

INDIANS OF THE EASTERN CANADIAN PARKLANDS, 1800-1930

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INDIANS  
OF  
THE EASTERN CANADIAN PARKLANDS :  
AN ECONOMIC ETHNOHISTORY, 1800-1930

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis traces changes in economic livelihood among Canadian Parkland Indians during 1800-1930, primarily to analyse the Indians' transition from a relative economic independence to membership in an economically disadvantaged population sector.

Concepts of opportunity and constraint are utilized. The growth of settlement in Western Canada in the nineteenth century generated novel economic opportunities for Indians; however, constraints were also imposed, and these gathered strength in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indians are seen in this study as economic agents, who took an active role in seizing opportunities and responding to constraints. It is suggested this approach contrasts with many which assume post-contact Indian peoples to be relatively passive objects of Euro-Canadian or Euro-American action.

Economic opportunities discussed are those associated, successively, with equestrian living and bison-hunting on the Plains; the growth of the transport trade, the pemmican trade; adoption of Christianity and aspects of Western civilization; subsistence and commercial agriculture; and, more recently, wage labour.



A primary constraint developed out of government policy. A special body of legislation had been created for Indians, and after 1879 a new policy was implemented in the West to exert comprehensive control over numerous sectors of Indian life. It affected livelihood by discouraging economic enterprise and imposing difficulties in obtaining financial credit. It also drastically reduced the scope for initiative on the part of native leaders.

When Indians left their home reserves in later years to seek wage labour, their lack of skills and inability to remedy social disadvantages trapped them in a poorly-paid employment.

A "culture of poverty" explanation, emphasizing Indians as 'patients', has frequently been advanced to explain Indian poverty. In this study that approach is criticized. It is argued that Indian poverty developed not through failure of Indians to adjust to the growth of settlement. Rather it was a consequence of constraints imposed upon them by (a) government policy and (b) impediments to social mobility.

The study has utilized both archival and field data. Archival research was carried out in Winnipeg and Ottawa, and field research at Indian reserves in the eastern Parklands.

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MAPS

CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA

SOUTHERN MANITOBA AND REGION

appended

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian West evokes memories of the explorer La Verendrye, the powerful Hudson's Bay Company, and Louis Riel, and indeed it has had a rich and colourful history. It was the source for the valued fur and pemmican which brought powerful mercantile interests into conflict with one another, And it was the site for the Red River Settlement, the sprightly child of Lord Selkirk's dreams, which grew into a thriving cosmopolitan centre deep in the heart of the continent at a time when many Eastern cities were struggling small towns. In later years the prairie grasslands of the West were transformed into fields of golden grain, and together with the immense cattle ranches, they lifted Canada into a position of eminence as an agricultural nation.

In the development of Canada as an economically strong nation, however, we learn precious little about the Indians, except within the context of the fur trade. After the fur trade was over in the agricultural country in the South, what became of the Indians? Were their lives shattered by the great inrush of settlement, the establishment of reserves and the disappearance of the buffalo? How did the Indians cope with the new developments taking place around them? What were their relations with Government, mainly the administrative body of Indian Affairs, which it was hoped would bring them closer to civilization? Prior to the extensive agricultural settlement (which commenced in the 1870s) how did the Indians respond to the Red River Settlement? In what manner did the Churches in the Settlement, and the



agricultural life ways of the settlers, affect them? Did the Indians adopt the ways of the settlers, or did this contact demoralize them and set in motion a process of social and economic decline?

Many of these questions, surprisingly, have remained uninvestigated. Our understanding of the dynamics of change among the Indians (and among the settlers) perhaps suffers in consequence. The present study attempts to focus its attention on these problems, and it is hoped that by raising some of the issues involved a greater interest will be generated for historical research among Indians in the prairie provinces.

This study is an attempt to discuss economic history of the native peoples in a region comprising the eastern Parklands and Prairies of Southern Manitoba and Southeastern Saskatchewan during the years 1800-1930. This economic history saw a great many changes: the movements of Parkland peoples into the Plains, and the adoption by the migrants of the famed equestrian culture; employment of native peoples in transport, particularly in the freighting of goods by Red River cart; new trade activities associated with the pemmican trade; the adoption by various bands of subsistence agriculture; and the rise and fall, on certain reserves, of commercial grain farming. These changes in livelihood sometimes were dramatic, and had far reaching results. Documentation of these changes should provide basic historical information pertinent to the region of the Eastern Canadian Parklands and

Prairies, and contribute also to the recording of Canadian Indian history.

An operative concept put forward in this study is that of "opportunity". A series of opportunities presented themselves to the people, and it is upon these opportunities, and the responses of the Indians to them, that this study focuses. The concept of opportunity rises from an approach which emphasizes the subjects of study as agents and actors, rather than as 'patients', or passive objects of influence and action.

Constraints, or limitations of opportunities, also presented themselves to the native people. Many kinds of influences from other groups in the larger society were directed toward them. The Department of Indian Affairs, most specially, devoted much of its attention to moving the Indians in one direction or another. But in these circumstances Indians often responded actively. They made attempts to alleviate, though with varying degrees of success, the constraints they perceived were imposed upon them.

Much has been written about post-contact Indians in North America as 'patients', in the sense indicated earlier. It seemed interesting, and perhaps fruitful, to look upon them from another point of view.

The principal theses that have been argued and discussed in this study are the following:

(a) Equestrian life on the Plains proffered opportunities to Parkland and native groups. These opportunities comprised acqui-

sition of prestige and glory through warfare, and wealth through horse-raiding and trade. A consequence of these opportunities was a successive migration of Parkland native peoples into the Plains. (Discussion is contained in Chapter 2).

(b) The establishment of the Red River Settlement in southern Manitoba generated opportunities for Ojibwa residents of the area. These opportunities consisted of trade with the settlers, freighting of goods by means of Red River cart, and acquiring the accoutrements of civilization. These opportunities were made use of, largely through choice, by different individuals and groups among the Ojibwa. (Discussion is contained in Chapter 3).

(c) After the demarcation of reserves in the 1870s, a sizeable proportion of the reserve-based Indian bands chose to adopt subsistence agriculture. In southwestern Manitoba, within the Birtle Indian Agency, Dakota Indian farmers located upon prime grain-producing lands in the southern section of the Agency proceeded to transform their subsistence operations into commercial grain farming enterprises. This process, or movement from one form of farming enterprise to another, commenced in the mid 1880s, and continued to about 1892. (Discussion is contained in Chapter 6).

(d) The policy of the Canadian Government toward native peoples has a long history of development and change. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 provided a foundation for this development. In Western Canada two phases in Government policy in the nineteenth

century can be discerned. The first phase (1870-1877) coincided with the administration of Lieutenant Governors Archibald and Morris. The second arose in 1878-79 as a result of new policy initiatives taken by the Macdonald Government, and the appointment of Edgar Dewdney to head Indian administration in the West. (This is discussed in Chapter 7)

(e) The policies and actions of Government officials subsequent to 1878 constituted a constraint, or a limitation of opportunity for the Indians in the prairie provinces. These constraints had a profound effect upon various aspects of livelihood, organization, and entrepreneurship on reserves. As an illustration, the policies and actions of Indian Affairs officials with regard to agriculture on the Dakota Oak River Reserve, and the responses of the Indians to these policies, are discussed in Chapter 8.

(f) With the decline of entrepreneurship on reserves, Indians were forced to seek means of livelihood off the reserves. During the tremendous economic expansion that took place in Canada in the early years of the century, Indians perceived an opportunity in wage labour, which was, for a number of years at least as profitable as subsistence farming. The initial opportunity promised by wage labour proved, in the long run, however, to be disadvantageous. Lacking the means for upward mobility, many Indians found themselves trapped into transient, low-paying wage labour. Indian poverty in its modern form emerged. It is argued that Indian poverty has had its roots in Indian Affairs

policies, and the disadvantages encountered by Indians in obtaining better jobs and housing. Contrary to the view of some Canadian historians, Indian poverty emerged in the 1920s rather than during the early years of settlement growth in the nineteenth century. (Discussion is contained in Chapter 9).

\* \* \* \* \*

Ojibwa and Dakota reside in the eastern Parklands at present. During historic times, however, other native groups resided in this area. In the seventeenth century these were the Assiniboine, Cree, Hidatsa, and Blackfoot. In the forests to the north lived the Swampy Cree, and to the east and south the Ojibwa. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century a steady migration of Assiniboine and Cree took place into the Plains region to the west. Within a decade or two of their departure from the area, this region was occupied by the Ojibwa, who migrated into the area from their homes in the forest. This Ojibwa migration continued during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Following hostilities between the Dakota and the United States Army in Minnesota in 1862 some of the Dakota crossed into Manitoba and Saskatchewan and sought political refuge. In the later years, in response to their requests, reserves of land were set apart for them in these provinces, and the Dakota have remained in Canada

since then. The present study does not deal with the culture history or the social organization of the Ojibwa and the Lakota, except peripherally, insofar as these subjects seem relevant to the main topic, which is the economic and administrative history of Indian peoples in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan parkland region.

With the establishment of Government administrative control over the Ojibwa and Dakota in the 1870s, both groups began to be perceived by the officials of Indian Affairs, and by the populace at large, as "Indians", devoid of sociological particularities. The views of the officials reflected the structure and working of laws, notably the Indian Act in its many versions, in which the "Indians" were understood to constitute a unitary population sector.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the native communities and the Parklands and Prairies faced economic conditions, laws, and administrative policies which had a similar, if not identical effect upon them all. They came increasingly to react, not in terms of their prior cultural traditions, but as members of a peculiar and highly visible minority within the larger society.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a paucity of historical research among Indians in the Prairie provinces. The main body of published material consists of histories which for the most part make reference to Indians

only insofar as their actions impinged upon the interests of European traders and settlers, who are the principal subjects of these works. Hence Indians receive attention as consumers where the main actors are European traders, and they are viewed as protagonists in the conflicts over land that arose in the early life of the immigrant settlers. After the reserves were established the Indians disappear from the consciousness of historians because they took no part in the tussles for power within the political arena, and they made no contribution to the development of national or provincial economic and social policies.

Their apparent impotence and invisibility after the establishment of reserves tends to lead historians to the conclusion that the Indians "collapsed", or that their cultures "broke down", thus eventually to produce the poverty and "social disorganization" noticeable today. These historians make little attempt to investigate the thought behind Indian responses or to understand purpose behind their actions other than from the comfort of a priori constructs. This is not to suggest that such histories should be condemned. A "rounded" history is not the objective of every historian. The aspirations of different segments in society do not often overlap, and their histories should constitute valid fields for scholarly enquiry. Nonetheless the hiatus in comprehension of Indian actions that historians sometimes demonstrate reduces the value of their contributions to the study of Indian history.

Historians have not, of course, entirely ignored the inherent significance of Indian history. Important studies of social history as well as biographical research have been conducted. In Canada one might cite the works of Johnston (1964), Fisher (1977), Dempsey (1980), Pannekoek (1970), and also the numerous works on Louis Riel and the Metis Rebellion.<sup>1</sup> However, apart from the Metis studies, few of these have been conducted in the eastern Plains and Parklands (Pannekoek is an exception). The Manitoba Metis Federation seems to have recognized the need for research in this area and has published some useful material, (e.g. Pelletier 1974, Sealey and Lussier 1975, de Tremaudan 1980). Some historians (e.g. Patterson, 1972, Leighton, 1975, Taylor, 1975, Crowe, 1974, Surtees, 1971) do have relevance to specific issues in the Plains and Parklands. However, these are few and far between and are often restricted in their focus of interest.

Ethnohistorical literature has grown in recent years as efforts have been made, mostly by anthropologists, to conduct research on Indian history. In Canada, however, the main interest of ethnohistorians has been confined to the fur trade. Perhaps this is a result of the continuing interest expressed in cultural ecological study in Canadian anthropology, and perhaps too it is a logical continuation of early research in the field of ethnohistory in Canada. This was mostly fur trade analysis, and the seminal work of Leacock (1954) was a classic in the genre. It is likely, however, that ethnohistorians will diversify their interests and venture outside the fur trade to tap the extensive



archival resources for the "Government period" in Indian history. In the United States such research has increased in significance, as represented by recent publications, such as those of Berthrong (1976), Schusky (1975), Hagan (1976).

With respect to fur trade research the work most apposite to the Parklands is that of Ray (1975). Ray's main contribution lies in detailing the annual cycle in the exploitation of food resources in the Parklands. He sensibly argues that the Indians who resided in the Parklands did not confine themselves to resources in the Parkland ecotone but made use, at different seasons of the year, of resources in both neighbouring biomes, the grasslands and the boreal forest. Ray's interest also lies in elucidating the trading relationship between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians. He uses data gathered from York Factory account books and various post journals. He fails to contrast, however, the differences in the trading patterns between those in the forest area as represented by York Factory, and those prevailing in the Parklands. The differences were in all likelihood considerable, because while the Hudson's Bay Company held a near monopoly in the forest areas after 1821, in the southern Parklands it was required to contend with increasing competition from American traders, and independent or "free" traders, both Metis and Indian. In what manner did this competition affect the standards of trade, the ceremonial gift-giving institutions, and the practice of "tripping" (establishing contacts with Indians at their camps)? Ray also does not properly explore

the means by which the "provision trade" (i.e. trade in pemmican) was carried out. This trade was markedly different from that conducted for fur in the north. The Hudson's Bay Company purchased large quantities of pemmican not from the hunters themselves but from Metis and Indian free traders or middlemen. Ray's data on trading relationships and patterns are derived mostly from York Factory accounts and York Factory experiences, and these are not readily applicable to the conditions prevalent in the Parklands.

Ray's book, nonetheless, is a useful addition to Indian history. It contains valuable material on the westward movements of the Assiniboine. It also makes a perceptive analysis of the Indian demand for trade goods in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The studies of Hickerson (1962, 1970) and Bishop (1974) pertain to Ojibwa in the forests neighbouring the Parklands. They need mention in particular because they represent an approach which finds some popularity within the field of ethnohistory.

These studies are positivist in their orientation. Here reference is made to the positivism of the nineteenth century rather than that of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> The former has had much more influence than the latter on the social sciences, and certainly on ethnohistory. As Bidney has pointed out in commenting on the legal historian Maitland, positivist scholars viewed history as "the factual record of objective natural processes and sequences of social events".<sup>3</sup> The positivist approach, in

the spirit of Comte and Spencer, has encouraged much excellent research, in which Hickerson and Bishop, among others, have taken part. However, there are other modes of viewing the processes under consideration.

Studies exemplified by those of Hickerson and Bishop aim to discover "processes" or results which emerge from the operation and interplay of what are regarded as objective factors. Thus the search is for determinants of cultural form, and the analytical level is removed far from that of the individual. On the whole, the authors give the impression that Indians constitute passive objects who responded almost mechanically to external influences and constraints.

Bishop seeks to establish economic determinants for changes in Ojibwa social organization from the seventeenth century to the present. He finds these determinants in subsistence patterns and changes in the supply of food resources over the years. Thus the Ojibwa had clans at the time of their residence in a resource-rich habitat near Lake Superior. But these clans broke up when they moved northwards because of changes in subsistence patterns, forced to some extent by dependence upon Euro-Canadian traders, and the attenuation of game supplies. He writes:

Too many indigenous materials had been replaced by Euro-Canadian ones, and the economy of a clan-based society had been destroyed with (1) the move into the interior away from bountiful territoriality-based fisheries, and with (2) the decimation of large game animals at a later date.

Hickerson's perspective is equally deterministic and causal, if not more so. In the seventeenth century warfare between Ojibwa and Dakota in Minnesota, the Indians counted for nought as their warfare was determined by policies of traders and ecological constraints:

In the long run the Indians were pawns in the trade, exploited, despoiled, and finally extinguished. Their warfare, based ultimately on traders' competition over fur, but reflecting and taking its specific character from the need for deer for subsistence, was only an episode in that process.<sup>5</sup>

It cannot be gainsaid that external constraints existed and influenced the direction of changes in Indian ways of life. However, the avid search for causes and processes tends to reduce the foci of these studies to a simplistic determinism that ultimately fails to satisfy. Having disposed of individuals, and thereby the thought that propelled them as somewhat irrelevant, the authors fail to describe actual occurrences and events through which changes took place. Thereby they fail to demonstrate the actual connections or relationships between the determinants they propose and the changes they report. Without such demonstration the relationships of determinacy remain nothing more than assertions. Also we might ask: Were Indians really pawns on the battlefield where superior powers controlled their every action and made moves at will? Did Indians always respond in determinate ways? Did they resist changes? Did they attempt to manipulate conditions to their advantage? Was there disagreement or disputation among Indians regarding how to respond?

An essential difficulty with positivist approaches in dealing with human phenomena is that they tend to reduce people into objects. Because objects do not think or feel or respond to ideas or interests or sentiments, positivist studies are prone to offer us little new insight into human behaviour, or into the reasons why responses take the form they do. History becomes, then, a diachronic collection of facts, or of cause and effect statements. How valid is such history? What value does it have if we cannot engage our thoughts with it, relate to it, receive sustenance from it? When the novelties contained in the causal "discoveries" are eroded by time, can these discoveries retain any relevance in our lives, or for that matter, in the lives of the subjects of the studies?

It is possible to avoid positivism in good measure and write useful history. Often those who allow their subjects human qualities are able to achieve this. They explain changes not by discovering determinant factors, but by showing how purpose and desire and human failings have operated in specific situations. Two examples of such ethnohistorical works in Canada are noted here.

Trigger (1976) in his study of the Huron in the seventeenth century approaches history with the notion of interest groups as an explanatory tool. He analyses behaviour of people in historical situations as guided by interests. He is quick to point out that in interactional situations all Indians and all

Europeans did not constitute homogeneous interest groups. Such groups formed or appeared to form when members seemed to pursue common goals and support one another in common actions. The historian thus seeks to locate interests in operation in his subjects' actions and explains their behaviour as serving or failing to serve these interests. The use of interests as an explanatory tool can have its drawbacks, of course. One can crush the data and drift toward extreme utilitarianism. Such pitfalls can only be avoided through good judgment and integrity toward one's data. Trigger's analysis of the Huron succeeds in being a superior account, as much from his willingness to treat his subjects as human, as from his apparent conscientiousness in respecting his data.

Another noteworthy account using a fairly humanist approach is Bennett's study (1969) of four cultural and occupational groups in the vicinity of Maple Creek in southwestern Saskatchewan. These groups comprised ranchers, farmers, Hutterites and Crees. Bennett's study employs an historical frame of reference and goes back from the date of the study in the 1960s to the early part of this century. Data are obtained through informant testimony and government documents. The central notion used is "adaptive strategy". This refers to the manner the different groups used resources and solved technical, economic, social and political problems while doing so. Bennett discusses how these groups tried to maximize production, change Government policies, and how they used cooperatives, ranchers and farmers' organizations

and the social strategies of Hutterites to achieve their ends. The study is particularly successful in offering a feel for the tribulations and achievements of the rancher and farmer groups. The Indians, however, receive virtually no historical treatment. Braroe, the author of the Indian section in Bennett's book labours under a putative assumption that after the buffalo disappeared the Indians became welfare cases and remain as such to the present day.

Ethnohistorians have oftentimes emphasized the dictum that ethnohistory is a method and has no independent theory. This emphasis, however, seems to be somewhat misplaced and is deceptive. Ethnohistorians write different kinds of ethnohistory. Some attempt to convey human qualities behind actions; others prefer to employ formalistic, scientific, and objectified approaches. The differences among these approaches seem to arise from varying bents of mind and orientations, which underlie formal theoretical differences. If positivist ethnohistorians are convinced that objectification is necessary and the determination of causality is essential, more self-assessment is necessary in the light of different approaches to history. One of the best ethnohistories written by an anthropologist (Evans Pritchard 1949) fails to establish determinant causes for change, yet seems to go a long way in explaining why, and demonstrating how, a religious organization was able to acquire the attributes of a powerful political organization in the course of a century,

To describe changes this study has attempted to use an empathetic

rather than a formalist approach. It is assumed that intuition and speculation, if employed in a responsible manner - that is, a manner in which the investigator remains true to his data and close to it - have a place in clarification of ethnohistorical problems. To explain the actions that we perceive in history we attempt to "enter into" the thoughts of the subjects of our study and by doing so attempt to illumine the purpose assumed to be lying at the base of their action.<sup>6</sup> To this end changes and actions and decisions are explained in this study by relating them to "opportunity". It is assumed that where some choice was available for adoption of new forms of livelihood or ways of living, the perception of opportunity was a guiding factor for such course of action. There may have been both advantages and disadvantages in pursuing particular modes of action. Also there may have been other considerations which predisposed or influenced people to act the way they did. Nonetheless, the assessment of opportunity or advantage does provide us with a heuristic device by which to order data, examine it critically, interpret it in a way which makes sense, and perhaps approach some modicum of truth as known by the subjects of our study.

The use of subjective means to aid analysis and interpretation has been termed by Honigmann in a recent paper "the personal approach". Honigmann encourages and justifies its use in cultural anthropological research,<sup>7</sup> His persuasive contribution in doing so is one in the long and continuing debate over the relative value and relevance of humanistic in contrast to



scientific modes of enquiry in the social sciences. The "history vs. science" debate has not been put to final rest by Honigsmann.<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt that both qualitative and quantitative methods are productive of new knowledge in anthropology. Nonetheless, the position taken in this study is that as human data derive from human sources, to treat such data with "coldness" is to deprive them of purpose and sensation, and thus to undermine their ultimate significance.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this study, the understandings on the part of the Indians to events, and their reactions to events during the period in question, are by the nature of the situation imputed and derived by inference from statements written by Euro-Canadians, whose own understandings, viewpoints, motivations, and purposes not only differed from those of the Indians but in many instances were in direct opposition to them. Much of what is contained in this study is in the nature of reconstruction. This does not mean that it is "speculative history" any more than is true of much other historiography. It is more in the line of the tradition of ethnographic reconstructions which have been carried out by many Americanists and other ethnographers. Instead of being based on "memory culture" or the narratives of aged informants, it is based on unpublished and published documentation and some informant testimony.

In recent years one kind of revisionism in historiography that has come to the fore has been the increasing number of attempts

to write history from the viewpoint of the historical 'losers', the silent people or population sectors who have not hitherto had much opportunity to get their side of the story on the record. These include American Blacks; former colonial populations; European, Latin American, and Asian peasants; women; children. This trend in the writing of history should be congenial to anthropologists, as they have traditionally dealt, for the most part, with people who do not have much power in the contemporary world. Like many of these revisionist histories, the ethnohistorian is chronicling people who have not been able to record their own stories, and is using documentation produced by others, many of whom are at cross-purposes with the subjects of the study.

\* \* \* \* \*

The present study uses the concept of opportunity as a means to comprehend the course of historical change among Indian people. Opportunities are considered here as favourable sets of circumstances which allowed Indians the possibility of taking up various forms of work and ways of life. Sometimes favourable circumstances coexisted or were replaced by others that were less favourable or unfavourable. These are called constraints, or limitations of opportunities. The responses of the Indians to these latter are also noted. They gave rise to dilemmas and conflicts as Indians sought to overcome or circumvent the limitations they perceived as imposed upon them by these circumstances. Opportunities are conceived in this study in an emic sense. Thus, circumstances are deemed favourable (constitute opportunities)

or unfavourable as they apparently were perceived and evaluated by the Indians.

Some opportunities that emerged were economic opportunities, such as those for freighting work and trading pemmican in the nineteenth century. Others offered scope for social advancement. Conversion to Christianity may have been sparked by opportunities for social advancement, and the same may be said for the movement of some Parkland peoples to the Plains. There was greater opportunity for gaining social prestige on the Plains. This was accomplished by warfare and horse-raiding.

In this study it is assumed that thought and purpose guided the actions of Indians and prompted the changes therein. While opportunities that emerged were external developments (usually the Parkland Indians did not create the opportunities), once they arose and were favourably evaluated, some Indians took the initiative to adopt new behaviour patterns even when, as was the case in some instances, they were drastically different from those to which they were accustomed.

The attempt is made in this study to analyse the links between external "structural" changes (represented by changing opportunities and those at the local level developing out of decisions in response to opportunities. The former are changes at the macro-level - they constitute broad political and economic changes; and the latter are changes at the micro or group level -

they constitute changes such as adoption of new forms of technology and some social changes.

The micro-level changes are described in the form of "pattern statements". Such statements, Honigmann notes,<sup>9</sup> are ubiquitous in anthropology. They compress a number of similar instances into one generalized instance. Hence they are generalizations, though of a descriptive nature, as for example "by raiding horses men acquired a measure of social prestige".

The concept of opportunity rests upon a similar set of assumptions that lie at the base of decision making theory in cultural anthropology. It is assumed that there is purpose in human actions, and that when decisions are made conscious thought is given to assess benefits perceived in different courses of action available. Thus where there is choice available, people adopt a course of action for which there is greater incentive or benefit.<sup>10</sup> Together with incentives, there exist, within the social and economic order, constraints as well. These can include values which act as restraining forces; material constraints, such as limitations of resources and skills in exploiting resources; or institutional constraints, such as regulations and administrative authority.<sup>11</sup> When people make decisions they choose between alternatives on the basis of their assessment of benefit. They also devise strategies to circumvent or nullify constraints to achieve desired ends.

Opportunities and limitations of opportunities represent in this study the incentives and constraints which provide the overarching circumstances, the economic environment and milieu

within which decisions are made by groups of people over time.

The term opportunities is used here in the context similar to the analytical framework used by Cohen. (1977) Cohen uses the terms "expanding fields of opportunities" to denote incentives; and "contracting fields of opportunities" to denote constraints. In Middle Eastern societies the former would be manifest by new "communicative", economic, and political-administrative forces. Thus new roads, new forms of transportation, and new markets for local products and labour would constitute expanding fields of opportunities. Contracting fields of opportunities would comprise the obverse of these: loss of political autonomy, loss of control over local resources. Cohen also integrates into the analysis the responses of the community. By adopting an attitude of either acceptance or rejection, any of four responses may result: exploitation (of new opportunities), submission, insulation, or defiance.

The dynamics of response cannot usefully be subsumed under a typology, and descriptive analysis seems also essential for adequate explanation. However, in formulating such explanation for economic and social history, the concept of opportunity is a valuable heuristic device.

\* \* \* \* \*

Methods used in this study to obtain data comprised a combination of field work and archival work. Through field work it was

needed to gather some sense of what it meant to be an Indian in a variety of situations. While one cannot always judge motives of ancestors from the behaviour and testimony of descendants, it was found that extrapolation of past conditions was greatly facilitated by familiarity with present conditions. Also in the field much information was obtained on agricultural work and the experience of transient unskilled employment.

Field work was carried out in Southern Manitoba and Southeastern Saskatchewan, primarily at the Ojibwa Keeseekoowenin Reserve in Manitoba, in the fall of 1979 and the spring and early summer of 1980. During this time a number of other Ojibwa and Dakota reserves in the region were also visited. Visits were also made to the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota, which is inhabited primarily by Metis. Archival research was carried out at the following places: Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Provincial Legislative Library, and United Church Archives at the University of Winnipeg (all in Winnipeg); Public Archives of Canada, and Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs (both in Ottawa); Archives of the State Historical Society (Bismarck, North Dakota); Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada (Toronto); McMaster University Archives (Hamilton).

The primary sources of archival data relevant to this dissertation were obtained at (a) The Hudson's Bay Company Archives; (b) Provincial Archives of Manitoba; and (c) Public Archives of

Canada. An assessment of the material utilized is as follows:

(a) Hudson's Bay Company Archives:

Most useful were the Post Journals and District and General Reports in Series B22, B51, B53, B63, and B122. Inspection Reports in the D25 Series were also of great value. The following documents were also perused, but they were not of primary relevance to this dissertation: D4 Series (Correspondence of Governor Simpson - Letters Outward); D20 Series (Incoming Letters to Commissioners Smith and Grahame, 1874-76); A74 Series (Annual Reports on Swan River District, 1891-95); B235 Series (Minutes of Council); A75 Series (Annual Reports on Sales Shops, 1893-1900); and Miscellaneous Papers in the A12/FT Series, 1892-1916.

(b) Provincial Archives of Manitoba:

The primary materials utilized here were the Archibald Papers, and the Morris Papers (Lieutenant Governor's Collection, and the Ketcheson Collection). Also various miscellaneous documents relevant to Indians in Manitoba, and the Red River Settlement were also studied. The Archives contain a valuable set of Fort Ellice Journals in the MG 1 C6 classification.

(c) Public Archives of Canada:

Papers relevant to the administration of Indian Affairs in the Prairie provinces are contained in the 'Black Series' in Record Group (RG) 10. These papers comprise numerous reports, correspondences, petitions, statements of policy, instructions regarding regulations, newspaper clippings, obituaries, confidential observations, etc. A number of the files contained in this Record Group are restricted from public use. Permission to use

a great many of these documents was obtained from Mr. John Leslie's office, Treaties and Historical Research Centre, at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Hull, Quebec.

Other documents that were found useful were: Numerous reports and surveys of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, rare books concerning early Manitoba history, and newspapers (Provincial Legislative Library, Winnipeg); papers relating to early Minnesota and North Dakota history, trading posts, and negotiations of treaties south of the International border (State Historical Society, Bismarck, North Dakota); papers relating to various missions (United Church and Anglican Church Archives); and Publications of the Hudson's Bay Company Record Society (McMaster University Archives).



## CHAPTER I

### THE PARKLAND SETTING

The locale of this study, the Canadian Parklands, once formed the western edges of the great glacial Lake Agassiz, which inundated much of central and eastern Manitoba during the Pleistocene era. When the glaciers retreated, the Lake drained into Hudson Bay through the Nelson River system, leaving vestiges in the form of Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis, Lake of the Woods, and other lesser bodies of water.

This northward drainage of water defined and determined much of the post-contact history of the region, as the activities of the early fur-trading companies were closely tied to the network of waterways leading to the seaports. The Hudson's Bay Company established itself at York Factory on the mouth of the Nelson River, and eventually it extended its presence over the Parkland region and a greater part of Central North America, which was subsequently named Rupertsland.<sup>1</sup>

Glacial events also defined the soil cover of the region, which later proved highly attractive to agricultural settlers. During the melting of the final glacier, Lake

Agassiz increased in size and extended into the present Red and Saskatchewan River valleys. This enlargement of the water body smoothed the surface and resulted in deposition of fine particles of modified till known as lacustrine sediment. In the numerous sections of the old Lake bed where these were deposited in thick layers, the soil cover is a fine silt or alluvium, excellent for the cultivation of crops.<sup>2</sup>

Thus for a variety of reasons, for its faunal resources and agricultural potential, the Parklands offered many alluring and favourable prospects to European traders and settlers.

For its aboriginal inhabitants, too, the land held numerous attractions. In the Parklands, the faunal resources of the grasslands complemented those of the forests, thus a greater variety of game animals could be hunted.<sup>3</sup> In some sections of the region the resources of game, fish and vegetal foods were very rich indeed. At the Manitoba Narrows, for instance, schools of whitefish emerged every year during the spring runs and could almost be scooped out of the water by hand. There was a grove of sugar maples just east of the Riding Mountain escarpment from which highly productive yields of sugar could be obtained. The buffalo, the woodland caribou and the hibernating bears all had their favourite haunts. These the natives of the region knew and exploited to their advantage.

Some sections of the country were poor in game and other food resources, however, such as the western shores of Lake Winnipeg. The aboriginal inhabitants were undoubtedly well aware of these limitations, and they knew too that the abundance of game resources changed, sometimes drastically, in successive years.

In spite of these uncertainties and variations, the land as a whole was rich in resources, and usually it did provide the small population of aboriginal hunters an ample subsistence.

#### Habitat and food resources

The Parkland is a biotic ecotone lying between the boreal forest and the Prairie grasslands. It runs approximately in an arc from the vicinity of the Lake of the Woods in southeastern Manitoba to the Saskatchewan River near Nipawin, Saskatchewan, and then along the North Branch of this river to the Rocky Mountains. In Saskatchewan and Alberta, the Parkland is in places about 200 miles in width, but in Manitoba, it is usually about half as wide.<sup>4</sup>

In the Parkland, groves of forests occur as

islands within the Prairie grassland, and the forests, likewise, are interspersed with islands of grassland. The dominant tree species in the Parkland forest is the "quaking aspen", a variety of poplar having leaves with flattened petioles that flutter in the slightest wind. In the sunlight, the shimmering leaves of the aspen present a pretty spectacle, and they provided the inspiration for the name "Fort des Trembles" (also "Fort Tremblant", Fort aux Trembles"), which were commonly used for the early nineteenth century trading posts within the area. Other trees and vegetation within the Parkland forests are willows, box elders, bur oak, hazel nut and choke cherry. Balsam, paper birch, and conifers are also occasionally found.<sup>5</sup>

The Parkland is a dynamic community subject to different ecological pressures favouring one or the other of its two primary components, the grasses and the forests. In years of poor precipitation, the grasslands tend to invade the Parkland forests, and this is also the case in years when the snowshoe

rabbit (an animal subject to great population fluctuation) is in abundance. The rabbits subsist in winter on twigs and barks of the woody plants, thus girdling the trees, and cutting back seedlings.<sup>6</sup> Another factor which favours the grassland is fire. In recent years, because of greater fire control, the Parkland forests have extended themselves into many areas that previously were grassland. For example, comparison of present vegetation in Manitoba with that of 1905 shows that in the latter year, the entire region between the Assiniboine River and the Riding Mountain, an area exceeding 2,000 square miles, was grassland. At present, the Parkland fully covers this area.<sup>7</sup>

The influence of fire in the extension of grasslands has received considerable attention from some anthropologists. They have argued that Prairie fires were deliberately set by Indians to extend the buffalo ranges, and have even insisted that the grasslands of the Great Plains themselves were man-made.<sup>8</sup> However, there are a number of reports that uncontrolled fires were destructive of buffalo as well as of animals in the woods, and that Indians were very fearful of them.<sup>9</sup> Also, Wedel finds evidence that the Great Plains grasslands are of considerable antiquity. Fossil soils of the Pleistocene and early Holocene from the Central Plains States indicate the characteristics of grassland, and not of forest environments.<sup>10</sup>

To the south and west of the Parkland arc lies the

vast region of perennial grasses. These grasses vary in type from the "tall grasses" of the Eastern sector, where the soils are rich and moist, to the "short grasses" of the Western sector, where there is less moisture and more evaporation on account of the frequent strong winds. The 20-inch rainfall isohyet, which runs north and south through Manitoba, the Dakotas, Nebraska and Kansas, may be said to correspond in some degree to a division of these types of grassland.<sup>11</sup>

The tall or Prairie grasses, as they are usually called, like the common big bluestem, grow to heights of five to eight feet, and thrust their roots into the soil to equal depths. Though they have greater bulk, the tall grasses are not as nutritive for grazing wildlife and for livestock as are the short grasses - the blue grama and the buffalo grass - of the Western Plains.<sup>12</sup>

Between the tall and short grasses is an area of mixed grasses, and some "mid grasses" grow here also not found in either biome. In years of greater precipitation, the tall Prairie grasses push westwards and displace the short grasses, and in drier years the reverse takes place and the short grasses extend themselves into the Prairies.<sup>13</sup>

Though the grasslands in both the Eastern and Western sectors are treeless, ribbons of forest do develop along river courses, and flood plains, and also on scarp protected areas and high altitude sections. Aspen, willows, basswood,

white elm, and various shrubs are commonly found in these forested sections.<sup>14</sup>

Animal resources in the Parklands tend to duplicate to some extent those of the boreal forests lying to the north and east, and those of the grasslands lying to the south and west. Among forest animals found in the Parklands are moose and bear, and prior to the nineteenth century, the woodland caribou was also known in this area. Other forest animals inhabiting the Parklands are beaver, marten, lynx, otter, fisher, mink, rabbit and muskrat; and some of these were also to be found in the forested sections in the grasslands.<sup>15</sup>

The buffalo, the pronghorn antelope, the elk, were the main food animals available in the grasslands. The red fox, silver fox, wolf and badger were primarily sought for their skins. These animals were found, occasionally, also in the open sections of the Parklands.<sup>16</sup> The buffalo had a very extensive range in former times. A woodland variety was found in the seventeenth century as far east as Virginia and North Carolina, but it became extinct in succeeding years. In the nineteenth century, the western grassland species moved steadily westward and finally disappeared from the Canadian Plains in the 1880's. In Manitoba, the buffalo was known in great numbers in the early 1800's, but by 1820, it had become scarce.<sup>17</sup> The elk (also known as wapiti and red deer) was abundant in the Prairie and Parkland region during the last century. It is still found today in some areas of the Riding Mountain National Park. Deer species, such as the

white tail, black tail and mule deer, which inhabit the Prairies of the United States, were rarely found in Canada.<sup>18</sup>

Other food resources located in the Parklands consist of waterfowl subsisting in the numerous small sloughs in the area, as well as the larger lakes. In the lakes and rivers, sturgeon, pike, whitefish and suckers were found. Sturgeon ascended the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in the spring, usually in late April soon after the melting of ice. They commenced their descent in mid-June to the waters of Lake Winnipeg.<sup>19</sup>

In the forested sections of the Parklands and grasslands, a number of berries and wild fruit were used as a food resource. The Manitoba maple grew in the southern part of the Parklands, and it was tapped for its sugar. On the Prairies, the wild turnip (Cree: nestescoosemen) and the wild parsnip (Cree: scotas) were used as soap.<sup>20</sup> Wild rice grew in the Lake of the Woods area and the Winnipeg River, but was not found further west.

#### Indian Migrations

During the 1760's, the primary residents of the Parklands in Southern Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan were the Cree and Assiniboine.<sup>21</sup> But during these years, and in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, they had begun to depart from the Parklands and migrate to the Plains; and this migration had become substantial as they acquired horses from their neighbours, the Blackfoot and Hidatsa to their west, and the Dakota and Cheyenne to their south.



The depopulation of the Parklands was intensified by a severe epidemic of smallpox which swept through the area in 1780 - 82. While the epidemic was widespread - it affected Indians residing along the Northern Great Lakes, the forests further north, and the Northern Plains - the effect in the Parklands was apparently severe enough to have caused an almost complete depopulation. The oral tradition of the Ojibwa in the Lake Superior region puts a figure on the deaths in the Lower Red River area to "several thousand".<sup>22</sup> Near the site of La Verendrye's Fort Rouge, there was an extensive graveyard where the victims of the epidemic lay buried. Alexander Henry, passing this site two decades after the epidemic, in 1800, noted:<sup>23</sup>

We were troubled by swarms of water snakes, which even came into our tents at midday; every morning some are sure to be found on our beds; but they are harmless. They appear to lurk and breed in the old graves, of which there are many, this spot having been a place of great resort for the natives in 1781-82; and at the time of the smallpox made such havoc, many hundreds of men, women and children were buried here.

The progressive depopulation of the Manitoba - Saskatchewan Parklands had the result of attracting into this area groups of Ojibwa peoples living in the vicinity of Rainy Lake and in the region of the headwaters of the Mississippi River (in present day Minnesota). Actually, for some time prior to the epidemic, a general northward and westward movement of the Ojibwa from their large horticultural villages

at Chequamegon Bay and other points on the south shore of Lake Superior had been under way. These movements may have commenced as early as 1730. The Ojibwa relate from oral tradition that from Chequamegon they had proceeded to occupy the upper Mississippi region by 1760, and Leech Lake, Red Lake, and the Lake of the Woods by 1800.<sup>24</sup> Alexander Henry the Elder, in his journal describing his travels from Montreal to the Northern Plains in 1775, noted the presence in that year of a "Pillager" band of Ojibwa at the Lake of the Woods.<sup>25</sup>

It appears that the movement of the Ojibwa north into the Parklands took place primarily in the years following the epidemic till about 1820. From Henry the Elder's account, we find that there were few Ojibwa in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in 1775. Most of the Indians he met in this area were Assiniboine and Cree.<sup>26</sup> Then, during the period 1795-1810, a number of traders resident at Pembina and in the Lake Manitoba-Lake Winnipegosis area mentioned repeatedly the arrival of groups of Ojibwa from Minnesota and Rainy Lake. Henry the Younger, for instance, writing from the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in 1800, names 34 heads of families of "O-ge-bois or Saulteurs" who he said were inhabitants of the upper Mississippi, Leech Lake and environs, and had left their lands to move north in 1789 and 1790.<sup>27</sup> Also, he named seven heads of families of another group of Ojibwa whom he called Red Suckers or Beavers, who he said had

had arrived from Red Lake in 1790.<sup>28</sup> At his post near the confluence of the Red and Pembina Rivers, Henry noted the arrival of new groups of Ojibwa from Rainy Lake in 1801 and 1802, and in the summer of 1805 he wrote that Indians were arriving in numbers daily from the Red Lake and Fond du Lac country.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, William John Cobb, a Hudson's Bay Company trader, met "Outchapoys" in 1797 along the western and northern shores of Lake Manitoba and these people informed him that "their country laid to the Southward of Red River".<sup>30</sup> And in 1820, Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company wrote:<sup>31</sup>

the natives trading and residing in this District [Lake Manitoba and Lake Dauphin] is in the greater part Bungees or Soteaux ....These Indians are not originally Natives of these Parts [and have come from] their original lands about the Rain Lake and the Western borders of Lake Superior.

In a report dated 1819, Fidler noted:<sup>32</sup>

...forty years ago there was scarce a single Bungee in this District. They have come from Rainy Lake and that quarter.

Most of the Ojibwa migrants remained in the Parklands of Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan, from Pembina in the south to Lake Winnipegosis and the Porcupine Mountains in the north. Some, however, continued to push on westward along the Parkland corridor through Central Saskatchewan and Alberta and reached the Peace River country in British Columbia. Some descendants of these most westerly Ojibwa reside on a reserve near Fort St. John, British Columbia.

Interestingly enough, however, the Ojibwa appear to have confined their movements north and west within the narrow Parkland belt. They seem to have been almost careful to avoid both the grasslands and the northern forests west of Lake Winnipeg. This latter area was occupied by the Muskegon or Swampy Cree, and no Ojibwa bands penetrated into the forest area north of Lake Winnipegosis. Movement into the grasslands was no doubt limited because during these initial migrations in 1780-1800 the Ojibwa possessed few horses.<sup>33</sup>

The enlargement of the area occupied by the Ojibwa in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries calls to mind notions of territorial expansion of one group at the expense of another, an idea of lebensraum accompanied by warfare and victory. As a matter of fact, the expansion of the Ojibwa into the Parklands north of the international border was accompanied by virtually no warfare at all. The Ojibwa were careful, no doubt, to make the necessary payments to those who were deemed to have claim to occupation of the land. Political alliances were established with the Assiniboine and Cree, probably facilitated by the enmity that all three groups shared with the Dakota.

Relations with the Assiniboine and Cree seem to have been characterized by a wary and circumspect amity. Also the land into which the Ojibwa "expanded", the southern Parklands, was thinly inhabited. The epidemic of 1780-82 had served to deplete the Assiniboine and Cree population in the area, and this depletion was proceeding apace with the progressive movement of these groups into the Plains. It is possible, that, for this very reason, Ojibwa movement into the forests west of Lake Winnipeg did not occur. In these latter areas depletion of population had not occurred to the extent or proportion that it had in the southern Parklands.

The notion of territorial expansion by force of superior strength seems actually to be a European notion and rather inapplicable to the Indian people of this region. The purpose of warfare in this area was not the conquest of new lands. Rather it was to achieve honours from combat and to inflict revenge. Lowie describes the objectives of Plains warfare in these terms, and they seem to have applicability to warfare in the western Woodlands and Parklands as well:<sup>34</sup>

Plains Indian warfare, compared with  
the practice of civilized peoples,  
had many distinctive features.....

The objective was never to acquire new lands. Revenge, horse lifting, and the lust for glory were the chief motives.

While the Ojibwa movement north of the International border was accompanied by little or no warfare, this was not the case in Minnesota. Here the Ojibwa were engaged in considerable and recurrent warfare with the Dakota. The hostility between the two groups in fact persisted well into the second half of the nineteenth century (though it should be pointed out also that there were many periods in the interim when much intermarriage took place and the groups remained in peaceable coexistence). Was the recurrent Dakota-Ojibwa warfare in Minnesota an exception to the usual nature of western Woodland warfare, and was it a prototype of European territorial conflict? Historians have generally subscribed to this latter idea. Grace Lee Nute, for instance, contends that the Ojibwa, in receipt of guns through trade with the French prior to the Dakota, were able, through their superior military strength and firepower, to drive the relatively defenceless Dakota away from their homes in Northern Minnesota, and push them out into the Plains.<sup>35</sup> This seems a transposition, in essence, of a widely held notion with respect to warfare in the eastern Great Lakes, aptly manifest in this comment of Innis: <sup>36</sup>

These scattered tribes [Ottawa and Sauteurs in the mid seventeenth century] came in contact with remote tribes of the interior, trespassed on their

lands, introduced to them European goods, and engaged with them in new wars.

Actually it is erroneous to contend that the Ojibwa acquired firearms much in advance of the Dakota. The Ojibwa are credited with obtaining firearms from Eastern French sources in the 1660s. But it was not much later that the Dakota had contact in Minnesota with French traders, who were purveyors of firearms. It is not known when the first French traders reached Minnesota as the pioneer independent French traders from the St. Lawrence did not document their movements very adequately. However, it is almost certain that they had reached the head of Lake Superior before the visit of Daniel Greysolon, Sieur du Lhut in 1679, and had preceded Father Hennepin's captivity in the Mille Lacs Lake region in 1680.<sup>37</sup> Thereby, at the time of the Ojibwa "expansion" northwards subsequent to 1730, both Ojibwa and Dakota had adequate access to firearms. Indeed the Dakota might have been better supplied with firearms as they were in contact with the expanding Spanish frontier up the Mississippi River.

Why did the Ojibwa succeed in "driving out" the Dakota from their homes in Northern Minnesota? Perhaps a good part of the answer lies in the general movement of many of the western Woodland and eastern Prairie peoples into the Plains, which occurred in the eighteenth century following the acquisition by these people of horses.

In 1736, the French at Lake Superior made a "census" of Sioux based upon the opinion of voyageurs. According to this there were an estimated 2,300 Sioux warriors west of Lake Superior. Of these only 300 were said to have been living in the Woodlands. The remainder resided in the grasslands to the west.<sup>38</sup> If this census does indicate to some extent the actual distribution of the Northern Dakota, any victories the Ojibwa did gain over the Dakota in the northern Minnesota Woodlands in the second half of the eighteenth century, as noted by Nute and others, were achieved at the expense of a relatively small segment of the Dakota peoples. This segment may have comprised the "stragglers", who had been tardy in following their compatriots to the Plains.<sup>39</sup> In any event, it is misleading to imply that the Ojibwa achieved the distinction of driving the main body of the Dakota out of their homes in northern Minnesota through force of superior firepower.



Native Population in the Eastern Parklands: 1800-1870

The census of native peoples in the Parklands was made a number of times in the nineteenth century by the trading companies and other observers. However, these censuses did not always distinguish the ethnicity of the population, and also did not always make the somewhat fine distinctions between Parkland, Grassland, and Woodland residents. Hence the estimates of Parkland Indians at any particular date must necessarily be imprecise. The population of the Indians in the Parklands was also fluid to some extent. In the first four decades of the nineteenth century this population was regularly augmented by the arrival of Ojibwa from the Woodlands of Minnesota and Ontario, and Swampy Cree of Lake Winnipeg, whereas the numbers were diminished by the migration of the Assiniboine, Parkland Cree, and some of the Ojibwa to the Plains.

An early count was made by the Montreal traders in 1805.<sup>40</sup> In this census the Manitoba Parklands were divided into three "Departments", and the Indian resident population was listed as follows:

| Department      | Men   | Women | Children | Total |
|-----------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| Fort Dauphin    | 19    | 17    | 31       | 67    |
| Upper Red River | 1,170 | 1,200 | 2,500    | 4,870 |
| Lower Red River | 160   | 190   | 250      | 600   |
| TOTAL           | 1,349 | 1,407 | 2,781    | 5,537 |

It is likely that the Fort Dauphin and the Lower Red River Indians in 1805 were almost all Ojibwa, and the Upper Red River (Assiniboine River) Indians were almost entirely Assiniboine and Parkland Cree. This would indicate that in the Parklands in Manitoba there were approximately 1,000 Ojibwa and 4,500 Assiniboine and Parkland Cree in 1805.

The next census of significance was made by Peter Fidler,<sup>41</sup> a noted Hudson's Bay Company trader, explorer and surveyor in 1819-20. Fidler made an estimate of the Indian population according to ethnic categories. Ojibwa trading in the Manitoba Parklands, at Fort Daer (Pembina); the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers; and the posts in the vicinity of Lake Manitoba (Fort Dauphin, Partridge Crop, Big Point, and Duck River) were estimated to number 1,352. Assiniboine trading at Brandon House were said to number 1,260, and the Cree located at various points on the lower Assiniboine River numbered about 300. These figures are tabulated as follows:

| Indian group | Men | Women | Children | Total |
|--------------|-----|-------|----------|-------|
| Ojibwa       | 256 | 294   | 792      | 1,342 |
| Assiniboine  | 180 | 270   | 810      | 1,260 |
| Cree         | 50  | 65    | 200      | 315   |
| TOTAL        | 486 | 629   | 1,802    | 2,917 |

It can be seen that during the period 1805-20 the population of Ojibwa increased considerably, no doubt owing to a heavy immigration from the forest regions. The immigration was able to counterbalance the emigration of Ojibwa from this Parkland region into the Plains. On the other hand, the population of Assiniboine and Cree declined during this period. Of the estimated 4,500 Assiniboine and Cree resident in the Manitoba Parklands in 1805 about 1,575 (i.e. 1,260 Assiniboine plus 315 Cree) remained in this area in 1819-20. As there were no major epidemics during this period this population decline reflects the large-scale migration of Assiniboine and Cree to the Plains.

In 1821 amalgamation took place of the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, and as a result a large number of half-breeds in the employ of both companies were relieved from service as voyageurs and company servants. Some of these people decided to make their home at the Red River Settlement,

located on and near the Forks, a local term for the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The population of the Red River Settlement swelled. Within a year more than 800 people were added to it, and these figures rose as the influx of half-breeds continued through the decade.<sup>42</sup>

Some of the half-breeds intermarried with the Ojibwa in the Parklands, and preferred to live in the Indian encampments rather than their own "communities" at the Red River Settlement and nearby White Horse Plains. This added to the population of the "Indians". Some of the Red River half-breeds, thereby, either forsook their own identity and adopted that of the Indians, or maintained a dual identity by means of which they retained their links with both Ojibwa and half-breed "communities". The accretion of half-breeds to the Indian population is indicated by population figures for 1857-58.

A set of figures for the Indian population in 1857-58 are available to us through the reports of the Hind and the Palliser Expeditions, which toured Manitoba and the Western Provinces.<sup>43</sup> The figures are estimates of Indians trading at various trading posts, and were provided by the Hudson's Bay Company. Indians trading at posts in southwestern Manitoba (Manitoba House, Shoal River, Fort Ellice, and Fort Pelly) are estimated to number 1,620. <sup>44</sup> About 500 can be reduced from this figure as some of the Indians trading at Fort Ellice and

and Fort Pelly were Plains Indians. In addition, about 800 Indians resided at the "Indian Settlement" near the Red River Settlement.<sup>45</sup>

Comparison of these figures with those of the previous census of 1819-20 yields the following:

| Location              | Indian<br>population<br>1819-20 | Indian<br>population<br>1857-58 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Southwestern Manitoba | 2,917                           | 1,120                           |
| Indian Settlement     | ---                             | 800                             |
| TOTAL                 | 2,917                           | 1,920                           |

Almost the entire Assiniboine and Parkland Cree populations had removed themselves from the area of southern Manitoba prior to 1857. Also an undetermined number of Ojibwa had migrated to the Plains. An estimate of the migration of Indians, and of the accretion of half-breeds into the Indian population may be made as follows:

|   |  |              |
|---|--|--------------|
| Assiniboine and Parkland Cree departures from the Parklands   |  | 1,575        |
| Ojibwa departures from the Parklands (estimate) <sup>46</sup> |  | <u>500</u>   |
| TOTAL departures (during the years 1819-58)                   |  | <u>2,075</u> |

Indian population in 1819 less Migrants to the Plains (2,917 less 2,075) = 842  
This figure (842) comprises Ojibwa that did not migrate from the Manitoba Parklands to the Plains.

Increment to the Ojibwa population in the Manitoba Parklands .  
between 1819 and 1858 (1920 less 842) = 1,078

This increase derived from

- (a) natural increase in the Parkland Ojibwa population
- (b) immigration of Swampy Cree from the Lake Winnipeg region and Cumberland House into the partly Christian 'Indian Settlement' (plus natural increase in this population)
- (c) immigration of Ojibwa into the Parklands (plus natural increase in this population)
- (d) influx of half-breeds into Ojibwa bands (plus natural increase in this population)

Information is lacking by which to ascribe figures to these four sources of increment. However, one can estimate that natural increase of Parkland Ojibwa, i.e. (a) above, was about 760.<sup>47</sup> Immigration of Swampy Cree was somewhat heavy, probably about 200.<sup>48</sup> Immigration of Ojibwa from adjacent forest areas into the Parklands appears to have been light; possibly (c) and (d) above accounted for about 50 persons each.

In 1874 a census was taken of the Indian population by government officials. This produced the following figures:<sup>49</sup>

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Lake Manitoba Indians                    | 195          |
| Pembina Band                             | 309          |
| Fort Garry Indians                       | 362          |
| Waterhen and Crane River                 | 204          |
| Portage la Prairie Band                  | 573          |
| Riding Mountain and Dauphin Lake Indians | 115          |
| Fairford                                 | 367          |
| Broken Head Indians                      | 90           |
| Fort Alexander Band                      | 394          |
| St. Peter's Indians                      | <u>1,746</u> |
| TOTAL                                    | <u>4,355</u> |

There was no significant migration of Parkland Indians to the Plains subsequent to 1858, hence there were no losses in population on this account. Population increase from the 1857-58 figure of 1,920 is 2,435.

What comprised the sources for this dramatic increase? These factors are largely the same as those operative in 1857-58, namely: natural increase; Swampy Cree immigration to the Indian Settlement; and inclusion of half-breeds in band lists. Ojibwa migration from Woodland areas to the Parklands was likely insignificant after 1858.

Natural increase is estimated to be about 700.<sup>50</sup>

It can be noticed that the St. Peter's Indians (who comprised the "Indian Settlement" of earlier figures) had nearly doubled in population, adding almost 950 individuals. Much of this increase was the result of immigration of Swampy Cree to the Indian Settlement. We can estimate that about 650 Cree immigrated and found inclusion in the category "St. Peter's Indians".<sup>51</sup>

A great part of the increase can be attributed to the inclusion of half-breeds in the Indian treaty lists. This would have comprised about 1,100 individuals. Many half-breeds lived "an Indian way of life", and a large proportion of these decided, and were permitted by both Indian leaders and the government authorities to "take treaty", that is, include themselves officially as members of Indian bands. Indian groups that were particularly augmented by the inclusion of half-breeds in the 1870s were the following: Lake Manitoba Indians (presently resident at Ebb and Flow and Dog Creek Reserves); Fort Garry Indians (resident at Brokenhead, Fort Alexander, and Roseau River); Crane River Indians; the Portage la Prairie Band (particularly those resident at Sandy Bay; and the Fort Alexander Band.

It is evident that a significant number of the Indians in the Parklands who were generally understood to have been Ojibwa were in fact not so at all. In Manitoba, of the population of 4,355, on the basis of populations at specific locations, it is estimated that about 850 were Swampy Cree, and approximately 1,150 were half-breeds. Thus the population of Ojibwa was about 2,350, which constituted less than 55% of the total Parkland population.<sup>52</sup>

The Swampy Cree seem to have confined their immigration to Red River, and thereby, to the St. Peter's Band. Half-breeds,



on the other hand, attached themselves to Indians resident in most of the different localities in the Parklands. As a consequence of this infusion, many of the "Ojibwa" of the St. Peter's Band were actually Cree, and those living in other parts of southern Manitoba were half-breeds. In the Manitoba Parklands after 1830, therefore, the Ojibwa comprised a rather composite aggregate of people.

It should be noted that in comparison with Chippewa reservations in the United States, in particular the Turtle Mountain Reservation located adjacent to the Manitoba border in North Dakota, the Ojibwa in Manitoba received a relatively small infusion of half-breeds. At Turtle Mountain the Chippewa (Ojibwa) population is greatly outnumbered by half-breeds, who presently (1980) comprise 98% of the Chippewa population on the reservation. There are only about 250 "full blood" Chippewa (Ojibwa) in the total reservation population of 14,000.<sup>53</sup> The half-breeds are kinsmen of Manitoba and Red River half-breeds, and perhaps because of their predominance at Turtle Mountain, they maintain a distinctive identity as half-breeds. In Manitoba the half-breeds have been absorbed in Indian band populations, and have not retained a separate identity.

The term "half-breed" implies that those who were identified as such were the product of European and Indian matings. This definition can be somewhat inaccurate and mis-

leading.<sup>54</sup> Half-breeds that settled at Red River were not necessarily the offspring of recent matings between Europeans and Indians. Many of them belonged to half-breed groups that had maintained a sociological identity for a number of generations.<sup>55</sup> The Indian component of their ancestry was not necessarily Ojibwa. It consisted, quite likely, of a variety of Algonquin and Athapaskan peoples.

In the region of the Western Great Lakes the European ancestry of most of the half-breeds was French. In the mid-eighteenth century during the French regime in Western North America, these half-breeds, sometimes called "French half-breeds", had developed a sociological identity as a distinctive people. By the late eighteenth century these people had also developed some notably distinctive features of culture. In their dress, food, music, and festivities, they differed markedly from Ojibwa and other Indian groups.<sup>56</sup> French half-breeds also usually had a very strong and intimate association with the Roman Catholic Church. They also spoke a distinctive language known as "Meechif", a name apparently derived from "(la langue) metisse". This was essentially a Country French that had adopted into its vocabulary numerous loan words from Ojibwa.<sup>57</sup>

French half-breeds were known as, and referred to themselves as, either "half-breeds" (without any pejorative implication) or as "Metis". In this study these terms are used interchangeably to denote these people.

During the nineteenth century, a number of "Home Guard Cree" and Hudson's Bay Company servants settled in the Red River area. These people also were half-breeds, but they usually had Scotch, Orkney, and English ancestry. In the Red River Settlement they were often referred to as the "Country born".<sup>58</sup> Some of these people maintained a separate identity. Others through marriage and acculturation fused with French half-breeds or with various Indian groups. The term half-breed, as used in this study, denotes these people as well.

A number of Siouan groups, mostly Dakota, also make their home in the eastern Parklands. The Dakota arrived in Canada as refugees after the Minnesota hostilities in 1862.<sup>59</sup> Upon their request reserve lands were granted to them during the mid-1870s in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

#### Parkland subsistence and adaptations

Traditional forms of subsistence in the Parklands were centred around hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering wild foods. As the Ojibwa were the primary residents of the Parklands during the nineteenth century, a description follows of traditional Ojibwa subsistence patterns in the Parklands.

The Ojibwa were geared to a Woodland economy in their homes near Lake Superior and the upper Mississippi. With their migration into the Parklands they retained much of their

woodland subsistence patterns and material culture, and forms of social organization and religion. However, some new adaptations were also made. The adaptations for the most part consisted of incorporating some of the features of the style of life of the Plains. For large game the Woodland Ojibwa had relied on deer, moose, and bear. In the Parklands they added to their subsistence elk and buffalo. The buffalo was not hunted in large organized parties, or by the use of pounds, as was practised by the true Plains-dwellers. Rather it was hunted individually or in small groups of two or three hunters, usually on foot, though occasionally on horseback. In the Parklands the buffalo did not always travel in large herds. They could be found singly and in small groups.

The Ojibwa also adopted the Plains style of tent. At first these were used only in the winters, but later came to be utilized all year through. The Woodland Ojibwa style of house structure was the birch bark wigwam, oblong in shape, about fifteen feet wide and sometimes over thirty feet in length. Four or five families resided together in these wigwams.<sup>60</sup> The Plains style tent, or tipi, on the other hand, was conical in shape, with an adjustable aperture at the apex to admit light and let out smoke. It was smaller than the wigwam, and accommodated a single nuclear, or an extended, family.<sup>61</sup> The tents were covered by ten to twelve skins of buffalo, moose, or elk. Buffalo skins were preferred, as they were lighter and more durable.<sup>62</sup> Bedding in these homes consisted of buffalo hides with the hair retained, and buffalo robes, and also

blankets obtained from traders.<sup>63</sup> Some of the Ojibwa lived in a novel form of dwelling in the summer. This was a beehive shaped structure, with a rounded roof like the wigwam. But its size was that of a tipi (about 10-15 feet in diameter and about 10 feet high), and it possessed an adjustable vent at the top.<sup>64</sup>

The annual round of activity of the Ojibwa in the Parklands and the seasonal differences in social aggregates remained quite similar to those in the Woodlands. The winter hunt for food animals and furbearers commenced in September. The exploitative unit during this period consisted of a group of families comprising three to twelve tents having with them about five to fifteen able bodied male hunters.<sup>65</sup> Bilateral kinship ties probably held this hunting, or wintering band, together: however, individual tents could, and did, splinter from a particular wintering band to join another during the course of a winter hunt. This wintering band had a clearly defined leader, who through his hunting or shamanistic prowess, or ability to act as spokesman, held the respect and authority of the other members of the band. The wintering band was usually referred to by traders as a named leader's "party" or "gang". It seems that this group kept within a fairly localized area, or hunting ground, all winter. A hunting ground, however, was not an exclusive territorial privilege of one wintering band. Other bands could also live and hunt within the area. Wintering bands usually camped

on riverine sites, close to wood for fuel.<sup>66</sup>

A "tent" usually comprised a composite family. It might consist of a nuclear family and one or both of the parents of either spouse; or it might comprise an older couple, their children and a prospective son-in-law (a groom usually performed bride service by assisting his in-laws in hunting and other duties during the course of at least one winter).<sup>67</sup>

Sororal polygyny was common among senior and affluent males.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, Fidler reports that the husband, or "master of the tent" occupied one half of the tent, usually that on the right hand side as one entered, and the rest of the family occupied the remaining half.<sup>69</sup>

The winter harvest consisted of beaver, marten, lynx, fisher, mink, otter, wolverine, fox, wolf, bear, and muskrat.

The wintering band came together with other groups in spring at the sugar maple groves. The Manitoba maple, or box elder (*Acer negundo*) grows only in the southern portions of the Parklands, and is not as productive of sugar as the maple of the Great Lakes; nonetheless, the making of maple sugar was a popular activity for the Ojibwa in the Parklands. The season for making sugar commenced at the time of the second thaw, usually the first week of April. It continued till about the middle part of May.<sup>70</sup>

About three or four gallons of the maple sap produced about a pound of sugar. The sap was processed by boiling it in an iron kettle into a concentrate, and then adding a lump of fat. By doing so granulation would occur.<sup>71</sup> The sap was collected collected in birch bark containers or "roggans" of about a quart's capacity. A family would usually collect about 1,000 quarts of sap in a season, and make perhaps 75 lbs. of sugar.<sup>72</sup> This was packed in birch bark vessels holding about fifty lbs. of the product.<sup>73</sup> Sugar was traded to other Indian groups and to the Red River settlers after Lord Selkirk's Colony was established in 1812. It should be mentioned that individual families as a rule returned to the same spot every year, and tapped the same grove of trees. The rights of a particular family to do so were respected by others. If the family left the area the trees could be tapped by other families.<sup>74</sup>

Some horticulture was also practised by Ojibwa groups. Along the Red River, in particular, some Ojibwa families had fields of corn and beans. When Nicholas Garry (1900) visited the Red River Settlement after Lord Selkirk's death in 1821 he appears to have been impressed by the standing fields of corn he saw along the lower Red River. Peter Fidler, the Hudson's Bay Company trader, also noted in 1819 instances of cultivation by some of the Indians. On the Assiniboine River, near Portage la Prairie, an Indian had a cultivated

plot which was fenced and well-tended. He also lived, along with his extended family household, in a log cabin.<sup>75</sup> The growing of potatoes was apparently fairly common in the northern Parklands. Hudson's Bay Company post employees sometimes purchased potatoes and barley from the local Ojibwa prior to 1819.<sup>76</sup> The cultivation, in the Canadian Parklands, of grain and potatoes by Indians was not an aboriginal practice. But it is unclear whether it predated the establishment of the Red River Settlement in 1812.

After the sugar season, for most Ojibwa in the Parklands, it was a time for fishing. The fish, particularly pike and suckers, were caught in nets during the period between the opening of ice in April or May, and the fall. The fish were dried and winter stocks were laid up.<sup>77</sup> Pike in the area weighed between four and fifteen pounds, and suckers about three and four pounds. The head of a sucker constituted a delicacy. Tickaming (whitefish) were more scarce, but in some places, such as the Manitoba Narrows they were plentiful during the spring and fall runs. Sturgeon was found in the Assiniboine River, but was rare in other sections of the Parklands.<sup>78</sup> Fish weirs were often erected on rivers in the summertime, and these weirs were the exclusive property of those who erected them. Once the fishing season was over, after the ice had set in, the weirs were damaged, or in the spring, swept away by the floating ice. In the following summer, damaged weirs could be repaired and used by anyone.<sup>79</sup>



In addition to fishing, summer was a time for numerous activities. Ducks, geese and other fowl were hunted, and a great variety of berries were picked. Also it was a time for making dried provisions, trading, attending the summer ceremonials, visiting the Red River Settlement to sell various products, and also it was a time for simply resting and enjoying a holiday.<sup>80</sup>

### Trade

Trade was an age-old activity engaged in by the Parkland Indians.<sup>81</sup> More recently, in historic times, the Parkland people carried on a regular trade with the villagers of the upper Missouri, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara. They brought to the villages forest produce, such as the meat of forest animals, furs, gum or wattap for canoes, and perhaps also salt (there was a notable salt mine in southern Manitoba), feathers, wild rice, maple sugar. In return the Ojibwa and other Parkland peoples obtained a wide variety of goods originating in the Plains and other areas, for the Missouri River villages were important commercial entrepôts. European goods were exchanged as well. British and French manufactures were probably traded with goods of Spanish, Mexican, and American origin. The Ojibwa also obtained trade goods and horses from various Indian peoples in exchange for herbal medicines and the treatment of ailments. This was because the Ojibwa shamans were widely known and regarded

for the efficacy of the cures.<sup>82</sup>

Concerning trade with European traders, Ojibwa in Minnesota were likely in contact with independent French traders from the St. Lawrence in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. These traders had penetrated into the western sections of Lake Superior and, perhaps, the headwaters of the Mississippi during this period. The Indians were also likely in touch, at least indirectly, with the Hudson's Bay Company's Bayshore posts, which had been established during these same years.

In the Parklands the fur trade with European traders was at its peak in the eighteenth century, during the French regime (1738-1759), and the later years of that century. The French explorer Sieur de la Verendrye established the first Parkland post in 1738, and more posts were located in the region during subsequent years as far west as Fort la Corne near the forks of the Saskatchewan River.

After the fall of Quebec (1759) traders from Montreal established a series of trading posts in present-day Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and organized themselves into various coalitions, of which the Northwest Company was the most viable. To meet this competition, the Hudson's Bay Company established its own inland trading posts, commencing with Cumberland House in 1774. A strong rivalry ensued, which intensified in the years 1790-1821.

The main prize of the great rivalry, however, was

access to the furs of the vast North-West forests, superior in quality and more numerous than those of the Parklands. As exploitation of these forests increased, the fur trade in the Parklands lost its earlier significance. By 1810 the productivity of the Parklands had been considerably reduced, as a result of both exploitation and disease. Beaver, in particular, was struck by disease in this area. Peter Fidler, Hudson's Bay Company trader, wrote in 1820:<sup>83</sup>

Beaver formerly a well known animal is now very scarce - formerly more Packs of Beaver skins of 90 lb weight was taken out of this District than are now got single skins - about 19 Years some disorder occasioned by the Change of the Air or some other unknown cause suddenly reduced them to the very few that is now to be found....

In exchange for their beaver, other furs and pemmican, the Indians in the Parklands received from the traders liquor (primarily rum and brandy), tobacco and tea; various metal goods, such as knives, ice-chisels, files, axes; guns and ammunition; blankets, yard goods (broadcloth, lace, gartering); and numerous other items such as beads, prunes, watches and various novelties.<sup>84</sup>

After about 1810 the demand for pemmican rose considerably, and the Parkland posts were pressed into the task of procuring pemmican and other provisions, namely dried meat and grease.

Pemmican was the staple food for voyageurs, and ideally

suited as a travelling provision on account of its low bulk, high nutritive content and low risk of spoilage.<sup>85</sup> It could keep indefinitely if kept reasonably dry and free from mould. As increasing numbers of trading posts were established in the Northwest, the demand for pemmican to feed the voyageurs that manned the vast transportation network increased. By 1820 it could be stated that the "provision" trade had replaced the fur trade in the Parklands. The demand for pemmican, in fact, continue to increase in the ensuing decades and remained high till the buffalo was finally reduced to near-extinction.

The provision trade was in many respects quite different from the fur trade that was carried on in the northern forests. It was a kind of enterprise in which the Hudson's Bay Company was forced into competition at multiple stages of the trade process. The fruits of profit, thereby, did not accrue to a single trading establishment or a corporate rival, but tended to be widely distributed into the hands of small, independent traders. The Indians too appear to have benefitted to a larger extent from the profits of the trade.

The provision, or pemmican, trade also had a direct impact on the growth and prosperity of the Red River Settlement, as Lord Selkirk's Colony was called. This growth and prosperity increased opportunities for the Parkland Indians. Demand rose

for transport services and food products and provided employment and new forms of livelihood. Some Indians became entrepreneurs and entered the pemmican trade in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company. The opportunities which arose in the Parklands with the growth of the pemmican trade and the Red River Settlement, and were utilized by Indians, are described in Chapter III.

## CHAPTER II

### OPPORTUNITY IN THE "CLASSIC" PLAINS: 1750-1850

In this Chapter, I turn my attention to the region of the Plains, which lies adjacent to the Manitoba Parklands to the west and the south. In the eighteenth century this region saw the emergence of an elaborate cultural tradition based on the hunting of buffalo and on equestrian skills in warfare and raiding. This emergent tradition offered a striking set of opportunities to which neighbouring Indian societies, which included those in the Parklands, reacted strongly.

A consequence was that a number of Indian peoples resident along the northeastern periphery of the Plains - the Dakota, Assiniboine and Parkland Cree - abandoned their Woodland and Parkland homes and migrated into the Plains en masse during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

A significant number of the Ojibwa resident in the Parklands also responded to the opportunities on the Plains. The migration of the Ojibwa took place, for the most part, between 1810 and 1840.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the Plains were occupied by big game hunters in prehistoric times, and their kill sites, such as Clovis, Folsom, Lindenmeier,

Scottsbluff, date back to over 10,000 years.<sup>1</sup> Though the Plains were continuously occupied in subsequent years, they were not productive of great wealth or elaborate cultural development. When Coronado visited the Plains in 1540 he considered the inhabitants "miserably poor and almost chronically hungry" in comparison to the sedentary and sophisticated Pueblos he had encountered in the American Southwest.<sup>2</sup> In Coronado's time most of the dwellers of the Southern and Central Plains left the grasslands during the winter months to live in proximity to the settlements of sedentary peoples, wherever this was possible. Thus for at least a portion of the year, many Plains-dwellers, such as the Apache, Comanche, Shoshoni, Tonkawa, found it necessary to depart from the grasslands, and their exploitation of the Plains was essentially a seasonal one.<sup>3</sup>

During the latter part of the seventeenth century the region of the Great Plains, however, was the centre of a transformation that surely must rank as one of the most dramatic and colourful in human history. From a land of want and severe difficulty, it was transformed, almost suddenly, into a land of plenty, into a land of vitality and vigor, saturated with opportunity. The cause of the revolution in the expansion of opportunity, likened by some writers to that which was caused by steam, and electricity, and the automobile in later years, was the introduction, into this area, of the horse.<sup>4</sup>

The primary economic utility of the horse lay in the great mobility it provided in the hunting of the buffalo. Prior to the use of the horse, hunting had to be conducted on foot. Hunters did have the assistance of the dog, which pulled their travois; however, for hunting there was no alternative but to walk. Though the Great Plains teemed with buffalo, often present in herds of over 500,000 animals, they were extremely mobile, and widely scattered within the boundless expanses of the vast land.<sup>5</sup> It was the mobility that the horse provided which made it an efficient instrument in the hunting of buffalo. With the horse the hunter could extend his range to tap an enormous and bountiful supply of meat; but without the horse he was utterly dependent upon the capricious migrations of the herds.<sup>6</sup>

Not only was the horse an attractive animal for the Plains-dwelling pedestrian buffalo hunters, but it became increasingly so also for those on the edges of the Plains, who subsisted on buffalo in a relatively minor way. For these people, with the availability of horses, the hunting of buffalo seems to have developed a new and almost irresistible charm. Various sedentary groups began to be drawn from their settled existence into the excitement and violence of the buffalo hunt. We need not minimize the emotive and affective aspects of the enterprise; and the sense of power and excitement experienced by the hunter in riding into a dust-raising,



stampeding buffalo herd and picking off choice animals with the bow and arrow or the early Northwest gun. Perhaps the mounted buffalo hunt offered new scope for the show of bravery and daring, of boasting, and of displaying demonstrable skill and initiative in the technique of hunting. Up-and-coming young men had new opportunities to seek the guidance of supernatural protectors and perform deeds of valour and strength. The buffalo hunts seem to have exuded a vitality that was lacking in other, perhaps equally productive, endeavours. (There was no great rush among Prairie-dwellers to join the Menomini in catching fish or hunting muskrats).

On the eastern Prairies the agricultural and semi-agricultural Pawnee had begun to hunt buffalo on horseback prior to 1700. Others, such as the Omaha, Ponca, Missouri, were known to be doing so in the early eighteenth century. The horse reached the northeastern Prairies after 1740.<sup>7</sup> The Crow, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and various Siouan groups who were residents in this area, not only increased their exploitation of the buffalo, but in doing so abandoned their villages and horticultural way of life altogether. The Cheyenne, for example, who were to become a supreme example of the High Plains culture, first acquired horses about 1750. Within the space of less than two generations, by 1780, most of the Cheyenne had abandoned their village on the upper Red and Sheyenne Rivers in North Dakota and Minnesota, and had

joined Arikara villages near the Missouri - Grand confluence. From here, within a decade, they had abandoned their gardens and moved into the Black Hills of South Dakota. By the early 1800s they were raiding Spanish settlements deep in the Southwest. During these years Cheyenne groups could be seen scattered all along the Western Plains from the headwaters of the Arkansas River in Southern Colorado to the Black Hills, and to the Arikara villages on the Missouri.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the sedentary villagers who moved westwards into the Plains retained their agricultural mode of life, however. These groups were the Mandan, some of the Hidatsa, and Arikara. They settled in villages along the banks of the Missouri River, and their settlements became important trading centres for peoples of the Northern and Central Plains.<sup>9</sup>

The transformations that occurred on the eastern periphery of the Plains with the coming of the horse were duplicated along the western and northern peripheries as well. In the west the buffalo-hunting horse culture claimed the Utes, the Eastern Shoshoni, and numerous Plateau Salish people such as the Flathead, Nez Perce, Coeur d'Alene, Spokane, Colville etc. From the north the Sarsi, Cree, Assiniboiné, and Ojibwa moved southwards and westwards to become buffalo-hunting equestrians.<sup>10</sup>

The meeting of these diverse peoples on the Plains with their common equestrian habits and their dependence on the buffalo for a staple had the effect of allowing the rise of a remarkably similar emergent culture. Rapidly this was "intensified" to acquire the richness and colour so frequently associated with it.

Intensification had the result also of sharpening the distinctiveness of cultures on the Plains. The uniqueness of Plains cultures is perhaps best described by the "horse complex", the set of interrelated patterns associated with the horse - skills of horsemanship, notions of wealth, patterns of trade, and warfare. These are described below.

### Horsemanship

In horsemanship the Plains Indians had few equals in the world. Both sexes seem to have had an equal repute as horsemen. They learnt to ride in childhood, thus acquiring skills at an early age. George Catlin, the traveller and artist, gives us an account of horsemanship he witnessed among the Comanche, and which was common throughout the Plains:

..... a stratagem of war, learned and practised by every young man in the tribe; by which he is able to drop his body upon the side of his horse at the instant he is passing, effectually screened from his enemies' weapons as he rests in a horizontal position behind the body of his horse, with his heel hanging over the horse's back; by which he has the power of throwing himself up again, and changing to the other side of the horse if necessary. In this wonderful condition, he will hang whilst his horse is at fullest speed, carrying with him his bow and his shield, and also his long lance of fourteen feet in length, all or either of which he will wield upon his enemy as he passes; rising and throwing his arrows over the horse's back, or with ease and equal success under the horse's neck..... This astonishing feat which the young men have been repeatedly playing off to our surprise and amusement, whilst they have been galloping about in front of our tents, completely puzzled the whole of us; and appeared to be the result of magic, rather than of skill acquired through practice.<sup>11</sup>

### Horses as Wealth

With the constant employment of horses for hunting, for warfare, for transport, for sport, it was perhaps inevitable that horses acquired great value. Indeed, the horse had become a unit of value early in the development of Plains culture, and the size of the herd held by a man or a band marked prosperity and riches. Personal aggrandizement through acquisition of wealth in horses and other goods was allowed free reign, and such aggrandizement, as in the Northwest Coast, culminated in great giveaways, which further enhanced glory and reputation. To be able to undertake such giveaways men

needed to continually replenish their horse herds, and the most important sources of new horses were trading and raiding.

Horses in America apparently bred rapidly enough but the natural increase could not keep pace with the everspiralling demand for them. The Kiowa Apache in 1869, with 1,500 people, were reported to have 6,000 horses, and the richest of the Plains Indians, the Crow, had 9,000 - 10,000 horses for 400 tipis in the earlier parts of the nineteenth century. (The horses of the Crow were obtained largely through raiding the relatively peaceable Plateau Salish and Shoshoni, who were greatly impoverished in consequence). Horses were owned as personal property and were by no means evenly distributed within the group. Some individuals owned great numbers of horses as personal wealth. According to Maximilian, in the early 1840s, wealthy Tetons had about 30 - 40 horses, and a Blackfoot by the name of Sackomapoh owned 4,000 - 5,000 horses.<sup>12</sup>

Men with great wealth in horses did not, of course, use all of them. A person with 100 horses might use only 20; the remainder would be unbroken. The surplus helped to replenish his herd of broken horses as well as served as a liquid currency to engage in trading operations, and make payments within the band or locality. In the Plains, horses were used for payment to medical specialists, and for payment as legal penalties. They were also used in the giveaway ceremonials.<sup>13</sup>

Thieving of horses was carried on by every Plains group, and was quite often the primary source for new horses. Some individuals, or groups of people, were particularly notorious for this.

### Trading

Trading for horses, as well as for other goods, was carried on extensively over the Plains. From historical accounts we know of three major trading centres in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, of which the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara villages on the Middle Missouri, and the "Shoshoni Rendezvous" in Southwestern Wyoming were the most significant. There was also a "Dakota Rendezvous" located in Southeastern South Dakota. Annual fairs were held and usually a "market peace" prevailed at these centres between different warring military groups. The trading networks were extremely wide-ranging. The Middle Missouri trading villages received visitors from the northern Prairie and Woodland people, such as the Assiniboine, Cree and Ojibwa, as well as those from as far south as the Southern Cheyenne, Kiowa, Kiowa Apache, Comanche. Through the Crow they were tied in to the Shoshoni Rendezvous, and through this marketplace to the bustling Wishram-Wasco villages of the Dalles on the Columbia River, not far from its mouth on the Pacific. Mountain sheep bows, leather goods from far Clung

areas, marine shell gorgets, medicinal herbs from different biomes, exotic foods, crafts, agricultural produce, as well as various manufactures of Spanish, British, French, and American origin, could be found in these villages.<sup>14</sup> Trading was not confined to annual fairs or to any selected set of items. From Alexander Henry's account the Mandans appeared to have been willing to trade virtually everything that was offered to them. Every Mandan household was in effect a shop, and every householder a trader.<sup>15</sup> Trading, as Blakeslee suggests, may have contributed strongly to the remarkable uniformity in cultural expression found on the Plains.<sup>16</sup>

While horses changed hands within the Plains at these and other trading centres, they were also exported from the Plains in large numbers. Mexican traders ranged over much of the Plains trading flour, utensils and liquor, and demanded horses in return. Horses were also traded, by the thousands, to the French in the Southeast, and to the Anglo-American colonists, mostly by the Apache and Comanche. These Indian traders obtained most of their horses by raiding Spanish and Indian settlements in the American Southwest.<sup>17</sup>

### Warfare

Intimately tied to this "horse complex" of riding proficiency, and the trading and raiding of horses, was the pursuit of warfare on the Plains. The premium placed on daring and valour

amongst the ancestral peoples of the Plains Indians was raised to new heights through warfare in the Plains. The important means for acquiring glory and expressing valour were warfare and horse raiding. In warfare, the killing of the enemy and destruction of his property were important, but the greatest deed of merit, usually, was the counting of coup. This consisted of touching the body of an enemy with the hand, or with a weapon, or a special stick. Valour, thereby, was expressed in the Plains by a display of speed, daring and boldness. In the display of these qualities the horse played an essential role. The boldness of the Indian's advance to the encampment of his enemy, and the fleetness of his retreat from it depended heavily, when all were equestrian, upon the speed and proficiency of his horse.<sup>18</sup>

Warfare was usually carried out in small parties, and the warriors attempted to obtain the advantage of surprise. The heroic exploits of men in these raids were recited publically, and received great attention. Prestigious warriors obtained material rewards also when they bestowed honour or supernatural power: a great warrior would be paid for naming a new born child, or outfitting the leader of a war party with a part of his medicine.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the killing and stealing in the surprise raids, feuds were triggered which led to endless retaliation. Indeed, together with the pursuit of glory, the pursuit of revenge



constituted the prime purpose of all warfare. Within this context of militarism, chieftainship acquired an important dimension as pressing decisions required to be made in the almost continual state of readiness for warfare. This gave rise to an elaborate system of alliances between neighbouring tribal and military groupings.

\*        \*        \*        \*

Apart from customs and practices involving the horse, other features of Plains life might be mentioned as well to describe the unique cultural growth that occurred following the introduction of the horse. Among these were the ceremonial splendour of the Sun Dances, the discipline of the military fraternities, the huge, imposing camp circles, and the finely worked leather tipis with their adjustable smoke vents. These and other features were elaborated within the fairly short span of time between the mid eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. The Plains, in fact, seem to provide a very appropriate illustration of Kroeber's notion of "culture area", where cultures "grew to climax", "intensified", became more "elaborate", "richer", "luxuriant".<sup>20</sup> Regarding the intensifying consequences of the horse, Kroeber wrote:

What it is suggested happened is that not only ritual complexes, but indeed all sorts of cultural patterns, quickly blossomed out in the plains after the introduction of the horse had converted a struggling, precarious or seasonal mode of subsistence into one normally assured, abundant, and productive of wealth and leisure.... The culture was not only active and intensive, it was still expanding when white settlement killed its roots.<sup>21</sup>

Kroeber's arguments have, however, not found much favour with anthropologists working in the Plains. The numerous ecological and kinship studies<sup>22</sup> conducted in the Plains retain a materialistic bias which hamper understanding of intuitive, idealist conceptions. Others have failed to extricate their work from the positivist quagmires they have created for themselves: the tree diagrams and phi coefficients of Driver and associates might be mentioned as an extreme example.<sup>23</sup>

If "intensification" of culture occurred on the Plains, and if, indeed, intensity is a useful notion, what implications does the notion lead us to? What does it clarify regarding the life and experiences of people?

Kroeber's ideas have not been entirely ignored, and their heuristic value is indicated by their guiding influence on the works of Mishkin (1940) on Kiowa warfare, Jablow (1950) on the Plains Indian trading networks, and Secoy (1953) on the emergent military patterns following the introduction of the horse. Lewis' work can also be mentioned in this context.<sup>24</sup> However, except for Mishkin's work, these remain essentially 'etic' studies. They do not adequately attempt to understand change, or cultural form, or events, from the standpoint of

the experiences of people.

When there is intensification of culture it seems likely that new opportunities would arise. If this did occur, what was the nature of such opportunities on the Plains? How were these opportunities seen and understood by Prairie and Parkland dwellers? How did these people compare the nature of their condition with that enjoyed by those on the Plains? What life experiences were involved in the transformations that subsequently took place as the Prairie and Parkland peoples sought a new existence in a new land?

The Ojibwa and others living in the Prairies and Parklands were not destitute. Their hunts and gardens assured them of a reasonably stable food supply. However, it is likely that as the equestrian Plains culture emerged, so also did the disparity between their own conditions and those on the Plains.

Let us follow Alexander Henry, a trader living with the Parkland Ojibwa, on his first visit to the Plains in 1806. Henry chose to visit the Mandan and Hidatsa villages on the Missouri, essentially as a tourist, and in the course of his visit he was invited also to travel to a Cheyenne encampment to witness a peace alliance. He was accompanied by a small party of Ojibwa and Assiniboiné from Red River. To the visitor from the Parklands the radical contrast seen in the style of

life lived on the Plains seemed to produce a sense of awe and wonderment. This is noticeable in Henry's mind as he recorded his observations.

Henry's comments, on various occasions, point to the opulence, the self-assured manners, and the shrewd trading skills of his hosts. These contrasted with the raggedness of the Parkland Indians. Describing the sights he saw in the countryside between two villages, Henry wrote:

..... we proceeded on a delightful, hard dry road..... upon each side were pleasant cultivated spots, some of which stretched up the rising ground on our left, whilst on our right they ran nearly to the Missouri. In these fields were many women and children at work, who all appeared industrious. Upon the road were passing and repassing every moment natives, afoot and on horseback, curious to examine and stare at us. Many horses were feeding in every direction beyond the plantation. The whole view was agreeable, and had more the appearance of a country inhabited by a civilized nation than by a set of savages.<sup>25</sup>

After spending a few days at the villages (during which Henry recorded his extreme disapproval of "lascivious" customs) came the march to the Cheyenne encampment located about two days of travel away. This was an impressive occasion.

The Mandan - Hidatsa party organized to meet the Cheyenne was huge. It comprised 500 men and 300 women, all mounted. The men were armed to the teeth, with guns, spears, battle axes and bows. Henry's description of a part of the march is as follows:

Soon after getting in motion the young men formed themselves into parties of 10 to 30 abreast and proceeded at a slow, regular pace. They began to sing their war songs, accompanied with a number of rattles; this with the continued neighing and snorting of horses, which in a manner kept time to their songs, and their regular pace and motion, made really an imposing, warlike spectacle. At intervals they ceased singing and ran races, then formed again and proceeded as before.<sup>26</sup>

The Cheyenne encampment was set on an elevated plain and consisted of 120 large leather tipis "nearly all new and white as linen, pitched with great regularity at certain distances apart, in the shape of a horseshoe". Adjacent to each of these large tipis was a small kitchen, or storeroom, tipi.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps the most striking event was the meeting between the leaders of the Hidatsa - Mandan party and their enemies, the Cheyenne, who were accompanied by an allied party of Sioux:

We did not advance far before we met a small party of Schians on horseback. They were young men sent to meet us. They all gave us a friendly shake of the hand, uttering some words in their own language which no one present understood. Their horses were mostly beautiful, spirited beasts; some were masked in a very singular manner, to imitate the head of a buffalo, red deer, or cabbrie, with horns, the mouth and nostrils - even the eyes - trimmed with red cloth. This ornamentation gave them a very fierce appearance. They were by far the best built and most active horses I had seen in this country - superior, in every respect, to those we see to the northward. We came on about a mile, when, from an eminence, we perceived a large party of horsemen advancing abreast, in perfect order. We were ordered to stop, without dismounting; the several squads keeping their respective places, singing, shaking their rattles, and, at intervals, shouting. The Schians and Sioux - for the camp was

composed of both these nations, and a few Buffalo Indians - having advanced within about 50 paces of us, made a general halt, facing us; they were about 100 men. The neighing, snorting, and prancing of such a large company of strange horses, meeting each other suddenly and being restrained by their riders, had really a very spectacular effect.

We had not remained many minutes in this manner, when suddenly the first great war chief of the Schians, who was posted in their center, mounted on a handsome black stallion, gave him the reins, and at full speed rode directly up to the flag, the staff of which he folded in his arms; then he embraced the war chief who held it, next Le Borgne's brother, and then Two Crows. This ceremony being performed on horseback, with the greatest dispatch and dexterity imaginable, he passed on to the main body, selecting particular persons, whom he embraced very cordially; finally he came to us and gave us a hearty handshake, but did not take any of us in his arms.<sup>28</sup>

Eventually the peace alliance was completed. A part of the proceedings consisted of Le Borgne adopting a Cheyenne boy.

The marked contrasts between Plains and Parkland dwellers seem highlighted even in these brief and spotty descriptions of a temporary sojourner on the Plains. Parkland Indians, too, were surely aware of these contrasts as well. It was apparent that opportunities to achieve distinction and renown through warfare, horse-raiding, and peace-making existed in far greater strength on the Plains than they did in their homelands outside the Plains. Raiding and warfare, actually, were quite infrequent in the Parklands, and in some areas almost non-existent. From the point of view of a Parkland Indian, furthermore, even if a raid did occur, what

recognition could be obtained for deeds of valour? What occasions existed for a Parkland warrior to publicize his accomplishments? The Ojibwa warrior may perhaps boast of his deeds to his family or friends, or attempt to publicize them during the gatherings in spring and summer. Nonetheless, there were no clearly defined institutional means to acquire, or be accorded, recognition.

On the Plains, on the other hand, there were well-defined and legitimate occasions when military achievement was made known and given recognition. Mishkin describes the return of a war party among the Kiowa Apache thus:

The return of a successful revenge party was always marked by a triumphal entry.... two scouts were sent to ride around the home camp several times and then a column of warriors with blackened faces and in full war dress would ride in shooting their guns into the air, carrying scalps and other trophies flying from poles.... the war party leader would make a report covering the whole enterprise.... deeds and exploits of particular warriors were recounted in elaborate detail. The cowardly acts were mentioned likewise - who retreated, who pulled up his horse when order for the charge was given.... when a coup count was recited the women ululated, the audience roared, <sup>29</sup> came to its feet and danced and sang in the tipi.

Not only was valour given great recognition on the Plains, it was even measured with precision. Some deeds were graded as more valourous than others. Among the Crow, counting coup was the deed of highest honour, and this was followed in order by that of tearing a bow or gun out of the

hands of an enemy, of stealing a picketed horse from the midst of a hostile village, and that of acting in the capacity of leader of a war party.<sup>30</sup>

Further, opportunities existed on the Plains for the achievement of wealth through the giveaway ceremonies. Both enhanced prestige. While there are structural similarities in the Parklands, in that accumulation of wealth and generosity in giving it away were valued, the scale with which wealth was accumulated and redistributed in the Plains was so great that the Parkland similarities seem pale by comparison.<sup>31</sup>

#### MIGRATION OF PARKLAND-DWELLERS INTO THE PLAINS

The new opportunities on the Plains - for the accumulation of horse wealth, for the achievement of distinction in battle, for the recognition of valour, for new physical mobility, for the expression of bravery, speed, daring - began to attract a steady flow of Parkland people into the Plains. Of course, Plains living could only be accomplished following an acquisition of horses, and this did not seem to occur with much rapidity



till the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Alexander Henry the Elder passed through Central and Southeastern Saskatchewan in 1776 and he found some of the Assiniboiné and Cree in the area possessing small herds of horses.<sup>32</sup> Most of these people living along the eastern edges of the Plains at this time did not possess horses, and when they hunted the buffalo this was done on foot.<sup>33</sup> The Assiniboiné and Cree probably obtained some of their horses through trade with the Missouri River village people, and also through raids on the Blackfoot, Hidatsa, Dakota and Cheyenne.

Following 1776 the transformation of the Assiniboiné and Cree into equestrian Plains-dwellers seems to have been completed with the same rapidity as that which occurred among the Cheyenne. By the early 1800s, all bands of Assiniboiné in Manitoba and in Southeastern Saskatchewan were equestrian, though they remained poor in horse-wealth compared to their equestrian neighbours.

Among the Cree, however, the conversion to equestrian life was completed only partially by 1800. Some remained in the western Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan Parklands and retained their traditional livelihood of hunting moose, beaver, and red deer. Daniel Harmon, the Northwest Company trader, noted that there were Cree residents in the forests near Fort Alexandria on the upper Assiniboiné River in 1801.<sup>34</sup>

Small groups of Crees also remained in the Parkland in southern Manitoba.<sup>35</sup> North of Fort Alexandria, in the area of the Pasquia Hills, the Cowinnetou and Pigogomow Cree lived in the Parklands and the edges of the Plains.<sup>36</sup> The Parkland Crees in Manitoba and the Duck Mountains near Fort Alexandria departed for the Plains and became fully equestrian in the 1820s. After about 1830 there were apparently no Crees in the Manitoba Parklands other than Swampy Crees from Lake Winnipeg who had joined the Ojibwa Chief Peguis at the mouth of the Red River.

During this time, between 1800 and 1810, the geographical distribution of the different groups in the Parklands and northeastern Plains was as follows:

The Assiniboine and Cree were resident in the Plains of Manitoba and southeastern and central Saskatchewan. The Ojibwa were in the process of occupying the Manitoba - Saskatchewan Parkland as far north as the Porcupine Mountains, and the Cree were migrating into the Plains from this Parkland area. Few Ojibwa at this time had any horses and they were essentially a Woodland people. However, if an equestrian group called the "Snakes" seen by Henry in 1800 at Red River were Ojibwa people and members of the clan by that name, then it is apparent some of the Ojibwa had become fully equestrian.<sup>37</sup> The Hidatsa and Blackfoot were resident in southern and southwestern Saskatchewan, but the former had largely been

moving southwards and concentrating themselves in the villages and the Plains near the Middle and Upper Missouri. In North Dakota south of the Pembina Hills, Siouan groups, mainly Yanktonai and Sisseton, ranged the Plains on horseback. However, there had been a progressive movement of these groups southward following the great smallpox epidemic of 1780-82. The northern part of North Dakota, never heavily populated by the Dakota at any time, was being depopulated by this southward shift. After 1800, increasing numbers of Yanktonai and Sisseton were being seen in the vicinity of the St. Peter's or Minnesota River, and also at Prairie du Chien. They were drawn in part, it appears, by gifts and political dealings with British and American representatives prior to and following the War of 1812.<sup>38</sup>

Ojibwa entry into the Plains simply followed, by and large, that of the Assiniboiné and Cree. It took place from the Parkland and Woodland ecotone stretching from Red Lake in Minnesota to the Porcupine Hills in east central Saskatchewan. The initial recipients of horses, it appears, were Ojibwa bands residing along or near the Red and Assiniboiné Rivers, from Pembina in the south to the southern part of Lake Manitoba in the west. Horses in this quarter were obtained for most part through trade with the Assiniboiné and Cree, or theft from the Hudson's Bay Company and Canadian traders. The Ojibwa seem to have refrained, at this time, from stealing horses

from the Assiniboine and Cree. Perhaps as newcomers they were careful not to antagonize these people who were, at any event, more powerful than they were. The Ojibwa also had sought and effected political alliances with the Assiniboine and Cree. It appears that they were cautious and wished to avoid being subjected to warfare and harassment by more powerful neighbours during their initial entry into the equestrian life of the Plains.

Ojibwa participation in the usual raiding and warring activities of the Plains began to be apparent in the later part of the 1820s following the movement of some Ojibwa bands into the High Plains in southern Saskatchewan and northern North Dakota. In Saskatchewan, in alliance with the Assiniboine and Cree, with whom they often travelled, they engaged in warfare with the Hidatsa, Blackfoot, and the western Sioux. In the 1830s and 1840s increasingly more Ojibwa bands were being drawn into this region of the Plains from the Parklands in Manitoba; these bands proceeded westwards through the Qu'Appelle River valley and the Moose Mountains. By the mid nineteenth century encampments of Plains Ojibwa people were found in the Qu'Appelle region and the Moose Mountains, and further afield in southern Saskatchewan, in the Wood Mountains, the Cypress Hills, and south along the Milk River in northern Montana.<sup>39</sup>

Also during this period Ojibwa encampments appeared in

northern North Dakota, along the southern edges of the Pembina Hills and the Turtle Mountains. According to Yanktonai winter counts for the years 1824-25 there was a heroic Dakota raid on an Ojibwa encampment south of the Turtle Mountains. In 1835, according to Howard's informants, a huge Ojibwa Sun Dance encampment was established near this site, which lies in the vicinity of the present town of Towner, North Dakota, on the Souris River.<sup>40</sup>

Thus during the 1830s the Ojibwa had acquired the accoutrements of Plains culture in North Dakota, and in the process had lost their earlier dread of the Sioux. In characteristic Plains fashion, the Ojibwa raided the Dakota and the village peoples of the Missouri, the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara.

### CHAPTER III

#### OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PARKLANDS: 1812 - 1870

The migration of Parkland Indians into the Plains continued in strength till about 1840. It would appear that during the period 1810 - 1840 increasing numbers of Ojibwa joined the Assiniboine and Parkland Cree in these migrations.

Those among the Ojibwa who did not opt to migrate to the Plains continued to maintain their Parkland subsistence, which consisted of trapping fur, and hunting woodland game and buffalo.

New opportunities for livelihood began to appear in the Parklands after the establishment of the Red River Settlement in 1812. Initially these opportunities consisted in trade in food and forest products with the Red River settlers, but in subsequent years, particularly after 1830, a number of other opportunities also arose. These involved freighting of goods by means of the Red River cart, supplying the Hudson's Bay Company and the Red River settlers with pemmican, and experimenting with farming ventures in association with missionaries in the area.

In this Chapter, I propose to discuss these opportunities, and the response of the Ojibwa toward them. Discussion centres around the new opportunities that arose in the Parklands after 1812 which led the Parkland Ojibwa into "non-traditional" endeavours. The "traditional" hunting and trapping activities of the Parkland Indians (primarily Ojibwa) did not undergo any notable change in the nineteenth century. These "traditional" activities are described in Chapter I, and are not the subject of discussion here.

#### Economic opportunities during the early growth of settlement

While some of the Prairie and Parkland Indians, such as the Cheyenne and Dakota, and the Assiniboiné and Cree, adopted the equestrian life of the Plains en masse, the Parkland Ojibwa did not do so in the same proportionate numbers. At the time the latter had begun their transition to equestrian living, a novel development occurred in the Manitoba Parkland. Lord Selkirk, in his anxiety to find a new home for uprooted Highlanders in Scotland, chose the forks of the Red and Assiniboiné Rivers (centred within the site of the present city of Winnipeg) as a location for a new colony. The colony was established in 1812, and it

generated new economic opportunities for the Parkland Indians. The movement of Ojibwa to the Plains was checked to some degree.<sup>1</sup>

For Lord Selkirk this colony was an ambitious project, and one very dear to his heart. He followed its fortunes with interest, and he held a close emotional tie to it throughout the remainder of his life.<sup>2</sup> After his death in 1821, his brother-in-law and one of the executors of his estate, John Halkett, was able to persuade Sir George Simpson, the Hudson's Bay Company's Governor of Rupertsland, to take an active interest in the colony. This Simpson did, and the Hudson's Bay Company followed Lord Selkirk in becoming its chief and generous benefactor.<sup>3</sup> Simpson's objective in extending financial support was partly philanthropic, and partly it was an attempt to raise the colony's productivity so that the Hudson's Bay Company could draw on it for a supply of food and simple manufactures, which at that time it was required to import from England.<sup>4</sup>

While much of this continuing infusion of wealth into the colony benefitted the colonists, as it was designed to do, a considerable part of it also found its way into the hands of the local Indians. In the years following the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers in 1812, these were Ojibwa for the most part.



The colony remained quite a heavy financial liability for its sponsors in its earlier years. Agricultural development was slow. Crops were often ruined by grasshoppers, floods, droughts, and early frosts. Sometimes as a result of a poor harvest in one year there would be shortages of seed for planting in the next, and delays in acquiring seed would result in a late sowing. The colony was not able to produce enough flour for its own consumption until as late as 1831.<sup>5</sup> During years of inadequate or disastrous harvests, the settlers were dependent for food on the local Indians; they would follow the Red River Ojibwa bands to Pembina to obtain a share of the buffalo hunts.<sup>6</sup>

An active and lively trade, in consequence, developed between the settlers and the Ojibwa, and this was not confined to years when the crops were good.

Apart from fresh buffalo meat and robes, the settlers bought from the Ojibwa fish, venison, fowl, maple sugar, dressed leather, moccasins, furs, snowshoes, wild rice, pemmican, rawhide, horses, herbal medicines, and the numerous berries and wild fruit that grew in the region. Indians were sought also for various services. They were needed as guides, canoeemen, lumbermen, and for assistance in the tanning and dressing of skins, making canoes, carting hay, etc.<sup>7</sup>

The Selkirk settlers had the means to purchase these services. They were provided a monetary allowance by Lord Selkirk, and this was continued through his estate after his death. Also, at least during Lord Selkirk's lifetime,

they received goods by ship from England every year, such as clothing, oatmeal, tools, implements, and arms and ammunition.<sup>8</sup> All these items were of course desirable to the Ojibwa, hence the trade was of mutual benefit and productive of much goodwill. Moreover, this trade grew every year with the growth in requirements of the colony. Except in the aftermath of the skirmish at Seven Oaks in 1816, new settlers arrived every year at the colony, and there was an unbroken net of migration growth in spite of numerous defections from the colony to seek homesteads in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

It should be mentioned that these extensive trading relationships, and the goodwill between settlers and the Ojibwa, stood the colony in good stead during the troubles of 1815-16. The benefits of trade had established an interest for the Ojibwa in the colony's continued existence. When a party of Northwest Company men under Cuthbert Grant ousted the settlers from their homes in 1815, the latter were given refuge by a number of Ojibwa bands. A large segment of the colony spent an entire year in hiding with an Ojibwa band at Lake St. Martin.<sup>10</sup>

With the establishment and growth of the Red River Settlement, as the colony came to be known, a new and profitable opportunity was opened up for the Parkland Ojibwa. The terms of trade with the new settlement were attractive, a wider range of goods were in demand by settlers

than they were by the professional traders; and the settlers were less niggardly, less greedy and full of guile. Even after the settlement achieved a greater measure of self-sufficiency in food, the demands for trade in country produce brought in by Indian and Metis hunters and fishermen did not apparently decrease. In the 1860s the products of the Plains hunts and the fishing in the lakes and rivers continued to remain a significant part of the diet in the Red River Settlement.<sup>11</sup>

According to a settler in Portage la Prairie during the 1860s, each settler had someone among the hunters who he called "Nichiwan" (my cousin), and who was in effect a trading partner. It was expected within this relationship that each party would be generous to the other. Garrioch, describing the 1860s, writes that:

.. if the person so addressed i.e. as Nichiwan did not want to show himself painfully lacking in friendliness and good manners, there was nothing for it but to reciprocate both in word and deed. The Chiwan relationship did not live on air but on spontaneous and mutual acts of friendliness given and received..... My father's Chiwan was Antoine Fayan.... When Fayan handed father a couple of buffalo tongues, or a bladder of fine grease, or a moss, father looked happy - possibly he was - but by the time they parted an hour or two later Fayan had reason to be the happier man of the two.<sup>12</sup>

Thus a half century after the Selkirk settlers had arrived trade relations between the settlers and the Ojibwa continued to thrive, at least among some sections of the

population. Indeed, the growth of opportunity for the Ojibwa was closely tied to the growth of settlement. As settlement expanded initially in Manitoba, and soon after in Saskatchewan and Alberta, the demands of employment and services of various kinds grew rapidly. A line of work the Indians and half-breeds, between them, came to monopolize was the transport of goods between Red River and the various new settlements, as well as between the former and St. Paul (Minnesota), which had become an important entrepot after the arrival of the railway in Minnesota. Other than the freighting of goods, the Ojibwa found work in the growing packing, warehousing, and fur marketing operations in the Red River Settlement.

Though the Hudson's Bay Company, after absorbing its major rival, the Northwest Company in 1821, had emerged as a monopolistic giant, its control over the trade of furs, pemmican, and imported supplies was never very effective in the southern sections of Rupertsland. The Company's first major rivals in the 1820s were the Americans located at Pembina and the upper Red River, and along the upper Missouri.<sup>13</sup> Soon afterwards this competition was intensified by the entry into the trading field of "free traders". The lucrative business of "free trading", initially largely a Metis preserve, came to be engaged in by numerous Ojibwa as well.

This extensive and expanding range of opportunities, appearing, as it were, upon their doorstep, may have played an important part in halting, or at least perhaps curtailing, a large-scale movement of the Ojibwa into the Plains in search of glory, wealth and power. The opportunities to move to the Plains were there - horses were becoming increasingly available to the Ojibwa in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century - but at the same time a new and promising system of opportunities was being created in the Parklands as well. Many Ojibwa as a result, perhaps, came to see advantage in a relatively undistinguished continuity of their old traditional subsistence, and a new trading relationship, in preference to the excitement of horse-stealing and vengeful raids upon the wicked Hidatsa, Blackfoot and Sioux. With the expansion of settlement and trade, and with the acquisition of horses, the Ojibwa were on the threshold of opportunity in either of two directions. It was a period that promised cultural efflorescence and economic boom: on the Plains in conjunction with the wealth and power of the equestrian buffalo-hunters, and on the Parklands in conjunction with that of the new European settlers.

Yet this period, in the years following 1812, with its undisguised potential for acquiring wealth and luxury (which the Ojibwa evidently saw and utilized) is seen by scholars as one of "declining opportunities". Ray writes:

The period from 1821 to 1870 was one of declining opportunities for the Indians in the fur trade. The Woodland Indians were the first to feel the effects.... Declining resources and a growing economic dependency placed them in a weak position vis-a-vis the traders and they were forced to accept most of the economic reforms the Company initiated.... The Parkland-Grassland Indians, on the other hand, were able to resist these changes somewhat longer because of the Company's continued dependence upon them for food for a short period after 1821, and because of the proximity of American trading houses.<sup>14</sup>

Ray's argument centres around the proposition that after the end of competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company in 1821, brought about by the absorption of the latter by the former, the position of the Indians, as dependent clients of one or the other of the two companies, became weaker because they were then forced into dependency upon a single company. Being able to reduce its demand for pemmican by economizing and by finding alternative foods such as agricultural produce from the Red River Settlement, the Hudson's Bay Company threw the livelihood of the Parkland and Plains Indians into an economic depression. Other than a few American traders, no outlets existed for the products of the Indian hunt.<sup>15</sup>

There are some factual problems with this argument. The demand for pemmican rose rather than decreased after 1830 when posts in Athabasca and the Mackenzie District were extended and more men, for whom the pemmican was needed, were hired for the northern brigades. Also requisitions by the Hudson's Bay Company of flour produced by the Red River settlers declined during the 1840s.<sup>16</sup>

However, the main problems with this thesis go deeper. What were the notions of wealth among the Indians of the Plains? Ray, it seems, would have us understand that after their contact with traders the reason that the Plains Indians hunted buffalo - or, indeed, were on the Plains at all - was to supply traders with pemmican or furs, thus to be able to acquire trade goods from them. This is quite untenable. Wealth on the Plains consisted chiefly in horses, not in trade goods. The possession of trade goods, though desirable, did not arouse in the Indians the kind of consuming desire that was felt for the possession of horses.

Also, the Plains Indians, with their great mobility and penchant for trading, never really lacked any trading partners or access to trade goods. At the Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara villages, apart from native goods, manufactures of British, Spanish, French and American origin were regularly available. In addition to the Indian traders, Spanish and American traders operated from Middle Missouri sites as well. Rene Jessaume, an ex-Northwest Company employee, had a post near a Mandan village in 1794. Soon after this the Spanish Missouri Company established one in the vicinity in 1796. Fort Mandan was built by Captain George M. Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804 near the Spanish post, and numerous others in the same locality followed: Fort Manuel Lisa (Missouri Fur Company)

in 1809, Fort Tilton (Columbia Fur Company) in 1822, Fort Kipp (Columbia Fur Company) in 1825, Fort Union (American Fur Company) at the mouth of the Yellowstone River in 1828, Fort Atkinson (Northwest Company) in 1859, to mention some of the significant ones.<sup>17</sup>

To assume that the Plains Indians of Rupertsland would feel a "declining opportunity" if the Hudson's Bay Company were to buy a little less pemmican from them, or even none at all, is hardly credible. The Plains Indians were on the Plains not for the business of selling pemmican to traders, but for acquiring glory and for stealing horses. Declining opportunities were to come later, of course, after 1865, when the buffalo herds, source of their dietary staple, went into a rapid and irreversible decline. In spite of Governor Simpson's objective of bringing the Plains Indians under control and into dependency upon the Hudson's Bay Company, the Plains Indians continued to retain, on the Canadian Plains, at least, every measure of independence. Simpson's fond hope found expression again in later years (in the 1860s and a part of the 1870s) by the depiction by Company officials of the West as an area bordering on anarchy. Company officials hoped that by presenting such a picture they would attract the establishment of police and customs services, and thus attempt to restrict the mobility of the Plains Indians.<sup>18</sup>



Ray's contention that opportunities declined after 1621 fails to be applicable in the Pacific also. Mention has been made of the nature of opportunities perceived by the Ojibwa with the arrival and growth of settlement at the mouth of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The Ojibwa carried on an extensive trade with the settlers, to the benefit of both parties.

There is a tendency among some ethnohistorians, including Ray, to assume that when the products of hunting and trapping - skins and provisions - were in demand, Indians were contented and "well off" in a secondary sense, but when the fur trade declined through the depletion of fur and game resources, or a severe dip in prices, the Indians were left in a hapless state. As hunters and trappers, they were skillful, brilliant and successful, but when they were forced to take up other occupations, they floundered for life in the bush and failed to "adjust".

This ignores the fact that in some areas Indians engaged in work of a "non-traditional" nature even during the height of the fur trade.<sup>12</sup> In the huge establishments maintained by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Rector, and Norway House, and later at Fort George and numerous lesser ones such as Cumberland House, Albany, Churchill etc., large numbers of Indians were employed in maintenance.

While in the eighteenth century Orkney men were usually brought in to perform this work, in the nineteenth century Indians had begun to be employed. The tasks they performed were numerous and variegated. These involved the construction and maintenance of buildings: making doors, sawing beams, laying roofs, mudding walls, whitewashing etc.; the manufacture of boats: York boats, sturgeon heads, scows, canoes; and the tasks involved in making kilns, carts, and coracles, and fences, stockades, and a host of other work involving carpentry and iron work.<sup>20</sup> So many men had, in fact, shown skills in these occupations that the Hudson's Bay Company in 1830 formally decided to permit their post managers to employ native men as apprentices in skilled mechanical trades.<sup>21</sup> Referring to these mechanics, a Hudson's Bay Company trader reminisced:

....while the boatbuilders and carpenters were good, I think the blacksmiths were better, and could turn their hands to and repair anything from an anchor to a watch. Repairing guns was, of course, one of the principal crafts they were called upon to practice; but many of the "non-professional" natives claimed to be able to temper the knives they made for themselves, out of worn-out files, better than any of the blacksmiths. The Indians were all craftsmen in the making of snowshoes and canoes, and many of them were wonderful workers in metal without forge or other smithy appliances.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from construction and mechanical work, Indians also cultivated and tended gardens attached to various posts. Many posts also kept cattle. The servants at the

posts, many of them Indians, performed all the work needed to maintain the gardens and the cattle.<sup>23</sup>

While traditional economic activities, such as hunting and fishing, rooted in the pre-contact culture and in the Contact Traditional culture<sup>24</sup> continued to be pursued by the Parkland Indians (largely Ojibwa) in the nineteenth century, new opportunities for work were opened up with the rise of the Red River Settlement. Many of the Ojibwa seized these opportunities, and in consequence decided to pursue new forms of livelihood, and in some instances, new ways of life, in preference to, or in conjunction with, their traditional activities.

There is considerable literature on the traditional economic activities of the Ojibwa which became stabilized with the Euro-Canadian fur trade. But less has been written about Parkland Ojibwa activities in the early and mid-nineteenth century which can be termed "non-traditional". The "non-traditional" activities, nonetheless, were significant in the life of the Parkland Indians, for it is likely that during the 1850s and 1860s they provided a livelihood for about half the Indian population.

Following a brief review of the economic growth at Red River which gave rise to opportunities, the involvement of the Parkland Indians in the new, non-traditional opportunities and work patterns is discussed at some length in this Chapter.

A number of significant changes had begun to occur in Red River following 1821. Many of the people in and around Red River had begun to establish themselves as free traders, in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company, for trade in fur, pemmican, and imported necessities. In 1862 the rail line had pushed into Minnesota. This had the result of giving rise to a new and vigorous market for the products of the Northwest at St. Paul, and it also had the result of making available imported goods at a price considerably less than was the cost of importing similar articles from England by ship and York boat via York Factory.<sup>25</sup> As a consequence of these factors, the Red River Settlement began to grow in importance both as a market for fur and pemmican, and as a port of entry for imported goods. The Hudson's Bay Company, attempting to retain its long and monopoly, tried to discourage both developments, by establishing high import duties, and by harassing free traders through searches and seizures of "contraband" goods.<sup>26</sup> When it found itself unable to suppress the competition through these measures, regular troops were called in from Britain in 1846. However, the troops stayed at Fort Union for only two years, as the Hudson's Bay Company was unwilling to pay the costs of garrison.<sup>27</sup> In course of time the Hudson's Bay Company began to see the wisdom also of importing and exporting its goods via St. Paul, and the

denouement came after the dramatic Guillaume Boyer incident in 1849, when a half-breed free trader was tried but acquitted for violating the Company's trading restrictions.<sup>28</sup>

In the following decade the Hudson's Bay Company entered into agreement with the United States Secretary to allow tariff-free import of its goods from England via St. Paul, and concomitantly, it transferred its warehousing and administrative headquarters from York Factory to Fort Garry at Red River.<sup>29</sup> Thus, steadily, the Red River Settlement saw a rise in its importance as a market and transportation centre, and eventually as the headquarters for the Hudson's Bay Company's trading operations in the entire Northwest. The economy was based almost entirely on the highly profitable trade in fur and pemmican.

To refer to work that some Indians performed as being "non-traditional" is to be somewhat vague. Non-traditional how far back in time? For the Ojibwa, after all, both white collar work and horse-stealing were "non-traditional". Nevertheless, considering non-traditional work and opportunity as those which derived from the growth of settlement at Red River, we can usefully distinguish and classify three significant non-traditional categories of work and opportunity which the Parkland Indians utilized.

These were: transport; trade, in the capacity of entrepreneur; and a third category which might most fruitfully be

termed "becoming civilized", as it involved a variety of occupations. Each of these categories is discussed below, within the context of relevant historical detail.

### TRANSPORT

In the eighteenth century, transportation for the needs of the fur trade had developed along the waterways. Both the Hudson's Bay Company from York Factory, and the Canadian traders from Montreal, operated primarily in the lake and forest country. There was little penetration into the Plains, except along the major waterways. For these needs the transport canoe was sufficient.

For transportation on the Plains the Indians had retained their travois, and with the introduction of the horse, had replaced the motive power of the dog with that of the horse.<sup>30</sup>

It was left to the Metis to develop a new form of transportation on the Plains, and this, in course of time, proved to be so efficient and durable that it came to completely dominate the movement of goods on the Northern Plains.<sup>31</sup>

It was only the railway that succeeded ultimately in displacing it. This means of transportation was the Red River cart.

The Red River cart, though similar in external appearance to the horse-drawn wagons that carried heavy loads in all United States across the continent, was nevertheless in other ways a unique Northern invention. It consisted entirely of wood without any iron whatsoever. Thus even the spokes and rims of the wheels used no iron, and no nails were employed at all. Shaganappi (raw buffalo hide) was used to some extent to bind the parts together. Though the lack of iron might seem at first glance a disadvantage, actually it was not so. If any breakages occurred, the cart was readily repaired on route. Few tools were required to mend, or for that matter, to construct a cart. All that was necessary was an axe, a saw, a screw-auger, and a small knife. With these the beaverlander was independent, without need for extraneous facilities. A cart also functioned as a form of raft to cross heavily flooded rivers. The entire vehicle could be taken apart and placed on fisher wheels, or a piece of hide could be placed under it, and rowed across with all the belongings stacked on top of it.

Freight carts were pulled by an ox. They weighed up to 800 lbs., and travelled 20 miles a day. Horse-drawn carts were also used, mainly as a faster means of transport. About 50-60 miles a day could be covered by a horse-drawn vehicle, and this could carry about 400-500 lbs.<sup>30</sup>

When the Red River cart made its first appearance is not known. However, it is likely it was invented at Pembina, a favourite wintering site for Metis, Cree, Assiniboin and Ojibwa buffalo hunters. In 1802 Alexander Henry, the trader, described the cart as a means of transportation newly available in the area. Referring to the transport of trading goods to his two outposts at Red Lake (Minnesota) and Pinewaywining in the Pembina Hills, Henry wrote:

the.... posts are overland, and require horses to transport the property. We have enough for all purposes, and a new sort of cart, which facilitates transportation, hauling home meat, etc. They are about four feet high and perfectly straight; the spokes are perpendicular, without the least bending outward, and only four to each wheel. These carts carry about five pieces, and are drawn by one horse.

The cart at this time was essentially a substitute for the horse-drawn travois. It was used to haul buffalo meat from a hunt on the Plains to home base at a settlement such as Pembina. In course of time cart trails developed from these settlements to various points on the Plains. By 1850 cart trails existed over much of the area in southern Manitoba, southeast Saskatchewan, northern North Dakota, northwest and central Minnesota, and the upper Red River.<sup>34</sup>

The Red River cart began to be used as commercial transport beginning with the "illegal" trading activities



of the free traders. At first business was carried on by these free traders with American traders located on the upper Red River, but with the arrival of the railway in Minnesota, St. Paul became the destination of most of the commercial traffic.

Cart traffic between Red River and St. Paul rapidly increased. The following figures indicate the number of carts travelling from Red River to St. Paul:<sup>35</sup>

|      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1844 | 6     | carts |
| 1851 | 102   | carts |
| 1858 | 600   | carts |
| 1869 | 2,500 | carts |

The increase represented in the last two figures is accounted for in great part by the Hudson's Bay Company's use of the St. Paul route to transport its goods to and from England.

Most carts made a single trip to St. Paul in a year; however, about a third to half the number made a second trip as well. The distance on the cart trail between Red River and St. Paul was 600 miles and it took about three weeks to make the journey each way. The freight brought down to St. Paul consisted largely of fur pelts, buffalo robes, tallow, dried meat, leather, trinkets, and some farm produce. On the return trip home the carts brought into Red River

manufactured goods such as clothing, household articles, arms, machinery, and other general merchandise, such as staple groceries, tobacco, liquor, tools, hardware, and implements.<sup>36</sup>

The carts moved in huge trains in which it was not uncommon to find 200 to 300. They were divided into brigades of ten. Each brigade was manned by three persons, and there were general supervisors also who were in charge of large sections of the train. Thus, for example, in 1869 there would be over 750 men employed on a single trip to St. Paul.<sup>37</sup>

The majority of these men were Metis and Ojibwa. Most of them owned their own carts, and some of them owned two or three more as well. They contracted out their services for a particular trip. Freightage by Red River cart was a fairly profitable occupation. A cart owner could expect payment of \$52, plus board for a round trip journey from Red River to St. Paul, which normally took 40 to 45 days. In the mid-nineteenth century earnings of \$0.60 per day were generally considered good wages.<sup>38</sup>

The traffic of carts from Red River to the Western Plains consisted initially of sporadic forays of buffalo hunters. However, in the 1850s when the Red River Settlement developed into an active market for buffalo meat, regular hunts had begun to be conducted.<sup>39</sup> During this time the Hudson's Bay Company entered the market as a major buyer of pemican.

(to supply its brigades in the expanding fur trade in Athabasca and the Mackenzie District). Though the Company bought pemmican and dried meat at its trading posts at Qu'Appelle and on the Assiniboine and North Saskatchewan Rivers, it also bought considerable quantities at the Red River Settlement.<sup>40</sup> The cart trips from Red River to the Western Plains consequently became a commercial undertaking.

The Plains provision trade employed many more men than the Red River-St. Paul freighting trips. In the 1860s, when the provision trade had passed its peak and the St. Paul trade was on the rise, Hargrave estimates that 1,000 men were employed in the former work. Virtually all these men were Ojibwa and Metis, of whom it is estimated that about one fifth, or about 200, were Ojibwa. An additional 100 Ojibwa men may have been employed on the St. Paul route. Hence during the 1860s about 300 Ojibwa men were likely employed in freighting work, transporting pemmican from the Plains and American goods from St. Paul to Red River.<sup>41</sup>

A boost to cart traffic came with the formation of agricultural settlements in the West commencing in the 1870s. These were settlements of half-breed and Indian stock, and were located on the North Saskatchewan River at Vermilion, St. Paul, Victoria, and Ft. Albert.

Though these settlements were located on a major waterway, it was easier to travel overland than to go by river rather than follow the circuitous routes of the lake and

rivers. The requirements of general merchandise of the  
 settlers (most of whom were Red River half-breeds), and  
 their travel to Red River for visits and shopping increasingly  
 helped to develop a cart trail from these settlements to Red  
 River. Both Catholic and Wesleyan missions were located  
 at these settlements as well, augmenting their connections  
 with Red River. In the 1850s the Hudson's Bay Company began  
 to supply its Plains posts by means of cart from Red River.<sup>42</sup>  
 In consequence a cart trail developed linking Red River  
 with Fort Assiniboia, passing through Fort Ellice and the  
 Assiniboine River and the tedious agriculture settlement  
 en route. The trail also succeeded westward from Assiniboia  
 to Rocky Mountain House. Thereby a well-travelled cart trail over  
 1,100 miles long existed north of the international border  
 from the Red River Settlement to Rocky Mountain House in  
 the early 1860s.<sup>43</sup> Surprisingly, this significant artery  
 passing through the entire length of the Canadian Plains, so  
 responsible for virtually all travel across this vast  
 country, finds no mention in a standard history of transportation  
 in Canada.<sup>44</sup>

The trail was used primarily for the transport of goods,  
 but it was also used by prospective gold mine searchers  
 overland to the Placer in 1856, and by members of the Red River  
 and the Assiniboine and the Assiniboine. Later it was travelled  
 by stage coaches and noted as a connecting link between the

and Dr. Cheadle in 1862, who went to survey the West for possible immigration, to experience for themselves the thrills of the buffalo hunts, and to inhale the exuberant air of an unsettled West. During the 1870s when a great number of Government personnel began using the route, the Hudson's Bay Company posts en route became virtually hotels for the travellers and supply points for the large parties that sometimes accompanied them.<sup>45</sup>

The most heavily travelled section of this great trail was that between Red River and Carlton, which came to be known as the Carlton Trail. It certainly deserves an important place in the history of the West. The trail left Fort Garry and passed along the present Portage Avenue in Winnipeg. It then followed the Assiniboine River to Portage la Prairie (60 miles). There were two alternative routes after this for the next 90 mile section. Following this meeting, the cart trail passed on to Fort Ellice on the Assiniboine River. There was a very steep climb of 250 feet on the west bank, and negotiating this incline was arduous work especially with heavily loaded carts. The Hudson's Bay Company operated a scow (toll ferry) across the river for the benefit of travellers. The trail then travelled across the Plains to the Touchwood Hills, and in later years the Grand Pacific Railway would follow the same route. Another set of alternate routes appeared near the present town of Humboldt after the Quill Hills, and the trails met after two alternative crossings on the South Saskatchewan River. One of these crossings, at

Batoche, was operated by a scow owned by the Hudson's Bay Co., and the other, at Gabriel's Crossing, was run by Gabriel Dumont, a Metis settler who later played an important part in the 1885 uprising (the second Fiel Rebellion). For winter this there was only a short stretch of 25 miles to Fort. <sup>46</sup>

Interestingly, the cart trail did not consist of a single pair of ruts carved out by the cart wheels, because the teams in a brigade did not follow in a single line. The leading animal following the leading cart was hitched to the rear corner, walking in the rut of the wheel in front of it. The succeeding animal was hitched to the cart in the same manner, and thus the brigade was spread out over a wide area. As many as sixteen ruts often existed, each worn to the same depth. This reduced the danger of any rut becoming too deep. <sup>47</sup>

Freighting by Red River cart was summer-time employment, and those who engaged in this livelihood probably returned to their bands after the freighting season to trap, hunt, and fish in the winter and spring. Some, however, continued to transport freight by dog team in winter, though the volume of goods traffic was much reduced at this season. The freighters contracted out their services to commercial establishments, churches, and private individuals.

Some Indians and Metis found employment in winter with the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern packets (sledges and dogs). These packets left Red River around the tenth of September when the ice was strong. The sleds were drawn by teams of four dogs, and the men ran along the dog-trains on skis or

The runners and their dog-teams covered about 50 miles a day. One set of Red River runners would travel to Norway House, a distance of 350 miles, in 8 days. They would return to Red River bringing with them packets and commodities brought into Norway House from York Factory and other posts. Another packet similarly connected Red River with Carlton, and linked up with packets originating from the most northerly spots on the Mackenzie River and Athabasca. A resident of Red River in the 1860s termed the departure of the Northern packet from Red River as one of the great annual events of the Settlement.<sup>48</sup> Equally, when the runners returned in February bringing news from the various far-flung posts it was an event that captured the attention of virtually every resident at Red River. Much of the news was of a personal nature - of deaths, births, domestic events - and as almost everyone at Red River had relatives and acquaintances in those posts, the return of the runners to Red River was eagerly awaited.<sup>49</sup>

Some of the Parkland Ojibwa and Metis also found employment on the waterways in summer, usually in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company's freight was carried by the Portage la Loche brigades, which sailed on York boats from Red River to the watershed separating the Churchill water system from that of the Athabasca. Some of these boats were manned by nine men, consisting of eight Ojibwa and a steersman. Wages for one journey ranged from \$3 per a

steersman to \$6 for a middleman, including pemmican and flour; regarded as rather poor pay for such strenuous work.<sup>50</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company was using York boats to transport its goods since 1826.<sup>51</sup>

Steamers, mainly of the sternwheel variety, were introduced on the Red River to connect the Settlement with Georgetown in Minnesota in 1859. It was hoped that the steamer would provide a more efficient service than the Red River cart in the transport of goods between Fort Garry and St. Paul. However, these were initially not very successful because of low water on the Red and an ambivalent attitude toward them by the Hudson's Bay Company. They were discontinued in 1863, and remained out of operation till 1870. In the 1870s they did offer some competition to the cart, but it was the railway which came in 1879 that rang the death-knell to the cart. A unique set of opportunities were in consequence eliminated for the Parkland Indians.<sup>52</sup>

### Trade

During the years 1810-1870 the trade in pemmican was a most significant and profitable commerce at Red River. Commencing in the 1820s a number of "free", i.e. independent, traders began to participate in this commerce. These were primarily Metis; but during the period 1840-1870 a number of Ojibwa were attracted into the business as well.



The activities of the free traders consisted of acquiring pemmican, and on occasion dried and fresh meat (and also furs), from the Plains buffalo hunters, and selling this produce at either the Red River Settlement or the American Missouri River trading posts. At Red River, the major purchaser was the Hudson's Bay Company, but a great majority of settlers also purchased pemmican as a supplement to their diet, and it was a valued food.<sup>53</sup>

Between 1830 and 1850 the Hudson's Bay Company and free traders were engaged in fierce competition for control of the pemmican trade in the southern and eastern Canadian Plains. Though the Company held a dominant position initially, it was unable to maintain this dominance, and steadily lost ground to the free traders. In the wake of this competition, the Company was forced to close a number of its "forward" posts, such as Portage la Prairie and Brandon House during the 1830s and 1840s, and the only surviving posts on the eastern Plains in 1860 were Fort Qu'Appelle and Fort Ellice. The latter would have likely been abandoned as well, if it were not for the new profitable business that developed after 1855, as travellers, settlers, missionaries and government officials traversed the Carlton Trail on their way to the West.

Consequent to the abandonment of posts in the eastern Plains, the Hudson's Bay Company consolidated its position at the Red River Settlement, where it purchased pemmican from half-breed and Indian traders. It had to pay higher prices for pemmican at the Red River Settlement in comparison to the

Plains, but the Company apparently found it more economical to do this than maintain some of its Plains trading posts.

In the competition for the trade on the Eastern Plains both sides held some definite advantages.

For the free traders the main advantage was mobility. They were very mobile as they did not, as a rule, maintain permanent establishments. They conducted their trade at the encampments of the Indians themselves. Though the Hudson's Bay Company also employed Indian and half-breed 'tripmen' to perform the same work, it appears the Company's servants were not as effective as the free traders. The latter were also very aggressive in their pursuit of the custom or trade of the Plains Indians. They were quick to locate the whereabouts of hunters, and also alert to take advantage of trading opportunities as these presented themselves.

The prime advantage the Company possessed was in its capital resources. It could maintain large inventories of goods, and could also offer a wide selection of material imported directly from English, American and Canadian suppliers. Because of these connections with import sources it could offer new varieties of goods. The Company could engage in price wars to disrupt competition. In addition, the Hudson's Bay Company had greater strength to weather losses arising from non-payment of credit advances made to the Indians.

Thus the free traders and the Hudson's Bay Company had in each other a formidable adversary. But our knowledge

of the operations of the free traders is extremely scanty. Unlike the Hudson's Bay Company, they left few, if any, accounts of their transactions, or of their movements and other activities. The meagre information that we do possess is undoubtedly biased, as observers likely only made mention of the more successful and notable traders.

One of the prominent Ojibwa traders frequenting Red River was Kissoway, or John Tanner. He was credited with having a "very large trade", and to cut costs he imported goods directly from England. Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris met him in 1874, and he reported as follows:

Interview with Indian trader from S. Saskatchewan: This man's grandfather, he informed me, came from the American side where he had been baptized, and the grandson informed me that his name was John Tanner, but his Indian name was Kissoway. He had been sent to me by Hon. A. Boyd at my own request. Kissoway is in many respects a remarkable man. He is a pure Indian - a Saulteaux having no knowledge of either French or English. Nevertheless he carries on a very large trade and I am informed, imports goods on his own account from England. He bears a high character for good conduct and truthfulness, and impressed me most favorably by his intelligence and anxiety that steps should be taken to prevent any possible trouble with the Indian nations.<sup>54</sup>

Isaac Cowie, a Hudson's Bay Company trader also makes mention of Kissoway in his reminiscences. He writes:

In the end of March (1870) Mr. McDonald (Hudson's Bay Factor at Fort Qu'Appelle) ordered me to go to Wood Mountain to try to buy pemmican, at any price, to enable the boats to be provisioned for the voyage to York Factory. Henri Hibbert and I accordingly set out on horseback ...<sup>55</sup>

But the precious commodity was not easily obtained. Cowie found, eventually, that Kisseway was the only man in the Wood Mountain area who possessed any surplus pemmican. Indeed he had "a corner on the pemmican"<sup>56</sup> earlier a period of cut-throat competition for it in the declining years of the buffalo.

That evening we found the trader, Kis-sit-away Tanner in camp on the Dirt Hills. He was the only person known to have any pemmican, having ten bags, which he esteemed worth their weight in gold. After some haggling, he sold us six bags at two shillings and six pence a pound, payable in cash at Fort Garry.<sup>57</sup>

The price of pemmican at Red River in 1870 was one shilling per pound (Hargrave writes: "Pemmican, which formerly cost three-pence a pound, can now be procured with difficulty for a shilling ..."),<sup>58</sup> and the price at the Dirt Hills in Saskatchewan may perhaps have been half that amount. If that were so, Kisseway parted with his six bags to the Hudson's Bay Company trader for about five times the gain; all the same. Considering the circumstances and Cowie's rather desperate need for pemmican, the transaction was perhaps quite favourable from Cowie's point of view. If so, Kisseway can be considered a reasonable, not a ruthless bargainer.

Kisseway was successful enough as a trader to become a prominent half-breed servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, to his own employ. Oliver Flammond had been serving with the Hudson's Bay Company for many years, and was a highly respected employee. The following conversation, which is reported he had with Flammond, is mentioned here for interest.

amusing overtones:

After my business was over with Tanner, I took Flemmand for a little stroll, and to hear his adventures since he left the Company's service and entered that of "Mister Kisisaway", as he called his employer. "Well, Flemmand", I enquired, "how have you been getting on?" "Stop", he cried, "I don't want dat name no more! My name is now Jackson - 'Mister' Jackson, too, for dat's what de 'Mericans call me at Fort la Roche Jaune". "Why?" I asked. "I go dare to buy tings for my boss, for he not speak English, an' I hear de 'Mericans always swear by General Jackson. I want dem to t'ink me English-man, too, no halfbreed, so w'en day ask my name, I say 'Jackson'. Den day say, 'Oh, Mister Jackson, come an' heat wit us,' an' day make much of me. Dat's why I don't want dat old name Flemmand no more."<sup>59</sup>

In what manner did the Indian traders conduct their trade? The lack of documentation leaves us largely in the dark. But from the little we do know it seems that they operated in ways similar to that of European and Canadian traders. They strove to establish goodwill with the hunters, and offered presents of liquor, tea and tobacco to this end; and they hoped to use this goodwill to profit in trade. This is illustrated in an incident related by Cowie.

Cowie met the Ojibwa trader, Tip-is-cooch-tes-coo-won-in ("The Man in the Zenith"), and two half-breed traders on the plains of Southern Saskatchewan in 1868. The three traders had outfitted themselves at St. Joe, a post on the American side, and were on their way to Indian encampments. Tipiscouchkescouwenin had with him three Red River carts, and he was also the sole, and "proud possessor" of a huge

puncheon of over-proof alcohol.<sup>60</sup> The party proceeded to a large encampment of thirsty Crees, who had been awaiting its arrival with great anticipation. The Indian trader had been mixing the alcohol with swamp water "into a state of dilution most profitable to him", and the mixture was offered to the hunters. As the "highly-priced and rare vintage of Zenith" proceeded to take its effects, and the spirits of the celebration matured, pandemonium prevailed, as was expected. Three days later, however, when the "red raging demons" were ready to trade, the good humour generated by consumption of the contents of the puncheon seems to have created for all the traders a favourable climate, because the transactions were described as successful.<sup>61</sup>

These snippets of information give us only a small, tantalizing glimpse into the activities of the Indian traders, but they leave numerous questions unanswered. What was the volume of trade carried out by the individual Indian traders? What were the territories in which they operated? What were their ambitions with regard to trade? Did any of them cooperate with one another, pool their resources together and form partnerships? What was the nature and extent of competition between the free traders themselves? In what manner did they keep accounts? What were their policies regarding credit advances to Indians?

It would be useful also to know whether these

traders pursued a life entirely independent of Indian bands, and what the nature of their relationships were with other band members. Also what was the nature of their relationships with their employees? How long did their careers last? How many failed in their endeavours, and abandoned their operations?

We lack answers to these crucial questions; but we do have indication that some of the prominent traders left a strong impression on many observers. Regarding Kissoway, the comments of Lieutenant Governor Morris have been mentioned. Tipiscouchkescourvenin was striking for a different reason. He was clad, even on his trading trips to the homes of the Indian buffalo hunters, in haute couture,

elegant attire in the mode of the French Metis.<sup>62</sup> This consisted of brightly coloured flannel shirt, fine cloth capote and trousers, Assomption sash, silk handkerchiefs, foxtail plume, and ointments of pomatum and scented cedar oil, silver finger rings, and gilt earrings.<sup>63</sup> Cowie called him "the Saulteau Indian dandy", and was irritated by his demeanor, which may have been vainglorious and pretentious.<sup>64</sup>

Another Ojibwa trader who finds mention in the reminiscences of an early settler was Pachetoo. Pachetoo was perhaps one of the most successful Ojibwa traders, and was a rich man as early as the 1850s, when few other Ojibwa traders had achieved success. Garrioch describes him thus:

This man bore a striking remembrance not only to Esau the cunning hunter of the field, but also to Jacob the cunning man of business. In fact though he had but one eye he could see far as any other Indian, while the eye of his understanding reached far beyond their ken - in short he had a seeing eye ... Pachetoo was a progressive citizen, who had a taste for things elegant and comfortable ...<sup>65</sup>

Pachetoo lived in Portage La Prairie, and his residence was the most opulent in the settlement after that of William Cockran, the Anglican Minister. Carmichael describes at length Pachetoo's house and some of the curios contained in it, which made a great impression on his settler neighbours. These descriptions indicate also Pachetoo's relatively comfortable living standards:

The site of Pachetoo's house may at this date be accurately described as corner of Crescent Avenue and Broadway. Next to the parsonage it was the largest dwelling house in the parish, and had the distinction of being the only house, besides the church and parsonage, with a shingled roof, the others being thatched. It was whitewashed within and without. Doors and windows were painted a bright red - the red man's invariable choice of colours ...

If Pachetoo's house was in itself an object of interest, its contents were even more so, for therein were to be found things both curious and useful ...

He sometimes made a journey into the country of Uncle Sam, and when he returned his neighbours would be on the qui vive to see or to hear some new thing - anything in fact from a humming-top to a violin. Returning from one of these excursions he brought back, among other curios, two glass candlesticks; and it was not long till every inhabitant of the place had seen them.

... The writer himself had ample opportunity to admire the candlesticks when



at the age of fourteen he listened to a lecture in the aforesaid room on the subject of "Agricultural Economy", delivered by Mr. Oliver Gowler of Headingly, regarded in his day as the largest and best farmer in the Red River Settlement. I can only remember that Mr. Gowler snuffed the candle before starting in, and that on the way home, I gathered from remarks overheard that the honours of the occasion were pretty evenly divided between Mr. Gowler and his agricultural methods and Pachetoo and his glass candlesticks. Speaking the other day to a lady who is nearing her seventieth year, and who was a child when with her parents she came to Portage la Prairie from Ontario in 1862, she mentioned a pitcher that was among Pachetoo's possessions, and said that she had frequently thought of it since because of its pattern and shape.

To amuse his children Pachetoo was not satisfied with a rag doll of amateur make, but provided them with something that much more effectively appealed to their fun-loving natures in another product of American ingenuity in the form of a mechanical toy, which being fastened to the table and wound up went through a series of performances to the astonishment and delight of children both young and old.<sup>66</sup>

Pachetoo also attempted to cultivate a lawn in front of his house, and was perhaps one of the very few in his time in Rupertsland to have made this endeavour. He did not succeed, however, in this task.<sup>67</sup>

We do not know how many of Pachetoo's Ojibwa contemporaries were free traders. However, names of some other Indian free traders can be obtained from post journals of the Hudson's Bay Company's Plains trading posts. In the Fort Ellice journals a number of free traders find mention

as they passed the post in the course of their journeys between the Red River Settlement and the Plains. (Port Ellice was located at a strategic spot, upon a major cart trail, at the "gateway" to the Plains).

In the surviving journals of the years 1856-1871 the following are identified explicitly as free traders, and because of their names or other identification, can be assumed to be Indian (mainly Ojibwa) rather than half-breeds. Most frequently mentioned are: Necaneguanape; Petewawaquaneass; Sawanequanape; Thomas Pachetoo; George Racette (this was an Assiniboine Indian trader residing in the Moose Mountains area, and took an important part in many treaty negotiations); George Racette's son; and Heeshoot. There was also a trader identified only as Pachetoo's eldest son. This may have been Thomas Pachetoo. Others mentioned are: Akapow; Cheketum; Taponay; St. Paul; Nawasing; James Touchaton; Naputas Houle; I. Houle; William Cook; Thomas Spence; Kitewayhow. Others with names such as Cook, McKay, Sinclair, Fisher, Flett, Desjardins, Edwards, Houle, Lavallee could have been either Ojibwa, Cree or half-breeds. It should be added also that most commonly free traders were not identified by name, but merely referred to as "free traders" or "freemen going to trade".<sup>16</sup>

About a quarter of the named free traders appear to be Indian. From this data we could assume that Indians held account of approximately a third of the Plains pemmican trade that was in the hands of the free traders.

### "Becoming Civilized"

Many Indians were keenly attracted to the accoutrements of civilization, and looked to missionaries for guidance in acquiring some of these features. For instance, they were struck by the written word. It symbolized a power they felt they could utilize to their advantage. There was esoteric knowledge that missionaries as men of religion were reputed to have. However, these perceptions of what Indian civilization had to offer them were often at variance with what the missionaries interpreted as essentials of their own civilization and what they felt it was in the Indians' interest to acquire. Furthermore, the missionaries' common insistence that adoption of civilized ways required repudiation of aboriginal ways sometimes resulted in a confusion of purpose. Thus, for example, if an Indian expressed a desire to read and write, the missionary might insist that in doing so he abandon his participation in Hallowe'en ceremonials, cast away his totemic bundles, and adopt the skills of agriculture. Missionaries and Indians, however, were not always mired in sloughs of mutual misunderstanding. The work of missionaries among some segments of the Indian population was a great success, and the Indians in these areas enormously benefitted from the association.

Prior to 1871, in the Parkland and the Prairie, the most active churches were the Roman Catholic and the Presbyterian, and in their missionary work they utilized the printing press widely.

distinct strategies. An outline of their presence and work among the Ojibwa is discussed below.

#### Work of the Roman Catholic Church:

The Roman Catholic Church had been represented in the Parklands by a few Jesuits during the French regime. Father Aulneau de la Touche had come out to serve in the Northwest with the vanguard La Verendrye party, but was killed in 1736 during a chance encounter with a Sioux raiding party at the Lake of the Woods.<sup>69</sup> He was followed by Fathers du Jaunay, Coquart and de la Morinie. However, after the last named left his post at Fort la Reine (Portage la Prairie) in 1751, there was no missionary in the area till 1818 when Reverend Joseph Norbert Provencher, accompanied by Reverend J.H. Dumoulin, arrived to set up a mission at Red River.<sup>70</sup> Provencher and most of the clergy that followed him were born and educated in Quebec. Provencher's mission remained small, varying from a complement of three to six priests, and suffered from poor funding and a high rate of turnover until a contractual agreement with the Oblate order was reached in 1845. Two noteworthy men during this early period were Father Thibault, who established a mission at Ste. Anne's, west of Fort Edmonton, and journeyed into the northern woodlands to contact Chipewyans and Crees, and Father Georges Antoine Belcourt, a man of great charm and intellect, who left a profound mark on the politics of Red River as well on its French half-breed population. Father Belcourt acquired great proficiency in

the Ojibwa language, and by 1839 he had published a primer, catechism, and book of devotion in Ojibwa, as well as a 146 page pamphlet called "Principle of Laultenar Ison" written in French. He also prepared an Ojibwa dictionary.<sup>71</sup>

The natural constituency of the Roman Catholic Church was the French half-breed population. The Church found immediate acceptance amongst these people. The priests did not need to evangelize extensively among them. The Church was a part of the people, it was of them, and had been so even before the missionaries arrived. Few Quebecois priests felt attracted to a hardship posting in a wild and uncultivated interior. Nonetheless, with the limited resources at its disposal, the mission had managed to establish in 1830 three stations within the main centres of the half-breed population, at St. Boniface, Pembina, and St. Francois-Xavier (the latter was a new settlement on the Assiniboine River where most of the Pembina half-breeds had been persuaded to settle following the discovery that their settlement lay within U.S. territory).<sup>72</sup>

The relationship of the Church with the local Ojibwa population, however, was more complex, and of a different order of success. Father Belcourt built a chapel and home for himself at Baie St. Paul on the Assiniboine River in 1833 with the intention of forming around it an Ojibwa village where its residents would be devoted to a settled agricultural mode of life. He received active support in this from Governor

Simpson, who made the extraordinary gesture of granting to him a five mile long strip of land along the river. By 1835, thirty Indian families had sown in the area. They were growing potatoes, maize and barley. But they suffered from a shortage of oxen, having only one pair lent to them by Provencher. In the meanwhile, Bishop Provencher was beginning to show displeasure with the project. The Indians seemed more interested in pursuing agriculture than converting to Catholicism, and Belcourt had little to show by way of active results in this regard. Besides, Belcourt was straining the financial resources of the impoverished Red River mission. By 1837 he had already spent over £600, or the Bishop wanted to see "more catechizing and less ploughing".<sup>73</sup> In fact, Bishop Provencher could not afford to tie up the services of a priest at one mission, and as well spend great amounts of money doing so. There was a vast territory to cover, and the Protestants were already claiming large numbers of converts at their Indian Settlement at St. Peter's. In 1838 Belcourt was dispatched to new Ojibwa summer gathering spots. He proceeded to Wabessimong (White Dog) near the junction of the English and Winnipeg Rivers, and erected a large cross, and in 1840 he travelled to Duck Bay on the western shores of Lake Winnipegosis, and did the same. Baie St. Paul was left to languish.<sup>74</sup>

It would appear that there was no great economic necessity for the Ojibwa settled at Baie St Paul to devote

themselves entirely to the vicissitudes of a meagre farming operation in preference to the hunt.<sup>75</sup> The success of the village was contingent, probably, on the desire of a relatively small number of Ojibwa to enhance their personal glory by counting themselves as civilized.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps they had already "converted", as far as they were concerned, when they had taken up living in log structures, wearing clothes after the European fashion, ploughing, and reading and speaking in French. Perhaps, also, they could not see very clearly why they should be repudiating their own ceremonials, or the spiritual powers they owned or had access to, or polygyny, which itself was a mark of prestige and wealth. As the Ojibwa "converts" had wished to better themselves, i.e. acquire prestige and wealth, according to their own understandings of these, they were perhaps surprised at their sudden abandonment by a missionary who had seemed to be particularly concerned for their betterment.

The Baie St. Paul project limped along, however, and in 1845 it was still listed as a mission though there was no resident missionary,<sup>77</sup> and perhaps little interest on the part of the Red River mission in its success. The strong minded Belcourt was at loggerheads with his Bishop at this time, and there was little cooperation between them after these years.<sup>78</sup> Following the withdrawal of the facilities of the project, and also the preacher and project leader, the farming Indians were left to their own devices. They

may have joined the Anglican agricultural settlement at Portage la Prairie, or may have attached themselves to White Horse Plains, a nearby Metis settlement. Baie St. Paul was no longer included in the list of missions in 1853.<sup>79</sup>

While Baie St. Paul was an economic as well as a cultural project, the missions at Wabissong and Duck Bay were slim in their ambitions. No priests were resident at these sites for any substantial length of time. Perhaps, from the point of view of the priests, if Red River was a hardship post, Wabissong was much less desirable. Duck Bay, on the other hand, was the centre of a major tragedy. Reverend Darveau had proceeded from Duck Bay to open a mission at The Pas in 1843 in opposition to the Anglican mission established there. But on his subsequent visit to The Pas in 1844 he lost his life near Duck Bay. Darveau had run into conflict with two powerful Ojibwa or Swampy Cree men in the area, and according to oral tradition he was murdered, along with his half-breed and Indian companion, by them.<sup>80</sup> After this no further missions were opened by the Roman Catholic Church in exclusively Ojibwa settlements till well after the Indian reserves were established. Father Lacombe's St. Albert mission (1862) and Father Ritchot's mission at Qu'Appelle (1866) ministered primarily to a half-breed population. The Parkland and Plains Ojibwa seem to have acquired the reputation in the Church of being difficult to convert. Subsequently, the Roman Catholic Red River mission concentrated its energies and resources on work in the Northern forests, among the Chipewyans and Crees.<sup>81</sup>



### Work of the Anglican Church:

The Anglican Church did not appear to have had a clearly defined policy for their Indian work at Red River when the Church Missionary Society sent out its first missionary, Reverend John West, in 1820. However, Reverend West, a perceptive and thoughtful man, laid the groundwork for a policy which was to have far-reaching implications, both for mission work and for the development of a native priesthood.

During his brief stay at York Factory on his way to Red River, West was told that it was impossible to teach Indians Christianity or bring them into a settled and civilized existence. West, however, was not discouraged, and appalled by the "degraded" state of the Indians he saw in the neighbourhood of the Port, he became more determined than ever to seek their enlightenment.

..... I was determined not to be intimidated, not to 'confer with flesh and blood', but to put my hand immediately to the plough, in the attempt to break in upon this hostile wilderness.

He added, with shrewd pragmatism, that

If little hope could be cherished of the adult in his wandering and unsettled habits

of life, it appeared to me, that a wide and most extensive field, presented itself for cultivation in the instruction of the native children. (Italics in original)<sup>82</sup>

Before reaching Red River he spoke with a local Indian named Withaweeepo and persuaded him to part with two of his boys to take with him to Red River to educate and maintain. At Norway House he picked up another boy, the son of a half-breed widow. On a visit to Qu'Appelle the following year, he asked a parent for another boy, and in response to this request this boy along with another young companion, were sent to him in 1822.<sup>83</sup> With this small complement he started a school, and by 1825 there were 31 Indian children in it: 10 Swampy Crees, 5 Thickwood Assiniboincs, 5 Creec from Ile a la Crosse and Athabaska, 5 Chipewyans from Great Bear Lake, 5 Carriers from British Columbia, and 3 Indians from the Columbia River. The distant Indians had been sent in at the behest of Sir George Simpson, who felt that "civilized" Indians would have closer sympathies to the Hudson's Bay Company and would perhaps take up leadership roles and provide a counterweight to uncooperative traditional leaders.<sup>84</sup>

This school, located at the "Indian Settlement" on the Lower Red River near Cook's Creek, was responsible for turning out a number of educated young men who found employment with the two major employers in the region, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Church of England. The two

sons of Withaweecapo were baptised James and John Hope. Both entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. The latter, after his retirement became a Native catechist at a number of Cree reserves in the vicinity of Battleford, Saskatchewan. The third child picked up by West at Norway House became the Reverend Henry Budd, the respected Native minister who initiated the mission at The Pas in 1849. Budd served in the ministry for 60 years, mostly in northern missions, and was ordained by Bishop David Anderson in 1850. His son also joined the ministry and was sent to the Church Missionary Society's Islington Institute in London, but he died soon after his ordination. Other Indians who were ordained into the ministry were James Settee (1851), a Swampy Cree; Henry Cochrane (1856) and Thomas Cook (1861) both from the Indian Settlement of St. Peter's. Numerous others were employed by the Church as well, as catechists and deacons: Charles Pratt, an Assiniboine, spent most of his time at Fort Pelly and the Touchwood Hills area. James Beardy at Lac la Ponge, and John Anderson at Fairford. Spogan Garry, one of the Columbia River Indians, returned to his home, and attracted a band of Christian Indians around him, which came to be known as the "Spogan Indians".<sup>25</sup>

Some of the Indians educated at the Church Missionary Society School became teachers. Joseph Tait was employed as a schoolteacher at Fortage la Prairie in 1864, Henry Budd, prior to his departure for The Pas, had taught school

at Red River. Most of the Indians from the St. Peter's school, however, joined the Hudson's Bay Company. They took work as boatmen, freighters, servants at the posts, interpreters.<sup>86</sup>

The Indian school was formed from the seminal ideas of Reverend John West but it grew and flourished through the work of West's successors, Reverend William Cockran and Reverend John Smithurst, and the active cooperation of the Ojibwa Chief Peguis.

Reverend West departed for England in 1823; Reverend Cockran arrived at Red River in 1825, and Reverend Smithurst in 1839. In 1851 both departed from the Settlement. Cockran proceeded to the Assiniboine River to establish a village at Portage la Prairie, and Smithurst returned to England. After 1851 the school began to function quite independently, without the direct involvement of clergymen.<sup>87</sup>

Until 1831 the Church Missionary Society School was essentially a residential school for Indian children brought into Red River from outside communities. It did not count any local Ojibwa children among its pupils. West has told Peguis a number of times to ask for local children, but apart from offering a nephew as a temporary pupil, Peguis offered no support.<sup>88</sup>

Undoubtedly, Peguis was hiding his time to watch and evaluate the results of the school, and the extent of time to which the interest of the missionaries in the school could

be sustained in it. He had seen from the rapid turnover of personnel at the Roman Catholic Mission, as well as West's own brief sojourn at Red River that the initial ambitions and enthusiasms of the missionaries could mysteriously evaporate without ostensible reasons. Also, on account of the consensus style of decision making among the Ojibwa, Peguis, who himself was apparently quite in favour of the missionary project, had to wait till there was greater support for it within his band. When Peguis did make his move for active cooperation, in 1831, he had still not obtained the full consent of his people. His eldest son, in particular, remained strongly opposed to the establishment of an Indian mission.<sup>89</sup>

In spite of this internal division within the band, the long period of discussion among the people concerning the value of missionary efforts and objectives did create a community of people receptive and supportive of ideals of "civilized life" as represented by missionaries. Some members of the band had already developed a fairly sedentary life with the growth of the Red River Settlement located in close proximity to them. Some of these persons might have been involved as intermediaries in the burgeoning trade relations with the settlers carried out by members of their own and other Ojibwa bands; at any rate a fairly extensive "Indian Settlement", as it was called by the settlers, had been formed on the Red River near its marshy mouth, close to

Netley Creek. When Reverend Cockran offered to reside near this settlement and take a close interest in the school and in religious instruction, and in the proposed new farms of the Indians, a stage was set for the development of a viable Christian community.

A site was selected for an Indian village at Sugar Point, a little distance up river, and a few houses were built and some land broken. After a year, however, this site was abandoned in favour of an area near Cook's Creek. Here, in 1836, a large church, called St. Peter's accomodating three hundred persons was built with the help of the local Ojibwa and Swampy Cree (Peguis' primarily Ojibwa band was augmented constantly by Cree living along Lake Winnipeg following the increase in trade with settlers). The Church Missionary School was moved here as well, and in due course it began to function as a local school for local Indians rather than a residential establishment for children belonging to distant groups.<sup>90</sup>

Under the leadership of Reverend Cockran and leaders of the Indian Christian community, the Indian Settlement steadily progressed into becoming a model agricultural village, infused with Christian thought and Christian virtues. When Bishop Mountain of Montreal, responsible for Church affairs in Upper and Lower Canada, visited Red River in 1844 to inspect the work of the Church in this area, he was altogether astonished to see the deportment and the religious

dedication evident at St. Peter's. After the service in the church, where there was a congregation of 250 persons, the Bishop visited the Sunday School and stayed during the last examination. This consisted of readings from the Bible, verses from the Church Catechism and the Thirty Nine Articles. From Bishop Mountain wondered what Indian youths would understand by the latter, for instance Article Twenty two relating to the just subordination of General Councils to Synods. When asked, he was given a satisfactory answer by Father Sullivan, the resident clergyman. Apart from the scholarly and diligent schoolchildren, the Bishop was impressed by the few Indian converts evident among the adults.<sup>11</sup>

In response to enquiries of the time, the Bishop's missionary at St. Peter's, Reverend William T. Swaney, reported that residents of the community were engaged in agriculture and stock raising. Three years after the establishment of the mission site near Cook's Creek 12 acres were brought under cultivation, and the acreage under crop increased rapidly in the next few years. Some of the more ardent farmers were Henry Green and the late Winnipeg region who had begun to migrate to the area in considerable numbers. The following figures outline the increase in population at the Indian Settlement at St. Peter's, and the acreage farmed. Much of the population increase can be attributed to Swaney Tree immigration.<sup>12</sup>

Population and acres cultivated at St. Peter's, 1835-1856

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> <sup>93</sup> | <u>Acres cultivated</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1835        | 193                             | 18                      |
| 1840        | 434                             | 56.5                    |
| 1846        | 368                             | 151                     |
| 1849        | 460                             | 200                     |
| 1856        | 596                             | 302.5                   |

The farmers grew wheat, oats, barley, and also a great range of vegetable crops, which included onions, cabbage, celery, parsley, endive, rhubarb, beets, radishes, shallots, carrots, peas, beans, and lettuce.<sup>94</sup>

Though farming had been carried on by Ojibwa in the years prior to the arrival of missionaries at Red River, the methods of cultivation after 1832 were quite novel: they included the use of the plough and harrow in place of the hoe, and the use of oxen for motive power.

However, farming at the Indian Settlement did not achieve a high order of success. Crop failures were common at Red River during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>95</sup> In a 26 year period between 1832 and 1857, for example, crops were reported to have been total failures during six years (1832, 1833, 1838, 1843, 1846, 1847), and partial failures in an



additional four years (1840, 1855, 1856, 1857).<sup>96</sup> Thus in 10 out of 26 years there was virtually no harvest, or an extremely poor one. Even during some of the supposedly bountiful years, such as 1836 and 1841, many of the farms were said to have "barely rubbed through".<sup>97</sup> The cause of the crop failures was legion. They included early frosts, heavy rains, grasshoppers, Hessian fly, grubs, smut, blight, hail and floods.<sup>98</sup>

The Anglican Church, however, particularly during William Cockran's ministry at St. Peter's, took active steps to encourage and support the practice of agriculture by the Indian farmers. At times of crop failures or poor harvests it provided considerable material assistance. This included food assistance, as well as seed and implements. Also it employed a number of Indian farmers connected with the mission at its extensive 30-acre farm located close to the Indian Settlement.<sup>99</sup>

In 1842 the Church tried to initiate other agricultural communities in the Parklands. Reverend Abraham Cowley built a mission at Partridge Crop (Fairford), and a school was also established there. However, the enterprise did not immediately succeed, though five families did keep some cattle, and could be considered from their point of view at least, as converts. The Cowleys were discouraged after a five year stay and proposed that the mission be closed. But it was kept open at the insistence of the five Christian families.<sup>100</sup>

The success achieved by the Church at St. Peter's, therefore, was not duplicated at Fairford.

On the whole, St. Peter's was a conspicuous and outstanding example in the region of a mission-founded community characterized by the efforts of Indian people to seek and profit from an opportunity arising from the growth of settlement. Despite the many setbacks in agriculture, the St. Peter's community was apparently highly successful in providing for the material wants and desires of some of the Indians. In large part this was due to the variegated subsidies provided by the Anglican Church. But the mission school also played an important role, as education at the school appears to have greatly facilitated for the pupils employment with the Hudson's Bay Company in its warehousing and distributive operations at Red River. In addition, some of the young men from St. Peter's educated at the mission school came to occupy positions requiring literacy in English, for example, as teachers and clerks.

It is evident, too, that the Indian community at St. Peter's gained great prestige. It did so within the Red River Settlement, and perhaps it also attempted to establish itself as an elite group among the native residents of the Parklands. The prominent residents and farmers at St. Peter's emulated the living habits of the white settlers. They fenced their lands, built log houses of maple and pine plastered with mud, and built cellars and bins for their potatoes and grain. They associated themselves with Church activities, and took advantage of the opportunities for the children that were offered by the mission school. The prestige attained by many

members of the St. Peter's community, and which undoubtedly issued from their adoption of civilized ways, is symbolized by the careers of Chief Peguis and his son, Henry Prince. In 1811, at the time of Lord Selkirk's first visit to the region, Peguis was an undistinguished head of a small party of households wintering near the Forks. After his association with the Church, however, he came to be recognized as a spokesman for a large number of Indians in the area, and attained considerable influence. Henry Prince, as well, benefitted by his association with the Church and civilized living, and succeeded Chief Peguis as an important Ojibwa leader.

It can be said, thereby, that the Indians at St. Peter's were shrewdly cognizant of benefits to be obtained from institutional sources. They were successful in obtaining aid from missionaries in a variety of ways to achieve an improvement, as they saw it, in their social and economic status.<sup>101</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### GROWTH OF SETTLEMENT: 1860-1870

Chapters IV and V provide a background summary of events which were significant to the native peoples of the region, and which shaped the nature of opportunities in later years.

The commercial exploitation of the buffalo had been pushing the herds westwards into the region of the short-grass Plains, richer nutritively for the animals. During the 1860s, the Plains Ojibwa, Cree and Assiniboiné, who conducted raids upon the Blackfeet from the relative safety of the eastern and central Plains, were now being forced to hunt within the vicinity of the Blackfeet camps, with resulting conflicts sometimes undesirable to all concerned.<sup>1</sup> There were fears too that the once abundant bovine might suffer a severe and disastrous decline, but mysteriously, after virtually disappearing during one year, it would appear in fair abundance in the next.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the 1860s were a period of uncertainty for those who relied heavily on the buffalo for sustenance and profit. These included the Plains Indians, of course, for whom the buffalo was the staff of life, but many Ojibwa in the Parklands as well, who hunted buffalo as a supplementary source of diet and relied on it for trade.

The uncertainty was exacerbated by a growing influx of settlers. In previous years the growth of settlement had generally been welcomed. It provided new opportunities for trade, and for the transport business, particularly between Red River and St. Paul. Each received a boost from the growth in demand for supplies and provisions. But the growth of settlement had been controlled. While increasing demand, it had not been disruptive. When a new area was proposed to be brought under settlement, as by Rev. Cockran at Portage la Prairie in 1851, the minister had the courtesy to offer tobacco to the Ojibwa residing in that area, and to obtain their consent before settling. Chief Pakwahkikun was paid a bushel of wheat and other sundries annually by the settlers as a gift for disturbing his possession.<sup>3</sup>

The population growth had been slow largely because Hudson's Bay Company policies discouraged colonization. On the American Plains a quarter section of land (160 acres) could be acquired for the asking, and an additional quarter section was usually also obtainable as a pre-emption right. At Red River, on the other hand, there was no clearly defined land policy. The Hudson's Bay Company disbursed land as it saw fit, and permission to purchase was dependent upon the Company's good will. Sometimes land could be purchased for 7s. 6d. an acre, but there were numerous restrictions.<sup>4</sup>

For example, land could not be disposed of, let, or assigned without the approval of the Company. Among other stipulations, the purchaser was required not to traffic in any skins, etc. Furthermore, few settlers were actually given deeds following a purchase,<sup>5</sup> and it was not without reason that a group of settlers complained to a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1857:

Our lands are fertile, and easily cultivated, but the exclusive system of HBC effectively prohibits the tiller of the soil, as well as the adventurer in any other industrial pursuit, from devoting his energies to those labours which, while producing to the individual prosperity and wealth, contribute to the general advantage of the settlement at large. Under this system our energies are paralysed, and discontent is increasing....<sup>6</sup>

When Rev. Cockran founded the new settlement of Portage la Prairie he did so under severe disapprobation of Governor Simpson.<sup>7</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company did not wish to see new settlements sprout across the prairies and act as magnets for an uncontrolled immigration, thus further undermining its monopolistic control. The Company wished to isolate its territories from the "prairie fever" that was sweeping the mid-western states.<sup>8</sup> In this perhaps, the interests of some of the settlers, half-breeds, and Indians coincided to some extent, though for different reasons, with those of the Hudson's Bay Company. But the latter, universally disliked, received little appreciation for it.

Conditions changed in the latter half of the 1850s. Much of the prime agricultural land in Upper Canada had been occupied, and those living on the sandy and stony soils near Georgian Bay and Muskoka were hearing laudatory reports of Prairie lands in the West. Fears were also rampant in Canada that the British territories might be lost to American settlement in the manner the Oregon territory had been occupied in 1846.<sup>9</sup> In response to these pressures, and the approaching expiration in 1859 of the Hudson's Bay Company's charter for exclusive control of trade in the northwest, a Parliamentary Select Committee of the British House of Commons was formed in 1857 to examine the nature of Hudson's Bay Company rule, and to enquire into the possibilities of settlement on the Prairies and the Pacific Coast. In 1857, another monopolistic trading company, the East India Company, had been dissolved following the Indian Mutiny, and the Hudson's Bay Company took particular pains in its depositions before the committee to emphasize its sterling character, its benign and effective rule, and the unsuitability of the British territories of the Prairie West for agricultural settlement. Following the committee's enquiry, the Hudson's Bay Company was granted a renewal of its charter, but also two expeditions were appointed to make comprehensive surveys of the West and appraise its potentialities. A British expedition, headed by Captain Palliser was organized in 1857, and in the

same year an expedition was sent out by the Canadian government, headed by the engineer S.J. Dawson and Prof. H.Y. Hind of Trinity College, Toronto.<sup>10</sup>

Though the British expedition was somewhat skeptical, the Canadian expedition was highly enthusiastic concerning the possibilities of settlement on the Prairies, and this helped generate a small version of a "Prairie fever" in Upper Canada. In the 1860s there was a surge of new immigrants into Red River. As a result, the settlement saw a burst of activity it had not experienced since the great population increase of the 1820s, when discharged Northwest Company and Hudson's Bay Company servants had opted to settle at Red River.<sup>11</sup>

Many of the Upper Canada immigrants at this time were brash frontiersmen willing to take risks under company rule, and suffer the long and generally untried journey to Red River via the American midwest. They saw great lands waiting to be exploited, and great woods ready to be brought under the axe.

There was little administrative control. The spirit of defiance and aggressive frontier individualism of the immigrants were no match for the relatively puny administrative machinery of the Hudson's Bay Company. The immigrants staked claims at will. Their earliest settlements were at Portage la Prairie, and along the streams near the Pembina Hills. The new settlers were not particu-



cularly mindful of occupations other than those of their fellow immigrants. Kenneth McKenzie, passing the last claim west of Portage la Prairie, for example, ploughed a furrow that took in 1,400 acres of cultivable land and woods near Rat Creek. Others in course of time began to stake claims in the very shadow of Fort Garry, on lands which the Hudson's Bay Company considered its own preserve.<sup>12</sup>

The Indians did not find among these new settlers the niceties of behaviour that had usually attended the actions of those of former times. The Metis sometimes found improvements they had made on lands either confiscated or wrecked.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, many of the settlers began to fell timber and occupy the riverine trapping and fishing grounds of the Ojibwa and half-breeds without permission or accord. The new settlers held a rather supercilious disdain for some of the old white settlers as well, whom they thought of as uncultivated and "almost Indian". Garrioch notes that the children of the new settlers came to school clad in shoes, and were derisive of the locals who wore mocassins. The locals in response did their best to acculturate to the new standards of acceptable behaviour set by the Upper Canada immigrants.<sup>14</sup> While the white settlers were able to do this if they wished to, the Indians, considered savages, were a priori unacceptable. Usually, however, they did not engage in confrontations with the settlers.<sup>15</sup> In Portage la Prairie, Pachetoo and

the considerable numbers of Ojibwa in and round the settlement quietly moved away. The half-breeds followed, pushed out by bylaws and disputations.<sup>16</sup> The Sioux, who had begun to enter the British territories in 1862 as impoverished refugees following the Minneosta hostilities, remained, as they had few alternate sites to go to within essentially unfriendly Ojibwa territory. Many Indians and Metis had realized during these years that a new order was in the making, that settlement was bound to greatly increase. The freighters from their journeys to St. Paul, the traders from their visits to Fort Union and other trading posts on the Missouri, the hunters and trappers in the upper Mississippi Valley, and the Dakota from their homes deep in Minnesota could speak of rapid changes that had taken place before their own eyes within the past few years or a single decade. In the Territory of Minnesota the population had increased from less than 5,000 in 1849 to 172,000 in 1860.<sup>17</sup>

The U.S. government had attempted to precede the growth of settlement by entering into treaties with Indians. Treaties had been negotiated in southern and central Minnesota with the Sioux. In northeast Minnesota the Mississippi, Pillager and Lake Winnebigoshish bands of Ojibwa had ceded lands in 1855 in exchange for annuities and promises of reservations free from further white encroachment. An earlier attempt at treaty making at Pembina in 1851,

designed to open the fertile Red River Valley to settlement, however, had been a failure.<sup>18</sup>

In the absence of a treaty agreement in this area, conflict had broken out on the upper Red River in the U.S., after a steamer service had been initiated in 1859 between Georgetown (near Fargo, North Dakota) and Fort Garry. The Pembina and Red Lake River Ojibwa, finding their fishing and muskrat trapping interrupted by the plying of the steamer, had barricaded the river and demanded toll for passage through their lands. Trouble had also occurred at the Red River near its confluence with the Red Lake River, where lumber mills and grist mills had been erected, and a massive timber cutting operation was under way.<sup>19</sup>

In response to these conflicts the U.S. government entered into a treaty with the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwa on October 2, 1863. Through terms of this treaty, the Ojibwa ceded lands in the entire Red River Valley, from the international border to the proximity of Georgetown, and also the entire northern Minnesota region south of the international border and west of the Lake of the Woods. The treaty provided for a sum of \$20,000 to be paid to the Ojibwa bands, estimated to number 2,000, annually, for a period of twenty years. Of this money, \$5,000 was to be expended for agricultural development, education, and purchase of powder, lead, and other goods. In addition, \$2,000 was to be presented to the Ojibwa in various goods

at the time of the first payment. Chiefs would be paid \$150 in annuities, and a sum of \$500 at the first payment, to build houses for themselves. The U.S. government agreed not to hold the Ojibwa liable for damages, or punishment for losses incurred by the Red River steamers and the milling establishments. Further, the government agreed to construct a road to the cost of \$5,000 between Leech Lake and Red Lake. With respect to land reserves, two separate tracts, each of 640 acres, were promised to be set apart at the present site of Thief River Falls, and on the north side of the Pembina River. (In fact, subsequently, neither of these tracts, both comprising prime agricultural land, were set apart for the reserves). There was a provision also in the treaty that adult male half-breeds related to the Ojibwa were to be entitled to a scrip for a quarter section homestead plot.<sup>20</sup> This treaty at Pembina reached the Red River settlement by way of rumour. It was said that the bargain with the 2,000 Ojibwa had cost the U.S. government ten million dollars.<sup>21</sup>

At Red River, however, no treaty was forthcoming. Neither did there seem to exist any authority to whom questions arising from the new settlement could be addressed. The Hudson's Bay Company seemed to be quite powerless, as well as uninformed.

As more settlers arrived from Upper Canada into the Hudson's Bay Company territories, they were joined by

political activists, such as John Schultz, Charles Mair, Henry McKinney. These men were vocal in their demands that the northwest be freed from the "yoke" of company rule, and be annexed by the Province of Canada.<sup>22</sup> The company, on the defensive in the face of the aggressive new settlers, appealed to the Imperial Government for just compensation as a condition prior to transfer. It was aware that many Upper Canada politicians were in favour of exactly the reverse.<sup>23</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company appeals found support in Lower Canada, which was apprehensive that annexation would upset the delicate political balance within the Province of Canada. Following Confederation in 1867, however, the opportunity arose for admitting the northwest as a separate entity. In the face of American interest in the northwest, the Imperial Government sought to expedite negotiation between the company and the Canadian authorities. After considerable bargaining in 1869, an agreement was reached, and this was subsequently approved by the Canadian Parliament on October 1, 1869.<sup>24</sup>

At Red River, news of the negotiations and impending transfer was of exceptional interest, and rumours added to the excitement. Apart from those who were staunchly American in their sympathies, most people at Red River were not unhappy with the projected release of company control, and the union of the Hudson's Bay Company territories with Canada. However, they were acutely apprehensive of how this

union would affect their land holdings. This was of concern, in particular, to the half-breeds, who comprised over half the population of the Red River settlement. The Ontario immigrants of the 1860s had sometimes displaced them from their lands, and denounced them as "cumberers of the soil who must speedily make way for the superior race about to pour in upon them."<sup>25</sup> The francophone half-breeds were also concerned whether steps would be taken by the Canadian government to protect the French language and schooling. The Canadian government had proceeded with the entire transfer process without ascertaining the views in Red River.<sup>26</sup>

The concern about land tenure was brought to a head by the commencement of land surveys under the direction of Colonel J.S. Dennis, sent out by the Canadian government in July 1869 to conduct surveys in anticipation of transfer. The Metis wished to know what their land entitlements were to be, as occupiers of the land, and Dennis had no answer to this query, for the Canadian government had not seriously considered this question.

The result of this was that on October 11, 1869 when Captain Webb of the surveying party was running survey lines across the "hay privilege" of one of the Red River half-breeds, he was prevented from doing so. Louis Riel, the leader of the Metis, declared that the Canadian

government had no right to make land surveys without consulting the people of Red River. In a quick succession of events, the new Lieutenant Governor of the northwest, William McDougall, was debarred by the Metis at Pembina on October 19 from proceeding past the port of entry and Riel and his followers occupied Fort Garry, the political center of power at Red River, on November 2. On November 26, Riel formed a provisional government to negotiate for the entry of Manitoba into Confederation.<sup>27</sup> The aim of Riel and the half-breeds was to press for negotiations before, rather than after, the actual transfer of power to the Canadian government. As a result, the Manitoba Act was passed and received assent on May 12, 1870. One of the provisions of the act (Section 31) was that following extinguishment of the Indian title to land, 1,400,000 acres would be set apart for the families of half-breed residents.<sup>28</sup>

## CHAPTER V

### TREATIES IN THE WEST: 1871-1877

Opportunity for the Indians to enquire into the Canadian Government's policy regarding treaties and problems arising out of the sudden surge in new settlement presented itself with the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor, Adams G. Archibald, at Fort Garry on 2 September, 1870<sup>1</sup>. The St. Peter's Indians, through their leader Henry Prince, Chief Pequis' younger son, lost no time in approaching the Lieutenant Governor in this matter. But the Lieutenant Governor did not have, at this point, any specific authority to negotiate a treaty. Archibald, nevertheless, met with a large gathering of concerned Indians at St. Peter's Parish School on 16th September, a fortnight after his arrival at Red River. He was impressed with their determination to ascertain the policies of the Dominion Government, and he informed them that a treaty was under the Government's consideration and would likely be negotiated the following spring<sup>2</sup>.

Though Archibald was strongly in favour of concluding an agreement with the Indians, thereby to facilitate unhindered



immigration into the agricultural prairie lands in Manitoba and the Northwest, the Dominion Government was slow to take effective action in this regard. No machinery was created to carry out negotiations with the Indians, and no decision was forthcoming to bring this about.

Archibald, however, found an ally in S.J. Dawson, the engineer responsible for demarcating an all-Canadian route between Fort William and Fort Garry for immigrants travelling to the west. Dawson's proposed route transversed both lands and water. It involved the construction of a series of roads, and the establishment of steamer and rowboat service across the water-borne sections. Dawson had lived in this area of his proposed route since the 1850s, and he was keenly interested in having the Government conclude a treaty with the Indians in that area, thus to avoid possible obstruction to the free passage of people and goods along the Line of Route.<sup>3</sup> Dawson realized that if a steamer service was initiated on Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods as proposed, the spring sturgeon fishing upon which large numbers of Ojibwa subsisted would be adversely affected. The Indians were not likely to let such disruption in their livelihood pass by without protest. Furthermore, the trapping along the minor streams west of the Lake of the Woods would be destroyed by the carving of the road link between Fort Garry and the Lake of the Woods.<sup>4</sup>

Both Archibald and Dawson brought considerable pressure to bear upon the Federal Government to negotiate treaties with

the Indians, and the Government responded eventually by appointing in April 1871 Wemyss B. Simpson, the Conservative M.P. for Sault Ste. Marie as Chief Indian Commissioner. Simpson was authorized to make treaties with Indians west of Fort William.<sup>5</sup> East of Fort William treaties had been concluded in 1850 (the Robinson-Huron Treaties), and the Government hoped that the terms of the new treaties would be roughly similar to these earlier ones.

While the Federal Government was considering its policies regarding treaties, settlement was growing apace in Manitoba. The settlers took land at Oak Point (Iles des Chenes) east of Winnipeg, and in the vicinity of Portage la Prairie. New settlements sprouted at Shoal Lake (northwest of Winnipeg), the Boyne River near the Pembina Hills, and at Headingly on the Assiniboine. Winnipeg too, was growing rapidly and expanding in all directions. By the end of 1870 12,000 acres had been occupied east of Winnipeg at Oak Point and other smaller settlements; 10,000 acres northeast of Portage la Prairie, at High Bluff and Poplar Point; and 20,000 acres had been taken up by a rapidly spreading settlement in the area west and northwest of Portage la Prairie toward Fat Creek and the White Mud River.<sup>6</sup>

With this increase in settlement, conflicts between settlers and Indians, as yet quite rare, increased dramatically.

Complaints came flooding into the office of the Lieutenant Governor. The Lake of the Woods Indians complained that the

people from Red River were cutting timber on their lands before any treaty negotiations had been commenced.<sup>7</sup> A settler at Portage la Prairie wished to know where he could cut fencing and building timber as local Indians were disallowing him to fell timber on the Assiniboine River near Rat Creek.<sup>8</sup> Henry Prince, expecting that a polite letter would be sufficient to cause settlers to desist from encroaching upon the cultivated plots and hay lands of the residents of the Indian Settlement, found that his letters received no response whatever. The settlers merely laughed and told the messenger that they intended to remain where they were.<sup>9</sup> The Sheriff of Assiniboia, in a report commissioned by the Lieutenant Governor wrote:

...disputes have already arisen between the Indians of the Province and some of the white population. The latter have been prevented by the Indians, on several occasions, from cutting lumber. The Indians alleged that they had not received any consideration for the Country and that until they had been indemnified for their lands the settlers will not be permitted to fell timber. Failing a treaty with them their interference will probably extend beyond the limits it has at present reached.<sup>10</sup>

Much of the disputation referred to in this report was taking place in the area surrounding Portage la Prairie. It was becoming a common experience for settlers in outlying areas to be greeted by a half dozen Ojibwa on horseback disallowing them from working the land. On one of the roads leading to a wooded section north of High Bluff settlers proceeding for timber encountered a notice pinned on one of the trees:

Notice

Dec. 17, 1870

To all whom it may concern

Whereas the Indian title to all lands West of the 50 mile boundary line at High Bluff has not been extinguished. Whereas those lands are being taken up and the wood thereon cut off by parties who have no right or title thereto. I hereby warn all such parties that they are infringing on lands that as yet virtually belong to the Indians and do hereby call on them to desist on pain of forfeiting their labour.

Moosoos x his mark

Witness Fred A. Bird<sup>11</sup>

It was reported that the Chief vehemently insisted that the woods belonged to the Indians and that the settlers cutting timber were stealing. He demanded to know why there was no agreement reached for this purpose when as a rule even the smallest bargains required an agreement.<sup>12</sup>

Events at Portage la Prairie took a particularly serious turn in the late fall of 1870, when the settlers began to talk of using force to put down the Indian opposition. However, the adroit handling of this situation by Lieutenant Governor Archibald helped to stave off a possible violent confrontation. The settlers had sent, through their minister, the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, a petition to Archibald requesting that a police force be stationed at Portage la Prairie to deal with Indian matters. Archibald wished to see no force used for this purpose. It would simply exacerbate conflict and hinder the peaceful conclusion of treaty negotiations with

the Indians. Accordingly, Archibald wrote to Fletcher:

The existence of a small force, instead of overawing the Indians, would only be looked upon as a menace, and make them think it was the intention of the Government to take their lands by force...It would be unfortunate such an impression should be created...it will be in the interests of the settlers to get along as peaceably as possible with the Indians... I trust that you will use your influence among the people to induce them to get along with the Indians till a treaty is made.<sup>13</sup>

The settlers, nonetheless, could not be persuaded by such reasoning. They decided to form their own vigilante squads. Matters came to a head when a vigilante squad conducted a raid on a neighbouring Ojibwa camp and captured one of the Indians. The man was brought before the Council of Portage la Prairie, tried for alleged horse stealing, and sentenced to death by hanging.<sup>14</sup> The council likely had no authority to pass such a sentence as a law-making body consisting of the Lieutenant Governor and his Executive Council, was in existence at the time; however, on the "frontier" legal niceties were sometimes forgotten. Luckily for the captured Indian, though, some of the older settlers of Portage la Prairie, who knew the man personally, expressed their disapproval of the trial, and the prisoner was allowed mysteriously to escape.<sup>15</sup>

The incident, in its turn, created a tremendous stir among the various Ojibwa groups in the region, and at the subsequent sugar season a Council was held at Lake Manitoba to discuss it. At this Council meeting attended by 73 men, a resolution was passed and forwarded to the Lieutenant Governor.

The resolution strongly condemned the actions of the settlers in imprisoning one of their members, and demanded indemnification if such action were to be repeated. The Council insisted also that it expected compensation for the use of lands and woods by the settlers. In response to this Indian resolution, Archibald, aided by James McKay, the half breed member of his Executive Council, invited the Indian leaders to an interview, and with the giving of gifts, assured them that the Government was keen and willing to enter into treaty with them. This personal initiative by the Lieutenant Governor to meet with the Indian leaders and convey to them his assurance of the Government's intention to proceed with a treaty, seems to have gone a long way to placate the Indians, and obtain their consent to desist from entering into confrontation with settlers.<sup>16</sup>

One group of Ojibwa, at Fairford, as yet relatively untouched by the difficult times experienced by their more southerly compatriots, met in Council in January 1871, and set apart an Indian Reserve for themselves "according to the Reserves of the Ontario Department of Indians". A notice was sent to the Lieutenant Governor informing him of this decision "taken in all Peace and Quietness". He was asked to take cognizance of this decision arrived at in Council attended by over 70 signatories, and take steps wherever necessary to prevent "infringement" of the Reserve through fishing, hunting, the cutting of timber, and the taking up of claims on the Reserve by the Hudson's Bay Company and

other outsiders.<sup>17</sup> In this case the Indians themselves took the initiative to bring some order to their prospective relations with settlers who they expected would arrive in their neighbourhood, and they sought the support of the Lieutenant Governor for this purpose. Such an action, of course, was not acceptable to Archibald, but he quietly ignored it.

Archibald, for his part, tried to reduce conflicts between settlers and Indians by discouraging large scale immigration prior to the formal cession of lands by the Indians. In response to a request by an immigration agent at Montreal for a grant of 50,000 acres on the prairies to be distributed to a "good class of emigrants", Archibald wrote that the Government was not in a position to deal "vigorously with the lands" till the Indian title was extinguished.<sup>18</sup>

Thus both the Lieutenant Governor and the Ojibwa were keen to reach some form of agreement on the subject of lands and the compensation to be paid for them. The Ojibwa were quite aware that immigration into their lands would likely continue unabated, and they wished to obtain agreement that reserve lands would be set apart for them, and that compensation would be paid. The Lieutenant Governor, on his part, wished to obtain a formal cession of Indian lands, and reach agreement on the matter of compensation. He also wanted to obtain from the Indians commitments that they would refrain

strictly from interfering in the progress of settlement. The Canadian prairies were in direct competition for immigrants with the lands north of the international border, and the Government did not wish to be embroiled in Indian wars which might serve to decrease the attraction Canadian lands held for prospective settlers. The Ojibwa were also aware that treaties had been signed south of the international border, and east of Fort William, and it is likely they expected that an agreement of similar fashion would be reached with them.. Perhaps they hoped that they could improve on the terms that had been offered by the Governments in these earlier treaties.

Negotiations for an agreement sought by all parties could not proceed, however, till the Federal Government had come to a decision in favour of concluding new treaties in the west. With the appointment of Wemyss Simpson as Indian Commissioner this decision was finally taken.

The appointment of Simpson as a chief negotiator, however, did not bring the Government, nor the Ojibwa, any closer to an actual treaty. Simpson seemed to have been singularly lacking in negotiating ability. He was disputatious and tactless with the Indians. He spent the greater part of the summer of 1871 at Fort Frances and apparently made no headway in arriving at any agreement.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps he would have failed to produce any results in Manitoba as well. Eventually, realizing the impracticability of relying on



Simpson, Archibald decided to take matters in his own hands. Not only had he promised the Ojibwa that a treaty would be finalized in the spring of 1871, but he was keen also that the lands be freed from Indian claims, and the process of surveying and settlement proceed unhindered. He asked Simpson to come to Manitoba in mid-July, and in the meantime he contacted every Ojibwa band in southern Manitoba to meet for negotiations at two sites: at the Stone Fort or Lower Fort Garry near the Indian settlement, and at Manitoba House, the Hudson's Bay Company post on Lake Manitoba. Also he conducted extensive research on the practice of treaty making in Upper Canada and the United States, and it seems evident that he wrote the draft of the treaty agreement to be negotiated.

The negotiations for the first treaty ("Treaty No. 1") were commenced at Lower Fort Garry on 27 July 1871. The occasion was an impressive and colourful one. A large tent was erected to serve as headquarters for the Government negotiators, who were principally the Indian Commissioner, the Lieutenant Governor, and James McKay. The Commissioner and the Lieutenant Governor wore special suits of clothing provided to them by the Government for this event. Major Irvine was present in full dress together with a detachment of troops. An estimated 1,000 Indians were present, and also numerous half breeds and local settlers.<sup>20</sup>

The proceedings commenced with a dignified speech by the Lieutenant Governor, who noted that the Queen wished

the good of all races under her sway and that she had designated the Indian Commissioner as her spokesman in the negotiations. He proceeded to outline the general terms of the treaty, and asked the Indians that were to be treated with to choose responsible leaders who would represent truly their wishes. This was followed by a short speech by Simpson, and thereafter the main negotiations began.<sup>21</sup>

In return for the lands ceded (in present-day southern Manitoba the government offered to lay apart reserve lands for the Indians on which outsiders would not be allowed to intrude. For each band these reserves would constitute 160 acres for each family of five (or in that proportion for larger and smaller families). In addition the Government would pay \$12.00 as annuity to each family of five (or in like proportion), and these annuities would continue in perpetuity.<sup>22</sup>

By way of comparison, the Robinson-Superior and Robinson-Huron Treaties concluded with the Indians of Lake Superior and Lake Huron in 1850 also provided for the setting apart of Indian Reserves, but these were arbitrarily designated and not calculated according to any pro rata schedule. The Government had agreed to annuity payments in perpetuity. The amount of annuity was set as 1,000 (\$4,400) for the 2,662 Indians (of all ages and sexes) covered by the terms of the Treaties. This came to a little less than \$2/head. However, this amount of annuity according to the terms of the Treaties

could be augmented from time to time.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the Indians were paid a lump sum of 4,000 (\$16,000) as their "share" of money received by the Government from mining companies locating upon the lands ceded.<sup>24</sup>

In 1863 the U.S. Government had entered into treaty with the Ojibwa residing immediately to the south of this area of Treaty No. 1. In this instance a sum of \$20,000 was paid to a population of 2,000 Ojibwa as annuity, but this annuity was to be paid only for 20 years. Other benefits were also granted by the Government including gifts to Chiefs and to band members at the time of the first payment.<sup>25</sup>

The negotiations for Treaty 1 lasted for an entire week, and the agreement was finally signed on August 3, 1871. The Ojibwa initially rejected the acreage proposed for Reserve lands and the annuity money offered by the Government as insufficient. With regard to the former they put forward a proposal which would have allowed them to retain about two-thirds of the area of the Province of Manitoba as constituted at that time.<sup>26</sup> It appears that they also pressed for an annuity payment of \$10.00 per person. This figure had been demanded initially at the time of the Robinson Treaties, and was reiterated by the principal Chief at Fort Frances during an interview with Wemyss Simpson in 1870.<sup>27</sup> The grant of \$10.00/head as annuity by the United States Government was also undoubtedly widely known. Following a tortuous process of bargaining the Indians finally agreed to accept the

Government proposal for the acreage of reserve lands, namely the calculations pro rata of 160 acres for a family of five. The Government negotiators were extremely firm on this point.<sup>28</sup> On its part the Government agreed to increase the annuity payment to \$3.00 per person as well as pay an initial lump sum gratuity in the same amount. A number of other wide-ranging benefits were also promised by the Government as a result of the treaty negotiations. These were:

- to establish a school upon the reserves
- to provide each Indian who commenced agriculture with a plough and harrow
- to provide one bull for each reserve
- to give to each Chief one cow, and also one male and one female of some "smaller kind" of farm animal

In addition each Chief was to receive a dress, flag, and medal, and also (with the exception of the Chief of the Portage Band who refused this gift) a buggy, or light spring wagon. Two councillors and two braves of each band were also to receive a dress, somewhat inferior to that provided to the Chiefs, and also (except for those of the Portage Band) each a buggy.<sup>29</sup>

Within the text of the treaty the Reserve lands of the seven bands conducting the negotiations were described in a general way. It was understood by all concerned that the reserves would be demarcated at an early opportunity, when a census was taken and the surveying completed.<sup>30</sup>

Treaty 1 formed an archetype for a series of treaties

concluded in the west soon afterwards. Treaty 2 was concluded less than three weeks later, on 21 August 1871. It was identical, mutatis mutandis, to Treaty 1, the only differences being the names of the Indian leaders and the sites for their Reserves. Subsequent treaties concluded in the west were numbered 3 to 8. Treaty 3 was negotiated in 1873 by Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris, who had succeeded Archibald in 1872. Morris assisted in negotiating Treaty 3 by Indian Commissioner J.A.N. Provencher and S.J. Dawson (Simpson had earlier resigned). This treaty obtained the cession of lands in northwestern Ontario.<sup>31</sup> Treaties 4 to 7 were also negotiated by Morris and were concluded between 1874 and 1877. Treaties 4, 6 and 7 obtained the cession of lands in the Plains and Parkland areas of present day Saskatchewan and Alberta, and Treaty 5 did the same for the forest region of northern Manitoba.<sup>32</sup> Treaty 8 was signed in 1899.

Treaties 3, 4 and 6 were concluded after some pretty hard and protracted bargaining, in the manner of Treaty 1. The Indians held out for increased annuities and subsidiary benefits. As a result, the annuity payment was increased in Treaty 3.<sup>33</sup>

On the Plains, in treaty negotiations in later years, Morris was under considerable pressure to raise annuity payments yet higher, but he was able to resist these demands successfully.<sup>34</sup>

One of the persistent demands of the Indians during treaty negotiations was for Government assistance in agriculture, a form of livelihood which was new for most of them. The Indians felt very strongly in this matter, as by ceding land many of them were depriving themselves of a livelihood based on the hunt. Morris promised regularly that the Government would help the Indians in this regard, but the Indians were not satisfied with assurance. They wanted concrete assistance. In the treaties following 1 and 2, at the Indians' insistence, a list was concluded of specific articles and animals that the Government would provide. The list for Treaty 6, for example, reads as follows:

It is further agreed between Her Majesty and the said Indians that the following articles shall be supplied to any band of the said Indians who are now cultivating the soil, or who shall hereafter commence to cultivate the land, that is to say:-- Four hoes for every family actually cultivating, also two spades per family as aforesaid; one plough for every three families as aforesaid, one harrow for every three families as aforesaid; two scythes, and one whetstone and two hayforks and two reaping-hooks for every family as aforesaid; and also two axes, and also one cross-cut saw, and also one hand-saw, one pit-saw, the necessary files, one grindstone and one auger for each band; and also for each Chief, for the use of his band, one chest of ordinary carpenter's tools; also for each band, enough of wheat, barley, potatoes and oats to plant the land actually broken up for cultivation by each band; also for each band, four oxen, one bull and six cows, also one boar and two sows, and one handmill when any band shall raise sufficient grain therefor; all the aforesaid articles to be given once for

all for the encouragement of the practice  
of agriculture among the Indians....<sup>35</sup>

This was a long and somewhat unwieldy list of items, but it reflects the deep concern of the Indians leaders regarding agriculture. However, it constituted an aspect of the treaties the Government was not fully able to honour. Essentially the Government misinterpreted the sense of urgency with which these items were requested by the Indians. It was assumed that the Indians would neglect to make proper use of them without proper instruction. Circumstances also conspired to cause the Government to fail in keeping its commitment. The agricultural implements were of little use till the reserves were surveyed, and often there was a delay of several years in carrying out of these surveys. After 1879 the policy of the Government changed perceptibly and new priorities were established for Government action. Many of the implements and animals that were promised failed to reach the Indians.

#### The Dakota in the Canadian Parklands

In Western Canada treaties were made with native groups who were deemed to have held a claim to prior occupancy of the lands. The Dakota, presently resident upon a number of reserves in the three prairie provinces, were not included in any of the treaty negotiations or agreements. They were understood to have been residents of lands lying south of the international border.

For their part, the Dakota did not press any claims to an historic occupancy of lands in Canada.

The Dakota, in fact, had arrived in the Canadian Parklands less than a decade prior to the signing of the first treaties in Manitoba. They came as political refugees, a defeated people pursued by the United States military. The misfortunes of the Dakota were the result of a major outbreak of violence in August 1862, when they took offensive action against Agency employees and settlers.<sup>36</sup> Subsequently over a period of two years, they were harassed and pursued by military forces.<sup>37</sup>

Splinter groups of the Dakota began crossing the border into British territory in late 1862. They came in groups of two or three families, and occasionally in larger aggregates of 50 to 100 people. Their movements continued over the course of a decade. Encampments of 300-400 people north of the border were reported by observers during the mid-1860s.<sup>38</sup> However, an unknown number of these refugees elected to return to the United States before long, particularly after their relations with American authorities improved in 1865.

The Dakota arrived in Rupertsland in a destitute condition. Also they were wary of attacks against them by the Ojibwa. Rumours, in fact, were rampant of imminent Ojibwa attacks, particularly from groups resident at Red Lake (Minnesota). Most of these attacks did not materialize, but there were a few isolated incidents of violence. There is evidence that the



Dakota moved quickly to placate different Ojibwa groups by making treaties of friendship with them.<sup>39</sup>

Local settlers were also apprehensive of threats posed by the Dakota, who were seen to have arrived fresh from their "massacres" in Minnesota. Dakota leaders, however, tried to still rumours of their hostile intentions, and it appears they were largely successful.

The refugee Indians settled in encampments mainly in the vicinity of Portage la Prairie in Manitoba, and the Moose Woods in southern Saskatchewan. They began to work as labourers for local farmers and some found wage employment with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Ellice and Fort Qu'Appelle. In addition, they found subsistence through winter fishing in Lake Manitoba, and hunting in the Riding Mountains.<sup>40</sup>

After the Canadian Government had signed Treaties 1 and 2 with the Ojibwa and had promised to lay apart reserves for them, the Dakota decided to petition Lt. Governor Archibald for the setting apart of reserves for them also. They stressed their peaceful intentions, and continued to press their case before Archibald's successor, Lt. Governor Morris.<sup>41</sup> Eventually the government decided to grant them reserves in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and these reserves were surveyed and demarcated during the years 1874 to 1879. However, no treaties were signed with the Dakota, nor were annuities or other compensation made to them, as they had no lands to cede.

In Manitoba, the Dakota reserves were located at Oak River (this reserve is now known as "Sioux Valley"), Oak Lake, Turtle Mountain, and Birdtail Creek. The first two are located in excellent grain farming lands in the southern sections of the Parklands.

The Dakota were actually not strangers in Rupertsland. During the 1840s and 1850s they had been frequent visitors to the Red River Settlement, where the settlers tended to look upon them with awe as the great warriors of the Plains. They engaged in warfare with the Ojibwa, and also often conducted raids upon half-breed hunting parties on the Plains. But the raiding activity of the Dakota was largely confined to U.S. territory south of the Pembina Hills, and rarely took place within Rupertsland.

In the seventeenth century, the Dakota had been Woodland-dwellers, occupying most of northern Minnesota and the prairie edge in the central part of that State. They lived in earth lodges forming permanent villages, many of which were located in the Mille Lacs Lake region. Father Marquette reported in 1659 that there were "no less than fifteen populous towns" of the Sioux in that area. In 1661 Radisson and Groseilliers had visited these villages and were informed that the Sioux numbered 7,000 men in the area between Mille Lacs and Lake Traverse. In these villages the Sioux cultivated corn and tobacco. They also hunted buffalo, mainly during the spring and summer. Those in the northern areas harvested wild rice.

Because of their extensive agricultural operations they were frequently compared to the Iroquoian peoples of the Eastern Great Lakes. Father Allouez in 1669 called them "the Iroquois of this country", and Fathers Raymbault and Jogues noted that "they till the soil in the manner of our Hurons".<sup>42</sup>

Agriculture and village life, however, were abandoned by the Dakota after acquisition of horses and migration to the Plains. These movements had apparently commenced in the late seventeenth century, and gained momentum during the first half of the eighteenth century. By the date of the battle of Kathio with the Ojibwa, circa 1750, the Dakota had abandoned most of their villages in the Mille Lacs Lake region. By 1780 they had vacated much of the forested section of northern Minnesota. In doing so the Dakota transformed their ways of life in the manner of their Cheyenne neighbours. They became equestrian buffalo hunters, warriors, and traders, and contributed to the efflorescent Plains cultural tradition.<sup>43</sup>

The Siouan Diaspora of the Plains and Prairie-dwellers is usually divided into three major divisions, based on residential location and dialectical differences. The Dakota, also called the Santee Sioux, comprise the Eastern Division. The Nakota, or Yanktonai, constitute the Middle Division, and the Lakota, or Teton, are referred to as the Western Division.<sup>44</sup>

Prior to the Minnesota hostilities in 1862 the Dakota were

organized into four major subgroups. These were named thus:

Wahpeton ("Dwellers among the Leaves")  
Sisseton ("Lake Village" or "Fishscale Village")  
Mdewakanton ("Spirit Lake Village")  
Wahpekute ("Shooters in the Leaves")

The first two were generally referred to as the "Upper Dakota", as they resided, by and large, in Central Minnesota, and the last two named were known as the "Lower Dakota", as they resided in southern Minnesota and neighbouring Iowa and South Dakota.<sup>45</sup>

The expulsion of the Dakota from Minnesota in 1865 destroyed the integrity of these units, and they now live scattered on reservations in a number of States and Provinces. On the Canadian Parkland reserves, members of all four Dakota subgroups were found in various proportions.<sup>46</sup> These reserves also received refugee Sioux (mostly Teton) after the 1876-77 conflict in the United States.<sup>47</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

### FARMING AND OTHER OCCUPATIONS IN THE PARKLANDS: 1870-1896

In this Chapter the adoption of farming by a number of native people in the Parklands of Manitoba is discussed. Farming on the reserves became quite widespread during the 1880s, and was engaged in by both Ojibwa and Dakota groups. Many of these farming reserves were located within the Birtle Agency, an administrative unit of the Department of Indian Affairs. The records of the Birtle Agency are rich for the period 1879-1896, hence a rather detailed reconstruction of the development of farming within this Agency is possible.

The Parklands within the Birtle Agency are divided into two sections by the 100 frost-free day isogram. North of this isogram the cultivation of wheat was limited during the nineteenth century as most of the varieties of wheat available during that time took more than 100 days to ripen, and thus were vulnerable to damage by frost before harvest.

In the zone lying to the south of the isogram the risk of damage by frost was lower. In this area during the 1880s some of the Indian farmers followed the settlers in converting their agricultural operations from subsistence farming to the commercial cultivation of wheat. In the Birtle Agency there were three Indian reserves located in this southern zone. Two of these were inhabited by Dakota, and one by

Ojibwa. The Dakota Oak River Reserve was the largest in the southern zone, and the development of commercial wheat farming on this reserve is described in a section of this Chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the 1870s two of the primary occupations of the Parkland Ojibwa were in a state of economic collapse. The buffalo trade was in a severe downspin owing to the approaching extinction of the buffalo on the Canadian Plains. The years 1874-1876 could be described as failures not merely for the trade but for subsistence as well.

The business of freighting goods by Red River cart also was in serious trouble. It received a setback with the establishment of a railhead on the upper Red River in 1871. This considerably reduced the distance of haulage by cart on the lucrative St. Paul - Winnipeg route. It was a matter of time before the rail-link between St. Paul and Winnipeg would be completed. The Red River cart awaited the inevitable coup de grace, and this came eventually in 1878. The controverted political bargaining for the Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental railway line delayed the completion of the line and kept the Red River cart in business on the Canadian Plains during the 1870s. But in 1881 the gleaming ironhorse emerged from the confines of the Canadian Shield and

sped rapidly westward. Transportation in the West was revolutionized, but it was a revolution which did not bring the benefits of employment to the Ojibwa.<sup>1</sup>

Hunting, trapping, and fishing in the Parklands could not possibly absorb all the Ojibwa. The land was being occupied by the incoming settlers. Timber groves even in northern areas less desirable for agriculture were being systematically stripped. Deprived of their forest cover, game and furbearers were being destroyed or driven away. This depletion reached far into the northern woods. The game and fur of the Parkland, it was obvious, was a declining resource.

In this crisis of economic collapse the logical direction to turn was toward the adoption of agriculture. But if agriculture was to be adopted, where could this be carried out? Before the reserves were surveyed an Indian wishing to farm could only do so as a squatter. He was liable to eviction if this land was entered as a claim by a new settler. Though the treaties did in a general way describe the land that would form the reserves, the boundaries were far from clear, for they were to be determined after a census of Indians was taken and "160 acres for a family of five, or in that proportion for larger or smaller families" was computed.<sup>2</sup> Without the benefit of a survey an Indian could not possibly know whether a particular piece of land on which he proposed to make improvements could be retained by him or not.

An Indian was not permitted to register a claim for a homestead, because the land had been ceded, and he had been accorded a tract of land for his own exclusive use. But where was this tract of land? The Indians repeatedly requested the Lieutenant Governor that the reserve surveys be carried out, but the Dominion Lands Branch was hard put to find the staff and the time to do the work.

The surveying of Indian reserves, in fact, was not a priority at this time when the tide of immigration was rising high and strong. It was not until four to nine years after the lands had been ceded that this work in Manitoba and the eastern Prairies was begun. In the meantime, some of the best agricultural land was taken up by new settlers, and when the reserves were finally surveyed after this crucial delay, mostly in the second half of the decade, it was inevitable that the lands included within them were mainly of poor agricultural worth.

It seems apparent that the wave of immigration of the 1870s, and the continuing failure of the government, year after year, to set apart Indian lands, contributed to a strong fear among potential Indian farmers that if they did attempt to farm they would be dispossessed. Mekis and some members of the Riding Mountain Band of Ojibwa, for instances, were desirous to farm, and proposed settling on good farming land in the valley of the Little Saskatchewan



River, but their apprehensions that they would be dispossessed when settlers reached that area discouraged them from doing so. Eventually they contacted George Flett, a half breed farmer and former Presbyterian worker, a genial and likable man, for assistance.<sup>3</sup>

George Flett agreed to make attempts to aid them, and he was able to secure the help of the Presbyterian mission at Red River for this purpose.<sup>4</sup> In 1874 the Church acquired a quarter section plot in the Little Saskatchewan Valley on which to locate a mission and farm, and the Indians were allowed to settle on this land. Flett entered the service of the Church as a missionary, and established the Okanese mission on the Church property. About 15 Indian households proceeded to join Flett at this mission, and they commenced to farm by acquiring cattle and breaking one, two or three acres per household to grow grain, potatoes, and vegetables.<sup>5</sup> The Indians, thus, with the active assistance of the Presbyterian Church, were able to obtain land for farming purposes on which they could feel secure.

In 1875 the reserve for the Riding Mountain Band was to be surveyed. The Presbyterian Church and the farming Indians brought pressure to bear upon the Lands Branch to locate this reserve near the Okanese Mission. The Branch agreed to do this, and it thus departed from locating the reserve upon the site described in Treaty 2,

which was near Lake Dauphin, sixty miles away.<sup>6</sup>

Occasionally, during the 1870s, Ojibwa families settled down as squatters near a stream and made improvements on the land without the assistance of the Church or other agency. Cattle, implements, and seed were acquired, and gardens were laid out and fenced. They were perhaps unmindful of the possibility that they might be evicted. Some of them in fact demonstrated a pugnacity which seemed quite uncharacteristic. Big Bill was such a settler. He laid out his garden and cultivated a small plot near the Red River a few miles north of the International border. The land on which he had settled was claimed and registered as a homestead by a new immigrant from England. This gentleman showed Big Bill his purchase slip and asked him to vacate the land. Big Bill adamantly refused to move, and officials of the Lands Branch as well as the Mounted Police were not able to shake his determination or his possession of the land. Eventually, the registered owner decided to end the confrontation because he was afraid Big Bill might resort to physical violence in revenge.<sup>7</sup>

Such confrontations over possession of land, however, were extremely rare. When the surveyors marked out the reserves they took care, wherever possible, to include within the bounds of the reserves, lands on which improvements had been made by the Indians.

The uncertainty over land tenure came to an end

when the reserves were surveyed and demarcated. In what is now Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan this was done between 1875 and 1881. Some Indian groups began to adopt agriculture almost immediately after these surveys. Indian Affairs officials, pleasantly surprised, recorded these developments with enthusiasm.

For example, Inspector T.P. Wadsworth, in a report on the Okemasis Reserve in southern Saskatchewan in 1881, had this to say:

Although only settling in the spring of 1880 he [the headman of the Cutnose band] with his followers are working wonders.... Their fields are laid out and fenced like whitemens, their houses are good and all were busy as beavers taking up turnips, their grain being early secured. They have cultivated fully double the land they did last year, several of the men being good ploughmen....if their zeal continues in another year they will be self supporting.<sup>8</sup>

On a visit to another reserve in the same region, that of the One Arrow Band, Inspector Wadsworth wrote:

I was in the Chief's house....he had a cellar full of potatoes, and the beams and rafters were hung with buffalo meat, on shelves were milk pans (made by sawing two powder kegs) brimming with milk, all of which could be summed up by the Indian expression "good medicine". I met the same Chief with his people exactly a year before in a starving condition.<sup>9</sup>

In the same year Hayter Reed, an Indian Agent, describing his visit to the Stoney Reserve in southeastern Saskatchewan

(though in somewhat patronizing language) wrote:

Although this is the first year for the Indians on this reserve, they have done remarkably well, when their savage nature is taken into consideration. Their little gardens in some cases showed a degree of care and attention really commendable, and they appeared to take a child-like pride in their care, and whenever I happened to approach their respective plots the owners would run and stand sentry over them until my arrival.<sup>10</sup>

A shortage of animal power and implements to perform farm work was often a difficulty faced by the Indians during these early years of agriculture. The new fledgling Indian Affairs organization tried to do its best in the late 1870s to supply the reserves with the requisite seed, implements, and oxen, but it was hard-pressed to keep pace with the rapid developments taking place on the reserves. Lack of animal traction and implements, however, did not deter those who were determined to cultivate and put in seed. An Indian version of the "pioneer spirit" arose, as seems indicated by some Indian Affairs reports written at the time. Ebenezer McColl, Inspector of Indian Agencies in Manitoba, for example, wrote in 1878:

Numerous instances can be cited where the members of Bands with ploughs and harrows, but without cattle or horses, have actually harnessed themselves and ploughed and harrowed their fields--ingenious use of ropes and portage straps. In other cases

they have made train dogs to do the work of the ox and the horse rather than make no use of the implements provided. They use the grub hoe very successfully in the absence of more suitable implements in their cultivation of their garden patches, from a fraction to six or seven acres in extent.<sup>11</sup>

And Hayter Reed remarked following a visit to the reserve settled by the Mosquito Band in southeastern Saskatchewan:

These poor people, although savages of the wildest type, displayed a most commendable desire to get on, and would be an example to others more advanced in civilization. They broke up about eight acres with grub hoes and small axes, after the land had been ploughed, and from this a great yield is expected, being much better worked than could have been done by the harrow.<sup>12</sup>

The enthusiasm for agriculture even penetrated, in some cases, to reserves lying outside the bounds of the main agricultural region. In a single year, 1880, Indian Affairs officials in the Manitoba Superintendancy received petitions from four different bands in northern forest areas requesting resurveys of their reserves to include hay lands and sections of bush lands suitable for cultivation. The Lands Branch, responsible for surveys, initially expressed its reluctance to carry out these resurveys, but Lawrence Vankoughnet, the Deputy Superintendant General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa expressed keen interest in the requests of the Indians, and persuaded the Surveyor General to accord sanction for the resurveys.<sup>13</sup>

In the southern area the enthusiasm for agriculture did not affect every reserve in like manner, however. On some reserves the enthusiasm was great, almost a fever, soon after the reserves were surveyed, but on other reserves there was considerable tardiness in the adoption of agriculture. A factor that seems to have had important bearing in this regard was the interest expressed by the leaders on the reserves. Indian Affairs officials often noted the crucial significance leadership had for the adoption of agriculture by the Indians. For example, in 1877, Henry Martineau, the Indian Agent at Manitoba House, wrote regarding the Ebb and Flow Band:

This band, although a new one, is already above the level of the others; this is due to their young chief Pennaise, who is an active, energetic man....thus stimulating them by his example.<sup>14</sup>

This band, Martineau reported, had brought 125 acres of land under cultivation in the very first year after the survey of this reserve, and had also constructed during this year nine new houses, two new stables, and a school-house measuring 30 by 25 feet.<sup>15</sup>

The Broken Head Band at their reserve at the southern end of Lake Winnipeg was, in a similar way, singled out by Indian Affairs officials as making rapid progress. Dr. Young, the Indian Agent, wrote in 1879:

The heathen Chief at Broken Head has taken great interest in farming and the band is making very fair progress. Three new families have settled down, built houses, and put in crop since last year. The Chief has appointed one of his men to supervise the farming and housebuilding, and he has performed his duties satisfactorily. Seed furnished sown yielded a very fair return. They took a great deal of pride in showing me over their farms this summer, their crops are clean, well cared for and fenced off from the cattle.<sup>16</sup>

After two years the agent who had replaced Dr. Young made a similar comment:

Naskepanais, the chief of the Heathen band, is setting his people a good example in regard to farming, he is staying steadily on the reserve and working hard; also an Indian called Eningo who did all the ploughing last spring.<sup>17</sup>

The critical factor of leadership in stimulating agricultural progress is illustrated also by the example of the Portage la Prairie Band. In 1871, at the time of the signing of Treaty No. 1, this band was under the leadership of Yellow Quill. Subsequently dissensions developed and the band split into three groups, headed by Yellow Quill, Nawachewaykapone and Short Bear. When the reserves were to be surveyed in 1877, the three leaders requested and received three separate reserves at Swan Lake, Sandy Bay and Long Plains, respectively. Nawachewaykapone and Short Bear were keen on adopting agriculture. Some of the Nawachewaykapone

people in fact preceded the survey by setting up small farms along the southwestern shore of Lake Manitoba: Indian Agent Francis Ogletree commented in 1879 that they were determined to farm even on lands that were quite marshy. After the surveys the Nawachewaykapone and Short Bear bands made swift progress in agriculture, but the Yellow Quill Band lagged behind greatly in this respect until 1884. Yellow Quill's lack of enthusiasm for farming may well have affected agricultural development on the reserve as a whole. Ironically, Yellow Quill selected a reserve which contained sections of excellent arable land, while Nawachewaykapone's reserve was generally of poor agricultural quality.<sup>18</sup>

While leaders seemed to have had an important role in stimulating agricultural progress, various other factors played their part as well. At Waywayseecappo, the adoption of agriculture hinged not so much on examples set by individual leaders as on a solution found to a thorny local problem. It seems that there was considerable recrimination and strife on the reserve over the issue of protection of crops from livestock. The few farmers on the reserve who cultivated land were at odds with a larger number of livestock owners. The result was that Waywayseecappo persistently lagged behind neighbouring reserves in the production of wheat and other crops. Even after Yellow Quill's Swan



Lake Reserve had made some progress in cultivation in the late 1880s, Waywayseecappo (a very large reserve) had in 1887 only 24 acres under wheat, five under potatoes and one third acre under oats.<sup>19</sup> In 1890, finally, the Waywayseecappo people found a solution to their livestock problem. They devised an ingenious means to fence off their livestock, which amounted to over 144 head of cattle, and also a number of sheep and horses. They linked the numerous sloughs on their reserves by fences, and thus formed a livestock enclosure of about one thousand acres. This means of forming an enclosure was inexpensive, and also saved each farmer the effort of fencing off each isolated plot individually.<sup>20</sup> After this livestock enclosure was constructed the acreage under crop increased dramatically, producing an "industrial wave." Inspector Wadsworth, in his report for 1891 wrote:

I am happy to report that there is quite a change for the better, since my inspection last year, at which time I was unable to extend to them any praise, but this year they appear to be struck by an industrial wave, they have put in a larger crop--for them--namely--one hundred and five acres, it consists of fifty and one half acres wheat, twenty one acres barley, nine acres oats, eight and one half acres potatoes, one and a quarter acres turnips, half an acre carrots, one eighth acre onions. The wheat and barley was ripe and ready for the sickle, and they are magnificent crops; the root crops had been fairly well attended to and would yield an average quantity in return. These crops are owned by twenty-one Indians,

sixteen of whom have a full line of crops, while five have potatoes and other root crops only.<sup>21</sup>

### Subsistence Farming and Non-Farm Work

During the 1880s and 1890s most of the Indian farmers in the Eastern Parklands and Prairies were subsistence farmers. They kept cattle, cultivated up to 10 acres of land, and grew wheat, oats, potatoes, barley, and various vegetables, such as turnips, carrots, beets, beans, rhubarb, onions, shallots, celery, lettuce. Some kept poultry and other farm animals: goats, sheep, pigs, and geese are often mentioned in the reports of Indian Affairs Inspectors. The farmers owned few implements, and apparently shared the use with others on their reserve of fairly unsophisticated items such as cast iron and chill iron ploughs and two wheeled platform mowers (or reapers). For threshing grain they paid for the services of itinerant owners of threshing machines, and for milling too they relied on outside services.

The farmers produced their crops, dairy and other farm products mainly for their own usage, but some of this produce was given away to needy relatives, or bartered for non-farm goods such as fish or products of the hunt. If a reserve were located close to a cheese factory the farmers sold their milk to this commercial outlet. Some cheese factories, indeed, relied for their milk supplies almost

solely on Indian farmers. The cheese factory at Ashern, Manitoba, for instance, received about 80% of its supplies from farmers at the Dog Creek and Fairford Reserves.

Most Indian farmers trapped in the wintertime and hunted periodically. Some also worked with relatives or neighbours in other non-farm work. In many respects, indeed, Indian subsistence farmers were better off than the settlers. Indians possessed a diversity of skills to obtain a livelihood. If crops failed they could make up the shortfall by trapping or fishing, or carting, or through a variety of other occupations. They could remain on the land and retain their homes and farms -- and sometimes even prosper -- during years of severe crop failures. Settlers, on the other hand, were more inflexibly committed to an agricultural livelihood. If bad harvests decimated their agricultural incomes there were few options open to them but to abandon their farms and migrate to the cities. Not surprisingly Indian Agent Markle of Birtle Agency noted at the end of an extremely poor crop year in 1889: "Indians are in a much better position than white settlers who have lost their crops this season by drought -- as an Indian can gain a livelihood where a white man would starve."<sup>22</sup>

Most settlers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan during the late nineteenth century were in fact subsistence farmers, and the difficulties in obtaining a measure of self-sufficiency through purely subsistence agriculture were often

quite unsurmountable. Almost half the settlers who came to the Prairies to take up free homesteads during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries could not prove up on their homesteads. As the historian Chester Martin has written:

A comparison of this acreage actually under homestead in 1929 and 1930 with the estimated acreage of homestead entries since 1870 would illustrate something of the wastage of human material that must have attended the free-homestead system in Western Canada...More than 41 per cent of original homestead entries from 1870 to 1927 were cancelled: more than forty-one out of every hundred Canadian homesteaders fell by the wayside before acquiring patent to their original homesteads. How many after acquiring patent turned their homesteads over to speculators and land companies it would perhaps be impossible to estimate. It will be conceded that in some respects "free" homesteads have been costly beyond computation. The great Homestead Act of 1862 was once characterized as a wager in which the United States staked a quarter section of land that a man could not live on it for five consecutive years. In Canada the odds have been easier -- three years instead of five -- but all too many wagers have been lost by the settler in the silent but deadly attrition going on upon the frontier.<sup>23</sup>

Because Indian farmers often engaged in hunting, trapping, and a variety of other non-farm means of obtaining livelihood, estimates of numbers of farmers on reserves are likely to be imprecise. At Waywayseecappo, after the surge of farming activity in 1891, there were 21 residents engaged in cultivation. In that year there were 43 heads of households on the reserve according to the annuity paysheets (some, however, were widows and a few others had moved away

to Valley River near Lake Dauphin).<sup>24</sup> Thus approximately 40% of the householders were cultivating land. Many others (an unspecified number) had cattle or sheep, and were not cultivating land. Few people were likely to have had more than a dozen head of cattle, and there were a total of 144 head of cattle on the reserve.<sup>25</sup> As these animals were unlikely to be concentrated in a few hands, it appears that almost all the householders (approximately 23) kept some cattle or sheep or both. Thus virtually every household was engaged in some kind of farming activity; the householder was either cultivating land, or maintaining animals, or both.

The reserves in the northern sections of the Parklands (where Waywayseecappo, for instance, was located) lie in a zone north of the 100 day frost-free day isogram. As such, these areas were not very well suited to the cultivation of wheat. In the nineteenth century, the varieties of wheat raised usually took longer than 100 days to ripen. Thus the cultivation of wheat here was limited by climate, and agriculture in the area was necessarily a mixed-farming operation. A variety of crops was raised, and livestock was kept.

In the southern sections of the Parklands, lying south of the 100 frost-free day isogram, the cultivation

of wheat as a cash crop was more feasible. This type of agriculture is described in the next section of this study entitled "Commercial Grain Farming".

In the northern mixed-farming areas, some of the Indians had begun to achieve considerable success in farming during the early 1890s. This success was noted by various observers. As an example, in his report on the Birdtail Creek (Dakota) Reserve in 1892, Inspector Wadsworth commented as follows:

Gardens are exceptionally good, even when compared with white settlers. Awitchan's garden is like a large market garden -- vegetables of almost every variety being grown by him in great profusion, it has been well attended to, and he was well rewarded for his labour, which, by the way, was mostly done by his wife.<sup>26</sup>

And in the same report, referring to the livestock at the Silver Creek (Ojibwa) Reserve, Wadsworth wrote:

They have a good herd, a breed of grade shorthorns crossed with Galloway. I have seen no finer cattle anywhere.<sup>27</sup>

Local settlers also described similar conditions during the 1890s. For example, 91 year old Jim Proutt reminisced in 1962 in a taped interview with a local Manitoba historian:

The only industry in those times (soon after 1885) was the cheese factory, that took the milk from the settlers and Indians and made cheese.... I know it was gone in 1898.

The Indians (at Keeseekoowenin Reserve) during these times were pretty well off, had lots of horses and cattle. When the buyers came in, there wasn't a month in the year you couldn't buy a couple of carloads of cattle. The Indians were happy and well dressed and worked a lot for a fellow named Stewart, with a mill at Rapid City. He had a winter camp up here and a sawmill besides. They also hunted a lot, grew vegetables and kept cows, for their own use then, as the cheese factory had burned down.<sup>28</sup>

Other similar reports can also be noted for reserves in the region.

As an alternative to farming, and also as a subsidiary or secondary livelihood, Indians engaged in a variety of non-farm occupations. These included hunting and trapping, and fishing where reserves were located in proximity to fishing sites. Other significant non-farm occupations were a variety of small business ventures. Examples were contracting to sell wood or hay to settlers, and freighting goods over short distances. The Ojibwa at Waywayseecappo were very successful as wood and hay contractors<sup>29</sup>; and The Silver Creek Ojibwa maintained large stables of horses to provide freighting services and were well-known for this purpose.<sup>30</sup> Labour on the larger, commercial farms of settlers was another important occupation. The Ojibwa and Dakota on the Long Plains Reserve seem to have earned considerable income from this type of work.<sup>31</sup> Other non-farm occupations were tanning hides, which Indian Affairs

officials reported as being very profitable,<sup>32</sup> handicrafts (for example, willow baskets, wooden ox-collars, bead work, snowshoes, mocassins and other leather articles), and collecting senega root (by means of which a good income of about \$1./day could be earned).<sup>33</sup>

It should be mentioned that non-farm occupations sometimes netted fairly good returns. Some of the Indians who did not farm were quite well off. Indeed, sometimes they were better off, than Indians who were farming. In the Birtle Indian Agency in southwestern Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan, farming was minimal on the Cote, Keys, and Keeseekouse Ojibwa reserves (located near Fort Pelly). Yet in their living standards the residents of these reserves were said to be the most "advanced" in the entire Birtle Agency, which included a number of wheat-farming and mixed-farming reserves.

Inspector McGibbon gave this rather interesting account of a visit to the Keys Reserve in 1887:

The next Reserve I visited was No. 65 "Keys". The crops here consist of 16 acres of barley, 10 of potatoes and one of garden produce, all looking well, potatoes especially being well advanced. Hunting here also is the principal industry, and it has been a very successful one during the past year. I consider the Indians at Fort Pelly the most advanced and most comfortable of any I have yet visited. I went into every house on these Reserves, and nothing could exceed the tidiness of the houses and all the surroundings.



In fact one would not distinguish many of them from houses of white people. They have bedsteads and blankets, pillows and quilts, cupboards for keeping in their dishes. I saw their tables set for meals plates knives and forks cruet stands and everything in keeping. Floors clean and stoves as bright as a shilling. The only remnant of the Indian style being that the apartment would be all in one, no partition of rooms kept separately. I presume this is partly owing to the fact that one room is easier kept warm in winter than if separated by partitions.<sup>34</sup>

Parenthetically, farming Indians seem to have also lived in fairly comfortable circumstances. Inspector McGibbon in 1897 made detailed descriptions of the interiors of Indian homes, and his following observations are typical:

Oak River Reserve:

Tom Blacksmith, No. 13: Neat house 14 x 16, wooden floor, new factory bedstead, chairs, tables, cupboard, woman scrubbing floor, paper on walls, rail and sod roof, white mud outside and in. No open chimney, cookstove, binder outside, new granary 14 x 16, with a good supply of wheat and oats in it. Children were clean. Tools hung up on walls, home made bob sleighs, frame up for an implement shed, good stable. The whole place was in good order.

Sunkasha No. 80: Good house, no chimney, cookstove, two lamps, pictures, dishes, wooden floor, beds on floor...good door.<sup>35</sup>

Waywayseecappo Reserve:

Billy Long Claws No. 144: New house 20 x 20, a double decker stove, polished bright...stone foundation under house, put in by himself, shelf with books, pitched roof made of rails

and sod. Lots of potatoes. Frank Seaton was here from Regina School for his holidays.

Basil Tanner No. 186: Garden in front, nice stable, 3 stalls, cows on one side, has pidgeons, curry comb and brush, harness, and sweat collars.

Keewaytincappo No. 158: China cups and saucers, granite tea pot. Bead work and pictures on walls, baby cot, dolls for the children. Busy tanning hides, home made sleighs...wood nicely sawn and piled for home use - nice place.<sup>36</sup>

From these descriptions it appears that in the Birtle Agency, at least, Indian farmers as well as non-farmers were quite similar in their living standards to those of their neighbours, the European and Canadian settlers. The nature and conditions of their farms also appear to have been quite comparable.

### Commercial Grain Farming

While much of the livelihood of Indians in the 1880s and 1890s was gained through a mixed subsistence farming and non-farm work, the cultivation of wheat as a commercial, or cash crop enterprise, had also begun to make its appearance on some Indian reserves in the late 1880s. This type of farming was confined, of course, to reserves located in the southern sections of the Parklands, within the 100 frost free day zone.

The Indian commercial farmers of the late 1880s commenced to farm during the earlier part of the same

decade as subsistence farmers, cultivating small acreages and keeping a variety of farm animals, but as they focussed their ambitions on the commercial production of wheat they discarded their stock and ceased to use land for the cultivation of crops other than wheat. They increased their cultivated acreage, commenced summer fallowing, and began to utilize and purchase some of the latest and best farm machinery available to wheat farmers within the region.

In the Birtle Indian Agency commercial grain farming received its greatest impetus at Oak River and at Silver Creek, where by the early 1890s every farming Indian was either a well-established commercial grain farmer or had ambitions to become one. In this Agency commercial farmers were also to be found at Oak Lake, Birdtail Creek, and Waywayseecappo. These reserves were all located within some of the best wheat-producing lands of southern Manitoba.

Commercial wheat farming was not a widespread or common enterprise among the settlers in the 1880s. At this time settlers had not begun to specialize in the production of wheat as a strictly commercial undertaking. They were primarily mixed-farmers and subsistence farmers, who raised crops and kept farm animals essentially for their own use, and sold surplus produce.<sup>37</sup> A diversified mixed-farming operation provided a cushion to losses which might be incurred in particular

sectors of their farming operations. To rely entirely on wheat production to make a living was for these farmers a foolish and risky proposition. Furthermore, commercial production of wheat could only be viable on large extensive holdings, which required great capital inputs. Such capitalization subsistence farmers were unable, and often unwilling, to undertake.

Nonetheless, commercial grain farming had begun to develop and expand in Manitoba in the late 1870s and early 1880s. After an extremely depressing decade of crop failures and poor wheat prices, a number of facilitating circumstances came together to help reverse this trend. Three successive years of poor harvests in Europe during 1879-1881 increased wheat prices; precipitation was extraordinarily favourable on the northern Prairies for a seven year stretch following 1878; and the rail link between Winnipeg and St. Paul completed in 1879 facilitated the export of grain and the import of building materials, barbed wire, windmills, new farm implements and other farm related goods.<sup>38</sup>

An important factor also was the considerable knowledge and technical skill that had accumulated in successfully combatting the special problems posed by dry-land agriculture on the Great Plains.<sup>39</sup> Drought, early frosts, hail, floods and grasshoppers were not the only

drawbacks that farmers on the Plains and Prairies faced. They suffered poor yields, even crop failures, from their inadequate understanding regarding the conservation of moisture in the soil, and their improper practices of ploughing, preparing seed beds, and eliminating weeds and grasses. Ploughing, harrowing, and packing were in fact crucial operations, and the way these were conducted could spell the difference between the success and failure of crops. Farmers settling the West from humid farming areas in Europe and Eastern North America often failed to realize that many of their age old assumptions and practices regarding cultivation needed to be rethought and adapted to their new environment. For example, these farmers thought it essential to air the soil. After ploughing, the soil would be left loose and untilled. In the dry-farming areas of the Plains such a practice severely depleted the precious moisture content of the soil. Here it was not air that was needed, rather it was moisture that required to be conserved. After ploughing it was useful, rather, to harrow and plank a field.<sup>40</sup> On the Plains, because of the dry conditions, the stubble on the fields did not decompose quickly as it did in humid areas. Should the stubble be ploughed under, removed, or left to provide a cover for the soil? Should fields be burnt after a crop was harvested? When should ploughing be done to most

effectively kill the weeds and grasses? Was the late fall-ploughing practised in the humid areas useful in the dry lands of the West? Which crop rotation practises were most beneficial?

It was obvious that age old practices solidly entrenched in the tradition of many of the agricultural settlers were sometimes inappropriate, and even detrimental to farming on the Plains. For dry-farming, to be successful, merely the absence of natural calamities was insufficient. Innovative adjustments were needed in agricultural practices. Also new technology had to be evolved to cope with the more extensive acreages that had to be cultivated in the attempt to make commercial operations viable, and new drought resistant and early maturing strains of wheat were required.

By the late 1870s experience with dry farming had matured to a point where innovations in technology as well as in tillage and crop management practices had begun to be made. Most of the technology and innovations developed in the United States. These progressively diffused into the Canadian Prairies. The first commercial farming ventures also commenced in the United States. Between 1879 and 1885 a number of "bonanza farms" were initiated by land speculating companies and large grain buyers in the upper Red River Valley in the U. S.<sup>41</sup> These were gigantic

capital intensive farms designed essentially to raise land prices and sell to prospective settlers' land, seed and farm equipment. One of the most famous bonanza farms was the Cass-Cheney Farm operated by Oliver Dalrymple. At the peak of its career in 1885 the farm took up 32,000 acres in crop land, employed 600 men at seedtime, 800 men at harvest, and possessed an inventory of 200 gang ploughs, 200 self-binding reapers, 30 steam threshers and 400 teams of horses and mules.<sup>42</sup> Bonanza farms usually remained in existence for only about a half dozen years, selling out when their primary objectives had been realized. Nonetheless, they did serve as model enterprises for settlers in their areas, and also provided useful testing grounds for new seeds and the latest farm machinery produced by the large Chicago farm equipment manufacturers.<sup>43</sup>

While most settlers on both sides of the International border were loathe to enter into commercial grain farming, some enterprising individuals did venture into this relatively risky business. In Manitoba a handful of commercial wheat farmers had expanded their farming enterprise in 1890 to the point that they were holding down over 1,000 acres under crop in the prime wheat-farming region.<sup>44</sup>

During the 1880s, while working as farm labourers, Indians were quick to observe that farming practices were

not very standardized. They differed according to the aims, knowledge, and the enterprise of the different settlers. Some settlers were content to proceed along "traditional" farming styles, while others were innovative and seemed to be privy to new techniques, new information, and new sources of supply of improved products, such as disease-resistant varieties of grain.

At the time Indians commenced their own farming ventures they were in somewhat of an advantageous position. They were not bound by traditional farming habits or "received knowledge" and they were rather free to choose, question, and emulate. But they were desperate for good advice. They were unsure of the results of their own somewhat scattered observations of farming methods. Before attempting risky ventures they wished to discuss, and evaluate other points of view. Nonetheless, sympathetic and knowledgeable advisors and discussants were difficult to come by. It was almost impossible for Indians to break into the social and information network of the progressive farmers. Indian Affairs Agents were usually not farmers themselves, and quite obviously uninformed. "Farm Instructors" appointed by the Department of Indian Affairs were hardly any better qualified. Some were political appointees, others seemed to have been lapsed homesteaders who found the employ of the Government easier and more remunerative than labouring jobs on farms or in cities.



Indians, then, were left essentially to their own devices. They had to sift through and evaluate the advice that was sometimes tendered to them, and judge what was best suited to their own interests and inclinations. With respect to the technical knowledge of dry-land agriculture, they found that there was no better way to acquire such knowledge than to watch closely and perceptively the methods and operations of those farmers in their vicinity who they knew were proficient and possessed special skills and experience.

The development of commercial farming among Indians in Manitoba is exemplified by the case of the Oak River Indians, a band of Santee Dakota located on a reserve about 30 miles from Brandon, in the midst of the highly productive Southern Manitoba wheat belt. A brief review of their early farming ventures, and decisions to specialize in the commercial production of wheat, is described below.

The Dakota on this reserve had fled to Canada in the mid 1860s following the Minnesota hostilities. They arrived in Canada at a time when Indians locally were finding distress because of the decline of the buffalo and other game. The Dakota had the added discomfort of being in hostile Ojibwa territory. After the treaties were signed in the area, in which they took no part having no lands to cede, they petitioned Lieutenant Governor Morris for

reserves to be set apart for them. Because of their peaceful behaviour on Canadian soil, reserves were surveyed for them in southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the reserve at Oak River was one of these.

Though the reserve was surveyed in 1876, it took almost three years for the splinter Dakota groups to settle on it and commence to farm. Probably it was a distasteful task for many of them. The Santee adhered to a full blown Plains horse culture and had likely not "grown a potato" since the 1760s, following their departure from semi-sedentary villages in the Minnesota woodlands. Nonetheless, decisions were made by some of the Oak River Band members to farm, and they requested Lieutenant Governor Morris for farm instruction, and for oxen and implements.

The first Indian Agent appointed to the Oak River Reserve was L. W. Herchmer in 1877. Herchmer came from Upper Canada and was actually a knowledgeable and accomplished farmer, but his expertise was in cattle rather than dry-land grain agriculture. Herchmer advised the Indians to acquire cattle, and, taking his advice, they began to do so in 1879.<sup>45</sup> He arranged private sales to the Indian farmers who paid cash earned from outside employment, such as cutting wood for steamers plying on the Assiniboine River.<sup>46</sup> It is possible Herchmer benefitted personally from these cattle sales. In 1882 he asked the Department of Indian Affairs

for personal loans to expand his "business", if such it was, in starting off-reserve "model farms" employing Indian labour.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, Herchmer's active interest in cattle helped the Oak River Indians in acquiring some very superior quality livestock. Livestock owned by the Indians increased from a mere 3 yoke of oxen and no cows in 1878 to more than 160 short horned cattle in 1885. (There were 54 households at Oak River in 1885. It is not known, however, how many of these owned cattle).<sup>48</sup>

Apparently much of the farming at Oak River before 1885 was confined to cattle raising. Herchmer often reported progress in the acquisition of cattle and the growing of potatoes, but made few references to wheat growing.

The keeping of cattle was useful as a supplement to grain-farming in the Oak River region, but it could not itself be very profitable. Grazing lands on the Oak River Reserve were limited, and it was not possible to acquire lands outside the reserve. After Herchmer's departure from the reserve in 1885, the Indians seem to have decided, on their own initiative, that grain-farming was more suited to their economic interests and that it held a greater potential for expansion. Thence, within a short span of two years, they began to concentrate their attention on the production of wheat and on increasing the

acreage under this crop. In 1887 there were 200 acres under wheat on the Reserve, out of a total cultivated acreage of 225 acres.<sup>49</sup>

A good crop in 1888 seemed to have bolstered the Indians' enthusiasm for wheat growing. By this time some of them also had become quite proficient in this enterprise, as is indicated by this report of Inspector McGibbon of Indian Affairs, who visited the reserve in July (before the harvest):

This is a very fine Reserve and the crops looked well...Some of the wheat fields were as fine as any I had seen among white settlers, and I saw some magnificent fields passing along Griswold district. In one Indian's field I gathered stalks of wheat on 5th July measuring 33 inches on the average.

The fields were clean and well ploughed and the seed had been well sowed. In fact from every point it was equal to any white man's crop...

The Band asked for some implements. They said they wanted no help in way of provisions, but they would like to get a few more implements to enable them to carry on farm work more extensively. They asked for some wagons.

They ask for eight Breaking plows, and eight cross plows, a few sett Harrows, some Trace-chains, and some Gun powder.<sup>50</sup>

The next year's crop, that of 1889, was an almost total failure owing to a severe drought and depredation by gophers, yet in 1890 the acreage under wheat increased.<sup>51</sup> In 1891 this acreage was increased again, and in that year there were 516 acres under wheat out of a total of 559½

acres cultivated on the reserve. One of the commercial farmers, together with his father, threshed 1,200 bushels of wheat. At a maximum price of 90.4¢/ bushel in 1891, this man's income might possibly have been almost \$1,084. that year, just a little over an Indian Agent's normal salary of \$1,000/annum.<sup>52</sup>

In 1892 wheat acreage at Oak River increased again, and this time sharply, to 958½ acres out of a total 1,075½ acres cultivated.<sup>53</sup> Inspector Wadsworth, after his visit to the reserve that year, however, criticized this specialization in wheat production. He wrote:

They plough up every acre they can, and sow as much seed as their credit is good for, and they can get hold of ...The decrease in the quantity of potatoes and roots planted is to be greatly regretted. Their supreme anxiety to grow wheat overshadows every other interest. The shrinkage in the yield of grain, and the low prices this year may bring a sober second thought that they should not place entire dependence on it.

What potatoes they had this year were not as well attended to as they should have been.<sup>54</sup>

Inspector Wadsworth clearly shared the views of most settlers, who preferred to remain diversified subsistence farmers rather than take risks and make the capital investments required of commercial wheat farming. The Oak River farmers had had a very poor wheat crop in 1889 (in common with farmers in the entire province), yet the acreage they planted under wheat in 1890 increased.

As commercial farmers Indians no doubt saw more need than subsistence farmers in increasing acreage to benefit from the economies of scale. Subsistence farmers, after a bad crop year, were perhaps likely to somewhat reduce their cultivated acreage the following year because of shortage of seed grain. Such farmers generally shrank from rapidly expanding any one sector of their diversified operations, "placing all their eggs in one basket", for fear of losing money in the event of a poor yield or downfall in price.

The increase in acreages cultivated by individual farmers can be noted by comparing Inspector Wadsworth's statements in 1892 with those in 1890. In 1892 Wadsworth wrote:

Of the forty-two farming land...the average of all but eight went into double figures; two of them, Mah-pe-za-ska and George Pah-ka-da-sin had ninety-three acres each; four others, Eli Aicage, Ti-oy-om-he-na, Charley and Sun-ka-maza had over fifty acres each; and sixteen others had over twenty acres each.<sup>55</sup>

In 1890 Wadsworth had written:

Harry Hotannia is the most prosperous farmer on the Reserve, his principal crop being eighteen acres wheat, and half an acre potatoes. His wheat threshed out machine measure, four hundred and fifty bushels. [25 bushels/acre].<sup>56</sup>

Thus in 1890 only one man was farming 18 acres, but in 1892 22 men were farming more than 20 acres each, and two of these had farms of 93 acres each. This tremendous

increase in farming activity was concentrated in wheat production, and did not spill over to other farm activities. The number of livestock owned on the Reserve in 1892 was 162.<sup>57</sup> This represented almost no increase from 1885, when the figure was 160.

In the early part of the 1890s, therefore, the Indian farmers at Oak River Reserve had gained sufficient confidence in their agricultural operations to decide that commercial wheat production was most suited to their interests and to the agricultural potential of the land on which they farmed. While they had keenly sought the advice of their Indian Agent in 1877 for their farming operations, and had seemingly accepted his views as being expert advice, by 1890 they were far more experienced in the business. They were in a position to evaluate such advice critically. They must have been fairly amused at Inspector Wadsworth's exhortations to them to diversify their operations. They probably listened to him quietly and ignored his "expert advice" as inapplicable and not useful. It was clearly safer to remain a diversified subsistence farmer than to attempt the risky and pitfall-ridden path of commercial wheat farming. But if the risk were greater in the latter, so was the promise of gain. Commercial farmers from Oak River and other bands had decided to opt for the risky road. And in doing so they were also becoming fiercely independent, which in subsequent

years was to cause much consternation among Indian Affairs officials. (See Chapter VIII)

Were the Indian farmers too rash in attempting to pursue a rather specialized avocation against the advice of outside observers such as Inspector Wadsworth? Did they understand the nature of markets and economic problems attending commercial wheat farming in the West? Did they possess sufficient technical expertise to launch into a risky endeavour?

It is rather remarkable that in spite of farming for a decade Indian farmers in the 1890s appeared to have had virtually no contact with any farmers' organizations. Also, they did not appear to have participated in farmers' fairs. The news carried by local newspapers does not indicate that much meaningful contact took place between Indians and their neighbours, even on an informal level. Indians seem to have pursued their farming endeavours in almost complete isolation from the social and political life of the farming people living around them. Few attempts were made by Indians or the settlers (with some notable exceptions mentioned in Chapter VIII) to involve themselves in the affairs and activities of the other.

This alienation from social and political currents around them was surely not in the interests of the Indian farmers in the long run. With respect to wheat production it quite likely reduced their perspectives to immediate



considerations of price and profitability, and did not allow them to anticipate difficulties or to make decisions with the knowledge of long-term prospects.

Indians seem also to have been curiously unaware of the special body of legislation that affected them exclusively. Partly because of this ignorance they were not able to offer any inputs designed to change policy to their advantage. One of the disadvantages which they suffered under this special body of legislation, the Indian Act, was particularly invidious. Indian property could not be offered as collateral (under a provision of the Act) and thus Indians were effectively excluded from being able to obtain credit from private lending institutions. This constituted a severe handicap in pursuing commercial agriculture (or, indeed, any commercial enterprise). Sometimes when the loan-givers were ignorant of the Indian Act, the Indians had an opportunity to obtain credit and expand their agricultural operations. But when the legal drawbacks of offering credit to Indians were known, they were likely to be denied credit, and economic expansion was virtually impossible.

Indian commercial farmers did not appear to be desultory or inept farmers. They seemed to have worked studiously to master the complex procedures of dry-land wheat farming. They seem to have been well aware that to obtain good yields one did not merely plough a field and plant seed and wait by for nature to take its course.

The proficient dry-land wheat farmer harrowed or packed his field soon after ploughing to lessen evaporation of moisture from the furrow slice; he cultivated his fields thoroughly to kill weeds and grasses; if he found cracks developing in his soil he returned and cultivated again. He decided according to prevailing conditions of wind and rain and the stubble on his fields whether to perform fall-ploughing or not, and how deep to furrow; he decided whether or not to harrow early in the spring to control moisture; and whether harrowing after a crop was taken would be favourable for killing weeds, or unfavourable for increasing the danger of soil drift. Depending upon conditions of soil and the lay of the land he decided upon how much seed to plant. Obtaining good yields of wheat, therefore, was not merely a fortuitous happenstance, though this was sometimes important. Judgement, expertise, and alertness were necessary inputs as well.<sup>58</sup>

Indian Affairs officials rarely described the technical quality of the Indians' farming work, but we can infer this from some of their description of results. At Oak River in 1888 Inspector McGibbon described the Indian farmers' fields as "clean", "well ploughed", and "the seed well sowed"<sup>59</sup>. Harry Hotainna had a yield of wheat on 18 acres of 25 bushels/acre in 1890<sup>60</sup> when the Manitoba average for that year was 19.65 bushels/acre.<sup>61</sup> On the

Silver Creek Reserve in the same year Indian Agent J.A. Markle had this to say regarding John Tannin's field just before the harvest:

All the grain on the Indian farms is good, and John Tannin's in my opinion cannot be excelled in the Dominion. He has 25 acres wheat, and from present appearance will yield 40 bushels/acre at least, and I trust all will ripen before there is any frost to do damage.<sup>62</sup>

Every Indian farmer was surely not as successful as John Tannin or Harry Hotainna. Nonetheless, these examples are instructive in that they indicate the proficiency that at least some Indian farmers had achieved at the time they were engaged in commercial wheat agriculture.

The expansion of acreages cultivated by individual Indian farmers required outlays of capital. The Indians could either make extensive utilization of labour, or capitalize their farms by investing in labour-saving implements and farm machinery. Or they could employ a judicious combination of both. The Indians at Oak River and at Silver Creek chose almost exclusively to invest in implements and machinery rather than place reliance on labour.

In this respect Indians deviated from the common practice of non-Indian commercial wheat farmers. While farm machinery was used by the latter, they also relied heavily on farm labour to carry out the various tasks of

breaking new land and operating the large farms. It has been suggested that they did so because capital was costly relative to labour and land, and hence it was economically profitable to remain undercapitalized till the cost of labour had begun to exceed that of capital.

In the 1890s the cost of labour was relatively cheap, and also it was quite readily available. Subsistence farmers and new immigrants formed a great pool of available labour.<sup>63</sup>

For Indians the use of labour to work their farms was fraught with a great many difficulties. Non-Indians might have been disinclined to work for Indian employers, and Indians themselves did not attempt to recruit non-Indian labour. The labour of other Indians was available, and probably utilized, but Indian farmers shied away from using it to any great extent.

The use of Indian labour was attended by too many problems. Indians likely would not work for Indian farmers on a purely cash basis. They were, after all, kinsmen and compatriots and conceivably would make too many extra-monetary demands. For the Indian farmers an impersonal and purely mercantile relationship was quite impossible with Indian labour. Hints that a man might attempt to gain at the expense of his kinsmen, or attempt to function as a "boss" ordering people around, was certain to set in motion swift and irrepressible social disapproval.

Entrepreneurship was not necessarily negatively sanctioned within Indian communities. On the Plains, for instance, considerable incentive existed to acquire and accumulate wealth in horses and other goods. Through special talent or supernatural assistance a man could attain both wealth and power. However, these were acceptable only if attained by means of personal achievement. It was anathema if one man attempted to do so by trying to direct and control the actions of others.

The distaste in both Ojibwa and Dakota cultures for an Indian to "boss" another Indian (other than on certain clearly defined occasions such as a communal hunt or in war) seemed to have been a particularly deep-seated aspect of the ethos of these cultures. This distaste was readily conferred upon commercial transactional relationships, thus it was highly problematic for an Indian to function as an employer of other Indians. Where employment was actually effected it required to be clothed heavily in the guise of a quasi-partnership. The Indian free traders of the mid-nineteenth century employed Indians and half-breeds in this manner. The "European system" (from the Indian point of view) of impersonal employer-employee relationships based on purely monetary considerations seemed to have been rather rigidly rejected by Indians as inappropriate to relations between and among Indians.

In the early 1890s, therefore, Indian commercial farmers began to mechanize their farms essentially because they had little choice but to do so. One of the results was that Indian farms were more highly mechanized than farms of comparable size of settlers. As this anticipated the progressive replacement of labour on prairie farms by increased usage of farm machinery, in one sense the farms of the Indians at this time were more "advanced" than those of the settlers.

## CHAPTER VII

### LIMITATIONS IN OPPORTUNITIES (I):

#### GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARDS INDIANS: 1763-1896

The authority that government has, and the policies that it formulates and implements, affect us all. However, these have had a particularly crucial significance for the Indians as the relationship they have had with government is of a very unusual kind. Some of the policies and authority of government for Indians have been enshrined in legislation, in particular the Indian Act. Policies were also given definitive shape by government politicians and bureaucrats, and they were important in effecting changes in social and economic life on the reserves.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \*

The focus in Chapter VII is government policy between 1870 and 1896, and the response of some of the Indians to it. 1870 is the date the Manitoba Act was passed. Canadian civilian authority on the Prairies was established in that year with the arrival at Fort Garry of Lieutenant Governor Adams Archibald. In 1896 the Conservative Government in Ottawa fell and was replaced by that of the Liberals under Sir Wilfrid Laurier.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Indian-Canadian relations, and the special position of Indians vis-a-vis the larger society, have made clear, it is hoped, the predominant importance of the federal government and its agencies in affecting the expansion and limitation of life opportunities among Parkland Indians. It becomes necessary at this point to review in some detail the policy and practice of government in the 19th century, as these affected the native peoples of the region.

Government Policy: 1763-1870

One of the key sources of policy toward Indians in Canada was the Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued under the authority of King George III. This proclamation<sup>3</sup> asserted that it was in the interest of the Crown, as well as the North American colonists, that the possession of the lands of Indian allies not be molested or disturbed. The proclamation forbade settlers and local officials from taking possession of Indian lands, or making purchase of property from Indians, without the express approval of the Crown. Significantly, while regulating against the alienation of Indian lands by the general populace, the Crown reserved for itself through "Our Royal Will and Pleasure" the rights of actual sovereignty over Indian lands.

The proclamation also made regulations regarding



other aspects of intercourse between settlers and Indians. It forbade trading with Indians without a licence from the Crown, and it forbade the sale of intoxicants within Indian territories. All these restrictions, regarding the alienation of Indian lands, and the trade with Indians, were further elaborated in subsequent legislation.

While the royal proclamation was an important exercise in the formulation of policy, the regulations were not very effective. They were sanctioned by the Crown through the "Pain of Our Displeasure", and this was not sufficient to restrain the tremendous pressures that were building up as settlement grew, for the acquisition of Indian lands.

Essentially, the royal proclamation defined the legal entitlement of lands in the possession of Indians, and by formulating various regulations, it tried to reduce some of the persistent causes of friction taking place at that time between Indian allies and the local white settlers.

The British government had developed, during the period of military conflict in North America in the 18th century, a policy of giving presents, often in the form of annuities, to their Indian allies. However, when field agents were unreliable irregularities crept into the disbursement of these annuities. Following the Revolutionary War of 1774 the British government took a renewed interest in its relations with its Indian allies, and undertook to reform the system of disbursing presents. A new bureaucratic

structure was created, and one of the first major expansions of the Department of Indian Affairs took place. By means of a set of instructions provided to Governor Carlton in 1775<sup>4</sup> a hierarchy of officials were appointed: superintendents, deputy superintendents, commissaries, interpreters and missionaries. These appointees were provided clearly defined duties and powers to manage the distribution of monies and presents, and to enforce the directives of the royal proclamation of 1763. In conjunction with these appointments, the jurisdiction of the Crown over the affairs of Indians was expanded. Officials were designated Justices of the Peace with powers to adjudicate disputes with Indians, and also new conditions were imposed on the carrying out of trade with Indians. For instance, traders were disallowed from extending credit for goods over fifty shillings, and no debt above that sum could be recovered from Indians.

After the War of 1812, amicable relations developed between Britain and the United States, and the Indians were no longer useful as potential allies. There were calls for the curtailment of the expensive payments of presents and annuities to Indians, but because of anticipated Indian protests this was generally not carried through. Sir James Kempt counselled the government to be patient in this regard. The presents, sometimes guaranteed by treaty, could be withdrawn gradually, Sir James felt, without

provoking undue protest from the Indians.<sup>5</sup> Many years later, in 1858, the giving of presents was finally discontinued.<sup>6</sup> In the meantime, however, as settlement expanded during the first half of the nineteenth century, a number of treaties were made with Indians in Upper Canada and compensation for the land cessions and surrenders usually took the form of annuities.<sup>7</sup> Thus the payment of annuities persisted.

With population growth in Upper Canada in the 1820s and 1830s, new conflicts arose between the settlers and Indians, particularly as a result of encroachment on Indian lands and timber stands. The Department of Indian Affairs also came in for severe criticism for the mismanagement of Indian funds acquired through sales and surrenders of lands. But the complaints of Indians generally went unheeded until the Rebellion of 1837. During the course of these troubles the Indians of Upper Canada remained scrupulously loyal, and the Crown authorities felt prompted, in return for this loyalty, to investigate the long litany of Indian grievances against departmental administration.<sup>8</sup> The Macaulay Commission, a one-man board of enquiry comprising Chief Justice J. B. Macaulay, was appointed by Sir George Arthur, and it presented its report in 1839. Macaulay appealed for greater efficiency within the Department of Indian Affairs, and recommended an upgrading of schools among the Indians, and appointment of more missionaries.<sup>9</sup> Within a decade of

Macaulay's investigation a number of other commissions were also appointed; the most significant of these was the Bagot Commission, a three-member team appointed by Sir Charles Bagot in 1842.<sup>10</sup>

The Bagot Commission was given a fairly comprehensive charter. It sought to enquire into the entire system of Indian administration, and to do so it accepted briefs from department personnel, missionaries, and a single Indian, Rev. Peter Jones, the Mississauga leader and Methodist minister. The commission's report made a number of recommendations, and discussed issues concerning presents and annuities (with regard to their continuance and their distribution), Indian lands (here the commission discussed titles, tenure, management, and the protection of reserves), and the structure and the personnel of the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>11</sup>

The Bagot Commission's criticisms of Indian administration were quite severe, as indeed were those of some of the other boards of enquiry. Such criticisms were remarkable, as many members of the investigating teams had close personal connections with senior Indian Affairs personnel. However, the mishandling and misappropriation of Indian funds (obtained largely from surrenders of lands) were so rampant that they could not easily be ignored.<sup>12</sup> The Bagot Commission's recommendations regarding this problem were quite straightforward: audits should be made

regularly of band funds, and sums in excess of £200 should be invested for the benefit of the band; chiefs and headmen should be given an annual accounting of the funds to the credit of bands; and Indian Affairs officials should be compelled to account fully for funds under their administration each year.<sup>13</sup> Criticism regarding the management of monies were ultimately beneficial to the department. Accounting procedures were set up and a close watch was maintained by senior personnel and the Treasury with respect to the disbursement of monies and the use of band funds.

Perhaps the most important recommendation of the Bagot Commission was that Indian administration should remain under the immediate control of the Crown, rather than that of provincial or local authorities. Legislation was introduced soon afterwards to formalize such control, and this has remained a cardinal principle in the dealings of government with Indians to the present day. The Commission based this recommendation upon reasoning derived from a Report to the British House of Commons in 1837. This report strongly argued that the protection of aborigines be considered a duty of the Imperial Government rather than that of local colonial legislatures. A just administration for aborigines could not be provided by local legislatures because:

...a local legislature, if properly constituted should partake largely in the interests, and represent the feelings of the settled opinions of the great mass of the people for whom they act....[as] the settlers in almost every Colony [have] disputes to adjust with the native Tribes, or claims to urge against them, the Representative body is virtually a party, and therefore ought not to be a judge in such controversies....<sup>14</sup>

In response partly to the recommendations of the various commissions, two bills were passed in the Legislature of the Province of Canada in 1850 detailing the government's policies toward Indians. Another commission, the Talfour, Worthington and Pennefather Commission was appointed in 1856 to make further recommendations regarding government policy,<sup>15</sup> and this was followed by passage of another act in 1857.

The three acts of 1850 and 1857 established the main outlines of Indian legislation and supplemented by two subsequent acts passed in 1868 and 1869, they formed the main bulk of the Indian Act of 1876, which served essentially to consolidate all this prior legislation.

The acts of 1850, 1857, and 1868 and 1869 were titled as follows:

1850 - An Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada (13 and 14 Vic. Cap. 42).

- 1850 - An Act for the Protection of Indians in Upper Canada from Imposition, and the Property Occupied or Enjoyed by Them from Trespass and Injury (13 and 14 Vic. Cap. 74)
- 1857 - An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws Respecting Indians (20 Vic. Cap. 26)
- 1868 - An Act Providing for the Organization of the Department of Secretary of State of Canada, and for the Management of Indian and Ordnance Lands (31 Vic. Cap. 42)
- 1869 - An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs, and to Extend the Provisions of the Act 31 Victoria Cap. 42 (32 and 33 Vic. Cap. 6).

The essential ingredients of these Acts were to establish for the government, by means of legislation, complete control of the management of resources and monies of Indian bands, and to prevent, without the approval of the government, alienation of land and resources on reserves. In addition, the government began, with the passage of these acts, to take an active role in formulating laws and restrictions applicable uniquely to Indians. These were usually done without any consultation with the Indians, and the result often was that they were extremely unpopular.

With respect to management of band monies, the Act of 1868 described the powers of the government in these terms:

The Governor in Council may, subject to the provisions of this Act, direct how, and in what manner, and by whom the moneys arising from sales of Indian lands, and from property held or to be held in trust for the Indians, or for any timber thereon, or from any other source for the benefit of Indians, shall be invested from time to time, and how the payments or assistance to which the Indians may be entitled shall be made or given, and may provide for the general management of such lands, moneys and property, and direct what percentage or proportion thereof shall be set apart from time to time, to cover the cost of and attendant upon such management under the provisions of this Act, and for the construction and repair of roads passing through such lands, and by way of contribution to schools frequented by such Indians.<sup>16</sup>

This rather comprehensive entitlement of powers to the Governor in Council left in its wake virtually no administrative powers or financial resources in the hands of Indian leaders for band management. Indian leaders, however, were given the authority and discretion to assent to proposed sale or lease of Indian reserve lands. By means of this authority chiefs "surrendered" or "released" these lands to the government, which then formalized the sale or lease. Surrenders were made by a chief, or a majority of chiefs of the band, at a general band meeting called especially for the purpose.<sup>17</sup> The decision to release or surrender lands, then, was one of the few powers relating to the administration of reserves that were granted to Indian leaders within the provisions of the act of 1868.



A number of special laws, applicable solely to Indians, were detailed in the Indian legislation. Perhaps the most significant of these was the protection accorded to Indians from recovery of debts taken by them. By means of the Act of 1850 (Vic. 13 and 14 Cap. 74) non-Indians were disallowed from obtaining judgement for "any debt or pretended debt, or upon any bond, bill, note, promise or other contract whatsoever" from Indians. They were also prohibited from taking legal action to attach property located upon a reserve for non-payment of debt by an Indian.<sup>18</sup> This provision may have served the beneficial purpose intended for it, namely to protect Indians from unscrupulous usurers, but it operated also as a severe handicap for those Indians who attempted to embark upon commercial ventures. Financial facilities, such as loans or mortgages, from non-Indian sources or from commercial institutions, were not readily available to them. This proviso found its way into the Indian Act of 1876, and was retained essentially in its original form until the middle of the present century.

Other special provisions contained in the above-noted act of 1850 disbarred Indians from disposing to non-Indians presents and annuities given to them by government, and from procuring liquor either on or off the reserves. Indians were also exempted from paying taxes or being assessed for or in respect of Indian reserve lands.<sup>19</sup>

To define the applicability of these laws, it was necessary to designate who would be included in the category 'Indian'. In Vic. 13 & 14 Cap. 42 of 1850 this categorization was framed in these terms:

- First - All persons of Indian blood, reputed to belong to the particular Body or Tribe of Indians interested in such lands [appropriated for the use of Indian bands], and their descendants
- Secondly - All persons intermarried with any such Indians and residing among them, and [their] descendants
- Thirdly - All persons residing among such Indians, whose parents on either side were or are Indians of such Body or Tribe, or entitled to be considered as such,
- Fourthly - All persons adopted in infancy by any such Indians, and residing in the Village or upon the lands of such Body or Tribe of Indians, and their descendants.<sup>20</sup>

In subsequent years, this categorization was restricted in its scope by the application of a patrilineal principle. The people legally eligible to be classed as Indians were thereby considerably reduced. In 1876, Part 4 of the above definition was excised, and Part 2 restricted to non-Indian women marrying Indian men, and their descendants. In 1880, Parts 1 and 3 were consolidated to include as Indian only males, their wives and children. The definition of "Indian" in 1880 was thus reworded as follows:

The term "Indian" means -

First. Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band;

Secondly. Any child of such person.

Thirdly. Any woman who is or was lawfully married to such a person.<sup>21</sup>

In 1857 (20 Vic. Cap. 26) the government introduced a procedure for an Indian to be "enfranchised", that is, released from his Indian status. This was considered to be in the nature of a privilege. Indians who were educated and "of good moral character" could be examined by certain government officials and recommended for enfranchisement. Uneducated Indians could be enfranchised as well if they were "sufficiently intelligent" and "capable of managing their own affairs", but they were required to wait for a three year probationary period.<sup>22</sup>

Very few Indians took advantage of the "opportunity" offered to be released from Indian status. Between 1857 and 1920 only about 250 persons had been enfranchised (and many of these appear to have been wives and children of enfranchised Indians who were enfranchised concomitantly). The reason for this lack of enthusiasm for enfranchisement is not difficult to seek. An Indian upon enfranchisement received in fee simple a piece of land which was "his share"

of reserve property, and also various revenues of the band. The process of enfranchisement threatened to cause reserve lands to be partitioned and alienated. It struck at the very base of the reserve system. If reserve lands could be transformed into small segments, and owned in fee simple, the integrity of the reserve would cease. Indians perceived the enfranchisement legislation as a means by which the government hoped to break up the reserves, and thus to destroy the land base they had obtained through the treaties. From their point of view, enfranchisement was a bait offered to Indians to "cease" to be Indians. When this took place government could relieve itself of its treaty obligations. Thus the offer of enfranchisement was merely a manoeuvre on the part of government to annul the treaties. The government offered enfranchised Indians the "legal rights and habilities" of Her Majesty's other subjects. But if those Indians who removed a share of reserve property could be granted these rights, why could other Indians not be granted these rights as well? However unsatisfactory life was under the restrictions of Indian legislation, Indians did not feel that it was likely to be any better without assets and benefits of a communal land resource.<sup>23</sup>

Indian legislation which came to be incorporated in the consolidated Indian Act of 1876 seems to have been designated to serve two somewhat disparate purposes: to protect Indian lands and natural resources from encroachment by non-Indians; and to retain for the government an

extraordinary authority and control over Indians. Perhaps the government felt that the latter was necessary to prevent violent uprisings by Indians, and also that it might help render Indians more pliable in their dealings with government. The government usually justified its extraordinary control over the affairs of Indians as a means to civilize them. But the objective, namely to civilize Indians, and the means chosen to do so, appear to have been somewhat contradictory. If Indians were to be civilized why was it deemed necessary to strip their leaders of almost all powers to manage their own lands and resources? Was management of lands not civilized behaviour? Why were Indians' advice and opinions invariably ignored when new legislation was passed affecting their affairs and interests? Would it not have facilitated the civilizing process to obtain their participation in such decision-making? Why did government services, such as education, health care, agricultural extension consistently remain poor and deficient on Indian reserves in comparison with those among the general populace?

While there can be no doubt that government did hope to see Indians participate as social and economic equals with their non-Indian neighbours outside the reserves, one aspect of government policy, namely legislation passed in the 1850s and in subsequent years, was clearly directed toward keeping Indians under tight government control, and

toward excluding them from any significant role in the administration of the reserves. The Bagot Commission had warned in 1847 that the administration of Indian affairs "has had the tendency to keep the Indians in a state of isolation and tutelage, and materially to retard their progress."<sup>24</sup> But the government remained unwilling to alter these conditions. Instead of dismantling the legal structure which had helped to create the isolation and tutelage, government proceeded rather to enlarge this structure and increase its interference and restrictive control over the affairs of Indians.

Sometimes there was an attempt on the part of government to take stock, and to look critically at its policies toward Indians. A notable instance of this was in 1876 when the Indian Act was to be formulated and tabled in the House in that year. David Laird, the Liberal Minister of the Interior, wrote:

...our Indian legislation generally rests on the principle, that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage and treated as wards or children of the State. The soundness of this principle I cannot admit. On the contrary, I am firmly persuaded that the true interests of the aborigines and of the State alike require that every effort should be made to aid the red man in uplifting himself out of his condition of tutelage and dependence, and it is clearly our wisdom and our duty, through education and every other means, to prepare him for a higher civilization by encouraging him to assume the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship.<sup>25</sup>

However, no efforts were made to reform or rethink legislation in any substantial way. The trend toward authoritarianism proceeded unchecked. In the Indian Act of 1876, every provision of prior legislation which gave the government authoritarian powers in its relations with Indians was retained. Indeed, new restrictions were added, for example in the control of the usage of liquor by Indians. Thus, if an Indian was found intoxicated, he could be imprisoned for one month, and if he did not reveal the source of the supply of his liquor, another fourteen days could be added to his prison sentence. If he was found with liquor in his possession, he could be ordered to pay \$50 to \$100 plus costs, or in default be incarcerated for two to six months.<sup>26</sup> These heavy penalties for imbibing or possessing liquor did not exist in prior legislation. Introspection regarding its role in enhancing tutelage did prompt the government, however, to make, from its point of view, one concession, though from the point of view of the Indians this was no concession at all. The qualifications necessary for an Indian to be enfranchised were relaxed. According to the 1857 requirements an Indian was eligible for enfranchisement only if he could read, write, and speak in English or French, possessed elementary education, was of "good moral character", and free from debt. In 1876, for an Indian to be enfranchised, it became necessary only to have attained some degree of civilization and to

have "integrity, morality and sobriety."<sup>27</sup> The government felt that by relaxing eligibility it was introducing a major reform in Indian legislation: it was making it easier for an Indian to break free from tutelage and wardship. However, as earlier noted, Indians saw enfranchisement not as a facility but as a threat to the integrity of their reserves.

#### Government Policy: 1870-1879

These, then, were the laws that existed, and were applicable to Indians, when the authority of the Canadian government was extended to the Prairies in 1870. Initially, however, the government did not concern itself with the application of these laws. The policy of the government in the early 1870s was to obtain the Indians' consent and their goodwill to negotiate agreements on land cessions, and to end their interference in the progress of settlement. In the course of negotiations for the treaties, the provisions of Indian legislation were relegated to the background and ignored.<sup>28</sup> The government officials did not wish to burden the negotiations with complications which might result if legislation were discussed. It seems quite probable that Indian leaders were unaware of the laws that were to be uniquely applicable to them (and some of which they were to find quite objectionable).



The first two Lieutenant Governors of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, Adams Archibald (1870-72) and Alexander Morris (1872-77), took an active interest in the administration of Indian affairs. Such administration, during their term in office, consisted mainly of resolving conflicts between settlers and Indians. These conflicts arose mostly from the cutting of timber by settlers on lands designated, but not surveyed and demarcated, as Indian reserves. Both Lieutenant Governors typically acted quickly to quell serious trouble whenever this was apprehended. They did not use regulations or legislation for this purpose, rather they acted on an ad hoc basis. They gathered the complaints of all parties to a dispute, asked for a report from a government official, such as a land surveyor, and adjudicated the dispute using their good offices with both Indian leaders and the settlers.<sup>29</sup> They used persuasion rather than force. Even after 1873 when the North West Mounted Police had been stationed in the West, Morris rarely called upon the police to resolve conflicts involving encroachment upon alleged Indian lands and timber stands.

Both Archibald and Morris established, and kept open, lines of communication between themselves and Indian leaders. The latter utilized, and perhaps equally important, felt free to utilize, these lines of communication. Deputations and petitions from the Indians to the Lieutenant

Governors were a common occurrence. Archibald and Morris both chafed at the time and expense involved in conducting their "powwows" with Indian leaders (which usually included listening to long speeches and giving gifts),<sup>30</sup> nonetheless, they wished to retain their personal contacts with Indian leaders. The Lieutenant Governors tried to ensure that the complaints of Indians were listened to, and that no serious deterioration in the relations between Indians and settlers was taking place.

The Indian Acts of 1869 and 1876 had allowed the government considerable discretion to interfere in the traditional political structure of Indian bands. Provision existed in these acts for the government to order that elections be held for chiefs and councillors, to stipulate the number of leaders allowed, according to band population size, and also to depose elected officials for "dishonesty, intemperance or immorality."<sup>31</sup> However, neither Lieutenant Governor utilized these powers at his disposal. Their interests were, in fact, not to disrupt traditional leadership; they were to maintain, and even to facilitate, the development of capable leadership in Indian bands, so that when need arose effective agreements could be reached with them. The Lieutenant Governors wished to deal with strong Indian leaders, those who commanded wide respect within their bands. Such leaders were more likely to be able to dissuade band members from aggravating tensions with their settler

neighbours.

During much of the 1870s there did not seem to be any substantive aspect of Indian legislation that government officials in the West felt it was necessary to utilize. The Indian acts remained ignored and virtually unknown in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories until the departure of Morris from the West in December 1877.

The organization of Indian Affairs was quite simple during much of the 1870s. The first Indian Commissioner was Wemyss Simpson, appointed in 1871.<sup>32</sup> After the treaties of 1871, however, Simpson preferred to stay at his home in the East rather than in Winnipeg, much to Archibald's displeasure.<sup>33</sup> When Simpson did return to Manitoba in the spring of 1872 his relations with Indians were unsatisfactory, and Archibald had no choice but to continue his active role in Indian affairs.<sup>34</sup> Simpson decided to resign his position in 1872.<sup>35</sup> Simpson's successor was J.A.N. Provencher, the nephew of the first bishop of Juliopolis. He was appointed in 1872 and remained in office until 1878.<sup>36</sup>

The primary need of Indian administration from the point of view of the Lieutenant Governors was to resolve disputes between Indians and settlers. As long as satisfactory relations prevailed, and allowed for a peaceable expansion of settlement, the Lieutenant Governors felt that Indian administration was being carried out in a successful manner.

Indians, however, had a somewhat different understanding of what the government's roles and responsibilities were. They felt that government was committed to fulfill its promises in accordance with treaty. The primary promise that government had made, according to their understanding, was that in return for acquiring Indian lands, government would "look after them." For the great majority of Indian people in the area, this meant that assistance would be given to them to commence a new way of life and undertake a new system of livelihood, namely agriculture. The Indians felt they needed every help they could get in this regard--they needed instruction, implements, seed, and animal power.<sup>37</sup> Many Indians, in fact, felt very strongly that government had a moral responsibility to provide them with such assistance. Indian lands had been taken up for settlement. Hunting and trapping, the livelihood which Indians looked to as a basic, vital alternative to fall back upon if other opportunities failed, had been lost or greatly disturbed as a consequence of settlement. Indians felt vulnerable, and the promises to "look after them" held for them a sense of urgency and importance which the Lieutenant Governors and the Indian Commissioners did not fully comprehend.

Indian requests for implements, etc., were persistent, and eventually the government officials tired of them. They began to look upon these as cantankerous. To

the government officials Indians were insatiable. One could give them all that was possible from the resources one had at one's disposal, and yet they would ask for more. Eventually in the mid 1870s Provencher began to press the Dominion Government to appoint field agents on the newly surveyed reserves so that these men could relieve him of the incessant Indian demands.<sup>38</sup>

It seems apparent that by the mid-1870s, when surveying of the reserves had been commenced, and some of the seed, implements and oxen requested by the Indians distributed, Morris and Provencher began to take the view that it would be desirable to dissociate themselves as far as possible from a continuing involvement in Indian matters. They felt that government had fulfilled its obligations to the Indians to an extent that was reasonable, and that future development of agriculture on the Indian reserves was the responsibility of the Indians themselves. Government could continue to provide assistance in this regard indefinitely and still see no end to Indian demands. Apart from the appointment of field agents who might try to respond to Indian demands as best they could, they felt that there was little need for further government assistance or interference in Indian matters. Provencher, in his annual report in 1876, argued this point as follows:

Indian Reserves being situated in the midst, or in the immediate vicinity of settlements, there is no necessity (as is the case elsewhere) to teach the several Tribes the rudiments of the new way of life which they are called upon to embrace.

These Indians have for several years past, lived among the Whites, and have become sufficiently familiar with the elements of industry and of agriculture, so that reliance may be had in their willingness to put to good profit the several advantages tendered to them.

If their education is susceptible of great improvement, it has at least been commenced, and they are in a position to improve it themselves. This proximity to settlements gives them another advantage; they may supply themselves, on the same terms as other inhabitants of the Province, with all the articles they may be in need of, and can dispose with the same facility of the produce of their hunt and of their fishing.

For these reasons the Government is exonerated from the obligation, which it has to fulfil elsewhere, of establishing model farms, erecting mills, &c., in the middle of an Indian population, and of regulating the conditions of trade.

Nothing therefore remains to be done but the superintendence of real estate and the prevention of the sale of spirituous liquors.

The practice followed to this day of distributing agricultural implements, some tools and some cattle, has met the requirements of the Indians, and nothing more will be claimed by them.

The use they make of these articles, and the care they give to the cattle, exonerates the Government from all further responsibility.<sup>39</sup>

It seems fair to suggest that in 1876 the opinion of senior government personnel in the West was essentially that the Indians were capable, by and large, of being able to maintain themselves, and look after their own interests. They felt that the government needed to dissociate itself from catering to Indian demands or involving itself in their affairs, except to provide assistance in managing their reserves, and preventing excesses in the sale and usage of liquor.

Government Policy: 1879-1896

Circumstances changed drastically with the return of Sir John A. Macdonald and the Conservatives to power in 1878. The structure of relations built between the Indians and the government authorities in the northwest in the 1870s were transformed as Macdonald and his party brought with them a new attitude toward Indians, and a new understanding of the type of role it was desirable for government to play in its dealings with them.

Macdonald saw the Indians of the West as a hazard, a potential obstacle to the fulfilment of his national policy, which consisted essentially of a determination to complete the transcontinental railway, and to finance the project, in large measure, by the sale of lands on the Prairies. It was necessary, in terms of the national

policy, to make the lands of the West as attractive as possible for prospective settlers, and fill them rapidly with people.<sup>40</sup> But the Indians, Macdonald believed, would be vehemently opposed to this envisaged rapid immigration of settlers. They were wild, roving, and savage people, whose ways were antithetical to progress and development. The first concern, then, for government was to bring the Indians under control. The development of civilization in the area could not occur before law and order were adequately established.<sup>41</sup>

Undoubtedly Macdonald saw the West as a barbaric, dangerous and untamed frontier. The gentlefolk of the East often tended to conceive of the West in these terms. The officials of the Hudson's Bay Company, furthermore, helped to reinforce these views. They spoke of living in a fearful world, surrounded by unscrupulous whiskey traders and drunken, uncontrolled Indians. In their small forts, tiny oases of civilization in the midst of savagery, their lives and property were vulnerable at every moment to the insolence and aggression of the natives, who were becoming increasingly hostile with the disappearance of the buffalo. The Northwest Mounted Police had been sent into this area in 1873, but the Indians were still wild and dangerous, and had yet to be brought under control. The Hudson's Bay Company, of course, had a pecuniary motive in presenting these lively reports to the centres of power in the



East. Under the banner of law and order they wanted the activities of their competition, the free traders, to be controlled and checked, and with the decline of the buffalo trade, they desired more of the new, profitable custom that was being brought to them by the Northwest Mounted Police, government officials, surveying parties, missionaries, and settlers.<sup>42</sup> Regardless of their ulterior interests, though, this view of the West struck a responsive chord in the hearts and minds of men of power in an imperial age: it evoked a pride in the conquest of distant lands, where the wilderness had to be tamed, and the savage subdued.

To the imperialists in the Conservative government the Riel Rebellion had been an object lesson. It was the consequence to be expected when policy had not shown firm authority and control when dealing with the natives.<sup>43</sup> The policies of Archibald, in particular, had been seen as weak-kneed and acquiescent; in fact his resignation had been spurred by the vociferous displeasure in Ontario attendant to his offering of official gratitude to Louis Riel and the French half-breeds for their support to the government in 1872, at the time of the abortive Fenian raid into Manitoba.

Macdonald wanted to devise a new Indian policy for the West, particularly because of the special need he saw to bring the Indians under control. "You cannot judge the

wild nomad of the North-West by the standards of the Indian of Ontario", he stated in the House of Commons.<sup>44</sup> A firm and authoritative policy was called for, one that did not pander to the Indians' demands, but acted to subdue them, and make them "tractable". In part to guide this new policy, Macdonald retained charge of the Ministry of the Interior, which had under its jurisdiction the Department of Indian Affairs.

The Prime Minister's initial concern was to staff the Department of Indian Affairs with men who were committed to his approach and thought, and were dedicated to the difficult tasks that lay ahead for the department. The outgoing Liberal Minister of the Interior, David Laird, had received the appointment of Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territories, and concurrently that of Superintendent of Indian Affairs in that region. The latter position, in particular, Macdonald wanted for his own appointee. It was an important position. The man who would hold it would head the administration of Indian Affairs in the West, and direct the new policy for the Indians. In the following year, Laird was persuaded to vacate this position, and Macdonald appointed his friend, Edgar Dewdney, the Conservative M.P. from Yale, B.C., to the post in May 1879.<sup>45</sup> The importance Macdonald held for this post is indicated by Dewdney's salary, which was set at \$3,200/annum. This amount exceeded that of Lawrence Vankoughnet, the Deputy

Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, by \$ 950. Placed under Dewdney was James Graham, who was elevated from Clerk at the Winnipeg office to Acting Superintendent in Manitoba at a salary of \$1,200.<sup>46</sup> Provencher, who had held this position earlier, had resigned in 1878, and his successor, Molyneux St. John, appointed by the outgoing Liberal government, was refused the position.<sup>47</sup>

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Macdonald and Dewdney had a common outlook on Indians. They shared, by and large, the same set of constructions regarding the 'Indian problem', and their views coincided on the means and strategies required to deal with this problem. Essentially their view of Indians was a pessimistic one. They looked upon themselves and Indians as being in constant and inveterate opposition: Indians were wild and nomadic, and by their nature they were opposed to settlement, religion and progress. Their tribal leaders and heathen medicine men perpetuated this opposition and the attendant hatred the Indian had in his heart toward the white man. As civilization must proceed and cover the West, the Indian would inevitably have to be tamed. He would have to accept the new circumstances. But no meaningful dialogue was possible with him. Coopera-

tion could only be achieved if the Indian were subdued and made more "tractable". To do this Indians needed to be dealt with firmly and authoritatively. Dewdney purported to know what the Indian character was like: Indians were childlike, demanding, and exploitative, unless dealt with strictly.<sup>48</sup> These shortcomings in the Indians' character, and the constant possibility of irresponsible behavior on their part ("they may be working well today but throw up everything tomorrow") were a problem for the government and for whites.<sup>49</sup> While Archibald and Morris had, by and large, treated Indians along a similar footing as settlers and half-breeds, as ordinary citizens who had problems, Macdonald and Dewdney thought of Indians not in having problems but being problems. While Archibald and Morris would press both Indians and non-Indians to look for solutions when conflict occurred between them, Macdonald and Dewdney could apparently not see how this sort of intercourse between Indians, settlers, and the government could be productive of useful results. They favoured, rather, that Indians be confined to their reserves. Thus conflicts would be minimized. If a watchful eye were kept over them to detect signs of unrest, and forceful action was taken quickly to eradicate this if it occurred, peaceful progress in settlement would take place in the West, unhindered by Indian interference and intransigence.

Such a program, which, in effect, proposed a

policing of the reserves, called for a large complement of staff, and thereby of financial outlays. However, it was felt that this program was imperative for the future success of settlement in the West, and though the need for maintaining economy was loudly voiced, over \$400,000 were found for the program for the first year in 1879.

It was perhaps inevitable that increasingly greater amounts of money would be found in subsequent years. The government's enthusiasm to fight the "Indian problem", quixotic though it was, waxed luxuriantly for a few years. It was spurred by extreme optimism in its capacity to achieve ultimate success. Total expenditures by the Department of Indian Affairs in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories rose to the million dollar mark in 1882, and thence stabilized at this level. Figures for the period 1879 to 1888 are as follows:<sup>50</sup>

Total expenditures: Department of Indian Affairs, Manitoba and Northwest Territories, 1879-1888.

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|      |            |
|------|------------|
| 1879 | \$ 403,218 |
| 1880 | 614,860    |
| 1881 | 726,738    |
| 1882 | 1,099,797  |
| 1883 | 1,027,217  |
| 1884 | 1,025,676  |
| 1885 | 1,008,930  |
| 1886 | 1,097,934  |
| 1887 | 1,072,398  |
| 1888 | 875,385    |

## CHAPTER VIII

### LIMITATIONS IN OPPORTUNITIES (II):

#### STUDIES OF CONFLICTS WITH DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS:

1880-1896

The new authoritarian policy for Indians found the Indian Act a useful instrument for attaining its objectives. The Act established a sound structure of control for the government in its relations with Indians. As noted earlier, the Act had placed the management and control of band resources in government hands, and a number of powers were also provided to government to regulate commercial transactions, the exercise of leadership, the use of liquor, rights of residence on reserves, band membership, Indian status, etc.

However, the Indian Affairs administration in the West was beginning to find, after a few short years, that even these regulations were insufficient. Indians were discovering ways to circumvent various regulations, and even, on occasion, to defy and ignore them. In response, the Department devised new regulations, expanded others, and made these more restrictive. New policies were also instituted. Attempts were made to close all loopholes and make the penalties so stiff that they would serve as effective deterrents to violators.

The department created and expanded its regulations by a variety of means. The most important of these was legislation, but orders-in-council and departmental direc-

tives from Dewdney's office in Battleford (later in Regina) were also employed. In addition, field agents, on occasion, made their own regulations. If these were seen to supplement departmental policy, they were allowed to stand without objection from senior officials.

Through legislation a large body of new regulations was created. This was done by amending the Indian Act, and for many years after 1879, new amendments were introduced almost every year. Except for the enfranchisement clauses, these amendments consisted invariably of new regulations and restrictions, and specific extensions in government authority. After the amendments of 1879, the Indian Act of 1876 was greatly expanded by amendments in 1880. Thereafter, additional amendments were made to it in 1881, 1882, 1883 and 1884. In 1886, the Act was consolidated and expanded once again. And this was followed by another round of amendments in 1887, 1888, 1890, 1891, 1894, 1895 and 1898.

The change of government in Ottawa in 1896 seems to have dampened somewhat the appetite of the government for new amendments, and the next expansion of the Indian Act did not occur until 1906. But after this, the enthusiasm for adding new regulations to the Indian Act was resumed in 1910, and a surge of amendments took place again in 1910, 1911, 1914, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926, and 1927. By this time the Indian Act had become a formidable

body of laws for the exercise of bureaucratic control. But expansion of government powers and regulations continued throughout much of the 1930s. Eventually in 1946 a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons was appointed to "Examine and Consider" the Indian Act,<sup>1</sup> and this constituted, in fact, the first investigative body to evaluate the Act and the functioning of Indian Affairs administration since the Talfourd, Worthington and Pennefather Commission of 1856. As a result of the Special Joint Committee's recommendations, the new Indian Act passed in 1951<sup>2</sup> reduced, rather than increased, almost for the first time, the powers of the Department of Indian Affairs, and the special restrictions on Indians.

Embarked as it was on a policy of control, the Macdonald administration seemed to have been noticeably apprehensive about the possibility of revolt against its authority. The Indian agent was seen to be most vulnerable because of his continual contact with Indians. Thus, early in its tenure in office, the administration took steps to arm the Indian Agent, by means of legislation, with extraordinary powers. In 1882, the Indian Agents were given the power to act as Stipendiary Magistrates and as Police Magistrates,<sup>3</sup> and these powers were extended further in 1886 to that of ex-officio Justice of the Peace. In cases concerning the violation of the Indian Act, the agent had the "power and authority of two Justices



of the Peace."<sup>4</sup> With these powers the Indian Agent was given the responsibility for both the laying of charges, and the judging of the cases. Presumably he also had considerable leeway in interpreting the various clauses of the Indian Act under which he could lay charges and convict.

In cases of suspected revolt, the Indian Agent could imprison "agitators". If anyone "induced, incited or stirred up" three or more Indians to make "request or demand" which the Indian Agent found threatening, he could imprison that person for a maximum of two years, with or without hard labour.<sup>5</sup> Indian ceremonies also were suspect on this account. During these ceremonies Indians tended to become "excitable" and "unsettled." The West Coast Potlatch and the Plains Giveaway ceremonies were banned in 1884,<sup>6</sup> and this ban was extended to include any Indian ceremony, festival, or dance in 1895.<sup>7</sup> While part of the government's motive for banning these ceremonials was, no doubt, to "civilize" the Indian, a political component to these restrictions should not be overlooked. The penalty for holding a ceremony, or even for encouraging that one be held, was a jail term of two to six months.<sup>8</sup>

Jail terms, in fact, were a favoured penalty for numerous offences in the Indian Act. But the government, it seems, thought that jail terms were not a sufficient penalty in themselves. The Act of 1880 prescribed that

Indians serving jail sentences be debarred from receiving annuities and their share of any band income due. The costs of imprisonment, and legal expenses could also be deducted from these monies.<sup>9</sup>

The repressive policies of the Department of Indian Affairs instituted soon after the establishment of reserves in the West produced almost universal discontent. But violent revolt did not occur other than in the North Saskatchewan River area in 1885, when a few Cree bands joined the Metis in the short-lived Second Riel Rebellion.<sup>10</sup>

The lack of violence among Indians seems to have led some historians to infer that the Indians "collapsed" soon after their experience with reserve life, and that they lost their "initiative", and capitulated in the face of the department's repressive actions in incarcerating "agitators", stamping out Sun Dances, forcibly returning Indians to their reserves, etc.<sup>11</sup>

A closer examination of actual events on the reserves, however, reveals that the department found the implementation of its policies by no means an easy task. The Indians did not remain quiescent to the directives promulgated and the restrictions the department tried to impose upon them. They confronted the department openly and defiantly without resorting to violence, and they used

a variety of means to register their protests and attempt to change policies. They wrote petitions to Indian Affairs headquarters in Ottawa, they lobbied influential local people to support their causes, they contacted lawyers in neighbouring towns to intercede on their behalf, and they tried to win over departmental officials who were somewhat sympathetic to them. At other times they simply ignored the department's directives, and even rebuffed Indian Agents and other officials. Equally significant, perhaps, their opposition to these directives was often sustained and persistent.

Two sets of incidents are described below which will indicate that the Department of Indian Affairs did not encounter smooth sailing in forcing its restrictions upon the Indians. These incidents are from the Dakota Oak River Reserve in Manitoba, and they relate to the Indians' opposition to the interference of the department in their agricultural operations. The second incident, which took place at a time when the shift to commercial grain farming was beginning to gather momentum, has been selected to illustrate also the effect that the department's policies ultimately had in stifling this form of enterprise.

Oak River farmers versus L. Herchmer, Indian Agent

The first of the two conflicts recorded here took place over the sale of cattle.

Between 1879 and 1884 the Oak River farmers had built up an impressive herd of shorthorn cattle with the aid of their Indian Agent, Lawrence Herchmer. The cattle were not gifted to the Indians; they had been purchased by them with earnings obtained from cutting wood for steamers plying on the Assiniboine River, and from working for the neighbouring farmers.<sup>12</sup>

In the early 1880s, Herchmer began to insist to the Indians that they obtain his permission before making any purchases or sales of cattle.<sup>13</sup> But Herchmer lived in Birtle, about one hundred miles away from the reserve, and the procedure was rather impractical. The Oak River farmers also wondered why it should be necessary for them to take Herchmer's permission to sell cattle which they had purchased using their own financial resources. Farmers outside the reserve did not need to take permission from anyone to buy or sell cattle. Hence why should they be required to do so?

The Indian farmers generally ignored Herchmer's admonitions. It seems that they were puzzled by them, and quite skeptical of their actual legitimacy. Herchmer, nonetheless, remained insistent that the stated regulations be followed. To demonstrate his authority, he apprehended

two Oak River farmers selling cattle without his permission in 1885, and had them both placed in jail.<sup>14</sup>

This is an example, and a rather typical one, of an Indian Agent interpreting regulations quite freely and arbitrarily for the purpose of bolstering his authority. The regulation under which Herchmer was presumably acting (an amendment to the Indian Act in 1881) stated that no "grain or root crops, or other produce grown upon any Indian Reserve in the North-West Territories, the Province of Manitoba, or the District of Keewatin" could be sold, bartered, exchanged, or gifted, unless certain procedures laid out in the Canada Gazette were followed.<sup>15</sup> The procedures in the Canada Gazette required the purchaser of goods from an Indian (not the Indian selling) to obtain permission from the Indian Agent prior to making the transaction.<sup>16</sup> Thus (a) transactions involving cattle were not included in the regulations (which applied specifically to grain, root crops and other produce), and (b) it was the purchaser, not the Indian, who was required under the regulations to obtain the Indian Agent's permission.

Herchmer was clearly extending the provisions of these relations rather liberally. He was including the sale of cattle in the regulations, and was also placing responsibility upon the Indians, rather than the purchasers, for following the proper procedures for the transactions.<sup>17</sup>

The penalty for violation of the 1881 regulation

read as follows:

Any person who buys or otherwise acquires from any such Indian, or band, or irregular band of Indians, contrary to any provisions or regulations made by the Governor in Council under this Act, is guilty of an offence, and is punishable, upon summary conviction, by fine, not exceeding one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months, in any place of confinement other than a penitentiary, or by both fine and imprisonment.<sup>18</sup>

Here again, it was the non-Indian purchaser who was liable for conviction, and not the Indian involved in the sale.

The Indians were perhaps not cognizant of these legalities. But they were incensed, nonetheless, that two men had been thrown in jail, seemingly without committing any serious offence. By chance, it seems, at the very time when feelings were running high at Oak River, Herchmer ran into a serious confrontation with Enoch, the respected chief of another Dakota band (at Birdtail Creek) in Manitoba. He "severely reprimanded" Enoch.<sup>19</sup> This served to add fuel to the fire, and discontent was greatly aggravated. Soon thereafter, three Dakota bands in Manitoba, acting in unison, sent this petition to Ottawa, asking for Herchmer's removal:

We Mahpiyahdinape, Wanendiska, Taminyaydinaquin, Chiefs of the Sioux Indians, wish to make known to you our troubles. Some years ago we were given reserves on the Bird Tail Creek,

Oak River and Oak Lake, in Manitoba. We live on those Reserves still. Some years ago Mr. Herchmer was made Agent for us and we supposed that our Great Mother wished this agent to be kind and good to us, to teach us to build houses and use tools and implements, and to treat us kindly. But Mr. Herchmer has not done these things. He is always cross and unkind, complaining and scolding. He will not listen to or talk with us. All our people are not satisfied with him. Our young men dislike him more and more, and we fear they may do something we would be sorry for if Mr. Herchmer is not removed. We would like an agent who would take an interest in us, would be kind and friendly, and would teach us what we do not know.

Lately Mr. Herchmer has been treating us more unkindly than before. Governor Morris some years ago gave us each a cow and ox. A few weeks since Antoine, one of our head men sold a cow that he thought belonged to him. Mr. Herchmer had him and another man of our tribe arrested and they are now lying in gaol at Brandon. They did not know that they were doing anything wrong in selling the cow. If they did wrong it was because the agent did not tell them.

We still love our Great Mother, and wish to do only those things that will please her, and we feel sure that she would not wish us to be ill-used, and will now have a good man sent to us in place of Mr. Herchmer.<sup>20</sup>

The Indians waited for a reply, but apart from an acknowledgment, no satisfactory response was obtained. The Oak River farmers, however, led by Harry Hotain, did not wish to let the issue die. They approached a barrister in Brandon, who wrote a letter on their behalf to Edgar Dewdney, repeating their complaints. Dewdney responded to Peterson, the barrister, stating that Herchmer was one

of the best Indian Agents the department had, and that he had performed his duties according to law and in the ultimate interests of the Indians.<sup>21</sup> Peterson's letter, however, seems to have had some effect. The Department of Indian Affairs was acutely sensitive to the opinions of influential local townspeople regarding the propriety of its administration during a year of Indian and Metis troubles (the Second Riel Rebellion of 1885), and Indian Commissioner Dewdney, apparently, was becoming increasingly cautious just prior to an impending federal election in 1886.

Harry Hotain and his cohorts, in the meanwhile, did not remain idle. They contacted and sought advice of anyone among their neighbours who would heed their complaints. Eventually their persistence paid some dividends because the following article appeared in the Montreal Daily Post of December 5, 1885 (along with a similar one in the Toronto Globe):

#### How Grievances are Remedied

The following story, which will give the people of Canada an idea of how the population of the Northwest has been and is still treated by the Government, is given by the Witness regarding the manner in which the petition of certain Sioux chiefs from the neighbourhood of Brandon has been attested to ":-It is stated that in August last the Indians petitioned the government to take cognizance of their grievances against their agent, a Mr. Herchmer. In October they were informed that their case had been considered and relegated to Lt.



Gov. Dewdney. In November Mr. Dewdney informed the petitioners that Mr. Herchmer had been promoted to the office of Inspector of Indian Agencies and would in a short time visit his old Agency when he would inquire into the 'cause of the complaints and report upon them'. Inspector Herchmer was, therefore, sent to enquire into the cause of complaints as to the conduct of Mr. Agent Herchmer.

The death of Riel is not the only thing the government will have to answer for before Parliament and the people.<sup>22</sup>

Dewdney took note. Herchmer was transferred to another location.<sup>23</sup>

Oak River commercial farmers versus J.A.Markle, Indian Agent, and R.W. Scott, Farm Instructor

For a number of years following this the Oak River farmers were left to pursue their agricultural vocation without departmental interference. They bought and sold cattle, raised wheat, potatoes, etc., and sold their crop on the open market without being forced to obtain permits for any of their varied transactions. Their new Agent, J.A. Markle (appointed in 1886), visited the reserve from his headquarters at Birtle a few times during the summer months. He reported on agricultural progress and the steady shift toward commercial grain farming. Markle refrained from joining issue with the Oak River grain farmers on the illegality of their wheat marketing operations. He made

no mention in his reports of insisting that permission be obtained for the marketing of wheat. The Inspector for Indian Agencies, T.P. Wadsworth, visited the reserve once a year to write his annual report, and he similarly failed to make any complaints concerning the commercial transactions of the Indians, and the continued contravention of Section 1 of the 1881 Amendment (disbarring sale of grain without following stipulated procedures). Oak River, actually, was a distant reserve from the centers of administrative power. It was over one hundred miles away from the agency office at Birtle, and Birtle Agency was itself somewhat of a peripheral and outlying region in relation to the administrative center at Regina. It was not a 'prominent' reserve; it did not have any well-known chiefs or missionary establishments. Perhaps for this reason it failed to excite much attention. It escaped also the scrutiny usually directed to reserves located within easy reach of departmental offices.

In their isolation from departmental attention the Oak River farmers made considerable strides toward agricultural development. Farming became transformed increasingly into a commercial operation. There were signs as well of material prosperity. Houses looked neat and well cared for, and horse-drawn wagons were a common sight on the reserve. Moreover, the people were self-sufficient, and relied on virtually no assistance

from Indian Affairs.<sup>24</sup>

Despite these positive features, in the opinion of Markle, the Indian Agent, conditions on the reserve left a lot to be desired. The Indians had become spoilt from a lack of departmental controls. The Sun Dance flourished on the Reserve, and other Dakota ceremonials were conducted in a large 'round house' the residents had built for themselves.<sup>25</sup> When he admonished them, they seemed to receive his advice with a shrug and ignore it. They bought expensive machinery when they had no "need" for it, they cut hay as and when they wanted to, rather than when they were told to, liquor consumption was not checked despite numerous promises made to him to the contrary. Visiting and dancing continued unabated. From Markle's point of view it was anarchy. There was an almost complete breakdown of law and order on the reserve. He complained numerous times in his reports that the Indians were difficult to control.<sup>26</sup> An example:

Their mode of attending to their spiritual wants is by "Hay dancing" and is demoralizing. I have endeavored to stop it but of very little use, and owing to their having a good crop last season and not asking and getting any assistance from the Department I have no control over them.<sup>27</sup>

Markle decided that the drift to independence was becoming too expansive and needed to be checked. He started his efforts to do so in 1889. The initial concern was liquor

consumption. The use of liquor by Indians contravened numerous sections of the Indian Act, and it seems that Markle was also personally a crusader against drinking. He petitioned the Commissioner's office at Regina for the placement of a department official at the Oak River Reserve. The distance from Agency headquarters, he wrote, was too great for him to supervise and maintain control over the reserve personally. If such an appointment could be made for just one year he felt certain that the problems on the reserve could be eliminated.<sup>28</sup> Markle seems to have persisted in his request and the Commissioner's office finally agreed in 1891 to accede to it. This was done by appointing a Farm Instructor for the Oak River Reserve. The Assistant Commissioner, A.E. Forget wrote:

The Agent considered that these Indians although nearly self supporting, would get much benefit from having a Farmer for at least one year. He particularly desired that they should be induced and taught to put up a better class of dwellings. He was also most anxious to have a Farmer there in order to put down traffic in intoxicants known to be carried on.<sup>29</sup>

A Farm Instructor, A.J. Ennis, was placed at the reserve in 1891.<sup>30</sup> However, the Indians were apparently quite aware of the true functions of the Farm Instructor, and they made their protest against his placement known in clear terms to Inspector Wadsworth when he visited the

reserve on his annual round during that year. Wadsworth actually sympathized with the Indians, but he had no desire to embroil himself in the disputation. In his annual report he decided to caution his senior officers diplomatically:

A Mr. Ennis has recently been placed on this Reserve to oversee the work of these Indians, the appointment of an Instructor to this Band is in my opinion an experiment of doubtful utility, any success they have attained up to the present must be attributed to the Agent, and to the Indians themselves; having gained such a full measure of success I think it would have been better to stick to the old lines. I admit the argument may be used that with such great success without an Instructor, how much greater it will be with one, such a line of argument does not bear practical fruit with Indians but I would say instead, as they are doing so well; let well enough alone, particularly when it is in the line of economy, and not attempt to bring them too near to perfection.<sup>31</sup>

Apparently Mr. Ennis was no match for the defiant and determined Indians, and he was relieved of his duties before very long. In May 1892 R. W. Scott was appointed in his place.<sup>32</sup> This new Farm Instructor was much more zealous in his duties, and the relations between him and the farming Indians were bitter and hostile almost from the time of his appointment.

In that year (1892) commercial farming was gaining rapidly on the reserve, and Markle apparently decided

that the most effective way to bring the Indians to book was to undermine the agricultural livelihood of those who persisted in remaining defiant.

After Scott's appointment, Markle asked the Regina office to inform the implement dealers in the region to discontinue credit sales of farm equipment to the Indians. Also he decided to introduce a permit system whereby the Indians would not be allowed to sell their grain unless they received permits from the resident Farm Instructor. Markle and Scott thought that the permit system would provide them considerable leverage over the Indians. Scott could delay the issuance of permits at will, thus harassing those who seemed too independent. Also, while issuing the permits he could decide what proportion of the farmer's crop should be sold (in the jargon of Indian Affairs: how much crop it was "in the farmer's interest" to sell).<sup>33</sup> By controlling such sales the money flowing into Indian hands would be controlled, and thus the improvident habits of the Indians of buying too much equipment would be checked. Through such control and supervision Indians would learn the value of thrift and acquire proper spending habits.

As the harvest in August was some months away, Markle and Scott decided<sup>34</sup> first to disrupt the sales to Indians of farm equipment. Though there was no regulation in the law books which specifically forbade Indians to

make purchases on credit for farm equipment and other goods, Section 78 of the Indian Act of 1886 could readily be energized to have that effect. This section disallowed collateral for loans taken out by Indians on a reserve (and was listed in the Act ironically as a 'Legal Right' of Indians):

No person shall take any security or otherwise obtain any lien or charge, whether by mortgage, judgement or otherwise, upon real or personal property of any Indian or non-treaty Indian...<sup>35</sup>

Markle wrote to the Indian Commissioner explaining his opposition to the taking of credit by the Oak River Indians:

Many members of this band gain a considerable amount of money each season by farming and other sources, but few if any know how to use their gains to the best interests of themselves and families, and it was more to advise them on this point that I wanted a man placed on the Reserve, than to instruct them at farming, but this can also be done to their advantage.

Many of these Indians seem to be able to get any article they fancy on credit and this to mind is detrimental to their interests as it leads them to purchase articles that they could get along without and articles not at all required. I have informed the Indians that this practice must be stopped and instructed Mr. Scott to discontinue the receiving of goods by the Indians on credit and to report to me if this order is contravened....and it is my intention with your approval not to allow the Indians to sell grain this Season only under permit of the Instructor.<sup>36</sup>

The Assistant Indian Commissioner at Regina added a note to this letter:

This course (i.e. obtaining farm equipment on credit) has been opposed. The Commissioner recently warned the Headquarters of the Implement Dealers, whose agents have been the principal offenders, and they thanked him and promised to warn their Agents.<sup>37</sup>

Farm Instructor Scott, acting under Markle's instructions, went to meet the local implement dealers and grain buyers. He informed them about the permit system, and told them that it was the department's policy that they were to discontinue the giving of credit to the Indians, and refrain from selling unnecessary farm equipment. The businessmen seemed to have generally ignored or rebuffed Scott (one of them said "it made no difference to him if the Indians had a permit or not, and he could fire ahead").<sup>38</sup> But when the Indians came to learn about this attempted interference by Scott in their private business transactions they were indignant.

This year (1892) when Inspector Wadsworth came by to report on the reserve, he heard virtually nothing but strong protests.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps he was asked whether it was the intention of the government to help them or whether it was to suppress them. Indians were not the only farmers in the region who bought farm equipment on credit.



Why did the government disapprove of Indians doing so to the extent of placing a government employee on the reserve to disallow these transactions, when no progressive farmer outside the reserve was subject to hindrance on this account? Wadsworth could only reply in the stock phrases of the department. The department had always the best interests of the Indians at heart. What the Indians did on their own was not in their best interests; unscrupulous white men would take advantage of them at every opportunity.<sup>40</sup>

In his report Wadsworth noted that the Indians were "restive" and defiant. He thought they would sell their wheat clandestinely without taking out permits, merely to assert their independence. In doing so they would be taken advantage of by unscrupulous white men who would give them lower prices than if they took the wheat to the open market, in the same manner such men took advantage of the Indians with respect to the supply of liquor.<sup>41</sup> One is left to wonder whether Wadsworth noticed the irony contained in the department's attempt to restrict the Indians' access to the open market. The department claimed the restrictions were necessary to "protect" the Indians; yet by denying them access to needed goods and to the open market for the sale of their produce, it was forcing them into clandestine transactions and thus exposing them to exploitation. Was the department really so naive as not to see the

inconsistency of its intentions? Wadsworth added that in spite of Scott's strong disapproval Harry Hotain had proceeded to purchase a new self binder.<sup>42</sup> In comment to this statement Assistant Commissioner Forget wrote:

The purchase of such labor saving implements, as Dept. is aware, totally opposed to the Commissioner's views, but where Indians are so much independent, it is difficult to prevent it. There has been correspondence with Dept. relative to credit given Indians of this Agency and the Implement Dealers have been warned of the risk they run and that Indians will not be authorized to sell produce to pay for what in Dept's opinion should not have been purchased by them.<sup>43</sup>

In another note Forget was optimistic about the suppression of credit. If the sale of produce by farmers could be properly controlled by Farm Instructor Scott the farmers would be forced to renege on their payments to the implement dealers, and thus "the difficulty thrown in the way of collecting will probably to a great extent put a stop to the giving of credit."<sup>44</sup>

It is noteworthy that the department had to take recourse to such extreme measures even after the implement dealers had been told that their loans to Indians were given entirely on personal risk, as there was no basis in law to recoup a loan from an Indian resident on a reserve in case of default. That the implement dealers continued to do business with the Indians at the time and ignore the

the alarmist warnings of the Department of Indian Affairs in indicative of the sound business relationships they had with the Indians. No doubt the latter took care to honour their debts when they sold their crops in the fall.

It is uncertain how far the permit system was successful during the crop years of 1892 and 1893. Farmer Scott kept no records and he wrote no reports. The Indians, nonetheless, had come to feel extremely harassed. Perhaps Scott's efforts at disrupting their ready access to the markets had begun to cause strains in their relationships with the merchants. They decided, at any rate, that some new and determined action on their part was needed to rid themselves of Scott. Making complaints to Inspector Wadsworth had not been effective.

Most of the people the Indians spoke to regarding their problems with Scott were quite sympathetic. Mrs. Hartland, for example, the wife of the new Anglican missionary on the reserve, was really quite upset by the actions of Markle and Scott.<sup>45</sup> Finding that "objective" observers, that is, those not associated with Indian Affairs, seemed to readily side with them, the farmers at Oak River decided to make known their difficulties to the very seniormost officials in the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. The Indians, apparently, were so convinced of the worthiness of their cause that they thought no reasonable person in Ottawa could possibly be insensitive to the

injustice they were being subjected to on their reserve by their Farm Instructor and Indian Agent. Using their own funds, they dispatched, secretly, a three man delegation to Ottawa, entirely without the knowledge of the Farm Instructor. The Anglican missionary and his wife were privy to these plans but they failed to warn Scott of them.<sup>46</sup>

The three delegates, Harry Hotain, Mahpeyaska, and Kinyanyakan, arrived at Deputy Superintendent General Lawrence Vankoughnet's office in Ottawa on 28 October 1893. They spoke no English and had no interpreter with them, but they brought a letter explaining their grievance.<sup>47</sup> Vankoughnet immediately sent a letter to Forget at Regina and Markle at Birtle asking for a complete enquiry into the matter. He added that the person conducting the enquiry "should also enquire how these Indians came to leave the Reserve without proper authority and he should caution them that they must not do so again."<sup>48</sup>

The Indians' secret visit to Ottawa came as a shock to Forget and Markle, and both were extremely indignant by this action. Forget replied to Vankoughnet that he was sending Markle to investigate, and that he thought the Anglican missionary was the instigator of the whole sorry business. He added that he told the Agent "to strongly caution his Indians against doing anything of the kind

again."<sup>49</sup> Markle, for his part, rushed to the reserve and challenged anyone to come forward to support the allegations of the three "agitators". He wrote, with satisfaction, that in response to his challenge no one came forward in support of the actions of the three men.<sup>50</sup>

Soon thereafter, Hartland, the Anglican missionary, received a letter from the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. It demanded an explanation of his conduct in the matter. Hartland seemed to have been quite intimidated by this letter. He wrote back apologetically, and almost in desperation:

...although I had heard of the Indians' intention of visiting Ottawa I had no idea that they would do so. I have done my best to make peace between the Indians and Mr. Scott and I did all I could to prevent the three men from going to Ottawa. They begged hard that I would write out a list of grievances and ask that Mr. Scott be removed. This I refused to do and my reason for giving a letter of introduction was in the interest of the school and church. Had I not done this or had I informed the Agent or Mr. Scott of what was taking place the Indians would have given me endless trouble in many ways. I fully explained these things to Mr. Markle and he knows the predicament in which I was placed. Although I sympathise with the Indians in many respects I have to admit that strict measures are necessary to keep them straight. I read your letter to the Indians and they know now that they must obey and submit and I think they will do so quietly. As to my supplanting Mr. Scott such an idea never entered my head. I have told the Indians repeatedly that Mr. Scott is all right and acts for their benefit in every direction and I believe this is so.

Whatever may have been said at Ottawa by the three Indians was not at my instigation and the Indian Agent is erred in the matter. I hope you will take a lenient view of the case and consider the position in which I was placed.<sup>51</sup>

Hartland had a chance here to act as a mediator in the dispute, but he chose not to do so. By being accused as an instigator he was placed on the defensive, and effectively neutralized.

Markle wrote a more detailed report to his superiors in a few days and explained the reasons behind the Indians actions, and their inability to manage their own affairs:

So that you will more thoroughly understand the capabilities of individual Indians of this band, to manage their own affairs, I will take up a few of the transactions of the Indians who visited Ottawa. Mahpeyaska threshed, season of 1891, over six hundred bushels of wheat, and in 1892, over five hundred. He was not content with oxen, to do his farming, and during the fall of 1891, he purchased a heavy team of colts, for which he paid about \$300.00. I took exception to this purchase, as in my opinion, oxen were better suited to the wants of a man in his position....Kinyanyakan had 375 bushels of wheat, season of 1891, and 400 bushels, season of 1892, and is indebted to the Massey Harris Company \$147.05, part of which is for twine got, season of 1892. This Indian was implicated in bringing intoxicants on the reserve. Harry Hotainna threshed 700 bushels of wheat, season of 1891, and 1300 bushels in 1892. He, like many others on the reserve, is industrious, but lacks the ability of knowing how best to expend his earnings, and is now indebted to the Massey Harris Co. \$119.63....There is another

Indian on this reserve, that although he did not accompany the other three to Ottawa, intended to do so, at least Mr. Hartland informed me to this effect, and who is the chief agitator to break up the permit system. His name is Chas. Dawson, and he and his father had, season of 1891, nearly 1200 bushels of wheat, and in 1892, about 1540 bushels.

During the winter of 1891 and -2, he seldom, if ever, returned on the reserve, without bringing in intoxicants; and I failed to break up this traffic, until well on in the winter.

The three Indian delegates, when at Ottawa, stated that they wanted the services of Mr. Scott and self dispensed with, and the services of the present missionary and teacher retained. The reason for making this request, is quite plain to me, as before Mr. Scott was placed on the reserve, and when Mr. Hartland was missionary and teacher, they had entirely too much freedom for their own good, there was not a week, during the winter of 1891-2, that there were not intoxicants on the reserve, in fact it was almost daily; yet the missionary and teacher referred to, did not know it, or at least, did not report it to me; and since Mr. Scott has been on the reserve, there have only been intoxicants brought on, to my knowledge, once or twice... 52

The Indians' journey to Ottawa was a failure. They received no redress. In fact their journey proved to be a further irritant to Markle and stiffened his resolve to take strong retaliatory measures. As it was difficult to restrain the Indians from doing business with the implement dealers and selling their grain without permits, Markle and Forget decided that the implement dealers and millers should be prosecuted, thus to deter them from all business contacts with the Indians. Section 30 of the Indian Act

of 1886 (which incorporated Sections 1 and 2 of the amendment of 1881 quoted on pages 253-254) allow the Indian Affairs officials to proceed in this direction.

Markle commenced his battle plan by reprimanding the largest implement dealer in Griswold, a town located close to the reserve. He demanded that this dealer refrain from making any further sales to Indians until Indian Affairs permission had been obtained. At first this implement dealer reacted angrily against this proposition, and Markle reported:

When the grain-permit-system was introduced at this reserve, I don't think there was anyone outside the Indians that took stronger exception to it than the Agent of the Massey Harris Co. at Griswold, and he, no doubt, like many others, was under the impression that wheat would always yield from 15 to 25 bushels per acre, and that the market value of same would average 60¢ per bushel; and as he is a very sharp collector, no doubt he thought that he would be able to collect a large percentage of his sales from the Indians.

I know that I had more trouble with him than any other; and as you may remember, I at last requested you to report him to the manager of the company at Winnipeg which you did.<sup>53</sup>

A short while later, however, the Massey Harris agent came to an understanding with Markle. For unspecified favours he agreed that "he was wrong and that I (Markle) was right," and he even went as far as to agree with Markle's request to prosecute two grain buyers in the



region for buying wheat from the Indians without a permit.

(The Massey Harris agent was also a magistrate in Brandon.)<sup>54</sup>

Markle proceeded to Alexander and Oak Lake and with the help of the Massey Harris agent obtained convictions and fines against the grain buyers in both these towns.<sup>55</sup> One of the buyers fined was the agent of the Ogilvie Co., one of the largest firms of grain buyers in the West. This agent complained to his general manager in Winnipeg, who in turn sent to the Indian Commissioner at Regina this angry note:

...I also deem it necessary to issue instructions to our Agents not to buy any wheat from the Indians even from those having a permit, which in my opinion, is the best way to protect the interests of this Company.<sup>56</sup>

This brought a rather distressful retort from Forget, who wrote to the general manager:

The unpleasantness referred to by Mr. Chambers [the Ogilvie Company's agent] arising probably in a great measure from a misconception of the duties of the Indian Officials rendered sometimes so difficult by the improvident nature of the Indians, is not to be regretted; but it would be a matter of still greater regret if it were to serve as the ground for your Company refusing to purchase wheat from the Indians even when they have permits. Such a course would have the appearance of an act of retaliation against the Indian Department, certainly unjustified under the circumstances, and I can only hope it will not be carried out.<sup>57</sup>

The local grain buyers, however, were extremely angry at their convictions and fines. Chambers, the Ogilvie Agent, asked his general manager for permission to write to the Free Press, a strongly Liberal newspaper in Winnipeg, "placing this matter of the government's mode of treating with the Indians and permits and the system of their

Agent's &c &c before the public and show where the thing is rotten."<sup>58</sup> Angus Leitch of Leitch Brothers, another of those convicted, went straight to the Virden Chronicle, and an article, reproduced below, appeared soon after in this newspaper.

#### INDIAN GRIEVANCES

The grain dealers and citizens of Oak Lake, Griswold, Oak River and other places are greatly incensed at the action of the Indian Agent and farm instructor on the Oak River reservation, in the matter of the issuing of Permits to Indians to sell grain. In conversation with a grain dealer of Oak Lake this week, the CHRONICLE learned a number of facts regarding this matter, which if they can be substantiated--and from the character of our informant we believe they can--should call for an investigation and the removal of the grievances which now exist. Should this not be done the matter may assume serious proportions and we do not want another rebellion.

It appears that there is an Order in Council, stating that before an Indian may thresh or sell his grain he must procure from the agent or instructor, a permit to do so. While this regulation may have been made to protect the interests of the Indians, in the hands of an unscrupulous agent, it may be made a source of annoyance and injury, and it is true that the Indians on the Reserve referred to are very dissatisfied; both with the Order and the manner in which the permits are issued. They farm their own land, work hard all summer, and through the obnoxious order are not allowed the full benefit of the fruit of their own labor. They are thus placed at a disadvantage in competition with their White and more highly civilized neighbours.

In the fall of 1892, for some reason or other, the issuing of permits to thresh their grain was delayed and a good deal of the crop on the Reserve was on that account

so badly damaged by rain as to be utterly useless. Again the system of issuing permits is very irregular, and some of them to say the least are very peculiar. For instance some of them read like this: "Pay Indian \$2.00, pay John Jones \$3.00, and pay the Massey-Harris Company balance of proceeds of sale of grain." In this way parties who purchase anything from an Indian are made into a collection bureau for mercantile and implement firms. We believe it is impossible to recover at law from an Indian for goods sold on credit, but the parties who sell the goods should take the risk and not be secured by the agents of the Government.

On a charge of purchasing grain from an Indian without a permit last week, the agent of the Ogilvie Milling Company at Alexander was fined \$24, and Leitch Bros. of Oak Lake \$16, and other buyers have been threatened. In both cases the convicting magistrate was an agent of the Massey-Harris Company, and as this Company is the chief creditor of the Indians, the matter is at present receiving considerable comment. The grain dealers have almost concluded not to purchase any more grain from the Indians, except at a very low rate, as they are entirely at the mercy of the Indian Agent, who comes around at intervals and collects the permits from the buyer, leaving him nothing for security against conviction and fine. An Indian's wheat is just as good as a white man's but the dealers claim that if they are by purchasing it, making themselves liable to prosecution, and they must protect their own interests.

Another grievance of the Indians on the Reserve is the manner in which they were deprived of a number of their cattle last fall. Some of the stock from the Reserve got on a white neighbor's crop and were impounded. The Indians had no money to pay the poundage fees, but were told that the Government would make the matter all right.

In spite of this the cattle were sold from \$8 to \$10 each and the Indians deprived of one of their means of livelihood, without redress. Their confidence in the promises of the Government was destroyed, and this as a feature of the policy of the Canadian Government in dealing with their Indian wards, is an important matter. There are several other things to which we could refer, which in our opinion demand attention, but we reserve their mention for a future article. The above is merely a short statement of the grievances which are said to exist and the Indian Department will act wisely in investigate them, before they assume proportions which may cause serious trouble. White civilized men often find it annoying to have to submit to obnoxious regulations and Orders in Council, and how much more so do the untutored children of the plains, who but a few short years ago, roamed at will over the prairies, knowing no master but their own sweet fancy.<sup>59</sup>

This newspaper article constituted a sharp criticism of the Department of Indian Affairs. But on this occasion the department was not intimidated by it, as it seemed to have been in 1885. The public criticism apparently made no dent in policy at the local level.

While the department was not cowed into reviewing its policies toward the Oak River Indians, the latter refused to be reduced to silence either. They hated the regulations that interfered with their livelihood, and Scott's heavy-handed implementation of them. They continued their search for new means to achieve their ends, chief of which was the removal from their reserve of Farm Instructor Scott.

Later during the same year (1894) they were able to persuade F.W. Stevenson, a resident of a neighbouring town, who was personally acquainted with T.M. Daly, the Minister of the Interior, to write to Daly on their behalf. Stevenson wrote as follows:

I had forgotten that you were Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (as well as Minister of the Interior) or I would have written to you some time ago upon a matter which I think should yet be sifted....

The remainder of Stevenson's letter detailed the Indians' grievances, and included their latest complaint concerning the impounding of their cattle (this was also noted in the newspaper article). Stevenson ended his letter with this comment:

The Indians are greedy enough when they get a chance, still they should have justice. They are your wards and they would naturally look to you for protection--had they anyone to represent them.<sup>60</sup>

The Minister acted speedily and ordered a new enquiry into the Indians' grievances. A board was constituted to conduct the inquiry, but it contained no one other than the protagonists in the conflict. It consisted of Chief Inspector T.P. Wadsworth, and Indian Agent J.N. Markle. The conclusion of this board was that the Indians were entirely unjustified in their criticism of Farm Instructor

Scott. The latter was exonerated of misconduct. Twelve testimonials were given by neighbouring settlers and one Oak River Indian in favour of Scott, and were appended to the report of the board of inquiry. The testimonials lavishly praised Scott's devotion to duty, his disposition, his morals, etc.<sup>61</sup> The results of the inquiry were summarized in a memo by Hayter Reed, the new Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, who wrote:

The Department has carefully considered all that those Indians said to the Inspector, and has made careful enquiries about the Farmer, and his manner of performing his duties, and is quite convinced that the real cause of the dissatisfaction with the Farmer... [is] he does not allow them to dispose of stock or farm produce without a permit to do so.

The Department, in a letter addressed to "Harry Hotaimin and Kinyewakan" on 23rd May 1894, told them that the Farmer, in putting a stop to their selling produce without permission, was only doing his duty, and carrying out provisions made by the Government, in the best interests of the Indians themselves, and to prevent advantage being taken of them by white men.

The Department may now add that what it then said about the Farmer stopping the sale of produce being by its instructions, and in the best interests of the Indians themselves, applies also to the sale of stock, to the purchases by them--especially on credit--of articles they cannot afford and do not require, also to the traffic in intoxicants.

Their somewhat straitened circumstances, of which they complain, are not, as they seem to suppose, attributable to Mr. Scott's exer-

cising a control over their affairs, but to the fact that some years ago, when they had a run of good seasons and prolific crops, instead of taking care of what they had, and investing their surplus funds in ways which would afterwards be a source of benefit to them, they made foolish purchases and got into the merchants' debt....Now if the Department did not, through the Agent and the Farmer, control the business actions of the Indians, so far from getting into better circumstances they would inevitably go from bad to worse....

The Department is therefore compelled to express its strong disapproval of the conduct of that section of the Band of whom Hotanin appears to be the representative, that is in so far as concerns devoting themselves to trying to find faults in their Instructor, refusing obedience to lawful instructions, and agitating generally. The Department hopes that in their own interests these malcontents will settle down to steady work under their Farmer's guidance....

The Department hopes, moreover, that they will close their ears to the attempts of white men who try to make them discontented with their treatment, in order that they may gain their own selfish ends, without any care as to how much their dupes may suffer in the long run.<sup>62</sup>

The department's conduct of the inquiry in this case was typical of the manner in which it responded to Indian complaints.

The Oak River Indians had sustained their protests against a resident farm instructor, and regulations they considered discriminatory and ruinous to their enterprise for three years. They had presented their case first

to Inspector Wadsworth. Subsequently they had tried to gain the attention of senior departmental officials in Ottawa, and finally the Minister of the Interior. They were not successful in their objectives. By 1894 they had probably come to the conclusion that the Farm Instructor could not be dislodged from their reserve, and that they would either have to obey the regulations or circumvent them as best they could.

Their farming enterprises were crippled by the government's strict limitation on their purchases of equipment required in the expansion of operations. The action taken by Markle to prosecute the businessmen with whom they had to deal probably destroyed any hopes that they had of continuing their operations in defiance of the Indian Agent's wishes. The presence of the Farm Instructor on the reserve ensured that they would not be allowed to continue their normal business transactions.

While this example confines itself to the experiences the Oak River farmers had with the policies of the Department of Indian Affairs, this case appears to be quite representative of the arbitrary and the destructive effects of departmental policy upon the enterprise of commercial grain farmers. Publicly the department proclaimed that it attempted to do its utmost to encourage the Indians to become farmers. However, a closer look at its actions in the field cannot fail to show that to a large extent, they



interdicted the shift of Indian farmers to commercial grain farming, and for those who did attempt to pursue this venture, shackled them with regulations which made it extremely difficult for them to succeed in any other enterprise.

The effects of Indian Affairs policy seem to be indicated in the figures for wheat acreage at the Oak River Reserve. The figures show a slow initial increase in this acreage (1884-1889). During these years the farmers primarily had a mixed farming operation. After 1890 there was a rapid increase in the acreage of wheat when commercial farming was gaining popularity. But following upon the troubles of 1892 and 1893, this increase was stalled in 1893, and was reversed into an erratic decline in subsequent years. Unfortunately figures are available only until 1896. After this year the new Liberal government in Ottawa apparently decided to curtail detailed annual reporting on the reserves in the West.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Acreage Under Wheat: Oak River Reserve</u> |
|-------------|---|
| 1884        | 128   |
| 1885        | Not Available                                 |
| 1886        | 180   |
| 1887        | 200   |
| 1888        | 226   |
| 1889        | 248   |
| 1890        | 315   |
| 1891        | 516   |
| 1892        | 958½  |
| 1893        | 904   |
| 1894        | 868   |
| 1895        | 845   |
| 1896        | 712   |

Source: Inspection Reports, Department of Indian Affairs.

### Other Aspects of Indian Affairs Policy

During 1879-1896 the main thrust of Indian Affairs policy appears to have been directed toward establishing, maintaining, and extending its control over Indians through regulations and restrictions. Regulations were devised through legislation, but various directives from field offices also served to expand the controls. The nature of the controls and some of their effects have been discussed in the preceding section.

Indian Affairs also appeared to have had a policy toward the education of Indian children, but it was almost in the nature of a non-policy. Prior to 1888 the department took very little interest in schooling. The scattering of schools that did exist were threadbare in supplies.<sup>63</sup> The teachers appointed were almost illiterate themselves.<sup>64</sup> Between 1888 and 1892 the department divested itself almost entirely of the active responsibility of running schools, and contracted out the education of Indian children to the churches. Funds were granted to the churches to run residential schools where Indians were given both elementary education and instruction in farming and house-keeping. Though the schools were unpopular (the children disliked the regimentation and the forced labour they were required to perform), the department did not reform or review the system until the 1950s. The residential school

system has been the subject of some research (e.g., Carriere 1967, Falk 1973, Gresko 1975, Kennedy 1970, Lewis 1966, Nowakowski 1962; see also Bryce 1907). As Indian Affairs did not have an educational policy in which it took an active part, discussion of the school system is not included here.

Other than its policy of devising regulations and establishing control over the Indians, two other noteworthy adjuncts of the central policy should be mentioned. These were policies in regard to (a) agricultural development on the reserves, and (b) native leadership. Both are briefly discussed below.

#### Government Farms

In 1879 the Dewdney administration in the West evinced keen interest in the development of agriculture on the Indian reserves. It was hoped that as Indians settled down on the reserves and took up agriculture, a "better class" of Indians would emerge and prove to be self-sufficient.

The government, however, decided that it would not sit idly by and allow agricultural lands on Indian reserves to remain undeveloped while the Indians prepared to adopt agriculture. It would set up farms of its own. As the Indians were destitute, these farms would produce the grain

and root crops needed to feed them. Thus the government would be able to reduce some of the expenses anticipated in feeding the Indians. Dewdney proposed also to demand labour from the Indians in exchange for food assistance. In this way the costs for operating the farms would be reduced.<sup>65</sup> On the whole the government farm program seemed economically sound, and one that an efficient administration could execute with profit.

At the same time that the farms produced the grain to feed the Indians, the latter would benefit as well. They would be able to observe model government farms in operation. Farm Instructors would be employed to run the government farms, and these men would also teach the Indians the skills of agriculture.

Edgar Dewdney was the prime architect of this agricultural policy for the West, and almost immediately after his appointment he enthusiastically set about his task of selecting sites for government farms and of locations for the Farm Instructors. Within a year six farms were set up, and nineteen Farm Instructors appointed. The department in the West at this time, in fact, consisted mostly of Farm Instructors. In 1879, apart from the nineteen Farm Instructors, there were only nine other staff members (excluding Dewdney). These consisted of the Assistant Superintendent for Manitoba; two inspectors and six Indian Agents.<sup>66</sup> The Farm Instructors were treated

at par with Indian Agents. They received an annual salary of \$730.00. This was comparable to that of the Indian Agents, which ranged from \$600.00 to \$1,000.00.<sup>67</sup>

The government farms that Dewdney established were of two kinds. One was the supply farm, usually a mammoth undertaking, in which Farm Instructors operated a huge farm located close to several Indian reserves. The farm served also as a regional headquarters for Indian Affairs staff, and a depot for supplies. The first supply farm organized was the Pincher Creek farm on the Peigan Reserve in Alberta which comprised 3,000 acres. It was selected from the very best agricultural land on the reserve, and was started in 1870.<sup>68</sup> The notion of supply farms seems to have been inspired by the bonanza farms of the upper Red River area which were being established during these same years.

The second kind of government farm established was called the home farm. This type of farm was much smaller, and was operated by a single Farm Instructor. Both types of farm were designed to serve essentially the same purpose. They were to produce crops to meet the department's commitments to feed destitute Indians, and they were to be models which the Indians could watch closely, to see how farming operations were carried out.

Both types of government farm, however, ran into some severe difficulties soon after they were established.

To begin with, it became apparent that non-Indian labour would be required on the farms. The great number of Indian labourers that had been anticipated to work without wages for their rations was simply not forthcoming. This increased greatly the expense of operating the farms. To compound this difficulty labourers employed rarely seemed to do satisfactory work. Indian Agents repeatedly complained on this account, and it seems the turnover among workers on the farms was inordinately high. Here is a sample of labour difficulties on the Pincher Creek Supply Farm:

There has been little or no work done at the Pincher Creek Farm for some time past and Mr. McHugh (Asst. Supt. Farms Treaty 7) says he threatened to discharge two of the men and had a great deal of trouble with the rest, as they said if these men were discharged they would all leave. I authorised Mr. McHugh to discharge the two Paisleys which has been done.<sup>69</sup>

Another source of difficulty which nagged the government farms was the poor managerial, and sometimes technical skills of the Farm Instructors. Some of the Farm Instructors employed were quite inexperienced in farming. For example, Paul Kane, the son of the famous artist of the same name, and a resident of Toronto, was hired in 1882 as a Farm Instructor for the Swan Lake Reserve in southern Manitoba. After causing the loss of the greater part of the crop grown on the home farm at

Swan Lake for two years in a row, Kane was relieved of his duties. His dismissal letter accused him of

negligence, and unsatisfactory manner of discharging your duties; not properly securing the oats and potatoes raised at Swan Lake at considerable expense, leaving oats lying in sheaves scattered upon the ground under the rain and snow; leaving half the potatoes plowed up and left exposed to the frost for several days....<sup>70</sup>

Some Farm Instructors apparently were lumbermen from the East and inexperienced in farming on the Plains. A settler in the Battleford (Saskatchewan) area noted in his reminiscences:

They (Farm Instructors) were all lumbermen from the Ottawa district...and they knew nothing of the West or of climatic conditions here....<sup>71</sup>

Most of the Farm Instructors employed, however, were farmers of a sort. Likely they had operated small subsistence farms, or had abandoned these in favour of the more lucrative prospects contained in government employment. Usually they were uneducated. Hence they wrote no reports nor kept financial accounts of their farm operations. It seems quite apparent that they did not see the farms they operated as a business enterprise. They seem rather to have viewed their work essentially as government employment where productivity was not a primary concern.

Farm Instructors were constantly criticized by Indian Agents for the poor productivity of government farms. Indian Agent Ogletree, for instance, wondered why the Long Plains Reserve home farm should be maintained. He suggested that it would be a lesser expense for the government to purchase food rations in the open market rather than have them produced on the home farm.<sup>72</sup> After a visit to the Touchwood Hills home farm, Inspector Wadsworth wrote: "I would sooner suggest the abandonment of the Home Farm altogether than to continue the system of the past two years, where the pretence of work upon the Home Farm has been a cloak for idleness."<sup>73</sup> Indian Agent Herchmer complained that he ordered Farm Instructor R.B. Johnston at Moose Mountain (in southeast Saskatchewan) to plough twenty acres at White Bear's Reserve, but after almost a month only 1½ acres had been actually ploughed, and the Farm Instructor gave numerous excuses. Moreover, he was trading provisions for feathers, and Herchmer recommended that he be dismissed.<sup>74</sup>

Farm Instructors, indeed, were hired and dismissed with depressing regularity during the 1880s and 1890s. In 1881 their salaries were dropped to \$480 per annum,<sup>75</sup> and in later years newly hired Farm Instructors were paid by the month according to their anticipated capabilities. Even with a reduction in salary, however, Farm Instructors in the employ of Indian Affairs were probably better off



than working as farm labourers, or on small farms on the Prairies. This presumably would be the work many of these men would have performed had they not entered government service.

While some Farm Instructors were merely incompetent, others were apparently so harsh in their dealings with Indians that their actions have been regarded as a cause for the violent 1885 violent uprising by Indians in Saskatchewan. A report from the Presbyterian Church noted as follows:

At the Presbytery meeting at Brandon, Manitoba, Rev. Mr. Cameron, who spent many years among the Indians about Battleford, contended that "Indian uprising was in a great measure due to the character of the instructors and agents appointed by the Government. If the Government officials had been the right kind of men the uprising would never have taken place. In many cases their treatment of the Indians was calculated to have a most injurious effect--some of them treating the Indians like dogs--never speaking to them without an oath, and paying no regard whatever to their word." The rev, gentleman remarked that it would spoil good Indians to make them like some of the Indian Department officials who are over them, and supposed to be civilising them. Mr. Cameron's statements were confirmed by Rev. Messrs. Robertson, Flett, and other Indian missionaries, who maintained that the Indian revolt was in a great measure due to the character of the Government officials sent amongst them.<sup>76</sup>

Other observers have remarked on the harshness of some Farm Instructors also. Lawrence Clarke, a member of the Northwest Council, the legislative body of the Western

Prairie region, referred specifically to a Farm Instructor who was killed on the Frog Lake Reserve during the same uprising:

Brutal ruffians were appointed as farm instructors over the Indians, who maltreated the poor people in the most brutal manner, answering them with kicks and blows, accompanied with showers of profanity and disgusting epithets; of the farm instructors killed by the Indians two were universally known to be brutal wretches such as I have mentioned, and the priests lost their lives in attempting to save them from the pent-up wrath of the savages.<sup>77</sup>

Archbishop Tache, in a report on this incident, provided apparent confirmation to Lawrence Clarke's view. He wrote:

At the risk of creating great surprise, I affirm that the massacres were not committed without previous provocation. I here invoke the testimony of one of the victims himself. The Rev. Father Fafard said, in conversation with another missionary, who in turn related it to me: 'Such a one (naming an official) acts with shameful brutality towards the Indians. He will be killed some day.' The person alluded to was killed, and two devoted missionaries increased the number of victims they were striving to protect. A gentleman whose veracity I cannot question assured me that some Indians had told him in 1884 that an individual, whom he mentioned, 'treated them like dogs', and the same individual was killed by the Indians who had lodged the complaint against him.<sup>78</sup>

It is difficult to see how the appointment of Farm Instructors was of any benefit to the Indians. It is

unlikely that any of them were experts in any branch of agriculture. Indeed their technical competence hardly seemed to have exceeded that of the Indians themselves. George Flett, the Presbyterian missionary at the Keeseekowenin Reserve in Manitoba wrote to the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs with some sarcasm:

I think it would be better if some tribes like those at Pelly and here who are more or less civilized were to get an amount in cattle and seed equal to what the Indian Agents get, it would help to make things better for them, as they would soon be able to support themselves. I do not quite approve of the present policy of the Government in sending farmer Agents to farm for the Indians on behalf of Government; better for someone to teach them to make themselves independent and work among them constantly; for as it now stands the only one really benefitted by the present system is the man who is sent to farm for the Indians and not the Indians themselves. (emphasis in original) <sup>79</sup>

Some Farm Instructors did not actually farm, or instruct the Indians in farming. Farm Instructor Scott at the Oak River Reserve was appointed as a sort of shadow Indian Agent. He was responsible for policing the reserve and disciplining the Indians.

The Farm Instructor program did not seem to have lived up to its original expectations. Neither it seems did the Home and Supply Farm Program. There were two supply farms initially established and they were both closed in 1882.<sup>80</sup> Thus they had a life of about three

years each. There were a large number of home farms established during the nineteen year span of the Dewdney administration and that of his successor, Hayter Reed (1879-1896). But these farms do not appear to have had a life span much greater than the two supply farms. At Birtle Agency in Manitoba only one farm was established during this period. This was at Waywayseecappo Reserve and it existed for about three years (1880-1882).<sup>81</sup>

The government found it necessary to close farms as the Farm Instructors were dismissed. Also the farms were closed for other somewhat obscure and arbitrary reasons. The Waywayseecappo farm, for example, was closed because "it is considered that the Indians are far enough advanced to be thrown upon their own resources."<sup>82</sup> But in 1882 there was almost no farming activity at Waywayseecappo. As mentioned earlier this was a "backward" reserve in terms of agricultural progress, and it was not until 1891 that an "industrial wave" had swept the reserve and stimulated farming activity.

Since neither the Farm Instructors nor the Indian Agents apparently kept accounts of the operation of the home farms it is not known whether these farms ever made any profit, or if, as seems likely, they lost money, what the nature of these losses were. Inexplicably, Indian Affairs Inspectors, who wrote in meticulous detail about the agricultural activities of Indians, failed

to make more than a few, scattered remarks concerning government farms. Inspector Wadsworth, for example, in a detailed report on agriculture in the Treaty 7 area in Alberta, made only a brief mention of the huge Pincher Creek Supply Farm. He noted it was woefully lacking in proper equipment and was hampered in its functioning by inexperienced workmen and the lack of horsepower.<sup>83</sup>

Home farms were barely mentioned in the reports.

In retrospect, the home farms of the Prairie reserves have a ghostly and insubstantial existence. It may well be that during the period of their operation they had some of the same qualities. If so, the following memo may constitute a suitable epitaph:

Abandoned Home Farms in Northwest Territories: -

Farm at File Hills has no buildings on it, but it is of value to Department as it has a lake and water otherwise is scarce in the locality. It should be retained.

Farm at Eagle Hills no longer required. Two old log buildings and stable of very little value - at most \$100.

Farm between the Reserve of Poundmaker and Sweetgrass abandoned in 1882 and all buildings were removed.

From farm at Riviere qui barre all worthwhile buildings were removed.

Farm at Peace Hills - refer to letter from this office No. 1005 and enclosures, in reply to Department's letter 7587 of 16.11.1888.<sup>84</sup>

Native Leaders: "Obstructionist" and "Cooperative"

Native leaders often played a crucial role in encouraging their band members to avail themselves of economic and social opportunities as these appeared. In the 1870s, for example, a few native leaders, such as Pennaise at Ebb and Flow, Nasekepenais at Broken Head, Nawachewaykapone at Sandy Bay, took an active part in influencing band members to take up an agricultural livelihood. Peguis, in the 1830s, had played a significant role encouraging his Ojibwa band to adopt Christianity and transform certain of their living habits.

Indian Affairs officials looked upon such leaders with favour. However, strong leaders were also, as a rule, critical of Indian Affairs policies, and acted as spokesman for their people in voicing opposition to constraints imposed by legislation and bureaucratic action. Because complaints were common, government looked upon native leaders with suspicion and considered them as potential obstacles to an "orderly" administration.

In concomitance with the expansion of the Indian Act in the mid-nineteenth century, the government formulated a policy toward native leaders. Initially it attempted to replace traditional leaders by democratically elected ones, for the latter were expected to be somewhat more moderate in their attitudes toward government policies. However, elected leaders did not conform to these expectations, it appears, and in due course the Department in the West decided to discontinue elections. In their place was instituted a policy whereby cooperative or submissive men were recognized and appointed as chiefs. This policy grew as a result of decisions made by senior bureaucrats in the Canadian West.

The interference of government in the selection of native leaders was not always accepted by Indian bands without protest. An incident which is illustrative, and involves the Cowesses band, is related in this section. Nonetheless, in the long run, the policy of appointment of "reasonable" men to leadership positions had the effect of devaluing the status of leaders, eroding support for traditional leaders, and also, perhaps, intensifying factionalism in reserve communities. Indian leaders tended to sink into impotence and ultimately proved unable to respond to the economic challenges which faced native peoples during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Government authorities in the East generally held the view that a good proportion of Indians were essentially cooperative and "tractable", but they were misled by their traditional, conservative leaders into resisting adoption of civilized ways, thereby retarding progress. Because government tried to foster civilization, the resistance of traditional leaders usually took on an anti-government stance. It was reasoned that if these uncooperative traditional leaders could be replaced by those more "progressive", government aims in policy would be better served. Also, day to day administration would be facilitated. "Progressive" persons could usually be found on the reserves. These were people who were responsive to the wishes of government and mission authorities.<sup>85</sup>

How could traditional, obstructionist leaders be replaced by those more progressive and cooperative, and more "intelligent and educated"? It was thought that by breaking up the traditional tribal system and replacing it by an elective one this desirable change could be brought about. Accordingly, in 1869, legislation to achieve this end was introduced:

The Governor may order that the Chiefs of any tribe, band or body of Indians shall be elected by the male members of each Indian Settlement of the full age of



twenty-one years at such time and place, and in such manner, as the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs may direct, and they shall in such case be elected for a period of three years, unless deposed by the Governor for dishonesty, intemperance, or immorality....Provided always that all life Chiefs now living shall continue as such until death or resignation, or until their removal by the Governor for dishonesty, intemperance or immorality.<sup>86</sup>

Through this legislation the government held out the hope that progressive Indians would be encouraged to take up the office of chiefs. Thus the government would succeed in "establishing a responsible, for an irresponsible system", and "pave the way to the establishment of simple municipal institutions."<sup>87</sup>

Quite remarkably, while the government was seeking to encourage the emergence of a progressive leadership, it was also ensuring, through legislation, that the vaunted new leadership would have no tasks of any significance to perform. The elected leaders were being invited to a Barmecide feast. They were not allowed any powers to control or manage their bands' finances, and they were not empowered to make any local or municipal laws. These powers were effectively vested in the hands of the Department of Indian Affairs. What useful function could an elected Band Council on an Indian reserve perform without finances at its disposal?

The elected Band Council did have some duties assigned to it and these were clearly specified in the

legislation. In 1869, the Council had seven duties, and to these one more was added in 1876, four more in 1879, and one more in 1884. The seven original duties were as follows:

1. The care of public health.
2. The observance of order and decorum at assemblies of the people in General Council, or on other occasions.
3. The repression of intemperance and profligacy.
4. The prevention of trespass by cattle.
5. The maintenance of roads, bridges, ditches and fences.
6. The construction of and maintaining in repair of school houses, council houses and other Indian public buildings.
7. The establishment of pounds and the appointment of poundkeepers.<sup>88</sup>

Without the control of finances, many of the duties were actually farcical or imaginary anyhow. How could a Council take steps for the "care of public health" (No. 1), or maintain roads, bridges, etc., (No. 5) or establish pounds and appoint pound keepers (No. 7) with no funds at its disposal? Duty No. 6 (the construction and repair of school houses, council houses, etc.) was particularly ironic, as such buildings remained virtually non-existent on the reserves in Manitoba in the 19th century.

The additions made to the list of Band Council's duties after 1869 included "the repression of noxious weeds" and the "protection of sheep", certainly no remarkable reforms toward the expansion of the Band Council's powers.<sup>89</sup> In 1879 the Council was given the power to impose penalties of either \$30.00 or thirty days in jail

for infraction of regulations it had passed.<sup>90</sup> By means of this provision the exiguous powers of the Band Council were given a force of authority, and perhaps, also, some additional legitimacy.

Soon after the commencement of Dewdney's administration, the elective system for choosing band leaders was introduced on some reserves, but local Indian Agents were generally not found to be well disposed toward it. As the policy of Indian Affairs emphasized the establishment of controls over the Indian population, the introduction of democratic institutions on the reserves could not, in fact, be expected to find much favour. In due course, policy shifted to a simple appointment of leaders. Men considered pliable were appointed as Chiefs. If any of these appointees became uncooperative, they were simply not recognized as leaders. Chieftainship came to be considered essentially as an office of patronage bestowed on cooperative individuals.

Dewdney in his report for 1884, for example, wrote:

Thunder Child and his Indians are plain [Plains] hunters; the chief was a follower of Big Bear and one of those who held aloof from the treaty for several years, but in 1883 severed his connection with the old chief; and on entering the treaty, was promised by me, to be recommended for a chiefship, provided he was able to collect the requisite number of families; this he has done, and I am glad the Government recognized his worth, and confirmed him in the chiefship....<sup>91</sup>

And in this same report he added:

It has been recommended that Lucky Man be deposed from the temporary position of Chief, which he occupies. He is utterly worthless, and was paid as an ordinary Indian at the last payment.<sup>92</sup>

The system of patronage was extended by offering special attention to the bands of Chiefs who were cooperative.

For example:

...Chiefs Mistawasis and Ah-tah ka koop have been two of our best Indians, I think all the more important that they and their bands should be well cared for now that they have met with misfortune....<sup>93</sup>

Dewdney departed from the West in 1887, and with the elevation of Hayter Reed to the position of Indian Commissioner at Regina, Indian Affairs policy underwent another change. This policy was a natural outgrowth of Reed's views, which were quite explicit on the subject of Indian leadership.

Reed was not in favour of traditional leaders, whom he found too conservative. Neither was he in favour of the elective system because "the excitement attendant upon the recurring elections has the most unsettling effect upon the Indians." He favoured rather the abolition of the office of Indian chiefs and councillors altogether. He wrote:

the lapse of the office...has greatly benefitted some of the bands...in order to retain their influence over the lazy and intractable (the chiefs) become, against their better judgement, the mouthpiece for the ventilation of imaginary grievances and the presentation of utterly unreasonable demands. The agents find that when the Indians, deprived of their chiefs, are compelled to seek the advice of their instructors, a marked change for the better is soon observed.<sup>94</sup>

Reed further justified his reasons for seeking abolishment of the office of chiefs in the course of a lengthy correspondence with Lawrence Vankoughnet, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. The department's objective, he argued, was to educate the Indians so that they may be enfranchised and become ordinary citizens of the state. To do this it was necessary that the links of the Indian with his tribal way of life be severed. The existence of the chiefs and band councils merely perpetuated the tribal way of life. They kept alive the feeling among Indians that they were distinct from the White man. They retarded the development of individualism. Some immigrants to the country, Reed observed, retained their leaders, and thereby their old customs and habits. These people found it extremely difficult to assimilate to the new ways of life around them. Indians too could not assimilate for the same reasons. Thus it was in the best interests of the Indians, and desirable for their advancement, that the office of chiefs be abolished.

Abolishment would provide "one of the strongest aids towards the destruction of communism and the creation of individuality."<sup>95</sup>

Reed tried to put these ideas concerning abolishment into practice in the West, and some Indian bands began to find that they had to put up a struggle merely to retain their chiefs and councillors. This was the case at the Cowesses Reserve of Ojibwa and Cree in southeastern Saskatchewan, and the incident covered a lengthy period of seven years, between 1891 and 1898.

In 1891 the Cowesses Band requested the Department that an election be held on their reserve to select their Chief and Councillors. The department acceded to this request, but the Band elected as Chief a person whom Reed did not favour. In due course a petition was received from some members of the Band asking for the Chief's removal, and suggesting also that the offices of Chiefs and Councillors be abolished. This petition was forwarded to Ottawa for approval, but Vankoughnet did not approve it, and the results of the band election were allowed to stand.<sup>96</sup>

In 1894, when the three year term of office of the Cowesses Band Council was over, the Indians asked that a fresh election be called. Reed by then had replaced Vankoughnet in Ottawa. The Assistant Commissioner at Regina, A.E. Forget, wrote to Reed asking him whether the band's request should be acceded to "as it was departmental

policy to do away with Chiefs and Headmen."<sup>97</sup> Reed commended Forget's perspicacity and, as was expected, rejected the Cowesses request.<sup>98</sup>

The Indians, however, were insistent that an election be called, and claimed that it was their right under treaty to have a chief and headmen. The Agent, A. McDonald, tried his best to persuade them otherwise, but the Indians remained stubborn in their insistence.<sup>99</sup>

Reed, on his part, was equally firm, and he accused the Agent of supporting "agitators" on the reserve, a charge which McDonald vigorously denied. In the face of the Deputy Superintendent General's truculence over the matter, Forget suggested, as a compromise, that the Indians be asked to give up their idea of the election in exchange for some presents of tea and tobacco. This could be purchased from annuity monies saved from payments to the elected officials. This compromise was not acceptable to Reed, but he suggested in its place that a couple of wagons and other articles be given to the Indians in exchange for the relinquishment of treaty rights.<sup>100</sup>

But the Cowesses Band could still not be won over. They refused the offer and argued that if they relinquished their treaty rights future generations would blame them for it. After yet more correspondence on this issue, Reed agreed that elections be held, but reduced the size of the Band Council from four members to one.<sup>101</sup>

This raised another storm of protest on the reserve. The Indians claimed it was their treaty right to have four councillors, any suggestion of abrogations of treaty rights was like showing a red flag to a bull. Apparently even the department felt harassed, and Reed agreed eventually to a Council of three.<sup>102</sup> With this decision the matter was laid to rest until 1898, when Reed was removed from office by the incoming Liberal administration.

In 1898 the Cowesses Band decided to petition the department for a reversion to the four member Band Council. By then, they were conversant with the Indian Act, and had apparently studied it carefully. They based their claim on an amendment made to the Indian Act in 1898 (Section 9) which permitted the appointment of a chief for a band population of thirty, and a councillor for each additional thirty people. By privilege of this amendment the Cowesses Band was permitted a council of four.<sup>103</sup>

The request of the Cowesses Band apparently created quite a stir in the department's office in Ottawa when it was received. It was discovered that the wording of the legislative amendment was a mistake, and that it had crept into the text of the Indian Act "in error". It had been the intention of the department, by means of the amendment, to actually reduce the number of councillors permitted to Indian bands. But the wording of the amendment, instead,



had resulted in giving effect to exactly the opposite.<sup>104</sup> Consequently, a bill was soon drafted to rectify the error, and the offending amendment was repealed.

The Cowesses Band, therefore, not to be forced into accepting Hayter Reed's informally devised policy directives, did have to submit to a new legislative ruling.

Reed's policy was not pursued in a formal manner in the West after 1896, but it embodied the spirit of future Indian Affairs policy toward native leaders. The department officials usually did not accord recognition to any leaders unless there was an express purpose for doing so. Most often, native leaders were recognized in order to obtain their consent to proposed surrenders of reserve lands, which was in fact a policy actively pursued in the first quarter of this century. Thus William Spragge's hope in 1870 of replacing an "irresponsible system" of traditional leadership by a "responsible system" of elected leadership, evolved in the West into a departmental policy which prescribed a unique combination of derecognition of leaders with their ad hoc appointment.

This policy tended to favour the appointment of "reasonable" men, who were cooperative and acquiescent, to positions of authority. Talented leaders, perhaps, often found themselves classed as 'agitators' and 'trouble makers', and were forced into confrontations with departmental officials and the recognized leaders. It seems the policy eventually

had the effect of creating or intensifying factionalism on the reserves. Also it probably devalued the authority and respect that traditional leaders had been able to command in Indian bands. Thus responsible leadership capable of protecting or voicing Indian interests seem to have been steadily eroded, and during the twentieth century when new economic challenges confronted them, the response of native people was often uncertain and ineffectual.

## CHAPTER IX

### FROM FARMING TO WAGE LABOUR: 1896-1930

We have seen that in the late nineteenth century, Indian agricultural enterprise was severely limited by policies and actions of the Department of Indian Affairs. The last years of the century and the early decades of the twentieth century witnessed remarkable changes on the Prairies. These were an unprecedented expansion of European immigration and a tremendous boom in wheat production. Associated with this expansion were novel opportunities for labourers, both in construction and on farms.

Indians of the Parklands readily perceived these new opportunities and sought to participate in them. Many moved out of farming and into general labour, attracted by chances for higher incomes than were available to most of them as farmers.

This Chapter discusses the transition of Parkland Indians from agricultural enterprise on the reserves to labouring activity off the reserves during the period 1896 to 1930.

Records of the Birtle Agency available in the Public Archives of Canada are spotty and inadequate for this period. Hence a detailed reconstruction of the process of transition from agricultural activity to labour of the Indians resident

within the Birtle Agency cannot be made. Nonetheless, the process of transition is of significance to the understanding of the development of Indian poverty, and the essential parameters of this process can be substantially formulated through scrutiny of documents other than Agency, or general administrative records. The data used in this Chapter are derived from a variety of sources. These include published analyses of economic change within the eastern Prairie and Parkland region of Canada; relevant archival documentation; published material relating to pioneer settlement; and interviews with Indian people of the region.

It might be suggested that in the economic history of Indians the history of settlement and the economic development of the West are not of relevance. This suggestion is questionable. Economic development in the West offered new opportunities, and to these, Indians responded strongly. We need to be reminded that Indian people were Canadians too whose labour, for example, played a part in the building of the West as did that of men and women from many other ethnic groups. Indians were not strange exotics isolated from the economic forces and currents that prevailed around them. Indeed, a proper analysis of these economic conditions is essential toward any attempt to acquire understanding of economic change among native people. While

it is necessary to point out that Indians responded positively to economic opportunities that were generated in the first quarter of the twentieth century, it is also essential to isolate and emphasize the disabilities under which Indians became entrapped in the role of and status as labourer, while non-Indian settlers and immigrants went on to other occupations and statuses.

It is a truism that no historical account, even if it be in the form of a bare chronicle, is devoid of interpretation. The mere selection of data itself forms an initial screening, and its treatment involves further interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Be that as it may, it is the case that the ratio of hitherto unpublished data to interpretation is higher in the previous Chapter (Chapter VIII) than in the present one. This is mainly because a considerable proportion of the contents of the present Chapter are based upon published material, that is, material which has been interpreted in various ways by previous authors.

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The Federal elections of 1896 saw the Conservative Government fall, after eighteen years of unbroken power, to be replaced by that of the Liberals under Sir Wilfred Laurier. The Laurier Government was able to achieve, during its tenure in office, tremendous success in settling the vast, "empty lands" of the West. Though the Canadian Pacific Railway had built

the transcontinental line through the region in the 1880s, the lands, by and large, remained devoid of settlers. After an initial burst of promise in the early 1880s, immigration into the Plains was reduced to a trickle. The rigid reliance placed by the Conservatives on the Canadian Pacific Railway and other speculators to promote immigration, an undistinguished homestead policy, and high freight rates, combined to offer little incentive to the immigration needed to spur economic growth.<sup>2</sup>

Clifford Sifton from Brandon, Manitoba, the enterprising Minister of the Interior in the Laurier government, clearly saw the need for new initiatives for promoting growth of immigration into the West. He relied heavily, and with success, on the principle of the free homestead. Hitherto free homesteads had been made available only twenty miles and more away from the proposed rail lines. The Conservative government did not wish to give away prime lands located near the rail lines in gratuity (other than to the Canadian Pacific Railway which was felt to have "earned" the land by building the railway), and it was hoped that by selling these prime lands at good prices some of the considerable expense of the railway project would be recouped.<sup>3</sup> In the words of the agricultural economist, Vernon Fowke, the Conservative government had a homestead policy, but it lacked a homestead philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Sifton, on the other hand, initiated a new, more genuine free homestead policy. The justification for this policy was expressed by Frank Oliver, Sifton's successor in the Ministry of the Interior during a debate in the House of Commons:

...the interest of the Dominion in the lands is in the revenue which it can derive from the settler who makes that land productive. The Dominion of Canada can make millions out of the lands of the Northwest and never sell an acre....the increase in our customs returns, the increase in our trade and commerce, the increase in our manufactures, is to a very large extent due to the increase in settlement on the free lands of the Northwest Territories.... The interest of the Dominion is to secure the settlement of the lands, and whether with a price or without a price makes little or no difference. It is worth the while of the Dominion to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in promoting immigration...in surveying and administering these lands, and then to give them away.<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not it was the free homestead that was responsible for luring new immigrants into the Prairies has been a matter of some debate. The fact, nonetheless, was that new immigrants did come, and they came in tremendous numbers. They came from Germany (despite severe restrictions on emigration from that country), from Poland, Russia, the Ukraine, the British Isles, and quite remarkably, from the United States as well. It was one of the few occasions when extensive immigration occurred from the United States into Canada rather than the reverse. In the United States, Sifton's Ministry vigorously promoted the Canadian Plains as the "last, best West." There was an important unwritten rider attached, however; namely "only farmers need apply."<sup>6</sup> Indeed, clear occupational preferences were given for farmers and farm labourers in the promotions

in Europe as well. Agents of steamship companies were given bonuses only for farmers, farm labourers, and female domestic servants.<sup>7</sup>

The surge in immigration brought a dramatic population growth. Between 1901 and 1921 the population in Canada increased by 64%, while in the previous twenty years the increase had been only 24%. In actual numbers of people the figure grew from 5,371,315 in 1901 to 10,376,786 in 1921. While the entire country absorbed this population growth, the prairie provinces were the main beneficiaries.<sup>8</sup>

Along with this great increase in population, fortune smiled on Canada in other very significant ways as well. The industrialization of western Europe, and to some extent the United States, attracted people to the cities, and there was a growing demand for food products. The discovery of gold in great quantities in South Africa, and its absorption into the gold-based monetary system of the European countries, provided a new transfusion of vigour into the international economy. Prices rose sharply, more so for food and raw materials than for manufactured goods, for which the price upsurge was limited by competition among the industrial countries. In the early years of this century, prior to the First War, the price of all Canadian exports rose by 32%, with grains



leading the way by almost 66%. Together with these fortuitous circumstances ocean freight rates declined substantially, and this was a particularly important advantage for Canada because the exports were primarily of great bulk.<sup>9</sup>

The new immigrants attracted to the Prairies soon got down to producing the golden grain that was in such great demand in the world. Farm acreage expanded 125% between 1901 and 1921, and wheat production and exports rose as follows:<sup>10</sup>

Production of wheat and exports of wheat and wheat flour  
(thousands of bushels)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Production</u> | <u>Exports</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1896        | 55,703            | 10,760         |
| 1900        | 59,912            | 20,301         |
| 1905        | 71,838            | 20,647         |
| 1910        | 166,744           | 67,808         |
| 1915        | 161,280           | 86,750         |
| 1920        | 193,260           | 92,500         |
| 1925        | 262,097           | 192,722        |
| 1930        | 302,192           | 186,267        |

After 1911 a new hybrid wheat called Marquis, a cross between the commonly used Red Fife and Hard Red Calcutta, was introduced in the market. It accounted significantly for the increase in production. It is estimated that this new strain added some \$100,000,000 to farm income annually.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from its policy of free homesteads, the government acted in other ways as well to facilitate settlement and boost the agricultural economy of the West. Involved bureaucratic procedures in the registration of homestead plots that had developed over the years were

eliminated. The gold of the Yukon, discovered in 1898, provided the government with capital to establish a strong infrastructure for agricultural development. Roads, railways, and bridges were built to provide a new communication network within the region, and grain elevators and terminals, as well as flour and feed mills, were constructed. Many miles of fencing were built also, and new irrigation channels were laid. Wheat was the prime mover of the Canadian economy at this time; efforts were made to insure success in its production.<sup>12</sup>

The buoyant economy of the early 20th century transformed the nation from its relative stagnation into a land of great promise "almost overnight."<sup>13</sup> Enthusiasm and a sense of confidence were everywhere. An immigration pamphlet called "Canada: The Land of Opportunity" stated with obvious pride in 1909:

The Premier of Canada recently expressed the idea, which is that of all Canadians, that as the 19th century was the century of the United States, the 20th century is the century of Canada....The United States is the America of achievement, but Canada is the America of opportunity.<sup>14</sup>

It seems reasonable to expect that Indians would have shared the benefits of this new burst of enthusiasm and economic activity. Many Indians, after all, were farmers, and the surge of wheat prices would have been of benefit to them as it was to others. However, during this

period there was a decline in Indian farming. The benefits of the economic expansion did reach the Indians, and, in all probability, they did share the joy and enthusiasm which was characteristic of the new century. But the opportunities that came to them during these years were opportunities that held only a short-run benefit; in the long run they were laced with economic doom.

Attracted by the high wages to be earned in different forms of wage labour during the boom of the early 20th century, many Indians left their farms to take advantage of this new opportunity. Labour, indeed, was in tremendous demand. New settlers needed labour to clear and break land on the 160-acre homestead plots which many of them intended to farm in full, and the larger undercapitalized farms also sorely needed farm labour on their expanding agricultural operations. Labour was required as well in the work of constructing the great network of roads, railways, elevators, etc., and it was in great demand in the cities too in the burgeoning new industries.<sup>15</sup>

For the most part, Indians opted for farm labour. This was almost local work. They could remain near their homes, and the wages brought in a welcome addition to their varied incomes.

It should be noted that many settlers and homesteaders left their farms as well during this period to work as labourers. Homestead cancellations in Saskatchewan

during the first three decades of this century ran to nearly 46%: thus about half the homesteaders abandoned their free homesteads before the three-year waiting period for acquiring patent.<sup>16</sup> The demand for labour was so great, in fact, that many people who migrated to the Prairies with the intention of taking up homesteads did not do so. The ready money that wage work offered was too attractive to disregard.

In 1912 there developed a credit squeeze in the international money markets and almost at the same time the world price levels dropped sharply for wheat and other Canadian staples. The Prairie economy, based on farm and construction work, had geared itself for an unfettered and rapid expansion, and the sudden halt in growth forced it to make painful cutbacks in all sectors. Added to this there was a disastrous crop in 1914. Low prices on account of disruption in world trade through war sent farm incomes into a headlong dive toward rock bottom. But in the next year, abruptly, wheat prices rose again almost as sharply as they had declined, and a boom, similar to that of the years prior to 1912 was in operation once again, in all its previous health and vigour. This boom continued until after the war.<sup>17</sup> Prices for No. 1 northern wheat (Fort William), which had averaged \$1.07 per bushel in the years 1910-16 climbed to \$2.31 per bushel in the years 1917-20. In fact they hit a peak of \$2.63 in the latter

year. In 1921 the prices went into a nose dive once again, and reverted back to \$1.07 per bushel in 1924. The next upturn commenced in 1925 and lasted until 1931 when the effects of the market crash of 1929 finally reached the Prairies.<sup>18</sup>

With every boom there was the tremendous surge of demand for labour, and with every depression there was widespread unemployment.<sup>19</sup> The first downturn, in 1912, must have been extremely bitter to the Indians who had progressively left their farms to participate in the boom outside their reserves. When depression struck they could not easily reactivate their farms once again. However, the Great War started in 1914 and the demand for men to fill the

trenches on the front lines was created almost overnight. The unemployed Indians quickly responded to the call for enlistment. From some reserves every able bodied man opted for a military employment.<sup>20</sup>

During the boom and bust era of the first three decades of this century, when heady economic growth alternated abruptly with precipitous depressions, subsistence farming was not an attractive proposition. A subsistence farmer could usually adapt himself to the ups and downs of seasonal and climatic variations--in fact he knew he must do so, and he maintained a diversified agricultural base. But the economic climate of boom and bust was another matter altogether. In the boom years the rapid growth of well-

paying employment all around him was too difficult to resist. In such years farm labour was usually more profitable, especially if the farmer had less than thirty acres of land under wheat. If this farmer produced four hundred bushels of wheat he might gross an income of \$700 to \$800 (net income would be reduced through payment for seed, implements, etc.), but for this same period of work (3½ months) he could earn about \$600 to \$700 as a farm labourer.<sup>21</sup>

During the years of "bust", when there was widespread unemployment, farming might have seemed a more attractive proposition. But abandoned farms were not easily reactivated and made viable after three or four years of outside employment. Farming was not an occupation one could enter or leave at will.

While subsistence farming was economically unattractive, commercial grain farming did have a chance for success and viability. Indian farmers, however, faced the primary obstacle of obtaining credit. Their attempts to take advantage of the rising profitability of wheat farming were frustrated by their inability to expand their farming operations. Outside the reserves the processes of farm consolidation and the progressive industrialization of agriculture had commenced in earnest in the early twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> However, while Indians had almost a head start in the mechanization of farms, their efforts to maintain

this momentum were stymied by the department's regulatory controls.

Indian Affairs officials, in fact, tried to debar Indian farmers from acquiring modern farm equipment. In 1894, Hayter Reed, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, issued this directive:

The Department's policy is to confine the farming operations of the Indians to such an area as will allow of the work being done by themselves, and that, too, by the use of such simple instruments as they are likely to be able to procure for themselves when thrown entirely on their own resources. Expensive labour saving implements should not be employed unless under very exceptional circumstances, and it is not easy to conceive of such existing.... If the Indians are too lazy to take off their existing crops the proper plan would appear to be to let them suffer the consequences to an extent to teach them a lesson they stand in need of. In any operations that may be undertaken next year the policy herein laid down must be strictly considered, and not departed from without permission.<sup>23</sup>

Though these instructions seem to have been intended only as a short term policy, there is little evidence that they were formally rescinded. Quite likely field officials made use of them when and as they felt it was in their interest to do so. Once regulations were instituted they tended to become sanctified.

By disallowing credit and trying to prevent the purchase of modern equipment, the department effectively debarred the Indians from mechanizing their farms, thus

discouraging commercial grain farming. Though changes were made in senior personnel in subsequent years, the stultifying procedures of the department did not show any signs of reform. Restrictions were in fact augmented in the first half of the present century, and the field actions of bureaucrats continued their drift towards greater authoritarianism and arbitrariness.

Belatedly, in the late 1920s, when commercial grain farming was almost extinct on the reserves, the Department of Indian Affairs did come to recognize the disabilities that Indians suffered from the non-availability of credit. To rectify this disability the department initiated a form of credit called the "Revolving Fund Loan": the loans "revolved" in the sense that as they were returned the money could be lent to others. But the project was a failure. The granting of loans was the privilege of the Indian Agent, and it was perhaps inevitable that the Indian Agent would use this facility, as he did every other facility such as welfare assistance, as a means to reduce the Indians to submission. The funds were probably given to those who were "tractable" (for Indian Affairs officials the greatest virtue an Indian could possess) rather than to those who were considered "agitators". By far the great majority of loans was never paid back. From the point of view of an Indian, why pay back a loan to a hated authority that was foolish enough to offer the money in the first



place? It was not until the late 1940s when R.J. Battle (later Director of Indian Affairs) reached senior ranks that there was some recognition of the difficulties under which the revolving fund loan program operated. In a meeting with colleagues he argued that the relationship between Indians and their Indian Agent was steeped in such distrust and hostility that the business aspects of the loan program were completely lost from view.<sup>24</sup>

When the Indians returned as victorious troops in 1918, the Canadian economy was enjoying a period of expansion, and the demand for labour was high. Wheat-growing was in its heyday. The war had reduced acreages in the importing countries of Europe. Russian and Danubian exports had been cut off owing to the breakdown of communications, and high freight rates discouraged expansion in the Argentine and Australia. Wheat prices had surged upwards, and labour was needed for breaking new ground, expanding operations, etc.<sup>25</sup>

Mechanization had tended to reduce somewhat the requirements of labour on the farms, but new and more promising opportunities for labour had opened up in the northern bush country. The most significant new development was that of logging.

Between 1917 and 1920 there had been almost a revolutionary rise within the newsprint industry as the mass circulation of daily newspapers in the United States

recorded a spectacular growth. The United States had exploited most of its forests to the full by 1900, and Canada found itself in an excellent position to supply the rapidly expanding United States market in newsprint, wood, pulp, and paper products. In 1900 in Canada newsprint production was negligible. But in 1913 it was 402,000 tons, and Canada was already the world's largest exporter. In 1919 this output was doubled, spurred by the high demand and the very high prices for newsprint, which were by then nine times greater than what they were in 1895. In 1923 the Canadian output tripled from the 1913 level, and peak production was reached in 1929 with almost three million tons.<sup>26</sup>

In the bush country opportunities for labour also developed through expansion of mining activity and the building of railways. Expansion in mining activity had been touched off by the high price for gold, silver and base metals (nickel, copper, zinc, lead) during the war years. British Columbia and the Canadian Shield had rich deposits of these minerals. Foreign capital poured in to develop Canada's extractive industries: capital investment rose from \$1232 million in 1901 to \$4906 in 1921.<sup>27</sup> The first major developments were in British Columbia, but after the turn of the century attention shifted to Ontario and Manitoba.<sup>28</sup> Rich silver deposits were found near Cobalt in 1903 and gold at Kirkland Lake in Ontario in 1911. In

Manitoba discoveries of gold were made at Rice Lake (off the Winnipeg River) in 1911 and Herb Lake (eighty miles northeast of The Pas) in 1914.<sup>29</sup> Extensive ore bodies of copper and zinc were found at Flin Flon in 1915. After 1918 the aeroplane was used for prospecting, and this extended the range of exploration greatly. In the 1920s the Geological Survey of Canada conducted extensive surveys in the Shield and drew detailed maps of mineral belts. Production started, or greatly expanded, at different sites during and soon after the war.<sup>30</sup>

Railbuilding in northern Manitoba commenced in 1910. The Hudson's Bay Railway to Churchill which provided an alternate outlet to Montreal for Western wheat and reduced the mileage between Liverpool and Saskatoon was completed between 1910 and 1929.<sup>31</sup>

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With the continuing demand for labour off the reserves after the Great War, farming on the reserves was almost totally abandoned.<sup>32</sup> Indian farms and homes began to take on a forlorn look. In 1922 a Presbyterian Church report about the reserves near the present day Riding Mountain National Park sadly noted:

...[on these reserves] no progress in farming or better housing conditions has been made in the last 15 years. The land is not properly cultivated and much of it is running wild with weeds, especially wild oats. On the Rolling River Reserve, for example, 20 years ago, according to the "Minnedosa Tribune" Indians from this Reserve marketed wheat in M'dosa which graded No. 1 Northern. This year no wheat sown at all. No cattle on this Reserve. At one time there was quite a herd. More cultivated land has gone back to sod this year than in any previous year. With very few exceptions there are no homes of a sanitary character on the Reserves. These facts should indicate to the Dept. of Indian Affairs what the Presbytery means by its resolution sent to the B. of H.M. We feel that all that is needed is kind advice given the Indians on the question of farming and moral firmness in seeing that the instructions are carried out. Financial help should be given in some cases to enable these poor ignorant people provide themselves with proper housing accommodation. We feel that while these conditions exist on the Reserves much of our Education and training in our I. Boarding school is futile. No real progress can be made until there is closer cooperation between the representatives of the Dept. of Indian Affairs and the Church and Schools.<sup>33</sup>

Mr. Hodges, the author of this report, thought that "kind advice" and "moral firmness" would lure the Indians back to a life of productive farming. But it was advice (though not necessarily kind) of Indian Affairs, and the firmness with which it was administered, which had managed to create the adverse economic climate on the reserves, whereby enterprises of a productive nature were not possible. Even if the Indians could acquire capital (which they could not), it would have been foolish for them to invest it on

some enterprise on their home reserves when the thicket of Indian Affairs regulation, and the ever present threat of arbitrary action on the part of their Indian Agent, could smother their efforts and bring economic ruin. When no enterprise could succeed on the reserves, what economic opportunities existed other than the meagre sustenance promised by subsistence farming?

To outside observers, such as Mr. Hodges, who likely failed to learn from the Indians themselves about their difficulties, it was perhaps easy to arrive at the widely-held conclusion that the Indians were to blame for their own "ignorance" and lack of achievement. They saw the fields growing up in weeds, the poor condition of the houses, the absence of cattle, and quite naturally they compared their own relative prosperity to that of the Indians' poverty. It was easy to blame the Indian for his poverty. The cause of his poverty could be found in his culture (which could not adjust to civilized ways), or in his peculiar mentality, or lack of spirituality, or his seeming inability to persevere in productive endeavours.<sup>34</sup> While such explanations were perhaps not valueless, they usually failed to note the role of Indian Affairs and their regulations in suppressing economic opportunities on the reserves.

### Impediments to Upward Mobility

A significant concomitant of the barbed opportunity that Indians found in the labouring occupations was that upward mobility was almost impossible. Most settlers had the option of earning money through labour, and then eventually moving to more profitable or higher status occupations. Indians, however, found that, by and large, this path was closed to them. Perhaps the most significant factors which served to hamper upward mobility for Indians were (a) exclusion from many government services; (b) lack of credit facilities; and (c) stigmatized social status.

(a) Indians were not eligible, and could not take advantage of many government services, such as training programmes and incentives, which the provincial and federal governments periodically offered to the general public. Some of these programmes, namely, upgrading of school education, vocational training, placement on jobs, training through apprenticeship, commenced in the 1920s and 1930s,<sup>35</sup> and assisted some of the non-Indian labourers and farmers to acquire marketable skills for employment in industry and construction. Indians were not eligible for these programmes because of their unique legal status, and the almost exclusive administrative control the Department of Indian Affairs had over them. Indian Affairs, in effect, had a "charter" for such administration, and other government

departments generally refrained from "trespassing" upon the jurisdiction of Indian Affairs, and thereby extending their services to Indians.

Indeed jurisdictional responsibility was carried to extremes. Where various assistance programs were concerned, Indians were outside the pale. For example, prior to the Second World War they were ineligible for Old Age Assistance, Blind Pensions, or assistance for different physical handicaps.<sup>36</sup> As farmers, they were ineligible for various provincial crop insurance plans, land rehabilitation programs, soil surveys, farm loans, or grants-in-aid for dairying or livestock management, or for weed control, soil conservation, the organization of 4-H clubs, etc.<sup>37</sup> When the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1935, the Federal Department of Agriculture refused to consider Indians as eligible for benefits under the Act (for example, debt adjustments, community irrigation projects, special assistance to marginal farmers, etc.).<sup>38</sup> It seems that as a general rule Indians were excluded from provincial programs because they were a "federal responsibility". And they were excluded from federal programs because they were an "Indian Affairs responsibility". Unfortunately for Indians, Indian Affairs did not have the financial resources or the expertise to devise comparable programs.

In the 1920s and 1930s most Canadian Indians lived in rural slums. As such, they were out of sight, and evidently, out of mind to the great majority of Canadians. As

with other victims of rural poverty, their existence, the problems, and the struggles were quite unnoticed. It was not until the Second World War when Indians began to move into cities in great numbers, and created unsightly "sores" near downtown sections, that they began to intrude into the public consciousness. An "Indian problem" emerged, and government departments at different levels (federal, provincial and municipal) began to devise means through cost-sharing programs to extend many normal government services to them, which had as yet been denied. The Department of Indian Affairs, as well, espoused this cause, and tried to break jurisdictional barriers that had hardened over the years. The department, persevered, for example, to reverse an obdurate stand taken by the federal Department of Agriculture to exclude Indians from the benefits of the ARDA (Area Rural Development Act) program in the 1960s.<sup>39</sup> Also it took steps soon after to ensure that Indian reserves would not be excluded from DREE (Department of Regional Economic Expansion).<sup>40</sup>

Prior to the Second World War, however, Indians were generally excluded from government programs that were designed to raise skills for employment.

(b) There has been discussion earlier of the difficulties Indians faced in acquiring credit. The



lack of access to credit facilities obstructed Indian labourers from following a path which many non-Indian labourers and marginal farmers employed in striving for upward mobility. This was the establishment of small businesses.

Many of the settlers who had saved some money through wage employment entered business as small merchants. They sold groceries, dry goods, tools, lumber, hardware, and various implements in the villages that blossomed as settlement grew. Some set up saw-mills or other small-scale manufacturing units making harnesses, leather goods, furniture, and other articles in use by farmers and townspeople.<sup>41</sup> Others established businesses in the mechanical trades. They set up shops and became self-employed as electricians, photographers, radio mechanics, plumbers, shoemakers, and repairmen of various kinds.<sup>42</sup> These enterprises required capital outlays, and undoubtedly the availability of credit was an essential ingredient for their growth. Some of these enterprises grew into major commercial operations in later years.

Indians failed to achieve this transition from labourer to businessman. But it is unlikely that this failure derived from an innate distaste for commerce

among Indians. Indians lacked the opportunities for obtaining credit, and they were rarely permitted to set up businesses in the towns and villages. On the reserves the activities of Indian Affairs officials generally proved fatal to Indians' entrepreneurial plans.

(c) Since early contact there had been a tendency among settlers to view Indians as savages. The idea of 'savage' did not necessarily hold a pejorative quality. Indians were often admired for their bushcraft, hunting skills, visual acuity, etc.<sup>43</sup> The idea of 'noble savage' could also perhaps be interpreted as laudatory of the Indian body politic.

Nonetheless, the idea that savages were inferior to civilized peoples in various ways, or were deficient in the capacity to live a civilized life, was also commonly held. Haycock notes that in the first thirty years of this century the widespread doctrine of Social Darwinism, as applied to North American Indians, produced the idea that the Indian was inevitably doomed to extinction in the face of European expansion.<sup>44</sup> Other views of the Indian during this period portrayed him as ignorant and slothful; and as

simple-minded, thus easily corrupted by unscrupulous whites.<sup>45</sup>

These negative views of Indians seem to have played some part in restricting upward mobility in the work place. It is not possible to state at this point to what extent these views did actually subvert the work careers of Indians during the 1920s, because data on this topic is insufficient. The nature of prejudice which operated during this era in the bush camps where Indians were employed, or in jobs such as those in construction (road building and other public works projects), and in the small manufacturing units in the rural areas, is not adequately known. It seems justifiable to suggest that prejudice did act in various ways to discourage advancement of Indians from poorly paid and relatively undesirable forms of employment. The following comments of men and women from the Keeseekoowenin Reserve are illustrative in this regard.

A man in his late seventies said as follows:

After I left the army [after the First World War] I began to work in bush camps in Saskatchewan and B.C.....sometimes the gang boss was a good guy but often we would run into some real bad characters. One guy I remember near Dawson Creek kept pestering me and my chum, called us dirty names...he just liked to treat us bad...he kept snapping at us all the time...we called him a Crazy Wolverine.... At another time I was working near Flin Flon clearing the bush and there was a bunch of guys there. It was impossible to work there, they were always picking a fight with us.... The only time I worked in peace at a bush camp was near Dryden [Ontario]. The guys there were good to us and one of them even came to visit me here with his wife later on.

Another individual recounted his experience after being promoted to a supervisory position:

I worked in a pulp mill near Fort Frances [Ontario] for fourteen years [1924 to 1938], and I was at the same level when I started as when I quit. Once, about 1935 or so, they put me in the foreman's job. That paid \$3.85 a day, good wages in those days. But I hadn't been foreman for two months when I quit. Nobody would take me seriously. I had working under me some fellows from Selkirk and that side [Manitoba] and they would just not do what they were told. They kept badgering me. I think they resented having to take orders from an Indian. The manager at the plant even put me on a different shift but it was the same story. They didn't like Indians to get ahead in those days.

A remarkably similar experience was related to Lithman at Fort Alexander:

I was appointed foreman, but Jesus Christ, I should never have taken it. All the White guys started to raise all sorts of troubles, and there was no way I could keep things going right. I could never get them to do what I wanted, and they were always back-biting and trying to make a fool out of me. I couldn't take that kind of shit, so I resigned as a foreman.<sup>46</sup>

Another manner in which stigma operated to restrict upward mobility was through difficulties placed in the way of Indians in obtaining housing in the small towns and villages. Indians found that if they were offered employment in these settlements, they were almost never permitted to take up residence in them. From informant testimony,

this prejudice was most pronounced in towns located close to Indian reserves. Indians employed in these settlements took up residence on the outer fringes of these settlements. They put up temporary (and usually unsightly) shacks on road allowances or sections of Crown lands. They were vulnerable to ejection from these sites, and sometimes townspeople took action to do so, with varying degrees of success. Indians say that usually when their fringe settlements increased in size, as other Indians and Metis came to take advantage of employment opportunities, hostility of townspeople toward them seemed to increase as well.

The difficulties in obtaining housing in a village in Saskatchewan was related by a Keeseekoowenin woman who was a teenager in the late 1920s:

My parents left the reserve when I was a little girl and worked on farms near Russell and Yorkton. Then my dad got a good job in [a village, which she named in the neighbourhood of Yorkton]. It was in a hardware store, and my dad was responsible for all the inventory in the warehouse. The boss used to have a farm near Esterhazy before he bought the store. My dad knew him from the farm because he had worked there with mu uncle for many years....At first we lived in a little shack outside [the village] and my parents saved enough money to buy a house in town. My dad gave a deposit for the house, but when other people in town heard about it they began to tell the owner that there was no way they were going to allow us to move in there. Someone told my mum that they were afraid if we moved into town other Indians would move in too. So we had to stay in our shack outside the town. My mother took it very bad, she used to cry a lot about it. But my dad said we had to put

up with this kind of behaviour, because he wanted to keep his job at the store. The owner of the house we were going to move into gave back the deposit my dad had given him. Many years later when I was working in Yorkton I heard from a lady I knew that the clerk told her "We have no Indian problem here because we know how to deal with them."

\* \* \* \* \*

Though labouring jobs had constituted an opportunity for subsistence and marginal farmers in years of boom and rapid economic growth, in the long run they presaged a life of poverty. Lacking the usual opportunities for upward mobility, Indians tended to be trapped into them. These labouring jobs were also transient and uncertain. They might offer a good wage during one season, but shrivel or evaporate the next. In the bush country, particularly, labouring jobs usually lasted for a few months, or even a few weeks. The labourer was forced, in these circumstances, to be continually on the move, seeking one transient job after another. Many Indians did not look upon these transient jobs in the northern bush country as an attractive proposition. But they had few choices available. The dilemma was expressed as follows by a man at the Keeseekoowenin Reserve:

My Dad worked in the bush only because he had to. There was no work around here except at that saw-mill at Riding Mountain.... These jobs in the bush were hard work...it was slave labour from what my Dad used to tell me. Sometimes my Mum went with him but usually she stayed here....My Dad started working in bush camps after he ran away from Elkhorn [Indian Residential School] around 1925....My Mum kept a few cows here....

Asked why his father did not return to the reserve and farm, the informant said:

Why didn't he farm here instead? How could he support us? By 1935 there were four of us kids. You had to have a pretty large spread to be able to support a family.... There was only one large farmer here on the reserve in those years....and he was always running into hassles with the Indian Agent... These Indian Agents wanted to run everything and you couldn't get out of their sight.... My Dad had been to jail three times when he stayed on the reserve, and he didn't want any more of it.

By and large, Indians had two major alternatives open to them to gain a livelihood. They could remain in labouring jobs--whenever and wherever these were available-- or they could try their hand at subsistence farming. They could also, where this was possible, attempt to take up temporary jobs while farming on the reserves, or alternate between labouring jobs and subsistence farming.

None of these alternatives were rewarding economically. On the reserve one could keep a few cows, eke a meagre subsistence by selling milk and grain, take up an

occasional jobs outside the reserve, seek welfare assistance from the Indian Agent. Off the reserve one had access to little else but a labouring job, often in a bush camp at great distance from the home reserve, a job which was usually transient, and offered poor pay for very hard work.

The restriction of opportunities-- on the reserves to subsistence farming and welfare assistance--and off the reserves to transient poorly-paid wage labour--created a poverty syndrome which until the present day has continued to plague Indians on Keeseekoowenin, and many other Western reserves. The stage was set for the emergence of the distinguishing traits of Indian poverty as we know it today-- high unemployment, lack of technical skills, dependence upon transient, poorly-paid wage labour. It is noteworthy that this stage was set, not in the nineteenth century when Indians were displaced from their lands by the growth of settlement, but in the 1920s, soon after the First War, at a time when, ironically, the nation was enjoying considerable prosperity.

Many European immigrants, particularly those from Central and Eastern Europe, who made the long, arduous and expensive journey from their homelands to Western Canada, also faced numerous problems experienced by the Indians in the early twentieth century. They lacked capital resources and education, suffered stigma and the oppressive discriminatory practises of employers and various officials.<sup>47</sup> They also



formed a great pool of unskilled labour, and experienced extreme impoverishment during the periodic economic depressions.

Nonetheless, these immigrants possessed certain crucial assets which the Indians lacked. They were not imprisoned within a special legal status. And because of their vastly greater numbers they were able to take political action to further their interests. As events proved during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, unrest among the immigrant groups could be mobilized into a powerful political force.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the immigrant groups often possessed a capable and energetic leadership. Among the Ukrainians, for example, men such as M. Pohorecky, M. Shatulski, and Father Semczuk worked tirelessly to ameliorate social disabilities, and organize the community politically.<sup>49</sup> Indians, on the other hand, had been largely deprived of talented leadership. They had become members of almost acephalous bodies, increasingly dependent upon the policies and actions of the Department of Indian Affairs.

In recent times the situation of native peoples has improved considerably. They have been progressively granted many privileges of citizenship denied to them for long. In 1960 they obtained the right to vote, and during the 1970s to administer the affairs of their own bands. The policies of the Department of Indian Affairs, as well, have undergone a major reorganization since the Second World War. Professionalism and expertise, to an increasingly greater extent, now inform the aims and the actions of the Department of Indian Affairs.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, attempt has been made to look at Indian people as economic agents within a larger society, taking advantage of, and limited by, their geographical, political, and social position. The economic actions of Indians have been traced over a period of a century and a quarter in the Manitoba - Saskatchewan Parklands in Western Canada.

The tracing of this economic history of Indians has taken us over a series of opportunities which the Indians took advantage of, as well as, in later years in particular, a series of limitations to these opportunities. The limitations to opportunities, it has been argued, were instrumental to a large extent in producing Canadian Indian poverty within the eastern Parklands in Canada. The situation of Indians changed from one in which they had access to a variety of opportunities to one of considerable restriction of opportunity. The resultant poverty transformed Indian societies from relatively independent groups to a stigmatized sector within Canadian society.

It is felt that the present study differs from many ethnohistories in its theoretical approach; it centres upon opportunities offered to the native people, and their reactions,

or attempted reactions to these opportunities. It also professes to bring to bear upon the problem ethnohistorical material which has generally not been adduced hitherto: some of this material concerns the crucial role played by the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs at the end of the nineteenth century in fostering, inadvertently no doubt, the development of Indian poverty.

Briefly, the opportunities and limitations to opportunities which Indians in the eastern Parklands faced and responded to, which form the substance of this study, are outlined as follows:

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the equestrian culture and economy of the Plains afforded to the Parkland Indians a unique complex of opportunities. These comprised the attainment of prestige and glory through warfare, and wealth through trade and horse-stealing. The Assiniboine and Cree residents of the Manitoba - Saskatchewan Parklands responded to these opportunities by migrating en masse to the plains. This migration took place primarily in the late eighteenth century but continued to occur in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Between 1810 and 1850 the Parkland Ojibwa followed suit. It is estimated that 6,500 individuals, about 6,000 Assiniboine and Cree and 500 Ojibwa, departed from the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Parklands for the

Plains during the period 1800-1857.

In contrast to the Assiniboine and Parkland Cree, many of the Parkland Ojibwa opted to remain in the Parklands. They did not take advantage of opportunities on the Plains which had attracted some of their congeners and their Assiniboine and Cree neighbours. This failure to take advantage of opportunities on the Plains may indicate a preference for Parkland subsistence activities. However it is also true that, commencing in 1812, a new and promising set of opportunities arose within the Parklands; and these appear to have offered considerable incentive to the Ojibwa for remaining within the region rather than moving onto the Plains.

The novel opportunities were of a "non-traditional" nature, arising largely as a direct consequence of the growth of the Red River Settlement. Prominent among them were opportunities for enterprise and employment in transportation, especially in freighting by means of the Red River cart; in the pemmican trade; and in acquiring a measure of new-found prestige through conversion to Christianity.

The pemmican trade declined in the 1860s on account of reduction of the buffalo herds, which eventually disappeared from the Canadian Plains in the early 1880s. The Red River cart was displaced by the railway soon after its arrival in Manitoba in the late 1870s. Forms of livelihood which had

proved very profitable to the Parkland Indians during the second quarter of the nineteenth century contracted rapidly within a few years of each other in the 1870s. The inrush of new settlement into Manitoba after the accord ending the Riel Rebellion in 1870 destroyed the viability of hunting and trapping in many sections of the southern Parklands. The native peoples in the area, both Ojibwa and Dakota, faced as a result starvation and great distress during the mid 1870s.

Treaties had been signed by the Canadian Government with the Ojibwa commencing in 1871, and it was promised that lands would be set apart for them, but the surveying was delayed till the mid and late 1870s. This further aggravated the uncertainty which the Indians had to face following the decline of the buffalo herds.

When the reserves eventually were surveyed for the Ojibwa and Dakota in the Parklands during the 1870s, the Indians appeared to have had few options available to them. They could work as itinerant labourers on the farms of the settlers or with the Hudson's Bay Company, or they could attempt to pursue a new way of livelihood through agriculture. Increasingly, in the late 1870s and the 1880s many members of Indian bands decided to cultivate, and some of them became accomplished farmers within a remarkably short interval of time. It is evident that farming was

viewed by many Indians as an opportunity at this time, though it is also clear that few viable alternatives were open to them.

In the mid 1870s, agriculture had become fairly widespread in most Parkland reserve communities. Mixed farming was normally practised. The farmers kept cattle, and sometimes also sheep, goats, pigs, poultry and geese. They cultivated wheat, barley, oats, and fodder crops, as well as potatoes and numerous vegetables. North of the 100 day frost free zone there was a limitation to the growing of wheat, and mixed farming was essential. Here dairy and beef cattle constituted the economic mainstay for the farmers. Milk was sold to cheese factories, and some of these factories relied for their supply almost entirely on Indian farmers. Potatoes were the main cultivated crop.

In the superior grain-growing region within the more southerly sections of the Parklands new opportunities were discerned by Indians in the commercial cultivation of wheat. Consequently a steady shift toward this type of farming became evident in the late 1880s. The new commercial grain farmers proceeded to dispose of their cattle and to decrease acreage under potatoes, in order to concentrate their energies in the cultivation of wheat as a cash crop. By 1890, they expanded the acreage they had under wheat, some left summer fallowing, and made purposeful attempts to acquire the special technical skills of dry-land agriculture. Some of them achieved considerable success in this, as is evidenced

by a number of statements and observations made by the Indian Agents of Indian Affairs in reports in the early 1880's. These years were the hey-day of Indian agriculture in the eastern Prairies and Parklands, and the agriculture in agriculture at this time was never again realized until the contemporary period.

The commercial grain farmers began to readily mechanize their farms almost as soon as they had embarked on their new enterprises. Using their own resources, they purchased threshers, self-binders, and seeders. They attempted to improve their farm operations by other means as well. For traction they replaced slow-moving oxen with sturdy breeds of horses. Many of these farmers made more extensive use of mechanization than commercial farmers among the settlers.

Though almost all the Indian households were engaged in farming in the southern wheat-growing region, in more northerly sections of the Parklands cultivated crops were less common, and a greater proportion of the Indian population was employed in non-farm occupations. Significant non-farm occupations were trapping for fur; selling water buffalo to settlers; contracting to freight goods over great distances; collecting senega root (*Polygala senega*); tanning hides; and handicrafts.

These non-farm occupations were by no means unprofitable. The hunters at Fort Tully, for example, seemed to have lived in greater material comfort than the commercial grain farmers of the Oak River Reserve. They

were reported to be the most "advanced" in the Birtle Indian Agency in western Manitoba in terms of income earned, and also in the conditions of their homes and general affluence.

A pernicious control over the affairs of Indians, and the systematic attempt by the Department of Indian Affairs to impose a repressive administrative regime over the Indians of the Plains and Prairie regions was responsible, at least in some measure, for the downfall of commercial farming. With the appointment of Edgar Dewdney as Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1879, the Department began to actively exercise control over the movements, livelihood, and leadership of the Western Indians. It was a control which was to have serious and far-reaching effects on Indian livelihood. On the reserves nothing escaped, or could escape for long, the scrutiny of the Indian Affairs officials. The Department distrusted the Indians, and the Government, particularly after 1879, began to devise regulations, by means of legislation and administrative directives, designed to extend its control over the Indians in their political, economic, social, and cultural lives. The regulations were virtually all in the nature of disallowances. Traditional ceremonies, and in some areas freedom of travel between reserves, were prohibited. In addition, the Indians were not permitted to vote in Provincial or Federal elections, or to exert any control over the management of resources on their lands. A particularly harmful regulation had the effect of prohibiting them from



making any use of commercial and financial institutions. By means of these regulations, Indians were effectively isolated from political life in Canada as well as in the Provinces, and they were rigorously hindered by severe handicaps in entrepreneurial ventures.

The Department of Indian Affairs had a long tradition of maladministration and jobbery dating back to the eighteenth century. As constituted in the West under Elgar Dewdney, the Department seems to have done well in carrying on this established tradition. There are indications that funds were misappropriated almost without scruple. Graft and dealings with favoured contractors, it would seem likely, benefitted Dewdney personally and many of his underlings. Enormous amounts were charged to Government accounts as travelling expenses, and also for feeding and clothing the Indians and for supplying them with agricultural implements. But the state of corruption was great and for its sake supposedly purchased actually filtered down to the Indians.<sup>1</sup> Because the Department held absolute sway over every aspect of Indian Affairs, there was no real authority to check its activities.

The Department was also free to deal with the Indians as it saw fit, without check to its authority. A dominant characteristic, that became increasingly evident in its dealings with the Indians, was a harsh arbitrariness.

The result was a severe constraint on the Indians' freedom of actions. It was necessary for the Indian to obtain the Department's, or his Indian Agent's, approval before embarking on any major enterprise. Moreover, he had to remain continually in his Agent's good books. He had to habituate himself to take the role of yeoman; he had to be scrupulously 'tractable'. And even then he was subject to the whims of the Indian Agent. Agents were often ruthless in achieving their priorities, and in setting an example of their dominant position, regardless of the deleterious effects these might have on the Indians or their business enterprises.

In the light of these circumstances should it be any wonder that Indians, having felt the venom of an Indian Agent's disapproval a few times, preferred to refrain from investing too much of their effort or money in productive enterprises on the reserves? How could one predict at what moment some Indian Agent would find fault with their way of proceeding with an endeavour, thus forcing them to dismantle whatever progress they had made and to abandon the operation? Why, for instance, should an Indian Agent find fault with such a productive venture as commercial grain farming? The Department, in fact, did not want it. The Department did not wish the Indians to buy needed agricultural implements on credit, nor to buy labour -

saving articles, as these would presumably make them lazy.

When one adds the arbitrary, and to the Indians, unpredictable actions of the all-powerful administrators to the well-known risks and uncertainties that beset dry-land farmers of every ethnicity, it made eminently more sense for an Indian to plead poverty and 'tractably' to request welfare assistance. Indians usually found that if they presented themselves with the proper combination of submission and indigence they could be quite successful in obtaining money from the Department of Indian Affairs.

The early years of the twentieth century brought with them a period of great economic expansion in Western Canada. The Laurier Government, which had come to power in 1896, vigorously pursued a policy designed to bring about settlement in the West. Large numbers of immigrants were attracted to the region. Farm labour came into high demand, and there was need for construction labour to build the infrastructure for an expanding farm economy.

Excluded from pursuing commercial farming occupations on account of Indian Affairs policies, and finding farm labour more profitable than subsistence farming, Indians began to drift into various labouring jobs, particularly on the new commercial farms outside their reserves. A process was initiated that was to continue through the following decades till the farms on the reserves were almost completely abandoned. Many subsistence farmers among the settlers also

abandoned their farms during this same period. However, the latter had some measure of opportunity for upward mobility, whereas the Indians did not. The social order conspired with Indian Affairs to exclude them from opportunities that were eventually utilized by immigrant groups who commenced their careers in Canada at the bottom end of the social and economic ladder.

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The major theme of this study has been to analyze opportunities available to Indians within a particular region, and to denote the changes that took place in their economic and social life as they responded to these opportunities. It is manifest that Indians showed a remarkable adaptability over the years. Some of the changes that occurred in economic and social patterns were quite dramatic. The adoption of Plains Indian culture, the conversion to Christianity in the 1850s, and the taking up of an agricultural way of life in the 1860s, constitute perhaps the more outstanding examples of the radical changes that occurred in Indian culture during a century and a quarter. These changes involved transformations of life-ways as great as, and possibly more drastic, than those

which were undergone by pioneer settlers, and should form a welcome complement to pioneer history. They also offer comparative material for the study of sudden transformations in cultural life.

The concept of opportunity has been found useful as a heuristic device to investigate these changes. This viewpoint tends to sensitize us to a broad range of questions concerning why certain changes occurred, and why some of these were adopted readily. To take one example, the concept has facilitated explanation of the complex reasons behind the extensive migrations of Prichard and Parkland peoples into the Great Plains, a noteworthy event in human history.

A use of the concept of opportunity is also of value in clarifying the relationships between the Indians and the Red River Settlement, which are as yet poorly understood. In what manner were these relationships beneficial to both parties? What was the role of the Indians in the economic and social development of the Settlement? The present study does not go to great lengths in unravelling the complexities of this relationship, but the notion of opportunity is offered as a means toward making further headway in this direction. Little work has been done on this aspect of the Settlement's history. Historians, such as Pittelott (1942), Horton (1957), and Jackson (1943), in their accounts of the Red River Settlement virtually ignore the Indians,

while ethnohistorians, such as Ray (1974), in their accounts of the Indians have little to say about the Red River Settlement.

It is also probable that an understanding of relations between the Red River Settlement and the Indians of the region would help greatly in explaining the "provision trade", which was as significant in the Prairies as the fur trade was in the northern forests.

Finally, the concept of opportunity provides us with some insight into the rise and the decline of Indian farming in the first few decades of the "Government period" in Indian history. What contributed to the rise of agriculture, and how did the legal status of Indians and relations with Indian Affairs officials limit opportunity and restrict entrepreneurship on the reserves? How did Indians react in response to perceived limitations in opportunity? Within the context of these limitations, what options were open to Indians?

There is a conspicuous paucity of scholarly work on the economic and social history of Plains and Parkland Indians. This lack is a cause for disappointment, not only because a great proportion of the nation's Indians live within this region, but also because the historical material is rich and suggestive of theoretical import.

Ethnohistorians have barely scratched the surface here, as most of the recent work has been done by historians, but the conceptual framework that seems to dominate the work of historians is so outworn and outmoded that it surely needs rethinking and challenge.

Perhaps the most influential piece of work in this area is George Stanley's "Birth of Western Canada", first published in 1936. Stanley surveys historical developments in the West, primarily with reference to the two Metis Rebellions of 1869-70, and 1885. The Indians in the region are included in the discussion essentially in the same category as most of the Metis. Both are depicted as non-agricultural and uncivilized natives of the country, in contrast to immigrant settlers, who were civilized, agricultural people. The central conceptualization comprises the well-known "frontier thesis". This locates cause for the Rebellions in a "sociological problem" generated by the contact of the Indian and Metis with civilization ("the clash between primitive and civilized peoples").<sup>2</sup> Essentially, the "sociological problem" and the cause for conflict is held to lie in the inability of the native peoples to cope with changing circumstances (the "demands of civilization").<sup>3</sup> Because of this inability to cope successfully, the natives faced "disaster and decline".<sup>4</sup> This unwelcome prospect gave rise to dissatisfaction and prompted them

to rise in revolt.

The question arises: Why were the Indians and less civilized half-breeds unable to cope with modern civilization? Stanley's apparent answer is that their character was inadequate to meet the demands of the new circumstances.

By character and upbringing the half-breeds, no less than the Indians, were unfitted to compete with the whites in the competitive individualism of white civilization, or to share with them the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.<sup>5</sup>

Because of this deficiency in character, the efforts of the Department of Indian Affairs to raise the living standards of the Indians were doomed to failure. Indians tried to adopt agricultural ways but they could not sustain these efforts, and eventually fell behind. Stanley writes:

At the outset many, by a display of energy, gave every appearance that ere long they might free themselves from dependence upon public assistance. The official reports were full of confident prophecies of Indian self sufficiency. But the very character of the Indians militated against a rapid advance. An Indian once declared to Sir John A. Macdonald, "We are the wild animals; you cannot make an ox of a deer". The sanguine expectations and optimistic reports of Sir John A. Macdonald and Edgar Dowdney were not based upon an understanding of Indian character, or a thorough appreciation of the distance which the primitive Indian had to travel to reach the white man's scale of proficiency. The character moulded by centuries could not be transformed in a few years. Restlessness



was inherent in the Indian disposition. His dislike of uncongenial labour was proverbial.'

Stanley's views suffer from an extreme ethnocentrism, yet the "frontier thesis" in essence can be found in most contemporary histories of the Canadian West. Jackson, for instance, writes as follows in his history of Manitoba, published in 1970:

In 1834, the old order of the West made a last convulsive effort to avoid extinction. Many of the Metis of Assiniboia had moved westward when their former hunting grounds became the Province of Manitoba.... Here, they attempted to carry on the buffalo-hunting life which they had once enjoyed at Red River. To die their cousins, the Plains Indians, who were settled on reserves in the same general area. But time had run out for their way of life - just as it had for the buffalo. Both the Indians and Metis, unable to become farmers, began to starve.... The result was the Northwest Rebellion of 1885.'

The "frontier thesis" assumes that prior to 1870 Indians in the Plains and Prairies lived relatively untouched by civilization. The fur trade had imposed a few changes in their lives, but these were minor and the Indians could cope with them. After 1870, however, with the rise in settlement and of civilization, the "old order" passed, and the Indian way of life collapsed. The primitive Indians could not make a successful transition.

Actually, documentary evidence offers little support for the central elements of this thesis. Prior to 1870, the Parkland Indians (and to some extent the Plains Indians

as well) lived in close contact with the Red River Settlement. They had established various trading links with it. Also, they were employed as freighters and boatmen. Some of them commenced farming at the behest of the Anglican and Roman Catholic missions. These Indians could hardly be considered as living untouched by civilization. Subsequently, in the post-1870 period, some Indians avidly adopted agriculture, and within the better grain-producing areas many of these agriculturalists expanded their operations into commercial undertakings. Those that did not adopt agriculture pursued various non-farm occupations, such as contracting for the sale of hay and wood to settlers, and could obtain adequate incomes by doing so.

In the 1890s, a generation after the "new order" was established, Indians were generally quite self-sufficient, and some had achieved a considerable measure of success in their various endeavours. There was no evidence of "disaster and decline" at this time. Decline in farming and other forms of enterprise did occur in later years. But is it sensible to locate the causes for this in the "primitive Indian character"? Why should the special legal status of Indians, and the actions and policies of the Department of Indian Affairs be ignored? Stanley and other historians naively assume that the Indian Affairs administration during the Dewdney years and in those following

was beneficent, but ineffective, because it could not cope with the special deficiencies of the Indian character.

It is apparent that the "Frontier thesis" leads its sustenance from the same murky waters out of which have emerged those theories of Indian poverty which use the notion of disorganisation as an explanation. James, for instance, cites lack of psychological equipment to cope adequately with the modern world, stresses and strains, status anxiety, and other such features.<sup>4</sup> But stresses and strains affect us all in the modern world. Why should they produce economic poverty among Indians to a greater degree than among other sectors of the population? What constitutes psychological inadequacy and vulnerability in failing to cope with modern conditions? Jones finds reasons for this to lie in the absence of traditional Indian culture and its replacement by a "culture of poverty", comprising institutions which perpetuate poverty and possess characteristics of disorganisation, such as dependency, alcoholism etc.<sup>5</sup> Essentially this is the same conceptual framework as Stanley's. Deficiencies and inadequacies - in Indian character, personality, culture - are identified as factors primarily responsible for difficulties in coping and adjustment - and thereby for disaster, decline, or disorganisation in various forms.

If an essential ingredient of poverty consists in jobs which are poorly-paid and lowly in status, the origins of poverty among the Western Indians can be traced quite specifically to the period 1890 to 1920 when (a) entrepreneurial enterprise was discouraged and stifled by means of a number of specific disabilities in the Indian Act (in particular the disallowance of credit facilities to Indians), and the policies and actions of Indian Affairs officials; and (b) Indians were effectively excluded from better-paying and more valued employment. Prior to 1890 Indians had not known economic poverty, except during short periods of crisis. As farmers in the 1890s they were successful. Non-farm occupations likewise were profitable. In earlier years as well, the Ojibwa had been apparently successful as freighters and traders, and in their horse-stealing endeavours in the Plains. After a critical decade in the 1870s, through sheer determination and dint of hard work, they were able to uplift themselves into productive farming and non-farming occupations. On the whole, they showed adaptability and assiduity in achieving their goals.

The heuristic value of the culture of poverty approach to explain Indian poverty has been challenged by a number of authors. Noteworthy are Jorgenson (1971), Davis (1968, 1970), Elias (1975), who use Frank's (1967) concept of "metropolis and hinterland" as an explanatory tool. They cite the exploitative relationship obtaining between the actions of power, finances, and political influence (metropolis) and

resources and labour of Indians (satellites) as the primary factor for the perpetuation of poverty among Indians. The metropolis grows in wealth and power at the expense of the satellite through bureaucratic management of Indian lands and resources and expropriation of economic surplus.

The metropolis-satellite notion is suggestive and useful. However, if pushed too far it loses its value. Can the relationship between the Department of Indian Affairs and the Indians be readily explained by it? Are Indian satellites theoretically congruent with non-Indian satellites? If distinction needs to be made in this regard, which seems desirable, how can this be done within the metropolis-satellite framework? It appears that the notion suffers measurably from its inability to explain the special role of the Department of Indian Affairs in the development of Indian poverty. By equating the Department with other centres of power, its unique significance is beclouded.

The Department's administration, policy formulation, and its role in influencing and hampering change in Indian communities have been analysed by Hawthorn 1966-67, Koolage 1972, Christie 1976, Weaver 1981, Lithman 1978, among others.<sup>10</sup> Stymeist (1975) has, in a provocative work, evaluated the bureaucratic intent of a broad range of "helping agencies", which include Indian Affairs. These

agencies "target" Indians as clients. The government monies that are expended serve, through creation of jobs and special authority, to benefit the agencies themselves to a considerable degree. In this manner "helping agencies" develop a vested interest in Indian poverty. Stymeist found that in a northwestern Ontario town many people benefitted from government expenditures allocated for services to Indians, but these townspeople excluded Indians from obtaining jobs and housing in town. Thus they suppressed Indians while retaining control over government aid to them.

This study has attempted to examine the issues regarding Indian poverty using an historical perspective. Evidence indicates that the entry of Indians into conditions of poverty, particularly as indicated by their occupation of low-paying transient employment, occurred in the early years of this century. The factors seemingly responsible for this development have been the stifling of Indian economic enterprise on reserves through the actions and policies of the Department of Indian Affairs, and through a subsequent process of exclusion of Indians from upward mobility.

Though this study utilizes an historical perspective, it does not constitute an historical study as such. It aims, rather, at offering a contribution to social

anthropology. It seeks to trace some of the events involved in a process whereby certain human populations and their descendants have been transformed from one kind of social and economic entity into another. In this case, the transformation was from independent regional bands and chieftainships, which exercised a considerable degree of choice in pursuing certain forms of livelihood they found profitable, into sectors of a minority group which was restricted into performing forms of work which were poorly-paid and offered little opportunity for social and economic advancement.

A number of studies, utilizing a variety of perspectives, have investigated this process as it relates to native peoples in North America. The culture of poverty approach, a modern analogue of the older 'frontier' theory, is one such perspective. The metropolis-satellite approach is another. Concepts of ethnicity and minority group (Stymiest 1975, Adams 1975, Slobodin 1966, Guillemin 1975, Thompson and Peterson 1975, Collins 1975) have also been used with some success in explaining the same body of social phenomena.<sup>11</sup>

This study has attempted to offer a new perspective to this issue. It has focussed upon Indian enterprise, and has seen Indians as active agents who sought out and utilized new forms of livelihood that became available as a result of changing circumstances and

and emergent opportunities. Historical data have been adduced to illustrate these changes.

The decline in economic viability of the native peoples is explained by elucidating the steady augmentation of constraints placed upon them. On the reserves, within their home communities, these constraints were the result of a government policy that developed especially after 1879. Off the reserves, outside their home communities, these constraints were the result of social exclusion, stigma, and a lack of access to usual political channels. Though the Indians sought actively to remove the constraints which arose through government policy, they were not immediately able to improve their position in this regard. Indeed they have failed till quite recently to reverse some of the baneful controls imposed upon them, and to press by political and other means for the mitigation of some of the discriminatory practises manifest in the work-place.

The circumstances that generated Indian poverty in the West, namely, the constraints imposed by government policy and by economic and social impediments to upward mobility, are suggestive of the factors which have created poverty among other native groups in the New World, and indeed, among peasant societies in other parts of the world. Constraints have been imposed upon these societies by colonial administrations during the



past hundred or two hundred years, and in more recent times, by monetary policy, plantation economies, class interests, corporate institutions, and various impediments to industrialization.<sup>12</sup> In a broad sense constraints on opportunities have restricted economic growth in local societies.

It is not the purpose of this study to assess the relative significance of the many different varieties of constraints operative in societies living in poverty across the world. Rather a detailed examination has been made of one example of constraint, namely, government policy, which through its deep and far-reaching effects reversed a manifest trend toward self-sufficiency and economic prosperity among native peoples living in agricultural areas in Western Canada during the late nineteenth century.

ABBREVIATIONS IN NOTES

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Arch. Pap.                     | Archibald Papers in Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg                                 |
| DHC                            | Debates in the House of Commons, Ottawa   |
| HBC                            | Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg   |
| Morris Pap.<br>(Lt.Gov. Coll.) | Morris Papers (Lieutenant Governor's Collection) in Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg |
| PAM                            | Provincial Archives of Manitoba   |
| RG 10 **                       | Record Group Ten (Black Series) in Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa                          |
| S.P.                           | Sessional Papers, Government of Canada  |

\*\* In the Notes, the first cluster of numerals following "RG 10" refer to Volume Number; the numeral cluster following the slant line is the File Number.

INTRODUCTION

1. For example, Kennedy 1929; Joseph Howard 1952; Osler 1961; Salagnac 1971
2. Kaplan 1968: 389
3. Bidney 1967: 265
4. Bishop 1974: 348
5. Hickerson 1970: 119
6. Collingwood 1961: 213-31; for a critique, see Walsh 1967: 48-58
7. Honigmann 1976: 243-45
8. Kroeber 1935, Redfield 1953, Spencer 1954, Swartz 1968, Slobodin 1978: 122-126; Bidney 1967: 250-285 have, among others, discussed this issue.
9. Honigmann 1976: 246
10. Bee 1974: 198
11. Ibid.: 201-05

CHAPTER I

1. Kaye and Moodie 1973: 21-22
2. Murray 1967: 4-5
3. Ray 1974: 27-29
4. Shelford 1963: 319
5. loc. cit.; Bird 1961: 12-15; Watts 1960: 37-39. The French word for 'aspen' is 'tremble'.
6. Shelford 1963: 319-21
7. Bird 1961: 1
8. Stewart 1956; Sauer 1956
9. Brandon House Report, 1828-29. HBC: B22 e3/2; Fort Ellice P.J. 1858-59. HBC: B63 a4/15d. See also Ray 1974: 119-20
10. Wedel 1961: 17-19
11. Watts 1960: 30-36; Gilbert 1980: 9, 11
12. Gilbert 1980: 11
13. Watts 1960: 30-36; Gilbert 1980: 11
14. Watts 1960: 36-37; Gilbert 1980: 11
15. Ray 1974: 27
16. Red River District Report, 1819. HBC: B22 e1/5-5d; Big Point P.J., 1818-19. HBC: B122 a1/6, 14
17. Manitoba District Report, 1820. HBC: B51 e1/5; Upper Red River J., 1822-23. HBC: B63 a3/17d
18. Red River District Report, 1819. B22 e1/2d; Gates 1965: 115-16
19. Red River District Report, 1819. B22 e1/5d-6, 8d; Coues 1965: I/2
20. Manitoba District Report, 1820. HBC: B51 e1/6d; Red River District Report, 1819. HBC: B22 e1/3

21. Both La Verendrye in 1736 and Henry the Elder in 1775 found tents of Assiniboine and Cree on the lower Red River and up the Assiniboine River. The Cree were also residing in the Parkland areas north of Lake Manitoba and the Manitoba escarpment. There is some dispute, however, whether the Assiniboine lived in this area as well. According to Wheeler (1977) arguments for such occupation misrepresent the identity of named groups. The "Stonies", a term by which the Assiniboine are often called, could refer to Cree groups who identified themselves with stone or stony places. Also the identity of other groups such as the "Eagle Eyed Indians", who some writers have asserted are Assiniboine, is problematic. However, Joseph Smith, a Hudson's Bay Company man, who possibly travelled in the Lake Dauphin area in 1763 wrote: "Whe Lea by for ther whe Laft the fameleys and ther cam 8 canous mour of the Sinepoits then ther was all mst 200 canus" (quoted in Ray 1974: 43). The identification of the "Sinepoits" with the Assiniboine in the fur trade literature is common, and Wheeler does not appear to dispute this. If the Assiniboine were using canoes and transporting their families in them it means they were familiar with the lake and forest regions, and likely resident in them to obtain subsistence for at least part of the year. We know too that the Sinepoits regularly travelled by canoe to British posts on Hudson Bay in the 17th and 18th centuries. It would seem incredible that they would build and use these canoes solely for trading journeys and not also utilize them for subsistence. Later, when the Assiniboine migrated to the Plains they abandoned the use of the canoe.
22. Warren 1974: 261
23. Coues 1965: I/46. According to C.N. Bell (Ibid.: I/44 Footnote 52) this graveyard lies within the City of Winnipeg, on the east side of Main Street between Graham and York Avenues.
24. Warren 1974: 135-91, 256
25. Bain 1901: 243-44
26. Ibid.: 245-321
27. Coues 1965: I/185
28. Ibid.: I/193
29. Ibid.: I/256

30. Doubtfull Post J., 1797-98. HBC: B53 a1/2d
31. Manetoba District Report, 1820. HBC: B51 e1/15d
32. Red River District Report, 1819. HBC: B22 e1/13
33. Coues 1965: 47
34. Lowie 1954: 114
35. Nute 1965: 6
36. Innis 1956: 43
37. Meyer 1967: 6
38. Ibid.: 12
39. See also White 1978; Holzkamm 1981: 77-108
40. Coues 1965: I/282
41. Red River district Report, 1819. HBC: B22 e1/11-13;  
Manetoba District Report, 1820. HBC: B51 e1/15d
42. Pritchett 1942: 232; Morice 1910: 118-23; Hind 1971:  
I/176
43. Hind 1971: I and II; Papers relative to the Exploration  
by Captain Palliser..... 1969
44. Hind 1971: II/151
45. Papers relative to the Exploration by Cap. Palliser...  
1969: 54
46. This appears to be a conservative estimate, i.e.,  
tending to a low, rather than a high figure. Ft. Ellice  
Post Journals in the 1850s and 1860s make mention of a  
number of Ojibwa bands recognizable as Plains- or  
Prairie-dwellers. These were led by Waywayseecappo  
(or the Murderer), Checaneques, Sapowetung, The Gambler,  
Misaquat, Mosquito, Que-wich. There were undoubtedly  
others. It appears some of these bands attained a  
considerable size; this is suggested, for instance, by  
the observation in 1875 the Waywayseecappo's band included  
58 families. In addition to those residing near Ft.  
Ellice, a number of Ojibwa had migrated further west into  
the short grass Plains in the 1820s and 1830s. Catlin,  
for example, met Plains-dwelling Ojibwa at the mouth of  
the Yellowstone River in 1832 (Catlin 1963: I/53)

47. In the relatively non-industrial areas of the globe presently the average crude annual birth rate is 42 per 1,000 population. The annual death rate here is approximately 22 per 1,000 population. (Moriyama 1968: 499). Thus, as a rough estimate, the average annual natural increase is 22/1,000 population. The figure of 760 is arrived at by compounding 842 by 22 in a period of 40 years (1819-1858).
48. Swampy Cree immigration to Red River was beginning to cause some anxiety to the Hudson's Bay Company as the men were needed as boatmen (Glover 1948). The migration of Cumberland House families to Red River prompted Governor George Simpson of the Company to make this angry remark: "A mania of colonization has seized the native". (Pannekoek 1970: 20)
49. S.P. 1975(8): 109
50. This figure is arrived at by compounding 1,920 by 22 (the assumed annual rate of natural increase per 1,000 population) for 16 years (1858-1874).
51. Natural increase in the 1858 population of 800 at the Indian Settlement was probably about 300.
52. Based on the following:
- |                                    |       |            |
|------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Estimated Swampy Cree immigration: |       |            |
| During the period 1819-1858.....   | 200   |            |
| " " " 1858-1874.....               | 850   |            |
|                                    | Total | <u>850</u> |
- 
- |  |       |              |
|--|-------|--------------|
| Estimated half-breed influx into Indian bands: |       |              |
| During the period 1819-1858.....               | 50    |              |
| " " " 1858-1874.....                           | 1,150 |              |
|  |       | <u>1,150</u> |
- 
- |   |  |                |
|---|--|----------------|
| Estimated Ojibwa in population in 1874: |  |                |
| 4,355 - (850 + 1,150)                   |  | = <u>2,355</u> |
- Natural increase, which is presumed to have occurred in all three categories at a similar rate, is ignored in the figures above; hence these figures have value, or are suggestive, only as proportions.
53. Aunnisnenaubay 1971: 23; field notes
54. Slobodin 1966: 4
55. Sealey and Lussier 1975: 1-10; Slobodin 1966: 158
56. Sealey and Lussier 1975: 16-19; Slobodin 1966: 153-54

57. Field notes; Aunnishenaubay 1971: 9-11; Letourneau 1978: 15
58. Pannekoek 1976: 72
59. Parks et.al. 1980: 293-94; Meyer 1967: 155
60. Manitoba District Report, 1820. HBC: E51 e1/17
61. Ibid.: /16d
62. loc. cit.
63. loc. cit.
64. Ibid.: /17
65. Ibid.: /17d
66. loc. cit.
67. Ibid.: /16d; Grant 1960: 320
68. Manitoba District Report, op. cit.: /16d
69. loc. cit.; the association of position within the tent with status is also observed among the Kutchin, and is a fairly widespread 'circumpolar' trait, in various forms. (I am thankful to Prof. Slobodin for this information).
70. Manitoba Dist. Report, op. cit.: /9d
71. loc. cit.
72. loc. cit.
73. Ibid.: /10
74. loc. cit.
75. Ibid.: /18d
76. For example, ibid.: /14,18
77. Ibid.: /6d
78. loc. cit.; Manitoba Lake F.J., 1815-16. HBC: B122 a1/3d



79. Manitoba Dist. Report, 1820. HBC: B51 e1/18
80. Ibid.: /16d
81. Jamieson 1974: 210-11, 213; Tisdale 1978:102-04; Syms 1977
82. For example, Coues 1965: I/185, 191
83. Manitoba Dist. Report, 1820. HBC: B51 e1/5d
84. Ray 1974: 66-68, 72-91
85. Pemmican was mainly made from buffalo meat. It was manufactured in this fashion:  
Buffalo meat was cut into thin strips, about four feet by two feet, and placed on a rack to dry in the sun. In favourable weather this took about a day and a half. The dried meat was then placed on the flesh side of a buffalo hide, and beaten with flails to a mass of shreds. This meat was then placed in large kettles containing hot tallow and thoroughly mixed. This mixture was pemmican, and it was poured hot into sacks of buffalo hide prepared for it. Each bag normally held 90 to 100 lbs. The pemmican hardened upon cooling. It could be eaten in this form or cooked with vegetables. Berry pemmican was a more elaborate version of the product: usually tongues or tenderloin were mixed with marrow fat, berries and maple sugar. This was considered a food for the epicure. (Hargrave 1871: 168-69)

CHAPTER II

1. Caldwell and Henning 1978: 116-20
2. Wedel 1961: 300
3. Caldwell and Henning 1978: 121, 123
4. Mishkin 1940: 9, 20; Webb 1961: 53; Gladwin 1957: 111-12
5. Roe 1970: 347-65. Hornaday (1889: 390-91) quotes an observer who described a herd of over 4 million animals
6. Though the horse once roamed across both North and South America it was likely extinct before the arrival of man in the New World (Wissler 1923: 110). The horses that the Indians in North America acquired originated in the Spanish settlements of the American Southwest (Haines 1938).
7. Ewers 1955: 4-12
8. Ibid.: 7-9; Jablow 1950: 1-10; Holder 1970: 90-94
9. Holder 1970: 91-92
10. Haines 1938; Teit 1930
11. Catlin 1973: II/65; See also ibid.: II/141-44
12. Mishkin 1940: 8-10, 21-22, 51
13. Ibid.: 21-22; Jablow 1950: 23-24; Lowie 1963: 44-45; Weist 1973
14. Wood 1980: 99-104; Ewers 1968: 14-33; Jablow 1950: 39-46
15. Coues 1965: I/324-25, 328-30
16. Blakeslee 1975 (quoted in Wood 1980: 106)
17. Mishkin 1940: 6; Haines 1976: 119
18. Lowie 1963: 114-19; Mishkin 1940: 2
19. Lowie 1963: 114, 125-26; Mishkin 1940: 28-29
20. Kroeber 1953: 4-6, 222

21. Ibid.: 78
22. Oliver 1962; Howard 1960, for example.
23. Driver et.al 1972
24. Lewis 1942
25. Coues 1965: I/344
26. Ibid.: I/368
27. Ibid.: I/382
28. Ibid.: I/377-78
29. Mishkin 1940: 29-30
30. Lowie 1963: 117
31. Lowie emphasized the importance of warfare in Plains cultures, but this view was challenged by Newcombe (1950), who pointed to the accumulation of wealth as being of greater significance on the Plains.  
 Johnson writes: "The accumulation of wealth was important to all Plains tribes and was directly tied to the system of status achievement. The base for status achievement, however, rested in success in warfare, for through this means, new wealth in the form of horses and goods was obtained. For most Plains tribes, wealth was not important in itself, but assumed significance in that the wealthy man was necessarily a successful warrior. Among the Teton, for example, accumulated wealth was distributed through gifts and thus served mainly as a vehicle for validating status. The successful Teton man demonstrated his prowess to others in his hand through his generosity. The Kiowa, however, far richer in horses than the Teton and in an area where accumulation of horses through raiding gave greater promise of new wealth, had developed what were essentially a series of economic classes..... While wealth and property assumed large proportions in Kiowa society, and wealth was used to validate status, the highest status for males was achieved through success in warfare....." (Johnson 1965: 332)  
 Undoubtedly, both warfare and the accumulation of wealth were of considerable significance in the cultures of the Plains.
32. Bain 1901: 295-96
33. Ibid.: 299-301, 269-322
34. Lamb 1957: 41; Coues 1965: II/516-26
35. Coues 1965: I/154

36. Meyer 1981: 60-61
37. The "Snakes" are mentioned by Henry in his journal on a number of occasions (e.g. Coues 1965: I/154,333). The identity of this group has been a puzzle. However, it is possible the "Snakes" were a clan of the Ojibwa, which Landes (1969: 32) notes was located at the Lake of the Woods.
38. Meyer 1967: 24-35
39. Howard 1965: 7-10; Catlin 1973: I/53
40. Howard 1965: 18, 20

CHAPTER III

1. Morton 1957: 45-46; Pritchett 1942: 56
2. Morton 1957: 48; Morice 1910: 88-94, 98-99; Poon 1962: xiv; Ross 1957: 16-19, 63-64
3. Ross 1957: 133-40; Mackay 1949: 180-96
4. Ross 1957: 115; Rich 1961: III/513
5. Ross 1957: 20-69, 77-78, 83-110; Pritchett 1942: 112-27; Morton 1957: 46-57
6. Ross 1957: 21-25, 45-51, 56-57; Hill 1890: 86-87
7. Ross 1957: 22-25, 58-60; Hill 1890: 90-91; Report on Business of Brandon House, 1828-29. HBC: B22 e3/5; Report of Manitoba District, 1818-19. HBC: B122 e1/7d-3; Annual Report of Manitoba District, 1821. HBC: B51 e2/1d
8. Ross 1957: 63-64; Pritchett 1942: 95, 97
9. Morton 1957: 49, 66; Murray 1967: 40
10. This was the "Pemmican War". It was precipitated by the "Pemmican Proclamation" of Miles Macdonnell, Governor of the Red River Colony, designed to obstruct free passage of the boat brigades of the Northwest Company between Fort William & its posts in the southern Plains. This resulted in a series of ambushes and post burnings, and a major skirmish at Seven Oaks; Report of Manitoba District, 1818-19. HBC: B122 e1/4d
11. Hargrave 1871: 175-77
12. Garrioch 1923: 100-01
13. Report on Brandon House, 1828-29. HBC: B22 e3/2d-4
14. Ray 1974: 213
15. Ibid.: 206-07
16. Innis 1956: 303
17. Wishart 1979: 41-74; Wood 1980: 99-104

18. For example, A. McDonald, Ft. Qu'Appelle, to Ft. Gov. Archibald, Dec. 24, 1871, Arch. Rep.: 200; W.J. Christie, Edmonton House, to Archibald, May 19, 1871, Arch. Rep.: 299; see also Lt. Butler's Report printed as Appendix in Butler 1872: 357, 377-386
19. This point has been aptly stressed by Knight 1976: 7-27
20. HBC Post Journals provide information of such work in great detail. Little research has been done on Post employees; an exception is Foster 1977
21. Cowie 1913: 366
22. Ibid.: 367
23. Innis 1956: 300; HBC Post Journals also record such work.
24. Meln and Dumas 1963
25. Gluck 1965: 143-54
26. Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company 1857: 134-35, 254, 262-65, 281
27. Horton 1957: 76. The HBC had apparently petitioned for a military force for some time, but the Oregon Crisis in 1846 (in which American settlers had formed a Provisional Government in defiance of the HBC) and the subsequent dealings with the U.S. created a situation in which the Crown was willing to heed the Company's request.
28. Horton 1957: 77
29. Blakely 1898: 45-66; Morton 1957: 32, 34
30. Howie 1963: 39-44
31. Sealey and Lussier 1975: 20
32. Hargrave 1871: 58-60; Bréhaut 1871-72: 8-15; Gilman et.al.: 1979: 14-16
33. Coates 1897: 205. A piece normally weighed 90 lbs. The Red River cart was not invented by Alexander Henry, as Innes (1942: 39) suggests.
34. Gilman et.al.: 1979: 13
35. Knox 1942: 42; Gilman et.al. 1979: 24
36. Hargrave 1871: 167-68; Gilman et. al. 1979: 14

37. Gilman et. al. 1971: 14; Hargrave 1871: 167-68
38. Hargrave 1871: 167
39. Ibid.: 168-70; Ross 1957: 271-72
40. Innis 1956: 301-02; 336; Hargrave 1871: 165
41. Hargrave 1871: 169
42. Norton 1957: 32, 34
43. Hargrave 1871: 168; Russell 1971: 17-20
44. Glazebrook 1964
45. Russell 1971: 23-40; Ft. Ellice P.J., Aug. 1-4. HBC: B63 a4/120-13; Ft. Ellice P.J., Nov. 1, 1858. HBC: B63 a4/23; Ft. Ellice P.J., May 20, 1858. HBC: B63 a5/3; Ft. Ellice P.J., Jun. 17, 1864. PAM; Ft. Ellice P.J., Jun. 25, 1866. HBC: B63 a9/39
46. Russell 1971: 2-8
47. Ibid.: 1-2
48. Hargrave 1871: 155-59
49. Ibid.: 157-58
50. Ibid.: 160
51. Glover 1849: 22
52. McPadden 1950a: 32; McPadden 1950b: 29; Abel 1972: 47-56
53. Hargrave 1871: 166-69; Carrioch 1923: 100
54. Lt. Gov. Morris to Minister of the Interior, Jun. 6, 1874. RG 10: 3610/3523
55. Cowie 1913: 420-21
56. Ibid.: 420
57. Ibid.: 421
58. Hargrave 1871: 170
59. Cowie 1913: 421-22
60. Ibid.: 290

61. Ibid.: 317-19
62. Ibid.: 298
63. Ibid.: 290
64. loc. cit.
65. Garrioch 1923: 94-95
66. Ibid.: 95-97
67. Ibid.: 97-98
68. Some of the references to Indian traders in the Ft. Alliance Post Journals are as follows:
 

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Necanequanape         | Apr. 15, 1868. HEC: B63 a10/35<br>Jun. 8, 1868. HBC: B63 a10/39<br>Sep. 2, 1868. HEC: B63 a10/45 |
| Petewawaquaneass      | Sep. 5, 1865. HEC: B63 a9/3<br>Sep. 17, 1868. HEC: B63 a10/46<br>Sep. 23, 1868. HEC: B63 a10/9d  |
| Sawanequanape         | as for Petewawaquaneass  |
| Pachetoo's eldest son | Dec. 7, 1863. PAM: MG1 C6<br>May 27, 1868. HBC: B63 a10/38d<br>Jun. 2, 1868. HBC: B63 a10/40     |
| Thomas Pachetoo       | Jul. 15, 1871. HEC: B63 a11/4d<br>Oct. 22, 1871. HEC: B63 a11/9d                                 |
| George Racette        | Apr. 12, 1863. PAM: MG1 C6   |
| George Racette's son  | Jun. 13, 1858. PAM: MG1 C6   |
| Neashoot              | Sen. 5, 1863. PAM: MG1 C6  |
69. Morice 1910: I/26-32
70. Ibid.: I/33-47
71. Ibid.: I/95-150, 213-24; Hughes 1911: 9-10; Reardon 1955: 122, 197
72. Morice 1910: I/132, 138-43; Hargrave 1871: 127-34
73. Morice 1910: I/142; Reardon 1955: 32-44; Ross 1957: 265-68
74. Morice 1910: I/148, 161; Reardon 1955: 45
75. Ross 1957: 275. Ross estimates that in 1841 the Plains hunters received from the HBC alone 1,200, which was "rather more money than all the agricultural class obtained for their produce in the same year." Also, buffalo meat was sold to American traders, and to settlers in the Red River Settlement.
76. Report of Manitoba District, 1820. HBC: E51 a1/16-16c. Peter Widler, the author of the Report, notes that some Ojibwa had ambitions of living in the manner of the Colonists.



77. Morice 1910: I/193
78. Ibid.: I/213-24; Beardon 1955: 48-51
79. Ibid.: I/244
80. Ibid.: I/173-82
81. Ibid.: I/230; Beardon 1955: 59-60. This may not have been the case in the vicinity of Lake Superior. In that area, according to Warren (1974: 135), the Ojibwa had a closer association with the French, both politically and culturally, than they had with either the British or the Americans.
82. West 1966: 13-14
83. Ibid.: 14-16, 40-41; Boon 1962: 10
84. Boon 1962: 24, 33
85. Ibid.: 35; See also Jessett 1961
86. See e.g. Cowie 1913: 214-15, 222
87. Boon 1962: 20, 48, 49
88. West 1966: 102-04
89. Thompson 1973: 30-31
90. Ibid.: 22-25; Boon 1962: 38-39 ; Czuboka 1960: 44-46
91. Boon 1962: 56
92. Censuses of Canada 1665 to 1871: 1876 (see Bibliography)
93. These figures appear to be in agreement with Palliser's estimate of 800 for the St. Peter's population in 1858. (Papers relative to the exploration by Capt. Palliser.... 1969: 54). See also Chapter I (The Parkland Setting), p. 45
94. Pannekoek 1970: 100
95. Ibid.: 104-05. See also Morton 1949
96. Pannekoek 1970: 104
97. loc. cit.
98. loc. cit.; Morton 1949

99. William Cockran to Secy. of C.M.S., Aug. 2, 1837, Oct. 15, 1837. Anglican Church Archives: A84 C1/0

100. Boon 1962: 51-53

101: This is not to discredit at all the genuine spiritual attraction which some of the Indians appear to have found in the teachings of the Anglican Church.

CHAPTER IV

1. Cowie 1913: 301, 303-05
2. Fort Ellice P.J., Dec. 8, 1862. PAM: MG1 C6; Fort Ellice P.J., May 17, 1863. HEC: B63 a6/16d; Fort Ellice P.J., Apr. 29, 1864. HEC: B63 a6/46; Fort Ellice P.J., Nov. 4, 1865. HEC: B63 a9/10; Fort Ellice P.J., Feb. 22, 1867. HEC: B63 a9/56  
Buffalo was scarce in southeastern Saskatchewan in 1862-63, but was once again abundant in the years 1864-67. A possible explanation for this might be that as the years 1862-63 were of great drought on the Plains (Morton 1957: 114) the extension of the short grasses eastward also extended the primary range of the buffalo.
3. Garrioch 1923: 92-93; Hill 1890: 125-26
4. Hind 1971: 1/139-90
5. Ibid.: 1/90
6. Petition of Inhabitants and Natives of the Settlement situated on the Red River, in the Assiniboine Country, British North America, to the Honourable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada in Parliament assembled, contained in the Appendix, No. 15 of the Report from the Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company in Thomas 1975: 60
7. Garrioch 1923: 80; Morton 1957: 88
8. Blakely 1896: 61; Morton 1957: 68, 95
9. Morton 1973: 825-830
10. Morton 1957: 95-96, 107; Morton 1973: 818-25
11. Morton 1957: 115
12. Ibid.: 116
13. Stanley 1961: 48-49
14. Garrioch 1923: 124
15. Some incidents of conflict are described by Hill 1890: 148-55

16. Garrioch 1923: 123, 130-31
17. Stanley 1961: 24
18. Compendium of History and Biography of Northern Minnesota....  
1902: 48-55; Ross 1957: 761-62
19. Upham 1898: 14-16; Compendium of His. and Bio. of N. Minn.  
Minn. 1902: 68-80
20. Compilation of all the Treaties between the U.S. and Indian  
Tribes 1873: 880
21. Hargrave 1871: 304
22. Norton 1973: 842-52
23. Stanley 1961: 29-42; Morton 1957: 117
24. Report from Donald A. Smith, Canadian Government Emigrant  
to the Hon. Joseph Howe, Secy. of State for the Provinces,  
Apr. 12, 1870 in Oliver 1914: II/934
25. List of Rights adopted Feb. 3, 1870 by the Convention  
chosen by the people of the "English" and "French"  
Parishes after the meeting with Donald A. Smith in  
Thomas 1975: 67-68; Morton 1957: 117, 119
26. Norton 1957: 119-20
27. Stanley 1961: 68-75
28. Norton 1957: 141

APPENDIX

1. Horton 1957: 144
2. Report of Meeting between Lt. Gov. Archibald and Chief of Council at Swampy Cree at St. Peter's Parish School, Sept. 13, 1870. Arch. Rep.: 22
3. S.J. Dawson to Hon. H.J. Langevin, Min. of Public Works, Ottawa Dec. 12, 1870. Arch. Rep.: 151
4. loc. cit.
5. Duties of Indian Commissioner Mayss McKenzie Simpson, Apr. 28, 1871. Arch. Rep.: 270
6. Report of Holyrood St. John, Jan. 3, 1871. Arch. Rep.: 164A
7. Robert Ether to Archibald, Oct. 14, 1870. Arch. Rep.: 34
8. L.W. Borden to Archibald, Oct. 31, 1870. Arch. Rep.: 35
9. Henry Prince to Archibald, Feb. 7, 1871. Arch. Rep.: 100
10. Report of H. St. John, Jan. 3, 1871. Arch. Rep.: 164A
11. Arch. Rep.: 150
12. loc. cit.
13. Archibald to Rev. Fletcher, Nov. 5, 1870. Arch. Rep.: 31
14. Garrloch 1921: 171-74; 1911-1912: 150-55
15. Garrloch op. cit.
16. Statement of Resolution of Indians of Fortage de Fairford passed at Council, May 30, 1871. Arch. Rep.: 512
17. Council Resolution of Indians at Fairford, Jan. 7, 1871. Arch. Rep.: 164
18. Archibald to J.B. Bright, Montreal, Nov. 27, 1870. Arch. Rep.: 114
19. Report of Simpson, Jan. 20, 1870. Arch. Rep.: 25
20. Report of Archibald, Jul. 29, 1871 in Morris 1880: 37
21. Opening Speech of Archibald in Morris 1880: 26-30
22. Report of Archibald, Jul. 29, 1871 in Morris 1880: 34; Report of Simpson, Jul. 30, 1871 in Morris 1880: 35

23. Robinson Superior Treaty and Robinson Huron Treaty in Morris 1880: 702-07.
24. W.B. Robinson to Supt. Gen., Ind. Affs., Ottawa, Sept. 24, 1850 in Morris 1880: 17
25. Compilation of all Treaties between the U.S. and the Indian Tribes 1875
26. Morris 1880: 31
27. Report of Simpson, Jun. 20, 1871, pp. 6-7. Arch. Rep.: 25
28. Report of Simpson, Jul. 30, 1871 in Morris 1880: 36
29. Report of Simpson, Nov. 3, 1871 in Morris 1880: 39
30. Ibid.: 42
31. Morris 1880: 320-326
32. Ibid.: 330-75
33. Ibid.: 59-76
34. Ibid.: 168-275
35. Ibid.: 354
36. Meyer 1967: 109-23.
37. Ibid.: 124-34
38. Fort Elllice P.J., May 28, 1866. HBC: P63 a9/35d;  
Fort Elllice P.J., Jul. 19, 1866. HBC: P63 a9/40d
39. White Can, Saventur, Garden Fire, Chiefs of Sioux Tribe to Archibald, Mar. 14, 1870, Arch. Rep.: 3; Morris 1880: 280
40. Morris 1880: 279; Cowie 1913: 187-88. Also there are numerous references to employment of Sioux labour at Fort Elllice. See Post Journals of the years 1862-63, 1865-69.
41. Interview with Archibald of Sioux leaders, Dec. 27, 1871, Arch. Rep.: 564; Report of a Committee of the Hon. the Privy Council, Jan. 4, 1873, Morris Rep. (It. Gov.'s Call.): 50; Morris 1880: 279
42. Meyer 1967: 1-6
43. Ibid.: 13. The date of the battle of Kothio is William W. Warren's estimate, and is based upon Ojibwa oral tradition.

44. Parks et. al. 1980: 293-94
45. Meyer 1967: viii
46. Parks et. al. 1980: 293-94
47. loc. cit.; Morris 1980: 282-84

CHAPTER VI

1. Few Indians appear to have been employed in construction work for the CPR line (see Lavallois 1974). Also, they apparently did not find employment with the railways in operational or maintenance work during the nineteenth century.
2. Treaty Number Two, Aug. 2, 1872
3. Rev. John Black to Lt. Gov. Morris, Jan. 31, 1876, Morris Pap. (Lt. Gov.'s Coll.): 1109; Baird 1895: 16-18.  
George Flett was married to a sister of Mrs. John Black.  
Rev. Black was the Presbyterian minister at Red River.
4. Black to Morris, *op. cit.*
5. *Loc. cit.*
6. D. Baird to Gov. Gen.-in-Council Apr. 8, 1875. RG 10: 3555/15; *Ibid.*, Provencher to Meredith, Jun. 17, 1875; *Ibid.*, William Wagner, Surveyor to Min. of the Int., Jul. 15, 1875
7. Report of F. Bradley, Nov. 17, 1874. RG 10: 7556/10106 Pt. 2
8. Report of Inspector T.P. Wadsworth, Dec. 1, 1881. RG 10: 3574/156
9. *Loc. cit.*
10. Memo from Hayter Reed, Jan. 12, 1881, S.P. 1882(6):75
11. Report of E. McColl, S.P. 1870(2):51
12. Memo from Hayter Reed, Jul. 9, 1881, S.P. 1882(6):viii
13. The four reserves were Little Saskatchewan, Shoal Lake, Rat Portage and Norway House. Sanctions were received for resurveys at Shoal Lake in 1881 (RG 10: 3726/25066), and at Rat Portage in 1884 (RG 10: 3726/25131). The records for Little Saskatchewan are incomplete, and it is unclear if a resurvey was carried out.  
At Norway House, matters were somewhat more complicated. The band was large, and not everyone supported a resurvey that would entail an exchange of reserve lands. In 1880 there were 39 farming families at Norway House. They had constructed log houses and had 61 acres under cultivation and under pasture on the reserve. They wished to obtain land 15 miles distant down the Pine River.  
Faced with opposition within the band, and deciding also that the proposed new lands were inadequate for expansion,



the Norway House farmers migrated en masse to the mouth of the Fisher River on Lake Winnipeg, 200 miles to the south. Subsequently they petitioned for the grant of a reserve at this location, and this was eventually accorded to them. The attraction that agriculture held for some of the boreal forest people seems reminiscent to the attraction Plains living had for some of the Parkland people in earlier years. It is tempting to surmise that if farmlands in the south had been more readily available to Indians during these years, a more extensive migration from the forests into the southern agricultural areas might have occurred.

14. Report of Henry Martineau, S.P. 1873(10):41
15. loc. cit.
16. Report of Dr. Young, S.P. 1880(4):67-68
17. Report of Muckle, Indian Agent, S.P. 1882(6):64
18. Field notes
19. Report of Wadsworth, Sept. 7, 1891. RG 10: 3859/32250-2
20. loc. cit.
21. loc. cit.
22. J.A. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina, Dec. 1, 1889. RG 10: 3783/40470
23. Martin 1974: 431
24. Report of Wadsworth, Sept. 7, 1891. RG 10: 3859/32250-2
25. loc. cit.
26. Report of Wadsworth, Oct. 20, 1892. RG 10: 3895/37456
27. loc. cit.
28. Centennial History Committee 1970: 29-30
29. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina, Mar. 1, 1888. RG 10: 3783/40470
30. Ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina, Jul. 2, 1887
31. Report of Inspector McGibbon, May 31, 1897. RG 10: 3782/40468-2
32. Report of McGibbon, Dec. 4, 1896. RG 10: 3895/37456
33. Dried root of a North American milkwort (Polygala senega)

34. Report of McGibbon, Jul. 2, 1887. RG 10: 3782/40468-2
35. Report of McGibbon, Jan. 21, 1897. RG 10: 3895/97456
36. loc. cit.
37. Murray 1967: 97-98; Jackson 1970: 153; McGinnis 1977: 177
38. Murray 1967: 120-21
39. Ibid.: 124
40. Bracken 1921: 156-58
41. Murray 1967: 104-15
42. Ibid.: 131
43. Ibid.: 140
44. Report of Wadsworth, Oct. 20, 1892, p. 32. RG 10: 3895/97456
45. Report of Herchmer, S.P. 1380(4):70-71
46. Report of Herchmer, S.P. 1382(6):68
47. Herchmer to Depy. Supt. Gen., Ind. Affs., Ottawa, Dec. 7, 1882. RG 10: 3719/22817
48. Herchmer to Ind. Comm., Regina, Nov. 29, 1885. RG 10: 3719/22817
49. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina, Aug. 3, 1887. RG 10: 3783/40470
50. Report of McGibbon, Jul. 18, 1888. RG 10: 3303/ 50774-1
51. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina, Sept. 9, 1889. RG 10: 3783/40470; Report of Wadsworth, Nov. 3, 1890, RG 10: 3844/73406-2
52. Report of Wadsworth, Sept. 7, 1891. RG 10: 3859/82250-2; Strange 1954: Appendix II
53. Report of Wadsworth, Oct. 20, 1892. RG 10: 3895/97456
54. loc. cit.
55. loc. cit.
56. Report of Wadsworth, Nov. 3, 1890. RG 10: 3844/73406-2
57. Report of Wadsworth, Oct. 20, 1892. RG 10: 3895/97456
58. Bracken 1921: 82-84
59. Report of McGibbon, Jul. 18, 1888. RG 10: 3303/50774-1

60. Report of Wadsworth, Nov. 3, 1890. AG 10: 3344/7406-2
61. Strange 1954: Appendix II
62. Harkle to Ind. Comm., Regina, Aug. 5, 1890. AG 10: 3705/73406-2
65. McGinnis 1977: 177

Chapter VII

1. The role of bureaucrats in the making of government policy is sometimes underestimated. An incisive discussion is contained in Doern and Aucoin 1979. See also van Loon 1976: 373-78, 406-46.
2. Morton 1957: 144; Brown and Cook 1974: 7
3. Royal Proclamation, Oct. 7, 1763 in Smith 1975: 2-4
4. Instructions to Gov. Carleton, Jan. 3, 1775 in Smith 1975: 6-12; Historical Development of the Indian Act 1978: 6-9. Sir Guy Carleton (Baron Dorchester) was Governor-in-Chief of Canada (1768-69, 1786-96).
5. Testimony of Sir James Kempt in Bagot Commission Report 1847. Sir James Kempt was Administrator of Lower Canada (1828-30).
6. Surtees 1969: 89
7. Schmaltz 1977: 64-148
8. Leighton 1975: 92; Hist. Devel. of Ind. Act. 1978: 13
9. Leighton 1975: 82-83. Sir George Arthur was Lt. Governor of Upper Canada (1838-41).
10. Hist. Devel. of Ind. Act 1978: 13-22; Leighton 1975: 38-47, 92. Sir Charles Bagot was Governor-in-Chief of Canada (1842-43).
11. Bagot Commission Report 1847
12. The Commission made no specific reference to any misdeeds, but public exposure of embezzlement of Oneida funds by Samuel Jarvis, Chief Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, while in office, led to scandal and resignation of Jarvis in 1845 (Leighton 1975: 91-147).
13. Bagot Commission Report 1847
14. Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Aborigines of the British Settlements, Jun. 26, 1837 in Bagot Commission Report 1847
15. Hist. Devel. of Ind. Act. 1978: 23
16. Sec. 11. S.C. 1868. cap. 42: An Act Providing for the Organization....Indian and Ordnance Lands
17. Ibid., Secs. 6-8

17. Sec. 3. S.C. 1850. cap. 74: An Act for the Protection of Indians.... from Trespass and Injury
18. *Ibid.*, Secs. 4, 5, 8
19. Sec. 5. S.C. 1850. cap. 42: An Act for the Better Protection... of the Indians in Lower Canada
20. Sec. 2(3). S.C. 1830. cap. 28: The Indian Act
21. Secs. 2, 3, 4. S.C. 1857. cap. 26: An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization.... Amend the Laws Respecting Indians
22. Tobias 1976: 18, 22-23
23. Bagot Commission Report 1847
24. Report of the Minister of the Interior, S.P. 1876(9):xii-xiii
25. Secs. 79-85. S.C. 1876. cap. 18: The Indian Act
26. *Ibid.*, Secs. 86-94
27. Though the Department of Indian Affairs had been entrenched and strengthened by the legislation passed between 1850 and 1869, there was little interest, during the early and middle 1870s, in extending the bureaucracy to the West.
28. See for example, Interview with Kee-wee-tay-yash's brother, Feb. 23, 1872, Arch. Pap.: 537; Correspondence between Lt. Gov. Archibald and F. Bradley, March 1872, Arch. Pap.: 601, 623, 629, 630, 631; Corr. between Archibald and Louis de la Ponde, Feb. and Mar. 1872, Arch. Pap.: 593, 650
29. Both utilized extensively the services of James McKay, a noted half-breed trader.
30. Sec. 10. S.C. 1869. cap. 6: An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians....and to Extend the Provisions of the Act 21 Vic. cap. 42; Sec. 62. S.C. 1876. cap. 18: The Indian Act
31. Copy of duties sd. by Joseph Howe, Secy. of State, April 28, 1871 is in Arch. Pap.: 278; Appointment letter, May 5, 1871 Arch. Pap.: 289
32. see e.g. Howe to Archibald, Aug. 1, 1871, Arch. Pap.: 414; Archibald to Secy. of State, Aug. 2, 1872. RG 10: 3578/539
33. Archibald to Secy. of State, Aug. 2, 1872. RG 10: 3578/539
34. resignation was effective Jan. 27, 1873. RG 10: 3598/1350
35. With the change of Government in the elections of 1878, the Department was reorganized, and Provencher was relieved of his duties.

37. Provancher's interviews with Indian leaders seemed invariably to revert to these demands.
38. Report of Provancher, S.P. 1876(6):v7
39. *Ibid.*: 52-54
40. Hedges 1959: 14-17
41. Sir John A. Macdonald, DHC, March 17, p. 1684, 1688; Report of Minister of the Interior, S.P. 1880(4): x
42. As an another example, rumours of a Sioux uprising and producing great alarm in Deloraine, Manitoba in 1882 were investigated by the NWMP and discovered to be unfounded. The police officers learnt that the rumours had been initiated by the local hotel owner, who hoped that the stationing of a police detachment in the area would boost his business. (Turtle Mountain Report by NWMP, Oct. 14, 1882. RG 10: 3597/1350).  
Referring to the Missouri River area in the U.S., Sharp writes (1973: 128): " Army expenditures played such an important role in the region's economy that citizens constantly implored the government to expand its military commitments. They often pictured friendly Indians as hostile and exaggerated isolated depredations into a state of warfare ....Government spending to construct and maintain the forts introduced considerable currency into this frontier region. Army quartermaster purchases of fresh vegetables, butter, eggs, hay, and grain stimulated the initial agricultural enterprisers in the Sun river valley and in the rich, alluvial bottom lands along the Missouri River. Heavy purchases of beef to feed thousands of soldiers promoted the rapid expansion of the range cattle industry on the benchlands and surrounding plains."  
See also Larmour 1979: 44; Butler 1872: Appendix
43. See Berger 1970
44. Sir John A. Macdonald, DHC, March 17, 1881, p. 1457
45. Report of Minister of the Interior, S.P. 1880(4):iii
46. S.P. 1880(4): 150, 152
47. St. John was offered a junior position as Indian Agent in Battleford, which he did not accept.
48. e.g. Report of Edgar Dewdney, S.P. 1880(4):99-104; see also Sir John A. Macdonald, DHC, May 13, 1880, p.1944
49. quote from Report of Hayter Reed, Jul.9, 1881, S.P. 1882(6):xv
50. quoted in Larmour 1969: 76

# CHAPTER VIII

1. Sec: Minutes and Proceedings and Evidence of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons appointed to Examine and Consider the Indian Act. (Ottawa: 1946)
2. S.C. 1951. cap. 29: The Indian Act
3. Sec. 3. S.C. 1882. cap. 30: An Act to further Amend "The Indian Act, 1880"
4. Sec. 117. R.S.C. 1886. cap. 43: The Indian Act
5. Sec. 1. S.C. 1884. cap. 27: An Act to further Amend "The Indian Act, 1880"
6. Sec. 3., *ibid.*
7. Sec. 114. R.S.C. 1886. cap. 43: The Indian Act
8. *Loc. cit.*
9. Sec. 71. S.C. 1876. cap. 18: The Indian Act
10. Stanley 1961: 194-242; Joseph Howard 1952: 141-56; see also Hughes 1976, Allen 1972, Fraser 1966
11. Careless 1970: 22; Patterson 1972: 136
12. Report of L.W. Herchmer, Sept. 10, 1880. S.P. 1881(4):52
13. Herchmer described his actions and his policies in a letter to Dewdney. Herchmer to Hon. Commissioner, Indian Affairs, Nov. 29, 1885. RG 10: 3719/22617
14. *Ibid.*; also *ibid.*, Petition of Chiefs of the Sioux Indians.
15. Sec. 1. S.C. 1881. cap. 17: An Act to Amend "The Indian Act, 1880"
16. Enactment of this regulation was justified by Macdonald as follows: "There is great danger lest any crop which the Indians might raise should be disposed of to traders, and the Indians thus be thrown on the humanity of the whites, or on the Public Treasury.... There is no danger of the Indians being wronged by this at all events". Sir John A. Macdonald, DBC, March 12, 1881, p. 1427

17. This assumes that Departmental regulations, other than those contained in legislation, had not been made.
18. Sec. 2. S.C. 1881. cap. 17: An Act to Amend "The Indian Act, 1880"
19. Herchmer to Hon. Comm., Nov.29, 1885. RG 10: 3713/22317
20. Ibid., Petition from Chiefs of the Sioux Indians n.d. (Received by Dept. of the Interior, Ottawa, Aug.13, 1885).
21. Ibid., Dewdney to Supt. General, Indian Affairs, Ottawa, Dec.10, 1885
22. Included in RG 10: 3917/22317
23. To an Indian Agency in Alberta. J.A. Markle replaced him at Birtle in 1886.
24. See: Report of Markle May 5, 1886. RG 10: 3742/29467; Report of Markle Feb.2, 1887. RG 10: 3771/36664; Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Dec.9, 1887. RG 10: 3733/40470; Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Nov.2, 1889. RG 10: 3783/40470
25. Report of Markle May 5, 1886. RG 10: 3742/29467; Report of Insp. A. McDibbon Jul.18, 1888 (p.15). RG 10: 3771/36664
26. Report of Markle May 5, 1886. RG 10: 3742/29467; Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Feb. 2, 1887. RG 10: 3774/36664
27. Report of Markle May 5, 1886. RG 10: 3742/29467
28. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Jan. 17, 1887. RG 10: 3774/36664; ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Feb. 2, 1887; Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Apr. 8, 1889. RG 10: 3783/40470
29. A.E. Forget's comments in T.P. Wadsworth to Ind. Comm., Regina Sept. 7, 1891 (p.33). RG 10: 3859/82250-1
30. Wadsworth to Ind. Comm., Regina Sept.7, 1891 (p.31). RG 10: 3859/82250-2
31. Loc. cit.
32. Wadsworth to Ind. Comm., Regina Oct 20, 1892 (p.25). RG 10: 3895/97456; Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Jun.1, 1892. RG 10: 3869/83145
33. See: Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Dec.5, 1892, and comments of Forget in the margin. RG 10: 3869/83145; also: Ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Jun.1, 1892
34. Ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Jun.1, 1892



35. Sec. 78. R.S.C. 1886. cap. 43: The Indian Act. (This was Sec. 66 of the Indian Act of 1876, S.C. 1876. cap. 18).
36. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Jun. 1, 1892. RG 10: 3869/88145
37. Loc. cit.
38. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Dec. 3, 1893. RG 10: 3908/107243
39. Wadsworth to Ind. Comm., Regina Oct. 20, 1892 (p.29)
40. Ibid., pp. 29-30
41. Loc. cit.
42. Ibid., p. 21
43. Loc. cit.
44. Forget's comments in Markle to Indian Comm., Regina Dec. 5, 1892 (p.3). RG 10: 3869/88145
45. Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Nov. 27, 1893 (p. 9). RG 10: 3908/107243
46. Ibid., Hartland's letter Nov. 27, 1893
47. Ibid., Deputy Supt. Gen., In. Affs., Ottawa to A.E. Forget, Asst. Ind. Comm., Regina Oct. 28, 1893
48. Loc. cit.
49. Ibid., Forget to Deputy Supt. Gen. Nov. 2, 1893
50. Ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Nov. 25., 1893 (pp. 3-6)
51. Ibid., Hartland's letter Nov. 27, 1893
52. Ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Nov. 25, 1893 (pp. 3-6)
53. Ibid., pp. 6-7
54. Ibid., p. 7
55. Ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Dec. 16, 1893; Ibid., Markle to Ind. Comm., Regina Dec. 23, 1893
56. Ibid., General Manager, Ogilvie Milling Co., Winnipeg to Ind. Comm., Regina Jan. 8, 1894
57. Ibid. Forget to Messrs. The Ogilvie Milling Co. Jan. 12, 1894

58. Ibid., William Chambers, Oak Lake to F.W. Thompson, Mgr., Ogilvie Milling Co. Jan. 4, 1894
59. Virden Chronicle, Jan. 11, 1894 in RG 10: 3903/107247
60. F.W. Stevenson, Hillview, Manitoba to Hon. T.M. Daly, Min. of the Interior. Oct. 29, 1894. RG 10: 3908/107243
61. Ibid., Report of Wadsworth, Dec. 26, 1894
62. Ibid., Memo. from Bayter Reed, Deputy Supt. Gen., Ind. Affs., Ottawa, Feb. 22, 1895 pp. 1-4
63. e.g. Report of H. McColl, Inspector of Indian Agencies, Winnipeg, Dec. 27, 1884 p. 26. RG 10: 3703/17664
64. Ibid., Report of H. McColl. S.P. 1879(7): 54; L. Cartwright, Deputy Supt. Gen., Ind. Affs., Ottawa to J. Graham, Asst. Supt., Winnipeg, Dec. 10, 1881. RG 10: 3755/139
65. S.P. 1882(6):100
66. S.P. 1880(4):152-53
67. loc. cit.
68. Wadsworth to Ind. Comm., Regina, Dec. 1, 1881. RG 10: 3574/156; see also correspondence regarding the Lincher Creek Farm in RG 10: 3754/254
69. K.E. Denny, Indian Agent, Ft. McLeod to E.J. Gale, Asst. Ind. Comm., Winnipeg, Nov. 2, 1882. RG 10: 3556/4412
70. Memo May 12, 1882. RG 10: 3600/1702 Pt. 2; Ibid., Memo Oct. 22, 1882
71. Robert Jefferson in The Saskatchewan Herald, 1929 (quoted in Larmour 1969: 45)
72. F. Ogletree to H. McColl, Apr. 1, 1892. RG 10: 7509/10127-3
73. Report of Wadsworth, Dec. 1, 1881. RG 10: 3574/156
74. Herchmer to Ind. Comm., Regina, Oct. 28, 1882. RG 10: 3763/33303
75. S.P. 1882(6):157-166
76. DHC April 15, 1886, p. 720

77. Loc. cit. Actually only one Farm Instructor, James Delaney was killed. The other official killed was the Indian Agent, T.T. Quinn. Two Roman Catholic priests lost their lives: one tried to save Delaney, and the other was killed in the melee while trying to save Father Lafard. (Morice 1911: II/178-79; Hughes 1976: x-xxv)
78. DHC April 15, 1886, p. 729
79. George Flett to L. Vankoughnet, Depy., Supt. Gen., Ind. Affs., Ottawa, Jan. 3, 1880. RG 10: 3706/18809
80. Larmour 1969: 76
81. S.P. 1883(5):158
82. Ibid. :270-71
83. Report of Wadsworth, Dec. 12, 1881. RG 10: 3754/156
84. Hayter Reed, Ind. Comm., Regina to Depy. Supt. Gen., Dec. 5, 1889. RG 10: 3706/18809
85. Dougherty and Madill 1980: 2; Gurtess 1971: 72
86. Sec. 10. S.C. 1869. cap. 6: An Act for the Gradual enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs, and to Extend the Provisions of the Act 31 Vic. cap. 42.
87. Dougherty and Madill 1980: 2; Annual Report, Dept. of Indian Affairs 1871: Depy. Supt. Gen. William Spragge to Secretary of State Joseph Howe, Feb. 2, 1870
88. Sec. 63. S.C. 1869. cap. 6: op. cit.
89. Sec. 4. S.C. 1879. cap. 34: An Act to Amend "The Indian Act, 1876"
90. Loc. cit.
91. S.P. 1885(3):157
92. Ibid. : 158
93. Ibid. : 157
94. Annual Report, Dept. of Ind. Affs. 1889: Comm. Hayter Reed to Supt. Gen. H. Dewdney, Oct. 31, 1889 (quoted in Dougherty and Madill 1980: 28)
95. Reed to Dewdney Mar. 5, 1891. RG 10: 3511/11140a and Ibid., Reed to Vankoughnet May 3, 1892; Dougherty and Madill's (1980: 28-30) reference to this correspondence is gratefully acknowledged.

96. Dougherty and MacMillan discussion (1930: 30-39) of the Cowesses elections is gratefully acknowledged; Reed to Dowdney, Feb. 17, 1891. RG 10: 5911/111404
97. Ibid., Forget to Reed, Feb. 14, 1894
98. Ibid., Reed to Forget, Feb. 21, 1894
99. Ibid., McDonald to Forget, Jun. 2, 1884
100. Ibid., Reed to Forget, Aug. 18, 1894
101. Ibid., McDonald to Forget, Sept. 10, 1894
102. Ibid., Reed to Forget, Sept. 29, 1894
103. J.P. Wright, Indian Agent to J.D. McLean, Depy. Secy., Ind. Affs., Apr. 28, 1898. RG 10: 5932/121698-8
104. McLean to Ind. Comm. Forget, May 16, 1898. RG 10: 3939/121698-3

CHAPTER IX

1. Carr 1961: 8-20
2. Fowke 1946: 160-77; Troper 1977: 86-101; Lalonde 1971
3. Hall 1973: 602-38
4. Fowke 1946: 179
5. Quoted in Martin 1974: 402
6. Hall 1973: 177-202; 602-38; Troper 1972
7. Fowke 1946: 182
8. Brown and Cook 1974: 50
9. Ibid.: 49-53
10. Ibid.: 53; Urquhart and Buckley 1965: 363
11. Brown and Cook 1974: 52-53; Strange 1954: 23-28; Fowke 1946: 236
12. Fowke 1957: 70-75, 290-94; McGinnis 1977: 176-77; Jackson 1970: 158
13. Jackson 1970: 158
14. Brown and Cook 1974: 49
15. Powrie 1955: 98-104
16. Martin 1974: 431
17. Mackintosh 1964: 40-45; Strange 1954: App. IX; Easterbrook and Aitken 1956: 482-89
18. Mackintosh 1964: 71-81; Strange 1954: App. IX; Easterbrook and Aitken 1956: 489-92
19. Piniuta 1978: 165-78
20. Enlistment was also heavy in other areas where unemployment was high. Brown and Cook (1974: 239) note as follows:

The enthusiasm with which men volunteered for service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force was directly related to employment prospects in Canada. Thousands of men, the young and not-so-young, signed up in 1914 and 1915 not so much from patriotism as because the army offered steady, though hazardous, employment. "Recruits were numerous in districts where employment was scarce", observed the Patriotic Fund. Nor was it mere accident that volunteer recruitment fell off badly in 1916 when, as the Minister of Labour put it, "unemployment has been transformed into a labour shortage continually becoming more acute" and that organized labour supported conscription only with the deepest misgivings. (Footnotes in original omitted)

21. Even in 1921, when wheat prices had peaked at \$2.65/bushel (Fort William), the local farmer with a production of 400 bushels would probably have earned about \$800. The wage for farm labour in the post-World War I years ranged from \$6 - \$8/ day (Labour Statistics, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1919-1925). A 3½ month (105 day) employment on a farm would thus have earned \$630 - \$840 plus board. See also Haythorne 1960: 49-50
22. Furniss 1951: 23-30; Murchie 1974: 70-83. The considerable facilities for settlers in obtaining credit during this period are discussed in Easterbrook 1938: 43-60, 94-157
23. Hayter Reed, Depy. Supt. Gen. of Ind. Aff., Ottawa to E. McColl, Inspector, Ind. Aff. Agencies, Winnipeg, Aug. 6, 1894. RG 10: 7599/10127-3
24. R. Battle, Asst. Depy. Minister to J.E. Charette (Treasury Board), Mar. 17, 1965. RG 10: 8831/577/15-10-6 (Pt.3)
25. Mackintosh 1964: 56
26. Ibid.: 40; Easterbrook and Aitken 1956: 538, 545
27. Mackintosh 1964: 41
28. Easterbrook and Aitken 1956: 534
29. Cole 1938
30. Ibid.; Easterbrook and Aitken 1956: 533, 537
31. Fleming 1957

32. It is unfortunate that adequate quantitative and statistical data about economic conditions during this crucial period in Indian economic history are rather scanty. The Department of Indian Affairs ceased to compile detailed information about economic conditions of Indians at the time of the First World War. The Census of Canada ignored, and continues to ignore Indians, in large measure, in its statistical computations. It is, in fact, only in recent years that the Department of Indian Affairs has begun to gather and collate statistical information concerning Indians in Canada.  
The process of abandonment of farms by Indians during this period is noticeable at Cape Crocker in Ontario also. See de Mille 1971: 156-57, 246-47
33. J. Hodges to Dr. Edmison, Minnedosa, Manitoba, May 30, 1922. RG 10: 7596/10106 Pt. 1
34. Ryan 1976
35. Glendenning 1968; see also Canada, Department of Labour publications dated 1947, 1953, n.d.
36. Field notes
37. Field notes; see also Ellis 1971: 325-29
38. Field notes; Ellis 1971: 308-25
39. Field notes
40. Field notes
41. Many rural histories give biographical sketches of local settlers who "made good" by means of such enterprise. For southwestern Manitoba see, for example, Centennial History Committee, R.M. of Strathclair 1970; Ochre Women's Institute 1970; Russell Women's Institute 1967 McKenzie 1958.
42. loc. cit.
43. The word "savage" (English) and "sauvage" (French) originally meant simply "man of the woods". I am thankful to Prof. Slobodin for this information.
44. Haycock 1971: 1-27. The title of a best-selling novel of the period, focussing on North American Indians, became a popular phrase, as it expressed a prevailing, and somewhat comforting view: this was Zane Grey's "The Vanishing American" (1925). My thanks to Prof. Slobodin for this information.

45. Haycock 1971: 1-27
46. Lithman 1978: 102
47. For example, see Piniuta 1978
48. Avery 1976
49. Yuzyk 1953: 80-112



### SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

1. Cameron (Huron) in DHC, April 15, 1886, pp. 718-746
2. Stanley 1961: vii. George Stanley's 'frontier thesis' needs to be distinguished from the 'frontier thesis' of the famous American historian Frederick Jackson Turner.
3. Stanley 1961: 193
4. loc. cit.
5. Ibid.: vii
6. Ibid.: 238-39
7. Jackson 1970: 126
8. James 1970: 437-39
9. Ibid.: 438-442
10. In the Plains region of the United States Meyer 1967 and Berthrong 1976 are noteworthy studies.
11. The following references, not noted in the bibliography, are described as follows:  
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12. See, for example, Leeds 1968; Perlman 1976; Roberts 1978

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