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SASKATCHEWAN
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SASKATCHEWAN
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INTERVIEWER: DR. D.G. MANDELBAUM
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En route here I met several men whose comments on certain matters of interest are recorded below.

Ralph Linton casually remarked that although the Ojibway, Winnebago, and Potawatomi had similar economic life and material culture, the other aspects of their tribal life were

vastly dissimilar. This is a good case in point for use in regard to the cultural compulsion latent in economic homogeneity. This too may be turned about. Thus the Plains Cree were economically worlds apart from the Chippewa, say; yet was the social organization, fundamental drives, etc. so diverse? Jeannette Mirsky of Columbia (who was also visiting Linton) let fall the remark that the "fundamental drives" of the Eskimo and Ojibway were very much alike despite all environmental and geographic distance. I challenged her upon this point (politely of course) and she defended it but feebly. However I will be wise to examine this thesis later.

Linton advised me to see one of his students, Rachel Commons, who has been working Potawatomi and/or Winnebago. All Central Algonkin stuff, of course, will be useful.

Dr. Austin Simes, physician to the Qu'Appelle and File Hills Agencies told me incidentally that the Montreal Lake Indians (John -- Jas. -- Smith's Band) were badly syphilized; these being the only bands seriously afflicted in this wise. He had visited and examined them one treaty time and knew. This may help to explain the peculiar vital statistics of this band.

Dr. R. G. Ferguson, head of the Sanitarium, had a great many interesting things to say; most of which are included in his papers and hence need no recording herein.

He did say that the pediatrician who examined the Indian children in 1928 (Dr. Urban Gareau of Regina), corroborated his opinion that Indian children were generally pretty good specimens. Now from their diet they ought not be and I must investigate to find how this occurs.

Arthur S. Morse, the historian, whom I met in Saskatoon, told me just a few of the things he uncovered in the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. He spent sixteen months thumbing through the records and trying to convince the company that they ought to publish them in a series similar to that of the Champlain Society. They will probably do this sometime in the future. Unfortunately I was about to become violently unwell when I was listening to Norton, so the names below may be garbled a bit.

One James Knight was chief Factor about 1714 and attempted to stop the Crees from raiding the Chipewayans and polishing them off with their trade guns. True to the English policy (as contrasted with the French), he sought to pacify the tribes. However, the Cree would not desist and made things pretty uncomfortable for two Chipewayans that Knight had planted among the Cree to learn the language. Finally Knight established posts in Chip. territory, armed them so that they were able to beat off the Cree. What seems significant to me is that the Cree, having acquired guns, were fierce and rapacious warriors, driving the Chipewayan out of their lands about the Churchill. The Cree then were not the docile amiable folk all northern woods dwellers are supposed to be. Radisson's Journal also hints at a warlike spirit among the pre-trade Cree of the east.

Another account in the archives is by Isham and describes the Indian and annuals [animals?] about Fort Churchill. He tells how the Indians, having been scattered for the winter hunt, assemble to go up to the Fort in full force. Just before they arrive, a brave is appointed to collect one skin from each man and with the resultant bale which is topped by the peace pipe, he leads the way into the fort and presents the gift to the Factor. Compare this with the manner in which dances were purchased from Sioux and Stony.

Another journal is that of Pink (?) who came down with some Indians (evidently Woods Cree) to a place near Ft. La Corne. There they destroyed their canoes and came west through Jackfish lake to Frog Lake. They were trapping all the time and perhaps trading. (Morton thinks they did trade though the Journal did not make this explicit). Then they turned south into the prairies to kill buffalo and make pemmican to provision their return, which practically always was within the year. Coming up to the Saskatchewan again, they built canoes and went back to Fort Churchill.

Morton told me this last in reply to my query as to when the Plains Cree came west. He thought it was of recent date and cited this Journal to show how woods Indians easily and evidently habitually hunted buffalo on side trips. When I offered some objections Morton replied, "After all the change from Woodlands to Plains was not so hard to make and the trading Indians could not resist the bountiful life on the Plains." It was a bit disconcerting to me to hear the conclusion I shall so laboriously and triumphantly reach, casually assumed and pro facto uttered by a good scholar.

Morton made a point of the position of the Cree as "trading Indians" which matter is hard to posit definitely from the published material but evidently stands out plain as day in the archives.