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Transportation, Trade and Regional Identity in the Southwestern Prairies

A.A. den Otter

ABSTRACT. Two Montana firms dominated southern Alberta commerce in the years preceding the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). But it was less the railway itself than National Policy tariffs and the arrival of entrepreneurial immigrants with important ties to business interests in central Canada and London that weakened the hold of the American merchants. So did the decision of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) to spend the monies required to reestablish its former importance in the trade of the northwest. It was the link between the railways and the expanded interest of traders in the northwest, rather than the building of the railway itself, that led to the eclipse of the American firms in southern Alberta.

SOMMAIRE. Au cours des années qui ont précédé la construction de la voie ferrée du Canadien Pacifique (CPR), deux firmes du Montana dominaient la scène commerciale du sud de l'Alberta. Mais ce n'est pas tant la voie ferrée que les tarifs de la Politique nationale et l'arrivée d'immigrants pleins d'entreprise et ayant des liens importants avec des intérêts commerciaux dans le Canada central et à Londres qui ont affaibli l'emprise des marchands américains. La Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson a elle aussi contribué à cet affaiblissement lorsqu'elle a décidé de dépenser les fonds nécessaires pour reprendre la place qu'elle occupait dans le commerce du Nord-Ouest. Ce fut donc le lien qui existait entre les compagnies de chemin fer et les intérêts des négociants du Nord-Ouest plutôt que la construction de la voie ferrée même, qui entraîna la disparition des firmes américaines dans le sud de l'Alberta.

Canadian tradition has accorded great importance to communication technologies as a means of unifying the diverse regions of Canada.¹ D.G. Creighton, for example, has argued that "the prime function of the Canadian Pacific Railway was to assist in this effort — to help in the building of the national economy and the national society."² Other historians have echoed this theme. Paul Sharp, after an intensive analysis of trade patterns in the southwest corner of the Canadian plains, concluded that "not until the Canadian Pacific entered the region in 1883 did the boundary line really indicate a division in the economic and cultural life of [southern Alberta and Montana]."³

The history of two American trading companies, T.C. Power and Brother Company and I.G. Baker and Company, active in the southwestern corner of the Canadian Prairies, suggests that the submergence of regional identities into the national consciousness by means of railway technology is a more subtle and complex process than Paul Sharp's theme suggests. Undoubtedly, the completion of the CPR permitted central Canadian retailers to penetrate the western market, but these American entrepreneurs were equally able to use the railway to transport their trade goods. They eventually abandoned southern Alberta and Saskatchewan not primarily because they failed to adjust to changing transportation routes but mainly because they were unable to adapt to the radically altered business climate which the railway introduced to the northwest. In addition to increased competition and more sophisticated retailing techniques, the Montana merchants faced federal transportation subsidies, monopolistic concessions and high protective tariffs. A nationalistic fiscal regime, set within a business and transportation revolution, became the primary factor in the complex set of circumstances which forced the Power and Baker companies to withdraw from Canadian territory.

The region now known as southern Alberta was an intertidal zone between the commercial empires of British and American fur companies. In the 1830s, however, a slight transportation advantage permitted American businessmen to capture the larger share of trade within the region. As a result, the London-based HBC, dependent upon relatively small canoes and unwieldy York boats, increasingly specialized in small, light furs, surrendering the main product of the plains — the expanding but bulky bison robe trade — to the American Fur Company, which used steamboats to transport its goods down the Missouri River to eastern markets.⁴ This division of activities complemented the migrations of the local Natives, who sold their small furs to the northern HBC posts during the summer and traded their large buffalo robes to the southern American establishments during the winter.⁵

By the late 1860s, the insatiable demand for buffalo hides eroded the power of the two companies as hundreds of traders scoured the great plains in search of the rapidly dwindling herds. Most of the free commerce originated in Fort Benton, a buffalo trade rendezvous founded in 1846. Its position at the head of navigation of the Missouri River made it the hub of transportation for northern Montana, and a fleet of carts, wagons and stagecoaches spread across the territory. By the early 1870s, the town's traders were travelling northwards deep into Canadian territory, sometimes reaching as far as Fort Edmonton. Although the HBC remained interested in the trade, its reliance on archaic transportation techniques curbed its activities. Moreover, in 1870 the company surrendered its trade monopoly and its political control over Rupert's Land to the Canadian government. The company's retreat into the northern forests, added to the government's reluctance to spend money on law enforcement in its new holdings, created an economic and political vacuum on the southwestern plains which was quickly filled by rapacious robe hunters. The result was a period of totally unrestricted and lawless free trade in western Canadian territory.⁶

Although devastating, the apparent anarchy lasted only briefly. It began in December 1869, when two American traders, John J. Healy and Alfred B. Hamilton, escaped the pressure of American law enforcement and took advantage of the power vacuum in Canadian territory to build Fort Hamilton at the confluence of the St. Mary and Oldman rivers. The two traders spent the winter next to a favourite winter camp of the Bloods and swapped adulterated whiskey for buffalo robes. In the spring they burned the fort and loaded their carts for Fort Benton, where they supposedly netted \$50,000 for one season's work.⁷ Stories of their success spread rapidly and within years scores of small, temporary posts, with descriptive names like Robber's Roost, Stand-Off and Whisky Gap dotted the southwestern Canadian plains. Crossing the border at will, often pursued by American marshals, the traders cheated the disease-weakened Indians, debasing them with adulterated whiskey.⁸

Among the beneficiaries of the temporary power vacuum in the Canadian northwest were two Fort Benton trading companies. The first was T.C. Power

and Brother Co., one of the largest companies in Montana, built on sales to gold miners, Indians and military garrisons. Crucial to its success was the Fort Benton Transportation Company, which operated a fleet of steamers on the Missouri River, a company which T.C. and John W. Power had founded and which gave them control over the cheapest means of transportation into the far western American plains.⁹

The principal competitor of the Powers in Canadian territory was another prominent Fort Benton firm, the I.G. Baker and Company, founded in 1866 by two enterprising, well-educated New Englanders, Isaac and George Baker. In 1873 two of its employees, William and Charles Conrad from Virginia, became partners in the firm. When the Bakers moved to the major financial centre and shipping port of St. Louis to manage the enterprise, the Conrads, still only in their twenties, supervised the Fort Benton operations. The four partners formed an ambitious team, eager and fit to compete in the freewheeling frontier economy, avidly building a wide range of business interests.¹⁰

The whiskey trade wrested Whoop-Up country out of the grasp of the traditional British empire and the newborn Canadian nation. In his classic study, Paul Sharp claims that the whiskey era was a dangerous threat to Canadian sovereignty and a potential prelude to American annexation because it made this Canadian territory part of the American frontier.¹¹ This is an overstatement. Although the Indians may have ignored the international border, American law officers and traders were very conscious of its presence. Federal marshals and the army, following official American policy not to encroach upon British and Canadian sovereign soil, never pursued smugglers into Canadian territory.¹² As for the whiskey smugglers, their only interest in Canada was the potential quick profits possible under anarchy; the last thing they wanted was the extension of American jurisdiction to Canadian soil. They gleefully thumbed their noses at chagrined American authorities whenever a chase ended at the border. The whiskey trade, then, was an aberration which resulted in a temporary loss of authority in the northwest, a sore to be cauterized as soon as the inexperienced Canadian government decided on the proper procedure.

Repeated warnings from western residents eventually spurred the Canadian government to establish the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP), a small, highly mobile force. Particularly influential was the argument that serious unrest would undermine Canada's effort to settle the northwest.¹³ Although the force nearly perished in 1874 on its difficult march to Whoop-Up country and had to be aided by Fort Benton merchants, it quickly established law and order in the region and simultaneously asserted Canada's claims. The Indians accepted the NWMP because the force severely curtailed the whiskey trade. Small-time traffickers, obsessed with quick, high profits, abandoned the whiskey trade because frequent and unpredictable patrols made smuggling too risky, while the larger operators, committed to long-term interests, welcomed the new regime as it promised a stable business environment free from costly

Indian raids.¹⁴ T.C. Power and Brother Co., for example, quickly abandoned the illegal whiskey trade when the NWMP arrived, preferring to operate a legitimate business under police protection.¹⁵

The NWMP placed a distinctive cultural stamp upon the southwestern prairies. Building upon the foundation of mutual respect which HBC traders and Natives had nurtured, the police used to good advantage the decade during which the Prairies were relatively unsettled. Moreover, in the early years the NWMP were more than peacekeepers and law enforcers; they became mailmen, customs collectors, welfare officers and agricultural advisors. They affirmed Canada's sovereignty on the Prairies, effectively neutralizing the impact of the short-lived whiskey trade. Despite the HBC's indifference toward the southwestern fringe of its empire and despite the free-trade era, the segment of the western great plains lying north of the international boundary retained its distinct British-American identity.¹⁶

Although the NWMP curbed the whiskey trade, the force stimulated the activities of the two Fort Benton competitors. Knowing how desperately the police needed provisions, Isaac Baker, who was prominently involved in the whiskey trade, slaughtered several buffalo and sold them to the police. He also provided a guide to take the police to Fort Whoop-Up and wrote a lengthy memorandum describing the northwest.¹⁷ Both the Powers and the Conrads cultivated cordial relations with the officers and made frequent business trips to Ottawa. As a result, their activities on the Canadian Prairies grew rapidly. I.G. Baker and Company opened a store at Fort Macleod in 1874 and at Calgary and Fort Walsh the following year, while T.C. Power and Brother Co. established businesses at Forts Macleod and Walsh. Each operation represented a substantial investment. The I.G. Baker and Company properties at Calgary, for example, included a number of buildings and over one thousand acres of cultivated land.¹⁸ Provisioning the police proved to be a valuable and stable replacement for the uncertainties of the marginal whiskey trade.

Transportation was the key to T.C. Power's and I.G. Baker's northern empire and the foundation of their prosperity. The rapid development of river steamboats and railways in the post-Civil War era allowed them to monopolize trade on the southwestern Canadian Prairies. By 1874 the companies could use cheap water transportation all the way from New Orleans, or rapid rail haulage to Bismarck, North Dakota, and steamers the rest of the way up the Missouri. This efficient combination of transportation methods permitted the Bentonites to sell goods to the NWMP at Fort Macleod at half the price charged by the HBC.¹⁹ As the local *Record* put it, Fort Benton "commands the traffic of the country, holds the key to the business homes of the Territory . . . in short . . . is the business center of Montana."²⁰

North of Fort Benton, commerce with Canada relied on wheeled transport — wagons, carts and stagecoaches — running against the grain of the landscape.

Métis crews wrestled heavily laden trains along dusty or muddy trails, across unbridged rivers, and through deep coulees, the wheels and hooves carving deep ruts northward to Fort Walsh and northwestward to Fort Macleod and Calgary. Almost weekly, bull trains brought manufactured goods from eastern American and British factories to western ranchers, squatters, and Indians. For many years, Fort Macleod's only connection to central Canada was via this overland trail; even its mail came via Fort Benton. In the early 1880s, the Benton, Macleod and Calgary Stage Coach Co. used crude wagons to transport passengers between these centres three times per month; subsequently, the company bought more comfortable Concord coaches which also carried mail. This overland transport was expensive, however, and a single bull train, consisting of 12-14 teams of oxen hauling 24-30 wagons, cost about \$25,000-\$30,000 to operate per year. Although mule trains were faster, they were even more expensive.²¹ Moreover, within years both companies required dozens of trains to meet the ever-growing demands of Canadian customers.

In 1875, the Canadian government appointed I.G. Baker and Company as banker for the NWMP. A substantial business, the company paid \$15,560 in the first five months of 1876 as salaries for the three police divisions stationed at Calgary, Fort Macleod, and Fort Walsh. The 2 percent commission it earned on the NWMP payroll was not sufficient for Isaac Baker, however, and he complained that the government reimbursed the company too slowly, that the transit of cash from Ottawa often consumed two months of high interest charges, and that keeping Canadian currency on hand was costly. He proposed to pay the men in American currency but the department refused and he eventually accepted monthly deposits of \$5,000 to his company's account at an Ottawa bank.²² Under these terms, police banking became a profitable business; I.G. Baker and Company earned interest on government deposits, a commission on the payroll, and additional profits when the police spent their salaries in the company's stores.²³

As the buffalo disappeared from the plains in the late 1870s, hauling food to the Prairies became increasingly important, particularly after Ottawa assumed responsibility for feeding the destitute and starving prairie Natives. In 1879, I.G. Baker and Company supplied \$8,751 and \$25,072 worth of cattle to Treaty Six and Treaty Seven Indians respectively. The company also supplied \$10,889 in emergency rations, while T.C. Power dispensed \$5,398 in food at Fort Walsh.²⁴ Obviously, Canadian government spending was an important factor in the economic recovery of Fort Benton.

Meanwhile, the HBC did not pursue government business as aggressively as the American firms, especially in the southwestern corner of the Prairies. In part, the company's strategy continued the tradition of neglecting this marginal region, but increasingly, it reflected its strained transportation network.²⁵ The century-old river route from York Factory on Hudson Bay was obsolete and the company increasingly imported its trade goods by rail to St. Paul and from there

by the Red River. In the early 1870s it placed a steamboat on Lake Winnipeg and another on the Saskatchewan River, but a series of unfortunate incidents foiled its plans. Not until July 1874 did the first river steamer, the *Northcote*, reach Fort Edmonton. The vessel ascended the Saskatchewan only once that year, however, and the company employed a fleet of York boats on the river and an army of four hundred carts on land to ferry trade goods as far as Edmonton.²⁶ Despite its limitations the *Northcote* demonstrated the cost efficiency of steamboats, and in 1876 the HBC bought another steamer and completed several expensive improvements on the Saskatchewan. Nevertheless, low water levels and accidents continued to plague the company.²⁷

The company's archaic transportation technology severely limited its activities. Although it opened a store in Calgary in 1874, the cumbersome transportation system limited the size of its inventory and selection of merchandise. Unlike its American competitors, the HBC store offered only a small assortment of groceries and no canned fruit. Only by virtue of its reputation for selling high-quality goods did the company manage to keep any customers.²⁸ Meanwhile, the HBC left the provisioning of Treaty Seven Indians entirely to I.G. Baker and Company and surrendered most of the business in Treaty Four to Winnipeg firms. In 1879, the company competed for Indian Department supplies only in Treaty Six territory, selling \$4,553 worth of seed, which represented 17 percent of the available business. It also distributed \$8,868 worth of food to destitute Indians near its posts.²⁹

The completion of the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway to Winnipeg in 1878 heralded a new age for the company. Encouraged by the signs of economic recovery, the company was receptive to fresh initiatives. It hired C.J. Brydges, an experienced and innovative railway manager, to initiate new objectives. Brydges lobbied the government to improve river navigation, expanded the steamboat operations, and opened the vessels to general traffic.³⁰ Anxious to maintain the HBC's transportation monopoly in western Canada, Brydges argued that

unless the company is prepared to make its boats available for public traffic and especially in regards for the Indian department . . . there will undoubtedly be an opposition line of boats put upon the river, which will have the effect of opening up the whole of the northern country for supplies for fur trading purposes in direct opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company.³¹

Although Brydges was determined to retain the company's centuries-old policy of controlling access to the northwest, he also intended to take full advantage of the opportunities created by the arrival of railway technology to the northwest.

Concerned about the revitalized HBC, the Montana merchants gradually integrated their affairs. As early as 1875, after chiding Baker for selling grain too cheaply, Power suggested he might abandon the Cypress Hills business and proposed an alliance against "other traders," presumably the HBC.³²

Meanwhile, he freely used the financial resources of the Bakers to operate his trading posts. In 1879, the gradual intertwining of the financial affairs of the two firms became apparent in the establishment of the Benton National Bank. W.G. Conrad, T.C. Power, and Samuel T. Hauser, an ambitious banker with financial contacts in St. Louis, New York and Montréal, founded the Fort Benton bank to finance their extensive business activities. To secure the bank's position in western Canada and improve its chances of receiving "a deposit of 100,000 to 200,000 from the Canadian government," the bank's directors gave fifty shares to Edgar Dewdney, the Indian commissioner.³³ The gift proved to be a sound investment and the Benton bank became a profitable venture, particularly in the financial vacuum in Canada.

At this point in the development of southern Alberta, Paul Sharp's contention that the region was being integrated into the financial empire of Montana has merit.³⁴ Nevertheless, it is important to note that these businesses were but outposts of the financial empires of eastern North America. I.G. Baker and Company, T.C. Power and Brother Co., and the Benton National Bank tapped financial institutions on the Atlantic seaboard and the St. Lawrence River. They operated within a colonial economy, exporting natural resources and importing manufactured goods, the whole financed by metropolitan centres. It was a marginal structure, totally dependent upon a temporary transportation advantage, liable to be toppled at any time by a competing business empire.

Meanwhile, government policies and extenuating circumstances forced Baker and Power to adopt new business strategies. This was particularly true for the trade in buffalo robes, an important component in their activities because the hides provided cargoes for bull trains returning to Fort Benton. Before 1876 T.C. Power had been unable to break into the Canadian buffalo trade, but when the United States increased the tariff on buffalo robes Power arranged for a bonding agreement with the American government.³⁵ Enjoying substantial savings on transportation costs, aided by a new and aggressive Montréal agent, John Reiplinger, T.C. Power outsold the HBC. As late as 1879, when buffalo were virtually extinct on the Canadian Prairies, Reiplinger was still briskly selling Power's robes.³⁶

Initially the basis of Fort Benton's prosperity, the buffalo robe trade disappeared quickly. In 1881, Power's Fort Walsh agency shipped no hides because no buffalo had been killed near the post that winter. Elsewhere the situation was not as desperate, but in 1883 the bottom dropped out of the market because fashion dictated that robes be grey. Since most Canadian hides were best suited for coats and robes, demand slumped and Reiplinger's North West Buffalo and Robe Co., which by then controlled the entire Canadian trade, stockpiled many of the twenty-five thousand robes the Fort Benton merchants sent to Montréal that summer. In 1884 Reiplinger advised T.C. Power to store all hides — which were of very poor quality — in Chicago until the surplus disappeared and prices improved.³⁷ Neither demand nor prices recovered and the trade virtually ended.

An ominous portent, the demise of the buffalo trade robbed the Americans of payloads for their bull trains returning to Fort Benton.

The demise of the buffalo hunt did not end the Power-Reiplinger association. In 1881, the Montréal agent handled a large shipment of goods from Montréal to Fort Macleod for T.C. Power and Brother Company. Subsequently, he made regular trips to Ottawa as a representative for T.C. Power and in 1885 tendered for him on Indian Department contracts. The following year, Reiplinger and the Montréal merchandising firm of Tees and Wilson joined T.C. Power and Brother Company to bid on a \$7,000 contract to provision Treaty Seven Indians.³⁸

More significant than the collapse of the robe trade was the impact of the National Policy, enacted in 1879 as a deliberate protectionist program primarily designed to stimulate the industrial development of the young nation. Within its broad design the National Policy also contained protection for commercial interests: the complex tariff structure included provisions which discouraged American factories and wholesalers from bypassing Canadian wholesalers and selling directly to Canadian retailers and consumers.³⁹

The dramatic tariff changes forced T.C. Power to change his tactics. He began to buy more of his goods in Montréal and carry them in bond through the United States. Starting in 1879, he purchased tobacco products from J. Rattray & Co.; in 1881 and 1882 his invoices amounted to over \$700 and nearly \$1,000 respectively.⁴⁰ Rattray usually shipped his tobacco by steamboat from Collingwood to Duluth, by train to Bismarck, by river steamer to Fort Benton, and finally by bull train to Fort Walsh. Others, like James O'Brien & Co., a wholesale clothier, dispatched six cases of clothes with the Grand Trunk to Chicago and from there by train to Bismarck.⁴¹ Increasing his purchases in Montréal every year, Power annually bought several thousand dollars worth of nails, tools and other hardware from Crathern & Caverhill, candy and sweets from Boissonneault, and blankets from James Johnstone & Co.⁴² Most significant was his courtship of the prominent wholesale grocery firm of Tees, Costigan & Wilson, which sold him \$4,606 worth of groceries in the first nine months of 1881.⁴³ Eventually, Tees, Costigan & Wilson handled shipping arrangements for Power's Canadian tobacconist and confectioner, and in the mid-1880s this wholesaler joined Power in tendering for several Indian Department supply contracts. In sum, even if the Fort Benton merchants were drawing Canada's Whoop-Up country into the American economy, they themselves were being integrated into the empire of the St. Lawrence. The federal government's tariff policy had forced the American businessmen to seek Canadian suppliers and associates.

The demise of the buffalo robe trade was a powerful omen of the new industrial order transforming prairie society. By 1878 the foremost symbol of this revolution, the railway, reached the Canadian plains. Soon afterward the

tracks of the CPR stretched across the expansive Prairies, recasting regional transportation systems. As elsewhere, the technology of railways altered traditional patterns and methods of commerce. Impervious to climatic and geophysical obstacles, the railway provided regular, dependable and fast transportation; it reduced the cost of overland transport and slashed delivery times. In western Canada, the railway made the land accessible and carried thousands of ambitious settlers onto the plains. With the colonists came hundreds of entrepreneurs eager to capture a slice of a potential market. Yet, if railway technology was central to the transformation of the economic order in western Canada, the role of the CPR in tying the plains to central Canada was a complex and subtle process.

The Canadianization of commerce in the northwest even emerged out of CPR construction policies. In the first stage of the railway's prairie construction program, the company entrusted the bulk of the work to large American firms like Langdon, Shepherd and Company. Naturally these contractors preferred to hire American subcontractors, who in turn favoured American suppliers and labourers. The performance of the American firms was disappointing, however, and after 1882 the CPR awarded construction contracts to smaller Canadian firms who were more inclined to look to Canadian suppliers and labour.⁴⁴ In this subtle way, the company's construction policy encouraged Canadian businessmen to invest in northwestern enterprises.

More significantly, the completion of the prairie section of the CPR in 1883 made possible the establishment of large-scale ranching in southern Alberta. Hoping to minimize the cost of feeding the destitute Indians, and anxious to secure a share of British investment in American ranching, the Canadian government awarded several very large grazing leases to a number of prominent Canadian and British investors. Among the most notable was Senator Cochrane of the Eastern Townships, who drove a large herd into Alberta from Montana. At the end of the year, he signed a contract to supply sixty-four thousand pounds of beef to the NWMP in Calgary.⁴⁵ Not only did the new ranching industry represent a potent threat to the American merchants but the enterprise was dominated by central Canadian and British businessmen who established firm cultural and political links between western and central Canada, completing a process begun by the earliest fur traders.⁴⁶

Initially, the Fort Benton merchants responded well to the rise of the cattle industry. T.C. Power and Brother Company delivered herds to several southern Alberta ranches, the largest for the Walrond Ranch, near Pincher Creek, in which Power had a 10 percent interest. In July 1883, Power's men drove a herd of 3,125 head of cattle from Bismarck to the Walrond Ranch. Bought in central Canada at \$32 a head, this herd was shipped to Bismarck on the Grand Trunk and American railways at a cost of \$220 per carload. Two years later, the company handled a herd of 5,000 head. Since prominent central Canadians owned these ranches, the connection provided Power with an important *entrée*

into government circles: "I think we could do considerable wire pulling at Ottawa," one collaborator wrote him, "both with the government and syndicate."⁴⁷ In fact, that influence secured Power a lucrative grazing lease of about 63,000 acres, at \$1 per acre, in Assiniboia, south of the CPR mainline.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Conrad and Company bought a 640-acre ranch near Calgary. From these holdings, and from herds in Montana, both companies supplied beef to railway construction camps. The cattle business, therefore, evolved naturally out of the old transport and supply business. As long as the railway network was immature, the expertise of the Fort Benton merchants was a valuable asset.

The two Montana companies also continued to be successful in their first line of business, filling Indian and police contracts. They succeeded for two reasons. First, they established ties with Canadian businessmen. In 1881, Power joined the Ottawa firm of Kavanagh Brothers to get a beef contract for the Indian Department. "If we pull together," Kavanagh wrote Power, "we can get our price as Conrad said last month he will not tender again."⁴⁹ Second, as implied in Kavanagh's letter, the Fort Benton merchants survived the arrival of the CPR because they stopped competing for the same contracts. In 1885, I.G. Baker and T.C. Power agreed that Baker would bid on all police and Indian supply contracts on the CPR line; that Power would tender for beef contracts at Calgary, Medicine Hat, Maple Creek and Regina; and that they would divide equally the profits of each contract.⁵⁰ In 1889, four years after the completion of the CPR, I.G. Baker captured Indian Department contracts worth \$123,995, representing 32 percent of the total available.⁵¹ Significantly, almost all the contracts were to supply beef, bacon or flour to destitute Natives. Bulk shipments to remote places was I.G. Baker's specialty and the firm did the job efficiently and profitably.

Nevertheless, the task of supplying beef to railway crews or Indian reserves was no longer the sole preserve of Power and Conrad. The presence of large cattle herds in the northwest and a growing market lured young and energetic frontier entrepreneurs to the region, ready to challenge the older, established traders with new techniques. In 1890, for example, Pat Burns, an Ontario-born Saskatchewan homesteader and cattle buyer, secured the contract to supply beef to construction crews on the Calgary-Edmonton Railway. Blending traditional cattle drives with railway transport and crude slaughtering houses at strategic sites, Burns captured an increasing share of the cattle market. Significantly, he found a good supply of beef among local ranchers who were by then already shipping cattle to central Canada and overseas. In 1891 Burns won the beef contract for the Fort Macleod to Calgary railway and also a significant portion of the Indian contracts for southern Alberta. Meanwhile, he moved into interior British Columbia and competed for business in the United States, filling contracts for several Great Northern and North Pacific branch lines.⁵² Thus the new transportation regime permitted Canadian entrepreneurs to challenge the Fort Benton merchants even on their home grounds.

Elsewhere, too, the CPR altered trading patterns on the southwestern Prairies. In 1883, two CPR representatives were in Fort Benton gathering business for the railway and a year later the local press carried CPR advertisements offering cheap rates for stock shipments from Montana to the eastern United States by way of Maple Creek.⁵³ In 1885 Sir Alexander Galt, a prominent Montréal financier and one of the Fathers of Confederation, completed a narrow gauge railway from Medicine Hat to his coal mines at Lethbridge, a few kilometres from the charred ruins of Fort Whoop-Up. The branch line made Lethbridge the distribution centre for southern Alberta: Galt's North Western Coal and Navigation Company, for example, instituted regular stagecoach service to Fort Macleod.⁵⁴ Financed largely by London capital, the Galt concern symbolized the reorientation of the southwestern Prairies to central Canada, the eastern United States and Great Britain. Although I.G. Baker established a store in Lethbridge, it competed against several other businesses and eventually sold out to the HBC. When a group of Montana investors and the Galt interests built a railway from Lethbridge to Great Falls, they bypassed Fort Benton. The road, completed in 1890, was designed to channel cattle and other trade northward but steep tariffs and embargoes killed the importation of cattle: the road became a local branch line, a conduit for Lethbridge coal to Montana smelters.⁵⁵ Commerce between the two parts of Whoop-Up country gradually declined.

The arrival of railway technology to the American plains also strengthened the mercantile community of Winnipeg. As with Fort Benton, Winnipeg's isolation from eastern merchants had permitted the rise of a small but expansionist group of merchants who historically were tied to American commercial networks. Since the 1840s, its traders had imported goods from St. Paul on the Mississippi, using cars on overland trails or steamboats on the Red River. In the next decade, the HBC reinforced the Minnesota connection and by the 1860s moved half of its goods by way of St. Paul.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Winnipeg became an important western warehouse and wholesale centre controlled by an aggressive merchant class, which traded directly with St. Paul or London but not with Canada. Commercial activity fluctuated year by year, but grew steadily so that by 1878, when the rail connection with St. Paul was complete, Winnipeg had the experience and access to credit to take advantage of government supply contracts.⁵⁷

As the CPR advanced across the plains, the volume of traffic through Winnipeg increased and its trading community grew. By 1886, the city had nineteen major establishments specialized in exploiting the commerce of the western hinterland. Their owners formed a powerful group which persuaded the CPR to build the main line south through Winnipeg rather than Selkirk, wrested control over the grain trade from Toronto, and later demolished the CPR monopoly. Its members founded subsidiaries in towns built along the main line; J.H. Ashdown, hardware wholesaler and retailer, for example, established a hardware store in Calgary. His and other firms replenished their stock from

Winnipeg suppliers who in turn ordered from central Canada, Great Britain or the United States, depending upon price and quality. Dixon Brothers of Medicine Hat bought almost half its supplies from Winnipeg wholesalers, and most of the remainder from Montréal and Toronto.⁵⁸ No longer was western Canada tied only to the HBC's London suppliers but, with the assistance of the CPR, prairie entrepreneurs were forging the region into an international economic network.

The availability of the railway, in fact, prompted even the HBC to alter its trading methods. The completion of the CPR stimulated the settlement of the northwest and thus created a demand for a wider range of consumer goods. The HBC responded by diversifying its traditional operations, and in 1880 it adopted a policy of establishing sales shops wherever populations warranted. The following year the company sold its river fleet to private investors and gradually abandoned the steamboat experiment on the Saskatchewan. In 1883 it transferred its Edmonton District headquarters to Calgary, and the following season shipped most of its Edmonton and some of its Mackenzie and Athabasca outfits by CPR via Calgary. The London committee restructured the company's management, decentralizing some control to Canada, modernizing inventory and accounting practices, and expanding its selection of wares. It created a new chief executive position, commissioner of trade, and appointed Joseph Wrigley, a professional manager with no Canadian fur trade experience, to the post.⁵⁹ Keenly aware that the CPR was increasing business opportunities in western Canada, Wrigley intended to harness them for the benefit of the HBC.⁶⁰ The company would tender for all government contracts in the northwest, including the southwestern preserve of I.G. Baker and Company.⁶¹

Bolstered by growing profits from land sales, knowing that its British connection made it popular in Canada, and confident that the new all-Canadian transportation system made it competitive, the HBC was determined to drive the American firms far south of the CPR mainline. To make its point, the company built a substantial warehouse and retail store in Calgary and it bluntly rejected I.G. Baker's desperate appeal for a division of territory.⁶² Although cognizant that it had to share the populated areas of the northwest with Winnipeg and central Canadian businessmen, the HBC intended to exploit the new transportation technology and growing prairie population to capture a leading position in the region it had commanded for two centuries.

The spectre of increased competition from Winnipeg merchants and the HBC drove the two Fort Benton firms closer together. Beginning in January 1881, they negotiated a merger of virtually all their operations in everything but name. In the first instance, Power's Fort Benton Transportation Company set its rates for both firms at one dollar less per ton than for any other merchant. At the same time, Power promised to bid considerably higher than Baker on Canadian police, Indian, and other government business, while I.G. Baker and Company similarly surrendered all government contracts in Montana to T.C. Power and

Brother. At the end of the year, each firm was to give the other one-quarter of all profits earned on these tenders. The American merchants also set freight rates for each other's business within the territories and determined not to carry government freight for any other company. Since there was not enough business for both companies in Forts Walsh and Macleod, I.G. Baker and Company sold Power its inventory at Fort Walsh and bought out T. C. Power and Brother at Fort Macleod. Obviously, the two firms decided to maximize their profits while they still enjoyed a virtual monopoly. As one of T.C. Power's people succinctly observed, "I am extremely glad to hear that those people in the Macleod country are getting it 'bang on the nose' on prices. They could not appreciate having two houses there, when we were there."⁶³ Renewed annually, the collusion permitted the two firms to survive for a few more years in Canadian territory.

A detailed examination of the activities of one of T.C. Power's associates in Canada provides an excellent illustration of how changing conditions on the southwestern frontier affected this American business establishment. In January 1881, D.W. Marsh, who operated the company's post at Fort Walsh for a one-third share in the business, wrote a long letter complaining about the primitive transportation techniques which isolated him from his suppliers and customers. The past winter had been so cold and snowy that trade was only possible by dog trains which took three weeks to reach Fort Macleod. Marsh failed to send goods to Wood Mountains to the east because the Métis chartered for the job never appeared, partly because a grass fire had burned a two-hundred-mile swath across the Prairies, making them impassable for heavy wagons. To ensure that the trade goods he needed for next fall and winter arrived on time, he was already preparing requisitions for them. While police business had been fair the past year, the robe trade had been disastrous and he politely refused an offer of a half share in Fort Walsh. "The NWT is not like Montana or even Dakota," Marsh complained, "it has no resources in sight, the soil is too poor and the climate too cold for either stock raising or agriculture — and mining is out of the question."⁶⁴

The greatest problem Marsh faced was keeping his post stocked. If he unexpectedly ran out of an item (tea, for example) he had to send for it by mail or stagecoach from Fort Benton, an expensive and risky venture. Packages were often lost on the trail. By 1882, the situation was virtually unmanageable as first CPR surveyors and later construction crews needed supplies, often without advance notice. In February alone, CPR business totalled \$3,000. To compound his problems, many more Indians appeared at Fort Walsh for treaty payments than even the Indian Department had expected and payments soared to \$31,000, much of which Marsh had to exchange for supplies. By August, he was virtually out of food staples, a dangerous situation as his was the only store in the region. "Starvation is not very far ahead of us," he remarked laconically, but all that he could do was order more goods in expensive small lots.⁶⁵ Little wonder that there was a tinge of excitement when he informed T.C. Power that he planned to order

goods by way of Winnipeg and the CPR: "We will contract to ship you next year's late freight at low rates and turn the tables by having you urging us for your goods! And will run you a Cypress Hills & Benton branch if the people of your section will liberally subscribe."⁶⁶

Although a poor prophet, D.W. Marsh was a clever purchaser and he carefully took advantage of the changing transportation patterns. In 1882 he still ordered most of his merchandise through Montana, and his customs bills increased from \$1,122.90 in the last quarter of 1881 to \$2,000 in the third quarter of 1882. Since he did not expect the CPR to operate beyond Regina, he still ordered his winter shipment from Fort Benton. Significantly, Marsh placed some of his emergency orders in Winnipeg to be shipped by steamers on the Assiniboine River. Moreover, he bought his regular stock of blankets in Winnipeg to be transported by the CPR, the saving on customs duties offsetting the extra cost of transportation. He had trouble, however, persuading Power to let the CPR haul his flour, as it had I.G. Baker and Company's. Marsh finally ordered flour in January 1883, but customs difficulties and heavy snows delayed its delivery until mid-April.⁶⁷

The federal government's Indian policy forced Marsh to abandon Fort Walsh in the spring of 1883. Fearful that the Cree might concentrate south of the newly built CPR, government officials determined to settle them in small groups north of the main line. The execution of the policy took two forms: the bureaucrats closed Fort Walsh, and they refused to dole out rations to the Indians except in designated places north of the tracks.⁶⁸ Since practically all of Marsh's trade was with the NWMP or the Indians, his Cypress Hills business died and he relocated in Maple Creek. Pessimistic about the future, Marsh feared that the completed railway would bring rivals and tumbling prices, and that he would require a large inventory to remain competitive. Choosing the community with the greatest potential for supporting a large investment in the midst of competition was a difficult decision, but Marsh opted for Maple Creek because the police had moved there and because he thought that it might become the terminus for a CPR branch line to the international border.⁶⁹

Marsh was uneasy in Maple Creek and watched for opportunities elsewhere. Pessimistic by nature, he was convinced that the collapse of the Winnipeg boom had created a surplus of goods which would eventually be unloaded at low prices. He complained that one firm, Langdon and Sheppard, was already selling at Chicago prices, and he worried that trade was stagnating because "there is a store in the country for every man."⁷⁰ In fact, the fierce competition in Maple Creek forced Marsh to buy still more of his stock in Canada, and he shopped carefully, using Tees, Costigan, and Wilson for most of his groceries because they used the cheaper Great Lakes route and avoided customs delays. But Marsh felt the Montréal firm charged too much for cheese, tea, and syrup so he turned elsewhere for these products: "Once we could stand these charges when we were able to add it to the cost of goods and take it out of the consumer

but now too much care cannot be taken in purchasing to keep such expenses down.”⁷¹ He also cautioned Power to buy as much as possible in Canada to avoid custom duties and delays.⁷² Thus tariffs and competition, made possible by more direct transportation, became important instruments in repatriating western commerce.

The tariff did not affect all of Marsh’s purchasing and he continued to import some goods from Chicago. These articles included furniture, oil cloth, grains, ladders, tents, tarps, potatoes, hats, clothing, leather goods, brass goods and farm equipment. In September and October 1883, such shipments were valued at \$780 and \$690 respectively.⁷³ While these amounts were small in comparison to Canadian purchases, it is important to note that even these American goods travelled through Winnipeg. Marsh no longer imported through Fort Benton.

Despite savings in transportation costs and a better selection of suppliers, the Maple Creek store languished. Profits for 1884 amounted to a mere \$2,400, a disappointing return for a substantial investment. In the summer of 1884 Marsh expanded to Calgary, but even in the larger town business was slow. In 1885 both retail operations lost money and Marsh wanted to sell his share in the business, preferring to be paid a salary.⁷⁴ He blamed the failure on the excessive number of retailers in the sparsely populated territory. He believed that the Manitoba boom, launched by the start of construction of the CPR, created false expectations and left a legacy of disappointed petty traders flogging a mountain of surplus goods at bargain prices.⁷⁵ This dismal situation was aggravated by the government’s policy of removing the Indian and Métis population to the north, leaving a depopulated and stagnant southern economy.

Marsh’s analysis of the economic problem facing western Canada was perceptive to a point. He noted that “the RR [railway] in hissing through the country broke up all former channels of trade and everything became changed, new towns were projected of mushroom growth and death, and it was impossible for anyone to see where it would be advisable to locate.”⁷⁶ Within one year, the peaceful isolation of the frontier, where business was cushioned by reliable government contracts, was shattered. The railway, which eased transportation and stocking problems, also brought harsh competition. Not only did Marsh face his old rivals, the HBC and Winnipeg merchants, but also such manufacturers from central Canada and the United States as Harris and John Deere, who set up farm implement dealerships in many towns on the plains. Large flour millers like A.W. Ogilvie erected mills in the northwest or gathered wheat for central Canadian or European plants. Moreover, an army of travelling salesmen alighted from each inbound train, taking orders for Winnipeg and Montréal wholesalers.⁷⁷ Only the hardy and resourceful could survive this turbulent period.

While Marsh was unable to adapt to the competitive retail conditions, he remained successful in the provisioning trade. In 1884, he launched a small firm,

backed by T.C. Power, to supply beef to CPR construction camps. He bought much of the beef from local ranchers, including I.G. Baker and Company. The CPR's demand for meat rose steadily, peaking at two hundred head per month by July. But the venture was expensive, requiring a large initial investment and considerable patience waiting for the railway company to pay its bills. By March 1885, for example, the CPR owed the suppliers \$60,000, against a projected profit of \$24,000. The enterprise also presented physical difficulties, needing experienced hands to herd the cattle along the desolate right of way with little forage, and further inland through tree falls and swamps.⁷⁸ Marsh, however, knew the northwest and primitive transportation techniques; he persevered and managed to earn a good profit.

The experience of Marsh and his employers demonstrated that business in western Canada had undergone a radical transformation. Gerald Friesen has noted that Great Britain lost its predominant position on the plains in the 1870s and 1880s, surrendering much of its trade to the United States.⁷⁹ In absolute terms, total imports into the region from these two countries remained relatively constant during the 1870s and then increased dramatically in the following decade along with the growth in population. More significant, however, is the speed with which central Canadian businessmen moved onto the Prairies. By the mid-1880s their share of the western Canadian market had soared from virtually nothing to two-thirds of the total. While this increase coincided with the completion of the CPR, it owes its growth primarily to the National Policy. Canadians could have shipped their goods to the northwest in bond through the United States but, without the protective tariff which in the case of farm machinery stood at 35 percent, they would not have done as well. Central Canadian businessmen, Friesen concludes, "enjoyed an enormous advantage on the prairies in the decade of the 1880s." The tariff, coupled to personal contacts, national loyalties, and corporate purchasing policies, permitted them to capture the lion's share of the western Canadian market. T.C. Power and I.G. Baker were unable to integrate themselves fully into this new network.

The continued success of the two Fort Benton firms in the supply business for several years after the CPR was completed demonstrates that the alteration of transportation routes was no more than a minor factor in the decline of their retail operations. They, like all mercantile companies, had equal access to constantly improving rail service. More significant was that railway technology, as a fast and efficient means of transportation, permitted the settlement of western Canada and encouraged hundreds of central and eastern North American businessmen, merchants and manufacturers to participate in its economic development.⁸⁰ When the pace of settlement proved much slower than expected, many of these entrepreneurs, including the Fort Benton merchants, failed in the overcrowded market.

More importantly the CPR, as an extension of the railway network of eastern and central North America, facilitated the introduction of modern retail and

wholesale techniques to western Canada. By providing easy access to the Prairies, the CPR permitted the establishment of a legion of small shops in towns along its main and branch lines. An army of travelling salesmen supplied these stores with goods from eastern factories. Shopkeepers like Harry Bentley in Lethbridge filled their shelves with an array of products manufactured in central Canada or the United States, shipped to them directly or by Winnipeg distributors.⁸¹ The CPR also permitted factories, such as farm implement manufacturers, to establish dealerships across the northwest and sell directly to the consumer.

The two Fort Benton companies, then, were the casualties of the rapid expansion of eastern businessmen onto the Prairies, a phenomenon made possible by the new transportation technology. Specialized in gathering furs and hauling freight in isolated, rugged frontier conditions, they were unable to respond to the new way of doing business in western Canada. Unlike the well-financed and resilient HBC, the smaller Montana businesses fell victim to the revolution in merchandising, a transformation facilitated by the consolidation and expansion of the North American railway network.

The Power and Conrad firms gradually withdrew from retailing and freighting in southern Alberta. I.G. Baker and Company sold its Calgary stock to the HBC in 1885, a preliminary step to surrendering to the London firm all its merchandising enterprises in Canada. Baker retired in 1893. In the same year T.C. Power sold his Calgary store to D.W. Marsh and concentrated his attention on his highly successful operations in Montana.⁸²

In a period when Canadians were actively seeking a renewal of freer trade with the United States, the claim that the CPR was necessary to thwart American annexationists is questionable. In the first place, the Fort Benton traders had no overt political ambitions in Canadian territory; their primary interest was economic profit.⁸³ Second, Canadians had not yet equated economic fellowship with loss of political sovereignty or cultural identity. Despite protectionist sentiment, the prevailing economic philosophy rested on the basic doctrine of liberalism and its tenets of free trade and economic integration. Even if Canadians designed the CPR as a symbol of the nation's claim to western Canada and as a facilitator of trade between the regions, they also perceived the railway as part of a continental railway network. By the 1880s, Canadians hoped that the CPR would integrate the northwest into the commercial empires of North America and Europe. The CPR, which crossed the international boundary at several strategic locations, as well as the American railways which entered Canadian territory, encouraged economic unity between Canada and the United States; they allowed American as well as European factories to expand onto the plains and made it easier for Canadian resource producers to sell south of the border.⁸⁴

When Canada wanted to bar foreign manufacturers from the domestic market, including the Prairies, it did not look to the transcontinental railway but

When Canada wanted to bar foreign manufacturers from the domestic market, including the Prairies, it did not look to the transcontinental railway but enacted the highly protective National Policy. It was an ambiguous policy, however, because Canadians still viewed tariffs only as temporary measures, designed to foster domestic “infant” industries; at the same time, they encouraged the establishment of American branch plants in Canada and they also envisioned the tariff as a means of compelling the United States to bow to their overtures for free trade in natural resources.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, despite its ambivalent goals, the National Policy became a highly efficient tool for forging trade patterns between central and western Canada. Politicians, encouraged by manufacturers, knew that the National Policy was a more effective lever than the CPR for forcing western Canadians to buy in central Canada.

Although the two Fort Benton companies dominated commerce in southern Alberta for two decades, their cultural legacy is minimal. Lasting but a decade, their trade hegemony only tinged the social character of the region with American ties. The area’s strong identification with British institutions, first established by the HBC and later reinforced by the NWMP, was strengthened even further by the emergence of the ranching community immediately after the completion of the CPR. Although the new industry adopted many American techniques, its capital and management came from central Canada and Great Britain. Tied closely to the Conservative party, the nascent and powerful ranching community ensured that the cultural associations of the southwestern Prairies were with central Canada.⁸⁶ The ranchers and NWMP officers formed the region’s elite and their values dominated its society. Undoubtedly these two communities utilized the railway to maintain their ties with central Canada, but their presence was a paramount factor in the Canadianization of southern Alberta. The completion of the prairie portion of the CPR in 1883, therefore, was only one of many events which wove southern Alberta into the fabric of an international economy, and which indicated that the boundary was a clear demarcation between two distinct cultural identities.

NOTES

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57. Donald Kerr, "Wholesale Trade on the Canadian Plains in the Late Nineteenth Century: Winnipeg and Its Competition," in Howard Palmer, ed., *The Settlement of the West* (Calgary: University of Calgary/Comprint Publishing Company, 1977), 130-35. Kerr estimated that before 1878, 70 percent of goods unloaded in Winnipeg had their origin in the United States or Great Britain.
58. *Ibid.*, 139-52. In 1880, merchants other than the HBC and I.G. Baker and Company captured almost 75 percent of the Indian Department's regular treaty supplies for Treaty Four, more than 50 percent for Treaty Six, and less than 10 percent for Treaty Seven. Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880, no. 4 272-76.
59. HBCA-PAM, Proceedings at the General Court of the Hudson's Bay Company, 6 July 1880; Report of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1 July 1884; A12/51, Grahame to Armit, 2 August 1884, f. 243; A12/27, Wrigley to Armit, 20 February 1885, f. 195.
60. *Ibid.*, A12/27, Wrigley to Armit, 17 November 1884, f. 94.
61. *Ibid.*, A12/27, Grahame to Wrigley, 2 May 1884, f. 134, 22 July 1884, f. 241; A12/27, Wrigley to Armit, 6 July 1884, f. 376.
62. *Ibid.*, A12/27, Wrigley to Armit, 3 November 1884, f. 89.
63. MHS, Power Papers, vol. 14, file 21, Bogy to Power, 1 December 1881; vol. 84, file 4, I.G. Baker Company to Power and Brother Company, 18 January 1881, and Power to Baker, 18 January 1881; vol. 273, file 28, agreements Baker and Company and Power and Brother Company, 18 January, 23 April, 12 September 1881; vol. 106, file 83, Marsh to Power, 3 and 22 February 1881; vol. 106, file 9, Marsh to Power, 28 September 1881; vol. 274, file 22, Agreement, 13 May 1885.
64. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, file 8, Marsh to Power, 27 January 1881.
65. *Ibid.*, vol. 106, file 9, Marsh to Power, 12 October, 30 November and 6 December 1881; vol. 107, file 2, Marsh to Power, 18 February, 5 July, 2 and 29 August 1882; vol. 107, file 3, 20 December 1882.
66. *Ibid.*, vol. 106, file 9, Marsh to Power, 10 November 1881.
67. *Ibid.*, vol. 107, file 1, Marsh to Power, 7 January 1882; vol. 107, file 2, Marsh to Power, 26 June 1882; vol. 107, file 3, Marsh to Power, 27 September, 4 and 18 October, 22 and 30 November, 20 and 27 December 1882; vol. 107, file 4, Marsh to Power, 18 and 25 January, 19 April 1883.
68. John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," *Canadian Historical Review* 64 (December 1983): 519-48.
69. MHS, Power Papers, vol. 107, file 1, Marsh to Power, 15 February, 19 April 1882; vol. 107, file 3, Marsh to Power, 29 November 1882; vol. 107, file 4, Marsh to Power, 15 March 1883.
70. *Ibid.*, vol. 129, file 3, Marsh to Power, 11 August 1883.
71. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1883.
72. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1883.
73. In contrast, T.C. Power and Brother Company paid \$1,374 to ship one order from Montréal to Winnipeg and \$240 the rest of the way to Maple Creek. MHS, Power Papers, vol. 15, file

- 37, Power to Howard, 31 May 1883; for American invoices see vol. 115, file 3, Howard to Power, 4 December 1883; vol. 15, file 32, Wright to Power, 14 July 1883; vol. 15, file 37, Howard to Power, 17 September and 2 November 1883.
74. In 1886, the Calgary and Maple Creek operations lost over \$5,000 on their retail outlets and only the profits of \$33,000 on beef sales to the CPR saved the company. MHS, Power Papers, vol. 17, file 38, T.C. Power and Brother Company to T.C. Power, 6 September 1886; vol. 129, file 4, T.C. Power and Brother Company to T.C. Power, 16 March 1885; Marsh to Power, 8 July and 9 August 1885.
75. *Ibid.*, vol. 129, file 3, Marsh to Power, 21 February 1884.
76. *Ibid.*, Marsh to Power, 12 November 1885.
77. Kerr, "Wholesale Trade," 139-42.
78. MHS, Power Papers, vol. 274, file 13, Samples to Power, 3 April 1884, file 22, Memorandum, Power and Baker, 16 May 1885; vol. 16, file 30, Samples to Power, 27 June and 23 September 1884; vol. 16, file 35, Samples to Power, 24 September 1884; vol. 129, file 3, Samples to Power, 16 June 1884; vol. 129, file 4, Samples to Power, 6 November 1884; vol. 17, file 10, Samples to Power, 18 February 1885.
79. Gerald Friesen, "Imports and Exports in the Manitoba Economy, 1870-1890," *Manitoba History* 16 (Autumn 1988): 31-41.
80. Albert Fishlow, *American Railroads and the Transformation of the Ante-Bellum Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). Peter George, in his foreword to Harold A. Innis, *A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), questions the social and economic value of the transcontinental.
81. Bentley's advertisements in the *Lethbridge News* attest to the wide variety of goods he offered customers.
82. HBCA-PAM, A12/52, Grahame to Armit, 28 January 1884, f. 55; 18 April 1884, f. 126; 2 May 1884, f. 134; A12/27, Wrigley to Armit, 6 October and 3 November 1884, ff. 52 and 87; 14 February 1885, f. 188; Francis, "Business, Enterprise," 64.
83. Francis, "Business, Enterprise," 6-7. There is an entire historiography on the annexation question. For a recent summary, see Gordon T. Stewart, "'A Special Contiguous Country Economic Regime': An Overview of America's Canadian Policy," *Diplomatic History* 6 (Fall 1982): 339-57.
84. William J. Wilgus, *The Railway Interrelations of the United States and Canada* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937).
85. Forster, *Conjunction of Interests*.
86. L.G. Thomas, "Associations and Communications," in Canadian Historical Association, *Papers 1973* (n.p.: The Canadian Historical Association, 1973), 1-12. A more detailed explanation of this theme is in Breen, *Ranching Frontier*.



The Creation of the Alpine Club of Canada: An Early Manifestation of Canadian Nationalism

Raymond Huel

ABSTRACT. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Canadian nationalist sentiment combined with the concepts of manliness and Britishness in sport to make Canadians aware of the challenge and beauty offered by the Rocky Mountains. In an attempt to encourage mountaineering and the exploration of alpine ranges in Canada, A.O. Wheeler proposed the creation of a Canadian alpine club. But the project met with such indifference that he decided to promote the establishment of a Canadian section of the American Alpine Club. Mrs. Elizabeth Parker of Winnipeg took a dim view of this affiliation and used her column in the *Manitoba Free Press* to advocate a Canadian association. Eventually, she convinced a sufficient number of individuals, including Wheeler, to accept her views and when delegates met in Winnipeg on 27-28 March 1906, the Alpine Club of Canada was formed.

SOMMAIRE. Au Canada, entre 1900 et 1910, un sentiment nationaliste auquel s'alliait le penchant des Canadiens pour les sports virils et "britanniques" leur fit prendre conscience du défi qu'offraient les montagnes Rocheuses, ainsi que de leur beauté. Pour encourager l'alpinisme et l'exploration des chaînes montagneuses du pays, A.O. Wheeler proposa la création d'un club alpin canadien. Son projet fut accueilli avec une telle indifférence qu'il décida d'encourager l'établissement d'une section canadienne de l'American Alpine Club. Madame Elizabeth Parker de Winnipeg ne vit pas d'un très bon oeil cette affiliation et se servit de sa chronique dans le *Manitoba Free Press* pour préconiser la création d'une association canadienne. Elle finit par convaincre un assez grand nombre de personnes, dont Wheeler. C'est ainsi que fut créé lors de la réunion des délégués à Winnipeg, les 27-28 mars 1906, le Club alpin du Canada.

At the turn of the century a wave of optimism and enthusiasm swept across Canada. A healthy international economy, a growing demand for Canadian products and the settlement and development of the west all contributed to stimulating domestic expansion, especially in the transportation and industrial sectors. Canadians from all walks of life shared Prime Minister Laurier's belief that the twentieth century belonged to Canada. Many also felt that Canada was passing from adolescence to adulthood, and hence had to take her rightful place among the nations of the world.

While there was a general consensus that Canada was a dynamic young nation with great potential, there was no unanimity of opinion on the nature of the Canadian identity. On the one hand, imperialists felt that Canada could exist only as an integral part of the British Empire because it was through membership in the empire that Canada derived its political and cultural traditions, security and economic well-being. Nationalists, on the other hand, were much more critical of imperial attachments, which imposed serious limitations on the development of Canadian autonomy and the fulfillment of indigenous Canadian aspirations.

The might of the United States and its geographical proximity to Canada also generated concern among Canadians. Imperialists regarded the increasing strength and influence of the republic as a threat to the status of the British Empire and its traditions. Nationalists were alarmed that Canada was slowly being incorporated into the American orbit, with its distinct identity being eroded in the process. The perceived menace of the United States presented imperialists and nationalists with a rare opportunity to cooperate to achieve a common goal: the preservation of Canada with its unique traditions.

Politicians and statesmen were not the only ones interested in the Canadian identity, as writers, poets, painters and others strove to explore distinctive Canadian themes and styles. Some recreational activities came to be regarded as part of the Canadian character and culture. As early as 1867, for example, Dr. W.G. Beers, a Montréal dentist and sportsman, attempted to have lacrosse accepted as Canada's national sport. Beers said that it was an ideal choice in view of its Canadian origins but stressed that lacrosse, "while exercising the manly virtues, also trains the national and the moral, it will, undoubtedly help to make us better men; and genuine 'pluck' will never go out of fashion in Canada."¹

This concept of "manly sports" was very important to the dominant Anglo-Protestant elite in Canada. As Morris Mott has pointed out in his study of sport in Manitoba, there were motives other than enjoyment for participating in vigorous sports. These "manly sports" not only rejuvenated body and mind, they also improved character. Furthermore, they inculcated "manliness," a concept that transcended physical prowess and included intellectual and moral strength.² It was believed that the pluck and stamina developed on the playing fields had contributed to the greatness of the Anglo-Saxon race, enabling it to create the mightiest empire the world had ever known. Through participation in sport, English Canadians would renew the qualities that had made the British predominant, and prepare Canada to play her rightful role in the empire and in the world.³

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Canadian nationalist sentiment and the concept of manliness and Britishness in sports combined to make Canadians aware of the challenge and beauty offered by the majestic Rocky Mountains. It was felt that, like lacrosse, the Rockies were very much part of the Canadian national character and heritage. By the turn of the century the Rockies had been explored due to the Canadian government's policy of developing the west and publicizing its agricultural potential, as well as the Canadian Pacific Railway's (CPR) desire to "capitalize the scenery." Impressive first ascents had been made in the Rockies but they were made by British and American alpinists, not by Canadians. The CPR was quick to take advantage of this growing interest in mountaineering and it imported Swiss guides and built hotels along its main line to cater to the growing number of tourists who came to the Rockies.⁴

Some Canadians were profoundly disturbed by the fact that this mountain heritage was being exploited by foreigners. To overcome this, it was proposed to create an association to promote the interests of mountaineering in Canada and to enhance the benefits associated with alpine regions. An informal alpine association had been formed in 1883 by Sanford Fleming, who had been sent into the Selkirk Mountains by the CPR to verify the pass discovered by Major A.B. Rogers. Fleming was accompanied by his son, S. Hall Fleming, and Principal George Grant of Queen's University. They were viewing the landscape near the summit of Rogers Pass and, as a memorial to their visit, they

decided to organize a Canadian alpine club. Fleming was named president, his son treasurer, while Grant became secretary. A meeting was then held and a toast to the success of the new venture was drunk from a nearby stream. The new executive expressed its gratitude to Major Rogers and to his nephew, Albert, for having assisted in the discovery of the pass. As they descended from the pass, Fleming noticed a conical peak which he estimated to be fifteen hundred feet higher than the surrounding summits. It was given the name Syndicate Peak (Mount Sir Donald), and deemed to be “a fit spot for the virgin attempt” of the newly formed club.⁵ The project, however, was not carried out, subsequent organizational activities were not pursued, and this early Canadian alpine club faded into oblivion.

Some eighteen years were to pass before the idea again received attention. In 1901-02, Arthur Oliver Wheeler was engaged in a phototopographical survey of the Selkirk Range and became initiated into mountaineering. What began as a work-related experience was quickly transformed into a pronounced fascination and love for the mountains.⁶ While at Glacier House, Wheeler met Professor Charles Fay of Tufts College, Massachusetts. Fay, who was also president of the Appalachian Mountain Club, had awakened the interest of Americans through his enthusiastic reports on the Rockies. At that time he was in the process of organizing a much larger and broader institution which became known as the American Alpine Club (AAC). Wheeler discussed the possibility of establishing a Canadian alpine club and corresponded with other mountaineers regarding the feasibility of such a venture.

He also wrote an article entitled “Canadians as Mountaineers,” sending it to his father-in-law, John Macoun, for publication in the *Ottawa Journal*, and copies to the *Manitoba Free Press* and the *Vancouver Herald*.⁷ In this, his first commentary on mountaineering in Canada, Wheeler stated that every year the mountains of Canada were visited by climbers from Europe and the United States who, with the assistance of Swiss guides ascended the highest summits. He stressed that the contribution of Canadians who were members of the Topographical Survey should not be overlooked. He presented a brief overview of the survey which began in 1887 and affirmed that of thirty-two ascents of peaks in excess of 9,500 feet, fourteen were credited to J.J. McArthur. Furthermore, these climbs had been made before the introduction of Swiss guides, when surveyors still had to carry heavy cameras and transits to record their topographical data.

In 1901 the influx of visitors was such that a topographical map of the Selkirk Range near the CPR right of way was deemed necessary and Wheeler was sent out to do the field work. During two seasons Wheeler’s party established triangulation and camera stations on the summits of thirty peaks. He enthusiastically described the area beyond Glacier House as the “wildest, most awe-inspiring and most rugged portion of the range still unseen, or only by the more adventurous spirits.”⁸

Shortly thereafter, Wheeler made a passionate plea for the establishment of a Canadian mountaineering association in an article entitled "An Alpine Club for Canada." In it he affirmed that Canada possessed a "noble heritage" in her mountain ranges, and that representatives of the English and Swiss alpine clubs had reported favourably on Canada's mountains, having conquered some of them. With the completion of the CPR, Canada's mountains had been opened to the world, but a vast virgin territory lay beyond the main line. He added that while many countries had alpine clubs, Canada's "praiseworthy determination" to create one in 1883 had been stillborn. Stating that Canada possessed all the prerequisites, such as snow, glaciers and alpine terrain, Wheeler then issued a challenge:

Canadians are admitted the world over as typical of strong energetic and intelligent manhood. As mountaineers they are, except in training, no whit inferior to representatives of any other race. Canada for Canadians is our motto. Why not then a Canadian Mountain Club for Canada?⁹

He suggested that a Canadian club could be divided into Rocky Mountain and Selkirk Mountain sections, with club houses constructed at Laggan (Lake Louise Station) or Field, and at Glacier House. Furthermore, if they were built close to CPR hotels the latter might provide living accommodations and special rates. In the summer the club could employ two or three Swiss guides and this might entice more of them to settle in Canada, or result in the formation of a corps of Canadian guides. The club also could assist mountaineers to reach the more distant ranges by constructing trails, building cabins, providing guides and preparing maps.

In the meantime, Wheeler received unexpected support from Mrs. Elizabeth Parker, a determined and articulate individual whose actions would profoundly alter the thrust of efforts to organize Canadian alpinists. Since her arrival in Winnipeg in 1892, and subsequent visit to Banff for health reasons, Parker had become deeply attached to the Rockies. As events were to prove, she was a staunch nationalist who was convinced that Canadians had remained in the background while others had explored and exploited their alpine regions. She became a regular contributor to the *Free Press* and, in September 1905, wrote a series of articles describing her tour of western Canada. In her first installment, "A Holiday Tour in the West," she expressed surprise at how little Canadians knew of their mountains. Worse yet was the fact that Canadians did not appear to climb in the Rockies, and the first ascents had been made by Americans or Englishmen. She claimed that the Reverend J.C. Herdman of Calgary had been climbing by himself for the past eighteen years and was a voice crying in the wilderness because he urged this "vigorous and ethical pastime upon his countrymen." According to Parker, it was both important and necessary to establish a Canadian alpine club because, in the absence of one, foreign mountaineers would conquer Canada's virgin peaks.¹⁰

The following week she complained that few first ascents had been made by Canadians who left "the hardships and triumphs" of conquering virgin summits to strangers. The consequences were horrendous. To begin with, Canadians learned about their mountains from American and British climbers. In addition, by not having been active in mountaineering, Canadians had lost an opportunity to display those qualities and values which would demonstrate that Canada was ready to take its rightful place in the world. Parker believed that the absence of some form of alpine organization in Canada provided the Canadian Club of Winnipeg with an opportunity to take the initiative and establish one. She urged its young members to take an ice axe and go to the Rockies, "which throw down the challenge to the strong." Winnipegers were urged not to be outdone by the citizens of Toronto or Ottawa; in this important matter, they were to act immediately.¹¹ In a subsequent article entitled "The Canadian Rockies: A Joy to Mountaineers," she reiterated the lack of Canadian achievement in the Rockies by referring to the first ascent of Mount Sir Donald by two Swiss guides and a porter on 26 July 1890. They left a description of their climb in a bottle, concluding it with "three cheers for Switzerland." According to Parker, if Canadians were to make an unguided first ascent in Switzerland, they too would be justified in declaring "three cheers for Canada." She added, however, that there were no more virgin peaks to conquer in Switzerland and "no more are there Canadian stalwarts to climb them if there were."¹²

Parker then approached J.W. Dafoe, editor of the *Free Press*, and asked him to support the organization of a Canadian alpine club. While he "was very phlegmatic regarding the strenuous joys of actual mountain climbing," the nationalistic element "touched home." Dafoe provided introductions to prominent individuals and supported organization on a distinct Canadian basis in his influential journal.¹³ As a journalist Dafoe felt it was his duty to direct public opinion. Furthermore, the subject being debated reflected his faith in the potential of Canadians, especially western Canadians, to overcome challenges through determined efforts. Dafoe also believed that participation in sport would make young men more "manly."¹⁴

In an editorial Dafoe enthusiastically seconded Parker's suggestion that Winnipeg take the initiative in organizing a Canadian alpine club. He asserted that, while Canada did not have lofty peaks such as Mont Blanc, it had countless giant mountains, glaciers, rivers and valleys which awaited the explorer. According to Dafoe, there was "a major peak to every climber for a century to come." At a time when climbers from across the world were coming to the Rockies, Canadians themselves ought to be even more attracted to their mountains "and make our mountaineering history." Dafoe predicted that until a Canadian alpine club was formed Canadians would "accomplish nothing worthwhile in the Play Ground of America." Consequently, the recent suggestion that Winnipeg take the initiative in establishing a Canadian organization was a "timely one."¹⁵

In the meantime, Wheeler was continuing his efforts to organize the Canadian mountaineering fraternity. Unfortunately his initial appeal, while eloquent and patriotic, met “with scepticism [*sic*] and indifference,” and J.C. Herdman of Calgary was its only enthusiastic supporter. Meanwhile, Fay was completing his arrangements for establishing the AAC and Wheeler spoke to him of his frustrations with a similar Canadian venture. In view of this apathy north of the border, Fay suggested that Wheeler direct his efforts toward the establishment of a Canadian section of the AAC.¹⁶ One of the reasons put forth by Fay for a Canadian section was his conviction that the term “America” included not only the United States but Canada as well. Hence, “the name American Alpine Club in its very essence embraces Canadians.”¹⁷ Convinced that some form of organization was necessary for Canadian alpinists, Wheeler accepted Fay’s proposal and wrote another newspaper article to inform interested parties.

A short while later, Wheeler’s topographical survey was published, and in *The Selkirk Range* he commented on the state of mountaineering in Canada. He declared that in the last decade no significant first ascents had been made because of poor accessibility and a lack of facilities. The situation would not change until an ambitious alpine club was formed in Canada to organize expeditions, build cabins, trails and so forth. He could not explain why such organization had not taken place. The consequences, however, were ominous: “It speaks but poorly for the enterprise of Canadians that they must look to the works of other countries for a knowledge of their own mountains.”¹⁸ Insofar as the Selkirks were concerned, extended expeditions would remain impossible until the creation of an alpine club to look after mountaineering and exploration in that region, “to create a demand for more hotels and to institute a corps of trained guide, and porters resident in the country.”¹⁹

Wheeler’s book was reviewed in the *Free Press* by Parker (writing as “M.T.”). She claimed that mountaineering in Canada would progress rapidly in the next decade, but that to date the record of Canadians had been dismal. She noted that of the thirty or so first ascents listed, only four Canadians were mentioned. Since Canadians had close at hand “peaks, not only inexhaustible, but even unnamed and unseen,” Parker expressed shame that her past appeals to associates for a serious Canadian mountaineering effort had fallen on deaf ears. She had been told that the Americans should be allowed to make the first ascents because they had the money and the time. Referring to the proposal to create a Canadian section of the AAC, she stated that she could not accept organization on such a basis. While Canadians were indebted to Americans for the services they had rendered in the Rockies, and they were welcome to return, Parker left no doubt as to the type of organization she preferred:

But we owe it to our own young nationhood in simple self-respect, to begin an organized system of mountaineering on an independent basis. Surely between Halifax and Victoria, there can be found at least a dozen persons who are made of the stuff, and care enough about our mountain heritage to redeem Canadian apathy and indifference. It is simply amazing that for so long we have cared so little.²⁰

She felt that the popular Canadian Clubs should promote the establishment of a Canadian alpine club, but unfortunately they only were interested in eating. Here was an opportunity for them to “turn their eating into splendid patriotic account by discussing the necessity and importance of a thorough going, systematized acquaintance with the Alpine regions of the Dominion.” Parker was convinced that if Winnipeg were interested, it could take the initiative and form the nucleus of the first Canadian alpine club within a week.²¹

Wheeler remarked later that “M.T.” had taken him “roundly to task” for his unpatriotic actions and lack of imperialistic sentiment. Not knowing her true identity, he wrote to “Dear Sir,” asking for his cooperation and access to the *Free Press* to promote an association for Canadian alpinists.²² Wheeler claimed that Canadian apathy was responsible for the proposal to establish a Canadian section of the AAC.²³

Two days after the publication of Parker’s review of *The Selkirk Range*, Dafoe wrote another editorial favouring an organization of Canadian alpinists. He had been advised that such a venture would take place in Calgary during the winter, but made it clear that he would support only a Canadian organization, regardless of where its headquarters might be. The *Free Press* affirmed that while Canadians slept, strangers explored and conquered their mountain ranges. The signs that Canada was awakening were welcome to Dafoe because Canadians would now become aware of their alpine heritage. The organization of an independent Canadian club would encourage Canadian climbers, stimulate explorations, and speed the establishment of trails and huts. Furthermore, a young Canada would soon begin “climbing mountains seriously.”²⁴

While corresponding with Parker, Wheeler sent a circular letter to potential members outlining the objective of forming a Canadian section of the AAC. He asserted that in examining the list of recorded ascents, “the names of Canadians are chiefly conspicuous by their absence.” It seemed as if Canadians were not “fully alive to the glorious heritage” found in their “enchanted wonderland of Crags and Canyons.” To Wheeler the decision was obvious:

The eyes of the world are upon Canada. She is preparing to take her place among the Nations of the earth. Why then should she be behind in the matter of an Alpine Club to exploit her own Alps?

He commented on the objectives of the AAC and declared that they were “worthy of attainment, and may be worked for in unison regardless of nationality.” Since the AAC had indicated its willingness to admit a Canadian section, Wheeler felt that it was advisable to accept the offer “in order to form the nucleus of a Canadian Club.” If such an association were formed it would be necessary for organizational purposes to meet at a central point such as Winnipeg, and afterwards to meet annually. After enumerating the advantages of forming a club, Wheeler asked his readers to make a decision:

Are you in favour of forming a Canadian Section of the American Alpine Club? If so, will you become a member with that object in view? If not, will you take an active part in the formation of a purely Canadian organization?

Wheeler's concluding remarks suggest that he anticipated a favourable response to the American affiliation, but that this association would not be permanent:

Please bear in mind that the initial object is to become allied to an already formed and active Alpine Club, that has won its spurs; but that, when strong enough, with some record behind us, there is no reason why we should not stand on our merits.²⁵

Wheeler sent a copy of the circular to William Whyte, second vice-president of the CPR, soliciting his assistance by pointing out that the formation of an alpine club in Canada was in the CPR's interest. Wheeler asked Whyte to use his influence to have the Winnipeg press promote the venture. According to Wheeler, it would be an honour to be associated with the AAC, and its objectives were "broad enough to include all nationalities with advantage." Canada had the mountains but needed mountaineers from the world over; an alpine club would facilitate their coming to this country.²⁶ For his part, Whyte wrote to Robert Kerr, the CPR's passenger traffic manager, asking him to interest mountain tourists in Wheeler's organizational activities. Whyte indicated his support for the venture, and observed that anything Kerr could do "would be appreciated."²⁷ Whyte replied to Wheeler that the creation "of a Canadian Section of the American Alpine Club if [*sic*] certainly of great interest to all loyal Canadians," adding that Wheeler could count on his support as well as that of other CPR officials.²⁸

For her part, Parker informed Wheeler that Winnipeg would have nothing to do with membership in the AAC and argued that the proposed branch would make the American club even more dominant in Canada's mountains. Wheeler countered that Americans generated a large part of Canada's tourist revenue and that a Canadian section, by increasing American interest, "would give a rousing increase to Canadian mountaineering." He added that he was interested in the mountains of North America and that focussing on the mountains of Canada was too narrow a perspective. He affirmed that Americans were not trying to intrude and that it was only because he was a personal friend of its president that the AAC was even considering the matter of a Canadian section.²⁹

Parker was not convinced and continued to press her views in the pages of the *Free Press*. In her review of James Outram's *In The Heart Of The Canadian Rockies*, for example, she reiterated the author's contention that the advantage of the Rockies over the Swiss Alps was due to the fact that in Canada climbers could still realize their ambition of making first ascents. Moreover, she claimed that the features of the Alps were not to be found in the mountains below the forty-ninth parallel, but they were all harmoniously blended in the Canadian Rockies. The glaciers, majestic ranges, great peaks and clear lakes accounted for

“the persistent enthusiastic devotion of the American climber in Canadian altitudes.”³⁰ A few weeks later, Parker commented on Wheeler’s circular letter concerning an organization of Canadian alpinists. She stressed that the proposal to establish a Canadian section of the AAC was only an alternative suggestion and that an independent Canadian association could be created if one were desired. She hinted that the proposal of a distinct Canadian club was “regarded very favourably by many influential people” and that it would stimulate Canadians to take the lead in exploring their own mountains.³¹

While Wheeler continued to plan for a Canadian section of the AAC,³² Parker’s articles had succeeded in overcoming the apathy of Canadians and convinced them to opt for an independent organization. In the face of mounting opposition to a Canadian section, Fay offered to change the name of the AAC to the Alpine Club of North America, thus eliminating criticism that the term “American” no longer had a geographical connotation but a national one. Parker acknowledged only the geographical meaning of the term “American,” but nevertheless admitted that Fay’s offer “was a very generous concession meeting an objection.” She also objected to the eagle on the AAC’s crest because its presence precluded the establishment of an organization that was American in the true geographical sense of the term.³³ She then advised Wheeler that if the AAC were also to abolish the outspread eagle on its coat of arms, she would work for the establishment of a Canadian section.³⁴

In the face of this unexpected encouragement from Winnipeg for the formation of a Canadian alpine club, Wheeler opted for the creation of a purely Canadian organization. In the face of this “conversion,” Parker wrote ecstatically that “since the Strathcona Horse, nothing had so appealed to the feeling of empire.”³⁵ For his part, Dafoe wrote another editorial on 15 January 1906, stating that when the *Free Press* first had been asked to publicize the organization of Canadian mountaineers, it had been opposed to affiliation with the AAC and its objections were now “more firmly rooted.” Dafoe could not identify with the AAC’s emblem but, more important, “Canada ought, in sheer self-respect to produce climbers and explorers enough to form an Alpine Club on her own basis.” He informed readers that Wheeler, assisted by Herdman, had outlined a plan whereby a Canadian association with three categories of membership could be realized and that delegates would be meeting in Winnipeg in the last week of March for organizational purposes. Dafoe expressed the hope that the Canadian club would admit Fay and some of his American colleagues to honorary membership out of courtesy and gratitude. Dafoe agreed with Fay that the word “American” included Canadians, but that when it was applied to an individual or society, it lost “its pristine geographical meaning, and the mountaineering visiting card of a Canadian is the Union Jack.”³⁶

In the meantime, Wheeler had asked Parker to assist him in the organization of a Canadian alpine club and she in turn wrote to prominent individuals soliciting their support. In a letter to Prime Minister Laurier, for example, she

admitted that Canadians owed a debt of gratitude to Americans “for the long and loving service they have rendered to the Canadian Alps, while we slept.” However, it was time that Canadians awakened, began climbing and made a name for themselves in alpine circles. She predicted that as mountaineering became popular its influence would be reflected in a heightened nationalistic sentiment. In addition she claimed that if a Canadian section of the AAC were formed, Americans would regard it as a parasite. Voicing her objection to “that Screaming Eagle” on the AAC crest, Parker affirmed that Canadians had enough energy to explore their own mountains. She asked Laurier to use his influence to promote an independent Canadian organization that would be “unashamed among other Alpine Clubs of the world.” The *Free Press* was providing “genuine moral support” for such a venture and of the six people she had canvassed in Winnipeg, three had promised to qualify for membership in an independent Canadian association.³⁷

Laurier replied that he was not familiar with mountaineering but added: “I have no hesitation in sending you my sympathy with your intentions and actions.”³⁸ If Parker was disappointed that the prime minister had given nothing more than his benediction, she was probably disgusted with the response of Minister of the Interior Frank Oliver. According to Parker, he “replied with a brevity that was the soul of discouragement, that he had no time to think of it.”³⁹

On the other hand, Dafoe was quite pleased with the progress of the organizational activities. Interest in the venture was “far beyond expectations” and by 17 February 1906, twenty-five individuals had already indicated their intention to become charter members; fourteen already qualified for active membership as a result of their previous mountaineering experience, and eleven proposed to graduate in the summer. He informed his readers that under Wheeler’s guidance, graduating members would have an opportunity to participate in a summer camp near Yoho Pass, and ascents would be made on Mount Vice-President by guided parties. “Mr. Wheeler’s Alpine Summer School” would initiate “Young Canada to the healthy, strenuous, and altogether aesthetic and spiritual joys of mountaineering.” In the same issue, Parker described the Yoho Valley as well as the proposed camps and routes on Mount Vice-President in a half-page illustrated article entitled “The Summer School of Mountaineering.”⁴⁰

Dafoe’s editorial also mentioned that Sir Sanford Fleming was interested in the proposed organization, and suggested that it would be an excellent opportunity to have him present a personal account of the creation of the first alpine club in 1883. While Fleming was opposed to the name Canadian Alpine Club and preferred Rocky Mountain Club because it was a more genuine Canadian name, Dafoe claimed that “he has an open mind and is not disposed to stick at trifles.” As far as the *Free Press* was concerned, the name Canadian Alpine Club was more impressive but the final decision would have to be made by a majority of the delegates. While the AAC had indicated its willingness to alter its

name to make a Canadian section more acceptable and would undoubtedly replace the screaming eagle with the legend "Excelsior," Dafoe felt that the concept of a Canadian organization was superior. For an individual who had never taken part in any alpine activity, he expounded eloquently on the virtues of mountaineering, which fostered simplicity of life and strength of character:

The men of the plains who live by the daily grind of the commonplace, whether for stint of wages or rich emolument, may gain new leases of health and learn new secrets of life on these high recruiting grounds, where clouds form and where sound the mightier movements of Nature — learn how well worth a man's while it is to have conquered Nature in her loftiest strongholds.⁴¹

As a result of the publicity generated by Parker and the *Free Press*, prominent individuals began to take an interest in the establishment of a Canadian alpine club, among them R. Marpole, general superintendent of the western division of the CPR, the Very Reverend Dean E.C. Paget of Calgary, and Dr. A.P. Coleman, a prominent geologist from Toronto. The real impetus to organization came on 14 February 1906, when William Whyte convoked a meeting of important company officials in Field, British Columbia. Marpole had asked Wheeler to attend and introduced him to Whyte, so that they could discuss the formation of a Canadian alpine club. Wheeler expressed his views to Whyte in the presence of Marpole and C.E. McPherson, the western passenger traffic manager. At the end of the presentation, Whyte asked Wheeler what he wanted and was told that twenty return passes would be needed to bring delegates to Winnipeg. Whyte authorized the request after consulting with McPherson, who assured him that it was "a first class idea."⁴² Winnipeg had been chosen because it was a mid point between east and west and, as such, facilitated travelling. It was also a logical choice given Parker's contacts and activities, as well as the support that could be expected from the *Free Press*.

After obtaining the passes from the CPR, Wheeler corresponded with Parker and Herdman, and a circular was sent out to various individuals inviting them to be delegates at a meeting in Winnipeg on 27-28 March.⁴³ In the meantime Herdman went to eastern Canada and, in Toronto, informed his audience of the AAC's offer to include a Canadian section and to change its name. However, he stressed the necessity of a Canadian organization to stimulate Canadian climbers and to publicize their activities.⁴⁴ Parker approached the Winnipeg Canadian Club and consequently Wheeler was invited to address its luncheon meeting on the subject of organizing a Canadian alpine club. A number of delegates were also invited to attend the luncheon.⁴⁵

Wheeler and Herdman arrived in Winnipeg on 26 March and met with Parker to finalize arrangements. For its part, the *Free Press* publicized these inaugural activities by stating that a comprehensive program had been worked out and that the convention would generate "unwonted enthusiasm in regard to the scenic wonders of Canada's most stupendous physical feature."⁴⁶ Twenty-six

delegates attended the first organizational meeting held the next afternoon under chairmanship of A.P. Coleman. In his remarks, Wheeler affirmed that the primary object of the proposed organization was to awaken the interest of Canadians "in regard to their great scenic heritage which was not surpassed by the Alps." Dean Paget drew attention to the fact that Americans appreciated the Rockies more than did eastern Canadians, while Herdman argued that the youth of Canada should be brought into touch with "the great mountains of their country."⁴⁷

After the discussions the delegates unanimously decided to establish an organization known as the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC). The name Rocky Mountain Club had been suggested but was rejected on the grounds that the activities of members would not be limited to the Rockies. It was also decided that the ACC's headquarters would be in Winnipeg, but that every year it would sponsor a summer camp at some suitable location in the mountain ranges. A committee was chosen to nominate an executive, draft a constitution and present a report the following day. Later that evening Wheeler, assisted by Herdman, gave a lecture entitled "The Wonderland of Canada" in the YMCA auditorium. It was illustrated by one hundred lantern slides of mountain scenes along the CPR right of way. Herdman showed views of the recently discovered caves of Cheops near the summit of Rogers Pass. The lecture was well attended and the *Free Press* described it as "a rich treat," so instructive and entertaining that Wheeler was asked to repeat it before he left the city.⁴⁸ The following day, Wheeler was asked to address the Canadian Club luncheon on the subject of organizing a Canadian alpine club. Wheeler discussed Canada's "great mountain heritage," explained the aims of the proposed association, and commented on its various functions. He affirmed that the moral aspect was obvious by the presence of numerous clergymen who had associated themselves with the venture. Scientific study would be promoted and artistic pleasure enhanced, while the physical exercise involved in mountaineering would not only develop and harden muscles, "but [would train] the mind in attributes of patience, earnest endeavour and overcoming of difficulties."⁴⁹ After the luncheon two Winnipeg residents, E.L. Drewey and the Reverend C.W. Gordon joined as associate members.

Later that afternoon the delegates met to adopt a constitution and elect officers. Wheeler was elected president along with Coleman and Herdman as vice-presidents. Tom Wilson, the prominent Banff packer, was made a member of the advisory board and six persons, including Parker, were granted honorary membership.⁵⁰ The objectives of the ACC were to promote the study of the alpine and glacial regions of Canada, to promote artistic endeavours in relation to mountain scenery, to educate Canadians to appreciate their mountain heritage, to stimulate mountaineering and open new regions "as a national playground," to preserve the pristine beauty and the flora and fauna of the alpine regions, and to exchange literature with other similar organizations. In addition to promoting

the exploration and study of the country's alpine regions, the ACC would also disseminate published material and photographs, promote the study of glaciers, establish an art section, and organize a group of qualified guides and outfitters who would assist in fulfilling the club's mandate.⁵¹ The ACC would temporarily be located in Winnipeg because the secretary lived there. It was also decided to hold the first summer camp at Yoho Lake near the summit of Yoho Pass. As soon as the club's finances permitted, a journal entitled the *Canadian Alpine Journal* would be published and distributed to members.⁵²

There were five categories of membership: honorary, associate, active, graduate and subscribing. Honorary membership was accorded to those who had distinguished themselves in mountaineering, exploration or research. Among the first six honorary members were J.N. Collie, discoverer of the Columbia Icefields, Edouard Deville, surveyor-general of Canada, Charles Fay, and Edward Whympfer, conqueror of the Matterhorn. Associate members were those who had not qualified for active membership but who supported the ACC by an annual contribution of twenty-five dollars. J.D. Patterson of Woodstock, Ontario, was the first person to join as an associate member and he was followed by William Whyte. Active members were those who had ascended a mountain not less than ten thousand feet above sea level while graduating members were given a two-year probationary period to qualify for active membership. The purpose of the annual summer camp was to permit graduating members to change their status. Subscribing members took no active part in the ACC's activities but received its publications.⁵³

The *Free Press* provided extensive coverage of these organizational activities. Dafoe was very pleased with the outcome because an independent Canadian association had been established. There was no screaming eagle on the ACC's crest; its emblem was Mount Assiniboine and the flags of Britain and Canada. Furthermore, the contribution of American and British alpinists had been acknowledged by honorary memberships as he had suggested earlier. A new era was in the making as Canadian mountaineers ventured out to conquer virgin summits. It was indeed a proud *Free Press* that proclaimed: "The notorious days of national apathy are already past." The ACC would redeem Canada's honour.⁵⁴

For its part, the *Calgary Daily Herald* was also supportive. In an editorial it affirmed that there could be "no more practical or patriotic scheme" to exploit Canada's mountains than the formation of the ACC. The growth of the club would benefit not only the nation but especially Alberta. The ACC's activities would focus attention on the natural beauties of the province and attract tourists, and this would enhance the material prosperity of the province.⁵⁵ The *Vancouver Daily Province* claimed that the establishment of the ACC provided the tourist association of British Columbia with a valuable auxiliary in proclaiming the merits of that province to artists and sportsmen. Tourists would pass through Winnipeg where organizations such as the ACC would inform them "of the

glories of the mountains beyond the plains and of the latent riches of British Columbia and its delightful climate.” The paper affirmed that the province would have a continual flow of additional tourists as a result of the ACC’s activities, and consequently it deserved the encouragement and cooperation of all public and semipublic bodies in British Columbia.⁵⁶

The *Townsmen* had only one criticism and that had to do with the choice of the name Alpine Club, which it felt was too imitative of the British Alpine Club. In a letter to the editor Wheeler defended the selection of the name by stating that the alternatives such as Canadian Rocky Mountain Club, Rocky Mountain Club or Cordilleran Club were unsuitable. He was quick to declare that the ACC did not propose to be “a mere mountain club of which there are dozens in Europe,” but that it aspired “to be and would become one of the premier Alpine organizations of the world.” He suggested, however, that the name Alpine Club of Canada was more dignified than the term Canadian Alpine Club. The editor remained unconvinced and in a rebuttal he stated: “But *we* are Canadians! Could anything be better than that? And what’s wrong with ‘Canadian Rocky Mountain Club?’”⁵⁷ Insofar as the editor of the *The Field: The Country Gentleman’s Newspaper* was concerned,

The idea of Winnipeg, a city of the plains, becoming the centre of an Alpine Club has a delightfully comic side suggestive of friend Tartarin, but being practically the centre of Canada it was found convenient for business purposes.⁵⁸

After the organizational activities in Winnipeg were terminated, attention turned to preparing the first summer camp to be held 9-16 July in the Yoho Valley and a circular was sent out to members informing them of the location, charges and requirements.⁵⁹ In keeping with the objectives of the ACC, the purpose of this “summer school” was to enable members to meet in the mountains and to provide graduating members with an opportunity to qualify for active membership by climbing a mountain ten thousand feet above sea level. Over one hundred persons attended this camp and forty-four graduated to active membership. The camp was in charge of M.P. Bridgland and H.G. Wheeler, both members of the Topographical Survey. The CPR loaned the services of two of its Swiss guides, Edouard Feuz Jr. and Gottfried Feuz. For its part, the dominion government provided men, horses and equipment while the government of Alberta contributed a grant of \$250. Local outfitters and guides placed their outfits at the disposal of the camp free of charge.⁶⁰

Women were encouraged to join the ACC and attend its camps, but they were not allowed to rope up while wearing skirts because in this attire, “they [were] a distinct source of danger to the entire party.” The “serviceable and safe” clothing recommended for females consisted of “knickerbockers or bloomers with putties or gaiters and sweater.”⁶¹ Mountaineering, like the “manly sports,” was not regarded as the exclusive prerogative of males. It was felt that women could contribute to mountaineering as well as derive benefits from their

participation. Where males were expected to display courage, strength and stamina, women would demonstrate grace, modesty and elegance, thereby bringing about a greater refinement and dignity to mountaineering. Through participation women would be healthier and as mothers would bear healthier children.⁶²

In the first summer camp, female members took part in the ascents of Mounts Vice-President (10,049 feet), President (10,287 feet), Burgess (8,463), Wapta (9,106 feet) and Field (8,645 feet). Mount Collie was climbed by a female member of the ACC on the same day as the official club ascent, but she was not in attendance at the camp and had followed a different route with her Swiss guide. No women participated in the first ascents of Mounts Amgadamo (9,537 feet) and Marpole (9,822 feet).⁶³

In addition to the official climbs, trips were organized to view the beauties of the Yoho Valley. Four two-day trips were made around the Yoho Valley itself and sixty persons participated in excursion. Three other trips involving twenty-seven persons were made to the Emerald glacier. Nineteen individuals visited Takakkaw Falls while the ACC's scientific section made a trip to the Yoho glacier to initiate yearly studies of its rate of flow and recession. Numerous visits were made to Inspiration Point near the Upper Yoho Valley trail, and to Lookout Point on the Lower Yoho Valley trail, which presented a spectacular view of Takakkaw Falls.⁶⁴

The "unqualified success" of the ACC's first summer camp was attributed to Wheeler's "generalship." The Yoho camp had been an experiment but it was so successful and well received that it was repeated annually and became an institution. A decision was made to hold the 1908 camp in Paradise Valley at the foot of the Horseshoe glacier.⁶⁵ Membership was increasing and in 1908 the ranks of the twenty-six original members who had met in Winnipeg had swelled to two hundred. Attendance at the Paradise Valley camp was expected to be greater than that of the previous year. In her report Parker, the club's secretary, commented on the ACC's growth but felt that it was not too rapid. The summer camp, delightful as it appeared, was not an "idle holiday" because "there is no foolishness in mountaineering; it is too vigorous a pastime." Membership requirements were demanding and the only "royal road" was as an associate member who paid twenty-five dollars a year as opposed to five dollars for active members and two dollars for graduating members. Associate membership was a means whereby honourable men could invest money in "nationhood, yielding a far-off interest, not of tears but of noble, patriotic temper." Parker had lost none of her enthusiasm and optimism as she predicted that the ACC would

weld together the provinces in the bonds of brotherhood; and furnish training in the more Spartan virtues of time of peace. It will not be many years before it will have entrenched itself deep in every province between two oceans, when its membership will be in the thousands, and every Canadian mountaineer make the Club's motto his own — *sic itur ad astra*.⁶⁶

For his part, Wheeler did not relax his efforts on behalf of the ACC. In December 1906 he was in eastern Canada and gave a series of lectures in Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and other centres. He was the guest of the Canadian Club in Ottawa where he presented an address on Canadian mountaineering. In January the executive first met in Winnipeg and later in Calgary, where a decision was taken to publish the *Canadian Alpine Journal* and \$800 was allotted to print the first issue.⁶⁷

Since its inception in 1906, the ACC has met its objective of encouraging mountaineering and it has become Canada's premier alpine association. It has built and maintained a system of huts and a clubhouse, stimulated the creation of an association of qualified, certified guides, published guidebooks and encouraged expeditions. Its annual mountaineering camps have become a traditional retreat for alpinists of all ages and all walks of life. Its annual publication, the *Canadian Alpine Journal*, has provided mountaineers with a medium of communication as well as an instrument for keeping abreast of developments in the sport.

In an historical perspective, the founding of the ACC is significant because it was an early manifestation of Canadian cultural nationalism. The organizational movement combined an appreciation of British values and traditions in sport with an exuberant Canadian nationalist sentiment. Mountaineering was not to be undertaken solely to provide recreation and leisure for its adherents. Like the "manly sports," mountaineering would revitalize body and mind, inculcate Victorian values, and provide individuals with an opportunity to be "worthy of their racial and cultural heritage."⁶⁸ Unlike attempts to establish closer economic relations with the United States, the establishment of an association for Canadian mountaineers had no immediate political ramifications, but nevertheless it was a subject of crucial importance to contemporaries, who were proud of their British heritage and had an abounding faith in the ability of Canadians. The appeals made by Wheeler, Dafoe and Parker found a receptive audience among middle- and upper-class English-speaking Canadians. Protestant clergymen were also interested because, as a vigorous activity, mountaineering developed mature moral strength and fashioned individuals who "could be counted upon to stand up for God and the forces of Right."⁶⁹ Individuals like Parker were proud of the young dominion and felt that it would be a shame for Canadians to remain indifferent and apathetic to the conquest of their mountains by American and European climbers. Out of self-respect, Canada had to form its own alpine club rather than opt for associate membership in the AAC.

In addition to this patriotic sentiment there was the conviction that mountaineering was a vigorous and ethical pastime that would stimulate the energetic and intelligent manhood of Canada. Canada's mountain ranges presented a challenge to the bold and strong and they would become better citizens as a result of the strenuous joys of mountaineering. Canadians had created a country that was taking its place among the nations of the world and it was imperative that they make their own mountaineering history.

Parker's role in the creation of the ACC is remarkable. It was her strong opposition to affiliation with the AAC that turned the tide in favour of an independent Canadian organization. Ironically, her contribution was made at a time when, in most spheres of activity, women were neither recognized as the equals of men nor accorded the same status. Mountaineering may have appeared to be a man's sport but it was an activity that provided women who shared the same values and aspirations with an opportunity to participate equally and, in Parker's case, to make a significant contribution. The ACC acknowledged her organizational efforts and continued devotion by naming her as its first honorary secretary and honorary member, and in a most fitting tribute, named the Elizabeth Parker Hut at Lake O'Hara after her.

NOTES

1. W.G. Beers, *Lacrosse: The National Game of Canada* (Montréal: Dawson, 1869), xv-xvi.
2. Morris Mott, "Manly Sports and Manitobans: Settlement Days to World War One" (Ph.D. dissertation, Queen's University, 1980), 56-57.
3. *Ibid.*, 123, 135, 190.
4. E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism* (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1983), 22.
5. S. Fleming, *England and Canada: A Summer Tour Between Old and New Westminster, with Historical Notes* (London: S. Low, 1884), 110.
6. E. Fraser, *Wheeler* (Banff: Summerthought, 1978), chapter 8.
7. A.O. Wheeler Diary, 18 November 1902. The author wishes to thank Dr. J.O. Wheeler, who made his grandfather's scrapbooks and diaries available for consultation.
8. *Manitoba Free Press* (hereafter *Free Press*), 26 November 1902.
9. *Ibid.*, 3 January 1903.
10. *Free Press*, 9 September 1905. Elizabeth Parker was born in Colchester County, Nova Scotia, and attended Normal School in Truro. She came to Winnipeg in 1892 and became very active in associations such as the Travellers' Aid Society, the YWCA and the Women's Canadian Club. As a result of her interest in literature, she wrote an account of recitals of Robert Browning's works which was accepted for publication by the *Free Press* in 1904. She then began to write the weekly column "Literary Causerie," which she signed "M.T.," the initials of her mother's maiden name. In 1912, she began an editorial page feature, "A Reader's Notes," using the pseudonym "The Bookman." *Free Press*, 27 October 1944; *Canadian Alpine Journal* (hereafter *CAJ*) (1944): 122-27.
11. *Ibid.*, 16 September 1905.
12. *Ibid.*, 23 September 23, 1905.
13. *Winnipeg Telegram*, 18 May 1905.
14. R. Cook, *The Politics of John W. Dafoe and the Free Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 285-86. Mott, "Manly Sports and Manitobans," 119.
15. *Free Press*, 30 September 1905.

16. A.O. Wheeler, "Origin and Founding of the Alpine Club of Canada, 1906," *CAJ* (1938): 88.
17. Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), MG 26 G, W. Laurier Papers, 105177, E. Parker to The Premier of Canada, 5 January 1905.
18. A.O. Wheeler, *The Selkirk Range* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1905), 293.
19. *Ibid.*, 351.
20. *Free Press*, 25 November 1905.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Wheeler, "Origin and Founding of the Alpine Club," 88.
23. *Free Press*, 10 April 1926.
24. *Ibid.*, 27 November 1905.
25. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies (hereafter Whyte Museum), AC OM 44, A.O. Wheeler, "Appeal for a Canadian Alpine Club," 30 November 1905. Prime Minister Laurier was among the recipients of this circular letter. PAC, MG 26 G, W. Laurier Papers, 105180-182.
26. *Ibid.*, AC O 44, A.O. Wheeler to W. Whyte, 16 December, 1905.
27. *Ibid.*, Second Vice-President [Whyte] to R. Kerr, n.d.
28. *Ibid.*, Second Vice-President [Whyte] to Mr. Wheeler, 30 January 1906.
29. *Free Press*, 10 April 1926.
30. *Ibid.*, 16 December 1905.
31. *Ibid.*, 10 January 1906.
32. A.O. Wheeler Diary, 16 December 1905.
33. PAC, MG 26 G, W. Laurier Papers, 105178, E. Parker to The Premier of Canada.
34. *Winnipeg Telegram*, 18 May 1905.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Free Press*, 15 January 1906.
37. PAC, W. Laurier Papers, 105181, E. Parker to Sir W. Laurier, 3 January 1906.
38. *Ibid.*, 105183, Laurier to Mrs. Parker, 11 January 1906.
39. *Winnipeg Telegram*, 18 May 1907.
40. *Free Press*, 17 February 1906.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Wheeler, "Origin and Founding of the Alpine Club," 89-90.
43. *Ibid.*, 90.
44. *Toronto Globe*, 17 March 1906.
45. Wheeler, "Origin and Founding of the Alpine Club," 90.
46. *Free Press*, 27 March 1906.
47. *Ibid.*, 28 March 1906.

48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 30 March 1906.
50. Wheeler, "Origin and Founding of the Alpine Club," 92.
51. "Constitution," *CAJ* (1907): 178.
52. Wheeler, "Origin and Founding of the Alpine Club," 92.
53. "Constitution," *CAJ*.
54. *Free Press* 31 March 1906.
55. A.O. Wheeler Scrapbook, volume 1, p. 54, clipping, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 26 April 1906.
56. Ibid., p. 16, clipping, *Vancouver Daily Province*, 28 March 1906.
57. Ibid., p. 17, undated clipping, *The Townsman*. The clipping provides no information as to where this journal was published nor is it listed in the *Union List of Canadian Newspapers Held by Canadian Libraries*.
58. Ibid., p. 47, clipping, *The Field: The Country Gentleman's Newspaper*.
59. "Yoho Camp Circular Issued," *CAJ* (1907): 169-70.
60. A.O. Wheeler Scrapbook, volume 1, p. 45, unidentified and undated clipping, "Guides of the Upper and Lower Altitudes."
61. Ibid., p. 26, unidentified and undated clipping, "The Alpine Club of Canada First Summer Camp in the Yoho Park."
62. Mott, "Manly Sports and Manitobans," 211.
63. "Report of Chief Mountaineer," *CAJ* (1907): 171-75.
64. Ibid., "Trips," 176-77.
65. Ibid., "Report of Secretary," pp. 165-66.
66. Ibid., 166. The phrase is from Virgil: "Such is the way to the stars," that is, to immortal fame.
67. Ibid.
68. Mott, "Manly Sports and Manitobans," 123.
69. Ibid., 60.



“A Square Deal for All and No Railroading”: Labour and Politics in Brandon, 1900-1920

Tom Mitchell

ABSTRACT. Brandon's election of a labourite to the Manitoba legislature in 1920 was the culmination of twenty years of growth in the political consciousness and activity of the city's labour movement. Initially, the Trades and Labour Council contented itself with lobbying civic politicians for reforms. The influence of local socialists and social gospellers, as well as anger over inflation during World War I caused Brandon labour to seek Labour representation at all levels of government independent of the two established parties. Strikes in 1919 created the degree of class consciousness necessary for the 1920 victory.

SOMMAIRE. L'élection en 1920 à Brandon d'un travailliste marque l'apogée de vingt années de croissance dans la conscience et l'activité politiques du mouvement ouvrier de la ville. A l'origine, le "Trades and Labour Council" se contentait de faire pression sur les politiciens municipaux pour obtenir des réformes. L'influence des socialistes locaux et des prêcheurs sociaux et la colère provoquée par l'inflation au cours de la Première Guerre mondiale amenèrent les travailleurs de Brandon à se faire représenter par des travaillistes à tous les niveaux de gouvernements indépendamment des deux partis établis. Les grèves de 1919 créèrent la conscience de classe nécessaire à la victoire de 1920.

Prior to World War I, the political life of western Canadian communities was dominated by individuals drawn predominantly from the region's business and professional elite. Still, beginning early in the twentieth century, the growing numerical importance of working-class voters and a widening ideological commitment among the region's workers to direct participation in politics resulted in the emergence of working-class political activities in various centres across western Canada. In Brandon from 1900 to 1920, the city's workers played an increasingly important role in city politics, challenging the image of the city as a centre of political conservatism with its politically homogeneous populace loyal to a benevolent business and professional elite. Worker influence was exercised through the Brandon Trades and Labour Council, the Labour Representation League, the Brandon People's Church, and locals of the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Dominion Labour Party (DLP) and the Brandon Labour Party.

While the organizations, ideologies, and styles which collectively shaped and informed the evolution of Brandon's labour political movement were unabashedly British in character, its vitality derived from the commitment of workers in Brandon to traditional notions of popular justice and liberty.¹ The movement's ideological roots were principally those of labourism; the evanescent character of many of its organizational structures reflected the rapidity of its evolution, and the pervasive influence of developments in Winnipeg on the evolving character of Brandon's labour political movement. In the last years of World War I, a class-conscious labourite ideology leavened by ethical and Marxist socialism attracted wide support among Brandon's working class. In 1920, the growing sophistication and popularity of this labourite ideology contributed to the election of the Reverend A.E. Smith to the provincial legislature as the candidate of the Brandon Labour Party, a party conceived and controlled by the city's organized labour movement.

From 1900 to World War I, Brandon's population grew from 5,620 to 13,890. During these years the predominantly British and Protestant character of the city's population began to decline. In 1901, 83 percent of the population was British; in 1911, 74 percent. Meanwhile, Brandonites of Central and Eastern European backgrounds grew from 2 percent in 1901 to 9 percent in 1911.²

While the spacious residences of Brandon's business and professional elite dominated the area immediately to the south and west of the central business district, the homes of workers filled the rest of the city. The expanding working-class neighbourhood to the east of First Street was a long-standing feature of the city. The area south of Victoria Avenue, termed the "English Ward," was a product of the arrival in the city of British working-class immigrants prior to World War I. The residential area north of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) tracks was occupied almost exclusively by the primitive and overcrowded homes of Central and Eastern European working class immigrants who had arrived in Brandon, beginning in the last years of the century.³ A *Brandon Sun* article published in 1902 termed the north end "Brandon's Ghetto," and noted with dismay that it was difficult to "imagine that in the clean little city of Brandon, there would be such a class of dwellings . . ."⁴

Sifton's "men in sheepskin coats" formed an unassimilated and unorganized residue of unskilled industrial labour within Brandon's growing working class, which was composed principally of skilled workers in the city's expanding transportation, construction and manufacturing industries. Each sector of the city's economy experienced dramatic growth in the years before World War I. For example, between 1900 and 1910 the number of manufacturing establishments in Brandon employing at least five individuals more than doubled. By 1910, twenty-nine manufacturing establishments, representing a capital investment of \$3,012,115, employed a work force of 830 and paid \$571,971 per annum in wages, while producing goods valued at \$2,330,430.⁵

Just as the growth and transformation of the working class added new dimensions to the city's social and economic character, the growing electoral significance of Brandon's workers changed the city's political life. Increasingly, the traditional political ascendancy of the city's business and professional elite depended on the effectiveness of patronage, electoral manipulation and explicit appeals for working-class support in securing the votes of the city's workers. This growing reliance of the city's elite on working-class voters was acknowledged as early as 1902, when newly elected Mayor J.W. Fleming, a prominent Liberal in the Brandon business community, observed that "his election was due largely to the working men who had given him their support."⁶ In 1903 Robert Hall, a Brandon area farmer and a Liberal, ran against Conservative John Hanbury, the owner of a large lumber mill, for the mayor's office. During the election, the Liberal *Brandon Sun* appealed repeatedly to Brandon's workers to vote for Hall, contending that in the past

the representatives of the city . . . had been chosen from the wealthier classes — from the ranks of the merchants, the manufacturers, and the professions . . . the

working man has a right to expect that his interests, equally with those of wealthier citizens, should be represented.⁷

Though neither Hanbury nor Hall could claim to be “working men,” Hanbury’s reputation as the largest employer in Brandon — other than the CPR — certainly identified him as a representative of Brandon’s wealthy class, and therefore incapable of representing the interests of the working man in the mayor’s office. With the help of the city’s workers, Hall won the election.

While working-class voters could shape the outcome of elections in the city, any challenge to the political ascendancy of the city’s business and professional elite required the emergence of a unified, class-conscious political movement and the elaboration of a program and strategy which would attract the enthusiastic support of the city’s workers. Prior to World War I, the development of such an inclusive political movement was undermined when two competing political orientations emerged among Brandon’s workers. The first and most pervasive was the labourism of the city’s organized skilled workers. The second was the revolutionary socialism of the Brandon local of the SPC.

Labourism owed its beginnings in Brandon to the creation of the Brandon Trades and Labour Council in July 1906 after the visit to the city of W.R. Trotter, the western organizer for the Trades and Labour Congress.⁸ The original council contained thirteen locals, including those of railway workers, sheet metal workers, plumbers and steam fitters, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, cigar makers, printers and barbers. By 1912 there were twenty-four locals in Brandon.⁹ The new Trades and Labour Council provided a vehicle for organized skilled workers to initiate the first deliberate, organized working-class political action in Brandon.

Consistent with traditional British and Canadian labourism, the Brandon Trades and Labour Council functioned as both the central union and political organization for the city’s organized workers.¹⁰ In the years before World War I the trades council, as the principal focus of labourite activity, exercised political influence in a nonpartisan fashion, choosing not to participate directly in the city’s politics by nominating or endorsing candidates for election to public office. Rather, the council lobbied the city’s politicians in support of municipal ownership of public utilities including the city’s street railway, a hospital, a public library, public baths and a municipal employment bureau. The city’s skilled workers also lobbied assiduously for a fair wage clause in all municipal contracts, home postal delivery, compulsory education, Sunday street car service, paid Saturday half-holidays, garden allotments and public works for the unemployed.¹¹ The moderate and practical character of the reforms they sought were squarely within the ideological tradition of “labourism,” the term which some authors have used to differentiate reformist labour-initiated political action from both socialism and syndicalism, two ideologies competing with reformism in this period in western Canada.¹²

Like their counterparts in other communities, Brandon's labourites were almost invariably skilled craft workers with a history of autonomy on the job and success as unionists in imposing their will on employers. In Brandon from 1907 to 1914, five of the eight strikes reported in the city erupted over issues related to the control of the work process or the work site, and in each case the workers prevailed.¹³ This experience in the labour process shaped a class pride, along with a general acceptance of capitalist economic relations. Accordingly, the political demands of Brandon's labourites reflected their perceived interests as respectable workers within an economic system with which they were in general agreement. Moreover, Brandon's labourites had no ideological commitment to a proletarian dominance over the city's political life, or the creation of absolute social equality.

The social and political moderation of the city's labourites was reflected as well in a determined self-reliance, which was a badge of the skilled worker's respectability and his economic and social independence. As the independence and respectability of Brandon's skilled workers was insured through craft and class solidarity, not individual accumulation, the labourite ideology of the city's skilled workers held within it the potential for trade union solidarity, political militancy and class antagonism when the perceived interests of the city's skilled workers were threatened or traditional notions of economic justice or liberty were challenged. In the absence of such provocation, the commitment of the city's skilled workers to class solidarity was evident in the presence of a vigorous organized labour movement in the city, and in the widespread existence of fraternal organizations in Brandon supported by the city's workers. For example, 1913 saw the opening of Fraternal Hall, which had been constructed through the cooperative efforts of the city's fraternal organizations.¹⁴

Brandon's labourites were typically ethnocentric and exclusive in their preoccupation with defending and advancing the interests of Brandon's British and Canadian skilled workers, viewing themselves as a social class of higher standing and worth than unskilled workers, especially those of non-British background. This social and ethnic exclusivity precluded any concerted action to extend organized labour to the ranks of the unskilled, or to elaborate a political program or strategy designed to incorporate the interests and support of the city's unskilled and non-Anglo-Saxon working class. In their attack on the city's employment practices, for example, members of the Brandon Trades and Labour Council blamed low wages as much on the victims as on the setters of the wages. As one member of the trades council asserted in disputing the value of a fair wage clause in all civic contracts,

no white man needed apply for a job under the city officials. Mayor Fleming had secured his position through the vote of the Galicians and their employment was the natural sequel.¹⁵

The second orientation in the city's emergent labour political movement was the revolutionary socialism advanced by the Brandon local of the SPC which,

from 1909 to the outbreak of World War I advocated the destruction of capitalism. While the SPC local was composed almost exclusively of skilled British working men involved in the city's building trades, Brandon's SPC activists were determined to communicate their revolutionary message to the city's working class regardless of trade or ethnic background.

At a time when the SPC in Winnipeg was moribund, Brandon's local engaged in a vigorous program of socialist evangelism. In May 1909 representatives of the local appeared before city council to assert their right to hold rallies on Brandon streets.¹⁶ In September 1910 Wilf Gribble, a Lancashire-born SPC organizer, spent a week in Brandon directing the organization and propaganda work of the local.¹⁷ In October 1910 the Brandon local continued its propaganda work by publishing a leaflet outlining the party's aims, a copy of which was delivered to the door of “every wage plug” in the city. The leaflet summed up the party's goal as the “transformation . . . of capitalist property . . . into the collective property of the working class.”¹⁸ By January 1911 the local had a headquarters and reading room in operation, held regular economic and “speaker's” classes, and had initiated a variety of activities to spread the party's propaganda. In April 1911 the Brandon local distributed a special Brandon edition of the *Western Clarion* to the homes of Brandon's “wage slaves.”¹⁹

Members of the SPC, including the local's moving spirit, Edmund Fulcher, were active if occasionally quarrelsome members of the city's Trades and Labour Council.²⁰ Paradoxically, SPC militants who would applaud Fulcher's assertion that “nothing short of socialism can benefit the workers” also joined him in extolling the accomplishments of the manifestly reform-oriented Trades and Labour Council.²¹ For example, when the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners — a hotbed of SPC activists — held a banquet on 28 December 1912, SPC activist T. Mellalieu toasted the Trades and Labour Council, asserting that it was from trade unionism that the idea of the modern municipality had emerged, and declaring that trade unionism was essential in maintaining the market price of labour. Fulcher responded to Mellalieu's toast, saluting the vigorous efforts that had been made by the Trades and Labour Council to secure a public library and public baths for the city.²² Such ideological inconsistency was not atypical of SPC militants in other communities in the west. A faction of the SPC, however, rejected all reforms within capitalism and the intransigence of these “impossibilists” limited the party's appeal.

Impossibilism, joined to the irreconcilability of the labourism of the city's skilled workers and the radicalism of the SPC, rendered the SPC a marginal, if divisive, influence among the city's working class. Still, the presence of revolutionary socialists in Brandon's labour movement leavened the moderate labourism of the majority of the city's skilled workers, contributing to the growing radicalism of labour in Brandon during the last years of World War I.

By 1915, prewar unemployment and the departure of working men to the trenches resulted in the dissolution of both the Trades Council and the SPC local

in Brandon. However, the eclipse of organized labour from political activity in the city did not prevent Brandon's labour political movement from continuing to evolve. During the middle years of the war labourites, progressives and middle-class socialists sought, with varying degrees of success, to create in Brandon the labour political organizations which had already appeared in Winnipeg. These efforts helped form a basis for the creation of an inclusive, broadly based labour political movement. In the last years of the war, organized skilled workers — through a reconstituted and revitalized Trades Council — took the lead in the formation of such a political organization, and in the elaboration of a comprehensive political program for the direct participation of labour in Brandon's electoral politics.

The tendency of Brandon's labour movement to become an inclusive political movement composed of labourites, progressives and socialists, was evident as early as 1913 when A.E. Smith, the new minister of Brandon's First Methodist Church, was named to the Trades and Labour Council as the council's first delegate from the Brandon Ministerial Association.²³ Smith was a vigorous advocate of the social gospel and an active supporter of working-class interests. Though he had come to Methodism through a personal experience of conversion, his theology had been conditioned during his training for the ministry by progressive thinkers including J.S. Woodsworth and Salem Bland.²⁴

Like many other Canadians, Smith viewed World War I as an opportunity to reform Canadian society. In an address to the Western Manitoba Teachers' Association in the fall of 1915, he asserted with unconcealed pleasure that Canadian "society was in the grip of a mighty revolution . . ."²⁵ While Smith's language was apocalyptic, there was some evidence that change was in the air. In August 1915 the Norris government had been elected on a platform of broad social reform. In the same election, F.J. Dixon and R.A. Rigg had been returned in Winnipeg as "Labour" representatives.

In Brandon, a local of the Winnipeg-based SDP was organized in October. The SDP combined a pragmatic commitment to electoral success and immediate reform with the revolutionary vision of Marxist socialism. The Brandon local of the SPC, which appears to have been organized principally by James Skene, a Brandon teacher, failed to win broad support among the city's workers.²⁶ In November 1915 R.A. Rigg addressed the city's putative Social Democrats, attacking the existing social system, pleading for a more equal distribution of wealth, and the public ownership of the means of production and distribution.²⁷ Following Rigg's appearance, however, Skene lamented the absence of labour radicalism in the city.²⁸

This indifference waned early in 1916, when a civic controversy involving the Brandon Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) incited class antagonism in the city. The controversy was ignited in February 1916, when a

delegation representing the YMCA, headed by C.S. Maharg, superintendent of CPR operations, appeared before city council and requested that council issue debentures in the name of the city in the amount of \$33,000 to provide funds to cover the remaining debt incurred by the YMCA in constructing a new building prior to World War I.²⁹

The Brandon YMCA had been established in 1886 by leading young businessmen in the city, including James Smart and Clifford Sifton.³⁰ During its years of operation, it had evolved into a service organization similar to YMCA organizations across North America. In Brandon, however, the perception persisted of the YMCA as an exclusive organization serving the city's Protestant business and professional elite. The YMCA had appealed to the city council for assistance in 1914, and the city's ratepayers had agreed to issue \$20,000 in debentures in the name of the city to raise funds for the YMCA building. Its appeal for an additional \$33,000 provoked angry opposition from representatives of the city's workers, who viewed the YMCA as an elitist and exclusive institution controlled by individuals well able to afford all they received from the YMCA. Opposition to the YMCA's request was manifested in delegations before city council and in letters to the *Brandon Sun*.³¹ Opponents argued that the proposal was designed to shift the YMCA's financial problems from its business and professional patrons to the city's hard-pressed taxpayers.

Another important focus of resistance to the YMCA proposal was the Brandon People's Forum, modeled after the People's Forum established in Winnipeg by J.S. Woodsworth in 1912.³² Beginning early in 1916 the forum, which met at King George School in the city's predominantly working-class east end, provided a focus for Brandon's labourites and socialists to make common cause on the issues of the day. Labourites and socialists such as James Skene and J.A.G. Grantham used the forum to attack the YMCA's request for financial help. During a meeting of the forum on 15 February 1916 the proposal to bail out the YMCA was denounced, its critics contending that whatever the pretensions of the organization, it had failed to justify its claim for community support and had no right to describe itself as a Christian organization.³³

A civic bylaw calling for the issue of the debentures, as requested by the YMCA, required the support of two-thirds of the ratepayers who chose to vote on the matter. Though the city council agreed to submit the matter to a vote, none was held since public opposition to the proposal expressed through the press and the Brandon's People's Forum led the YMCA to withdraw its request.

The YMCA controversy occurred at a time of deepening economic crisis, the result of spiralling, war-induced inflation which was spreading economic distress among workers unable to achieve wage increases. The civic discord of the YMCA controversy illustrated how the economic distress could cause deep class antagonism and political crisis in communities such as Brandon. More immediately, the YMCA controversy stirred a renewed interest in civic affairs.

In the autumn of 1915, community solidarity in support of the war effort had resulted in the filling of all aldermanic posts by acclamation; in 1916 elections occurred in three of the four city wards. Labourite J.A.G. Grantham, one of the most vigorous opponents of the YMCA proposal, was elected to city council as the alderman for Ward 1 in the city's east end.³⁴

Civic controversy and class antagonism became pervasive civic themes in Brandon in 1917. In January 1917, the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association annual meeting in Brandon was convulsed with conflict over whether to withdraw an invitation to Fred Dixon, an avowed pacifist and opponent of conscription, to address the Grain Growers.³⁵ Though a motion to withdraw the invitation was defeated, Brandon's newly organized Army and Navy Veterans took advantage of the incident to denounce Dixon publicly. The Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council protested this action, and on 23 January 1917 the Brandon veterans responded with the following motion:

That inasmuch as the Brandon Trades and Labour Council has been disbanded owing to the absence of its members at the front, we do express our utter contempt for the treacherous utterances of men who falsely claim to represent the working classes, and urge that the government take action to have them interned as enemies of the Empire, as being suspect of being on German pay for the duration of the war.³⁶

Evidence presented below indicates that the city's working class was divided on the issue of conscription. Nevertheless, the Dixon episode almost certainly prompted calls from the provincial labour movement for the reconstitution of the Brandon Trades and Labour Council in order to allow the city's workers to speak for themselves on conscription and the emerging economic and political crisis.

In the spring of 1917, concern about the cost and availability of essential commodities eclipsed concern over the possible imposition of conscription and provoked vigorous working-class protest. By late 1916, the price of fuel in Brandon had risen to record levels owing to a scarcity of coal and to congested transportation arteries;³⁷ the price of wood rose accordingly. Early in January 1917 city council approved a bylaw for the regulation of the sale of wood in the city. The bylaw provoked protests from fuel dealers who sought to have it amended or withdrawn.³⁸ In April 1917 the city's organized labour movement, including twelve union locals and fifteen hundred skilled workers, reconstituted the Brandon Trades and Labour Council. The council's first public statements were a demand for the maintenance of the fuel bylaw and, in true labourite fashion, a call for a "square deal for all classes and no railroading."³⁹

The council turned its attention immediately to the rising cost of fuel. In May 1917 CPR locals informed city council that they were prepared to help it enforce the fuel bylaw. Signalling the growing militancy of the city's working class, the CPR workers asserted that they were "prepared to take drastic action . . . to bring about more equitable dealing with regard to fuel or other commodities."⁴⁰

The Trades and Labour Council, in concert with the CPR workers, sponsored mass meetings in May and June to protest city council's refusal to create a municipal fuel yard.⁴¹ The Trades and Labour Council was responding to, not inciting, the growing militancy of the city's workers. This militancy was principally a product of the deepening economic crisis confronting the city's workers, arising from wartime inflation and the inability of workers to secure better wages.⁴²

This distress, aggravated by the apparent indifference of government at every level to profiteering at the expense of working people, prompted the council to abandon its prewar strategy of nonpartisan political activity. On 1 July 1917 the council sponsored a meeting to establish the Brandon Labour Representation League, an organization modeled after the league created in Winnipeg in 1912. The Brandon Labour Representation League was labourite in its ideological orientation. While it remained the political arm of the city's organized labour movement, the separation of the league from the Trades and Labour Council provided for the participation in the league's activities of middle-class labourites and socialists who were not formally affiliated with the city's organized labour movement. The creation of the league signalled the commitment of the city's organized labour movement to an inclusive, broad-based political party of labour.⁴³

The league's first political initiative was a cooperative one with the farmers' movement. On 19 July 1917 representatives of the league and Grain Growers in the city met and agreed to nominate a joint candidate to run in the federal election expected in the fall. On 30 July A.E. Smith, former SPC activist Edmund Fulcher, and CPR conductor R.T. Smith were nominated by the league as labour candidates for the joint convention scheduled for 1 August 1917.⁴⁴ But labour's experience in this venture was disappointing. At the convention held in the city hall,

the views of the Labour Representation League respecting a minimum wage were deliberately ignored, their nominees were, in turn, rejected, and with the exception of a noncommittal resolution calling for the mobilization of men and resources, their resolutions were kept in the background and not submitted to the convention.⁴⁵

Roderick McKenzie, a Brandon area farmer and former Liberal stalwart, was elected.⁴⁶

In October 1917 the Labour Representation League published its platform for the November civic elections. The program was a comprehensive statement of organized labour's aims at the municipal level, including a municipal fuel depot, municipal fire insurance, a progressive system of education, an advanced policy in regard to outdoor amusement and physical development, the establishment of a well-equipped public library, an eight-hour day, a fair wage for all civic employees, a nonexemption property tax, abolition of plural voting in favor of one man/one vote, and abolition of property qualifications for municipal

elections.⁴⁷ On 13 November 1917 over 150 supporters of the Labour Representation League attended a meeting at which R.B. Ferguson, a painter resident in the city's east end, CPR engineer Robert Crawford and CPR dispatcher George Morris announced their candidacies in the municipal elections. They would be joined in the election by incumbent J.A.G. Grantham as an aldermanic candidate in Ward 1.⁴⁸ Efforts to convince former SPC activist Edmund Fulcher to run for mayor were unsuccessful.

The league's municipal campaign was derailed when conflict erupted within the city's labour movement over conscription. Unhappy with the choice of the Grain Growers' candidate during the joint convention in August, anticonscriptionists among the city's labour movement determined to nominate a candidate for the December federal election. On 18 November 1917, during a tumultuous meeting called under the auspices of the Trades and Labour Council, E.J.L. Brisson, a young Englishman studying at Brandon College, was nominated as an anticonscriptionist labour candidate in the federal election.⁴⁹ In reaction to Brisson's nomination, which they considered unpatriotic, Robert Crawford and R.B. Ferguson severed their association with the Labour Representation League and announced that they would run as independent labour candidates. The *Brandon Sun*, a vigorous advocate of conscription, explained that the

socialist element in the body [the Labour Representation League], together with their anti-conscriptionist campaign have brought the organization into disrepute and antagonized a major portion of the labour party in the city.⁵⁰

The quick decision of the Trades and Labour Council executive to withdraw Brisson from the election underscored the relative weakness of the anti-conscription cause in the city.⁵¹

Meanwhile, the candidates nominated by the Labour Representation League for the municipal elections were defeated, with the exception of J.A.G. Grantham, who was reelected in the east end.⁵² Nevertheless, by the end of 1917 it was clear that the leadership of the city's labour movement was determined to provide an organizational focus for the growing anger of the city's workers at inflation, wartime profiteering and the increasingly oppressive labour policies of the Union government. This determination was intensified in late 1917 as news of the Russian Revolution reached the city. A.E. Smith notes:

the shock of the Russian Revolution was powerful enough to be felt even in Brandon . . . I was aroused. I began to seek information. I sent away for a number of books dealing with the teachings of communism. I got the Manifesto. I remember the first time I read it through. It was like a revelation of a new world into which I felt I must enter and to which I seemed to belong.⁵³

In the spring of 1918, the city's Labour Representation League was replaced when a Brandon local of the DLP was created. The DLP had been formed in Winnipeg in March 1918 by individuals associated with the Winnipeg Labour

Representation Committee and the Winnipeg SDP. Immediately following the creation of the party in Winnipeg, William Ivens was dispatched to Brandon to promote the creation of a branch in the city. In early May 1918 he reported to the Winnipeg executive that the creation of a Brandon branch was imminent.⁵⁴ This exemplified the responsiveness of Brandon’s labour political movement to developments in Winnipeg, whose rapidly evolving labour movement constituted, by 1919, the vanguard of working-class militancy in Canada.

The creation of the Brandon local of the DLP signalled the transformation of the city’s labour political movement from that of a predominantly proletarian one to one which was an alliance of labourites, progressive liberals, and socialists. The original executive of the DLP in Brandon was composed of a cross section of labour in the city and included middle-class socialists such as A.E. Smith.⁵⁵ In 1918 A.E. Smith played a central role in the historic quadrennial conference of the Methodist Church, which adopted a report committing the church “to nothing less than a complete social reconstruction” of Canadian society.⁵⁶

The intent of the DLP’s leadership, which included leading figures in the revitalized Trades and Labour Council, was to elaborate a political program and strategy which could draw broad support from the city’s working class and other progressive elements in the city. To this end, the party’s constitution included provision for a press committee, an education and propaganda committee, a membership committee and an organization committee. Moreover, the party’s aims reflect the influence of labourism, the social gospel and Marxist socialism. These aims included:

public ownership of railways, telephones, and other public utilities, free public education, the abolition of property qualifications and election deposits for public office, the abolition of child labour, the establishment of equal pay for men and women, and equal suffrage for men and women over twenty-one years of age, and . . . the transformation of capitalist property into social property with production for use instead of for profit.⁵⁷

Craig Heron’s observation concerning Canadian working-class politics in this era aptly describes the Brandon situation in the spring of 1918:

For the first time . . . working class liberalism had linked up with elements of Marxist and ethical socialism in a dynamic alliance, which, under the old label of labourism, provided the ideological dimension of the unprecedented postwar upsurge of the Canadian working class.⁵⁸

The epidemic of Spanish influenza which swept across the country in the autumn of 1918 prevented the holding of any public meetings in the city during the November civic elections. Labourite J.A.G. Grantham was reelected, while two other labour candidates endorsed by the Trades and Labour Council and the DLP were defeated.⁵⁹ The poor performance of labour candidates suggested that

a means of communicating the political program of the city's labour political movement to Brandon's workers was essential if electoral success was to be achieved. Accordingly, in January 1919 the Brandon Trades and Labour Council, in conjunction with the DLP, began the publication of a labour newspaper, the *Confederate*, characterized by the newspaper's editorial committee as labour's "first considerable undertaking in public propaganda."⁶⁰

In the spring of 1919 a series of dramatic strikes, including a civic employees' strike in April 1919, a sympathetic strike in conjunction with the Winnipeg General Strike during May and June, and an abortive general strike at the end of June, provoked unprecedented class antagonism in Brandon. Though the civic employees' strike in April was a dramatic success, a determined coalition of forces — including the hastily formed Brandon Law and Order League composed of Brandon's business and professional elite, city council, a special detachment of the Royal North-West Mounted Police (RNWMP), and provincial and federal authorities — defeated the latter two strikes. In the aftermath of the strikes, which apparently ruptured the unity of the DLP, Brandon's workers sought to protect their class interests through direct political action under the auspices of the Brandon Trades and Labour Council and, in 1920, the Brandon Labour Party.⁶¹

In engendering a greater working-class solidarity among the city's workers, the spring strikes diminished the social and political isolation of Brandon's workers of Central and Eastern European origin. Before the war these workers had remained largely unorganized and outside the city's labour political activities. Their isolation was exacerbated by the hysteria generated by the war. In Brandon an Alien Detention Centre, which contained nearly one thousand "enemy aliens" at the end of 1916, gave Brandon's "alien" population a unique sense of its isolation. It took the dramatic events of the spring of 1919 to cause a reassessment by the city's British and Canadian workers of their relations with the city's "foreign" workers. While evidence exists to suggest that animosity towards "alien" working men continued among segments of the city's English-speaking working class, the cause of working-class solidarity in the city was advanced by the strike leadership through the publication of strike bulletins and the organization of strike rallies and parades in which non-British workers participated. In the 1920 provincial election, workers voting at the Ukrainian Home in the city's north end cast their ballots almost unanimously for Brandon's first provincial Labour candidate.⁶²

The strikes also helped to integrate women into Brandon's labour political movement. Female telephone operators and civic employees were among the city's striking workers during the spring strikes. In 1969 Beatrice Brigden and Edith Cove, two long-standing members of Manitoba's labour political movement, recalled that their association with the labour movement dated from their involvement in the Brandon labour crisis of 1919 and the provincial election of 1920.⁶³

The solidarity of Brandon’s working class was also advanced by the creation of a labour church in Brandon under the leadership of A.E. Smith. The People’s Church, organized on 8 June 1919, was designed to provide a forum “where the gospel of social Christianity could be fearlessly propounded.”⁶⁴ The idea of creating the church had originated with the organizing committee of the Brandon People’s Forum which, through the winter of 1918-19, had sponsored addresses from Smith, William Ivens, Salem Bland and others. The Brandon Sympathetic Strike was accordingly “the occasion, not the cause . . . for the organization of the church.”⁶⁵

Predictably, the congregation was predominantly working class with a heavy representation of east end railway workers. Still, the ethnic and congregational origins of the new church’s membership were diverse. In celebrating this diversity, Beatrice Brigden noted that at an early meeting of the church,

in one sweep of the eye, I saw three men — one who had served time for attempting to murder his wife — second, an influential Jew — third, an Austrian Greek Catholic who bears the nickname of “King of the Austrians”, on the flats he holds the key to every Austrian home — and all three men were eager and susceptible.⁶⁶

Brigden was associated with the People’s Church throughout its existence, and was second only to A.E. Smith in its leadership. Early in her involvement in the church, she wrote a letter to T.A. Moore of the Methodist Church — the contents of which Moore reported to the RNWMP — expressing her commitment to the work of the church. In her remarks, Brigden reflected the church’s broad spiritual and political focus on the problems of the city’s workers:

The dialect of the common people is in my speech and the burden of their ignorance and helplessness, their worth and their aspirations, is on my heart and I never expect to forsake them — so, such time as I am in Brandon, I shall work in the People’s Church.⁶⁷

In the first year of the church’s existence A.E. Smith, William Ivens, J.S. Woodsworth and others addressed the congregation on topics including the Winnipeg General Strike, economic democracy, proportional representation, production and hours of labour, “Jesus the Communist,” and Leon Trotsky and his theories.⁶⁸ Yet the church was not an exclusively political organization. Smith also dealt with religious issues. Richard Allen has concluded that

in the place of redemption of sinful man by Christ’s sacrifice . . . [Smith] preached a social redemption whereby man’s ills would be overcome by fruitful work and equitable distribution.⁶⁹

Arguably, the principal significance of the People’s Church to its adherents was not the promise of individual salvation, but rather the centrality of social justice to the core of Christ’s teachings. Through this commitment to social justice, the People’s Church provided “an extraordinary example of utilizing spiritual

support for political purposes.”⁷⁰ Its central impact was to bind working-class Brandonites together irrespective of their ethnic or congregational origins; its principal creed was “the justice of labour’s cause.”⁷¹

In the wake of the 1919 labour confrontation in Brandon

the ability to transcend class lines, to mediate the differences between divergent community groups was . . . a vital characteristic of those politicians who served successfully . . .⁷²

These abilities were given particular importance in the municipal elections of 1919, when class antagonism in the city remained the central issue of the civic election. The *Brandon Sun*, one of the most vigorous opponents of labour in the spring of 1919, supported the mayoralty candidacy of George Dinsdale, the owner of a Brandon cartage operation, and a self-declared “labour” man. The *Sun* skillfully presented Dinsdale as the man capable of representing the interests of both business and labour:

One of the weaknesses in Dinsdale’s candidature is the fact that he, a labour man, is supported by businessmen. Some labour men regard this as impossible. They have set themselves apart as a class, when there should be no such and is no such distinction. A businessman may be and often is, as anxious to see justice done to so-called labour men as they are themselves . . .⁷³

Dinsdale explained his decision to run for mayor by noting that he had been asked to do so by “representative men” and that he was not backed by any “league or party.”⁷⁴

Dinsdale’s opponent, Henry Cater, who was endorsed by the *Confederate*, was attacked by the *Sun* as the person responsible for the conflicts involving civic employees which had resulted in their 1919 strike. Although Cater had ceased to hold public office a year prior to the confrontation with civic workers, the *Sun* asserted that during his term as mayor Brandon had seethed with discontent and “civic staffs and workmen were treated without consideration for their rights or feelings.”⁷⁵

A central issue of contention during the election concerned the treatment of civic employees at the conclusion of the Sympathetic Strike, when returning employees were stripped of seniority. Just prior to the election G.B. Coleman, a city lawyer and alderman for Ward 1, and one of the most determined opponents of the Civic Employees’ Federal Union, persuaded city council to restore the seniority and pay differentials lost by civic employees at the conclusion of the Sympathetic Strike.⁷⁶

In the election, Dinsdale prevailed in a very close contest with Cater, who received the majority of votes in the predominantly working-class Wards 1 and 5. In the aldermanic elections, G.B. Coleman was reelected in Ward 1 by thirty-seven votes, defeating Trades and Labour candidate Charles Durrant.

F.E. Carey, a Canadian National Railway (CNR) dispatcher and self-declared labour candidate, was elected in Ward 3. The other candidate endorsed by the Trades and Labour Council, Walter Stone, was defeated in Ward 5 by B.J. Hales, principal of the Brandon Normal School. The Trades and Labour Council had endorsed two candidates for the school board: William Marlatt won his seat on the board in Ward 1 by acclamation; George Ayers was defeated in Ward 5.⁷⁷ According to the *Confederate*, although labour's candidates had not all been successful, the workers had won an important victory, for

without wealth, without influence, with only nominal leaders in many instances, with a minimum of support from the printed page; with ranks filled with many wounded and fearful ones, the workers gave battle to the entrenched followers of tradition, special privilege, and wealth.⁷⁸

In 1920, labour's preparation for the provincial election began on 13 April, when a meeting of representatives from every union organization in the city was held to arrange for the nomination of labour's first candidate for a provincial election. A committee of fifteen members was given the responsibility of drafting a platform to submit to a meeting scheduled for 28 April, when a "labour" candidate was to be selected.⁷⁹ There, ten candidates sought the nomination to run for the Brandon Labour Party, it being agreed that the labour candidate in Brandon would not be affiliated with any provincial organization. This approach eliminated past organizational and ideological divisions which might have diminished political solidarity among Brandon's workers. The candidates who sought the nomination of the Brandon Labour Party represented every tendency in the historical evolution of the Brandon labour political movement, including labourites, middle-class socialists and reformers, and a Marxist socialist. The range of candidates signalled the unprecedented degree of labour solidarity in Brandon following the tumult of 1919. After two ballots A.E. Smith was nominated to run. The meeting also adopted a platform including the introduction of vocational training in secondary schools, support for the principle of collective bargaining, the enforcement of a minimum national standard of living, the extension of hydroelectric power lines to Brandon and western Manitoba, and the socialization of industry.⁸⁰ Finally, a campaign committee composed of one member from each union local in the city was appointed with George Ayers as chairman to supervise the election campaign.⁸¹

The *Brandon Sun*, reflecting the Brandon business community's entrenched hostility to labour's direct participation in the provincial election, condemned Smith's nomination, asserting that the "Red" element among labour had managed to impose Smith on the convention. Furthermore, the *Sun* postulated that the election of Smith would mean

the bonusing of a Red, a means of livelihood, and a continuance of the discord and strife that, while assisting towards bringing about revolution, is not improving the condition of the working man.⁸²

Immigrants in Canada 1900-1914,' in Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando, eds., *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 38-55.

16. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 18 May 1909. In the article reporting the request to council, the SPC was referred to as the "Secret Seven." The fact that it was the SPC making the request is confirmed by correspondence to Brandon City Council from Edmund Fulcher on behalf of the SPC. Edmund Fulcher was a native of Longstratton, Norfolk, England. He came to Brandon with his brother Harry in 1903. Fulcher had learned the bricklaying and carpentry trades in England and had clearly been influenced by the growing radicalism of the British labour movement at the turn of the century. The Fulchers were drawn to Brandon by the construction boom prior to World War I. Fulcher was involved in the Brandon Trades and Labour Council from its earliest years and was an unsuccessful candidate for the SPC in Winnipeg in the 1910 provincial election, and in Macleod, Alberta, during the 1911 federal election. See *Brandon Weekly Sun*, 7 September 1911 and *Brandon Times*, 7 September 1911; see also Ernie Chisick, "The Development of Winnipeg's Socialist Movement" (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972), 78. Fulcher was appointed the Brandon correspondent for the *Labour Gazette* in 1908. Following the demise of the Brandon local of the SPC, Fulcher associated himself with the Labour Representation League and the DLP. Rapid City Historical Society, *Our Past and the Future: Rapid City and District* (Rapid City: Rapid City Historical Society, 1978), 235.
17. Letter from Edmund Fulcher to the *Western Clarion*, 24 September 1910. For biographical reference to Wilf Gribble, see A. Ross McCormack, "British Working-Class Immigrants and Canadian Radicalism: The Case of Arthur Puttee," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 10, no. 2 (1978): 27.
18. Letter from Edmund Fulcher to the *Western Clarion*, 22 October 1910.
19. See A.T. Higgins, letter to the *Western Clarion*, 21 January 1911. The Brandon edition of the *Western Clarion* was published on 1 April 1911.
20. See, for example, the debate in the Trades and Labour Council reported in the *Brandon Daily Sun*, 28 February 1913 regarding the provincial Liberal party, Fred Dixon, and direct legislation.
21. Letters to the *Western Clarion* from Edmund Fulcher, 23 March and 30 March 1912.
22. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 28 December 1912.
23. *Ibid.*, 24 October 1913. The idea of such an affiliation probably derived from Smith who, because of his association with J.S. Woodsworth, would have known that the Winnipeg Ministerial Association had affiliated with the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council. On this point see McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries*, 87. A.E. Smith had a lengthy career in the Methodist Church, beginning in the last years of the century. In 1912 he became minister of First Methodist, one of Brandon's wealthiest churches. As an active supporter of church union, Smith was chosen president of the Manitoba Conference in 1916 and 1917. Smith recalled his varied career in his autobiography, *All My Life* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1949). In his article on Smith, "From Clergyman to Communist: The Radicalization of A.E. Smith," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 13, no. 4 (Winter, 1978-79), J. Petryshyn ignores the central importance to Smith's radicalization of his involvement in the Brandon labour movement and the Brandon labour strife of 1919 discussed below.
24. See Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 223-27, for a discussion of this point and Smith's career.

25. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 14 October 1915.
26. *Ibid.*, 25 October 1915. James Skene came to Brandon in 1911 to become the director of manual training in the Brandon School Division and the Brandon Normal School. Skene was a principal figure in the organization of the Brandon SDP, the People's Forum, the Labour Representation League, the DLP, and the People's Church. Skene was also instrumental in the creation of the Brandon Teachers' Association (a teachers' union) in 1918. In 1922, Skene left the employ of the school division, as did the entire teaching staff, over a wage dispute with the school board.
27. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 8 November 1915.
28. *Ibid.*, 10 November 1915.
29. *Ibid.*, 12 February 1916.
30. T.S. Mitchell, "Forging a New Protestant Ontario on the Agricultural Frontier: Public Schools in Brandon and the Origins of the Manitoba School Question, 1881-1890," *Prairie Forum* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 34.
31. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 14 February 1916; *ibid.*, 21 February 1916.
32. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1916. See also McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries*, 90.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, 20 December 1916.
35. *Ibid.*, 11 January 1917.
36. *Ibid.*, 24 January 1917.
37. *The Labour Gazette* 17 (1917): 51.
38. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 3 April 1917.
39. *Ibid.*, 12 April 1917. See also *The Voice*, 4 May 1917, for comment on the demise and reconstitution of the Brandon Trades and Labour Council.
40. *Ibid.*, 3 May 1917.
41. *The Voice*, 15 June 1917.
42. *The Labour Gazette* 17 (1917): 54; *ibid.*, 18 (1918): 1012.
43. *The Voice*, 6 July 1917; McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries*, 94.
44. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 30 July 1917; *Henderson's Directory* (1917).
45. *Ibid.*, 3 August 1917.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *The Voice*, 17 October 1917.
48. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 14 November 1917; *Henderson's Directory* (1917).
49. *Ibid.*, 19 November 1917; *The Voice*, 23 November 1917. In January 1918 the students at Brandon College voted to expel Brisson. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 4 January 1918.
50. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1917.
51. *Ibid.*, 26 November 1917; *The Voice*, 11 January 1918.
52. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1917.

53. Smith, *All My Life*, 43.
54. Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Dominion Labour Party Winnipeg and District Minutes, MG10A, 14-2, Box 2, F5, 2 May 1918.
55. The original executive of the DLP in Brandon included: James H. Skene, a teacher; the Reverend James Savage, a Presbyterian minister; George Ayers, a section foreman; Wesley Rosebrugh, a railway machinist; W.H. Stringer, a retired carpenter; J.A.G. Grantham, a realtor; W.G. Darvill, a school janitor; Robert Bullard, a CPR shopworker; Tom Mellor, the Brandon School Board attendance officer; J. Coplestone, a CNR shopworker; Herb Ingham, a letter carrier; J.H. Hines, manager of the Hanbury Hardware Company; David Baker, a machinist; R.T. Smith, a CPR conductor; Sid Broomhall, a shoe store clerk; Charles Page, a CPR shopworker; D. Wood, a school janitor; CPR employee W.B. Parkes; and A.E. Smith. See PAM, Salton Collection, MG7, F8, Dominion Labour Party Constitution, Brandon and District Branch. *Henderson's Directory* (1919).
56. J.M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (September 1968): 229.
57. PAM, Salton Collection, MG7, F8, Dominion Labour Party Constitution, Brandon and District Branch.
58. Heron, "Labourism and the Canadian Working Class," 67.
59. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 30 November 1918.
60. *Confederate*, 9 January 1919.
61. For a detailed discussion of these strikes, see Tom Mitchell, "Brandon 1919: Labour and Industrial Relations in the Wheat City in the Year of the General Strike," *Manitoba History* 17 (Spring 1989).
62. NAC, Sympathetic Brandon, June 1919, RG 27, Vol. 3133, file 150. Constable J.T. McGregor to Inspector F.W. French, 7 June 1919.
63. *Winnipeg Tribune*, 13 August 1969.
64. "The Peoples' Church, Brandon, Manitoba, (A Tentative Proposal)." United Church Archives (Toronto), Notes on the Labour Churches, File 22, Box 7, Evangelism and Social Service Branch. The Peoples' Church was also the basis for the organization of the Brandon Defense Committee. One Big Union *Bulletin*, 20 September 1919.
65. PAM, Brigden Collection, MG14, C14, Brigden to T.A. Moore, 26 July 1919. Beatrice Brigden was born on the family homestead near Deloraine, Manitoba, in January 1888. She was educated at Albert College in Ontario, Brandon College, and the School of Expression in Toronto. In 1913 she was recruited to work for the Evangelism and Social Service branch of the Methodist Church by T.A. Moore. She returned to Brandon in 1919 and quickly became involved in the activities of the People's Church and the political career of A.E. Smith. Brigden continued throughout her life to be involved politically in the Independent Labour Party, the CCF and the NDP. Brigden was also active in support of a variety of other progressive causes. See PAM, Brigden Collection, MG 14, C19.
66. PAM, Brigden Collection, MG14, C14, Brigden to T.A. Moore, 26 July 1919.
67. *Ibid.*
68. United Church Archives (Toronto), Notes on the Labour Churches. File 22, Box 7, Board of Evangelism and Social Service Branch. See Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973),

- 170-71, for a discussion of the duplicity of T.A. Moore, head of Evangelism and Social Service for the Methodist Church, in collecting information for the RNWMP concerning the labour church in Brandon and other points in western Canada.
69. Allen, *The Social Passion*, 166.
 70. K.O. Wormsbecker, “The Rise and Fall of the Labour Political Movement in Manitoba, 1919-1927” (Master’s thesis, Queen’s University, 1977), 40.
 71. *Ibid.*, 39.
 72. W. Leland Clark, *Brandon’s Politics and Politicians* (Brandon: Brandon Sun, 1982), 235.
 73. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 21 November 1919.
 74. *Ibid.*, 5 November 1919.
 75. *Ibid.* Harry Cater was a native of Whittington, Norfolk, England. Born 4 December 1869, Cater had only three years of formal education. He arrived in Brandon in 1899 after immigrating to St. Thomas, Ontario, in 1887. Cater established a pump manufacturing business which he operated until his death. While Cater was labour’s candidate for mayor in 1919, he lost to A.E. Smith in the contest to run as the candidate for the Brandon Labour Party. For a discussion of Cater’s remarkable career in municipal politics, see Clark, *Brandon’s Politics and Politicians*, 121-44.
 76. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 25 November 1919.
 77. *Ibid.*, 29 November 1919.
 78. *Confederate*, 5 December 1919.
 79. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 14 April 1920; *Confederate*, 16 April 1920.
 80. *Ibid.*, 28 April 1920; *Confederate*, 30 April 1920. Smith represented the moderate center of the city’s labour political movement. H.M. Bartholomew, who had emerged as a leading figure in the spring strikes was an advocate of the One Big Union, and a radical politically. After 1920, he moved to Winnipeg and became active in the Socialist Party of Canada. In 1922 he joined the Worker’s Party of Canada and remained an active Communist until his death in 1931. See Ivan Avakamoic, *The Communist Party: A History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 24; Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Montréal: Vanguard Publications, 1981), 97.
 81. George Artimus Ayers was a British immigrant who came to Brandon in 1911 to work as a section foreman on the CNR. He became active in the reconstituted Trades and Labour Council in 1917 and was president of the council during the spring 1919 strikes. In July 1920, following Smith’s victory, Ayers became president of a reorganized DLP. *Confederate*, 16 July 1920. See also *Henderson’s Directory* (1911-20); obituary, George Artimus Ayers, *Brandon Sun*, 11 September 1965; obituary, Mrs. G.A. Ayers, *Brandon Sun*, 2 January 1958.
 82. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 21 June 1920.
 83. *Ibid.*, 28 June 1920.
 84. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1920; *ibid.*, 19 June 1920.
 85. Wormsbecker, *Rise and Fall*, 39. For a discussion of Mrs. Cove’s subsequent involvement in the CCF in Winnipeg, see Lloyd Stinson, *Political Warriors: Recollections of a Social Democrat* (Winnipeg: Queenston House, 1975), 123-24.
 86. Clark, *Brandon’s Politics and Politicians*, 98.
 87. *Brandon Daily Sun*, 30 June 1920; *ibid.*, 6 July 1920.

Goose Grease and Turpentine: Mother Treats the Family's Illnesses

Norah L. Lewis

ABSTRACT. The women's pages of farm and ranch newspapers and magazines provided a vital peer and generational support network to women living on the homesteads and ranches of the Canadian northwest during the period from 1900 to 1920. This article considers one aspect of their letters: the medical recipes offered and utilized by women in the treatment of their families' illnesses. In the developing west, medical services were limited, if not inaccessible, and those services which were accessible were costly to poverty-stricken settlers. Therefore, it was usually the responsibility of women to treat family illnesses. In their home treatments shared with fellow readers, women used those materials readily available — the contents of their cupboards, pantries and gardens. The effectiveness of the medical recipes offered is open to discussion, but women believed it was better to take action and fail than to take no action and watch their children die.

SOMMAIRE. Entre 1900 et 1920, la page des lectrices des journaux et des magazines ruraux offrit aux femmes des homesteads ou des ranches du Nord-Ouest du Canada, un réseau vital d'entraide féminine. L'article étudie un aspect de cette entraide, en l'occurrence les recettes médicales qu'elles utilisaient pour soigner leurs familles. Dans l'ouest en plein essor, les services médicaux étaient limités, sinon inaccessibles et les services auxquels la population avait accès étaient trop chers pour ces colons dans le besoin. Il incombait donc aux femmes de traiter leurs familles. Pour ces recettes personnelles qu'elles partageaient entre lectrices, ces femmes utilisaient ce qu'elle avaient sous la main, dans leurs placards, leurs garde-mangers et leurs jardins. On peut discuter l'efficacité de ces recettes mais ces femmes croyaient qu'il valait mieux agir, quitte à échouer, que ne rien faire et laisser mourir leurs enfants.

Minnie May, women's editor for *The Farmer's Advocate* wrote in 1890:

In all our trials woman's greatest friend should be woman. It is the very greatest comfort to have a woman friend to whom one can turn for consolation when all seems dark around us, and she can say the words you most want to hear.¹

Seventeen years later "Marie" wrote to Lillian Laurie, women's editor of the "Home Loving Hearts" page of the *Free Press and Prairie Farmer*:

Living as many of us do, on the bleak prairies, hundreds of miles from civilization, we welcome everything that tends to make our life more bright and cheerful . . . A little piece of poetry, or a friendly greeting from a neighbor; these seem trivial things, when we are surrounded by friends and plenty; but when we must leave all behind, and go where stern duty bids us, we learn to value little things.²

During the first two decades of this century, life on the homesteads and ranches of the Canadian northwest was difficult, particularly for women. Many women came west with a sense of adventure, filled with hopes and dreams for economic success; others came out of duty to their husbands; some came as single or widowed women seeking work or marriage partners. Through letters written to the women's pages of farm and ranch magazines during the early decades of this century, western women provide a rare personal glimpse of their daily lives, their problems and concerns, their hopes and dreams, their gains and losses.³

With the exception of those from eastern Canada and the United States, a significant proportion of immigrants had been urban dwellers or lived in

communities central to the surrounding fields to and from which they walked daily. The systematic surveying of the Canadian west into sections and quarter sections provided for efficient administration by government agencies and for sale by land companies, but retarded the development of close-knit communities. Homesteaders often found themselves miles from their nearest neighbours and even further from a town or village. Manitoba-born newspaper editor and author James Gray observed that "if it had been done deliberately to devise a settlement plan to drive the farm women up the walls of their shacks it could hardly have proceeded differently."⁴ In his 1913 study of rural life in Canada for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the Reverend John MacDougall reported that "farm homes in Canada were further apart than anywhere in the world."⁵

In some developing communities, many of the homesteaders were of the same ethnic or religious group, but in other communities individuals and families were isolated from their neighbours not only by space but also by language, culture and religion. The simple act of visiting a neighbour or going to town required a major effort, for often the trip was accomplished by walking or driving horses or oxen over inadequate roads. Faced by a long, uncomfortable trip, and especially if burdened with several small children, women tended to stay at home. Furthermore, someone had to remain on the homestead to feed the chickens, milk the cows and keep the home fires burning. Yet, in spite of hardships, many homesteaders believed country life was preferable to urban life. The farm, they insisted, provided a pure atmosphere, a free and happy lifestyle, and a place to rear their children away from the problems they believed were found in cities. "A Farmer's Wife" voiced the attitude of many prairie women when she wrote, "I would not change with any town or city woman that I know."⁶

The introduction and rapid spread of the rural telephone system provided a vital communication link for rural families, but rural women found another important source of support and companionship through the women's pages of weekly and monthly farm and ranch magazines such as *The Farmer's Advocate*, *The Free Press and Prairie Farmer*, *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, *The Grain Growers' Guide* and *Western Home Monthly*. They sought and gave encouragement, exchanged information and sought advice, and shared concerns with the "dear sisters" they knew understood and sympathized. Tending to be conservative, and racially or religiously intolerant, they occasionally scorned those with whom they did not agree. Writers seldom disclosed their addresses, although they often indicated whether they resided in the farming, ranching or mining areas of the Prairies or British Columbia. Neither did they usually give their names, but rather selected pseudonyms that revealed much about their economic condition, emotional state or religious faith. The editors, however, had both the names and addresses of the writers. Those writing to the women's pages represented a variety of educational, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, but all writers possessed some literacy skills.

Although their letters dealt with a wide range of topics there were a number of recurring themes: the terrible loneliness and acute poverty of life on the homesteads; women's role and duties as wives and mothers; the lack of dower laws; the need for schools for their children and churches for their communities; appropriate methods of child discipline; sex education for children; the evils of alcohol and the need for prohibition; the dearth of health services and the lack of health professionals; and the vulnerability of their own health and that of their families. Poor nutrition, communicable diseases, accidents and chronic illnesses took a toll on children and adults alike. A request from a reader for advice on any topic usually brought a range of responses from fellow readers, including advice on treatment of family illnesses. This article will examine some of the home treatments, probably better termed medical recipes, and health care advice shared by women through the support and information network provided in the women's pages of weekly and monthly farm and ranch newspapers and magazines during the period from 1900 to 1920. It will also consider why women accepted such advice as suitable for the treatment of their families' illnesses.

Care of the sick and injured was generally the task of women. In most rural communities, one or two local women served as midwives and nurses, but within the home nursing was generally the mother's responsibility. Many families owned what they called a "doctor book," a general purpose home care manual such as *Dr. Chase's Recipes: or Information for Everybody: An Invaluable Collection of over 1000 Recipes, Gardner's Household Medicine and Sick Room Guide* or *A Doctor at Home and Nurses Guide Book*, available through Eaton's Mail Order Catalogue. Other sources of information included bulletins distributed by life insurance or drug companies and medical columns edited by health advisers carried in newspapers and magazines. Patent medicines, readily available through the catalogue, promised cures for a myriad of unrelated illnesses or conditions suffered by humans or animals, including congestion, consumption, constipation, chilblains, weak eyes, fallen wombs and worms. The Eaton's catalogue for 1900-01 offered approximately 250 different patent medicines, and weekly newspapers and magazines carried advertisements for a number of "cure all" patent medicines. In an address to the Ontario Women's Institute reported in *The Farmer's Advocate*,⁷ Toronto physician and social reformer Dr. Helen MacMurchy reported that patent medicines were dangerous since they frequently contained cocaine, strychnine or opium, and had a higher alcohol content than the best brands of whiskey. Not only were most patent medicines generally ineffective, but also many unfortunate individuals became addicted to them.

It was in medical information articles to the women's pages of *The Farmer's Advocate* and the *Free Press and Prairie Farmer* that unidentified columnists O.Z. Bond and Hogarth Lenn, M.D., recommended that families maintain a locked medicine chest of drugs for treating family illnesses. Bond's list included

spirits of camphor, spirits of turpentine, linseed (flaxseed) oil, sassafras oil, sweet (olive) oil, Epsom salts, luan caustic, and menthol crystals.⁸ Lenn's list included iodine of potassium, bromide of sodium, Belladonna, compound of spirits of ether, morphine, tincture of camphor, tincture of *nux vomica*, essence of pepsin, boracic acid ointment, subnitrate of bismuth, tincture of catechu, tincture of aconite, laxative salts, glycerine, vaseline, listerine, absorbent cotton and surgical linen bandages. Lenn added that laudanum was always convenient to have on hand.⁹ All of these items could be purchased through Eaton's catalogue.¹⁰

But poverty-stricken homesteaders could not afford to buy all, or any, of these drugs and often did not know how to use them if they did. One anxious mother, for example, asked the editor of the "Mother and Baby" column of the *Family Herald and Weekly Star* what she should do if her twenty-seven-month-old son suffered another bilious attack. At the time of the last attack she had given the child half of her last morphine pill, and the second half a few hours later. The columnist responded with a curt warning of the danger of giving morphine to a child.¹¹

Practical women therefore used what they had available to them — the contents of their cupboards, pantries and gardens, including turpentine, vinegar, spices and herbs. Turpentine, if taken internally, acted on the urinary system and the mucous membranes of the respiratory system; if applied externally, it treated local pains or rheumatism. Vinegar, an astringent and emetic, was frequently used as liniment or to relieve the discomfort of insect bites. Kerosene (coal oil), when taken orally with other ingredients, was thought to clear the congestion of the chest or a head cold. Salt dissolved in water served as an emetic, and when heated dry was applied as a compress on sprains or sore areas. Black pepper, a carminative and stimulant, relieved gastrointestinal conditions and congestive chills. Cayenne pepper, a stimulant, tonic and rubefacient, was used to produce heat. Mustard, an irritant, stimulant, diuretic and emetic, was used chiefly in poultice form to treat respiratory ailments or local pains. Ginger, an expectorate and stimulant, relieved abdominal pains, and if taken in hot water produced copious perspiration and helped break the congestion of a cold. Another common spice, nutmeg, a carminative and stomachic, was effective for the treatment of flatulency, nausea and vomiting. Cream of tartar was used as a diuretic. Baking soda was a common treatment for indigestion, skin irritations, insect bites, or in combination with salt as a cheap tooth cleaner. Animal fats such as lard, tallow, goose grease, skunk oil, milk, cream or buttermilk were used in combination with other materials, although skunk oil and goose grease were rubbed on youngsters' chests, throats and backs to relieve the congestion of a cold. Alum, a powerful astringent, irritant and emetic, checked the flow of perspiration. Potatoes were used raw to treat gastritis, and boiled with a little milk as an emergency poultice. Onions, a diuretic and expectorate, were considered a satisfactory and safe treatment for colds. Hops, considered a tonic

and a diuretic, were used in combination with other remedies to treat debility, nervous conditions and worms. Lemon, a tonic and diaphoretic high in Vitamin C, was considered a good treatment for colds when served in a hot drink on going to bed. Peppermint served as an antispasmodic for the relief of abdominal cramps, headache and heartburn. Alcoholic spirits such as brandy, rye, rum and gin were used medicinally as stimulants, or on occasion as anesthetics. Pine tar was a common treatment for skin eruptions. Flaxseed poultices were used to treat boils, burns and infected sores, while flaxseed (linseed) oil was a common laxative.

Several local plants were also recommended by readers: Devil's Club was a cathartic, emetic and diaphoretic; violets were used as an expectorate; sage leaves were an astringent; golden rod was a stimulant and carminative; and buds from the Balm of Gilead served as a healing agent in ointments and plasters. Women shared with their fellow readers those medical recipes that they had successfully used themselves, or that they believed were at least worth trying for the treatment of family illnesses.

In *Popular Herbs*, Dawn McLeod points out that during the settlement of rural communities in North America, herbal remedies continued in vogue, dispensed by people with handed-down knowledge who were known to and trusted by the sufferer.¹² The same process is described as a dynamic relationship among the healer, the patient and the family by Wayland D. Hand, director of the Center for Comparative Folklore and Mythology, University of California, and an investigator of American folklore.¹³ Unable to consult traditional sources (mothers or other female relatives) and unable to locate the herbs used in traditional medicines, women of the Canadian northwest looked to the people they believed to be trustworthy — the editors of and contributors to women's pages. Bruno Gebhard, an American physician interested in the history of the home medications of the American frontier, reported that settlers remote from medical care regularly used self-treatment as well as remedies available through mail order sources; the same situation existed in Canada.¹⁴ In addition, women's trust of the editors of women's pages was not unique to the readers of farm newspapers. Molly Ladd-Taylor, in a review of letters written to the American Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, notes that mothers sought better care both for their children and for themselves, and that they regarded the director, Julia Lathrope, and editorial writers Mary Mills West and Dorothy Reed Mendenhall, not only as vital sources of information but also as personal friends.¹⁵

American folklorist John Q. Anderson designates four classifications of folk medicine — cures, treatments, removals, and preventatives or health treatments. The major portion of the medical recipes offered or sought by letter writers to the women's pages could be classified as either cures or treatments and generally dealt with routine illnesses such as colds, bronchial conditions, sore throats, infections, chilblains, rheumatism, stomach complaints and skin

conditions. Treatments, however, were sought for more diverse and serious conditions such as childbirth, fallen wombs, hernias, breast lumps and alcoholism. Medical recipes were frequently offered as one small part of the total content of a lengthy, friendly letter that covered a wide range of concerns, and a request for advice usually brought a number of responses from fellow readers.¹⁶

The restricted diet of the winter months, the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables, and the cold and draughty conditions in many farm homes made family members susceptible to illness. The common cold, its accompanying cough, the frequent development of croup among infants and small children, and the ever-present danger of pneumonia, pleurisy or consumption were of constant concern. Women shared a wide variety of medical recipes designed to "kill or cure" these illnesses. Most medical recipes for cold treatments contained one or more of the following: an astringent, stimulant, expectorate, diaphoretic or aromatic such as alum, kerosene, vinegar, mustard, ginger or camphor, and if the concoction was to be taken orally, a flavouring or sweetener such as lemon, peppermint, sugar or honey was added to make the medicine more palatable. Honey was also effective in inducing sleep, treating coughs and soothing sore throats. Suggested oral cold treatments included honey sprinkled with salt, alum mixed with sugar, white sugar mixed with coal oil or camphor, the yolk of one egg with three teaspoons of ginger and two teaspoons of syrup or honey, black strap molasses (a good source of Vitamin B and potassium) mixed with a few drops of castor oil, one teaspoon of sulphur (a traditional and effective treatment for bacterial infections) mixed with two or three drops of kerosene, and malt vinegar and sugar.

If the treatment was a plaster or poultice applied to the chest, throat or back, women recommended that lard or goose grease first be spread on the skin to prevent blistering. Flour was used to dilute mustard, a common and often successful treatment for bronchitis or pneumonia, at a ratio of one part mustard to eight parts flour. When mustard was not available for a plaster, women suggested the substitution of ginger or nutmeg, but neither spice appears to have any medicinal qualities when used as a plaster. Other women suggested the external application of black pepper, cayenne pepper, camphor, vinegar or turpentine to be spread on, or soaked into, a strip of bacon or a piece of flannel and then wrapped around the throat or on the chest. "Hawkeye's" suggestion was to place pieces of cut raw onions on the window sill as she believed that they would absorb diseases from the air. When the pieces were dry they should be burned, thereby ensuring the disease was destroyed. Two treatments recommended for the treatment of colds and croup in small children were to apply an onion poultice (whether cooked or raw is not clear) to the infant's chest or back, or to rub the infant with skunk oil. An earache could be cured by applying the juice of a roast onion. Dame Durden, editor of the "Ingle Nook" page of *The Farmer's Advocate*, and O.Z. Bond both advocated quinine as a quick, sure cure for colds, but letter writers did not recommend quinine to one another.¹⁷

Mothers' suggestions for cough syrups seemed to follow the adage that "if it tasted bad it was bound to be good for you." "Patient Mary" advocated a sweet and sour cough syrup made by boiling to a syrup one cup of sugar with one cup of vinegar.¹⁸ "Mamma" boiled down three cups of sugar and three tablespoons of pine tar in a quart of water. After the solution cooled, she skimmed off the tar and used the resulting pine oil as an expectorate and stimulant to relieve the cause of the cough.¹⁹ Cough mixtures advocated by "Old Lady"²⁰ and "Tilda Jane"²¹ contained either the scraped bark of a licorice root or castor oil, both of which were common laxatives. "E.K." said oil of aniseed, a commonly used carminative and pectoral, would stop a cough in a minute and cure a cold in a week. Some recipes were more appetizing. "Lily of the Valley" advocated a cough cure made with one cup of rum, one cup of sugar, and one ounce of glycerine, to be taken when a cough was troublesome.²² "Chinook" suggested the addition of laudanum and sweet spirits of nitre to homemade cough medicine,²³ but Lillian Laurie warned against the use of both drugs, as laudanum deadened the organs and nitre was harmful to the kidneys.

Herbal-based cough remedies were also included in the letters. In the spring, "Prairie Chicken" gathered and dried wild violets, which when boiled with water she deemed useful as a cough medicine and "not bad tasting."²⁴ The resulting liquid worked as an expectorate. "Ivy and Joy" made a throat gargle by first pouring boiling water over sage leaves, a common astringent for the treatment of sore throats and sores in the mouth, to which she added a sweetener and a little vinegar. She also suggested a gargle made by dissolving powder of gum of myrrh, a healing antiseptic, with some cayenne pepper in half a pint of water.²⁵ Mrs. J.E. Hawkins's remedy for swollen tonsils was to gargle vinegar mixed with black pepper.²⁶ This combination must have been very irritating to already sore tonsils.

Infants and young children were often susceptible to bacterial infections from drinking raw cow's milk that was neither fresh nor pasteurized, drinking impure, unboiled water, or eating food improperly prepared or unsuitable for their age. Through articles and columns on child health and child care — generally carried on or near the women's pages — health professionals advised mothers to breast feed, or at least to use proper precautions or techniques in the preparation and storage of modified milk, thereby preventing dysentery among their infants. Women mourned the loss of their otherwise healthy babies and tried various medical recipes to cure or at least control *cholera infantum*. "East Lynne" gave her children sweetened tomato juice,²⁷ "Tony" suggested pulverized egg shells (calcium) in milk,²⁸ and other readers advocated that children drink egg whites beaten into water, barley water or rice water. The treatments were designed to prevent total dehydration and give the infant some nourishment. However, the most common form of treatment — and probably the most dangerous — was to give the sick child a dose of castor oil. "Alexia" shared with readers the wisdom of an old aunt who told her:

if I was ever in a state that I did not know what to do for a sick child and it was suffering so much and I could not get a doctor for perhaps hours, to give the child a good dose of castor oil as it would cool or check fever, and often caused a very sick child to sleep well.²⁹

Other desperate mothers insured the ailing child slept well by adding one or two drops of laudanum to the castor oil. Physicians and mothers believed that castor oil cleared the bowels of bacterial infection, thereby eliminating the cause of the ailment. But castor oil probably caused further dehydration, and laudanum could prove fatal to an already sick child.

Considering the difficulties of communication and travel, the rapidity with which advice could be transmitted from one mother to another is quite surprising. On 14 January 1909 “Anxious Mother” wrote *The Farmer’s Advocate* asking readers how to prepare modified milk as her infant was not gaining weight as it should. Two weeks later the newspaper published a letter from “Jack’s Wife,” and three weeks later from “Baby Betty’s Mother,” both recommending that “Anxious Mother” purchase *The Care and Feeding of Children* by Luther Emmett Holt, a well-known and respected American physician and child-care specialist. In addition to recommending the book, both women copied out the instructions for the preparation of modified milk. Several other readers offered to lend “Anxious Mother” a copy of the book. The 18 March issue carried a second letter from “Anxious Mother” saying she had tried modified milk and that her baby was growing and healthy. On 22 April the editor advised women that arrangements had been made by which mothers could purchase *The Care and Feeding of Children* through the office of *The Farmer’s Advocate*. The willingness of women to share the little they had — whether advice, encouragement or material goods — was repeated time and again.

After a long winter, mothers believed that the entire family needed a spring tonic to cleanse the blood and clear the bowels. The traditional spring tonic of sulphur and molasses provided the taker with Vitamin B, iron, potassium, calcium and several other minerals. To this mixture, “A.R.” added an equal amount of the diuretic cream of tartar.³⁰ “Liverpudlian” mixed a tonic composed of equal parts of baking soda, cream of tartar, Epsom salts and sugar.³¹ A spring tonic printed in *The Farmer’s Advocate* suggested to readers: “Halve your food; double your drinking water; treble your out-of-door exercise; and quadruple your consumption of fresh air and laughter.” *The Farmer’s Advocate* published another tonic recommended for a “sick man.” To produce ten gallons of the tonic required three-quarters of a pound of hops combined with ten teaspoons of ginger, one cup of molasses, ten cups of brown sugar, three yeast cakes and ten gallons of water. It took one week to produce this tonic, which probably smelled and tasted very much like ginger beer.

The application of turpentine was the basic treatment for cuts, scratches, bumps, bruises, felons (painful, pus-forming infections at the end of the finger

or toe), and wounds caused by rusty nails, pitchfork tines and bullets. It was considered an antiseptic and an effective pain killer. As one correspondent wrote, turpentine “smarts real good and lively and takes the pain out every time.” Poultices and plasters, which provided a moist heat, were often used to draw infections from punctures, carbuncles, boils and sores. “M.C.W.K.” recommended the application of cornmeal, a recognized cataplasm, dampened with water that had first been filtered through wood ashes (potassium).³² Poultices, easily prepared and easily applied, were made from a wide range of plant products including flaxseed, oatmeal, cornmeal, potatoes and bread.

Skin conditions such as eczema, purple rashes, prairie itch and ringworm were treated with a variety of ointments and salves. “Amelia”³³ and “Hampshire”³⁴ both made an effective healing salve by boiling the buds of Balm of Gilead with either cream or lard. A common treatment was the application of oxide of zinc, while “Mother of Nine” prepared a mixture of equal parts of oil of pine, sulphur and glycerine, to which she added a few drops of carbolic acid.³⁵ To a mixture of sulphur and lard — a traditional treatment for bacterial infections — “Mrs. F.B.” added enough of the antiseptic carbolic acid to “make it sting real good.” “British Canadian” suggested that to treat itch, mothers mix one ounce of quicksilver (mercury), one ounce of Venus turpentine, one ounce of brown hellebore and one ounce of sweet (olive) oil. The mixture was stirred with a wooden stick once a day for nine days and then applied to the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. “It never fails,” she wrote, but the frequent applications of mercury to the skin would eventually lead to mercury poisoning and the development of health problems far more serious and longer lasting than itch.³⁶

To relieve the discomforts of poison oak or poison ivy, women suggested the following treatments: bromine, a corrosive liquid, mixed with glycerine; calomel, generally used to stimulate the production of bile, and lime water; lemon juice, a citric acid, and glycerine; paste of sulphur and milk; baking soda and buttermilk. Further discomfort was created by the ubiquitous fleas, lice and bedbugs. Getting rid of them usually required the use of poisonous or inflammable substances, but one less dangerous method involved sprinkling peppermint and turpentine in the bed and on clothing, even that being worn, “particularly on undergarments, and the fleas will leave.” A second method was to sprinkle ground (black) pepper in the bed and into the cracks in the bed frame. One reader wrote, “I think red pepper would be still better.” Pepper seemed to create an unhealthy environment for fleas, and it was certainly less dangerous to humans than painting the bed frame or cracks in the walls and floor with gasoline, coal oil or formaldehyde.

Cold, draughty houses and the lack of footwear suitable for Canadian winters meant that many people suffered from painful, burning, swollen chilblains. The severity of treatments advocated by writers gives some indication of the discomfort caused by chilblains: rub a cut, salted onion on the affected parts of

the feet; sprinkle cornmeal over hot coals in a pan and hold the feet over the resulting steam and smoke; rub the chilblains with the juice of two raw, grated potatoes sprinkled with salt; soak the feet in hot water in which alum had been dissolved; soak the feet with hot water and rub with coal oil; rub the feet with a mixture of salad oil, bee's wax, turpentine and hog lard; soak the feet in hot water and carbolic acid and then rub with baking soda. One reader had a simpler solution: "I just put a handful of salt in my stockings for two or three days." She added that this method should not be used during cold weather as the salt made the feet very cold. All of these treatments appeared to act as counterirritants to a most uncomfortable condition.

Childbirth was the experience most dreaded by women. Many women were poorly informed about the entire process of pregnancy and childbirth, and there was often no one to whom they could turn for information and advice. Consequently they turned to their fellow readers, euphemistically referring to pregnancy as "expecting a little stranger," the "family way" or "my sickness." For example, "Crocus" wrote:

I would like also to hear from members who have used roots or herbs before confinement. I was not told anything about such things and would be so thankful for advice on the subject.³⁷

"Crocus" was not atypical. In 1910 "Keystone Pansy" urged pregnant women to stay healthy, avoid large crowds, and not to lose their tempers or lace themselves into tight clothing. The same year "Azile" advised the use of "Indian Women's Balm" since it produced healthy babies. "Little Belgium" tried a box of "Westerner" for painless childbirth and declared it to be good, while "Maybird" recommended "Mother's Friend," an oil to be rubbed on abdomen and thighs for fifteen minutes each evening and five minutes in the morning for several weeks before confinement. "Wild Sunflower" suggested that a daily drink of boiled linseed gruel flavoured with lemon during the last month of pregnancy would ensure an easier delivery, but "Prairie Violet" wrote that although she had used linseed for the last three months of her pregnancy, her confinement was difficult and her baby was weak: "I advise every mother to leave it alone."³⁸ In 1908 "Madge" recommended a tea made of steeped spikenard root drunk immediately upon rising in the morning for the last six weeks of pregnancy. Spikenard root served as a stimulant, a slight expectorant, and appeared to ease the pain of childbirth. "Mother of Four" tried it and wrote, "I can say from the bottom of my heart I thank her. Although I only used it for three weeks in place of the six she said."³⁹ In 1912 "Sonnie's Sweetheart" suggested two additional medical recipes for childbirth — drinking the liquid of steeped cohosh root, an emmenagogue, three or four times a day for two weeks before confinement, and drinking half a cup of steeped summer savory leaves, an aromatic with warming qualities, when "taken sick." "Islesworth" offered her unused box of medicine free to a poor and needy

expectant mother. Her generosity reflected a genuine concern for the suffering of others.

“Christena,” a reader living in the Quesnel area of British Columbia, offered free to expectant mothers a locally grown wild root, later identified as Devil’s Club, which was used by local Indians for several medicinal purposes including easing the pains of childbirth. The response was immediate and overwhelming — women wanted the herb. In a lengthy letter to Lillian Laurie, “Christena” described the herb as “perfectly harmless, though it is very powerful for allaying pain in confinement.”⁴⁰ The expectant mother was to drink a weak tea made from Devil’s Club root during the last four to six weeks of pregnancy, and one cupful of strong root tea at the onset of labour, with additional sips as needed. Devil’s Club appeared to have antispasmodic, diaphoretic and emmenagogue qualities that relaxed the woman’s muscles, thereby making labour easier and shorter. Initially, “Christena” sent the root free of charge to those who requested it, but the demand was so great that she was forced to ask the women to pay the postage. Although she usually gathered the root herself, she sometimes had to buy it from local Indians. By July 1914 Lillian Laurie reported the widespread use of “Christena’s herb” by readers, and that those who tried it reported great relief from the pains of childbirth and a shortened time in labour. To check its safety, Laurie sent some of the root to the University of Manitoba for analysis, and was informed that it belonged to a group of plants used in medicine elsewhere, although not in Canada. By 1915 “Christena” had started a small business, packaging and selling the herb as “Mrs. Feund’s Compound Tea.”

In 1975 a testimonial to the success of “Christena’s herb” was provided by Mrs. Beatrice Vincent, a prairie pioneer who spoke of her twelve confinements without a physician or midwife:

But I will say, at this time, I saw an advertisement in the *Free Press* about Indians using herbs to cut down labor pains and they were a dollar a box. So I thought, we’ll send for a box anyway. And soon as labor pains started I took a cupful of these herbs that was steeped in water and took out all the labour pains.⁴¹

Mrs. Vincent had learned about “Christena’s herb” through the “Home Loving Hearts” page.

From 1900 to 1920, most births occurred at home, with only a relative or a neighbour to assist the mother. In May 1910 “Farmer’s Wife,” an English immigrant who served as midwife to her neighbours, sent Lillian Laurie an article entitled “Maternity Complete Without a Washing Day,” which told women how to prepare for and attend a birth. She asked Laurie to send a copy to women who requested it. Because Laurie could not keep abreast of readers’ demands, “Sweetheart” volunteered to copy out additional copies. She quickly sent out five copies, including the original. A few weeks later Laurie asked women who already had copies of the article to make one or more additional

copies, but she was still unable to meet the demand. By December 1910 Laurie reported that she was having "Maternity" typewritten for distribution upon request. The article remained in demand until 1912, when a paper entitled "Preparation for Maternity," written by Manitoba physician Mary E. Crawford, was made available for free from the *Free Press Prairie Farmer*.

The arrival of a "little stranger" was not necessarily cause for rejoicing. The whole process of childbearing, feeding, clothing and then nursing their children through a succession of illnesses left women physically and emotionally exhausted. "Determination" commented on a previous letter from a forty-year-old mother of thirteen: "we cannot extricate [ourselves] from the home of a large family of children or the treadmill of duties."⁴² At the same time some segments of Canadian society considered motherhood a sacred trust and a national duty, and women as the "guardians of the race." Also current was the suggestion of compulsory motherhood as a means of perpetuating the race. Mrs. Octavius Allen believed that women would "gladly welcome the happiness of motherhood if it were recognized as a blessing rather than as a nuisance or stigma."⁴³ "Contented Wife" said that she believed there was something wrong with women who did not think the pains, self-denial, inconvenience and trouble of childbearing "repaid a hundred fold by the love, truth and joy motherhood brings."⁴⁴ But "Contented Wife" did not face the poverty of some families, who could neither adequately feed nor clothe their children.

Many women believed that they already endured compulsory motherhood. "Determination" said that no woman was responsible for bearing ten children — implying that the husband was — and "Lady Lothian" observed that compulsory motherhood was forced upon many women "whose husbands felt cheated if their wives did not produce a child a year."⁴⁵ "Arbutus" related the story of a woman who, told by her physician that another child would be fatal, became pregnant and died, "a martyr to a man's passion — her life sacrificed to his whim."⁴⁶ Lillian Laurie believed that women who did not want children ought not to marry, and that unhealthy women should not bring weaklings into the world. An unidentified editorial writer for *The Farmer's Advocate* observed that "these large families required two or three mothers to bring them into the world." Three or four children, the writer stated, were sufficient for any family. Unfortunately, motherless families were not uncommon. In 1912 "Sixteen" (her age) was left to care for herself and nine younger siblings. In 1918 the fifteen-year-old "Prairie Maid" was trying to care for herself and eight younger brothers and sisters.

Women chided one another for ruining their health through childbearing and hard work. "Ade Nae," a frequent contributor to "Home Loving Hearts," cynically wrote: "That's right girls, if we can only make property for No. 2 to enjoy, perhaps we get a nice burial and a posey to smell after we are dead."⁴⁷ She complained that men gave better care to their animals at birthing than to their wives. A man would call a veterinarian to treat his sick horse, but he would

not call a doctor to treat his wife. “Discouraged Woman,” ill, probably pregnant, and mourning the death of her young neighbour (a mother of four), reported the comments of another neighbour to her husband: “Do men ever stop to realize what it means for a woman to bear his children, give the best years of her life for them, and then be glad to die?”⁴⁸

Did women know methods of birth control? McLaren and McLaren report that the declining birth rate that began in the mid-nineteenth century indicates that many Canadian couples knew about, and practiced, traditional methods of birth control, including abstinence, *coitus interruptus*, and self-induced abortion.⁴⁹ Like many other women of the period, “Nawitka,” a frequent contributor, believed that upper- and middle-class women had ways to limit family size that were unknown to the poor. Therefore, “every poor working class couple should have the knowledge so as to have families to suit the income.”⁵⁰ In 1916 “Try Again” urged married couples to use common sense and self-control in their sex life, thereby limiting family size, and an article in the May 1907 issue of *Western Home Monthly* advised women to delay their marriages for a few years as one means of limiting family size. Women who practiced sex outside of marriage were soundly condemned, but sex within marriage also had its critics. “One Beyond the Pale” asked her fellow readers: “Does the marriage ceremony give any man and woman the right to indulge their passions as much as they wish?”⁵¹ Their letters indicate that very few women wanted to spend their childbearing years producing an endless succession of babies who might or might not survive.

McLaren and McLaren also reported that, although dissemination of birth control or family planning information was illegal, women knew abortifacients were available. Frequently, the same magazines that carried the women’s letters also carried advertisements for patent medicines that guaranteed relief from all kinds of female disorders, including painful or delayed menses.⁵² In her study of cross-cultural medicine for women, Lucille Newman notes that information about nonprescriptive methods of birth control are transmitted through women’s peer or intergenerational networks.⁵³ “English Lassie,” for example, heard of and knew women who took medicine to prevent having children.⁵⁴ “Try Again” said that she knew women who took “dope” (unspecified) or preventatives against pregnancy.⁵⁵ Both women opposed the use of such materials for moral and religious reasons, and were cognizant of their danger to the health of the women who used them. However, both realized that some women resorted to such methods out of desperation. “Snow Bird” complained that she had unsuccessfully used squaw vine as suggested by “Young Manitoba,” and “I shall soon become a mother with my first child.”⁵⁶ Coon reports that squaw vine was used by Indians in the treatment of menstrual disorders, including the absence or suppression of menses,⁵⁷ and Laura Jamieson reports that avens, cedar, cherry or yarrow could be used for birth control purposes.⁵⁸ These herbs either suppressed ovulation, prevented the fertilized egg from attaching to the uterine wall, or acted as an abortifacient.

Women seemed to have little inhibition in sharing problems and solutions, especially when they could do so under the anonymity of a pseudonym. "Auld Scottie" shared the testimonial of a woman whose alcoholic husband took a successful cure at an institution. Her brother-in-law analyzed the content of the medication so that he could treat his own addiction, and she thoughtfully provided the recipe for her fellow readers. The cure contained electrified gold, muriate of ammonia, compound extract of cinchona, cocoa, nitrate of strychnia, distilled water and glycerine. After the second or third day, "Auld Scottie" stated, there would be no further desire for alcohol, and the cost of the medicine would be less than four dollars.⁵⁹ Since inaccuracy in measuring some ingredients would certainly have been dangerous, Lillian Laurie recommended that the potential user consult his or her physician before embarking on this treatment. When Mrs. Williams wrote asking if other readers could suggest a cure for a painful lump in her breast, Laurie exhorted the lady to see her physician at once, as surgery was the only cure. In 1918 "Flo" offered a herbal cure for cancer if the treatment was not broken. The decoction was composed of red clover blossoms, burdock root, yellow root (probably yellow sarsaparilla), dandelion, spignet, mardric (mandrake), black cherry bark and comfrey. Coon notes that all of these herbs are commonly used for healing, purifying the blood, the relief of bumps, bruises and tumors, and to stop internal bleeding.⁶⁰ There appeared to be no later letters vouching for the success of any of these treatments.

This article has examined some of the medical recipes included in the letters written by women of the Canadian northwest to the women's pages of farm and ranch papers during the period from 1900 to 1920. There were, during those years, increasing numbers of practicing physicians and health care facilities available in the western provinces, yet women continued to seek and offer medical recipes for home treatments. Why would they continue to do so rather than seek professional advice? One major consideration was that professional services and medical treatment were expensive and settlers preferred not to pay for treatment of routine illnesses such as coughs, colds, skin irritations, chilblains, rheumatism, boils and infected wounds. These they could treat at home. In addition, physician-prescribed medications were a further expense that families did not want to incur, particularly if they believed they could use the contents of their own cupboards and gardens to effect treatment. Undoubtedly, many home treatments were successful. In other cases professional medical advice should have been sought, but many settlers believed that a physician should only be called to attend cases of serious illness or severe injury.

The inconvenience and time required to travel to a physician, or to have one come to the farm, was also a major consideration. An expanding network of roads joined farms to towns, but dirt and gravel surfaces were subject to the vagaries of climate and weather, and the roads were impassable at certain times of the year. By 1920 some farmers owned motor cars, but many still travelled to

and from town by horse and wagon or sleigh. Treating the illness at home saved hours of travel time and the inconvenience of an uncomfortable trip. Other settlers feared admission to hospital. It was usually the very ill who were admitted to hospital, and some settlers viewed hospitals as a place to die, not a place to get well.

But there were other reasons women used home treatments. The recipes were offered by people the readers trusted: the editors of the women's pages and other rural women who, together, formed a peer and generational support network. The women's editors not only made sympathetic and compassionate comments, but they also directed women to organize, demand and petition for dower laws, suffrage and prohibition. And their fellow readers, regardless of cultural or ethnic background, whether newcomers or old-timers, shared common experiences of isolation, loneliness, bereavement, poverty and other problems inherent in rural life. Writing under pseudonyms, women aired personal problems they might not have shared face-to-face. Their letters were personal, poignant and reflective of life as it existed for them. Many women used letter writing as a cathartic process. Because the medical recipes came from "dear sisters" with whom they had much in common, they tended to accept their advice as true. Furthermore, there was among readers a persistent belief in the truth of the printed word. This attitude may have been the result of their religious training and their acceptance of the truth of the Bible, or simply the result of their limited life experiences, but all too frequently readers believed in the truth and accuracy of printed materials, whether in books or newspapers. Their trust in the integrity of letter writers, coupled with their belief in the truth of the written word, lent credibility to advice contained in testimonials and letters. Additionally, western women had learned to be practical, and the medical recipes offered by their fellow readers were inexpensive, the materials were readily accessible, and the treatments were actions women could take when their children or husbands fell ill. Women believed it was better to do something and fail than to do nothing and watch their loved ones suffer. To administer some form of home treatment would free them from guilt and self-recrimination if the treatment was not successful. Finally, there was always the chance that the home treatment administered might be successful and cure the family's illnesses.

NOTES

1. Minnie May, *The Farmer's Advocate (FA)*, August 1890.
2. "Marie," *Free Press and Prairie Farmer (FPPF)*, 6 February 1907.
3. Ramsay Cook, "The Triumph and Trials of Materialism (1900-1945), in Ramsay Cook, ed., *The Illustrated History of Canada* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen, 1987), 383-84. Between 1901 and 1921, the population of Canada increased from 5,371,315 to 8,800,000. This was marked by a 49 percent increase on the Prairies and 40 percent in Ontario and Québec. About one-third of the settlers came from the United States. See David K. Foot, *Canada's Population Outlook: Demographic Futures and Economic Challenges* (Toronto: James

- Lorimer, 1982), 3-13; and Jane Bruce, ed., *The Last Best West* (Vancouver: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1976).
4. James Gray, *The Roar of the Twenties* (Markham: Paperjacks, 1975), 47.
 5. John MacDougall, *Rural Life in Canada: Its Trends and Its Tasks* (1913; reprint Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).
 6. *FA*, 10 May 1910.
 7. "Ontario Women's Institute Convention," *FA*, 2 January 1906.
 8. *FA*, October 1901. Camphor was used as an irritant, stimulant, or in liniment. Turpentine (an oleoresin) along with vinegar was considered a panacea for many health problems. Sassafras was used as a general tonic in the treatment of rheumatism and as a diuretic. Epsom salts were used as a cathartic. Lunar caustic (silver nitrate) was used as an antispasmodic to relieve intestinal cramps, abdominal pains, headache and heartburn. Linseed oil served as a laxative, emollient or demulcent, and the seeds were used as a poultice for infections or boils.
 9. *FPPF*, 21 September 1910. The purpose of iodide of potassium is unclear. Bromide of sodium was used as a sedative. Belladonna was used to treat asthma, coughs and constipation, to dilate the pupils of the eyes, and to stimulate the heart. Spirits of ether were used as an anesthetic. Morphine (derived from opium) was taken to kill pain or induce sleep. Tincture of *nux vomica* (containing strychnine) was used as a heart stimulant. Essence of pepsin aided digestion. Subnitrate of bismuth was used to treat indigestion. Tincture of catechu worked as an astringent to contract the tissues and check discharges such as bleeding or mucus. Laudanum was a frequently used opium-based painkiller.
 10. Approximately 750 chemicals or drugs in twenty-five categories, and approximately 250 patent medicines were listed for sale. The purchaser of poisonous drugs had to register his name and the purpose of the drug, or provide a written prescription from a physician.
 11. "Mother and Baby," *Family Herald and Weekly Star (FHWS)*, 29 October 1919.
 12. Dawn McLeod, *Popular Herbs* (Trowbridge: Duckworth, 1981), 12.
 13. Wayland D. Hand, ed., *American Folk Medicine: A Symposium* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 4.
 14. Bruno Gebhard, "The Interactionship of Scientific and Folk Medicine in the United States Since 1850," in Hand, *American Folk Medicine*, 92.
 15. Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mothers' Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1919-1932* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986). During the latter part of the nineteenth century, many mothers wrote to the authors of child care pages in magazines and newspapers seeking advice, and on occasion their letters were printed along with the adviser's replies. The Children's Bureau received as many as 125,000 letters each year from women seeking advice. Dr. Helen MacMurphy, director of the Child Welfare Division of the federal Department of Health, her successors in the department, and Charlotte Whitton and the staff at the Canadian Child Welfare Association, also received thousands of letters from women anxious about their own health and that of their families.
 16. John Q. Anderson, "Medical Folklore in the American Collection," in Hand, *American Folk Medicine*, 318.
 17. *FA*, 25 October 1905; *ibid.*, *FA*, 20 October 1902.

18. *FPPF*, February 1910.
19. *Ibid.*, 11 May 1910. It was also used for burns, itch and infected cuts.
20. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1909.
21. *Ibid.*, 12 March 1913.
22. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1913.
23. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1910.
24. *Ibid.*, 12 March 1913.
25. *Ibid.*, 23 February 1910.
26. *Ibid.*, 21 April 1916.
27. *Ibid.*, 29 January 1908.
28. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1908.
29. *Ibid.*, 15 June 1910.
30. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1908.
31. *Ibid.*, 22 June 1910.
32. *Ibid.*, 1 January 1908.
33. *Ibid.*, January 1908.
34. *Ibid.*, 14 September 1912.
35. *Ibid.*, 7 January 1914.
36. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1913.
37. *Ibid.*, 18 December 1912.
38. *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 21 April 1915.
39. *FPPF*, 11 May 1910.
40. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1913.
41. Linda Rassmussen et al., *A Harvest Yet to Reap* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1976), 76.
42. *FPPF*, 26 January 1915.
43. Mrs. Octavius Allen, "How Women Think on the Question of Race Suicide," *FA*, October 1905. Mrs. Octavius Allen was Mary Wood Allen.
44. *FPPF*, 26 July 1915.
45. *Ibid.*, 12 January 1913.
46. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1913.
47. *Ibid.*, 11 September 1907.
48. *Ibid.*, 2 January 1918.
49. Angus McLaren and Arleen Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 9-53.
50. *FPPF*, 9 December 1909.

51. Ibid., 15 March 1916.
52. McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, 11, 16, 18, 22, 67, 73. In large doses, yarrow suppressed ovulation; a decoction of avnes prevented conception. Two examples of abortifacients advertised in or near the women's pages were Towles Pennyroyal and Steel Pills, and IRS Golden Compound Tablets.
53. Lucille F. Newman, ed., *Women's Medicine: A Cross Cultural Study of Indigenous Fertility Regulation* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 13-15.
54. *FPPF*, 24 April 1912.
55. Ibid., 5 July 1916.
56. Ibid., 8 May 1912.
57. Nelson Coon, *Using Plants for Healing* (Emmanus, Pennsylvania: Rodale, 1979), 67.
58. Laura E. Jamieson, *Wild Herbs of Bowen Island* (Vancouver: West Press, 1981), 145.
59. *FPPF*, 30 April 1913.
60. Coon, *Using Plants for Healing*, 67, 144, 166, 192, 195, 197.

The Manitoba Cabinet in the Liberal-Progressive Era, 1922-1958

Christopher Dunn

ABSTRACT. The “unaided cabinet model” predicts, in part, the character of governance in Manitoba under the “nonpartisan” cabinets from 1922 to 1958. But there were many features of this government which deviate from the model. These include real power in the hands of senior cabinet ministers as opposed to the premier alone; the presence of a clerk of the executive council; and the use of the clerk’s office for policy advice to cabinet during the Garson years.

SOMMAIRE. Le “unaided cabinet model,” cabinet sans infrastructure de soutien, annonce en partie le type de contrôle présent au Manitoba sous les cabinets non partisans de 1922 à 1958. Cependant ce type de gouvernement comportait de nombreuses caractéristiques qui s’éloignaient du modèle. Le pouvoir n’était pas exclusivement entre les mains du Premier ministre: les principaux ministres du cabinet avaient eux aussi un pouvoir réel. Il y avait un greffier du conseil exécutif et sous le gouvernement Garson son bureau offrait au cabinet des conseils relatifs aux politiques.

Introduction

There are many works which review federal and provincial cabinets in modern Canada,¹ but the study of cabinet evolution, especially provincial cabinet evolution, has received only slight attention. Contrary to what one might expect, for example, the early Liberal-Progressive cabinets in Manitoba engaged in planning exercises, hired cabinet-level staff, allowed minutes of cabinet to be taken for several years, and contemplated program budgeting. This is not at all what we might expect of the historic “traditional” or “unaided” cabinet, and yet the traditional pattern did pertain for the most part. This article will fill some historical *lacunae* about the Bracken, Garson and Campbell cabinets in Manitoba. It will demonstrate that “traditional” cabinet characteristics dominated the Liberal-Progressive period, but that the pattern was not entirely homogeneous. Future cabinet studies should mention this historical variety, both for Manitoba and for other provinces.

For “traditional” cabinet characteristics we depend on Tennant’s well-known article about the Barrett NDP cabinet.² Tennant was writing about British Columbia cabinets, but his descriptions included asides about Canadian provincial cabinets in general. The characteristics of a “traditional” government include:

Cabinet: Under Social Credit [W.A.C. Bennett] the cabinet had remained entirely traditional — that is, simple in structure and uncomplicated in origin, lacking the committees, staff, staff agencies, and extensive paper work which provide planning and coordination capability at the cabinet level in the central government and most of the larger provinces.

Premier: The premier is “the one feasible means of attaining coordination” in the traditional cabinet [Tennant implies that the premier, to achieve coordination, should be an authoritarian leader].

Decision-making: In its decision-making the NDP cabinet illustrates what is presumably true of any traditional cabinet attempting to operate at the centre of a large and complex government: within the cabinet itself in any policy area there can

be no consistent and reliable source of information other than the minister in charge of the area.

Central Staff: The [Barrett] NDP approach to policy-making was also supportive of the traditional cabinet. Some ministers had an explicit faith in what might be termed the unaided politician in the unaided cabinet. In good part this faith rested on the failure to see the distinction between line and staff agencies . . . and . . . on a lack of appreciation of the role staff outside the regular bureaucracy can play in adding to the capabilities of political decision makers. [W.A.C. Bennett's "traditional" cabinet had a Treasury Board with "no staff of its own while other committees and the cabinet itself had no staff whatever. There was no clerk to the cabinet and no staff official attended cabinet meetings."']

Planning: It would appear that the traditional cabinet is one in which complex planning capability cannot be achieved and in which, at best, coordination may be achieved by an authoritarian leader.

Budgeting: The NDP attitude to financial management was identical to that of the previous government. A balanced budget was seen as the *sine qua non* of successful government.

Early provincial cabinets did indeed follow the general pattern described by Tennant; but contrary to what he and other contemporary analysts imply,³ the pattern was sometimes broken. In Manitoba, especially in the period of Premier Garson, there were atypical developments in the area of premier-cabinet relations, professional staff, planning and budgeting.

Liberal-Progressive Cabinets in the Nonpartisan Era

The term "nonpartisan" is sometimes used to describe the years 1922-58. Lloyd Stinson says:

Not only was John Bracken in control of the House, he was the predominant influence of his time; his philosophy of non-partisanship dominated Manitoba politics for more than two decades and was carried on for another 15 years under the guidance of his faithful disciples [Garson and Campbell] . . . Because of his belief in the principles of cooperation and consultation Bracken disparaged party politics; it was in the role of non-partisan premier that he made his mark on Canadian life.⁴

Of course party politics were not entirely absent during these years, but there was a consistent tendency towards political homogenization. The United Farmers of Manitoba (UFM) gained office in 1922, opposed by Liberals, Conservatives and Labour. Over time, however, Premier John Bracken (with the party renamed the Progressives in 1927) managed to arrange an alliance or coalition with the Liberals in 1932 (the Liberal-Progressives), entered an arrangement with Social Credit in 1936 to support his government, and constructed a full-blown coalition with the Conservatives, CCF and Social Credit in 1940 (alternately referred to by some as "nonpartisan government"). The CCF left in 1942. Following the election of the independent Conservatives under Roblin in 1949, the Conservatives left the coalition in 1950 (leaving a few

renegades behind) and “normal” party politics are considered to have begun again in 1958. The dominant theme of the era was to downplay party politics.

Of course, the Liberal-Progressive cabinets of Manitoba reflected anything but a nonpartisan composition. Bracken’s particular genius was his ability to persuade his political opponents to join forces with him, resulting in a cabinet of unusual variety. Of the thirty-seven ministers, including premiers, who served between 1922 and 1958, nine claimed to have belonged only to the UFM, ten claimed to have been Liberal-Progressive only, four had been Liberals and then turned UFM/Progressive or Liberal-Progressive, one was a Conservative who turned UFM, there were two who had been Brackenites, Conservatives and Liberals during the span of their political careers; seven from other party formations joined the coalition cabinet (four Conservatives, plus one CCF, one Social Credit and one Independent Liberal), another claimed to have been a “Liberal supporter of the Government” and one merely a “Liberal,” and two did not divulge their partisanship.⁵ Provincial politics sometimes served as a “safety hatch” for politicians of various shades who had been unsuccessful at the federal level, like Conservatives Albert Prefontaine, Errick Willis and W.C. Miller, and Liberal Ewen McPherson. In spite of the multihued nature of the Liberal-Progressive cabinets, they reflected more solidarity than many contemporary executive councils.

Solidarity may have been due in part to the fact that the Manitoba political elite itself was remarkably homogeneous. In a province swamped by a half-century of immigration, twenty-six of the thirty-seven ministers were either British-born or had parents of British origin (this total climbs to thirty-one if five unknown but probably “British” or British-origin cases are included). Only three ministers were French Canadian, along with one Ukrainian and two Germans. Nearly all were Protestant: either Anglican or United Church (or Presbyterian, one of the forerunners to the United Church); only four were Roman Catholic.⁶ Lack of electoral reform ensured that rural areas dominated the legislature and therefore the cabinet. Twenty-five ministers were from rural ridings, seven from urban, two from urban-rural and three from the north. “Rural notables” figured heavily in the occupational makeup of cabinet, which featured ten lawyers, nine farmers, six businessmen (many in agri-business) and a scattering of other backgrounds. Of the dozen with municipal elected political experience, ten had accumulated it in rural settings; the other two had been secretary-treasurers for rural municipalities. When political leaders in Manitoba made direct analogies between provincial and municipal affairs when justifying political coalitions,⁷ there would be no disagreement from these men.

Fraternal ties bound some together. Many of the heavy hitters in the various nonpartisan cabinets — Clubb, Major, McDiarmid, McPherson, Schultz, McLenaghan — were Freemasons. Of the sixteen premiers in the first century of Manitoba’s existence, twelve have been Freemasons,⁸ including Bracken and Garson.⁹

There were even links between the judicial and political elites. Two former attorneys general of Manitoba — Major and Schultz — were appointed to the Manitoba Court of King's Bench and the Court of Appeal, respectively. This of course occurred while there were Liberals in office in both Ottawa and Winnipeg. (C. Rhodes Smith, attorney general from 1950 to 1952, was later appointed to Queen's Bench in 1963, to the Court of Appeal in 1966, and to the position of chief justice in 1971.) Ewen McPherson, a former treasurer, was appointed chief justice of the Court of King's Bench in 1937 and later appointed chief justice of Manitoba in 1944.

Jackson's summary of the motive force of this era gives a clue to the preferred type of public administration:

the Progressive Party underwent several changes in name and two of leader; but it never was, nor did it ever pretend to be, anything more than a careful and cautious custodian of the public purse.¹⁰

Economy in public expenditure entailed economy in public administration. This implied having a traditional central executive, but there were exceptions.

Premiers

The traditional model of cabinet would have us believe that the premier is, or should be, "authoritarian." Otherwise, the one focal point of coordination in government disappears. What the theory overlooks is the possibility that a government long in office can develop relatively more consensual decision-making and lessen the stress on the premier's role. This appears to be the case with the Liberal-Progressive cabinets. There, cabinet was the effective decision-making focus.

Premiers of Manitoba shared effective power in cabinet with other influential ministers. This was partly due to the long duration of many of the ministers in specific portfolios and in cabinet itself. J.S. McDiarmid was the minister of Mines and Natural Resources for twenty-one years (1932-53), and had the longest tenure of any active Canadian cabinet minister when he retired.¹¹ W.R. (Bill) Clubb was minister of Public Works for eighteen years (1922-40). Ivan Schultz was a cabinet member for nineteen years (1934-53), first in Education (eight years), then Health (nine years) and finally as attorney general (two years). Sauveur Marcoux was minister without portfolio for twelve years (1936-48), then minister of Municipal Affairs for three. William Major was attorney general for thirteen years (1927-40). Douglas Campbell held the Agriculture portfolio for twelve years (1936-48) before he became premier. Robert Hoey was minister of Education from 1927 to 1936, and Errick Willis held Public Works from 1940 to 1948 in the coalition government. These long ministerial terms meant that premiers — and other cabinet colleagues — either deferred to the responsible minister's judgment or at least acknowledged the weight of his opinion in council.¹²

Historical circumstances also accounted for the more egalitarian distribution of influence in each of the nonpartisan cabinets. Bracken's cabinets (see Figure 1) were marked by the political circumstances of the 1922 election. Douglas Campbell stated that both the UFM cabinet and caucus worked on a consensual basis because the initial numerical parity between the government and the combined opposition factions dictated "endless caucuses" to plan strategy. He went on to say that "Bracken formed his style of procedure from those days. He was a first among equals, but he was not dictatorial or authoritarian; he tried very hard for a consensus."¹³ Not that this entailed a lack of influence: Bracken's intellect made him the natural leader in cabinet — even during coalition — and he lectured his cabinet much like a patient university professor. Garson, less solicitous of agreement than Bracken, was more inclined to say "This is the consensus and we'll do it this way." Still, he was not dictatorial because he had "a more sophisticated group to deal with" who had, like him, entered caucus at roughly the same time.¹⁴ Campbell portrays himself as the least concerned about party cohesion of the three premiers. He had experienced ministers like McDiarmid and Schultz in cabinet, so his power was more loosely exercised.¹⁵



Figure 1. Manitoba Cabinet 1942. Left to right: S.J. Farmer, J.S. McDiarmid, N. Turnbull, S. Marcoux, A.R. Welch, I. Schultz, D.L. Campbell, W. Morton, J. McLenaghan, J. Bracken, E. Willis, S.S. Garson. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, W4855)

Some ministers were notably influential. Bill Clubb and Richard Craig were Bracken's lieutenants in the early UFM government. Craig, a lawyer and the only government member from Winnipeg, was valued for his procedural expertise and Clubb for his political savvy in dealing with farm interests.¹⁶ The dedicated public health pioneer, Dr. E.W. Montgomery, aggressively expanded the services and budget of the newly formed Department of Health and Public

Welfare while he was minister from 1927 to 1932.¹⁷ William Major helped establish Headingly Gaol and revised the provincial magisterial system.¹⁸ Lloyd Stinson says J.S. McDiarmid had great prestige and “carried a heavy load in the Coalition Cabinet in various posts.”¹⁹ The first resources minister after the natural resources transfer, McDiarmid helped to broaden the province’s economic base and established the Bureau of Industry to develop new products. Both Errick Willis and William Morton were instrumental in expanding the provincial highways system while they were ministers of Public Works (1940-48 and 1952-55, respectively).²⁰ Ivan Schultz was called “the main support of a limping government” in the early 1950s; earlier he had successfully pushed for rural hospital expansion.²¹ Ron Turner exercised significant influence with Premier Campbell while the former was provincial treasurer (1951-56).²² To this one must add the influence that Garson and Campbell enjoyed with their predecessor premiers while they were line ministers (Garson in Treasury, 1936-43, and Campbell in Agriculture, 1936-48).

Cabinet Structure

In keeping with the traditional model of cabinet structure, cabinet committees other than Treasury Board were rarely used. Cabinet was so small (an average of ten ministers), its workload so reasonable and the ministers so knowledgeable about the issues that it made little sense to structure committees. Rare exceptions would occur: a three-member committee on Red River Flood Relief headed by Campbell was formed in 1950 and later the Provincial-Municipal Committee, a quasi-committee of cabinet members and mayors, was struck. There was also an informal Establishment Committee of Cabinet, which kept track of the actual establishment in each department, reviewed the necessity for having certain staff positions and evaluated their proper location in the departmental structure. It was established after World War II as a way to slow civil service growth. No minister could get additional staff without the request passing through the Establishment Committee, and from there to cabinet.

As in other traditional cabinets there was a Treasury Board. The Treasury Board had been first explicitly referred to in the Treasury Department Act, 1887,²³ although a “Board of Audit” had been created in 1874. Like most post-Confederation Treasury Boards, Manitoba’s had by today’s standards relatively narrow duties: regulating department bookkeeping, issuing warrants and auditing public expenditures. The Liberal-Progressive government introduced only one major source of financial framework legislation, the Treasury Act of 1936.²⁴ The Treasury Board was to examine the public accounts and present them to cabinet, which then submitted them to the Legislative Assembly; where necessary it was to overrule refusals of the comptroller general to issue cheques; and it was to determine the correct appropriation to which authorized expenditure should be charged, in case of disputes between the departments and the comptroller general. In contrast to the Treasury Boards of today, the nonpartisan era board was not expected to perform a policy or managerial role.

Central Staff

The traditional, “unaided” cabinet model dominated the period but with some modifications. There was a clerk of the executive council, but he did not attend cabinet in the Bracken and Campbell years. There was also a deputy clerk. The traditional model in the Manitoba context entailed central staff doing strictly housekeeping duties. Even record keeping was kept to a minimum. However, the Garson period (1943-48) offered a temporary deviation from the traditional executive model.

The clerk of the executive council was the chief official in the executive council office, with two main responsibilities: preparing and keeping Orders in Council, and acting as senior electoral officer. The clerk’s responsibility for elections had long roots. Legislation in 1872 obliged the returning officers in provincial elections to deliver their poll books and return their writs to the clerk within forty-eight hours of a general election.²⁵ A 1904 amendment to the Election Act noted the duty of the clerk to make and certify copies of lists of electors and store them in the archives of his office.²⁶ Legislation passed in 1931 elaborated on the clerk’s duties: he was to receive notices from returning officers who had ceased to be members of the electoral division of which they were officers, receive letters setting out reasons for the right of exemption from returning officer duties, issue the writs of election and transmit them to returning officers, publish in *The Manitoba Gazette* the notice of the issue of the writ of election, and furnish each returning officer with election forms and related material.²⁷ In 1949 amendments provided for the appointment of a chief electoral officer (CEO) to have charge of the conduct of elections if the lieutenant governor-in-council deemed it advisable. This meant either that a CEO could be appointed or that the clerk of the executive council could exercise CEO duties. Ballot boxes and associated election paraphernalia were to be delivered to the clerk.²⁸ In 1952 it was specified that the clerk was to act as CEO in the latter’s absence or incapacity.²⁹ Finally, in 1956 it was noted that there be a CEO with no mention of interchangeability of posts;³⁰ legislative mention of the clerk’s electoral responsibilities had at last come to an end.

The clerks’ backgrounds seem to suggest restricted expectations for their office. Frederick T. Axford, until then one of the longest-serving clerks (1919-33), was hired at the age of sixty and retired at the age of seventy-four. A former federal land service official, he had been the province’s inspector of legal offices from 1916 to 1919. His successor, John Leslie Johnston, who served as acting clerk from 1933 to 1937, had been the assistant provincial librarian at the time of his appointment and returned subsequently to employment as provincial librarian. (The Provincial Library was financed out of the same vote in the appropriations as the executive council, which may explain the moves.) The next clerk, P. Adjutor Talbot, had been a career politician. He was first elected in LaVerendrye in 1915, and was chosen speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 1923, serving until he failed renomination in 1936. (A foe of the Norris

government's French language policy, he left the Liberals in 1916 and provoked the election of 1922 when his motion of censure carried.) Talbot served as clerk from 1937 to 1948. Robert E. Moffat (1948-52) was an exception to the pattern, combining the post of clerk with that of economic advisor to executive council and serving as a high-profile policy advisor. However, the old low-profile pattern reestablished itself in 1952-58 with only an acting clerk, Orville Montague Miles Kay, in office.³¹

The second official working for the executive council during most of this period was called the deputy clerk and secretary to the premier. The position of deputy clerk appears to have begun with Clarence Wilfrid Jackson, who was appointed by Premier Bracken in September 1930.³² Previously there was the post of "senior clerk," but this seems to have been more an assistant to the clerk, whereas the deputy clerk was to perform duties separate from those of the clerk.³³ The post of deputy clerk apparently was created for Jackson due to the defeat of the federal Liberals in 1930, at which time he had been executive secretary to T.A. Crerar; he merely went back to Ottawa as Crerar's secretary in November 1935, after the Liberals returned to power.³⁴ The next deputy clerk, Locksley McNeill (1935-43), recalls performing a variety of functions as deputy clerk: receiving correspondence, answering letters, administering the oath of allegiance and oaths of office if the clerk was away, and arranging interviews with the premier. Unlike the clerk's duties, the deputy clerk's responsibilities were all within the premier's office. Occasionally during general elections he would help the premier write speeches, but this was not a usual part of his duties.³⁵ The Bracken papers also show McNeill occasionally corresponding with departmental officials on administrative business. Until 1944 the office of deputy clerk was a civil service position while that of secretary was outside the scope of the civil service. In 1944 legislation provided that the secretaries were to be civil servants and McNeill recalls "buying back" into the superannuation plan for the time he had spent as secretary.³⁶ Thereafter the post of secretary was not combined with other positions.³⁷

Subsequently there was a relatively short period in which a third type of official appeared in Manitoba's executive council office. In 1943 a new post was created called "solicitor to the executive council," in which capacity Mr. McNeill worked from 1943 to 1945. This entailed drafting all Orders in Council to ensure correct format and legality before they went to cabinet, in which function he cooperated with the legislative counsel. The rationale for McNeill's appointment was the belief that a qualified solicitor should be the drafter of Orders in Council.³⁸ He was also custodian of government titles, which required that he keep a centralized record of titles to all properties owned by the Crown in right of the province. After 1945 McNeill's post was held by Joseph Crawford, who performed the two aforementioned duties as well as acting as "inspector of legal offices."

There was in the executive council office no explicit "political liaison" post; it never occurred to cabinet ministers to share the job of political contacts with

nonelected officials. Agriculture Minister Douglas Campbell was a major political conduit for Premier Bracken. Albert Prefontaine served as the major contact with the French community from 1923 to 1935; Sauveur Marcoux did the same from 1936 to 1951 and Edmond Prefontaine (Albert's son) likewise from 1951 to 1958. James McLenaghan served as liaison to the Interlake Conservatives in the 1940s.

A deviation from the "unaided cabinet" pattern came about with the hiring in November 1945 of Robert E. Moffat, who brought a policy analysis capability to executive council. Moffat had served with Wartime Price Control Board as an industry administrator and was hired by then Premier Stuart S. Garson when the latter visited Ottawa in August 1945. When he took up his post in late 1945 his title was "economic advisor to executive council"; in addition he was the clerk of the executive council from 1948 to 1952. He resigned in May 1952. Moffat was assisted by about a half-dozen short-term and summer staff at various times, many of them recommended by the dean of Commerce of the University of Manitoba. In the early 1950s he was aided by Peter B. Curd, assistant to the economic advisor. Moffat was one of four major postwar appointees who became senior policy advisors. The others were Stuart Anderson, a member of the civil service commission who in 1950 became deputy provincial treasurer, Merlin Newton, the civil service commissioner, and Rex Grose, a senior Industry and Commerce Department official who went on to serve in the Roblin government and briefly in the Schreyer government.

The variety of papers and projects engaged in by Moffat attest to the activity of the executive council staff. Moffat analyzed anticipated changes in taxation of cooperatives for Premier Garson's information. He was instrumental in drafting Manitoba's submissions opposing increases in freight rates in 1947, and helped arrange Manitoba's submissions to the Royal Commission on Transportation in 1949. Moffat, with law graduate Dave Jones, researched information on constitutional matters. He did analytical preparatory work for and attended the constitutional conferences of 1950. In all he attended eight federal-provincial meetings, some of which dealt with federal-provincial financing. Moffat recalls that

wartime activities pushed aside the Rowell-Sirois Report and after the War, Garson who was then Premier, was very involved in re-starting the whole discussion. He and the whole central administration of Manitoba spent a great amount of time on the implementing of the revenue-sharing arrangements and later drafts of the agreements to share revenue from income tax and for Ottawa to make grants to the low-income provinces. One of his major achievements was the negotiation of those agreements . . . This was the major activity of the central administration for 2 or 3 years.³⁹

After Douglas Campbell became premier in 1948, hydroelectric policy, municipal affairs and the Red River flood were to become the major pre-

occupations of government. Campbell appointed Moffat the chairman of a committee of deputy ministers in late 1949 to recommend ways of servicing the electrical needs of rural residents. Moffat states:

Winnipeg Hydro and Winnipeg Electric each had two plants built before the war at prewar cost levels and almost paid for. The question [before the committee and ultimately before cabinet] was who would finance and administer the next big high-cost plants required for the greatly increased electrical demand of the province.

The work of the committee led ultimately, and after much controversy, to the provincial takeover of the Winnipeg Electric Company and to the establishment of Manitoba Hydro. Finally, Moffat worked as economic researcher for a joint committee of provincial ministers and mayors called the "Provincial-Municipal Committee," which reported in 1953 and which was the first body to broach the idea of the unification of the city of Winnipeg.⁴⁰ There is no indication of similar activism by the executive council office following Moffat's departure.

The Administration of Cabinet

Only rarely did the cabinet in the Liberal-Progressive era become highly specialized and administratively formal. Formal agendas and cabinet minutes were uncommon and cabinet only seldom invited officials to sit in on meetings. In these respects, Liberal-Progressive cabinets were indeed traditional.

Again the exception proved to be Garson, who in 1946 introduced the practice of taking minutes of cabinet meetings. Garson had Moffat keep a formal record of the decisions taken, avoiding direct quotations from specific ministers. These, however, were for the premier's eyes alone and never circulated. Even in Garson's time there were still no agendas used.

Bracken and Campbell were different. With Bracken, even the clerk of the executive council did not attend cabinet; he would merely prepare the Orders in Council and disseminate them once they were passed. Campbell stopped the Garson practice of having an outsider in cabinet and reverted to Bracken's style:

I preferred Bracken's method of having each Cabinet minister free to voice his own opinions, free from outsiders and no records of decisions made . . . Cabinet remained the judge of what was to go out . . . There was nearly always a verbal report by the minister responsible; only on rare occasions were deputies brought in.⁴¹

Planning

The Bracken government and its successors did not involve themselves in continual and intensive planning efforts. Nevertheless there were sporadic activities that approximated planning or were claimed to constitute planning: the economic survey, postwar reconstruction planning, the rural electrification

program, and various expansions of highway and telephone service. In most cases outside experts assisted in these planning efforts.

The economic survey was not exactly planning, but could have served as the basis for such. It originated as part of a deal struck between Bracken and the provincial Social Credit party. The Social Credit wanted the survey performed in return for offering political support to the Liberal-Progressives after the latter had their seat total reduced in the 1936 election. The surveys were done over the next two to three years but nothing explicit seems to have resulted from them.

Postwar reconstruction planning involved activity both within and beyond government. Within government, Garson showed what was, for the times, an uncharacteristic dedication to planning. In his first year as premier he committed himself to a program of planning, stating that “postwar planning in Canada must be lifted above the level of promises, and oratory, and generalities into a discussion of method . . .”⁴²

On 31 March 1944, Garson elaborated before the Legislative Assembly the principles and projects that would guide postwar planning in Manitoba.⁴³ They included the following: the federal government had responsibility for devising a national plan, but much of it would have to be worked out by provinces; there should be a reallocation of revenues to enable Manitoba to carry out planning; the private sector had to shoulder much responsibility for assuring postwar employment, or government would step in; postwar plans were likely to be wide in scope and duration, so the budgeting for them should be done over a number of years; and cooperation, coordination and input should be sought from all levels of government, labour, business, farmers and citizens.

In 1944 Garson set up a number of planning bodies for postwar policy: a Special Select Committee of the Whole House for the purpose of reviewing, criticizing and formulating proposals and plans, and advising the government in the formulation of the postwar program; a committee of members of the Executive Council on Postwar Reconstruction; a committee of deputy ministers on postwar reconstruction; an executive subcommittee of the deputy ministers committee to which Professor Waines of the University of Manitoba was added as economist; a Greater Winnipeg Committee on Postwar Reconstruction under the chairmanship of Gordon Konantz, with responsibility for postwar planning in Greater Winnipeg; and the government’s Advisory Committee on Co-ordination and Postwar Planning composed of experts in various economic sectors to recommend measures to avoid overlap in different parts of the Manitoba Postwar Plan.⁴⁴ One of the results of this activity was the report of the postwar reconstruction committee.⁴⁵

Three types of projects were planned by the Manitoba government — those desirable for their own sake, those desirable for employment potential, and those contingent on national and international markets. In the first category were projects for rural electrification, agricultural rehabilitation, conservation,

mining, education, health and municipal affairs. The second category included mapping and surveys, conservation and roads. The third category consisted largely of hydroelectric projects.⁴⁶ An unstated but fairly evident purpose of the planning seemed to be the prevention of postwar social dislocation. Campbell later stated that the government's advisors had warned it (erroneously) about massive postwar unemployment.⁴⁷

The major planning effort of the late 1940s was the program of rural electrification. Moffat notes:

Campbell should get . . . credit for "Rural Electrification." In that project he was the originator and the pusher while Garson was the Premier and finance man who helped things along.⁴⁸

Professor Emerson Schmidt of the University of Chicago headed a team of outside experts established in 1942 called the "Manitoba Electrification Enquiry Committee." The committee, answering to Campbell, made plans for an expanded electrical services network. The implementation of the electrification program began in 1945. By the end of Garson's term, about 12,000 Manitoba farms were receiving power from central generating stations — a dramatic growth from 2,800 in June 1946 — and the Campbell government aimed at an additional 5,000 annually.⁴⁹ The electrification campaign ended in 1954-55. It had been more than a mere technical improvement; rural electrification had been discussed in the provincial election of 1945 and vast electoral benefits were foreseen. Later, more modest initiatives would be taken in telephones and highways.

Rural electrification dominated Manitoba's postwar planning implementation, but wartime planning had paved the way. Campbell states:

After WWI there had been a let-down [economically] for a while. Most of the returning servicemen had found it difficult to get jobs. The postwar plan for the end of WWII [on the other hand] had received a lot of thought. Garson had developed a team of experts to take up the slack at the end of WWII. We had established a "Postwar Fund" into which we had been paying. We had built it up to about \$17-19 million. I always took pride in the fact that two of my closest friends, Morton — in Telephones — and Willis — in Highways [Public Works] — did not receive as much of the fund as Hydro [Campbell's responsibility] did. Due to the rural electrification committee [the Schmidt Committee] we already had plans ready in Hydro. We managed to grab most of the fund before Willis and Morton got their hands on it . . . Hydro was the priority. Others had to borrow to get their money.⁵⁰

Planning activities in the nonpartisan period were therefore sporadic and relatively narrow in focus. As well, it appears from the reliance on outside experts that both planning and analytical expertise were lacking in the departmental bureaucracy. Planning appears to have been a temporary expedient to deal with extraordinary postwar circumstances.

Budgeting

In their budgeting practices, the Liberal-Progressive cabinets were squarely in the traditional mould. The UFM had first been elected in 1922 because of public opposition to the deficits and alleged inefficiency of the Norris government.⁵¹ The UFM's themes of economical, efficient and nonpartisan government were to last for the next thirty-six years. Friesen says that "only British Columbia among Canada's nine provinces could join Manitoba in reporting balanced accounts (always exclusive of relief payments) in the late 1930s."⁵² The Liberal-Progressive cabinets all worked on the philosophy of "pay-as-you-go" rather than debt financing, although of course this theme worked more as a brake on new spending adventures than as a rigid fiscal guideline. By the 1959 provincial election, fiscal conservatism had become a political liability. Campbell was said to be indignant at his "tight-fisted" image and took pains to explain that under his government expenditures had gone from \$38 million to \$105 million and the debt from \$100 to \$200 million.⁵³

Preparation of the budget in the nonpartisan era was also along the traditional lines familiar to students of revenue and expenditure processes. The expenditures in the estimates were listed in terms of "input" items such as personnel and material rather than "programs," as we now call categories of government activity. Political and administrative inertia halted attempts to make the budget process more meaningful.

A typical budget directions memo in the Bracken Papers asks ministers to have their estimates submitted by 15 November 1927 and asks simply that they show expenditures for the year ended 30 April 1927, estimates for the year ending 30 April 1928, and proposed estimates for the year ending 30 April 1929.⁵⁴ This format did not vary throughout the nonpartisan era.

Cabinet estimates review was performed by the full cabinet with administrative help from the Treasury Department. Cabinet, however, at one point commissioned consultants to suggest how it could modernize its budget process. A report by Stevenson and Kellogg Ltd., apparently part of a cross-governmental efficiency survey, outlined the processes involved in budget and audit functions and their serious deficiencies; it proposed many reforms which were ahead of their time. Only the budget function shall concern us here.

The consultants gave a pithy description of the Manitoba budget process as of the early 1950s. The provincial treasurer and senior Treasury officials had only six weeks to study departmental estimates, and spent most of this time studying major spending requirements rather than trying to balance competing demands for program funds. They had neither the mandate nor the time for disinterested study of relative priorities in the government's program. As well, Treasury officials were not equipped to review the relative merits of technical proposals. Better budget analysis was imperative.⁵⁵

After this analysis, the consultants made recommendations which, if followed, would have placed Manitoba with Saskatchewan in the forefront of

provincial budget reform. One suggestion was to adopt the “performance budgeting” idea proposed by the Hoover Commission in the United States, which was the forerunner of modern program budgeting.⁵⁶

The consultants also suggested what would be in effect a central agency for budgeting. A “staff group” in the Treasury Department answering to the deputy provincial treasurer or preferably a group “established as an adjunct of the Executive Council” should be established as a fundamental part of provincial financial control.⁵⁷ The group would examine program expansion proposals, capital expenditures, staff additions, the status of appropriated moneys, program monitoring and perhaps study structural organization: in short, tasks now common for Treasury Board staffs.

The report appears to have had little influence. Minimal change took place in the estimates and there was never a central budgetary staff appointed in Campbell’s day. This was due to a mixture of traditionalism, frugality and cabinet’s feeling that it was doing a satisfactory job.

Campbell gives the impression that the interrelating of priorities and relative claims on resources was in fact being done by cabinet:

Cabinet kept very close to operations . . . In 1935 Aberhart went into office; not long after the Social Credit went in, they defaulted on their interest payments [and we wanted to avoid the same thing happening in Manitoba]. We had the fullest cooperation from the departments. Estimates would all come to the full cabinet. We would scrutinize each others’ Estimates. Health and welfare was already showing its potential for alarming growth and all of us would contribute our points of view to such problems.

At Estimates time, the Deputy Minister would sit in with the Minister to try to justify the increases they were asking for.⁵⁸

M.S. Donnelly says that before 1959 the Treasury Board’s activities were modest:

activities that might have been carried out by it were dealt with by the whole cabinet and the board was left with the relatively minor duties of certifying public accounts for presentation to the legislature and serving as a court of appeal on certain decisions of the comptroller-general.⁵⁹

As for the revenue budget (budget speech), only the treasurer and premier would see this before it was delivered. (From 1925 to 1932 Bracken was his own treasurer, as was Garson from 1943 to 1948 and Campbell from 1950 to 1951.) The options available to Bracken were limited, however, since Ottawa virtually dictated fiscal policy to Manitoba in the 1930s.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The traditional cabinet model is a generic description of provincial cabinets before the dawn of big government. It describes cabinet as simple in structure,

with few if any committees, with no clerk and few permanent staff, little central planning and analysis, a premier exercising dominant control and line ministers depended upon as the chief source of political and administrative intelligence. Yet, like many models it can be an imperfect description of political reality. What we find in our review of Manitoba's nonpartisan cabinets is that the "unaided" characteristics predominate but that there are significant deviations from the model. This is especially true in the Garson years.

The Liberal-Progressive premiers of Manitoba believed more in consensus than in domination; they shared power because other ministers had considerable political and departmental experience. In keeping with parliamentary theory, cabinet was the effective decision-making centre of government.

In keeping with the traditional model, the Manitoba cabinet had few cabinet committees; and even these had responsibilities that were more on the administrative than the policy development side. As well, cabinet was reluctant to encourage detailed administration of its records, preferring that ministers be the conduits for council decisions. Garson initiated a record of cabinet decisions, but it was only for his personal use.

Contrary to the traditional or "unaided" model, there was a clerk of the executive council, but in keeping with the model, central professional support was generally modest. With the exception of the strong policy advisor role played by Robert Moffat from 1945 to 1952, the executive council performed essentially clerical duties. Campbell phased out the policy role which was nascent in the Garson years.

As might have been predicted by the traditional model, there was little central planning or analysis for much of the Liberal-Progressive era. There was, however, the economic survey of the late 1930s, which could have been a first step to planning. Garson's planning initiatives were a clear break from the unaided model, even if they were merely an attempt to stem postwar discontent. Rural electrification was the only obvious result of the postwar concern with planning.

Budgeting remained an "unaided" process fixed on balancing expenditures and revenues. It was line-item-oriented and something in which the whole cabinet participated because of the electoral ramifications of uncontrolled expenditures. Performance (program) budgeting was suggested by the experts, but cabinet continued traditional budgeting patterns: emphasis on material inputs rather than on programs, along with hurried review by financial officers rather than by the policy advisors recommended by consultants. Such patterns undoubtedly aided ministers to deflect the challenges to departmental autonomy posed by collective cabinet budget review.

The Manitoba Liberal-Progressive cabinets were largely, but not entirely, "traditional." They employed modest planning and staff assistance, and for a time had a form of cabinet record keeping and central policy analysis. Liberal-

Progressive premiers were more consensual than authoritarian. Campbell's government must have contemplated program budgeting. These characteristics were of course exceptions rather than the rule, but they are intriguing. They deviate enough from our normal expectations of traditional cabinets to suggest that we must seek a new theoretical formulation of the traditional cabinet model.

NOTES

There is no satisfactory term to describe the governments of John Bracken (1922-43), Stuart Garson (1943-48) and Douglas Campbell (1948-58). To call them "Brackenite" detracts from the significant political role of the last two premiers. To call them, as Bracken himself might have wished, "nonpartisan" may lead to confusion with the "coalition" governments of 1940-50; the two terms were often interchangeable. Even "Liberal-Progressive" may be confusing, since there were periods when the governments went by other names: the United Farmers of Manitoba in the early 1920s, the Progressives in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the Coalition of 1940-50. We shall generally describe all of them as "Liberal-Progressive" for the sake of convenience, while occasionally using the other terms.

1. See, for example, "Cabinet and Policy," "The Budgetary Process" and "The Provinces" in the bibliographies provided in various editions of Richard J. Van Loon and Michael S. Whittington, *The Canadian Political System* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, various years).
2. Paul Tennant, "The NDP Government of British Columbia: Unaided Politicians in an Unaided Cabinet," *Canadian Public Policy* 3 (Autumn 1977): 489-503
3. See, for example, Graham White, "Governing from Queen's Park: The Ontario Premiership," in Leslie Pal and David Taras, eds., *Prime Ministers and Premiers: Political Leadership and Public Policy in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1988).
4. Lloyd Stinson, "John Bracken — Our Most Durable Premier," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 2 December 1972.
5. Material on cabinet member partisanship is taken from a variety of sources. The most important are the biographies of ministers indexed in the Legislative Library of Manitoba's political scrapbooks, and the biographies of members in the *Canadian Parliamentary Guide* for various years (hereafter "Biographies and Guides").
6. "Biographies and Guides." Perhaps not surprisingly, there was a high degree of similarity between the attributes necessary for political success in early Winnipeg city politics and those necessary for success in provincial politics. See Alan F.J. Artibise, *Winnipeg: A Social History of Urban Growth* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), 36-37.
7. M.S. Donnelly, "Parliamentary Government in Manitoba," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 23, no. 1 (February 1957): 30.
8. "Looking Back over 100 Years of Freemasonry," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 7 June 1975.
9. Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, "List of Members: Valleys of Winnipeg and Brandon," 25, 27 (30 September 1951). I am grateful to Z.S. Gawron for pointing this out.
10. James A. Jackson, *The Centennial History of Manitoba* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 211-12; quoted in Roger Gibbons, *Prairie Politics and Society* (Toronto: Butterworth, 1980), 126.

11. "Ex-lieutenant-governor, John S. McDiarmid dies," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 7 June 1965.
12. Interview with D.L. Campbell, Winnipeg, November 1988.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. "First Provincial Health Head Dies," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 27 September 1948.
18. "William James Major," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 15 August 1953.
19. Lloyd Stinson, *Political Warriors: Recollections of a Social Democrat* (Winnipeg: Queenston House, 1975), 134.
20. "Meet Your Member: Morton's Words Few But They Carry Weight," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 18 February 1955; and "He Left His Mark on Manitoba History," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 10 January 1967.
21. "Mr. Justice Schultz," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 11 November 1966.
22. Interview with D.L. Campbell, November 1988.
23. S.M. (Statutes of Manitoba) 50 Vic. 1887, c. 20.
24. S.M.1 Edward VIII 1936, c. 45.
25. An Act of the Regulation and Conducting of Elections, 1872, S.M. 35 Vict., c.7, s. 20.
26. An Act to Amend the Manitoba Election Act, 1904, S.M. 3-4 Ed. VII, C. 13, S. 69.
27. The Manitoba Election Act, 1931, S.M. 21 Geo. V, C. 10, SS. 3-10.
28. An Act to Amend the Manitoba Election Act, 1949, S.M. 13 Geo. VI, C. 14, S. 2 (4).
29. An Act to Amend the Manitoba Election Act, 1952, S.M. (First Session) 16 Geo. VI and 1 Eliz. II, C. 18, S. 2A (2).
30. An Act Respecting the Election of Members to the Legislative Assembly, R.S.M. C. 57.
31. Manitoba, Orders in Council 852/52 and 1261/58.
32. Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Bracken Papers, MG 13/I2, file 400, Order in Council of 12 September 1930.
33. Ibid., letter from Clerk of the Executive Council to C.M. McCann, Civil Service Commissioner, 7 March 1930.
34. Interview with Locksley D. McNeill, former secretary to Premier Bracken, Winnipeg, 20 June 1986.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ruth Vogel was Premier Garson's secretary; Bert Fraser, Thora Sigurdson, John Mills and lastly Michael V. Dafoe served in succession as secretaries to Premier Campbell. Mills had a Master's degree from the University of Manitoba, had done postgraduate work at Yale, and had worked for the federal Department of Justice as a combines investigation officer. *Winnipeg Free Press*, 8 August 1953.

38. PAM, Garson Papers ("Premier's Office"), Box 17, file 32, Memorandum from G. S. Rutherford, Legislative Counsel to L.D. McNeill, 11 August 1943.
39. Correspondence to the author from Robert E. Moffat, former clerk of the executive council, 20 November 1986.
40. Manitoba, *Provincial-Municipal Committee Report and Memorandum of Recommendations and the Statement of Government Policy with respect to Provincial-Municipal Relations* (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1953).
41. Interview with D.L. Campbell, Winnipeg, 30 December 1984.
42. PAM, Garson Papers, ("Premier's Office") GR 43, Box 19, file 84, News Release from Premier's Office "handed to the *Free Press* and *Tribune* 22/10/43."
43. PAM, Garson Papers, Box 22, file 83, Remarks of Premier Garson in Introducing Post-War Estimates, Manitoba Legislature, 13 March 1944.
44. PAM, Garson Papers, Box 22, file 83, "Premier Garson's remarks in introducing the resolution to appoint the Select Committee of the Whole House," n.d.
45. Manitoba, Post-War Reconstruction Committee, *Report to Premier Stuart Garson* (chaired by W.J. Waines) (Winnipeg: n.p., 1945).
46. Ibid.
47. Roger Newman, "Campbell: 42-Year MLA," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 10 June 1964.
48. Correspondence from Robert E. Moffat.
49. "Farm Electrification Plans Big Factor in Expansion Program on the Prairies," *Financial Post*, 7 May 1949.
50. Interview with D.L. Campbell, November 1988.
51. John Kendle, *John Bracken: A Political Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 27-28, 37.
52. Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 403.
53. Don McGillivray, "Manitoba Political Leaders III: Douglas Campbell of the Liberals," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 12 May 1959; and political biographies of three party leaders (Campbell, Roblin and Stinson) in *Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 May 1959.
54. PAM, Bracken Papers, MG13/I2, Box 16, Premier's Memo to ministers in "Estimates" file, 30 April 1927.
55. Stevenson, Kellogg Ltd., *Report on the Survey of the Treasury Department, Province of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Stevenson, Kellogg Ltd, 1952). Section III, "General Observations and Comments," III-5.
56. Ibid., III.
57. Ibid., III-7.
58. Interview with D.L. Campbell, 30 December 1984.
59. M.S. Donnelly, *The Government of Manitoba* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 100.
60. John Kendle, *John Bracken*, chapters 8-10.

The Changing Varietal Composition of Prairie Bread Wheat Production, 1941-1985

Philip D. Keddie

ABSTRACT. This article documents and discusses the changing varietal composition of prairie bread wheat production from 1941 to 1985. Variety developments are described in the context of the major environmental hazards of the production environment. Temporal changes in varietal composition and changes in the geographical pattern of the varietal landscape are documented. These changes in turn provide graphic evidence of the varietal transitions through time and across space and consequently reveal macro-scale differences in adoptive behaviour. These differences in turn reflect the variable nature and severity of environmental hazards and the availability of wheat varieties to better meet these hazards. While variation in adoptive behaviour is revealed, questions are raised that could only be effectively addressed through micro-scale adoption and diffusion research.

SOMMAIRE. L'article traite du changement dans la composition variétale du blé de minoterie produit dans les Prairies de 1941 à 1985. On y décrit les variétés développées dans le contexte des principaux risques naturels encourus dans la zone de production. On y documente également les changements temporels dans la composition variétale et les changements dans la configuration géographique du paysage variétal. Ces changements fournissent une preuve graphique des transitions variétales dans le temps et dans l'espace, et révèlent des différences à grande échelle dans l'adaptation de ces variétés. Ces différences montrent, à leur tour, la nature variable et la gravité des risques environnementaux ainsi que les variétés de blé disponibles pour mieux faire face à ces risques. Si cette étude indique des variations de comportement dans le processus d'adaptation, elle soulève aussi des questions qui ne pourraient être résolues qu'en faisant une recherche sur l'adaptation et la propagation à échelle restreinte.

Introduction

The success of the prairie wheat economy has been dependent in no small measure on the development of wheat varieties suitable to both the region's general and more particular environments for wheat production. The purpose of this article is to document and discuss these developments, with particular focus on the changing varietal composition of prairie bread wheat production from 1941 to 1985. The objective is to provide a broad overview of the development and adoption of the various varieties that remain fundamentally important to the ongoing successful production of the crop.

While there is a substantial literature on various aspects of the agricultural geography of the prairie region, geographers have paid scant attention to the role of variety development in meeting the needs of the production environment and to the way in which the varietal landscape has changed through time and across space.

The first section of the article provides an overview of variety development against a backdrop of the hazards of the biophysical production environment. This is followed by a note on the data sources and by a brief discussion on the methods of data presentation. The final two sections deal respectively with temporal trends in varietal composition and the varietal landscape in 1985, and draw heavily on the graphs and maps that document the changes.

The Production Environment and Variety Development

The varietal composition of wheat production must be viewed in the context of the general and particular biophysical environments of the Prairies. Table 1 provides a brief characterization of the major varieties of bread wheats of importance in the period from 1941 to 1985 and their dates of licensing.

Table 1
Agronomic Characteristics of Selected Prairie Wheat Varieties

Variety	Date Licensed	Quality (equal to Marquis)	Comments
Marquis	1910	n/a	set standard of quality in Canadian wheat grading system
Garnet	1925	no	earliness, ruled inferior to Marquis, 1935
Red Bobs	1926	no	ease of combining, ruled inferior to Marquis, 1951
Thatcher	1935	yes	stem rust resistance, more drought resistant than Marquis
Apex	1937	yes	stem rust resistance
Renown	1937	yes	stem rust resistance
Regent	1939	yes	stem rust resistance
Rescue	1946	no	sawfly resistance, licensed despite inferiority to Marquis
Redman	1946	yes	stem rust resistance
Saunders	1947	yes	earliness
Lee	1950	yes	leaf rust resistance
Chinook	1952	yes	sawfly resistance
Selkirk	1953	yes	stem rust resistance
Pembina	1960	yes	stem rust resistance
Canthatch	1960	yes	stem rust resistance
Park	1963	yes	earliness, higher yielding than Saunders
Manitou	1965	yes	stem and leaf rust resistance
Neepawa	1969	yes	stem and leaf rust resistance, earlier than Manitou, stronger straw and superior disease resistance
Napayo	1972	yes	similar to Manitou, awned, easier handling by swather, combine
Glenlea ¹	1972	no	high yielding utility wheat, represents nearly all Canadian utility wheat now grown
Canuck ²	1974	yes	sawfly resistance, improvement over Cypress in yield, quality and disease resistance
Sinton ³	1975	yes	awned, resistant to leaf and stem rust, higher yield than Neepawa in black soil zones
Benito ⁴	1979	yes	stem and leaf rust resistance, superior leaf rust resistance over Neepawa, earlier maturity
Columbus ⁵	1980	yes	high degree of resistance to harvest-time sprouting, slightly later maturing and higher yielding than Neepawa, good resistance to leaf rust and moderate resistance to stem rust
Katepwa ⁶	1981	yes	more resistant to stem and leaf rust, slightly easier to thresh than Neepawa
Leader ⁷	1981	yes	sawfly resistance and long dormancy period, outyields Neepawa in brown soil zone of Saskatchewan, leaf and stem rust resistance
HY320 ⁸	1985	no	semidwarf, first cultivar eligible for grades of new class Canada Prairie Spring, wide adaptation, 30% yield advantage over conventional hard red spring wheats, later maturing, resistance to leaf and stem rust.

Source: Bushuk, 1982 unless otherwise noted as follows: 1. Wilson, 1979 and Grain Research Laboratory, 1986; McBean, 1975; De Pauw, Hurd and Patterson, 1981; 4. Campbell and Czarnecki, 1981a and Research Station, Winnipeg, 1983; 5. Campbell and Czarnecki, 1981b and Research Station, Winnipeg, 1981; 6. Campbell and Czarnecki, 1987; 7. De Pauw et al. 1982b; 8. Research Station, Swift Current, 1986. (See references for full citations.)

The first breakthrough in the development of a variety of general suitability was of course the pioneering work leading to the release of Marquis wheat (Morrison, 1960). Since 1910 Marquis has been the yardstick for bread wheats in terms of length of time to maturity, yield and baking quality, and by 1928 it had reached a level of prominence never attained by any subsequent variety (Bushuk, 1982). It seems that the major efforts since Marquis have been directed towards the development of varieties which, while retaining the yield and breadmaking qualities of Marquis, were superior in meeting particular environmental hazards. Only recently can one find evidence of significant departures from this position. Veeman and Veeman (1984, p. 108) argue that "it is imperative . . . that Canada expand its production and marketing base in nontraditional wheat types . . . in order to capitalize on yield advantages in production and on emerging opportunities in world markets."

Time to Maturity

The introduction of Marquis did not stop the search for early maturity. Garnet represented one such important early development and gained widespread popularity, especially in Alberta. Its production was to lead to considerable controversy because of its inferior baking quality, helping to prompt some of the early surveys of the varietal composition of wheat production such as those reported by Fraser and Whiteside (1936) and Fraser (1949).

The Garnet controversy led to the first acid test of the "equal to Marquis principle" and to the gradual demotion of Garnet, leading by 1954 to a separate commercial grade, No. 4 Canada Western Garnet (Irvine, 1983). Subsequently two early maturing varieties, Saunders and Park, licensed in 1947 and 1963 respectively, were developed and became popular in the shorter growing season areas of Alberta.

Rust Resistance

While Marquis, because of early ripening, had the potential to escape injury by rust (Bushuk, 1982), it was not a rust-resistant variety. The search for better stem rust resistance led to the development of the region's most eminent varieties (Bushuk, 1982). Indeed the most dramatic changes in varietal composition are related to the development and adoption of resistant varieties, notably Thatcher, Selkirk, Manitou and Neepawa.

While Thatcher is moderately resistant to stem rust it is susceptible to leaf rust. Selkirk is resistant to stem rust and moderately susceptible to leaf rust. Manitou, in contrast, is resistant to both stem and leaf rust (Green, 1967). While stem rust is potentially the more destructive, losses from leaf rust probably exceeded those from stem rust from 1943 to 1966 (Green, 1967). Each of the varieties thus represents an improvement over what was previously available. Neepawa is equal to Manitou in rust resistance, but matures slightly earlier and has somewhat superior seed size and resistance to lodging (Bushuk, 1982).

Rust resistance is of particular importance in Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan (Craigie, 1945), but few if any areas are entirely rust free and on occasion heavy infections occur in areas further west (Craigie, 1944; Peterson, 1958). However, the details of changing varietal composition need to be seen in the context of the spatial pattern of the risk of rust damage. It is also critical that varieties resistant to some races of rust may be susceptible to others. Furthermore, Green (1958, p. 3) noted that "the popular varieties encourage the increase of races able to attack them by eliminating competition from races to which they are resistant." Elsewhere, Green (1967) notes that there is no final solution to the problem posed by rust.

One piece of graphic evidence on the importance of rust resistance in a spatial context is presented in Table 2. It provides a comparison of yields between non-rust-resistant Marquis and the rust-resistant varieties Thatcher, Selkirk and Manitou. Further testimony to the importance of the development of rust-resistant varieties is provided by Shebeski (1967, p. 253), who notes that "in the rust areas alone two varieties, Thatcher and Selkirk, have during the period from 1940 to 1960, increased Western Canadian farm income by 2 1/4 billion dollars." A paper by Schultz (1965) on the economic impact of wheat breeding in the prairie region concludes that the benefits, at least to that date, had accrued chiefly to the rust-prone eastern Prairies. In addition to direct yield reductions suffered by rust-susceptible varieties a further revenue loss can be attributed to losses in grain quality resulting in classification into lower grades (Greaney, 1936).

Table 2
Average Yields in Bushels/Acre, 1962-1965

Variety	Location			
	Morden	Regina	Lethbridge	Beaverlodge
Marquis	19.6	32.5	26.5	45.9
Thatcher	33.5	42.9	30.1	48.6
Selkirk	38.3	40.9	25.0	45.3
Manitou	43.4	46.9	29.2	46.1

Source: G.J. Green, "Diseases and Wheat Production."

Stem Sawfly Resistance

Particularly in the drier areas of Saskatchewan and Alberta, the wheat stem sawfly is an important agricultural pest. McGinnis and Kasting (1967) discuss the ways in which a number of changes in farming practices led to an increase in the severity of infestations and outline the development of Rescue, licensed in 1946, and the first of the solid-stemmed sawfly resistant varieties of bread wheat.

According to Bushuk (1982), Rescue was licensed despite its inferiority to Marquis in breadmaking quality because of pressure to have a sawfly resistant

variety. There is evidence to suggest that its introduction had favourable results. For example, with reference to southwestern Saskatchewan the following observation was made:

Following the release of Rescue in 1946, this variety was predominant in the area by 1948 and was largely responsible for the reduction of the sawfly population to a point where this pest was no longer a limiting factor in wheat production. With sawflies no longer a current problem, the acreage devoted to Thatcher again increased because Rescue is less satisfactory than Thatcher in resistance to root rot, spring frost, lodging and shattering. (Dominion Experimental Farm, Swift Current, 1955, p. 16).

Rescue was superseded by the superior cultivar Chinook, which was in turn replaced by Canuck and Chester. Currently Leader, a cultivar which combines resistance to cutting by the wheat stem sawfly with a long seed dormancy period (De Pauw et al. 1982b), is the leading variety produced. According to De Pauw, additional qualities of Leader include "better resistance to damage by wet weather conditions prior to threshing than all other Canadian wheat cultivars except Columbus" and somewhat higher yields than either Neepawa or Chester in the drier areas where the sawfly is likely to be a serious pest. The varying degree of resistance to sawfly damage (percentage of stems cut by the sawfly) follows: Leader, 19.7 percent; Chester, 19.9 percent; Columbus, 56 percent; Neepawa, 66.3 percent (De Pauw et al. 1982a). This clearly demonstrates the protection afforded by the solid-stemmed varieties developed for sawfly resistance.

One of the problems noted by Bushuk (1982) has been a tendency for farmers, once resistant varieties have controlled damage, to revert to higher yielding but less resistant wheats, thus allowing infestations to build up to damaging levels. Bushuk hopes that Canuck, higher yielding and more resistant to common root rot and loose smut than other sawfly resistant varieties, will minimize the damage cycle by being consistently more attractive to growers. The development of Leader may further improve the likelihood of such behaviour.

Drought Resistance

The excellent review by Bushuk (1982) details comprehensively the various varieties developed not only in response to the problems noted above but also for a number of other agronomic characteristics. Interestingly, he notes that Lake is the only variety developed specifically for drought resistance. This presumably reflects in part the fact that wheat is by nature well suited to the sub-humid and semiarid environments of the Prairies and that yield fluctuations, due primarily to precipitation variability, are accepted as one of the harsh realities of prairie agriculture. Clarke and McCaig (1982) provide a comparison of the drought resistance of a number of varieties.

Breeding for Yield

Some years ago Shebeski (1967, p. 253) noted that "there can be no doubt that Canadian wheat breeders, concentrating on the control of stem and leaf rust in Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan, on drought and sawfly resistance in the prairie regions of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and on earliness in the northern regions have been highly successful." However, he and others questioned the adequacy of contemporary plant breeding methods as they pertained to breeding for yield. Perhaps the successes reflected a "yield saving" rather than a "yield improving" strategy.

According to Irvine (1983, pp. 100-01), "from Marquis, released in 1909, to the present day wheats there has been a continuing succession of varieties which have given better protection against environmental hazards than provided by Marquis, but which have not represented a particularly significant improvement in genetic yielding ability." He also noted that "most current evidence suggests that considerably greater yield increase can still be obtained in Western Canada through improved husbandry and management practices rather than from genetic engineering."

In a recent study, Hucl and Baker (1987) note that Neepawa yields about 11 percent more than Thatcher, indicating that some progress has been made in yield improvement. They point out (p. 96) that "selection for rust resistance and bread-making quality have been major objectives in Canadian wheat breeding programs" and suggest that "improvement of Thatcher-type wheat grain yields will likely be difficult." There is now much greater evidence of alternative possibilities, the compromise being one of sacrificing traditional quality for improved yield.

Green (1967, p. 328) noted that "if hybrid wheat makes higher yields possible in Western Canada, care will have to be taken that hybrid varieties are not disease prone." Irvine (1983, p. 100) provides a summary overview of the prospects for higher yields stemming from the work on hybrid wheat development. He is pessimistic about the prospects, concluding that "after twenty years, the expectations still have not been realized for hybrid winter wheat, and the prospects for hybrid spring wheat appear to be even more remote." According to Hunt (personal communication, 1987), this avenue of research is not now being seriously pursued by Canadian plant breeders.

Another way to achieve higher yields is what Irvine (1983) refers to as the "winter wheat option." He provides evidence (p. 105) of the yield advantage under dryland conditions of hard red winter wheat compared to hard red spring wheat. At Lethbridge, from 1969 to 1981, the mean yield for hard red winter wheat was 47.2 bushels per acre compared to 37.7 for hard red spring wheat. Irvine also provides a brief history of winter wheat production in the region and notes a recent (early 1980s) increase in production triggered, he claims, by the release of Norstar, a new variety with superior winter hardiness. Grant (1980)

provides a succinct description of this cultivar. Improvements in management practices, the most important of which is seeding in standing stubble to facilitate the development and maintenance of an insulating snow cover, have also been important to the spread of winter wheat production (Slinkard, 1983). While these developments will be addressed in more detail later in this article, it should be noted here that the area devoted to winter wheat increased from 125,000 hectares in 1982 to 558,000 hectares in 1985 (Prairie Pools Inc., 1982, 1985).

Another possibility for improved yields commented upon by Hucl and Baker (1987) relates to yield increases of 30 percent or better with the introduction of semidwarf cultivars. These were first introduced some twenty-five years ago. According to Hucl and Baker (1987, p. 96), "The critical question remains whether the high yield potential of semidwarf cultivars can be combined with the high breadmaking qualities of traditional Canadian cultivars." In this regard one should note the licensing in 1985 of HY320, the first cultivar eligible for grades of the new class Canada Prairie Spring, and described as "suitable for the production of French-type hearth breads and flat breads. It can also be used alone or in blends to produce various types of noodles, steam breads, pan breads, crackers and related products." (Grain Research Laboratory, 1986, p. 14) This cultivar obviously falls short with regard to the high breadmaking qualities of traditional Canadian cultivars, but production of over 311,000 hectares was reported in 1985 (Prairie Pools Inc., 1985). Its agronomic characteristics are summarized on Table 1.

Data Sources

The focus regarding changes in varietal composition is on the 1941-85 period. For these years comprehensive data were available on the varietal composition of the crop for the region as a whole and for each province. For most years data were available down to the scale of the crop district.

For the years from 1941 to 1950, a report by Greaney and Barnes (1953) provided information for each province and the prairie region as a whole on the percentage of the area seeded to each variety. Similar data for 1951 to 1954 were available from Line Elevators Farm Service information from a table entitled "Distribution of Wheat Varieties in the Prairie Provinces (1951 to 1955)," but since the 1955 data were unweighted they were not used. In addition, for the 1941-71 period, with a few exceptions, tables published annually for each province and its crop districts were made available by the Agriculture Canada Research Station, Winnipeg. For the 1955-71 period, these data were used in the absence of more general tabulations, the regional data being derived by aggregating the provincial data. Finally, for the 1972-85 period, regional, provincial and crop district data were available from the Prairie Grain Variety Survey, compiled and published annually by Prairie Pools Inc. (formerly Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited).

Before 1970, durum wheat was included with bread wheats in the wheat variety survey data, while after 1970 it was published separately. Since the focus

is on bread wheat, all the data prior to 1970 were adjusted to exclude durum wheat. A separate tabulation for winter wheat began in 1985, while previously it was either tabulated with the spring bread wheat varieties or was included in the "other" category. Consequently the 1985 data were adjusted to include winter wheat. Soft white spring wheat was first mentioned in the bread wheat variety survey data in 1974 and was included until 1984, while in 1985 it was tabulated separately. Again, the 1985 data were adjusted to include soft spring wheat.

Data Presentation

Data on the varietal composition of wheat production are presented in two forms. For the region as a whole and for each of the provinces, graphs show the composition of the crop from 1941 to 1985. On these graphs (Figures 1-4) varieties are presented in order of licensing date (see Table 1). Some minor varieties are not shown and portrayed varieties could not be represented if they dropped below the 1 percent level. In addition, since neither winter wheat nor soft spring wheat could be represented by variety in any consistent fashion, they are also part of the residual. In discussing the changes in varietal composition reference will first be made to these graphs which effectively document temporal changes in varietal composition and provincial scale differences in composition.

Four maps (Figures 5-8) supplement the graphs and provide a spatial portrayal of the varietal landscape for selected years at the scale of the crop district. For reasons of clarity, in Manitoba and Alberta crop districts were aggregated where deemed appropriate. In addition, only varieties that attained a threshold of 7.5 percent of seeded area in a crop district are represented. On each map a table is provided showing, for the region and each province, the proportional distribution of the varieties mapped.

Temporal Trends in Varietal Composition

Despite the considerable number of varieties that have enjoyed some popularity between 1941 and 1985, four rust-resistant varieties (Thatcher, Selkirk, Manitou and Neepawa) have dominated the area devoted to bread wheat (Figure 1). From 1941 to 1967, the most popular variety was the stem rust-resistant variety, Thatcher. It was developed at the University of Minnesota from a double cross, with Marquis as a parent in each single cross involved, and was licensed in Canada in 1935 (Bushuk, 1982).

At the provincial scale the timing of Thatcher's dominance varied considerably. In Manitoba (Figure 2) adoption was very rapid and although it was the most dominant variety in 1941 it was already in decline. From 1941 until 1954 it increasingly shared its position with other early rust-resistant varieties (Renown, Regent, Redman and Lee). The severity of leaf rust in southern and eastern Manitoba, Thatcher's susceptibility and the superior leaf rust resistance

of Regent and Renown provides part of the explanation (Dominion Experimental Farm, Brandon, 1949, p. 19).

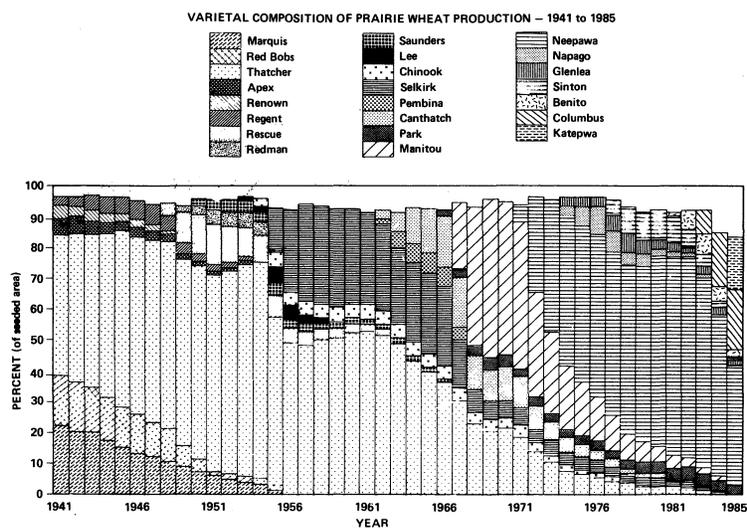


Figure 1. Varietal composition of prairie wheat production, 1941-1985.

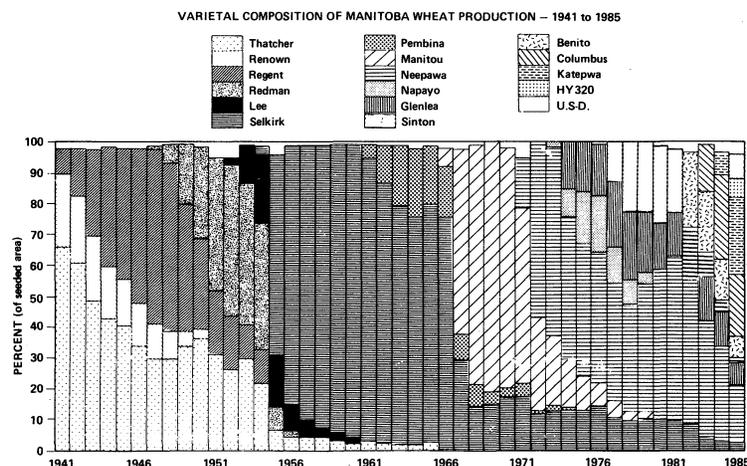


Figure 2. Varietal composition of Manitoba wheat production, 1941-1985.

In Saskatchewan (Figure 3) Thatcher was the most popular variety from 1941 to 1967, and until 1963 accounted for over 50 percent of seeded area. Unlike Manitoba, Marquis still held an important residual position in the 1940s and none of the other early rust-resistant varieties (pre-Selkirk) gained a position of strength. By way of contrast, in relatively rust-free Alberta Thatcher was much

slower in gaining a position of dominance (Figure 4). Until 1946 Red Bobs and Marquis were the two leading varieties and the early maturing but inferior Garnet persisted for a number of years. However, by 1951 Thatcher accounted for over 50 percent of Alberta's seeded area, a situation that pertained until 1967. Indeed, as late as 1973 Thatcher was still the leading variety in Alberta.

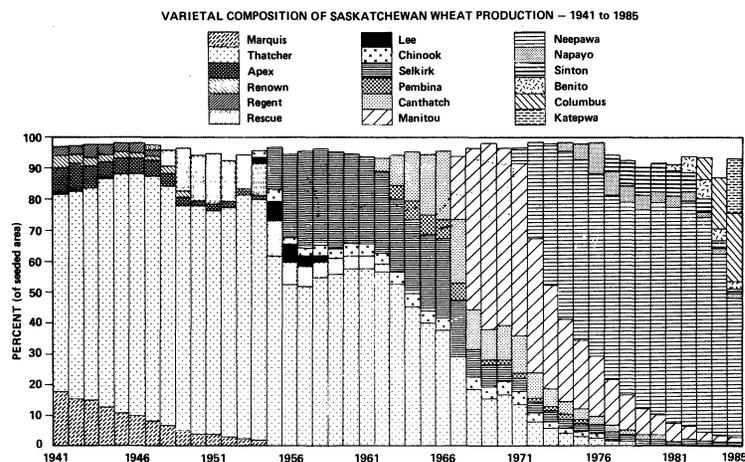


Figure 3. Varietal composition of Saskatchewan wheat production, 1941-1985.

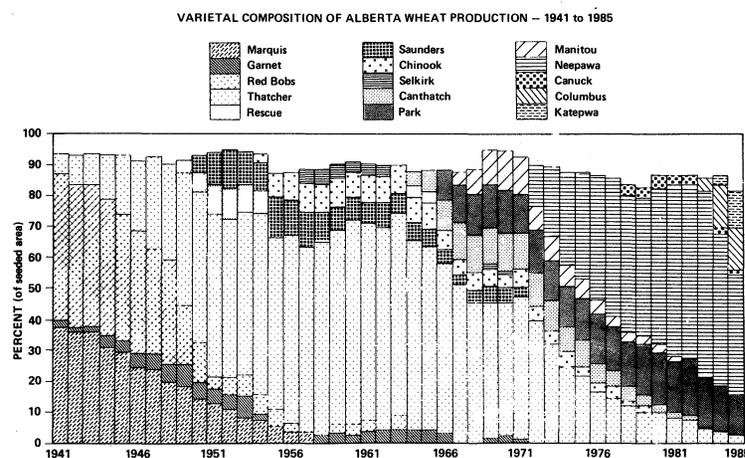


Figure 4. Varietal composition of Alberta wheat production, 1941-1985.

While Thatcher enjoyed a long period as the leading variety, Figures 5-7 (1943, 1960 and 1972 respectively) portray changes in the spatial pattern of its importance. They show its westward displacement by other rust-resistant varieties on the eastern Prairies and its displacement of Marquis and Red Bobs further west. Bushuk (1982) notes that it is perhaps surprising that Thatcher's

superior drought resistance compared to Marquis was not more rapidly recognized in the drier areas of both Alberta and Saskatchewan.

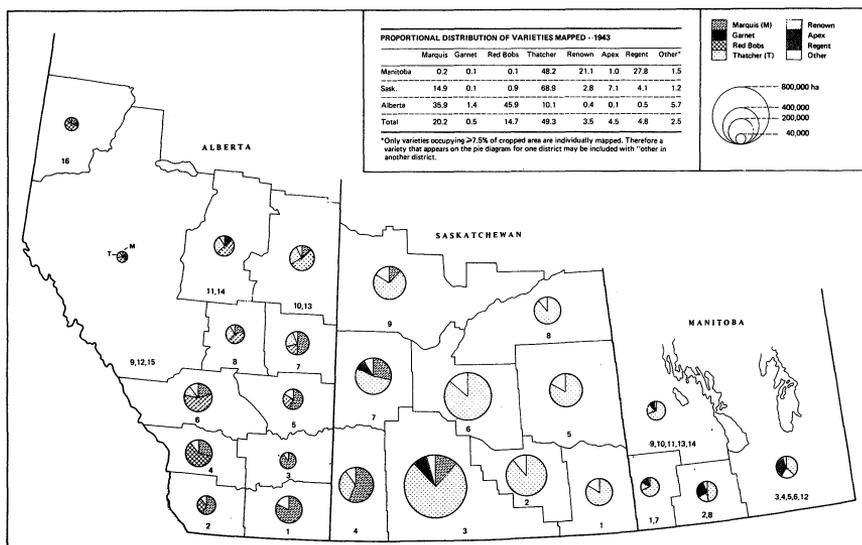


Figure 5. The distribution of wheat varieties by crop reporting districts, 1943.

For the region as a whole Selkirk, resistant to race 15 B of stem rust, was the second leading variety from 1955 to 1966 (Figure 1). However, this disguises the position it held in the "rust area" of Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan. Figure 2 shows that Selkirk dominated the seeded area in Manitoba from 1956 to 1966 while over the same period it was the second leading variety in Saskatchewan (Figure 3) but, as is evident from Figure 6, it was largely restricted to eastern Saskatchewan.

The rapid change to Selkirk in the "rust area" was in response to the susceptibility of such varieties as Thatcher, Regent and Redman to 15 B stem rust, the rapid increase in the prevalence of that race over the years 1952 to 1955, and the licensing of Selkirk in 1953 with a resistance to race 15 B. As noted by Peterson (1956, p. 6), "fortunately the existence of 15 B had been known since

1939 at which time the plan for the development of Selkirk was initiated.” In 1955 over three million bushels of Selkirk seed were available and by 1956 ample seed was available for everyone needing Selkirk (Peterson, 1956).

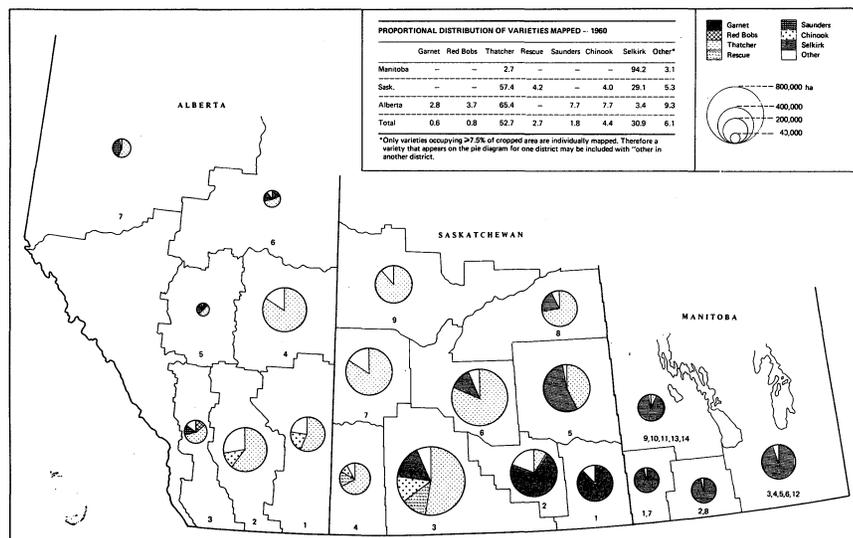


Figure 6. The distribution of wheat varieties by crop reporting districts, 1960.

According to Peterson (1958) comparative yield studies in 1954 for Manitoba were Selkirk, 35 bushels, Redman, 17 bushels, and Thatcher, 14 bushels, while those for Saskatchewan were Selkirk, 31 bushels, and Thatcher, 13 bushels. Given these data the speed of the varietal transition is hardly surprising. However, “the quality of Selkirk was not quite up to that of Thatcher, which it replaced, but it was still approved by the Associate Committee as ‘equal in quality to Marquis.’” (Irvine, 1983, p. 94) As an emergency “stop gap” variety its dominance was spectacular if short-lived in the “rust area” but, unlike Thatcher, it never gained much acceptance on the western Prairies (see Figure 6).

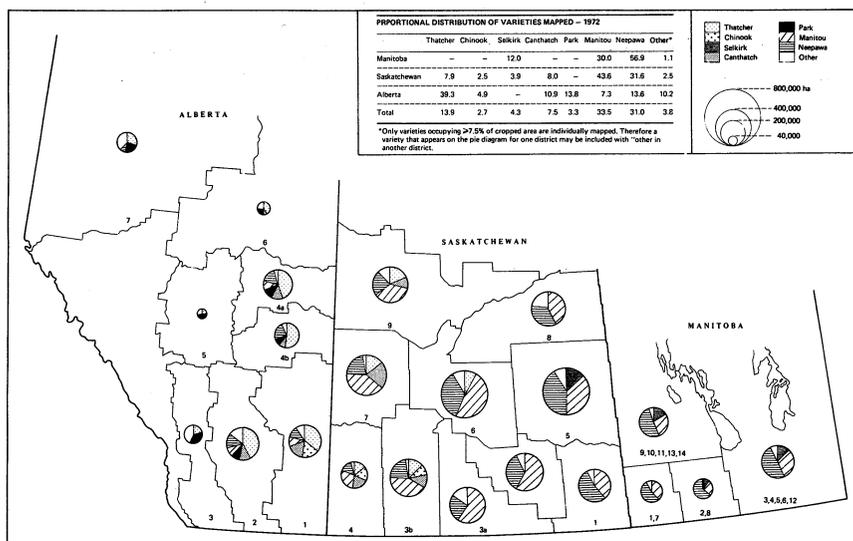


Figure 7. The distribution of wheat varieties by crop reporting districts, 1972.

In 1965 Manitou, both stem and leaf rust resistant, was licensed and enjoyed a short period (1968-72) as the most popular variety (Figure 1). In Manitoba (Figure 2) it was the leading variety from 1967 to 1971, a position it held in Saskatchewan (Figure 3) from 1968 until 1972. It made only modest inroads in Alberta (Figure 4). Manitou was rapidly displaced by Neepawa, a variety not only superior to Manitou in disease resistance but also earlier and superior in straw strength (lodging resistance). As Figure 1 indicates, by 1973 Neepawa was the leading variety and by 1982 it reached its greatest level of acceptance at over 65 percent. Manitoba farmers were the first to adopt Neepawa and it exceeded the 50 percent level by 1972, but was soon challenged by a number of newer varieties (Figure 2). In Saskatchewan, Neepawa first exceeded the 50 percent level in 1974 but its period of dominance was much longer than in Manitoba (Figure 3). While by 1985 Neepawa was still at 46 percent of total seeded area in Saskatchewan and the leading variety in every crop district

(Figure 8), in Manitoba it accounted for less than 20 percent of seeded area. In Alberta, where Manitou never gained a significant position, Neepawa progressively displaced Thatcher and reached maximum acceptance at 57 percent in 1983.

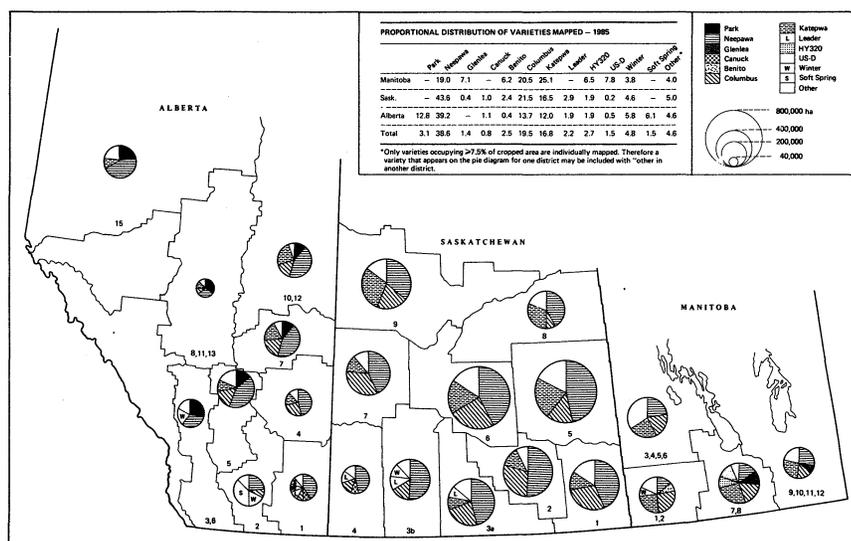


Figure 8. The distribution of wheat varieties by crop reporting districts, 1985.

The trends from 1941 to 1985 indicate a definite east to west progression in the timing of dominance by the two leading varieties, Thatcher and Neepawa. Selkirk and Manitou, of lesser overall significance, never had much impact in Alberta. Manitoba, where rust is a major threat, experienced very rapid changes in varietal composition, and its pattern of varietal composition would seem to indicate a greater willingness or need to accept and experiment with rust-resistant varieties that had limited impact elsewhere. Major changes in Saskatchewan have been more gradual, presumably reflecting the fact that across large parts of that province rust is not nearly as serious a threat. But this disguises the more rapid changes in the "rust area" of eastern Saskatchewan. A

comparison between the graphs for Alberta and Manitoba is instructive as it helps to highlight the gradual nature of varietal transitions in relatively rust-free Alberta compared to the rapid turnovers in Manitoba.

In addition to the major varieties the graphs make it possible to trace the course of two groups of other wheats. The wheat stem sawfly-resistant variety Rescue is plotted on Figure 1 from 1948 to 1962. Its superior successor, Chinook, first appeared in 1954 and persisted until 1977. Both also appear on the graphs for Saskatchewan and Alberta (Figures 3 and 4). In contrast, Canuck only gained sufficient popularity to be represented on the Alberta graph from 1974 to 1985. The areas where these varieties were of some significance are evident on Figure 6 for Rescue and Chinook in 1960, Figure 7 for Chinook in 1973, and Figure 8 for Canuck and Leader in 1985.

Saunders and Park, the two post-Garnet varieties developed for earliness, while represented on Figure 1, only attained a significant position in some crop districts of Alberta. Saunders first appears on the Alberta graph (Figure 4) in 1950, four years after licensing, and persisted until 1971. As of 1960, its relative importance in the shorter season areas of Alberta is shown on Figure 6. Park, first appearing in 1966, gradually displaced Saunders, and retained a relatively constant and significant share of Alberta's seeded area through to 1985. Figures 7 and 8 show the details of its distribution in Alberta for 1972 and 1985 respectively.

The Varietal Landscape in 1985

By the terminal year of this overview the varietal landscape seems to be on the threshold of another major transition. Neepawa's share of seeded area stood at about 39 percent, a substantial reduction from the 65 percent level it enjoyed in 1982 (Figure 1). Columbus and Katepwa held second and third place at about 19 and 17 percent respectively. Collectively, however, these three leading varieties of rust-resistant hard red spring wheat accounted for about 75 percent of total area seeded. Differences in the relative position of the three is clearly revealed in Figure 8. Again Manitoba was the first to experience the rust-resistant variety transition, for here both Columbus and Katepwa were more important than Neepawa, in contrast to the situation in both Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The major departures from past trends are, first, the significant increase in the area devoted to winter wheat. This trend presumably reflects the superior winter hardiness of Norstar. As noted by Irvine (1983, p. 102), "the total area of Western Canada where winter wheats might be grown on a regular basis has been estimated at no more than one million acres, mostly in southern Alberta and the southwestern corner of Saskatchewan." The traditional area is seen by Thomas and Gaudet (1983) as an even more restricted area in the Chinook belt of southwestern Alberta. However, by 1985 winter wheat was reported in every crop district across the region except for Districts 9, 10 and 11 in Manitoba and

12 in Alberta. If Crop Districts 1, 2 and 3 in southern Alberta and 3b and 4 in southwestern Saskatchewan represent the more favourable area suggested by Irvine, then in 1985 these districts accounted for only 37 percent of the total area (558,000 hectares) devoted to the crop. In absolute terms Crop District 5 in Saskatchewan (Yorkton-Melville area) reported the greatest area devoted to winter wheat, and the variety Norstar accounted for 95 percent of this.

Grant (1983) provides a comprehensive overview of winter wheat breeding objectives, partially in the context of problems as the crop moves north and east from its more traditional area of production. The class Canada Western Red Winter Wheat, of which Norstar is the dominant variety, are wheats of superior milling quality, the top grades of which perform well in the production of French-type hearth breads and are also suitable for the production of certain types of noodles, flat breads, steamed breads and related products (Grain Research Laboratory, 1986). Grant (1983), in discussing the milling and baking quality and the quality breeding objectives for winter wheat, suggests that it fits to a large degree the requirements of a 3M wheat (medium kernel hardness, medium protein content, and medium gluten strength) and suggests it could share a common market with the new 3M spring wheats being developed, of which HY320 is the first licensed cultivar. Indeed, the end product use descriptions are very similar.

The second departure is the appearance of the class Canada Western Soft White Spring Wheat on the production landscape. Soft white spring wheat is first listed along with other bread wheats in the Prairie Grain Variety Survey in 1974, with about 53,000 hectares in Alberta. By 1985 this had increased to 162,000 hectares, about 93 percent of which was the variety Fielder, and was itemized as to variety in a separate tabulation. While in 1985 it represented only 1.5 percent of the total area seeded, it did represent a significant portion of production in Alberta, and accounted for about 38 percent of the seeded area in Crop District 2 (Figure 8). This class of wheat yields "a product more desirable for pastry flour." (Veeman and Veeman, 1984, p. 109)

The final departure is represented by the variety HY320, as noted earlier the only variety eligible for a new class of Canadian wheat introduced in 1985, Canada Prairie Spring. As indicated in Figure 8, this variety represented about 2.7 percent of seeded area, and while its production was reported in every crop district in 1985, it is represented on Figure 8 only for Crop Districts 7 and 8 in Manitoba.

The ultimate success of these departures is of course conditional on success in producing and marketing these classes of wheat. The argument by Veeman and Veeman that Canada expand its production and marketing base in non-traditional wheat types was noted earlier. These departures represent the types of developments they felt should be encouraged. They note further (p. 109) that "the premium for protein indicates that it is not sufficient to offset the yield

advantages of lower protein varieties for many regions in Western Canada, especially the Peace River and black soil zone regions (but not southern Saskatchewan).”

While the foregoing represent interesting departures, one should not lose sight of the fact that prairie farmers overwhelmingly grow hard red spring wheat destined for the various grades of Canada Western Red Spring Wheat. In 1985 varieties of this class, the high-quality, high-protein bread wheats, still accounted for about 90 percent of the total area of the various classes of wheat considered in this article, and if one includes durum, some 78 percent of the total area devoted to wheat production. Since Marquis was developed the focus has been on the development of cultivars equal to it in breadmaking qualities but superior to it in the protection provided against environmental hazards. Recent cultivars with these characteristics still dominated the production landscape in 1985. It has been argued that the greatest hurdle facing the introduction of new and higher yielding varieties has been the grading and handling system requirement that varieties be visually distinguishable (Veeman and Veeman, 1982). While the strict licensing system exists to maintain the integrity of the grade standards, Carter, Loyns and Ahmadi-Esfahani (1986) estimate that annual producer gains with the higher yielding wheats would be 5 to 17 percent of current net farm income.

Conclusion

This article has provided a comprehensive documentation of the changing varietal composition of prairie bread wheat production. While a great number of varieties have been developed over the years it is quite evident that to date a handful of rust-resistant cultivars have dominated the landscape. What is also evident is that the timing of dominance of these varieties has varied considerably across the region. This is particularly evident if one compares the graphs for Manitoba (Figure 2) and Alberta (Figure 4), and is evident from the maps (Figures 5 to 8) for selected years. These differences reflect, in the final analysis, decisions made by thousands of producers as to the variety or varieties best suited to meet the requirements of their production environments.

Consequently this article has only scratched the surface of a large and complex topic. The aggregate changes displayed on the graphs and maps represent the outcome of individual decisions within the framework of information and recommendations provided by the provincial Departments of Agriculture. The mechanisms of the adoption and diffusion process remain unexplored and are potentially a fascinating avenue for further research. What are the communication channels involved in this process and how efficiently and effectively do they operate?

Given the variations across the region in environmental hazards, do farmer attitudes towards varietal change vary significantly? There is certainly evidence to indicate that “rust area” farmers have been willing to make almost total

varietal change in a very short period, such as that which occurred with Selkirk wheat. Bushuk has argued, in regard to the area where the wheat stem sawfly is a hazard, that farmers have tended to revert to nonresistant varieties superior in other characteristics once the resistant varieties had controlled damage. What have been the tradeoffs of this behaviour?

These are just some of the more particular questions that could only be effectively addressed within the decision-making framework of adoption and diffusion research. To this researcher's knowledge, in the context of the changing varietal composition of prairie wheat production, this is largely unexplored territory.

This article also provides evidence of the outstanding contribution Canadian plant scientists have made and continue to make in developing varieties to meet the needs of the production environment. According to Zentner and Peterson (1984, p. 348) publicly funded wheat research activities from 1946 to 1979 have yielded average annual internal rates of return ranging between 30 and 39 percent. They note further that these rates of return "were generally much higher than those typically earned on most ordinary business investments and from those realized on most types of public investment opportunities."

It is premature to judge the implications of some of the more current developments that represent departures from past trends. Undoubtedly this is a time of pessimism about the future of prairie wheat production given current market realities. But good years and bad have always been a part of farming "on a knife-edge of hope between the despairs of frost and the terrors of drought," (Watson, 1965, p. 29) and subject further to the vicissitudes of the international market place

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In Defence of Public Ownership: The Case of Manitoba

Errol Black

and

Jim Silver

ABSTRACT. The resounding defeat of the Manitoba NDP government in 1988 after large increases in public auto insurance were announced suggested to some that public ownership in Canada had been discredited. But a close analysis of the Pawley years in government suggests that public enterprise brought benefits to Manitoba. Better planning and greater involvement of workers and consumers in public enterprises could have improved that record. This article suggests ways in which public ownership can become a tool for greater economic democracy.

SOMMAIRE. La défaite retentissante du gouvernement néo-démocrate manitobain en 1988, juste après qu'il eût annoncé une augmentation importante des primes d'assurance automobile semblait indiquer que la propriété publique avait été discréditée au Canada. Mais si on analyse de près les années où Pawley a été Premier ministre, il semblerait qu'au contraire, le Manitoba ait bénéficié de l'entreprise publique. Cela aurait été encore plus sensible s'il y avait eu une meilleure planification et une plus grande participation des employés et des consommateurs dans les entreprises publiques. L'article suggère de quelles façons la propriété publique peut devenir l'instrument d'une plus grande démocratie économique.

In recent years, public ownership has been under attack from both the Right and the Left. Neo-conservatives have made privatization a central part of their market-oriented program, while many on the Left have come to see public as no different from private ownership — it is argued that formal ownership entitlements may change, but the relations of production do not. Crown corporations are removed from public control, subjected to the demands of the market, and directed by a corporate philosophy. The consequence has been justifiable criticism of existing publicly owned enterprise.

We offer a defence of public ownership, and some observations on its role in the face of certain global trends, by examining the use of public ownership by the recent Pawley government in Manitoba. We argue that, contrary to the neo-conservative view, the NDP's use of public ownership yielded real economic and social benefits to Manitobans, while at the same time, as if in response to criticisms from the Left, the Pawley administration took certain tentative steps toward subjecting provincial Crown corporations to a greater degree of public control, and toward an opening of their decision making to workers and users. These steps, though limited, suggest the possibilities embodied in public ownership. We think Manitoba's experience with public ownership is especially worthy of examination at a time when an increased reliance on market forces threatens to further erode the viability of peripheral economies such as those in western Canada. Yet those same market forces, together with the fiscal crisis of the state and the rise of neo-conservatism, have placed serious constraints on the use of public ownership, and have been the main forces behind the trend to the privatization and commercialization of publicly owned enterprises.

Globalization, the Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Neo-Conservatism

The world economy is restructuring. This is normal in capitalism, but the process has accelerated and taken on a more global character since the economic

crisis that began in the 1970s. To counter declining profit rates, corporations have consciously reorganized their operations in a globally integrated fashion, a process made the more possible by dramatic technological changes affecting production, transport and communication. In some cases production has been physically relocated. In others it has been “outsourced,” that is, contracted out to other, often foreign, companies. In still other cases, collaborative activities of various kinds — licensing agreements or joint ventures, for example — have been entered into with foreign corporations. Frequently, particular plants in a globally integrated network have been retooled to specialize in the production of particular parts of final products, resulting in a dramatic increase in intrafirm trade. In all cases, the objective of this global restructuring is to cut costs and increase profits. The consequence is an intensification of international competitive pressures. This situation has been exacerbated, moreover, by the entry of firms from certain newly industrializing countries into global competition.

At the national level, this globalization and heightened competitiveness has led to increased merger and acquisition activity, a shift toward new high-tech industries and service sector activities, an increased incidence of plant closures, layoffs, downsizing, work reorganization, concession bargaining and union-busting, and the attempt generally to shift national income from labour to capital,¹ as companies and nation-states manoeuvre to make themselves more competitive.

Markets, too, have become more international. Globally structured companies see the entire world as a potential market, and seek to remove state-created impediments — often referred to as market “imperfections” or “rigidities,” which are in need of “adjustment” — to the international movement of capital and goods and services. They wish — indeed heightened competition forces them — to move freely and rapidly around the world, without government interference and irrespective of national borders, in pursuit of the highest rates of profit. As Joyce Kolko puts it: “the prominence of a world market is clearly a new structural feature, making the forces of competition determinative even for the largest corporations.”² This, as we shall argue, includes publicly owned corporations.

These processes of globalization weaken the state in individual countries by creating even greater pressures to accommodate the needs of big business. This in turn aggravates the fiscal crisis of the state — that is, the widening imbalance between revenues and expenditures — which is itself, in part, a manifestation of the economic crisis which started in the 1970s. The fiscal crisis, as described by James O’Connor, is rooted in the privatization of profits and the socialization of costs — that is, business continues to appropriate the profits from the system, while the state pays more and more of the costs of reproducing the system,³ costs which rise with the deepening of the economic crisis.

In Canada, for example, federal Liberal governments responded to the emergence of the economic crisis in the 1970s and the demands of big business

with large tax expenditures which were intended to induce investment, but which served only to aggravate the fiscal crisis. Government could not respond to the deteriorating situation by raising corporate taxes, since that would have defeated the purpose for which the tax expenditures were made. At the same time, there were limits to the extent to which taxes on wages could be raised, since such measures had an impact at the bargaining table, adding to inflationary pressures. Consequently deficits expanded. A sort of institutional deadlock emerged. Its economic outcome was stagflation and accentuation of the fiscal crisis of the state.

Neo-conservatism grew out of this environment. It became apparent that liberalism and Keynesianism had no answers to the problem of stagflation and the concomitant fiscal crisis. In the absence of any adequate response from the Left, the basis was created for the rise of neo-conservatism with its determination to reduce the role of the state, and increase the role of the market.⁴ Neo-conservatism's most obvious expressions have been in the political successes of Margaret Thatcher in Britain since 1979, and Ronald Reagan in the United States since 1980. But behind these electoral victories there has emerged a vast network of neo-conservative institutions — "factories of ideology," as Sidney Blumenthal calls them in his account of the rise of neo-conservatism in the United States,⁵ whose efforts made neo-conservatism a material force in the Western world.

These three forces — globalization, with its intensification of competitive pressures; the fiscal crisis, with the restraints it places on state expenditures; and neo-conservatism, with its orientation to the market — have had an enormous impact on publicly owned enterprises. The most publicized manifestation has been the drive to privatization,⁶ but it has also, and this is of particular importance for our purposes, taken the form of pressures for the commercialization of publicly owned enterprises.

While privatization involves turning publicly owned enterprises over to the private sector, commercialization involves making such enterprises operate more like private-sector, profit-seeking firms, while remaining a part of the public sector. Public enterprises are instructed to make a "profit," to measure their success against the "bottom line," to act more like competitive, private-sector corporations so as not to add to the fiscal crisis. Social purposes are de-emphasized, in favour of a more narrowly defined, profit-oriented "business logic." Public corporations become ever more indistinguishable from their private-sector counterparts as they move into new competitive commercial activities, sometimes involving their vying for export markets and offshore contracts and generally engaging in the new globalized economy in order to generate profits. This is a phenomenon common throughout the Western world.⁷

In this environment, the idea of public ownership, and especially public ownership oriented to purposes other than those defined by the bottom line, has taken a pounding. This was made particularly clear in the campaign heading up to the April 1988 Manitoba election.

The Public Ownership Debate in Manitoba

Conservative, Liberal and *Winnipeg Free Press* campaigns in the April 1988 Manitoba election focussed on “NDP incompetence.” A main target was Manitoba’s Crown corporations — guilty, so the Conservatives claimed, of “six years of waste and mismanagement.”⁸ Many people were apparently receptive to this criticism. In March, a journalist generally sympathetic to the merits of state intervention observed that Crown corporations had become “the most unpopular part of the NDP legacy.”⁹

The catalyst for this discontent was a more than 20 percent premium increase for auto insurance, the consequence of a \$62 million loss in 1987 by the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPIC). Protestors rallied outside the legislature; a twenty-year-old student who organized a petition campaign against the premium hikes was nominated woman of the year by the Chamber of Commerce; and the NDP’s relentless arch-foe, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, had a field day attacking this “typical example” of waste and mismanagement.

The unpopularity of Crown corporations stemmed from financial losses and a series of scandals and fiascos. The president and two senior executives of McKenzie Seeds were convicted in 1986 of defrauding the company of more than \$300,000. The president of MPIC was dismissed in 1986 for nepotism and misuse of expense accounts. Two executives of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation were dismissed in 1986 for having an interest in a lottery supply operation. In 1987 John Sweeney, who had been hired as president of MANFOR (the province’s publicly owned forestry complex at The Pas) to turn the company around (and who was paid a \$150,000 annual salary, given generous bonus, expense account and holiday provisions, plus a fully-paid membership in Montréal’s plush Mount Royal Club), quit and told the government to sell the company.¹⁰

There was also the MTX fiasco. MTX Telecom Services Inc., a subsidiary of the Manitoba Telephone System (MTS), was set up in 1982 to do business in Saudi Arabia. In 1986 it was revealed that MTX employees had paid thousands of dollars in bribes and unauthorized loans; that MTX hiring practices discriminated against Jews and women; and that one MTX employee had been flogged by Saudi Arabian police. As revelation piled upon revelation, Al Mackling, minister in charge of MTS, was forced to admit publicly that he had no idea what was happening with MTX. A management audit concluded that the government had lost control of MTX. Five senior officials were dismissed or resigned. The whole sordid affair has cost Manitoba taxpayers at least \$27 million.¹¹

Around this record, the opposition parties built a campaign strategy centred on attacking public ownership and “NDP incompetence.” Their success reflected the anti-public ownership mood of the times.¹²

Public Ownership and Myth-Making

The attack on Crown corporations, however, is not really about the specifics of MTX, or MANFOR, or even public auto insurance. Rather, these cases are important to the Conservatives for their value in myth-making. The myth is the magic of the ‘‘enterprise culture’’ which will, we are told, bestow benefits upon all of us. In pursuit of these benefits, the state must be rolled back and the market expanded on all fronts. Charges of waste and mismanagement at publicly owned corporations are mere fodder for the manufacture of the myths needed to justify this broader ideological purpose.

Even Conservative privatization, to the extent it occurs, will have less to do with the merits of each case than with the value of privatization as myth. Thomas Kierans, president of a major investment brokerage house and co-sponsor of a 1985 conference on privatization, accurately stated:

The act of privatization is at least as symbolic as it is substantive. As an exercise in symbolism, it signals the government’s intentions to respond to the challenge of change by strengthening the market at the expense of the state.¹³

To this end, public ownership is equated with waste, inefficiency, incompetence and bloated bureaucracies, while private enterprise is held to be lean, productive and crisply efficient.

But reality differs from this myth. Manitoba’s Crown corporations are not nearly as badly managed as the Conservatives and Liberals (and the *Free Press*) have claimed. In fact, they have added significantly to the economic and social well-being of Manitobans in ways not possible without public ownership.

A defence of public ownership is overdue. Too much has been conceded to neo-conservative myths. It is true that socialism does not stand or fall, is not advanced or delayed, by the ownership arrangements of isolated Manitoba enterprises. It is also true that the record of public ownership in Canada has been, from a socialist point of view, uninspiring. Most publicly owned enterprises were established to support capital,¹⁴ and have been organized and operated in ways that made them virtually indistinguishable from capitalist enterprises. This no doubt accounts in large part for the failure to mount a campaign in defence of public ownership. But the failure to defend public ownership adds fuel to neo-conservative myths, and erodes the credibility of an institution which, at least to some extent, can offer protection against the worst effects of the unbridled forces of the market.

Public Ownership and the Globalization of Capital

Our defence of public ownership uses the recent experience of Manitoba as a case study, but our analysis is set in the broader context of the dramatic changes in the international political economy of capitalism described earlier. Among the consequences of the globalization of capital, the fiscal crisis of the state and

the rise of neo-conservatism, are that the political space within which public ownership can fruitfully be used is contracting, and that the operations of existing publicly-owned enterprises are being distorted.¹⁵

The globalization of capital renders public ownership potentially obsolete in some industries. The ownership of a single plant in an industry dominated by vertically integrated, globally organized, multiplant enterprises, leaves the owners with little leverage. Many Canadian subsidiaries have become, or are in the process of becoming, little more than single links in a globally rationalized production system. They are not independent entities, but are almost wholly dependent upon other parts of their global corporate network.

For example, the acquisition of essential inputs into a subsidiary's production process may require access to other parts of the global network of which it is a part. If a subsidiary produces complete products, their sale may require access to the corporate marketing system through which end products are sold. For those subsidiaries which produce only a portion or portions of an end product, sales may depend upon access to other links in the corporation's global network. It becomes futile to take into public ownership a single plant in a global network, since the plant is increasingly likely to be organized in such a way as to make economic sense only as part of the bigger corporate system of which it is a part, and within which it plays a small assigned role.

Should such plants become publicly owned they are likely to suffer financial losses, not because of mismanagement or any inherent failing in public ownership, but because a single plant makes economic sense only as part of a larger, global network. Deficit-ridden governments are unwilling to absorb the resultant losses. As a consequence such enterprises are pushed toward adopting more "businesslike" practices.

In some cases this includes diversification of product and service lines and extension beyond geographic borders. In other cases, such as Canada Post, public enterprises are prevented by business-oriented, neo-conservative governments from diversifying their product and service lines, and are thus denied access to the most profitable and technologically advanced spheres, which are left to the private sector. In such cases the pressure to cut losses requires narrow and repressive measures. In all cases, there is a general orientation toward "the bottom line." Similar competitive pressures impinge upon the operations of almost all public enterprises, including utilities.

This makes it increasingly difficult for public enterprises to fulfill broader social goals, and pushes them toward becoming more distant from the users of their outputs, and more indistinguishable from their private-sector counterparts. At the national level, CNR and Air Canada are good examples. Support for public ownership is therefore further eroded, preparing the ground for the zealous ideologues of privatization, and ironic sales pitches like "public participation" — as privatization is called in Saskatchewan.

Yet it remains the case that for peripheral economies like Manitoba's — and most of Canada's for that matter — the globalization of capital is making reliance on private capital and the forces of the market even more hazardous than it has always been.

We will argue that at the provincial level a public ownership strategy should avoid highly competitive, globalized sectors of the provincial economy, because to take into public ownership just one of the pieces in a globalized, vertically integrated network is to guarantee financial loss, which then serves to advance neo-conservative interests by further eroding the idea of public ownership. But an avoidance of globalized capital allows control of the most important sectors of the economy to go unchallenged, while confining the use of public ownership largely to those sectors of the economy which are least profitable. This would appear to fly in the face of that socialist thinking which would have the use of public ownership aimed specifically at the most profitable sectors of the economy, in order to build up investment capital.

We maintain, however, that it is essential to recognize the limits of provincial governments, especially *vis-à-vis* globalized capital. A single province cannot take on the globalized corporate giants. Thus if the most profitable and powerful sectors of the economy are to be taken into the public realm, and subjected to a more rational and democratic control, it has to be done by bigger units — whole regions in some cases, Canada as a whole in others, and in still others Canada as part of a broader public network that cuts across several or many nations. This will require new, more “globalized” forms of public ownership. Our purpose here is not to comment on how this might be done, it is simply to observe that it must be done if globalized capital is to be confronted.

We want to emphasize, however, that it does not follow from such an observation that there is nothing to be done at a more local level. We believe that there *are* areas where new provincial public ownership makes sense, and these opportunities should be pursued aggressively. More importantly, we believe that much more should be done with those Crown corporations which already exist, to open them to users and employees, to make them more democratic and accountable, and to more accurately measure and make known their real costs and benefits. While this will not itself shift the power relations in capitalism — the formal ownership arrangements of individual enterprises may, or may not, bring tangible benefits to workers and the communities in which such enterprises are located, but they cannot by themselves dramatically affect the impact of global capitalism (except perhaps insofar as they exist as a concrete alternative to private ownership) — it could, if done properly, serve to rebuild the legitimacy and desirability of public ownership, thus constructing a base of support from which to confront the globalized corporate giants.

Manitoba's recent NDP government introduced some potentially important — albeit limited and belated — innovations with respect to Crown corporations. A reform-oriented approach to public ownership could usefully extend and build upon those measures.

Crown Corporations in Manitoba

Manitoba has between twenty-five and thirty Crown corporations, the most important of which are identified and categorized in Table 1:

Table 1
Key Crown Corporations in Manitoba, By Activity

PUBLIC UTILITIES	Manitoba Hydro* Manitoba Telephone System*
COMMERCIAL	Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPIC)* Manitoba Liquor Control Commission* Venture Manitoba Tours*
MANUFACTURING	McKenzie Seeds* MANFOR Ltd.*
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	Manitoba Mineral Resources* Manitoba Oil and Gas* Leaf Rapids Town Properties
REGIONAL-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/ PROVISION OF LOW-COST FINANCE	Communities Economic Development Fund* Manitoba Development Corporation* Manitoba Housing & Renewal Corporation Moose Lake Loggers Ltd.* Channel Area Loggers Ltd.*
AGRICULTURE	Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corp. Manitoba Crop Insurance Corp.
PLANNING/COORDINATING/REGULATING	Manitoba Energy Authority* Manitoba Data Services* Manitoba Trading Corporation Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corp.* Manitoba Properties Inc.

*These enterprises were subject to the 1987 Crown Accountability Act.

Unlike private-sector firms which seek to maximize profits, Manitoba public enterprises have diverse economic and social objectives — a factor obscured in the attack directed at them and the NDP. For example, after the 1982 depression the NDP government used public investment on its own account and through the Crowns to stimulate the economy and spark private-sector investment.

Table 2 presents summary data on investment expenditures of the Manitoba government relative to total investment in Manitoba, and to investment by all provincial governments combined. As can be seen, public investment in Manitoba increased dramatically, both absolutely and relatively.

Table 2
Manitoba Government Public-Sector Investment (Millions of \$),* 1981-1987**

Year	Investment Expenditures by Manitoba Government Public Sector	Investment Expenditures by Manitoba Public Sector as % of Total Investment Expenditures in Manitoba	Investment Expenditure of all Provincial/ Territorial Governments Public Sectors as % of Total Investment Expenditures
1981	426	15.8	14.6
1982	510	19.2	17.2
1983	563	18.1	16.3
1984	604	16.4	14.5
1985	776	18.0	12.8
1986	727	15.5	11.9
1987	870	18.0	12.2

*Capital and repair expenditures combined.

**The data for 1987 are based on intentions, those for 1986 are preliminary actual.

Sources: Statistics Canada, *Private and Public Investment in Canada* (61-205); Manitoba Bureau of Statistics.

The major public investment was the Limestone Generating Station, which started in 1985 and involved an expenditure of \$1.5-\$2 billion over six years.¹⁶ The government assisted Manitoba firms to obtain contracts, and instructed Hydro to give northern residents — most of them Natives — the training required for them to get jobs. These initiatives would have been much more difficult, perhaps impossible, without public ownership of Hydro. Some studies have suggested that Natives have benefited little from this training, and that hydroelectric projects have undermined their traditional sources of livelihood. It has been argued that “Native people have been enticed to become active participants in their own underdevelopment by seeking employment on projects that do harm to, rather than benefit, their economic future.” This important finding is not necessarily inconsistent with our observations on the merits of public ownership. On the contrary, the solution, as the same author argues, is still more public involvement: “in order for mega-project employment to have a positive impact on Native communities, it must improve the level of certifiable skills of the Native employees, and result in the development of productive economic activities in the communities to utilize these new skills once the project has been completed.”¹⁷ Public ownership in some form would be an essential element in any such strategy.

The use of public investment — much of it channelled through publicly owned enterprises — to overcome stagnation produced the desired results. As is indicated in Table 3, from 1983 to 1987 the Manitoba economy matched or outperformed the national average on most significant economic indicators.¹⁸

Table 3

Comparison of Selected Economic Indicators, Manitoba/Canadian Economies, 1983-1987

Percentage Change		1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Gross Domestic Product at						
Current Market Prices	Manitoba	6.4	10.9	8.7	5.9	6.4
	Canada	8.3	9.6	7.6	5.7	8.5
Private and Public						
Investment Expenditures	Manitoba	11.2	16.2	25.7	11.3	2.4
	Canada	-3.4	4.1	15.0	4.6	3.8
Business Capital						
Expenditures	Manitoba	-4.0	19.4	10.9	9.7	1.9
	Canada	-10.9	3.0	9.2	1.6	4.3
Wages, Salaries and						
Supplementary Labour						
Income	Manitoba	6.4	7.1	7.0	8.0	6.4
	Canada	4.9	7.5	7.7	6.7	7.6
Average Weekly Earnings						
(Industrial Composite)	Manitoba	4.5	4.6	2.4	3.6	1.4
	Canada	1.2	2.3	3.5	2.8	2.7

Sources: Canada Department of Finance, *Quarterly Economic Review* (Annual Reference Tables), June 1987; and Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, *Manitoba Statistical Review*, First Quarter, 1988.

There was an added benefit associated with the success of this economic strategy: the government was able to maintain the social welfare programs which Conservative governments elsewhere were gutting. Much of the investment of the Manitoba Crowns also has significant social consequences. The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC), for example, invests in public-housing units, which provide decent accommodation for low-income people, and strengthen the province's system of rent controls. As of 31 March 1986, MHRC owned 7,712 units of elderly persons' housing and 7,779 units of family housing, with a total value of more than \$300 million.¹⁹

Similarly, the vast amounts of money capital generated by automobile insurance premiums are invested in Manitoba. As of 31 October 1987, MPIC had \$243 million invested in long-term Manitoba provincial, hospital, school and municipal bonds and debentures — at rates lower than those available in capital markets.²⁰ Under private auto insurance, most of this capital would have left the province in the form of dividends or other remittances to distant shareholders.

The point is that public ownership creates the basis for directly influencing the timing and content of public-sector investment in ways which promote important economic and social objectives. The three major Crowns — MTS, Hydro and MPIC — produce essential services used by virtually every household in Manitoba. The rates charged for their services are among the lowest in the country: MTS, the lowest; Hydro, the second lowest, just behind Québec; and MPIC, second only to Saskatchewan (even after the substantial hikes in 1988).²¹

Manitobans with lower incomes benefit most, because these rates are similar in many respects to regressive taxes. These enterprises have also adopted purchasing practices intended to maximize the impact of their expenditures on Manitoba producers, thus creating jobs and yielding a net benefit to the province.

The prime example of the impact of such practices is the Manitoba Hydro Limestone Development. When the decision was made to proceed with the project, Manitoba Hydro personnel toured the province to encourage businesses and communities to take advantage of the potential opportunities available in the tendering process. As well, Hydro advised prospective bidders that Manitoba content would be one of the factors taken into account in awarding tenders. According to Manitoba Hydro, these policies have resulted in a significant increase in Manitoba content relative to previous projects.²²

In summary, public enterprises contribute significantly to the province's economic and social well-being, and do so in ways that would not be possible if the enterprises were privately-owned and run solely for profit. The question that arises is whether, and if so how, the role of public ownership can be sustained and/or expanded in the face of emergent trends.

The Trend to Commercialization

Manitoba's publicly owned enterprises, like those elsewhere, are subject to the intensified competition associated with the globalization of capital, and the related fiscal crisis of the state. As argued earlier, these forces have created a push toward the privatization of some Crowns, and the commercialization of others.

The example of MTS illustrates the push toward commercialization. The corporation's revenue base was adversely affected not just by the depression of the early 1980s, but also by competitive forces arising in other jurisdictions largely as a result of deregulation — for example, the competitive sales of telephone and other telecommunications components, and the application by CNCP Telecommunications for long distance telephone rights. In an attempt to secure its revenue base and prevent layoffs, MTS established MTX Telecom Services Inc. to pursue profit-making ventures outside Manitoba.²³ The result of MTX's Saudi Arabian adventures was the political scandal described earlier.

The Conservative opposition attributed the scandal and the \$27 million loss to the "waste and mismanagement" which it claims are intrinsic to public ownership. In fact its real cause was the decision by MTS to reach beyond Manitoba's borders, and to plunge into the cutthroat competitive world of international capital in search of profits. When a company operates in this world, it either adopts the practices of its competitors, or it loses money. MTX did both. Its ill-fated foreign adventures are an example of the trend toward commercialization which is affecting publicly owned enterprises everywhere, creating pressures on them to emulate their private-sector counterparts.²⁴

MPIC is another example of a Manitoba Crown corporation which was hurt financially when it became involved in the trend toward commercialization. MPIC's general insurance division took positions in the international reinsurance market. Reinsurance is a common practice among private insurers, involving the sharing of risks to reduce the liability of single insurers. MPIC became involved in these high-risk, international reinsurance efforts as a means of generating additional revenues, but its involvement ultimately resulted in its being held liable for large claims. In 1985-86 alone, MPIC had to establish a provision of \$36 million for such claims.²⁵ These losses are another example of the consequences of the commercialization of publicly owned enterprises.

The irony is that the cases of MTX and MPIC reinsurance have been used to discredit public ownership, when in fact what both reveal is the damage that is done when the irrational forces of intensified competition push well-managed public enterprises into aping the practices of big business. The further irony is that both of these ill-advised adventures for which the NDP paid a political price were initiated by Sterling Lyon's Conservatives.

Other Manitoba Crown corporations have been or will be privatized — Flyer Industries was sold to a Dutch multinational bus manufacturer in July 1986 and MANFOR was sold to Repap Enterprises Ltd. in May 1989. Both sustained large and persistent losses through much of the 1980s as a consequence of their apparent inability to compete in national and international markets.

Still other "potential" Crown corporations are not taken over at all because of the pressures created by the same forces. The Pawley government considered taking over Winnipeg's profitable Kimberly-Clark plant when it shut down in 1983, but decided — perhaps wisely — that a single plant producing only one of a wide range of paper products would be unable to compete with the large, integrated operations whose marketing costs, for example, are spread over a much higher volume and wider range of products.²⁶ And Inter-City Gas was not taken over (despite the fact that such a takeover makes economic sense and is a long-standing policy of the NDP), because of a \$30 million hitch which developed at the end of negotiations in 1987.²⁷ The forces, both economic and ideological, which are pushing existing publicly owned companies toward a more commercial orientation, and militating against the initiation of new publicly owned enterprises, are very powerful.

We might add, almost parenthetically, that these powerful forces are pushing for the privatization of sectors of our society which have for so long been in the public realm that we scarcely think of them as being publicly owned, and thus we fail to see them as examples of the benefits of public ownership. Public libraries and universities are among many good examples.

Subjecting the Crowns to Political Control

The Pawley government took steps in the opposite direction, in an attempt to subject Crown corporations to a greater degree of public, rather than market,

control. It did so by trying to improve its capacity to analyze Crown corporation activities, and by trying to pry open, however slightly, Crown corporations' decision-making processes to users and employees. In the end, the NDP's efforts in these regards can either be criticized because they were too little and too late, or praised because they were steps in the right direction. We will do both, though it must be emphasized that the steps taken were so tentative, partial and late that their worth lies almost wholly in their potential rather than their achievements.

The Department of Crown Investments

In 1982 the new Pawley government created a Department of Crown Investments (DCI). The DCI acted as a secretariat to the powerful Economic and Resources Committee of Cabinet (ERIC). Its mandate was to ensure a full and adequate two-way flow of information between Crown corporations and the government, to ensure that Crown corporation investments and activities reflected government objectives, and to provide the analytical support to enable greater government control and coordination of Crown corporation activities.

The NDP government was well advised to create the DCI for these purposes. On too many occasions provincial governments have been taken to the cleaners because they lacked the necessary specialist expertise in an industry.²⁸

However, the DCI was far too small. It had a staff of only six professional analysts, a budget well under \$1 million, and was headed by three deputy ministers in four years, all of which suggests that the Pawley government did not give the department the support it needed. This seems to have been deliberate. The DCI's first minister, Wilson Parasiuk, insisted in the legislature in 1982 that "it is our intention to limit the size and scope of this newly created department,"²⁹ and this commitment was repeated and adhered to throughout the department's existence. In 1987 Gary Doer was quoted as saying that "we had the right idea in 1982 . . . and then we didn't provide the resources," with the result that "billion dollar decisions" were being made on the basis of completely inadequate information and analysis.³⁰ Similar frustrations were expressed by Robin Murray, in describing his experiences with the Greater London Council. He observed that "in the end, its policy and popular planning side contained a hundred people, working 3500 hours a week. It was tiny relative to the task at hand."³¹ The DCI was even tinier — with six analysts to monitor the activities and plans of all the province's Crown corporations, some of which employed a very substantial body of technical expertise, and were being pushed into new and unfamiliar territory in search of additional revenue — and with much of their limited time consumed by the problems associated with large losses at Flyer and MANFOR, the DCI was never able to fulfill its mandate.

The Real Costs and Benefits of Public Ownership

However, even with Flyer and MANFOR, DCI had problems. The decision to seek private-sector buyers for these two Crown corporations may or may not

have been a wise one — we cannot tell. Nor could the DCI, because it was reached without adequate information. Substantial economic and social benefits accrued to Manitoba as a result of the eight hundred or so full-time jobs created by these two Crown corporations, and as a result of the various linkages with other parts of the economy. Such benefits may outweigh the costs incurred in covering the losses of these companies. But the capitalist accounting framework used by commercial Crown corporations is far too narrow to capture real costs and benefits. The accounting system used by Crown corporations does not include, for example, the benefits derived from their linkages with other sectors of the economy, through the supplying of inputs, the processing of outputs, and the expenditure of wages and salaries. Nor does it include the impact on social welfare costs associated with changes in the level of employment. The DCI never developed an alternative. Without a broader accounting framework able to identify all costs and benefits, including those which are nonquantifiable, it becomes almost impossible — especially given the fiscal crisis and the current neo-conservative climate — to justify the continued existence of a Crown corporation which consistently incurs (narrowly defined) losses. Yet such an enterprise may yield a net benefit to the province.³²

Worker Directors

A second initiative of the Pawley government was to add worker directors to the boards of some Crowns. As of 25 September 1987, eight of the Crowns had worker representatives on their boards: McKenzie Seeds, two of nine; Manitoba Data Services, two of seven; MANFOR, three of nine; Manitoba Hydro, two of eleven; MPIC, two of seven; MTS, two of ten; Moose Lake Loggers Ltd., two of nine; and Venture Tours Ltd., one of nine.³³

Some segments of the Left have long promoted the idea of boards comprised of those who work in the enterprises, plus representatives from users of its services, and/or from the communities in which the enterprises are located. However, our understanding of how these boards would, and could, differ from traditional boards remains fuzzy.

An assumption underlying the idea of worker directors is that the goal of public enterprise is not to maximize profits, but to achieve some social objectives. In some cases this involves preservation of jobs as a vital part of a community's economic base. There is, in short, more to their jobs than simply the cash nexus; they are part of a collective project and have a direct interest in making that project work. At the same time, however, there is a suspicion on the part of both workers and unions that participation in boards will result in co-optation and the sacrifice of their interests to the interests of the enterprise and the provincial government.

When the idea of adding worker directors was raised in Manitoba, the unions insisted that directors either be elected by the union membership or named by the union executive. The NDP government accepted this. The arrangements for

appointing these directors varied from situation to situation.³⁴ Thus, in the case of MANFOR, two directors were elected by the membership of the IWA local (one from each of the Woodlands and Sawmill divisions) and one director by the CPU union local. In contrast, the union representatives on the Hydro and MTS boards were selected by the government from a list of names submitted by the union executives. The representatives on the MTS board were a vice-president of the CWC local and the president of the IBEW local. The IBEW representative on the Hydro board, on the other hand, was not a member of the executive, but was an activist within the union.

The worker directors are bound by the same rules pertaining to conflict-of-interest and confidentiality as other board members. Consequently, they cannot participate in issues involving collective bargaining or other matters relating to union affairs, and they cannot reveal information which may be detrimental to the company, if it becomes public — for example, a new strategy relating to the pricing and marketing of the Crown's products or services.

Reporting-back arrangements also vary from situation to situation. The union representatives on the former MANFOR board reported regularly to both the union membership and the union executive; the CWC representative on the MTS board reported regularly to her executive; and the IBEW representative on the Hydro board reported twice a year to the executive and was encouraged to give reports at seminars and other educational projects organized for the membership.

Most of the union representatives we talked to believe that having union representation on the boards is a positive development. The main advantage is that the union and the workers are represented on issues that directly affect them. Maggie Hatfield, national representative of the CWC, cited the "shock" affair and pay equity as two issues where it helped to have a representative on the MTS board. Jim Anderson, union representative of the IWA local at MANFOR, said that the main advantages he saw were, first, that his members were better informed — had a better understanding of the operation of the entire enterprise — and second, that the union was in a better position to anticipate problems. And Charles Washington, president of the IBEW local at Hydro, said that the main benefit he saw was that the labour representatives might dissuade the boards from making some decisions which could have serious consequences for the union and their workers.

The one drawback cited by a couple of union representatives is that representatives with career ambitions were inhibited by the presence at meetings of their bosses. There was also agreement that if the unions lost control over such appointments, having workers on boards could be detrimental to the interests of unions and their members. This is now a real possibility. The new Conservative government has so far dealt with Crown corporations on an ad hoc basis: in some cases whole boards, and in others only certain board members, have been replaced, while in at least one case the worker directors were removed without

consultation with the union. (The Conservatives' Bill 37, The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability and Consequential Amendments Act, proclaimed in January 1989, weakens the provision in the old Crown Accountability Act for the appointment of employee directors. Under Bill 37, the government "may appoint persons who are employed by the corporation and who, in the opinion of the minister responsible for the corporation, are qualified to serve as directors, to be members of the board of the corporation." [Section 23(b)] The NDP's Bill 58 read: "In appointing directors of a Crown Corporation, the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall, where the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers it practical to do so, appoint not less than two individuals employed by the corporation in positions other than senior management positions to be directors of the corporation." [Section 11]) The elected worker representatives on the McKenzie Seeds Board were replaced by two workers appointed by the Conservative government. According to Al Patterson, union representative for Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers Local 832, there was no prior consultation with either the union or the workers at McKenzie Seeds. He also said that the two people appointed were among the least active members in the union. Subsequently, on 1 August 1988, representatives from CUPE and the Union of Health Employees on the board of the Manitoba Cancer Research and Treatment Foundation were replaced by Conservative-appointed worker directors. These changes too were made without prior consultation with either the unions or the employees of the foundation.

The Crown Accountability Act

A third initiative was the 1987 Crown Accountability Act. The series of highly publicized problems made it clear that the DCI could not monitor Manitoba's Crown corporations. Thus the act created the Public Investments Corporation of Manitoba (PIC), a holding company modelled on Saskatchewan's Crown Investments Corporation. It was to have a staff of twenty-five and a budget of \$2.5 million, giving it substantially more analytical capacity than the DCI. The fledgling PIC has been dismantled by the Conservatives and replaced with a diluted Crown Corporations Council, but the PIC was a further step toward subjecting Manitoba Crown corporations to rational rather than market control. (The Crown Corporations Council is to consist of seven members appointed by cabinet, "one of whom is the Dean of the Faculty of Management of the University of Manitoba" [Section 4(2)(a)] — currently the right-wing ex-banker Mr. William Mackness — and "one of whom is a person nominated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba" [Section A(2)(b)]. It is clear from the relevant provisions of Bill 37 that the new council is not intended to have the analytical capacity that PIC was intended to have.)

Opening Up the Crown Corporations

The Crown Accountability Act also included provisions to open up decision making to users and employees. These steps were timid but potentially valuable. The act required that by 9 January 1988, the boards of all Crown corporations

establish service committees (Bill 37 eliminates service committees), a majority of whose members were to be members of the board, and whose purpose was to ensure that the senior management of a Crown corporation:

(a) shall meet at least once a year with the public for the purpose of explaining the objectives of the corporation, reviewing the corporation's relationships with its customers and the delivery of its services to the public, and receiving suggestions from the public as to the manner in which it can improve those relationships and the delivery of those services to the public; and

(b) shall receive and, if considered appropriate, shall investigate complaints from the public relating to the operations of the corporation.³⁵

The act also required that the boards of all Crown corporations establish joint councils, to be comprised of the responsible minister, the chief executive officer, a board member and three employees named by the trade union or employee association or by the employees at large:

The purpose of a joint council is to promote the exchange of information and ideas between the corporation that established it and the trade union or employee organization naming members to it but such purpose does not include collective bargaining within the meaning of the Labour Relations Act.³⁶

These joint councils were in addition to the provision that where cabinet "considers it practical to do so," it would appoint not less than two non-management employees to the board. The Conservatives have replaced the joint councils with labour-management committees. However, neither unions nor employee organizations play any role in selecting the employee members of these labour-management committees. The method of selection is left open, thus further reducing the role of organized labour.

These provisions gave users and employees few, if any, new powers. Our argument is not that these initiatives constituted a shift in power relations. Rather we wish to argue that these are steps — however limited and belated — which had the potential to move Manitoba's Crown corporations in the proper direction. Nor is it our argument that a future NDP government in Manitoba would be capable of realizing this potential. The small steps taken so late in the Pawley administration may represent the limit of what NDP governments in Manitoba are prepared to do in this regard — they have historically been exceptionally reluctant to introduce initiatives untried in other jurisdictions.³⁷ It is worth noting, however, that Gary Doer, the current leader of the NDP and the minister responsible for the 1987 Crown Accountability Act, stated that once the government had achieved its objectives for the Crowns regarding financial control and strategic planning, the intention was to introduce a form of social auditing which would be used to monitor progress toward the achievement of social objectives.³⁸ We maintain that the small and tentative steps that the Pawley administration did take, along with the ideas that were apparently being

worked on by cabinet, could usefully be built upon in thinking about a strategy for public ownership.

Conclusion

The intensified competition arising from the globalization of capital, plus the fiscal crisis of the state and the rise of neo-conservatism, are pushing Manitoba's Crown corporations, like those everywhere, in the direction of commercialization and even privatization. The Pawley government, unlike almost every other government in Canada, took steps which can be seen as an attempt to use the provincial state to push in the opposite way, by introducing measures intended to subject Crown corporations to a greater measure of public as opposed to market control. These measures, very limited and belated though they were, seized upon the two areas where gains must be made with respect to public ownership: the development of analytical capacity, and the opening of Crown corporations to their users and workers.

Much more needs to be done. For example, a new means of evaluating public enterprises, based upon a full accounting of real costs and benefits, needs to be developed. This is especially important if the public is to be mobilized to confront and challenge the powerful economic and ideological forces pushing for commercialization and privatization.³⁹

New public ownership initiatives should be aggressively pursued, but in targeted sectors of the economy. At least initially, this should be done in those sectors which are or can be protected from the increasingly competitive and internationalized market. Within such niches the pressures toward commercialization and business logic are less onerous, and space can be found for new Crown enterprises to establish themselves economically and build social measures, including democratization, into their corporate strategy. By picking sectors at least somewhat insulated from the pressures of the internationalized market, such Crown corporations have the opportunity to become "model" operations.

The aim should be to create publicly owned enterprises which "work," both in a broadly defined economic sense, and in the sense of democratizing their operations by opening up the decision-making processes to both users and employees. To the extent that this can be done, support will emerge for public ownership through the "propaganda of practice."⁴⁰

The limitations of public ownership — important corrective though their identification has been — have been overstated, and the potential of public ownership for promoting social change has been sadly neglected, and in many cases even negated, not only by neo-conservatives but also by many of the Left.

We agree with the recently stated view of Robin Murray, based on his experience with the Greater London Council:

while we should reaffirm the aims of social ownership as they were advanced in the 1930's, we should add to them the many-sided purpose of changing the social relations of production . . . the task is to unite the interests of users and workers against the capitalist pressures that bear down on a public enterprise . . . Key to the strategy is the establishment of liberated zones, within which an alternative administration is established.⁴¹

“Liberated zones” may be too evocative a term, setting up standards which public ownership by itself cannot reasonably be expected to reach. But Murray's point is that public ownership can make possible, or can create the conditions for, the achievement of much that is not otherwise possible. It enables an experimentation with administrative forms which emphasizes greater degrees of participation and involvement, both by workers and users. Murray concludes:

changes in ownership begin rather than finish the process. The development of new skills, of management, strategic planning and open discussion, the establishment of new types of social accounting and a culture of social creativity — all these take time and involve a great trail of errors and false starts. For this reason we should not wait for a blueprint. We should go forward with the new approaches in many different ways.⁴²

It is perhaps ironic that a social democratic government, which has been justifiably criticized for its timidity, and which operated within the constitutional and economic constraints which severely limit the options of provincial governments, should have begun this very process. Manitoba's NDP government took some small, tentative steps in the right direction, and did so in the face of powerful forces pushing it in the opposite direction. Manitoba's Crown corporations were not, of course, “liberated zones,” nor could they have been. But it would be appropriate not just to criticize the timidity of the NDP's efforts, but also, and more importantly, to rethink the importance of public ownership in an era when the market is being used to make more and more of the decisions that are central to society — to the ultimate detriment of peripheral societies.⁴³

NOTES

1. A 1983 IMF report noted that “the major shift . . . from capital to labour that took place in the late 1960's and early 1970's has not been fully reversed and remains an important factor accounting for low profitability and low investment.” IMF, *World Economic Outlook* (1983), 14.
2. Joyce Kolko, *Restructuring the World Economy* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 90.
3. James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).
4. For a useful discussion of these points, see Cy Gonick, *The Great Economic Debate: Failed Economics and a Future for Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1987).
5. Sidney Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter Establishment* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986). It is interesting to note that neo-conservatism has achieved its greatest success in the

two countries — Britain and the United States — which have fared least well in the face of intensified competition in global markets.

6. A full-blown discussion of privatization is beyond the scope of this article. However, it is important to note here that privatization is perceived to bring at least three significant advantages to the neo-conservative state: it generates revenue which can be used to lower the deficit; it extricates the state from political problems faced by publicly owned enterprises in times of economic crisis and fiscal restraint — for example, should a plant be closed or workers laid off; and it removes the state from the “problem” of public-sector workers who are now unionized, increasingly militant, and unhappy about being squeezed by the fiscal crisis. Private capital also benefits from privatization. Rates of profit, squeezed by the economic crisis and the increasingly competitive environment brought on by globalization, are helped enormously when productive assets can be purchased at depressed prices. [See Herschel Hardin, *The Privatization Putsch* (Halifax: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1989)]. As well, the transfer of assets from the public to the private sector strengthens the position of capital *vis-à-vis* the state. It is frequently argued that privatized companies can perform better than publicly owned enterprises, especially in a period of economic crisis. But this may well be because the private sector can unload workers — that is, socialize the costs of dislocation and adjustment. The private sector can make these “tough” decisions with less political fallout than can the state. This then makes the private sector look more “efficient” — a concept less clear and less useful than is usually thought — thus reinforcing the neo-conservative ideology, and promoting the myth of enterprise culture. Recent evidence from Britain on these questions suggests that the benefits of privatization to the state are largely illusory. The benefits to private capital on the other hand are likely to be immediate, and significant — major benefits for investment dealers, merchant bankers and stock brokers, major capital gains for the stock purchasers, and major increases in the salaries and benefits of the management of privatized firms. Such results are entirely compatible with the overriding objective of the neo-conservative agenda — to undermine the state and strengthen private capital. See, for example, Edward Greenspon, “British privatization gives investors big profits,” *Globe and Mail*, 12 May 1989.
7. See, for example, Jeanne Kirk Laux and Maureen Appel Molot, *State Capitalism: Public Enterprise in Canada* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), especially 26-27, 33-34, and 73-78.
8. *Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 March 1988.
9. *Ibid.*, 12 March 1988. This, of course, was not just a Manitoba phenomenon. As Doern and Tupper point out, “most recent literature is critical of crown corporations as institutions, partial to market forces as a solution to contemporary woes and supportive of privatization.” They add: “both intellectually and politically, supporters of crown corporations are on the defensive.” Allan Tupper and G. Bruce Doern, “Canadian Public Enterprise and Privatization,” in Allan Tupper and G. Bruce Doern, eds., *Privatization, Public Policy and Public Corporations in Canada* (Halifax: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1988), 12. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Laux and Molot, *State Capitalism*.
10. *Winnipeg Sun*, 8 March 1987.
11. *Ibid.* See also Coopers and Lybrand, *Management Audit of MTX*, six volumes, submitted to MTX Management Audit Steering Committee, 1986.
12. The “public mood” is, of course, a very difficult thing to define, and it may well be that the public view of public ownership is both more ambiguous and more complex than what is

suggested by the election campaign and outcome in Manitoba in April 1988 (and by the reelection in November 1988 of a national Conservative government with an ideological predisposition to privatization). This is borne out by Richard Johnston's review of public opinion on the public ownership question in Canada, *Public Opinion and Public Policy in Canada: Questions of Confidence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), especially 181-85, which leads him to conclude that "in general, the public does not seem gripped by enthusiasm for either more or less public ownership . . . Canadians seem to favour the public/private *status quo*." (p. 183) Johnston's review is based on responses to survey questions asked in the abstract. The responses to such questions do not necessarily reveal how people will act on the ownership question, once a concrete issue arises. In Manitoba, the sale of Flyer Industries, and more recently MANFOR, generated little resistance. There are probably two main reasons for this. First, the benefits of these two enterprises were perceived to accrue solely to the people who had jobs with them and, in the case of MANFOR, to the community of The Pas. Second, it seems likely that the public resented the large infusions of tax dollars required to offset their losses and keep them going — tax dollars that presumably could be used to improve education, health care and other services. As it turned out, moreover, even the people immediately affected by the sale of these firms did not oppose the change in ownership; indeed, they may even have welcomed it. With the increased emphasis on commercialization in the 1980s, perennial losers such as Flyer and MANFOR, were subject to relentless criticism and the constant threat of closure or sale, if their performances did not improve. This situation created much uncertainty and anxiety for the people involved in these enterprises. Privatization resolved these problems — at least temporarily. The privatization of public enterprises which have a broader constituency of beneficiaries, including the users of the products and/or services produced by the enterprises (for example, public utilities), would likely produce a different reaction. For example, the attempt by the Devine government in Saskatchewan (whose commitment to privatization verges on the pathological) to privatize SaskEnergy has generated widespread opposition. The results of a poll commissioned by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour in April 1989 indicate that significant majorities of the population in that province are opposed to the sale of major public enterprises. As well, the pollsters suggest that opposition to privatization has risen significantly since 1988. (These results are reported in the *Regina Leader-Post*, 3 May 1989.)

13. Thomas E. Kierans, "Privatization, or Strengthening the Market at the Expense of the State," in W.T. Stanbury and Thomas E. Kierans, eds., *Papers on Privatization* (Montréal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1985), xviii.
14. See, among many examples, Tupper and Doern, "Canadian Public Enterprise and Privatization," 16-17; H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines and Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1840-1941* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974); and Jorge Niosi, *Canadian Capitalism* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981), especially pages 69-117.
15. See, for example, Robin Murray, "Ownership, Control and the Market," *New Left Review* 164 (July/August 1987): 87-112.
16. Manitoba Hydroelectric Board, *Annual Report*, 1986-87.
17. James B. Waldrum, "Native Employment and Hydro-Electric Development in Northern Manitoba," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 62-63, 74. See also John Loxley, "The 'Great Northern' Plan," *Studies in Political Economy* 6 (Autumn 1981): 151-82.
18. The selection of indicators for comparative purposes is invariably somewhat arbitrary. In this case, these indicators were used because data were available for the years 1983-87.

19. Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, *Annual Report*, 1985-86.
20. Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, *Annual Report*, 1986-87.
21. Saskatchewan, Department of Finance, "The Saskatchewan Budget Address," 1988.
22. Manitoba Hydroelectric Board, *Annual Report*, 12.
23. See Manitoba Telephone System, *Annual Report*, 1981-82, especially "Chairman's Report" and "General Manager's Report," and *Annual Report*, 1982-83. The Chairman's Report for 1982-83 noted that MTS profits had been adversely affected not just by the recession, "but also by competitive forces arising in other jurisdictions. MTS is undertaking to find new uses for its network and new ways of marketing its existing services to secure its revenue base." See also Coopers and Lybrand, *Management Audit of MTX*, Volume 1, which states that the MTX project was undertaken "to provide an additional source of revenue to offset declining MTS profitability." (P. 2) This report also details other MTS efforts to generate revenues by entering into commercial activities beyond Manitoba's borders.
24. For other examples, see Laux and Molot, *State Capitalism*, 76-77.
25. See Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, *Annual Report*, 1985-86.
26. Jim Silver, "Plant Closures in Manitoba, 1976-1986," in Jeremy Hull and Jim Silver, eds., *The Political Economy of Manitoba* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1990).
27. The NDP had conducted a survey in the spring of 1987 which revealed that there was little public support for a takeover of ICG. The government went ahead with the takeover, believing that public support would be generated during the course of the debate and through an effective educational effort. The hitch developed when ICG realized that the agreement would require the company to assume a \$30 million federal government tax liability. ICG, of course, wanted the province to assume this responsibility. At this time, a majority in the NDP caucus recommended that the takeover attempt be abandoned.
28. See, for example, Philip Mathias, *Forced Growth* (Toronto: J. Lewis & Samuel, 1971).
29. Manitoba, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 31 May 1982.
30. *Winnipeg Sun*, 8 March 1987.
31. Robin Murray, "Ownership, Control and the Market," 104.
32. Tupper and Doern, in "Canadian Public Enterprise and Privatization," provide a succinct discussion of the problems involved in establishing criteria both for evaluating the activities of public enterprise and for assessing the "social" implications of privatization. See in particular pages 17-33. The experience with the sale of MANFOR to Repap Enterprises may clarify some of these issues. There has already been some controversy because of the Conservative government's refusal to reveal the contents of the agreement with Repap. Ironically, the Manitoba Keewatinowei Okimakanak (MKO), an organization created by northern Indian bands to assess the implications of resource projects for Natives, obtained a copy of the agreement through the United States Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington just before the commencement of legislative committee hearings on the deal. The Conservative members of the committee withdrew from the hearings when the MKO and the opposition parties pointed out major flaws in the agreement with Repap — flaws which suggested both that Repap would be the chief beneficiary of the deal and that the government had given no consideration either to the environmental consequences of Repap's plans or to the impact these plans would have on the economies of Native communities. Moreover, since the deal was finalized, it has been revealed that MANFOR

generated profits of \$9 million in the first quarter of 1989. According to Val Werier, a columnist for the *Winnipeg Free Press*, experts in the industry suggest that MANFOR was "commercially viable" on a long-term basis "because it is 'environmentally friendly' in comparison to Repap which will convert to bleached kraft paper, a process that can be harmful to the environment." *Winnipeg Free Press*, 13 May 1989.

33. Information supplied by Stephan R. Barg, President, Public Investments Corporation of Manitoba, 27 May 1988.
34. The following information is based on personal interviews with union representatives in Manitoba Crown corporations.
35. An Act Respecting the Accountability of Crown Corporations and to Amend Other Acts in Consequence Thereof, 12(2).
36. *Ibid.*, 13(5).
37. See, for example, James A. McAllister, *The Government of Edward Schreyer* (Kingston and Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).
38. Interview with Gary Doer, 20 June 1988.
39. Gary Doer indicated to us that while the NDP government's approach to social auditing was still in its formative stages, it intended to monitor such things as the quality and geographic distribution of jobs, the incidence of accidents, workplace health and the environmental impact of Crown activities. For a useful example of the potential of evaluating Crowns (and private-sector firms as well) from a social perspective and in a way that provides a basis for mobilizing support for public enterprise, see Bob Rowthorn and Terry Ward, "How to Run a Company and Run Down an Economy: The Effects of Closing Down Steel-Making in Corby," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 3, no. 4 (December 1979).
40. Robin Murray, "Ownership, Control and the Market," 103.
41. *Ibid.*, 112.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Questions on power and control have figured prominently in the debate on privatization in Saskatchewan. In particular, the opponents of privatization have tapped the historical memory of the people of Saskatchewan to remind them of the vulnerability of an economy and society exposed to the rigours of the market and the whims of the private owners of productive wealth.

Review Essay

“Beer Drinkers Make Better Lovers:” Covert Messages in Saskatchewan Women’s Writing

Joan Givner

Sky High: Stories from Saskatchewan, edited by Geoffrey Ursell. Regina: Coteau Books, 1988; *Queen of the Headaches*, by Sharon Butala. Regina: Coteau Books, 1985; *The Gates of the Sun*, by Sharon Butala. Saskatoon: Fifth House Press, 1986; *The Garden of Eloise Loon*, by Edna Alford. Victoria: Oolichan Books, 1986; *The Last Echo*, by Byma Barclay. Edmonton: Newest Press, 1985; *Best Kept Secrets*, by Pat Krause. Regina: Coteau Books, 1988.

In “The Gift” (*Sky High: Stories from Saskatchewan*) Marlis Wesseler describes a visit by a group of tourists to a Greek monastery. A sign, “Women must please cover their heads and wear skirts,” threatens to exclude the casually dressed women. But they hastily improvise, one woman entering in a wrap-around skirt over her blue jeans and a baseball cap bearing the words: “Beer drinkers make better lovers.” The monks are not offended because they do not speak her language. This simple act of subversion provides a resonant image for all women obliged to find ways of coping with the restrictions imposed upon them as they enter male enclaves.

I want to use it as a point of departure in my reading of six books by Saskatchewan authors, all, save some stories in *Sky High*, by women. These are not recent books: *Queen of the Headaches* appeared five years ago. All of them have been reviewed before, half of them by me. I should like, therefore, to explore them this time around for indications of how the women authors experience themselves as writers within the larger writing community of Saskatchewan.

It is, I believe, generally acknowledged that women writers have a very high profile in Saskatchewan. Yet, if women exceed men in numbers, they seem not to do so in authority, as evidenced by the recent “Writing Saskatchewan” literary symposium. There the main speakers were men, and when the conference papers were published, only six of the twenty were by women. The Governor General’s Award winners from the province have been men, as have most of the editors of anthologies of local writing. It is worth noting in passing that when the editor is a woman (as in Bonnie Burnard’s *The Old Dance*) the proportion of women’s stories is as high as two-thirds.

I suspect that the prevailing situation imposes restrictions on non-mainstream writers who are inclined, unconsciously if not consciously, to placate and gain approval from male authority figures. When, for instance, the chief reviewer of the *Globe & Mail* complains about the unrelievedly sombre tone of certain

books by Saskatchewan women, his comment constitutes a subtle temptation to lighten up. In this lies the danger that anger will be held in check, and thus a pattern of repression is established.

Wessler's "The Gift" deals head on with the threat of repression, the narrowing, softening and restricting of the female vision. The action of the story covers a range of countries, allowing the main characters, Kathleen and Allan, to experience civilizations older than their own — Morocco, Greece and Israel. While there is a great deal of tension between the lovers, it is sometimes relieved by Allan's "gifts." As in the old myths and legends, these have a symbolic rather than a tangible value, and within the story they number three. He has the habit of presenting Kathleen with "perfect scenes frozen in time, snap-shots from another dimension":

To him, each picture was a whole, entire, beginning and ending with itself, and he presented the scenes to her with delight, as if they were jewels. They stayed in her memory, frozen images she could bring out and turn over again and again with pleasure.

Before each "gift" is presented, she is required to close her eyes, see nothing of the context but only his selected and framed picture, rendered static, lifeless, idealized, deathlike — in the narrator's word "frozen." The three gifts are a scene in Morocco, a pair of foolishly jolly identical fifty-year-old twins playing in the sea, and finally the monastery which is the idyllic home of only two monks. These scenes, which appeal to Allan, images of contentment and of male camaraderie, do appear charming when they are extracted from their context. Kathleen, however, notices other details—invariably evidence of oppression. In Morocco she remembers "a man driving a plough pulled by a woman." She notices that the jolly twins bear tattoos that mark them as concentration camp victims.

When she enters the monastery and drinks the monks' wine, she is briefly euphoric, carried away by the beauty, dignity and simplicity of the religious life. But once again, she cannot share Allan's ability to banish from consciousness whatever does not make a perfect picture. At the end of the story the relationship has long since ended, but the remains of the monks' liquor can still inspire her with a momentary vision, like that of Allan's third gift. It comes back to her, however, with a slight whiff of decay. What is this odour? The distaste for the exclusive, excluding, tidy world of men who are replicating their own images like the jolly twins?

Although Wessler is not self-consciously literary, the few echoes of other texts resonate throughout this story. A student of Virginia Woolf, she must have been aware when she referred to the monastery as a "monk's house," of the house in which Woolf lived and died under the vigilance of her protective husband. The comparison of the twins with Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee starts a chain of associations of Kathleen with Alice travelling through her wonderland of sinister avuncular figures.

Finally, there is an undertow of religious associations. Allan's gifts suggest the gifts of the Magi which symbolize the majesty, suffering and death of Christ. When Kathleen sees the unearthly perfection of the monastery, she exclaims "Jesus!" When she sees the image of Christ, she notes that he looks like "a spectator at a particularly shabby and boring circus." Her feeling of euphoria is short-lived because, of course, she has no place in this world of men who do not speak her language. She feels like a "balloon with a slow leak" in which she cannot locate the opening. Allan, on the other hand, his masculine superiority affirmed, stands "shining a little, like a candle."

Lois Simmie's "Sweetie Pie" in the same anthology offers a variation on Wesseler's theme. Again a man and a young woman are travelling, this time with his exotic cockatoo in the back of the truck. The special use of bird imagery (particularly caged) in women's writing was noted years ago by Ellen Moers and has been often documented since then. Here, the bird is the pet of a man who is "meaner than a junk-yard dog." His girl friend in a moment of anger lets Sweetie Pie out of her cage, but the cockatoo's bid for freedom is short-lived. The trail of food set out by the man is too tempting and the cockatoo follows it back into the cage. The cockatoo's fate mirrors that of the girl friend. She has become the partner of this uncouth man after her live-in partner has shot himself. After the escapade of the freeing and the recapturing of the cockatoo she makes her own bid for freedom. The story ends as she is irresistably drawn back into a cage, stepping into yet another car with yet another man.

The most telling detail of this story is what has happened to the cockatoo's voice. It has been trained to make a noise like a toilet flushing and the owner is now teaching it, with a great deal of patience, to parrot his own obscenities. He experiences a moment of triumph amid the frustration of trying to recapture his pet, when it tells him, "fuck you." "Sweetie Pie" is a light-hearted, jaunty story, yet there is surely some pathos and more than a little anger in the depiction of an awesomely beautiful bird, being taught pointless obscenities by a man who every morning "picks up his shorts from wherever he's left them, sniffs the crotch, and if that doesn't knock him out he wears them another day."

"Best Kept Secrets," the title story in Pat Krause's collection, might well serve as an artist's manifesto. Here she expands on the themes of caged lives, usurped voices and blinkered views of the world. She also takes up the issue of the conditioned repression that affects the telling of stories.

Against a backdrop of political oppression, disenfranchised nations and the denial of autonomy, her main characters in the safety of the New World are drawn into their own patterns of oppression. The central characters, a pair of star-crossed cousins, are restive under the authoritarian discipline of the home. They find relief from that discipline through the imagination of Olga, the family maid who comes from the old country. She participates in their horseplay and tells them stories with overtones of brutality that dismay the little girl. One

particular story, a memory from her own past, echoes the larger theme of “Best Kept Secrets” — that of the deadly collusion between silence and oppression. In Olga’s story, a village priest, too deaf to hear confession, is also unable to read the warning signs before soldiers swoop down, destroy the village, and reduce the hero to pieces of meat. Olga’s association with the cousins ends when she passes into another kind of servitude — an arranged marriage with an old widower who has four sons. The narrator’s participation as attendant in the wedding ceremony foreshadows her own future, for she later marries and has four children.

The main incident of the story is that the boy cousin is beaten almost to a pulp in a playground incident that has racist and nationalist overtones. He never recovers and is thereafter reduced to the status of a nonperson, shrouded in secrecy, never mentioned in the family. Much later in her life, the narrator, escaping briefly from the clamorous attentions of her family, and with her husband’s permission, seeks him out. She finds him in hospital, a hopeless, speechless vegetable in a baby’s crib.

The most significant part of this reunion, however, is the narrator’s role and her own unconsciousness of its implications. She is led into the presence of her cousin by another patient — a young woman, strapped into a wheelchair, with more mobility than the cousin, but as speechless as he is. The wheelchair woman and the vegetable cousin parallel the two cousins at the beginning of the story. Both are unable to speak.

There is also an equation between the narrator and that other storyteller, Olga. When in childhood the narrator listened to Olga, she rejected the phrase “a fate worse than death,” reluctant to believe that anything could be worse or more final. When she contemplates her cousin, she finally believes that she has learned the truth — that happy endings do not exist and that certain fates are living deaths or worse than death. Yet in some ways, she is still the same girl. Like the girl in the wheelchair, she has some mobility and can manage an awkward kind of communication. But, for all that, she is bound and hampered, prevented from speaking clearly. Olga remains as the unattainable example of the teller of tales which are at the same time true, prophetic and terrible. She carries her terrible tales from one country to another, speaks two languages and is the only person capable of reaching the destroyed cousin. The story ends with the sense of the narrator’s impotence in the face of her cousin. She finds him, sees him, but ultimately is rendered speechless in the face of his living death.

Edna Alford begins “The Late Date” by questioning the effectiveness of the well-told tale for deadening, embalming and making palatable experiences which should not be rendered acceptable. The narrator, Marilyn, introduces her story by saying that she has repeated her “tale” many times over the years and there is “no longer any feeling attached to it other than the concern about the telling itself, the timing, the well-delivered line.” She has turned it into “a

humorous anecdote” in which the “mandate was entertainment. The story had to be palatable, served, as it were, with dry martinis and fresh pâté.” The result of this constant retelling has been to bury or repress the experience:

Certain uncomfortable fragments . . . had resurfaced . . . but she had put them out of her mind, or rather replaced them very carefully in the deeper recesses on a solid shelf in the hope that they would remain there, not fall off again, reappear behind her eyes.

Finally, when she is approaching menopause and her daughter is reaching the age at which the experience of her “tale” happened, she knows that she must come to terms with it. Her desire to do so recalls Virginia Woolf’s attempt, just before she committed suicide, to exorcise the memory of being molested as a child: “By putting it into words . . . I make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me.”

The story is set against an implied background of cosmic horror, full of images of dismemberment:

Recently she had read an article which declared that the decade would be marked by images of dismemberment, mutilation and rare disease . . . Several of Marilyn’s friends, women . . . had told her of the things they had seen over the years, were witness and nurse to the numberless victims rising like wraiths from the pit, men and women and children who preceded the images or followed them — no one seemed to know which.

The relation of cause to effect is part of the interrogation of story material and story telling which underpins “The Late Date.” It takes place during Marilyn’s eighteenth summer spent among fragmented people while she does a summer job at a psychiatric hospital. Her experiences mark the end of her childhood and threaten to reduce her to fragments. But she hopes to make herself whole again by remembering.

Marilyn is exposed to the spectacle of various kinds of dehumanization, the most shocking of which is the sight of old men lined up naked in shower stalls and hosed down. All the same, the repeated examples of dehumanization of women are more persistent. She meets “Amazing Grace” a former English teacher who speaks a language similar to that of Gertrude Stein and who evokes the contrasting female spectres of “Motherhood and apple-pie” and “Suzie Rotten-Crotch”; she meets a woman who was raped at seventeen whose story recalls a joke her father heard about a prostitute and pubic hair. Marilyn begins to sense the lethal danger that exists for her.

An aspect of that danger is personified by Bill, Marilyn’s late night date. His squiffed view of women is suggested by his physically impaired vision. He has lost the sight of one eye, wears bifocals with one opaque lens and lacks binocular vision. His reduction of Marilyn to a one-dimensional female is suggested by

his habit of calling her “Monroe.” She suspects that her exposure to the naked men lined up in the shower stalls has been his idea of a joke and, as a prelude to their date, he thrusts upon her yet another devastating experience. He leads her to the morgue (echoes of Sylvia Plath’s “Two Views of a Cadaver Room”) where she sees the remains of an inmate, preserved and labelled in different bottles. Unhinged by the sight, perhaps in an effort to feel alive and whole, she has sex with Bill on the bank of a river.

The scope of this review does not permit an exploration of the rich mythical dimension by which this story, with its many scenes in the bowels of the mental institution, connects with numerous other literary womb-shaped grave caves. But its connectedness to another story by Alford is relevant to my present purpose. The most remarkable story of her earlier collection, *A Sleep Full of Dreams*, is “Communion,” in which a young woman seen in a series of “frames,” after watching a framed scene of two dogs having sex, goes to the bathroom, locks herself into a stall, and masturbates. Both “Communion” and “The Late Date” stand together as examples of the boldest expression of female experience which has traditionally been shrouded in silence. A glance at the acknowledgements to journals which have previously published the stories that make up *The Garden of Eloise Loon* shows no entry for “The Late Date.” I have no means of knowing what that signifies. But a memory of Alford’s comment in an interview, that many editors had rejected “Communion,” makes me speculate on the tendency of editors and reviewers to enforce the silence which Alford breaches so daringly.

The two novels, *Gates of the Sun* and *The Last Echo*, are the most ambitious of the six books, being not merely full-length novels but also parts of an extended set — a trilogy and a quartet respectively. Each is rooted in a particular location — Barclay’s in the Livelong area which she shares with Edna Alford, and Butala’s in the Cypress Hills region. Both clearly are attempting, as Willa Cather did in *My Antonia*, to carry the muse into their own country, to endow the stories of their own places with heroic dimensions. This is evident in the bardic oral style of Barclay and the poetic passages of Butala’s book. For heroic literature, both turn from the plain prose style of the short stories they write, and in these novels both turn to an earlier era in time.

Byrna Barclay’s narrator locates herself in the last pages of her novel between two of her characters, of whom she says “there’s something of both women in me that creeps out when I least want it to.” The story of these two great-aunts is potentially the old-fashioned tale of a jilting, since great-uncle Arvid left his love Johanna and travelled to Livelong with Astrid whom he eventually married. Yet, the triangular relationship is not quite the traditional one. Astrid did not seduce Arvid on his last night in Sweden because she loved him. She was simply using him as a means of escape from her abject life as the daughter of the public bath woman. Hardship has taught her to harden her heart against expectations of love, marriage and childbearing. Survival and self-preservation

are her aims. She has managed to get to Livelong and become Arvid's wife and her status is proved by the large photograph of her in her wedding clothes, "framed" on the wall. All the same, she has never borne his children and he has sought solace in the bed of the prostitute at the Livelong Hotel. His true love, Johanna, was almost dealt a death-blow by his desertion. But she comes of hardy stock, leaves Sweden, follows Arvid to Livelong and marries his brother. If she does not marry Arvid, she never surrenders her dream that romantic love does exist, and she works on a "someday wedding cloth" for the narrator. The narrator, however, positions herself between the two women:

I'm never getting married. Ever. Men love the land and their work. They talk to the tractor, to the Overland Ford, to the '46 Fargo, to the horses, even to each other, but never to the women in the family.

Both great-aunts have made efforts to tell their stories. After Johanna was jilted, she tried to express that grief in letters, bleeding onto the page. She sits at the table, trying to begin a sentence that will reach and touch Arvin, but ultimately she is paralyzed and unable to break her silence. Astrid, on the other hand, who has taken her fate into her own hands, rejected dependency to a certain extent by relegating the man to the periphery of her existence, feels the need to tell the story of her last night in Sweden. Then she threw off one kind of oppression at the inn but avoided assuming another. The story of such resourcefulness and defiance is not one that women usually tell. Usually it is consigned to the blank page. Yet it gets through to the narrator, who has had a silence imposed on her. She is forbidden to speak Swedish so that she will not speak "broken English." In spite of this ban against communication with her aunts, she understands the language. Thus, the story of Astrid's resistance is communicated despite language barriers, bans on speech and all other taboos. The story that should be shrouded in secrecy, respectability and silence is passed on.

"The Mission," the first story in Butala's *Queen of the Headaches* is concerned with a woman's attempts to create in two different art forms and to communicate with people of different racial, educational and geographical backgrounds. She shows the overwhelming difficulty and loneliness of both endeavours. Butala has always been concerned with the basic difficulties facing women who yearn to write. She has expressed her concern not only in her fiction but in moving tributes on the deaths of women members of the writing community in her Eastend neighborhood:

Serious writing requires complete dedication, it requires a desire more intense than either of them could muster anymore. Like so many women all over the world, their energies had been devoured by family, their buried talents never allowed breathing room, their deepest, most personal desires never fulfilled. I wept at both their funerals and even though, as a mother myself, I know that they would not wish away one child, or one moment of family life, their lives prevented them both from fully becoming what they might have been: writers, artists. I mourn for that part of them, and indeed of all Canadian women, which died without being given the chance to blossom.

In “The Mission,” she depicts the obstacles mentioned in her obituary notice. She also shows, with anger, the hostility and suspicion directed at the artist. In her earlier life, her husband has thrown all her paintings on the town dump. When in a later phase, she tries to incorporate that experience in a short story, a neighbor drops by for coffee. The narrator, sensing the neighbor’s disapproval, pretends that she is writing a business letter for her husband. Finally, she links the difficulties to the forms that writing takes. In such harsh conditions, the artist is unable to remember anything peaceful and happy and she abandons her colourful paintings, the scenes and still lives associated with the Mediterranean artists of another time. Her vision becomes somber, her lines angular and stark.

Another story, “Where the Red Hibiscus Flares,” in the same collection, provides a variation on the same theme. Here a female poet from a warmer climate finds herself unable to write: “my poems are frozen inside me.” She is discouraged by the savagery of the climate, the ugliness (to her eyes) of the landscape and by the denigrating attitudes towards poetry. The stories that seem to count are tales of hardship, blizzards of other years. Yet, when her very life is threatened in a blizzard, her frozen voice is somehow forced up through the frozen layers and lines of poetry emerge. She survives, drives on to the city but decides she cannot stand the place and makes plans to return to her hot southern homeland. As she makes her plans to leave, her voice is “flat, without resonance.”

While this story, like the first story in *Queen of the Headaches*, articulates very strongly the overwhelming odds facing the artist — climate, hostility, lack of interest — both stories seem to suggest something else. This is that writing in these circumstances is possible but that it calls for almost superhuman determination. The result of the need to force something up through frozen layers produces its own kind of voice. It is not a weak voice lacking resonance and it is vastly different from that which creates art in softer climates. Just as in “Mission,” the artist has abandoned still lives, fruit and flowers, the paintings associated with Mediterranean painters, so Naomi of “Where the Red Hibiscus Flares” longs for a lush landscape with flocks of exotic birds. Colour, prettiness, conventional lyricism are replaced in Butala’s credo with a tough elemental harshness.

When Butala published her second novel, *Gates of the Sun*, the surprise was that, after many short stories and an earlier novel from a female point of view, she should choose a rancher as her hero. Her new direction raised the question of how a writer could portray heroism in this western province. Could it be shown only through the conflicts, battles and sexual exploits of a man? In what could a woman’s heroism in the Cypress Hills consist of? Butala herself, when pressed on the subject, said that she intended to follow *Gates of the Sun* with a woman’s story, and she has since fulfilled this promise. Yet, even in the story of Andrew Samson, many readers felt that the women surrounding the hero — his

mother, wife, daughters and mistresses formed the most compelling part of the story. It was clear that their heroism consisted in midwifery, childbearing, suffering and just plain enduring and that it provided a counterpart to the adventures of Andrew Samson.

Of particular interest are the places in which Butala inscribes in her story the presence of the woman artist. One of the most vivid sections of the book, rendered with all the more emphasis for being something of a digression, is the description of two women who come to the region to live together in solitude and write. But they do not even survive one winter, before they are found frozen to death, one of them in bed and one at the table with pen in hand. The tableau constitutes a vivid emblem of the futility of two women trying to be sufficient to each other within a patriarchal culture in a stark western location.

The telling detail in this episode is that they die not through their own negligence, not battered by the elements, but by the agency of a man. Their shopping list has contained all the essential items and has included matches. But the shopkeeper omitted the matches and for the lack of them, they have died. This oversight seems to point to the conclusion, not that women cannot survive alone and live autonomously, but that they are not permitted to do so. A punitive restriction is laid on those who live outside the heterosexual mainstream.

At the end of her novel when her hero, like the dying Samson for whom he is named, watches all that he had striven for disappear, Butala again introduces an artist. Here, she seems to say, hopefully, that it is the artist alone who can preserve the memory of an earlier time, give permanence to the vision of a man of action and record his transient glories. Butala's first instinct was to make her artist — a painter — a female character. Under editorial guidance, however, she changed her first conception and created a male figure. It has always seemed to me that this slight gesture on the part of a well-intentioned editor replicates the gesture within the novel of the grocery-store clerk who withheld the matches. Thus, by slight words and deeds, the authority and presence of the woman artist is quietly eroded.

Even a highly selective reading of these six books reveals a strong concern on the parts of the writers not merely for the process of telling stories but of stories silenced and prevented, voices usurped, and of visions blinkered or narrowed. There is a surprising coherence of images — of bodies dismembered, caged, reduced to vegetable form, hands paralyzed and frozen, and voices reduced to parroting nonsense or babbling mindlessly like ventriloquist's dummies. All these suggest a kind of duress which might confirm William French's statement:

For reasons best known to sociologists, Regina is currently the Canadian capital of women's plight. Two recent collections of short stories by Regina writers — a total of 29 stories — deal exclusively with the plight of women and their victimization by men.

Book Reviews

Canadian Volunteers: Spain 1936-1939, by William Beeching. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1989. Pp. 212.

On 18 July 1936 troops in Spanish Morocco led by General Francisco Franco rebelled, signalling the start of that bitter conflict, the Spanish Civil War. A week later, on 25 July, the World Committee Against War and Fascism, an international front organization established by the Third or Communist International (Comintern), issued an appeal to "All Friends of Freedom and Civilization" asking that they attempt to influence governments "to grant all possible moral and material support to the Spanish People's Government."

Taking its cue from that appeal and spearheaded by Tim Buck, its general secretary, and A.A. MacLeod, a leading Central Committee member, the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) began recruiting volunteers for military service in Spain. The CPC also led the way in establishing ancillary organizations such as the Canadian League Against War and Fascism and the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. In May 1937, anticipating the formation of a Canadian unit in Spain, the CPC helped establish the Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Such bodies, which included in their membership a wide range of like-minded individuals representing all shades of Canadian political opinion, were integral components of a worldwide anti-Fascist campaign orchestrated by Willi Münzenberg, the Comintern's brilliant propagandist, and formed a backdrop to the armed struggle taking place on Spanish soil.

From the outbreak of the war until September 1938, when Spanish Prime Minister Juan Negrín agreed to withdraw foreigners serving in the Republic's armed forces, over thirty-five thousand men and women from all parts of the world fought in Spain. Organized into five International Brigades the volunteers included 1,448 Canadians, the majority of whom came from western Canada. Their casualties were staggering: 721 were killed or died on active service. William Beeching, a Civil War veteran and a longtime leading member of the CPC, tells the Canadian volunteers' story in clear, unadorned prose, a story that is enhanced by insights distilled through his own experiences in Spain. His account, which is well-organized and direct, is buttressed with simple but effective maps, and supplemented with numerous photographs, most of them previously unpublished. The book also lists the names of all Canadians known to have served in Spain, and contains a limited bibliography of secondary sources notable for its surprising omissions.

In nine chapters Beeching recounts the Canadian volunteers' history, tracing their response to the call to Spain, their recruitment, dispatch and training, and their part in the major campaigns in which they fought while serving with the XVth International Brigade. Initially randomly distributed in that unit, the Canadians were subsequently transferred to the Lincoln Battalion, which was

mainly composed of American volunteers. With the Lincolns they fought at Jarama, Villeneuve de la Cañada and Mosquito Creek, and experienced the Brunete bloodbath before being consolidated into their own battalion — the Mackenzie-Papineau or Mac-Pap — in the late summer of 1937.

From private archives, letters, primary and secondary sources, Beeching vividly recaptures the grim realities of those actions as well as the subsequent battles in the Aragon, and the debacle which characterized the Republicans' retreat to, and crossing of, the Ebro River during the winter of 1937-38. Confronted by an opposition which was not only numerically superior and better equipped but which also enjoyed air superiority — if the Spanish Civil War proved anything it was the supreme importance of air cover, particularly in support of ground operations — Canadian volunteers had to make the best of inadequate supplies and medical services, rudimentary communications, inferior weapons and questionable leadership, while enduring the blistering Spanish summers and numbing cold during the winter months. In doing so they experienced to the full the confusion, contradictions and demoralization which are the hallmarks of defeat.

Unlike previous accounts of Canadian volunteers in Spain, Beeching covers aspects of their service which have been neglected or overlooked: duties with partisan groups, artillery, communications, medical — Norman Bethune's blood transfusion unit is referred to only briefly — transport, armour and cavalry units. His account of atrocities, although focussed primarily upon those committed by Franco's forces, graphically projects the horrors perpetrated by both sides during the Spanish conflict, and goes far in explaining the bitterness which divided Spain for so long, and which to some extent still lingers. Beeching rounds out his book by pointing up the volunteers' difficulties in withdrawing from Spain: their appalling treatment in Franco's prisoner-of-war compounds; the overcrowded, insanitary French holding camps; near starvation rations; bureaucratic delays; and their eventual return to a largely indifferent dominion on the threshold of World War II.

While Beeching's book is compelling and compassionate in its recounting of the volunteers' experiences during the Spanish conflict, it is also noteworthy for the predictable thrust of its analysis, and for its pronounced omissions. The International Brigades caught and held the world's political imagination, particularly that of the Left. *Canadian Volunteers* emphasizes that point by insisting (despite the factors of rampant unemployment, lack of opportunities, and a plain yen for adventure) that the young men who committed themselves to the Republican cause did so out of an enhanced idealism which stemmed from an intense loathing for fascism. He discounts the intense anti-Fascist campaign initiated by the Comintern and waged unremittingly by the CPC in Canada, and is coy about confirming that a significant proportion of the recruits from the dominion were CPC members and carefully screened left-wing supporters, many of whom were experienced labour militants and On-to-Ottawa Trek

veterans. Nor does he put into accurate perspective the Comintern's role in the formation and direction of the International Brigades which, as Raymond Carr points out, were controlled "by humorless Communists more inclined to hunt out political dissidents than to provide creature comforts for the men."

Again, no account of the Spanish Civil War can overlook the part played by foreign military advisors. Beeching points up the infusion of men and materiel by Germany and Italy, but is largely silent about the nature and extent of Soviet assistance. Yet, until Stalin decided to abandon the Spanish cause, the large Russian military mission (which operated under the cover of false identities) was extremely influential because of its control of aircraft (Chatas and Moscas) and tanks. Equally, Comintern representatives were too often incompetent, self-righteous and vindictive in their leadership — André Marty is a classic example — while military advice, such as the late Soviet Marshal Malinovsky's mendacious claims about his part in planning the Brunete action, proved to be disastrous.

That the Canadian volunteers who fought in the Comintern's army in Spain were, as William Beeching's admirable volume confirms, brave, often selfless men, is undoubted. That they were also mishandled and, in the end, abandoned, are considerations which he, in his summary of the volunteers' place in history, fails to address. Old loyalties, it seems, even in this day of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, die hard.

William Rodney
Royal Roads Military College
Victoria, British Columbia

Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885, by D.N. Sprague. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988. Pp. 204.

Among the most famous episodes in Canadian history are the two confrontations between the federal government and the Métis of the west, the first at Red River in 1869-70, the second at Batoche in 1885. Despite the impressive amount of ink spilled, the impassioned argument and learned *exposés*, we are far from having heard the last word on these events. New research into the voluminous John A. Macdonald papers, facilitated by a comprehensive index unveiled by the Public Archives of Canada in 1968, and fresh examinations of the economic and social contexts of the troubles, have turned up details that promise to lead to a whole series of new interpretations. Widely accepted stereotypes are being revealed as anything but secure.

D.N. Sprague, a history professor at the University of Manitoba, has jumped into the fray on the side of the Métis, as a partisan of the Manitoba Metis Federation for which he has been working since 1978. Taking advantage of their new accessibility, he has delved deeply into the Macdonald papers, and has emerged with sufficient evidence to make a strong argument for a variation of

the conspiracy theory, that the Canadian government played a double game of apparent conciliation and hidden provocation with the Métis.

The issue, of course, is dominated by the personality of Macdonald himself. As complex as the problems he was dealing with, he is famous for his deviousness and capacity for delay. That he used these techniques to undercut the Métis position can be demonstrated up to a certain point, as Professor Sprague does with careful detail, sometimes in Macdonald's own words. But to then argue that Macdonald was set upon destroying the Métis as a people by removing their land base is to strain the evidence. The conviction remains that Macdonald was not so much concerned with undoing the Métis as he was with the creation of a nation stretching from sea to sea. If the Métis got in the way, then unfortunately they had to take the consequences. To Macdonald, that meant putting the Métis in their place, rather than destroying them. The prime minister was tough rather than heartless, and he was clear about his priorities.

The Métis, too, had their priorities, but they were not unanimously agreed upon, as Professor Sprague acknowledges. Typical of the leaders of the Red River resistance, Baptiste Tourond and André Lépine were buffalo hunters, freighters and subsistence farmers who were in "peaceful possession" of their lands but without registered title. They represented those Métis who were most vulnerable to changing circumstances as the buffalo herds diminished and settler pressures from the east increased. Other Métis leaders, such as William Dease and Pascal Breland, were much better situated; as Sprague describes it, they had lucrative ties with the Hudson's Bay Company, had registered title to their lands, and some were members of the Council of Assiniboia. While quite prepared to stand up for their political rights, they were inclined to doubt Riel's course of action, and in some cases actively opposed it. In Sprague's view, Dease and his friends were willing tools of the Canadian expansionists who were "diverting attention from the real danger, which was land loss." Riel, in taking up the cause of those who had the most to lose, accentuated this division.

It is certainly true that nineteenth-century Canada was not comfortable with the "Native fact" of the west. There were even those who were alarmed when the Métis showed signs of developing political power; in the ethos of the times, sharing power with a "savage" nation was unthinkable. The Métis, a people "in between savagery and civilization," were viewed as dubious candidates at best for active political participation in the new nation that was being forged. Macdonald may have even shared some of these perspectives; certainly he had to take them into account as he prepared to open the west for settlement. He appears to have taken for granted that large concentrations of Native peoples — whether Amerindian or Métis — were to be avoided. That his priority was white settlement is beyond question; what remains to be determined is how far he bent the rules of fair play as he set about realizing his national dream. Did he, as Sprague claims, see war as the most likely means of dislodging the Métis?

In arguing his case, Sprague concentrates on the political aspects of the confrontations. If he had widened his scope to include more of the economic and social aspects, he might well have found circumstances that would have tempered his conclusions. For example, not all dispossession was due to governmental double-dealing and entrepreneurial fraud; economic developments, such as the short-lived buffalo robe trade (active from mid-nineteenth century until the disappearance of the herds), and the growing importance of commercial agriculture at the expense of traditional subsistence farming, were major factors in Métis displacements even before the confrontations. So were the diminishing fur trade, crop failures, the effects of the railway on Métis freighting activities (a point which Sprague does touch upon), and periodic economic hard times, which were the result of the industrial boom-and-bust cycle which affected even such remote areas as the northwestern plains. In other words, war was not necessary for Macdonald to achieve his goals. For such an astute politician, that must have been evident at the time.

That said, Sprague raises a point that must be seriously considered by historians. If fraud was not the only factor in Métis dispossession, neither can its presence be discounted; the rush to open the west did not always allow for careful procedure. The extent of the fraud is now coming in for consideration in a court case that has been launched by the Manitoba Métis against the Canadian government. If there is a moral to all this, it might be in changing attitudes as to what is fair and allowable in government; the unfettered Machiavellian approach, of which Macdonald took such skillful advantage, may have had its day.

Sprague makes no bones about writing contentious history, and feeding the still flourishing debate. Canada's past is alive and kicking furiously.

Olive Patricia Dickason
History
University of Alberta

Magpie Rising: Sketches From the Great Plains, by Merrill Gilfillan. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1988; *Ranchers' Legacy: Alberta Essays*, by Lewis G. Thomas. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986.

Twenty years ago now, I left Saskatchewan with my husband and small child and did not come back for five years. We went first to lower mainland British Columbia and then to Halifax. I never got to like the lower mainland, and it seemed to me that Nova Scotia, though I liked it very much, was more like another country than merely another province. I remember the day we returned to Saskatoon, pulling into the parking lot of a small mall near the outskirts of the city before we went on to our relative's house. As I sat in the car waiting for my husband, I was very happy to be back in what felt like civilization to me and, as I sat there watching all the people passing by on the sidewalk, I remember the shock I felt on suddenly seeing what seemed to me to be their uniquely Saskatchewan faces.

I was shocked because I had not realized until then that there was such a thing as a typical Saskatchewan face and I felt, as well as recognition, a glow of warmth starting, that one feels when one knows one is home at last, and a flush of love for the province where I was born and raised. For the first time in my young life — I was twenty-nine — I understood that Saskatchewan was an identifiable *place* and that I was a native of it, one who knew it, one who loved it. I settled in with a contented sigh, and have not left for more than a few weeks at a time since.

In the years since that psychically momentous day I have extended that sense of home to the entire west, in which I now, though more tentatively, include British Columbia. Since that time, too, I have become a writer of fiction and I have found that my work is grounded in the most profound way in my life lived in this province and further, in the west, as a westerner.

Any number of western writers could tell the same story (though probably they recognized themselves as belonging here a good deal sooner than I did). At any rate, we now have a large and growing number of serious writers who are trying, through fiction and non-fiction, to describe and explain “the west” both to ourselves and to the rest of the world, as we have our own presses to ensure this work is made available to readers.

During this time too, “the west” has become an object of moderate curiosity to the *litteratae* and the intellectuals of the rest of the country, who have sent journalist after journalist out here, some with tenuous connections to the west, many without, who then write articles in national magazines or publish books purporting to explain us to the rest of Canada. I think of a long article by Barry Callaghan that appeared a year or two ago in *Saturday Night* magazine, most of the interviewing for which appeared to have been done in the bar of a seedy hotel in downtown Calgary, and of Mark Abley’s *Beyond Forget* which, I am told, was loved by the east and, I know, loathed by the west, fulfilling as it did every prejudice of the day about this place and its people. In any case, like the decorative ceramic ducks that are suddenly appearing — now that the wetlands that nourish them are vanishing — in every gift boutique from one end of the country to the other, we have become fashionable.

Probably the first, and in my opinion still the best, of these books attempting to delineate our lives in this western country, is Wallace Stegner’s *Wolf Willow: A History, A Story and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier* (Viking Press, 1966). Others that come to mind are Canadian Geoffrey Ursell’s novel *Perdue: Or How the West Was Lost* (Macmillan, 1984) and Katherine Govier’s novel *Between Men* (Penguin Books, 1987), American William Least Heat Moon’s flashy nonfiction piece about the American west that was first published in *The New Yorker* (*Great Plains*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989), and now Mark Abley’s *Heartland: Prairie Portraits and Landscapes* (Douglas and McIntyre, 1989), a title revealing either a willful ignorance on the part of the publisher or

an attempt to cash in on a myth since, although the midwest may be the American heartland, western Canada is certainly not the Canadian heartland, but seems instead to be viewed at least by central Canada as an aberration. At any rate, millions of words have been expended in what has become the “Great Quest”: to capture the flavour, the nature, the true soul of the real west.

Magpie Rising: Sketches From the Great Plains is a nonfiction work whose author, Merrill Gilfillan, was born in the midwest and now lives in Boulder, Colorado, but who cannot have spent much of his life on the Great Plains since his book has that flavour of unmistakable romanticism, as though it were written by someone who just discovered the central grassland and is still overwhelmed by its wonders. Gilfillan says:

On this continent and in the psyche of its peoples the plains have always been a staggering presence, a place of myth and cliché, a place of transformation, a bafflement, or heartbreak. (P. 2)

This is a thesis which may or may not be so, or may be true of the American Great Plains but not of the Canadian, or it may once have been true in the time of the explorers, or even of the first settlers, but is no longer — who can say? In any case, it is the statement that lies at the bottom of Gilfillan’s search, and that informs all his observations about the Great Plains.

Magpie Rising is in the nature of a travel book, covering Gilfillan’s movement over the Great Plains, some fifty thousand miles of travel from the Mexican border to the Peace River region and from West Texas and Manitoba in the east to Medicine Hat in the west. His way of working has been to travel with a notebook and pen, sometimes bird-watching, sometimes hiking, sometimes camping, or sometimes simply going for an aimless drive, an activity which he describes as “as New World a pastime as baseball” (p. 9), and to make notes on everything and anything which catches his attention, together with comments on how he understands what he sees in the context of this mythical west that so fascinates him. He has compiled these observations into a series of twenty-five essays or “sketches,” as he refers to them, most no longer than six pages (although Chapter 18 is twelve pages long), some only a few lines long. There are sketches about hamlets, about the search for a café that offers “good homecooking at 1950’s prices” (p. 62) — a romantic quest if ever there was one — sketches about particular Indian tribes or about one legendary Indian, a loving sketch about western speech, though the subject of most is less easy to pin down and often has only one particular drive as a framework.

In each place he has gathered myriad details: the names of the local topographical features, its myths and legends, stories and facts about its history, its wildlife and its vegetation. He has described each place’s physical appearance, either with a sweeping eye or one that concentrates on the microcosm. He searches for the image, the detail, usually visual, that will at once evoke and encapsulate something of the essence of what is the west.

Such a method of approaching a subject has its merits, but it is a difficult one to handle. For instance, if a feeling of fulfillment is to emerge in the reader from all of this, the writer has to be skillful; he has to express himself with utmost clarity and precision, and unfortunately Gilfillan does not always manage this. Sometimes his momentary passion is too much for him and its expression is garbled and virtually incomprehensible:

Where U.S. 34 crosses the North Republican a brown thrasher sings: multi-dimensional intersection and coordinate point of June crux potent as astrological gearage. (P. 117)

Or,

To imagine a collective ancestral mouth dropped open at that juncture was the assignment that week, as its human signature, the image that sticks by virtue of its silhouette and thrift, is one from a campground near Vermilion, Alberta, an edgy place with hordes of mosquitos and scattered popple. (P. 154)

But where he does succeed, usually in describing something small and detailed, the prose is beautiful, the image caught:

Right there, at 6:45, turned away along the fence, I hear it off behind me. It registers instantly as Baird's song and sends a flurry of chill up the spine. It is a lovely, minor key little song, wistful and carefree at once, delicate as crystal, simple as breath. More than that, it is a new song to these ears; it is a new configuration, as in snowflake, of the given world. (P. 67)

Although he has made no claim to having seen every square inch of North America's Great Plains, the book is heavily weighted toward the American section, and Gilfillan's exploration of the Canadian Plains has a cursory feel to it and lacks the intimacy of his accounts of his travels in the United States. He speaks of a "rackety Canadian wind," that shakes a Montana motel, and describes a shed he passes as "lonesome and newspaper-caulked as . . . outer Saskatchewan." But the image evoked in the latter phrase caught this reader by surprise: it seems more characteristic of a sight in poverty-stricken rural Montana (where, in fact, he actually saw it) than it does of Saskatchewan. Except for Chapter 20, where he describes a scene in a campground in northern Alberta and then spends more time on his visit to Writing-On-Stone in southern Alberta, Gilfillan leaves the impression that he mentions Canadian place names more as proof that he has been from one end of the plains to the other than out of any real understanding of, or affection for, this part of the territory. And for all the intensity of his gathering of facts, Gilfillan does not mention the few acres of tallgrass prairie left in the heart of Winnipeg, nor the shortgrass national park at Val Marie, Saskatchewan, which, were they in the United States, would doubtless have merited a visit and a few words.

But for all *Magpie Rising's* undeniable merits — its "laid back" attitude, its pleasurable-to-read descriptions, its occasional quirkiness — the picture of

Great Plains life which emerges is one from which ideas and meaningful themes are missing. People too — aside from quick sketches of an old Sioux gentleman enjoying the sun, a few Hutterites at a rummage sale, a foul-mouthed baby, a woman worrying about lightning — are missing, and it seems to me that these two problems are almost certainly related.

Why has Gilfillan so omitted any meaningful contact with people? I suspect it is because rural westerners baffle him, as they seem to have baffled Mark Abley, so he has resorted to using short encounters which dwell on the flavour of the place and the moment, which have been selected for their picturesqueness, but which have the effect of hiding rather than revealing the souls of the people encountered. This bafflement (and often consequent hostility), it seems to me, is rooted in the two different languages each solitude speaks.

Urban people seem to believe that everything can be said. This attitude astonishes rural people, dismays them; they prefer to look off into the hills or into the other person's eyes, finding this more eloquent than mere speech could ever be. The urban person does not understand that the rural person uses language differently; the rural person has, as well as a different vocabulary and a different verbal style which makes frequent use of a verbal shorthand, a reliance on a poetic use of silence — the thing not said but inferred or implied. And sadly, the rural person fails to understand that the urban person misses the inference entirely and hears only the silence, or that his shorthand contains for the urban person only an infuriating lack of precision, and that in the rural person's silence and refusal to elaborate, the urban person reads only cussedness, or worse, stupidity. Each has lived a different life, has a different set of values and an understanding of life that is rooted in different experiences. Each would do well to approach the other as he would a person of a different culture: with respect, and the patience stemming from humility that is born out of awareness of one's own ignorance.

And it seems to me that no *place* can be illuminated without recourse to its people, to those who spend their lives in it and know it in their souls, are themselves a part of it, and in whose memory it exists going back three or more generations, and in whose tribal memory it still exists as it was in the beginning, when it was wild. So Gilfillan's approach, for all its gathering of facts and its unsimulated awe, remains essentially shallow, because of the great void where true contact with the people should be.

This is a point with which the historian Lewis G. Thomas would be unlikely to argue. Where *Magpie Rising* is poetic, subjective, random and wide ranging without providing much depth or many ideas, Thomas in *Ranchers' Legacy* focusses on one short period of time (1883-1914), in one fairly definable area (the foothills of Alberta), and on one group of people (the privileged settlers). He pursues his ideas about this subject in depth and from several different angles.

Ranchers' Legacy is a collection of ten papers and essays written by Thomas over his long and distinguished career as an academic historian, all of which delve into the roots of Alberta society, drawing threads from it to show how these roots have helped to make present-day Alberta society what it is. The earliest of these papers is a chapter excerpted from his 1935 Master's thesis, and the latest is a paper called "Privileged Settlers," written as an introduction to another work and published by the Alberta Historical Society in 1981.

Thomas is himself a descendent of one of these families of privileged settlers, whom he defines as "anyone . . . who had access to financial resources beyond the bare minimum necessary to bring him to his destination," who had a "superior level of education" and "inherited social position." (Pp. 155-57) It is his thesis that these privileged settlers made a vital and lasting contribution to Alberta society, a contribution which if studied goes a long way to explaining the conservative and westward-looking stance of Alberta today.

He explains the influence these people were consciously able to wield (and unconsciously spread) through his theory of "social contiguity," which he defines as "more than a cluster of attitudes, values or convictions held in common . . . [It is] supported by frequent meetings . . . some degree of education, the possession of some means and . . . some leisure." (P. 141) In this case, the settlers were nearly all from England where they had shared a social class and its habits and values, and were supported in the new country by infusions of money from there, and by continuing close contact with that world. Over the course of the essays, Thomas elaborates on what these values and attitudes were, on how they directly shaped the new Alberta society ("Associations and Communications"), and gives a detailed and interesting account of what the lives of these settlers on the foothills were like ("The Ranching Tradition and the Life of the Ranchers," "A Rancher's Community — Okotoks," "Ranch Houses of the Alberta Foothills").

Those of us who come from different backgrounds — French, Ukrainian, German — or who were raised in non-Protestant religions may well look askance at the kind of society the privileged settlers embodied and espoused: a conservative, class-oriented one, with an inbred sense of themselves as rightful leaders — in fact, as those who are always right — with little tolerance for difference, which is invariably seen as a manifestation of lower social class. But Thomas, presumably as one raised within the tradition, is only moderately critical, and much of his writing about these people is infused with affection and his own powerful sense of belonging.

Nonetheless, this reader found *Ranchers' Legacy* fascinating, explaining as it does much about the peculiarities of today's Alberta with such a depth of understanding and such a keen intelligence that the reader's interest never flags despite, the book's essentially academic orientation. Even the essay "Ranch Houses of the Alberta Foothills" — in fact a detailed description of "Cotton-

woods," the home where Thomas was raised — which might well be seen as self-indulgent, amply justifies itself.

"Cottonwoods," near Okotoks, was built in the 1880s by another family but in 1910 became the Thomas family home. It is still occupied by a family member. The essay recounts the house's history, its additions and changes to it over the years, and describes and tells the history of many of the artifacts within — the rugs, the dishes, its mattresses and curtains, its doors and its furniture. It is a house typical of those of the privileged settlers, and their attitudes and the lives they lived can be teased out of such artifacts as a souvenir plate celebrating the coronation of King George V. In this essay and in "The Shires Transplanted — Millarville," Thomas does such a masterful job of pulling together and making sense of the small everyday world around us that I found myself thinking of the old log house next door to the room in which I write, and of the small town eleven miles from here to which the same methods might be applied, yielding who knows what treasures.

And yet it is fascinating to read these two books side by side, to note the differences in approach and in attitude to the west, and to mull over the shortcomings and the strengths of each. Gilfillan says "the theatre of the plains space cries out for human gesture of fitting magnitude, ample of dimension yet humble under a full sky" (p. 41) and Lewis Thomas, in unwitting response, writes a detailed description of the home in which he grew up under this same sweeping sky, which he does not even mention.

But the question occurs: why does the west always seem to provoke the need for myth? Because of its relative emptiness? Its vast spaces? The newness of its settling? Or is it our sense of failure about it, our sense of things gone wrong, of hopes shattered and promise vanished, that turns us again and again to searching out a definitive, a final explanation?

Gilfillan is absorbed by the hunt for the myth; he chases myths down wherever he finds them, recounts them, elaborates on them, accepts them wholeheartedly and with delight. Thomas, with a curmudgeonly eye, traces them, patiently picks away at them, and warns that they seldom turn out to be wholly correct ("Myth and Fiction"). I was reminded of my continual irritation with scholars whose habit of mind is always to correct and clarify *ad infinitum*, it often seems, wholly for the love of the process. Revision, it seems to me, is a process that never ends.

Gilfillan speaks of "the struggle to find a shred of local traction" (p. 105) and in the attempt goes back to prehistory and finally to the land itself, a journey with which I sympathize but find futile. It is a poet's journey, and although Gilfillan is a poet, he has failed to find the key, the grail, on this journey, perhaps lacking the vision to see the invisible. Thomas's history, at least in *Ranchers' Legacy*, begins with the first settlers as though nothing which has gone before is of any consequence, and he almost succeeds in convincing the reader that this is so.

Gilfillan's view of the Great Plains is that of an outsider. His west feels mostly like a strange place I have never visited, but which must be quite wonderful, while Lewis Thomas, the quintessential insider, talks about a west I recognize, which feels like the one I live in, comfortable as an old shoe, but homely and without much poetry. The truth, I think, lies somewhere in between.

Sharon Butala
Eastend, Saskatchewan

Northern Prairie Wetlands, edited by Arnold van der Valk. Ames: Iowa State University Press. Pp. 400.

The Canadian Prairies are currently under a state of siege as a result of two major forces: the drought conditions which have drastically reduced the moisture supply, and the pressures of agriculture which have resulted in draining these areas to increase crop production. It is a most fortunate time for the appearance of this book, which results from a 1985 symposium held at the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center in Jamestown, North Dakota. This book consists of twelve chapters, representing papers which were presented at the symposium. In addition, the editor has provided a preface, an introduction and an index. While I will deal with the chapters separately, I would first like to make some general comments about the publication. The book is both stylistically consistent and readable. The binding is sturdy and the text and illustrations, with the exception of some photographs, are clear and readable. I think it is a useful compendium of summarized information for the library of any educated person interested for either professional or personal reasons.

The opening chapter, a political and economic overview of prairie wetlands, is brief and lacking in much detail. It does, however, paint a bleak picture for the continued existence of this resource. Chapter 2, by Thomas Winter, is an intensive review of the complexities of prairie hydrology with an especially interesting treatment of the interactions between wetlands and ground water. James LaBaugh, in Chapter 3, deals primarily with surface water chemistry, summarizing much of the published information on the more permanent water bodies. The short section on ground water indicates the lack of literature, although there are data available in government records. Noticeable by their absence are data on ephemeral water bodies, the small potholes and sloughs that are an important part of this ecotope. This is not meant as a criticism of the author but as a general comment on the lack of available information. Following this chapter is one on nutrient dynamics which also contains many useful references on pesticides.

Kanrud et al. (Chapter 5) describe the classification and characteristics of wetlands and aquatic macrophytes (vascular plants) and discuss the anthropogenic impacts resulting from agricultural practices. The characterization of the flora and description of environmental factors affecting species

composition and abundance are quite extensive. In contrast, the following chapter on algae is somewhat abbreviated. While the discussion touches on many aspects of algal ecology, it would have been useful to present more detail including, for example, some information about toxic blue-green species.

Two multiauthored chapters (7 and 8) are devoted to waterfowl, their populations, species abundance and composition, habitat, breeding and so on. This extensive coverage probably reflects the perhaps natural bias of the symposium to this most spectacular wetlands-user group. Much less attention is given in Chapter 9 to mammals, and Chapter 10, on fish, is very short. It is interesting to note that the invertebrates, both aquatic and terrestrial, and the noneconomic birds receive essentially no attention at all. As aquatic insect larvae and other invertebrates serve as important food for waterfowl, these groups should have received some attention. Similarly, the diversity of the wetlands provides habitat for a wide variety of song birds and upland game species. A chapter on food chains does discuss various trophic levels and their interactions. The final chapter of the book is essentially a mini-version of the symposium devoted to a special area: the Nebraska sandhills. This chapter presents an overview of that unique region.

In conclusion, I enjoyed reading the book, and judge it a useful reference for several aspects of prairie wetlands ecology.

Don T. Waite
Environment Canada
Regina

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Prairie Forum is now entering its fifteenth year of publication. As a service to readers, a comprehensive list of all submissions to the journal for its first fourteen years is being provided in this issue. Entries are listed alphabetically by title and include the volume, number, date of issue, and page numbers of each item.

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Contributors

A.A. DEN OTTER is a professor and head of the Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland. He is the author of *Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of Western Canada*.

RAYMOND HUEL is a professor of History at the University of Lethbridge. He was a member and volume editor of the Louis Riel Project and is currently general editor of the Western Oblate History Project.

TOM MITCHELL was dean of Student Services at Brandon University from 1984 to 1989. He is currently on leave. He has written on education, labour and politics with a focus on the city of Brandon.

NORAH L. LEWIS is a research associate with the Canadian Childhood History Project and an itinerant teacher. She is a graduate of both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of British Columbia.

CHRISTOPHER DUNN is a political scientist who has taught at four Canadian universities, the most recent being Memorial University of Newfoundland. He was a policy adviser to the Manitoba cabinet and has written a Ph.D. dissertation on cabinet decision making in provincial governments.

PHILIP D. KEDDIE is an associate professor of Geography at the University of Guelph. He received his M.A. from the University of Wisconsin and his Ph.D. from the University of Waterloo. His research interests include both the historical and contemporary agricultural geography of southern Ontario and the Prairies.

ERROL BLACK is a professor of Economics in the Faculty of Arts, Brandon University.

JIM SILVER is an associate professor of Political Science at the University of Winnipeg. He is currently an editor of *Canadian Dimension* magazine.

JOAN GIVNER is a professor of English at the University of Regina and editor of *Wascana Review*. She is the author of two biographies: *Katherine Anne Porter: A Life* (Simon & Schuster, 1982) and *Mazo de la Roche: The Hidden Life* (Oxford University Press, 1985). She has edited *Katherine Anne Porter: Conversations* (University Press of Mississippi, 1987) and has published two collections of short stories: *Tentacles of Unreason* (University of Illinois Short Fiction Series, 1985) and *Unfortunate Incidents* (Oberon Press, 1988).

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