

PRAIRIE FORUM

Vol. 12, No. 2

Fall 1987

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PRAIRIE FORUM is published twice yearly, in Spring and Fall, at an annual subscription rate of \$15.00, single copies and special issues \$7.50 subscribers, \$10.00 and \$1.50 postage and handling non-subscribers; back issues \$10.00. Effective 1 January 1988, annual subscription rates will rise to \$18.00 for individual subscribers, \$22.00 for institutions; single copies and special issues \$9.00 for subscribers, \$11.00 for institutions, \$11.00 and \$1.50 postage and handling non-subscribers. All subscriptions, correspondence and contributions should be sent to The Editor, Prairie Forum, Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, S4S 0A2. Subscribers will also receive the *Canadian Plains Bulletin*, the newsletter of the Canadian Plains Research Center.

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Relationships Between Moisture Deficiency and Amount of Tree Cover on the Pre-Agricultural Canadian Prairies

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ABSTRACT. This article examines the relationship between soil moisture and amount of tree cover on the Canadian Prairies prior to agricultural settlement. Tree cover data were secured from original township plans while soil moisture was represented by seasonal water deficit modified by soil texture. The analysis consisted of simple regression and correlation of the percentage of tree cover with seasonal water deficit. Residuals were also plotted on a map to ascertain distributional trends.

The amount of tree cover declines at a decreasing rate with increased moisture deficit although seasonal water deficits explain only 49 percent of the variability. It is concluded that climatic influences are only a partial explanation for the causal mechanisms involved in prairie grassland distribution. The suggestion is made that fire and/or wildlife may have been influential in the suppression of tree growth, and that the suppression of these factors during the last century has allowed the grassland-parkland boundary to move south.

SOMMAIRE. L'article qui suit examine le rapport qui existait avant l'implantation de l'agriculture dans les prairies canadiennes entre l'humidité du sol et le couvert d'arbres. Les données concernant le couvert d'arbres ont été relevées sur les plans d'origine des municipalités tandis que l'humidité du sol a été compilée à partir du déficit hydrique saisonnier modifié par la texture du sol. L'analyse fut basée sur une simple régression et corrélation entre le pourcentage du couvert d'arbres et le déficit hydrique saisonnier. Les résiduels ont été rapportés sur une carte pour vérifier les tendances de répartition.

Le couvert d'arbres diminue moins rapidement lorsque le déficit d'humidité augmente mais les déficits hydriques saisonniers n'expliquent que 49 pour cent de la variation. On en conclut que les facteurs climatiques ne peuvent que partiellement expliquer les mécanismes qui influent sur la distribution de la prairie. L'article suggère que le feu et/ou la faune ont pu contribuer à l'épouffement du couvert d'arbres et que leur propre disparition au siècle dernier a permis à la ligne de démarcation entre la prairie et la forêt-parc d'avancer vers le sud.

Introduction

This article outlines one approach to studying the relationship between climate and vegetation on the Canadian Prairies in order to determine the degree to which pre-agricultural vegetation cover types corresponded with climate. Specifically, it examines relationships between soil moisture deficiency and percentage tree cover at sixty-three locations across the region prior to late nineteenth-century agricultural settlement to ascertain the degree to which tree cover and climate were correlated. The study takes a quantitative approach using seasonal water deficits, soil moisture retention capabilities and vegetation data derived from the original nineteenth-century land surveys. Figure 1, showing present-day natural vegetation cover of the study area, is presented to provide an approximation to late nineteenth-century conditions. The locations of the sixty-three sampling points are shown in Figure 2.

Authors such as Gleason (1952) explain the origin of the North American Prairies in terms of Rocky Mountains uplift in the Tertiary causing adiabatically dried air to flow across the plains. More recent

publications suggest, however, that climate does not necessarily play such a dominant role and that other factors such as fire and the effects of grazing animals may be involved (Knapp and Seastedt, 1986; Axelrod, 1985; Bragg, 1982). The fact that grasslands tend to occupy generally flat terrain may be a clue to their origin as rough topography provides fire breaks for trees. This is important because according to early settlers burning was, and still is, a common practice among Indians on the plains (Catlin, 1842; Hind, 1859; Lewis, 1977; Barrett and Arno, 1982; Pyne, 1982).

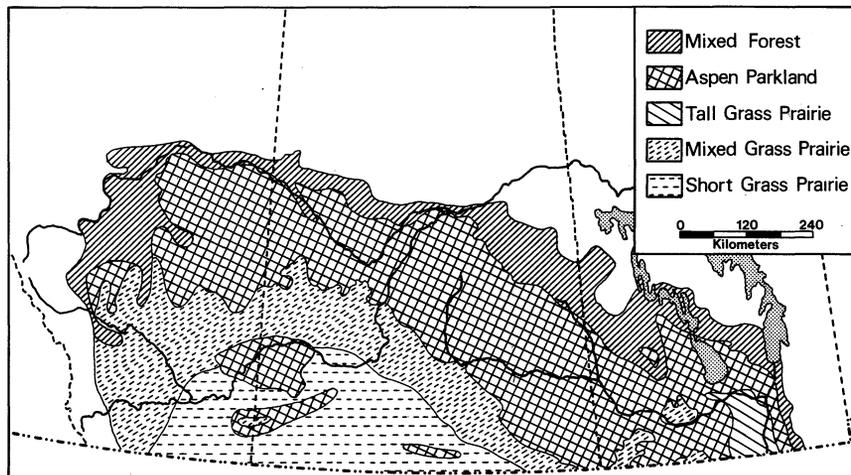


Figure 1. Present-day natural vegetation of the Canadian Prairies. Modified from Zoltai (1975).

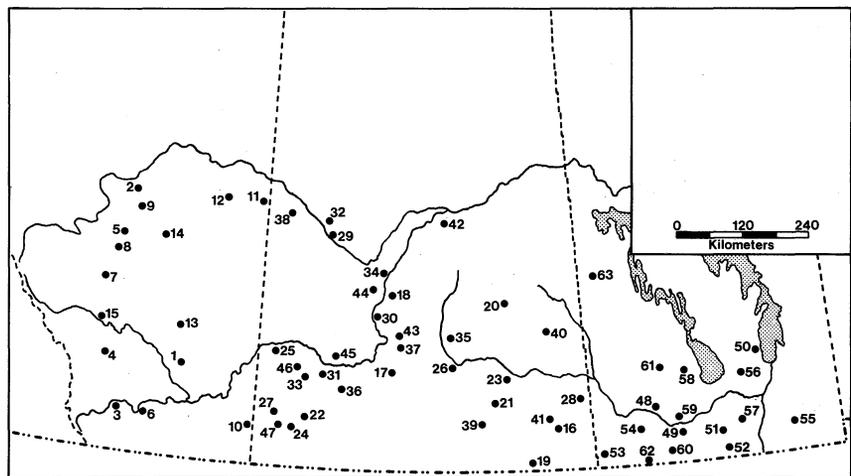


Figure 2. The sixty-three sampling points used in the study.

Fire may well have influenced grassland-parkland and parkland-forest boundaries to such an extent that they are now out of phase with climatic determinants. It has been documented that since the time of initial European

settlement trees have spread into many former grassland areas and increased their percentage cover in parkland (Bird, 1930, 1961). Löve (1959) concludes that for Manitoba, parkland began to invade grassland and the northern forest began to invade parkland once the Indians had been driven off the land. Furthermore, Stewart (1956) claims that the position of the parkland zone has such a poor relationship with the present climate that it is difficult to understand its distribution without considering fire.

Not all authors concur on the southward migration of the prairie-parkland transition (Lynch, 1955). Claims as to the degree of boundary change following European settlement must be considered carefully. Zoltai (1975) found one-hundred-year-old black spruce growing throughout areas classified clearly by younger maps as parkland and consequently cautioned readers to be suitably suspicious of any reports of recent major forest reinvasions. As much uncertainty surrounds the possible role of fire along the prairie-parkland and parkland-forest boundaries, and since it is not possible to test the role of fire directly, the approach taken here is to compare climatic soil moisture parameters with nineteenth-century vegetation data for the region to see if they are in phase with each other.

Data Sources and Selection

Vegetation Cover

Critical to our approach was obtaining good vegetation cover data. This is difficult because most maps of pre-agricultural natural vegetation of the southern prairie provinces reflect generalizations, repetitions and definition biases. To obtain what we hoped were more reliable cover data we utilized the original 1873-1900 township plans prepared by the Department of the Interior. These individual township plans were drawn at a scale of 1:31,680 (40 chains:1 inch) to summarize the results of surveys completed prior to agricultural settlement (Tyman, 1972).

Surveyors were required, among other things, to describe vegetation cover. This was classified as Woods, Woods-and-Prairie or Scrub (hereafter called Grove), Prairie, Brulé (burned woods), and Swamp. Surface water was also recorded. Surveyors were also required to measure and record distances occupied by these cover types along road allowances which they surveyed (Minister of the Interior, 1881). The fact that no clear guidelines for vegetation classification were given to the surveyors made it difficult to accurately infer cover types from their descriptions. Therefore we modified the surveyors' classification. The Swamp class, which overlapped with a number of other cover types, was broken down and reclassified as Woods, Grove or Prairie, depending on the nature of the swamp as indicated on the township plans. Brulé was reclassified as either Woods or Grove, again depending on the nature of the burned vegetation as indicated on the township plans. Our final modified classification consists of the following cover types: Woods, Grove, Prairie and Water, where

Woods refers to complete tree cover (whether burned or not), Prairie refers to grassy vegetation and Water refers to open water.

It is important to be aware of other limitations of township plans if they are to be used as a source of vegetation data (Watts, 1960; Richtik, 1980). According to the *Manual of Surveys* (Minister of the Interior, 1881), only the road allowances had to be surveyed. Features not located on a road allowance were recorded at the surveyor's discretion, and more often than not such a record would only be indicative of the individual's perception of the section interior. Furthermore, "when generalizations were used, the individual's perception and classificatory system [became] important" (Richtik, 1980:15). Botanical training varied among surveyors as did the quality of their vegetation descriptions. More often than not their descriptions consisted of a cursory appraisal of cover types and often this was so subjective that it rendered comparisons between surveyors meaningless. Hence, even accurately measured distances occupied by various cover types on road allowances would result in indefinite boundaries due to a subjective system of classification. Consequently, a lack of uniformity accrued. Another limitation to these data is that by the time that the survey had reached western Alberta, large herds of cattle may have significantly altered the natural proportion of tree cover. Nevertheless, if the limitations of these township plans are realized, they can be used as a valuable source of pre-agricultural vegetation data (Watts, 1960; Archibold and Wilson, 1980; Richtik, 1980).

Township plans used in this study were found in the following depositories: Alberta Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources; Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina and Saskatoon offices; Lands Branch, Manitoba Department of Natural Resources; and the National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada. Sampling distribution is shown in Figure 2, and for each sampling point in this study a 9.7 x 9.7 km (6 x 6 mi.) quadrat was used. For each quadrat, up to four township plans were utilized in such a manner that a given sample point (located at a weather reporting station) was located at the centre of the quadrat. In some cases, due to missing data, the quadrat was less than 93.2 km² (36 mi.²) but never less than 77.7 km² (30 mi.²). The length of road allowance occupied by each cover type, except Prairie, was measured to the nearest millimetre on the township plans and then divided by the total length of road allowance (usually 3,104 mm on a township plan) to arrive at a value for percent cover of both Woods and Grove. Open water, when encountered, was subtracted from the total when calculating percentages.

It was desirable to have a single value to represent percent tree cover at each sample point. Therefore, the Woods class was arbitrarily defined as 100 percent tree cover and Grove as 50 percent tree cover. Hence, combining the percentage cover for Woods with half of that for Grove

provided a value of percentage tree cover for the sample site. Although such a procedure is open to criticism, it was used here in an attempt to realistically represent the total amount of tree cover from township plans and to utilize the data source to the greatest extent possible. Regardless of the original classification criteria, if such existed for the survey, Woods were observed to have a higher percentage of tree cover than Grove, given the same surveyor for both cover types. Not all surveyors would have the same distinction between Woods and Grove, but they would have made some sort of distinction between these two cover types based on the relative amounts of tree cover present.

Moisture Deficiency

Probably the most important climatic variable involved in prairie grassland distribution is moisture. Water deficit was chosen to represent moisture availability and can be defined as the difference between potential evapotranspiration (PE) and actual evapotranspiration (AE) over a given time period. Evapotranspiration is defined as the combined water loss from soil evaporation and plant transpiration. If soil moisture is unlimited, AE will equal PE. PE is the evapotranspiration that occurs from a surface with a uniform vegetation cover when the soil is at field capacity (FC). Although there are differing viewpoints on the form of the relationship between PE, AE and soil moisture status, most researchers agree that AE becomes less than PE as soil moisture status drops from FC to the permanent wilting point (Baier and Robertson, 1967; Baier, 1967). Furthermore, Holmes (1961) has suggested that a fine textured soil will more quickly show a drop in AE than a coarse textured soil. Since evapotranspiration is related to temperature, which is indicative of the evaporative power of the atmosphere, water deficit is an expression of the relationship between precipitation and temperature and hence can be useful in making definitive statements about climate (Thorntwaite, 1948).

Although computer programmes are available to calculate water deficits, these programmes are generally not suited to input from long-term average climatic data without extensive modification of the programmes themselves. Therefore, it was decided to use seasonal water deficits as calculated by Sly and Coligado (1974) and used by Agriculture Canada (1976a) in their water deficit map.

Sly and Coligado (1974) used 1931-60 data to develop several regression models combining assumed FCs, consumptive uses and probability of occurrence levels (probability that the values for the variables used in model construction will occur in any given year). The most suitable of these models and the one used by Agriculture Canada (1976a) was one developed for a soil with a 100 mm FC, a consumptive use factor of 1.00 and a probability of occurrence level at 50 percent. In its quadratic form,

$$D = 1.13 + 0.45 (P-PE) + 2.02 (P-PE)^2 \quad (1)$$

Where: D = Seasonal water deficit (May to September)
 P = Seasonal precipitation (May to September)
 PE = Seasonal potential evapotranspiration (May to September).

To obtain water deficit values for our sixty-three sample points we prepared a 1:5,000,000 transparency of Figure 2 and overlaid it on the Agriculture Canada (1976a) map. Water deficit values were then interpolated to the nearest 5 mm.

Soil Moisture Retention

Data were obtained on soil texture because this influences FC, available water and, consequently, AE. Textural data were collected as follows. Each sampling point quadrat was delineated on a base map which was then overlaid on a 1:5,000,000 soils map (Agriculture Canada, 1976b). The proportion of each quadrat occupied by a given soil map unit or type was then estimated to the nearest tenth. From the soil texture inventory (Clayton, *et. al.*, 1977) it was possible to rate each soil map unit on a relative scale: 0-coarse; 1-sand; 5-loam; 10-clay. Organic soils were given a rating of 20 because of their superior colloidal properties. Individual textural ratings were multiplied by the proportion of the quadrat that was occupied by each soil type. These values were then summed to give an overall rating for the individual quadrats reflecting soil moisture retention qualities.

To account for the influence of soil moisture retention capabilities on water deficit, a procedure was developed whereby seasonal water deficit values were modified according to soil moisture retention characteristics. The following steps were taken in order to represent numerically how available soil water increases at a decreasing rate from sand to loam to clay:

$$\text{if } 0.0 \leq T \leq 5.0 \\ T' = T \quad (2)$$

$$\text{if } 5.0 < T \leq 10.0 \\ T' = (T - 5.0) 0.2 + 5.0 \quad (3)$$

where: T = Texture rating
 T' = Modified texture rating.

Equation (3) reduced the range between loam and clay to values between 5 and 6. To modify seasonal water deficit values, the following formula was applied:

$$D' = D - (T'(0.05))D \quad (4)$$

where: D = Seasonal water deficit
 D' = Modified seasonal water deficit
 T' = Modified texture rating.

Utilizing this formula, a proportion of the deficit based on its own magnitude was subtracted from it. The proportion subtracted varied directly with the modified texture rating. Thus, coarse textured soil texture was modified

little by the formula. If the soil texture was fine then the magnitude of the modification varied with the size of the original deficit. Although these modifications are somewhat arbitrary, they provide relative values that attempt to reflect actual conditions. Any further references to seasonal water deficits in this article will be to modified seasonal water deficit values.

Sampling Strategy

It was originally intended to utilize climate normals (Environment Canada, 1971) as input data for calculating water deficits. To this end, stations with climatic records of twenty years or more were selected. The stations chosen were located no farther north than approximately the parkland-forest boundary as defined by Watts (1960). Additional points were also selected in areas of apparently anomalous tree cover (Watts, 1960) although for these points climatic parameters had to be interpolated.

During the course of vegetation data collection it became apparent that suitable township plans were not available for all sample points. A thorough search of depositories failed to procure the desired documents although some of these were apparently used by Archibold and Wilson (1980) in their maps of cover types in southern Saskatchewan prior to agricultural settlement. The final sample size chosen was therefore sixty-three, of which forty-one were located at specific climatic stations. The sampling locations, along with the data collected, are tabulated in Hildebrand (1982). Although a strategy of random or stratified random sampling is important in studies of this nature (Strahler, 1977), and could have been properly devised in this case had the problems of missing township plans been anticipated, the sample distribution used does not radically depart from random and is considered valid for this study.

Data Analysis

Simple correlation and regression carries certain underlying statistical assumptions, the most important of which is that the data are normally distributed. Therefore, skewness and kurtosis, measures defining the shape of frequency distributions, were computed for percent tree cover and seasonal water deficit. Skewness of percent tree cover was significant at $P = 0.01$ while kurtosis was normal ($P = 0.05$). A square root transformation was applied to percent tree cover; in this case skewness and kurtosis were both found significant at $P = 0.05$. Logarithmic transformations reduced kurtosis but increased skewness. Since skewness is important when assuming linearity, we retained the square root transformation. Neither skewness nor kurtosis of seasonal water deficit were significant ($P = 0.05$).

The data were then subjected to simple correlation and regression analysis. It was hypothesized that percent tree cover was inversely related to seasonal water deficit. This hypothesis was tested using the square root of percent tree cover as the dependent variable, and seasonal water deficit

as the independent variable. Finally, residual values were calculated for each observation (sample site) and plotted on a map to ascertain distribution trends. The following categories were used: $1\frac{1}{2} S_y.x$ (much greater tree cover than expected); $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{2} S_y.x$ (greater tree cover than expected); $\frac{1}{2}$ to $-\frac{1}{2} S_y.x$ (amount of tree cover as expected); $-\frac{1}{2}$ to $-1\frac{1}{2} S_y.x$ (less tree cover than expected); and $-1\frac{1}{2} S_y.x$ (much less tree cover than expected).

Results

The relationship between percent tree cover and seasonal water deficit is graphically displayed in Figure 3. It is apparent that a considerable scatter of points exists around the line of least squares. The regression and correlation coefficients were tested (t-test) at $P = 0.05$ and found to be significant; the null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected. As expected, the correlation between seasonal water deficit and percent tree cover was negative ($r = -0.655$); that is, the lower the available moisture, the lower the percentage of tree cover.

The relationship, as empirically modelled, can be formulated as:

$$\sqrt{Y} = 8.672 - 0.034 (X) \quad (5)$$

Where: Y = Percent tree cover

X = Seasonal water deficit (mm).

By setting $X = 0$ we find that $Y = 75.204$ and by setting $Y = 0$ we find that $X = 255.061$. This indicates that only if there is a moisture surplus will tree cover percentages rise above 75 (approximately). It also indicates that tree growth will not occur in areas with a seasonal water deficit greater than about 255 mm. It should be noted, however, that this relationship is not linear. The rate of change in percent tree cover will decrease with increasing seasonal water deficit.

Even though the correlation between the dependent and independent variable is statistically significant, seasonal water deficit can account for only about 43 percent ($r^2 = 0.429$) of the variation in the amount of tree cover. In order to determine some of the other sources of variation, the spatial distribution of residuals was examined (see Figure 4). Although this residual pattern is somewhat random, general trends are observable. For example, the northern part of the study area, except in Alberta, generally has more tree cover than expected. In Manitoba a considerable number of observations have much more tree cover than expected, but observations on the northern fringe of the study area in Alberta correspond fairly well with expectations. Observations in the southern part of the study area, except southwestern Saskatchewan, generally have less tree cover than expected.

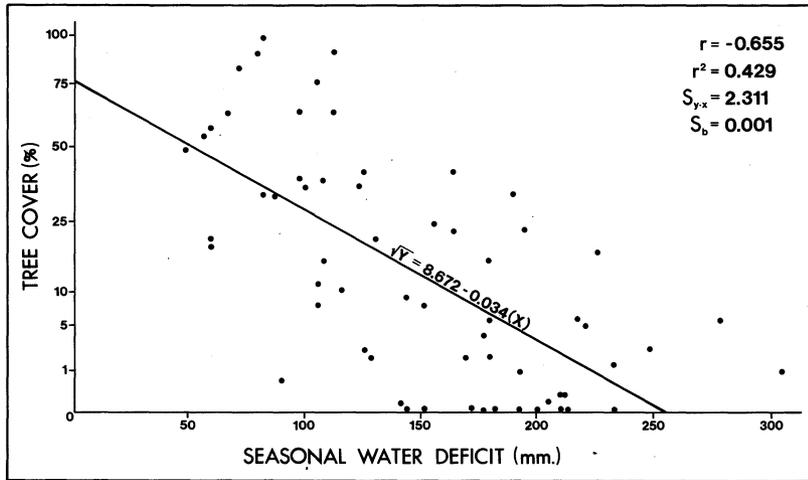


Figure 3. Relationship between amount of tree cover (percentage) and seasonal water deficit (mm).

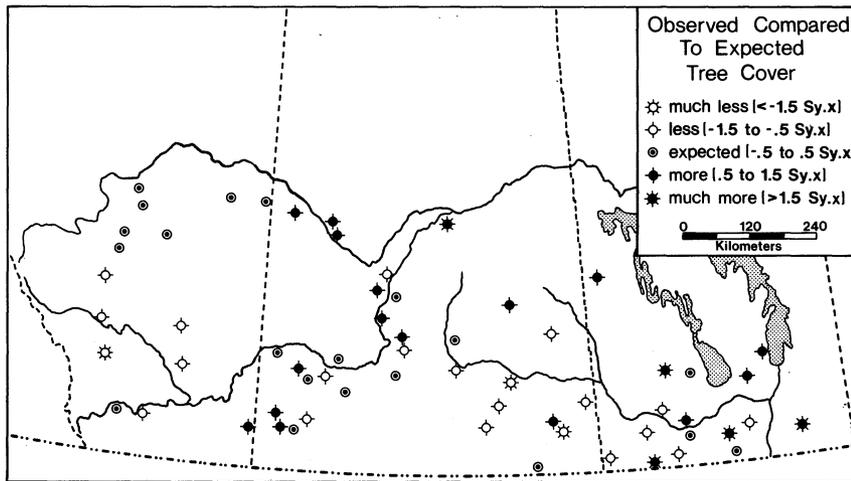


Figure 4. Spatial distribution of residuals showing observed compared to expected tree cover.

Discussion and Conclusions

Soil Moisture Limitations

It seems reasonable that an inverse relationship should exist between soil moisture deficiency and percent tree cover. However, the rate of change in percent tree cover with seasonal water deficit is not constant. For example, if two adjacent areas have seasonal water deficits of 230 and 250 mm respectively, there will not be a great difference in the amount of tree cover that occurs in the two areas, but if two adjacent areas have

seasonal water deficits of 80 and 90 mm respectively, the difference in the amount of tree cover will be more substantial. This feature is of ecological significance for it indicates that the parkland-forest boundary is, theoretically, more abrupt than the grassland-parkland boundary regardless of the criteria used in parkland definition. It is also evident from this that forest vegetation patterns are more susceptible to changes in moisture levels than are grassland vegetation patterns. If the parkland is defined as an ecotone from grassland to forest, it can be suggested that the northern edge of this ecotone will fluctuate to a greater extent with climatic change than its southern edge. For this reason, a moist climatic period will create an ecotone that is narrower than during a dry period.

In terms of present vegetation distributions on the Canadian Prairies it could be inferred that, because the parkland zone is relatively wide, the vegetation pattern has perhaps accrued from a rather dry climate. It could also be inferred that the northern limit of parkland is a more direct function of climate than is the southern limit. Zoltai (1975) claims that the parkland-forest boundary has remained relatively stable over the last century. Hence its position is probably fairly well correlated with climate. Perhaps because of this the northern parkland boundary is somewhat more regular than the southern parkland boundary.

Other Limitations

Because the model explains less than half of the variation in tree cover, inferences in addition to those above should only be made with caution. For example, the model predicts that tree cover will only rise above 75 percent (approximately) if a moisture surplus exists. It also predicts that no tree growth is possible in areas with a seasonal water deficit greater than about 255 mm (Figure 3). Yet, both of these predictions can be demonstrated inaccurate by examining actual data. Furthermore, a coefficient of determination of 0.429 indicates that the variation in the amount of tree cover may well be explained by additional factors besides soil moisture deficiency.

The pattern of residuals suggests that the parkland-forest boundary is somewhat more abrupt than the model implies even in its parabolic form. By this we mean that the parkland seems to close suddenly to become forest. It suggests that a certain condition limiting tree growth has suddenly disappeared at the parkland-forest boundary. In Manitoba this situation is even more pronounced. On the other hand, the parkland-forest boundary in Alberta, especially at the parkland's northern limit, can be fairly well predicted from the model.

In contrast to northern areas, southern areas generally have less tree cover than expected. It could therefore be inferred that the parkland zone is narrower than would be the case if its distribution was exclusively determined by soil moisture availability. Limitations, apart from moisture

deficiency, placed on parkland distribution are such that tree growth is restricted over a large area in the south. Hence, the grassland-parkland boundary is located farther north than would be expected if its position was influenced exclusively by soil moisture availability.

As suggested earlier, fire may have been one of the limitations on tree growth (Axelrod, 1985). Raby (1966) states that pre-agricultural burning, whether natural, intentional or accidental, inhibited tree growth on the Prairies if fires were large enough. Daubenmire (1968) claims that in the absence of frequent fires, woody vegetation will overwhelm grasslands. Because the amount of tree cover in the south is small, the spread and intensification of grass fires would be encouraged. The increase in tree cover at the parkland-forest boundary could inhibit further burning by introducing unfavourable conditions such as higher soil moisture resulting in a greater heat sink to reduce the fire's temperature, greater humidity under the forest canopy to increase the moisture content of the fuel, making it more difficult to burn, and introducing fuels requiring a higher ignition temperature than available in a grass fire (Daubenmire, 1968). Topographic breaks probably act as shelters from fire and tree cover in their vicinity would suppress fires further by introducing unfavourable burning conditions.

It could also be postulated that herbivore activities placed limitations on tree growth severe enough to hamper development of woody vegetation (Knapp and Seastedt, 1986). This may have been the case in western Alberta where some land surveys were carried out after ranching had been practiced for some time. Nelson (1973) believes that wildlife, especially bison, had a pronounced effect on the prairie landscape, tramping woody vegetation and causing short grasses to dominate. Moss (1932) and Roe (1951) have "suggested that bison assisted in maintaining the parkland-prairie boundary by rubbing, uprooting and trampling the trees" (Gordon, 1979:12).

Fire and wildlife probably both played roles in the suppression of woody vegetation (Looman, 1979). Bird (1961) recounts explorers' reports of vast conflagrations which frequently destroyed young forest growth on the Prairies. He also relates accounts of the effects of prairie wildlife, particularly bison because of their large numbers, on woody vegetation. Mature trees were rubbed bare of bark while willows and younger trees were trampled to death. Fire may have played a distinctive role in maintaining bison habitat by helping to keep grasslands free of woody vegetation, while the bison in turn may have contributed to the dominance of grasses and thereby induced conditions favourable to burning. Consequently, a feedback mechanism would ensure an environment suitable to both grasses and bison (Knapp and Seastedt, 1986).

It seems that soil moisture deficiency, while certainly playing a distinctive role in vegetation composition, has not been totally responsible for the prairie grasslands. The patterns of residuals displayed in Figure

4 may be indicative of any factor or combination of limiting factors controlling the amount of tree cover. It may also be indicative of succession — the end product to be determined by the dominant limiting factor(s) operating at a given site (Whittaker, 1953). Any reduction of limiting factors prevailing at the time of European settlement would probably cause the parkland zone to extend southward. If the parkland-forest transition has actually been stable, as Zoltai (1975) suggests, any southward shift would have to occur in the position of the grassland-parkland boundary. This parkland shift has, to some extent, already occurred since agricultural settlement as shown by Bird (1930, 1961), Löve (1959), and others. If the parkland-forest boundary is stable, and if the position of this boundary corresponds fairly well with climate, then it would follow that the possibility of climatic change affecting vegetation patterns during the last century has not been significant.

It is quite possible that climatic factors other than soil moisture deficiency may have been involved in prairie grassland development and distribution. However, data on growing season length, degree days, frequency of dry spells, climatic variability, and other expressions of climate that are meaningful to plant growth are often difficult to obtain. It would be beneficial to develop models to estimate these parameters using readily available data. The models developed by Baier and Robertson (1965), and Sly and Coligado (1974) represent progress in this area but require further refinement.

The advent of agricultural settlement has made it difficult to develop firm conclusions regarding the causal mechanisms involved with distribution of prairie vegetation. However, this study strongly suggests that climatic influences, particularly soil moisture, are only a partial explanation for the development and distribution of prairie grassland. It is suggested that fire and wildlife may have been influential in the suppression of tree growth and that the reduction in these factors since European agriculture began may have allowed the grassland-parkland boundary to move farther south. Nevertheless, any factors affecting grassland development and distribution are forces of nature and, as such, are part of the grassland environment.

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We wish to thank James M. Richtik for his assistance in this study and Weldon Hiebert for drafting the figures. We are also grateful to the staffs of the depositories of township plans for their help in data collection.

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Utopia, Sect and Millennium in Western Canada, 1870-1940

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ABSTRACT. Political radicalism on the Prairies has its roots in prior traditions of utopianism and millennialism which date back to the Riel Rebellion and to the early period of Euro-Canadian settlement. Religious sects, ethnic communities with utopian goals, and utopian socialists all left their stamp on the intellectual heritage of the Prairies. Though the early visionaries were found mainly on the land, individuals within these traditions also later played a role in urban labour and reform movements. Ultimately various utopian and millennialist visions competed for favour and spawned both the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and Social Credit in the political realm. This article demonstrates the intellectual continuities between early sects, utopians and millenarians and the later political movements of the 1930s both at the level of ideas and of certain individuals who bridged the two periods.

SOMMAIRE. Dans les Prairies, le radicalisme politique a ses racines dans les traditions d'utopisme et de millénarisme qui remontent à la Rébellion de Riel et au début de la colonisation euro-canadienne. Des sectes religieuses, des communautés ethniques aux rêves utopiques et des socialistes utopiques ont tous laissé leur empreinte sur l'héritage intellectuel des Prairies. Si les premiers visionnaires étaient en milieu ruraux, des individus issus de ces traditions apparurent plus tard dans les mouvements ouvriers et les mouvements de réforme urbains. Finalement, diverses visions utopiques et millénaristes se trouvèrent en compétition et donnèrent naissance dans le domaine politique et au CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) et au Crédit social. L'article qui suit montre qu'il existait une continuité intellectuelle entre les sectes, les utopistes et les millénaristes des premiers jours et les mouvements politiques des années 30, tant au niveau des idées que des individus qui firent la jonction entre les deux périodes.

Utopianism has had a long and often bad name in the annals of western Canadian history. One of the first negative references occurs in a letter to the editor of the *Inverness Journal* in Scotland by a pro-North West Company advocate denouncing Lord Selkirk's colonizing venture of 1811 at Red River as "a Utopian project."¹ Nearly a century and a half later the CCF government of Saskatchewan was roundly criticized for its impractical and utopian crown corporations such as the Prince Albert Box Factory.² Whether Selkirk's proposed Buffalo Wool Company or the domestication of reindeer at Red River were any less "utopian" than the CCF's promotion of clay, leather and wool industries as crown corporations is a moot point. But, like the proverbial Scot with one foot in the future, the vision of a somewhat eccentric Scottish philanthropist at Red River, Thomas Douglas alias Lord Selkirk, proved as controversial as the socialist planning of the latter-day Scottish social democrat, Tommy Douglas, a century and a half later.

These two "utopian" experiments, the one a communitarian venture and the other the inspiration of utopian socialism, form two ends of a common strand in western Canadian social thought. They coexisted, as this article will argue, with other radical social and political ideals, some visited upon the west from external sources, the others internally generated. Some of these, such as biblical millennialism, millenarianism and Christian communism, have been linked in the study of the utopian tradition, most recently by Frank and Fritzie Manuel in their study of the utopian tradition in the western world.³ Theodore Olson's recent work, *Millennialism, Utopianism and Progress*, also finds mutual links between the two traditions despite their profound philosophical differences. In particular, he notes the providential leaning of millennialism upon the will of God and historical

reality, and the spatial and cognitive focus of utopian thought upon an ideal future state. Both at least superficially exclude the notion of progress and work to particular secular objectives and reforms.⁴ Further, he notes that no classic utopias were evident after the advent of progressivism, but that millennialism did continue after progressivism.

For an historical perspective, it is also apparent that two distinct schools of thought have emerged in distinguishing millenarianism in its several modes from utopian social thought and communitarian movements. Within each ascribed set of characteristics, distinctions are acutely drawn, as for example those seven types detailed by Bryan Wilson in his study *Magic and the Millennium*.⁵ But in certain historical circumstances it is difficult to distinguish, as in the English Revolution, who exactly were the utopians, the sectarians and the millenarians. As Frank and Fritzie Manuel have observed in their discussion of the period 1640-60, "Virtually every sect carried its own utopia, and individuals moved freely from one circle into another punctuating their advent and departure with an appropriate religious revelation."⁶

While it would be difficult to argue that western Canada in the period from 1870 to 1940 was a society undergoing similar revolutionary change, it was a period of rapid economic and social transformation. Occupied at its beginning by a small indigenous and Métis population, the west underwent its first profound change in institutions and authority in the period between the two rebellions from 1870-85. It then underwent a massive demographic change in its rural sector as European and central Canadian populations occupied the prairie region in the period preceding World War I. Concurrently, the first decade of the twentieth century witnessed the efflorescence of the urban sector which expanded by some 700 percent in the pre-war decade. Immediately following the war, the most radical manifestations of labour radicalism occurred in Winnipeg and in the mines of the far west as the One Big Union movement spent its revolutionary force. Lastly, the Depression period of the 1930s had a profound if not apocalyptic impact on the agrarian economy of the prairie region and its debt-ridden farmers. Abrupt social change and metamorphosis were the ethos of the west in this period, and intense social change and radical economic and political action was its central *leitmotif*.

Providentially dependent on weather and externally subordinate to political and economic institutions outside its pale, it proved notoriously susceptible to ideologies with a chiliastic and millennialist tinge. At the same time, the west forged, in this context of deep societal change, a new set of institutions and identity, with what W.L. Morton has described as "a deeply felt sense of novelty . . . the belief that the prairies were a *tabula rasa*."⁷ That was the positive or utopian sensibility which also was deeply imbedded in western society from its early visions of a new people in the communitarian phase of settlement to a new social order in the period of urban growth, and finally a new political dispensation in the 1930s.

From Primitive to Modern: The Millenarian Response, 1870-1885

The period between the first Red River uprising and the North-West Rebellion of 1885 has been characterized by George F.G. Stanley as a transitional one which brought with it "a sociological problem of great magnitude, the reconciliation of the needs of a primitive native society with the demands of a modern civilization."⁸ Arguing in a similar vein, W.L. Morton depicted the broader period from 1870 to 1905 as one of the colonization of the west, an era which saw the export of "an English Protestant individual society to the Northwest, a society which would grant equality to the metis [*sic*] as persons and destroy them as people."⁹ Since then, Douglas Owrarn and Thomas Flanagan have offered further insights into the perceptual and psychological aspects of colonization on the frontier, the first from the eye of the conqueror-beholder and the second from the conquered Métis. Owrarn describes the utopian and Edenic image of the west imposed by central Canadian expansionists,¹⁰ and Flanagan the millenarian and messianic responses of Riel, the Métis and Plains Indians, which were generated by the process of conquest and colonization.¹¹

The metropolitan-frontier, modern-primitive dialectic was not new to western Canada, since the utopian projection of a settled European society had been in evidence since Lord Selkirk's philanthropic plan to settle the North-West.¹² Shortly thereafter, the evangelical vision of a Christianized Native population in western Canada emanated from the Church Missionary Society and its secretary Henry Venn in the 1840s. This ideal of a Christian Native commonwealth was played out in the far west between 1862 and 1882 in the Reverend William Duncan's model Indian utopia at Metlakatla in British Columbia.¹³ Nor were such experiments confined to Protestant denominations since early evidences of model Catholic missions existed in Father Lacombe's initial experiment at St. Paul des Cris in the 1860s and those that Oblate Bishop Herbomez planned for the Fraser Valley in the same decade.¹⁴ Such isolated missionary-induced model communities only presaged a wholesale onslaught of similar community-building experiments launched in the 1880s and 1890s as metropolitan institutions and society moved west.

But first the process of modernization, of extending the structure of the national state, the *gesellschaft*, was fundamental to the societal reconstruction of the west. Thus for the Plains Indians and Métis the period 1870-85 represented a wholesale assault on the *gemeinschaft*, their tribal, communal and societal structure.¹⁵ The imposition of the "scientific" modern state in the late nineteenth century was itself a utopian exercise which aimed at what has been described by Anthony Smith in other contexts of colonization as: assimilation of the population; discrimination against some of its sub-groups; a levelling interventionism and centralization; and an attempt to apply the latest scientific methods to the problems of government.¹⁶ Religion and its cosmic images thereby became separated

from tradition as belief became the fragmented raw material for internal revolution.¹⁷

The social policies imposed by the Canadian state were in part extensions of nineteenth-century Christian humanitarianism, in particular the treaty system and reserves legislation of the 1870s which would theoretically promote peace and harmony between Native peoples and frontier settlers.¹⁸ These were followed in the 1880s by assimilationist institutions such as the industrial and boarding school systems for the Native populations of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Such utopian experiments as the industrial schools at Battleford and in the Qu'Appelle Valley by Father Hugonard and the Dunbow experiment south of Calgary by Father Lacombe were acknowledged failures by the late 1880s.¹⁹ The Plains Indians, it appears, were not ready for such a total alteration of their lifestyle and belief systems. Sun dances were annually held, particularly in the Qu'Appelle region, as part of the religious revival of the mid-1880s. Similar patterns of cultural resistance were evident among the Salishan Indians on the West Coast who persisted in spirit dancing, while some turned to revivalist cults.²⁰ The most severe reaction occurred during the 1890s with the Ghost dance revival among the Plains Indians which provided a millenarian belief in the revival of the buffalo.²¹ In this respect the reaction on the Canadian side of the medicine line proved somewhat less acute than the "Wovoka" prophecy which was widespread among the Sioux, predicting a flooding of the plains and a descent by the Indians from the mountains to the abundantly renewed prairie.²²

The Riel and Métis uprising of 1885 is to date, however, the most compelling evidence of a millenarian, or perhaps millennialist, response to modernization. The term millenarian has been the subject of considerable discourse by Cohn, Thrupp, Talmon, Bendix and others who have established a brief taxonomy of popular movements and sets of conditions which would admit or disqualify them as millenarian.²³ Five salient characteristics appear to emerge from these scholars as descriptors of particular millenarian movements, i.e., they were (1) collective, (2) terrestrial, (3) imminent, (4) promising a total change in the new dispensation and (5) presaging a supernatural moment at a near total end of history. Yet other more recent and historically detailed discussions of nineteenth-century millenarian movements provide some further contextual refinement to the criteria. As John Harrison has noted, by this time the biblical millennialists were quite intellectually sophisticated, whereas the adventist millenarians were often people "condemned by the opulent classes as imposters and by historians as cranks and the lunatic fringe. . . . A simplicity, often crudity, seemed to mark their mentality, for their reliance on the supernatural enabled them to dispense with many of the limitations imposed by logic and reason."²⁴

In this context, Riel's messianic and prophetic ideas may qualify him more as a popular millenarian than millennialist prophet. Thus, to add

to Thomas Flanagan's rigorous application of definitions of millenarian and millennialist, it would seem that Riel may well have progressed to or devolved from strictly millennialist biblical prophecy and glosses upon Daniel 8:13-14 in 1876 to a more jumbled millenarian syncretism in 1885 of Métis nationalism with his own supernatural beliefs and sense of mission.²⁵ His personal role in the rebellion movement was riddled with contradictory elements of providentialism, ultramontanist, nationalism and universalism.²⁶ Only with his defeat and capture was the millennialist apocalypticism of his earlier ideas restored in his letters to Archbishop Taché. It would appear that by his trial his pre-rebellion millenarianism was even further transmuted into a utopian variant of secular millennialism.

By now stripped of ultramontanist clerical support or succour, he projected a new social dispensation for the west in his final trial prophecy of a new pluralistic society, a new Ireland and a new Poland in western Canada.²⁷ Flanagan argues that these "utopian political schemes" were unrepresentative of Riel's thought since he was speaking for effect to an English and Protestant audience and jury. Yet it would seem that he had indeed made a death-bed acknowledgement of the assimilative power of the modern scientific state and its polyethnicity which he faced in the courtroom. Thus Riel's last statement to the jury is a desperate attempt to bridge what Anthony Smith has called the crisis of "dual legitimacy" between the "scientific state" and the *cosmic* image of traditional societies.²⁸

Riel thus correctly anticipated the limited shape of the future in which the Métis would be but one nation among many in the new polyethnic west, one of several New Jerusalems projected on the plains from Europe. The degree to which they had become a colonized society was evident in the projection by Father Lacombe of a Christian utopian refuge for the Métis in a letter to the Minister of the Interior in 1896. A resurrection of an earlier community experiment — St. Paul des Cris — the new "Philanthropic Plan to Redeem the Half-Breeds of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories" would be located at St. Paul des Métis near Edmonton. Essentially a new version of an old theme, it was ostensibly a Christian reserve, a utopian community for the dispossessed Métis, which was like the other experiments of the settlement period.²⁹

The new west after 1885 would be a collectivity of small, self-sufficient and isolated agrarian communities linked by the instruments of the state and technology. The dominant political and cultural ethic had dramatically shifted from an organic dualism of language and plains society to the pluralism of the dominant and distant nation state in central Canada.

Communitarianism in the Settlement Era, 1885-1910

The settlement era in the west ushered in a new phase of rural utopianism which transformed the landscape by 1911. Various small-scale

community experiments were undertaken, and most were abandoned by World War I. Their impulse to settle and their character varied widely from sacred to secular, from aristocratic and arcadian to democratic and futuristic, from ethnic to nationalist, and from conservative to communistic. Fragments of European and North American society sought social escape whether from the pressures of state persecution or whether to simply flee from the temptations of alcohol or the social evils of the modern city. Most often the motive was a socially defensive one to preserve and to defend small-scale social systems, family, ethnic group and religious sect, in order to pursue their lifestyle and rituals untrammelled by majoritarian values. It was an era in Europe which proved particularly harsh in the treatment of minorities, as the nation state and the demands of orthodoxy produced many fragments to the last rural frontier in North America.³⁰

One variety of the utopias of escape were the ethnic-nationalist settlements in the west, particularly those of the Jews, Icelanders and Hungarians in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. The case of the Icelanders, who eventually founded the colony of New Iceland at Gimli in 1876, represents an early variant of the ethnic-utopian settlement. Soon beset by the factional quarrels that characterized all of the later utopian experiments in the west, New Iceland was a social expression of the themes of paradise lost, paradise regained according to an early minister to the colony, Fridjon Fridriksson, in 1881:

Progress and social activities are not even discussed in New Iceland. Most intend to stay here only a few years, and then they are going to move to some other place which by then is the best suited for Icelanders. Others (they are not as many) are going to live and die here, these only ask for enough food and clothes on their backs. All hopes of a purely Icelandic tribe in America are dead. Icelandic bigotry and conceit is fading away and stupidity, narrowmindedness, superstition, and conservatism is disappearing but common sense and liberalism — both in worldly and spiritual matters — is gaining grounds. Never have I been more optimistic about the revival of Icelanders in America than right now. First the old Icelandic Adam — along with all his sins and bad desires — must be drowned, and then the new American can emerge, admittedly possessing some negative traits, but endowed with a lot of positive qualities outshining the negative ones. The positive transformation of Icelanders in America started by their arrival here, and it is proceeding steadily. By now they realize their own imperfections and seek improvement. At that stage they are bound to win in a country like America.³¹

Fridriksson would no doubt have applauded some of the directions which Icelandic free-thought would develop in the later 1880s in the minds of such free-thinkers as the Icelandic-American immigrant to Alberta, Stephan Stephansson. A strong proponent of American liberal Felix Adler's ideas of "ethical culture," Stephansson had been active in the formation of the Icelandic Cultural Society in North Dakota, and carried his radical free-thinking to the cooperative colonies of Tindastoll and Markerville, which he helped establish in Alberta during the 1890s.³²

Similar strains of ethnic utopianism attended the establishment of the first Jewish colonies in western Canada in the Qu'Appelle Valley in the early 1880s. There is some speculation that the first refugees to Canada

were inspired by the "Am Olam" back-to-the-land movement and the idea of Jewish farm cooperatives.³³ The degree of its impact is unclear, but it is certainly the case that twenty-six families arrived near Moosomin in 1882 and took up 8,960 acres in a settlement called New Jerusalem.³⁴ Further colonies followed at nearby Wapella in 1888, sponsored by the Jewish Colonization Association, and at Hirsch in 1892. The latter deserves some attention because of its sponsorship by the Baron de Hirsch, who articulated his philanthropic ideals in the *North American Review* of 1891. Confessing that his philanthropy was based upon a pragmatic motive to relieve the suffering of the oppressed Russian Jews, not upon any "utopian theory," he nevertheless idealized the virtues of agricultural settlements to demonstrate the capacity of the Jews for farming.³⁵ Rejecting the United States because of the large numbers of Jews already resident there, Hirsch decided upon Canada and the Argentine since settlement should be scattered, thereby offering "no opportunity for social or religious rupture."

The practical idealism of the philanthropic agencies notwithstanding, the early Jewish settlements were often wracked by factionalism and plagued by desertions. The Moosomin colony was virtually deserted by 1887,³⁶ and by 1901 only one settler was left. A second experiment to sponsor a western "agricultural millennium" by the Montefiore Agricultural Association withered on the vine by 1885. Even among later surviving colonies like Edenbridge (Yid'n Bridge) established in 1906, intra-colony factionalism was fierce. Divided as it was between Am Olam and secular left-wing socialists, the colony was described by its agent as "acrimonious" beyond "all bounds."³⁷ Even the relatively "successful" experiment at Hirsch near Oxbow was a nightmare for colony administrators, one of whom despaired to his directors in Montréal that "I have no hesitation in saying that in all my experience I have never seen a worse set of men to deal with than the Russian settlers in the Hirsch colony."³⁸ Yet these and other colonies were vital and became the seedbed of radical social idealism. This was particularly true of Edenbridge which produced several activists in the agrarian movement, the wheat pools and, later, the CCF in the 1930s, spokesmen such as Norman Vickers, Michael Usiskin and Louis Rosenberg.³⁹

The Hungarian settlements of southeastern Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley were a nearby variant upon the theme of ethnic communitarianism. Following a classic pattern of initial philanthropy and colonizing fervour, the first experiment, "New Hungary," was launched by Count Paul Esterhazy in 1885.⁴⁰ Discord and drift threatened the colony until it was rescued by a new infusion of settlers in 1888.⁴¹ A second colony was launched as part of this back-to-the-land movement at Othton in the 1890s and a third was started in 1900 at Bekevar ("Fortress of Peace") near Kipling. In this latter case, there is some evidence that a nationalist-millennialist spirit inspired some of the Bekevar group who had celebrated

the one-thousandth year of Hungary's existence in 1896.⁴² Although religious in its basis and communal in its socio-cultural life, Bekevar was typically wracked by strife as various factions contested with one another over the means of establishing the New Jerusalem. In the words of one minister who attempted to transcend these doctrinal quarrels, "Let the dirty waves of wrangling and haughtiness billow around you, but continue plying your oars on the sea of peacefulness, justice and love, towards the heavenly Jerusalem."⁴³

The convergence of ethnic communitarianism and the millennialist religious impulse to the New Jerusalem becomes more obvious in the Christian sectarian movements which peopled the west in this period. Mennonites, Hutterites, Mormons, Doukhobors, Adamites and Quakers were exemplars of this Christian communitarian spirit on the western Canadian frontier. These sects reflected a common desire to escape pressures to conform and active religious persecution in their host societies, particularly in the *fin de siècle* era of Russian orthodoxy and conservatism in the United States.

Unlike the secular socialist utopias and even the ethnic-nationalist experiments, the commitment mechanisms of the religious sect proved much more powerful in ensuring group identity and community survival in the long term. As R.M. Kanter observed in her study of utopian commitment in these groups, there must be some measure of effecting group willingness to stay in the group, preserving a collective identity versus the *outside*, and regulating the community in an authoritative way. The means of commitment vary but were most often instrumental (cost and reward), and affective or moral (emotional or religious acceptance of social norms and beliefs), since community success or failure depends on this effectiveness of the group in maximizing these personal commitments.⁴⁴ Further commitment mechanisms might involve mortification or renunciation, transcendence, physical isolation, abstinence, vegetarianism, polygamy, labour in common, common investment in property and goods, charismatic leadership and deference.⁴⁵

The first of these religious-sectarian utopias was established by the Mennonites in Manitoba in 1874 where they hoped to build a society based upon the New Testament.⁴⁶ In the religious realm their quest had been a centuries-long pursuit of the earthly realization of the Kingdom of God on earth, but it had a secular aspect as well in that the Mennonites sought after and received from the Canadian government large land tracts, religious freedom, military exemption and control over their own schools.⁴⁷ Once established, the traditional commitment mechanisms, both instrumental and moral, were practiced with varying degrees of success in the East and West Reserves. Attitudes towards leadership, communal government, common property and modernity fluctuated both spatially and through time.⁴⁸ Similarly, other differences emerged over the questions of

transcendence (i.e., "in the world, but not of the world") and the means of establishing the Kingdom of God on a higher spiritual plane.⁴⁹ Factionalism between progressive and conservative elements in each of the several colonies was characteristic of a whole host of groups: Klein Gemeinde, Holdemann, Bruderthaler, Bergthaler, Sommerfelder and Old Colony Mennonites. Yet cultural persistence and survival were the norm by World War I, despite schism, factionalism and pressures from the external community on schooling and military service — as Frank Epp has aptly described it, "diversity within a corporate personality."⁵⁰

Perhaps even more dramatically, the historical ethos of the Hutterite Brethren underlined the hardening effects of nationalist orthodoxy and persecution as this group suffered double displacement from Russia to South Dakota and then to Canada during World War I. Indeed, the fluctuation of group ideology on such key issues as the community of goods, family and property has been an historically dialectical relationship linked to the degree of persecution of the group.⁵¹ Equally there have been some significant *leut* or colony differences on issues of modernization,⁵² the colonies established from 1880 to the end of World War I being able to impose the regimen of the community of goods and works as instrumental commitments, and a common Anabaptist religious ideology on their membership.⁵³

The Doukhobors were yet a more prominent sect thrown into the Canadian west by Russian nationalism and conscription in the late nineteenth century. While its sectarian roots ran deep into seventeenth-century dissent against Orthodoxy, the "Spirit Wrestlers" evolved a unique set of religious practices and beliefs with strong utopian and millenarian tendencies.⁵⁴ Further adaptation of their religious ideology occurred during Peter Verigin's leadership in exile, including proscriptions against alcohol and tobacco, then, under Tolstoy's influence, the ideal of common property.⁵⁵ Further support and influence came from English Tolstoyans such as J.C. Kenworthy, who were already experimenting with utopian colonies of Christian Brotherhood, and led to Verigin's adoption of the name, the Brotherhood Church. Upon emigration to Canada, the Doukhobors had established, near Kamsack in the North-West Territories, the short-lived Doukhobor Trading Company and cooperative industries, which Koozma Tarasoff describes as "the largest experiment in pure communism in North America."⁵⁶

In the process of settlement, the factionalism which plagued communitarian groups appeared in groups of orthodox independents as well as of radicals such as the conservative Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, the Independents and the *Svobodniki* or Sons of Freedom chiliasts who paraded in the nude to Yorkton in 1903. Equally, other challenges to the messianic leadership of Peter "The Lordly" Verigin emerged from the radical zealots who questioned his Christ-ness, and the

Independents who rejected the principle of communal property.⁵⁷ With the establishment of the second community in British Columbia after 1907, yet another “utopian” phase replaced the earlier millenarian one — Verigin’s role as leader was diminished somewhat, communal architecture adopted a more Icarian or phalansterian style, and experimentation occurred with a moneyless economy.⁵⁸ Tensions between and within the prairie and British Columbia communities persisted, and relations with the state in both jurisdictions worsened, but clearly this peculiar sect had rooted firmly in Canada by the eve of World War I.

A bizarre cultist footnote to the Doukhobor experience in Saskatchewan was the appearance in 1908 of a small armed band of “Adamites” from Kansas led by one James Sharpe who claimed to be “Christ, Elijah II and Adam-God” on his way to evangelize the Doukhobors in the company of his gun-toting wife, the Virgin Mary.⁵⁹ After a brief encounter with the North-West Mounted Police, to whom he explained his divine mission, he and his band proceeded on to Yorkton, and were given a predictably cool reception by Verigin, who instructed his followers to ignore Sharpe. The latter departed in disgust, claiming as he left that the Doukhobors “must be a people of God or they would never live in such subservience. Verigin has a fine graft, and I would like to run the spiritual side of the business for him.”⁶⁰ Sharpe later proceeded to North Dakota in September 1908, and back to Kansas City where he became involved in a shoot-out with local police, resulting in the killing of several police officers and one of his own children.⁶¹

Active persecution by the American government and police authorities drove the Mormon sect northwards after the institution of the anti-polygamy penalties in the Edmunds Act of 1882. This, combined with economic pressures to conformity and integration, drove a conservative fragment northwards from Utah to Alberta to establish “a Zion in the North” in 1887.⁶² The clandestine activities of this community’s founder, Charles Ora Card, who fled from what the Mormons then called “the land of legalized persecution,” clearly marked this fragment’s sectarian and anti-statist character. The concern of the early leaders in Cardston to have a federal concession allowing polygamy reflected their abiding commitment to an integral feature of their communal culture.⁶³ Despite their refusal by the Macdonald government, the Mormons proceeded to reinforce the instrumental aspects of their community by establishing a cooperative economic system from 1887-95 in the Cardston Company, a cheese factory, a sawmill, and a scrip form of currency bearing C.O. Card’s signature.⁶⁴ Even the spatial structure of the Cardston colony was modelled directly upon the prescribed millennialist Plat of Zion, with a central core of public buildings, storehouses and temple.⁶⁵

Elements of millennialist theology were also apparent in Charles Ora Card’s diary entries, particularly in the first pioneer decade of community-

building. Frequently he digressed in the late 1880s on the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God, and announced his preparations to that end. Equally evident were his providential musings on the millennial fate of Mormonism within the British territories,⁶⁶ including a long gloss upon Joseph Smith's prophecy of 1843 that the United States would on the advent of the second coming be "overthrown by the ten tribes from the North. She would never persecute the Saints as a nation. She would gather up great treasures of gold and yet we should seek refuge in her Dominion."⁶⁷ These and other passages reflect a confident conviction in the coming of the Kingdom, so much so that they appear to confirm W.H. Oliver's judgement in *Prophets and Millennialists* that the proclamation of Zion in America seemed "more like a progressive utopia than a waiting remnant." Also, in his view, the Mormons formally remained pre-millennialists after Nauvoo, "but in substance the optimistic post-millennialism of the redeemer nation took over."⁶⁸ The fluid boundaries between eschatology and community-building described for Nauvoo might then be transferred to the Cardston experiment which fused sacred and secular concerns in this enduring New Jerusalem in southern Alberta.⁶⁹

A less successful fusion of commitments and beliefs may be observed at the turn of the century in the Sojntula colony or Harmony experiment on Malcolm Island in British Columbia. This Finnish community experiment has been variously described as a "utopian-socialist" colony, and more recently as a "Finnish-Canadian millenarian movement."⁷⁰ Both views shed light on a complex of secular and sectarian ideologies which informed its founders, Matti Kurikka and A.B. Makela. The idealistic and charismatic Kurikka, as J.D. Wilson demonstrates, was originally inspired by Tolstoy and by utopian socialism, and later by the theosophical idealism of Madame Blavatsky.⁷¹ Kurikka's attempts to fuse "ancient religious fantasies in modern looking dress" brought him into disrepute with the Marxian-socialist Makela faction, which also objected to the former's espousal of free love. In addition to profound ideological division, the community's leaders were unable to master the instrumental aspects of business organization and the Kalevan Kansan Colonization Company failed after three years in 1904.⁷²

The inherent contradictions of a utopian-socialist society organized as a joint-stock capital venture and ethnically inspired by the ancient Finnish *Kalevala* did not escape the notice of its labour and Marxist critics.⁷³ Nor did the apparent ironies of a "dry" society which banned alcohol and churches yet condoned free love make sense to any but Kurikka and his inner faction. These internal paradoxes can only be explained by the highly eclectic mixture of motives, ideals and leadership in the settlement.⁷⁴ The experiment was at once a utopia of ethnic escape to Eden in the West Coast, an archaic restoration of the old Finnish values of the *Kalevala* and a futuristic projection inspired by secular utopists such as Fourier, Owen

and Bellamy.⁷⁵ A victim of its own eclecticism and lack of commitment mechanisms, the colony splintered into its several components after 1905.

Other socialist experiments imbued by somewhat more consistent beliefs were scarcely less successful, although less spectacular as failures. Two late-century experiments which were variously inspired by the utopian idealism of Bellamy, Morris, Ruskin and Russell's *Millennial Dawn* were founded in 1895 and 1896 at Tantalton in the Qu'Appelle Valley and at Ruskin in the lower Fraser mainland. The first, the Harmony Industrial Association or Hamona, was named, according to one of its founders, after one of the "Cities of Refuge in Israel [which] means a multitude,"⁷⁶ and was inspired by the doctrine of Christian social cooperation. Its virtual twin, the Canadian Co-operative Commonwealth colony at Ruskin, was similarly founded to spread "the grand truths that were taught by our Lord Jesus Christ."⁷⁷ Both were based upon the economic cooperation of primary producers, farmers, fishermen and loggers, and both established cooperative economic and social institutions. The colonies in fact made contact and bartered with one another, flour and butter for salmon and lumber, with occasional monies exchanged to settle outstanding balances.⁷⁸

Both colonies were also gone by 1900, victims of internal dissension and economic circumstance which dissipated the settlements into the surrounding region. Yet each also contributed to the development of the socialist tradition in both Saskatchewan and British Columbia. The principles of agrarian social cooperation were in the view of one of Hamona's founders rooted in that early abortive socialist utopia. J.E. Paynter later wrote of his involvement in the Comrades of Equity and the early Grain Growers' Association as "the natural consequence of social principles of justice and equity which caused me to bring together and organize the first [*sic*] members of the Hamona colony."⁷⁹ Similarly, several of the Ruskin settlers joined the Canadian Socialist League after the colony's collapse in 1899, when the Stave River failed to bring saw logs downstream. One of the founders, H.M. "Annie" Charlton, later reminisced that "calamity seemed to show that co-operation by groups was not sufficient and we must gain control of government so we could make laws to free ourselves from the money power."⁸⁰ The Christian socialism of George Wrigley's *Citizen and Country* had a clear appeal to former Ruskinites at Port Moody, which became an active local of the first Canadian Socialist League.⁸¹ One notable Ruskin pioneer in the later CCF movement, O. Lee Charlton, was a founding member of the League, and reflected fondly on that early socialist experiment in cooperative sawmilling and barter with Harmony Colony.⁸²

This pioneer phase of community-building in the west thus spawned a wide variety of experiments, only a few of which could be detailed here.⁸³ Their relative success or failure is a moot point, since the

sectarian experiments manifested the highest capacity for survival and growth, the ethnic utopias of escape perhaps second in terms of social persistence as colonies, and the utopian socialists were easily the least visibly successful in effecting either instrumental, affective or moral commitment from their members. Yet as adaptive cultural strategies on the frontier it could be argued that the utopian-socialist experiments such as Hamona, Ruskin and Sojntula were indeed an essential preparation for the third wave of social reform and progressivism which swept through western Canada in the early twentieth century.

Rural and Urban Progressivism: Working Towards the Millennium, 1905-1925

These two decades marked the rise of the agrarian progressive movement and the fusion of the Christian social gospel with the cooperative movement by such ideologues as E.A. Partridge, Henry Wise Wood and J.B. Musselman. This eclectic amalgam of post-millennial theology and utopian-socialism was reinforced by Henry George's single-tax, the particular social visions of Ruskin, Bellamy and Morris. In a symbolic sense, E.A. Partridge of Sinaluta summed up all of its contradictory elements, for as early as 1909 he trumpeted out the message of Henry George's single-tax and Ruskin's socialist brotherhood as harbingers of the millennial advent of the Kingdom of God.⁸⁴ At its conclusion in 1926, however, the secular utopian strain in his thought quickened as he projected a separate western state of COALSAMA, a totalitarian document which Carl Berger has described as "anticipating an existence as joyless as the barracks."⁸⁵

The urban quest for social perfection was manifested in the Christian social gospel and positivistic Christianity of Salem Bland, J.S. Woodsworth, William Ivens, William Irvine and A.E. Smith.⁸⁶ Their concern for urban and working-class reforms was articulated in several programmes from eugenics to prohibition, social hygiene and sport, all of which were posited upon a utopian or progressive quest for social perfection. Almost by necessity, their involvement in the cause of urban labour took those like Woodsworth, Ivens and Smith directly into the labour movement and infused it with the spirit of millennialism during the Winnipeg General Strike.⁸⁷ In the process of moving from the sacred to the secular realm in the 1920s, they, like their agrarian counterparts, also tended to substitute utopian socialism for the frustrated hope of post-millennialism on "labour's great day" in Winnipeg in 1919.

A further key element bonding the urban and rural wings of the social gospel was the spirit of nationalism in the 1920s. The west was no longer, in their view, an isolated hinterland but a region integrated into national churches, labour organizations and agrarian cooperatives.⁸⁸ No longer a refuge for the New Jerusalem as an isolated utopia, the entire west now had become a proving ground for the advent of the Kingdom of God. Hence

it was not surprising that Edward Bellamy's nationalist collective vision with every man in his place should prove so compelling in this generation of progressives. By the 1920s the spirit of post-war millennialist revolt became somewhat archaic as the west became more integrated, albeit temporarily, into national institutions and thought.

World War I was the watershed for the working out of these tensions between millennialism and secular utopianism, and I shall draw here upon several tracts of the late war which were illustrative of these tensions. The first of these, from the agrarian side, is Henry Wise Wood's wartime polemic of 1918, "Organization for Democracy," of which W.L. Morton has perceptively written:

And if William Blake, among the Satanic mills of the Industrial Revolution, could see the New Jerusalem descending, so might Wood among the foothills of Alberta. This religious sense of Wood's is very relevant, for in his teaching of class conflict and his belief in social harmony through the reconciliation of organized classes, one perceives not the dialectical progression of Karl Marx but something of the rapt organic vision of Revelations.⁸⁹

Wood himself was a member of the Campbellite sect in Missouri, a British pre-millennialist sect, which in its early stages had been in competition with Mormonism in New England.⁹⁰ And in common with the Mormons, the Campbellites shared a faith in secular America as part of the divine plan, with the Campbellites opting for a faith in the American constitution as the harbinger of the new order.⁹¹

Given these antecedents, it is not surprising that a sense of millennial optimism and the imminence of the second coming should pervade Wood's pamphlet or tract, "Organization for Democracy." First he established the catastrophic collapse of old-world autocracy, since no European nation had successfully implemented democracy. Thus, the possibilities for human regeneration and social perfection lay only in a new-world implementation of democratic cooperation. The tension is described in almost Manichean terms between good and evil, between "animal selfishness and social unselfishness," "autocracy and democracy," and "mammon and God."⁹² Then in a last ecstatic metaphor, Wood likened the global progression to democracy to the run-off of mountain streams onto the riverine plain, "till they all find the common level of national democracy, and then on till the ultimate common level is found in the placid social sea of world-wide democracy."⁹³

A similar syncretism of religious and secular world-view pervades the postwar tract, *Farmers in Politics*, by William Irvine of Alberta, a social gospeller and British Christian socialist.⁹⁴ Arguing passionately for a fusion of science and ethics and the bonding of the "sacred" and "secular," Irvine urged a wider universal acceptance of cooperation variously called "by the religionists [as] the coming of God on earth," or in the terms of the returned soldier as the "comradeship of national life" or "brotherhood extended to all practical affairs." These constituent elements would coalesce into a "new man" drawn from the agrarian and

industrial classes which were “the Nazareth from which are coming the prophets of the New Day.”⁹⁵ Further metaphors and analogies drawn from Darwinism and the contemporary pseudo-science of eugenics further demonstrated Irvine’s inclination towards a positivistic social Christianity.⁹⁶

If Irvine found it possible to syncretize science and Christianity, he had no doubt taken instruction well at Manitoba College with Salem Bland.⁹⁷ That connection likely enabled Irvine to fuse the principles of agrarian cooperation with the labour Christianity of school contemporaries like Ivens and Woodsworth. As L.W. Felske has noted in his thesis, “Science and the Radical Social Gospel,” the radical social gossellers sought after a scientific creation of a new social order — in the words of Bland, “an orderly scientific and brotherly reconstruction” of the Kingdom of God on Earth.”⁹⁸ A pervasive belief in the capacity of science, in the hands of H.G. Wellsian samurai and other experts, to recreate society extended from Bland’s “science of civics” to A.E. Smith’s “social architecture” and Woodsworth’s espousal of eugenics.⁹⁹ A clearly utopian and progressivist impulse had thus taken shape during World War I among the social gossellers of Winnipeg. The secular preparation of that city for the Kingdom of Christ was to be achieved through racial purification, urban planning and design, social surveys, and a whole host of particular panaceas ranging from prohibition to the single-tax and social hygiene.

The social gospel was then transformed from a progressive and rational programme of social improvement to a chiliastic and millenarian fervency during the Winnipeg General Strike. In this radical phase, Richard Allen has observed a spirit of “labour millennialism” and “millennial optimism,” which derived in particular from the more “rhapsodic and undisciplined comments of Ivens and Woodsworth.”¹⁰⁰ Yet it would seem that even Salem Bland, who was quite moderate, offered positive encouragement of the labour millennium to come in his “Labour’s Great Day” address of August 1918. His reflection on the current “fall of capitalism” ranged over such recent evidence as the unionization of the police force of London, to the French Revolution of 1789, and the irruption of the barbarians into fifth-century Rome. His final comment was unambiguous: “A new King is about to ascend the throne, money is to give place to labor!”¹⁰¹

This sense of the imminent Christian transformation of Winnipeg, and ultimately Canadian, society soon gave way after the Strike to a reassertion of utopian-progressive principles among the social gossellers. J.S. Woodsworth’s “First Story of the Labor Church” called in 1920 for the creation of a new religion of the future which would be “progressive, scientific, practical, social and universal.”¹⁰² This labour church would both preach and practice an amalgam of orthodox Christianity and orthodox Marxism in the creation of the future “co-operative commonwealth.”¹⁰³

Salem Bland for his part moved from an imminent realization of Christian ideals in 1918-19 to a Saint-Simonian synthesis of science and faith in his positivistic version of *The New Christianity* in 1920. Like Saint-Simon, he periodized history into three stages, and made strong pleas throughout for a universal, spiritual brotherhood.¹⁰⁴ Following the Catholic-aristocratic and Protestant-bourgeois eras, Bland projected a new age of labour Christianity in twentieth-century America.¹⁰⁵ This final stage of Christianity was a yeasty mix of all previous traditions and ethical principles, with a dash of Slavic mysticism and brotherhood thrown in as leaven.¹⁰⁶ Thus both Woodsworth and Bland had, in the tradition of Saint-Simon and Comte, synthesized a new universal religion of progress, science, ethics and socialism.¹⁰⁷

The widespread search in the immediate post-war period for a more universal system of secular ethics and Christianity affected the farm movement as well, in particular J.B. Musselman, the Secretary of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. In several addresses to the Grain Growers at the end of the war, Musselman reflected on the religious and social aspects in writings such as "Man's Rise through Adam's Fall," "A New Golden Rule," and "Morals and Economics."¹⁰⁸ Ranging widely across several world religions and economic and social theory, Musselman searched for a common system of morals and universal rights. Arguing from the environmentalist position of natural law, he held that man acquired a "universal appreciation of the fact that advantageous living for the human requires obedience to these laws . . . each of them rooted in a natural physical law as unalterable and eternal as gravitation." In sum, man was evolving towards a "higher and fairer social structure," and he suggested that the Christian church was out of step with modern thought in failing to keep abreast of modern economic thought, and thereby ignoring the means of bringing "Heaven on Earth."¹⁰⁹

It was this search for a superior ethical system based upon economic and social theory which carried other social gossellers to search elsewhere for final resolutions. A.E. Smith found his utopian solution in communism by the mid-1920s in the firm conviction that it "would eventually bring forth the true nature and spirit of man in a classless society of conscious Brotherhood over all the Earth."¹¹⁰ For William Irvine, the economic search carried him to Social Credit and Douglas's A + B theorem as an alternative to both capitalism and communism.¹¹¹ Certainly the secular utopian quest also separated E.A. Partridge by some considerable distance from his original post-millennialist moorings in the pre-war *Grain Growers' Guide* to his *War on Poverty* in 1926. The latter was replete with a welter of thinkers from the Fabians and underconsumptionists to utopians and other idealists, and included a patchwork of nostrums and panaceas including reincarnation.¹¹² But his most disturbing if not dystopian vision was the Platonic republic of COALSAMAO which he conjured for the Prairies. In common with Plato's guardians and H.G. Wells's samurai,

Partridge created an “aristocracy of ability” and “High Court of Control.”¹¹³ The state thus assumed an authoritarian, educative function not unlike that of Plato, Wells and Comte, as Partridge delegated society’s most important problems to scientists and schoolmasters for resolution. Everyone and everything was standardized in his propertyless, desexualized society, which was organized into work “camps” run by the “army of Common Good.” Domestic life would settle into a vast suburbia with a serviceable car for all who needed one. The latter would run on grain alcohol, for Partridge’s heaven on earth would be both dry and vegetarian.¹¹⁴

By the mid-1920s then, the optimistic post-millennial world promised at the war’s end had become fragmented as one element was drawn into the realm of secular utopian thought and political action. Whether the secular realm was the political world of the House of Commons as it was for Woodsworth and Irvine, the wheat pools and cooperatives of Wood and Musselman, or the Communist party of A.E. Smith, the impulse was similar. Tactile, pragmatic and progressive action in the real world of politics combined with an increasingly immanentist and authoritarian cast of mind. Thus by the very process of progressive socialization, the millennialist traditions of the social gospel had become instruments of human rather than divine will.¹¹⁵ By the mid-1920s Woodsworth’s Christianity had developed into a pantheism; Irvine had abandoned “any particular dogma or scheme” and concentrated on practical reform; Wood had become the unchallenged “boss” of the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA); and E.A. Partridge and A.E. Smith had opted for the radical overhaul of the entire political and social system. The libertarian and communitarian thrust of the previous era had given way to a more authoritarian and prescriptive attitude towards utopia.

Political Utopianism: The Last Phase, 1925-1940

The final expressions of utopianism and millennialism were embodied in the agrarian third-party movements, CCF socialism in Saskatchewan and Social Credit in Alberta. As W.L. Morton has observed of the 1930s, “certain utopian elements diffused through western society, but stimulated on the frontiers of settlement emerged in prairie politics.” The prairie west in the crucible of economic disaster had become receptive to radical solutions, also because of a frontier disposition to fundamentalist salvation, evangelical idealism and a progressive reform tradition “tinged with millenarianism.”¹¹⁶ And as Morton and C.B. Macpherson have both argued, this period also witnessed the rise, particularly in Alberta, of the administrative, one-party, plebiscitary state which functioned as assistant to community development and enterprise.¹¹⁷ Indeed, Macpherson in his intellectual dissection of Social Credit *petit-bourgeois* liberalism, clearly heard the voices of the nineteenth-century utopians, Fourier, Saint-Simon and Proudhon, reverberating in Major Douglas’s theories.¹¹⁸

A divided and discordant historiography has more recently emerged, however, on the theological and intellectual underpinnings of these two third-party movements, but Social Credit in particular. According to Richard Allen, the rise of fundamentalism drove a wedge between the post-millennial social gospellers and pre-millennialist fundamentalists. Further, he argued with reference to Alberta that, "It should come as no surprise where post-millennial politics had been most intense but had failed to avert the disasters of the 1930s, a virulent pre-millennial politics of the second coming should take its place."¹¹⁹ Other studies, however, by John Finlay on the English origins of Social Credit and N.K. Clifford on the theological foundations of Aberhart's ideas, have stated that no necessary connection existed between fundamentalism and Social Credit. Clifford in particular suggests that only when Aberhart abandoned his pre-millennialism and dispensationalism was he able to develop a broadly based social and political movement.¹²⁰ Further complications have been introduced to this dialogue by Thomas Flanagan, who has provocatively suggested that the Alberta Social Credit movement represented a syncretism of "Aberhart's Christian chiliasm," and the "secular millenarian creed of Social Credit." Further, he has likened the end political result to more primitive millenarian movements such as Melanesian cargo-cults and the Plains Indian Ghost dance movement.¹²¹

Recent historical revisionism applied to Aberhart by David Elliott also brings to light the Alberta prophet's abandonment after 1933 of his pre-millennialist dispensationalism which had guided him through the 1920s. Contradictory notes of universalism, theosophy and occasional touches of post-millennialism crept into Aberhart's speeches on Social Credit as "applied practical Christianity" and as a prelude to the imminent arrival of the Christian millennium in Alberta.¹²² Nor does it appear that Major Douglas was the sole secular source of Aberhart's economic millennium, for it seems that Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and *Equality* were both an inspiration to and a source of some of Aberhart's policies on money and banking.¹²³ His eclectic mind thus appeared receptive to a diverse welter of ideas which he grafted to the main branches of his pre-millennialist theology. Various antithetical elements formed this hybrid result according to Elliott: pre- and post-millennialism, utopianism, chiliasm, and universalism to name a few of its inconsistent elements.¹²⁴

The case for the utopian-socialist antecedents of the CCF movement in Saskatchewan seem clearer if only because of a more sympathetic historiography which traces the party's roots into the social gospel traditions of the pre-World War I era. Almost universal acknowledgement is given to the inspirational message of Edward Bellamy's novel as the visionary foundation of the party's leadership from Woodsworth through to Coldwell. As Walter Young has observed of the leadership elements, there was within them a strong "pedagogical strain . . . augmented by the utopian evangelism and the chiliasm of the leading figures in the movement."¹²⁵

Also, thousands of copies were sold to farmers through the offices of the *Grain Growers' Guide*, and for many, Bellamy was their first contact with utopian-socialist ideas.¹²⁶ Yet other predictable influences for the 1930s generation of socialists like Stanley Knowles and T.C. Douglas were such social gospel classics as Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis* and Harry Emerson Fosdick's *Christianity and Progress*. On the secular side, formative intellectual influences often cited were Henry George, William Morris, John Ruskin, the Fabians and Fred Henderson's *The Case for Socialism*.¹²⁷

But the pre-1935 distinctions between the early CCF and Social Credit movements become blurred, particularly on issues of monetary reform. In particular, the intellectual gymnastics of William Irvine from 1926-35 are testimony to the fluidity of party ideologies in this formative period. To his eclectic arsenal of social gospel and social democratic thought Irvine now added the American guild-socialist tract by James Peter Warbasse, *Co-operative Democracy*, and the underconsumptionist economics of both J.M. Keynes and Major Douglas. While these doctrines had long since become incompatible in Great Britain, Irvine espoused them together as the UFA dissolved into the CCF and Douglas's theories were pre-empted by Aberhart in 1934.¹²⁸

Further examples of this early depression eclecticism among agrarian cooperators may be seen in W.C. Paynter's economic tract, "The Trumpet Call of Canadian Money and Progress," published in 1931. As one of the early founders of Saskatchewan's first utopian cooperatives at Hamona, Paynter had by now become a warm advocate of economic pump-priming, but his rhetoric was very much like that of Douglas and Aberhart, in his injunctions for an increase in the "Social Life Blood-currency." And yet in other instances, Paynter rang in the orthodox changes with social gospel imprecations for the coming millennium: "the Co-operative Commonwealth, the Brotherhood of Man, the Kingdom of God on Earth."¹²⁹ Thus, a closer reading of the pamphlet and tract literature of the CCF and Social Credit movements, before their mid-1930s split,¹³⁰ may well dispel the conventional wisdom and false dichotomy of the CCF as post-millennialist, utopian and social-progressive, as distinct from the fundamentalist pre-millennialist orthodoxy of Alberta Social Credit.

A suggestive utopian connection also seems to exist between the leadership echelons and the ethnic grass-roots of the CCF movement, to fill out W.L. Morton's untested hypothesis on the social sources of utopianism in the west. As T.C. Douglas observed in his memoirs, "People came from traditions in which socialism wasn't a bad word . . . a mixed group of people hadn't yet settled into a new tradition in which certain things were sacrosanct and unquestionable."¹³¹ Three biographical examples may be cited by way of connecting the utopian ethnic roots of the first communitarian experiments with the CCF movement of the 1930s

— Peter Makaroff, Louis Rosenberg and Frank Eliason. Makaroff was the first secretary of the Society of Independent Doukhobors who challenged the leadership of Verigin in 1916, and also the Canadian government's imposition of conscription in 1917. Later, Makaroff, a trained lawyer, ran unsuccessfully for election as a CCF candidate in the 1934 provincial election and became an activist in the party.¹³² Louis Rosenberg's career as a community leader among the Jewish settlers followed a similar pattern. A sociology graduate of Leeds and London universities, he became Director of Jewish Agricultural Settlements for western Canada from 1919 to 1940. He also became active in Regina local politics and education and finally in the CCF itself upon its formation in 1933. Soon he developed into one of the party's chief provincial researchers and ideologues, making regular policy contributions on such subjects as land collectivization, cooperative education, and the socialization of banking and finance. Often he wrote under the pseudonym "Watt Hugh McCollum," and contributed a large tract, *Who Owns Canada?*, to the CCF Research Bureau in 1935. While occasionally critical of some utopian idealists among the early Jewish settlers in Saskatchewan, Rosenberg clearly extended their traditions of communitarianism and contributed his own Fabian brand of socialism which he had brought with him from England.¹³³

The third ethnic utopian-socialist who bridged the generation between old community and new party was Frank Eliason, a Swedish-American immigrant who had been raised in Minnesota and Wisconsin on western radical unionism and Debs's socialism. On coming to Wynyard, Saskatchewan in 1910, Eliason soon became active in the Grain Growers' movement, and as a solid supporter of the Rochdale cooperative system, he saw in it a resemblance to the "socialism visualized by that great writer, Edward Bellamy in his book *Looking Backward*."¹³⁴ After a further conversion to the wheat pools advocated by Aaron Sapiro in the 1920s, Eliason became provincial secretary of the United Farmers of Canada in 1929 and a formative figure in the agrarian wing of the Farmer-Labour party and the CCF in the 1930s. And despite that party's initial reluctance to court the ethnic vote, Eliason himself was instrumental in arranging speaking tours for M.J. Coldwell in the Ukrainian communities of the Rosthern area.¹³⁵

While such individuals do not form even a minor part of the "mainstream" historiography of the early CCF, they do nevertheless demonstrate the diverse social and intellectual origins of political utopianism in Saskatchewan. If considerably less ambiguous than Alberta's Social Credit party at its apex, the CCF in Saskatchewan was a diverse mix at the base, drawing from various utopian-socialist traditions in Britain, the United States and Scandinavia as well as from a rich grass-roots communitarianism of the Canadian west prior to World War I. Further studies of the cooperative movement and ethnic bases in particular regions

of the Prairies may reveal some further connections between ethnic-sectarian cooperation and third-party movements.¹³⁶

A similar fruitful study may be made of the communitarian and cultist base of political utopianism in Alberta to extend the analysis done earlier by W.E. Mann, in his *Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta*.¹³⁷ Suggestive references have been made in James Gray's *Winter Years* to the cultist and spiritualist literature ranging from Ingalese's *History of the Power of Mind* to British Israel, New Thought and Howard Scott's *Technocracy*, whose branches "sprang up all over western Canada."¹³⁸ Further scholarship could be devoted to the economic ideas of *Technocracy* and other obscure organizations like the "Futurarian League" which advocated currency expansion as a means of alleviating cyclical depressions.¹³⁹ Further study of communitarian sects might similarly develop the connection suggested in recent scholarship between Mormons, Baptists and Dunkards of southern Alberta, and the UFA and Social Credit.¹⁴⁰

The radical political culture of Alberta and Saskatchewan symbolized by 1940 the prior traditions of utopia and millennium in the past three-quarters of a century. The revolt of Riel and the Métis against the imposition of colonial status, the communitarian ideology of its ethnic and sectarian utopias, and the radical social gospel and progressivism all melded together into what George Melnyk has described as a unique "radical regionalism."¹⁴¹ The very phrase itself suggests that a consensus model of unitary political culture rather than one governed by artificial and autochthonous political boundaries may be more applicable to this last phase of political utopianism. Some recent scholarship has, for example, pointed to the essential similarities in the ideology and structure of the Social Credit party in Saskatchewan to that of the CCF.¹⁴² Recent critical examination of J.S. Woodsworth's socialism has also suggested a whiggish libertarian outlook which "adjusted pioneer individualism to the necessities of industrialism."¹⁴³ That had been the central concern of Bellamy, and it was also the central concern of social gossellers and CCF supporters who saw in *Looking Backward* a nationalist-millennialist vision of the twenty-first century.¹⁴⁴

That libertarian and apocalyptic bent to prairie socialism also suggests links to C.B. Macpherson's critique of Social Credit liberal-utopian ideology and John Finlay's characterization of English Social Credit as anarchistic in outlook.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, it appears that this apocalyptic libertarian outlook unites some of the diverse strands of the social gospel and the Saskatchewan CCF on the one hand, and the millennialist rhetoric of the Alberta UFA and Social Credit on the other. Certainly the predisposition which western labour had shown towards radical ideologies from impossibilism to syndicalism and the One Big Union manifested to a considerable degree an apocalyptic and utopian mentality.¹⁴⁶ And both Aberhart's pre-millennial theology and T.C. Douglas's post-millennial vision of the

Kingdom of God on earth in the depths of the Depression differed largely in their particulars, but their prophetic vision had a similar liberating promise. History was less an orderly march, even in the socialist version, to the promised land than it was a great leap forward into modernity.¹⁴⁷

Yet another common strain in prairie radicalism and utopianism was its nationalist impulse, particularly after the 1920s and the advent of progressivism. Thereafter in the 1930s, as W.L. Morton has noted, the west tried to invert the normal process of absorption of the region within the larger nation, while instead "the utopian element seeks to merge the nation in the section."¹⁴⁸ Perhaps it was that utopian promise of altering national values that had been the persistent national role of the prairie west from its beginnings. First as simply empty space, it held utopian promise for national expansion and growth, and later as a proving ground for political and economic experiments. And throughout its history, the west proved full of moral imperatives for the nation, from the regenerative ideals of wartime in the Winnipeg General Strike, and of the Depression in the Regina Manifesto. The western voice was ever prophetic and millennial in its counsel, if somewhat utopian in its persistent attempts to assimilate the nation into the region.

NOTES

The author would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Leave Fellowship Program for making the research for this article possible, and to extend his warm appreciation to Howard Palmer, Douglas Francis, Thomas Flanagan and Barry Ferguson for their perceptive reading and suggestions. This article is a revised version of an earlier one delivered to the Canadian Historical Association at Guelph in 1984.

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- 143 Allen Mills, "The Later Thought of J.S. Woodsworth, 1918-42: An Essay in Revision," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1982): 96-110.
- 144 See Theodore Olson, *Millennialism, Utopianism and Progress*, 257-62.
- 145 See C.B. Macpherson, *Democracy in Alberta*, 214-50; J. Finlay, *Social Credit, The English Origins* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), 248-49.
- 146 See A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries*; David Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978).
- 147 See, for example, T.C. Douglas oratory in Seymour Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, 170.
- 148 W.L. Morton, "The Bias of Prairie Politics," 300.



Métis Land Claims at St. Laurent: Old Arguments and New Evidence

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ABSTRACT. The author examines critiques of his book *Riel and the Rebellion* in light of new evidence regarding such basic issues of the 1885 Rebellion as scrip and river lots. He reasserts the view expressed in the book that federal government actions in the period before the outbreak of the Rebellion demonstrated a clear intention to deal effectively with Métis grievances. But he emphasizes that the evidence also suggests grave weaknesses in the government's attempts to let the Métis know how it was responding to their demands.

SOMMAIRE. L'auteur examine les critiques de son livre *Riel and the Rebellion* à la lueur de nouvelles preuves concernant le "scrip" et les lots de rivière, deux facteurs fondamentaux de la rébellion de 1885. Il réaffirme l'opinion exprimée dans son livre selon laquelle les actions du gouvernement fédéral juste avant que la rébellion n'éclate montraient que celui-ci avait véritablement l'intention de s'occuper des griefs des Métis. Mais il souligne que ces mêmes preuves révèlent aussi de graves faiblesses dans la manière dont le gouvernement essaya d'informer les Métis de sa réponse à leurs revendications.

*Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered*¹ occasioned a minor flurry of controversy, including demands by the Metis Association of Alberta, that the author be fired from the University of Calgary.² Several reviewers made rather extreme statements about the book. "For pure nastiness and vengefulness," wrote Murray Dobbin, "it is unmatched in recent literature. It is not simply flawed, but fundamentally flawed."³ Ron Bourgeault, calling it "a condemnation of a people and their struggle for democracy and national rights," compared the author's views to Jim Keegstra's holocaust denial.⁴ Dennis Duffy, on the other hand, called *Riel and the Rebellion* "a superb and timely work."⁵ Most reviewers fell between these extremes, seeing some useful new information in the book but finding themselves unable to agree with all the author's interpretations and conclusions.⁶

Polemics are momentarily entertaining, but the most important thing in the long run is to advance historical knowledge of the Rebellion and related events. This brief article takes another look at two aspects of Métis land claims at St. Laurent: scrip and river lots. On both topics, there has been continued writing, and in some instances new documentary evidence has been discovered. This article is thus an attempt to update my earlier analysis in the light of ongoing research by myself and others. My conclusions have had to be modified in certain respects, resulting in a clearer and more balanced explanation of why the Métis took up arms in 1885.

Scrip

Riel and the Rebellion argued essentially that, after many delays and administrative errors, the government was proceeding to fulfill the substance of Métis demands before the resort to arms. That is, plans were being made to administer a land grant in the North-West Territories similar to that which took place in Manitoba pursuant to Section 31 of the Manitoba Act. The chief evidence for this view is the order in council of 28 January

1885, which authorized the minister of the interior to appoint a commission of three to enumerate the North-West Métis

with a view of settling equitably the claims of half-breeds in Manitoba and the North-West Territories who would have been entitled to land had they resided in Manitoba at the time of the transfer and filed their claims in due course under the Manitoba Act, and also of those who, though residing in Manitoba and equitably entitled to participate in the grant, did not do so.⁷

Several writers have contended, in the words of George Woodcock, that “this did not — as Flanagan seems to assume — promise a resolution of Métis grievances; it merely constituted an undertaking to look into them. . . .”⁸ Ken Hatt writes: “In this order there was no commitment to extinguish the claims of the Métis.”⁹ Hatt also sees the order as defective since it referred to the Manitoba Act rather than Section 125 of the Dominion Lands Act, 1879, which had provided for a land grant to the Métis of the North-West. Hatt and others go on to conclude that nothing of significance occurred until after the battle of Duck Lake, thus implying that a resort to arms was necessary to galvanize the government into action.¹⁰

Let us examine these contentions. First, as to timing, there is evidence that the government was moving ahead even before the Rebellion broke out. We know from the memoirs of W.P.R. Street, chairman of the Commission, that he was approached by the government in the second week of March. The other members — Roger Goulet, a Métis surveyor from St. Boniface, and A.-E. Forget, secretary of the Legislative Council of the North-West Territories — were approached on 18 and 19 March.¹¹ This is well before the battle of Duck Lake on 26 March and is consistent with the only practical plan, i.e., to put the Commission in the field after the spring thaw.

Hatt’s query about the wording of the order can also be answered. Section 31 of the Manitoba Act had set aside 1.4 million acres in the province for distribution “among the children of the half-breed heads of families residing in the province at the time of the said transfer to Canada [15 July 1870]. . . .”¹² This meant that Métis residing outside the province at that date were not eligible for the grant. A second group of Métis excluded from the grant arose in the course of the actual distribution in the years 1875-80, for by that time some Métis who were legally eligible had moved away and could not receive their allotments. Analysis of the order in council of 28 January 1885 shows that it was intended to address the needs of both groups. The “half-breeds in Manitoba and the North-West Territories who would have been entitled to land had they resided in Manitoba at the time of transfer” were the first group, i.e., the Métis who had been outside Manitoba on 15 July 1870. “Those who, though residing in Manitoba and equitably entitled to participate in the grant, did not do so” were the second group, i.e., those who were omitted for administrative reasons, chiefly for being absent when the distribution was actually made.

Hatt is correct that it would have been better to refer to Section 125 of the Dominion Lands Act, 1879, which was the statutory authority for distributing land to the North-West Métis;¹³ and this mistake was subsequently corrected in an order in council of 30 March 1885. But there is no reason to see in the oversight anything more malign than administrative confusion. Analysis of the wording of the order of 28 January shows that it was intended to reach the right target groups.

Finally, it is clear that the Commission was more than another investigation that might have no tangible result. Its mandate was not merely to investigate matters. Rather, it was appointed “with a view of settling equitably the claims” of the Métis. It was instructed to “enumerate” them, i.e., to conduct a census and collect the information necessary to determine eligibility for each individual. This was an exact repetition of the procedure followed in Manitoba, where a commission composed of J.M. Machar and Matthew Ryan had enumerated the Métis prior to distribution of the land grant.¹⁴ By way of improvement, two members of the North-West Commission were to be French-speaking and one a Métis.

If everything was fine, why were the Métis of St. Laurent not pacified? The answer seems to lie in faulty communication. The minister of the interior, Sir David Macpherson, telegraphed to Governor Dewdney on 4 February 1885: “Government has decided to investigate claims of half-breeds and with that view has directed enumeration of those who did not participate in grant under Manitoba Act. . . .”¹⁵ This was a very weak expression of the contents of the order in council of 28 January, as shown above. *Riel and the Rebellion* erroneously states that Dewdney “sent a copy of the telegram to Charles Nolin.”¹⁶ In fact, Dewdney realized that the brief telegram from Macpherson would not satisfy the Métis. He wrote back to Sir John A. Macdonald: “I feared to send the Telegram as worded by Sir David as it would at this season when they have nothing else to do seem to the bulk of the French Half Breeds who are making demands that they have nothing to expect.”¹⁷ Instead, Dewdney sent a new telegram to D.H. Macdowall of Prince Albert, a member of the North-West Territories Council, who had been acting as an informal intermediary between Riel and the government: “Government has decided to investigate claims of the Half Breeds and with that view has already taken the preliminary steps.”¹⁸

Dewdney had made two important changes in content. First he had removed the statement that the government would deal with “those who did not participate in grant under Manitoba Act.” Dewdney knew full well that most of the Métis of St. Laurent had emigrated only recently from Manitoba, had participated in the distribution of land and scrip in that province, and thus would not be eligible for consideration by this commission. He did not believe they should receive anything further, and he was not trying to do anything for them; he merely wanted not to

disappoint their hopes until they had scattered for the freighting season and were no longer capable of uniting to make a disturbance. This alteration in the telegram was not particularly honest, but it was at least consonant with his goal of preventing trouble over the winter. However, his second alteration worked against his own objectives; for in omitting to mention in his telegram that there would be an enumeration, he had made the government's initiative seem like a mere investigation, perhaps only another delaying tactic.

A final disruption of communication occurred when Macdowall gave the telegram to Charles Nolin. It is not clear why Macdowall passed it on to Nolin, but the explanation is probably not sinister. Nolin and his brother-in-law Maxime Lépine, using money advanced by Macdowall, bid to supply telegraph poles for a telegraph line between Duck Lake and Edmonton.¹⁹ Nolin was frequently in Prince Albert in connection with this business deal, and Macdowall perhaps gave him the telegram out of sheer convenience. In any case, Riel, who was also in contact with Macdowall over his claims for an indemnity from the government, probably felt slighted by the way the telegram was transmitted; we know he reacted emotionally when he saw it on 8 February.²⁰

The net result of these successive lapses in communication was that the government's decision to proceed with the long-delayed Métis land grant in the North-West was perceived by Riel and the Métis as yet another evasion and delay. It was tragically like the classic experiment in which people are asked to whisper a bit of news to their neighbours around a circle. What emerges at the end may be unrecognizable or even the opposite of what was first said.

River Lots

On the question of river lots at St. Laurent, *Riel and the Rebellion* argued that, as with scrip, the federal government was guilty of administrative mistakes and delays but did ultimately accede to the substance of Métis demands before the Rebellion. However, two important questions could not be fully answered on the basis of the evidence presented at the time: 1) Why was only one stretch of land on the South Branch surveyed into river lots, producing seventy-one such lots at St. Laurent? Why were other areas surveyed on the rectangular principle? 2) On what terms did the Department of Interior offer entry to the Métis of St. Laurent in early 1885? Since the official schedule of recommendations had not been found at the time of writing of *Riel and the Rebellion*, the Department's decisions had to be inferred from later records, leaving open the possibility that the relatively generous treatment ultimately accorded had not been envisioned before the Rebellion.

Surveys

Subdivision of the St. Laurent area began in the summer of 1878. Working on the east side of the river, Montague Aldous marked out a

river-lot reserve embracing all of T.43, R.1, W.3 and half of T.44, R.1, W.3, thus creating seventy-one river lots. Standing instructions for surveyors were to create river lots wherever they found substantial numbers of settlers already on the land who desired this system. Aldous's notebook shows that he regarded only twenty-four of the seventy-one lots as occupied, almost all of these lying towards the northern end of the settlement.²¹ By

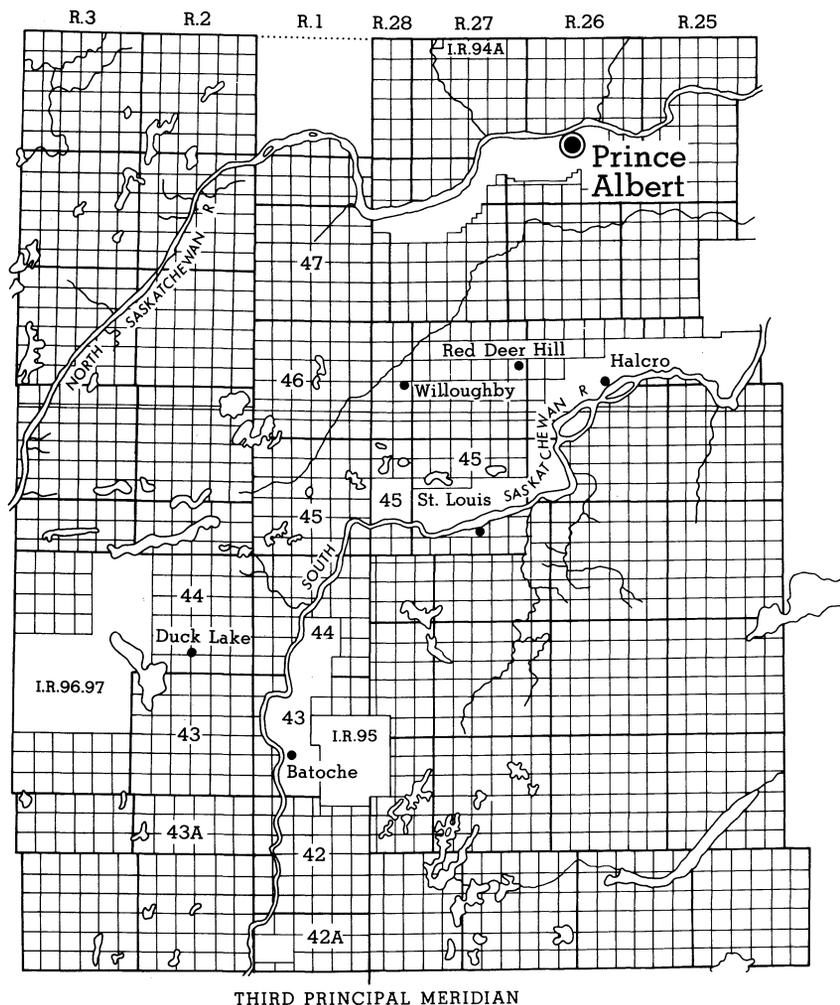


Figure 1. Early Surveys in the Saskatchewan Valley, 1878-82. Cross-hatched areas were surveyed on the sectional system; blank areas, apart from Indian Reserves, were surveyed into river lots. Note that, around Batoche, river lots were drawn only on the east side of the South Saskatchewan River in T.43 and T.44, R.1, W.3. The west side of the river was square-surveyed, even though some French Métis were already settled there before survey. Around St. Louis, only the north side of the river, settled by English half-breeds, received river lots (T.45, R.28, R.27, and R.26, W.3). The south side, where French Métis were settling in numbers around the time of survey (1882), was done on the rectangular principle. The map is adapted from Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, V1/502 (1903)

his own standards, he was apparently tolerant in recognition of claims. For example, he entered the claims of the Carrière family in his book, while noting: “Lots Nos. 20 to 27 (inclusive) are only claimed by the Carriers [*sic*] — they are not at present in occupation.”²² Aldous may have missed some claimants; several other Métis stated in 1884 that they were cultivating land there as early as 1877.²³ But such oral, retrospective statements are not necessarily accurate to the exact year, and in any case the issue here is what degree of settlement had to be perceived by the surveyor in order to justify a river-lot survey. The answer in this instance seems to be about one-third.

The same summer, Duncan Sinclair was surveying north of the river east of the great bend (T.45 and T.46, R.28, W.2; T.45, R.27, W.2; T.45, R.26, W.2), i.e., across from what would become the parish of St. Louis de Langevin. This area, to the extent that it was settled at all in 1878, was inhabited only by a few Scottish mixed bloods. Sinclair’s notebook for T.45 and T.46, R.28, W.2 stated: “There are five settlers on it already that made a beginning last year and are doing well”; it mentioned the names McLean, McKay, and Cameron.²⁴ His maps show no prior settlers at all in T.45, R.27, W.2 and only five in T.46, R.26, W.2, again with English or Scottish names.²⁵ In spite of this thin occupancy, Sinclair obligingly drew river lots throughout the townships. This generous treatment of an English-speaking area would later seem like unfair partiality to French Métis who did not receive the same privilege.

River lots were not so readily granted in 1879. In that year J. Lestock Reid surveyed T.42, R.1, W.3 (the Fish Creek area) on both sides of the river as well as T.43 and T.44, R.1, W.3 on the west bank, directly across from the St. Laurent river-lot reserve created the preceding summer by Aldous. Regarding T.42, Reid noted:

There are a few families of French Halfbreeds at present living in this township and from the number of plough furrows marking out the boundaries of claims I am led to suppose a large number are about breaking here.²⁶

In spite of this observation, he must have used a strict criterion for recognition of claims, for his sketches and final map show only four claims: Dubois, Poitras, Vandal, and Dumont.

A similar contradiction marked Reid’s surveying as he worked his way up the west bank. In T.43 he noted: “Both banks of the River are settled by French halfbreeds”;²⁷ yet he recorded the presence of only two claimants. In T.44 he wrote:

The South Saskatchewan River runs diagonally through this township . . . both banks of the river being settled by French Half breeds whose chief occupation has been trading and hunting on the Plains but who are now turning their attention more to farming.²⁸

Even though his sketches and map show half a dozen instances of settlement, covering almost all sections fronting on the west bank of the river, he still did a square survey rather than river lots.

Although one cannot give a precise quantitative measurement, it seems clear that Reid was operating on a different basis than Aldous, and that Aldous would certainly have created river lots in T.44 and probably in T.43 and T.42. Unfortunately, the available documents do not explain this difference between the surveyors; but since there is no evidence of a shift in official instructions, one can only infer that it was a personal difference in outlook.

Roughly the same situation occurred in St. Louis de Langevin. Whereas in 1878 Duncan Sinclair had surveyed the north bank of the river into river lots, in 1882 Hugh Wilson surveyed the south side into quarter-sections, even though he encountered a higher incidence of settlement than Sinclair had found in 1878. Wilson encountered four river-front claimants in both T.45, R.28, W.2 and T.45, R.27, W.2, not as many as in the St. Laurent area but still far from negligible. Also there is other evidence that Métis were coming in to settle in St. Louis precisely at this time.²⁹ They may not have had a chance to make visible improvements by the time of survey, but Wilson should have known what was happening.

All this evidence substantiates the conclusion reached in *Riel and the Rebellion*: “it was an error not to have extended the river-lot survey to comprise the whole St. Laurent colony in the first place.”³⁰ There is no evidence to show the mistake was other than a matter of surveyors’ judgement in the field, but it nonetheless had serious long-term consequences.

Entry

In spite of many requests, the government refused to resurvey quarter-sections along the river into river lots. Instead it proposed the administrative compromise of allowing squatters to make entry for *de facto* river lots by adding together twenty-acre legal subdivisions. In May 1884 Prince Albert lands agent George Duck collected evidence from ninety-nine Métis claimants at St. Laurent, and on the basis of these submissions made recommendations to the Dominion Lands Board. After some further delays, the Métis were notified between 26 February and 7 March 1885 of the terms on which they could make entry. *Riel and the Rebellion* depicted this process as a reasonable solution to the difficulties created by the original mistake of not having surveyed all of St. Laurent into river lots.

There was, however, a weak link in the book’s evidence. Since the schedule of cases investigated by Duck had not been located, it was necessary to infer the substance of the Lands Board decisions from actions recorded in later homestead files. D.N. Sprague used this lacuna in the evidence to propose an alternate interpretation, according to which “what most people received was a provocative denial of their demand for title to the lands they had occupied for years.”³¹ Sprague pointed out that most claims to *de facto* river lots on quarter-sections involved odd-numbered

sections; indeed this was inevitable, since creating a river lot by means of legal subdivision meant that it had to cross two or sometimes three contiguous sections, at least one of which had to be odd-numbered. Now according to Dominion Lands regulations, odd-numbered sections were not open for homestead but were reserved for preemption, i.e., purchase at a favourable fixed price, so that successful homesteaders could expand their landholdings. Reasoning from precedents in other parts of the west, Sprague argued that the St. Laurent Métis would have been informed that they could make homestead entry on odd-numbered sections but would have to purchase them outright, at one dollar or two dollars per acre, depending on the date of first occupation.³²

The missing schedule of St. Laurent cases investigated by Duck has now been found, and it shows unequivocally that Sprague's theory is wrong.³³ Squatters whose claims involved odd-numbered sections were indeed allowed to make homestead entry for up to 160 acres. If their claim encompassed more than 160 acres, as sometimes happened with river lots because of the river's irregular course, they could purchase the surplus at one dollar or two dollars per acre, depending on the date of first occupancy. All of this was recommended in 1884, long before there was any question of taking up arms.

Sprague's criticism has, however, been fruitful in another respect. It has drawn attention to the fact that, while the Métis had asked for immediate free patents, the Department of the Interior offered in almost all cases only the right of entry. By 1885, the Métis had generally been on the land more than the requisite three years, but their improvements were not usually sufficient to qualify for patents. *Riel and the Rebellion* did not take sufficient note of this important distinction. Entry required a fee of ten dollars, not in itself an insuperable obstacle for most Métis. But entry did not carry with it the rights to mortgage or sell the land; these rights came only with patent. With the end of the buffalo hunt, the Métis were looking for new sources of cash to increase their intensity of farming or to invest in businesses such as wood-cutting and freighting. There may have been many who were disappointed with receiving only entry rather than patent, thus helping to explain why the notification between 26 February and 7 March did nothing to prevent a resort to arms.

Another question that still nags, even if it is of secondary importance, is what form the notification took. *Riel and the Rebellion* asserted that "a letter was sent to each of the claimants stating the terms on which he could make entry,"³⁴ but this may have been an overstatement. If so many letters were actually sent, it is odd that not even one has ever been found. Two homestead files contain specific notations that letters were sent,³⁵ but others merely report that claimants were notified to make entry.³⁶ Even if letters were sent to everyone, it is possible that many Métis did not fully grasp their significance, since hardly any of them could

read. With the advantage of hindsight, it seems too bad that a French-speaking employee of the Prince Albert Lands Office did not make a trip to St. Laurent to explain precisely what was being conceded.

Conclusion

Although clichés are always suspect as explanations, it truly seems that a “breakdown in communications” was crucial to the outbreak of the North-West Rebellion. On the two main grievances of scrip and river lots, slow and awkward governmental attempts at explanation were vitiated even further by the intrinsic difficulties of communicating in mid-winter with a non-literate francophone group living in a remote place. If government is to be faulted, it is primarily for not taking extra effort to explain its actions rather than for the substance of its actions.

Collateral support for this interpretation comes from André Lalonde’s careful study of the Prince Albert Colonization Company. Lalonde has shown that, in spite of many allegations, the Prince Albert Colonization Company did not present the slightest threat to the Métis living on the South Branch.³⁷ The parish of St. Louis de Langevin did grow up on land bought by the Company, but the latter had no power to evict settlers and no steps were ever taken in that direction. And yet at least some Métis had the impression that the Company was a threat to their lands. Louis Riel wrote after the Rebellion:

La Puissance arriva à ne plus garder aucune modération. Elle vendit à une société de colonisation une paroisse métisse toute ronde, le prêtre était là. Elle vendit la paroisse de St. Louis de Langevin avec la terre de l’église, sur laquelle était une chapelle en voie de construction; elle vendit la terre de l’école et les propriétés de trente-cinq familles.³⁸

Even if in reality there was no threat to the Métis from the Company, the perception of a threat may have reinforced the feeling that a resort to arms was necessary.

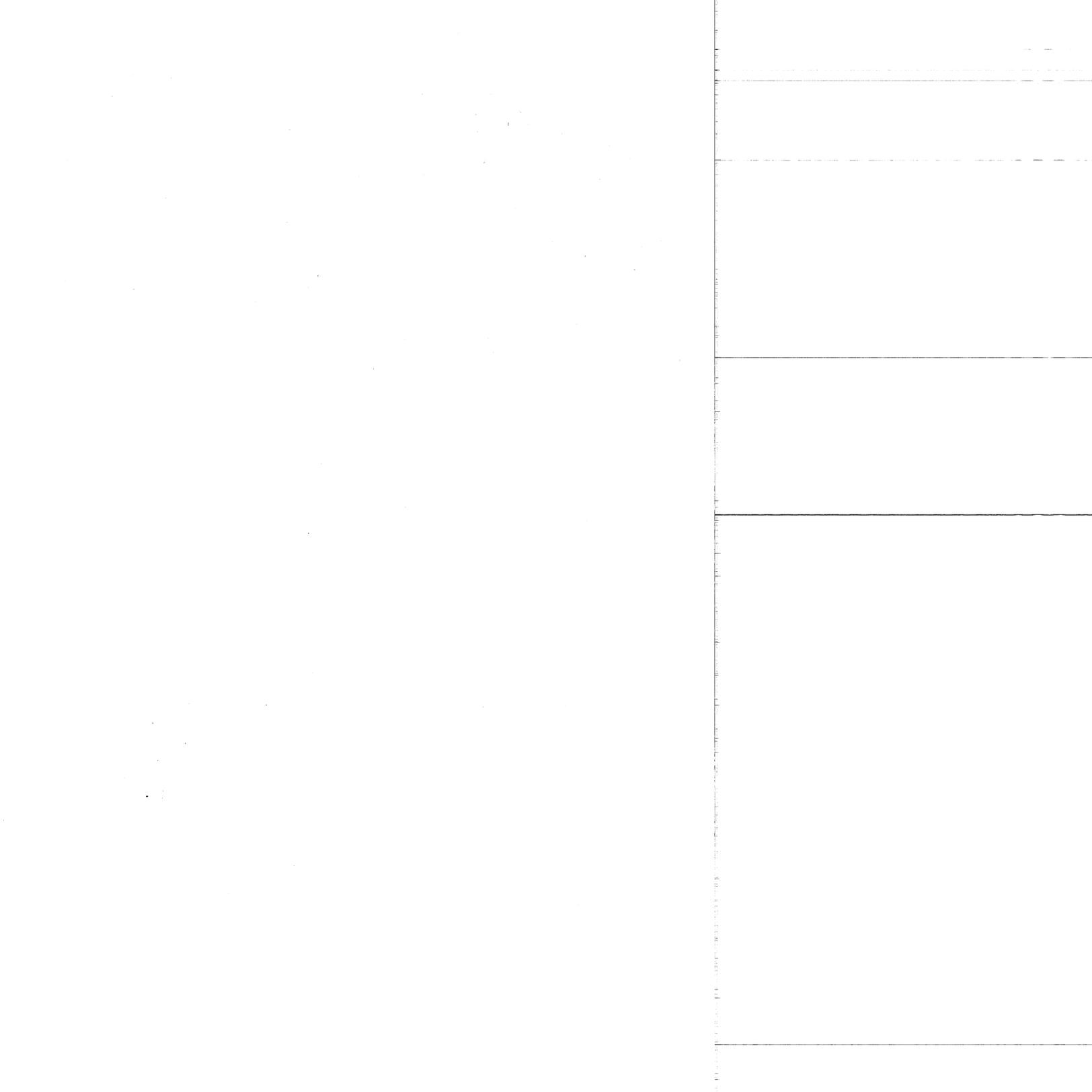
There are essentially three views about the federal government’s role in the origin of the Rebellion. First, that Sir John A. Macdonald deliberately provoked the Métis into taking up arms so that he could crush their power in the west while simultaneously securing funding for the Canadian Pacific Railway. This is the conspiracy theory suggested by A.-H. de Trémaudan,³⁹ sketched by Howard Adams,⁴⁰ and expanded to great lengths by Don McLean.⁴¹ Second, that the government unintentionally drove the Métis into rebellion by grave delays and mistakes in lands policy. This is the standard view in the tradition of George F.G. Stanley. Third, that the government’s policy should have satisfied the Métis but did not because it was not properly communicated to them. This is the view developed in *Riel and the Rebellion* and presented here with certain refinements and new information.

NOTES

I am grateful to the Research Grants Committee of the University of Calgary for a grant to update my research on the North-West Rebellion.

- 1 Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983).
- 2 *Calgary Herald*, 3 December 1983, p. 32; *Alberta Report*, 2 January 1984, p. 27
- 3 Murray Dobbin, "Thomas Flanagan's Riel: An Unfortunate Obsession," *Alberta History* 32 (Spring 1984): 26.
- 4 Ron Bourgeault, review in *Labour/Le Travail* 16 (1985): 284-85.
- 5 Dennis Duffy, *The Globe and Mail*, 22 October 1983, p. E6.
- 6 See, for example, John Foster in *Great Plains Quarterly* 5 (Fall 1985): 259-60; J.E. Rea in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 17 (September 1984): 612-13; Gerald Friesen in *Saskatchewan History* 37 (Autumn 1984): 119-20.
- 7 Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 70.
- 8 George Woodcock, "Not guilty," *Books in Canada* (January 1984): 10. Grammatically, Woodcock's sentence refers to the subsequent telegram to Governor Dewdney and not to the order in council, but in context it is clear he is writing about government policy as a whole and is not distinguishing among different documents.
- 9 Ken Hatt, "The North-West Rebellion Scrip Commissions, 1885-1889," in F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram, eds., *1885 and After: Native Society in Transition* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1986), 191.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 H.H. Langton, "The Commission of 1885 to the North-West Territories," *Canadian Historical Review* 25 (1944): 39, 45.
- 12 S.C., 1870, c.3, s.31.
- 13 S.C., 1879, c.31, s.125(3), cited in Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 67.
- 14 Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 64.
- 15 Diane Payment, *Batoche (1870-1910)* (Saint-Boniface: Les Editions du Blé, 1983), 78.
- 16 Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 71. I must, of course, take responsibility for errors in my book. However, it should be noted that the episode of the telegrams is also inaccurately reported in well-known books such as George F.G. Stanley's *Louis Riel* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1963), 297-98, and George Woodcock's *Gabriel Dumont* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1975), 155-57. It is to be hoped that the correct version, established by Payment and by Beal and Macleod, and accepted here, will become prevalent in the literature.
- 17 Diane Payment, *Batoche*, 79; Bob Beal and Rod Macleod, *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1984), 131.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 113.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 71.
- 21 Government of Saskatchewan, Central Survey and Mapping Agency, Legal Surveys Branch (Regina) (hereafter LSB), Notebook 747. Diane Payment was the first to exploit these notebooks.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 The statements are in Saskatchewan Archives (Saskatoon), Homestead Files, 81184. For example, Daniel Garripie claimed in 1884 that he had lived continuously on lot 37 since 1877, but Aldous did not note his presence.
- 24 LSB, Notebook 746.
- 25 All references to township maps are to the complete set of bound volumes in the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (Regina).
- 26 LSB, Notebook 872.
- 27 *Ibid.*, Notebook 882.
- 28 *Ibid.*, Notebook 880.
- 29 Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 37.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 31 D.N. Sprague, "Deliberation and Accident in the Events of 1885," *Prairie Fire: A Manitoba Literary Review* 6 (1985): 107.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 103.
- 33 University of Alberta Archives, William Pearce Papers, MG 9/2/4-4 (Vol. 4), 224-75. It is embarrassing to have to report that Diane Payment, D.N. Sprague and I had all consulted the Pearce Papers before 1983 without finding this schedule. The letterbooks are difficult to read and not well indexed.

- 34 Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 47.
- 35 Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon), Department of Agriculture, Lands Branch, Ag11, Files 30061 (Father Julien Moulin) and 29800 (Joseph Pilon).
- 36 Ibid., files 29805 (Jean Caron, Jr.), 29811 (George Ness), 30047 (Isidore Dumas).
- 37 André N. Lalonde, "Colonization Companies and the North-West Rebellion," in F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram, eds., *1885 and After*, 53-65.
- 38 Thomas Flanagan, ed., *The Collected Writings of Louis Riel/Les Ecrits complets de Louis Riel* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985, 5 vols.), 3: 288. Originally published 28 November 1985, in the Montréal *Daily Star* under the title "Les Métis du Nord-Ouest."
- 39 A.-H. de Trémaudan, *Histoire de la nation métisse dans l'ouest canadien* (Montréal: Editions Albert Lévesque, 1936).
- 40 Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass* (Toronto: New Press, 1975), ch. 9.
- 41 Martin Shulman and Don McLean, "Lawrence Clarke: Architect of Revolt," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 3 (1983): 57-68; Don McLean, *1885: Métis Rebellion or Government Conspiracy?* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1985); Don McLean, "1885: Métis Rebellion or Government Conspiracy?" in F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram, *1885 and After*, 79-104. For my review of McLean's book, see *Canadian Historical Review* 67 (September 1986): 462.



Masters and Servants: Labour Relations in the Saskatchewan Civil Service, 1905-1945

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ABSTRACT. This article examines the attitudes and actions of both Saskatchewan governments and their employees to unionism from the province's establishment to the winning of union recognition and a collective agreement in 1945. It argues that, for most of the period, governments took a classic master-servant attitude to relations with their employees and that, until the 1930s, few employees challenged the view that their public service functions excluded them from trade union participation. From then, militant groups within the Saskatchewan Civil Service Association began to challenge the pliant leadership; when the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was elected in 1944 and gave civil servants the right to organize, these militants spearheaded an organization drive.

SOMMAIRE. L'article qui suit examine les attitudes et les actions des gouvernements de la Saskatchewan et de leurs employés vis à vis du syndicalisme, des débuts de la province jusqu'à la reconnaissance d'un syndicat et la convention collective de 1945. Il démontre que pendant pratiquement toute cette période les gouvernements appliquèrent aux relations employeur-employé une attitude classique maître-serviteur, et qu'avant les années 30 peu d'employés contestaient l'idée qu'ils ne pouvaient, en tant que fonctionnaires, faire partie d'un syndicat.

A partir de ce moment-là, des groupes militants au sein de l'Association de la fonction publique de la Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Civil Service Association) commencèrent à défier la docilité de leur direction. Lorsque le CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) fut élu en 1944 et qu'il donna aux fonctionnaires le droit de s'organiser, ce sont ces militants qui menèrent la campagne d'organisation.

The Saskatchewan Government Employees Union (SGEU), the second largest union in the province, has developed into a militant organization prepared to engage in struggle against the government. The most recent example of militancy was the September 1985 rotating strikes which only ended after the government legislated its employees back to work. The militancy of the SGEU came after a period which was characterized by a master-servant relationship. Prior to 1944 provincial governments used their dual power as legislators of labour law and employers of labour to maintain control of the work force. In fact, civil servants had even fewer rights than other Saskatchewan workers, because they were excluded from existing labour legislation. Nevertheless by 1944 government employees were taking steps to break the master-servant relationship. A small group of progressive rank and filers were making demands for the formation of a union which would improve wages and working conditions. They were assisted by changes in the labour relations system; it was after 1944 that the so-called "era of 'free collective bargaining' came to be" and workers, including civil servants, were able to achieve trade union rights.¹ The purpose of this article is to examine labour relations in the Saskatchewan civil service between 1905 and 1945 by first outlining both roles of the government *vis à vis* labour (i.e., legislator and employer) and then documenting the employees' response, which finally led to union recognition.

The Saskatchewan government's role as legislator in the labour relations system was to regulate the relations between capital and labour

in a manner that ensured an orderly operation of the capitalist mode of production within an economy dominated by agriculture.² The first provincial government, led by Walter Scott, followed the lead of other provinces, especially Ontario, and adopted what H.C. Pentland has described as “the ancient prescription of master and unquestioning servant.”³ Saskatchewan governments, like their federal and provincial counterparts, viewed their employees as servants who were required to mind their betters both as a matter of social propriety and as part of a commitment to a high level of public service.⁴ Industrial workers were viewed in a similar way. Neither employers nor the governments wanted to allow workers collective bargaining rights that would break the master-servant relationship. In fact, the Canadian state attempted to moderate and contain class conflict by the use of the Industrial Disputes Investigation (IDI) Act of 1907, which gave no protection to union recognition nor the concept of collective bargaining.⁵ It was not until the passage of the Wagner Act (National Labour Relations Act) in the United States in 1935, with its commitment to workers’ rights to organize and bargain collectively, that the Canadian trade union movement gained the confidence to press provincial governments for the same rights.

At the 1936 national Trades and Labour Congress (TLC) convention, the delegates passed a resolution calling upon the TLC Executive Council to persuade provincial governments to pass legislation parallel to Wagner Act provisions that gave workers the right to a closed shop. A union representing a majority of a bargaining unit would have the right to negotiate improvements in wages and working conditions without fear of reprisals such as dismissal of members from their jobs. The TLC drafted a trade union bill and sent a copy to each provincial legislative assembly with a covering letter pointing out that since

the right of employees to organize, or to join trade unions is not secured or protected by any positive law on the subject; [and since] trade unionism is necessary to [improve] Canadian living standards . . . we submit that it is strongly to be condemned that employers should continue to have it in their power to prevent their workers from joining a union and we desire to solicit your assistance in removing such authority over their workers from all employers . . . and we earnestly solicit your support for a measure, based on this bill, to be enacted by your Legislature.⁶

Canadian legislators took the TLC’s bill under consideration, for they had been plagued by bitter recognition strikes in their respective jurisdictions. As a result a number of provinces moved cautiously in that direction in 1937 and 1938.⁷ In Saskatchewan T.M. Molloy, commissioner of labour, wrote a letter to the Honourable R.J.M. Parker in January 1938 warning him that if he decided “not to enact this particular law, [there is] a possibility of the ‘progressive’ or radical element in the Province interpreting a lack of legislation of this kind as a further concession to the capitalist class.” Molloy continued with his opinion that “the enactment of such a law even with all the difficulties and bickerings that may arise between employers and employees as a result of such legislation

. . . may not bring as much criticism of the Government or its policies, as to neglect to introduce this legislation into the House.’’⁸

As a result, on 23 March 1938, the Saskatchewan government passed the Freedom of Trade Union Association Act. Its purpose was “to render it lawful for employees to form themselves into a trade union and to render it lawful for employees to bargain collectively with their employer . . . and to conduct such bargaining through the Employees’ Trade Union and through duly chosen officers of such Union.’’⁹ The major shortcomings of the Act were that it was not compulsory for the employers and it failed to include civil servants within the definition of employees who were entitled to join trade unions. Accordingly the demand for improvement in bargaining rights continued throughout the late 1930s and the war years.

In response to this union pressure, W.G. Baker, a unionist politician in the Liberal government of W.J. Patterson, introduced Bill 51 in 1943, “An Act Respecting the Right of Employees to Organize and Providing for Conciliation and Arbitration in Industrial Disputes.” The bill, which was based on the British Columbia Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (1943), was designed to replace the Freedom of Trade Union Association Act and the IDI Act (Saskatchewan), which had been passed as enabling legislation in 1926. It was intended to improve the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively with their employers. The Bill made provision for penalties against both workers and employers who engaged in labour practices defined under the legislation as unfair. Finally, the settlement of disputes would still involve conciliation provisions in order to provide a “cooling-off” period.¹⁰ A commission of inquiry was set up to investigate the principles of Bill 51. The commission later issued a report which formed the basis of the Labour Relations Act of 1944.

Meanwhile, important developments in labour legislation were taking place at the federal level as a response to the growing militant labour discontent and the resultant threat to the war effort. During the early war years the aggressive organizing drive of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and union recognition strikes greatly enhanced working-class antagonism against both the employers and the state. The state attempted to reduce the growing confrontations first by wage controls and then with the passage of a series of orders in council culminating in PC 1003 on 17 February 1944.¹¹ PC 1003, which was based on the principles embodied in the Wagner Act, brought new stability to Canada’s labour laws by establishing compulsory union recognition, compulsory collective bargaining, the surveillance of labour relations by permanent administrative boards, penalties for employers engaging in unfair labour practices and compulsory conciliation before a strike or lockout commenced. PC 1003, according to Panitch and Swartz, “was a product of a heretofore unparalleled shift in the balance of class forces in Canadian society” and marked the opening of “the era of free collective

bargaining.”¹² In 1948 PC 1003 was consolidated with the IDI Act to create the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act, which also brought all the orders of the Wartime Labour Relations Board under the jurisdiction of the newly created Canada Labour Relations Board.¹³ It should be noted, however, that rather than balance the power relations between capital and labour the new legislation, as Panitch and Swartz point out, “fashioned a new hegemony for capital in Canadian society.”¹⁴

In Saskatchewan it was not until the electoral victory of the CCF in June 1944 that labour would receive a trade union act which would usher in a so-called “free” collective bargaining era. The CCF had been working with organized labour to develop a programme which had as its priority “The Right to Organize [whereby] the CCF will make it mandatory for employers to enter into collective bargaining with the labour union selected by the majority of the employees.”¹⁵ After the election, David Lewis, national secretary of the CCF, immediately contacted Premier T.C. Douglas to impress on him the importance of a proper labour policy in Saskatchewan because of the “long-term implications for organized labour throughout the country.”¹⁶ Lewis notes in his memoirs that Douglas proceeded with the Trade Union Act, even though the Saskatchewan labour movement had little political clout, “partly because it was established CCF policy which he had always supported and partly because he hoped it would be of value in other provinces, like Ontario and British Columbia, as a demonstration of CCF commitment to labour’s cause.”¹⁷ The proper labour policy, however, did not mean that the CCF government would do the organizing work for the union movement. As Pat Conroy, secretary treasurer of the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL), pointed out to A.F. Langton, general organizer of the CCL,

The Government cannot do our work of organizing; they can only provide what we believe to be fit and proper mediums to enable us to do a good job. The Government cannot, and must not, be held responsible for the work which we in our Congress can do.¹⁸

To ensure that the proper legislation was drafted, David Lewis had Andrew Brewin and Ted Jolliffe, both prominent Ontario labour lawyers and CCF members, assist the Douglas government.

With the passage of the Trade Union Act in September 1944, the IDI Act, the Freedom of Trade Union Association Act and the Labour Relations Act were all repealed. For the first time civil servants were given the same rights as other workers to organize into unions of their own choosing, to bargain collectively, and to strike after conciliation procedures had failed. Another first was that the provincial government was to be considered like any other employer in that it had to recognize a union and bargain in “good faith” with a view to concluding a written collective agreement. The act prohibited unfair labour practices, especially during the certification procedure. The definition of a union was narrowed to exclude company-sponsored and dominated associations. Union security was provided by

means of compulsory dues check-off. The act was to be administered by a seven-member Labour Relations Board (LRB) representing employers and workers and, where deemed advisable, the general public. The LRB received wide powers to determine the appropriate bargaining unit or trade union, to require an employer to bargain collectively, to disestablish a company-dominated organization and to restrain persons from engaging in any unfair labour practices.¹⁹

According to the Political Action Committee of the CCL, this was “the best labour legislation in North America”; for the first time labour was “getting a square deal from government.”²⁰ The Trade Union Act also marked a watershed in Saskatchewan industrial relations by providing workers and trade unions certain fundamental rights to improve their conditions *vis à vis* the employers. In other words, the CCF had gone farther than the former Liberal and Conservative governments to promote stability in labour relations via union recognition and free collective bargaining.

2

In their role as an employer, the Saskatchewan Liberal and Conservative governments, like their federal and provincial counterparts, adopted according to J.E. Hodgetts and O.P. Dwivedi, an authoritarian approach to their employees based on “the legal concept of the state as sovereign.”²¹ The doctrine of sovereignty was used by governments to maintain absolute control in the management of their employees. Governments were faced with the same two basic labour relations problems as private enterprise: the conflict over wages and the maintenance of authority and supervision. Nonetheless, as an employer, the government, with its non-market-dependent controls over its receipts and its direct ability to resort to legislation to make its managerial authority over employees stick, is unique. As H.D. Woods has argued, the political context of government labour relations has to be emphasized because

the discipline of the balance sheet, which has a prime influence in private industrial relations, is less influential in the public sector. While industrial relations in the public sector have to conform to budgetary limitations, the budgets themselves are the result of political pressures and manoeuvring.²²

The political context of the Saskatchewan government’s labour relations policies as an employer was first outlined in the Public Service Act, 1906. The act defined employees as “all persons in the service of the Executive Government of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan”; in 1906 there were 123 civil servants working in the departments of the Attorney General, Provincial Secretary, Treasury, Public Works, Agriculture, Education and the Railway Commissioner.²³ It is important to note that this definition included both white-collar and blue-collar workers. The government needed both types in order to handle clerical duties and manual labour. As the population grew and more industries and services were established the demand for new departments increased. In 1930, for example, when natural

resources were transferred to the province a new department was created. And in 1944 the CCF introduced a number of new departments including Co-operation and Co-operative Development, Social Welfare and Labour. From the time of the 1906 Act, the staff of each department was divided and ranked as follows: deputy head, chief clerk of each branch or bureau, professional or technical officials, clerks and other employees. The ranking of employees in such a fashion created an internal class structure and a group of proletarian white-collar workers.²⁴ Most of these were young single women who were assigned low-paying routine clerical jobs. All employees were required to take an oath of allegiance, and an oath of office declaring that they would faithfully and honestly fulfill their duties. The government used the oath as a means to create a loyal and subservient labour force. The act gave the head of each department the authority to oversee, direct and control his employees in the carrying out of their duties. The department head also had the authority to discipline any employee who failed to perform his duties or engaged in improper conduct. Finally, all employees had their salaries assigned to them by orders in council; if any employee applied for a salary increase, his action was considered "as a tendering of the resignation of such employee."²⁵

The Public Service Act remained in force until 1913 when the Scott government passed the Civil Service Act. The new act made several changes in the organization and administration of government employees' work. Definitions were provided to distinguish between officers, clerks, stenographers and a category termed employees, which included every member of the permanent civil service not included in the other three categories. A civil service commissioner was appointed to make and administer all rules and regulations concerning hiring procedures, the filling of vacancies, the classification of employees, the payment of wages, the promotion or transfer of employees, the examination of applicants for admission, and all other matters pertaining to the management and discipline of employees. The Lieutenant Governor in Council was empowered to define and establish the offices in any department, to determine the qualifications and duties of the members of the civil service, to set the hours of work, to establish the conditions of employment for all employees, to grant vacations and leaves of absence and to fix wage schedules.²⁶ In a word, the Commissioner would operate in a paternalistic labour relations system which tended to proletarianize white-collar workers at the lower levels.

The act gave government managers complete control of the operation of the civil service. Employees were expected to be subservient and loyal to their employer; and it was this expectation of loyalty, according to Doug Taylor, that "made servants out of public employees and servants have few rights or privileges."²⁷ This certainly was the case in such matters as wages and the promotion and selection procedures. The labour relations policy of the Liberal and Conservative governments was to force the

resignation of any employee who questioned his wage. Even P. Walker, registrar of the British Columbia Civil Service Commission, thought it was unreasonable that the Saskatchewan government would prevent an employee from having the right of appeal. "It seems to me," stated Walker, "that a Civil Servant who does not think that he has been treated properly as regards salary should have some right of appeal. . . ." ²⁸ But this was not to be the case prior to 1944 when the CCF came in with its exceptional employer image.

Government employees also had no rights when it came to the promotion and selection procedures. Since the Civil Service Act did not recognize seniority or provide for job examinations for civil servants, the Commissioner could arbitrarily determine an applicant's qualifications. In 1922, for example, P.G. Ward, Civil Service Commissioner, made an outrageous claim that this procedure was "far better than any system of examinations ever invented." He then provided a most revealing explanation of the type of servant wanted:

Some of the worst failures have qualified for entrance to Oxford or Cambridge and some of the most backward students have by hard work and diligence in seeking knowledge, proved themselves fitted to occupy positions of the greatest responsibility. Hard work and diligence is an indication of loyalty and as Elbert Hubbard truly said "an ounce of loyalty is worth a pound of cleverness."

The Civil Service Commission after all is a big employment bureau whose duty, upon application by a Department, is to send, for their approval those they judge to be suitable for the vacancy to be filled. . . . ²⁹

Such a practice allowed the Commissioner to be discriminatory and sexist in dealing with women workers. In a letter to the efficiency examiner at the Wisconsin Civil Service Commission in 1919, F.J. Reynolds, the civil service commissioner, claimed that his "experience in working with and employing women, both in business concerns and in the Government led [him] to believe that it [was] physically impossible for a woman to be of the same relative value and service as a man, although she may be just as efficient and perform the same work." ³⁰ As a case in point the Martin government made ninety-six appointments in 1918: twenty-eight were in the male-reserved area, while fifty-four of the sixty-eight clerical positions went to returned soldiers. They were paid \$75 to \$90 per month, which was \$15 to \$30 above the rate paid to women. ³¹ It was also discovered that promotions for women workers from one department to another, with the possible exception of junior clerks and stenographers, were rare. The problem was with the job training procedure. According to P.G. Ward, "an experienced senior clerk, in let us say the Department of Agriculture would be useless as a chief clerk in the Department of Education or for that matter in any other Department other than the one in which he gained his knowledge. This applies all down the line with few exceptions." ³²

The Liberal government's hiring and promotion procedures were marred by the patronage system, which remained in operation until the

mid-1940s when the CCF stopped the practice.³³ But before that happened the Liberals gained a notorious reputation “for converting the civil service into a machine for political patronage. . . .”³⁴ For example, in the late stages of World War I and after, returned officers who supported the Liberals were given preference in the placement of high-ranking civil service positions.³⁵ During the 1920s the government, especially under Premier James Gardiner, made patronage appointments by manipulation of the Civil Service Act. The practice was to hire individuals for six months, release them for a brief period, and then rehire them for another six months with the intention of releasing them again, thus keeping them temporary on an ongoing basis.³⁶ Even the pro-Liberal newspaper *The Leader-Post* accused the government of leaving “the patronage gate open” and firing civil servants in order to give their jobs to Liberal supporters.³⁷ As a consequence the patronage system became a means of controlling the work force and ensuring the maintenance of loyal employees.

Little changed in the operation of the civil service until the election of the Conservative government in 1929. One of the planks in the Conservative platform had been civil service reform. Consequently on 27 September 1929 Premier J.T.M. Anderson established a Public Service Inquiry Commission (PSIC) consisting of J.F. Bryant, minister of public works and telephones, A. Hayworth of the Power Commission and M.J. Coldwell, a Regina school principal who was to become the leader of the CCF, to carry out an investigation of the civil service. In early November the PSIC outlined the major factors that the government should take into consideration, particularly job security, promotion by merit and seniority, political patronage and the standardization of conditions of entry into the service.³⁸

The government, as a result of these recommendations, passed the Public Service Act on 1 June 1930. The act made provision for a Public Service Commission consisting of a full-time chairman for ten years and two other members for five years each. Employees were still divided into four classes: Administrative, which included deputy ministers, commissioners, members of the Local Government Board, Farm Loans Board and Liquor Board, normal school principals, superintendents of mental hospitals and wardens of jails; Professional, consisting of all persons whose offices or duties required professional skill and training of a legal, medical, literary, technical, scientific or other special character; Clerical, including chief clerks, court reporters, draftsmen, stenographers, typists, clerks, bookkeepers, accountants and inspectors; and General, encompassing all the remaining white-collar and blue-collar employees. The employees in these divisions were paid graded salaries with annual increments in accordance with the Public Service Commission’s schedules.³⁹ All positions were subject to competitive written and oral examinations, and promotion was on merit, with consideration for seniority. Notice of all promotions and transfers had to be published in the

Saskatchewan Gazette. A joint committee consisting of six members, three appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and three elected by the employees, was established to hear and determine appeals involving job classifications, wages, employee grievances and dismissals. Finally, no employee was to engage in partisan activities.⁴⁰

Supposedly the Public Service Act was to change the corrupt practices in the government's labour relations policies and abolish the patronage system. The Anderson government, however, did not make any changes in actual practice. *The Leader-Post* accused the Conservative government of firing civil servants and replacing them with party workers. Anderson's response to the accusation was that the employees had to be dismissed because they had been politically active in the Liberal party.⁴¹ Anderson soon faced a much more serious problem than the administration of the act. The Depression cut government revenues substantially, thus by 1931 causing a problem of how to pay the thirty-five hundred civil servants who remained. Employees who were not laid off found that their wages had been cut by "5% on their first \$1,000 and 10% over that."⁴²

Government employees did not fare that much better when the Liberals regained power in 1934. Premier Gardiner immediately reverted to the former patronage system and purged Conservative supporters. In the first six months after the Liberals had regained power, over 10 percent of the civil servants had been dismissed because "they were alleged to be patronage appointments by the Conservatives."⁴³ The remaining civil servants also felt the brunt of the attack when Gardiner announced in October 1934 that there would be further wage cuts.

The Liberal government continued to control its employees throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s by threatening to cut both jobs and wages. In 1940, for example, the W.J. Patterson government appointed a special committee to investigate all departments in order to determine which jobs could be eliminated and how work could be reorganized among fewer staff.⁴⁴ The government also issued notices to all departments "that there would be no increases in salaries for the year 1940-41."⁴⁵ Although a number of employees complained about the lack of wage increases and the government's failure to provide scaled annual increments, they received nothing more than the acting public service commissioner's reply that "we must wait and hope for better conditions."⁴⁶ The reply was of little comfort to stenographers and office workers who earned wages so low that they barely matched the legal minimum wage.⁴⁷ Such unfavourable employer attitudes by the government did not change until the CCF was elected in 1944.

The CCF took a different approach to labour relations than the previous Liberal and Conservative administrations. The CCF, for obvious political reasons, wanted to become an exceptional employer in order to bring about both social and economic reform and an orderly labour relations system.

As a consequence in 1945 the CCF amended the Public Service Act to make the civil service non-political, to provide a fair job classification and promotion system, to ensure job security and to grant trade union recognition and compulsory collective bargaining rights. Because the CCF was also concerned about discrimination, it made provision for the principle of equal pay for equal work and included a non-discrimination clause which stated that "No person shall be appointed or promoted to or dismissed from any position in the public service or in any way discriminated against with respect to terms of employment or rates of pay because of sex, race, or religious opinions or affiliations."⁴⁸

Two years later the CCF government passed a new Public Service Act which established an internal labour relations system "based upon merit principles and objective methods governing the classification of positions, the appointment, promotion, lay-off, removal and discipline of employees in the public service and other incidents of provincial employment. . . ." To administer the act a three-member Public Service Commission was appointed. Its responsibilities included the equal treatment of employees covered by collective bargaining agreements with respect to pay, hours of work, attendance, holidays, sick leave, severance pay, gratuities, selection procedures, promotions, job classifications, layoffs and other conditions of work. The act made an important distinction between the unclassified division, which included managers, administrators, police magistrates, professionals and clerical employees of the Legislative Assembly, and the classified division, which consisted of all other positions in the public service. An important breakthrough came in the determination of the basic pay structure. No longer would the Lieutenant Governor in Council arbitrarily determine wage rates, for they now had to form "the basis of collective bargaining within the meaning of The Trade Union Act, 1944." Furthermore, appointments or promotions would be made on the basis of merit, fitness and competitive examinations instead of the patronage system. An appeal procedure was built into the act to allow any permanent employee who was not within the scope of a collective bargaining agreement to appeal a dismissal or demotion. Finally, no employee was required "to take part in any political undertaking, or to make any contribution to any political party, or be in any manner threatened or discriminated against for refusing to take part in any political undertaking. . . ."⁴⁹

Thus the two most important changes that the CCF made in labour relations policies were the removal of the prohibition against government employees participating in politics and the provision of the right to join a trade union in order to engage in collective bargaining on every aspect of their jobs. This was the first time that a government had altered the labour relations system to give its employees these rights. According to David Lewis, the Saskatchewan government was two decades in advance of any other government in recognizing such rights for its public servants.⁵⁰ The CCF government had to encourage its employees to join

a union because it not only had to prove it was an exceptional employer with a social democratic philosophy seeking social reform, but also had to prove the advantages of the new Trade Union Act. This was a very important issue for Lewis, the national party and the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL). Lewis states he kept a close eye on the Douglas cabinet and its legislation because as the first democratic socialist government in North America it “was an experiment that would be vital to the future of the CCF across the country.”⁵¹ In fact, the Saskatchewan CCF had to portray itself as an ideal government to socialists and workers in other provinces, particularly Ontario, if the CCF was to have further electoral success.⁵² But in a more pragmatic way the Douglas cabinet also had to create an orderly labour relations system so that it could pursue long-range financial planning without experiencing costly labour disputes. “It is critical to understand,” as Panitch and Swartz point out, “that the new mechanisms promoting the institutionalization of union recognition and free collective bargaining were, as Rand said, devised to adjust, toward an increasing harmony the interests of capital, labour and the public in light of the shift in the balance of class forces that had taken place.”⁵³

3

For most of the period under study the Saskatchewan government employees’ response to their employer did not follow a path of militant trade unionism. In fact, they showed little interest in trade unionism. Though the Saskatchewan Civil Service Association (SCSA) was formed in Regina in February 1913, it had no real function. It was mainly concerned with “the promotion of social intercourse and sports among the civil servants in the Parliament Buildings.”⁵⁴ Furthermore, it was not concerned with establishing pension plans or any fringe benefits and thus engaged in little activity prior to 1920.

In early 1920 a reorganization was carried out in the hope of expanding SCSA membership to all government employees in the province. A new organization formed on 12 January 1920 with the objectives “To unite the members of the Civil Service into an Association for mutual improvement socially, intellectually and physically, to improve the efficiency of the service, and to promote the common interests of the members of the Association.” It also sought to achieve “joint action” with the government in order to improve both the Service and the conditions of all civil servants. The SCSA established a joint council to handle its affairs and “to make recommendations to the proper authorities for action.”⁵⁵ In early September the joint council made a number of recommendations: that salary advances be made to purchase coal for the winter, that legislation be passed to have all government offices closed at noon on Saturdays, that sick leave be made cumulative, that six months’ sick leave with salary be granted to any member on the presentation of a doctor’s certificate, and that legislation be passed to have all government

offices closed for “one day in the summer for the purpose of holding a Civil Service Picnic.”⁵⁶ The government, after some consideration, granted most of the recommendations.

Although the SCSA did not develop any labour militancy during the 1920s, it continued to press for a number of improvements in wages and fringe benefits, especially a superannuation scheme. In the fall of 1923 the SCSA called upon the government to put into “operation a scheme of Superannuation for Civil Servants . . . to partially provide for those who have given long and faithful service in the public interests.”⁵⁷ Premier Charles Dunning’s reply was to “keep the matter in hand and continue research work on the subject. . . .”⁵⁸ After four more years of research and appeals to the government, the Public Service Superannuation Act was finally passed in 1927. The act, which was administered by a three-member Civil Service Superannuation Board, was designed to provide a yearly superannuation allowance to a civil servant who had reached retirement age (sixty-five in the case of males and sixty in the case of females), or was forced to retire on account of ill health or physical or mental incapacity. In the case of death, the widow would receive one half of the allowance and each child under eighteen would receive 10 percent of the allowance.⁵⁹ The act was considered to be one of the major achievements of the SCSA.

In the mid-1920s the association underwent another reorganization. At the fourth annual general meeting held on 6 April 1925 a motion was passed to alter the name to read “The Province of Saskatchewan Government Services Association” (SGSA). Its purpose was “to unite its members . . . for their mutual improvement and to promote [their] common interests. . . .”⁶⁰ But the association was not to be considered a trade union, as its president, J.E. Tanner, explained:

It is not the desire or aim of the Executive to consider the Association as a kind of Labour Union or to “hold a club over” anyone in order to enforce demands. We wish to right wrongs, if any exist, but do not care to be at the “beck and call” of anyone who may “have an axe to grind.”⁶¹

Tanner, nevertheless, assured the membership that the executive would continue to deal with “any complaint” as long as it was “put in writing.” Finally, the association launched a new magazine, *The Dome*, not for the purpose of agitation and propaganda, but for

The development of the Saskatchewan Government Services Association as a real and lasting force in the advancement of the legitimate interests of its members, in the encouragement of the social, cultural and sports activities of the various Service bodies, and in maintaining a true spirit of loyalty and friendship among the members in and between all branches of the Service.⁶²

Furthermore, during the late 1920s *The Dome* continued to promote the image of government employees as loyal servants rather than militant proletarians. It also emphasized its apolitical position, regardless of the

politics of the employer. A case in point was the result of the 1929 election. *The Dome* issued an editorial which explained the SGSA's relationship to the new Conservative government and the duty of each employee to Premier J.T.M. Anderson:

So far as members of the Civil Service, and Government employees generally are concerned, we should view this change [from Gardiner to Anderson] in just one way. We are servants of the Government of Saskatchewan, not of a Liberal, Conservative, Cooperative, Labour or Farmer Government, but the Government of Saskatchewan as a representative of the people of the Province. . . .

It is the imperative duty of every employee to be just as loyal to the new Ministers as they were to the old; to render the same efficient, painstaking service; to exert themselves to the utmost to successfully carry on the administration of public business and make fully effective whatever policies may be decided upon.⁶³

Conditions, however, quickly changed. The Anderson government, as has already been pointed out, had no intention of promoting unions or workers' rights. Furthermore, in 1931 the government introduced wage cuts and massive layoffs in the civil service without reference to seniority. Working conditions deteriorated in places like the mental hospitals as the remaining staff members were required to work a sixty-hour week with no overtime or extra holiday pay.

In response the SGSA approached the government in early 1932 and made a request that the concept of seniority should apply in the layoff procedure and that massive wage cuts be replaced by "a voluntary contribution based on a graded scale of monthly deductions from the salaries of members of the service."⁶⁴ The SGSA, in other words, was agreeing to some form of wage cut; nonetheless, the government refused the request. A year later the SGSA once again approached the government to present arguments against any further wage cuts, especially for those earning less than \$1,200 a year, and to improve both the classification system and the benefits under the Superannuation Act. The executive, however, did not view these as demands to be made on the government, but rather as a means of cooperation. In fact, the executive believed that it had "gained considerable prestige in making an attempt to cooperate with the Government during these days of stress and strife."⁶⁵

The executive's cooperation with the employer and its failure to achieve results raised some criticism from rank and file members who "looked with disdain on the SGSA . . . and considered it little more than a social club. . . ."⁶⁶ A number of locals in North Battleford, Weyburn and Swift Current had petitioned the executive to take action on wages and working conditions. Others were demanding a refund of their dues if the SGSA was not going to do anything. And those who were developing a trade union consciousness were demanding that the SGSA should become some kind of labour organization which would be capable of making demands of the government.⁶⁷ Indeed, some civil servants had heard what the Committee for Industrial Organization (later the Congress of Industrial

Organization) was doing for white-collar workers, previously ignored by unions. The Business and Professional Workers Union, for example, had made some inroads among so-called proletarian clerical workers in offices in both the United States and eastern Canada.⁶⁸

The executive's response to such criticism was apologetic and defensive of the government. In fact the executive was made up of people from the chief clerks level who were not only aspiring to become professional bureaucrats, but also wanted to reinforce management's view that working for the government divorced civil servants from trade unionism. They used *The Dome* to point out that the SGSA was not a labour union, that its objects "are not to demand but request and arbitrate . . ."⁶⁹ C.F.W. Hames, president of the SGSA, argued that the working conditions of civil servants could not be improved because "In the present times of stress it is very difficult and quite inopportune to seek favours from a government which has a far greater responsibility — that of providing the necessary services for the people of the province . . ."⁷⁰ The general secretary of the association came out in defence both of the executive committee and the government for their lack of "outstanding accomplishments." He went on to explain that it was

simply a problem of the futility of trying to make bricks without straw and even Governments cannot perform miracles. We have the assurance, however, that our Government, being fully aware of our problems, will do its utmost to rectify matters at the earliest possible moment when finances permit and that is all we can ask.⁷¹

These explanations did little to quiet the growing discontent. Some SGSA members were well aware of what was happening with the various trade unions that were demanding wage increases and cost-of-living bonuses during the early 1940s. As a consequence the more progressive rank and file started pressuring the government for wage increases, improved superannuation benefits for Liquor Board workers, three-week vacations for telephone employees and the eight-hour day for mental hospital employees.⁷² Although the SGSA finally won a cost-of-living bonus in 1942, some of the rank and file wanted to change their so-called "collective begging" status to one of full collective bargaining rights.⁷³

The CCF government, as has already been pointed out, made the necessary changes in the labour relations system to encourage civil servants to join a union. Furthermore, in July 1944 Douglas had given Pat Conroy of the CCL the impression that the government would support the CCL's organizing drive in the civil service.⁷⁴ Consequently, Conroy sent A.A. McAuslane, a former coal miner and first vice-president of the CCL, to Regina. He arrived in the city on 4 August 1944, and held an organizing meeting for the civil servants in the city hall. Only seventy-five of the approximately twenty-five hundred civil servants in Regina showed up to hear McAuslane explain the benefits of unionization. The small turnout, according to one of the civil servants in attendance, was not the result

of employees' opposition to unionization, but of their fear that they would lose their jobs when there was a change of government.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, McAuslane pointed out that a union would not only "rectify the injustices that have existed in the civil service and provide greater efficiency," but also strive for better wages and working conditions, job security, an equitable job classification system and a grievance procedure. At the end of the meeting application cards were distributed and an organizing committee of six employees was elected to work on behalf of the United Civil Servants of Canada.

The CCL organizing committee seemed to be concerned mainly with carrying out its activities in those government buildings containing so-called blue-collar workers, particularly Saskatchewan Telephones and the Weyburn and North Battleford mental hospitals. While the CCL organizing drive was proceeding, the minister of labour, C.C. Williams, who disliked militant industrial unions, countered Douglas's position and declared that the government would remain neutral on the issue of the union affiliation to be chosen by workers.⁷⁶ This decision gave the SGSA executive the time to counter the CCL organizing drive by arranging a meeting with Carl Berg and Phil Hoffner of the TLC on 27 August. Both TLC representatives pointed out that that SGSA could still keep its independence and autonomy when it affiliated. Before it could make an agreement with the TLC, the executive claimed that it would first have to hear Premier Douglas's views on what constituted a *bona fide* trade union.

On 29 August the executive met with Douglas who explained that a trade union was necessary and criticized the SGSA for not becoming one. But most important he did not want the SGSA to embarrass the government by not taking advantage of the "legislation which the Government is presenting for the benefit of employees throughout the province."⁷⁷ As Douglas pointed out,

Under the Trade Union Act, you can bargain collectively if you form a union. You should apply to the Labour Relations Board to decide which congress (the Trades and Labour Congress or the Canadian Congress of Labour) you want to name as your bargaining agent. If you are supported by at least fifty-one percent of the civil servants, then you'll have a union and we'll bargain collectively regarding wages, hours of work, and conditions of labour.⁷⁸

The executive followed up with a meeting on 30 August at which a motion was passed recommending affiliation with the TLC. A special meeting of the Regina local was held the next night in order to gain support for the executive's decision. Approximately 640 members were in attendance to hear the executive's arguments for joining the TLC, which were essentially that

the TLC was apolitical (the CCL had endorsed the CCF as "labour's political arm") and could therefore work under any government . . . the TLC allowed complete autonomy for the association [and that it was] more appealing to [those] members who adhered to the traditional civil servant mentality.⁷⁹

Accordingly, 95 percent voted in favour of the TLC rather than the CCL. This decision gave the executive the go-ahead for a letter and ballot to be sent out on 7 September to all SGSA members. The result of the vote was 88.4 percent in favour of affiliation with the "business unionism" of the TLC. The reason for this outcome was that the progressive rank and file were in the small locals in Swift Current, North Battleford and Weyburn and thus did not have the members to counter the conservative stronghold in Regina. In any case on 23 September a TLC charter was granted to the SGSA, with a membership of 3,237, making it the largest union in the province.⁸⁰

In early 1945 the SGSA applied to the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board to have "the entire staff of the Government of Saskatchewan determined as a single appropriate bargaining unit and to have itself determined as the organization representing the employees in that unit."⁸¹ The application, however, was contested by both the United Civil Servants of Canada, which claimed jurisdiction over the employees in the Department of Municipal Affairs and in the mental hospitals at Weyburn and North Battleford, and the United Telephone Workers of Canada, which represented all the employees in the Department of Telephones. On 19 March the board came to a decision that the SGSA would be the bargaining agent for the employees of all the departments and agencies of the government except the mental hospitals at Weyburn and North Battleford and the Department of Telephones."⁸² The United Civil Servants of Canada (locals 2 and 3) were given jurisdiction over the employees in the mental hospitals, but not the Department of Municipal Affairs. The reason for excluding this department was that the board could find nothing in the nature of the operations performed by its employees (i.e., clerks, secretaries, stenographers, accountants, inspectors, statisticians, and machine operators) to differentiate them from other employees in the SGSA.⁸³ The United Telephone Workers of Canada was determined to be the bargaining agent for the employees in the Department of Telephones because their work was entirely different from the work performed by other government employees.

As soon as certification was achieved the SGSA prepared to negotiate a first contract. A negotiating committee was elected to research model collective agreements and then to draft a set of proposals. After a number of long meetings with the government, an agreement was reached and signed on 2 August 1945. The major provisions included union recognition, equal pay, overtime rates, 35.5 hours per week for office employees and 44 hours per week for other employees, three weeks of vacation, cumulative sick leave benefits, a grievance procedure, annual wage increase, promotion by seniority and merit, no dismissal without just cause and a one-year agreement. The United Civil Servants were able to achieve a similar agreement for their members.

The union and the collective agreement marked a drastic change in the labour relations of the civil service. Government managers could no longer treat their employees as subservient servants. As Premier Douglas noted in a statement explaining the change in the relationship between the government and its employees:

A new departure in the relationship between the Government and its employees was made . . . when a collective bargaining agreement was entered into between the Government . . . and the Civil Service Association Heretofore, governments have been prone to set standards of conduct to which private employers were required to adhere, but by which they themselves frequently refused to be bound. Minimum wage legislation, apprenticeship laws, safety regulations and other similar provisions have generally benefitted employees in private industry, but have totally ignored the civil servant. This new agreement however, firmly establishes the principle that this Government intends to abide by standards higher even than those required of private employers. In its relationship to the civil service, the Government of Saskatchewan now seeks to become a model employer.⁸⁴

Although Douglas was concerned with turning the government into a so-called model employer, it still was faced with an ongoing power struggle with its employees and their unions. The first government employee strikes occurred in 1948 when the workers at the Prince Albert Box Factory, nationalized by the CCF and organized by the CCL, and those at the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office, also organized by the CCL, struck against the government because of poor wages and working conditions. Further research is needed to fully examine the so-called model employer image of the CCF (and later the New Democratic Party) in the post-1945 period.

4

In conclusion, this article has attempted to examine the nature of labour relations in the Saskatchewan civil service between 1905 and 1945. Both the Liberal and Conservative governments acted like typical employers refusing to recognize unions or to allow their employees bargaining rights. The governments used both their roles as legislator and employer to maintain a master-servant relationship with their employees. And for the first three decades the civil servants accepted this relationship, even with the formation of their association. However, by the late 1930s and early 1940s there was a simmering of progressive rank and file workers who seemed prepared to equate themselves with other Saskatchewan workers who were using various political and trade union methods to improve their wage and working conditions and to increase their power *vis à vis* the employer. Their attempts were partially aided by the CCF government when it made the necessary changes in the labour relations system. Because of these changes the government employees were able to gain union and bargaining rights and thus put an end to the so-called master-servant relationship.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank Professors Robin Wylie and Bob Russell and the reviewers of *Prairie Forum* for providing many useful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and Mr. Bob Lindsay for some research assistance.

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- 3 H.C. Pentland, "The Canadian Industrial Relations System: Some Formative Factors," *Labour/Le Travailleur* 4 (1979): 9.
- 4 Saskatchewan Archives Board (hereafter SAB), Department of Labour. I. General Correspondence: H.S. Johnstone, Commissioner to Hon. E.M. Culliton, 20 August 1940.
- 5 The IDI Act gave no protection to workers to organize into unions and employers were not forced to recognize unions nor engage in collective bargaining. It merely curbed strikes and lockouts in so-called public utilities until an investigation was carried out. See *Statutes of the Dominion of Canada, 1907* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1907), chapter 20. For a detailed explanation of the use of the IDI Act in mediating class conflict, see P. Craven, *'An Impartial Umpire': Industrial Relations and the Canadian State 1900-1911* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
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The Red Cross and Relief in Alberta, 1920s-1930s

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ABSTRACT. As World War I drew to a close the Canadian Red Cross, along with other members of the international Red Cross movement, debated what role it could play in peacetime. The health of recruits had alerted the group to the need for a concerted effort in both health prevention and care. The Alberta chapter of the Canadian Red Cross very quickly found itself involved in a momentous task. The agricultural disasters in the dry belt areas in the 1920s and the depression and drought of the 1930s left many farmers, particularly in the southeast portion of the province, in straitened circumstances. Eventually the Red Cross became the official clothing relief agency for the provincial government.

This examination of the role of the Red Cross reveals that the part it played in relief helped it to establish a reputation as a necessary peacetime organization; that it prodded governments to be more responsible for citizens in times of stress; and that it provided much-needed relief to many residents of Alberta.

SOMMAIRE. Vers la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale, la Croix Rouge canadienne et d'autres membres du mouvement international de la Croix Rouge commencèrent à se demander quel pourrait être leur rôle en temps de paix. La santé des soldats avait sensibilisé le groupe au besoin d'une concertation au niveau des soins préventifs et curatifs. Le chapitre albertain de la Croix Rouge dut très rapidement faire face à une tâche monumentale. Les désastres agricoles des années 20 dans les régions asséchées et la crise économique et la sécheresse des années 30 laissèrent dans la gêne de nombreux fermiers, surtout dans le sud-est de la province. La Croix Rouge devint éventuellement l'agence officielle de secours en vêtements du gouvernement provincial.

Cette étude du rôle de la Croix Rouge montre qu'en participant aux campagnes de secours, la Croix Rouge prouva qu'elle était indispensable en temps de paix. L'étude montre aussi que l'organisation a poussé les gouvernements à prendre leurs responsabilités envers les citoyens en périodes difficiles et qu'elle a apporté à de nombreux albertains un secours dont ils avaient grand besoin.

1

The Red Cross to most of us elicits thoughts of blood donor clinics and swimming lessons at the local level, of emergency shipments of medical supplies, resources and personnel on the occasion of a spectacular disaster somewhere in the world, and of support and care for sick and wounded soldiers and for prisoners during times of hostilities. The first Red Cross organization arose out of a meeting held in Geneva in 1864 at which "The Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field" was born. Canada, as a colony of Great Britain, was bound by its provisions. The symbol of a red cross on a white background was first worn by a Swiss physician on the battlefield in 1864 during the Prussian/Danish conflict.¹ The Canadian Red Cross was organized as an overseas branch of the British Red Cross in 1896 and incorporated as an autonomous national Red Cross society by an act of Parliament in 1909.²

By the end of World War I the Red Cross had gained world-wide recognition. Millions of prisoners of war had been visited by delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 524 internment camps and, through Red Cross channels, had maintained communication with their families. Military hospitals had been built and equipped by Red Cross funds. Red Cross nurses, aides and relief teams had worked among the refugees, the sick and the destitute from Siberia to Palestine. In thirty countries, national Red Cross societies had spearheaded and coordinated

the auxiliary war effort, raising funds, rolling bandages, knitting socks, recruiting nursing personnel, and transporting the sick and wounded.³ The Canadian Red Cross was no exception, and in addition organized (particularly in Saskatchewan) classroom Junior Red Cross units to enable school children to do their share for the war effort.⁴

These accomplishments throughout the world and the belief that this had been “the war to end all wars” spearheaded a peacetime move to federate the Red Cross societies of the world into an “international league of Red Cross Societies which, in the humanitarian field, would parallel the League of Nations in the political field.” With the support of the medical and allied health professions the League of Red Cross Societies was organized with the mandate to work for “the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world.” An amendment to the Act of Incorporation of the Canadian Red Cross Society was passed in 1919, giving the Red Cross the additional mandate to carry on in times of peace.⁵

From the beginning the Canadian Red Cross has been governed by a central council composed of up to sixty voluntary members who elect the officers and the executive committee. Divisions are organized provincially, and include all the branches within each province. Revenue has been derived mostly from the proceeds of an annual national campaign for funds and has been controlled by the central council. This policy has enabled the society to provide a uniform standard of service across the country, regardless of variations in economic status. It has also allowed it to respond quickly to regional and world-wide disasters.⁶

With the end of World War I, the Red Cross faced the challenge of becoming an effective peacetime organization, and the generally appalling health care conditions existing in Canada at that time provided a worthy target. Approximately fifty thousand Canadians died annually from tuberculosis alone — equal to the four-year wartime total of servicemen killed — while influenza, pneumonia, heart disease and infant mortality raised the toll even higher. Rural areas lacked hospitals, doctors and nurses. City schools which had begun medical examinations for entrance reported that approximately 50 percent of the children had defects of one kind or another. No federal department of health existed in 1918, the allied health organizations were not coordinated and physicians generally worked alone and with individual patients.⁷

The Red Cross confronted the health care issue in several ways. First, it endorsed the classroom-based branches of the Junior Red Cross, which focussed on health, citizenship and service. Second, the central council held two conferences in 1920 which were attended by representatives from the newly formed Dominion Department of Health, the Department of Soldiers’ Civil Re-Establishment, provincial departments of health and national voluntary health agencies. The various representatives outlined

their programmes and described how the Red Cross had already assisted or could assist them. There was no doubt about the number and variety of needs, each of which warranted priority. The Canadian Red Cross made it clear that it did not wish to undertake or compete with work already being carried out by government or other organizations but that it wanted to strengthen and assist such activity and to coordinate voluntary efforts.

As the national organization was establishing its guidelines and policies each of the provincial branches was already at work extending its war-related efforts to peacetime activities. In Alberta this meant activity on several fronts. In common with other Red Cross branches Alberta encouraged the organization of Junior Red Cross units in classrooms. The more traditional role of serving sick and wounded soldiers was continued by supporting the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment. By October 1920 the Alberta division was operating two hospitals in outlying areas, had plans to increase the number of these units, and had given supplies and/or financial assistance to eight struggling municipal hospitals.⁸ The society was therefore active in the improvement of health and prevention of disease, and in the care of sick and wounded soldiers. Its ability to mitigate suffering, also a part of the peacetime mandate, was soon to be put to the test in Alberta. Although the Red Cross was not designed to be a relief organization in the usual sense of the word, events in Alberta in the 1920s and 1930s tested its ability to coordinate efforts of volunteers and to work in close cooperation with government authorities.⁹

2

The pre-war period on the Prairies witnessed large-scale immigration, a land rush and expansion into marginal and dry areas. Escalating land prices, a prolonged drought, and a post-war depression created hardship for many westerners, but especially for new immigrants who had not had time to establish their roots and for those living and farming on marginal land. The most extensive dry belt area and the one hardest hit by fluctuating crops and prices was that of southeastern Alberta. Many settlers in this region just gave up and moved on. Others either could not or stayed hoping that "next year" would be better. As crop failure occurred year after year, the problems of the people who remained became more acute. Schools and hospitals were closed because of dwindling clients and eroding resources. Financial institutions recalled loans and foreclosed mortgages. Adequate food, clothing and shelter became more difficult to procure. Taxes were left unpaid and municipalities were forced to curtail services. The Alberta division of the Red Cross became involved in relief work almost by default since there was little in the way of social services operating at the end of the war.¹⁰

The first years of the 1920s found the members of the Alberta division active on several fronts in support of drought-stricken residents. They

participated in the government conference on unemployment and relief held in August 1921. This was followed by a government questionnaire sent to municipalities asking for information on the percentage of residents who would need help, the reasons for their destitution, the kind of support anticipated, suggestions as to who should provide this and the names of any groups or agencies in the area which were active in social service.¹¹ Besides this assistance to individuals and families by local branches, the provincial organization surveyed the dry belt to identify conditions and needs, made suggestions to government on relief policies and implementation, and acted as coordinator for all clothing relief.

Survey of Conditions

The *Report of Survey Made by the Alberta Red Cross of Conditions in Crop Failure Districts September 13th to 24th 1921* was presented to the government of Alberta on 1 October 1921.¹² The *Report* listed the centres visited, assessed the conditions in each area and concluded that the Retlaw-Lomond section was in very poor shape. The *Report* noted:

Conditions very bad. Immediate help needed, especially clothing. This is already being distributed by Red Cross. These conditions are the worst of any visited.

The question of securing medical aid for the Retlaw district is urgent. The local drug store was burned three weeks ago, so that not even drugs are available. The train to Medicine Hat passes through the town only twice a week. There is no hospital closer than Medicine Hat or at Taber. The people cannot afford to call the doctors from Taber. The Municipality are doing their best to secure the services of a medical man. A bonus of \$1200 a year has been proposed. . . . Mr. Podal, Secretary of Municipality, also stated that he thought the doctor might operate a drugstore if he wished to do so as there was no prospect of a local druggist re-opening.

Mr. Allan, Manager of the Bank of Commerce and Chairman of the District Red Cross, stated that it would be impossible for any donor to collect fees in and around Retlaw district under present conditions. . . .¹³

The *Report* also included a list of the schools visited and a chart detailing the percentage of school children suffering from malnutrition and physical defects and classifying those defects. It noted that the general appearance of the children was poor. "Many of them lacked vitality . . . had round shoulders and narrow chests. Most of the children were poorly clothed, footwear especially was bad." Cases of children with tuberculosis, infantile paralysis, crippling injuries, harelip, chorea, eye disease, and nose and throat problems, which required either hospital or special medical treatment, were also listed. Two examples indicate the difficulties:

Beth Cutler, Gold Coin School District, age 6. This child is deaf. Parents have been planning to send her to Winnipeg so that she may be taught to speak. Four years' crop failure have reduced them to extreme poverty and they have been unable to send the child away. Father and mother brought her to be examined. A bright and pretty little girl. Father broke down completely when speaking of their inability to have her trained.

William Johnston, age 6, Enchant School — suspected T.B. Very weak and pale, pulse feeble, breathing rapid. Coughs incessantly. Parents cannot afford hospital treatment. . . .¹⁴

Provisions for Relief

Suggestions for relief identified three areas of concern and assumed that suggestions made at the unemployment and relief conference would be followed, specifically that the government would take responsibility for the distribution of food, feed and fuel through either the municipality or district committees.¹⁵ Clothing, medical service and malnutrition in children were areas the Red Cross thought needed coordinated action and it proposed that distribution of clothing be made through its district branches acting in cooperation with local committees composed of Red Cross members and representatives from any local organizations such as the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA), and women's institutes. Decentralizing relief in this way and registering relief cases were seen as the best methods to reach deserving cases and to avoid overlap.¹⁶

Proper medical attention for families, particularly women and children, was not easy to supply. Since there was no adequate hospital accommodation between Medicine Hat and Lethbridge on any of the three railway lines, and beds at the Taber and Foremost hospitals were insufficient, it did not seem feasible to have doctors and dentists visit central points. Besides, families could not afford the railway fare to enable them to travel to a central point. The Red Cross suggestion was a novel one. It wanted to secure the loan of two ambulance cars from the Department of Militia and Defence, and to request the Canadian Pacific Railway to attach these cars to freight trains travelling through the crop failure district and park them on sidings of the various towns. Equipped with supplies of linen and clothing donated by the Red Cross and with personnel arranged between the government and the society, a travelling clinic would serve the whole district.¹⁷

Malnutrition among children, the Red Cross reported, was the result "not so much of lack of food as to lack of variety also ignorance and in certain cases, indifference on the part of some of the parents." It was suggested that in town and village schools additional nourishment be provided by issuing cocoa, soup or milk to all children at the morning and afternoon recess. Children in rural schools, where a box lunch was the norm, should have soup, milk/cocoa or some similar form of nourishment provided to supplement the noon meal. Red Cross committees and Junior Red Cross units would organize such a scheme if the government agreed to pick up the cost.¹⁸

Organized Clothing Relief

Although the Red Cross in Alberta had been distributing relief in southern Alberta since 1918 it was only in the fall of 1921, after the unemployment and relief conference and the Red Cross survey of the dried out districts, that the relief efforts of the Red Cross became organized.

Division headquarters in Calgary became responsible for "collecting, purchasing, fumigating, sorting and shipping of all clothing for relief purposes."¹⁹ In a report on relief distribution for 15 September 1921 to 30 April 1922, statistics for southern Alberta were noted.

Large donations of secondhand clothing were made by the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs of Calgary, the Grand Lodge of Alberta, and locals of the UFA, UFWA and women's institutes. New goods at reduced prices were purchased from wholesale and business houses in Calgary and Edmonton. Through the cooperation of the Manufacturers Association and business firms of eastern Canada and the railway companies, purchases made at minimum cost and secured through fast freight helped emergency orders. It was estimated that a one-third to two-thirds saving was effected on goods ordered this way through national Red Cross headquarters in Toronto. In cases of extreme emergency branches had the authority to purchase locally.²⁰

Financial support for these activities came from both the provincial government and the Red Cross. The province's contribution was based on the understanding that the Alberta division would reimburse the government if its campaign for funds was successful. In forwarding a receipt for \$23,918.01 that the government had made available to the Alberta division "on the understanding that if at all possible the money will be refunded," Mrs. Waagen, vice-president and honorary secretary, warned the government that "our appeal is meeting with very little success." She concluded that there was general willingness to support Red Cross activities in relief work but a lack of money made this difficult for many residents.²¹

The Red Cross appeal at the national level was much more successful. Financial support was contributed by the national office and bales of secondhand clothing by the Ontario division.²² In a statement to the Honourable R.G. Reid, Minister of Municipalities and Health, total relief distributions of \$105,166.36 were noted by the Alberta Red Cross. Of these, \$65,391.36 was charged to the government and \$42,513.30 received as contributions for relief purposes. Not included in this overall amount were secondhand clothing distributions valued at \$38,775.00.²³ Besides these expenditures in the area of direct relief the organization also found that rural hospitals needed support. Those at Foremost, Hanna, Consort and Altario had between four and twelve beds each and cared for hundreds of patients each year. The inability of patients to pay hospital fees and the difficulties municipalities had in attempting to support hospitals when tax revenues were greatly reduced caused some hospitals either to be closed or taken over by the Red Cross. In 1922 hospitals at Taber and Strathmore were closed; that at Empress was given a loan to enable it to continue while at Foremost the debt was taken over by the province and the hospital was operated by the Red Cross.²⁴ As the relief crisis became more acute

and the Red Cross found its funds depleted, a decision was taken to withdraw support slowly from rural hospitals. It was hoped that this decision would spur the government to become involved in rural hospital policy.²⁵

The government was slow to act. It was 1924 before a municipal hospital policy was adopted for the purpose of affording hospitalization to residents in the rural districts and country towns of Alberta. The services of the Red Cross in this respect were to be to outlying and pioneer districts, and in other areas as an emergency and temporary measure.²⁶ The difficulty in Alberta had been, of course, that the emergency caused by drought was not temporary and the Red Cross found itself without enough clothing, supplies or cash to fulfill emergency requests from individuals, municipal officials and hospitals.

Early in April 1922 the UFA government decided to stop clothing relief measures at the end of the month. The Red Cross, however, which had been designated early in the preceding autumn as the agency for clothing relief, continued to receive requests which became more difficult to meet without any provincial assistance. With the onset of colder weather in the autumn of 1922, following another summer of poor crops, the situation was again becoming acute. Several times the Alberta division pleaded with the government to make a decision regarding relief, suggested a scheme for relief on a limited scale, and requested a grant of \$2000 for the purchase of relief materials. "Limited scale" meant the purchase of flannelette, wool, stockings, moccasins and blankets for use in urgent situations, with the great majority of requests being filled with secondhand clothing. Although Junior Red Cross branches were busily knitting mitts, stockings and jerseys, and women's sewing circles and church groups were offering assistance, Mrs. Waagen argued that it was absolutely essential that government get involved.²⁷

Finally, in January 1923, the government established a relief policy:

All applications for clothing relief received by the Red Cross Society to be forwarded immediately to the Hon. R.G. Reid, Minister of Public Health.

Each application will then be investigated by us and instructions sent to the Red Cross Society at Calgary, as to what articles or materials are to be forwarded to the applicant.

All buying and distribution to be done by the Red Cross Society and grants will be made from time to time to cover costs of goods distributed by the Red Cross Society.²⁸

This policy was a fairly radical shift from the previous year since the government rather than the Red Cross was now deciding who should receive what in the way of clothing relief. The Red Cross thus became a collection and distribution agency only. The well-established network of Red Cross centres across the drought area, working in cooperation with local organizations, lost the ability to provide input, and decisions on relief became centralized in the hands of the provincial government. This brought clothing relief more in line with the administration of other forms of relief under the Drought Relief Act.²⁹

The Red Cross acquiesced to this decision and in a letter to the premier Mrs. Waagen indicated that all applications for clothing would be forwarded and she offered to place at the disposal of the government all reports and information connected with relief. As in the previous year government relief was curtailed in the spring and the Red Cross again felt pressure to respond, particularly as winter approached. Having reviewed the manner in which the government policy had worked in the early months of 1923, delegates to the Red Cross convention in the autumn agreed that the policy "was detrimental to the government itself, to those receiving relief, and also to the Red Cross."³⁰ A special committee of the provincial council of the Red Cross made several recommendations to improve the investigation and distribution methods. In essence, Red Cross committees in each area would investigate all applications, and make a recommendation to the reeve of the municipality or to the provincial police in an unorganized territory. An official signature would be necessary before the Red Cross could issue relief. In areas where no Red Cross committees or representatives were present the provincial police would take on the investigative task. The decentralized methods of the Red Cross which had operated in 1921-22 were being advocated.³¹

At approximately this time the UFA government decided that clothing relief could be handled by voluntary agencies, and it terminated the arrangements which had been made with the Red Cross. For the rest of the 1920s the organization acted under the terms of its charter — improvement of health, prevention of disease and mitigation of suffering. Improved crop conditions in some years allowed the Red Cross to concentrate on the crippled children's hospital, hospital outposts, radio shows and other educational functions, particularly for women and children. Relief action tended to be responses to emergencies such as fires or floods. In 1926 a committee was formed to survey conditions throughout the province, meet the executives of the various organizations and strive to define policies whereby the province might best be served in food and clothing relief and in health needs. Red Cross officials were concerned that time, money and effort were wasted because of duplication.³²

In some ways the disaster of the dry belt is an example of the reluctance of governments to get involved in what previously had been the responsibility of the private sector. This division between public and private responsibility was also evident in the decision to phase out Red Cross assistance in the mid-1920s, at a time when other relief was being consolidated through the Debt Adjustment Board. This experience proved useful to the Red Cross during the more widespread depression and crop failures of the 1930s. Working with government, organizing municipal committees, coordinating the work of other agencies, investigating applications, establishing price lists for clothing, arranging bulk and wholesale purchases, negotiating government loans and grants and justifying its administrative and other costs helped develop the expertise of the organization.

Although the Alberta division of the Red Cross was well established and accepted by the people in the province the depression and drought of the 1930s went far beyond the experience of a still fledgling peacetime organization. Not only were the effects more widespread in the province, necessitating more relief, but investments of the Red Cross, which were used for operating capital, had been caught in the collapse of the money markets.³³ The national state of emergency declared by Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, the greater difficulty in attracting support through the annual Red Cross drive, and a new Alberta premier all helped to make the role of the Alberta division more difficult during the 1930s.

Organization of Clothing Relief

As in the early 1920s, the Alberta division eventually became the designated agent for clothing relief in the province. Unlike the earlier arrangement, the government was now more directly involved from the outset, but the role of the Red Cross was not always clear and it certainly was not always smooth. By December 1930 conditions in Alberta were strained, the Depression was into its second year, and there had been widespread crop failures. On 30 December the premier wrote to D.M. Duggan, second vice-president of the Red Cross in Alberta:

a very complete organization has been arranged to take care of any relief problems throughout the Province. . . . Having already completed these arrangements . . . it would not be desirable to have another organization working along similar lines, thus duplicating expensive organization as well as undoubtedly, in many cases, duplicating relief issued to individuals. It has, therefore, been very difficult for us to see how the Red Cross organization can be fitted into our plans without the danger of this duplication.³⁴

However, from mid-December to mid-January the Red Cross received 97 applications for relief, including 91 adults and 349 children, and it seemed obvious that more needed to be done.³⁵ Throughout the early months of 1931 the Red Cross and the government negotiated the conditions and terms to be met and the grants to be made available. At a meeting on 11 February 1931, an eleven-point programme was recommended to enable the Red Cross to act as the clothing relief agency for the province. The scheme allowed municipalities and the provincial police in unorganized districts (in cooperation with officials of the Soldier Settlement Board and the Canadian Legion) to investigate applications for relief and to requisition the necessary clothing. This was supplied to the municipalities from the stock in the Red Cross store which had been purchased with a government grant.³⁶ Projecting requirements to 15 May, the Red Cross executive estimated \$15,000 were necessary, and asked for an additional \$5,000 to help carry on the traditional work of the Alberta division. As an indication of the scope of its work and to support its request, the executive noted that more than \$750,000 in Red Cross funds had been spent in Alberta since 1919.³⁷

Correspondence in March and April showed little progress: the circular covering arrangements had not been distributed throughout the province; a grant had not been forthcoming from the government to the Red Cross, so no money was available to supply clothing relief; and some criticism of the Red Cross from the Department of Militia and Defense, the Soldiers' Settlement Board, and the Royal Canadian Legion was beginning to surface.³⁸ Mrs. Waagen noted in a letter to the premier:

The Red Cross is, after all, in a different position to that of other organizations in that its undertakings in peace-time are not wholly optional but were guaranteed under the Peace Treaty by governments signatory to the covenant of the League of Nations, Canada no less than others.³⁹

Conditions in the first half of 1931 and the delays experienced by the Red Cross in trying to work out an agreement were repeated in the autumn after the federal government became directly involved. Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, declaring a state of national emergency, launched a drive for clothing and funds for the work of the Red Cross, designated the Canadian Red Cross as the agency to receive and distribute clothing relief, and agreed to help provinces with the cost of relief.⁴⁰ Under this arrangement federal, provincial and municipal authorities would share the burden of relief equally, with one exception. In a telegram to Premier Brownlee of Alberta, the prime minister said: "We have agreed to provide for the entire cost of relief measures where three successive crop failures have created a condition which may be regarded as a national calamity."⁴¹ By 1 October, the Alberta division of the Red Cross became the agent for the provincial government for the accumulation of a reserve store of clothing. Under the arrangements the Red Cross was to receive a \$500-a-month administration fee, purchase clothing and shoes up to a sum of \$20,000, furnish the government with a price list of all articles of clothing, and distribute clothing once applications from municipalities had been approved by the new relief division of the Department of Municipal Affairs, under the direction of A.A. Mackenzie.⁴² An additional \$10,000 was approved to handle requests from cities and a loan of \$10,000 was authorized to allow the Red Cross as an organization, not as the government agent, to supply certain relief items not covered by government regulation. The \$500-a-month administration fee was to be recovered by placing a 5 percent charge on all orders. One further condition was that these arrangements were to be considered confidential, a public announcement indicating only that "clothing is to be distributed as direct relief through the municipalities."⁴³

Organizational Frustrations

From 1931 until 1936, except for several interruptions caused by the hoped-for return of good times and good crops, the Alberta division acted as the agent of the government in the purchasing, warehousing and

distribution of clothing under direct relief. It also continued its other activities, which included distribution of clothing to people who did not qualify as destitute according to the terms of direct relief. For the Red Cross this was an immensely active but difficult period.

From the beginning some local merchants felt they were unable to compete with the prices obtained by the bulk and wholesale buying practices of the Red Cross. The organization bought factory-made goods from eastern manufacturers and transported them by rail at reduced prices. Local merchants and manufacturers, unable to match the terms supplied by these larger outlets, thought that much-needed sales and work were being lost to eastern Canada.⁴⁴ There were many complaints of delay, with the Red Cross accused of not responding quickly enough to requests for aid. In turn the Red Cross made constant pleas to the government to act: to decide about the administration fee through the summer months; to settle Red Cross accounts which were overdrawn and causing credit to be refused; to authorize lower prices for left-over winter clothing; and to indicate what decisions were being made for the next fall and winter. The Alberta division's arrangements with the government were usually for the winter months only, causing the organization some problems. The government, of course, was hoping each year for an end to the drought.⁴⁵

The Red Cross argued that the government's criteria for receiving relief were too strict, that owning a few stock did not necessarily give a farmer cash. Slaughtering a head or two might supply meat but not clothing unless cattle could be sold. A residency requirement in a municipality, agreement by the municipality to pay one-third of the costs involved, and a complicated application form all aggravated the situation.⁴⁶ Mrs. Waagen wrote that many individuals and families were suffering because municipalities could not afford or refused to pay the one-third cost of relief. Although an agreement had been reached with the federal government about such municipalities, no list exempting certain areas from payment had been received.⁴⁷

A.A. Mackenzie criticized the attitude of the Red Cross, and Mrs. Waagen in particular, on the matter of distribution. He believed that she did not realize that some rural areas were not going through the Red Cross for relief because local merchants were willing to match Red Cross prices.⁴⁸ Mrs. Waagen replied that Mackenzie thought that "all foreigners should not be allowed to live in the country" and was turning a blind eye to their desperate situation.⁴⁹ She maintained that her organization was receiving up to twenty applications a day from people who did not qualify under the Relief Act,⁵⁰ some of whom lived in unorganized districts up to fifty miles from the nearest police depot. Mrs. Waagen indicated that Mackenzie's solution was for such cases to "walk" to the depot to have their applications investigated.⁵¹ The Alberta provincial police thought there was too much publicity regarding relief

and were flooded with applications from people in non-organized districts. The investigation of these was both time-consuming and expensive and the police argued that “some people, not destitute, wanted something for nothing.”⁵² There was some feeling in official circles that the women involved with the Red Cross were too soft. Nonetheless, internationally the Red Cross was the official organization to be activated in times of disaster, and despite “soft” women volunteers it was not a women’s organization and could not be easily disregarded or dismissed as unimportant.

Statistics supplied by the Red Cross from November 1931 to August 1932 indicate that clothing valued at \$42,840 had been distributed under government regulations and a further \$32,921 from Red Cross reserves. The numbers for southern Alberta, excluding Calgary, were approximately one-half those for an equivalent period in 1921-22.⁵³ As David Jones has argued, farm abandonments in the 1920s meant that fewer people were still living in the southeast portion of the province. In the 1930s, the difficulties were spread throughout the entire province, and the cities in particular bore the heavy brunt of unemployment. The applications from the southeastern, non-urban communities stressed the need for clothing to allow the children to attend school. Although adult clothing would be useful, letter after letter indicated that the real need was for coats and shoes for school-aged children. Teachers, Alberta provincial police detachments, women’s auxiliaries of the United Church, school board officials, and local relief committees emphasized that children were being kept out of school because of inadequate clothing.⁵⁴

Although letters from most recipients were full of gratitude,⁵⁵ there were complaints about poor quality clothing from the superintendent of the Gleichen Eventide Home for men and J.J. Mott, who represented ex-servicemen. The Red Cross policy to purchase better clothing so that it would last longer, and the confidential and “hidden” 5 percent surcharge to cover administrative costs caused the mayor of Calgary to complain that the Red Cross prices were higher than necessary.⁵⁶ A.A. Mackenzie also believed that Red Cross prices were too high and he felt that many of the clothing purchases were not necessary for relief; only useful clothing should be distributed. His definition of useful is not available, but his list did not include coats, jackets, pants, scarves or shoes — all of which were available from the Red Cross.⁵⁷

By 1936 the Depression was easing across Canada, productivity was increasing, and unemployment had begun to decrease.⁵⁸ An order in council was approved on 10 August 1935 which was to have been the last payment to the Red Cross for its clothing relief work.⁵⁹ This turned out to be premature. Despite recovery elsewhere the Prairies still experienced agriculture failure. Continuous drought in some areas, and hail, grasshopper plagues, early frosts and so forth in others, meant that in 1936 conditions

were worse than in 1933, the year considered nationally to be the depth of the Depression. Under the Agricultural Relief Advances Act of 1936 a municipality had to furnish seed grain, fodder, feed grain, fuel oil or lubricating oil to farmers needing assistance.⁶⁰ As well, the Social Credit government, like the UFA before it, found it necessary to continue to use the services of the Red Cross for clothing relief.⁶¹

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This look at the role of the Alberta division in supplying clothing relief during the dry belt disaster of the early 1920s and the depression and drought of the 1930s is instructive in understanding the development of government policies in relief situations. It is also, and perhaps more so, indicative of a changing attitude toward relief — from one of charity and individual benevolence to the notion that relief should be financed by governments. It can be argued that the Red Cross, despite its voluntary nature, and its appeals for funds and support nationally and in each province, by its very existence pushed governments into coordinating and financing relief. The election of a government sympathetic to farmers in the midst of the dry belt disaster and the depth of the Depression also contributed to this change in attitude.

One mandate of the Red Cross in times of peace, accepted by national governments, was the mitigation of suffering. Generally this meant that the Red Cross was activated in disaster situations such as earthquakes, floods, volcanoes and fires where individuals and sometimes whole communities lost everything. At such times the Red Cross disaster emergency team went into full gear directing relief operations and coordinating government and private donations. Before August 1921 this team dealt with disasters such as the Leduc fire and the influenza epidemic. Although the dry belt area was disastrous, the Red Cross activity there was individual and local. The Liberal government under Premier Stewart first signed a relief agreement in 1920 which included provisions, fuel and fodder for animals as necessities.⁶² The election of the UFA government and the unemployment and relief conference resulted in the emergency relief team of the Red Cross being called upon to coordinate the dry belt clothing relief effort. The Red Cross coordinated with other organizations, worked with local committees to assess applications, and operated with a loan from the government. As the drought continued and more applications were received, the government became more directly involved, supporting the Red Cross with grants rather than loans. The Red Cross, with its knowledge of local conditions and its mandate to relieve suffering, urged the government to take measures in the areas that the Red Cross was unable to cover. In doing so the government insisted on control and accountability to the dismay of the Red Cross leaders.

The notion that governments had a role was well established by the end of the Depression. The Brownlee government went further than its

predecessor with an administration grant, a scheme of one-third contribution from each level of government, and no liens in return for relief. By this time, of course, R.B. Bennett, former president of the Alberta division of the Red Cross, was prime minister and made the federal government responsible for relief and directed the Canadian Red Cross to be the clothing relief agency for the country. Total government relief for municipalities with three successive years of crop failure was a part of Bennett's scheme.

Besides urging the government to accept responsibility for relief the Red Cross also acted as a watchdog in areas beyond its responsibility for clothing. For example, the prominence afforded the Red Cross and its widespread organization meant that it became aware of a variety of problems and drew them to the attention of the government. Because textbooks were not supplied free of charge to schoolchildren, some students, especially in the more senior grades, could not attend school. School inspectors suggested to parents that they should appeal to the Red Cross, which immediately pleaded with the government to supply free texts.⁶³ The idea of the hot school lunch was also presented to the government as a way of ensuring better health.⁶⁴ Complaints about the low nutritional value of foods on the food relief list were also made and the Red Cross appealed to Irene Parlbly to bring this matter to the government's attention.⁶⁵ What appeared to be a huge markup for clothing sold to men in work camps on the Banff-Jasper highway was another example of a problem that needed attention.⁶⁶ It was also suggested that participation in the Vacant Lot Garden Club Movement should be compulsory rather than voluntary for those on relief.⁶⁷ A scheme was advanced to reduce the cost of relief in cities and to assist the drought districts by securing produce from districts in which it was so abundant that it would go to waste. A *quid pro quo* arrangement of needed clothing for the donation of produce was suggested.⁶⁸ In essence the Alberta division prodded the government to become involved in areas that previously were not within the accepted mandate of governments, nor did the Red Cross hesitate to condemn practices it felt were deficient.

In 1936 the federal government initiated relief measures for the fifty thousand families in the drought area of the three prairie provinces. The announcement and the resulting effort indicate the changes that had taken place since 1919 and the beginnings of the peacetime mandate of the Red Cross. Instead of prodding the government to get involved, the process in 1936 consisted of the government asking "the Red Cross Society to assist it in its task of providing the necessary relief . . . by undertaking the distribution of bedding and other household necessities." The end result was that the Society was able to provide 290,361 articles of bedding, clothing and household materials to some 250,000 individuals in the drought area of the west at a cost of only a little more than one-third of ordinary prices. Premier Aberhart, in thanking the Red Cross in Alberta for its work in this particular campaign, also expressed gratitude to the Ontario, Québec

and British Columbia divisions of the Red Cross which had contributed generously.⁶⁹

Two conclusions stand out. First, the disaster of the dry belt helped the Alberta division to gain experience in the area of relief and prepared it for the more widespread disaster of the 1930s. The assistance provided by the Red Cross provincially and nationally helped establish its reputation across the country as a valuable peacetime organization, a reputation it still holds today. Second, the relationship between the Red Cross and the government highlights the tension in the area of public versus private responsibility for social welfare. On the one hand the widespread nature of the depression disaster probably helped the development of a social welfare mentality in Canada, a mentality which has increasingly called on the government to provide assistance. On the other hand a voluntary agency such as the Red Cross, by its existence, assistance and expertise, allowed the government to limit the amount of official support it provided to those in need and to make temporary *ad hoc* arrangements for government assistance, thus curtailing and delaying its responsibility.

NOTES

A shortened version of this paper was presented at the Palliser Triangle Conference, Medicine Hat, Alberta in May 1986.

The research upon which this paper was based was supported in part by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

- 1 P.H. Gordon, *Fifty Years in the Canadian Red Cross* (n.p., n.d.); 11-12.
- 2 Canadian Red Cross Society (hereafter CRCS), *The Role of One Voluntary Organization in Canada's Health Service* (Toronto: Canadian Red Cross Headquarters, 1962), 1.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 6; P.H. Gordon, *Fifty Years*, 78-80.
- 4 For information on the beginnings and growth of the Junior Red Cross in Saskatchewan, see Nancy M. Sheehan, "The Junior Red Cross Movement in Saskatchewan, 1919-1939: Rural Improvement Through the Schools," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson, eds., *Building Beyond the Homestead* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), 66-86.
- 5 H.P. Davison, "Address to Opening Session of the General Council, March 2, 1920," *Bulletin of League of Red Cross Societies* 1 (April 1920): 6-9.
- 6 CRCS, *One Voluntary Organization*, 1-2.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 12; J. Riddington, "The Role of Voluntary Societies in the Care of Public Health," *The Public Health Journal* 11 (October 1920): 437-43; Dr. A.F. Miller, "Community Responsibility with Regard to Tuberculosis," *The Public Health Journal* 14 (March 1923): 99-100; G.D. Porter, "The Nineteenth Annual Report of the Executive Council of the Canadian Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis," *The Public Health Journal* 10 (December 1919): 551-55.
- 8 CRCS, *One Voluntary Organization*, 16-17.
- 9 *Canadian Red Cross in War and Peace* (Toronto: n.p., n.d.), 30; Public Archives of Nova Scotia (hereafter PANS), MB 20, 1369 #76.
- 10 David C. Jones, "Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties," *Prairie Forum* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 1-19. See also, David C. Jones, "An Exceedingly Risky and Unremunerative Partnership: Farmers and Financial Interests Amid the Collapse of Southern Alberta," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson, eds., *Building Beyond the Homestead*, 207-27. In 1929 the hospital at Foremost had been closed for eighteen months. Others, at Consort and Hanna, only managed to stay open with the support of the Red Cross.
- 11 Provincial Archives of Alberta (hereafter PAA), 75.126, file 3295b, Attorney General Records, General Administration Branch, questionnaires in Drought Area Correspondence.
- 12 PAA, Red Cross Files #437 (hereafter RCF 437), Premiers' Papers 69.289. Letter from Mary E. Waagen to Premier Herbert Greenfield, 1 October 1921.
- 13 *Ibid.* *Report of Survey Made by the Alberta Red Cross of Conditions in Crop Failure Districts September 13th to 24th 1921. Prepared for Consideration of the Government of Alberta*, 6.

- 14 Ibid., 10.
- 15 Ibid. *Recommendations of Special Committee appointed at Government Conference on Unemployment and Relief, Edmonton, Aug. 23rd to recommend to the Government, methods of distributing Relief.*
- 16 Ibid. *Relief Regulations for the Information of Red Cross Branches or Communities*, 1-2.
- 17 Ibid. *Report of Survey*, 11-12.
- 18 Ibid., 12-13.
- 19 Ibid. *Report on Relief to Date*, Alberta Division, Canadian Red Cross, 31 December 1921. This report includes the organization set-up, the rationale, the distributing centres and the distribution of clothing to date.
- 20 Ibid., 9-10; *Report on Relief Distribution*, 4; untitled, undated two-page letter from Mary Waagen, circa late autumn 1921.
- 21 Ibid. Letter from Mary Waagen to the Honourable R.G. Reid, Minister of Municipalities, 3 February 1922.
- 22 Ibid. Telegram from Mary Waagen to Premier Greenfield, 28 January 1922, and from Greenfield to Waagen, 30 January 1922.
- 23 Ibid. Letter from Mary Waagen to the Honourable R.G. Reid, Minister of Municipalities, 22 May 1922.
- 24 Department of Public Health, *Annual Report for 1922* (Edmonton: King's Printer, 1923), 13, 38.
- 25 D. Geneva Lent, "Alberta Red Cross in Peace and War (1914-1947)" (unpublished manuscript), 43, 49; letter from Mary Waagen to Premier Greenfield, 16 February 1922; PAA, RCF 437. *Memorandum re Rural Nursing and Hospital Service*, Alberta Division, Canadian Red Cross, and *Statement of Finances of Hospitals*.
- 26 Ibid., 47.
- 27 PAA, RCF 437. Letters from Mary Waagen to Premier Greenfield, 18 October and 18 November 1922.
- 28 Ibid. Letter from Premier Greenfield to Mary Waagen, 6 January 1923.
- 29 For example, the Debt Adjustment Board established by the government in 1923 took on the responsibility for the operation of a number of relief acts, including the Feed Grain Relief, Binder Twine Relief and Bankruptcy Acts. See PAA, Department of Municipal Affairs Records, Administration Files, 74.6, file 3, "Instruction of Relief Agents," and *Statutes of Alberta, 1923*, "An Act to Facilitate the Adjustment of Agricultural Debts," 21 April 1923.
- 30 PAA, RCF 437. Letter from Premier Greenfield to Mary Waagen, 26 November 1923.
- 31 Ibid. "Relief," *Annual Report for 1924*, Canadian Red Cross Society, Alberta Provincial Division.
- 32 *Calgary Herald*, 10 March 1926.
- 33 PAA, RCF 438. Letter from Mary Waagen to the Honourable George Hoadley, Minister of Health and Agriculture, 16 February 1931.
- 34 Ibid. Letter from Premier Brownlee to D.M. Duggan, 30 December 1930. The complete organization eventually was as follows: all matters pertaining to relief were placed under the Honourable O.L. McPherson, Minister of Public Works; A.A. Mackenzie, Department of Municipal Affairs, was appointed Director of Charity and Relief and was responsible for rural relief; Mackenzie's office was also responsible for the cost of administration of the Feed Grain Act (Department of Agriculture), the Unemployment Relief Commission (Public Works), Medical Attention and Hospitalization (Public Health), Debt Adjustment Board (Attorney General), and Direct Relief to Cities (Bureau of Labour). See PAA, 65.118, file 228, Alberta Unemployment Service Papers, 1920-1941, and letter from A.A. Mackenzie to O.L. McPherson, 1 March 1934, *Annual Report on Unemployment Relief*, Bureau of Labour.
- 35 Ibid. Letter from Mr. D.M. Duggan to Premier Brownlee, 15 January 1931.
- 36 Ibid. Memo, "Re: Red Cross Clothing Relief," circa mid-February 1931.
- 37 Ibid. Letters from Mary Waagen to the Honourable George Hoadley, Minister of Health, 12 and 16 February 1931.
- 38 Ibid., 7 March 1931.
- 39 Ibid. Letter from Mary Waagen to Premier Brownlee, 8 April 1931.
- 40 Known as the Relief Act, 1931, this act was passed for a year at a time. See, for example, *Statutes of Canada, 1932*, chapter 36, "An Act respecting Relief Measures," 99-101, and *Statutes of Canada, 1933*, chapter 18, "An Act respecting Relief Measures," 89-91.
- 41 PAA, RCF 438. Telegram from Prime Minister R.B. Bennett to Premier Brownlee, 12 September 1931.
- 42 Ibid. Letters from Premier Brownlee to Mary Waagen, 1 October 1931, and from R. English, Department of Municipal Affairs to Premier Brownlee, 22 October 1931.

- 43 Ibid. The loan of \$10,000 was made on the understanding that the first \$10,000 raised in the national drive would be used to reimburse the government. See letter from Premier Brownlee to Mary Waagen, 24 November 1931; see also letter from E.J. Fream, Sec. Board of Public Utility Commissioners, Edmonton, to Premier Brownlee, 16 November 1931.
- 44 Ibid. Letter from Mary Waagen to Premier Brownlee, 12 September 1931; see also editorial in *The Drumheller Mail*, 17 September 1931.
- 45 Ibid. Letters from Mary Waagen to Premier Brownlee, 4 April, 10 and 28 May 1932; James C. Thompson, Provincial Auditor to Mary Waagen, 7, 8 and 12 April 1932; R. English, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs to Premier Brownlee, 5 and 20 May 1932; A.A. Mackenzie, Supervisor, Charity and Relief to R. English, 19 May 1932.
- 46 Ibid. *Report of Emergency Relief As At August 31st, 1932*, Canadian Red Cross Society, Alberta Division.
- 47 Ibid. Letters from Mary Waagen to Premier Brownlee, 22 December 1931 and 17 October 1932.
- 48 Ibid. Memorandum from A.A. Mackenzie to Premier Brownlee, 23 February 1932.
- 49 Ibid. Letter from Mary Waagen to Canon C.F.A. Clough, President, Canadian Red Cross Society, 1 March 1932.
- 50 Ibid. Letter from Mary Waagen to Premier Brownlee, 5 March 1932.
- 51 Ibid. *Report of Emergency Relief*, 5. For other incidences of Mackenzie's attitude see letter from A.A. Mackenzie to the Honourable Mr. Lymburn, Attorney General, 28 December 1932, and from George R. Walshaw, Independent Labor Party to Premier Brownlee, 17 November 1933. PAA, 83.212, file 119, Papers of J.F. Lymburn as Attorney General.
- 52 Ibid. See Report from J.C. Scott, Inspector, Commanding "D" Division to The Commander, Alberta Provincial Police, 4 November 1931, and from K.V. Shaw, Constable, Lomond Detachment, same date. See also letters from J.E. Woodhead, Paymaster Sergeant, Alberta Provincial Police to Secretary, Red Cross Society, 17 December 1931; Mary Waagen to J.F. Lymburn, Attorney General, 24 February 1932, J.F. Lymburn to Premier Brownlee, 27 February 1932.
- 53 Ibid. *Report of Emergency Relief*, 8-9.
- 54 Ibid. See *History sheets, Alberta Provincial Police Reports* and letters.
- 55 Ibid. Letters from J.J. Mott to Lieutenant Governor Maloh, 9 December 1931 and Hector C. Habkirk, Salvation Army to S.C. Jones, Department of Municipal Affairs, 15 February 1932.
- 56 Ibid. Letters from D.H. Tomlinson, Secretary and Acting Manager to Mayor Andrew Davison, Calgary, 27 February 1933, and Andrew Davison to Premier Brownlee, 6 March 1933.
- 57 Ibid. Memorandum from A.A. Mackenzie to James C. Thompson, Provincial Auditor, 27 May 1933.
- 58 Public Archives of Canada, RG 27, Vol. 2096, File Y40. J.K. Houston, *An Appreciation of Relief as Related to Economic and Employment Tendencies in Canada*, 31 October 1936, pp. 1-7; for details on Alberta see p. 14.
- 59 PAA, 65.118, Box 36, file 313. Alberta Employment Service Papers, 1920-1941, *Orders in Council, Relief Grants*, 10 August 1935.
- 60 For the terms of the Agricultural Relief Advances Act see *Commentary*, PAA, 74.437, Department of Municipal Affairs papers.
- 61 See J.K. Houston, *An Appreciation of Relief*, Table 12, p. 28; D. Geneva Lent, "Alberta Red Cross in Peace and War," 66; PAA, RCF 1224, and Canadian Red Cross Society, Alberta Division, *Report of Executive Officers*, October 1973 to September 1938, p. 8.
- 62 Order in Council 1863/19; Memorandum of Agreement signed by Arthur C. Meighen, Minister of the Interior, and Premier Charles Stewart; Order in Council 20/20, 7 January 1920, PAA 75.126, file 3379, Alberta Attorney General Papers, General Administration Branch.
- 63 PAA, RCF 438. Letter from Mary Waagen to Premier Brownlee, 20 September 1932.
- 64 PAA, RCF 437. *Report of Survey*, 12-13.
- 65 PAA, RCF 438. Letters from Mary Waagen to the Honourable Irene Parlby, 25 October 1932 and to Premier Brownlee, 25 October 1932; Government of the Province of Alberta, Department of Municipal Affairs, *List of Goods Which Can Be Purchased By Those Receiving Direct Relief*.
- 66 Ibid. Letters from Mary Waagen to Premier Brownlee, 26 May and 29 June 1932, and Premier Brownlee to Mary Waagen, 7 July 1932.
- 67 Ibid.. 10 May 1932.
- 68 Ibid.. 19 September 1931.
- 69 PANS, MG 20, Vol. 322. *Annual Report of the Canadian Red Cross Society*, 1936, pp. 30-31.



FORUM

Prairie Forum welcomes readers' comments on articles which appear in the journal. Our "Forum" section offers an opportunity for scholarly debate and discussion kindled by papers in earlier issues of *Prairie Forum*.

"So What's the Importance of the Lethbridge Strike of 1906?": Local History and the Issue of Significance

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Paul Voisey's recent *Prairie Forum* survey and critique of local history on the Prairies covered a lot of ground.¹ The article claimed that over the past two or three decades local history has played a crucial role at the cutting edge of the discipline of history in France, England and the United States. By contrast, Voisey argued, the local history practiced on the Prairies has been unsophisticated, not to say backward, in its research design and methodology. He concluded that it was necessary to upgrade the status and standard of prairie local history using a variety of techniques and sources, including the numerous community-written local histories which contain buckets of raw data.

The article is a valuable one, geared not only to encouraging historians of the Prairies to recognize the vast scholarly potential of local history but also to challenging practitioners of local history to upgrade their approach and methodology.² Voisey's concern about local history undoubtedly stems from his own involvement in the field — his *Vulcan: Farming Communities in Southern Alberta* is to be published by the University of Toronto Press in December 1987. My own research project in local history has also been the origin of the following brief reflections on the subject of local history and the issue of significance.

When people ask me what research project I am currently working on, I reply: "The Lethbridge coal miners' strike of 1906." For a handful of labour historians and the few historians of Lethbridge this response suffices. For most questioners, however, this answer is usually followed by another query, stated either directly or indirectly, along the following lines: "Why on earth would you want to study that? What possible relevance can that have to anything?" And so I prattle on telling my listener that it was an important event because it was a large and lengthy strike in early western Canadian history; that it was mediated by W.L. Mackenzie King; that it was the catalyst for King drafting the extremely important Industrial

Disputes Investigation Act of 1907; that it demonstrated the influence and power of the strongest union in North America at the time, the United Mine Workers of America; and that through it one can gain an insight into the lives of a group of workers at that time and place. Such elaboration fails to convince some listeners, bores others, satisfies some, and leads to interesting discussions with still others.

It is probably true that anyone working on any project has had a somewhat similar experience. Even those working on prominent topics, such as Nazi Germany or the American Revolution, have a problem of justification. They are forced to defend their examination of the topic in the face of the enormous volume of research already completed (“Why study that? It’s an overworked subject! What new thing can you possibly discover that’s of any importance?”) Yet the practitioner of local history has a particularly difficult time in justifying his/her activities because of greater general ignorance of the subject matter.

Most people, for instance, know the basic details of Hitler’s career but how many, even Albertans, have ever heard of Herbert Greenfield (United Farmers of Alberta premier, 1921-25) let alone W.D.L. Hardie (long-time manager of the Lethbridge coal mine and mayor of the city from 1913 to 1928)? Moreover, it seems to be a commonplace assumption that highly publicized events that take place in the so-called centres of the world have greater intrinsic significance and impact than occurrences on the local level. While that assumption is of questionable validity, its existence makes difficult the local historian’s claim of the importance of his/her endeavours. Yet those of us who are involved in research in local history know that such studies are, or at least may be, of significance. The problem is, then, one of providing a rationale. How, in other words, does one articulate the argument?

When I began to reflect on this matter in relation to the 1906 strike in a more direct and more systematic fashion I asked the obvious question: what do other writers say about the importance of the strike? In the first place, it is clear that although the strike is mentioned in various sources it is not generally considered to be a central feature of Canadian history. No Canadian history textbook worth its salt could fail to discuss the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 but most do omit even a mention of the Lethbridge strike. Nevertheless, some general works do present some information about the strike. Moreover, it is included in various works in Canadian labour history and seems to have become more widely discussed in that field over the last decade. Finally, the strike certainly has a place of importance in accounts of Lethbridge history, A.A. den Otter devoting an entire chapter to the strike in his *Civilizing the West*.³ The various sources view the significance of the strike somewhat differently. At the level of Canadian history the strike is seen as having some importance because it resulted in the involvement of the federal government in the

person of King, the deputy minister of labour, and led to the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act of 1907.⁴ For labour historians the strike's significance rests on it being an important example of workers' conflict with employers in early western Canada. Bryan Palmer, for example, has asserted that the strike was "the first major instance of class war . . ."⁵ Lastly, for local historians the significance of the strike lies in its demonstration of Lethbridge being at a transition point in its development: "A clear signal that Lethbridge had stepped into the modern industrial world was the miners' strike of 1906."⁶

From these assessments of significance certain observations could be made. In the first place there was no consistency or agreement amongst the sources about what was the importance of the strike. Secondly, in each case the matter of the significance of the strike had been assessed or demonstrated in relation to and focussed on other topics rather than for its own sake. Finally, it is clear that in none of these cases were the other topics absolutely dependent on the 1906 strike. For example, one could discuss federal involvement in labour disputes and the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act without scrutinizing the Lethbridge strike.

This examination of other sources certainly proved to be an interesting exercise but did not provide me with a completely satisfying rationale for being involved in an extensive examination of the strike. Indeed, it had not been my original intention to do such a thing, for initially I had a limited concept of its significance. At first I had intended merely to write an explanatory article about the strike. However, when I delved into the relevant primary sources such as newspapers, Royal Canadian Mounted Police records and King's confidential account of his mediation, and when I reflected upon the topic over a period of time, my sense of the strike's significance expanded. What I began to see is that the strike was like a flashlight which could be used to illuminate many features of life. Focussing on the strike enabled me to examine in depth the influence of various forces and institutions existing in the society upon several groups of people but most especially upon the miners. But that focus also allowed the reverse, that is, to study the impact which social groups, particularly the miners, had upon the forces and institutions of the society. It is true that such topics are not completely ignored in historical studies but so often they are examined either in very theoretical terms or are far removed from everyday life. It became apparent that a focus on the strike would make possible the study of numerous topics of broad importance not only for comprehending the past but understanding the present and the future. Such topics included, for example, the nature, degree and purpose of violence; the relationship of workers and the state; the living and working conditions of the workers; and the relationship of miners to the union and to management. It was also evident that focussing on the strike did not mean ignoring theories or generalizations related to the particular issue being examined. Rather, it enabled one to test the theory or generalization and

had the potential for suggesting modifications to theory or even to new hypotheses.

The point I had reached in my thinking about the significance of my topic really boiled down to the conviction that the people involved in the strike were part, a connected part, of more extensive social groupings, and that the issues raised by the strike were related to similar issues in other places and times. In short, to modify a phrase borrowed from Sam B. Warner Jr., I was conceiving my topic along the lines of "If All The World Were Lethbridge 1906."⁷ In general terms, the conceptual underpinnings for making such a grandiose claim might be postulated in terms of four propositions: (1) Anything is a sub-set of at least one other thing and anything has its own sub-set(s). The ear, for example, is one part of the body, and in turn has a variety of component parts. Anything, therefore, is part of a continuum of greater and lesser things; (2) There is no hierarchy of intrinsic importance along the continuum. In other words, bigger is not better and smaller is not more beautiful. In terms of one's study, what one focusses upon is not by definition more or less significant or important but simply a vantage point which, as is the case with any vantage point, has its advantages and disadvantages; (3) Significance lies in the relationship of an item to other aspects of the continuum or the totality. Such significance exists by definition since every item is part of the continuum. Therefore, "significance," as one usually refers to it, really consists of demonstrating relationships up, down, and sideways; backwards and forwards; near and far along the continuum; (4) The totality of relationships (i.e., "significance") can never be completely described or explained.

If one accepts the plausibility of these propositions what does it mean in regard to local history? The first suggests that local history is a sub-set of regional, national, western and world history. In turn, local history has its own sub-sets or component parts. In the Lethbridge case, these would include coal mining, urban planning, religious organizations, and so forth.

The second proposition implies that local history is not the poor brother of, for example, Canadian history. It is merely a vantage point or focus. The disadvantages of that perspective may include the difficulty of comprehending the nature and degree of national and international trends upon the locale, whether they be political, economic or social. The advantages may include the opportunity of understanding, at a less official and ethereal level than is often the case, real life experience. Indeed, in designing and carrying out their research projects local historians would do well to consider what things can be done in local history that cannot be done on the national level and then attempt to make a contribution in those areas. But the second proposition would also prevent local historians from getting swollen heads. Their vantage point is not superior to the national or world perspective, nor is it more important than or senior to

its own sub-sets, whether they be the history of a church parish, the history of the train station or an examination of the rodeo.

Finally, the implications of the third and fourth propositions are rather self-evident. If one's local history is to have "significance," one must demonstrate relationships along the continuum. One might, for instance, examine the impact of provincial or national or international forces upon people in the local area. Equally, one might study the influence of the sub-sets of local history upon that history. The possibilities are endless, for whatever one discusses, be it the influence of World War I or be it the influence of a particular businessman, one can never exhaust the range of potential relationships.

It is difficult to conceive of any work in local history entirely devoid of any demonstration of relationships along the continuum. Yet it is also true that one judges relative "significance" on the basis of both the quantity and quality of the relationships analysed. Local historians ought, therefore, to assess relationships in their endeavour to achieve a high degree of "significance" in their work. But how does one ensure that our work in local history has "significance?" The simple answer is that it comes from a combination of theory and practice. The theoretical part is little more than a conceptual approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of things and a research strategy to examine and explain the connections.⁸ In terms of practice, relationships emerge simply by attempting to do a thorough job of performing the historian's task of explanation — what happened, when, how, where, to whom, and why.

Let us take but one example — a rather miniature case study. Suppose the selected topic in local history is the 1909 petition of the Moral Reform League in Lethbridge demanding that the city council suppress prostitution. In considering the topic on a theoretical level one would note that prostitution was not unique to Lethbridge but had existed for centuries throughout the world. Moreover, attempts had been made at various times in various places to eradicate it but without success. What one has, then, is a case study of an eternal issue. Clearly, what happened at other places and other times in regard to prostitution and attempts to repress it may shed light on what happened in Lethbridge. Equally, however, the opportunity exists in this case study for a detailed examination of the forces at play in this locale which, in turn, may be relevant to an understanding of what happened elsewhere at other times. A good research design, therefore, might commence with an examination of some of the basic secondary sources on prostitution in an endeavour to extract key issues and interpretations which can be examined in the local case. In historical study, of course, theory and practice are inseparable, the one influences the other. And simply attempting to provide an explanation of the incident leads to some interesting questions. Who signed the petition and were they a distinct social group? What precipitated their action? What was the Moral

Reform League? How did the city council respond to the petition? What interests or social groups opposed the petition? What was the scale of prostitution in the city and why? Was it greater or lesser in 1909 than earlier or later? What powers did city council have over prostitution? What did the criminal code say about prostitution? Was the existing legislation being enforced by the police and if not, why not? What was the economic significance of prostitution? Who were the prostitutes and how had they ended up in this occupation? Who were the clients of prostitutes? What, if anything, does the case study suggest about the roles and interrelationships between females and males at the time? The list of useful questions could be considerably expanded. But the point is, of course, that the attempt to provide an in depth explanation of a topic in local history ought to lead to a broadening of the sense of what the topic involves.

This perception of broadened horizons is another way of saying that "significance" lies in the demonstration of relationships. In part, the importance of a topic may exist in the nature of the particular subject itself, but to an even greater degree it depends on how the study of the topic is carried out. In other words, the significance of a subject lies more in the way in which a topic is examined than in the topic itself. The particular subject and the sources available on the topic point out the types of relationships which can be most effectively described and analysed. It remains the task and challenge of the local historian, or any other historian for that matter, to envision and exploit the opportunities available to him/her.

NOTES

The author gratefully acknowledges the support provided for his research project on the Lethbridge Strike of 1906 by the University of Lethbridge, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

- 1 P. Voisey, "Rural Local History and the Prairie West," *Prairie Forum* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 327-38.
- 2 Indeed, the article has utility beyond the disciplinary bounds of history for much of what it says has applicability to other types of local studies.
- 3 A.A. den Otter, *Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of Western Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982), 266-304.
- 4 See, for example, R.C. Brown and R. Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 121.
- 5 B.D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1983), 156. Palmer does not establish the boundaries of his claim but one assumes that he means "the first major instance of class war" in the western Alberta/eastern British Columbia coal fields.
- 6 A. Johnston and A.A. den Otter, *Lethbridge: A Centennial History* (Lethbridge: The City of Lethbridge and The Whoop-Up Country Chapter, Historical Society of Alberta, 1985), 99.
- 7 See S.B. Warner Jr., "If All The World Were Philadelphia: Scaffolding for Urban History, 1774-1930," *American Historical Review* 74 (1968): 26-43.
- 8 One might urge the adoption of highly sophisticated theoretical frameworks. But such advice might prove to be counterproductive if it led the majority of local historians — i.e., non-professionals — to resent and dissociate themselves even further from professional scholars. (J. Higham notes this problem in "Herbert Baxter Adams and The Study of Local History," *American Historical Review* 89, no. 5 (December 1984): 1239.)

Book Reviews

1885 and After: Native Society in Transition edited by F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1986. Pp. 306.

1885 and After: Native Society in Transition is not merely a record of changes that have taken place in Canada's native minorities in the west; it is also an interesting manifestation of a field of studies in a state of rapid growth within a society whose attitudes towards both Métis and Indians have themselves undergone a striking evolution. When I returned to Canada in 1949 and began to write on the way Canada had treated its minorities, particularly Doukhobors and Métis, I was astonished by the lack of authoritative and reliable material that was freely available. Stanley's *Birth of Western Canada* and Giraud's *Le Métis canadien* stood as rare monuments of scholarly writing on the history of the Métis (to which Stanley's book was not restricted); only three years later would Howard's more popular and tendentious *Strange Empire* appear. Nor was the climate of opinion regarding the Métis rebellions encouraging to those who cared to write about them except in a condemnatory vein. An article I wrote in *The Beaver* towards the end of the 1950s proposing in moderate tones a more understanding treatment of Riel and his actions aroused an angry correspondence of a kind it is impossible to envisage today. That Riel should become something of a Canadian hero and that special postage stamps should cast an aura of official approval over him and also Gabriel Dumont seemed then unthinkable.

The change in attitudes, scholarly and popular, is largely due to the emergence of militant native rights movements during the 1960s and 1970s. Without them there would not have been the rapid academic turning to native studies which has, among other results, produced the symposium I am reviewing. *1885 and After: Native Society in Transition* comprises nineteen papers presented at a conference with the same title as the book, held at the University of Saskatchewan to celebrate the centenary of the North-West Rebellion. The fact that the conference was held under the auspices of the university's Native Studies Department, and has been edited by two members of that department, is itself significant. Who, a few years ago, would have imagined such a discipline emerging in a Canadian university?

Yet the area of studies that was waiting to be opened — hitherto usually tacked on to anthropology since native peoples were regarded as having no history — was immense, and the richness of the present symposium is evidence of this, despite the fact that it virtually takes for granted the vast field of Indian and Métis cultures at their prime, in the days before the exhaustion of the buffalo herd and the 1885 rebellion. It is concerned with the rebellion itself, its causes and background, and with its consequences in determining the evolution of Métis and western Indian societies during the century that followed.

To the outside reader some of the perennial faults of a book based on a scholarly gathering will be evident. There is, particularly, an inclination to bow to academic fashion, to highlight some areas and unjustifiably lowlight others. The hypnotic presence of Riel is excessively evident, and so is the inclination to see the situation in 1885 from the viewpoint of Métis emigrants from Red River to the Saskatchewan and largely ignore the western Métis who had created working political organizations of their own, notably the St. Laurent commune of the early 1870s, well before the arrival of the Red River people. This in turn leads to an underestimation of the role of the western groups, with their lingering nomadic traditions, in precipitating the rebellion. There is, for example, no study of the way in which the extended family groups of the South Saskatchewan, such as the Dumonts and their associates by marriage, helped to determine events leading up to the rebellion and the course it took.

Some of the essays make particularly valuable and interesting contributions to our knowledge of the period, like Donald B. Smith's "Rip Van Jaxon," the account of the transformation of Will Jackson, Riel's anglophone secretary, into the "Métis" anarchist, Honoré Jaxon, and Diane Payment's essay on the changes in Batoche after 1885; contrary to the current myth, Payment shows, Batoche did not vanish after the defeat of the 1885 rebellion, but it did go through some interesting transformations.

Occasionally the pieces are self-laudatory, like George F.G. Stanley's "The Last Word on Louis Riel — The Man of Several Faces," though Stanley's genuine role as a pioneer in the field of native studies may perhaps be taken as a reason for indulgence. Other papers tend to be self-justificatory, like Thomas Flanagan's "Louis Riel: Was He Really Crazy?" Flanagan also takes part in a spirited exchange with Ken Hatt, who casts doubts on Flanagan's interpretation of the activities of the North-West Rebellion Scrip Commissions. Most of the papers are fluently and interestingly written, and one gets the feeling that people in native studies at least are shedding the appalling jargons that only a few years ago characterized academic writing in the social sciences. Perhaps the fact that they are really becoming historians as well as ethnologists is one explanation for their relatively clear prose.

Still, one regrets that, with the exception of a couple of native activists, the contributors to the symposium seem to have been entirely academic in their allegiances. The history of the Métis and of the Indians of the west has attracted a considerable number of Canadian creative writers and other artists, and the symposium — in both its spoken and its written form — might have been strengthened by the presence of literary artists like Rudy Wiebe and Margaret Laurence, then still active, like Mavor Moore and Don Gutteridge, and it might even have found an interesting role for Harry Somers, the composer of the opera, *Riel*. The discipline of native studies is such a new and as yet such an open one, that it could profit

from a cross-fertilization with the worlds of literature and the arts, from which it might receive a great deal in the way of imaginative interpretation and to which it might contribute a great deal in the way of valuable material.

George Woodcock
Vancouver

Perspectives of Women in the 1980s edited by Joan Turner and Lois Emery. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1984; *in the feminine: women and words/les femmes et les mots. Conference Proceedings 1983* edited by Ann Dybikowski, Victoria Freeman, Daphne Marlatt, Barbara Pulling and Betsy Warland. Edmonton: Longspoon Press, 1983.

The first women's conference I ever attended was in Calgary in 1975. The key speaker was Jill Conway, then Vice-President of the University of Toronto. She spoke of women's networks which at the time seemed a very new idea. But what most struck me was the appearance of the women delegates. So many were clones of leading feminists. I recall a (white) woman with an Afro hairdo who resembled Angela Davis; a Gloria Steinem look-alike with granny glasses and parallel streaks of white on dark hair; an Erica Jong who delivered her paper sitting atop the desk, one leg slung jauntily across the other. I thought how few models there were and how desperately needed even for strong, articulate, achieving women.

Since then, like most of us, I have become something of a veteran of these occasions. There was the "Twentieth Century Women Writers' Conference" at Hofstra University with a huge cast of writers and critics — Grace Paley, Elaine Showalter, Joyce Carol Oates and Marilyn French among them. There was "Feminist Criticism" at McMaster University with Carolyn Heilbrun and either (who knows? do they?) Gilbert or Gubar. There was a meeting of Saskatchewan women artists notable for a panel of articulate native women led by Maria Campbell. There was a meeting in Salt Lake City at which a number of Mormon women presented their special experiences.

I was at a conference on Texan women writers. This was organized as a reaction to an earlier one called "The Texas Tradition in Literature." At the earlier one the key speakers were men, with one female speaker imported from another country. Women writers from the state were relegated to either oblivion or brief spots on minor panels, and were understandably furious. The brochure for the conference was a dead giveaway with its array of symbols — ten-gallon hats, boots and spurs, lasso, branding iron and a rattlesnake! And the women protested as they did at the 1986 P.E.N. conference in New York.

I was reminded of that first Texas conference when I saw the brochure for the June 1987 Saskatchewan Literary Symposium at Fort San. As Yogi Berra said, "it's *déjà vu* all over again." When I asked two of the organizers

why the key speakers were three men and a woman from France, I was told (by a man) that all “the big guns” *are* men. A woman told me very earnestly that there had been a genuine effort to find Saskatchewan women but none met the requirements established for the key speakers. She assured me that women would have ample opportunity to speak out and respond as they would be on various panels. Well, women are used to marginality. And, in fact, the margin is not a bad place for any writer, since it provides a vantage point that is not possible in the mainstream.

All the same, women enjoy stepping out from the margins. Hence the number of women’s conferences — meetings which do not necessarily exclude men but which are not dominated by them. Women flock to these conferences to share information, to get moral support, to counter the isolation that many feel in their various fields and to learn about the lives of less visible sisters, those consigned by age, race, sexual orientation and economic circumstances to the outer margins of a marginal group. They come away with armfuls of papers but it is the solidarity and the sense of community generated by the occasions themselves which are most important.

The organizers of the 1983 conferences, “Perspectives on Women in the 1980s” in Winnipeg and “women in words” in Vancouver, have provided a valuable service to delegates and non-delegates alike by publishing their proceedings. And it is greatly to the credit of the editors that both volumes manage to convey the excitement and immediacy of the actual occasions.

Those two occasions are very different. The Winnipeg conference, organized mainly by the University of Manitoba’s Department of Social Work, has a practical concern with women’s daily lives. The Vancouver conference is literary in its orientation. But since it is the nature of feminist endeavours to be all-inclusive and encompass the personal, daily and practical along with the theoretical, the appeal of both is very wide.

The Winnipeg conference has an international flavour. Two of the key speakers were editors of prominent American magazines — Gloria Steinem of *Ms.* and Deidre English of *Mother Jones*. Steinem shows an admirable self-consciousness about her role as imported guest speaker. She says:

I also recognize that there is an unfortunate semi-imperialistic relationship between the United States and Canada, and I certainly do not want to duplicate that. The essence of feminism is autonomy and we do not want feminism to be seen as some kind of United States export — although it would, in fact, be one of the few healthy exports from the United States.

Thirteen papers are included in the *Perspectives on Women in the 1980s* volume and they are mostly essay-length formal speeches. All are lively as well as informative. Dorothy O’Connell punctuates her paper “Poverty: The Feminine Complaint” with song lyrics. She gives the full text of the old rugby song “She was poor, but she was honest” and adeptly shows

its sinister implications. Deidre English in "Romantic Love and Reproductive Rights" sets out the role played by the myth of romantic love in bolstering the patriarchy. I was interested in Helen Levine's attitude to the men in her women's studies courses at the Carleton School of Social Work:

I tell them they are welcome in the class, but my expectation is that they will do a great deal of listening to and learning from women. They will not be permitted to take over, to dominate the discussion, to define women's oppression.

The "women and words" conference has a much larger cast of participants. Not all those who spoke submitted papers for the volume but, since forty-seven did, they are necessarily short and sometimes sketchy. Their special value is in showing the variety and scope of the work and concerns of writing women. The subjects range from the specifically literary (Margaret Atwood on "Sexual Bias in Reviewing") to the personal (Marian Engel on "Twins and a Typewriter," and Beth Brant on "Coming Out as Indian Lesbian Writers"). The book introduces many new names and provides a handy roster of writing women across Canada.

Both these books, in fact, thanks to the meticulous work of the editors, are indispensable reference books. *Perspectives on Women in the 1980s*, besides having documentation appropriate to scholarly works and not always provided in conference proceedings, offers a complete list of Canadian magazines, journals, newspapers and newsletters with a feminist orientation.

One problem that perhaps should be mentioned in connection with both conferences springs from one of the virtues of these feminist gatherings. Their all-inclusiveness extends beyond the subject matter to the audience. They draw women of all levels of involvement with feminism, from the vaguely interested to the deeply committed, from the uninformed to those equipped with a full knowledge of the feminist literature of the past decades. Clearly, it is difficult for the speaker to be able to count on common ground. This problem is one that affects the teacher in a feminist classroom as much as the experienced platform speaker. I have often heard people who have expected revelations from a prominent feminist come away disappointed, saying "she didn't tell me anything I didn't already know." It is hard to balance the familiar with the new challenging ideas. Speakers fear both alienating the newcomer and preaching to the converted. But this is a small problem, and none who attended these two conferences can have come away without feeling enriched by them.

Neither Bennett's (now Vander Zalm's) British Columbia nor the prairie provinces with their big fundamentalist populations are conducive to women's reaching their full potential. Of course, the delegates were not entirely from the immediate area. Yet these conferences do create local interest and, simply by taking place, convey powerful messages. It is to

be hoped that those messages echo and linger long after the conferences are over.

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Swift Runner by Colin A. Thomson. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1984. Pp. 114; *Indian Tribes of Alberta* by Hugh A. Dempsey. Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1986. Pp. 100.

Windigo, the cannibal giant, is a phenomenon largely confined to Algonkian areas of northeastern and northcentral Canada, but with some spillover into the parklands that mediate between forest and plains. These Algonkians share with other Amerindians of the Canadian north an abhorrence of cannibalism, in marked contrast to such peoples as the Iroquoians south and east of the Great Lakes, the Mexica of Mexico and the Tupinambá of Brazil, all of whom belonged to the world-wide fraternity of those who elevated cannibalistic practices into ritual. In such societies there was nothing discernibly abnormal about those who ate their fellows. In the northern forests, however, the situation was quite otherwise. The cannibal giant may have been a mythic figure, but the psychosis which transformed ordinary human beings into windigos with uncontrollable appetites for human flesh was an all-too-real and much-feared occurrence. The social pattern of the northern Algonkians, with its belief in acting out dreams without consultation, and absence of alternatives to control such impulses as cannibalism, appear to have left the way open for this type of aberrant behaviour. But the phenomenon remains poorly understood.

Swift Runner was a Cree who turned into a windigo, and who was hanged on 16 August 1879 for eating his family and some near relatives, a total of nine individuals. The date is significant, because it was a time of stress as traditional lifestyles were losing their subsistence base, and tribesmen were being forced to give up their migratory habits and confine themselves to reserves. Hunger was not made easier to endure as a cost-conscious government enforced its work-for-rations rule in an attempt to expedite the transformation of hunters into farmers. Swift Runner reacted by becoming withdrawn, eventually turning on those closest to himself. Unlike many windigos, he gave no obvious sign of what happened either before or afterwards, except for being tormented by bad dreams and crying out in his sleep; it was fellow Amerindians who eventually became suspicious and took the matter to authorities. The case became a *cause célèbre* as both Amerindians and Euro-Canadians reacted with fascinated horror. However, it was not the first capital trial by jury in the west, as the author claims; Sir James Douglas, for one, had Amerindian malefactors tried by jury and hanged on the West Coast in 1853.

Thomson has assembled incidental and tangential data about the affair, and attempts to make the most of its more sensational aspects. He has also listed some other windigo cases, and provides an interesting map of known occurrences. But his treatment is inept, and he displays only a superficial knowledge of Cree lifeways, and little understanding of the phenomenon of windigo. The reader will not emerge any the wiser as to why Swift Runner reacted the way he did, or why this unritualized and socially uncontrolled form of cannibalism should be peculiar to northern Algonkians.

As a popular introduction to the native peoples of Alberta, *Indian Tribes of Alberta* has proved its usefulness since its original publication in 1978. Written in an easy, conversational style, it encapsulates enough of each tribe's story to satisfy the general reader at the same time as it helps students to get started. Both groups will welcome this revised and expanded edition.

The ten tribes of the original edition have been augmented by the inclusion of the Ojibwa, Iroquois, Gros Ventres, and a final section dealing with Shoshoni, Kootenay, and Crow. Only the first two of the additional groups have current representation in the province; the others are now based in the United States and British Columbia. Some individuals among them still maintain personal ties with Alberta, recalling the time when demographic distributions were more fluid than they are today.

The original text has been left largely intact (apart from minor changes in presentation), with some additions to the sections on the Blackfoot, Peigan and Sarcee; the most extensive was to update the introduction. Interestingly enough, in the first edition, section headings for the Blackfoot Confederation, here called "Nation," listed only the Blackfoot as a tribe; the other members, the Blood, Peigan and Sarcee, were simply "Indians," as were peoples outside the alliance. The new edition has changed this, to list all four members of the confederation as "tribes," retaining the "Indian" appellation for the others. No explanation is given for this classification. A useful addition is a section at the end of the volume listing the sources cited.

In contrast to the text, the illustrations have been heavily revised and augmented. The purpose behind this is not entirely clear, as the new choices, while different, are not always an improvement, and some good material has been dropped. One picture that has made it through both editions, of the interior of a Woodland Cree lodge in 1820 (first edition, p. 60; second edition, p. 58), does not concern Alberta. The artist, Lieutenant Robert Hood, was with the first Franklin Expedition (1819-22), when he visited and sketched the lodge while on a detour through Saskatchewan's Pasquia Hills near the Manitoba border.

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Heavy Horses: Highlights of Their History by Grant MacEwan. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986; *Prairie Giants* by Hans Dommasch. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986.

A reviewer approaches yet another Grant MacEwan book with ambivalent feelings. There can be no question that MacEwan has contributed greatly to the growing appreciation of our agricultural heritage. Yet his books, like those of most popularizers, usually fail to develop new themes or interpretations which would provide us with fresh insights into our past.

Unfortunately this book suffers from the usual lack of interpretation. It is unfortunate because the heavy horses, which are the focus of the volume, deserve to be studied in depth. The average modern Canadian city dweller can scarcely appreciate the role of these animals in providing the motive power for pioneer Canadian agriculture. Yet the nature and importance of that role is not developed for such readers by MacEwan. It is as if he assumes most readers would have a basic knowledge of pioneer agriculture which, in our dominantly urban society, is the wrong assumption to make.

MacEwan does not place the heavy horses within an evolving social and economic context. He does not integrate the growing horse population of earlier decades with the amount of land being opened to settlement. Nor does he explain the varied roles and tasks of these animals. Instead the reader must plod through seemingly endless lists of stallions and mares, which is about as interesting to read as the breed books from which they are taken. At times the book has the look and feel of an equine Genesis.

Another failing of the book is that when MacEwan does offer a novel piece of information he fails to fully develop its significance. For example, the author notes that while many Canadian pioneers began farming with oxen, most aspired to horse ownership and made the transition as quickly as they could. MacEwan, however, does not explain why this was the case, and does not delve into the social and economic factors which were at work here. Similarly, MacEwan informs the reader that there was sharp debate between horsemen and the early advocates of steam and gasoline engines. Given that the tractor displaced the heavy horses which MacEwan is dealing with one would have expected more discussion on this critical point; yet MacEwan deals with the issue in a single terse paragraph.

Heavy Horses: Highlights of Their History is vintage Grant MacEwan. It will appeal to those who enjoy an anecdotal approach to the past, but it will disappoint those seeking more substance. The book does contain the odd gem of information, but these are never refined and brought to their full brilliance. One can only hope that, given his vast knowledge of our agricultural past, MacEwan develops a substantive theme in his next offering, and drops his annoying penchant for alliteration in his titles.

Hans Dommasch's photographic compilation, *Prairie Giants*, is the sort of "coffee table" book westerners will be sending as gifts to friends and relatives in the east. It is an unassuming labour of love devoted to that prairie icon, the grain elevator. The book is a visual delight from cover to cover.

Dommasch's "Preface" is an extremely interesting, and too brief, account of his encounter with the prairie landscape, and its archetypal symbol. Many people born and raised on the plains tend to take their surroundings for granted, and it is worthwhile to read an immigrant's account such as this to obtain a sense of the awe that others find in our landscape. Brock Silversides's "Introduction" is useful and solid.

The real beauty of the book is, of course, the photography. The colour and reproduction are very good. Dommasch is to be congratulated for his selection of the photographs, although one could complain that there are not enough, and the book could have been longer. Not surprisingly, given the vastness of the backgrounds, the photographs which attract one the most are those which cover two pages. The landscapes covering pages 93 and 94, and pages 98 and 99, are particularly striking. There are many evocative scenes, but perhaps none more than that on page 122, which shows three partially destroyed Alberta elevators. Given the current changes in the grain handling system and the present rural crisis, the symbolism is almost overwhelming.

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Window on the Past. Archaeological Assessment of the Peace Point Site, Wood Buffalo National Park, Alberta by Marc G. Stevenson. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1986. Pp. 145.

At some point prior to Pond's penetration of the Athabasca region in 1778, the Beaver and Cree Indians arranged a truce, ending warfare between themselves which had extended throughout the protohistoric period. This event took place at Peace Point, on the lower Peace River. In this monograph, Stevenson reports the details of two episodes of archaeological research at Peace Point, as well as the findings of archaeological survey in the vicinity.

Peace Point is a magnificent archaeological site. It represents a relatively rare occurrence in the boreal forest: the coincidence of a protected, depositional environment with a locale in which there has been intensive prehistoric human occupation. Beginning just over twenty-two hundred years ago, alluvial sediments began to accumulate at Peace Point. Within were embedded eighteen distinct occupation surfaces, formed over paleosols.

The site has abundant stone artifacts, numerous features such as hearths, and an inventory of well-preserved faunal remains, including bison, moose, caribou, elk, black and grizzly bear, beaver, muskrat, waterfowl and fish. Frequent accumulation of sediments has also made for a record of great fidelity. One occupation surface at the site appeared to preserve, in a pattern of waste stone flakes, the outline of the kneeling craftsmen.

Stevenson's monograph is mandatory reading for those interested in western Canadian, and certainly, Subarctic prehistory. His analysis is comprehensive, and for the most part occasions few questions. There will be objections to the evidence for microblade technology at Peace Point, and other investigators are likely to dispute typological comparisons, especially for such outmoded constructs as the "Canadian Tundra" tradition. Stevenson goes much beyond reporting, however, as he strives to wring information concerning the economic and social organization of the prehistoric natives from the record at Peace Point.

Herein lies the great strength of the work and yet its greatest weakness. The sample proportion for the site is extremely small. The block excavation undertaken was just under twelve square metres. This yielded roughly 190 square metres of occupation surface. Relative to the enormous extent of the site, it is more than conceivable that any variability in the assemblages from different surfaces arises simply from sampling error. Despite this, Stevenson presses home arguments for such complex and elusive topics as site function, gross economic strategy of the site occupants (were they collectors or foragers?), and patterns of mobility.

The reader is left with the feeling that the research is overwhelmingly theory driven. Stevenson follows Binford closely as he seeks explanations for the patterning in artifact distributions around features like hearths. While we do require increasing sophistication in such arguments, some readers may balk at the emphasis on situational and proxemic constraints over human behaviour. The spatial organization of both Beaver and Cree camps, for instance, has powerful supernatural antecedents. And there are certainly ethnic differences in the pragmatic use of space. These last factors influencing site formation processes are often arbitrary and irreducible. Stevenson's universal sequences of occupation and abandonment for sites, or set etiquettes for behaviour around hearths, will ultimately be misleading without attention to these other orders of cultural life.

The sense of theory overcoming evidence is apparent when Stevenson applies his model of site occupation. He speculates that a unique cluster of over five hundred stone tools and large flakes from the Eaglenest Portage site in the nearby Birch Mountains was gathered up from that site just before its abandonment. This would be plausible, but for the indications of spatial distribution (the artifacts came from an extremely small area), of raw material (nonlocal kinds of stone are overrepresented), and morphology (every artifact edge shows extensive wear). On the contrary, these evidences

all suggest transport in a container, with deposition occurring at the beginning of a period of site occupation.

In any case, Stevenson's ideas make for provocative reading. He is to be commended for his initiative in undertaking the work at Peace Point, and for showing the enormous potential of the site. That potential must be explored, for there is one regret about this episode of research, quite beyond Stevenson's control. The only diagnostic projectile point recovered came from a recent occupational surface. Prehistoric studies in northern Alberta desperately require a chronological framework, and this can only come with the recovery of more time-sensitive artifacts in archaeological contexts like those of Peace Point.

Because Peace Point yields such a precious record, and because it is subject to long-term attrition through ice push and other forms of erosion, we can only hope the site will receive the additional investigation and protection it so richly deserves.

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Whelan by Eugene Whelan with Rick Archbold. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1986. Pp. 322; *Hawaiian Ordeal: Ukrainian Contract Workers 1897-1910* by Michael Ewanchuk. Winnipeg: Michael Ewanchuk, 1986. Pp. 192.

As one of a number of books by active or retired politicians to appear on bookstands recently, readers interested in certain subjects will welcome *Whelan*. Written in a colloquial style and referring periodically to certain by-products of the livestock industry, it touches on such varied matters as the flag debate and the quality of stetson hats. However, all but minor portions relate to three specific topics: Whelan himself, "a working man's and working woman's Liberal" and "honorary westerner," agriculture and politics.

Early chapters deal with Whelan's pre-House of Commons years, 1924-62. Described are such things as growing up with eight siblings and a widowed mother on a farm in Essex County, Ontario, during the Depression, quitting high school to do industrial war work, people and events shaping Whelan's ideas and character, and participating in local politics and various farm organizations ranging from the community cooperative to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Also mentioned is his failure to win a seat in the Ontario Legislature in 1959, the only election he lost save the 1984 Liberal leadership contest.

Subsequent chapters deal with Whelan's twenty-two years in the House of Commons in such capacities as a parliamentary secretary, chairman of the House Agricultural Committee and Minister of Agriculture, a position he began to covet soon after becoming a Member of Parliament. Discussed

as well are his impressions of foreign countries, some of their senior officials, and his activities connected with the United Nations.

In the second group of chapters, one sees Whelan change from an individual reluctant to seek political office into a person who found quitting a difficult decision to make. He is also shown to evolve from a freshman Member of Parliament with an inferiority complex into an experienced, indeed superior, parliamentarian, a politician with a finger on the national pulse, and an achiever of parliamentary firsts. The transformation is evident in various comments, for example, on parliamentary secretaries: "I never gave my secretaries as much responsibility as Davis gave me because I've never had one as capable as Davis did."

By making statements like the above, Whelan shows symptoms of having developed an enormous ego. But it must be acknowledged that he often refers to himself in less flattering terms. Perhaps his most cutting remark concerns his removal from cabinet by John Turner: "[I] pretty near begged him to keep me on . . . one of the most demeaning things I ever did in my life." He likewise relates such matters as being drenched with milk by Québec farmers and being labelled racist.

The autobiographical portion of the book is best described as of the Horatio Alger type and as such appropriately concludes:

I sometimes like to hold out my hand and say to an audience, "This right hand of mine has shaken hands with many leaders around the world, from the smaller nations to the most powerful, including the United States and the Soviet Union, the heads of the Anglican and Catholic Churches, and the Queen of England." I never would have dreamt when I was starting out, that little Gene Whelan from Anderdon Township who lived just across the railroad track from Hell's Corners would have ended up as Minister of Agriculture or would have run to be Prime Minister of Canada.

Not surprisingly, given Whelan's background and his positions in government, a substantial portion of his book concerns agriculture. But there are other reasons. "The farm was one of the main reasons I got into federal politics," he asserts, later adding: "From the minute I arrived in Parliament I spent my time looking out for farmers' interests." Receiving considerable attention and discussed in an informative manner are marketing boards, which Whelan describes as his "main strategy" for dealing with certain types of farm problems, agricultural research, federal-provincial relations as regards agriculture, and Whelan's unsuccessful effort to convert the Farm Credit Corporation into a "real farmers' bank." It might be noted in passing that, as with the media, he is seldom complimentary to bankers — "they're one of the most overrated groups of people I know," whose loans to farmers are "in many instances . . . just short of fraud."

Whelan's contacts with other countries derived from his position in Canadian agriculture. What he says of foreign dignitaries is generally interesting, informative or amusing; of agricultural problems abroad, their causes and possible solutions, often illuminating; and of the East African

famine, at times quite fascinating. Not unnaturally, given his background and interests, Whelan judges foreign governments on the basis of such things as the priority they give to agriculture, the economic position of their farming communities, their progress in narrowing the gap between rich and poor, and how well their citizens are fed and clothed.

Finally, the book contains comments of varying length on numerous political events and people in public life from the Diefenbaker years to Mulroney's first months in office. Liberal leadership conventions which chose Trudeau and Turner are compared, and Whelan's views on the accomplishments of the Pearson and Trudeau administrations are outlined. Also touched upon are elections, changes occurring in government and politics, federal bureaucrats, and the functioning of the Pearson and Trudeau cabinets. When assessing individuals, Whelan seeks to be even-handed, praising and criticizing members of all political parties.

While discussion of the foregoing matters is at times revealing (Judy LaMarsh "held a grudge and let that interfere with the way she worked with you afterwards") or amusing (Joe Green, Pearson's Minister of Agriculture "doesn't know a sow from a cow"), his political commentary may prove more interesting, even of practical value, to certain readers for another reason. Whether intended or not, the book offers many hints (and this is among its merits) on what an aspiring politician should or might do to be successful. Discussed extensively is the value of holding public office locally and participating in organizations before seeking election at a higher level. The importance of good constituency organization, certain "dos" and "don'ts" regarding campaigning, and the benefits of being in touch with one's constituency and the public generally also receive attention. How a newly elected member can learn the ropes and perhaps climb the political ladder is well illustrated. Other, somewhat more specific matters treated concern piloting a private member's bill through the House, and road blocks which may prevent a member or minister from wholly or even partly achieving a goal. Whelan sums up part of his political education thus: "I learned how to sweet-talk the secretaries and bother the ministers and bully the caucus." Lastly, while citing benefits derived from political activity, Whelan also indicates its costs, both to himself and to his family.

Written with enthusiasm and displaying both pride in and sympathy for the main actors in the account, *Hawaiian Ordeal* discusses for the most part the experiences of two rather small groups of Ukrainian immigrants. The first party, roughly six hundred single males and family members from the Western Ukraine, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, arrived in Honolulu via Bremen between 1897 and 1899. The second contingent of about eighteen hundred people, recruited in and around Harbin, Manchuria, reached Hawaii in 1909-10. It consisted mainly of former residents of Russian-held Eastern Ukraine, who had congregated in the Amur-Ussuri

region of eastern Siberia. Few members of either group appear to have remained on the "Paradise Islands" any longer than absolutely necessary. Promises made to them by agents of plantation owners concerning wages, hours of work, housing, land, schools and so forth were not kept. Instead their status was soon being publicized as "bondsmen of the soil," "peons of the plantations," "serfs" and "slaves." When seeking, in some cases for a third time, yet another new home and improved situation, most went to the United States mainland, but at least a few moved on into Canada or sailed directly to Vancouver and settled in such places as the Edmonton and Dauphin areas.

Apart from the interesting saga Ewanchuk relates regarding Ukrainian contract workers and contract labour generally in Hawaii for the years in question, and his documentation of the fact that certain Ukrainians reached western Canada by rather roundabout routes, there are additional reasons why individuals interested in Canada's ethnic minorities or, for example, the Canadian Prairies will find this book valuable.

In the beginning of his account, Ewanchuk discusses Ukrainian emigration generally and in the process deals with Canada displacing certain South American countries as a preferred destination. The change is attributed in part to an 1894 investigation of conditions in Brazil by Reverend Iwan Wolansky, a Ukrainian Catholic missionary in the United States. His findings were published in both Europe and America and, of course, reached Dr. Joseph Oleskow. Ewanchuk consequently concludes that Reverend Wolansky and Dr. Oleskow "therefore, must be given full credit as both influenced the course of Ukrainian emigration and . . . settlement of the Canadian West." Some but not all scholars writing on the movement of Ukrainians to Canada have noted the role played by Wolansky.

Ewanchuk also devotes some space to emigrant experiences while still in Europe. Delved into, among other things, are the deceptive, indeed dishonest, activities of a particular German port agent, F. Missler of Bremen. Apparently working hand in glove with agents of Hawaiian planters, he not only successfully manipulated Ukrainians heading for Canada into signing contracts to work in Hawaii's cane fields but also, before embarkation, used some of them to set the stage for obtaining additional plantation workers from their villages.

Because of very unsatisfactory working conditions, Hawaiian authorities and planters constantly sought new supplies of workers, especially Europeans. Ewanchuk outlines various schemes undertaken or proposals put forward, including one involving a second Slavic group to settle on the Prairies, that is the Doukhobors. That Doukhobors might have moved from Russia to Hawaii is noted in certain works concerning them. However, the implications of what Ewanchuk has to say are that while the idea was definitely considered in Hawaii, it is questionable if it was

examined by the Doukhobor community or its advisors. Such a proposal originated with a Ukrainian resident of the islands, Dr. Nicholas Russel (formerly Nicholas Kostantinovich Sydzylovsky), who served as president of Hawaii's first territorial senate. But by the time it was acted upon locally, the Doukhobors had elected to settle in Canada. Scholars researching the Doukhobor migration may benefit from Ewanchuk's comments.

Among other matters dealt with at length in the book is one which certainly merits notice by researchers interested in early twentieth-century Canada. It concerns how Ukrainian immigrants reacted to the deception perpetrated upon them and above all to the treatment they received at the hands of the planters. Their response was scarcely that of the "ignorant," "downtrodden," "docile" "foreigner," who all too often figured in speeches of Canadian WASPS. Rather it was more in the spirit of an aroused Clydeside shipyard worker. They lodged complaints and in 1898, when results were not forthcoming, launched Hawaii's first contract workers' strike, which landed many of them in jail. Through such actions, supported energetically and in various ways by mainlanders, also at times of Ukrainian origin, they improved not only their own lot but that of other contract workers. Such displays of militancy by Ukrainians in Hawaii are food for thought. If they displayed a tendency to act more moderately in Canada, it may well have had much more to do with their Canadian situation than with their background or character. Conditions in Canada were in certain respects at least significantly less oppressive.

All things considered, *Hawaiian Ordeal* is a worthwhile addition to the body of literature on one of Canada's larger ethnic minorities. Though it does tend at times to be repetitious, its author is to be congratulated not only on the finished product but also on his tenaciousness in seeing it through to completion. It is the product of extensive research carried on over many years and involving collections of records thousands of miles apart.

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Gaining Ground: European Critics on Canadian Literature edited by Robert Kroetsch and Reingard M. Nischik. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1985. Pp. 303; *Trace: Prairie Writers on Writing* edited by Birk Sproxton. Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1986. Pp. 328.

Not so very long ago matters were very differently arranged: there was a body of literature by Canadian writers, and it was read and commented on by a general audience, largely Canadian, called the reading public. But now two collections of essays, both pioneering in concept, both handsomely produced, and a tribute to the health of the western

Canadian publishing industry, also indicate how far fallen we are from what appears to have been a state of innocence. In the first the readers are not from a general public, but from academic institutions; it may be wondered whether their responses are not so specialized as to make the term “reader” somewhat misleading, and finally, they are not Canadian, but European; in the second the term “reader” is again strained, for the commentators are another specialized group, the authors themselves, more often than not discussing their own work; they are, like the academics, privileged and specialized as readers; and they represent not the broad spectrum of Canadian writers but those from a Canadian region, implicitly asserting its claims to a distinct and independent identity.

These facts suggest that Canadian writers are seeking and finding support outside traditional national grounds: in academies (with their international networks), within groups of writers, and within regions rather than the nation. Such a statement would be an exaggeration, but as an account of *trends* it would not go too far astray. Over the past decade writers and their publishers have become more aware that the most stable market for books — even some best-sellers after an initial flurry of sales — lies in the text-book market for university courses, not only senior ones on Canadian literature, but also first-year ones with “Canadian content.” A steady flood of promotional material entering academic mailboxes is testimony to this awareness. In recent years this market has expanded to include the many European academies which have extended their traditional offerings in English to include those of Australia, the Caribbean, Africa and, last but certainly not least, Canada. Similarly, regional writers’ organizations which network with members and lobby government agencies and otherwise represent writers’ interests have grown in the same period. Thus *Trace*, while it represents no formal organization, offers a prairie grouping which, it is fair to say, would scarcely have been possible without such organizations as the Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta writers guilds. Finally, regional publishing of high quality has been developed in reaction to (“rebellion against” might be the better choice of words) the Ontario inter-lake region’s traditional domination in selection, promotion, and distribution. Europe, the prairie provinces: Toronto, so to speak, has been by-passed in both cases.

A question that arises from consideration of these trends concerns the degree to which the goals of writing for both an academic/international and a regional audience are reconcilable. Certainly the kinds of “reading” brought to bear on the texts will be very different, with the academic readers tending to a highly sophisticated analysis, and the regional seeking the recognizable and reassuring in local reference and context. The difficulty of reconciliation is compounded by the fact that the different audiences tend to favour those texts accommodating to their very different kinds of reading. Contemporary academic analyses work best with “difficult” texts which challenge received conventions, while regional readers seeking

artistic versions of their experience — in landscapes, landmarks, habits of speech — quite naturally favour precisely those realistic conventions which “make new” such material to them. In the tug-of-war between the two goals, who seems to be prevailing: the regional reader or the academy? These volumes do not really provide an answer, but they do indicate trends. Certainly the tension between the two audiences may be seen when we examine the two books together.

To a large degree the tension between audiences can be seen as that between the literary movements of “modernism” and “post-modernism.” Some brief (and necessarily incomplete) definition of these is necessary. “Modernism” requires a slight adjustment for today’s reader, since its everyday use implies simply “contemporary or near-contemporary” or “up-to-date,” whereas in current literary circles it refers to a time period now largely deemed past. Modernism is a literary movement of considerable duration, extending from the late nineteenth century (in the fiction of Henry James, for example) to the post-war period and (though fading) beyond. It represents the development of literary techniques of impersonality to a high degree: in a modernist work the author is at most a latent presence and there is a consistent movement towards unity in such matters as a focus on a central character and/or theme, and the subordination of other elements, such as imagery, symbol and point-of-view, to that focus. Post-modernism is best first understood as reactive to its predecessor: its works throw a skeptical light on such centralizing and ordering conventions as those referred to, on the general ground that the illusion of an ordered reality they generate is misleading and philosophically unsound. Its practitioners work to defeat expectations of coherence generated by modernist works, so that readers looking for consistent characters, tidy endings, resonant symbolism (or simply “a good read”), find post-modernist works disconcerting. It should perhaps be underlined that much (though not all) modernist work is realistic, engaging the reader in a world whose general bearings are familiar, whereas among many post-modernisms realism as anathema is one of the few reliable constants.

It should be clear from the above that the “international/academic” reader will be the one most likely to opt for the post-modernist text, and the “regional” reader most likely to opt for the less “original” modernist one. *Gaining Ground* gathers essays by the first kind of reader, while *Trace* brings together position statements of writers who know they face both such international perspectives and those of the people they represent. The volumes reveal an uneasy and it would seem transitional condition, with the authors of *Gaining Ground* generally moving in the direction of the post-modernist camp, and the *Trace* authors, more divided, showing both commitment and resistance to it.

The authors of *Gaining Ground* may not all be committed to a post-modernist position, but certainly represent it in some major statements.

Coral Ann Howells from a feminist perspective and Franz K. Stanzel through the examination of a specialized phenomenon, the found poem, clearly have had their paths illuminated by its lights, and many others, such as Waldemar Zacharasiewicz writing on “modernist” aspects of Jack Hodgkins, deal self-consciously with the relation between modernism and its successor. Even where the essays may be said to draw their assumptions from older, “New Critical” dispensations, there is a passive commitment to post-modernism in the absence of explicit defensive resistance to it. Such authors, so to speak, write out of convenience rather than commitment, like a Renaissance writer aware the earth is not the centre of the universe but using Ptolemaic assumptions because they are suitable for a specific task undertaken. In most of the papers there is a strong formalistic tendency characteristic of criticism in the movement, so that works are analysed according to such categories as “extra-diegetic fragments” (p. 153), “narrative ‘chain’,” “omniscient narrator” or “point of view technique” (p. 110). (I have not attempted to distinguish here between formal terms of older and new discourse.) This analysis frequently points insightfully to organizational practices in the works, but it tends to be arid in the reading, and, one suspects, no more tells us about the relative value of the works at hand than a common chemical analysis would tell us about the respective value of coal and diamonds. One must accept from such a statement, however, such analyses as Coral Ann Howells of Atwood’s and Munro’s fiction or Rudolph Bader’s “Frederick Philip Grove and Naturalism Reconsidered,” which subordinate formal considerations to larger cultural issues.

In contrast, the voices of the creative writers in *Trace* are by and large informed with deep personal conviction, even passion. This is the case whether or not they are committed to post-modernism. (In fact post-modernist views and alternatives to them are about equally balanced in the book; for a few of the essays, this division is either not relevant or, perhaps less justifiably given it as an historical fact, ignored.) Outstanding among the essays are most of those in Part One of the collection, which gathers material of classical status from senior writers, and, from the second selection from younger authors, Dennis Cooley on “Some Principles of Line Breaks,” Pamela Banting’s formidable discussion of feminine writing, and Kristjana Gunnars, speaking on the poetics of the long poem. Conceptually, the most exciting essays come from such post-modern speakers as Banting and David Arnason, but non-post-modernists like David Williams and Jon Whyte make their points with almost equal strength, though generally out of experience and conviction rather than philosophy. A few of those opposed to post-modernism, such as Chris Wiseman, are overly defensive, leaving an impression of beleaguerment on the verge of defeat. Frequently the conviction and passion spoken of is further revealed in a personal style appropriate to the subject at hand, as in editor Birk Sproxton’s “What the World Was Saying When I Made It,” with

its disregard for the traditional essay form in favour of a dazzling montage of styles, or, in perhaps the most original entry of all, Kristjana Gunnars's diary narrative statement, "Essay Parcels from Andrew Suknaski," on behalf of a major western author who for whatever reason chose to make no statement of his own.

Gaining Ground's higher degree of capitulation to post-modernism is further seen in its concentration on one literary genre. Perhaps its most striking feature is a concentration on prose fiction to the virtual exclusion of poetry. Since for many Canadian authorities the achievement, regional and national, in poetry is more significant than that of fiction, the omission seems particularly telling. To pick senior writers only, there is nothing on Birney, Nowlan, Layton, Purdy, Livesay, or Atwood (as poet). The only treatments of poetry are Franz K. Stanzel's on the Canadian "found poem," and Cedric May's welcome analysis of Alain Grandbois's *Les Iles de la nuit*. To account for this one might say truthfully that the availability of texts for fiction (in the original or translation) is less of a problem for Europeans than texts of poetry. But it is the academic's business to seek out significant works even if they are hard to get, and once they have established their importance it is not too long before publishers go about providing them for students. A further explanation can be seen in the fact that post-modern techniques, which concentrate on de-stabilizing plot, character, and conventional endings, are based on narrative models, and that the material of prose fiction is the more amenable to analysis through them. Poetry, with its fundamental source in heightened rhythm, already departs in this respect from abhorrent realism, and is less amenable to "deconstruction." *Trace*, on the other hand, maintains a primacy to poetry and supports its general standing in Canada: some two thirds of the statements are from writers primarily known as poets: Dennis Cooley, Ann Szumigalski, Christopher Wiseman, Kristjana Gunnars, and Miriam Waddington, for example. There are writers puzzlingly absent from *Trace* — Edna Alford, Bill Kinsella, Glen Sorestad, Lois Simmie — but without *Gaining Ground's* generic bias. We certainly have here a very wide gap between the two books in what forms are deemed important.

The ascendant influence of post-modernism is also highlighted by *Gaining Ground's* emphasis on three senior western writers (also prominent in *Trace*, though for the simpler reason of locale): Rudy Wiebe, Robert Kroetsch, and Margaret Laurence. Wiebe gets more attention not only than any other western but also than any other *Canadian* author: he is the subject of two articles, as well as a half subject with Kroetsch of another; Kroetsch is the half subject of a second article, as well as being one of the editors of the book; Laurence is treated in one article. Their presence, by the way, reflects a strong western bias in the book; of its fifteen articles devoted to one or two authors (there are two more of a general nature) some five-and-one-half, more than one third, are devoted to those from the Prairies: a rather high percentage. The Maritimes, in contrast, are not

represented at all, despite their outstanding literary heritage. It almost seems gratuitous to add that post-modernism is an especially western Canadian phenomenon.

The three authors represent formidable influences in contemporary Canadian literature, and have to be seen as powerful forces in helping downplay the role of southern Ontario as a literary centre. Of the three Laurence is the most conventional in aesthetic, and the least publicly outspoken in advancing her views. Indeed, out of personal shyness she, during her lifetime, shunned, as far as possible, the cross-country readings and interviews that have helped make the names of most senior writers in the country better known. Wiebe and Kroetsch, in contrast, have been very much other. Their prominent appearance in both volumes reflects not only substantial achievement as authors, but also as speakers for the region and aesthetics they represent. Both have linked the region and the aesthetic, having been concerned with questions of authentic "voice," overlapping in this concern and in awareness of history and geography. There is certainly overlap in related areas as well, but generally one can say that Wiebe's position has been more positivistic and less skeptical than Kroetsch's, and that Kroetsch's has been more theoretically alert and internationally conscious. Both have been frequent visitors as writers-in-residence in academies and speakers in conferences domestically and abroad, particularly in Europe: indeed Wiebe at least might be said to have a higher reputation in Europe than in Canada, impressive as the latter might be. Yet it is probably Laurence of the three whose works have reached the widest audience and had the greatest impact on the largest number of readers.

The statements of, and articles on, Laurence, Wiebe, and Kroetsch seem to call for a certain highlighted attention.

As a representative of modernism Laurence has not much to say, though as a modernist practitioner there is a great deal she does, and the contrast is evident in her appearance in the two books. In *Trace* she speaks in "A Conversation with Robert Kroetsch" (1970) and in "The Artist Then, Now and Always" (1984). In both her aesthetic position gives evidence of being less one thought through from first principles than one received from the earlier works of others — D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster, and others in the British moralist stream of modernism. Her general position may be seen in touchstone particulars: characters sometimes leave the control of their author and take on lives of their own, symbols grow organically and are flat if preconceived, art must be on the side of life (human). There are meeting grounds in the conversation with Kroetsch, but the general impression is of the post-modernist holding himself in check to allow a revered senior a fair hearing, and even in points of contact Kroetsch's theoretical energy willy-nilly transforms Laurence's simpler humanistic categories into something more intellectually bracing. Thus

Laurence's references to the two sisters in *A Jest of God* and *The Fire-Dwellers* and the two brothers in Kroetsch's "That Yellow Prairie Sky" lead Kroetsch to begin a discussion (unsustained) of "that *doppleganger* thing." In contrast to Laurence's unadventurous aesthetic is her art, as revealed in *Gaining Ground*'s discussion by Giovanni Capone of her short story collection "A Bird In the House," which succeeds in giving us a strong sense of the honesty and lucidity of a Laurence heroine trying to determine her place as inheritor of European tradition in a non-European land.

In the critical studies Wiebe can be seen as occupying a position closer to Laurence in the earliest work (*The Temptations of Big Bear*, 1973; *The Scorched Wood People*, 1977), while in the latest (*My Lovely Enemy*, 1983), one closer to Kroetsch. The study of *The Scorched Wood People* by Wolfgang Klooss refers largely to the early concerns of realism, such as the relation of Wiebe's narrative to other literary sources and history and his reversal of conventional assessments of actors in the 1885 uprising. Klooss carefully charts problematics in the realist venture, such as Wiebe's consciousness that the exigencies of artistic invention at times compel modification of received historical fact for the sake of "higher truth," or George Woodcock's charge of Wiebe's excessive Christian bias in the interpretation of events. But even here the problematics are based on assumption of an objective truth; the questions simply concern obstacles to the attainment of it. In contrast the concerns of Pierre Spriet in "Structure and Meaning in Wiebe's *My Lovely Enemy*" are almost purely formal — as encouraged by Wiebe's text. Here the relation between fiction and reality is no longer seen as problematic, but rather the deceptive seductiveness of realism is stressed throughout by the use of post-modern *conventions* (for so they have become) that undermine received and orderly ones. Thus the novel, whose central themes are no longer historical and public, but subjective and private ones of love and particularly adultery, is analysed for its "refusal of coherent sense" (p. 53) seen in its "narrative incongruities, thematic contradictions, poetic deviations, and ungrammatical sentences" (p. 55), all of which proclaim "a truth beyond this world of words and logic" (p. 62). Wiebe the post-modernist is sustained as image in the *Trace* piece "The Blindman River Contradictions," which spoofs biographies of the author by offering in mock-interview form an account of Wiebe's true history as the son of a British remittance man who has posed all his writing career as a Mennonite.

In comparison to Laurence and especially Wiebe, Kroetsch seems relatively unrepresented. He shares attention with Wiebe and Vancouver writer George Bowering in two of the articles in *Gaining Ground*, and is, as mentioned, the other participant in the early "Conversation with Margaret Laurence" in *Trace*. But the quantitative calculation of presence is perhaps misleading: his influence can be sensed widely in both volumes, a fact symbolically underlined in his editorial role in *Gaining Ground* (as

part of which he contributes the "Preface"). His work over the past ten years in promoting the cause of western Canadian literature and in bringing theoretical emphases to bear on discussion of it has been truly an extraordinary phenomenon. Its impact can be seen in the fact of the publication of these two volumes, emerging from a literary climate he strongly helped to create, and in comments and emphases in individual statements and essays.

I have already commented on the "Conversation." The two essays, Jurgen Schafer's "A Farewell to Europe: Rudy Wiebe's *The Temptations of Big Bear* and Robert Kroetsch's *Gone Indian*" and Walter Pache's "'The Fiction Makes Us Real': Aspects of Post-Modernism in Canada" draw, successively, attention to regionalism and post-modernist skepticism in the works of Kroetsch and Wiebe and Kroetsch and Bowering. In so doing they inadvertently underline a contradiction between two leading impulses in Kroetsch and the works: that of establishing the authentic "place" in the regionalist emphasis, and the denial of any possible knowledge of ultimate reality in the post-modern. After all, if Saskatchewan is ultimately a fiction, it is difficult to claim it as a subject for representation. Schafer's essay usefully documents the regionalist effort in Wiebe and Kroetsch as a rejection of European models of knowledge and a foregrounding of the indigenous "native" knowledge; Pache's traces a contextual history of the term "post-modern" and its applications (stopping at it as an American phenomenon, however, and oddly for a European critic, not mentioning European antecedents), surveys developments in Canada (touching here some of Schafer's concerns with the indigenous), before turning to explorations of its embodiment in Kroetsch's *The Stud Horse Man* and *Gone Indian* and George Bowering's *Burning Water*.

Two significant collections of essays, then, showing, not surprisingly, literary ferment in a region of Canada, and, perhaps, more surprisingly, ferment about Canadian literature in Europe. They raise questions about the changing audience for that literature and about the relation between greater artistic self-consciousness and that audience; but equally importantly they document vitality and sophistication in discussion of Canadian writing from two improbably related sources. An important part of that documentation, not mentioned hitherto in this study, is Reingard M. Nischik's concluding forty-six pages to *Gaining Ground*, which include an essay on Canadian literature in Europe, and a bibliography of studies to date in seventeen European countries, of which the major are West Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

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Our Land: Native Rights in Canada by Don Purich. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1986. Pp. 252.

The recent refusal of the first ministers to entrench a clear statement concerning aboriginal rights and their nature in the constitutional amendments of 1987 lends importance to any work seeking to expound native rights in Canada. In his *Our Land*, the Director of the University of Saskatchewan's Native Law Centre has given us what is primarily a bird's eye view of the historical treatment of Natives, together with an outline of the land problem dating from the beginnings of European settlement and progressing through the development of the treaties and the reserves, until we are presented with a rather brief statement of the current position.

As with so many protagonists of aboriginal peoples, the author tends to write as if the Canadian experience was unique. One might inquire, for example, whether the Anglo-Indians, whose position has to some extent been entrenched in the Indian Constitution, would accept without question that the "Métis of western Canada are unique; there are almost no other mixed-blood populations in the world who have developed a political and cultural consciousness" (p. 155), and what of the Coloureds in South Africa? Further, he tends to ignore the fact that the white settlers and the administrators sent out from England were applying in North America the same sort of policy that was being pursued by colonial powers everywhere and which, while it undoubtedly ignored the rights of the aboriginal populations — of course in the transfer from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Crown "none of the Indian or Métis inhabitants of the west were consulted" (p. 81), for even today plebiscites are more an exception than the rule — was fully in accord with the then-acceptable concepts of international law regarding settlement, discovery, occupation and conquest. Perhaps it is this "Canadocentricity" that leads the author to assert that the Hudson's Bay Company is the "best-known" of the British trading companies" (p. 44). Can the East India Company be dismissed quite so preemptorily?

There is a basic difficulty in examining the practice of previous centuries in the light of developments and ideas which are prevalent today. This may be seen in the criticism of those who condemn the Natives for over-hunting (p. 26), especially as the problem of conservation and the question of Canada's responsibilities under international conventions are not discussed. It may be questioned whether "today, federal legislation such as the Migratory Birds Convention Act would be found to be non-applicable to Indians who have received a guarantee of hunting and fishing rights" as is asserted on page 196. What is the ordinary reader to understand by the statement that "multiculturalism is now constitutionally entrenched" (p. 213)? Any discussion of aboriginal rights should at least consider whether a modern country with a growing non-Native population can really

be bound by what the majority of the population may well consider outdated and sentimental attitudes, and do we really want to see the development of some sort of aboriginal provinces (p. 217), whether based on reserve boundaries or not? This proposal has an unholy resemblance to South Africa's black homelands! While it may be moral and ideal to seek to preserve the way of life of particular groups, one cannot help questioning whether any country can really afford to allow a segment of its people to "contract out" of the mainstream.

The author tends to agree that the "treaties" were not what international law considers as such (chapter 4, especially pp. 111-12), but he does not explain the legal character or significance of these documents. The word itself had a number of meanings in the real property and contract law of that time and many would argue that they were a type of contract which, when taken over by the Crown, depended on nothing more substantial than royal grace. It is when discussing legal issues that most reservations arise in relation to *Our Land*. It is submitted that the analysis of Vitoria's views on Indian rights (pp. 41-43) is somewhat one-sided. In view of the non-state character of the aboriginal peoples it does not tell us very much by stating that the Indians "can always lobby in the international forums using such avenues as the United Nations" (p. 63). One is inclined to ask how and to what effect, despite the decision of the Human Rights Committee in the *Lovelace* case (pp. 137, 203-4), which Canada could well have ignored without any adverse effect upon itself. In fact, there were already indications that this provision of the Indian Act was likely to be reviewed. Moreover, there was nothing unique in the position of the Indian woman marrying out, nor the white woman marrying in. The author comments that "the concept of a woman's status being determined by her husband's continued until 1985" (p. 136). Surely this has been the rule in nearly all common law countries until comparatively recently, and still prevails in much of the civil law world.

It cannot be denied, as the author points out in relation to Baker Lake, that much of aboriginal discontent reflects "a classic conflict between development and a centuries-old life style" (p. 57). But this situation is found wherever there are multiethnic populations. Does it need special legislation or constitutional entrenchment to make an adjustment possible? Most ethnic groups find a way to preserve their culture and background while adjusting to the needs of the country in which they dwell. Most, in the case of Canada, regard themselves as Canadians. They might find it difficult to accept that, merely because they are governed by the same laws as those around them, they "are *citizens* [italics added] of the province that they live in" (p. 68).

There is much to criticize in this little book, including a modern bias that is seen in the comment that "Government treaty negotiators kept detailed notes (often made by a secretary — typically male. . .) [and] the

government negotiator . . . may have a militia unit with him, in full dress uniform (lots of red). . .” (pp. 97-98). One might ask what arrangement the author might have found more acceptable, given the period of which he was writing. However, *Our Land* does provide a short account that may help some to begin to understand a complex Canadian problem.

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Indian Education in Canada Volume 2: The Challenge edited by Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert and Don McCaskill. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987. Pp. 256.

This book is the second of a two-volume series dealing with the education experiences of Indian peoples in Canada. Whereas the first volume focusses on the history of Indian education, the present volume represents a collection of twelve essays relating to recent attempts by Indian people to control their own educational institutions in keeping with the general goal of Indian self-government. The content of the papers ranges from general surveys to specific case studies and statements of principle, and among other things, includes discussions of Mi'kmaq literary, Indian cultural survival schools, the Cree educational system stemming from the James Bay Agreement, and the Sacred Circle Project in Edmonton. As the preface declares, “Almost all of the essays are original, appearing in print for the first time; and, as a group, they take an activist stance favouring Indian control of Indian education.”

What is important about the book is that it offers insight into what has been happening in the field of education since 1972 when First Nations initially began to articulate publicly their demand for some say in the education of their children. Its specific contribution is that it goes beyond what is generally known about the advent of Indian control of Indian education and details some of the ferment and diversity of educational experimentation that has taken place over the past fifteen years. A recurring theme is the similarity of experiences which gave rise to educational reform in certain segments of the Indian community: the willful neglect of education by Indian Affairs, the abiding determination of Indian parents to take control of their own educational institutions, and the birth of new and often radical departures from mainstream education. Commonly, the goal of these departures is a bicultural education through which Indian children, steeped in their own language and traditions and yet trained to participate fully in the larger Canadian community, can enjoy the best of what Indian and Canadian societies have to offer. For that reason, many of the educational schemes under Indian control have a significant cross-cultural component targeted not only at Indian students but at non-Native society as well.

One criticism of the book is that it occasionally lapses into questionable interpretations, especially of the historic context of the discussion. The assertion by one writer, for instance, that “until the nineteenth century . . . Europeans generally did not directly interfere in the lives of Indian communities” (p. 27) is hardly supported by the experience of the French in Huronia or of the Puritans along the Atlantic seaboard two centuries earlier. Also, because of the eclectic nature of the volume, it is not always evident whether the particular case study is representative of developments elsewhere or is merely an isolated occurrence. The Mount Currie Lil’wat Programme in British Columbia, for example, is the subject of the only paper on post-secondary education, but for those unfamiliar with teacher education programmes, it would be difficult to determine the extent to which this particular programme was reflective of the other sixteen teacher education programmes across Canada.

In addition, for those who are skeptical about the whole notion of Indian self-determination in the field of education, there are features of this book that are not reassuring. The problem in part stems from the indelible impression that most of the writers — in keeping with the activist stance favouring Indian control of Indian education — are unduly sympathetic and tend to gloss over or ignore serious problems. Certainly some of the papers are introspective and do identify structural problems and shortcomings in Indian-controlled schools. But there is often a tendency to attribute failure to external factors, especially to the control and financial strictures imposed by Indian Affairs and the provinces, and to measure the success of Indian-controlled schools against the benchmark of the old school system, rather than of the extent to which such schools are turning out well-trained bicultural students. There is also little in the book that will dispell the lingering suspicion that survival schools, teacher education programmes, and band-operated schools have compromised academic standards in order to accommodate their special interests. Nor is there a thoroughgoing analysis of the nature and implications of the content that is being communicated. Although a great deal is said and assumed about the benefits of Indian control and about the importance of culturally relevant forms of learning, including the use of canoe trips, culture camps and Indian ceremonies, there is little substantive comment on whether the content is uniquely Indian or merely an alternate form of mainstream education.

In fairness, it must be said that such concerns are beyond the scope of this book. The fact is that there is a great deal about Indian-controlled schools and special programmes that has yet to be studied, and if the content of *Indian Education* has an air of tentativeness about it, it is precisely for this reason. What the book does do is give an impression of the vitality and diversity of new approaches to Indian education. That it fails to answer

all the questions concerning Indian control of Indian education is freely admitted by the editors and to be expected.

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The Métis in the Canadian West by Marcel Giraud, translated by George Woodcock. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986; *Guide to the Holdings of the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province and Diocese of Rupert's Land* by Wilma MacDonald. Winnipeg: St. John's College Press, 1986.

Giraud's incredible ten-year labour is now available forty years after its first appearance to the unilingual anglophone. Was the effort at translation and reprinting worthwhile? The answer will depend upon whether the translation was effective, whether the introduction places the book within recent historiography, and whether the book still offers unique critical insight.

The translation is extremely faithful, to the point of being too literal. I would have preferred to see *Soeurs Grises* translated as Grey Nuns rather than Grey sisters, a translation which conjures up images of wan females not necessarily in holy orders. While Woodcock has not corrected problems with prose, he has corrected some errors in the spelling of names and places — Hendey is now Henday, and Keveny now Keveney. Unfortunately Woodcock should have continued to correct, and then Schulz (John Christian) would have become Schultz. Some errors also exist in the proofing; for example, on page 120, Reverend is Reverand.

Woodcock has decided not to comment on errors in fact. On page 224, for example, Giraud argues that Adam Thom could not speak French. Thom could, but chose not to. On page 119 Giraud has La Vérendrye at "the foothills of the Rocky Mountains." Most scholars agreed even in the 1940s that he never got there. To specialists these errors will be unimportant; to the uninitiated they could be dangerous.

Woodcock's introduction, a translator's introduction, should have been much more concerned with the text and its place in western Canadian and Métis historiography. First, annotations could have been provided to the text to indicate where Giraud's facts are incorrect. More important the work, which can be interpreted as racist, although Giraud himself declares he never intended it as such, should have been placed solidly in its historiographical and methodological context. Giraud's interpretation is undertaken within the general civilization/savagism dichotomy which has been rejected by today's anthropologists and historians. Woodcock argues that Giraud did not infer racial inferiority. Giraud himself states that

native society is, in its conception or organization, (not) inferior to white society. The two are in opposition because of their differences of structure, which we are not called upon to judge in terms of inferiority or superiority.

Giraud then contradicts himself by stating

If at times we resort to terms like "raising" or "lowering," it is solely because they describe the reaction caused among the native peoples by contact with the whites and by the comparison of their conditions of life with the more privileged status of the Anglo-Saxon. (Vol. 1, p. xiv)

Giraud's disclaimer is a hollow one. For example, on page 487 (vol. 2), isolation, apathy, laziness and backwardness are associated with primitive and Native; while the words modern, civilization, progress and education are associated with European culture. Unfortunately, the two volumes are rife with these dichotomies and implied value judgements. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown, editors of *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), should be read to ascertain the major contributions of more recent scholars to Métis historiography untainted by the problems of the civilization/savagism dichotomy.

Giraud, however, remains valuable both as a source for specialists and as a suggestive compendium of potential topics for future theses and dissertations. What was the extent of the Métis buffalo robe trade on the plains? What was the precise interrelationship between the Red River and the western interior Métis? How close exactly was the connection between the Indian and Métis groups? Why did so many Métis ally themselves with the Indians and take treaty in the 1880s? Much obviously remains to be done on the Métis who served as the Hudson's Bay Company's labour and guides. How important were Métis as intermediaries between Indian groups, and between Indians and Europeans? Equally important is the impact that Giraud had on Canadian historiography. W.L. Morton's "The Canadian Métis" in *The Beaver* (September 1950) is a lengthy review of Giraud's "magnificent study." It reveals how influenced Morton was by Giraud's dichotomies, which appear in many of Morton's subsequent works, such as *Manitoba: A History*. Students whose first language is English can now ponder these questions and countless others alongside Giraud's footnotes unobstructed by problems of language. I would caution undergraduates; just because the covers are new (and the dust jacket attractive) does not mean the interpretation is either.

Wilma MacDonald is to be congratulated for assembling this new roadmap to the holdings of Anglican church records that lie scattered in various diocesan archives throughout western Canada. The guide includes the records of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, plus the separate dioceses of Athabasca, Brandon, Calgary, Edmonton, Keewatin, Mackenzie River, Qu'Appelle, Rupert's Land, Saskatchewan, and Saskatoon. Although it has some very serious limitations, it will be of considerable value to those societies and individuals who undertake local or regional histories as well as to church historians.

On the other hand the drawbacks in the *Guide* will also pose some theory problems for most historians and other serious students of history.

First, the unique numbers MacDonald has assigned to each collection and the records that they contain do not correspond to the catalogue or location numbers of the individual archives. This alone will make scholarly citation somewhat problematic. Should historians refer to the "MacDonald" number? Should they refer to the number used by the respective repository? Should they perhaps cite both? Clearly, MacDonald should have included the current citations from each repository, thus facilitating ease of access to the collections. As it is, even with "MacDonald" at hand, the historian will still have to find each item in the respective institutional catalogues where such catalogues exist. With some foresight, this bothersome step could have been eliminated. It should be remembered that archival guides are not the same as regional bibliographies like Peel's *Bibliography of the Prairie Provinces*. Cited letters, parish registers, journals and copies of other correspondence are usually unique in that they are unpublished, they are not found in multiple microfilm copies, and consequently they usually reside in only one repository.

Had MacDonald consulted an historian in the compilation, these problems, which obscure the general usefulness of the guide, could have been avoided. But the professionalization of archival science as a "discipline," I suppose, means that archivists, like their fully professionalized librarian colleagues, may not talk to historians as they did so freely in the past. It is distressing to see so many promising young historians, who used to be able to practice their profession within the archives milieu, now co-opted by professional "archivery" and virtually lost to historical research in the process. Yet it is just these kinds of linkages between the disciplines and "professionals" that are so critical to the success and utility of these guides, bibliographies and indices. (I am, of course, not yet certain as to whether historians are now, or should qualify to be known as "professionals".)

Users should be warned that MacDonald's guide by no means lists all of the material relating to the Ecclesiastical Province and the various dioceses of Rupert's Land. There should be an introduction or an appendix to the guide discussing the locations of associated records. It should also have included the records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Church Missionary Society, and the Colonial and Continental Church Society. At the same time, there are important individual holdings in the Public Archives of Canada relating to western missionaries which should also have been noted.

In the end, the guide vividly illustrates the need for organizations like the Church of England to adopt a single and consistent access policy for their records. It is striking that each of the archives holding the various records, diocesan or provincial, has a different approach. The logistics and the intricate negotiations that are necessary for an historian to undertake a broad, cross-diocesan study are formidable. MacDonald's work makes

this plain and could be used to trigger a lobby for the appropriate policy revisions among the disparate repositories. There are, then, positive and negative aspects to MacDonald's work, and some of the unintentional benefits are the most impressive. Despite its shortcomings, this volume will, no doubt, find enthusiastic users — including myself.

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The Dynamics of Hutterite Society: An Analytical Approach by Karl A. Peter. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1987. Pp. 232.

A glimpse of sombre clad Hutterites at a farmer's market in a prairie town, or even a visit to a colony to purchase fresh vegetables, leaves one with an abiding sense of a different way of life. Moreover, casual visitors might be excused if they felt that "the Hutterite way" was serene and unchanging in comparison to the frenetic "trendiness" of contemporary society. In this book Dr. Peter focusses on the dynamic characteristics of Hutterite society. How and why has the sect survived acculturation? How and why is life in a Hutterite colony changing?

The substance of the book is made up of eleven papers published between 1966 and 1984. In addition there are two new essays by the author. Professor Ian Whitaker collaborated on five of the papers, while Dr. Boldt and Dr. Roberts are coauthors of one article. Although the previously published work was revised for this volume, no attempt was made to merge articles which addressed similar or complementary problems. The integrity of each original piece has been preserved and the reader is left to forge links between papers for himself. The book is divided up into five sections of unequal length. Part I, Religion and History, is made up of three papers while Part II, on Social Relations and Social Structures, comprises four papers. Part III on Demographic Dynamics and Part IV, Contemporary Social Changes, are shorter and Part V, on Ethnic Relations, is very brief indeed.

Dr. Peter is at his best when he is describing the nuances of Hutterite behaviour. He describes the shock when a child, on its third birthday, is first handed over to the kindergarten teachers; he explains the exchange of clandestine photographs between boys and girls to establish a "going steady" relationship; and he suggests that the exemplary record of the Hutterites with regard to divorce may be based on "the quiet suffering of many women" (p. 79). I found the short autobiography of a young Hutterite woman, included to illustrate some of the problems facing the Hutterite family, both moving and revealing. Chapters on the changing roles played by Hutterite women and attitudes towards private property are full of penetrating observations balanced by warnings that a wide range

of behaviour may be found on different colonies, and that precipitate change is extremely unlikely.

Dr. Peter is on less sure ground when he turns his attention to the Hutterite economy (Chapter 11). He suggests that technological change, regulatory restrictions, and difficulties in acquiring land have exerted pressures for change from traditional methods. I would challenge the assertion that "the acquisition of land within a reasonable distance from home base . . . has become more difficult over the years" (p. 187). Drought and low grain prices have once again diminished the prairie farmer's ability to compete with the sect and there have been many cases during the 1980s where Hutterites have been positively badgered to purchase land from groups of neighbours. Moreover, what has been considered a "reasonable distance" from home base has changed as the friction of distance has decreased. Finally, the removal of legislative controls over Hutterite land purchases in Alberta in 1974 meant that new areas were available for colonization.

The Hutterites, like all farmers, do have to interact with a complex network of government agencies which regulate the production and marketing of a variety of items. However, it cannot be assumed that this involvement has encouraged greater specialization. In many cases quotas actually restrict the degree to which a colony is able to specialize in dairy, egg or even hog production. The critical impact here has been that Hutterite leaders have been drawn into increased contact with outsiders even to the extent of becoming members of marketing boards.

Perhaps because of my own training and experience, I found the first two chapters of the book the least satisfactory. In them Peter addresses the broad question "what makes the Hutterite communal system survive while others perish." He looks for answers in the long history of the sect and the theoretical concepts of Weber and Kanter. I found the hypothesis proposed was too general to allow testing, and the relationship between the past and present needed more careful development. In contrast the third paper in Part I, "The Contemporary Dynamics of Religious Defection," was one of the most exciting in the book. I enjoyed it when it first appeared and it reads equally well five years later. Evangelical groups preaching a personal saviour and providing close social support to converts have caused some defections of whole families from colonies. This challenge to the Hutterite way is closely related to the kinds of changes discussed in Parts II and IV.

It seems unlikely that anybody who is interested in Hutterite society would dispute the assertion that the growth rate of Hutterite population has declined quite rapidly since the late 1960s. Bennett suspected this to be the case as early as 1967, while Laing analysed the decline using the 1971 census, and Hoepfner stressed the change in a government report in 1974. Peter's article on "The Decline of Hutterite Population Growth"

was published in 1980. As the author points out (p. 166), some of the methods and conclusions were challenged. The major problem was that there was no age-specific data available on vital rates. The "postscript" to this article, which describes ongoing work to replicate Eaton and Mayer's 1950 demographic study, provides glimpses of what will be possible in the future. One hopes that the research team will include both demographic experts and statisticians, so that the sociologists can focus on interpreting trends and commenting on their significance.

It should be abundantly clear from what I have said already that I got a lot out of reading this collection of essays. However, I did have a number of quite serious reservations which went beyond the natural pedantry of a reviewer! The book includes no discussion of research methodology. Those of us who have read Dr. Peter's papers over the years appreciate that he has monitored changes in Hutterite society for more than twenty years. However, it would be most helpful to know more about the sample of colonies which he has visited and the techniques he used to collect information. He refers to "the data" without making clear what data he is referring to. Does he really mean his experience over a period of years? Similarly, reference is made to the relatively wide range of social and economic contrasts between colonies, kinship groups, and geographical areas. In a book which focusses on change in a culture these kinds of variations over space, jurisdiction and ecosystem are crucial. They are not explored.

Dr. Peter chooses to reduce footnotes to a mere handful, and to provide only a brief bibliography. He does not acknowledge that others have wrestled with similar problems, or illuminate the work of others in the light of his own experience. Three examples of opportunities lost by this strategy must suffice. First, the work of Ryan in Manitoba and Riley in South Dakota suggests that the traditional process of colony division has been modified by the acquisition and operation of "farms" for several years before colony division takes place. Even among the *Dariusleut* in Alberta several years may elapse between initial land purchase and division. Any attempt to define average colony size (pp. 162-63) must address these ambiguities, while the sociological implications of having small groups of Hutterites living apart from the main colonies needs careful scrutiny. Secondly, in his rather superficial chapter on "Hutterites and Ethnic Relations" Peter seems to ignore two books, by Palmer and Flint, which address this question. Thirdly, the discussion of Hutterite demography would have benefitted from references to work based on special tabulations from Statistics Canada for the 1971 and 1981 censuses, and family records from a sample of *Dariusleut* colonies, which have been developed as part of an on-going research project at the University of Alberta.

By the time that I had finished reading the papers I had a somewhat unfocussed vision of a culture undergoing change both in response to

external circumstances and internal shifts in emphasis and balance. It is a great pity that Peter did not summarize his analysis to bring out the subtle interactions between change in one area and another. This would have transformed a series of interesting observations into a definitive statement of what it means to be a Hutterite in the 1980s.

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The Other Side of Rebellion: The Remarkable Story of Charles Bremner and his Furs by Margaret R. Stobie. Edmonton: NeWest Publishers, 1986. Pp. 202.

In this narrative Professor Margaret R. Stobie retells the relatively well-known story of Charles Bremner and his furs. These were, in the author's words, "purloined" by General Frederick Middleton during the 1885 "rebellion." The first half of the book covers in some detail Bremner's life up to his participation in the events of 1885. The last half concerns Bremner's struggle to get his furs back. Professor Stobie's version of these events produces a text in the classic mode of romance. In it, the hero Bremner struggles with his apparently unique experiences of injustice and evil to triumph not only over those in the west who "rebelled" against the Queen, but also against representatives of the Queen whose culpability in theft was finally demonstrated by the dogged Bremner. The case eventually proven, Middleton returned to Britain in disgrace, his image tarnished.

Stobie loads her stage with stock characters. Good and evil can thus be easily identified in the text by their modifiers. Luckily for him the courageous and valiant Bremner is part Scot and this lineage seems to allow him successfully to pick his way through the morass of despicable and morally repugnant characters who people the Prairies. According to Stobie, Bremner finds himself surrounded by Métis and Indians "fierce," "marauding," "crafty," and "ominous." These "cry," "shout" and "chant." This scene of "civilization" against "savagery" will warm the cockles of many a Scottish chauvinist's heart.

The Bremner story is indeed an interesting one. Like many other Indians and mixed-bloods, both Scottish and French, Bremner chose not to join Riel. Nevertheless, he found himself accused of being a "rebel" because he had spent time in Poundmaker's camp. The theft of his furs worth \$4,500, a life's savings in those days, sent him on a dizzying mission to gain restitution from an insensitive government bureaucracy and a cumbersome legal system. Bremner eventually got money for his stolen (for some, confiscated) furs, but not until 1899. In spite of the obvious injustice endured by Bremner (and, one might add, many other Natives in the North-West) Stobie seems unwilling to search too deeply for fault. She

is firm in her belief that imperialism is not to blame when she writes: “This story is not the cliché of the arrogant Englishman diddling [*sic*] the innocent colonial” (p. xii). She says little about Victorian attitudes to race and less about the not-so-subtle racism prevalent in the writing of P.G. Laurie or the attitudes of Indian Agent Hayter Reed. Yet despite the injustice to Bremner that took fifteen years to rectify, Stobie can end on this cheery note:

Nineteen hundred. A new life in a new land at the beginning of a new century. Charles Bremner, patriarch and provider, celebrated this New Year with his children and grand-children in the stopping house on the road to the north. The money from the furs had helped to bring them together. Emily and the girls had the pretty dresses . . . More than that, those ghostly voices in far-off Ottawa had declared that he was not a rebel. The gray cloud of “not proven” was gone forever.

In this new life, he could match adventure stories of his own: stories of rebellion, of Poundmaker, and of Middleton. Yet those stories seemed almost dream like: stories of another time in another world, a world that passes away. He was his own man.

Bremner could hardly have accepted a fifteen-year struggle with such equanimity. Stobie sees it simply as “justice delayed.” Beneath the surface of this “justice delayed” view, however, lie the presuppositions of George F.G. Stanley’s now outdated “clash of cultures” thesis, which privileges a carefully selected textual account of “civilization” (us) beating (a carefully selected account of) “savagery” (them). Stobie’s narrative thus has a deep structural bias against Bremner.

By their metaphors ye shall know them! Stobie’s Stanleyist (and perhaps unconscious) position emerges in her images, a classic example of which follows:

the soldiers came to the summit of the rise — they saw the Indians — like ants disturbed in their hill — streaming in all directions away from the tents. (P. 51)

The logic here proceeds first on a single level as soldiers/Indians, but then immediately becomes reductive with Indians = ants, to produce the civilization/savages implicit for the writer in her soldiers/Indians. In short, the monological vision which structures this text ruptures here to reveal the underlying presuppositions of the binary civilization/savagery opposition that informs the text. It is either/or logic when and/but logic would serve to better understand the problem that past histories have left us with.

The monological voice in this text joins that of other monological historians who would like to provide us with “the” single version of what happened, as if narrative were the equivalent of story (a chronology of facts), rather than a mediated version of story through which problematical and disputed “facts” emerge in always ideological form. That kind of historiography could work as long as the other side of the civilization/savagery division kept quiet, but they will (rightfully) no longer do that. We now not only have new evidence, but new forms of evidence which subvert the monologist enterprise.

Stobie presents the official government version of 1885, a well-known account. This consists of records of white settlers, missionaries, the North-West Mounted Police and government officials. Absent are the views of the Indians and Métis. Evidence is not always easily available — especially in written form. But in the case of Bremner and the Bresaylor people we can easily find many oral narratives (many of them now in written form) which conflict with the one that Stobie provides. For example, Stobie claims that Bremner and the Bresaylor people were forced into Poundmaker's camp and held as prisoners there. This may indeed have been the account that the Bresaylor people actually gave after the fighting, for no one wanted to be perceived as having sided with Poundmaker, who was being tried for treason. In such circumstances they would have had little chance of success in their applications to the Commission on Rebellion Losses. The dominant Cree version of these events seems to be that the Bresaylor people did not want to join Riel, and indeed feared being forced to fight with the Métis. They therefore accepted Poundmaker's invitation to camp near the Cree, which meant to accept whatever protection Poundmaker could offer.

In this view the Cree and Métis did not act in concert during the spring of 1885, the latter simply accepted the protection of the former. Stobie offers no evidence from the Cree perspective, though a considerable amount of the material would challenge her traditional portrayal of the events. She might for example have looked at *John Tootosis* by Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman, or the essays by Blair Stonechild and John Tobias. These might have softened her manichaeian thematization of the problematic. She might even have simply talked to the Cree elders on the Poundmaker reserve, who still preserve their version of 1885 in the history of their people. But monology triumphs and closure excludes the Native view.

One could go on about Stobie's acceptance at face value of the "evidence" of P.G. Laurie, Hayter Reed, Edgar Dewdney, and others. But enough has been said about ethnocentric biases. Descriptions of the killing of farm instructor Payne, the Craig incident and the Battle of Cut Knife Hill reproduce and thus reconfirm the late nineteenth-century ideology. This happens despite the fact that new research has thrown into question the official history of 1885 as the Indian and Métis point of view has been uncovered. This kind of history can be very damaging when used in schools and universities, for it can help to further entrench the stock stereotypes that many Canadians still have of Indians and Métis. Narratives such as this one can still help to bolster the position of those who have a vested interest in keeping Canadians ignorant of what happened to Cree and Métis people one hundred years ago. No monological narrative about the Scottish mixed-bloods can give us a reliable understanding of 1885, only one which would include the perspectives of the Métis and Indians as well. When it finally comes to be written, the dialogical discourse will be very different from the monological text under review.

Books like this one help to continue a cultural oppression that many choose to ignore. It is ironic that the NeWest Press has chosen to publish this Old West story.

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Socialism and Democracy in Alberta: Essays in Honour of Grant Notley
edited by Larry Pratt. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1986. Pp. 237.

The death of Grant Notley, leader of the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP) in a plane crash in October 1984, deprived the province of its best-known and hardest-working campaigner for social democracy. He did not live to see his party's breakthrough in the provincial election of May 1986, but his tireless efforts over the years to keep the party in good organizational shape and its policies on public view made a major contribution to that posthumous event. It is fitting that this man's life's work should be celebrated in a book of this kind and to the credit of the editor and authors that while the book pays homage to Notley, it does not fail to question aspects of his political message as well as political strategy. What emerges from these ten essays is a lively debate about the past and future of left-wing politics in Alberta.

The best piece in the book, in my view, is Pratt's own contribution, a political biography of Notley's early years which paints a portrait of the NDP's development via the political debates which squared Notley off against his opponents in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and later the NDP. Notley, according to Pratt, was on the right wing of the social-democratic spectrum. While he was committed to the pursuit of social justice, his rural Alberta roots convinced him that provincial voters would be turned off by talk of class struggle, nationalization of industry and cooperation with Communists. He set out to mould the party in his own moderate image, confronting along the way the old left-wingers who had dominated the CCF, and later the youth wing of the party and the small but determined Alberta Waffle Group. While disagreeing ideologically with his party's left-wing elements, Notley found particularly frustrating their emphasis on political talk and their reluctance before the task of organizing constituency associations, preparing for elections, etc. A profoundly practical man, Notley enjoyed grass-roots organizing more than philosophical discussion and he demonstrated his organizational skills by carrying out a sustained campaign in the years before the 1971 election to turn Spirit River-Fairview constituency in the Peace district, never a bright light for CCF or NDP hopefuls, into an NDP seat.

Pratt is even-handed in his discussion of the various political factions of the party. But he strongly suggests that while the CCF in its left-wing latter years used language and addressed issues that struck no chord with

voters, the early Alberta NDP, in its attempts to present a moderate, respectable image, often sounded rather vacuous. In the 1967 provincial election, for example, he claims the party concentrated on alleged corruption on the part of two Social Credit cabinet ministers to the exclusion of a serious discussion of the government's dismal performance in a variety of areas.

Frankly, while I believe that Pratt's assessments are not unfair, they are overdrawn. The CCF of the late 1950s was certainly defeatist; but it had made some accommodation with the province's conservative political culture. On the other hand, the NDP of the 1960s, while paranoid about being labelled "socialist," did not present a programme radically at variance with CCF programmes a decade earlier. As for the 1967 election, Social Credit had a mole in the NDP organization who made available to the government party details of the NDP's planned election literature before it was even published. This allowed Social Credit early on to take the offensive against NDP charges regarding a sell-out of the province's energy resources and to make it appear that the party offered electors nothing but unproved accusations against members of the government.

Pratt makes clear that Notley, who had lost on several tries to win in Edmonton before placing his hopes on Spirit River-Fairview, had little faith in the revolutionary potential of Alberta workers. Garth Stevenson, in his article, "Class and Class Politics in Alberta," takes to task the agrarian populism which he claims has caused the Alberta NDP to fear a frankly working-class appeal to voters. He provides many statistics to demonstrate the efficacy of this approach, but in the end what emerges is mainly his own distaste for the NDP's "me-too" attitude to capitalist parties' courtship of small business people and farmers. While this attitude is understandable, Stevenson appears remarkably unwilling to make any compromises with Alberta's political culture. It is a surprising attitude from someone who was a candidate in the provincial election of 1982 and in the federal election of 1984 in Edmonton ridings. But no doubt Stevenson felt frustrated by the NDP's lack of clarity in the stances it took on issues during those elections.

Several other authors in this collection also question the NDP's fuzziness on issues though Stevenson is alone in arguing this position in purely social class terms. Allan Tupper, in an excellent piece on "Grant Notley and the Modern State," attempts to demonstrate the limitations in the social-democratic vision of Notley as exemplified by major policy positions taken by the NDP leader during his period in the legislature. Tupper argues that the party's impact on public policy debate and perhaps also its success in vote-getting would be greater if the party adopted a more clearly socialistic economic strategy and argued for it consistently.

Interestingly, Ed Shaffer, a Marxist economist at the University of Alberta, in his article on "Oil, Class and Development in Alberta," is

rather sanguine about Notley's positions on the energy sector and economic diversification. Presumably, Shaffer, unlike Tupper, believes that Notley pushed the political debate in Alberta about as far leftwards as circumstances at the time allowed.

The variety of viewpoints in this collection of essays is ultimately the book's great strength. Both the history of socialism and the future path for the NDP (which not all of the authors regard as currently having much to do with socialism) in Alberta are presented from a variety of angles. The overall leaning of the book is leftwards of current official thinking in the Alberta NDP, though most of these authors hold a respectable place within the ranks of party activists in the province.

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L'Histoire des Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan by Richard Lapointe and Lucille Tessier. Regina: La Société historique de la Saskatchewan, 1986. Pp. 339.

En 1913, Norman F. Black publie son *History of Saskatchewan and the Old North West*. Il ignore pour ainsi dire la contribution des Franco-Saskatchewanais. Quarante ans plus tard, en 1955, J.F.C. Wright rédige une autre synthèse dans la même optique sans faire cas de la minorité francophone si ce n'est que dans le contexte des "problèmes scolaires." Même le récent ouvrage de John H. Archer, *Saskatchewan, A History*, accorde peu d'importance aux Fransaskois. L'index nous signale quelques références aux "French," plus spécifiquement les efforts d'immigration et l'épineuse "question des écoles" (l'enseignement en français). La perspective d'Archer est surtout celle de l'intégration au modèle anglo-canadien tout en visant "l'idéal multiculturel."

Il en revenait aux francophones eux-mêmes d'écrire leur histoire. Donatien Frémont entame le projet dans son *Histoire des Français dans l'Ouest canadien* publiée en 1959. C'est surtout une histoire chronologique et événementielle des "Français de France" qui sont venus dans l'Ouest canadien. Leur présence n'est pas sans importance. Leur nombre en Saskatchewan a été plus important que les Canadiens-français.

"L'histoire" de Richard Lapointe et de Lucille Tessier vient non seulement combler un vide dans les annales de la francophonie de la Saskatchewan. C'est un travail exhaustif, bien organisé et abondamment illustré qui se lit avec enthousiasme et facilité. Les sources sont originales dans le sens que les auteurs n'ont pas seulement recours aux documents écrits mais aux sources iconographiques et orales. Le projet d'histoire orale (les nombreux entretiens avec les pionniers francophones) de la Société historique de la Saskatchewan a servi de base à cette étude thématique

qui tente d'analyser les forces sociales et économiques qui ont forgé le cours de la colonisation et son mode d'implantation après 1870. C'est un départ de l'ancienne école de pensée "clérico-nationaliste" qui a inspiré presque tous les travaux antérieurs sur les francophones de l'Ouest. Par ailleurs le rôle prépondérant (omniprésent. . .) de l'Eglise catholique dans tous les domaines de la vie privée et publique est un thème qui revient inévitablement dans chaque chapitre.

Deux des quatre grands chapitres de l'étude de Lapointe et Tessier sont particulièrement analytiques et originaux, à mon avis. Le chapitre 2 qui traite de l'Eglise et de la colonisation française démontre comment le clergé s'est engagé dans le mouvement, tantôt comme promoteur, tantôt comme agence de recrutement et aussi comme force de pression dans les milieux gouvernementaux. L'Eglise a été impuissante à obtenir ce qu'elle désirait du gouvernement fédéral. Et sans vouloir adhérer à la "mentalité de complôt," il n'y a aucun doute que les ministères de l'Intérieur et de l'Immigration du Canada n'ont favorisé l'émigration de Canadiens-français ou l'immigration de Français, Belges et Suisses dans l'Ouest canadien. L'étude de Robert Painchaud (*Un rêve français dans le peuplement de la Prairie*, St-Boniface, 1987) a souligné la tension dans les rapports entre les dirigeants franco-catholiques de l'Ouest et les élites laïques et cléricales au Québec. D'autre part, le journaliste et agent consulaire de France Henri d'Hellencourt témoigne de l'inquiétude du clergé canadien conservateur et ultramontain devant la venue de Français libéraux ou pas trop démocrates (Bernard Pénisson, *Henri d'Hellencourt, Un Journaliste Français au Manitoba (1898-1905)*, St-Boniface, 1986, chapitre 6). Il ajoute que la langue française est peu favorisée dans l'Ouest canadien et que le ministre Clifford Sifton est parcimonieux à l'égard des francophones mais généreux et enthousiaste envers M. Barr qui établit des "jeunes anglais au jingoïsme ardent" en Saskatchewan. Il en ressort que l'échec du clergé catholique face à l'immigration francophone d'Europe, au rapatriement des Canadiens-français des Etats-Unis et au déplacement des Québécois est dû en grande partie à son idéologie conservatrice et paternaliste.

Ces thèmes sont réitérés au chapitre 4 dans le contexte de la question des écoles. Les années après 1890 sont des années d'intolérance et de persécution pour la minorité francophone en Saskatchewan. Mais paradoxalement, la lutte favorise l'émergence d'une élite intellectuelle qui revendique les droits de la minorité francophone. L'ACFC (l'Association catholique franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan) a pour but "la survivance" culturelle et linguistique. Elle combat le fanatisme et les assauts du gouvernement provincial durant "les années noires" (entre 1918 et vers 1965). Ironie de l'histoire, c'est depuis la relâche des années soixante (période où le gouvernement fédéral, le Secrétariat d'Etat, commence à favoriser les francophones hors Québec), que le pourcentage d'assimilation (langue maternelle-langue d'usage vaut pourcentage d'assimilation) augmente en Saskatchewan. Il passe d'environ 28 pourcent

en 1951, à 49,6 pourcent en 1971. Le taux d'assimilation est alors 71,7 pourcent. C'est le cas pour tout l'Ouest canadien, admettons le. Le Manitoba a le taux le "moins élevé" à 54,3 pourcent (*Atlas des Francophones de L'Ouest*, pp. 20, 36-39). Heureusement que la relève se prépare.

Le chapitre 3 est le plus riche au point de vue de l'histoire locale. On a l'impression de revivre "la récolte" du tournant du siècle. Les anecdotes et le recueil d'expressions et d'usages locaux au sujet du logement, du transport et de l'alimentation nous rapprochent de ces Fransaskois si entreprenants et témoignent de leur esprit communautaire.

Dans la conclusion, les auteurs déclarent que "c'est en 1885 que s'ouvre véritablement l'histoire des Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan. Mais elle s'ouvre sans eux" (p. 337). Ces paroles nous ramènent au premier chapitre. Il est non seulement décevant au point de vue de l'interprétation historique, il risque de renforcer certains préjugés traditionnels envers les Amérindiens et les Métis. Comment peut-on encore dire qu'en 1885, "c'est l'ancien peuple métis tout entier qui disparaît avec son chef" (p. 1), que le métchif est "une langue française déformée" (p. 45) et que les Métis cherchent "refuge" dans l'Ouest après 1870. Et cela malgré les récents travaux du Fransaskois Robert Papen sur le parlé métchif et de Philippe Mailhot, d'Antoine Lussier et autres sur les activités économiques et sociales des Métis depuis 1870. L'histoire des Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan (ou du Nord-Ouest) commence avec celle des "premiers-occupants" autochtones (surtout Cris, Assinboines et Ojibwas) et des Métis. A mon avis, il aurait eu lieu d'examiner la période pré-contact et contact (même brièvement) afin d'établir clairement que les Euro-Canadiens ont été des intrus. Les objectifs des colons "blancs" et de leurs chefs religieux et civils étaient de "civiliser, christianiser et d'assimiler" les autochtones, en somme de "renverser le pays." Ceux qu'on a péjorativement qualifiés de "sauvages" sont, qu'on veuille l'admettre ou non, nos ancêtres et nos compatriotes. Il faut éviter de perpétuer l'épopée ethnocentrique de LaVérendrye et de Jean-Louis Légaré (pp. 24-25).

"Excusez-là. . . ." La critique se doit avant tout de rendre hommage aux auteurs et aux collaborateurs de cette étude. Ils ont fait revivre un riche héritage culturel et ranimé la fierté des Fransaskois.

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