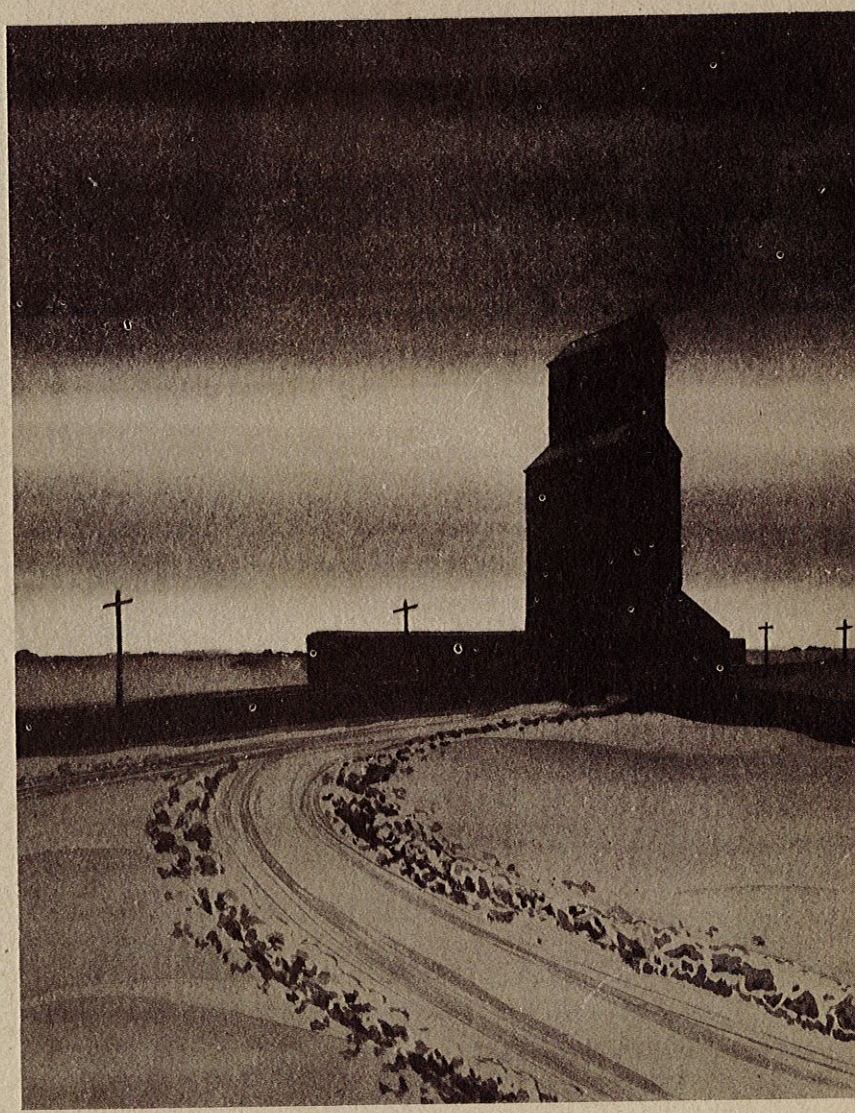
Saskatchewan HISTORY



★ Local Government In the North-West Territories.

BY

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BY

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Local Government in the North-West Territories

I. A Study of the Beginnings of Rural Local Government, 1883-1905

Although the "typical" pioneer is by taste and necessity a sturdy individualist, the history of pioneer communities suggests that he must co-operate if he is to survive. The early Saskatchewan newspapers show abundant evidence of public enterprises carried through by voluntary co-operation. The well-known editor of the *Saskatchewan Herald*,[1] P. G. Laurie, organized (and reported) many community enterprises, and we learn from the *Moosomin Courier* that the inhabitants of the newer southern districts were equally active in such operations as well-digging, the maintenance of cemeteries, public sanitation, public relief, the promotion of medical care, and fire protection.[2] "Three-fourths of the inhabitants belong to committees," said its Qu'Appelle correspondent in 1890.[3] Many permanent voluntary organizations also flourished—churches, boards of trade, agricultural societies, even what may be called "subscription elevators,"[4] to say nothing of every conceivable athletic and cultural club—lacrosse, polo, cricket, dramatics, and music.

However, *laisser faire* in Saskatchewan was more a matter of necessity than choice. No one had any objection to government aid. It was merely a question of which government would aid, how quickly, and how much. Essential services, such as the mounted police, Indian affairs, land surveying, and others, were in the hands of the Dominion Government. Local legislation, including fairly minute regulations for fire protection, stock marking, the running of stock, and weed and disease control, was the province of the Territorial Government. The latter also was responsible for local public works, financed largely from Dominion Government grants.

Yet the Territorial Government, ruling the vast area of the unmeasured plains, could only be termed "local" in comparison to the almost infinitely remote Dominion Government. This fact, combined with the strong local government traditions, of the Anglo-Saxon settlers at least, explains the agitation, reflected in the editorials of the *Saskatchewan Herald* as early as 1880,[5] for the creation of municipalities and school districts as a corrective for the neglect and ignorance which deprived small communities of necessary public works.

The first municipal ordinance was passed in October 1883, and in the following years a number of municipalities were erected by proclamation under this ordinance and by special ordinance. However, only four of these included rural territory—Qu'Appelle, South Qu'Appelle, Wolseley, and Indian Head.[6] These

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1 Published at Battleford, 1878-1938.
2 *Moosomin Courier*, January 15, 1885; June 25, 1885, July 19, 1888; October 25, 1888; May 21, 1891.
3 *Ibid.*, December 18, 1890.
4 *Ibid.*, April 7, 1892.
5 See, for example, the following issues: January 26, 1880; December 10, 1881; January 6, March 17, June 9, August 4, 1883; August 23, 1884.
6 *Proclamations and Orders of the Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.T.*: No. 150, May 1, 1884; No. 169, June 16, 1884; No. 192, August 18, 1884; No. 228, December 27, 1884.

four had an interesting history, but this form of local government was not typical of the period.[7] Their structure proved too elaborate for the still very primitive community life of the plains. It is the purpose of this article to examine the much more rudimentary forms from which our present system of rural municipal government really grew. These were fire districts, representing the most obvious and pressing local problem, and the later statute labour districts, statute labour and fire districts, and local improvement districts, which, in addition to fire prevention, worked mainly on the improvement of roads.

Fire districts were provided for first in 1886.[8] They were to be established by order of the Lieutenant Governor upon the application of a majority of the residents. Their area was to be not less than 36 square miles nor more than 144 square miles. The Lieutenant Governor was authorized to appoint a fire guardian or guardians. The latter were to have "full direction and control of the district for fire protection"[9] and were to apply available funds and labour as they thought best. The original ordinance provided for the assessment of each resident (defined as any male occupant of lands, over eighteen years of age) at the rate of $4.00 a year. The assessment could be commuted by giving services for the benefit of the district. The commutation rate was $1.00 per day for eight hours of labour or $2.00 per day if the person provided a team and implements. An amendment in 1890[10] made non-residents liable for contribution. In 1892[11] the assessment was related to the amount of land owned or occupied: not more than 160 acres, two days' labour; 160-320 acres, three days; 320-640 acres, five days, etc. Male inhabitants between eighteen and sixty, not otherwise assessed, were required to do one day's labour. The labour service could be commuted at $1.50 per day. The overseer (this term replaced that of fire guardian) was given authority to demand that persons assessed should provide horses, oxen, carts, wagons, ploughs, or scrapers, as necessary. For supplying such equipment, the assessed person was credited with two days for each day's service.

Only five fire districts were erected. The first was in the neighbourhood of Sunnymead in the Whitewood Electoral District.[12] It came into existence by an order of the Lieutenant Governor, dated March 24, 1890.[13] Henry William Pollock, James Nicholl Cowan, and Alexander McKenzie were appointed fire guardians. Returns for 1890[14] from two of these guardians showed that about twenty-six miles of firebreak, ten feet wide, had been made by ploughing, partly on road allowances and partly on private land. Unfortunately, a gap of about a half mile had to be left when the assessment turned out to be inadequate. Only $8.00 in cash, from two persons, was received, and of this $6.00 was spent for the required notice of erection in *The North-West Territories Gazette*. Twenty-four persons commuted their assessments. Of these, twenty-one supplied teams as well as their own labour.

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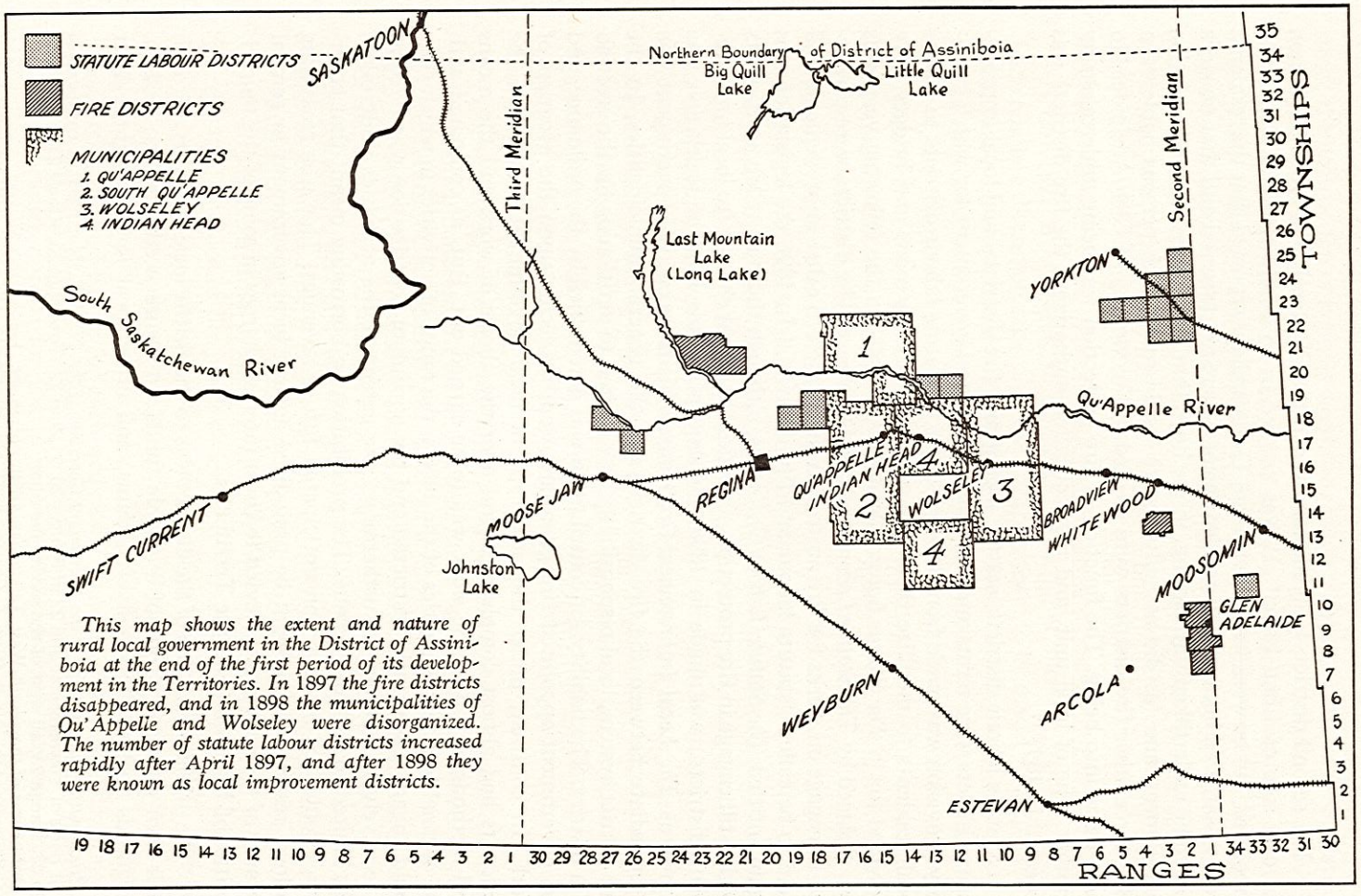
[7] These will be dealt with in detail in a subsequent article.
[8] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1886, No. 11.
[9] *Ibid.*, sec. 6.
[10] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1890, No. 9.
[11] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1891-2, No. 16.
[12] It consisted of parts of Townships 14 and 15, Range 3, and of Township 14, Range 2, all west of the second meridian.
[13] *Proclamations and Orders of the Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.T.*, No. 1301.
[14] *Report on Public Works in the North-West Territories*, 1890, pp. 134-5.



Rural Local Government Units in the District of Assiniboia, N.W.T., January 1, 1897

The second district, Longlaketon, was in the Electoral District of Regina on the east side of Long Lake.[15] It was erected in 1890 and fire guardians were appointed, but no work was undertaken. The guardians reported that the residents were dissatisfied because non-resident owners were not assessed and that no work was to be undertaken until spring, in the hope that amendment of the legislation in the meantime (as did actually occur) would make such persons liable.[16] In 1892 three other fire districts were erected in the vicinity of Glen Adelaide. No more came into being. The function of fire protection was being undertaken by another type of local unit, and the legislation authorizing the fire districts was repealed in 1897.[17]

Statute labour districts, statute labour and fire districts, and local improvement districts were terms applied to a form of local government for which statutory provision was made from 1887 onwards.[18] Statute labour districts to enable local residents to mobilize their resources for work on roads and bridges were provided for in *The Statute Labour Ordinance* of 1887. In the following year, this was replaced by *The Statute Labour and Fire Ordinance*. The districts were permitted to engage on works for fire protection in addition to other improvements and were to be called "statute labour and fire districts." In 1896 the legislation was again entitled *The Statute Labour Ordinance*, although the statute labour districts might still engage in fire protection activities. The final change (to local improvement districts) was made in 1898. Subsequently, this kind of legislation was known as *The Local Improvement Ordinance*. This form of local government was intermediate between the fire districts and the general municipalities. In the fire district system, local responsibility was limited to petitioning for the erection of a district. The liability for contribution was determined by the ordinance, and the government-appointed fire guardians were to decide upon the program of work. In contrast, under the new type of local government institution, the residents had almost complete control over the choice of work and the means and methods by which the work was to be carried out. But, as compared with the original four municipalities of the 1880's, the range of activities in which they could engage was greatly restricted and the maximum contribution was fixed at a relatively low amount. Furthermore, the extent of the activities undertaken was limited to current revenue. The prohibition on borrowing meant that enterprises could not be based on anticipated future revenues. This was reassuring to local residents who might be prejudiced against local government in general because of the heavy taxes levied to cover interest charges in some of the municipalities of Manitoba and the Territories.

The primary function of the district was to enable the local residents, through their own efforts and out of available funds, to secure needed roads, bridges, fireguards (after 1888), culverts, dams, and other local improvements. After

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[15] *Proclamations and Orders of the Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.T.*, No. 1335. It consisted of all or parts of Townships 21 and 22 in Ranges 20, 21, and 22; Township 23, Range 21; and Township 22, Range 23, all west of the second meridian.
[16] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1890, No. 9, sec. 1.
[17] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1897, No. 38, sec. 41.
[18] The legislation pertaining to these districts consists of the following ordinances: 1887, No. 12; 1888 (Revised Ordinances), Chap. 9; 1890, No. 7; 1892, No. 17; 1893, No. 12; 1894, No. 15; 1895, No. 20; 1896, No. 26; 1897, No. 10; 1898, No. 28; 1898 (Consolidated Ordinances), Chap. 73; 1899, Chap. 17; 1901, Chap. 27; 1903 (Second Session), Chap. 24; 1904, Chap. 8.

1895, the destruction of noxious weeds was made mandatory. After 1899, districts were permitted to expend up to $20 for poison for gopher control. The activities were thus quite restricted in range, but essential to the well-being of the rural area. They could not be secured satisfactorily by reliance on voluntary co-operation because completeness in design was essential. One gap in a road to market or in a fireguard might make it almost useless. As the Territorial Government had been practically powerless to meet these small local needs, the new legislation could be most advantageous to any community prepared to make the necessary effort.

Until 1895 an overseer, to be elected at a public meeting of the residents, had complete discretion regarding the improvements to be made.[19] From 1895 to 1903, however, the general administration of these districts was conducted by the ratepayers directly. Provision was made for annual meetings of ratepayers to elect the overseer, and at such meetings the residents were to determine improvements to be made during the year, equipment and supplies to be purchased, and methods by which the work was to be carried out. These meetings also approved the auditor's report, appointed the auditor for the coming year, and dealt with any other relevant business. The policies decided on at the annual meeting were carried out under the supervision of the overseer.[20] This overseer, the single executive officer of the district, made the assessment, notified owners or occupants of their liability, collected taxes paid in cash, called for the labour and equipment of the residents as required for the work of the district, supervised the work, prepared returns required for the annual meeting and for the Territorial Government, and called the annual meeting. He had discretionary powers only in emergencies or when the ratepayers failed to decide on the work to be done. His remuneration was fixed for many years at $2 per day, sometimes up to a maximum amount of $25 or $50. He might nominate a foreman to have actual charge of work being done.

Contributions were assessed on the basis of land owned or occupied, usually with a minimum assessment on able-bodied males not otherwise assessed. For the first ten years the assessment was in terms of days of "statute labour." In 1887, every "resident" was assessed one day. Every owner or occupant of land was assessed as follows: 160 acres or less, two days; 160-320 acres, three days; 320-640 acres, four days; and one day for each additional 640 acres. The statute labour could be commuted by a cash payment. In 1887 the rate of commutation was $1.50 for each day of labour assessed. The rates of assessment and of commutation were altered from time to time. From 1897 the assessment was in the form of a cash levy in place of the previous levy in terms of days of statute labour. The cash levy could be commuted by the rendering of labour services. The rate fixed in 1897 for male residents between eighteen and sixty, not otherwise assessed, was $1.25; owners or occupants of land were assessed $2.50 for the first 160 acres and 62½c for each additional 40 acres. The rate of commutation in that year was one day's work for each $1.25 of assessment. This represented a much heavier burden for the larger farmer—eight days for one section, as opposed to four in 1887. Throughout the whole period the overseer was authorized

[19] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1887, No. 12.
[20] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1895, No. 20.

to require residents to supply wagons, ploughs, and scrapers, with horses or oxen. For this they were allowed to commute at a higher rate, which was usually double the normal rate for a piece of equipment and a pair of horses or oxen. Persons who did not pay their assessment in cash and who wilfully neglected or refused to perform work were liable to fines.

The Territorial Government exercised fairly close supervision over the affairs of the local district. Overseers were required to report details of assessment, collections, and work done. The Government might appoint the overseer if the local residents failed to do so. After 1897 work had to be done in conformity with a manual of instructions supplied by the Government, and the Government might appoint inspectors to see that the work was being properly done and the books properly kept. After 1897 assistance was given in the collection of taxes,[21] and cash grants were made on the basis of days of statute labour worked. As time went on, the overseer performed administrative duties for the Territorial Government, in addition to his local responsibilities. He was appointed, *ex officio*, a fire guardian (after 1894) and a weed inspector (after 1896), and from 1899 he was required to enforce the public health and fire protection provisions of *The Village Ordinance* in any hamlets within his district.

Until 1896 districts could be constituted by the Lieutenant Governor unless, after notice had been duly given, a majority of residents petitioned against the erection of a district.[22] During 1888-9 applications were made for the establishment of districts in the neighbourhood of Calgary, Red Deer Hill, Pheasant Forks and Elmore (Souris District). The required notices were posted, but petitions signed by a majority of the residents of each area, objecting to the erection of districts, were received and no further action was taken.[23] The first district came into existence by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor, dated March 17, 1890.[24] It consisted of Townships 19 in Ranges 17 and 18 and a portion of Township 20 in Range 17, all west of the second meridian, an area a short distance north-east of Regina. The second district, near Edmonton (Township 53, Range 22, west of the fourth meridian), was proclaimed in 1893. From April 1894 through 1896, there was a steady stream of new districts. During this period, fifty-seven districts were erected, and at the end of 1896 fifty-five of these were still in existence.[25] The legislation in that year[26] permitted the Lieutenant Governor to establish as a district any township containing twelve residents, regardless of the wishes of the community. Advantage was taken of this by the newly formed Department of Public Works, which administered the legislation,

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[21] The Department of Public Works undertook the collection of overdue taxes as reported by the district overseers. The Department paid the amount of the arrears to the local district and, if the taxes were not paid within a specified period, the lands involved were forfeited to the Crown. Many advantages were claimed for this system. It stabilized district revenues and did away with difficulties involved in tax sales. It simplified the problem of collecting from individuals or corporations owning large amounts of land, scattered throughout many districts, as the total tax obligation could be discharged by a single payment to the Department. See *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works of the North-West Territories*, 1901, pp. 129-136.

[22] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1887, No. 12, secs. 2 and 3.

[23] *Report on Public Works in the North-West Territories*, 1889, pp. 39-40.

[24] *Proclamations and Orders of the Lieutenant Governor of the N.W.T.*, No. 1298.

[25] *The North-West Territories Gazette*, April 2, 1897.

[26] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1896, No. 26.

with the result that the number of districts increased as shown in the following table.[27]

		No. of Districts
Organized (voluntarily),	1890-6	57
" (compulsorily),	1897	181
" "	1898	178
" "	1899	32
" "	1900	33
" "	1901	12
" (by subdivision)	1902	2
		495
Disorganized for various reasons		39
In operation in 1903		456

These districts of one township were described as "small" districts. This distinguished them from "large local improvement districts" provided for first in 1899 by an amendment to *The Local Improvement Ordinance*.[28] The latter are not treated in this article, as they were not true units of local government, but merely administrative units erected by the Territorial Government, which collected the levies and carried out the improvements.

Fortunately, a number of details are available concerning the activities of the first statute labour and fire district in its early months of operation.[29] Between the proclamation of the district in March 1890 and the 6th of July following, an overseer was elected, the assessment roll prepared, and a considerable amount of work accomplished. This consisted of constructing a firebreak around the boundaries and through the centre of the district. It was about fifty miles in length and utilized the whole width of the road allowance. Labour was assigned to laying it out, clearing bush, and ploughing, as well as to other tasks. Some persons failed to perform duties assigned to them, and as a consequence gaps were left in the fireguard. To ensure its completion, the Member of the Territorial Assembly for the Electoral District of North Regina made a grant out of the "Aid to Districts" funds at his disposal.[30] One hundred and two persons were assessed for a total of 249½ days. The Hudson's Bay Company commuted its 7½ days at $1.50 per day. Fourteen persons, assessed for a total of thirty-five days' work, had neither performed their statute labour nor commuted, at the time the overseer reported. Some were over sixty years of age, some had agreed to work out their assessment later, some had left the district, and others had failed to make any settlement. The cash expenditure in connection with the completion of the fireguard, expenses of erection, election, assessment, and miscellaneous items was $129.40. As the only cash receipts were the $11.25

[27] *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works of the North-West Territories*, 1903, p. 88.
[28] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1899, Chap. 17, sec. 14.
[29] *Report on Public Works in the North-West Territories*, 1890, pp. 15-16, 129-133.
[30] The Territorial Government allocated funds for local improvements in each of the electoral districts of the Territories. These expenditures were described as the "Aid to Districts" and were used as recommended by the Member of the Assembly for the district.

received from the Hudson's Bay Company, there was a deficit of $118.15, all of which was covered by grant from the Territorial Government.

Several record books containing minutes and accounts of a number of districts erected in 1897 and 1898 have been preserved.[31] The records of three of these districts cover the period 1898-1903. They are Local Improvement Districts 180, 188, and 270, situated near Arcola in the extreme south-east portion of the Territories.[32] What was apparently the first annual meeting of L.I.D. No. 180 was held in Carlyle on March 15, 1898. Subsequent annual meetings were held in the school house in the district. The order of business at this first meeting was: election of a chairman, Samuel McGurk; election of an auditor, Harvey McNeil; designation of the improvements to be made that year; empowering the overseer to purchase four two-horse road scrapers for the use of the district; and passing a motion that the owner of any plough used on road work should be recompensed at the rate of thirty cents per day to cover the cost of having the ploughshares resharpened. No mention is made in the minutes of an overseer having been elected at this meeting, although W. R. Jefferson is reported elsewhere as the overseer in that year.[33] Minutes of subsequent meetings of this district do record the election of an overseer. In some years more than one was nominated, and a vote had to be taken. The order of business at these subsequent meetings followed the same general order with the addition of the reading of minutes of the previous meeting and the reading of the auditor's report. Other business dealt with included the borrowing of a grading machine from the Department of Public Works, expenditure on gopher poison, voting on the question of work being done by day labour or by contract, and voting on the question of abolition of commutation of assessment by rendering labour services.

The overseers were called upon to undertake a variety of jobs in managing district affairs. The account of the overseer, Henry McCartney, of L.I.D. No. 188 for 1901 was as follows: assessing district ($2), posting notices and calling

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[31] The records, which are in the office of the secretary-treasurer of the Rural Municipality of Brock No. 64 at Kisbey, Sask., are available on microfilm in the Saskatchewan Archives.

[32] At the time of their constitution, the term "Statute Labour District" was still in use; the change to "Local Improvement District" was made late in 1898. They will be referred to hereafter in this article as "L.I.D."

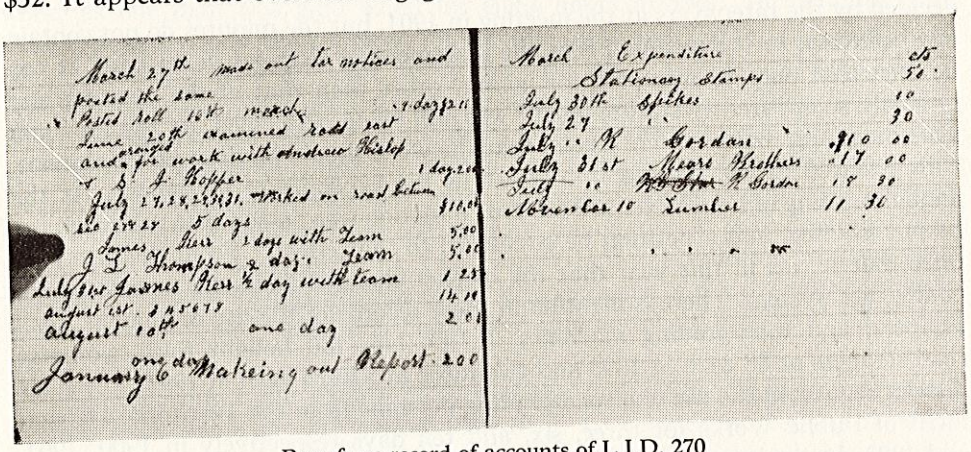
The areas, dates of formation, and first returning officers for L.I.D.'s No. 180, 188, and 270 were respectively: No. 180—Tp. 7, R. 4, W. of 2nd, formed June 4, 1897, Sandford McNeil of Clare, Assiniboia; No. 188—Tp. 7, R. 6, W. of 2nd, formed June 4, 1897, Henry McCartney of Coteau; No. 270—Tp. 8, R. 4, W. of 2nd, formed February 2, 1898, William Hislop, Clare Post Office. See *The North-West Territories Gazette*, June 15, 1897, p. 6, and February 15, 1898, p.7.

Of the three districts, the records of L.I.D. No. 180 are the most complete. The minutes of the annual meetings and the accounts are entered in the same book and run without gaps or omissions from 1898 to 1903, inclusive. For L.I.D. No. 188, only the accounts (from February 1899 to May 1904) have been found; the book in which they appear also contains the postage record of a later L.I.D., No. 4-C-2. The minutes and accounts of L.I.D. No. 270 are fragmentary. There are no minutes of annual meetings which may have been held in 1898, 1901, and 1902, and the accounts for 1898 and 1901 are missing.

The nature of the records varies, of course, with the skill of the overseer in record-keeping. Undated entries, unnumbered pages, incorrect spelling, ambiguities, and poor handwriting occur. On the whole, however, the books of these three districts were well kept. One error has been noted in the accounts of L.I.D. No. 180. It appears that a wrong balance was carried forward in 1900 and hence the overseer in that year, W. R. Jefferson, was held responsible for $7.85 more than he should have been. It can easily be imagined that he did not keep the district funds separate from his private funds and would be quite prepared to accept the auditor's statement of his obligation.

[33] *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works, North-West Territories*, 1898, p. 76.

annual meeting ($2), serving notices to do work (1½ days—$3), overseeing the work (8 days—$16), measuring grades ($2), making out annual report ($2), and taking books to auditor ($2). Another typical example is the account of the overseer of L.I.D. No. 270 for 1903 (apparently), who "posted [assessment] roll" on March 16, "made out tax notices and posted the same" on March 27, "examined road east and aranged [*sic*] for work with Andrew Hislop and S. J. Hopper" on June 20, worked on the road himself a total of thirteen days in July and August, and finally made out his report on January 26, 1904, for all of which he received $32. It appears that overseers engaged in the actual work as well as supervising



Page from record of accounts of L.I.D. 270

it. Thus Sandford McNeil, overseer of L.I.D. No. 180 in 1903 is credited with $24 for seven days' work grading across a slough, and the overseer of L.I.D. No. 270 for 1902 was paid $6 for three days' work in destroying weeds as well as $38 for nineteen days of "road work." Although at most of the annual meetings the work to be done was determined by vote of the ratepayers present, at the meeting of L.I.D. No. 270 on January 31, 1903, a motion was passed that the overseer was to decide where the work was to be done.

In each of the three districts for which records remain, the bulk of the work undertaken was the improvement of roads. Much grading was done and wooden box culverts were put in. Bridges were built and repaired. There are references to the repairing of a stone abutment to a bridge and purchases of timber and planks. Presumably the filling of sloughs was to avoid having detours in the roads. The only specific reference to the total amount of work done is in the records of L.I.D. No. 270, where reference is made to fourteen miles of road having been graded. In certain cases the undertaking of a specific project was made contingent upon the statute labour assessment being adequate. In addition to the road work, there are several references to the destroying of weeds, and each of the districts voted funds for buying gopher poison, although not in every year. The vote in each case was for $20, the maximum permitted by the ordinance.[34]

It appears that, in the early years of the above districts, most of the work was done by statute labour, but that in the later years the privilege of commuta-

[34] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1899, Chap. 17, sec. 13.

tion was abolished and the labour and other services required were paid for in cash. This policy was encouraged by the Department of Public Works. In 1899 it was provided that commutation could be abolished in any district on a petition of two-thirds of the ratepayers.[35] The Department favoured the abolition of the commutation privilege on the ground that it was more efficient to collect cash and engage fully qualified labourers. The districts, however, were slow to change.[36] At the annual meetings of L.I.D. No. 180 in 1898, 1899, and 1900, the motions dealing with work to be done also specified the individuals who were to do the work in commutation of their assessment. The work to be done was decided by the ratepayers at the meeting in 1901, but the minutes do not contain any reference to the means. From the statement of finances given later, it can be seen that only $3 was paid for labour, other than that of the overseer and foreman, so apparently statute labour was still being performed. At the 1902 and 1903 meetings, motions were passed that the work should be done by day labour. This resulted in the noticeable increase in the expenditure for labour. At the annual meeting of L.I.D. No. 270 for 1903 a motion was passed that "the cash tax be put in effect and a petition be circulated to that effect." From this one may infer that it was in this year that the district changed from the statute labour to the cash system. There is mention in these records of the use of ploughs, road scrapers, and road-grading machines. L.I.D. No. 180 bought four two-horse road scrapers at $8 each in 1898 and two more at $10.75 each in 1902. The same district requested the use of a road-grading machine from the Territorial Department of Public Works for three, six, and ten days respectively in 1900, 1901, and 1902. In the later years, when work was paid for in cash, there are frequent references to the hiring of a man and a team. From the records of these districts it appears that a more efficient system of carrying out local improvements was evolving. Hired labour replaced "statute labour" and more use was made of mechanized equipment.

The operations of L.I.D. No. 180 have been reconstructed from the surviving accounts and minutes and summarized in the following table:

Financial Statement of L.I.D No. 180

	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
Receipts						
Assessment paid in cash	$ 22.50	$ 43.75	$ 62.50	$ 25.00	$ 182.50	$ 75.00
Received from Dept of Public Works	5.25	16.00		13.50	15.25	4.50
Miscellaneous	5.55					1.70
	33.30	59.75	62.50	38.50	197.75	81.20
Expenses						
Overseer's account	11.00	14.00	16.50	25.00	23.85	46.25
Foreman's account	1.50	6.50	15.00	10.00	2.50	
Auditor		5.00	5.00	2.50	3.00	6.00
Labour on roads, bridges, etc.				3.00	45.80	32.75
Lumber, hardware, etc.			6.10	10.95	25.09	31.14
Gopher poison				20.00	20.00	17.50
Postage, stationery, etc.	1.21	1.19	.62	.16	1.74	2.02
Road scrapers	32.00				21.50	
	45.71	26.69	43.22	71.61	143.48	135.66

[35] *Ibid.*, sec. 11.

[36] *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works, North-West Territories*, 1898, pp. 83-4.

This gives a reasonably clear picture of the affairs of this district. The total amount of cash handled was small, even after the abolition of the commutation of assessment. It must be remembered, however, that we are dealing with an area of only thirty-six square miles. The usual wage of the overseer in this and other districts was $2 per day, whether engaged on business or in supervising work. Foremen usually received the same rate. Most of the other rates given in the accounts are for a man and team. For such services, L.I.D. No. 180 seems usually to have paid $3.50 per day in 1902 and 1903. This was apparently for ten hours' work, as one man was paid $2.80 for eight hours in 1902. Incidentally, this man apparently paid the overseer 25c for one meal and 70c for two bushels of oats, presumably received while he was on that job. L.I.D. No. 270 paid $2.50 per day for a man and team on one occasion. A certain W. Ellis (perhaps a skilled workman) was paid $3 for one day's work repairing a stone abutment and approach to a bridge in L.I.D. No. 180 in 1901. The amounts received from the Department of Public Works were partly grants to help cover the cost of road work and partly arrears of taxes collected for the district. It is to be noted that, in the first year of operations of L.I.D. No. 180, the expenditures exceeded cash receipts. This was possible because of the non-payment of the overseer's account and some small sundry accounts. These were paid out of the cash received during the next year.

The following table gives a picture of the work of the local improvement districts as a whole for the period 1898-1903. It is based on reports received from overseers and covers a large proportion of the districts existing in each year.

Work accomplished by Local Improvement Districts[37]

	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
Days worked in commutation of taxes	24,447	36,634	42,625	53,171	52,862	62,650
Miles of road graded	488	572	610	598	509	657
Miles of road cleared	272	672	477	567	422	426
Miles of fireguard ploughed	982	1,307	1,164	940	682	547
Bridges built	50	131	183	239	308	281
Bridges repaired	78	139	158	225	303	256
Culverts built	187	444	903	1,213	2,051	1,713
Culverts repaired	74	159	259	341	671	803
Dams built	12	28	34	34	56	32
Dams repaired	29	62	59	71	114	82
Holes, old wells, sloughs, etc., filled	820	1,828	2,245	2,595	4,233	3,224
Yards of corduroy completed	1,977	3,817	16,448	36,384	68,120	46,319
Average amount paid overseer for assessing and overseeing	$23.56	$23.92	$27.43	$31.80	$34.08	$42.69
Amount collected by overseers for taxes (largely payments by companies and non-resident land owners)	$10,373.15	$14,867.93	$20,336.62	$26,614.84	$39,447.67	$29,416.13

The steady and substantial expansion in the activities of local improvement districts was interpreted by the Department of Public Works as justification of

[37] *Annual Reports of the Department of Public Works, North-West Territories*, for the six years 1898 to 1903.

its policy of using compulsion to bring about their organization. At first there had been criticism of the policy and assertions that the settlers would make little or no effort to comply with the provisions of the ordinance.[38] It was charged that road improvement was unnecessary in many districts or that, if it were required, it should be the responsibility of the Territorial Government. The Department's reply was that if no road work was needed a district could use its taxes and labour for other desirable improvements, such as fireguards, bridges, and dams. Furthermore, the Territorial Government's limited resources had to be used to complete the large bridges and other works of a distinctly public character, and so it was not able financially to provide "these smaller works or repairs which should properly be undertaken by the people themselves . . ."[39] Another criticism was that a system of superintendence by local overseers would be wasteful, and the Department admitted this was a real difficulty. It pointed out that it was attempting to deal with it by requiring that the work should be done in accordance with a manual of instructions and that it was making available road-grading machines accompanied by expert foremen. The Department's criticism of the commutation privilege has already been explained, but responsibility for abolishing it rested with the districts. As late as 1901, a survey showed that fewer than a quarter of the districts were in favour of having the privilege withdrawn.[40] The opposition appears to have lessened in the following years, and after 1903 commutation by giving labour services was no longer permitted.[41]

Almost at the end of the period of Territorial Government there was a comprehensive reorganization of the local improvement district system. The new districts were to be much larger than the old. An ordinance passed in 1903[42] required that, from January 1, 1904, districts should be not less than 108 square miles and not more than 216 square miles in area. More important still was the introduction of representative government, no doubt rendered desirable, if not essential, by the larger unit. No longer were decisions about the district's affairs to be made at an annual meeting of ratepayers. Instead, the owners or occupants were to elect a council composed of not fewer than three members nor more than six. These councillors were to meet regularly and decide upon the public works necessary for the district. They were authorized to appoint a secretary-treasurer and such other officers as they saw fit. The revenue required for the district's activities was to be secured by a cash levy on land. Assessment was to be not less than 1¼c and not more than 5c per acre. The assessment could no longer be commuted by labour services.

The enlarged districts were constituted by a series of orders-in-council beginning on February 8, 1904.[43] They were given numbers, 1-A-1, 4-C-2, etc., according to a system based on their location. In the great majority of cases they were composed of four townships (144 square miles). The Department of Public Works appears to have been well satisfied with the reorganization. The larger size of the unit would make possible greater efficiency in carrying out

[38] *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works, North-West Territories*, 1899, pp. 36-7.
[39] *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works, North-West Territories*, 1898, pp. 83-4.
[40] *Annual Report of the Department of Public Works, North-West Territories*, 1903, pp. 88-9.
[41] *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, 1903 (2nd Sess.), Chap. 24.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *The North-West Territories Gazette*, February 29, 1904.

local improvements, and the abolition of commutation would eliminate the disadvantages associated with having the work done by statute labour. It reported that the new system was popular with ratepayers and that it augured well for the future. "These districts, forming as they do the nucleus of a municipal system, give the people of the province an opportunity to learn the features which should be retained or eliminated when the change to municipalities comes."[44]

A. N. REID

NOTE—This article is based on rather fragmentary sources. Many records disappeared as these early government units lost their identity in successive reorganizations. It is thought, however, that some records may have been preserved. Those used in this article were found in the offices of present-day municipalities. Other municipal offices may also have such records. Some may be in the possession of the families of former overseers, councillors, secretaries of school districts, etc. The Saskatchewan Archives Office is interested in securing such materials for deposit or for microfilming. If any readers of this magazine are aware of the existence of any such papers or have personal knowledge of the workings of these organizations, they are urgently requested to write to:

OFFICE OF THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES
Box 100, University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Sask.

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[44] *Reports of the Department of Public Works for the four months ended December* 31, 1905, *and the fourteen months ended February* 28, 1907, [Saskatchewan] 1908, p. 42.

ARCHIVAL STUDIES

The Territorial Public Service

If any group of persons ever merited the title "the silent service," it is the employees of the Government of the North-West Territories. The names and careers of many of the lieutenant governors and members of the Assembly have been perpetuated in the names of schools, streets and towns across the prairies, but of the public service little is known today. True, A. E. Forget began his career as Clerk of the North-West Council and ultimately became the last Lieutenant Governor of the Territories and the first of Saskatchewan, but his case was unique among employees of the Territorial Government. Others gave no less faithful and effective service, but their very existence has been almost forgotten. The documents here printed for the first time reveal something of this branch of the North-West Government, and perhaps may stir some friend, associate, or descendant to add his reminiscences to the all too scanty store of information.

The public service of the Territories may be said to have been inaugurated in November 1872, with the appointment of William Thorton Urquhart as Clerk of the North-West Council. This was during the period when the seat of government of the Territories was located in Winnipeg (1870-76) and the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba acted as Lieutenant Governor of the Territories. When the Council was not in session, the Clerk acted as the Lieutenant Governor's secretary or assistant for the conduct of territorial business. At about the same time the Lieutenant Governor was provided with a part-time legal adviser, who seems to have combined the functions of an attorney general and a legislative counsel.

These two officers were the only members of the "inside service," with the exception of part-time casual labour for such work as copying, engrossing, and translating, while the capital was at Winnipeg, Livingstone (Swan River Barracks), and Battleford. With the removal of the capital to Regina in 1883 came the appointment of the first assistant clerk in the Lieutenant Governor's Office, where all the business of the North-West Government was transacted. By this time the ordinances of the North-West Council were imposing important administrative duties on the Lieutenant Governor's Office. "My present staff for North-West Government work," Governor Dewdney remarked in 1884, "consists of the Clerk of the Council [A. E. Forget] and the Assistant just mentioned [L. O. Bourget]. Although both efficient and willing officers, I fear that a third clerk will have to be added before long."[1]

As the activities of the Lieutenant Governor's Office increased, the public service expanded. Three years after Dewdney's statement, the full-time personnel was as follows:[2]

[1] Annual Report of the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories for the year 1883, in Annual Report of the Department of the Interior, 1883, *Canada, Sessional Papers*, 1884, Paper No. 12, Part IV, p. 8.

[2] Lieutenant Governor E. Dewdney to P. B. Douglas, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, January 24, 1888, in Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, File No. 147888, transcript in the Archives of Saskatchewan.

Clerk of the Council: Amédée Emmanuel Forget.

Chief Clerk: Robert Bell Gordon.

Assistant Clerks: Charles Lethbridge, John McLachlan, Reginald Deane, Thomas Brown.

Accountant: Louis Octave Bourget.

Assistant Accountant: James Colledge Pope.

Secretary of the Board of Education: James Brown

Librarian: Henry Fisher.

Caretakers: Guillaume Gaffie, Edward Tennant.

Messenger at Government House: Francis Coventry.

With the exception of the Clerk of the Council, who was named by the Dominion Government, the Lieutenant Governor appointed all these employees and fixed their salaries. But when the Legislative Assembly (established in 1888) began its struggle to control the Dominion grant for the expenses of government in the Territories, the end of the Lieutenant Governor's power over the public service was in sight. Governor Royal feared that this change might affect the security of North-West Government employees, and sought to enlist the aid of the Dominion authorities in preventing dismissals. "While I have no reason to imagine that the Staff would be likely to suffer by reason of the transfer of this item to the Legislative Assembly," he wrote to the Minister of the Interior, "it must be remembered that the tendency of all newly created bodies is immediately to look around for opportunities of effecting radical changes and often, in the hope of obtaining credit for economy, to sacrifice efficiency for the sake of cutting down expenses."[3] When the Dominion Government placed financial control over a number of matters of local concern, including the public service of the Territories, in the hands of the Legislative Assembly during 1891 and 1892, Dewdney, then Minister of the Interior, wrote to Haultain as head of the Executive Committee of the Assembly, saying that he was confident that the Committee would deal justly with the employees whom they found in office. The Committee acted in accordance with this expectation, and confirmed the appointments.

With respect to the internal organization of this inside service, it is important to note that there were no departments in the true sense of the word until 1897, when full responsible government was conferred on the Territories, and the public service was organized into departments, each headed by one of the Lieutenant Governor's responsible advisers. However, the term "department" was frequently used before 1897 to refer to an office where a group of employees performed specialized duties, e.g., accounting, education, public works, but these "departments" were merely convenient subdivisions of a single administrative

[3] Lieutenant Governor J. Royal to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, July 11, 1892 in Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, File No. 284083, transcript in the Archives of Saskatchewan. Very probably this fear of dismissals under the new regime, coupled with the desire of the Department of the Interior to exercise closer control over the Lieutenant Governor, explains the confirmation of his appointments by Dominion Order in Council of January 26, 1891. See Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, File No. 242756, transcript in Archives of Saskatchewan.

unit, controlled first by the Lieutenant Governor, and then from 1892 to 1897 by the Executive Committee as a whole.[4]

LEWIS H. THOMAS

DOCUMENTS

Minute of the Executive Committee[5]

Regina
6th September 1892

The Executive Committee recommend that the undermentioned officers employed by the North West Government, whose salaries are paid out of that portion of the Parliamentary appropriation for the Territories, which has been transferred to the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly, be confirmed in their respective positions and at the following salaries:—

L. O. Bourget, Accountant	$1950.00
James Brown, Secy. Board of Education	1800.00
J. C. Pope, Chief License Inspector and Assistant Accountant	1500.00
Thos. Brown, in charge Public Works	1500.00
C. A. W. Lethbridge, Clerk	900.00
A. B. Deane, Clerk	720.00
W. J. Chaffey, Clerk	720.00
J. McLachlan, Clerk	720.00
C. W. Peters, Clerk	720.00
A. Bourget, Clerk	720.00

The Committee also recommend the following for employment on the permanent staff in lieu of their present temporary engagement at the following salaries:—

D. Brown, [Clerk]	$ 720.00
C. M. Clark, Clerk	720.00
V. Dodd, Clerk	720.00
Mrs. Kate Hayes, Librarian	720.00
Mrs. [E. F.] Grover, Clerk	600.00

The Committee submit the above for Your Honor's approval.

H. S. CAYLEY
of the Executive Committee

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[4] It should be noted that from 1892 until 1897 the Lieutenant Governor continued to exercise a number of important administrative duties, requiring a staff of several employees who were not under the control of the Executive Committee.

[5] This document and the ones that follow are from the files of Orders in Council in the office of the Clerk of the Executive Council of the Province of Saskatchewan; microfilm copies are available in the Archives of Saskatchewan.

Executive Committee

Thursday, 8th September, 1892.

The Executive Committee recommend the following regulations for observance by the staff employed in the North-West Government Offices, whose salaries are paid out of that portion of the Parliamentary appropriation for the Territories, which has been transferred to the Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly:

Office hours: 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
1.45 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

In case of pressure of business, these hours to be liable to extension and no day's work to be left unfinished at 4.30 p.m.

The Attendance Book to be removed at 9.30 a.m. and the absence of any signature required to be explained in writing.

Absence through leave or sickness to be noted in the Attendance Book.

The Committee submit the above for your Honor's approval.

H. S. CAYLEY
of the Executive Committee

O/C 2
Ref. 21. /97-8

Approved,
C. H. MACKINTOSH:—
Lieutenant Governor.

Regina, Friday, October 8, 1897.

Upon a report, bearing even date, by Mr. F. W. G. Haultain, a Member of the Executive Council, stating that the organisation of Departments of the public service of the Territories having been approved and authorised by Order in Council,[6] it is necessary to provide, for the proper performance of the work of each Department, such clerical staffs as are required;

Mr. Haultain recommends that the following disposition of the clerks and other employees in the service of the North-West Government be made, namely:

Office of the Executive Council, presided over by the Attorney General.—Clerk of Council, John Alexander Reid; Assistant, Frederick Stuart Pingle;

Department of the Attorney General—Work to be performed by clerical staff of the Executive Council, with assistance of Victor Dodd as Clerk in Charge of Licence Branch;

[6] This organization of departments by order in council was essentially a temporary measure following the advent of responsible government on October 1, 1897. When the Assembly met towards the end of the year, a number of ordinances were passed establishing departments and defining their functions.

Department of the Territorial Secretary of State, presided over by the Commissioner of Public Works—Assistant Secretary, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Department of the Treasury, presided over by the Attorney General—Acting Deputy, John Alexander Reid; Accountant, Charles Wentworth Peters; Assistants, Charles Maurice Clarke and Arthur Bourget; Audit Branch,—Auditor, James Colledge Pope; Assistant, John Alexander McLachlan.

Department of Public Works—Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer, John Stoughton Dennis, D.T.S.; Assistants, Samuel Padfield Chivers-Wilson, Daniel Brown and Mrs. Etta Frances Grover;

Department of Agriculture, presided over by the Commissioner of Public Works—Work to be performed by the clerical staff of the Territorial Secretary assisted by Victor Dodd in charge of Hospitals Branch;

Department of Public Instruction, presided over by the Attorney General—Secretary to Department and Council of Public Instruction, Edward James Wright; Assistants, James Brown, Charles Anthony Watts Lethbridge and John Alexander McLachlan; Technical Branch, Superintendent of Education, David James Goggin, Inspectors, John Hewgill, James Flett, B.D., William Rothwell, B.A., James Alexander Calder, B.A., and Thomas Edwin Perrett, B.A.;

The Offices of the Legislative Assembly, under supervision of the Territorial Secretary—Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Robert Bell Gordon; Clerk in charge of Legislative Library, Mrs. Kate Hayes;

Caretakers, Robert Edward Tennant, Charles Blackley (to act as Messenger in south building) and George Collier (to act as Messenger in north building).

The Executive Council submits the above recommendations for your Honour's approval.

F. W. G. HAULTAIN
Chairman.

TEACHERS' SECTION

Indian Treaties and the Settlement of the North-West[1]

THE westward march of the white man across the continent of North America during the nineteenth century is one of the most dramatic chapters in the long story of human migration over the face of the earth. It was not, as is sometimes assumed, a North American phenomenon merely. Rather it should be considered in a larger context, as a phase in the expansion of Europe overseas, as an aspect of the dynamic force of Western civilization in its remarkable physical conquest of the world. When Horace Greeley uttered his famous advice, "Go West, young man," the response came not from his fellow-countrymen alone. The vast western domain of the continent was a magnet exerting an almost irresistible attraction for European immigrants and native North Americans alike. It was a new Promised Land offering hope of peace, freedom and prosperity.

In westward expansion, as in virtually every other respect, British North America lagged behind the United States. The reasons for this are well known and need not be dealt with here in any detail. The hostility of the Hudson's Bay Company which, as a fur trading enterprise, was not unnaturally opposed to the spread of settlement within its territories was a factor of great importance. So was the difficulty of establishing communications between Canada and the North-West, separated as they were by the wilderness of the Pre-Cambrian Shield. And there was room for doubt whether the small province of Canada by itself possessed sufficient resources to develop and govern and defend a distant empire of such tremendous proportions. In part the union of the British North American provinces in 1867 was designed to overcome these obstacles to westward expansion. Of the various forces which happened to coincide in the 1860's to produce Confederation, not the least was the fear that unless decisive and united action were taken, the North-West would be lost to the United States through the inexorable pressure of advancing American settlement. The acquisition of the North-West by the Dominion of Canada and its settlement by British subjects were necessary measures if Canada was to possess, in the words of the psalmist which Canadian patriots piously quoted, "dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

The North-West was, of course, acquired by Canada in 1870 when the Hudson's Bay Company relinquished its title in return for certain considerations, chief of which was the cash payment of £300,000. The Dominion now found itself faced with the responsibility of organizing and settling its huge new empire. A railway had to be built, some scheme of granting land had to be devised, some system of government had to be established. And, as was recognized from the beginning, it was not enough to have extinguished the title of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Indians of the North-West had certain claims in the region as

[1] It is hoped that this article will provide some useful information for teachers of the Grade IX Social Studies course. The chief source used in its preparation was Geographic Board of Canada, *Handbook of Indians in Canada* (Ottawa, 1913).

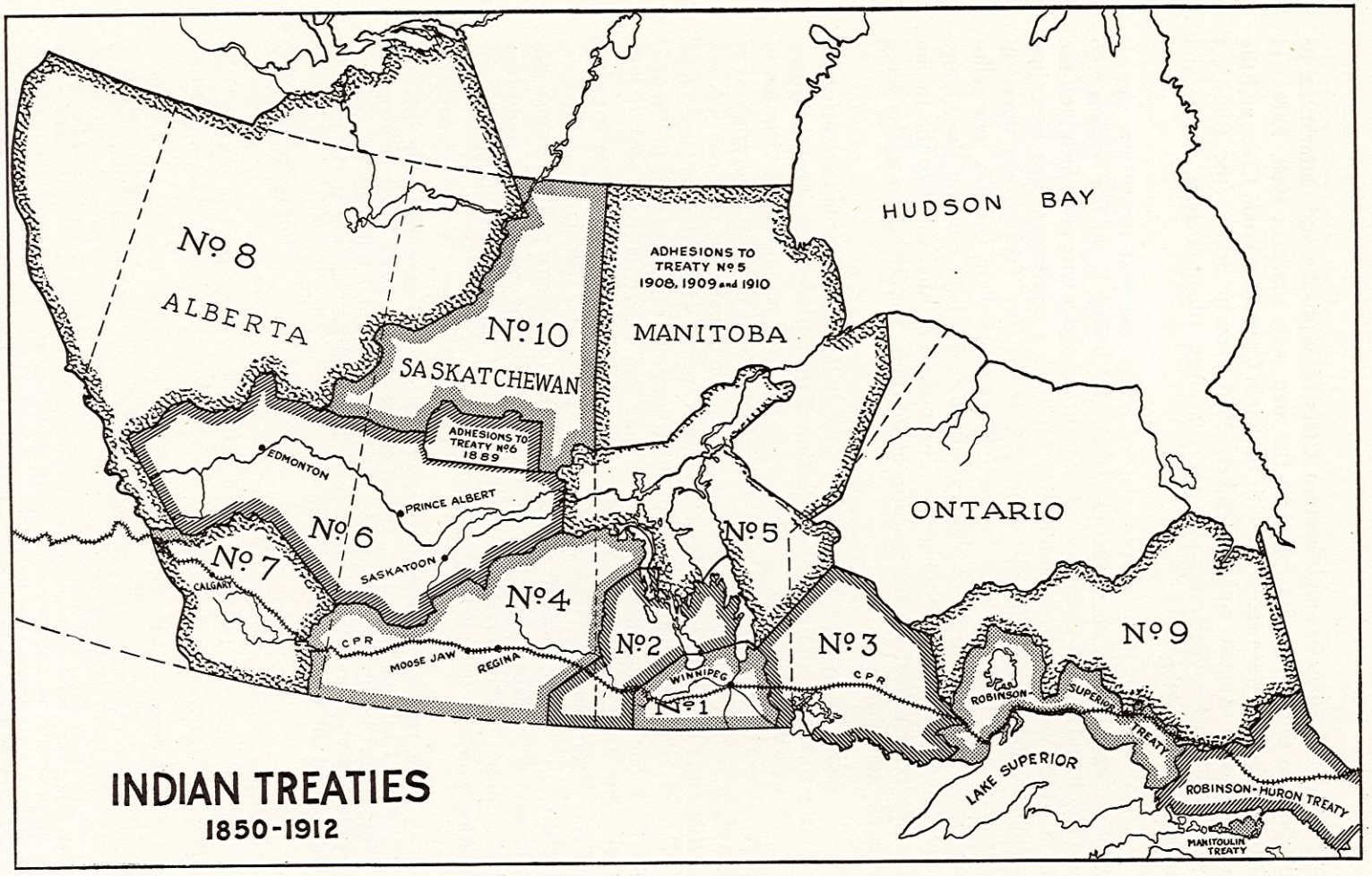
well, which would have to be met before a policy of white settlement could be put into operation.

The Proclamation of 1763, which has been called "The Magna Charta of all the Indians of Canada," laid down the general principle "that no Indian could be dispossessed of his lands without his consent and the consent of the Crown . . ."[2] Thus when the North-West was incorporated into the Dominion of Canada it was well understood that treaties would have to be negotiated with the Indians before settlement on a large scale could take place. The responsibility of administering Indian affairs and hence of conducting these negotiations was placed upon the Dominion government by the British North America Act, 1867 (section 91, subsection 24). In all there have been ten treaties between the Dominion and the Indians since Confederation. Each, of course, provided for the cession by the Indians to the Crown of a large area of land and these cessions are shown on the accompanying map. All the treaties contain the same general provisions, though they differ in detail. The Indians agreed to obey the laws of the country, to keep the peace between themselves and the white men and between themselves and other Indians, and to honor the conditions of the treaty. More specific obligations were in each case imposed upon the Crown. Reserves, generally to the extent of one square mile for each family of five, were to be set aside for the exclusive use of the Indians. Annuities, usually of $5, were to be paid to each man, woman and child, with an additional annual payment of $20 to each chief and $10 to each councillor or headman. A cash gratuity was paid to every member of the tribes concerned at the time each treaty was signed. Finally it was stipulated that the Dominion should establish schools on the reserves, pay annually a sum for the purchase of ammunition and twine for nets, and provide agricultural implements and tools at a certain ratio to the Indian population.

Treaty Number One (the Stone Fort Treaty) was concluded with the Chippewas and Swampy Crees of Manitoba in August, 1871. It was made necessary by unrest among these tribes which came to a head during the Red River Rebellion of 1870. The Indians, disturbed by the growth of settlement, repudiated a treaty which their ancestors had made with Lord Selkirk in 1811 by which a tract of land along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers had been surrendered, and began to interfere with surveyors and settlers. The immediate necessity of satisfying the Indians in order to make Manitoba safe for settlement thus led to this first treaty after Confederation.

It was followed almost immediately by Treaty Number Two (the Manitoba Post Treaty) with the Chippewas, also negotiated in August, 1871. During the 1870's five other important Indian treaties were signed. Number Three (the North-West Angle Treaty) of October, 1873 secured a valuable section of northwestern Ontario from the Chippewas, an area through which the projected Pacific railway would pass. Number Four (the Qu'Appelle Treaty) of September, 1874 extinguished the title of the Crees and Chippewas of the plains to the highly desirable agricultural area comprising chiefly what is now southern Saskatchewan. Treaty Five (the Winnipeg Treaty) was concluded in September,

[2] T. R. L. MacInnes, "The History and Policies of Indian Administration in Canada," in C. T. Loram and T. F. McIlwraith (eds.), *The North American Indian Today* (Toronto, 1943), p. 153.



Re-drawn from map in *Handbook of Indians of Canada*, Geographic Board of Canada (1913).

1875 with the Chippewas and Swampy Crees of Manitoba and Ontario. Large adhesions to this treaty, illustrated on the map, were made in 1908, 1909, and 1910. Number Six was negotiated with the Plain Crees, the Wood Crees and the Assiniboines in August and September, 1876. Treaty Seven (the Blackfeet Treaty) followed a year later with the Blackfeet, Blood, Peigan, Sarcee and Stony Indians of Alberta.

A period of twenty-two years elapsed before the next treaty was signed. In the summer of 1899 by the terms of Treaty Number Eight the Indians who lived south and west of Great Slave Lake surrendered a vast area, including the Peace River Valley, the possibilities of which as a settlement area were just becoming widely known. Treaty Nine (the James Bay Treaty) was signed in the summers of 1905 and 1906 by the Indians of northern Ontario, who relinquished that portion of the province which they still held south of the Albany River. Finally, by Treaty Number Ten, negotiated in August, 1906, the Indian title was extinguished in that portion of northern Saskatchewan not covered by earlier agreements.

The policy of treating formally with the Indians for their lands was extraordinarily successful and, with the exception of the participation of some Indians in the North-West Rebellion of 1885, there has been no important violation of the treaties. The costly Indian wars which punctuated the westward progress of settlement in the United States were not repeated in Canada and relations between the tribes and their white neighbors have been, on the whole, harmonious. There is, however, a certain poignancy about the triumph of the white over the Indian, peaceful though it may have been. One may half regret, without being guilty of romantic sentimentality about the decline and fall of the "noble savage," that the Indians have become wards of the Crown and segregated on reserves. The surrender by the Indians of their lands was a necessary prelude to peaceful settlement of the West, but it is not without an inherent sadness. The conference which resulted in the North-West Angle Treaty of 1873 was concluded with the following words by the chief Indian speaker:

> Now you see me stand before you all . . . and now in closing this council, I take off my glove, and in giving you my hand I deliver over my birthright and lands: and in taking your hand I hold fast all the promises you have made, and I hope they will last as long as the sun rises and the water flows . . .[3]

W. R. GRAHAM

[3] Quoted in D. C. Scott, "Indian Affairs, 1867-1912," in A. Shortt and A. G. Doughty (eds.), *Canada and Its Provinces*, vol. VII (Toronto, 1914), p. 596.

RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES—*S. T. St. John*[1]

I

Homesteading at Wilcox

WE now began to think seriously of our future, and I recalled a conversation with a man who had recently returned from Assiniboia, then one of the Canadian North-West Territories. He told me of its fertile soil and possible future. My wife and I decided I should investigate this Garden of Eden and, if it looked favorable, we would cast our lot in western Canada. So, August, 1901, saw a party of four leaving Omaha to inspect the land. I was deeply impressed with the country along the "Soo Line," south of Regina, a broad expanse of undulating prairie, with waving grass stretching away to the horizon like the ripple of the ocean. There was not a shrub or tree to be seen, and the only inhabitants seemed to be innumerable grouse, antelope, red fox, and jumping deer, but the soil, a heavy gumbo, was traversed by one of the longest railway tangents in the world, over seventy miles in length.

I was deeply impressed, too, with the possibilities of this virgin country and decided to stop at Regina, Saskatchewan, and learn more about this district, although I intended to see the country as far as the Rocky Mountains. Upon arrival in Regina, I was referred to George W. Brown, one of the early pioneers, who in search of health had travelled the western plains by ox teams and covered wagon and was thoroughly conversant with western conditions. He had settled at Regina and, in addition to farming, had established a law business, later becoming Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. Here, I also met the late Walter Scott, who became the first premier of the Province of Saskatchewan, and well do I remember a trip we made a few years later to St. Paul, Minnesota, to inspect their Capitol that we might get some advanced ideas for the new Parliament Buildings to be erected at Regina.

After inspecting the country as far west as the Rocky Mountains, I decided to take up a homestead on the "Soo Line," twenty-eight miles south of Regina, midway between Rouleau and Milestone, which were then only railway sidings, each of which boasted a little store located in the home of a settler. Their population could be counted on one's fingers.

The trip from Regina to the spot I had selected for a homestead was made with a team and buggy of ancient model. It had rained for several days prior and the country was without roads of any kind so we were compelled, like the

[1] Seward T. St. John, born in Iowa in 1865, first came to Canada at the age of thirty-six. After a few years of homesteading at Wilcox, Sask., he became manager of the Luse Land and Development Company. In that capacity, and later as manager of the Transcontinental Townsite Company, he brought many hundreds of settlers from the United States to the Canadian West. After his retirement from these activities in 1918, Mr. St. John returned with his wife to Wilcox. We print here a portion of his "Pioneer Recollections," a carefully prepared manuscript which he has recently placed in the Saskatchewan Archives. In later issues of this magazine, we hope to publish Mr. St. John's account of his activities as manager of the Luse Land Company, and excerpts from Mrs. St. John's diary of her experiences as a homesteader's wife. The narrative printed here begins shortly after their marriage, which took place in 1900. The text has been excised slightly.

mariner in the fog, to set our course across the hummocks and trust to luck. The sticky gumbo, mixed with the old dry grass, accumulated on the buggy wheels until they assumed the proportions of balloon tires. As their size increased, the weight became too heavy to hold together and, breaking at the weakest spot, unwound from the wheels and lay on the prairie like huge ribbons, each twelve feet long.

Owing to our slow progress, we did not arrive at our destination until dark. Fortunately there was a railway mileage post at this point. With the aid of a watch and a railway time-table, we located ourselves, nine miles east of the Rouleau siding. Turning westward, we reached Rouleau about ten o'clock and found shelter in a little store where we slept on the soft side of a board floor. The next day was spent in locating my homestead and that evening, after filing my claim, I flagged the train at Milestone siding and returned to Omaha. Upon my return many of our friends were anxious to learn more of the Canadian North-West. None of these would-be pioneers had ever farmed; they were all city-born and bred. For this reason I laid great stress on the difficulty and hardships they would have to endure, hoping it might discourage them, but of no avail. They offered to pay my expenses if I would return to Canada and file on a dozen or more homesteads for them, as near as possible to my own. So again in October (1901) I returned to Regina and filed on a dozen more homesteads. It was during this trip that one day Mr. Brown showed me his safe full to overflowing with Indian [métis] Land script. This script, issued to the Indians [métis] as part settlement of their claims at the close of the Riel Rebellion, entitled the holder to two hundred and forty acres of government land. Brown had purchased them cheaply from the Indians [métis] who preferred a little money to a parcel of land. I suggested that he let me take the script, file it on land south of Regina, which I would sell to American settlers at from eight to twenty dollars per acre, and we would divide the profit, fifty-fifty. He only laughed and said, "Ho; why, that land won't sell for more than three dollars per acre in the next twenty years." Incidentally, three dollars was the price charged for railway land at that time, but several years later, while I was a guest at Government House, Mr. Brown told me that had he accepted my proposition, we would have made over one million dollars profit.

Fifteen years after I made the aforementioned proposition, much of that same land around Wilcox sold for one hundred dollars per acre. On this trip in 1901 my leisure time was spent in the old Palmer House, Regina, visiting with many of the old timers, among whom was the late Jock Henderson, who seemed to take kindly to me and enjoyed relating the early history of his freighting days, the story of his arrest and imprisonment, and the whole story of his execution of Louis Riel.

Henderson was of that burly type of Scot and had spent many years freighting over the western plains. His home was always where he camped and all his children were born on the trail. It was during the Riel Rebellion that he was arrested and thrown into prison. He always maintained a suspicion that his arrest was brought about through the personal hatred of Louis Riel, and there may have been some slight feeling of revenge when he was called upon to act

as Riel's executioner. In addition to the fund of early reminiscences, he also had two of the most charming young daughters that it has ever been my pleasure to meet.

On Easter Sunday, March 30, in the spring of 1902, our good-byes were said and we set out for our destination in what was to be our land of adoption, there to spend many of our happiest years, optimistic always, knowing no fear, and confident that only success lay in our path. There is nothing eventful to record until the cars of settlers' effects arrived in Milestone, April 6, one week from the day of our departure. Snow still covered the ground.

The day following our arrival, the railway company sent a telegrapher to Milestone, where he (with my assistance) connected the wires to his instrument, that I might communicate with the superintendent (Mr. Milestone, in whose honor the town was named) at Moose Jaw. After a long conversation over the wire, he agreed to put our cars on the rear of a freight train, haul them to the designated spot and push them onto the prairie. Three days later our cars were moved to our location, twelve miles northwest of Milestone. The spot was marked only by Mile Post 35—spikes were pulled, the rails in turn were swung to one side, and our cars pushed out onto the prairie where they remained until the siding was built. Thus began the present town of Wilcox.

This Wilcox colony, founded in the spring of 1902, was composed of: Mrs. Seward T. St. John, U.S. American; Mr. Seward T. St. John, U.S. American; Mr. James (Jim) St. John, U.S. American; Mr. Henry Geesen, German American; Mr. Henry Scheibel, German American; Mr. Otto Sandberg, Swedish American; Mr. Nels Tarkelson, Swedish American; Mr. Idze Konieczeny, Polish American. The only members of this colony who had any previous experience in farming were the St. Johns, all of whom were born and raised on a farm.

Here our tents were pitched, and after weary days, the contents of the cars were unloaded. All went merrily until the twentieth of April, when, after a day's rain, the weather turned cold and presented us the next morning with six inches of snow. Countless and varied were the tasks at hand; distances were great; transportation was by the "push and pull" method; there was a scarcity of everything from food and fuel to lumber. The following weeks saw our shacks of some sort peaking their heads above the bald prairies—four walls and a leaky roof were known as a home. In none, excepting those who have pioneered, does one find the true interpretation of that word "home." When the shacks were completed and smoke was seen rising from the so-called "pipe," one became conscious of kindred spirits near.

One of the greatest hardships for early settlers was the absence of roads, especially where the country is hummocky as was the case in the locality of Wilcox. The hardship was greatest for horses shipped in for farm use. Scarcity of feed, lack of time for rest, weariness from the constant pounding of the wagon tongue against their shoulders as the vehicles were pulled over the hummocks—all these were in the day's toil. The task of breaking the prairies was difficult but had to be done, for on cultivation of the soil in this, a purely agricultural section, living depended. Power for farm labor was scarce and consisted of oxen

and a few horses. The first wheat sown at Wilcox was on our farm, the drill being drawn by two oxen and two horses, and when threshed yielded fifty-two bushels per acre.

Another hardship was furnishing water for stock and the household—no well, nothing but sloughs to hold the melted snow, and rain. Later, cisterns were used, made possible by the roof surface of buildings as they were rushed to completion to provide shelter for man and beast. Coming from a country made beautiful by man, for Nebraska was not naturally a timbered state, settlers turned their attention to planting trees for protection from the winds and to beautify the landscape. Garden spots were located and the spring found all planting vegetables, flowers and trees, and nowhere could finer specimens be grown.

Much credit must be given to these earlier settlers, many of whom had never farmed and were not even accustomed to horses, oxen, or machinery. This was a serious handicap and had to be surmounted, or failure would ultimately follow. The lack of practical experience was well illustrated on an occasion when a new homesteader came to Wilcox to purchase a plow and lumber for his shack. He had never farmed, and accepted with gratefulness the suggestion that before unloading the lumber, he plow a fireguard around his place and burn the grass off. This he did, but set the fire on the outside of the guard, thus burning off thousands of acres of the prairie and causing consternation among the homesteaders. But he attained a desirable, he was safe from any danger from other prairie fires.

As the years unfolded, it was a source of great pleasure to note the degree of success attained by these pioneers. As houses and barns were erected, and farmers came into their own, the village of Wilcox began expanding. There were stores, lumber yards, a post office, and many other concerns to supply the immediate needs of the settlers. Surely times have changed. In those days there was no such thing as credit, instead, pay as you enter or before you go out.

Our supply of foodstuff was not varied, yet we had plenty to subsist on, and even during our first year we had milk, cream, butter, eggs, and occasionally a fowl for dinner. By the time fall rolled around the second year, we had a wide variety of vegetables, besides chickens, turkeys, pigs, and a beef butchered at Thanksgiving time. When we were making plans for our first Thanksgiving dinner, the extra man was asked about his preference from our variety of meats and his surprising reply was "liver and onions"—that was our festal dish.

Variety is the spice of life, and if this be true, no day was drab; the unexpected was always happening. This applied to visitors who were constantly happening along. Plans would be made for the meal; the chairs were brought down from their high and mighty place, the wall, where from lack of space on the floor they hung from spikes driven into timbers until their services were required. Floor space would not permit the use of a sizeable table so a few were seated at a time while the rest looked on and the cook prayed that the supply would be equal to the demand.

The outside of our tar-paper covered shack was not inviting in appearance, and on one occasion when a traveller was invited to stay and take dinner with us, he looked at the shack, hestitated and after considerable persuasion, entered.

When asked what he thought of our home, he replied, "It's all right inside but looks like Hell outside." A 12x14 foot floor space would not allow lodging of many newcomers, but I recall Mrs. St. John caring for one family of eight. Sleeping quarters were established in a hay stack, the barn, and every available shelter on the farm. They stayed ten days and made quick work of a porker butchered prior to their arrival.

Another affair which almost proved tragic was the arrival, unannounced, of relatives from the States. Their purpose was to look at land for private investment. These visitors were elderly ladies, and a floor had to be laid in the tent where their bed was placed beneath the canvas canopy separating them from the starry heavens, and before morning from a heavy fall of snow. They were good sports but it was rather a serious situation at the time. The snow soon disappeared for it was early spring, and the next excitement was caused by the appearance of mosquitoes, such as no one had ever witnessed before or hoped to see again. It was almost time for the departure of these grand old dames but my memory wanders back to them battling furiously to prevent such torture as only these pests can inflict. As the train pulled away, they stood waving their 'kerchiefs in farewell to us. They seemed sad to go back and leave us to our fate which seemed black and dreary to them. It took more than an army of mosquitoes to wreck our faith in this new land for here was our first real home.

The greatest bulwark in life is confidence and optimism. Fortunately we possessed both. The cost of investigation, first payment on a half section of land, in addition to our homestead, the purchase of horses, cows and farm machinery had been a severe drain on our capital. When we arrived in Canada, our possessions were limited: a small amount of second-hand machinery; two horses for which I had given a note for three hundred dollars; two cows; two dozen chickens; considerable expensive furniture, including a gasoline stove, (the latter group more of a liability than an asset); and two dollars and thirty-five cents in cash. With this meager equipment, we faced the problem of carving out a home and prosperity from a limitless prairie on which not a furrow had ever been turned. This task entailed many hardships, as we shall see by the following excerpts from Mrs. St. John's diary.

(*Excerpts from this diary will be printed in a later issue*).

PLACE NAMES

Towns in Saskatchewan

MUCH work has been done by the Legislative Library in drawing together information about the names of Saskatchewan towns. A number of years ago, Mr. S. J. Latta, Commissioner of Publications and Librarian, undertook a project in co-operation with Mrs. A. M. Bothwell (now Legislative Librarian, and then a member of the library staff) to determine the origins of as many place names as they could. Through correspondence with railway officials, town and village officers, and interested citizens, they received the best available accounts of how our people named their communities and why particular names were chosen. A number of other sources seem to have been used as well.

No doubt local legend played a part in the responses of the best-intentioned informants. These legends are interesting and valuable in themselves. But we need to separate legend from fact as far as we can. In publishing selections from the list compiled by the Legislative Library, we hope to encourage further research, not only into the background of names not represented here, but also into the background of the names we print in this and future issues. We welcome correspondence from all persons who have information about the names of communities they know. We are anxious that any errors should be corrected; and that information published should be supported by all available evidence.

A. R. C.

ANNAHEIM. Annaheim takes its name from the fact that the first service held there by the Roman Catholic Church was on the feast day of St. Ann. The name means the home of Anna.

ASQUITH. This town on the Canadian Pacific Railway, west of Saskatoon, was named after the prime minister of Great Britain, Mr. Herbert Asquith.

ABBEY. Mr. D. F. Kennedy homesteaded the townsite of Abbey on July 10, 1909, and sold it to the C.P.R. in the fall of 1911. The name of Abbey was submitted to the C.P.R. by Mr. Kennedy; it was the name of the farm on which he was raised at Clonmel, County Tipperary.

BALJENNIE. Baljennie was named by Mr. Warden, a former member of the North West Mounted Police, after his daughter Jean. The original name was Baljeanie. Mr. Warden established a ranch in the vicinity in the early 'eighties. His location was on a small valley known as 22-mile creek, which was twenty-two miles from Battleford. When the railway was built from Regina to Saskatoon and the mail was carried overland from Battleford to Saskatoon, Mr. Warden's ranch was used as a stopping place. A mounted police post was established at Baljennie in the late 'eighties by a well-known pioneer, Robert Jefferson. It was later abandoned. Mr. Warden moved away from Baljennie and was appointed farm instructor on one of the reserves of the Battleford Agency, where he served for many years.

BEATTY. This town was named after Reginald Beatty, later of Melfort. Mr. Beatty had been a Hudson's Bay Company factor and acted as guide to the survey gang, who ran the first railway survey through that district.

BRESAYLOR. Named after the first families who settled in the district in 1882. Two of these families were named Taylor and two others were called

Sayers and Bremner. A Mr. Richardson, agent of the Government Telegraphs, named the first post office in the district Bresaylor, taking the first three letters of Bremner, the first three letters of Sayers, and the last three of Taylor. It was a remote place at that time, and the mail came about once a month from Swift Current. The first school in the settlement was built in 1886.

BRUNO. Bruno was named in honour of the Rt. Rev. Bruno Doerfler, the first Benedict abbot in Canada. He selected the land in 1902 for a group of German-speaking immigrants from the United States.

CRAVEN. The original name chosen for Craven, a village at the junction of the Qu'Appelle River and the outlet of Last Mountain Lake, was Sussex. About 1882 the people in the vicinity petitioned the government for the name Sussex for the post office. As there was already a place named Sussex in the Maritimes, the request could not be granted, and a list of names was submitted from which a choice could be made. The people chose Craven, and this it remained. The old Hudson's Bay Company name for the place was "La Fourche," or The Forks. At one time quite a future was foretold for the place as a lake port. The original projection of the line of railway from Regina to Prince Albert was by this route. The railway was to run from Regina to Craven. From there navigation was to take the place of rail to the head of the lake, and then land transportation was to be resumed to Prince Albert. A line in accordance with this plan was actually built to Craven, but the water portion of the project languished and an all-rail plan by another route was substituted.

PENSE. Pense received its name in a rather curious fashion. It was the end of steel in 1882, and a party of Canadian journalists were the guests of the C.P.R., to take a look at this new western country. They were carried as far as a train would take them, and the railway officials gave them the privilege of naming the station. One of the leading men of the party was a Mr. Pense, who for many years conducted a newspaper in Kingston, Ontario. By common consent his name was given to the place, and thus it remained.

PUNNICHY. Punnichy is taken from the Indian word meaning a hatching egg. In the early days there was a trader living in the vicinity, who was nicknamed Punnichy by the Indians on account of his bald egg-shaped head. [*See page 39 of this issue. Has any reader another story?*]

SENLAC. This name was chosen by the C.P.R. The name of the hamlet to the east is Rutland, and the village to the west is Evesham. Therefore, it seems that these three names were derived from English battlefields. In Senlac, with the exception of the avenue parallel to the railway, which is named Pacific Avenue, all other streets and avenues are named after people or places involved in the Battle of Hastings, fought near Senlac in the county of Sussex—Godwin Street, Harold Street, William Street, Sussex Street, Castle Street, and Battle Avenue. From this it would appear that Senlac was originally inhabited by a homesick native of Sussex.

SWAN RIVER. Was discovered by La Vérendrye and was named "Rivière des Cygnes" by him, probably on account of the number of swans in the vicinity. In the trade returns from Fort Pelly, swan skins appear in considerable numbers.

WELWYN. J.Wake located several miles south of the present site of the village in 1882. When the postal district was formed in 1883, he named the post office after his home town, Welwyn, in Hertfordshire. When the railway came in and the village was organized, the old post office name was retained as the name of the village.

The Difficulties of the Hudson's Bay Company's Penetration of the West[1]

For two hundred years historians have accepted the famous phrase which describes the Hudson's Bay Company "sleeping at the edge of a frozen sea" until enterprising Montrealers crept up behind them and carried off the furs over the intricate and almost endless route to Montreal. "In the conflict between the River [St. Lawrence] and the Bay almost every natural advantage for the fur trade was found on the side of the Hudson's Bay route," says a modern historian. Why did the Hudson's Bay men fail? The easy, obvious answer is that they were helpless Englishmen.

This answer is too easy, if only because some of the most successful Montreal "Pedlars" were Englishmen too. It is the purpose of this article to show, first, that three very important natural advantages rested, not with the Bay, but with the St. Lawrence; second, that the supposedly effete English strove ably and energetically to overcome the natural obstacles to their inland trade; third, that they failed to do so completely only because of an important factor entirely beyond their control.

It is true that the Bay had a very great natural advantage over the St. Lawrence in being much nearer to the North-West fur country. However, one must have means of transportation even for a short distance, and the three essential means for that country—canoes, skill in navigation, and manpower—were lacking on the Bay. The white birch (*betula papyrifera*, Marsh), whose bark was essential for canoes, was plentiful on the St. Lawrence, but did not grow on the Bay; the Orkney men, who formed the majority of the Hudson's Bay Company employees, might handle a boat in a heavy sea, but had none of the native skill of the Canadian *voyageur*; and these Orkney men were a mere handful of transients compared with the solid, growing population of the St. Lawrence colony.

From the early 'seventies when Montreal competition was becoming annoying, to 1821 when the union of the rivals happily solved the problem, the Bay men worked at their threefold problem and achieved a notable measure of success. In 1774 they sent Samuel Hearne inland to get the needed birch bark, but, like the early French Canadians, they were slow in acquiring the art of canoe-making. They tried to employ Indians, but the latter would only make small canoes of their own pattern; what were needed were the splendid transport canoes, developed by the men of the St. Lawrence, capable of carrying five times as much as the Indian canoes and so sparing man power. Pre-fabricated wooden canoes sent out from England proved a failure, but by 1792, by what means the records do not show, the Company men were plentifully supplied with adequate canoes, presumably made by themselves. They did not, however, stop here.

[1] This is an abstract of an article by Professor R. Glover of the University of Manitoba, which appeared in the *Canadian Historical Review*, September 1948, pp. 240-254.

First, on the Albany, then on the Hayes and Saskatchewan, they built York boats, wooden craft superior to the birch canoes in that they carried more cargo in proportion to their crew, were safer for novices, and on the lakes sailed better and were not appreciably slower than the heavy freighting canoes. This aspect of the transport problem was more than solved.

From 1774, however, lack of skilled canoemen had also been a problem. The Indians indeed were skilled, but in every other way proved hopelessly unsatisfactory. Orkney men were unfamiliar with canoes, and with the prospects of the certain toil and possible starvation that inland journeys involved, they were not very interested in the job. Their reluctance was overcome by a simple device. Asked by Samuel Hearne "what Encouragement they Required," they "seem'd to entermate that 12£ per annom would induce them to be actave and usefull." The "Encouragement" was given; a few years later a Company official speaks with pride of their skill and daring. Another problem was solved.

Such successes might satisfy the pride of Englishmen, but they did not serve to meet the competition from Montreal. Shortage of labour proved an almost insurmountable obstacle. It was not merely that the forts on the Bay could never build up anything to compare with the great reservoir of man power on the St. Lawrence, composed of people born in the country and trained from childhood in their arduous work. It was difficult for the Company even to bring men from Britain. Their shipping space was limited, and more serious was the fact that few of their men entered the service for life. Their interest lay not in fur trading, but in saving their wages in order to buy a farm at home in Orkney. There was, therefore, too great a turnover of employees for the maximum efficiency.

Most serious of all, however, was the fact that even Britain herself, with a population incomparably greater than that of the St. Lawrence colony, could not for much of the time afford the men necessary for the Hudson's Bay Company's operations. Of the forty-seven years between the founding of Cumberland House in 1774 and the union of the Companies in 1821, Britain was at war for twenty-eight—first against the rebel Americans and their powerful Bourbon allies, then against the revolutionary French republic and Napoleon. The active, able-bodied young fellows the armed forces required were exactly the men the Hudson's Bay Company wanted for the fur trade, and in competition with the armed forces the Company simply could not get them. The Quebec *habitant*, on the other hand, was not subject to the pressgang, not recruited for British armies and had no other military obligation than the defence of his own colony; and that was urgent only in 1775-6 and 1812-4. While the Hudson's Bay Company was hamstrung for want of men, the Nor'Westers could recruit all they pleased on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

Hence, the Hudson's Bay Company was reduced to taking what the services rejected. "The war that raged between England and France," said David Thompson in 1795, "drained the Orkney Islands of all men that were fit for the Army and Navy; and only those refused were obtained for the fur trade . . . those few were five foot five inches and under." The horrified squaw of James Spence, who saw such men landing at York Factory, told her husband that his country must be quite depopulated or "these dwarfs" would not have been sent. Not

only were the Hudson's Bay pieces reduced to sixty pounds as opposed to the North West ninety pounds; at a time when personal encounters were incidental to trade rivalry, these feeble recruits would find themselves at a serious disadvantage against the servants of a company accused of deliberately selecting men who could capture furs as well as trade for them.

It was this uncontrollable factor of manpower shortage during a period of dangerous and prolonged war that threatened to defeat the Englishmen on the Bay. Its significance has been strangely overlooked even by able and distinguished historians. The Hudson's Bay Company tried, of course, to recruit French Canadians, but the North West Company held the whole St. Lawrence colony in a firm, if easy, grip. Their rival could only, and after much contriving, secure the worthless, "the very dross and outcast of the human species," said Simpson. There was no remedy until 1815 put an end to the war. Then, it should be noted, only six years elapsed before the North West Company ended the rivalry by asking for terms.

Thus, "in spite of all that has been written on the fur trade, the last word on the strife between the companies has perhaps not yet been said. The Hudson's Bay Company would seem to have managed better than is generally conceded; and, except perhaps in the mechanics of transportation and a species of pugilism where they could pit heavyweight against bantam, the celebrated "efficiency" of the Nor'Westers is easily overrated."

H. N.

Book Reviews

THE AGRARIAN REVOLT IN WESTERN CANADA: A SURVEY SHOWING AMERICAN PARALLELS. *By Paul F. Sharp.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948. Pp. *viii,* 204. $3.00.

IT is nearly twenty-five years since the National Progressive party collapsed. It is nearly twenty years since the Canadian wheat pools abandoned the idea of pooling wheat on a contract basis. The onset of world-wide depression in the early 'thirties did not create a new era for the prairie wheat farmer, but, rather, coincided with the beginnings of such an era. The years since 1930, including as they did a decade of extreme economic hardship and six years of war, have not been conducive to careful historical analysis of the farmers' movement. It is therefore easy to excuse the failure of such studies to appear since the middle 'twenties. With the depression and the war out of the way, at least temporarily, and with sufficient time gone by to establish reasonable perspective, it is not too much to expect the early publication of a number of studies which individually and collectively will throw much-needed light upon the prairie farmers' collective activities in the early decades of the present century.

With the exception of S. W. Yates' "inside story" of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool which appeared in 1947, Professor Sharp's study, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada,* is the first post-war volume to attempt an appraisal of the Canadian farmers' movement. It is a survey dealing with the period from 1900 to 1930. Its first chapter outlines the processes of the settlement which took place after 1900 on the Canadian prairies, "the last best West," with particular emphasis upon the part played in that settlement by land-hungry Americans. Succeeding chapters set forth the economic and political disabilities under which the settlers laboured—as interpreted by the settlers themselves—and also describe briefly the actions taken by the new-comers in an attempt to remove at least the more obvious of the disabilities. There are chapters on the early farmers' organizations, the crusade for democracy, the Nonpartisan League, the post-war agrarian revolt of the Progressives and the activities of the Progressives in Canadian politics. The final chapter deals with the heritage left by the Progressives for succeeding generations of national and provincial political actors.

In the foreword, as in the sub-title, Professor Sharp indicates that one of the main purposes of his study is to explore the similarities between the American and the Canadian farmers' movements. He justifiably chides Canadian and American historians for past failure to take sufficient account of these similarities. His own analysis accordingly stresses the fact that the international boundary is merely an invisible line running through the central plains and that farmers above and below that line face much the same problems in terms of natural environment and in transportation and marketing difficulties as well as in their relations with eastern metropolitan centres. Similarity in the reactions of Canadian and American farmers to these circumstances is not surprising, and Professor Sharp indicates the parallel at various points throughout his study as the

occasion arises. His chapters on the Nonpartisan League deal with one of the many organizations which Canadian farmers adopted directly from the original American setting. The indication of the many Canadian-American parallels is probably the most important contribution which this book offers.

Professor Sharp's discussion of Canadian-American parallels, while informative, may be misleading. It tends to strengthen the impression which must be common among students of North American agrarianism that the *contrasts* between the economic and political constitutions of Canada and the United States are as important as the similarities for an understanding of the farmers' movements in these countries. Consider, by way of example, the significance of the British principle of responsible government. Since any adverse vote in the Canadian House of Commons may be regarded by the Government as a vote of want of confidence, no group within the House can vote in opposition to Government policy without considering the costly prospect of again having to face the electorate. If the Government's majority is secure a protest vote may go unheeded. If the Government is not secure, the threat of a dissolution may force potential rebels into line. There, therefore, exists the Canadian paradox, without American parallel, that a parliamentary farm bloc might well vote freely only if it were so weak as to be of little concern to the Government of the day. This and other important contrasts require careful study rather than dismissal.

The phrase "agrarian revolt" has doubtful validity when applied to the Canadian farmers' movement. Professor Sharp may be convinced that Canadian revolt could never reach the un-British level of armed conflict, and could never exceed a violence which at its maximum would be measurable in terms of electoral intransigence and the publication of nasty editorials. Let us admit at once that "revolt" need not imply armed violence. Nevertheless, a group can scarcely be described as "in revolt" unless its members oppose at least some fundamental institutions of the society in which they live. Prairie farmers have opposed many things since 1900: high tariffs, high freight rates, high profits, high costs of living—and low returns for their produce. Yet what fundamental Canadian institution have they challenged? Where have they stood on the question of private property? On the maintenance or abandonment of the free enterprise system? On law and order and the state? On the church? On marriage and the home? Canadian prairie farmers have been, and remain, the pillars of a national community whose conservatism is rarely equalled in the modern world. To characterize any of their activities as a revolt is to invoke the licence which may be granted to a dramatist but not to an historian.

This volume is a survey, as its author acknowledges in the sub-title. It could not be more since it deals in less than two hundred pages with the complex events of what may well be the three most significant decades in Canadian economic development to date. In view of the author's modest characterization of his work it would not be fair to charge him with having made no definitive, detailed analysis, or to say that he has left out this or that particular item. It would be fair to suggest, however, that with the appearance of this study there remains no need for further general outlines of the events of this particular period. What is now needed is a number of detailed and critical analyses of

particular aspects of the historical processes of the decades after 1900. On the political side the New National Policy party in the federal field and the U.F.A. and U.F.M. in the provincial field require individual treatment. The political activities of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and of the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) merit separate analyses. In the field of economics there remains, among major research tasks, that of analysing and appraising the entire wheat pool movement. When careful monographs have been prepared on these and other relevant topics it will be time enough to call for a new survey, an interpretive synthesis, of the events and forces of the post-1900 period.

V. Fowke

Le Metis Canadien: Son role dans l'histoire des provinces de l'ouest. *By Marcel Giraud.* (Université de Paris, Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, tome XLIV) Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1945. Pp. lvi, 1296, maps, illustrations. 1500 fr.[1]

In this book Marcel Giraud deals with the history and the sociological problems of the French Canadian métis. Giraud's work may be highly recommended to every historian, ethnologist and social worker interested in the métis of Western Canada. His monumental and scholarly contribution to history and sociology is remarkable for strength and clarity of argumentation, lucidity of style, and extensive documentation. The bibliography which precedes Giraud's thesis reveals the thoroughness with which the author studies the métis; his documentary research was complemented by field work in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

It is remarkable how the French Canadian métis have been able to develop traditions and aspirations of their own, which make them stand out among other hybrid groups in our country. Although there was never a métis "nation," as Giraud points out, an ethnic group of great influence really existed, a result of the union of the French Canadian *coureurs de bois* with the native women of the western plains. As time went by, this group grew larger and excerised a strong influence over the destinies of Western Canada, during its frontier period of civilization on the Red River.

Giraud's book is divided into six parts: 1. Physical and ethnical background on the western plains; 2. Penetration of the French Canadian element through explorers and fur-traders; 3. Birth of the métis race; 4. Awakening of "nationalism" among the métis; 5. Maturity of the métis as an ethnical group; 6. Disintegration of the métis group and its present status. Although sympathetic to the métis Giraud is very fair in his attitude on many controversial points. The late A. S. Morton, in his *History of the Canadian West to* 1870-71, sees the métis problem through the eyes of the Hudson's Bay Company men. Giraud sees it through the eyes of the French student; yet he has indicated clearly the leading factor in the

[1] For a lengthy review of this work, see "The Métis and the Conflict of Cultures in Western Canada" by G. F. G. Stanley in *The Canadian Historical Review,* December 1947, pp. 428-433.

two Riel uprisings, a kind of blind nationalistic instinct. The polemical account published a few years ago, under the name of the late A. H. de Trémaudan, *Histoire de la nation métisse dans l'ouest canadien*, one of the few works written in French to attempt the rehabilitation of Riel's memory, has been severely criticized, and justly so, by the greatest French historian of Western Canada, the Rev. A. G. Morice. Giraud, on the other hand, never allows his evident sympathies for the métis to influence his judgment of men and events.

The history of the French Canadian métis is an unhappy one. Living in a marginal society, and unable to adapt himself fully to our complex civilization, he seems doomed to sink even more deeply into dependency upon the State and eventually to disappear. There could never have been a métis "nation," notwithstanding the claims of a certain group of métis in Manitoba. The métis who have succeeded in adapting themselves are now absorbed into the white population. The French-speaking métis had little in common with the English-speaking half-breed: Frenchmen united more readily with the natives, and these unions were sanctioned by legal marriage. The métis was usually a buffalo hunter, whereas the half-breed of Scotch descent was sedentary on his farm or in his store. The passing of the fur trade dealt a death-blow to the economy of the French métis, and the aftermath of the first Riel uprising caused many of them to flee to Saskatchewan or into the northern States. Living now in material poverty and spiritual decadence, excluded from and despised by white society, the métis cannot even seek a refuge among the Indians, with whom he is closely allied by blood and customs, because the reserves are closed to him. He will long remain an acute problem to both the Provincial and Federal Governments.

A study of the Indians living on the reserves would have helped Giraud to understand better the sociological problems of the métis. The "Reserve Indian" is really a métis by blood in most cases; the name Indian is only a legal term for those who have signed the Treaties. A parallel study of the métis and of the "Indian" would have helped Giraud draw very interesting conclusions. Yet the métis does not wish, generally, to be a ward of the Federal Government, and most attempts made by Provincial Governments for his rehabilitation have met with failure. The policy of segregation pursued by the Federal Government in respect to the Indians has created a highly interesting situation for the student of ethnology, for the Indian way of life has become crystallized in a state of almost total dependency upon the paternalism of the Government.

The sociological study of the métis by Giraud is much less scientific and precise than his historical account; this may be due in part to lack of time in field research and the dearth of statistics, but it is largely because he did not study the Indian situation that Giraud's thesis loses strength. A more thorough study of half-breeds of other racial origins would also have helped the author in drawing more accurate conclusions; of course, this would have been almost impossible for one man alone to do.

We note a remarkable statement made by Giraud in regard to the solution of the métis problem. He says that the métis who have fared better than the others, the ones who have made reasonable progress, are those who have been assimilated into the French parochial settlements. The Church seems to have been able to

work out the eventual rehabilitation of the métis through assimilation, better than the sporadic, restricted, and often short-lived efforts of government agencies.

The student of history, as well as the sociologist, will find in Giraud's work a great wealth of information which will prove very useful, and a plan of research which can serve as a model for studies of other ethnic groups, not only in Canada, but in other parts of North America.

GONTRAN LAVIOLETTE, O.M.I.

THE SODBUSTERS. *By Grant MacEwan.* Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1948. Pp. 240. $3.00.

THIS series of radio addresses deals with pioneers of all types in the four western provinces: from unknown homesteaders who "bust sod" the hard way all their lives to sensational success types, such as Pat Burns, with the inevitable frontier eccentrics, like the Englishman in British Columbia with the hunting pack and Indian whip, thrown in. Saskatchewan people will find many old friends—Angus MacKay, Seager Wheeler, W. C. Murray, W. R. Motherwell and others. The author has a journalist's feeling for a "story" and he tells his stories with much pleasant humour. The sketches must have made easy listening, and they certainly make easy reading. Dean MacEwan is to be congratulated for zeal in collecting material, and ingenuity in presenting it.

The uneven quality of the book must be attributed partly to the conditions of the radio speech, which required treatment of equal length for each figure, whether the material were scanty or plentiful. Some sections are pretty thin, and others follow very well-worn trails. The historian might complain that the effort to exploit the sensational blinds the author to the more subtle intellectual pleasure of explaining it. For the student of history another serious defect is the almost total lack of any indication of sources. Even though much of the material evidently comes from oral tradition a brief note on sources would have been valuable, and need not have detracted from the popular appeal. And, where sources, such as Palliser's journal, can be checked, they reveal some carelessness on points of detail.

Technical criticisms can be carried too far, and all students of local history must appreciate Dean MacEwan's pleasant sketches. Yet sound historical knowledge can only rest on a sound technique of research and interpretation. It is time we gave ourselves to finding out what really happened and why. The spirit of the west, if any, has too long been presented as a blend of Ontario-Scottish virtue and cowboy glamour.

HILDA NEATBY

Notes and Correspondence

THE following communication from Mr. W. B. Cameron, well known as a Saskatchewan pioneer and writer of books on the period of the rebellion, refers to Mr. Bruce Peel's article, "On the Old Saskatchewan Trail," SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY, May, 1948.

To the Editor:

. . . while mention was made by Mr. Peel of the Assiniboine River, he said nothing about its ever having been an artery of commerce in the early '80s, as it was, and probably earlier than that. Now, although a river cannot, I suppose, actually be named a trail, I think that in this instance it may properly be regarded as a part of the Saskatchewan trail. At any rate, that, in 1881, is what it was. The steamboats carried passengers, westbound, and freight. I don't know whether or not you have "The Beaver" on file in the University, but, if you have, you will find in an issue several years old an article by me "The Trail of '81." That was the year I came west from Ontario, and in Winnipeg I engaged with "Sandy" Macdonald (later the grocery millionaire) to go to Battleford—then the N. W. Territory capital—as assistant to Bob Young, manager of his trading post there. I was instructed to go by trail with a team of ponies and buckboard he owned that I picked up at Portage la Prairie, to Fort Ellice, 200 miles overland west, and there await the arrival of the steamboat (the "Marquette" if I recall rightly) with merchandise for Sandy's posts at Battleford and Edmonton. Carts were coming from the north to Ellice and I was to load the goods arriving by boat on the carts before going on to Battleford. I reached Ellice early in August and shortly afterward the steamboat arrived and tied up at the bank, the goods were unloaded and stored in the H.B.C. warehouse and I subsequently loaded them on the carts (in October) and went on, on October 13th, to Battleford which I reached October 29th, after sixteen strenuous days on the trail with an extremely worn and weary team of ponies. So, as an important historical fact, I think that navigation of the Assiniboine in that early period should have had a place in Mr. Peel's story. I should add that a year or two later I completed my personal knowledge of the old trail by travelling, with horses, over it from Battleford to Edmonton.

A second criticism [is] the naming of Carlton in the article. Although it is commonly called Fort Carlton in these days, Carlton properly is "Carlton House"—as you know, once an important trading, forwarding and central headquarter post of the Hudson's Bay Company. So, to be historically correct and for the benefit of future generations of school children, it should remain in the histories what it really was "Carlton House." I take it, it would sound ridiculous if one were to refer to Cumberland House as Fort Cumberland and the same would apply to Norway House. . . .

Loon Lake, Sask. W. B. CAMERON

The historian who writes of events which occurred three score and ten years ago finds it a startling but invigorating experience to receive corrections from one of the participants. I feel honoured to receive Mr. Cameron's personal reactions to my article. Mr. Cameron's evidence on steamboating on the Assiniboine is interesting. Information on the subject is scarce. My subject, however, was the Saskatchewan Trail, and I felt under no obligation to treat all related themes, however interesting. Concerning the naming of Carlton, Mr. Cameron's

personal evidence is not open to challenge, but there is no doubt that the place was referred to indiscriminately as Carlton House, Fort Carlton and Carlton. Fort Carlton or Carlton seem to have been the favourite appellations. Grant, Trow, and Williams called it Fort Carlton, while Simpson, Palliser, Gordon, and McDougall referred to it as Carlton. Only Milton and Cheadle used Carlton House, while on the map accompanying Hind's report it is marked Carlton House.

B.B.P.

To the Editor:

While in Saskatoon last month, I got hold of a copy of SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY, Vol. I, No. 1, January, 1948. This interested me very much, being a resident of the Province of Saskatchewan since 1885. On page 4, there is a petition of the settlers of Round Plain-Touchwood Hills, October 15, 1888, asking for a well-boring machine. These names are all familiar to me. Some of the names are not spelled as they should be, but I knew them all . . . W. A. Meutack should be W. A. Heubach. He was a trader and had a store. The town of Punnichy is named after him. That was his Indian name, meaning a young bird just out of the shell. He had big eyes which the Indians thought resembled the eyes of a young bird. A. W. Beath should be Mc (or Mac) Beath. He was the Hudson's Bay man who ran the store . . .

Our home was about five miles from the present town of Punnichy. The name of the post office was Kutawa, where there was also the telegraph office of the government telegraph line from Qu'Appelle to Edmonton. There was also the Mounted Police and Indian Agency located at Kutawa. My father ran the post office and telegraph office and raised good horses.

Moose Jaw, Sask. W. V. LINDEBURGH

This most valuable communication is gratefully received by the editors. The mistakes in the spelling of the names were due to the extreme difficulty of deciphering unfamilar handwriting on the original documents. Such corrections are always welcome, and especially when accompanied as here by additional information on persons and place names, such as only residents or former residents can provide.

To the Editor:

On page 24 of Vol. I, No. 2, SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY, a statement *re* the naming of the village of Hafford is made. This place was named after the man who surveyed this railway line. His name was Hafford. I regret I have not his initials. He died at Blaine Lake while doing the survey in 1912.

If you need any more information of this district, my husband was here before the land was surveyed for homesteading.

Speers, Sask. MRS. R. W. MINER

Mrs. Miner's precise and well supported information effectively explodes the fancy story reproduced in SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY last spring. We might say that our Place Names editor printed this and another story as hearsay, hoping they might inspire some one to write in and tell us the facts.

To the Editor:

. . . I have enjoyed the magazines, especially your article on the Woman's Franchise work [SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY, October 1948]. It is very well written and covers our work very completely. Yes, I had quite an experience, made many friends, also many enemies. One cannot speak too highly of the work the W.G.G. Association did throughout the country districts. The Government certainly gave us a good cold time to get the signatures . . .

Vancouver, B.C. MRS. F. A. LAWTON

Mrs. F. A. Lawton as President of the Equal Franchise Board was one of the most distinguished leaders of the agitation for the enfranchisement of women.

NOTES

YORKTON. A collection of around 100 photographs, sketches and documents dealing with the early history of Yorkton was shown to a large audience attending a meeting of the Natural History Society Tuesday night. The pictures were reflected onto a screen and Fred Langstaff and Mrs. W. S. de Balinhard, pioneers of the district, acted as commentators. Earliest pictures were those showing the original townsite selected in 1882 by settlers of the York Farmers' Colonization Company. Yorkton at that time was located three miles northeast of the present site. The society will present the photographs to the city for the future museum.

Charles A. Peaker asked that the Yorkton Historical Society and the Natural History Society be amalgamated. He also asked that an effort be made to compile a list of the names of settlers in the Yorkton district between 1882 and 1890. The matter of wording a legend to be inscribed on a marker opposite the former townsite was referred to the executive.

[Reprinted from the *Saskatoon-Star Phoenix*, November 22, 1948.]

It will be of interest to the Yorkton Historical Society to know that on August 1, 1882, the settlers at York Colony wrote to the Manager of the York Farmers' Colonization Company, stating their complete satisfaction with their land and location and outlining plans for the future. The letter was signed by the following: John Holmwood, Waterloo; Allan Blyth, Dumfries; Arthur J. Shaw, Etobicoke; Wm. H. Meredith, Tecumseh; Cosmo J. McFarline, Toronto; A. E. Boake, York; J. J. Smith, Port Colborne; Wm. T. Smith, Port Colborne; Edward Bull, York; Wm. Jackson, York; Robert Bull, York. A transcript of this document from Dominion Lands Branch File 41345, Department of the Interior, is in the Saskatchewan Archives.

Contributors

A. N. REID, assistant professor of economics at the University of Saskatchewan, is at present engaged in research in the field of local government in Western Canada.

VERNON FOWKE, professor of economics at the University of Saskatchewan, is the author of *Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern*, and a contributor to various scholarly publications.

FATHER GONTRAN LAVIOLETTE, a member of the Order of the Oblate Fathers, has been engaged in mission work among the Sioux Indians. He is the author of *The Sioux Indians in Canada* and editor of *The Indian Missionary Review* and of *L'Ami du Foyer*.

Editorial Note:

The editorial committee will welcome comments on this issue and suggestions for the future. Articles and illustrations suitable for publication are desired, but contributors should consult the editor before submitting material.


Saskatchewan.