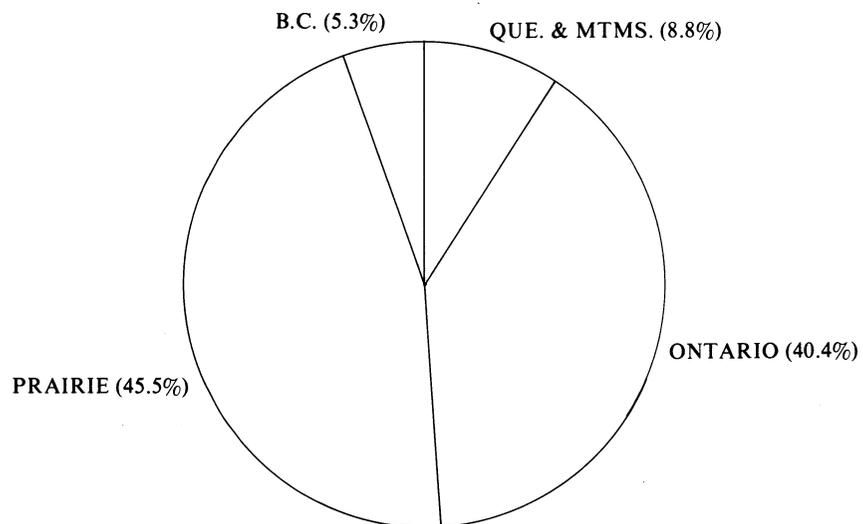


Illustration A.3. The distribution of Hungarians in Canada's main regions, 1961

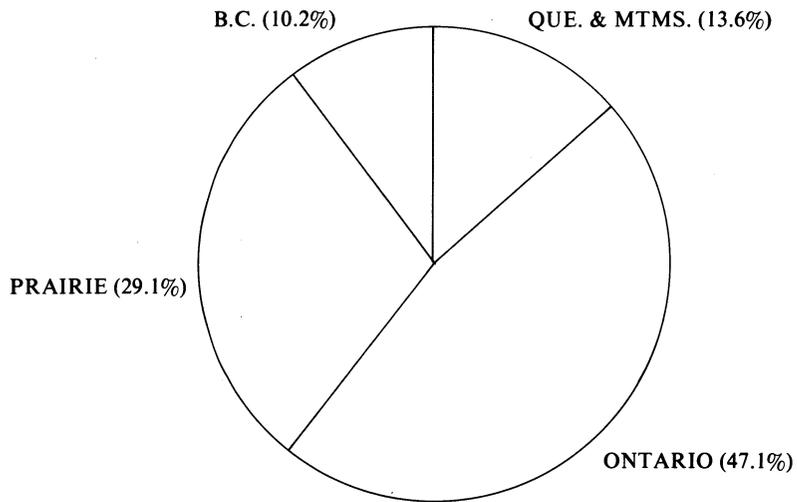
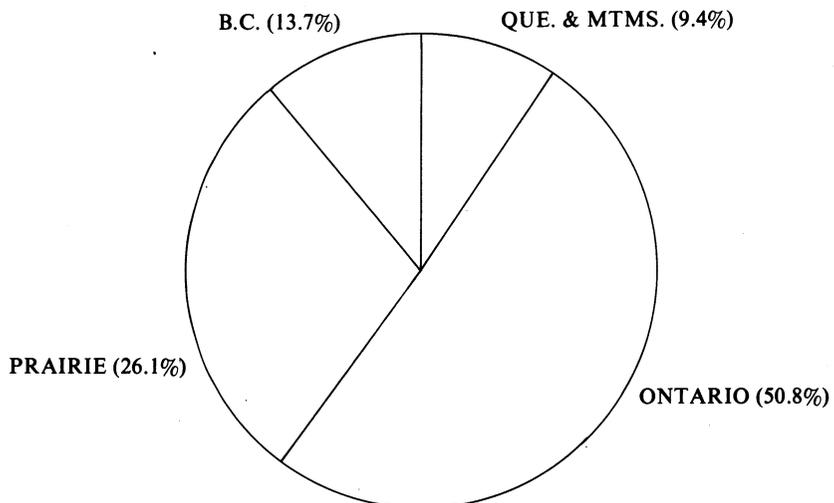


Illustration A.4. The distribution of Hungarians in Canada's main regions, 1981



Not all members of the Hungarian exodus from the Prairies went to Canada's cities. Some relocated in such agricultural regions as the Okanagan and Lower Fraser Valleys of British Columbia, or the "tobacco belt" of southern Ontario. All of these regions experienced a marked increase of their Hungarian populations in the 1930s.<sup>12</sup> During the war years, especially after 1941, most of the migration was to such industrial centres as Hamilton, Toronto, and Vancouver. The results of the 1951 census clearly underscored the new regional distribution of Canada's Hungarian-Canadian population: it showed that Hungarian residents of the prairie provinces made up only 37 percent of the total Hungarian-Canadian population.<sup>13</sup> The arrival of still more Hungarians in the country during the following years did not alter this trend. For example, nearly half of the refugees of 1956-57 settled in Ontario; British Columbia, the Western province that experienced the largest influx of them, received only 12 percent; Alberta 9 percent; Manitoba and Saskatchewan received even less. By 1971, the three prairie provinces served as the home of only 27 percent of the total Hungarian-Canadian population.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Alberta, this decline was relative only, that is relative to Ontario. In fact, the number of Hungarians in Alberta had kept growing throughout the decades. At the time of the 1971 census, it stood at 16,245. In comparison, British Columbia's was 16,600, Saskatchewan's 13,830, and Manitoba's 5,405. Preliminary results of the 1981 census report 15,920 persons of Hungarian ethnic origin for British Columbia, 15,170 for Alberta, 11,080

Illustration B.1. The distribution of Hungarians in the Canadian West, 1921

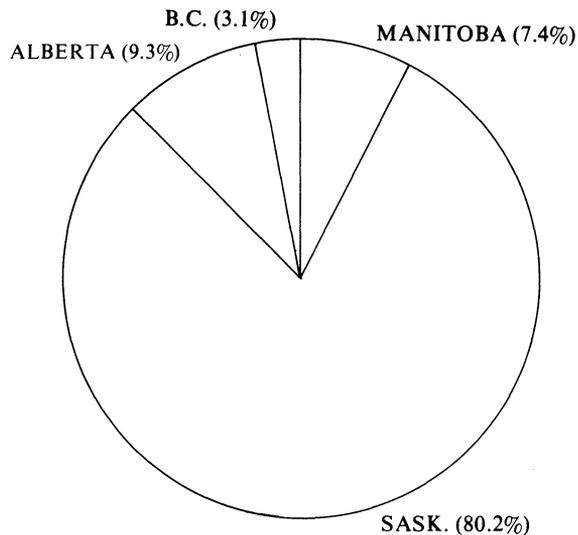


Illustration B.2. The distribution of Hungarians in the Canadian West, 1941

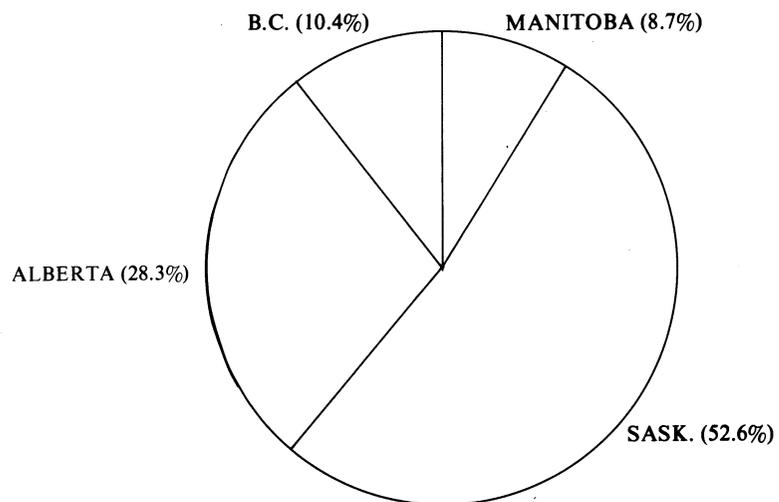


Illustration B.3. The distribution of Hungarians in the Canadian West, 1961

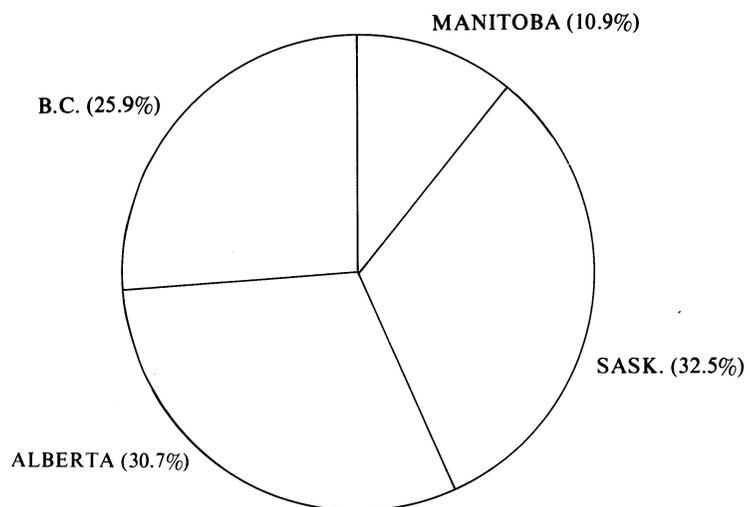
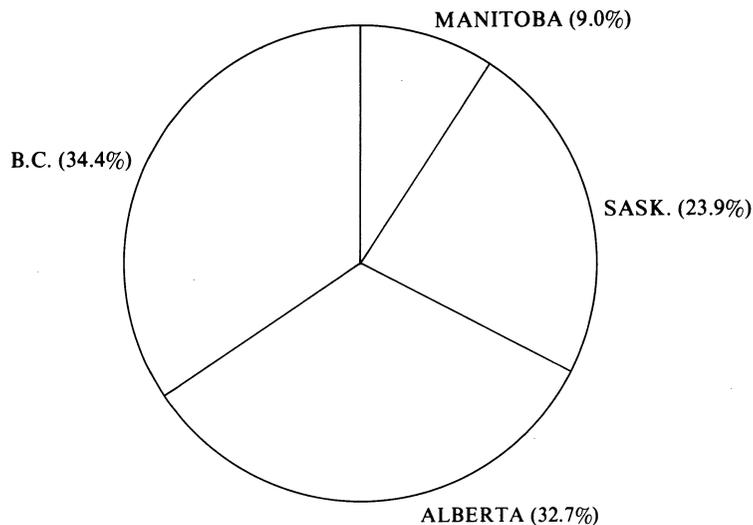


Illustration B.4. The distribution of Hungarians in the Canadian West, 1981



for Saskatchewan, and 4,160 for Manitoba. The decline in numbers is not explainable accurately. The fact is that for the first time census takers accepted more than one ethnic origin for an individual. How many people registered themselves of mixed Hungarian origin (for example English-Hungarian or German-Hungarian, etc.) is not known at the present. What is known is that the proportion of the Hungarian-Canadian population of the West, in particular of the three prairie provinces, is slowly declining. In 1981, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba accounted for only 26.1 percent of the total Hungarian population in the country, a decline of almost a full percentage since the previous census.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, there is much more to the study of the Hungarian community of the Canadian West than an outline featuring mainly statistics on population growth; but the cultural, social, economic and political evolution of this ethnic group is a larger subject than can be examined in a brief introduction. In any case, some aspects of this complex story have been treated in the works discussed below.

### Early Historiography

It is not easy to decide what type of publications should be included in a list of historical works on a relatively small ethnic group in a large and important region of Canada. Obviously, if such a list is restricted to

full-fledged monographs, it will be a very short one. It is a well-known fact that historical literature on Canadian ethnic groups rarely abounds in substantial works, especially scholarly books. Until recently, only a very few people could afford to do research on these groups, and even fewer had the chance to publish their findings in book form. Inevitably, a list of works on Hungarians in the Canadian West will have to be less selective than the usual academic bibliographies. It may have to include shorter works such as pamphlets, essays serialized in newspapers, or other works that under the usual circumstances are not regarded as publications of scholarly value.

With the above considerations in mind, one is tempted to start with a 1902 government publication, *The Hungarian Colony of Esterhaz, Assiniboia, North-west Territories, Canada*. Released by the Department of the Interior, the work belonged to the genre of Canadian official publications known as "immigration pamphlets." As such, it was designed to attract settlers to the Canadian West and was distributed in large quantities in both English and Hungarian. The pamphlet told the story of the settlement of Esterhaz and offered other useful information to prospective immigrants. Its author was Paul Oscar Esterhazy himself, the immigration agent who had been instrumental in the founding of the Esterhaz colony during the mid-1880s.<sup>16</sup> As most of the booklet was devoted to presenting a picture of contemporary Esterhaz, today it should be regarded more as a "primary source" useful to historians than a significant piece of Hungarian-Canadian historiography. Nevertheless, its historical introduction, with its autobiographical touches, constitutes a forerunner of what eventually became a solid tradition in Hungarian-Canadian historical writings later: a participant in immigrant ethnic affairs years or decades later describing the developments of his age in an historical account.

The pattern of Hungarian-Canadian amateur historical writing, started no doubt unwittingly by Esterhazy in his pamphlet, continued through the decades. The usual products of these efforts were local, parish or family histories.<sup>17</sup> Two persons, Jenö Ruzsa and Pal (Paul) Santha, made this tradition honourable by producing historical works of considerable significance.

Jenö Ruzsa was a Lutheran Minister. His contribution to Hungarian-Canadian historiography is important mainly because of its quantity rather than its quality. During the late 1930s, Ruzsa undertook the task of writing a history of all Hungarian settlements and communities in Canada. Considering the fact that he had no training as an historian, had no financial support to do research,<sup>18</sup> and that he and his family lived in poverty, his was a truly ambitious undertaking. The result was a partial success. Ruzsa produced a five hundred-page volume complete with appendices, illustrations and forty-page "picture gallery" of miscellaneous photographs. The book covered practically all Hungarian colonies in Canada from their beginnings to the time of the book's completion. During his travels

undertaken to research his book, *A kanadai magyarsag története* [The History of Canada's Magyars] (Toronto: published by the author, 1940), Ruzsa amassed much information. He presented it in a rather undigested form. As a result, his book became more of a travelogue about "Hungarian Canada" than a historical synthesis. Four of its main chapters deal exclusively with the West, and are entitled "Alberta," "British Columbia," "Manitoba," and "Saskatchewan." They are presented in this alphabetical order—which defies the logic of history or geography—probably because Ruzsa did not want to offend the sensitivities of any province's Hungarians by ascribing lesser importance to them through selecting something other than an obviously artificial order of enumeration. A few of the book's chapters not bearing the title of any province also deal mostly or partly with Hungarian affairs in the West.

It might be mentioned that Ruzsa's volume was apparently meant mainly for readers in Hungary, possibly with the aim of encouraging some of them to immigrate to Canada. This intention seems compatible with the book's overall though not entirely explicit theme that stresses the ability of Hungarians to become successful settlers in a strange land, often under difficult circumstances. If indeed the promotion of immigration to Canada had been one of Ruzsa's motives in publishing his book, his sacrifices were in vain: because of World War II and its consequences, the distribution of the volume in Hungary became impossible. Indeed, most copies of the book languished for years unsold in the author's residence in Hamilton. In old age Ruzsa began working on a sequel to his book, but was prevented from completing it by a tragic traffic accident that he was involved in on one of his research trips.

While Ruzsa's *History of Canada's Magyars* was almost exclusively the result of information collected in formal or informal interviews during the author's travels,<sup>19</sup> the works of Paul Santha, the other early Hungarian-Canadian historian, were the result of quite sophisticated research. Santha was the much respected Roman Catholic priest of Stockholm, Saskatchewan.<sup>20</sup> His best known work, *Three Generations, 1901-1957; The Hungarian Colony at Stockholm, Saskatchewan* (Stockholm: published by the author, ca. 1959), was an excellent parish history. His equally solid study about the early history of the colony of Székelyföld in the Arbury area of the same province, was serialized in the leading Hungarian-Canadian newspaper of the time, the *Kanadai Magyar Ujsag* (Canadian Hungarian News) of Winnipeg,<sup>21</sup> as was Santha's analysis of the census results of 1941.<sup>22</sup>

### Recent Studies

The study of Hungarians in the West by professional historians as well as social scientists did not begin until the emergence of ethnic studies as an important field in Canadian scholarship in the 1970s. Much of this pioneering effort was carried out by Professor M.L. Kovacs of the University of Regina. His first publication on the subject was the volume *Esterhazy*

and *Early Hungarian Immigration to Canada* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1974). The book's scope was more limited than the title implied. It dealt not so much with immigration but with the historical origins and context of the "Esterhazy pamphlet."<sup>23</sup> The examination of early Hungarian immigration to Western Canada was in fact begun later, by Professor Kovacs, in papers given at various conferences during the mid- and late 1970s.<sup>24</sup> These were capped later by a larger work on the history of the colony of Bekevar, Saskatchewan.

Professor Kovacs's volume on Bekevar had its origins in the decision of the National Museum of Man back in the 1970s to mount a major study of the community. The project's originator was a Hungarian émigré academic, the late Géza de Rohan, at the time the Assistant Chief of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies at the Museum.<sup>25</sup> Nearly a dozen scholars, recruited from North American and European universities and research institutes, participated in the enterprise. The plan was to publish the results of field-work and research in a series of volumes; unfortunately, the original scheme had to be abandoned as a result of Dr. Rohan's death. Nevertheless, two volumes did materialize: Kovacs's history of Bekevar, and a collection of studies by the project's other participants, edited by Robert Blumstock of McMaster University. The former work, entitled *Peace and Strife: Some Facets of the History of an Early Prairie Community* (Kipling, Saskatchewan: Kipling District Historical Society, 1980), is a detailed account of the origins and evolution of the colony, today part of the area surrounding the town of Kipling. It is a study in the Central European tradition of ethnic or, more precisely, settlement history, one of whose greatest Hungarian practitioners was Elemér Májusz, Kovacs's one-time mentor. As such, the book is the first work of its kind on a Hungarian settlement in North America.<sup>26</sup>

Blumstock's volume, entitled *Bekevar: Working Papers on a Canadian Prairie Community* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1979), is a collection of six studies. In the first of these, Professor Linda Degh of Indiana University surveys the evolution of Hungarian folklore in the Bekevar community. The second paper, by Marida Hollos, examines the lifestyles of the three generations that make up society in Bekevar. This is followed by a study by Maria Kresz of the evolution of the settlers' attitudes to aspects of life such as dress and child-rearing. Next, Zita McRobbie traces the evolution of language and language skills in Bekevar. In the penultimate study, Matyas and Hélène Szabo look at the colony's architecture while in the last paper Etienne Vintze offers a sociological overview of Bekevar society with special attention to intra-community relationships, leadership, and social deviance.

Both the above book, as well as most of Professor Kovacs's shorter publications, deal with Hungarians in Saskatchewan. In terms of quantity of research and published literature, the Hungarians of the other western provinces have been less well served. Very little has been published

concerning the Magyars of Manitoba and British Columbia.<sup>27</sup> In regards to Alberta, the situation is better. The history of that province's Hungarian community has been written by Howard and Tamara Palmer: *The Hungarian Experience in Alberta* (Toronto: Special issue of the *Hungarian Studies Review* 8, no. 2, Fall 1981). The study surveys the evolution of Alberta's Hungarian colonies from the turn of the century to our own days. It is a modest-sized volume designed to appeal to the lay reader and, at the same time, to provide the student of ethnic affairs with a brief but comprehensive outline of an ethnic group's evolution in Alberta.<sup>28</sup> As such, the volume ideally complements the most recent general survey of Hungarian-Canadian history,<sup>29</sup> which focussed on regions of greater Hungarian-Canadian concentration such as southern Saskatchewan before World War I and central Canada since the 1920s.

In reviewing the literature on Hungarians in the Canadian West, it should be mentioned that publishing on this subject is not confined to Canada. Occasionally books and articles appear on Hungarian-Canadians in Hungary. While some of these are insignificant in scope or entirely journalistic in style, one such work does deserve mention. It is a book by a Canadian, Gyöző Dojcsak, entitled *A kanadai Esterházy története* [The Story of the Canadian Esterhazy] (Budapest: Magvető, 1981). Actually, this volume contains two monographs in one: a brief biography of Paul Oscar Esterhazy, and an introduction to Canadian and Western Canadian history. Of the two parts, the first is more successful. Esterhazy's story lends itself to an exciting biography. The volume's second theme begs for more systematic treatment. What there is in this part of the book constitutes an uneasy compromise between journalistic reporting and scholarly synthesis; and the quality of the latter is placed in doubt by a few blunders.<sup>30</sup>

### Themes and Interpretations

Many themes have been explored in scholarly writings on the Hungarians of the West. One of the most frequently voiced is the theme of the interrelation between co-operation and conflict within the Hungarian ethnic group. Most historians, sociologists and ethnographers who have examined the West's Hungarian community, or have done field-work on individual Hungarian-Canadian colonies, have noted the existence of a high degree of co-operation, along with considerable intra-group friction. Professor Kovacs went as far as deeming these two seemingly paradoxical tendencies as the main theme of the story of Bekevar, hence the title of his book, *Peace and Strife*. It should be noted that Kovacs has given a rather broad definition to the word "strife" and, in any case, he considers peaceful co-operation as the dominant force in the evolution of this particular ethnic community.<sup>31</sup>

A more unusual theme is explored by Professor Kovacs in his examination of the "Hungarian school question," a pre-World War I

controversy which was part of a much larger conflict between certain elements of the West's French-Canadian clergy and their opponents both within and outside of the Roman Catholic Church. Kovacs's argument is that the desires of the Hungarian-Canadian settlers for cultural maintenance—through such means as Hungarian-speaking clergymen and bilingual (Hungarian-English rather than English only) schools—went against the wishes of the francophone ultramontane clergy who wanted to keep a close rein over all Roman Catholic immigrant colonies in their effort to control the “Catholic vote” in the West and to further the prospects of French-Canadian culture maintenance. The controversy became so bitter for a while that Archbishop Adelard Langevin of St. Boniface threatened to excommunicate any Hungarian Catholic settler who subscribed to a certain Hungarian newspaper that advocated bilingual schools and criticized the francophone clergy. Kovacs points out that, in the end, neither side in the dispute won. The Hungarians, though able to recruit a few Magyar-speaking clergymen, had less luck with bilingual teachers, while the Archbishop and his followers failed to gain a lasting influence over the West's immigrant Catholic community.<sup>32</sup>

The sociologists who participated in the study of the Bekevar settlement have also touched on the more commonly explored theme of community co-operation vs. intra-ethnic conflict. For example, Professor Hollos, in her study of the relationships of Bekevar's three generations of residents (the original settlers, their children, and members of the by now largely Canadianized “third generation”) noted that co-operation was a common feature in the lifestyle of each of these generations, and especially in the case of the first, the pioneers. According to Hollos, co-operation was present in many forms: in community projects, within the extended families, among people of the same religion, and often among members of different generations. But, alongside co-operation, there was also conflict, most often between members of different generations, usually over issues involving adherence to Hungarian norms and traditions.<sup>33</sup>

The coexistence of co-operation and conflict at the local level is paralleled in Hungarian-Canadian history by the presence of these trends at the regional and national levels. To put it another way, the phenomenon of “Peace and Strife” characterized not only the evolution of the individual Hungarian colonies, but marked the evolution of their supra-community institutions, and their political ventures. This phenomenon among Hungarian-Canadians has been described by Kovacs and Palmer, among others.<sup>34</sup>

Another theme emphasized by some authors has been the extraordinary importance of immigrant institutions in the evolution of the West's Hungarian-Canadian communities. The most important of these institutions in Hungarian-Canadian history, especially in earlier times, has been the ethnic church. The work of Hungarian-Canadian churches went beyond religion: they have usually performed social, cultural (especially educational) and at times even economic functions as well.

The church's greatest significance, according to Professor Kovacs, has been a strong contribution to the maintenance of the ethnic culture in an alien environment.<sup>35</sup> A similar and almost equally important role has been performed by the ethnic press.<sup>36</sup> Some other institutions that have been looked at by researchers studying the Hungarians of the Canadian West are the ethnic schools, self-help associations, social clubs, and political organizations.<sup>37</sup> A collectivity of such organizations in an ethnic settlement—together with family and social networks—has been called an "ethnic island" which, in the opinion of Professor Kovacs, performed the role of a "bridge" between the immigrant's old country and his new homeland.<sup>36</sup>

The most frequently discussed theme in connection with the history of the West's Hungarian-Canadian community is the steady assimilation of the Hungarian community. Nearly all commentators on the Hungarians of the West have pointed to the erosion of Hungarian culture in Hungarian-Canadian society. This cultural decline is most obvious to historians, especially those who have examined earlier phases of Hungarian-Canadian development when a vigorous Hungarian community life flourished in many colonies and the forces of cultural maintenance often held those of assimilation in check.<sup>39</sup> In recent decades the pace of cultural change has only increased, as inventions of the modern age and the spread of public education have made social mobility easier, and integration faster. It has been pointed out by a number of researchers that assimilation for members of more recent waves of immigration seems to be even faster than it had been in the case of earlier immigrants.<sup>40</sup> It is also evident that cultural change is accelerating even in the historic centres of the "old" immigration.<sup>41</sup> These findings seem to support the conclusions of the most recent survey of Hungarian-Canadian history which forecasts that without the resumption of immigration from Hungary "Hungarian-Canadian society might have to face the prospect of extinction as a culturally distinct ethnic community."<sup>42</sup>

This prediction might be unduly pessimistic in regard to the whole of Canada. In the central part of the country there continue to exist a few metropolitan centres where Hungarians, who on the whole have not yet been assimilated—basically those who still speak the ancestral language at home—live in large numbers. In these centres a rich Hungarian ethnic or community life is more of a possibility than elsewhere; as a result, in these cities the rate of assimilation might be slowed down somewhat. In the West, the situation is generally different. While the number of Hungarian-Canadians who reported the use of Magyar as a home language in the 1981 census in central Canada's large cities was close to 18,000; their number in Western Canada's largest Hungarian centres (Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg) barely exceeded 5,000. No city in the West had a population of these to some degree unassimilated Hungarians that reached 2,000; while in the East, over 10,000 of them are estimated to live in the Toronto area alone.<sup>43</sup>

A comparison of 1971 and 1981 census statistics regarding the use of Hungarian as home language also reveals a rapid cultural erosion among Hungarians in the West. In British Columbia the figure for people using Magyar as home language in 1971 is 4,320; while for 1981 it is 3,100. For Alberta the comparable figures are 4,545 and 3,130. For Manitoba the data are 1,765 for 1971 and 835 for 1981. For Saskatchewan the statistics reveal an even more dramatic erosion in the use of Magyar at home. In that province at the time of the 1971 census, 1,945 people reported using Hungarian at home; in 1981, only 830 did.<sup>44</sup> The Hungarians of the West then, are losing an important aspect of their unique identity, and they live at best in rather small, scattered centres, which makes it difficult for them to generate a rich and vibrant ethnic life that would help to counteract the forces of assimilation. These circumstances suggest that the pessimistic prediction quoted above is probably quite appropriate for the West's Hungarian community.

### **Future Research Needs**

Great strides have been taken in the study of the West's Hungarian community during the past decade, but it is evident that much work remains to be accomplished. There is a need, first of all, for more basic research, the kind that had been done on the Bekevar community. This writer's preference is for historical research, which should be undertaken before more of the old-timers die and before more of the primary material related to the Hungarian-Canadian experience disappears. In this connection there is an immediate need for the undertaking of oral history projects and for accumulating archival materials.

In addition to this basic work, investigations from the point of view of the social historian of a few of the other, older Hungarian colonies would be welcome. This would provide a basis for comparisons with the Bekevar settlement and might answer such questions as: did colonies of Catholic settlers, or colonies with settlers of mixed religious background, fare better or worse—from the point of view of both adjustment to Canadian condition and the retention of the immigrant heritage—than the exclusively Protestant colony of Bekevar? Further useful research in comparative history might be an analysis of settlements created by Hungarian and other European immigrants. Professor Kovacs has already started one such research project, a comparative study of immigrant settlements in the Kipling area of Saskatchewan. In addition to such analyses of different Hungarian settlements, or of colonies founded by different ethnic groups, there is a need for a penetrating look at the problem of relations between Hungarian immigrants and Canadian society at large, perhaps on the pattern of Myrna Kostash's work on the Ukrainians.<sup>45</sup>

In the realm of sociology, much new work could be done on the adjustment and assimilation of the post-World War II waves of Hungarian immigrants, especially in connection with the so-called "urban setting."

Professor Marg Csapo of the University of British Columbia has started research on the Vancouver Hungarians,<sup>46</sup> but similar and more exhaustive investigation pertaining to the Hungarian-Canadian communities of this and other cities would be most welcome. Both sociological and historical work could be done on the background to and causes of the immigration of Hungarians to Canada, in particular to the Canadian West. And, eventually, there would have to be more comprehensive surveys written, either along the lines of the Palmer study, that is a study of an individual province's Hungarian community, or—and this might be more useful—an outline of the Hungarian settlement of the entire Canadian West. Such a work would not constitute an act of political separatism, as there is more historical justification for this type of project than might be imagined at first glance. The fact is that, during important phases of its evolution, Hungarian-Canadian society has been, to a large extent, divided into a community centred on the Canadian West, and another one on central Canada. In fact, while the former seems to have lived a fairly autonomous existence, the latter at times had fairly close links with Hungarian colonies south of the border, in Buffalo, Detroit and Cleveland.

It is to be hoped that scholars, young and old, Canadians and non-Canadians (possibly scholars from Hungary), will become interested in undertaking these research projects, and that institutions in charge of encouraging research, will find the will and the means of supporting them in their efforts.

### POSTSCRIPT

Since this article was written, Statistics Canada has released data on population whose ethnic origin is mixed Hungarian, for Canada and provinces, 1981.

	Hungarian and British only	Hungarian and French only	Hungarian and other	All Hungarian categories (including Hungarian only)
Canada	14,325	2,680	9,375	144,195
Manitoba	555	100	450	5,300
Saskatchewan	1,125	260	1,560	14,165
Alberta	2,260	330	1,545	19,500
British Columbia	2,520	320	1,140	20,100

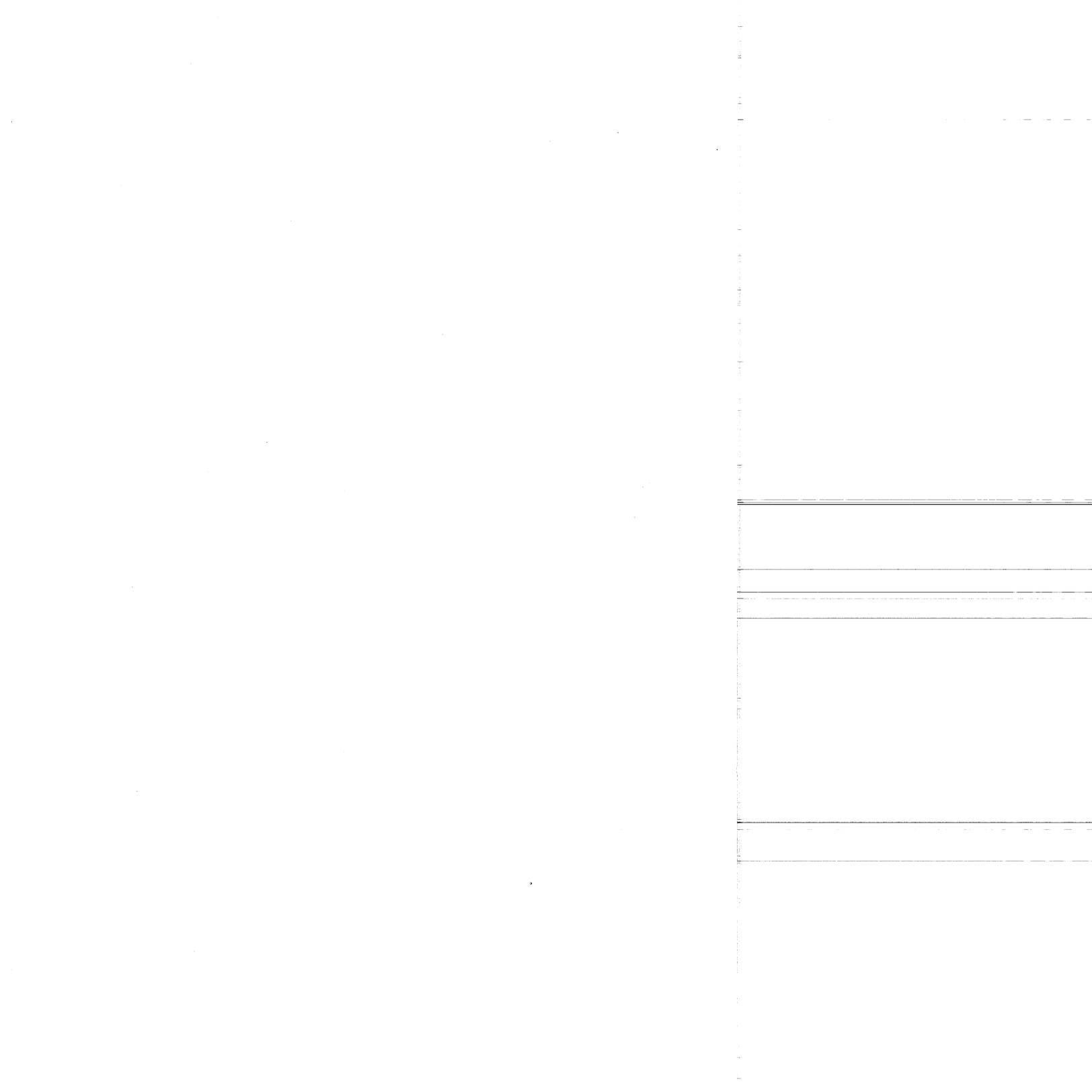
(This table does not include people, very small in numbers, who gave "Hungarian and British-French and other" as their origin.)

### NOTES

1. N.F. Dreisziger, M.L. Kovacs, Paul Bödy and Bennett Kovrig, *Struggle and Hope: The Hungarian-Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 95. This work is cited hereafter as Dreisziger et al.; unless otherwise indicated, the references are to parts of the book written by N.F. Dreisziger.
2. M.L. Kovacs, "From Industries to Farming," *Hungarian Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 48-50.
3. *Ibid.*, 52f. Howard and Tamara Palmer, *The Hungarian Experience in Alberta* (Toronto: *Hungarian Studies Review*, 1981): 151-153. This volume is a special issue of *The Hungarian Studies Review* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1981). Also, Dreisziger et al.: 64-66.

4. M.L. Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era, 1885-1914," in Dreisziger et al., 64-66; Palmer, 155-157.
5. On the Hungarian colonies of Lethbridge and Winnipeg see Dreisziger et al., 94-95; on the developments in Saskatchewan see Kovacs's chapter in the same volume, 77f.
6. Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era," 81; on the general impact of the war on the West see J.M. Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).
7. Dreisziger et al., 221.
8. Ibid., 101f. Also, N.F. Dreisziger, "Aspects of Hungarian Settlement in Central Canada," in *Hungarian-Canadian Perspectives: Selected Papers* ed. M.L. Kovacs, (Ottawa: Hungarian Readers Service, 1980), 46-48.
9. Dreisziger et al., 103-105.
10. Ibid., 105f.
11. Ibid., 106-109, 143 and 210.
12. Ibid., 142-144.
13. Ibid., 221f.
14. Canada, Statistics Canada, *1981 Census of Canada, Population, Ethnic Origin*, vol. 1 (Ottawa 1984).
15. Canada, Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1971; Population, Ethnic Groups* (Ottawa 1973); Canada, Statistics Canada, *Update from the 1981 Census, Highlights on Ethnicity...* (Ottawa, April 1983), 1-3.
16. The pamphlet is analyzed, annotated and reprinted in M.L. Kovacs, *Esterhazy and Early Hungarian Immigration to Canada* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1974).
17. Two of these early chroniclers of Hungarian-Canada history were Gyula Izsak and Lajos Gönczy. See Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era," notes 54 and 55 (pp. 88f). The exception to this tradition of amateur history is the work of Andrew Marchbin, "Early Emigration from Hungary to Canada," *Slavonic Review* 13 (July 1934): 127-38; published in a revised form in the Canadian Historical Association's *Report to the Annual Meeting of 1934* (Toronto 1935), 110-23.
18. Jenő Ruzsa, *A kanadai magyarság története* (The History of Canada's Magyars) (Toronto: By the author, 1940), 504. Ruzsa apparently took out a loan to cover his expenses.
19. Ruzsa did not think of consulting published Canadian sources on immigration statistics or census figures.
20. For further information on Santha see Dreisziger et al., 152-153, 178, 188 and 234.
21. *Kanadai Magyar Ujság* (Hungarian Canadian News), March and April 1947.
22. Also published separately: Pal Santha, *Kanada Magyarsága* (The Hungarians of Canada) (Winnipeg: *Kanadai Magyar Ujság*, 1946).
23. See note 16 above.
24. One of these has been mentioned: "From Industries to Farming." Another is "Early Hungarian-Canadian Cultures," *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 55-76. Still another is "From Peasant Village to the Canadian Prairies," Tom M.S. Priestly (ed.) *Proceedings of the First Banff Conference on Central and East European Studies* (Edmonton: Central and East European Studies Association of Alberta, 1977), 366-372.
25. For an obituary on Geza de Rohan see the *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 1976): 206f.
26. For further details see N.F. Dreisziger, "Hungarian History in North American Perspective," *The Historical Journal* 25, no. 3 (1982): 770. Susan Papp has written on the Hungarians of Cleveland: *Hungarian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland* (Cleveland, 1981). While a detailed work, Papp's volume, in view of its much larger subject, could not be as exhaustively researched as Kovacs's study of Bekevar.
27. There is some information in Dreisziger et al. especially 104-5, 142-43, 181, 210. A study on the problem of language maintenance among Hungarians in Vancouver is Marg Csapo's "Slide-rule Instead of Sheepskin Coat: Language Maintenance Among Post-Second-World-War Hungarian Immigrants," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 15, no. 1 (1983): 83-92.
28. A recent history of the Hungarian community of Lethbridge by a layman is Lajos Miskolci Panulics, *The Long Road: Hungarians in Southern Alberta* (Lethbridge: by the author, 1983).
29. Dreisziger et al. *cit.*
30. One of these is the mention of the "United States" in a pre-1776 context. Another is the omission of Kovacs's work on Esterhazy from the bibliography. Perhaps the most regrettable "faux pas" from the Canadian point of view is a description of the Red River rebellion's conclusion as a "dispersing" of the rebels by military force. For an English language publication by Professor G.V. Dojcsak on this subject see his article "The Mysterious Count Esterhazy," in *Saskatchewan History* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 63-72.
31. Kovacs, *Peace and Strife*, x.
32. M.L. Kovacs, "The Hungarian School Question," in *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education* ed. M.L. Kovacs (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1978), 333-358. For a brief summary of this controversy see Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era," 80-82.
33. Marida Hollos, "Families Through Three Generations in Bekevar," in Blumstock, 68-126, especially 93 and 111. The theme of interpersonal conflicts is touched upon in Etienne Vintze's study in the same volume, "Bekevar, Yesterday and Today," 294f.

34. Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era," 78-82; Palmer, 196-197, and N.F. Dreisziger, "In Search of a Hungarian Canadian Lobby, 1927-1951," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 12, no. 3 (1980): 81-96.
35. Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era," 69-70.
36. On one of the leading Hungarian-Canadian papers of the first half of the twentieth century see Carmela Patrias, *The Kanadai Magyar Ujsag and the Politics of the Hungarian Canadian Elite* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1978). Also, Dreisziger et al., 125-127, 159f, 182 and 202f.
37. Many of these have been commented on by Kovacs and Dreisziger in the book *Struggle and Hope*, as well as elsewhere. See the above book, 69f, 73-75, 78, 116f, 119-125, 150-155, 158f, 181-183, 198-200, 212f, and, for some conclusions, 224-227.
38. Kovacs, *Peace and Strife*, 207-209.
39. *Ibid.*, especially parts II and III. Also, Kovacs, "The Saskatchewan Era," 82f.
40. Dreisziger et al., 222-224, and especially, 231, note 8. This is the conclusion of Csapo's study also. (Cited in note 27 above.)
41. Hollos, especially 126. Kovacs, *Peace and Strife*, 209; Palmer, 197f. All these works more or less end on this pessimistic note.
42. Dreisziger et al., 224.
43. Canada, Statistics Canada, *1981 Census of Canada, Population, Mother Tongue, Official Language and Home Language* (Ottawa, 1983), Table 7.
44. Canada, Statistics Canada, *Update from the 1981 Census*, cit., 4-9.
45. Myrna Kostach, *All of Baba's Children* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1977).
46. Cited in note 27 above.



**Research Note**  
**Frontier Missionary in the North-West:**  
**Heinrich Schmieder, 1889-1893\***

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ABSTRACT. The journals of Heinrich Schmieder should receive more attention in the study of prairie social history. They reveal the critical role of the church and missionary in the creation of the new prairie society—and in the preservation of the German-Lutheran cultural and linguistic heritage.

RESUME. On devrait s'intéresser de plus près aux carnets de Heinrich Schmieder lorsque l'on étudie l'histoire sociale de la Prairie. Ils révèlent en effet le rôle important de l'Eglise et des missionnaires dans l'élaboration d'une nouvelle société sur la Prairie et dans le maintien de l'héritage culturel et linguistique des Allemands luthériens.

In the last ten years, the intensive exploration of previously overlooked ethnic source material has proven invaluable in shedding light on the religious history of the Prairie West. Without recourse to letters, diaries, and other personal accounts of immigrant settlers, particularly the churchmen, it would indeed be difficult to retrace the socializing influence of the churches in a frontier environment characterized by geographic and spiritual isolation and the concomitant slow-paced linguistic acculturation of its many ethnic settlements. Although, as Richard Allen has noted, "the main features of virtually the entire religious history of western civilization are represented within the region,"<sup>1</sup> it is not the doctrinal differences of these faiths which pose the greatest challenge to assessing their impact, but that of their influence on day-to-day life. The accounts of early missionaries are the first to reflect the religious socialization within and among the new settlements with any degree of continuity. Writing about the hardships of pioneer life was a continual reaffirmation of the act of faith which had taken them to the West, as well as an indispensable spiritual and intellectual link with the mother church. Indeed, it was an economic necessity, for it was through these writings on all aspects of frontier life that the missionary zeal and the largesse of the home mission societies were being encouraged.

In the case of Protestant missionaries, the rich letter-writing tradition of Pietistic and Moravian provenance allowed astute insights into the people and their social and political conditions. One such account, written in German and perhaps for that reason not yet fully appreciated as a valuable commentary on the prevailing conditions from the religious standpoint, is that of Heinrich Coelestin Schmieder (1863-1933), the first missionary in Winnipeg and Assiniboia appointed by a Canadian Lutheran synod.<sup>2</sup> Born in a small village in the state of Brandenburg, Germany, Schmieder came from a family of Lutheran clergymen. He graduated from Ebenezer Lutheran Seminary in Kropp, Schleswig-Holstein, an

institution founded for the specific purpose of educating ministers to serve German-speaking congregations of the General Council in America. Schmieder arrived in Philadelphia in 1886 and served as assistant pastor of St. Paul's until January 1889. At that time, he learned of the desperate need for missionaries in the Canadian Northwest, accepted the call of the Canada Synod and was duly appointed pastor of the just-founded Trinity Congregation in Winnipeg. None of his previous experience had prepared him for the social and economic realities he was about to encounter in a boom town on the fringe of civilization.

Only five years earlier, after a lengthy period of tough negotiations and the turbulence of the ensuing land speculations, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) had been routed through the city of Winnipeg. The two great needs of the West, railroads and immigrants, were being met and were transforming the strategic gateway to the West into the Bull's eye of the Dominion. Winnipeg had joined in the aggressive national and international promotion campaigns of the CPR syndicate, and ever-increasing numbers of settlers took up residence in the city in winter and moved on to their homesteads in spring. Lutherans, mostly Icelanders, were well represented among this influx, but while the Icelanders already enjoyed the advantages of a strong co-operative Icelandic Lutheran Synod ably led by the resident synod president, Jon Bjarnason, the German Lutherans were unorganized, culturally and linguistically adrift, and constantly exposed to the proselytizing of other denominations. In 1888, some forty heads of German families had written to the Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in Ontario advising of this state of affairs and requesting that a missionary be sent.<sup>3</sup> It was in fact this plea that persuaded Schmieder to take up his new duties in Winnipeg. His subsequent reports, mainly to church publications in Eastern Canada and Pennsylvania,<sup>4</sup> show clearly that he had not fully appreciated the enormity of his task.

On 18 February 1889, Schmieder, accompanied by his wife and ten-week-old son, Paul, began the arduous trek north. In what was to become a fairly regular series of articles for the Lutheran "Kirchenblatt," he now embarked on what he himself called his "unpretentious correspondence." Whether it was the experience of a blizzard which buried the Northern Pacific train some 260 miles short of their destination, observations on the boom and bust of Winnipeg land speculators, or brief sketches of individuals and vignettes of daily life, Schmieder wrote with flair for a readership on whose generosity he was absolutely dependent.<sup>5</sup> Although there was a nuclear church of some three hundred souls in Winnipeg which, under normal circumstances, could well be expected to raise the annual salary of \$200 for its pastor, this frontier congregation was in a state of flux, continually losing members to the west and replacing them with destitute immigrants from the east and from Europe. Living costs were high, coal cost twice as much as in Philadelphia, Schmieder's former home; coal oil was even four times as much. Vexatious taxes made life

unnecessarily hard for a struggling congregation: the 3 percent tax on bibles and hymnals and the incongruous levying of a tax on church rental facilities, but not on church property. Thus, right away this fledgling community of German Lutherans was faced with building its own church at a minimum projected cost of \$3,000, in order to save funds in the longer term.<sup>6</sup> Yet there were other, more desperate needs to be met. The plight of most immigrants was appalling: there was no work; living conditions were cramped and unsanitary; social services practically nonexistent. It was the nadir of the annual cycle which saw a surge of land-hungry immigrants descend on Winnipeg after the harvest season was over in Europe. Forlorn, unable to speak the language and clinging to a precarious existence through the wintertime, they became Schmieder's most immediate concern. The painful situations, where want and despair had crippled the soul's capacity for suffering and had replaced it with dehumanizing apathy, were all too frequent. Schmieder's simple diction and naturalistic style captured these scenes with clarity and compassion:

Last Sunday I had to baptize a child who was already dying. It was one of a set of twins, and when I asked about the other, the mother pointed to a bundle lying under the bed and said, "He is already dead. He is over there." On Monday, at a quarter to one, I was asked to return to the house [...] since the second child had died as well and was to be buried. I went right away. The front door did not have a latch, one pulled it open by a nail. When I stepped into the room, there was still great confusion. The mother said, "You will have to wait a little while, pastor, the coffin isn't quite ready yet." I almost couldn't stand the terrible heat and the stale air in the room. Fortunately, the coffin, a flat, square little box was ready in a short time. There was only some newspaper to be pasted to the inside and outside of it. Then the little bodies were placed inside. Still, it was a moving sight. And I knew that neither prayer nor scriptures had been in vain. That is my consolation and source of strength as well.<sup>7</sup>

Word of Schmieder's arrival had quickly spread through the German-Lutheran settlements in Assiniboia as well, and he was being inundated with requests for pastoral visits. Unable to reach these widely dispersed communities, he composed a "Pastoral Letter to the Brethren in the Faith in the Province of Manitoba" (1889),<sup>8</sup> which was to become the blueprint for the co-operative mission effort between Lutheran clergy and the laity in the diaspora. The Trinity Congregation in Winnipeg, "the first and oldest orthodox German congregation of the province," was established as the focal point of religious activity and its pastor was to be consulted in all matters of faith and church offices; Lutherans throughout the territory were exhorted to conduct their own regular devotions and, if possible, to "visit [their] dispersed brethren and thus initiate the establishment of mission stations." If this letter ends with a warning of seemingly undue severity against the danger of proselytizing efforts by other denominations, it was simply in keeping with the prevailing orthodox Lutheran view that the immigrant was "a lost sheep threatened with spiritual destruction at the hands of non-Lutheran and secular wolves."<sup>9</sup> Even the relative insularity of the new settlements in Assiniboia offered little protection from vagabond preachers, colporteurs, and other interlopers with their "soul-

snatching practices," as Schmieder frequently complained in his diary.<sup>10</sup> The result was that he had no choice but to venture out into Assiniboia, even though there was more than enough work for just one missionary in Winnipeg alone.

What followed were years of continual and exhaustive travel during which he carefully chronicled his small triumphs and the larger disappointments. In May of 1889, for example, Schmieder set out on the first of many "Missions- and Predigtreisen" or missionary trips, covering by his own account the distance of some 4,650 miles during the first seven and a half months of his mission in the Northwest. Travel was by rail, by buckboard, occasionally by horse. The first destination was the Seebach colony in the vicinity of Silver Creek, near Binscarth. Schmieder ministered to the small assemblage of ten adults and eight children, celebrated the Lord's Supper and saw to the establishment of a Sunday school. This first excursion was the most detailed in the Schmieder papers, running to six installments in the "Kirchenblatt."<sup>11</sup> The culmination of this first mission trip was the founding of the St. Paul's congregation in Hohenlohe-Langenburg in May. In July, Schmieder travelled to the colony of Josephsburg, near Grenfell, to bring comfort to a small group of Germans from Southern Russia who were facing the prospect of another poor harvest. The sheer physical impossibility of covering his mission territory expanding by now to Medicine Hat, compounded by the inevitable requests that as spiritual authority Schmieder should also mediate in local disputes, which he was reluctant to do, frustrated him deeply. Being fully aware of the financial strain being placed on the synod by this rapid expansion, he even proposed to accept a reduced salary, if only a colleague could be found to take his place in Winnipeg. His attention had been drawn to the central location of the German colony of Neu-Toulcha (now Edenwold) within the expanded Northwest mission, and his mind was made up to move there once the territory could be divided.<sup>12</sup>

The move to Assiniboia was finally approved and Schmieder settled his family in Edenwold in May of 1890. During this and the following year, he devoted much time and effort to the Josephsburg colony which, having been 'boomed' by the CPR, had become the largest German colony in the Northwest with some two hundred German families. Schmieder also continued to serve Gretna, Selkirk, Rosenhof, Brandon, and Seeburn, even though the small concentration of Lutheran settlers in these localities did not lead to the founding of congregations.

By this time, events far removed from Schmieder's lonely outpost were shaping up which were to bring him much needed relief. Lutheranism in Canada was entering a period of protracted change and organizational restructuring. This was due in part to ideological sectionalism, but also to the recognition that regional needs, and especially the missionary effort, were now best being met by individual synods and specialized committees.<sup>13</sup> After the transfer of mission responsibilities for the Northwest from the

Canada Synod to the Home Missions Committee of the General Council in June 1890, two more missionaries were dispatched to the West. In a report of May 1891, an elated Schmieder described how much had been accomplished in just one year. Pastor Streich had assumed the ministry in Winnipeg and surroundings; Pastor Pempeit was serving Edmonton, Josephsburg, and Dunmore; Schmieder himself continued in the heartland of the new territory—Edenwold, the colony of Josephsburg (near Grenfell), Strasbourg, Regina, Longlaketon and others.<sup>14</sup> His activities, although now concentrated on a much smaller area, were as exhaustive as ever. On 12 June 1891, he proudly reported “the laying of the cornerstone of the first Evangelical-Lutheran church in the Canadian Northwest”<sup>15</sup> in Edenwold, a building which was to serve the St. John’s Congregation until 1919. The district was growing, in spite of the poor harvests since 1888. The church had some 170 members and another 58 German Lutherans were homesteading in the surrounding 150 square miles, but many of them were so poor that they continued living in mud huts while working as day-labourers to pay for their farming implements. The district was still unable to support a pastor financially, a situation which was not helped by the wry notion, commonly held, that ministers were well paid by their synods and obliged to travel their circuits on a regular basis.<sup>16</sup> Schmieder, well aware that the Home Missions Committee in Ontario would like to see more rapid progress, pleaded for understanding:

One should not attempt to measure our mission field against inappropriate standards, because then the Mission Committee might all too quickly become dissatisfied with its missionaries and disappointed with slow development. It should always be remembered that it is only poor people who arrive in this vast, primitive country, lacking industry and commerce, who have to create all that, as well as earn their livelihood.

The Northwest is, nevertheless, a country of the future. Although a few may not regard it with much confidence, I and thousands of others have the greatest hope for it.<sup>17</sup>

Schmieder would remain in Edenwold for another three years before returning to the Philadelphia area.

Schmieder’s journal, unpretentious for a clergyman of his background and station, must be seen as more than simply a missionary’s memoir of life on the prairies. It adds detail to the chronicle of the stabilizing social effect of missionary activity and the indomitable will of pioneer communities to succeed in spite of economic, cultural, and linguistic deprivation.

#### NOTES

\*This paper is a condensed version of an essay which won the essay competition of the Association of Lutheran Archivists and Historians in Canada in the Martin Luther Commemorative Year 1983.

The Schmieder Papers, consisting of an incomplete clipping file (SC in the following) covering the years 1889-1893 and a hand-written diary for 1893, are in the collection of the Public Archives of Canada, call no. MG29C94. Pagination cited here is sequential, not chronological.

1. Richard Allen, ed. *Religion and Society in the Prairie West* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1974), Preface.
2. Home mission pastors and clergy explorers from synods in the Midwest of the United States, notably from the Missouri Synod, had been active in the area since the 1870s. See E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 263.
3. See *SC*, 3.
4. *Lutherisches Kirchenblatt* of the General Council (Pennsylvania); *Siloah*, publication of the Board of Home Missions of the General Council.
5. See "Nach dem Nordwesten," *SC*, 52 (22 February 1889); "Aus dem Nordwesten," *SC*, 53 (28 February 1889); and "Im Nordwesten," *SC*, 49 (n.d.).
6. See "Im Nordwesten" and "Fuer den Nordwesten," *SC*, 49-50.
7. "Aus Winnipeg," *SC*, 69 (13 June 1889).
8. See "Pastorales Sendschreiben," *SC*, 45-48.
9. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1964), 57.
10. See "Aus dem canadischen Nordwest-Territorium," *SC*, 83.
11. See "Eine Missions- und Predigtreise," *SC*, 67-68 and 57-62.
12. See "Ein Besuch in deutschen Kolonien des Nordwest-Territoriums," *SC*, 6 and 8.
13. See *The Lutherans in North America*, 363-365.
14. See "Unsere Missionare und deren Arbeitsfelder," *SC*, 24-25 (May 1891).
15. See "Ecksteinlegung der evang.-luth. Kirche in Edenwold," *SC*, 11.
16. See "Die Verhaeltnisse im Nordwesten," *SC*, 21.
17. See "Die Verhaeltnisse im Nordwesten," *SC*, 21.

## Book Reviews

*The Battle of Batoche: British Small Warfare and the Entrenched Métis* by Walter Hildebrandt. Ottawa: Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, 1985. Pp. 120.

Centenaries have an irresistible charm for publishers and tourism officials alike. A hundred years after Riel's defeat and execution, Canadians may expect a modest deluge of paper about events which myth-makers and historians alike have over-populated for years. Walter Hildebrandt's profusely illustrated book about a century-old skirmish will be a timely means of separating tourists from a little folding money at the Parks Canada interpretation centre at Batoche.

Buyers will be well served. Hildebrandt is certainly no stylist and he forgets that not all historical sources are created equal, but his conclusions, on the whole, are sensible and well-argued. His picture researcher, Jack Summers, has done an excellent job. In addition to the familiar collection from the Glenbow and the Public Archives, he has ranged as far as the Army Museum in Halifax. The local work of Parks Canada is evident in the number of photographs of Métis families involved in the 1885 events. The aged survivors, often portrayed years later, provide a vivid contrast to studio portraits of young militiamen, eager to display their military finery to the camera.

Unfortunately the resulting book is not worthy of their efforts. Whether Parks Canada wanted to cut costs or distribute patronage to an inept and unnamed printer, the typography reflects the limitations of primitive computer setting and photographic reproduction has robbed the James Peters originals of some of their texture. Appearance may not be everything in a book but it matters in a publication whose chief market will be the passing tourist. As a battle, Batoche did little to undermine Canada's reputation as "the peaceable kingdom." The West's longest and bloodiest battle was also the most titanic struggle on Canadian soil since 1814. It lasted three and a half days and consumed twenty-five lives. A nation must make what it can of its history. Lacking a Tamburlaine or an American Civil War to give our history sufficient bloodshed, we must be content with Batoche. Participants and their heirs have tried to raise it to the status of an epic. Incipient Canadian nationalism was fed on the legend that militia officers had wrested victory from the Métis despite their bumbling British commander. A later mythology, now reinforced by a commemorative stamp, insists that the Métis commander, Gabriel Dumont, was an unsung military genius.

Hildebrandt tells all. Indeed, in its minute dissection of every phase of the little battle, marked by such phrases as "The Firefight for Mission Ridge" or "The Building of the Zareba," he comes close to parodying those monumental volumes in which some American historians have

chronicled the lesser engagements of the Civil War. Hildebrandt's theoretical guide has been Sir Charles Callwell's little classic of 1896, *Small Wars: Their Principle and Practice*. While he cites and might even be tempted to endorse such native Canadian critics as Charles Pelham Mulvaney or the frustrated cavalier, Colonel George Denison, common sense and Callwell persuade Hildebrandt that the government commander, Major General Fred Middleton, made correct decisions about as often as any human being has a right to expect.

Photographs help emphasize what many authors forget: Frederick Dobson Middleton was almost past retirement age when he came to the Northwest in 1885. He was a short, red-faced soldier with an enormous white moustache, the spitting image of the as yet unborn Colonel Blimp. He had been recommended for the Victoria Cross during the Indian Mutiny but was denied it on the claim, astonishing to a later generation of soldiers, that all staff officers were expected to be courageous.

Less obvious from Middleton's appearance was the fact that he had married a young French Canadian, Eugenie Doucet, during an earlier posting to Canada, that he was a passionate proponent of the new and controversial notion of mounted infantry and that he was a thinker and a writer in an army that normally did little of either. Frankly, when Middleton came to Canada in 1884, the alternative was retirement on a colonel's half-pay. Canada wanted a general on the cheap, who would make no fuss about political patronage in the Militia Department. Canada got better than it deserved.

Running a military campaign in the Northwest was an extra Middleton had not bargained for. Neither had Canada. Unlike their aged general, few Canadians were aware of how unready they were. With difficulty, waggon trains, field hospitals, supply lines and scouts could be organized; soldiers able to move and fight on command could not be. Indeed militiamen, from private to lieutenant-colonel, had all the self-confidence of ignorance. Lieutenant-Colonel W.D. Otter, detached to relieve Battleford because he was the ablest Canadian officer, nonetheless ignored Middleton's urgent warnings and set off on a foolish expedition to Cut Knife Hill. He and half his men might have been destroyed if Poundmaker and his Crees had not decided to let the Canadians escape. If officers were willful and unwise, their men were utterly green. Unless they enjoyed marksmanship as a hobby, few of the Winnipeg Rifles or "the smart city battalions" from the East had fired their Snider-Enfield rifles.

Against Middleton's column, guerrilla tactics might well have been effective. Later, Dumont insisted that Riel had rejected his plea for night attacks. They would be "too barbarous" and, besides, there might be French Canadians among the troops. Certainly Middleton knew how easily his raw troops might be panicked by a night attack and he exhausted his strength in nightly rounds on his sentries. Only at Fish Creek, on the boundaries of Métis territory, could Dumont attempt an ambush, but the

Canadian scouts easily exposed the trap. Middleton was too good a soldier to be caught like that in the daylight.

The crucial question about the Métis campaign in 1885 was why after challenging the government, Riel insisted on remaining passively at Batoche. Like Bob Beal and Rod McLeod in their excellent book on the 1885 campaign, Hildebrandt argues that the Métis approach to war, as at the Grand Coteau in 1851, was essentially defensive. What worked against the Sioux would work against the Canadians. Beal and McLeod go farther and insist that Dumont himself appears nowhere in the minutes of the Exovedate urging the offensive spirit. Were his reminiscences, like those of General Middleton himself, written with the wisdom of hindsight?

Once the Métis had decided to defend Batoche, Middleton's strategy was confirmed. The modern theory of guerrilla war insists that there must be no stronghold a conventional army can capture. Riel was no revolutionary; neither was Dumont. Having launched his rebellion, Riel had little more to contribute to the Métis cause but his prayers. Middleton could approach his task with cautious professionalism. The caution was merited. At Fish Creek, his militiamen had shown their inexperience. They could easily have done so again on 9 May, amidst the dense bush south of Batoche. Pitching camp close to the battle was a safeguard against panic and the site chosen by Middleton's young quartermaster-general, Captain H. de H. Haig, was the best available.

Hildebrandt records the criticisms that poured later from the pens of some of Middleton's Canadian subordinates, many of them absorbed without acknowledgement in Mulvaney's instant history of the campaign. With a few exceptions, he concludes, the critics were wrong. Arming the *Northcote* and sending her downstream might have turned into a disaster but the Métis were suitably distracted. Middleton's caution at Batoche was a shrewd policy. Métis morale soared on the first day only to drain away when they realized that soldiers who had tumbled to the ground were not dead but hiding. Middleton's caution had another reason, reflected in his letters to the British commander-in-chief, the Duke of Cambridge. Regular troops would not only have been more disciplined; they would also, in a measure, have been more expendable. His Canadian volunteers were not. At Fish Creek, he told the Duke, he had been shaken at the sight of respectable clerks, merchants, artisans and their sons, who had set out in the spirit of a Sunday picnic but who now lay dead or painfully wounded. Middleton certainly wanted a quick campaign to save Ottawa money but once he was at Batoche, he would take his time to save the lives of his citizen-soldiers.

His citizen-soldiers had no such inhibitions. Their officers thirsted for glory; the men were bored. When Middleton's planned diversion on the morning of 12 May miscarried, his militia colonels seem to have taken tactics into their own hands. The mad charge down the hill to Batoche, against out-numbered and almost ammunitionless Métis provided the

Canadians with a suitably romantic conclusion to the battle. It also cost more than half the lives lost in the battle, Canadian and Métis.

If the spontaneous Canadian attack had miscarried disastrously, Middleton would have carried the blame. Since it succeeded, at a cost, he took the credit and shared it with his infantry brigadier, Lieutenant-Colonel Bowen Van Straubenzie. His Canadian colonels never forgave him. Neither have their heirs, descendants and admirers.

Despite modest defects in style and appearance, Walter Hildebrandt's book is a useful contribution to the mountain of literature on the events of 1885. He would have benefited from harsh editing and a more competent book designer. His desire to cram in quotations from sources of utterly disparate quality, from the informed Charles Arkell Boulton to the egregious C.P. Mulvaney, must bewilder most readers. It is puzzling that so little effort has been made to relate the book to the present historic site at Batoche. Perhaps Parks Canada wants its visitors to buy a second book.

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*The West: The History of a Region in Confederation* by J.F. Conway.  
Toronto: James Lorimer, 1984. Pp. 261.

I suppose that like anglophone and francophone, eastern and western Canadians will always live in an uneasy and sometimes acrimonious relationship. It is strife that, like winter, must be endured. J.F. Conway's book, subtitled *The History of a Region in Confederation*, purports to chronicle the economic and political development of the Canadian West since 1867. However, the use of the word "history" to describe this work is somewhat inappropriate. It is rather an unconvincing polemic based on scanty research, dubious or specious argument, and excessive use of language. If the author intended through his book to gain sympathy for the Canadian West, he succeeds only in irritating the reader and discrediting his purpose.

This book is a one-sided, one-dimensional lament for the colonized, exploited, and unhappy West which has never received a fair deal from central Canada and probably never will. As the author puts it, "western Canadians repeatedly struggled to construct Canada's political and economic order, not only to redress the grievances of the region, but to bring more justice and economic security for all Canadians." (P. 5) In return, the Métis were cruelly cheated of their western lands and later were subject to "attempted genocide." (P. 43) Western farmers were equally hard done by, though to be sure, not subjected to genocide. The CPR was the machination of Prime Minister Macdonald, not to act as the backbone of a greater Canada, but rather as a monopoly to exploit the farmer and compel him to buy expensive eastern Canadian manufactured goods.

Each federal concession to western interests was a crumb grudgingly brushed from the high table of central Canadian interests. (P. 65) Industrialization, tariff protection for Canadian industries, and rural depopulation were further examples of the anti-western policies of the federal government. Ottawa stood to block the idyll of a prosperous rural Canada buying cheap American manufactured goods. Later, when the advantages of industrialization became more evident, it was, once again, the indifference of the federal government which prevented the western provinces from diversifying their economies with strong manufacturing sectors.

In trying to blame every western grievance on the federal government in Ottawa, the author catches himself in numerous contradictions. On one page he states that immigration was only a "trickle"; on the next he reports a "startling increase in settlement in Manitoba and the Territory." (Pp. 35-6) Then, there is the question of "small concessions" to the West. (P. 43) Among these he mentions the breaking of the CPR monopoly (p. 43); and the Crow's Nest Pass agreement of 1897 which the author describes as a "landmark." (P. 47) He also mentions the construction of branch lines, better grain handling facilities, government terminals, and so on. (P. 49) "But all this," the author states, "was really a pittance." (P. 43) He mentions further "significant" federal concessions in the 1920s (p. 63), but then again he concludes that the feds "had astutely avoided conceding anything of real importance to the farmers." (P. 65) Conway cannot seem to make up his mind whether the federal government made "significant" concessions to the West or simply threw out a few crumbs.

The author also blames Ottawa for a litany of other slights and offenses to the West. Early Canadian legislation taking control of the Hudson's Bay Company's lands was done without consulting local inhabitants. (P. 16) No doubt this was true, but what Anglo-Saxon or European government ever "consulted" aborigines (and in this case Métis) before taking their lands? Later on, when the Métis sold their land scrip to speculators at derisory prices, it was entirely the latter's conniving to blame, not also the impatient haste of the former to move westward. (P. 19) Then, other speculators forced later farmers to sell their grain in the autumn when it was cheap (p. 45), as if farmers everywhere did not face this pressure at some time. The instability of farm prices was likewise the fault of federal industrial policy (p. 58), discounting, of course, world agricultural price trends. Indeed, the author goes so far in his criticism of federal policy that it is a wonder he did not blame bad weather on Ottawa as well.

Conway also laments "the decimation of rural Canada and the final triumph of urban industrial capitalism." (P. 55) The feds, it seems, were to blame (whatever one may think of capitalism) for advancing Canada into the twentieth century. The author, one must assume, would have preferred the maintenance in Canada of a pre-industrial economic base dependent on American manufactured goods.

The author runs his "history" forward to the 1970s, all the while criticizing Ottawa for its "naked," "brutal," and "unbridled use of federal power to keep the provinces in line." (Pp. 150, 210-11) One would have to conclude that Joe Stalin, not R.B. Bennett or Mackenzie King, was directing the country. As a result, the author raises the bogey of western separatism, pointing to a few public opinion polls (pp. 151, 213-14) and the by-election of a single Western Canada Concept MLA in Alberta in 1981 who could not hold his seat the following year.

The author's indignation reaches its pinnacle in describing the 1979-81 petroleum pricing dispute between Ottawa and the provinces. Whereas in his introduction the author proclaims that the West acted to advance the interest of all Canadians (p. 5), he later admits that the western provinces were not disposed "to bear the full cost of Canadian nationhood." (Pp. 201 & passim) Once again, the author indulges in the usual histrionics claiming that the West had "to help salvage the viability of the nation." (P. 201)

One could go on with more examples of the author's too loose use of language. But return to just one where Conway claims the Métis were subjected to attempted "genocide...one of the monumental crimes of the 19th century." (P. 229) Whatever the feds did to the Métis was mere child's play compared to Tsarist Russian conduct in central Asia, or the slaughter of the Tai-Ping Rebellion in China, or even American treatment of its own Indian populations. This author deals in hyperbole the same way a costermonger deals in fish with shrill, loud, and loose language.

Finally, the author leaves us with the advice that we would be better off with minority federal governments presumably to give way to the wishes of the provinces. (Pp. 237-38) Québec would have an "unqualified right to self-determination" and special status, while the West would be freed from its "quasi-colonial status." (Pp. 239-40) In this way the author hopes that Canada will flourish, but really it sounds more like a formula for the destruction of Canadian independence and the hawking of its parts to American multi-nationals and "big brother" in Washington.

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*Plains Families: Exploring Sociology Through Social History* by Scott G. McNall and Sally Allen McNall. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. Pp. 331.

*The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945*, A.W. Rasporich editor. Calgary: The University of Calgary Press, 1984. Pp. 235.

Well-worn and comfortable from twenty or more years of use, the

concept of region, and its expression, regionalism, have now become accepted as powerful tools of analysis. As social scientists now begin to consider the history of the post-World War II North American West, their concern is not whether the West has been a region, but whether it is still a region. Gerald Friesen, in his keynote article to *The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945*, poses the question addressed by most of the other contributors to that collection of articles and by Scott G. McNall and Sally Allen McNall in *Plains Families: Exploring Social History Through Sociology*. "What is 'the state of the region'?" Friesen asks. "Was it indeed just a neighbourhood of a global metropolis? Or did elements of a distinctive society and culture continue to exist?" (P. 1) Can sufficient evidence of regional particularism be identified to counter the assertion that modernization has homogenized North America and rendered superficial at best residual differences between East and West? Framed in this way, however, the debate does not directly address an irony inherent in the problem: region gained its academic currency as a concept during the same time period as its demise has been suspected.

*The Making of the Modern West* contains seventeen papers presented to the 1983 Western Studies Conference at the University of Calgary. In his Preface, A.W. Rasporich explains that the conference's subject was motivated by a conversation that he shared with Gerald Friesen. They agreed that few historians have addressed the history of the postwar West. This survey of many of the main interpretations advanced by economists, geographers, sociologists and political scientists in recent years ought to stimulate such consideration.

Friesen does not define the concept of region in his contribution, "The Prairie West Since 1945: An Historical Survey." Elsewhere, however, in *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, he explains region as human ecology, as landscape or landscapes bound together by an economy and reinforced by history. A conscious sense of place, of regional interest and identity—regionalism, in other words—is not a necessary criterion of region, but rather a historical product of it.<sup>1</sup> Friesen, then, can argue that the Prairie West has been a distinctive community for three hundred years.

Kenneth Norrie identifies the features of this economy in "A Regional Economic Overview of the West Since 1945." He maintains that the four western provinces possess an economic unity based on a comparative advantage in the exploitation of staples and an inability to influence the price of regional inputs or outputs because of its small market and openness to the flow of capital. For Norrie, then, the region's economic conditions are largely determined internally by its resource endowment and small population and not by its subordination to a heartland.

With this, Brenton M. Barr disagrees in "The Economic Geography of Prairie Canada in Regional Perspective." More appropriate, he implies, is a developmental model which provides for structural change over time. Thus, the Prairie economy in the 1970s was "an upward transitional

hinterland region," diversifying through "the generation of interlinked, productive, financial and political facilities" (P. 81) Yet its capacity to achieve full maturity, to make economic decisions for itself, was compromised by its status as a hinterland: like a third-world country, "the region is a contrived, somewhat protected, economic system that appears to thrive only when markets are artificially stimulated or cyclically hyperactive." (P. 86) Political issues of control, then, figure prominently in the regional subordination of the West to a heartland.

Another exception to Norrie's model is offered by Donald E. Blake in "Western Alienation: A British Columbia Perspective." British Columbia, he maintains, ought not to be grouped with the Prairie provinces because of its different political economy. Its staples have been subject to greater provincial government control and, because they are also staples with which Ontario is endowed, British Columbia has benefited from struggles over resource policy between powerful Ontario and the federal government.

Perhaps the major issue of political control has been the capture of economic rents. Because benefits from the earlier wheat economy accrued to eastern Canada, Roger Gibbins argues in "Political Change in the 'New West,'" the east had in the past a self-interest in accommodating the demands of western regionalism. However, provincial appropriation of economic rents from more recent staples, particularly petroleum, has eliminated any such incentive for conciliation. In response, according to B.M. Barr, federal energy policy has been designed to direct exploration and development into areas in which the federal government can control the appropriation of economic rents.

Norrie too recognizes this issue. But he doubts whether provincial policies designed to appropriate rents and then to direct their expenditure to the promotion of economic diversification have altered regional economic structures. If this is so, why have such proposals, in effect the denial of comparative advantage, been so popular? They have been sought, he suggests, for non-economic reasons, particularly for the assumed stabilizing effect of diversification. Moreover, since the advantages of such policies have been concentrated and, therefore, easily appropriated, private interests have lobbied for diversification for their own benefit. Political opposition has been difficult to mobilize because losses to the region through the dissipation of rent are diffuse and not the result of any direct taxation.

This argument indicates the need for an analysis of regional class structure, but the significance of class is a theme not developed in *The Making of the Modern West*. Only the articles by Friesen and Norrie refer to the argument advanced in *Prairie Capitalism* by John Richards and Larry Pratt that provincial policy has the ability to break the domination of the regional economy by outside capital and to create in its stead an indigenous bourgeoisie. Friesen dismisses its "crude categories of the Marxian dialectic" as inappropriate for the social divisions of the postwar

West (7), while Norrie avoids class analysis and terms Richards's and Pratt's "nascent regional bourgeoisie" an "urban élite."<sup>2</sup> (P. 74) Given the impact of the recent recession upon the western economy and the consequent fragility of the regional bourgeoisie, some re-evaluation of the Richards and Pratt thesis seems timely.

Only Max Foran in "Calgary, Calgarians and the Northern Movement of the Oil Frontier, 1950-1970" examines the activities of members of this class. Largely descriptive and uncritical, Foran portrays Calgary's oilmen, much as a generation ago Donald Creighton did his Laurentian merchants, as "visionaries" who overcame logistical and technological obstacles to assert Canadian control over a precious staple. More significant questions might have been posed since, unlike Richards's and Pratt's study, this one examines the initiative of Alberta oilmen in territory under federal jurisdiction and in projects involving federal participation. The possibility of federal succour for a regional bourgeoisie suggests that such a class might then be conceived less as a creature of provincial governments than as a supplicant to various governments.

The "infectious enthusiasm" of the oilmen noted by Foran (117), it might be argued, advanced the ideology which justified the diversion of economic rents to private interests. Tempering this enthusiasm and making policy decisions seem critical has been the spectre, consciously cultivated by the petroleum industry, of the ever closer depletion of the resource and the prospects of a western return to the mendicity of the 1930s. Such a warning is sounded in an article contributed by the Director of Public Affairs for Syncrude Canada Ltd., John J. Barr, entitled "The Impact of Oil on Alberta: Retrospect and Prospect."

R. W. Wright explores the ideology that accompanied the oil prosperity of the 1970s in "The Irony of Oil: The Alberta Case." Albertans, he argues, misinterpreted the source of the oil prosperity of the 1970s. Instead of recognizing that exogenously generated increases in energy prices promoted provincial economic growth, they preferred to believe that Alberta's commitment to free enterprise generated greater efficiency and, therefore, prosperity. To Wright, this illusion constituted an irony, "a situation in which the consequences of an action are contrary to its original intention and a significant part of the discrepancy between intention and outcome can be attributed to the disposition and perceptions of the actor." (P. 106) Irony is distinct from ideology, while ideology determines the response to irony, the response in Alberta being a reassertion of classical capitalism. (P. 112) But a Marxian alternative might also be offered: irony, or rather contradiction, is concealed, albeit temporarily, by ideology as a false consciousness of economic forces and social relationships.<sup>3</sup>

The concern with the qualities of region that these articles expressed ought itself to be considered central to the making of the modern West. Words and concepts have histories and as signifying systems or symbols they structure our understanding of the era which gave rise to them. This

problem is raised in B.Y. Card's "Perspectives on Rural Western Canada in the 1950s," a study of the "keyword" displaced by region in the 1950s. Card considers the history of "rural" as a symbol in the West from its emergence in the years shortly before World War I. As a symbol, it extolled the virtues of agriculture and country life and gave moral force to the claims and grievances of westerners against the urban East. After World War II as technology and education made possible an urban life style in the country, "rural" took on a different meaning, connoting problems, deprivation and backwardness.

Peter J. Smith agrees in "Urban Development in the Prairie Provinces," that in the postwar era "the traditional distinction between rural and urban has lost much of its meaning" in explaining differences in spatial organization. (P. 134) Cities have ceased to be self-contained and commuting has rendered residents of rural municipalities rural in name alone. It is worth commenting as well that this shift reflects changes in conceptual definition parallel to those noted by Card. A table on urban/rural population in the Prairies provided in Friesen's article requires five footnotes to explain the increasingly more inclusive Census definition of urban. In 1941 incorporation was the standard; in 1981, density; throughout, rural was considered the residual.

Walter G. Hardwick in "Transformation from Industrial to Post-Industrial Society" reveals the influence of the concept upon the scholar. Not only does he argue that the urban-centred growth of the service sector has rendered the West similar to other modern economies, but that the same developmental model of pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial fits the experiences of western Canada. Clearly something equivalent to industrialization had to be found and, for Hardwick, it was the postwar mechanization of agriculture and the growth of mining and petroleum industries.

Such an interpretation is rejected by regionalists, most vigorously by Gerald Friesen who claims that the model of modernization does not adequately fit the recent experiences of the Prairies. Yet his attempt to draw up a balance sheet with regional peculiarities in economic structure, social organization, culture and politics offsetting homogenization recognizes, but does not explain the contradiction of regionalism.

He does concede that with the decline of agriculture, the growth of cities and increasing employment in service industries, the Prairie economy has been rendered similar to other modern, developed economies. But through co-operatives and credit unions, by local entrepreneurship and with the intervention of provincial government, westerners exerted a "degree of control over the local economy that was much greater in 1980 than in 1940" (5). That a degree of control may have been the share exacted by an emergent local bourgeois fragment for collaborating with outside capital in the transformation is not considered by Friesen.

In asserting the persistence of ethnic identities as unique to Prairie

social organization, Friesen echoes the argument of Leo Driedger in "Multicultural Regionalism: Toward Understanding the Canadian West." Driedger argues that western attitudes have been shaped by the region's North American connections, or "axes" of power relationships and that ethnicity has been as important as economy in structuring these relationships. As the most ethnically diverse region, the West has demonstrated little sympathy for biculturalism, which has been interpreted as an attempt by French Canada to subordinate the region; at the same time the West has held the greatest sympathy for multiculturalism. Less persuasive is his argument advanced to counter the contention of John Porter in *The Vertical Mosaic* that regionalism has not formed basic group identities in Canada.<sup>4</sup> The meaning of being Canadian is different in the West, he suggests, than in Ontario because of multiculturalism. Because of its dominance the British élite of Ontario has been able to define what is "Canadian" in terms consistent with its own ethnic identity and interests. By contrast, he "predicts," but offers no data, that in the West the British "have been moulded earlier by a multi-ethnic milieu" (179) and therefore are less likely to equate being British with being Canadian. Such soothsaying can be easily dismissed—we should wait for the results of study. But, the assumption upon which it is based, that ethnicity is an ascribed and inherited characteristic of all, is more contentious, since it assumes ethnicity without a consciousness of ethnicity and denies Canadian as an ethnic identity.

But ethnicity may be conceived as a created and consciously reproduced identity, as a dependent rather than an independent variable. As Roger Gibbins has pointed out in *Prairie Politics and Society: Regionalism in Decline*, "the prairie population is one of the most indigenous in Canada." By-passed by post-war immigration, "the ethnic composition of the Prairies remained crystallized as it had been with the onset of the Depression while that of Ontario continued to be molded by sustained immigration."<sup>5</sup> To the extent that ethnicity does remain as a distinct feature of Prairie regionalism, as Driedger and Friesen claim, it must then be a conscious, intergenerational transmission. The problem then becomes what conditions have produced intergenerational ethnic consciousness as a feature of the West.

Further, the emergence of more assertive native and Métis organizations since 1945, Friesen adds, differentiates the West from the East. This irony—that the identity of its most disadvantaged and discriminated against minority distinguishes the West—might well have been explored more fully. Driedger does suggest that western racism has been stimulated by proximity to native peoples and by the federal government's frustration of western ambitions to exploit the North as its own resource hinterland. To Murray J. Dobbin in "The Métis in Western Canada Since 1945," the regional nature of Métis organization has been a response to the uneven development of capitalism and the progressive marginalization of people without marketable skills or appropriate attitudes within a racist social

structure. In the West Métis and native organizations have been more aggressive because these peoples have been more recently marginalized. The strength of Dobbin's argument is his appreciation of identity as a conscious exercise and struggle. He dismisses biological definitions of Métis as ahistorical, preferring to accept the individual's self-definition and his recognition as a fellow by others. (P. 183) From his perspective, organization and control of organization are crucial to identity and, according to Dobbin, historically have been the locus for struggle. Most recently, since 1960, the state has sought to co-opt Métis and Indian organizations by cultivating a bureaucratic élite bound by a commitment to a constitutional process and by government funding for services. State control of organization means state control of identity.

Postwar literature represents to Friesen the area of greatest regional cultural maturity and the success of Prairie writers in expressing with sophistication a sense of landscape and history has created "a vision that became a focus for community." (P. 9) In this, he follows the thesis of Dick Harrison that recent Prairie authors have written about the western past in order to "re-name" it, to cast off the vestiges of an eastern culture "ill-designed to encourage adaptation to a new land" and unable to see the landscape. The implication is that the cultural symbols expressed in past literature contributed to a western alienation from their environment. Friesen does not comment, as Harrison does, that this alienation has ceased at a time when "the prairie has been absorbed by a new urban-industrial environment." Harrison's explanation in McLuhanesque terms, that the present treats the past as an art form, merely restates the irony.<sup>6</sup>

Articles by Diane Besai on "The Prairie Theatre and the Playwright" and Christopher Varley, "Winnipeg West: The Postwar Development of Art in Western Canada," discuss forms of cultural expression which have not matured. Besai argues that the failure of the first wave of Prairie theatre to fulfill "a specifically regional mandate" provoked a second wave of explicitly regional theatres in protest. (P. 209) Her explanation for this failure—Manitoba Theatre Centre's "building fever" (210) and Edmonton Citadel Theatre's "delusions of grandeur" (211)—are somewhat unsatisfying and seem instead symptomatic of the pursuit of some different mandate. These theatres may very well have been successful in staging the cultural symbols demanded by certain elements within Prairie society. The issue might not just be success and failure, but also the politics of culture.

The latter appears as an implicit theme in Varley's discussion of western Canadian art. His discussion of modern artists, their works and the wanderings does stress the importance of institutional supports and more significantly the variations in them from city to city across the West. Why should Vancouver have attracted and indulged its artists, while "Winnipeg is still a good city to leave?" (P. 226) The reasons for this ought to attract more inquiry.

Finally Friesen refers to provincial politics as uniquely regional. Ideological divisions have produced an indigenous two party system that has integrated various occupational, native, ethnic, class, rural and urban groups into a "single community." (P. 8) Yet neither of these two features is unknown in British Columbia and Québec. More persuasive than a regional interpretation is the recent argument of Bothwell, Drummond and English that there has developed since 1945 the politics of provincialism. The modern Canadian welfare state and its principle of equality of access to services has been founded on the contradiction of federal powers of taxation and provincial responsibility for the delivery of services.<sup>7</sup> J.A. Boan examines one of these areas of contradiction in "Developments in Health Care in the Postwar Era."

Contradiction has produced conflict and conflict alienation. Alienation as a feature of the modern western politics is addressed in articles by David K. Elton and Donald A. Blake. Elton's "Contemporary Western Alienation: An Opinion Profile" promises to "provide an overview of public opinion research which has been accumulated [for the four western provinces] over the past ten to fifteen years," but only one paragraph, devoted to a 1969 Alberta survey, is outside the period 1979 to 1983. Because of the short time period, one cannot safely determine from what Westerners are alienated, the federal government or the actions of the party that has controlled that government for all but nine months of the period studied. As well, Elton's method of aggregating data by region requires elaboration. Is the reader to assume that variation in responses by province within regions was less significant than variation in responses among regions? For example, a 1980 poll indicated that while just 11 percent of Albertans placed their greatest confidence in the federal government to act in their best interests, 33 percent of Saskatchewan respondents, equal to the Ontario score, did so. (P. 50) This method of aggregation does make sense if province is subsumed in region, a leap that can only be made if region is assumed *a priori*. But Blake's "Western Alienation: A British Columbia Perspective" disagrees. British Columbia alienation ought not to be considered as part of a larger western alienation since its causes and expression are different. It is not, he maintains, as deeply ingrained and is limited to specific policies and politicians.

For Roger Gibbins, alienation in particular and Prairie politics in general do not attest to regional distinctiveness, as they do for Friesen and Elton. In "Political Change in the 'New West'," he argues that they reflect the failure of the West to be politically integrated into modern Canada at the same time as it has become socially, economically, and culturally more like the rest of the country. The source of this is the structure of Canadian federalism which fails to translate a reasonable popular vote in the West into an effective and reasonable representation. The resulting apparent disenfranchisement has promoted the political alienation of Westerners, a symptom of the decline of regionalism.

Few of the articles in *The Making of the Modern West* are history. Rather they debate the salient features of the period and reveal the irony of region. The historical problem remains to uncover beneath that irony the forces of social change which gave rise to a consciousness of region.

*Plains Families: Exploring Sociology through Social History* by Scott G. McNall and Sally Allen McNall of the University of Kansas, while intended to introduce undergraduate students to sociological concepts, does at the same time outline a general theory of social change. To do so, the experiences of families of the Great Plains region of the United States from the 1860s to the present are examined. An evaluation of how useful this book might prove as an introduction to sociology is beyond the competence of this reviewer, a social historian. I can, however, comment upon the way in which these concepts are introduced, through what the authors purport to be "social history," and on the utility that these concepts may afford for the analysis of social history of the post-World War II West.

Despite its subtitle, *Plains Families* has little to do with social history. McNall and McNall organize their book into alternating historical and sociological chapters, first presenting the experiences of presumably typical plains families and then explaining these through "sociological terms and concepts." (P. 2) The subsequent explanation of their editorial licence belies this claim, as the authors admit that:

The families in this book are composites. We have changed names, merged one family's set of records with those of another, moved passages from diaries into letters and vice versa, rearranged and combined interviews, and generally revised the materials to tell coherent and vivid stories. For example, in Chapter 6, Ed Higbee reminisces about his childhood. His words are taken from letters, retrospective materials, and diaries, combined so as to allow Higbee to "tell" his own story. Although we often quote directly from diaries and letters, we have eliminated redundant or irrelevant material. Often we have edited the material, standardizing grammatical forms, spellings and punctuations. (P. 3)

Confession does not absolve guilt.

Records generated from several sources and preserved in different forms cannot be merged and still considered original documents. The experiences of one individual cannot be taken for those of another and what might freely be confided in a personal diary, might well be concealed in a letter. Oral history differs from written records not only in the date, but also in the circumstances of creation: in its richness, it reveals not just elements of the past, but also the impress of the past upon present consciousness. Moreover, that which creative editors have eliminated on the charge of irrelevance or redundancy might prove central to the interpretations of others, if only because the inclusion of the seemingly irrelevant and redundant reveals the workings of a past mind. Nor should grammar be standardized, since these rules define the modes of expression which communicate, defend and sustain the culture of everyday life. Without this, the importance of language in a system of signification, of inclusion and exclusion, such as was so vitally portrayed in Richard

Hoggart's classic, *The Uses of Literacy*, is sadly lost.<sup>8</sup> *Plains Families*, then, is not social history, but historical fiction.

*Plains Families* suffers from a periodization of historical episodes which at times seems contrived and is confused by the necessity in a textbook of introducing sociological concepts in a cumulative fashion. Thus, a composite of a homesteading family in the last quarter of the nineteenth century illustrates a discussion of culture and social structure; a portrayal of disagreement and conflict between first and second generation farm families and between established settlers and more recent immigrants in the 1900s and 1910s provides the context for theories of community and association. Socialization and sex roles—more appropriate would be gender—are elaborated through family crises and break-ups deemed typical of the Great Depression and World War II. The experiences of families in a post-war college town introduce concepts of social class and stratification, while the reminiscences of a widowed farm woman occasion an examination of general theories of social change and stability.

Linking these episodes is a process of social change which, for the authors, is essentially dichotomous: the adaptation of American culture to the displacement of the traditional by the modern—or, to use the other dyads employed, *Gemeinschaft* by *Gesellschaft*, folk by urban society, mechanical by organic solidarity, inner-directed by other-directed personality. The *Gemeinschaft* of nineteenth-century Plains society conflicted with, and was progressively eroded by, “the city way of life.” The city represented the extension of “contract-based relations of the market place” at the expense of “older forms of human relations grounded in ties that emphasized mutual respect and interaction.” (P. 132) In folk society people not only knew one another intimately, but dealt with each other personally as individuals, not social categories. Increasingly, however, relationships were entered for specific and limited purposes by people who knew, and cared to know, little about one another.

Social change undermined or altered the complex of cultural values—achievement/success, activity/work, morality, efficiency/practicality, progress, humanitarianism, materialism, and democracy—that had defined and given meaning to Plains *Gemeinschaft*. For example, morality had been founded in the sense of community itself derived from the settlement and “civilization” of the wilderness and excluded as outsiders and immoral those who were not part of that experience. As that sense of community eroded, so too did the restraining influence of morality upon materialism. Morality had initially focussed the individual's need for achievement in material terms as production; without it, materialism and the need to belong to a community were expressed as consumption. Commonality and achievement became expressed in modern society through the possession of the same sort of goods.

Folk society remained relatively intact on the Plains, McNall and McNall claim, until the early twentieth century. Thereafter, “the United

States was becoming more modern.” (P. 129) Plains people from 1900 through the 1920s resisted what they perceived as the devaluation of their way of life and declared their sense of community by joining voluntary associations. Not only did these associations seek to halt the encroachment of “the city way of life,” but, as in the case of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and the Prohibition movement, their intent was to impose upon the city the more moral standards of the country.

Resistance faltered as the Great Depression and the World War translated rural/urban conflict into a conflict between generations within Plains society. The younger generation, according to McNall and McNall, rejected parental values which seemed riddled with contradictions. Hard work and the avoidance of debt did not appear in the 1930s to produce success. Indeed, the difficulty in finding work created a crisis of adolescence. Previously, adolescents within Plains families became peers of their parents, and established their individual identities harmoniously within the family, through the contribution of their labour to the family farm economy. The adolescents of the Depression could not achieve this and, with the encouragement of their frustrated parents, invested their hopes for adult success in education. Prolonged schooling made adolescence a separate status and created a new peer group within which identity was established through rebellion against parental norms and authority.

By the post-World War II period, “the city way of life” had penetrated Plains society and effected a “homogenization of culture.” But, this did not constitute a complete transformation, since many aspects of the early ideology persisted, including egalitarianism, the frontier mentality, the Protestant ethic, anti-radicalism, and faith in the future. The result was to inhibit class consciousness, despite the greater social stratification that accompanied regional urbanization, and to encourage a conception of status based on consumption. The absence of class society in the United States, then, is, according to the McNalls, a consequence of the retention of many aspects of traditional ideology within the context of the consumerism associated with modern society.

This periodization can be faulted on two grounds: the first, conceptual; the second, historical. McNall and McNall conceive of the Plains family as stereotypical of the “real American family.” The meaning of this stereotype is not clearly defined and, as a result, their theory of the family seems ahistorical. They imply that the changes experienced by Plains families, and presumably the periodization of those changes, were common among other American families; if one can understand the Plains experience, one understands other experiences. This only makes sense if one accepts, as the authors do, that materialist factors were separate from and generally subordinate to ideological forces in forming consciousness; clearly Plains agriculture, if only because of the chronology of settlement and development, has differed materially from that of other regions. The culture of the American rural family, then, displayed a unity

of values and consciousness that was lacking in the material base of agricultural society.

Such a contention runs counter to the ecological interpretation which over the last twenty years or so has become the most common conceptualization of North American rural family. This is not the place to review the extensive literature in the area, although the line of argument is easily recapitulated.<sup>9</sup> The structure of the farm family—its demography, gender roles, and intergenerational pattern of authority—have been determined by a complex of ecological factors—soil fertility, technology and markets. The viability of the family farm economy, it might be argued, has been dependent in large measure upon the exploitation of the labour of family members. Sons have accepted their exploitation and paternal authority trusting that the success of the family economy would ultimately finance the acquisition of their own farms. But changes in ecological factors, such as the depletion of soil fertility, competition for land, and collapse of commodity prices, by diminishing prospects for intergenerational mobility, can provoke and have provoked family crises. Responses to such crises have taken two forms: the alteration of family structures or geographical mobility in pursuit of a more favourable ecology within which to reproduce family structures. From this perspective, the Plains family crisis of the Depression might well be analogous in some respects to crises experienced earlier in other regions. Analogous perhaps, but it cannot be labelled stereotypical, since the opportunities for response through family migration were clearly restricted. The point is that the conception of the family offered by McNall and McNall does not consider dynamic factors within the family as a basis for a regional social morphology. Of course, this is not surprising since to do so would posit the operation of internal materialist forces which would not be compatible with their exogenous theory of modernization.<sup>10</sup>

From a historical perspective, the weakest stage in the periodization is the identification of late nineteenth century Plains society as a *Gemeinschaft* or folk society. Even when one has qualified the use of such concepts as ideal types, it remains difficult to believe that “the world we have lost” was misplaced so recently in the North American west.<sup>11</sup> In any case, a concept which dichotomizes human history into the last eighty-five years and all the rest does entirely too much violence to the past.

Yet, such a division is required by the argument of *Plains Families: Gemeinschaft* must exist, so that it can be eroded. In this, McNall and McNall, in one of the few such instances, do suggest a materialist basis for consciousness. The values of folk society were rooted in local self-sufficiency. Those needs for labour or goods which could not be satisfied within the domestic economy were obtained by barter or the exchange of labour. “Sharing work over a period of time built up mutual obligations based on trust.” (P. 132) The authors admit that the cost of farm formation and the necessary assumption of debt involved farmers from the beginning

in a cash economy, but they deny that this was participation in a capitalist, and therefore alienating, economy because:

farm labor was significantly different from factory labor. Farmers engaged in simple commodity production, that is, they produced a product, sold it, and realized the full benefit of their own labor. Most farmers owned or controlled their own farms and seldom used hired labor. If they made a surplus or a profit, it belonged to them alone. (P. 23)

This distinction between production and exchange is a significant one, although the authors' contention concerning the absence of wage labour and of the exploitation of labour might be controverted. (Similarly barter only indicates the absence of currency as medium of exchange, not necessarily the absence of commodity exchanges.) But, in a sense, this distinction is not relevant in this context since it does not necessarily connote the absence of market relations and exploitation, which the authors associate with *Gemeinschaft*. The labour of dependent family members was exploited. Besides, any society in which the forces of production are sufficient to produce a surplus affords intra- and inter-regional opportunities for exploitation and the formation of class relationships thereon.

The general theory of social change advanced to explain the historical process which eroded Plains folk society is not one with which many social historians will feel comfortable. It is a theory which blends—unsuccessfully, I think—the structuralism of the French Communist philosopher, Louis Althusser, with a theory of human action similar to that of the English social theorist, Anthony Giddens. From Althusser, they appropriate the notion that society is comprised of decentred and relatively autonomous structures, or “spheres” in their terminology, —economy, polity, and ideology—one of which dominates at a given historical moment. Significantly ignored is the distinction between “dominant” and “determinant,” which concedes the determination of economy in the “last instance.” Each structure is in contradiction with others and each internally contradicted; social change is the resolution of these “dialectical contradictions.” (Pp. 294-5, 297) To McNall and McNall, clearly the major contradiction was “the tension between ideas and reality.” (P. 296)

Social historians, most passionately E.P. Thompson,<sup>12</sup> have objected to Althusserian theory on the basis of its epistemology, consciously formulated in rejection of “empiricism,” “historicism,” and “humanism” and overtly hostile to social history. It denies that knowledge is “a real part of a real object” to be abstracted from it,<sup>13</sup> but counters that knowledge is a theoretical production, the result of the practice of theory, governed by its own internal methods of validation, upon the theoretical object. Thus, society at each historical juncture must be understood theoretically in all its complexity in terms of its structures. In the words of one critic, to Althusser “human beings are not the authors or subjects of this process [of social change] which, decentered, has no motive subject. They are supports, effects, of the structures and relations of the social formation.”<sup>14</sup>

Such an evaluation of human agency contradicts the McNalls's faith in "the role of the individual in transforming social structures." (Pp. 289, 287, 302) Further, they assert that "people have lived their lives in a historical setting that they have created and that constrains their action." (P. 306) To be logical, these constraints, I assume do not prevent the action of creation. Action, however, presumes some degree of knowledgeability, particularly in evaluating that "tension between ideas and reality." Yet, it is just this sort of human knowledgeability that Althusser denies.

*Plains Families*, though it wrestles with major issues, remains unsatisfactory. Its methodology is unacceptable as history, its periodization seems contrived, and its theory of social change rests on a contradiction. It does attest, however, to the attraction of modernization theory as an approach to the history of the West.

The books reviewed here present opposing evaluations of the "state of the region," disagreeing over the extent to which regional particularities persist in the modern West. Despite disagreement, region, whether ascendent or in decline, is the accepted framework. Failing to judge a winner in the debate or to achieve a reconciliation of positions, perhaps this review can only urge a reformulation of the problem. The debate itself points to an irony of region: at a time of diminishing differences, the elevation of region as a symbol has proclaimed the inherence of differences and reconstructed the past of the West in historical scholarship and literature in regionalist terms. Region, thereby, has promoted a conception of the past and present in terms of the unequal relationships among various ecological units within a system of political economy. Variations among regions have been taken as more significant than variations within regions. But, if region is accepted as a consciously created and reproduced symbol and part of an ideology, then the question becomes not just what has region structured as reality, but also perhaps what reality has region concealed?

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#### NOTES

1. Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 3-5. Much of Friesen's article for *The Making of the Canadian West* is incorporated in *The Canadian Prairies*.
2. In fairness to Norrie, it should be noted that Pratt and Richards themselves are not consistent in their conceptualization of Prairie class structure and refer to both a bourgeoisie and an élite. John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 11.
3. Jorge Lorrain, "Ideology," in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, edited by T. Bottomore et al., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 219.
4. John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).
5. Roger Gibbins, *Prairie Politics and Society: Regionalism in Decline* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980), 8.

6. Dick Harrison, *Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1977), 18, 191.
7. Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).
8. Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957), 25, 27-9, 88.
9. See for example, Philip Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970); James A. Henretta, "The Morphology of New England Society in the Colonial Period," in *The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays*, edited by Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rotberg (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 191-210; David P. Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1981).
10. McNall and McNall might well have considered the application of modernization theory to the history of the family advanced in Tamara K. Hareven, "Modernization and Family History: Perspectives on Social History," *Signs* 2 (1976): 190-206. Indeed, none of the important theoretical and empirical studies of the family by Hareven are referenced.
11. For an alternate periodization derived from modernization theory, unnoted by McNall and McNall, see Richard D. Brown, "Modernization and the Modern Personality, 1600-1865: A Sketch of a Synthesis," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (Winter 1972): 201-28.
12. E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).
13. Louis Althusser, *Reading Capital* (London: Verso, 1979), 38.
14. N. Geras, "Althusser, Louis," in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, 17.

*Alberta's County of Mountain View...A History* by Bodil J. Jensen. Didsbury, Alberta: Mountain View County No. 17, 1983. Pp. 132, maps, tables, illustrations, hardcover.

This revised Master's thesis is one of the better prairie local histories. It concerns an area of mixed farms and agricultural service towns half-way between Calgary and Red Deer, with emphasis on the area's formative years from 1890 to 1925. There are no footnotes, but it is evident that the author conducted extensive research in newspapers and other sources, and she seems aware of the literature on prairie settlement generally. The reader is capably led across such familiar terrain as the land survey, the homestead system, and the establishment of local schools, churches, and governments. Towns and hamlets, community organizations, recreation, and the impact of World War I receive more attention than is usual in prairie local histories, but there is not nearly enough on agricultural development, surely a priority for any general study of a farming area. Instead of succumbing to the strict chronological order that renders some local histories almost unreadable, the material is logically organized by theme, and the many photographs are sorted and presented in the appropriate chapters. Jensen resists simple-minded judgements throughout the book. Without denying the hardships of pioneering, she does not wallow in them, nor does she romanticize the "good old days."

Unfortunately, surpassing the typically inept local history in quality, even by a margin this wide, does not necessarily result in an important book. Just as a farmer who tackles routine chores conscientiously and competently emerges from his experience no wiser than when he began, the author skillfully surveys many themes in prairie settlement without revealing much new or important about any of them. Since the book addresses no specific historical problem, nothing new in the way of a general interpretation emerges either. Early on, the author bows to current

fashion by dismissing the frontier thesis out of hand, informing us that metropolitan influences and the imported culture of the pioneers shaped the new communities. But this now commonplace idea is not even systematically pursued, much less substantiated. In short, the book lacks any clear purpose other than to sketch an outline general history of the County.

Perhaps it is unfair to criticize the book on these grounds for its intended audience is chiefly the general reader living in Mountain View itself. The County government commissioned the early research and ultimately published the results. And the book is crammed with local incidents, place names, and personalities of no particular significance to the outsider. But if Mountain View residents have a much better local history than most prairie communities, the readers of this journal are apt to be teachers and researchers with heavy demands on their reading time. They can safely pass on this one.

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*Social Democracy in Manitoba: A History of the CCF-NDP* by Nelson Wiseman. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983. Pp.xx, 180.

*The Government of Edward Schreyer: Democratic Socialism in Manitoba* by James A. McAllister. Kingston and Montréal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984. Pp. x, 214.

*"Building the Co-operative Commonwealth": Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada*, J. William Brennan editor. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1985. Pp. xiii, 255.

Alan Whitehorn, in the first essay of the Brennan collection, argues forcefully for new interpretive models of the CCF-NDP. To date, he claims, the historiography of the CCF-NDP has been dominated by the "protest movement becalmed" school. Originating in Leo Zakuta's work of the same title in 1964, this was sustained by Walter Young's *Anatomy of a Party* (1969) and registered perhaps its most pointed statement in Michael Cross's *The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea* (1974). According to this perspective, the CCF-NDP started out as a movement; it was high-minded and committed to the socialist transformation of monopoly capitalism. But in time degradation set in. The CCF became oligarchic, power-oriented and dominated by eastern union leaders, while, intellectually, it made its peace with capitalism in statements like the Winnipeg Declaration (1956). The CCF-NDP, then, lost its identity as a movement and became a party not unlike the others.

This interpretive tradition, with its qualities of abstract symmetry and utopian imaginings, has an inherent appeal to intellectuals, who are

of course the very sort of people who write the history of the Left. McAllister's book on the Schreyer government reminds us that the tradition lives on.

In the period before the founding of the CCF in 1932, Manitoba was the centre of the most successful of non-Marxist left-wing politics in Canada. Arthur Puttee was elected to the Commons in 1899 from Winnipeg; the nascent labour movement threw up leaders of uncommon ability: Queen, Dixon, Penner and Russell; there was the Strike in 1919 and Woodsworth's and Heaps's election to Parliament in the 1920s; arguably, the Manitoba Independent Labour Party was the most successful of local labourist parties in the years between 1920 and 1932. Yet such early promise went unfulfilled. By 1940, S.J. Farmer, the ILP-CCF leader, was so doubtful of the prospect of political power that he committed the party to participation in Bracken's coalition government. The party saw a rise in its support at War's end but the Cold War quickly put paid to this augury of success. The 1950s and early 1960s were barren times. In the federal elections of 1965 and 1968 and the provincial election of 1966, the NDP's vote increased noticeably although by no means so substantially as to make even its most ardent supporter believe that the winning of government office would come in 1969. Schreyer governed for eight years winning crucial by-elections in 1971 to give him a majority and registering a decisive victory in the general election of 1973 when his party won over 42 percent of the vote. So, in two terms of government what was achieved? James McAllister's answer is: not much!

McAllister's method is very simple and direct. He first defines socialism. (It is, he claims, summed up in four principles: redistribution of wealth, public ownership, government planning and popular participation.) He then presumes that the Manitoba NDP was a socialist party, a distinctly doubtful proposition as I will argue later. He then applies the definition to the performance of the Schreyer administration and in every respect he finds it wanting.

He admits that in its first years in office it was marginally innovative. It eradicated medicare premiums, introduced public automobile insurance and created a unified city government for Winnipeg. There were other pioneering projects: tax credit programmes, pharmacare, the establishment of a Department of Northern Affairs and the introduction of a new royalty regime for mining companies. But all this was too little and by no means enough to off-set the essentially conservative and plodding nature of the government's policies in other areas. The Schreyer administration, he claims, failed to undertake the structural transformation of Manitoban society. By 1977, the size of the public sector measured by public ownership or the ratio of public expenditures to the gross provincial product had grown no more rapidly and in some cases more slowly than in other provincial jurisdictions in Canada. The civil service it kept intact from the Roblin/Weir governments. And its record on democratising public

institutions was unexceptional. What 'radical' successes it did attain were in fact retreats from possibly more radical positions. Thus Autopac was a compromise that allowed private agents to participate in the system; the 'nationalising' of Churchill Forest Industries was too long in the making so that the province lost many millions of dollars to unscrupulous foreign entrepreneurs; pharmacare avoided a confrontation with the private ownership of the pharmaceutical industry; and new mineral taxes still left the province's mines in private hands.

I do not doubt that measured by the standard of socialism, McAllister is correct in his assessment of the eight years of Schreyer's government. Oscar Wilde once remarked that a difficulty with socialism was that it would take up too many evenings. McAllister would presumably re-assure him; the achieving of socialism only requires a few afternoons! But, even if socialism is so easily attained, a devotee of the 'protest movement becalmed' school, as McAllister is, should not be so quickly disillusioned; he should hardly have expected socialism from Schreyer in the first place. For if the CCF-NDP in Manitoba was in a free fall from the heights of socialist purity in the 1930s, by 1969 it must have plummeted a substantial distance. Schreyer himself never identified himself as a socialist. He preferred the designation social democrat. And, if anything, he eschewed even the British social democracy of a Gaitskell or a Crosland in favour of the yet more tepid brand from Sweden and West Germany. Schreyer, then, was a moderate reformer, indistinguishable from the reform liberalism of a King, an Abbott, a Pearson or a Trudeau. He was surprised by electoral joy in 1969 and had the difficult task of running a minority government with only limited talent in his cabinet. His caucus had the stuffing kicked out of it in the Autopac debate in 1970 and thereafter, indeed, it was cautious and world-weary. But all of this is to point up how inappropriate it is to expect that Schreyer would in the first place have pursued socialist principles. His was a government of moderate reform. By this standard it was a moderate success. What the Schreyer government cannot be used for is as yet another example of the failure of democratic socialism.

I have other analytic difficulties with McAllister's book. Not because I wish to preserve the possibility of the Schreyer government having been socialist in character, for I have just denied that it was, but mainly because of historical and theoretical honesty it is necessary to qualify the uniformly bleak characterisation McAllister makes of Schreyer's years in office. It almost seems as if the author wishes nothing complimentary to be said on this subject. Thus he dismisses Autopac as an expression of a concern for "efficiency" rather than socialism. As if socialism had nothing to do with the providing of helpful public services! Also, he faults the Schreyer government for leaving the public service undisturbed. But at least he might have considered another quite widely held view that what Schreyer did was create an informal, parallel bureaucracy of NDP supporters, thus neutralising the opposition's criticism of partisan tampering with the public

service, while in fact installing just such a politicised bureaucracy. Again, the NDP government is faulted for the middle class nature of its caucus and cabinet, and the diffuse, classless character of its popular support. To be sure most of Schreyer's cabinet were drawn from the 'new middle class' of teachers and lawyers and professors; only a few were horny-handed sons of toil. Indeed in background they were not unlike Marx and Lenin. Yet McAllister admits that the likes of Schreyer and Green did in fact come from poor and disadvantaged families. In sum, the author's *ouvrièrisme* is a little silly and pointless. There is more. He criticizes the government for the classless nature of its base of electoral support. Here he reveals, I think, a serious failure of historical understanding. Between the early 1960s and its victory in 1969 the Manitoba NDP transformed itself from a party with a blue-collar electoral base to one with support from all classes, except the very rich. (In general McAllister rejects the view that the rise of the NDP was due mainly to class forces.) In the process its popular base became little different from the Conservatives or Liberals. But an inclusive base of support, encompassing farmers, workers and the professional middle class had always been the goal of the non-Marxist Left in the province as early as before World War I. In 1912 J.S. Woodsworth held just such a view and by no means was he exceptional in this regard. Indeed, all in all, McAllister does not give an adequate account of the somewhat unusual historical origins of the Manitoba NDP. It is the League for Social Reconstruction that he seems to take as the touchstone of what Canadian socialism is all about so that the special regional tradition of Queen, Dixon, Farmer, Woodsworth and Tipping is largely overlooked.

McAllister's discussion of the dynamics of the province's political party system is much more convincing and intriguing. He makes a good case for viewing the latter as the most competitive one in Canada. Ever since the rise of the Left in 1920 and the coming of the Farmers' government in 1922, Manitoba has had such a multiplicity of parties that "a smaller share of the popular vote was captured on average by the leading party—usually the government—in Manitoba than in any other Canadian province." (P. 118) Thus power can be won with between 35-40 percent of the popular vote, as happened with Schreyer in 1969. But what can be so easily won can be as easily lost. There is a relatively fixed relationship between the popular vote and the winning of legislative seats. For the more popular political parties in systems like Manitoba's for every unit of loss of electoral support there will be a correlative doubling of the loss of legislative seats. This instills inevitable moderation and caution, especially in would-be radical parties; in time it will bring political inertia. A fear to offend the few carries with it an exaggerated consequence for the future prospects of the whole government.

McAllister supplements this theory with the notion of the "equilibrium" of competitive party systems such as Manitoba's. Here the idea is that such party systems tend to a natural equilibrium. On the victory of

a given political party, some of its supporters tend to gravitate towards the opposing parties in order to sustain the competitive balance. McAllister has not proven that this is what has in fact happened in Manitoba, but it is a useful hypothesis and might explain why a party like the Manitoba NDP could never win election after election as the CCF-NDP did between 1944 and 1964 in Saskatchewan.

Implicit in McAllister's book is the neo-Marxism of Ralph Miliband. I have no quarrel with this intellectual influence, as such, except to say that it tends to produce a universal, homogeneous account of the politics of the Left in all liberal democracies. This is the result of the lofty altitude of vision that Miliband's analysis adopts. From a great height all political landscapes look alike. In contrast the advantage of Nelson Wiseman's book is that it seeks out some of the more singular and particular features of the Left in Manitoba. Here he is in debt to Gad Horowitz and his account of the migration and planting of foreign political ideas in Canadian soil.

Manitoba's original political traditions were, of course, rudely displaced in the two decades after Confederation by the immigration of southern Ontario farmers. Their ideology of liberalism was partly tory-touched and gave forth to the Conservative party. Or it was more thoroughly libertarian and populist and produced both the Liberal party and Brackenism. After 1896 other immigrants, from eastern Europe and the British Isles, brought in left-wing ideas. The latter challenged the political and economic hegemony of the Anglo-Ontarian ruling class in 1919 and in many respects failed.

Wiseman's second intellectual debt is to Tom Peterson who in "Manitoba: Ethnic and Class Politics in Manitoba" (1972) argued that the Strike was the formative event in the development of the province's modern political system. The Strike reinforced the culturally-induced conservative liberalism of the farmers, thus ensuring that, unlike Alberta and Saskatchewan, the farmers' movement in Manitoba would be less radical and less open to political alliances with labour. In Winnipeg, says Wiseman, the Strike split the Left asunder, leaving the Independent Labour Party as the dominant representative of reformist, parliamentary change. Yet its eventual electoral support was limited. Fear of the nativist wrath of the authorities induced a conformist attitude on the part of most non-Anglo-Saxon workers and farmers who consequently came to support the traditional parties.

The ILP, Wiseman concludes, was in all its existence an Anglo-Saxon, working class party of the city, ensured of a solid base of support but never popular enough to anticipate winning power. Thus the CCF was intended as a means to broaden the appeal of the old ILP. Especially the hope was that a breakthrough would be made in the rural areas. But, even with a new identity, progress was slow and, tired of waiting, S.J. Farmer joined the Bracken coalition in 1940 as Minister of Labour. The Manitoba

CCF, as elsewhere, saw its popularity rise in 1945 but then followed the Cold War. Wiseman has an especially good chapter on the internal shenanigans in the party over the expulsions in the 1940s of such fellow-travellers as Dr. D.L. Johnson, Berry Richards and Wilbert Donelyko. In the late 1950s the CCF was additionally frustrated when the revived reformist mood in the province was captured by Roblin and the Conservatives. To refurbish a tarnished image the CCF in turn sought a change of identity becoming the New Democratic Party in 1961. But, as Wiseman points out, not much changed either in terms of ideology, membership, leadership or political popularity. The NDP's vote did, however, rise in 1966 and three years later Schreyer and the NDP won their surprising victory. Although Wiseman is not unambiguous on this point, his settled opinion seems to be that by the mid-1960s ethnic assimilation and integration had eroded the non-class bases of voters' political attachments so that the NDP was able to gather in all the workers and poorer farmers. He recognizes that class and ethnicity are closely intertwined in Manitoba and he does admit that 1969 represented the coming in out of the cold of both ethnic and economic outsiders, but on balance he seems to favour the view of the primacy of class factors. (On this point McAllister takes the reverse view; class influences were less emphatic than ethnic and religious ones.) Wiseman recognizes as well the 'accidental' and contingent factors present in the NDP's triumph: the image of Schreyer, the right-wing caste of both opposition parties, the effects of re-distribution and improved press coverage. Sometimes the suspicion is that he wants to accommodate every competing explanation. Thus, Wiseman argues, the NDP won because of the unfolding of long-term structural trends; yet it would not have won without Schreyer. However, as he recognizes, without Schreyer the NDP won handily in 1981.

A similar difficulty presents itself in Wiseman's description of the overall political development of the ILP-CCF-NDP. He explicitly rejects the protest movement becalmed view. (Pp. 73, 150) Yet soberly confronting the record of the Schreyer administration as one of conventional, cautious, conservative governance, "more and more like the outlook of the other parties and their leaders"—how similar this is to McAllister's conclusion—leads him implicitly to embrace some version of the becalmed viewpoint. Thus consider the following quotations:

Pragmatic electoral politics, rather than socialist doctrine, always played a central role in the CCF-NDP's calculations. This was reflected in the party's coalition experience in the early 1940s, its expulsion of anti-NATO MLAs in the late 1940s, in the content of its campaigns, and in its legislative program in the 1970s. The CCF-NDP never "sold out" to the capitalist system, as some argued, because it was not at all clear that the party had ever "bought into" the anti-capitalism attributed to it by others. (P. 150)

The NDP's record in government in the 1970s showed that the party had also evolved from being a perceived radical alternative to the older parties into a party that had come to accept the economic system which in earlier years it was so eager to transform. The NDP in Manitoba, as in Canada, had become an established and conventional party in the electoral arena, much like the Western

European social democratic parties years earlier...(T)he outlook of the NDP and its leaders had become more and more like the outlook of the other parties and their leaders. (Pp. 145,6)

The two sets of claims don't quite fit together.

I have perhaps been overly critical of these two books. It must also be said that they are invaluable contributions to the historiography of the politics of Manitoba. Both are well-researched and clearly written. The analytic queries I raise are probably because both of them are pioneering works. Apart from Kendle's biography of Bracken and now these two books we have little of substance on Manitoba's post-Strike history. There is nothing yet about premiers D.C. Campbell and Duff Roblin and consequently nothing about the development of the provincial Liberals and Conservatives.

As it turns out "*Building the Co-operative Commonwealth*": *Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada* has little to say about Manitoba, nor indeed about Ontario and Québec. But what it does focus on it does so usually with helpful insight. The published papers of the conference organized by the Canadian Plains Research Center in Regina in June 1983, the twelve essays understandably deal mainly with the CCF in Saskatchewan. There is as well yet another paper from Michiel Horn on the LSR, an interesting contribution from Alvin Finkel on why the CCF never took off in Alberta, and a thoroughly intelligent piece from Ian MacPherson analysing the tensions between the Saskatchewan co-operative movement and the new Douglas government. I especially enjoyed Thomas Socknat's essay on the pacifist movement in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s. Feminist history is represented in two articles by Joan Sangster and Georgina Taylor on the not always exemplary history of the CCF's treatment of the women's issue. If I fail to mention all of the essays this is not because those omitted are inferior. All of them represent solid scholarship and agreeable communicative skill. Of course all twelve deal with only a minute part of the history of the democratic socialist tradition. What does not emerge is any sense of the historical totality of the subject. It may well be that this is intentional since, as Whitehorn argues, the received interpretive model often prejudices the outcome of new research. If there *is* a common theme it might be that the building of the co-operative commonwealth in this country has not been as easily obtained as the pioneers first believed. In addition from the evidence of these essays there is apparently still much new ground to till. Just as left-wing politicians need to re-think many things so historians of the Left still have much work to do.

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*Visible Symbols: Cultural Expression Among Canada's Ukrainians*, Manoly R. Lupul editor. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1984. Pp. 209, illustrations, colour plates.

When first approached to review this work I hesitated. First, I have no deep knowledge of Ukrainian culture, or of the Ukrainian community in Canada and, secondly, I am not primarily a specialist in matters cultural and social. On reading the book, I decided that I should undertake the task, for the issues presented, and the problems raised in various essays, pose fundamental questions as to the meaning and reality (if any) of "multiculturalism," that buzz word of modern Canada.

Lest this sound negative and even hostile, let me state clearly at the outset that I found this book well produced, written with a general high level of scholarship, and sympathetically presented. I too am a member of an ethnic minority, and as such am well aware of the anguish of trying to keep alive a language and a culture threatened by the amorphous blanket of the English-speaking mass media. Nonetheless, the crux of the problem is quite simple. Is it possible for any ethnic group in Canada to retain any meaningful "culture," or are they merely left with an ever decreasing number of miscellaneous material trivia? Will Ukrainian culture end up as Easter eggs, garlic sausage, perogies, and dances of doubtful authenticity?

Many of the authors of the twenty-three essays which comprise *Visible Symbols* tackle this question. The six discussion papers are dominated by the same problem and, as one might expect, no very clear consensus emerges, although many of the writers and discussants are pessimistic of future survival.

Before specifically reviewing the various sections of the book, I must comment on some of the basic difficulties involved in trying to define the word culture in general and more especially just what is meant by Ukrainian culture in the Canadian context.

As Wsevolod Isajiw, one of the major contributors points out, anthropologists (following Robert Redfield) distinguish between the "great" and "little" cultural traditions. The first is that of the élite: the second that of the people, or in other words, folk tradition. Original Ukrainian culture was very rich in both traditions, but the tragic history of the Ukraine, and the nature of Ukrainian immigration to Canada has meant that essentially the "great" tradition has been effectively lost, or at least much diluted.

Further complications result from the divisions within the Ukrainian Canadian community, stemming from religious differences, political ideologies, and the contrasted ideas current among the different waves of immigrants— those who arrived before 1914, the interwar group, and those who arrived after 1945. A particular problem involves reactions to, and relationships with, the Soviet Ukraine. All these problems are implicitly or explicitly referred to by many of the contributors.

In terms of format the work is divided into six parts entitled (in order): Ukrainian Material Culture in Canada; Ukrainian Art in Canada; Ukrainian Music in Canada; Ukrainian Dance in Canada; In Search of Ukrainian Canadian Symbols; and The Politics of Ukrainian Culture in Canada. Each of the parts in turn consists of a number of essays (three to five in number) followed by a discussion. Although space precludes detailed review, certain essays deserve special mention. I would signal Radoslav Zuk's comments on "Endurance, Disappearance and Adaptation" as an excellent introduction to the complexity of some of the issues. All of Part II on Ukrainian Art contains many interesting observations which would provoke many readers to discussion. Perhaps the "meatiest" section of the book is Part V, "In Search of Ukrainian Canadian Symbols." Here Wsevolod Isajiw's essay tries to pose some basic questions. Zenon Pohorecky then discusses the variety of Ukrainian symbols, and their change over time among the different sections of the Ukrainian community, and Roman Onufrijchuk attempts the ambitious (and controversial) endeavour of working towards a new strategy of the Ukrainian Canadian "cultural-experience-as-text" (sic). Lastly, Yars Balan offers some short but succinct remarks on Ukrainian Canadian symbols in general. The discussion which follows this section is also lively. Part VI on the "Politics of Ukrainian Culture" treads carefully through the various minefields for which the subject is notorious and, by a general avoidance of polemic, makes a number of constructive points.

The book's technical standards are excellent and there are a large number of well-chosen and beautiful colour plates, many of which are reproductions of the work of various Ukrainian artists. Manoly Lupul, the general editor, and the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta have done an excellent job.

However, I would like to raise a question. The volume is specifically entitled *Visible Symbols*. Thus, there is no discussion on the subject of the Ukrainian language in Canada *per se* and of its literature. Yet can one so readily separate "visible symbols" from the "non visible"? Can a culture survive the loss of language, or is it language which lies behind visible expressions? These are fundamental and debatable issues. To have included them within the volume, even at the risk of stepping outside of the title might have been worthwhile, even had it meant a longer, and less well-defined work.

I found *Visible Symbols* a stimulating book. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it, and I recommend it not only to people of Ukrainian origin interested in their heritage and its preservation, but also to all Canadians who wish to partake of the debate on our cultural mosaic.

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*The Moccasin Telegraph and Other Stories* by W.P. Kinsella. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983.

“Well, a wise old medicine man name of Buffalo-who-walks-like-a-man, long time ago mix up some herbs and roots in a porcupine bladder, and use it to tan prairie chicken hides. When them hides is stretched over a special drum why the sound travel for maybe a hundred miles. And it don’t make a bump-bump-bump sound like a regular drum, but a quiet hum like the telegraph wires do way out in the country on a quiet night.” (Pp. 25-26)

This is the way in which “Chief” Frank of the Ermineskin Reserve, explains his people’s communications system to a group of CBC reporters who have gathered in the town of Wetaskiwin for the funeral of an Indian outlaw gunned down by the police. “All these press peoples look at Frank like they was three years old,” the storyteller observes, “and he was this Big Bird off the television.” (P. 26) Comic elements abound in this fourth book of Hobbema tales, *The Moccasin Telegraph and Other Stories*, which call to mind the tradition of farfetched frontier humour. As in the other Hobbema books (*Dance Me Outside*, 1977; *Scars*, 1978 and *Born Indian*, 1981), the narrator is the young writer, Silas Ermineskin, who doesn’t always follow the white man’s spelling or syntax, although he was schooled in English and “had some books printed up.” (P. 24) The rough edges of his prose add to the authenticity of the tales and Silas’s growing Indian “savvy” combine with his wit and candour to make him a fine straight man for his brothers as they con the officious or self-seeking white men who once conned them out of their native lands and rights.

Nor is it just the white man who is looked at with humour and detachment. Silas notes that the cars which have brought so many unfamiliar Indians to the Alberta town have licence plates from Montana, Wyoming, and other distant places. The strangers are here, they tell Silas and his friends, to bury “our murdered brother.” “I think you got it wrong,” corrects Bedelia Coyote, one of the tough heroines of this volume, “It was Burt who done a murder.” Kinsella’s Indians have street smarts as well as trail smarts and they know that these interlopers (“AIM usually stand for American Indian Movement but most people around here call them Assholes in Moccasins,” 22) want to make an international case of it. The actual Indian chief, Tom Crow-eye—more Uncle Tom than real chief—is a grandstander who wants to use the occasion of the massive funeral for a speech about the “Alberta Government oil pricing policies.” The Wetaskiwin people ignore the politicians and quietly “drag the travois,” bearing the coffin, to the funeral home for cremation.

A death ritual is also the subject of a story, “Parts of the Eagle,” which deals with the response of a father to the loss of his daughter, a promising university student. The accidental death of young June Brown is publicly met with a ceremony which is an unconscious parody of the popular conception of Indian stoicism: “The coffin covered with a yellow rug of some kind, while the Browns sit in the front row dressed like dummies you see in department store windows in Edmonton.” (P. 47) Silas has

prepared us for his description of Lester Brown's family as characterless mannikins by noting, earlier in the story, a few of the Indians' jibes at Lester's white ways: e.g., "First you change your name," says Frank Fencepost, "next thing we know you'll be getting white-walls for your truck." (P. 46) This apple of an Indian (red outside, white inside) already *has* white-walls. However, when he speaks to Silas in private after the funeral, Lester Two-brown-bears momentarily "lapses into Cree" and he explains that June was going to pass on whatever old Indian knowledge she and her father shared. Silas then joins Lester as he goes off to bury June's "medicine bundle" with an old eagle feather, emblematic of the spirit's return to the sky. The fact that June was a university student is not just incidental but rather an ironic comment on the modern Indian's fate because June had found her native lore in library books. Lester had learned of the eagle from Mad Etta, a comically obese "Medicine Lady," one of the Reserve's last solid links with the animistic religion of the past.

Death is not always treated by Kinsella with the quiet dignity that it has in "Parts of the Eagle." There is the story of a good Samaritan, born Donato Fernando Tragaluz, who lives illegally but effectively as a Hobbema physician, "Dr. Donald Morninglight," until he is unmasked by the RCMP. After his consequent suicide, his patients gather at the funeral to sing the Hank Williams' song, "I've Seen the Light." The story ends with Silas Ermineskin's observation:

There was sundogs out this morning when we were putting the coffin in the grave, shimmering like peaches there in the cold pink sky. I imagined for a second that I could see Dr. Don's face in one of them, but only for a second. (P. 103)

This ending presumably springs from an unsophisticated but lively imagination. To pile such sentiments on top of a heartfelt ballad is too much for even a sturdy native travois to carry. Even the slightly parenthetical "only for a second" cannot prevent a tilt into the maudlin. The reader of Kinsella's story might prefer to have it end on the note struck by Mad Etta, who replied as follows when asked to explain what Dr. Don meant to the Reserve:

She gave a long speech in Cree that the white people think is her answer, but she really be saying things to make me and the other Indians laugh. (P. 102)

Mad Etta is right, of course, for it's not the white man's business although he tries to make it his business. Recalling the story called "Canadian Culture" in *Scars*, the reader wonders why there are always so many news reporters on the reserve. He might also wonder why they bothered to consult Mad Etta after they heard the testimony of Samantha Yellowknees: "No real doctor in his right mind would start a practice out here." (P. 101) Even this unofficial verdict of insanity does not put off the probing of the newspaper "creeps"! The view of the church in this case is the unsentimental one that Dr. Don was beyond the pale and therefore not entitled to its burial services.

Matters of the church in *The Moccasin Telegraph* usually pertain to Roman Catholicism, as one would expect to be the historical case, and the Hobbema priest's name, Father Alphonse, is related to the voyageur past. The Church is merely an accepted presence; services are not so important as picnics. What comes as a surprise to readers of Kinsella is the "Brotherhood of Burning Bush Bible College," located near the Reserve at Hobbema, which is the subject of the story entitled "The College." Kinsella paints the College-Reserve relations in broad strokes. When a group from the Reserve, costumed to look like "regular Indians," is stonewalled by the College's unobliging receptionist, who "buzzes" (the intercom) as the trapped "wasp" she is, they burst into the president's office banging a drum. Dr. Manson apologizes for the lack of Crees attending the BBBBC: "If you didn't live in Canada, it would be all right.... We could give you a scholarship if you were from the Third World, China or even Mexico, but as a Canadian you'd have to pay full tuition." (P. 115) But Dr. Manson is no mere straw figure for, although he cannot change the policy of his board of directors, he supports the Indians' demand for more educational opportunities. Here as elsewhere in *The Moccasin Telegraph* the more substantial enemies are the government and the Uncle Toms of the tribe.

The continued troubles with the government centre on the ownership of the land. In the story "The College" the issue is the cheap, long-term lease granted to the BBBBC. In "The Ballad of the Public Trustee" an old Indian dies intestate and the government converts his land into a computer farm. When the Indians tell the receptionist (they always encounter red tape) that they want to see the public trustee in charge of their case, they meet an unexpected obstacle and display an unpleasant touch of racism:

The man she send out smell like cherry candy, and he be an Indian, only one of those that come from the Pakistani tribe on the other side of the earth. I always wonder why the Government offices be full of those kind of Indians and never any of our kind. (P. 71)

From then on the troubles accumulate. The Indians get nowhere with the trustee; they are about to be outmanoeuvred by the lawyers of the avaricious Catholic Church; they are distressed by their own public-defender-type, a white lawyer, who believes that the parentage of Indian children is too problematic to hold up in court. In a final desperate act, Silas and a friend level the computer farm with heavy equipment to leave the land, "except that the buffalo be gone, as wild, and open, and lifeless, as it was when Old Joe first seen it nearly a hundred years ago." (P. 78) In the story "The Mother's Dance," which Kinsella begins and ends with stage directions for a ritual dance celebrating a hopeful future for newborn Indian children ("the dancers hold them babies way up high, as if they was pushing them toward the sun," 166), the subject is again a boundary rights dispute with Indian Affairs. Into the midst of the befuddlement on the Reserve there descends a rich city Indian (like a "Daze Exmacinaw," Silas explains, trying to recall his readings in drama at the tech School in

Wetaskiwin), whose name is fortuitously “Grace” and whose money and legal savvy win the day for the Ermineskin people. In a fine touch, the author has the grateful Indians create the dance, which frames the story, for Grace McGee (née Many Hands High). Less necessary to the story is Silas’s observation that the government, “no matter how simple the question,” will always “find a way to either charge us money, or take away something that already belongs to us.” (P. 156) Such a comment might be made by any disgruntled person, regardless of race or colour. (In a similar vein is the crack in “The Mother’s Dance” about the Minister of Indian Affairs “who think in French so his English always come out backside-foremost,” 161.) The more important fact is that the so-called Treaty Indians didn’t understand that they were giving up their native lands for a piece of *scrip*. This land deal was intended by the white man to be permanent; it’s ironic that language rights agreements are no longer thought to be held in perpetuity but constitute a contemporary problem.

As noted earlier, the tone of Kinsella’s stories is often lowered when he has a character descend to racist slurs. This is most obvious in “Fugitives” where two of the Ermineskin people dress up as East Indians (“They never bother the kind of Indians who come from India”) in order to escape capture by the RCMP, who seem to have nothing to do in *The Moccasin Telegraph* except harass the Ermineskins. The fugitives adopt the names “Ravinder Singh” and “Sanjit Singh,” the latter being sometimes mispronounced “Ratchet,” which comes close to being ratshit. “We are Canadians now,” the Singhs reassure their white landlord (who happens to be Silas’s brother-in-law, “Brother Bob”), “We have learned to cook with bacon grease and cabbage like everyone else” (193)—one of the funniest remarks in *The Moccasin Telegraph*. When the ever vigilant cop arrives on the scene, he mispronounces “Mr. Ki-o-Tee’s” name, fails to notice the aroma of curry which he’s been warned against, and then reprimands Brother Bob and his native wife, Illianna: “I’m surprised you’re all so prejudiced....East Indian people are our most law abiding citizens.” (P. 196) “The Fugitives” is a jokester’s story, even if it starts off with two cases of manslaughter, and the final word is Silas’s flip chuckle as he hoodwinks the bullies of the law, “You can always trust me to do the right thing.” (P. 196)

Silas is also the straight man in a farcical story, “Where the Wild Things Are,” which pits two Hobbema hosers, “Frank” and “Standing-Upright-in-a-Wet-River,” against a pair of rich dudes from the States. The Indians get giddy in their playacting, lose track of their roots and refer to their “slave names,” and even forget if they’re “Onagatchies” or “Onadatchies.” The latter of the tribe pseudo-names—designating folk who “have the blood of ravens in their veins”—is perhaps Kinsella’s wink at a fellow author, Michael Ondaatje, who can tell a fine frontier tale and whose ancestors were dusky Sinhalese (See Ondaatje’s *Running in the Family*, 1982). Playing a variation on the *Daze Exmacinaw* theme of another story, Kinsella here drops the dudes’ “safari truck” onto an elk,

thus bagging their game, and the story bumps to a close with the lapse of the reader's attention span.

Two other stories in the volume also draw the reader's attention: one does so because of its haunting conclusion. "Pius Blindman Is Coming Home" is filled with the clichés of condescension with which the white society denigrates the red. But we never lose sight of the cancer-ravaged Indian woman who is waiting for her prodigal son, "the old lady's favourite," to come home. What keeps the old woman alive? While Silas maintains his vigil over Minnie Blindman, she responds, "'Pius, is that you?'" to his movement in her darkened room. "In the orange glow of the coal oil lamp," he notices, "Minnie's one eye glows red, tiny and full of hate as a wolverine in a trap." (P. 175) Although Pius is long dead and buried, still he survives. As at the end of "Weasels and Ermines" in *Born Indian* and "Between" in *Dance Me Outside*, Kinsella is able to zero in on the arresting detail. So, too, in the gothic story "Nests," an old white man, Mr. Moon, lives nearly paralyzed in the decaying farm house which is haunted by his dead wife and the presence of his demented daughter. The girl has transformed the house into an empty wasp's nest, using glue and scraps of unread newspaper—the family has no more need for human reality—in a ritual re-enactment of her mother's identification with the insects which inhabit the twisted orchard trees outside. Danielle remembers how her father would scream, "'Predacious bastards,'" at the wasps. The etiology of the family sickness is obscure, though it may have been postpartum depression which drove the wife to spend her last days among the wasps, as Mr. Moon recalls,

"swayin', them yellow things crawling across her skin. She took off her clothes.....Sometimes when I think I see Jessie down there in the orchard, I expect it's Danielle I'm seein', though I don't want it to be." (P. 130)

"'First snow,'" says the old man who perhaps initiated the strange chain of metamorphoses with his maniacal possessiveness, "'I'm a dead man.'" Mr. Moon has been taken over, too, and his insect life will end with the coming of winter. Overall, it seems that *The Moccasin Telegraph* adds more to the story of Kinsella's humour than it does to the list of his serious or powerfully dramatic stories (such as the memorable tale of retribution, "Caraway," in *Dance Me Outside*). He can handle romantic love ("Vows") and sexual jealousy ("Green Candles"), but he never gets near ecstasy. Some aspects of the Indian sensibility which he portrays are clearly, if very simply, shown at the beginning of the volume in the description of a young girl's room: "She keep a picture of Jay Silverheels the movie actor, and Allen Sapp the artist, pinned to the wall." (P. 2) If the decor is superficially native (it's a photo, not an original Sapp, which she couldn't afford), the sentiments are fundamentally human. Yet Kinsella succeeds in *The Moccasin Telegraph* in reproducing a considerable range of human experience within the limits of his own view, which is both amused and concerned: jocoserious, in a word.

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*Prairie Wildflowers: An Illustrated Manual of Species Suitable for Cultivation and Grassland Restoration* by R. Currah, A. Smreciu and M. Van Dyk, ill. by J. Maywood. Edmonton: University of Alberta Devonian Botanic Garden, 1983. Pp. 280.

*Prairie Wildflowers* is unique as it is neither flora or a field guide nor is it a collection of colour photographs of common and showy native species. This should be fully understood, as should the author's intentions, if one is to appreciate the true value of this publication. *Prairie Wildflowers* is intended for a specific purpose. That is, to supply information that has regrettably few other sources. The information provided is primarily for the use of ecological consultants, site planners, and development engineers who are planning or recommending site revegetation with native species. Secondly, it is a guide for commercial gardeners, nursery tradesmen and landscaping agencies who require information concerning not only what the recommended species look like but also how to collect, propagate and grow the materials. Finally, it will be of interest to gardeners both amateur and professional, who are interested, either as a fascinating hobby or an absorbing vocation, in the establishment or re-establishment of communities of native plant species.

The background data for the publication were partially derived from numerous reference sources. In addition, it contains the findings of study and observation of plant species, community composition, phenology, edaphic and vegetative factors and propagation and establishment. One hundred and forty-two species were selected for inclusion in *Prairie Wildflowers* and were reported on after observation and data gathering at ten sites in southern Alberta, from the Cypress Hills to Magrath. On these sites, there were three-year research programmes which were designed to augment the background studies of the University of Alberta Devonian Botanic Garden and the research and practical knowledge extent in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

The data for the one hundred and forty-two individual species are listed alphabetically (by specific name). For each species, common names (489 in total) are given, followed by a description. Each description includes: growth habit, height, form, spread, leaf characteristics, stems, inflorescence, flowers, fruit, seed, underground parts and phenology details. While the descriptions themselves are acceptable, the lack of any taxonomic or other grouping or ranking requires that the user of the book have a considerable prior knowledge of the species. Also included for each species are habitat and distribution and propagation information. In some cases, some additional information, such as fungus diseases is given. Finally, references/ illustrations are provided.

Line drawings by J. Maywood illustrate 108 of the species. The illustrations are good, but unfortunately no scale is indicated and, as a result, the size of individual plants is not communicated.

A much appreciated inclusion, which will be of great value to many users of *Prairie Wildflowers*, is the enumeration of the forbs most commonly associated with a subject species. Unfortunately, the associated grasses, sedges and other grass-like species are not given. A series of lists of the principal grassland associations and their primary wildflower components would have been a worthwhile addition.

The section on propagation should be, and in some instances is, the "raison d'être" of this publication. As an author of a small treatise on the subject of showy native flowers, this reviewer is particularly aware of the need for this information. Granted it is not all-encompassing, the inclusion is welcomed. Equally welcome are the notes on sources of seed.

Information supplied includes a list of 93 references and a list of commercial seed suppliers. Appendices provide additional useful information. Appendix four should be particularly useful as it classifies the species by moisture requirements, flower colour and flowering time. In summary, while *Prairie Wildflowers*, an illustrated manual of species suitable for cultivation and grassland restoration, is not all things to all people it should be a useful addition to the library of those seeking less easily found information about native wild flowers.

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