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As I write these words, the Hall Commission Report on grain handling is being widely digested, discussed and debated; the Berger Report on the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline and its probable impact on native people has just been released; and the position of the French language and culture outside Quebec continues to be assessed. This issue of *Prairie Forum* can therefore be claimed to be topical and wide-ranging, pursuing the aims that have been set for the journal. Three of the articles relate broadly to the issues already mentioned, and the other two are concerned with important themes — the impact of the Depression on prairie literature, and the movement of agricultural machinery parts. Two of the contributions are from Alberta, two from Saskatchewan and one from Manitoba.

In view of the balance being achieved in *Prairie Forum*, the Editorial Board has decided that the time will soon be ripe for a “special theme” issue of the journal. It is hoped that Volume 3, Number 1 will be the first of such issues and that they will appear on a regular basis thereafter. We trust that this change will meet with our readers’ approval.

Volume 2, Number 2 will be edited by Ray Huel of University of Lethbridge and we wish him success in his efforts. We also welcome Barbara ElDeiry to her post as Coordinator of Publications for the Canadian Plains Research Center and wish her enjoyable association with *Prairie Forum*.

ALEC H. PAUL
Chief Editor.
FRANCO-MANITOBANS AND CULTURAL LOSS: A FOURTH GENERATION*

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ABSTRACT. This paper examines the hypothesis that “third-generation” ethnic group members lose their culture. The present research involves fourth-generation Franco-Manitobans residing in Winnipeg. The results show that while some loss of culture is evident, many non-material components of the culture still remain viable. The paper also addresses the tentative hypothesis with regard to cultural maintenance set forth by Vallée. The results tend to corroborate the new direction of “regional” research that is advocated by Vallée and has been initially tested by Anderson in Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION

French Canada is almost synonymous with Quebec; as a result the majority of studies directed toward French Canadians have focused on Quebec or eastern provinces (see for example, Selected Bibliography on Francophone Minorities in Canada, Vol. 1 and 2, 1972). However, as Anderson (1974) points out, a substantial number of French Canadians reside in the western provinces. Unfortunately, few empirical studies have been directed at this group (Hébert and Vaillancourt, 1971; Jackson, 1972; Denis, 1971) in the western context.

The basic aim of the present research is to analyze to what degree Franco-Manitoban adolescents are losing or maintaining their parents’ French-Canadian culture. Such information would shed some light on the situation of the French culture in Manitoba and the viability of the French culture outside the province of Quebec. The French minority in Manitoba has a special significance; historically, it has always been one of the most important concentrations of French Canadians outside Quebec. For a more detailed discussion of other prairie French Canadians, see Anderson (1974). French explorers were the first to open up Western Canada, and the French were of sufficient number that the Manitoba Act of 1870 provided for a bilingual Manitoba. However, as other ethnic groups settled in the area, the legal position of the French

* We would like to thank Alan Anderson and Frank Vallée for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper.
language was weakened (in 1890) and eventually destroyed (in 1916). The import of French Canadians in Winnipeg in contemporary society lies in the fact that the city has been proposed as one of the loci around which the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism would establish its “bilingual districts.”

The Census of 1961 reported 83,936 Manitobans of French origin, or 9.1 per cent of the province’s population. By 1971 there was an increase to 86,505. The proportion of Manitobans whose mother tongue was French decreased from 7.1 per cent in 1941 to 6.6 per cent in 1961, while by 1971 a further decrease to 6.3 per cent was evident. These data suggest, as Hébert and Vaillancourt (1971: 178) point out, that “linguistically . . . the French Canadians in Manitoba are becoming assimilated by the dominant culture at an increasing rate.” On the other hand, if one compares census data for 1941, 1961 and 1971, one finds that the percentage of French Canadians in Manitoba claiming French as their mother tongue decreased from 80 per cent in 1941 to 67 per cent in 1961. However, ten years later the proportion had increased to 70 per cent.

DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

Some social scientists have attempted to discern general cyclical patterns that are hypothesized to be characteristic of ethnic group relations. Others have focused on factors which accelerate or retard the process of cultural assimilation (Weinstock, 1963). All of these theorists have been concerned with the “disappearance syndrome,” that is, the process by which ethnic groups become culturally indistinguishable from the dominant (or other) cultural group (Fishman, 1966).

Recent studies on French-English contact in Canada have focused on some aspects of this “disappearance syndrome.” Joy (1972), Rioux (1969) and Lieberson (1970) attempted to demonstrate that the use of French outside Quebec is declining rapidly. Henripin (1974) argues that the relative importance of Francophones living outside Quebec will continue to diminish. Studies based more specifically on Franco-Manitobans (Laboissière, 1969; Jolicoeur, 1966) also indicated that Franco-Manitoban adolescents made little use of French (their mother tongue) and spoke English extensively. However, the quality of the data on adolescents was limited both by the sampling framework and by methodological problems.

When cultural groups come into contact, there is mutual interchange of material and non-material traits. Rarely do we find a situation where both cultures influence one another equally. One usually becomes dominant and is less influenced by the “weaker” culture. The less powerful culture is at a considerable disadvantage, for the culture contact often creates a conflict of values within it. In the face of such a situation, members of a minority culture may seek toleration for their
cultural differences, assimilate, or attempt to assert political and cultural independence. However, even though a cultural minority seeks to maintain its distinctiveness when contact between itself and a dominant culture is direct (face to face and sustained over long periods of time), some changes are bound to occur in the minority culture. New cultures of unequal strength cannot co-exist in intimate contact without some change occurring in the minority culture.

Anthropologists agree that in every contact situation some aspects of the minority native culture change (Bruner, 1956). Although there is less agreement as to what elements of culture do change, evidence seems to indicate that change under contact conditions proceeds at uneven rates (Social Science Research Council, 1954). At the level of the “mother culture”, some elements are kept in all their integrity while others are abandoned more or less rapidly. Several propositions have been formulated as a result of studies of contact situations involving both “non-literate” peoples and Western civilization.

That material traits are more amenable to change than non-material traits is a proposition that has received wide acceptance (Linton, 1940; Herskovits, 1941; Kushner et al., 1962). In this study we will not concern ourselves with material traits, for we feel that the Franco-Manitoban group is not distinct from the larger dominant English community in the organization and provision of life-sustaining activities such as the production and distribution of food, shelter, clothing and other necessities of life. When it comes to non-material items, however, we find less agreement among anthropologists on which non-material cultural items are lost and why they are lost. There is some agreement in the literature that non-material cultural items do change as a result of culture contact, although these items are more persistent and slower to change than material items.¹ The change is also less obvious and more difficult to measure.

As a result of the contact situation, inroads into the minority group culture occur over time. This cultural loss has been described as a three-generation process (Nahirny and Fishman, 1965; Kramer, 1970). Hansen (1952) has brought forward the view that there is some kind of return to the fold of ethnicity whenever any immigrant group reaches the third generation of its development. However, Lazerwitz and Rowitz (1964) point out that Hansen’s concepts were based on personal observations and that he did not present any substantial body of data on the actual behaviour of the third generation. It has been stated that “… ethnic heritage, including the ethnic mother tongue, usually ceases to play any viable role in the life of the third generation” (Nahirny and Fishman, 1965:311). Novak (1973) argues that this process occurs because there are a substantial number of people who try all their lives to “get over” their ethnic origin and to join the influential mainstream. As a result, they can experience a “new sense of relaxation and liberation, in a kind of expanded and (at last) integrated self-consciousness.” The trend
that stands out above all others is that each generation moves closer to complete acculturation as the younger generation gradually exerts its influence (Joy, 1972).

While we are not hypothesizing a strict third-generation theory, which would suggest that Franco-Manitobans have lost their ethnic heritage entirely, the discussion above suggests that little should remain of this heritage after over 100 years of cultural contact with the English. As a result, we should find that the non-material component of Franco-Manitoban culture is less evident among the young than in their parents’ generation; we are dealing in this study primarily with third-generation parents and consequently fourth-generation adolescents.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Generation: The concept of generation usually refers to a group of people who are born during the same time period. In a review of the concept of generation, Marias (1968) points out that it means a group of people who have in a sense grown up together, passed through childhood and youth at about the same time and matured during more or less the same years. These people also constitute the same generation because they have been subject to the same leading influences. The notion of generation is therefore more than a space in time; it is also the contemporary relation of individuals to each other.

In this study we are dealing with two age categories or generations, adults (third-generation) and adolescents (fourth-generation). Previous studies (Jolicoeur, 1966; Labossière, 1969; Kramer, 1970; Joy, 1972) have commented on the extent to which the younger generation of the minority group has a greater tendency to take on the values and behaviour patterns of the dominant group. The three-generation hypothesis discussed in the previous section has pointed out the interaction effect of time and each succeeding generation. As Kramer (1970: 135) has stated:

The minority is usually characterized by two somewhat divergent social systems that reflect generational change, the younger generation being always more acculturated than the older generation.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Loss of selected non-material attributes of culture: The concept “cultural loss” as such has not been systematically used or defined. Van Stone (1965) uses the concept in a study of Chipewyan Indians, and defines it as the loss of aboriginal Chipewyan cultural traits that have not been replaced by wholly acceptable or adequate new cultural traits. On the other hand, Kramer (1970) uses the concept of “deculturation” (which has overtones of cultural loss), and implies that it refers to a people without a culture striving to reacquire the ethnicity lost in sub-
jugation. The notion of a “people without a culture” is hard to accept, however, for most social scientists believe that to be human is to have a culture (Jaeger and Selznick, 1964). “Cultural confusion,” as used in the Stirling County Study (Hughes et al., 1960), also has overtones of cultural loss. In People of Cove and Woodlot (Book Two), cultural loss refers to those Acadians who depart from ideal Acadian sentiments and defining characteristics. The most systematic discussion of cultural loss can be found in Kroeber’s Anthropology (1948). His version of the concept refers to a displacement by something new rather than an outright disappearance or mere erosion. Keesing (1958) points out that it is only over longer time periods or in highly dynamic situations of culture contact that cultural loss is likely to show at all.

The present research is not concerned with the new cultural elements replacing the old ones but only with those elements which are being dropped or crowded out. Hence, cultural loss among Franco-Manitoban adolescents will be defined as a departure or deviation from their parents’ French-Canadian culture. French-Canadian culture will be defined in terms of a number of selected cultural elements, which in no way implies an “ideal” French-Canadian culture. Rather we will look at the parents’ French-Canadian culture as it is actually lived.

The cultural traits we have chosen have been referred to by Gordon (1964) as intrinsic cultural traits. These traits are considered a vital component of a group’s cultural heritage, and those used here are language, religious beliefs and practices, attitude towards endogamy and out-dating, ethnic identification, and use of the French mass media, i.e., television, radio and newspapers.

(i) Language. In the culture-contact situation, language is of the utmost importance. It is one of the main vehicles for the transmission of culture and is a central feature in the continuity of an ethnic group in contact, for the surrender of a distinctive mother tongue is a necessary step in the assimilation of ethnic groups in contact (Lieberson, 1970; Anderson, 1974; Samora and Diane, 1956). The study of the use of language not only reveals visible patterns of behaviour but goes beyond the visible pattern in terms of meanings and implications. The importance of language is underlined in the view of language as a collection of symbols which influence social behaviour (Lieberson, 1970). Language maintenance has always been emphasized by the French-Canadian minority. In fact, many French Canadians have tended to equate language and culture, and they have felt that if the French language were maintained other elements of the French-Canadian culture would be also (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Les Langues Officielles, Livre I). The French language is increasingly a focus of group loyalty as well as the principal identity trait (Corbett, 1967).

(ii) Religiosity. Religious beliefs and practices are also important to many ethnic groups because they serve as a focus of in-group loyalty and tend to reinforce in-group solidarity. The church often becomes the
core of communal life for an ethnic group (Kramer, 1970) where they can pray in their language and interact with members of their ethnic group. French Canadians have traditionally been associated with Roman Catholicism. They have always deemed it essential to preserve their faith and traditions, and they were convinced that loyalty in these two areas depended fully on the preservation of the French language (Lemaire, 1966; Corbett, 1967; Wagley and Harris, 1958; Piddington, 1961).

(iii) Attitude Towards Endogamy. Endogamy or the rule of marrying within the group is a device used by many ethnic groups to intensify group solidarity and to increase the physical and cultural homogeneity of the group (Wagley and Harris, 1958). It is argued that a high rate of inter-marriage would rapidly eliminate any cultural or physical characteristics that differentiate the minority from others, and would lead to the assimilation of the group. Intermarriage has always been seen as a threat to ethnic minorities who wished “survival”. Seen in this light, an ethnic group’s attitudes towards out-marriage and “out-dating” becomes important. Endogamy has been the rule or the norm of the Fili group because they were both French and Catholic (Wagley and Harris, 1958).

(iv) Ethnic Identification. Ethnic identification is very important for an ethnic group because it indicates the orientation of its members towards the group. The manner in which persons identify themselves is crucial, for what they do or do not do depends to a great extent upon their conceptions of themselves. Individuals must know who they are with some conviction and clarity if their behaviour is to exhibit definiteness and force towards their ethnic group (Foote, 1951). The internal cohesiveness of a group depends to a large extent upon the degree to which the members are aware of their identity (Glaser, 1958; Rothman, 1957), and the group’s vitality depends on the individual’s conviction of belonging to the group. For many French Canadians:

Etre canadien-français signifie essentiellement que l’on s’identifie avec la collectivité canadienne-française; avec le peuple auquel spontanément on se réfère quand on dit ou quand on pense à nous ... (Falardeau, 1960:26).

(v) Use of the French Mass Media. The mass media are a very important part of modern-day life, for they have the function of maintaining communication between the different sectors of society and of reaffirming the values of the group or groups which they are catering to (Labossière, 1969). For an ethnic group the mass media play a particularly important role. The ethnic press, radio and television promote the activities and the interests of the group and keep the mother tongue alive (Fishman, 1966; Lieberson, 1970). The adolescent period appears to be the point at which the impact on ethnically-based language maintenance is most clearly felt. For Franco-Manitobans the French
press is a factor which has bolstered French survival in the West (Stanley, 1960). To this one can add radio and television.

Briefly, then, these cultural elements, language, religious beliefs and practices, attitude towards endogamy and out-dating, ethnic identification, and use of the French mass media, were selected because it was felt that they were and still remain important components of French-Canadian culture.

INTERVENING VARIABLES

We now present a discussion of the intervening variables selected for this study which also may have an impact upon the degree of assimilation.

(i) Type of School. French-Canadians as an ethnic group have emphasized the importance of schools to transmit cultural values and maintain language use. Two types of schools are available to the Franco-Manitoban adolescent: (a) private French, and (b) public school.

In addition to being more homogeneous with respect to the ethnicity of its pupils, and to teaching the adolescent how to write and read in the mother tongue, the minority school indirectly serves to maintain intragroup relations among minority-group children. It also provides a focal point where pupils and active supporters meet and interact (Fishman, 1966).

In contrast to the private school, public schools admit all children. This policy favors heterogeneity and "Anglication"; the admission of all groups inevitably and immediately pulls in the direction of diversity or de-ethnization (Fishman, 1966). Comeau (1969) found an appreciable difference between the cultural orientation of Franco-Ontarian students who attended French private schools and those who attended bilingual schools. Students who attended private schools were more oriented towards the French culture. Jolicoeur (1966) also commented on the use of English in and outside the classrooms of the public schools in French parts of Manitoba, and upon the "effet de francisation" of the private school.

(ii) Social Class. Social class, defined objectively by education and/or occupation and/or income, is significant in the life of an ethnic group and in the life of the minority-group adolescent. A child grows up in a particular family which is part of a particular social class and learns the cultural values of that class as those values are brought home to him/her by family training, neighborhood friends and class-oriented educational patterns (Gordon, 1964). However, as Fishman (1966) points out, the impact of social class on cultural maintenance is not clear. Studies have indicated that social class has an impact on cultural maintenance although no definite pattern has been discerned. For example, in a study of French Canadians in Nova Scotia, Tremblay (1961), using occupation and income as an index of social class, found
that social class was inversely related to the level of acculturation, that is, the higher was a person's position in the social hierarchy, the lower the rate of acculturation. French Canadians who had a small income and whose occupation was low in status were the most attracted by English values, and rejected most Acadian values. However, Senter (1945), in a study of the Monitos of New Mexico, found that the upper strata were more Anglicized while the lower strata retained traditional values; the situation was the reverse of that reported by Tremblay.

HYPOTHESES

The general hypothesis guiding this study is that there will be a low degree of correspondence between Franco-Manitoban adolescents and Franco-Manitoban adults with regard to their adherence to the selected cultural traits; and that this low correspondence is because younger Franco-Manitobans are less likely to participate in activities practised by their parents in the area of maintenance of ethnicity. More specifically, it is hypothesized that:

1. Franco-Manitoban adolescents will make less overall use of the French language than Franco-Manitoban adults.
2. Franco-Manitoban adolescents will be less religiously oriented than Franco-Manitoban adults.
3. Franco-Manitoban adolescents will have a more positive attitude towards out-dating than Franco-Manitoban adults.
4. Franco-Manitoban adolescents will have a weaker ethnic identity than Franco-Manitoban adults.
5. Franco-Manitoban adolescents will make less use of the French mass media than Franco-Manitoban adults.

In addition, the two previously discussed intervening variables will be introduced as possibly affecting the above relationships.

METHODOLOGY

The sample was made up of Franco-Manitoban students in Grades 10-12 from four high schools in the city of St. Boniface in Manitoba, and their parents. This area was designated for the study because it has the highest concentration of French Canadians in Manitoba. Of the nearly fifty thousand Franco-Manitobans residing in urban areas in 1961, about fourteen thousand were concentrated in St. Boniface.

One of the schools is a private French school with an enrolment of approximately 245 students. Most of these are of French background and all courses are offered in French. The remaining three schools used in the sample are public high schools. However, they differ from one another in the ethnic composition of their student population and in the French courses offered. A total of 333 Franco-Manitoban students were selected for the present study.
The students answered the bilingual questionnaire in their classrooms; it took approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. All those students who answered “French” to the question “What language did you first learn at home as a child?” were asked to take a questionnaire home to their parents. One hundred and thirty-six parents returned the questionnaires, for a return rate of 41 per cent.\(^7\)

**MEASURING THE VARIABLES**

Language use was defined as the percentage of time during which respondents spoke French in various social and work activities. Both students and parents were asked what percentage of the time they spoke French at home, in their extra-curricular activities (social activities for the parents) and with their French-Canadian friends. In addition, the students were asked to what extent they spoke French at school, while the parents were asked what opportunity they had of speaking French at work and to what extent they did speak French at work.

In an attempt to measure the religious orientation of both parents and adolescents, two dimensions of religiosity were measured: (i) their belief in important points of dogma in the Roman Catholic Church, and (ii) the degree to which they fulfilled some ritual expectations of their Church. The intensity of their beliefs was measured by an attitudinal scale composed of eight items. The behavioral dimension was measured by two questions dealing with actual religious behaviour, for example, attending Mass, receiving sacraments.

Data on the respondents’ attitudes toward exogamy were obtained by asking the adolescents how willing they were to date a non-French-Canadian and by asking parents how they would feel if one of their children wanted to date a non-French-Canadian.

A form of the semantic differential was used to measure ethnic identification. It was made up of eleven bi-polar adjectives, the choice of which was based on past research and a review of the literature dealing with ethnic identity (Allen and Lambert, 1969).

Use of the French mass media was measured by asking the respondents to what extent they watched television, listened to the radio and read magazines and newspapers. They were then asked to what extent they engaged in these activities in French. An index for the use of the French mass media was then constructed.

Social class was measured by rating the occupations of the adult respondents (i.e., heads of households) and of the adolescents’ parents according to the scale of Blishen (1968).

**DATA ANALYSIS**

As stated above, our general hypotheses suggest that younger Franco-Manitobans (fourth generation) would be less likely to par-
anticipate in activities which were practised by their parents (third generation) in maintenance of ethnicity.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Between Generation and Selected Dimensions of Dependent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### i  Use of Language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At Home</th>
<th>In Social Activities</th>
<th>With French-Canadian Friends</th>
<th>At School/Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of French</td>
<td>.74a</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Canadian</td>
<td>43%b</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ii  Religiosity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### iii  Acceptance of Out-dating:

| .54     | 25%       |

### iv  Ethnic Identity:

| .10     | 7%        |

### v  Use of Mass Media:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspapers &amp; Magazines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. This value is of the statistic “Gamma.” Gamma is a measure showing the extent to which two variables are “related” to one another — how much association exists between them. The numerical values can range from ±1.00 to zero. A value of 1.00 indicates that knowledge of the independent variable will allow perfect predictions of the dependent variable. A value of zero means there is no predictive value in the independent variable.

b. These values are for the index of dissimilarity between generations. This second statistical measure is briefly explained in the text.

Table 1 summarizes our findings about the relationship between generation and the dependent variables, using Gamma as a measure of association. In addition, we present differences between generations by using an index of dissimilarity (for further explanation of these statistical procedures, see Mueller, Schuessler and Costner, 1970; Duncan and Duncan, 1955). It is clearly demonstrated in Table 1 that adult Franco-Manitobans use French as a primary language much more than do their offspring, thus verifying our first hypothesis. For example, with regard
to language use when engaged in social activities (using the index of dissimilarity), we find a value of 70 per cent for the difference between the younger generation and their parents. This means that 70 per cent of the adolescent sample would have to change their language pattern, in the context of social activities, in order to make their distribution identical to that of their parents. The data can also be interpreted from the perspective of prediction. That is, if we use a measure of association, to what extent can it predict language use by generation? The reader should keep in mind that a score of 1.00 would allow us to predict perfectly language use by generation, i.e., all generation-four speak French, all generation-three English, while a score of .00 would allow us no predictability. The value with regard to language use in social activities is .88, thereby showing a high degree of predictability. Predictability of language use in other contexts is also high. We will interpret a score of .50 or above as a reasonably high degree of association. Anderson (1974) shows in his Saskatchewan survey that generation is highly related to language use, as was found in the present study.

Table 1 also shows that religious beliefs are related to generation. However, while beliefs seem to be related to generation, actual religious behaviour does not. Thus our data seem to reject part of our second hypothesis. The data also show that the index of dissimilarity between generations is 16 per cent for religious behaviour. This means that only 16 per cent of the adolescent sample would have to change their behaviour in order to make their distribution identical to that of the parents. These results are also in agreement with those of Anderson (1974), in that he reported small generational differences in terms of religious beliefs and behaviour for his Saskatchewan sample. Hypothesis three is also tentatively confirmed. The data suggest that “out-dating” is a generational phenomenon (Table 1, part iii), but to a lesser degree than the use of language.

In viewing the relationship between generation and our measurement of ethnic identity, we find that the fourth hypothesis is not supported. Young Franco-Manitobans expressed just as high an ethnic identity as their parents. As Vallée (1971) points out, the salience or significance of ethnicity varies with the situation. At the time the questionnaires were distributed, much debate was going on in the various school divisions about the implementation of Bill 113, in which both English and French were recognized as official languages of instruction in Manitoba. This could have increased the students’ awareness of their “Frenchness” without changing their behaviour in any significant way.

When we look at the data relevant to the use of “mass media”, the general trend predicted by hypothesis five seems to be borne out. However, one notable exception is in the use of newspapers and magazines. We find that younger Franco-Manitobans read more French magazines and papers than their parents. Part of the hypothesis is
therefore rejected. However, as one can see, the difference is not very
great. One possible explanation for this could be that French magazines
are available more readily and in greater variety in the school than in the
home, and that Franco-Manitoban adolescents use this opportunity to
read French magazines and newspapers. Interestingly, the data reported
in the present study show a change in activities by young Franco-
Manitobans. A survey completed in 1964 (Hébert and Vaillancourt
1971) showed that over one-third of young Franco-Manitobans never
listened to the French radio station (compared to one-fourth of the older
group); 50 per cent of the young never watched French television (com-
pared to 42 per cent of the older group); and 59 per cent of the young
did not read La Liberté et le Patriote (compared to 45 per cent of the
older group). Anderson (1974) also claims that the younger respondents
in his study in Saskatchewan pay very little attention to the French
media, preferring English media.

In summary, it appears that some of the hypotheses were substan-
tiated although some important qualifications must be made. Our results
indicate that, in general, French-Canadian parents seem to be making
considerably greater use of the French language in selected situations,
and of the French mass media with the exception of French newspapers;
they also expressed more endogamous feelings and were slightly more
religiously oriented toward Catholicism than the adolescents. However,
the adolescents expressed a higher ethnic identity than was expected,
and the results show virtually no difference from their parents in this
regard.

We now wish to introduce our intervening variables to ascertain the
impact of type of school and social class on our previously stated
hypotheses. For example, we wanted to find out whether or not the type
of school the adolescent attends has any impact on his/her use of
language in the contexts we investigated. We also wanted to find out
whether or not the social class of the respondents would have any im-
pact on our dependent variable, e.g., do middle-class adolescents have
higher ethnic identity than lower-class adolescents? The overall rationale
for controlling for type of school and social class is that we wish to
assess whether or not these factors have more impact than our major in-
dependent variable — generation. For example, overall we found that
very little difference existed in ethnic identity between the two
generations. However, we might find that for middle-class respondents
there was a difference between generations, while for lower-class there
was no difference. A similar question could be asked with regard to type
of school attended. Would those attending a private French school have
higher ethnic identity than those attending a public school?

Our results suggest that the type of school the adolescent goes to
does have an impact on the language used. Students going to a private
French school use French more, in all of the contexts investigated, than
those going to other types of schools. However, the type of school
attended does not seem to have any impact on the other dimensions investigated. In other words, students going to a private French school do not have any greater or fewer cultural “losses” than those going to the other types of schools.

We find that social class also has a selected impact on the cultural-loss dimensions investigated. The most pronounced impact of social class is on ethnic identity. When we compare lower and middle-class groups, we find that for the lower class, adolescents seem to have ethnic identities very similar to those of their parents. However, middle-class adolescents have a much higher identity than do their parents. The second dependent variable affected by social class was that of accepting “out-dating”. We found that middle-class adolescents had a lower rate of acceptance of “out-dating” compared with their parents than their lower-class counterparts.

With the exceptions outlined above, we find that type of school attended by the adolescent does not seem to have any effect on the degree of cultural loss experienced by generation four. Social class, on the other hand, does not seem to affect language use. It does, however, seem to play an important role in ethnic identity and, to a lesser extent, acceptance of out-dating. However, with regard to the other dimensions investigated, social class does not seem to have an impact.

DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, there have been suggestions in the literature on culture contact that cultural loss is a three-generation phenomenon. In fact, when Joy (1972) discusses the French minorities in the West, he maintains that the third generation is “... almost invariably well along the road to assimilation.” Our findings indicate that the fourth generation in St. Boniface is still using the French language and maintaining other aspects of its culture. The data obtained support Vallée (1971), who argues for the analysis of ethnic groupings by region instead of by society as a whole. Vallée states that three types of variables (demographic-ecological; social-structural; and cultural and psychological) will have serious ramifications concerning the degree of persistence or lack of persistence of an ethnic minority group.8 While we lack comparison groups (the present research may be used by others doing similar research as a comparison group), we find that the results of our research on Franco-Manitobans in part confirm the initial hypotheses stated by Vallée.

Vallée sets forth nineteen conditions under which ethnic group persistence will be greatest. Under the factors labelled “demographic-ecological”, five conditions are delineated. For St. Boniface, condition (i) is more applicable than for other French minorities in Western Canada, and conditions (ii) and (iii) are met, while the last two are not met. All of the conditions set forth for the second set of factors (labelled social structure) are met. The third set of factors (attitudes and cultural
patterns) lists six conditions. Four of these conditions seem to be clearly met while two may not be met. This suggests that we should not be surprised to find strong ethnic identity among the young Franco-Manitoban population. There have been some very important events in the Franco-Manitoban community in recent years; for example, Bill 113 was passed, a Franco-Manitoban cultural centre has just been opened, and both the federal and provincial governments are subsidizing a variety of cultural and educational activities. As both Joy (1972) and Lieberson (1970) point out, we cannot as yet evaluate the extent to which government subsidization and legislation may succeed in prolonging the existence of minority ethnic groups. Our data suggest that it would be premature to say that the fourth generation is “lost.”

Franco-Manitoban adolescents make greater use of French at home than in any of the other three situations taken into account in this study. For many adolescents, the home is the only place where they speak any French at all. It has long been recognized that the French-Canadian family has been an important, if not the most important factor in the survival of the French-Canadians as an ethnic group (Piddington, 1961; Garigue, 1962). This must be particularly true of the French outside Quebec. The importance of the home in language maintenance is underlined by the general finding that

... active use of the mother tongue in the home is primarily responsible for enabling children to attain mastery of it. Without this, the best of school instruction is likely to fall far short of functional mastery (Hayden, 1966:198).

It would seem from our data that the home, where primary relations based on personal, informal and total interaction exist, is one of the important bulwarks of French culture in Manitoba.

A second important finding is the effect of the French private school on language maintenance in all four situations. The private-school student speaks much more French at school, with his French-Canadian friends and in extra-curricular activities than does his public-school counterpart. This is most important, for the private-school student, unlike the public-school student, speaks French outside the home and learns to use his mother tongue in a variety of situations. In other words, he learns to communicate effectively in French. In contrast to public schools, where “Anglification” and “de-ethnization” are encouraged in part by an English curriculum and in part by a policy of mixed membership, the private school, with an all-French curriculum and a homogeneous student body, encourages the use of French as an active language in various activities and even the use of French television and radio. But the school is only one of the institutions affecting the linguistic development of the child, and if it is to effectively promote this linguistic and cultural development, it must do more than teach the mother tongue as a subject. The school must compensate for the linguistic environment of the minority adolescent in which the ma-
jority language is heard on the street everywhere and even brought into
the home by radio and television. Continued use of the French language
by Franco-Manitoban adolescents is very important to the survival of
French culture in Manitoba; as Lieberson (1970) has pointed out,
language use is the central feature in the continuity of an ethnic group in
contact. This underlines the crucial role that schools can play in cultural
maintenance, and also underlines the importance of Bill 113.

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that young
Franco-Manitobans display an ethnic identity as strong as that of their
parents. St. Boniface may well fit Breton’s (1964) notion of “institutional
completeness”: the more institutionally complete an ethnic group is, the
more will members of that group tend to contain their interpersonal, in-
formal relations within the group, and thus the more they will retain their
ethnic identity. However, Isajiw (1971) suggests that a process of
“rediscovery” may be occurring. This is the process of selecting symbols
of the cultural past of the group and re-emphasizing their importance.
Isajiw argues that a minimum symbolism would be an acknowledgement
of common ancestry. Beyond this, the two major factors would be
language and ethnic endogamy. As shown by the results obtained in the
present study, these factors were emphasized by young Franco-
Manitobans. The turn to the past, then, is partly symbolic (Isajiw, 1971).
We may suggest that young Franco-Manitobans are not “returning to”
but are in a sense “rediscovering” their ancestral past as something with
new meaning.

FOOTNOTES

1 See Kushner et al. (1962) for a review of various propositions which attempt to explain which
cultural elements change and why. See also Linton (1940) and the Social Science Research
Council seminar (1954), who suggest that patterns of behaviour are harder to change. Linton
further suggests that the elements of the “inferior” culture of which the “superior” group open-
ly disapproves will lose their value in the eyes of the inferior group and will tend to be aban-
donied more easily. See also Bruner (1956) who reviews previous hypotheses and presents his
own.

2 Before elaborating on the dependent variable, it is necessary to justify our division of culture
into elements or attributes. As Herskovits (1941) pointed out, the student of culture contact
must work with some convention such as the cultural trait, for it is easier to speak of the study
of entire cultures than it is to do so. As he also mentions, nowhere in the discussion of those
who support this approach are there any specific methodological suggestions which would help
analyse such unwieldy units as whole civilizations. “Analysis of culture whether stable or un-
dergoing change means it must be broken down into its components” (Herskovits, 1941).
Others have also pointed out that it is necessary to break down culture and consider its various
components in order to use the concept as a tool of sociological analysis.

3 A good example of this is the American Jew. As traditional differences are progressively
eliminated between the Jew and the non-Jew, and there is little that marks the Jew except
Jewish self-consciousness and association with other Jews, group preservation depends more
and more on the individual’s decision to marry within the group. Parents attempt to transmit
this desire to their children.

4 As recently as April 3, 1971 in a brief presented to the provincial and federal government as
part of a public demonstration, Franco-Manitobans once again expressed this opinion. (See La
Liberté et le Patriote, Mercredi 7 Avril 1971, pp. 5 et 11).

5 For this study, a Franco-Manitoban has been defined as a person whose mother tongue is
French and presently resides in Manitoba. All respondents who answered “French” to the
question “What language did you first learn at home as a child?” were defined as Franco-
Manitobans and included in the sample. This definition differs slightly from the one used by
Statistics Canada which defines mother tongue as the language first learned in childhood and
still understood. According to Lieberson (1970) this runs counter to the normal view of mother
tongue as simply the first learned language in childhood, without taking into account the respondent's current ability to use the language. A second question was included in order to estimate respondents' present ability to use the French language.

6 Founded in 1818 by French missionaries, St. Boniface and its French institutions have been considered by many as the "citadel of French culture within dominantly English areas" of Western Canada (Frémont, 1954). Though the survival of the French culture in Manitoba has met with much opposition (all of their privileges were eliminated by the Manitoba legislature in 1890 and 1916), there is still a substantial French community in St. Boniface and in areas of rural Manitoba. In spite of their numerical weakness, for they make up only 6.1 per cent of the total population of Manitoba (Statistics Canada), they have been successful enough in maintaining themselves as a distinct group.

7 Thirty-seven parents (37 per cent) of the private-school students returned the questionnaires. Fifty-three parents (or 28 per cent) of the 187 Franco-Manitoban students in the predominantly French public school responded and 57 (or 57 per cent) of the parents of the students in the all-French public school returned their questionnaires. The overall return rate was 38 per cent (N = 147).

8 Vallée (1971) hypothesizes that ethnic group persistence will be greatest under the following conditions:

I) Demographic-ecological:
   (i) the closer the region to Quebec,
   (ii) where there are significant numbers of members in comparison with population of other origins in the region,
   (iii) where there is a higher degree of population clustering than of dispersal,
   (iv) where it is a primary region of reception for migrants from a "homeland," and
   (v) where the ethnic population is more concentrated in rural and small town localities than in large metropolitan areas;

II) Social-Structural Variables:
   (i) where there is considerable "structuration" or organization of corporate groups that act as vehicles for goals of ethnic persistence,
   (ii) where the institutions that engage people in the ethnic category are geographically defined and multi-functional, institutions like parishes and co-operatives,
   (iii) where the ethnic group concerned has some control over socialization institutions,
   (iv) where there is a significant degree of interdependence among organizations and communities with dominance of membership on the part of the ethnic group in question,
   (v) where representatives of the ethnic group concerned are in decision-making positions in community and regional organizations and where these people are viewed as representative of the ethnic minority concerned as distinct from other kinds of representation,
   (vi) where members of the ethnic group are "visible," and in conflict (latent or overt) with at least one other category of the population,
   (vii) where the members of the ethnic group in question are not segregated from one another for most purposes by social class or other categories which cut across the ethnic one, and
   (viii) where group resources such as media of communication provide opportunities for people to act in terms of their distinctive culture or subculture, e.g., to communicate in their own language.

III) Attitudes and Cultural Patterns:
   (i) where the regional population accepts the rightness of the group's claim to distinctiveness as one source of its legitimation,
   (ii) where the French-origin element is defined as a charter-member group in a region, i.e., where the region is a kind of "homeland,"
   (iii) where the ideology of cultural pluralism prevails in the region as a whole,
   (iv) where the prevalent value system of people of French origin focusses on kinship and communal interests and not on individualistic achievement interests in the educational and economic spheres,
   (v) where the prevalent orientation of the group's elite is to survivance, with other orientations secondary or non-existent, and
   (vi) where the population values its language, not only as an instrumental thing, but also as a symbol of the group's culture.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


A SIMULATED CONSOLIDATION
OF THE GRAIN HANDLING AND
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
IN WEST-CENTRAL
SASKATCHEWAN

CLARE L. KIRKLAND
Highway Traffic Board, Government of Saskatchewan

ABSTRACT. A series of computer simulations of changes in costs associated with grain handling and transportation which would result from closure of certain elevator points is carried out. Four different “scenarios” or strategies of elevator consolidation are tested, and minimum total costs for each of these strategies are calculated. These minima occur when approximately half of the elevator points operating in 1971-72 have been closed. However, because grain-trucking costs represent a large proportion of total costs, and because such costs have certainly been underestimated in this study of a portion of west-central Saskatchewan, the author concludes that much lower levels of elevator-point closure are desirable from the standpoint of minimizing total costs of grain handling and transportation.

RESUME
Une série de simulations sur ordinateur consacrée aux changements apportés aux coûts associés à la manutention des céréales et à leur transport, étant donné la fermeture de certains silos, est entreprise. Quatre différents “scénarios” ou stratégies de consolidation de silos sont testés, et les coûts totaux minimum de chacune des stratégies sont calculés. Les minima sont obtenus lorsque la moitié des silos de 1971-72 approximativement sont fermés. Cependant, vu que le transport des céréales par camions représente une grande proportion des frais totaux, et vu que ces frais ont certainement été sous-estimés dans cette étude d’une portion centrale ouest de la Saskatchewan, l’auteur conclut qu’une proportion beaucoup plus basse de fermeture de silos est désirable, si l’on tient à minimiser les coûts totaux de manutention des céréales et de leur transport.

There has been much discussion in academic, industry and government circles regarding the Western Canadian grain handling and transportation system. An example of this is the recent publication of the Hall Commission Report. The objective of the study reported here was to indicate how many elevators and miles of rail line should be abandoned in order to move from the present system to one with minimum total cost. The analysis, completed on a regional basis by digital computer simulation, illustrated the need to consider achieving system efficiencies in ways other than branchline abandonment or elevator closures. The region selected was the Wilkie-Macklin-Alsask-Rosetown area of west-central Saskatchewan (Figure 1).
FIG. 1 MAP OF STUDY AREA
A total of 163 elevators were situated at the region’s 55 elevator stations in the 1971-72 crop year. These elevator stations were served by the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways (hereinafter referred to as CN and CP respectively) as shown in Table 1. Figure 1 further defines the rail lines. Although lines 1 to 5 inclusive have been proposed for abandonment, the importance of line 5 as a secondary main line for CP suggests that its abandonment is unlikely. Therefore only lines 1-4 inclusive were considered for abandonment in the simulation calculations.

The study involves a series of computer simulations of stepwise changes in the regional elevator system in which the first step entails closure of one delivery point, the second step the closure of another, and so on. Four different “scenarios” or strategies of elevator consolidation are tested, and minimum total costs for each strategy are calculated. The minimum value is reached after a certain number of delivery points have been closed, the number varying with the particular scenario. This study differs in two fundamental ways from other consolidation studies completed. Firstly, a new system of elevators was not developed; instead, the present system was modified and modernized. Secondly, emphasis was placed on including all quantifiable producer costs, and not just trucking costs.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line No. and Description</th>
<th>Operating Company</th>
<th>Operating Miles</th>
<th>No. of Elevator Stations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dodsland — Alta. Border*</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Salvador — Alta. Border*</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unity — Salvador</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wilkie — Kerrobert</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kerrobert — Alta. Border</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rosetown — Alsask</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rosetown — Macklin</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>105.2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Macklin — Wilkie</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Unity — Reford</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Lines 1 and 2 are spur lines which end in the province of Alberta at Hemaruka and Bodo respectively.

**COST MODELS AND EQUATIONS**

A number of economic changes will occur as the result of any elevator closures or rail line abandonments. These economic changes will directly affect at least one of the three main sectors of the system. The three sectors are the producers, the railway companies, and the
elevator companies. Any relevant economic variables affecting the three sectors, which could be quantified with reasonable effort, were included in an equation within the program used in the simulation.

A. The Producer Sector

The producer sector included analysis of the following five economic variables:

(i) increases in costs of trucking grain from farm to delivery point,
(ii) changes in on-farm grain-storage costs,
(iii) increases in municipal taxation charges,
(iv) increases in municipal road-construction and maintenance costs,
(v) increases in queuing costs at country elevators.

Each of these is considered in turn below.

Grain-trucking costs were taken from Kulshreshtha's recent study.\textsuperscript{10} The equation for trucking costs (in cents per bushel-mile) developed by regression is as follows:

$$AC_i = \frac{1.10}{X_i^{.332}} \quad (1)$$

where $X_i$ = one-way distance in miles from farmland location to country elevator for producer i.

A more complex formula for trucking costs could not be used because of the limited information available on details of grain delivery for the approximately 5,000 Canadian Wheat Board permits issued to farmers in the region. Labour costs evaluated at $2.25 per hour accounted for 34.7 per cent of total trucking costs, according to Kulshreshtha. The Saskatchewan minimum wage is now $3.00/hour; this illustrates the underestimation of these trucking costs. Labour costs should be approximated by determining average wages and earnings of prairie labourers and operators respectively, with average labour costs being determined by the number of trips hauled by each. A more appropriate labour cost would raise estimated trucking costs substantially. Savings inherent in elevator consolidation are therefore overestimated in this study.

When an elevator station is closed, the total storage capacity of the regional elevator system decreases. If facilities are expanded at other delivery points, then system capacity is increased. Consolidation of the elevator system is intended to reduce average costs per bushel to the elevator companies; this implies an overall net reduction in total storage capacity of the system. In the long run, new facilities will be needed to replace any lost capacity. This assumes that demand and supply conditions do not change drastically so as to alter average grain production.
levels, or the general pattern of exports. In the simulation program, the net decrease in elevator system capacity was assumed to be replaced by on-farm storage facilities; this approach is the same as that of the Canada Grains Council in their Brandon Area Study, and is taken because at present the least expensive form of grain storage is the on-farm grain bin. Bruno Friesen's study was used as an estimate of on-farm grain-storage costs. Friesen calculated these costs to be 0.38 cents per bushel stored, for Saskatchewan. This average figure is low, for several reasons: (i) grain losses in Friesen's study were estimated by producers, and experimental research suggests that producers greatly underestimate this factor; (ii) grain losses were calculated at the initial, not the final, Canadian Wheat Board price of the grain; (iii) new facilities will have much higher capital costs than the highly depreciated facilities costed in Friesen's work.

Municipalities lose both business and property tax revenue when an active elevator station within their jurisdiction is closed. Unless municipal expenditures are reduced proportionately, this loss will have to be recovered through increased taxation of the remaining taxpayers. The service communities located at elevator stations are of two types: (i) incorporated (separate urban municipalities); (ii) unincorporated (small communities within the jurisdiction of the surrounding rural municipalities). The assumption was made that increased per capita taxation in rural municipalities would be paid entirely by producers, since more than 93 per cent of the residents of rural municipalities are producers and their families. In addition, the assumption was made that closure of elevators and abandonment of rail lines would not reduce municipal costs. Estimates of these property and business taxation losses and appropriate mill rates were made based on Provincial Government records. Increased taxation payments due to construction of new facilities were calculated using assessment formulas of the Department of Municipal Affairs. Property tax losses due to rail-line abandonments were calculated using the government assessment formula of $800 per mile multiplied by the relevant mill rate.

Another obvious result of consolidation of the grain handling and transportation system is that municipal roads will bear a significant increase in grain truck traffic. Other studies were available for possible use in calculating road costs; however, these were not used, for a variety of reasons. Shurson's thesis was concerned primarily with extreme levels of consolidation of the elevator system, which is contrary to a central assumption of this study. Platt's work assumed that only provincial highways would be appreciably affected. The author's work, described below, emphatically contradicts this assumption. The Municipal Road Assistance Authority measured traffic in vehicle numbers, which is a significant methodological weakness. For these reasons the author completed his own study of increased road costs.
Farm locations, grain delivery patterns (both present and future in the event of branchline abandonment), and road classification maps were available in conjunction with another study which the author had supervised. Present and future hauling routes were plotted for producers currently delivering to eleven Saskatchewan elevator points. The assumption was made that upgrading of road type will be necessary whenever the estimate of future bushels hauled per year exceeds the present average annual bushels hauled and passes certain threshold values. The calculated threshold levels for upgrading are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road Type</th>
<th>Average Bushels Hauled per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Farm Access</td>
<td>62,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grid</td>
<td>100,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oiled Surface</td>
<td>401,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Costs for road upgrading due to the proposed branchline abandonments ranged from .197 to .295 cents/added bushel-mile of grain haul, at the eleven stations studied. These costs of construction and increased maintenance were developed from Department of Highways\textsuperscript{11} and Municipal Road Assistance Authority data. Financial assistance to rural municipalities by the latter body is paid on an approximately 50-50 share basis. Therefore the cost due to elevator closures or rail line abandonments was taken to be equal to 0.12 cents per additional bushel-mile of traffic, as representing the producers’ share of the cost burden. The figure of 0.12 cents is low for several reasons:

(i) Construction and maintenance costs were calculated from five year averages for 1965-70. Present costs are at least double those values.

(ii) Any effects upon the Provincial Highway system were not included in the analysis.

(iii) Municipal roads that did not require upgrading but would require increased maintenance expenditures were not included.

(iv) Increased levels of elevator facility utilization due to consolidation will cause producers to deliver during inclement conditions such as wet weather. Such practices would cause severe roadbed damage. This could result in increased pressure to construct a complete system of “all-weather” roads, with accompanying increased costs.

Utilization of individual elevators increases as system consolidation progresses. There is a corresponding increase in the problem of servicing producers wishing to unload grain at the elevators. Some elevators could theoretically increase their bushel receipts by a factor of 3 or 4 without needing to be renovated or rebuilt. However, this would present severe queuing problems to producers waiting to empty their trucks. Since “dead-haul labour” is presently a major portion (19.1 per cent)\textsuperscript{10} of total hauling costs, increased queuing times would cause trucking costs to rise
substantially. The author attempted to develop by regression analysis an equation relating elevator and producer characteristics to queuing data collected by Kulshreshtha. Problems with data reliability and inadequate relationships with independent variables resulted in no satisfactory model for queuing costs being developed. Models that were developed were tested in the simulation program, and gave excessively low or high cost estimations. An equation for queuing costs was added to the program, even though it underestimates the probable level of these costs in a consolidated system, in order that an improved model might be added in the future.

B. The Railway Sector

The author had the greatest difficulty trying to determine the costs of the railway system. Ideally, costs may be divided into fixed and variable portions. Fixed costs will not change with varying traffic, except that in the event a line is abandoned, net salvage value can be recovered. Variable costs will change depending upon traffic conditions. The abandonment of a branchline will mean that grain is diverted to remaining rail delivery points in the region. In this way total variable costs would increase on the surrounding lines due to increased traffic, while average variable costs on total remaining mileage would undoubtedly decrease.

On the basis of the Canadian Transport Commission Costing Order R-6313, both CN and CP submit annual claims for losses on prairie branchline operations. These claims, according to the prescribed formula, are called “avoidable” costs of the branchline operations. In other words, if a branchline were not operated these costs supposedly would not be incurred. However, three general facts concerning prairie branchline operations must be noted:

(i) Almost the entire tonnage carried is outbound shipments of grain.
(ii) Inbound freight and other outbound freight are generally carried by truck.
(iii) Branchline costs as submitted are separated into On-line and Off-line costs. On-line costs are related to movement over the specific branchline. Off-line costs refer to transporting the branchline traffic to destination over the remainder of the route. Therefore Off-line costs cannot be considered avoidable.

As a measure of savings accruing to the railways from branchline abandonments, the On-line costs were taken as submitted to the C.T.C. by CN and CP. Variable costs of operation will change as mentioned above, but since Off-line costs are not publicly disclosed in detail, changes in Off-line variable costs could not be ascertained for use in this study. However, variable rail costs in the regional system may not change a great deal as a result of consolidation, if distance of haul is a dominant cost variable. As producers are diverted to surrounding
stations by elevator closures, the length of haul from their new delivery point to market may be greater or shorter than the distance from the previous station. Since the increases and decreases tend to be evenly distributed, total variable costs, in so far as they are proportional to distance, may not change greatly. Another major variable cost factor is time. Switching minutes, train hours, car days, etc., could probably be reduced if fewer country elevators existed. It should be noted, however, that according to CP staff members only 4.4 days of the total average car turnaround time of 18 days between the Lethbridge area and Vancouver is taken by loading and travelling time to Calgary. It would appear therefore that more attention should be directed to other parts of the system.

C. The Elevator Sector

One of the main economic reasons for consolidating the present country elevator system is to reduce the operating costs of that system. These costs are typically divided into fixed, variable and overhead components. Regression models were developed by Tangri, Tyrchniewicz and Zasada for operating (variable) costs and allocated head office (overhead) expenses. Table 2 describes these formulas. These equations based on 1965-69 data produce lower costs than would 1971-72 data, which are used in most other parts of this study; however, sensitivity analysis showed the effects of such an error to be relatively small. Head office expenses are by nature fixed, but their allocation changes as the number of country elevators decreases. Fixed costs of interest on investment and depreciation were not included for the existing facilities; most of them are old. Salvage value that can be recovered from these sunk costs is included in elevator construction costs in Equation 2 below.

TABLE 2

EQUATIONS FOR ELEVATOR OPERATING COSTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPACITY RANGE (thousands of bushels)</th>
<th>EQUATION (X = thousands of bushels handled)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 80</td>
<td>$4.726 + 911.24/X$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 100</td>
<td>$4.168 + 1081.3/X$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 120</td>
<td>$3.728 + 1306.3/X$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 - 140</td>
<td>$3.842 + 1383.5/X$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 - 160</td>
<td>$4.961 + 1287.7/X$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 - $\infty$</td>
<td>$5.173 + 1371.8/X$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the country elevator system is consolidated the level of utilization of the remaining elevators increases. At some stage new facilities will be needed to meet increasing service requirements. Depending upon demand and the condition of the facilities, either renovation or completely new construction can be undertaken. Fixed
costs of depreciation and interest on investment must be included for new capital additions to the elevator system. These fixed costs were averaged over the first 25 years of operation rather than by separate annual calculations. Construction costs (CC) as taken from 1974 industry data are shown in Equation 2 below, measured in dollars. Cost of money was set at 8 per cent, and depreciation accruals were calculated by the diminishing balance method at 5 per cent per year.

\[
CC = 126625 + 1.15 (C)
\]

where \(C\) = capacity of the elevator in bushels

Capital costs of renovation were set at \$75,000 per elevator to cover the standard additions of an automatic overhead scale and an additional elevating leg.

Decision criteria used in the simulation program to decide how to alter existing facilities are described in Table 3. The variable used to represent the level of utilization was taken as the throughput ratio (TPR), which is the ratio of bushels hauled to elevator storage capacity. The choices of TPR = 6.0 and 10.0 as threshold values were based on recommendations of industry officials. The constraint that no construction would be undertaken at branchline stations was adopted because a company would risk soon having to close a fairly new elevator, after only a short working life, in the event of abandonment of the line.

### TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of Elevators at a station</th>
<th>Applicable Throughput Ratio (TPR) Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TPR (\leq 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All elevators were built prior to 1950. Station on Mainline</td>
<td>No action necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above except station is on a Branchline</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some portion of the stations’ elevators built since 1950. Station on Mainline</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above except station is on a Branchline</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATA SOURCES

Receipts, numbers, and capacities of the country elevators in the region for the 1971-72 crop year were taken from Canadian Grain Commission reports. Elevator ages were obtained from the respective operating companies. Business and property tax data, mill rates and populations for the incorporated centers and rural municipalities were obtained from the Economics Branch of Agriculture Canada and also from the provincial Department of Municipal Affairs, both in Regina. On-line and Off-line costs of branchline operation were taken from CN and CP company submissions to the C.T.C. for the fiscal year ending in 1972. Lengths of rail lines and distances between stations were taken from CN and CP timetables. Receipts for permit holders in the region were from Canadian Wheat Board records for the 1971-72 crop year.

METHODOLOGY

Using the equations and criteria established, computer simulations of consolidation of the regional elevator system were carried out on a step-by-step basis, as first one elevator station, then others, were assumed to be closed. Since social, economic and political objectives affect decisions as to which elevator stations will be abandoned, a variety of scenarios or strategies for closure were followed. Four of the many scenarios analyzed are listed below; these are the four alternatives discussed in the remainder of the article.

(i) The “Profit” Scenario — Elevator stations were ranked according to their ability to cover their variable costs. Least profitable stations, of course, would be closed first.

(ii) The “Social Scenario” — Disruption of community life may be assumed to be approximated by the number of people affected by consolidation. Stations were ranked by summing the number of producers delivering to the station and the population of the surrounding community.

(iii) The “Formula” Scenario — The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool bases its decisions on closures of elevators to a large extent upon a formula which considers (a) the profitability of the elevator(s); (b) physical condition of the facilities; (c) the social impact on the people affected. Stations were ranked according to the author’s adaptation of this formula.

(iv) The “Branchline” Scenario — From the point of view of minimizing total costs of the regional system, greatest savings can be achieved if, whenever a station is closed, the rail line on which it is situated can also be abandoned. This can only happen if the delivery point is on a branchline with no active stations further up the line. Stations were ranked according to this Formula scenario, and then sorted again so that in the first
eighteen steps of consolidation all branchline links were assumed removed. This scenario achieved the lowest costs for the total regional system (all three sectors combined) and was therefore used in the sensitivity analysis discussed later.

Several fundamental assumptions were made regarding the constraints within which (a) station(s) could be closed:

(i) No new locations for elevator stations will be added as the system is consolidated. If new elevators are to be built, they will be located at existing delivery points.

(ii) Consolidation will be a continuous process; once a station is closed, it will not be reopened.

(iii) Objectives other than cost minimization do not receive consideration in this study, which assumes lowest costs to be representative of greatest efficiency. Multiple objectives could be incorporated in future studies.

In all scenarios, calculations by computer simulation were completed up to the stage at which 49 of the 55 elevator points within the region would have been abandoned. The six centers remaining are towns of great commercial importance, and are unlikely to lose their elevators except in the case of very extreme consolidation such as a system of inland terminals.

Several cost functions were recorded in the computer program for use in further analysis. These functions are described below.

**Producer's Direct Costs** — This function was calculated by summation of the following items (the letters in parentheses are names of the variables):
- total change in on-farm grain-storage costs (TCFSC)
- total cost of hauling grain from farmsite to country elevators (THC)
- total cost of rail freight rates evaluated at statutory levels (TFC)
- total change in rural municipal road costs (CROAD)
- total change in rural municipal property tax revenues (TCPT)
- total change in rural municipal business tax revenue (TCBT)
- total queuing costs at country elevators (TQC).

**Elevator Company Costs** — This function calculated the total cost of operating the elevator system (TCES) as described in Table 2.

**Railway Company Costs** — For this cost function the total savings of rail line abandonment (TRC\textsubscript{1}) were calculated by summation of On-line costs relevant to the branchline links that were assumed abandoned.
RESULTS

The difference between total system costs (i.e. to producer, elevator companies and railways) resulting from the simulation of the four scenarios selected is small (Table 4). It is the change identified in system cost components as a result of abandonment that is of great interest. The non-variable parts of total costs are interesting, but have no effect on rational economic decisions relative to consolidation of an existing system. The preconsolidation value of total system costs was $8.50 million. As illustrated by Graph 1 and Graph 4, once all branchlines have been abandoned in the first eighteen steps, savings to the elevator system are approximately offset by increased producer costs. Producer costs increase in an exponential manner, as shown by Graph 2. However, Graph 3 indicates that elevator costs decrease in a roughly linear manner. Therefore, at some point total system costs begin rising in a relatively rapid manner.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF MINIMUM TOTAL SYSTEM COSTS FOR SCENARIOS TESTED BY SIMULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario Name</th>
<th>No. of Elevator Stations Closed</th>
<th>Total System Costs (millions)</th>
<th>Percentage Cost Reduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$8.24</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formula</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branchline</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Components of producer costs, shown in Graph 2, indicate that trucking is the dominant component in system cost minimization. The combined effect of the other components is significant as well. As mentioned earlier, most producer cost components were conservatively estimated. It is predicted that more correct values would show a lesser degree of consolidation than is shown in Table 4 to be optimal. This is a very important point.

The results of any particular simulation run are dependent on the cost parameters and input data. This study is directed at future changes in the system examined; therefore sensitivity analysis is a necessary part. For the sensitivity analysis carried out, respective parameters or data values were both increased and decreased by 50 per cent, and the impact of the resulting changes assessed. Grain production proved to be the dominant sensitivity variable, as illustrated in Graph 5. An increase of 50 per cent over the 1971-72 Canadian Wheat Board receipts used in this study equals the total grain deliveries for that crop year. This is the case because one-third of the grain deliveries in the crop year were “off-
GRAPH 1

Total System Costs -vs- Number of Stations
Closed for the Four Scenarios Examined

Scenario (minima)

Profit (25)

Social (27)

Formula (25)

Branchline (32)

(minima as shown)
GRAPH 2
Components of Producer Costs -vs- Number of Stations Closed for the Branchline Scenario

Producer Costs ( Millions of Dollars )

- Total Producer Costs
- Queuing Costs & Municipal Taxes
- Municipal Road Costs
- On-Farm Storage Costs

Producers Trucking Costs

Railway Freight Charges

Number of Elevator Stations Closed
GRAPH 3

Elevator Operating Costs -vs- Number of Stations Closed for the Branchline Scenario
GRAPH 4

Savings from Rail line Abandonments -vs- Number of Stations Closed for the Branchline and Formula Scenarios

Number of Elevator Stations Closed

Rail Company On-Line Cost Savings (Millions of Dollars)
Board” sales. This 50 per cent increase represents a level of grain sales that has been achieved in certain years. If even higher future production and sales levels are used the results will be even more dramatic, since higher levels of receipts make consolidation much less necessary from an economic viewpoint. Graph 5 shows that the 50 per cent increase produces minimum total costs when only seven delivery points are closed.

The accuracy of savings from branchline abandonments as measured by On-line costs is not easily debated due to lack of detailed public disclosure of these costs. Sensitivity analysis indicates that varying levels of On-line costs as shown in Graph 6 do not alter the number of station closures that would minimize total system costs, but do affect the level of total cost.

As mentioned earlier, trucking costs are a major component of producer costs. The levels of total system costs are seen in Graph 7 to vary greatly with changes in trucking costs. The cost minima for all three curves do not change greatly over a range of 22 to 32 station closures. For their Area 11 study in Saskatchewan, the Canada Grains Council calculated that Kulshreshtha’s costs needed to be increased in the order of 40 per cent. Therefore, the 50 per cent increase illustrated by the upper curve in Graph 7 may already be representative of the current state of affairs.

Elevator company operating costs were also examined for their sensitivity effects. Graph 8 shows that, while increased costs affect the level of total system costs, they do not greatly alter the number of closures associated with the cost minima. It seems likely that elevator costs have risen at least 50 per cent since the cost equations were developed for 1965-69 data. But corresponding increases in trucking costs tend to offset the effects of increased elevator costs in determining the minima for total system costs.

A simulation was completed wherein elevator receipts, elevator costs, trucking costs, On-line costs and municipal road costs were all increased by 50 per cent. The results were similar to Graph 5 due to the dominance of elevator receipts (i.e. grain production levels) in sensitivity analysis, while the other cost increases tended to offset each other. The minimum total system costs occurred when only five elevator points had been closed, thus representing a degree of system consolidation that has already been achieved by the elevator companies.

Looking to the future, one can examine several probable trends. Costs of farm trucking will rise more rapidly due to labour-cost increases than those of the railways. This is because labour is a larger factor in trucking costs and because labor costs used in farm trucking studies are unrealistically low values which should increase in the future. Conversely, railways suffer proportionally higher costs than does the trucking industry. This situation is partly due to the fact that trucks do
GRAPH 5
Total System Costs -vs- Number of Stations Closed
for Three Levels of Country Elevator Receipts
(minima as shown)

A = (1.0) '71-'72 Canadian Wheat Board Receipts

(1.5)A

(0.5)A

Number of Elevator Stations Closed
GRAPH 6

Total System Costs -vs- Number of Stations Closed
for Three Levels of Railway On-Line Costs

(1.5) On-Line Costs
(1.0) On-Line Costs
(0.5) On-Line Costs

(minima as shown)
GRAPH 7

Total System Costs -vs- Number of Stations Closed for Three Levels of Producer Trucking Costs

- - - - (1.5) Producer Trucking Costs

- - - - -Producer Trucking Costs

- - - - - (0.5) Producer Trucking Costs

(minima as shown)
GRAPH 8

Total System Costs -vs- Number of Stations Closed
for Three Levels of Elevator Operating Costs

(1.5) Elevator Operating Costs
(1.0) Elevator Operating Costs
(0.5) Elevator Operating Costs

(minima as shown)
not pay a share of infrastructure costs proportional to that paid by the railways, as indicated by the recent work of Z. Haritos for the Canadian Transport Commission. Consideration has been given by government officials to developing some method to relieve the railways in this anomalous situation. As is now well known, railways are several times more efficient than trucking in energy utilization and land usage as well as in the very important area of safety.

**CONCLUSIONS**

A qualifying statement must be made with respect to the very important cost factor of branchline rejuvenation. Every prairie farmer knows that the railway branchlines have been neglected for many years. Railway permanent-way engineers know that deferred-maintenance policies should only be undertaken if eventual abandonment is certain or if someone else will pay the cost of future track improvements. This is the case because the cost of rebuilding neglected track far exceeds the apparent savings of eliminating routine maintenance. An explanation for the neglect of prairie branchlines is difficult to reason. Canadian Transport Commission subsidy formulas allow the railways to recover costs of capital improvements, and the railways receive their subsidies to both operate and maintain grain-related track. The answer probably lies with politics, in what appears to be the railways' ultimate objective of removing the Crowsnest statutory grain freight rates.

Given that many prairie branchlines can and should be used in the future, and that substantial sums are required to improve the condition of their track, some source of funds must be found. There are three alternatives: (i) railway earnings; (ii) grain-producer income; (iii) subsidies supported by taxation. The railway will refuse unless ceilings are removed on grain freight rates; this the producers cannot accept. The author's prediction is that a host of political considerations, not the least of which is that grain producers have never before received the levels of revenue experienced in recent years, will result in a combination of grain producer and public taxation to generate the funds required. A wide range of estimates have been given for the costs of rejuvenating the branchlines. From the author's investigations it seems clear that branchlines need not be maintained to 263,000-pound standards for carrying 100-ton hopper cars. Under low-speed low-traffic conditions, rail weighing only 85 pounds per yard has been sufficient to carry 100-ton cars on United States railroads. To the extent that this conclusion can be accepted, rebuilding or upgrading of branchlines will not be as expensive as sometimes suggested. For this study, railway On-line costs should have been increased to account for correct maintenance-of-way costs. Railway costs are confidential and the costs would have to be judgments in any event; consequently no analysis was undertaken in this regard.
The author believes the producer cost estimates used in this study to fall below their "true" value to a greater extent than is the case for the elevator and rail sectors. The sensitivity analysis has shown optimal system configurations to be highly dependent on (i) grain sales and (ii) producer costs. Given that both of these factors are most likely to favour consolidation, the general system optima described in this paper should be interpreted very cautiously. Branchline abandonments or elevator station closures should be considered in only a small number of cases.

There are other avenues which are more likely to yield savings in total system costs. In two major areas of the grain handling system, corporate objectives have led to costly duplication and inefficient system coordination.

The first major area is well recognized. The CN and CP railway systems are reasonably well structured to serve the Port of Thunder Bay. Movements to Vancouver, however, often involve many extra miles of railway grain hauling, the crosshauling between Edmonton and Calgary being the most obvious example. The hauling of grain to Churchill is completed by CN while nearby grain traffic off CP lines is diverted elsewhere. Exchanges of track, joint track usage and other rail system operating modifications have been suggested as solutions. However, these and other future problems will be most efficiently solved if the total railway system in Canada is operated on a public utility basis, where the objective is to use the most efficient method to achieve intermodal coordination of public policy goals.

The second area, which is not frequently discussed, relates to the elevator system. Consolidation is presently occurring in a manner which eliminates single-company elevator stations. If present trends continue, the future system will comprise a small number of stations at which three or four companies share the elevator business. It is much more efficient in a total sense to have one elevator at each of 1600 stations than to have these same 1600 elevators lined up four each at 400 stations. Conventional wisdom suggests that this "competition" between companies at a particular point is efficient and that producers are protected from discriminatory grading and weighing practices. The efficiency argument is clearly incorrect, and industry officials agree in private that "between-station" competition is as effective as "at-station" competition at protecting producers. Furthermore, all grades received can be checked free of charge by the Canadian Grain Commission, while cheating at the weigh scales is nearly nonexistent. In this case public awareness and political pressures are such that efficient solutions will not likely be undertaken.

There are other areas that could be discussed to illustrate further system inefficiencies. However, those discussed above lend support to the author's general conclusion from his study, that system efficiencies are most likely to be achieved through methods other than branchline
abandonments and elevator station closures. The study results suggest that, in order to minimize total costs of the grain handling and transportation system, only limited rail-line abandonments and closures of delivery points should be countenanced.

REFERENCES

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6. CP Operating Timetable, Effective October 29, 1972, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
7. Directory of Saskatchewan Hamlets, Settlements and Other Unincorporated Areas, 1972, Department of Municipal Affairs, Government of Saskatchewan, Regina, Saskatchewan.
A PRAIRIE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IN TRANSITION: THE CASE OF FARM MACHINERY PARTS IN MANITOBA

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Faculty of Administrative Studies
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ABSTRACT. The paper reports the general findings of a 1974 study of the distribution of farm machinery parts from manufacturer to regional warehouse to local dealer, with particular reference to the situation in Manitoba. Certain changes taking place in the system are discussed, notably the trend for regional warehouses serving the prairie market to be located in Regina rather than in Winnipeg; the decreasing number of local dealerships; and changes in the means of parts shipment, both from manufacturer to regional warehouse and from regional warehouse to local dealer. The impact of the change in regional warehouse location on the rapidity of parts shipment to selected farm implement dealerships in Manitoba is analyzed. The authors conclude with a review of the evolving distribution system and the probable directions of future change.

RESUME

Ce travail présente les résultats généraux obtenus par une étude entreprise en 1974 de la distribution des pièces de rechange de machinerie agricole de l'usine à l'entrepôt régional, puis au concessionnaire, en centrant la recherche sur le Manitoba. Certaines modifications se déroulant dans le système de distribution sont commentées, particulièrement la tendance à la concentration des entrepôts régionaux desservant le marché de la Prairie à Regina plutôt qu'à Winnipeg, le nombre décroissant des concessionnaires locaux, et les changements apportés dans la façon d'expédier les pièces de rechange, tant de l'usine à l'entrepôt régional que de l'entrepôt régional au concessionnaire. L'effet des changements apportés à la location des entrepôts régionaux ainsi que la rapidité de l'expédition des pièces de rechange à des concessionnaires sélectionnés au Manitoba sont analysés. Les auteurs concluent par une revue du système de distribution en évolution, et indiquent la direction probable des changements prévus dans l'avenir.

In the prairie provinces agriculture still plays a dominant role despite great strides in the process of industrialization. The importance of agriculture can be seen in an economic sense in that it directly accounts for 11 per cent of the total employment in Manitoba, 27 per cent in Saskatchewan, and 13 per cent in Alberta.1

One important facet of the agricultural system is the nature, availability, and distribution of farm machinery and associated services. The purpose of this paper is to outline recent trends within the distribution system for agricultural machinery parts and also to provide insights into the kind of system that is likely to develop in the future. In addition, it will consider several aspects of the relocation from Manitoba to Saskatchewan of major regional parts warehousing facilities by some manufacturers.

The subject of farm machinery and farm machinery parts has received considerable attention over the years; most notable is the report
of the Royal Commission on Farm Machinery released in 1971. Barber gives an extensive overview of the entire farm machinery system and outlines some trends evident at that time. Another important study was conducted by Tyrchniewicz. Relying extensively on the work of Barber, Tyrchniewicz extended the findings of the Royal Commission Report and developed a list of problems affecting the distribution of farm machinery parts. A paper by Thompson provides further background information on the farm machinery industry in Manitoba and identifies some of the developments in the dealership network and regional parts warehousing facilities.

In reviewing the literature, it was found, with respect to the transportation and distribution of farm machinery parts, that many of the problem areas identified are of a qualitative nature; and that it is difficult to assess the degree to which these problem conditions prevail, and the extent of their relationship to each other and to the transportation system as a whole.

This paper presents selected findings based on a study of certain aspects of the farm machinery system in western Canada during the summer of 1974. The study included a detailed survey, by means of personal interview, of seven full-line manufacturers, three long-line manufacturers and two short-line manufacturers. Also included was an in-depth study of 25 randomly selected Manitoba dealers representing the ten full-line and long-line companies, as well as the short-line companies. This phase of the study not only included personal interviews, but also assessed actual delivery performance through a determination of parts ordered on one specified day followed several days later by an analysis of if and when those orders had been received, and by what means. Through this methodology it was possible to analyze a number of aspects of the distribution system, and to develop some quantitative measures of efficiency.

A REVIEW OF THE EXISTING DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Farm machinery manufacturers are commonly categorized as either full-line, long-line or short-line companies. A full-line company manufactures a complete line of agricultural machinery, while a long-line manufacturer is a firm which is more restrictive in the line of machinery produced. The short-line company's products can generally be considered as accessories to equipment manufactured by the full-line and long-line firms.

At present, six of the ten full-line and long-line manufacturers predominant in the western Canadian market have regional parts warehouses in Winnipeg. These six manufacturers represent three full-line companies and three long-line companies. Two of the three long-line manufacturers have production facilities in Winnipeg and can be described as Winnipeg-based companies.
Three of the remaining manufacturers have their regional parts warehouses in Regina. One other has warehouses in both Winnipeg and Regina, with Winnipeg being used only for fast-moving parts. All four of these firms are classified as full-line companies.

With the exception of the two long-line companies with production facilities in Winnipeg, the remaining eight full-line or long-line manufacturers have their primary production facilities and major parts warehouses in either eastern Canada or the northern part of the United States, or both.

In addition to the full-line and long-line manufacturers, all three prairie provinces have a variety of short-line manufacturers and distributors of agricultural products. In recent years, many of the more innovative developments have been made by these smaller operations. Many of the products manufactured or promoted by these companies complement the products of the larger manufacturers. These short-line manufacturers and distributors can be found in smaller centers, as well as Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary and Edmonton.

The existing distribution system relies heavily on the use of trucks for the transportation of agricultural machinery parts both to and from the regional warehouses. More than 85 per cent of the parts delivered to the regional warehouse level are shipped by truck. In addition to truck transport, bus is utilized extensively for the shipment of parts from the regional warehouse to the dealer. Together, these two modes carry an overwhelming majority of all parts shipped between these points.

With one exception, all manufacturers utilize common carriers for the shipment of repair parts to their dealers. The other manufacturer utilizes a combination of contract carrier and common carrier.

All full-line and long-line manufacturers and distributors rely on a network of dealers to distribute their products as well as to provide the necessary service. The common practice of dealers is to be affiliated with a full-line or long-line manufacturer, as well as one or more short-line manufacturers.

RECENT TRENDS IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF FARM MACHINERY PARTS

a) *Increasing concentration and centralization*

The most significant trend in agriculture in the past few years has been the increasing concentration:

... although agricultural production has continued to climb, both the number of farms and the farm labour force have declined over the past decade, affected by increased mechanization and marketing trends. The number of Canadian farms dropped from 481,000 at the date of the 1961 Census to 431,000 in 1966; by 1980, it is expected that there will be only about 315,000 farms in Canada ... today one farmer feeds an estimated 40 people from his farming efforts; his grandfather fed about five at the beginning of
the century . . . It is expected that farms will continue to increase in size, but decrease in number during the remainder of the 1970's. Not only have farms become larger and farmers fewer, but machinery dealerships also have increased in size and become less numerous. Paralleling this trend has been the move towards using one regional warehouse for all of the prairie region as opposed to the more diverse system of past years.

Historically, Winnipeg served as the "Gateway to the West", becoming a major warehousing and distribution center for many commodities, including farm machinery. This aspect of Winnipeg's functional base is changing, and the farm machinery distribution system is no exception. Four full-line companies have embarked on centralization programs establishing one regional warehouse for the whole of western Canada. All four companies have facilities in Regina which has a more central location. Any facilities that may have previously existed in Winnipeg have been closed or reduced in importance. In addition to the four that have already relocated in Saskatchewan, one further company has indicated that it will also centralize its prairie operation through the establishment of a new warehouse in Regina.

The reasons for this move to Regina are numerous. One primary consideration is the central location that facilitates serving the entire prairie region. The practice prior to centralization was to have one or more additional warehouses in the other provinces. Most manufacturers who maintain a regional warehouse in Winnipeg still operate in this manner, with their other prairie warehouse(s) located in Regina, Calgary or Edmonton. As illustrated in Table 1, Regina enjoys a locational advantage over Winnipeg for the prairie region as a whole. The distances between Winnipeg and destinations in western Saskatchewan and Alberta are too great to be adequately served by one warehouse situated in Winnipeg.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To Winnipeg</th>
<th>To Regina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatoon</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan River</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The termination of warehouse facilities in Winnipeg may not be disadvantageous for all Manitoba dealers. Certainly, dealers in the eastern and interlake regions of the province will lose a close source of supply and, as a consequence, may experience a decline in the level of service. However, the bulk of farming in Manitoba is concentrated in the areas west of Winnipeg. As a result, many locations will not experience any appreciable change in distance from their dealership to the regional warehouse facility. Dealers near the western edge of the province may actually enjoy a reduction in the distance to their primary source of parts supply.

More important than geographical location, Saskatchewan also offers market location. As illustrated by Table 2, in 1973 Saskatchewan accounted for 42.8 per cent of total farm implement and equipment sales (including repair parts) within the three prairie provinces. Furthermore, Alberta accounted for 38.9 per cent of the total, while Manitoba accounted for only 18.3 per cent of total sales. Table 3 gives similar information for repair parts only, with Saskatchewan and Alberta accounting for 42.2 and 38.9 per cent respectively in 1973, while Manitoba accounted for only 18.9 per cent. It is evident from the data that Manitoba represents slightly less than 20 per cent of the market for sales of farm machinery and repair parts. The predominance of Saskatchewan and Alberta suggests that any decision to centralize regional warehousing will certainly lead to a choice of one of the two western provinces as opposed to Manitoba.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Manitoba</th>
<th>Saskatchewan</th>
<th>Alberta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>71,426,761</td>
<td>167,038,292</td>
<td>151,614,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>46,085,475</td>
<td>120,408,023</td>
<td>103,230,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>37,571,372</td>
<td>88,449,311</td>
<td>82,308,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>34,817,782</td>
<td>64,255,702</td>
<td>62,872,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>41,144,869</td>
<td>82,331,918</td>
<td>84,342,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>50,765,232</td>
<td>106,992,638</td>
<td>93,040,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>56,906,297</td>
<td>130,939,979</td>
<td>108,534,808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage of total prairie sales.

TABLE 3
Sale of Repair Parts for the three Prairie Provinces
1967-1973
Value at Wholesale Prices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Manitoba</th>
<th>Saskatchewan</th>
<th>Alberta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>10,455,682</td>
<td>23,436,461</td>
<td>1,541,176</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>8,082,836</td>
<td>19,297,199</td>
<td>16,537,454</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>6,835,053</td>
<td>16,552,015</td>
<td>13,950,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>6,382,249</td>
<td>12,689,990</td>
<td>12,518,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>6,425,507</td>
<td>12,690,302</td>
<td>12,618,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>6,314,504</td>
<td>14,889,432</td>
<td>12,469,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>5,982,814</td>
<td>14,487,088</td>
<td>12,757,474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage of total parts sales for prairies.

Source: *Farm Implement and Equipment Sales, 1973.* Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 63-203.

The combination of a geographically centralized location and the greater proximity to the prairie market found in Saskatchewan suggests that it is ideally suited for a centralized parts warehouse. However, these two factors are not the only criteria employed when a locational decision is made. As is discussed later, other factors are important; what is more, the whole concept of using one centralized warehouse facility at this time may be suspect.

b) *Changing patterns of transportation*

The increasing importance of truck and bus for the transportation of farm machinery parts became very evident in this study. The high frequency of service combined with broad geographical coverage has resulted in these two modes accounting for 80-90 per cent of total parts shipments to local dealers.

It is apparent that bus and some form of truck service, either LTL (less-than-truckload) or contract carrier service, are the only real alternatives available to the majority of farm implement dealers. Moreover, manufacturers are using these modes more frequently and thereby reducing the importance of other modes such as rail and air.

Another trend in the movement of parts is the increasing importance of contract carriers. A contract carrier is a company (normally trucking) which contracts to serve certain transportation needs of a firm. This service eliminates the need for dependence on public transport and rigid schedules, or for the purchase of transportation equipment. Some manufacturers have been using contract carriers for a number of years.
for parts shipments between their major warehouse and regional warehouse, and for a variety of other jobs such as the movement of parts from the manufacturing plant to a major warehouse facility.

The use of a contract carrier by one manufacturer at the regional warehouse/dealer level represents a further extension of this trend. The contract carrier’s vehicles leave the company’s regional warehouse in Saskatchewan each morning with parts shipments for all of the company’s affiliated dealers on the prairies. These shipments are unloaded at a number of designated depots, for example, Brandon. The parts are then either picked up by dealers in close geographical proximity to the depot or transferred the remaining distance by LTL truck or bus.

Other manufacturers have indicated considerable interest in this system and are monitoring its performance. It would seem from this expanding use of contract carriers that manufacturers are attempting to increase their control over the transportation function, in regards to parts distribution at least. The trend is away from the more traditional modes such as rail to the more flexible and controllable modes such as contract carriers.

This control of the transportation system by the manufacturers has implications for parts warehousing facilities. Many of the factors affecting the location of a warehouse in past years may no longer be valid. The decline of rail for the movement of parts suggests that locating in a center with major rail facilities may no longer be an important criterion. Similarly, the relative unimportance of air freight in the distribution of farm machinery parts would suggest that a center with numerous east-west and north-south air connections may be able to offer very little extra to an industry dominated by other modes.

Conversely, the increasing control of transportation as well as the increased use of local truck carriers and inter-provincial bus lines suggests that manufacturers can choose other criteria for the selection of a regional warehouse location. To a certain degree, this appears to have already transpired with the movement of regional warehouse facilities by a number of manufacturers to Regina, which has very limited north-south air connections.

c) Reduction in the number of dealers

The final trend affecting the distribution of farm machinery parts is the reduction in the number of dealers. Accompanying this reduction is the increased size of the remaining dealerships. This decline in numbers is the result of an evolutionary trend in agriculture as well as a change in manufacturers’ policy. The evolutionary trend is towards larger farms and fewer farmers. These large operations employ larger, more expensive equipment, thereby reducing the actual number of units represented by total equipment sales.
A change in policy by the manufacturers has also contributed to the reduction in the number of local dealerships. The trend in recent years has been to larger, more sophisticated dealerships. Such a trend appears necessary to meet the needs of larger farm operations. Manufacturers have encouraged this trend by closing out many of their smaller dealers. The result, in many cases, is one larger dealer now serving an area previously served by two or three smaller ones. This larger dealer is usually expected to carry more stock and parts inventory, as well as to provide a modernized sales and service facility. For example, our survey indicates that a small dealer carries, on average, a parts inventory valued at $5,000, whereas a large dealer's average inventory is almost $125,000. Some manufacturers seem to be pursuing this policy more actively than others, as evidenced by the number of new, expanded facilities they are opening. Such dealer centralization, of course, has economic and social implications for towns abandoned, as well as for those selected for larger operations. The former pattern of farmer travel and shopping activity may be significantly affected.

Warehouse policy decisions are also affected by this trend towards larger, but fewer, dealerships. Consequently, these have significance for larger cities, and even for provinces. As mentioned, the decline in the number of dealerships favours a centralized approach. With fewer dealerships it is easier for one warehouse location to service them all. Prior to this decline in the number of dealerships, a centralized warehouse operation probably would not have been feasible.

The larger size of existing dealerships also favours a more centralized approach to parts distribution. The warehouse is expected to service a smaller number of dealers who require parts that are not part of their regular stock, as well as to replenish their regular inventory levels. In past years, the smaller dealer may have relied heavily on the regional warehouse for parts rather than maintain expensive inventories himself. This, combined with a large number of dealers, made the multiple regional warehouse system a necessity. The more extensive inventories maintained by the larger dealers are ostensibly more beneficial to the farmer and to the manufacturer. However, as is outlined later, the system may not be as successful as initially expected.

THE SYSTEM IN EVOLUTION: AN EVALUATION

The main feature favouring centralization in Saskatchewan is its location. However, certain questions about this centralized location can be raised. A general principle pertaining to the efficient distribution of any commodity is to minimize backhauling. The location of a centralized warehouse in Saskatchewan actually creates backhauling situations for parts destined for eastern Saskatchewan and Manitoba since most parts originate from eastern Canada and must be shipped through Winnipeg.
Table 4 provides examples of backhauling situations in Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan. These mileage figures are based on the shortest routes between centers; however, many parts transported by bus follow routes that wind their way through the two provinces. For example, a dealer in Carman, Manitoba may receive a parts shipment by bus whose route travels through many southern towns such as Gainsborough, Saskatchewan and Cartwright, Manitoba. This adds additional mileage to the entire distance that a parts shipment must travel and, perhaps, increased cost and inconvenience to the dealer and farmer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>From Winnipeg</th>
<th>From Winnipeg Via Regina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swan River</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melita</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virden</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roblin</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkton</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinbach</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arborg</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dauphin</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other primary advantage of using one centralized location in Regina is greater proximity to the entire prairie market relative to a warehouse in Winnipeg or Calgary, for example. However, Table 5 suggests that the prairies market area may, in fact, be too large for one centralized warehouse operation. The distance between the warehouse location and some of the more distant centers results in high freight costs when shipments are sent long distances by LTL truck or bus. When more than one regional warehouse is utilized, the parts travel further under the more economical truckload or carload rates to the various warehouse locations. From these locations the parts can be shipped shorter distances at the more expensive LTL or bus rates.

Service levels, as well as freight costs, could be a problem for a centralized warehouse facility due to the size and diversity of the prairie market region. This market area and size combined with the complexity of modern machinery and the importance of having this machinery in operating condition during certain crucial periods of the year places an enormous burden on a centralized warehouse facility.
As an example, Table 6 illustrates shipping and arrival time to Manitoba dealers for a sample of parts shipments from manufacturers with regional warehouses in Winnipeg or Regina. The information was obtained in 1974 using a two-step survey procedure. First, parts ordered by the 25 dealers on a specific day were recorded. Second, a follow-up to the initial visit took place after 14 days had elapsed. Through the use of packing slips, bus and transfer receipts, and communications with the partsman at each location it was possible to determine the shipping and arrival date for each specified parts order.

It is evident that the performance of the Winnipeg-based warehouses is far better than the Saskatchewan-based warehouses in serving the Manitoba market.\(^7\) At the end of the 14-day period, one-third of all parts ordered had not arrived from the Saskatchewan-based operations. Conversely, only 3.8 per cent of the parts shipments from Manitoba-based warehouses had not arrived after this same period of time. There are any number of possible explanations for this difference. Some parts may not have been immediately available and placed on backorder. Other shipments may have been lost in transit or delayed at customs or during interlining. However, in this instance, it seems evident that the performance of the multiple operation is superior to that of the centralized warehouse operation.

As mentioned earlier, the increasing use of contract carriers in combination with more traditional modes favours a centralized facility. This factor combined with the infrequent use of air transport and the diminishing role of rail would suggest that a warehouse facility could be located at a center not particularly noted for rail and air facilities.
The benefits of such a decision may be short-term, however, as such changes as increased operating costs for trucks, reduced speed limits, the rationalization of the rail line system and an end to discriminatory freight rates could produce major changes in the transportation sector. All of these items have been under review in the past year. The relative economics of using contract carriers may diminish, forcing manufacturers to consider a return to rail which can offer economies for large shipments over greater distances. Unfortunately, the present level of service offered by rail is less than desirable, due to the unpredictability of arrival and the poor service offered in rural areas along branch lines.
especially, and a change back to this mode may only come about as a result of a combination of changes in the above factors.

Air may also play an expanded role in future transportation systems. The advent of jumbo jets and an increasing emphasis on fast delivery by many different industrial concerns will likely encourage an expansion of air freight service in the future. At present, however, air is only important for the delivery of emergency parts shipments from the major warehouse to the regional warehouse facility. Almost 50 per cent of emergency parts orders travel by air between these two points. An increased emphasis by farm groups and governments on quick emergency service, as evidenced by the Farm Machinery and Equipment Act for Manitoba, underlines the need for access to major air facilities.

Some manufacturers with centralized operations in Regina have attempted to overcome their lack of access to adequate air services for receiving parts shipped from their major warehouse facility by placing an employee at the Winnipeg terminal for the purpose of forwarding shipments to the proper dealer. This further emphasizes the need for adequate air service. While air is not the cheapest mode, it does offer quicker service for this movement than the others are capable of providing. As in the case of rail, air freight also seems to be currently suffering from its failure to provide adequate customer service.

Regardless of the present condition of these two modes, the future may witness the return of rail and the emergence of air. For a farm machinery manufacturer to possibly preclude optimum or future use of these modes by locating a regional warehouse in a center having limited rail and air facilities may be a premature decision.

Much of this study has been related to the question of a centralized regional warehouse versus a number of regional warehouses. Both the concept of minimizing backhauling and the sheer area of the prairie market might suggest that a series of warehouses would be more efficient than just one centralized facility. Of course a complete cost-benefit analysis would have to be conducted before final conclusions could be drawn.

An additional question about the effectiveness of a centralized operation may be raised. The idea of a centralized warehouse operation parallels the movement towards larger, less numerous dealerships. The concept behind the larger dealership is that of larger inventory levels and better service to the customer. However, strictly on physical appearance and size, it is obvious that many dealers have not modernized. For example, of the more than 190 dealerships presently licenced by the Manitoba Farm Machinery Board, the large majority are smaller dealerships that certainly cannot boast of high inventory levels or improved service facilities.

Accompanying this failure to modernize is an apparent continued expectation by many dealers of the previous role of ready delivery from
the regional warehouse. The survey showed that despite manufacturers’ expectations, smaller dealers continue to rely on the regional warehouse as a ready source of supply for parts. They fill a lower percentage of customer parts orders from their inventory than do larger dealerships and consequently do not provide the service required by large farms using expensive equipment, where the cost of waiting time is very serious. A number of dealers have increased their inventory levels somewhat over the past few years, but any substantial improvement in service to farmers seems to be nullified by the increasing complexity of machinery in general, and by the rapidity with which new model changes and product line expansions have been introduced by most manufacturers.

The concept of larger, modernized dealerships spread evenly throughout the western provinces may become a reality some day and would likely complement the development of centralized warehouse facilities. However, a look at the present pattern suggests that such a situation is still some time in the future. The current pattern of dealership appears to be somewhat haphazard with some centers enjoying an abundance of dealers while other centers of equivalent size and economic importance are without any dealers at all. In addition, the extent of modernization is rather varied, even among affiliates of the same manufacturer, and the overall performance of dealers varies greatly. In view of this situation some manufacturers may find it necessary to maintain several regional warehouses on the prairies if the level of service that their dealers and customers have come to expect is to be continued.

The marketing of farm machinery parts on the prairies is so complicated, covers such a large geographic area, and has so many eventual customers that any decision on warehousing must be thoroughly explored. The possibility of cost improvement realized through the operation of a single warehouse should be evaluated in terms of both short and long-run considerations. It is quite obvious that the farm machinery parts system is a distribution system in transition. The social and economic impacts of this transition are being felt by farmers, small businessmen, rural communities and, to a lesser extent, by larger cities and indeed the prairie provinces as a whole.

FOOTNOTES

1 Statistics Canada, 94-710. 1974.
2 Barber, C.L., Report of the Royal Commission on Farm Machinery, Ottawa, Queen’s Printer, 1971.
6 According to the 1971 Census the three prairie provinces have 133,571,421 acres of land in agricultural use broken down into 174,653 census farms.
7 It should be noted that Table 6 gives aggregated data for all 25 Manitoba dealers surveyed. As mentioned earlier, for some western Manitoba dealers, service from a Regina warehouse is not necessarily much different from that provided by a Winnipeg warehouse.
...ominated people, and demands are made that the control over the subordinates be lifted in order to enable them to participate on a more equal footing in the institutions of the dominant society, or to revive and develop their own institutions.

As accommodative structures, the treaties with the Canadian plains Indians provided the Indians with the essentials of physical sustenance and with certain legal rights and ‘protections’, in exchange for their lands and their promise to keep the peace. In addition to these economic and legal aspects, there were territorial, bureaucratic, and political aspects to the accommodation reached between the Indians and the government. Territorially, the Indians were relegated to isolated reservations. A bureaucratic apparatus was also created to administer the accommodation. Politically, Indians were excluded from power through the denial of the voting franchise.

However, some seventy-five years after the signing of the treaties, conditions began to change in significant ways. With the penetration of the dominant society’s mass media came an exposure not only to ideologies of decolonization, but also to the instructive examples of other subordinated peoples, such as the U.S. blacks and later the Algerians and U.S. Indians, who vigorously challenged their oppressors in order to arrive at a new accommodation. They further witnessed the revival of these other groups’ cultures and the emergence of social movements to promote their demands.

The example of these other peoples helped rekindle a sense of hope in Canadian Indians, and with this the accommodative structures began to weaken. The granting of the federal franchise in 1960 cracked the political pillar of the accommodative structures. The “baby boom” of the 1960’s and the resultant population pressure on the reserves cracked the territorial pillar, as increasing numbers of Indians left the isolation of the reserves and came to the cities. In addition, a determination arose to challenge the government on its violation of the legal provisions of the treaties, and to take full advantage of the legal system which had been imposed upon them in order to retrieve lost lands and to secure a more viable economic base for themselves.

An amorphous social movement arose across the country. One of its main objects of attack was the last pillar of the old accommodative structure—the bureaucracy represented by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The tactics followed by the different branches of this social movement varied considerably. However, those tactics, along with the movement’s rhetoric, demands, and accomplishments, helped propel Indians out of the state of virtual “irrelevance” (Patterson, 1972) into which the accommodative structures of the treaties had placed them vis-à-vis non-Indians and the non-Indian economy.
Thus Indians have moved from the wings much closer to the centre of the political stage in Canada. Questions now arise as to how Canadian Indians are perceived by non-Indians, how favourably or unfavourably disposed Canadians are toward Indians, and how the strategies, tactics, and goals pursued by Indians or available to them are received by non-Indians. These are important questions in need of answers, for if new accommodative structures are to be forged between Indians and governments, the shape and character of those structures will be influenced by the perceptions of Indians held by non-Indians in the electorate. For instance, if a “white backlash” were to occur against the Indian movement, the tactical options available to the movement would likely be considerably reduced, with concomitant effects upon the movement’s ability to achieve its goals. As a numerical minority with limited power resources in a majoritarian democracy, Indians stand vulnerably exposed to the consequences of adverse public opinion.

In western Canada, where the proportion of Indians in the total population is considerably greater than in the eastern provinces, there is considerable potential for the emergence of new accommodative structures, as illustrated by the agreement reached in the summer of 1976 to permit Indian participation in the development of the Athabasca tar sands. Therefore, it is our purpose in this paper to address ourselves to the questions raised in the previous paragraph, as they apply to the reactions of non-Indians in the three prairie provinces. We will first describe the general perceptions which westerners hold of native Indians. Then we will examine non-Indian reactions to native land claims, claims which often constitute the foundation of new accommodative structures which natives are trying to erect. Thirdly, we will discuss white reactions to the use of several different tactics which Indians have at their disposal in trying to achieve their goals. In concluding, we will explore some factors which have the potential ability to change westerners’ sentiments towards Indians in the future.

Our tool in this endeavour is the data from a study which we conducted during January and February 1976. At that time, 1832 randomly selected residents of Canada, living coast to coast and south of the sixtieth parallel of latitude, were interviewed in their homes for approximately one hour, primarily on the topic of their orientations toward Indians and Indian issues in Canada. Our attention in this paper will be focused mainly upon the 676 respondents interviewed in the prairie provinces, although passing reference will occasionally be made to results from the rest of Canada so as to provide a context within which to view the western data.

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF CANADIAN INDIANS

A. Differences Between Native Indians and Other Canadians

The first question in the interview which dealt directly with opinions about Indians was as follows: “If we were to compare native Canadian
Indians with other Canadians, in your opinion, what would be the major differences between them?” For the western Canadian sample as a whole, 80 per cent of the respondents stated at least one difference. Some 10.7 per cent stated that no differences exist, 2.5 per cent that no differences should exist, and 6.8 per cent either did not know of any differences or did not answer the question.

Table 1 shows the frequency with which the various differences were mentioned. It should be noted that throughout the article, interprovincial differences within the prairie sample will be mentioned only when they are statistically significant. Thus, when interprovincial differences are not cited, as in Table 1, it can be assumed that as far as the issue at hand is concerned the prairie population is not split along provincial lines.

Table 1 shows that, among the prairie residents, the most frequently mentioned differences referred to what, from the respondent’s point of view, might be called “personality deficiencies” among native Indians. Almost a third of the prairie respondents who mentioned any differences at all mentioned such “deficiencies”. Although most of the references related in one manner or another to laziness, lack of initiative or lack of motivation, sundry other “faults” were also mentioned.

The frequency with which personality differences were mentioned suggests a current of pejorative ethnic stereotyping among the western Canadian population. However, the next six most frequently mentioned differences cited by prairie respondents in Table 1 seem less pejorative in their content. For example, the fact that Indians are perceived as less educated, as practising a different lifestyle, as suffering from prejudice and discrimination, or as lacking sufficient economic opportunities does not necessarily imply racial hostility. Such perceptions could spring from an acute awareness of, and sympathy for, the native peoples as readily as they could from prejudice. We will return to this issue later.

The prairie respondents who mentioned differences in government treatment were relatively evenly divided into two groups. Forty people felt that Indians received preferential treatment from the government, while thirty-seven people felt that the government treatment received by Indians placed them at a disadvantage. On the other hand, responses in the category labelled “differences related to problems of assimilation and adjustment” were not so evenly divided. Here, twenty-three respondents referred to Indians’ “inability” to assimilate into the broader Canadian society, while only ten mentioned identity problems springing from the dilemma of assimilation. Finally, it is interesting to note also that only a handful of respondents mentioned the Indian relationship to the natural environment as a major source of difference. Thus, while one might assume that the ecology movement offers Indians a potentially positive toehold in the public consciousness by allowing a link to be forged between traditional Indian beliefs about the land and contemporary
TABLE 1
Major Differences Between Native Canadian Indians and other Canadians*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference Mentioned</th>
<th>Prairie Sample</th>
<th>National Non-prairie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Differences emphasizing Indian personality deficiencies (eg: laziness, lack of ambition, lack of initiative)</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Differences in education</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Differences in culture, heritage, or lifestyle (eg: “upbringing”, “way of life”, “philosophy of life”)</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Discrimination and/or prejudice mentioned as a difference</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Differences in economic opportunities or lack of economic achievement (eg: unemployment, inappropriate skills or training)</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Differences in government treatment</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Poverty or poor living conditions of Indians (eg: low incomes, poor health or nutrition, poor housing, poor sanitation)</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Differences in the use of alcohol</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Differences related to problems of assimilation and adjustment (eg: inability or unwillingness to assimilate and adjust, loss of identity)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Indian remoteness, geographical or social, from the Canadian society</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Indian relationship to the natural environment (eg: Indians protect, appreciate or know more about the environment, Indians live closer to the land)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* “If we were to compare native Canadian Indians with other Canadians, in your opinion what would be the major differences between them?”

** Because multiple answers were possible, the percentages do not total to 100%. The percentages in this table are based upon the 554 prairie respondents and 819 national non-prairie respondents who stated at least one difference between Indians and other Canadians.

ecological concerns, it appears that an environmental image of the native community has not yet taken hold in the prairie provinces.

Closely related to the question on the main differences between Indians and other Canadians were two other questions dealing with traditional Indian lifestyles. The first of these was stated as follows:
Some people say that Indians have to choose between either having a higher standard of living or preserving their traditional way of life. Do you agree that they have to make a choice or can they have both?

A bare majority (53.7 per cent) of our prairie respondents felt that Indians could both preserve their way of life and at the same time achieve a higher standard of living. A large minority (42.2 per cent) felt that a choice would have to be made by the Indians, while the remaining 4.1 per cent expressed no opinion.

To those respondents who felt that Indians would have to make a choice, we asked the follow-up question:

Which choice do you think the majority of Indian people would favour? That is, would they choose a higher standard of living or would they choose to preserve their traditional way of life?

Here a slight majority (55.8 per cent) said that most Indians would choose to preserve their way of life. Conversely, 37.9 per cent were of the opinion that the majority of Indians would choose a higher standard of living; 6.3 per cent expressed no opinion.

Combining these two questions, we see that 54 per cent of the prairie respondents apparently believe that Indians can participate in a new and more beneficial accommodative relationship with non-Indian society, without having to relinquish their cultural distinctiveness. Another 16 per cent apparently perceive Indians as seeking a new accommodation, but see assimilation as the cost of that accommodation and perceive the majority of Indians as being willing to bear that cost. A third perspective, held by 24 per cent of the sample, apparently views Indians as preferring the old accommodation to an assimilative new one. A small group of 6 per cent is undecided. While these proportions may not be just what Indian leaders would like, they nevertheless do provide some grounds for optimism for those leaders. At the “grass-roots” level, there does not seem to be any widespread, overwhelming assimilative thrust to have Indians give up those cultural differences which distinguish them from other Canadians.

B. Main Problems Faced by Canadian Indians

The perceptions captured in Table 1 are both modified and reinforced by answers to the next question in the interview, which asked: “What would you say are the main problems faced by Canadian Indians today?” If a problem was mentioned, the interviewer then probed to see if the respondent had any additional problems in mind. Ninety-five per cent of the respondents mentioned at least one problem, with the majority mentioning more than one (Table 2).

While the contents of Table 2 cannot be readily summarized, some of the highlights can be mentioned. For example, prejudice and discrimination by others constituted the most frequently mentioned problem facing Canadian Indians today. This was followed closely by
problems related to alcohol and less closely by problems centering on educational “deficiencies”. This was the only case in which significant interprovincial variation was encountered, with 29.1 per cent of the Alberta respondents mentioning education-related problems, compared to 18.6 per cent for Saskatchewan and 19.9 per cent for Manitoba respondents.

**TABLE 2**

Main Problems Faced by Canadian Indians Today*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Mentioned</th>
<th>Prairie Sample</th>
<th>National Non-prairie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Prejudice and/or discrimination against Canadian Indians (Also: racism, bigotry, lack of acceptance by whites)</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Drinking and/or alcoholism</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Lack of education (Also: dropping out of school, lack of an appropriate education)</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Political and/or governmental problems (eg: government assistance, too much welfare, dependency, government interference in Indian lives)</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Personality “deficiencies” (eg: laziness, lack of initiative, shyness, low self-esteem, feelings of inferiority)</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Problems of assimilation and adjustment (Including: inability or unwillingness to assimilate, forced assimilation, loss of culture, identity problems)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Indian reserves (eg: reserves hold Indians back, prevent integration, cannot be economically self-sufficient)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Problems of internal organization and cohesion (eg: lack of leadership, cannot agree among themselves, internal bickering)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* "What would you say are the main problems faced by Canadian Indians today? . . . Are there any other problems you can think of?"

** As multiple answers were possible, the percentages do not total to 100%. The percentages in this table are based upon the 642 prairie respondents and 1016 national non-prairie respondents who stated at least one problem. Other responses besides those listed in the table were also given.
The set of problems ranked fourth in frequency dealt with political or governmental issues. Interestingly, the great majority (78 per cent) of responses of this type focused upon government assistance to Indians, assistance which was frequently said to rob Indians of ambition and self-reliance. Only a single respondent touched upon the problems that Indians face as a relatively small and resource-poor minority struggling to influence governments which are themselves dependent upon majority support for their survival. It seems that the very acute political problems that Indians face in their dealings with all levels of government have not penetrated the perceptual filters of western Canadians.

In the fifth category listed in Table 2, unemployment was the major problem mentioned, although various aspects of poverty also received frequent mention. Responses coded as “problems of assimilation and adjustment” included 52 mentions of the Indians’ perceived inability to assimilate, 14 mentions of an unwillingness to assimilate, and 45 mentions of either identity problems or the loss of Indian culture.

Problems coded as “personality deficiencies” ranked sixth. These primarily involved the mention of laziness, lack of ambition or lack of initiative, characteristics which were mentioned four times as frequently as all other personality characteristics combined.

Caution is in order in making inferences about non-Indians’ evaluations of Indians, on the basis of data such as Mackie’s or those condensed into our Tables 1 and 2. Characteristics such as alcoholism, lack of initiative, and unsanitary living conditions, which were cited by our respondents as main problems of Indians or as main differences between Indians and other Canadians, may suggest that respondents holding these perceptions evaluate Indians negatively. However, such a conclusion would not be justified without knowing whom the respondent holds responsible for these characteristics—the Indians themselves or the larger society. Without such data on the attribution of responsibility, we cannot make inferences about the evaluational content of Tables 1 and 2.

C. Contact With Indians

A question which arises naturally here is, how important is actual direct contact with Indians in shaping respondents’ perceptions of Indians and their problems? Are the perceptions of prairie respondents who have encountered Indians in a variety of situations different from the perceptions of other prairie residents who have not? Common sense would probably suggest that the answer to the second question is “yes”, and the sociological literature certainly indicates that intergroup attitudes are affected by the characteristics of the situation of contact (Williams, 1975:138-140).

We therefore asked our respondents whether they had come into contact with Indians in any of the following five types of relationships or
situations: at work, in any clubs or organizations to which they belonged, as close friends, as neighbours, or as relatives. By adding up how many of these different types of contact each respondent had experienced, we were able to create what might be called a “Composite Index of Interpersonal Contact” to indicate the scope of interpersonal contact between the respondent and Canadian Indians.

We found that prairie respondents averaged two types of contacts with Indians, while non-prairie respondents averaged only a single form of contact. We found also, to our surprise, that the scope of interpersonal contact had no systematic impact whatsoever upon perceptions of Indians. Even when we broke down the aggregate index into its five components and examined each in relation to the problems and differences cited by respondents, we found virtually no statistically significant relationships.

Undeterred, we explored two other avenues suggested by the sociological literature on the effects of black-white contact in the U.S.A. That literature indicates that whites’ attitudes toward blacks are affected by whether or not the cross-racial contact involves persons of equal status, and whether or not the contact involved pleasant or unpleasant experiences. Once again, we found no conclusive results. As far as the second avenue is concerned, we are led to conclude that it is not the mere fact of having had a pleasant or unpleasant experience with Indians that influences perceptions of them. It is more likely the specific content of those encounters, and the significance attached to them by the non-Indian person, which influences the perception.

To summarize, contact with Indians as measured in our study was found to have virtually no impact upon perceptions. This is probably due to three factors:

1. our lack of more detailed information on the contact situations, such as recency, frequency, duration and significance to the respondent;
2. respondents over-reporting their contact with Indians — for example, we are skeptical of the finding that 40 per cent of the prairie sample reported having had a close Indian friend and 57 per cent reported having an Indian neighbour; these figures may reflect a “social desirability” bias;
3. the fact that increased scope of contact leads to increased likelihood of both pleasant and unpleasant experiences with Indians.

D. An Index of Generalized Sympathy Toward Indians and Indian Concerns

Our earlier examination of the two open-ended questions on Indian differences and problems was inconclusive with regard to the evaluations attached to respondents’ perceptions. We are still left with the question: “What, on balance, is the disposition of prairie sentiment toward Indians?” Are western Canadians sympathetic or unsympathetic toward
the conditions, treatment and aspirations of Indians? Are western Canadians polarized into “liberal” and “illiberal” camps on the issue, or are they beset by ambivalence, or by indifference?

These alternative images of the outlooks of western Canadians can be explored through responses to the battery of thirteen statements which we presented to respondents near the end of the interview. The statements covered a wide range of concerns, some of which had been touched upon earlier in the interview. For each statement, the respondent was asked to indicate his or her level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale ranging from “agree strongly” through “neither agree nor disagree” to “disagree strongly”. The patterns of response to ten of the thirteen items were sufficiently consistent with one another that they could be used to create an index of generalized sympathy (or, conversely, lack of sympathy) toward the conditions, treatment, and aspirations of Canadian Indians. This “Sympathy Index” can be used to assess the general disposition of western Canadians toward Indians, and to compare this disposition to that of Canadians living outside the prairie provinces.

For eight of the ten statements comprising the Sympathy Index, respondents were given a score of five (very sympathetic) if they strongly agreed with the statement, a score of four if they moderately agreed, and so on through to a score of one if they strongly disagreed with the statement. A score of three was given if the respondent neither agreed nor disagreed, or if he/she expressed no opinion at all concerning the statement. The eight statements, along with the percentage of the national and western Canadian samples that agreed (strongly or moderately) with each, are shown in Table 3. The Sympathy Index also included two statements for which respondents were given a score of five if they strongly disagreed, and so on through a score of one if they strongly agreed. These two statements, along with the per cent of the samples that disagreed (strongly or moderately) with each, are shown in the lower panel of Table 3.

For every respondent, an index score was created by adding together his/her score on each of the ten separate statements. Total index scores could thus potentially range from ten (which would reflect a very unsympathetic response to each of the ten statements) to fifty (which would reflect a very sympathetic response to each of the ten statements). Figure 1 presents the distribution of index scores for the prairie and national samples. The actual range of these scores in the prairie sample was from 11 to 48.

Figure 1 clearly illustrates that prairie sentiment toward Indians and Indian issues is not polarized into “liberal” and “illiberal” camps. Rather, it is more symmetrically distributed about the mean, with relatively few respondents being located at either extreme. Figure 1 also illustrates, however, that sentiment in the prairie provinces is markedly
### TABLE 3

**Ten Statements Comprising the Indian Sympathy Index**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% Agreeing Strongly or Moderately</th>
<th>% Disagreeing Strongly or Moderately</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) The Federal Department of Indian Affairs tends to be more concerned with bureaucratic red tape than seeing to the needs of the Indian people.</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) On the whole, Indian leaders in Canada have demonstrated a lot of restraint in acting on their grievances.</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Indians deserve to be a lot better off economically than they are now.</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Since Indians feel that they were unfairly taken advantage of when treaties were originally signed, the treaties should be renegotiated.</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Indians, as the first Canadians, should have special cultural protection that other groups don't have.</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) If a Mackenzie Valley pipeline is imposed upon the northern natives against their wishes, we can't blame them if they resort to violence.</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Indian people themselves, not the provincial government, should decide what Indian children are taught in school.</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Where Indian principles of land ownership conflict with the white man's law, Indian principles should be given priority.</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Most Indian leaders who criticize the Federal Department of Indian Affairs are more interested in improving their own political position than they are interested in improving the lot of their people.</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) At the present time Indians receive enough financial backing from the Federal Government.</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**N** = 676 1157
less sympathetic than it is elsewhere in Canada. Overall, the average index score for the prairies was 30.1 (which practically coincides with the mid-point of the scale), compared to a non-prairie average of 32.9. This difference is statistically significant at the .001 level. Thus, although prairie sentiment shows no clear indication of gravitating toward the unsympathetic end of the index, it is nonetheless decidedly less sympathetic toward Indians and Indian issues than is sentiment elsewhere in the country.

The distribution of prairie sentiment depicted in Figure 1 masks interprovincial variation which is significant at the .001 level of confidence. Respondents in Manitoba were, on the average, considerably more sympathetic toward Indians and Indian issues than the overall prairie distribution would suggest, while Saskatchewan respondents were significantly less so. The average score for Manitoba respondents was 31.4, compared to 30.0 for those in Alberta and only 28.9 for those respondents living in Saskatchewan. Thus even within the prairies, considerable interprovincial differences exist.

We have now examined some fairly general measures of prairie residents' perceptions of and sentiments toward Indians and Indian issues. However, such general measures frequently obscure the character of public sentiment on more specific issues. Thus, before turning to a discussion of some potential sources of change in prairie sentiment, we will examine the attitudes of prairie residents toward two more specific issues which are very important in forging the new accommodative structures which Indians are striving to establish with the non-Indian Canadian society. The first of these is land claims, which, for some Indians, constitute the very foundation upon which the new accommodative structures are to be erected. The second is that of the tactics which are available to Indians as they seek to drive home to bureaucrats, politicians, and others the message that new accommodative structures are desperately needed.

Land Claims

During the past decade, a large number of Indian land claims have been filed, many of which have attracted great public attention because of their scope, or their implications for resource development, or both. This is surely one of the potentially most contentious issues arising between Indians and the broader society. Thus, in our study, we devoted considerable emphasis to the measurement of opinions concerning Indian land claims. The interview explored several aspects not reported in this article but described elsewhere (Gibbins and Ponting, 1976a).

The question reported in Table 4 sought to probe respondents' perceptions of the motivation of Indians in making their land claims. Faced with the alternatives presented in the interview, 35.5 per cent of those who answered the question felt that Indians were interested in the
FIGURE 1
Sample Distributions on Indian Sympathy Index

---

National sample, excluding prairie respondents (N = 1157)

Prairie respondents (N = 676)

National Mean = 32.9
Prairie Mean = 30.1
land for its own sake, 39.3 per cent felt that Indians were interested in the money that the land might bring, and 25.2 per cent perceived both motives in land claims. As Table 4 indicates, Albertans were the most likely to perceive a pecuniary interest in land claims, compelling one to speculate that the capitalist ethic may well enjoy a more robust existence in Alberta than elsewhere in the prairies. In this regard, it should also be noted that we have no evidence that pecuniary motives are considered to be any less valid, legitimate or desirable by respondents than are other motives.

**TABLE 4**

**Indian Interest in Land Claims**

“Do you feel that when Indians lay claim to land in Canada they are mainly interested in the land for its own sake or are they mainly interested in it for the money it might bring?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option Chosen</th>
<th>Man.</th>
<th>Sask.</th>
<th>Alta.</th>
<th>Total Prairie*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Land for its own sake</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Land for the money it might bring</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Both of the above</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (excluding 6.8% non-responses)</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total national non-prairie percentages were as follows: (A) 50.6%; (B) 27.1%; (C) 22.4%.

The question reported in Table 5 moves away from the motivations underlying land claims to a more central concern—the perceived validity of such claims. If public opinion is to have any effect on the resolution of Indian land claims, the major impact will likely come from perceptions of legitimacy and validity, rather than from perceptions of motivation *per se*.

On balance the prairie population may appear at first glance to be more unsupportive than supportive of Indian land claims. While 46.8 per cent of the prairie sample felt that many or all Indian land claims are valid, 53.2 per cent felt that few or none are valid. Nevertheless, a substantial and perhaps even surprising degree of public support for native land claims does exist. Although only 6.5 per cent of the sample felt that *all* claims are valid, it should nonetheless be encouraging to Indians that only 7.8 per cent felt that *none* of the land claims are valid. To put the figures another way, 92.2 per cent of those with an opinion on the
TABLE 5

Validity of Indian Land Claims

"Overall, do you feel that all Indian land claims are valid, many are valid, few are valid, or no Indian land claims are valid?"

Per cent of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option Chosen</th>
<th>Man.</th>
<th>Sask.</th>
<th>Alta.</th>
<th>Total Prairies*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) All are valid</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Many are valid</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Few are valid</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) None are valid</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (excluding non-responses)</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 182 163 303 648

Chi square significance = .01

* The total national non-prairie percentages were as follows:
  (A) 12.2%; (B) 54.2%; (C) 27.5%; (D) 6.1%.

question granted the validity of at least some Indian land claims. We should also note from the table that support for Indian land claims is significantly higher in Manitoba, where 55.3 per cent of the respondents felt that all or many land claims were valid, than it is in Alberta (46.3 per cent) or in Saskatchewan (38.2 per cent).

In some respects, the question on validity is difficult to interpret because it is addressed to land claims in general, whereas specific land claims vary greatly in their magnitude, their implications for the broader society, and the degree of support or opposition that they generate within that society (Barber, 1976). We thus also incorporated a question on one particular land claim, filed by Indians in northern Alberta shortly before our study, and encompassing the Athabasca oil sands.

When asked if they had heard of this claim, 61.8 per cent of our prairie respondents replied that they had. Not surprisingly, Albertans were most likely to have heard of it. Respondents who had heard of the claim were then asked what they felt Indians were trying to accomplish with the claim. As Table 6 demonstrates, only a handful of respondents felt that Indians were trying to permanently block development of the oil sands. A more common belief was that Indians were trying to get total control of the oil sands. The most common perception, however, was that Indians were trying to obtain greater participation in the projects already under way at the oil sands. This belief appears to coincide with
the rationale publicized by the Indian Association of Alberta at the time it filed the claim. This publicity may also account for the finding that Alberta respondents were more likely than those in Saskatchewan or Manitoba to state greater participation as the Indian goal.

TABLE 6
Perceived Objectives of the Oil Sands Claim

“What would you say the Indians are trying to accomplish with the claim to the Athabasca oil sands? Here is a card listing some possibilities. Do you think their aim is one of these? ... (If not, what is your opinion?)”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Prevent the oil sands from ever being developed</td>
<td>Man. 10.7 Sask. 5.3 Alta. 4.8 Total Prairies 6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Obtain greater Indian participation in the projects that are already under way at the oil sands</td>
<td>Man. 54.7 Sask. 54.7 Alta. 63.5 Total Prairies 60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Gain total Indian control of the oil sands</td>
<td>Man. 32.0 Sask. 37.3 Alta. 23.9 Total Prairies 28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get money from the oil sands or from a settlement</td>
<td>Man. 2.7 Sask. — Alta. 3.9 Total Prairies 2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Man. — Sask. 2.7 Alta. 3.9 Total Prairies 2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (excluding non-responses)</td>
<td>100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 75 75 230 380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tactical Options Facing Canadian Indians

Over the past decade, Canadian Indians have employed a wide variety of tactics in promoting their cause and publicizing their grievances. Not only have they frequently used such “conventional” tactics as lawsuits, but there has also been a growing emphasis on more “radical” tactics such as blockades, armed and unarmed occupations, and threats of violence. It was this apparent shift toward radicalism that led us to pay particular attention to the public response to tactical radicalism. We were interested in whether or not tactical radicalism might undermine levels of public support and sympathy for the Indian cause, and in whether or not radicalism might trigger some form of backlash within the white population.

In this article we cannot fully explore the bulk of the survey data on public perceptions of tactical radicalism. A detailed discussion is
available elsewhere (Gibbins and Ponting 1976b). We should like, however, to discuss one set of questions in which respondents were asked to state their degree of approval or disapproval of Indians using each of seven tactical options. This material reveals at least some of the flavour of Western sentiment in this area.

The question, and the responses to it, are reported in Table 7. Here we find that requesting a Royal Commission and launching lawsuits both win majority approval, but for each of the other five tactics, at least a plurality of the sample disapproved. The rate of disapproval reached a peak with “threatening violence”, a tactic of which almost 96 per cent of the respondents disapproved, most of them strongly.

TABLE 7
Degree of Approval for Various Tactical Options Facing Indians

“Putting aside the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of each tactic, please tell me whether you would approve or disapprove of Indians actually using these different tactics.”

Per cent of the Sample Who:*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactical Option**</th>
<th>Strongly Approve</th>
<th>Moderately Approve</th>
<th>Neither Approve nor Disapprove</th>
<th>Moderately Disapprove</th>
<th>Strongly Disapprove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Requesting that a Royal Commission be formed to study Indian problems</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Launching lawsuits in the courts</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Holding protest marches</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Occupation of government offices</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Boycotting private businesses</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Barricading roads and railways crossing Indian reserves</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Threatening violence</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Respondents with no opinion (1.8% to 4.3% of the sample) excluded from this table.

** Order scrambled on questionnaire.

For the national sample excluding prairie respondents the percentages strongly or moderately approving of each tactic are as follows:
(1) 87.6%; (2) 67.3%; (3) 60.0%; (4) 37.3%; (5) 14.7% (6) 17.7%; (7) 2.8%
There are several aspects of Table 7 that warrant emphasis. The first is that, even for the two most innocuous tactics on the list, a significant level of disapproval is found within the prairie sample. Thus, while the majority of respondents approved of requesting a Royal Commission and launching lawsuits, 11.2 per cent nonetheless disapproved of the former and 23.6 per cent disapproved of the latter. Secondly, it is interesting to note that more people would approve of Indians occupying government offices than would approve of Indians boycotting private business. Although the former seems to be the more radical of the two tactics, it may be that the government, but not private business, is perceived by a substantial part of the public as a legitimate target of Indian protest. The only statistically significant interprovincial difference in this set of questions occurred with respect to “boycotting private business”. Although the provincial differences were not large, Saskatchewan residents were the most opposed to this tactic, while Manitoba residents displayed the highest level of approval. Finally, with respect to “threatening violence”, not only did an overwhelming percentage of the sample disapprove, but few people expressed indifference; only 2.4 per cent neither approved nor disapproved, and only 1.8 per cent of the respondents had no opinion on the question. For the other six tactical options, an average of 13.7 per cent of the sample neither agreed nor disagreed, and an average of 3.2 per cent expressed no opinion.

The potential for outbreaks of violence in Indian protest, and the serious consequences that such outbreaks could have on non-Indian public opinion (and subsequently upon Indians themselves) led us to include another question on violence in the interview. Thus, the following question was posed to respondents:

Some people say that no good can ever come from Indians using violence. Other people say that violence is justified under certain circumstances. What is your opinion—would you say that violence by Indians is justified under no circumstances, for self-defence only, or when all other means of getting their message across have failed?

For the total prairie sample, 41.9 per cent replied “under no circumstances”, 45.1 per cent said “for self-defence only”, 10.7 per cent said “when all other means have failed”; 0.3 per cent gave other answers, and 2.1 per cent had no opinion. There was no significant interprovincial variation.

The response to this question suggests a higher acceptance of violence than was implied by the 2.0 per cent of the sample in Table 7 which approved “threatening violence”. The level of support, however, is still minimal. In general, the reaction of prairie respondents to tactical radicalism suggests that the employment by Indians of radical tactics may seriously compromise pre-existing levels of public support and sympathy. However, the actual outcome of violence with respect to white public opinion would depend, no doubt, on the circumstances sur-
rounding the event, and upon the manner in which the event was both portrayed in the media and characterized by public officials (Turner, 1969). Furthermore, our research provides no insight as to whether the potential gains of radicalism, both with respect to mobilizing the native community and jolting the government into action, might outweigh the potential costs in public support (Gibbins and Ponting, 1977). Our research simply suggests that such potential costs exist, and that their magnitude may be considerable.

**SOURCES OF CHANGE IN PRAIRIE SENTIMENT**

Our survey offers a snapshot of prairie residents' perceptions of Canadian Indians, a snapshot taken during the early months of 1976. We cannot assume that the perceptions we have described are static. On the contrary, we must assume that such perceptions are always open to change. As new events, issues, demands and leaders emerge, public opinion will inevitably be affected, but of course, the degree to which existing opinions will change, and the direction in which they will change, cannot be determined until the character of future events unfolds.

There are other potential sources of change, however, that can be examined through our survey. These sources lie within the process of social and demographic change which moves inexorably through the prairie population. For example, over time, the population of western Canada is being exposed to greater and greater formal education; a child born today can expect, on the average, to spend more years undergoing formal education than did his parents. Secondly, the composition of the population is changing as older members die and are replaced. The population, in effect, is undergoing continual generational change. The implications of these sources of change for prairie residents' perceptions of Canadian Indians will now be considered.

**A. Educational Change**

The principal relevance of educational change to our present research lies in the frequently observed relationship between levels of formal education and inter-group attitudes. Specifically, studies have found that individuals with relatively advanced formal educations generally come across as more "liberal" in their orientations toward inter-group relations and minority group demands than do those individuals with less extensive education. If it can be shown that levels of formal education are related to the perceptions of native Canadians held by prairie respondents, then we can at least speculate on what continued educational change within the prairie population may entail for attitudes toward the conditions, concerns and aspirations of Canadian Indians.

If we return first to the question on major differences between Canadian Indians and other Canadians, we find that, in some respects, the four educational groups vary quite sharply in the types of differences
they reported. Table 8 presents those cases where statistically significant differences exist among the four educational groups. Thus we find that those respondents with relatively high levels of formal education were much more inclined than were those respondents with limited educations to cite differences related to poverty and culture. For example, among respondents who cited at least one difference, we found that 24.2 per cent of those with university degrees mentioned differences related to poverty or poor living conditions, while only 3.7 per cent of those with grade-school educations did so. On the other hand, not a single respondent with a university degree mentioned an alcohol-related difference, while 16.9 per cent of those respondents with only grade-school educations did so.

**TABLE 8**

**Major Differences Between Canadian Indians and Other Canadians**

*By Education of Respondent*

**Percentage Mentioning Type of Difference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education of Respondent</th>
<th>Grade School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Some Post Secondary</th>
<th>University Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Difference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Poverty or poor living conditions of Indians</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Differences in the use of alcohol</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Discrimination and/or prejudice</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Differences in culture, heritage and lifestyle</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant* differences among educational subsamples:

Respondents with higher levels of formal education were more likely to cite at least one difference between Indians and non-Indians. This greater response rate was statistically significant. The lower response rate among persons with a grade-school education may reflect greater difficulty experienced in handling open-ended questions.

Thus the amount of formal education appears to have an important impact on prairie perceptions of differences between Indians and other Canadians. In general, levels of formal education also tend to have a substantial impact upon the types of problems perceived to be facing
Canadian Indians today, as statistically significant differences once again emerge across the four educational subgroups. Specifically, as Table 9 shows, respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to mention the problems of prejudice and discrimination faced by Indians and the problems of assimilation and adjustment. However, persons with low levels of formal education were more likely to mention drinking or alcoholism as a problem. This is consistent with our findings on the previous question dealing with the main differences between Indians and other Canadians. Weaker, statistically insignificant trends can also be detected with respect to the mention of education, reserves, and poverty and unemployment. However, there is no trend by education whatsoever in the mention of personality "deficiencies", political and governmental problems, or problems of internal organization and cohesion.

### Table 9

Main Problems Faced by Canadian Indians Today
By Education of Respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Mentioned</th>
<th>Grade School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Some Post Secondary</th>
<th>University Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking and/or alcoholism</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice and/or discrimination against Indians</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of assimilation and adjustment</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant differences among educational subsamples:*

Levels of formal education also had an impact on other variables examined in this study. For instance, there was a weak, but statistically significant tendency for those with higher levels of formal education to be more likely to perceive Indian land claims as being valid. If we turn to the question concerning the Indian land claim to the Athabasca oil sands area, we find that respondents with limited formal educations were the most prone to believe that Indians sought either to prevent development or to gain total control. The belief that Indians sought greater participation in oil sands projects already under way was supported by only
48.8 per cent of the respondents with grade school educations, compared to 79.0 per cent of those with university degrees.

The higher the respondent’s level of formal education, the more likely he or she was to approve of Indians boycotting private businesses, holding protest marches, launching lawsuits, and requesting the formation of a Royal Commission to study Indian problems. Levels of formal education, however, were statistically unrelated to approval or disapproval of Indians barricading roads or railways crossing Indian reserves, occupying government offices, or threatening violence.

In a related question, education had a decidedly ambiguous impact on respondent assessment of the justification of violence by Indians. Those respondents with the lowest levels of formal education were the most prone to state that violence would not be justified under any circumstances. However, they were also the most likely to state that violence would be justified when other means of getting the Indian message across had failed. In short, the pattern with regard to education and the justification of violence lacks any statistical significance, and we conclude that a respondent’s level of formal education has no systematic impact on orientations toward the use of violence.

Finally, there was a weak relationship between levels of formal education and scores on the Indian Sympathy Index. In general, respondents with relatively advanced formal educations attained higher sympathy scores than did respondents with relatively little formal education. The average index score for those respondents with only grade school educations was 28.9, compared to an average of 30.2 for those with high school educations, 30.5 for those with some post-secondary education, and 31.1 for those respondents with one or more university degrees. The overall impact of education on the Sympathy Index scores, however, was only slight.

In summary, there is substantial evidence that levels of formal education have a significant impact on prairie residents’ perceptions of native peoples, their concerns and aspirations. In general, the impact of education is liberal in direction: relatively well-educated respondents seem disproportionately supportive of Indian concerns, and even more strikingly, appear less likely to hold what would appear to be negative ethnic “stereotypes”. Thus we might expect that, as educational advances continue to be made across the Canadian west, their effect will be to increase support for native peoples within the non-Indian prairie population.

B. Age and Generational Change

Societies continually replace themselves as their numbers are thinned out by death and filled in by birth. As this process takes place, the young take on many of the beliefs, values and social institutions of their predecessors. The transfer is less than perfect, however, as historical cir-
cumstances vary between generations. For example, people who are today in their late twenties and thirties came to maturity during the American civil rights movement, a period in which prevailing social attitudes toward minorities were undergoing radical revision. Thus, in the wake of the dramatic social change that has occurred within North America in the past two decades, the prospects of intergenerational stability in cross-group perceptions and attitudes seem unlikely.

Our concern here is with whether or not substantial differences exist between perceptions of native peoples by prairie respondents of varying age. More specifically, do younger people display more liberal or more sympathetic outlooks? If this be the case, then generational change through mortality and replacement should lead to significant changes in prairie residents' perceptions, unless the process of aging per se adversely affects outlooks toward native peoples. Alternatively, if significant age differences do not exist in our present sample, we would have little reason to expect any cumulative generational change.

If we turn first to the question asked about major differences between native Canadian Indians and other Canadians, we find few systematic or linear age trends in public perceptions. Three age differences are worth mentioning, however, although the statistical significance of all three is precarious. In the first place, respondents fifty-five years of age or older were much less likely than others to mention differences related to poverty or poor living conditions; only 5.1 per cent of these respondents mentioned such differences, compared to 15.5 per cent of those under fifty-five. Secondly, respondents aged fifty-five or over were more likely to mention alcohol-related differences; 12.8 per cent did so, compared to 6.2 per cent of the respondents under fifty-five. Finally, only 21.7 per cent of the respondents aged eighteen to twenty-nine mentioned differences emphasizing personality deficiencies, compared to 36.1 per cent of the respondents aged thirty and over who did so. In summary, however, it must be stressed again that no pronounced trends were evident across the four age categories.

Substantial age differences were found in the questions relating to Indian land claims. Older respondents were more likely to feel that Indians sought money through the land claims, and were more likely to reject the validity of Indian land claims. On the question asking what Indians hoped to accomplish with their claim to the Athabasca oil sands, older respondents were more prone than younger respondents to say that Indians either sought total control or hoped to prevent the oil sands from ever being developed.

The older respondents were, the less likely they were to approve of Indians using six of the seven tactical options presented in the interview. The relationship was particularly striking for reactions to Indian occupations of government offices, a tactic of which 49.5 per cent of respondents aged eighteen to twenty-nine would approve, contrasted to
only 17.3 per cent of respondents fifty-five and over. The contrast is even more marked if we look only at the respondents who would strongly approve of government office occupations, a category into which 21.7 per cent of the youngest, but only 2.5 per cent of the oldest, respondents fell. The only tactic for which a significant age trend was not encountered was “threatening violence”.

In general, we have witnessed substantial age effects on replies to the questions explored in this paper. These effects may be partly due to differences in levels of education. Younger respondents have displayed somewhat different perceptions of Indian problems and differences, have been more supportive of Indian land claims, and would be more willing to approve most means that Indians might utilize to press their grievances and claims upon the broader society. One last finding, however, must temper any conclusion that generational change will lead to a more supportive public climate in the prairies for Indian concerns. This last finding concerns the Indian Sympathy Index, where we found no trend for sympathy to increase among younger respondents. In this case, then, there was no evidence to support a liberalization of prairie sentiment among the young, although here, as in all the previous questions, there was no evidence of any emergent hostility among young non-Indian western Canadians.

Conclusion

That the accommodative structures erected a century ago between Indians and non-Indians under the old forms of colonialism are breaking down seems indisputable. That new accommodations are emerging between Indians and non-Indian Canadian society seems equally undeniable. Indians now have regular access to the federal cabinet, a new Indian Act has been drafted (Cardinal, 1977), partnerships are being proposed between Indians and private business and between poor and wealthy Indian bands, land claims are being negotiated and settled, and the churches have dramatically altered their previous position (McCullum and McCullum, 1975). Indian leaders are finally assuming positions of major responsibility in the bureaucracy which in the past has been a source of major frustrations to them.

Our data on the attitudes of non-Indians toward Indians suggest that, at the moment, the climate of public opinion is receptive to Indians working out a new role for themselves in Canadian society. Indeed, these data also suggest that if the process of socio-political change were to unfold smoothly without a national political crisis, the climate of opinion might well be even more receptive to Indian desires in another fifteen years.

However, it must be borne in mind that in negotiating these new accommodative structures and relationships, Indians are not alone. Pierre van den Berghe (1975), a noted intergroup relations expert, has describ-
ed Canada as a “thrice-colonized” society: first, the Indians were colonized by the Europeans; then the French were colonized by the British; and finally the Indians, French and British were economically colonized by the Americans. With the November 1976 election of the Parti Québécois to form the government in Quebec, the stage has been set for a major restructuring of the accommodation reached between the British and the French after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Decolonization, in one form or another, is likely to proceed apace there. However, lacking comparable historical precedents of other “thrice-colonized” societies, and in light of the complexity of the Canadian situation, it would be presumptuous and perhaps foolhardy for us to speculate on the probable consequence of these two processes of decolonization going on concurrently.

REFERENCES


THE RURAL PRAIRIE NOVEL AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

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ABSTRACT. Prairie fiction which delineates rural life during the Great Depression is examined with regard to three aspects considered to be particularly significant: the treatment of the political or socio-economic background, the prairie West as "garden", and the psychological impact of the Depression on the characters. Novels by McCourt, *Music at the Close*, and by Kroetsch, *The Words of My Roaring*, consider the political aspects; Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind* traces the growing awareness of a young town boy to the social effects of the Depression on the farming community; and Laurence's *The Stone Angel* points to the continuing rift between town and country during the Depression. All of these novels see some part of the West as a garden or Eden. In most cases the protagonists seek this promised land elsewhere, to the north or yet farther west. Other characters, as in Lysenko's *Westerly Wild*, try to reclaim the wind-scoured farms. Lysenko is particularly adept in portraying how the Depression warps the lives of those who remain on the prairies. Ross is probably the most successful in any psychological examination; in his *As For Me and My House* he has the Depression isolate the characters, in a Conradian sense, to highlight their reactions, a technique later used in Blondal's *A Candle to Light the Sun*.

RESUME

La prose de la Prairie consacrée à la vie rurale durant la Grande Crise est examinée au travers du prisme de trois aspects considérés comme étant particulièrement significatifs: le traitement de l'arrière-plan politique ou socio-économique, l'Ouest en tant que "jardin", et le choc psychologique de la crise sur les personnages. Les romans de McCourt tels *Music at the Close*, et Kroetsch, *The Words of My Roaring* traitent des aspects politiques; *Who Has Seen the Wind* de Mitchell retrace la prise de conscience d'un jeune garçon devant les effets sociaux de la Crise sur une communauté rurale, et *The Stone Angel* de Laurence met l'accent sur les démêlés continuels opposant la ville et la campagne durant la Crise. Tous ces romans considèrent une certaine partie de l'Ouest comme étant un jardin ou un Eden. Dans la plupart des cas, les protagonistes sont à la recherche d'une terre promise quelque part ailleurs, située au nord ou plus à l'ouest. D'autres personnages, tels Lysenko dans *Westerly Wild*, essaient de s'accrocher à leurs fermes battues par le vent. Lysenko, tout particulièrement, dépeint la façon dont la Crise déforme les vies de ceux qui persistent à demeurer dans la Prairie. Ross est probablement celui qui a le mieux maitrisé l'examen psychologique; dans *As For Me and My House*, les personnages sont isolés par la Crise, au sens Conradien du terme, afin de mettre en valeur leurs réactions, une technique utilisée plus tard dans *A Candle to Light the Sun* de Blondal.

A significant number of Canadian prairie novels which have a rural background deal with the Great Depression of the 1930's. An examination of these works demands first a brief consideration of the Depression itself. For the prairie dweller, particularly the farmer, the Great Depression was not a wholly new experience. Most farmers by 1930 had already been living under depression conditions for a part of their lives. Many were of the first generation to be born on the prairies, and so belonged to the West's initial baby boom, an attempt by their pioneer parents to populate the vast prairie emptiness. But unlike the parents, the many children could not obtain cheap homestead land when they became adults. Instead, they were forced to buy land—on time—when prices were high, as prices were during World War I, and then to try to pay off their mortgages during the recession that followed the war. And of course, drought and other plagues of the farmer were present in the 1920's as well as in the following decade.
Dr. G. E. Britnell, former head of the Department of Economics and Political Science at the University of Saskatchewan, writing in the Canadian Forum during the middle of the Great Depression, makes the point that the depression on the prairies did not stem from any extravagances of the 1920’s. In the 1920’s, he tells us, only 3 per cent of Western farms had electricity, while 95 per cent had access to dirt roads only; children seldom saw oranges from one Christmas to another, and most household “linen” was made from flour sacks. What made the 1930’s depression unique was the unrelieved drought, the accumulation of debts so that “arrears of interest alone often exceeded the ... value of the mortgaged property,” and the unemployment. It was three depressions in one, as James Gray notes in his book, The Winter Years (1966).

Canadian prairie novelists tend not to dwell on the economic forces underlying the Great Depression in their delineation of that era. Here they are unlike their American counterparts, for a reason that seems obvious. The American Depression novel tended to be published in the Depression, culminating with Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath in 1939. These novels were works of social protest, written in the heat of the moment. Art became a weapon; fiction took on Marxist shadowings as writers forgot their traditional alienation from society and identified themselves with the struggling workers. The Canadian novel dealing with the Depression on the prairies tended to be published after the event. Of course, portions of some of these novels may have been, and probably were, written during the Thirties, but by the time of final revisions and publication, the cancer had been cured. Only a few of the works involved enough social and political comment to be called “protest.” Instead, the writer’s interest became focused upon the individual’s every-day reaction to the manifestations of the Depression—the wind, the drought, and the hardships they caused.

In this paper, a number of these rural prairie novels are examined according to three broad, and sometimes overlapping, themes: first, the political or socio-economic background; second, the prairie West as “garden”; and third, the psychological impact of the Depression on the characters. Because the prairies, unlike other regions of Canada, endured three depressions simultaneously, the effect on the area’s economy was so great that not only were there traumatic social consequences but also lasting political developments. Both the Social Credit and C.C.F. parties sprang from prairie soil in the Depression. That these two parties should germinate in the West spoke for the self-reliance and grass-roots democracy which Frederick Jackson Turner posited for a frontier or western society. At the same time, the collective action needed to combat the depression conditions showed that the West could be other than a beneficent garden, an agricultural paradise which served as a safety-valve refuge for the despairing poor elsewhere. The West, it turned out, was a place to escape from during the Depression, and yet Turner’s
“safety-valve” hypothesis, with modification, was applicable to the Canadian West during the Thirties. Finally, if, as Barry Broadfoot claims, the decade was “the most debilitating, the most devastating, the most horrendous” of our nation’s history, surely it was most strikingly so on the prairies. The Depression, he says, still affects our everyday life, and for prairie dwellers over forty the “ten lost years” may ever remain as the most significant factor in their lives. The psychic scars created in people then could well serve the novelist as subject for his art, provided that the time lapse before the writing of the novel was not so great that they would be partly forgotten or else gilded by a warm nostalgia.

The earliest of the novels under consideration is Sinclair Ross’s *As For Me and My House*, coming out in 1941. Certainly this book retains the flavor of the Depression: always the wind is blowing; always the dust is everywhere—it seems to cover every page as much as it does the open diary which the narrator Mrs. Bentley is keeping. The other works to be considered, in greater or lesser detail, appear over a span of two decades but continue on the whole to present a realistic account. Edward McCourt’s *Music at the Close* and W. O. Mitchell’s *Who Has Seen the Wind* both were published in 1947, Vera Lysenko’s *Westerly Wild* in 1956, Patricia Blondal’s *A Candle to Light the Sun* in 1960, Margaret Laurence’s *The Stone Angel* in 1964, and Robert Kroetsch’s *The Words of My Roaring* in 1966.

The novels by McCourt and Kroetsch, like those of their American counterparts, do treat of the political aspect of the Depression. In McCourt’s *Music at the Close*, the central figure, Neil Fraser, fails at farming—his immediate thought was that “with any kind of luck he could clean up in a very short time” (p. 135)—then plays the grain market. When the market crashes in 1929, he finally gets a job as a strikebreaker in the coalfields of Saskatchewan. It is here that McCourt can bring in political comment, for Neil believes that the strike is caused by communist agitators. When he meets the strikers, he discovers that his old friend Gil Reardon is one of the leaders. Gil’s explanation of the cause of the strike might have been taken from *The Grapes of Wrath*: “If a man is a Red because he demands a decent living standard and humane treatment for himself and his fellow men, you’re right,” he tells Neil (p. 152). The implication seems to be that there was no Red agitation at the time.

In Gil’s lengthy analysis of the farmer’s relation to this situation, the harangue is so skillfully organized that we must believe Gil to be a very astute politician or else that McCourt is here speaking directly to the reader. The passage is worth quoting in full:

Neil, the farmer is a great guy. In a lot of ways he’s the best guy on earth. But as far as he’s concerned, only one thing matters, wheat! As long as there’s a market for his wheat he doesn’t give a hoot about the industrial worker—doesn’t know he exists. But once the bottom drops out of the wheat market, he can be led by the nose by
any political racketeer who has a formula for upping the price. It never occurs to him that he and the worker are caught in the same trap. And you’re a farmer, Neil. You’ve got chaff and dust and tractor oil in your blood. There’s no market for wheat—and so you swallow a line that wouldn’t fool an intelligent six-year-old. Chase all the Reds like me back to Russia—restore the industrial economy—and the price of wheat will go up! And if the miners live on the thin borderline of starvation—if their wives are old at thirty and their kids rickety and half-starved and half-frozen—what’s the difference so long as the Bolshevies are driven out and the price of wheat goes up! Neil—you make me sick. (p. 154).

Notice how in the first few sentences a tribute is given to the farmer generally and later on to Neil specifically—with the tractor oil in his veins. There is a reference to a common enemy, the political racketeer, and an appeal to sentiment with the mention of wives and children. All this is a preparation for the punch line—an attempt to instill self-disgust and hence an arousal to action: “Neil—you make me sick.”

The noted critic Malcolm Cowley has analyzed the many strike novels which appeared in the United States in the 1930’s and calls attention to the rigidity of their pattern:

The hero was usually a young worker, honest, naïve and politically undeveloped. Through intolerable mistreatment, he was driven to take part in a strike. Always the strike was ruthlessly suppressed, and usually its leader was killed. But the young worker, conscious now of the mission that united him to the whole working class, marched on toward new battles.8

We can see how conventional McCourt is in his portrayal of a Canadian strike. Neil’s political naivete prompts Gil’s tirade, and Neil, having been mistreated as were the miners themselves, is ready to march with them. He sees the universal significance of their actions. They are like the “hungry generations” of Keats’s poem,9 representative of mankind’s struggle through the ages for a better life. However, with the killing of their leader, Neil loses his sense of mission, and McCourt here departs from the typical format.

Neil is always the dreamer and therefore not much given to action; he has given himself to life on this occasion but then quickly lapses back into his usual stance, that of an observer. This fact is nowhere as obvious as later when he listens to “Bible Bill” Aberhart expound his Social Credit policies at a political meeting in Alberta. Neil is not caught up in the hysteria which grips the people about him. He is too much preoccupied with the spectacle of it. He can see that the others, because they will not accept what has happened to them, are putting a desperate trust in the new “prophet,” who, it turns out, does win the election with their help. Their refusal to give up is their strength, Neil believes, and the author implies that successful political activism of any kind does demand from its followers something which Neil unfortunately lacks—“the finest faith there is. Faith in mankind” (p. 156).
In Kroetsch's book, *The Words of My Roaring*, the central character, Johnnie Backstrom, is depicted as a political candidate in the 1935 provincial election in Alberta which swept Aberhart into power. Backstrom is apparently running on the Social Credit ticket, although the real name of the party and its leader are not given. However, the phrase “flow of credit” (p. 40) and the leader's name, “Applecart,” make the identification unmistakable. Johnnie, like his leader, attacks the Eastern big-money interests in his speeches: “Oh, sure... they send us a few apples and some salted codfish... All they want in return is our farms. Our land and our businesses and our flesh and our tears and our blood. That's all” (pp. 110-11). Then he grins to show he is being sarcastic, remembering that he has a magnificent set of teeth. For Johnnie Backstrom is a fake. He too, like Neil, is out to make a killing—but in politics. His actions, though, come to have a redemptive effect on the people he meets. They need something or someone to believe in when their world has gone wrong. They are grasping at straws in the wind. Even such a morally frail person as Johnnie can be something to cling to. He has promised rain for the election, or so his query of “Mister, how would you like some rain?” (p. 8) is construed. Hopes are renewed, and the rain, surprisingly, comes. As Johnnie drives his team at night through the mud in the downpour, farm couples wait along the road with lanterns to guide his way and with cocoa and sandwiches to serve as refreshment.

The book's forte is in the telling of just such little human kindnesses—and also of little human failings—characteristic of the Depression. The politics in the book, on the other hand, the reader cannot feel sure of. How much is serious? How much is slapstick? And how should we separate the one from the other? The problem occurs because the author's focus is on Johnnie the narrator, who, in an understatement, admits that he “exaggerate[s] a little” (p. 20). When Johnnie describes his leader's radio broadcast as “a voice blasting away into the darkness... one big blabbering mouth” (p. 94), are we learning especially about the platitudinous quality of politicians? of this particular speaker? or about the darkness of Johnnie's own soul and of the self-doubts raised there by the continuous, exhorting voice? Johnnie does recognize his own frailties, and such moral sensitivity should give some credence to any political remarks he makes. These, however, do not go beyond the intensely personal, while the radio comments of the leader remain distant and mechanical. Kroetsch purposely avoids making a political statement, but he is showing us that something more than apples and codfish are needed when a farmer's “one lifetime” is struggle and heartbreak, represented by nothing more than the items on that auction bill which announces his defeat (p. 56).

That both Kroetsch and McCourt choose to deal with the rise of the Social Credit party, however briefly, must stem in part from the authors' being originally Albertans. But one would suspect that this par-
ty, more so than the C.C.F., lends itself well to the designs of these two novelists. First its leader was charismatic and could easily be presented vividly, even caricatured. More importantly, ideology here was not very significant; the authors generally could save themselves the difficult task of trying to dramatize political tenets, because their chief concern remained the portrayal of character in the Depression: the recounting of two ways of coping with harsh conditions, Neil’s introspection and Johnnie’s lusty bravado.

While socio-economic background is part and parcel of the political references in *Music at the Close* and *The Words of My Roaring*, it is another book, W. O. Mitchell’s *Who Has Seen the Wind*, that has become a classic evocation of prairie life during the Thirties. It deals with the broad social and economic theme—and particularly with one aspect of it, the rift between town and country—apart from the considerations of politics. Mitchell does so by seeing the world mainly through the eyes of a child, Brian O’Connall, to whom politics can have no direct meaning. The young Brian, growing up in a small Saskatchewan town, is hardly touched by the Depression and its effect on the farming community—and here he is like many of the adults in the town. But whereas their attitude is often uncaring, his is merely innocent. Several of the incidents that mark his growing up have nothing distinctly “Depressionistic” about them. They are simply incidents common to the lives of most boys growing up at any time, such as experiencing the mysteries of birth and death and becoming aware of the place of these two phenomena in life’s pattern.

Where the Depression does enter into Brian’s life is in his changing relationship to the prairie circling the town. His attitude in the course of the novel changes noticeably and so becomes a contrast with that of others. At the beginning of the book, the first time that he is alone on the prairie, it is not a depression-scarred view that he beholds—not the bones of a former plenty,¹⁰ not the “skeleton requirements” (p. 3) of Saskatchewan landscape, land and sky, with black topsoil banked against the fences. Brian’s prairie is a happy place: a meadowlark sings “deliciously,” while the rock on which the boy sits is pleasantly “warm.” And the most pervasive element there, the wind, is “warm and living” against the boy’s face and in his hair (p. 11).

As Brian becomes older, his moments of empathy with nature become less frequent. Instead, he gains an objective awareness of what the forces of nature can do to the land and its people and in this regard has advanced beyond his indifferent townsmen. Having a farmer uncle helps Brian to be sympathetic to the farming community. For instance, he hears his Uncle Sean describe Saint Sammy, another farmer, who lives out on the prairie in a piano box: “Yearsa gittin’ rusted out an’ sawflied out an’ cutwormed out an’ 'hoppered out an’ hailed out an’ droughted out an’ rusted out an’ smutted out; he up an’ got good an’ goddam tired out. Crazier’n a cut calf” (p. 118). When Brian visits Saint
Sammy near the end of the story, the prairie is no longer a happy place for the boy. It is “inscrutable and unsmiling, . . . strung with the black crosses of telephone poles” (p. 265). The wind again is the most pervasive element, as a storm is developing. But now the wind is no longer friendly; the boy feels it “sting his face with dust and snatch at his very breath” (p. 270) as it scour the countryside. At the end of the story Brian seems to feel some responsibility to improve the plight of the land and plans to be a soil scientist when he grows up.

The rift between town and country is also apparent in Laurence’s *The Stone Angel*. This book’s central character, Hagar Currie, an elegant town girl, begins her personal depression by marrying a poor farmer. When she is reduced to filching some of the eggs laid by their own hens so that she can sell them on the sly in town for pin-money, it is she who is laughed at by the town girls as the “egg woman” (p. 132). She eventually leaves this life, her husband, and the farm, and goes to the West Coast before the Great Depression begins, but comes back in the mid-1930’s when her husband is dying. The description that follows, of the farm in the Depression, seems to be told as though by an outsider. Expressions like “the Russian thistle flourished, emblem of want” (p. 168) or “only the grasshoppers grew, leaping and whirring in the bone-dry air” (p. 169) seem too polished and sophisticated to originate with someone who has actually lived through such experiences. This kind of description can be justified, for Hagar after all is telling her own story, and she has been away since before the drought began.

Hagar, unlike Brian O’Connall but like his fellow townsman, had continually resisted gaining an empathic kinship with the farmland and its people. “I’d read of the drought,” she said before returning, “but it didn’t mean a thing to me. I couldn’t imagine it” (p. 168). When she does see it, her response is imaginative only in a literary sense, not in an emotional one. The reader is not convinced that she really feels it. And the rift between town and country, in spite of the levelling effect of the Depression, exists as before. The fact that she had married her husband as an act of rebellion against her town’s mores was evidence of the rift in the past; now she sees the episode repeated in another town girl out with her farmer son, “flaunting him like a ragged flag” (p. 199).

It appears that novelists may have given us a truer picture of the cultural gap separating the farmer from the small-town dweller in the Thirties than have the social scientists. The latter are apt to lump the small town and the country together as “rural” in their studies, in spite of the basic difference in how the occupants of each make their living and the contrasting attitudes which this difference generates. Mitchell dwells on the antagonism at its worst, accentuated by the Depression. Saint Sammy accusingly points his finger at the town people and declaims that its citizens are the cause of the drought; the town’s banker, in turn, opines that “farmers are not a thrifty lot” (p. 44) and blames them for the Depression. Laurence, meanwhile, seems to suggest that a
prolonged depression may be something of a leveller, although the rift is not eliminated. If farmers can be reduced to the same footing, as Hagar’s husband and his neighbours are, then too dwellers in town and country may find a concern in common problems and be, even as two old people, “no longer haggling with one another, but with fate, pitting [their] wits against God’s” (p. 212). As for Hagar, she again does not stay on the farm, as one would expect; she returns to the Coast, travelling west to that seeming Garden of Eden, as so many Depression victims had done.

The idea of some part of the West being a garden, a kind of paradise, is worth looking at in itself with regard to the Depression since the notion appears in almost all the works under consideration in this article. The Canadian prairies were settled largely by middle-European immigrants leaving an oppressed homeland (some via a brief stay in the American midwest) and by Eastern Canadians seeing in the western provinces greater opportunities than in their own area. Both groups therefore could visualize the West, even the prairie region, as a garden. But the idea, at least on this continent, is older than the time of prairie settlement. It goes back to the time of the very first colonies on the Eastern seaboard. All development, all opportunity, had to lie to the west, as Frederick Jackson Turner pointed out in his *The Frontier in American History*. The fertile groves and plains were waiting for their Adam, someone to hold dominion over them. And so European man, with the Biblical injunction that nature was his to keep and to subdue, started to march across the continent and came first to the midwest, then to the prairie.

The Adam who came to the Canadian prairie can hardly be thought of as the innocent in the garden of the West, who “falls” and learns disillusionment when the Depression comes along and destroys his Eden. Instead, he has either been disillusioned in his former home and has come west to gain his paradise, or learned disillusionment in his pre-Depression days in the West but has doggedly persisted in trying to make it an Eden. For the prairie is not paradise, as the diaries and reminiscences of the pioneer settlers attest. These accounts are filled with heartbreak and loneliness. The problem is that many of these “Adams”, consciously or otherwise, have interpreted the injunction that one should subdue nature to mean that one should exploit it. Thus they have helped to make their potential Eden infertile, and must seek another elsewhere once the Depression accentuates their misuse of the land.

One of the authors under consideration does describe the early-day southern Canadian prairie in Eden-like terms. The environs of the fictional Mouse Bluffs in Manitoba, in Blondal’s *A Candle to Light the Sun*, resemble a garden with a creek spraying “tiny rainbows into the pale air,” and with a “green valley where colours glinted more brightly than on the sun’sucked prairie, the oaks catching the sun on flickering oily rich leaves... a cornucopia of gentle beauty” (p. 69). Such imagery is usually reserved by the chroniclers of the Depression for a promised
land elsewhere, either in British Columbia or in the northwestern area of
the prairie provinces. Turner’s previously mentioned safety-valve refuge,
that unoccupied land stretching ahead of the settled area, had merely
moved farther north or as far west as it could ultimately go. It still ser-
ved as a place where a man had a chance to start all over again.

The Peace River country in northern Alberta was conceived to be
such an area, and many victims of the drought trekked there in the Thir-
ties. In Lysenko’s book, *Westerly Wild*, one of the trekkers writes back
to describe the new home in these glowing words:

> You should see our beautiful Peace River plateau. . . . The grass is
green, about a foot high, there are flowers, trees, luxuriant crops,
wood for fuel, game for meat, wild berries and good water. . . . Our
garden is a fairyland of flowers. . . . There are sweet peas,
hollyhocks seven feet tall, vegetable marrow, marshes, cosmos,
stocks, daisies, Russian pumpkins, pinks, raspberries, poppies,
onions and asparagus” (pp. 147-148).

The correspondent, apparently overwhelmed herself, is trying to
overwhelm us as well. Neil Fraser in McCourt’s book also sees the
Peace River area as a “promised land” with “purple distances” (p. 183).
It is his wife who brings him back to reality—and we wonder how true
Lysenko’s picture has been. Moira Fraser says that by moving there
they would simply be stuck away in the bush country and would eventu-
ally starve to death. How can they have an Eden there, she implies,
when they have not tended their garden here, such as it is.

The thing to do, it appears, is not to change one’s locality but to
change one’s attitude, from that of exploiter to that of keeper, and make
an Eden in the “wasteland”. This has been done by characters in two of
the novels. They are simply acting out changes which Turner himself
had to make in his frontier hypothesis when free land was no longer
available. He declared in 1924: “I place my trust in the mind of man
seeking solutions by intellectual toil rather than by drift and by habit,
bold to find new ways of adjustment, and strong in the leadership that
spreads new ideas among the common people.” In each of the two
novels in question, a character tries to change the attitude of his fellows
toward the land. In *Who Has Seen the Wind*, Brian’s Uncle Sean
irrigates his vegetable garden to show the other farmers what can be
done in spite of the drought. He tries, unsuccessfully, to interest them in
an irrigation scheme that would dam a river and provide water for the
crops, thus anticipating the kind of work that would be done in actuality
under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act. But Sean cannot get the
farmers to co-operate. In *Westerly Wild* the farmers do co-operate in
constructing a water reservoir, but the circumstances described in the
book are extreme. The year is 1937, the place is the Dust Bowl of
southwestern Saskatchewan. Something simply has to be done now,
although the farmers had been antagonistic enough when Marcus
Haugen, the chief male figure in the story, had earlier built a dam on his
own land to make the farm “an oasis in the middle of a desert” (p. 12).
There are attempts in the other novels to create "oases" too, that is, in the sense of their being pleasant places, miniature refuges, in the midst of a desolate region. Here we think of the arbour, which is compared to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, created by Johnnie Backstrom's political opponent in *The Words of My Roaring*; or of Mrs. Bentley's efforts to nurture poppies and nasturtiums in a small plot of ground in *As For Me and My House*. Gardens do keep cropping up in Depression fiction, perhaps pointing the way to changing a wasteland into an Eden. But neither of these two books is really concerned with the general theme of the prairie West as garden. Instead Kroetsch and Ross are using the garden image to comment on character or plot: on the sensuality of Johnnie Backstrom (some of his escapades occur in these "Gardens of Babylon") and on the inability of Mrs. Bentley to allay the tension between herself and husband Philip (her flowers curl up against the blistered earth). On the other hand, McCourt and Lysenko show that they understand the philosophical implications of the theme in the context of prairie history. And their books, along with Mitchell's to some degree, dramatize the two alternatives for achieving an Eden: husbanding what one has or starting afresh elsewhere.

Lysenko's book should be considered at some length apart from the "garden" theme. *Westerly Wild* may be the fullest and most balanced account of the Depression that we have in our fiction, if we can overlook the Gothic attributes and machinations of Haugen. Here are described almost all the characteristics of the Depression which we have already seen delineated in the books under discussion. Furthermore, the author is much concerned with the third major theme treated in this article, that of the psychological effect of the drought on the characters. She shows this effect on both minor and major figures. We see farm people whose personalities have become "dust-coloured" (p. 6) by drought, whose laughter "rattle[s] like dry grass" (p. 58). These people are wound up tight like a clock, and they feel they will break down, but they cannot and must not because of their children; "so they suffer, so their faces grow more and more every year like the earth, thirsty, with deep cracks" (p. 105).

Lysenko is particularly skillful in portraying the farm women and children. We see the women standing silently before a store's yard-goods counter, indulging a craving for polka dots and checks, for bright colours and ruffles, merely by looking—there is so much drabness in their lives. While they may have memories of other days in the past to tide them over the present (they can still beam coquettishly at a local dance), the children are for the most part quashed by the Depression. They speak in a kind of "Greek chorus:

I don't remember rain.
It's wet when it comes down.
It splashes your face and you stand in it and laugh. (p. 23)
Only one of the children is able to laugh, and she attracts others like a magnet to her simple joyousness.

The plot centers on the love affair of a schoolteacher heroine and the masterful Marcus Haugen, who already has a wife, kept hidden away in an upstairs room! Lysenko sees Haugen as something more than just a Bronte-esque figure, however. The fierce winds have attracted him to the country—they match his restless spirit—and he rides fiercely across the land on horseback, becoming, he tells us, “one with the wind” (p. 89). The nearby farmers think him to be in league with the devil, just as they might regard the scorching westerly wind itself. But even Haugen cannot stand up to its elemental power. At the end of the story, while he is driving his spirited horses in the field, a spring wind starts up and the horses too become wild, trampling Haugen under their hoofs, then dragging his body with them. Swerving before a fence, they pitch the dead man away “with such force . . . that his body [hangs] transfixed upon the barbed wire like a tumbleweed” (p. 284). On the second page of the story, tumbleweeds have already been described as ending their travels in “crucifixion” on the barbed-wire fences, and Haugen later describes himself as a “tumbleweed” (p. 90). One is led to believe that Haugen’s death is a sacrifice and that a new order is forthcoming. A farmer has just spoken of improved moisture conditions and of a project to plant hundreds of tree belts. As in the Christian tradition, Haugen has taken evil upon himself (in identifying himself with the wind) and is killed by the evil: it is the wild westerly which indirectly brings about his sacrifice, and it is the scourge of this very wind for which the farmers seek atonement.

In terms of psychological studies of the Depression, the novel of greatest depth is Ross’s *As For Me and My House*. Here also is a suggestion of sacrifice, but its meaning is left somewhat ambiguous. Near the end of this story, fittingly again in spring, Mrs. Bentley, the narrator, stands against the south wall of a grain elevator, “letting the wind nail [her] there.” She cowers with a sense of being “abandoned” (p. 159). This token sacrifice, if so it can be called, is of her own volition, and of course there is no death. Mrs. Bentley may be simply dramatizing her situation, and we have only her word to rely on. But a few days later, the woman who had replaced her for a brief time in Philip Bentley’s affection does die in giving birth to Philip’s child, and hope, apparently, is reborn for the Bentleys and the success of their marriage when they adopt the infant child.

In this novel Ross appears to be touching on a theme that is common in Joseph Conrad. In Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, for instance, the author places a European in the heart of Africa where the restraints of his former society are replaced by the savagery of the jungle. Can the man in these new circumstances, Conrad asks, retain his civilized values when the environment speaks to a lurking darkness in his own heart? Sinclair Ross does not have to remove his characters to some exotic out-
post. The Depression itself has isolated men and women right on the prairies. Can they maintain their normal behaviour in the new circumstances, brought on by drought and wind, in which they find themselves? Most of Mrs. Bentley’s diary entries begin with a comment on this same drought and wind, and her relationship with her husband during their one-year stay in the small town of Horizon becomes as bleak as the depression world which surrounds the town. Even the town seems a “lost little clutter on the long sweep of the prairie” where the wind is the master too (p. 74). What chance, then, to escape the wind and what it signifies?

The wind and the resulting dry crackle of sand against the windows are always unnerving for Mrs. Bentley: the mere doing of routine domestic chores can be a source of strength in times of trial (Conrad’s characters may make a fetish of dress and grooming in the steaming hot jungle), but for her such activities are “rubbed out” by the wind, “so that there’s nothing left but Philip and [her] alone [t]here, day after day, night after night, tensely aware of each other through the study door, listening to the whimper in the eaves” (p. 43). At times, in panic, she wishes to thrash out against the wind with her hands, but the real antagonist is within the self, within the heart, whatever its quality of darkness. The capricious winds and the drought which she has described so painstakingly are like an outward manifestation of her insecure and barren life, and that of her husband. She is childless and tries to mother Philip, but her advances result in his retreating white-faced into his study where he draws or pretends to draw. He is frustrated, has only the inclinations and not the perseverance of an artist, and seeks for prestige in his relation with the other woman.

Mrs. Bentley thinks she can escape from the enclosing walls of her morbid thoughts by taking a greater interest in the town’s activities, but she chooses to erect a false front between herself and the town in order to keep herself intact. Yet she herself is not distinct from the town. She describes the false fronts of the town’s stores as smug-looking and pretentious, but she is smug in trying to hold herself apart. There is also a smugness in her attitude towards Philip, at first in her awareness of his inability to do simple mannish chores and later in her secret knowledge of his infidelity. It is perhaps too neat that all these false fronts collapse at the end of the story. As in Westerly Wild, the wind which has accentuated an evil now helps to eliminate it; a great dust storm blows down most of the store fronts and, as though taking her cue from the wind, Mrs. Bentley tells Philip that he knows he is the father of the baby. With the barrier down between them, she can show forgiveness at last when she kisses her husband, who is feigning sleep. At least for the present, she has risen above her morbid thoughts, above her own depression.

A character in Blondal’s A Candle to Light the Sun implies that maintaining the niceties of civilized life is one way of coping with the Depression. Remember, such behaviour is just what we saw Conrad’s
white traders try to follow in their jungle outposts. In so doing they may look ridiculous, but they stay sane. What Blondal has her character actually say, about life in his little Manitoba town and its environs, seems to have Conrad in mind. “That is what we all do in Mouse Bluffs, dress for dinner in the jungle,” he says (p. 116). In a kind of prelude to her book, a prelude which speaks directly about the Depression, Blondal says: “The wind blows the promises thin, the fears in” (p. 10). What she says here has relevance to the effect that the Depression has had on the prairie novel. Before the 1930’s man and nature could be seen as equal protagonists. Man’s struggle was usually pictured as an external one and often as a romantic one too. But with the Depression, nature overwhelmed man. The prairie novelist, in order to capture the real essence of the Thirties, had to go inside his characters’ minds and hearts, like Conrad again, to examine the fears and whatever other reactions might be hidden there.

The psychological reactions might be manifested in practical ways—a concern with politics, economics, social custom, agricultural procedures. These kinds of manifestations pertain to the first two major themes discussed in this paper. Regarding the broad theme of political and socio-economic matters, we saw that politics in the main received but a jocular treatment from one novelist, Kroetsch, and a stereotyped one from a second writer, McCourt. And two novelists, Mitchell and Laurence, expanded upon the social consequences of the town-country rift: Mitchell vehement in his sympathy with the farmer, Laurence dispassionate in her awareness of its continuing nature. Regarding the prairie-as-garden theme, we found the writers simply restating Turner’s frontier concept of unspoiled land yet farther west where one might make good; in other words, what was true of the American West was also true of the Canadian Northwest. Some writers, like Mitchell, saw the need, however, for farmers to become “the keeper of the Lord’s Vineyard, literally” (p. 18), in their own locale. The proving ground, it was also discovered, was within the self as well. This last idea was effectively dramatized by Lysenko and Ross with their probes into the human psyche.

The writers’ treatment of the first two broad themes has documentary value and so is of increasing interest to our own fast-changing society, a society which is prompted to look back in search of its roots the better to understand its needs and motivations. But needs and motivations point to psychological considerations. Canadian prairie novelists of Depression times were sagacious in for the most part not focusing on a fictionalized description of politics, social custom or agricultural practices per se. Rather, they examined what is universal in any time: the striving for emotional security in an adverse environment. That this world was scoured by gritty winds and bleached by searing sun reduced the total environment, and not just the landscape, to “skeleton requirements”: the striving was reduced to elemental terms. In choosing
to delineate the struggle, the writers could speak to something basic in all of us. Thus the Depression in its way promoted the growth of the psychological novel in Canadian prairie fiction. On the whole the story elements of plot and setting came to be treated realistically, rather than romantically as in earlier novels; but their major significance was that they served to facilitate real psychological inquiry.

FOOTNOTES

1 See G. E. Britnell, “Economic Conditions in Rural Saskatchewan,” Canadian Forum, XIV (March, 1934), 209-211.


3 Most Canadian prairie novels written before the Depression are not concerned with economics either. But in them the protagonist is trying to establish a new home in the “wilderness,” and the urgency of winning a hand-to-hand combat with nature prevents him from stepping back and thinking of his situation in economic terms. By the 1930’s, however, one might have expected him to think in this manner.

4 Turner’s first essay on the topic was written in 1893 and entitled “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” It was a seminal work, not only leading to other essays by Turner (collected as The Frontier in American History [New York, 1920]) but also to controversy and to replies from other scholars. The gist of Turner’s thesis was that a uniquely American civilization arose from the experiences found in its ever-advancing frontier. Individualism and practicality, along with the larger concepts of nationalism and democracy, were some of the characteristics so instilled. With the arrival of the Depression, Turner’s theories were discredited, for individualism could not combat hard times. In the past few decades, however, the frontier hypothesis has regained much of its former popularity as one interpretation of American history, according to Ray Allen Billington in a foreword to an edition of Turner’s book (New York, 1962). There will be further references to Turner in this paper.

5 Barry Broadfoot, Ten Lost Years 1929-1939 (Don Mills, Ont., 1975), p. iv.


7 James Gray, who covered such events in the Thirties as a reporter, says in The Winter Years (Toronto, 1966), p. 28, et passim, that there was Red agitation.


9 “Ode to a Nightingale,” 1. 62.

10 Lois Phillips Hudson has written a lengthy novel of the Great Depression entitled The Bones of Plenty (Boston, 1962). It is set in North Dakota, and many of the problems faced by the farm family in her book are similar to those just across the border in Canada.

11 In Westerly Wild, p. 46, Lysenko refers to an “absent-minded sociologist” who sees the Depression as “simply an interesting scene for research” and then flees to some “well-watered city haven with his stack of notes.”

12 Mary Hiemstra’s Gully Farm (Toronto, 1955) is an example. It is true that the author’s father sees the prairies as a land of the future, “a fair country,” with the children being able to have things easier than the parents. But the mother keeps saying, even on the last page of the book: “if I’d known how it would be when I left England wild horses wouldn’t have dragged me here” (p. 311).


14 There is a similarity both to Rochester in Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre and to Heathcliff in Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights.

15 For a treatment of this theme as it relates to Ross’s short stories, see my article, “The Short Stories of Sinclair Ross,” Canadian Short Story Magazine, II (Fall, 1976), 71-73.

16 Examples might be Ralph Connor’s The Foreigner (Toronto, 1909) or Laura Goodman Salverson’s The Viking Heart (Toronto, 1923). The novels of Frederick Philip Grove, beginning with Settlers of the Marsh (Toronto, 1925) form a notable exception.

17 McCourt, however, is not without his humour too when he portrays candidates at a nomination meeting: “each . . . concluded with the assurance that if he were chosen to be a party standard-bearer he would represent his constituency to the fullest extent of his ability—if not, he would get behind the successful nominee and work for him to the fullest extent of his ability” (p. 179).
**BOOK REVIEWS**


*Tommy Douglas* by Doris French Shackleton is, by her own admission, “not the full story” of her subject. Yet it represents a worthwhile addition to the growing body of Canadian political biography, giving the reader some insight into a man of considerable stature in our nation’s development.

The book covers the life of Douglas from his birth in Falkirk, Scotland in 1904 to certain of his activities as N.D.P. Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands in 1974. The first third discusses his activities up to the period of the Second World War. Chapters are devoted to his early life in the British Isles, his family’s move to and his life in Winnipeg, his entry into the ministry and call to Weyburn, his work there connected with the church or arising from the depression, his decision to enter politics, his election to Ottawa in the first federal election contested by the C.C.F., and his performance as an M.P. Somewhat over half of the remainder deals with the selection of Douglas as leader of the Saskatchewan C.C.F. in 1942, his years as premier, and the medicare dispute which occurred soon after he handed the leadership of the government over to W. S. Lloyd in 1961 and re-entered federal politics. The concluding chapters cover his role as national leader of the N.D.P. and his subsequent return to the status of a private member.

In beginning her book, Shackleton freely acknowledges that she is not without bias where her subject is concerned. At one point she states: “I could not refrain from questioning the motives or the competence of those who disparaged him.” Douglas is portrayed as a somewhat remote, sincere, hard-working, democratic, humanitarian, witty, generally optimistic “leader of men.” He is a committed socialist and “the ideal exponent” of a “vigorouss, home-grown variety” of socialism, whose approach to popularizing his beliefs is that of “a moral persuader who avoids the pitfalls of depressing self-righteousness.” He is, among other things, credited with having set Saskatchewan “on its way to the New Jerusalem” in 1944 and, as a federal M.P., with having directed his efforts and those of his party toward putting Canada as a whole on the same road. Throughout the work Douglas is seldom seen to err. Among exceptions are his misinterpretation of the 1931 Estevan riot and his failure to grasp the importance of the language issue in Quebec. As Premier of Saskatchewan he is also mildly criticized for his lack of a “killer instinct” and hence his toleration of some weak or otherwise unsatisfactory subordinates.
Recognizing as she does both her partiality to Douglas and the desirability of producing an objective picture of him, Shackleton discusses certain matters which in the eyes of some have detracted from his stature. Such subjects include his use of a former Ku Klux Klan organizer in his first political campaign, the Tucker-Douglas slander suit, the Rawluk affair, and the tensions within the party when he became leader of the Saskatchewan C.C.F. and later, for a time, when he was national leader of the N.D.P.

While one’s assessment of the degree of success Shackleton has attained in her struggle for objectivity will influence one’s conclusions as to the merits of the work, certain other points about the book will be subject to more general criticism. Purists where the English language is concerned may well object to her frequent use of incomplete sentences. Others will probably accuse her of paying too much attention to trivia at the expense of discussing matters of greater moment in more depth. She need, for example, have mentioned only once what Douglas ate for breakfast and could as well have totally omitted the story of Shumiatcher and the cowboy suit for the boy in Dieppe. And more serious yet is her failure to check carefully the accuracy of what she presents as historical facts. Chapters two, three and four especially include a number of outright errors as well as certain dubious statements. Specific examples will not be cited, however, since corrections are being incorporated into the second edition.

Despite the foregoing criticisms of and reservations concerning the work, Tommy Douglas merits the attention of people interested in twentieth century Canada and her development, and Shackleton is to be congratulated for having undertaken the task of producing it. The biography makes available to readers the most complete picture of Douglas yet produced. It singles out certain people who influenced him and outlines some of the events which acted to mold him into the man he is. It also makes readily accessible material hitherto not in print relating to him, to his colleagues and party, and to numerous other people and events. Moreover, Shackleton also makes a number of points which merit serious consideration and further study. She contends that Westerners played a greater role in establishing the C.C.F. than certain writers have attributed to them. And, among other things, she takes issue with Lipset and others as to the nature of the party, arguing that the Douglas administration in Saskatchewan was a true socialist government. The work should also have a permanent value, indicating to future generations how an individual close to Douglas for a period of about thirty years viewed him as a person, as a politician and as a leader.

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Anthologies usually tell more about the anthologist than the poets represented. The obvious question arising from this volume is the omission of certain poets who are prominently associated with the region, in this case, Dorothy Livesay, or who are actively working in the region now, such as Stephen Scobie and Sid Stephen. One finds that Ricou has drawn up a carefully chosen selection of poems which underline the themes he has found in prairie poetry. He did, in fact, begin work on the anthology as a text for a course in Prairie Regionalism “not only for careful study but for relaxed reading.”

In this sense, it is too tight, too narrow, but the teacher’s prerogative. The entire introduction makes a good introductory lecture for the first day of the seminar before the professor assigns the twelve students one of the twelve poets for his/her seminar paper. Even the number is a good one for a semester’s work, over 10 and under 15. I can just see the rush of plagiarism and paraphrasing over the introduction alone. Still, this is not bad since students need capsules like these as jumping points.

These are “bulletin-board poems” ... “poems that become embedded in memory”: a tall order, even for devoted students. There are very few poems in this collection that I would like to try to commit to memory.

Ricou points out the “conversational style” (how many conversations can you remember verbatim?), which is fine in itself, but I am concerned with the quality of the conversation. Most of the poems are forgettable chitchat such as of one returning from a tour of Europe enumerating cities and then affirming her love of Canada (something which Livesay said better when she found the journey’s end in her beginnings with her pivotal Winnipeg, facing east and west), and fireside stories which are good for a few cold nights, and passing comments of prairie cities told over a cup of coffee in the dining car.

There are some scintillating poems which flow and rest easily in the mind; all of John Newlove’s are superb. Those of fine detail, word-paintings, such as George Bowering’s “A Sudden Measure” and Gary Geddes’ “Canning” are captivating.

What emerges in the entire collection is the urge for myth-making. In totem-building, or more correctly, painting on the side of grain elevators, grandfather’s and father’s heads are carved along with other quintessential men like Grove and Southesk, and the perennial Indian, the Russian/German/Ukrainian/Chinese immigrants, and the next poet from Goodridge, Alberta. They are protective demons against the dry wind and vast spaces, against the “nothing”: “There is nothing/ nothing to stand in/ the way of the eye” (“Prairie”, Peter Stevens).
When I spoke to Anne Szumigalski, who is quoted but not represented in this anthology, she mentioned that there was a unique way of looking, of using one’s eyes, in the prairies: one tends to look distantly. There should be a kind of telescopic vision in these poems, like a sailor looking over a vast sea, a maritime eye.

But the irony is that the poets are myopic. They do see and do celebrate the earth, the river, the animals, the “empty beer bottles in dry ditches” (“Outside Moose Jaw: A Whirlwind: Silence”, Robert Kroetsch) and most especially, the humans. They are reporters but with the gift of magical words that do transport us to the scene, whether that be the immediate dirty city snow or the personal remembrances of the poet’s childhood.

Ironically, too, the prairies are not dry: they have been the granary of Canada and should evoke fecundity; but they seem to be so because it is not Mother Earth which gives life. The prairie image is patriarchal. The land feeds you regularly (see Dale Zieroth’s “Manitoba Poem”) and you may grow but you do not flower. Like gothic grain elevators, the fathers are solitary, aloof, misunderstood, stern, rigid, vigilant, authoritative, certain, containers of seeds which will not or can not impregnate the children (wives are like the land, seasonally farmed). Again, this is Ricou’s interpretation and he selects those poems which will document his argument. There are many lost children/poets out there looking for love and maturity.

There does seem to be this peculiar child’s mind among the poets in this anthology. The child’s reactions, observations, love of stories, memories are all finely delineated. It is as though each poet were turning the prairie dust over in his hand, in his myopic eye, in his mind, to find there the dust of his own Self. But isn’t this childhood view an aspect of all regional writing?

Is the title misleading? Did these poets agree to be called Prairie Poets? Geddes said to me that his better poems are not on the prairies; another poet felt their being Oberon poets may have suggested inclusion. These poems are carefully selected prairie-images poems, not essentially about Twelve Prairie Poets. They are poems about the state of the prairie mind, a region we can inhabit now that it has been mapped for us. Ricou, the good teacher, hopes that by posting the bulletin-board poems in our minds, we will remember the routes.

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