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## A Saskatchewan Experiment in Teacher Education 1907-1917

**D**URING the years, 1905-1920, providing teachers for schools in Saskatchewan's non-English speaking communities was one of the most difficult problems in the administration of educational services. Teachers, qualified according to the regulations of the Department of Education, were scarce. Those who were available were hesitant in accepting positions in settlements where the ethnic origins and cultural traditions were foreign to the Britisher<sup>1</sup>, who comprised at least 95 per cent of the teaching force.

This was a period when the newly-formed province of Saskatchewan experienced phenomenal growth in population. The 1906 census reported 257,763 inhabitants. The census of 1916 recorded 647,835, an increase of over 250 per cent in ten years.<sup>2</sup> In 1916, the people of British extraction comprised 54.4 per cent of the population; the remaining 45.5 per cent included both those who were foreign born and who were first generation Canadians born of parents who had recently made Saskatchewan their home. The immigrants came from many countries. Included were those of Slavic origin whose peoples comprised over 20 per cent of those of non-British extraction.<sup>3</sup>

To complicate the task of education, many of the immigrant groups segregated themselves or were segregated in ethnic blocks. There were many reasons for this segregation. In some instances as Dawson and Younge pointed out, segregation was due to the "inevitable drifting together" of those who spoke the same language, who worshipped in the same ritual, who shared the same traditions, and who were given "an alien status by members of other groups." Among the Ukrainians, ". . . the tendency toward segregation was facilitated by Canadian government officials who steered them gently out along the northern fringe of settlement in the Prairie Provinces."<sup>4</sup>

Segregation, whether by personal choice or by government planning implied community isolation of ethnic groups. The most potent factors in maintaining this isolation were the strong ties of language and religion. These ties were particularly evident among the Old Colony Mennonites and Doukhobors. Consequently, they attempted by every means possible to resist the formation of school districts. They desired to have their own schools and to employ teachers of their own language and religious faith so that the traditions of their forefathers might be preserved. This was not the situation as far as the Ruthenians were concerned.

During the first and second decades of the history of the province, the term Ruthenian was used freely to designate peoples of Slavic origin not regularly

<sup>1</sup> The term, Britisher, is interpreted here, as including those of English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and Anglo-American descent.

<sup>2</sup> *The Canada Year Book*, 1907, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> *Census of the Prairie Provinces*, 1916, p. XXXV.

<sup>4</sup> C. A. Dawson and Eva R. Younge, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces*, p. 36, Vol. VIII of *Canadian Frontiers of Settlement*, W. R. MacIntosh and W. L. Joerg, Editors, Toronto: Macmillan, 1940.



included in the ethnic group known as Ruthenian. The latter designation in its most liberal interpretation included the Ruthenians proper and the Ukrainians, who were most closely related ethnically, together with the Galicians and the Bukowinians. These four groups had a combined population in Saskatchewan in 1916 of 27,506.<sup>5</sup>

The Ruthenians or Ukrainians, the names were used interchangeably, were strongly nationalistic, but they did not have the instinct of self-preservation through exclusive group life as was the case with the Old Colony Mennonites and the Doukhobors. As a group the Ruthenians took an active part in municipal and school government and they were eager to learn the English language, but they also were insistent on the preservation of their mother tongue. To this end, they persisted in employing in their schools Ruthenian-speaking teachers.

Simultaneous with the astounding growth in population was the unprecedented development in the number of school districts organized. In 1906, there were in existence in the province 1190 school districts of which 873 had a school or schools in operation. In 1907, there were 246 and, in 1908, 317 additional districts organized. During the ten year period, 1906 to 1916, the number of organized districts increased from 1190 to 3878 of which, in the latter year, 3608 were operating.<sup>6</sup> This meant that, on the average, for every day in each year for ten years, Sundays excepted, at least one school district came into existence. The problem of supplying teachers to keep the schools functioning was one that taxed the ingenuity of the Department of Education officials.

In considering the number of schools in operation during any one year, it is necessary to remember that while, at the time, the official length of the school year was 210 days, the schools kept open for the full year were in a definite minority.

Table one is an illustration of the variations in the length of the school year for schools in various parts of the province. When to this situation is added

TABLE ONE

Length of School Year for the Schools of the Province, 1909<sup>7</sup>  
(High School Districts Excluded)

Number of Schools	Number of Days Schools Open
5.....	Less than 20 days
25.....	20 to 50 days
178.....	51 to 100 days
483.....	101 to 150 days
463.....	151 to 200 days
537.....	201 to 210 days

the temporary nature of teacher employment in rural and village schools, one finds very unsatisfactory educational conditions. Some teachers changed schools

<sup>5</sup> *Census of Prairie Provinces*, 1916, Table 22, p. XX XV.

<sup>6</sup> Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Annual Reports*, 1906, p. 19; 1907, p. 16; 1908, p. 17; 1916, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1909, p. 16.



two or even three times a year; others resigned or were dismissed and sought different employment; still others held provisional certificates and were replaced at any time that qualified teachers became available.

To state the numbers of teachers employed in any one year is not a true indication of teacher pupil ratio. In 1906, there were 1298 teachers for an enrolment of 31,275 pupils. In 1916, 5,677 teachers were employed for 125,590 pupils. In 1916, out of the total of 5,677 teachers, 740 held first class certificates; 1,918, second class; 2,296, third class; and 723 provisional certificates.<sup>8</sup> Stated in percentages, in the year 1916, 13 per cent held first class; 33.8 per cent, second class; 40.5 per cent, third class; and 12.7 per cent held provisional certificates or permits.<sup>9</sup> These numbers and percentages do not include the 138 teachers employed in high schools and collegiate institutes which were in operation in the 21 city and larger town school districts. In 1913, of all teachers employed in high school districts, 68 per cent held bachelor's degrees and 19 per cent master's degrees with some professional training. These, however, were in a class apart from the vast number of teachers employed in rural, village, and smaller town areas, and even in the elementary schools of centres in which high school districts were formed.<sup>10</sup>

Coupled with all the problems of school district organization and teacher supply, throughout the period 1906 to 1920, was the demand on the part of non-British communities for teachers of the same ethnic origin and religion of the people of the district. In fact, it was maintained that the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) teacher could deal with the problems of his own people better than an Anglo-Saxon, who was very often regarded with suspicion.<sup>11</sup>

Manitoba, during the first two decades of the century had even greater problems in regard to their schools than Saskatchewan. The Laurier-Greenway Compromise of 1896 not only attempted to bring about a settlement of the religious issues in that province, but also outlined a plan with respect to the language of instruction in the schools.<sup>12</sup> Under this agreement and subsequent legislation:

When ten of the pupils in any school speak the French language or any language other than English, as their native language, the teaching of such pupils shall be conducted in French, or such other language, and English upon the bi-lingual system.<sup>13</sup>

This enactment resulted, in some instances, in the teaching of English through

<sup>8</sup> Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Annual Reports*, 1906, p. 19; 1916, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> First class certificates: Grade XII plus four months' course at Normal School; second class, Grade XI plus four months at Normal School; third class, Grade X plus ten weeks at Normal School; provisional or permits, no specified academic preparation and no teacher training.

<sup>10</sup> Pupils in Grade IX to XII, enrolled in high schools and collegiate institutes, in 1916, numbered 3849. There were, however, an additional 3256 pupils taking some high school work in rural, village and town, public and separate schools.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Yuzyk, *The Ukrainians in Manitoba*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953, p. 147.

<sup>12</sup> This "Compromise" came at the conclusion of six years of controversy and litigation over the 1890 legislation which abolished the dual system and instituted "public schools only."

<sup>13</sup> *Statutes of Manitoba*, 1897, c. 26, sec. 10. This clause was not repealed until 1916. See *Statutes of Manitoba*, 1916, c. 88, sec. 1.



the medium of another language, and, in such schools, English became a subject of instruction instead of the language of instruction.

The Ruthenians or Ukrainians were among the largest of the foreign speaking groups in Manitoba.<sup>14</sup> As in Saskatchewan, they insisted on having in their schools, teachers of their own ethnic origin. To supply these districts with Ukrainian teachers, the Manitoba Department of Education, in 1905, established a special normal school known as the Ruthenian Training School.<sup>15</sup>

The manner in which the Manitoba school was conducted was described briefly in a memorandum to Saskatchewan's Minister of Education, J. A. Calder, from his Deputy Minister, D. P. McColl. McColl had visited this school on March 10, 1908, for the purpose of finding out its *modus operandi*. In describing his visit in this memorandum, McColl stated that there were:

. . . 34 pupils . . . in attendance; 15 in the senior class, 19 in the junior. 2 teachers are continually employed; one an English speaking teacher, the other a person qualified to speak the Galician language.

Accommodation [sic] is provided by the government and is of a very satisfactory character. The students' parents enter into a contract with the Government that the boys in attendance shall stay at least one year or a longer period in case their standing is not sufficient to warrant their going out to take charge of schools.<sup>16</sup>

Further information regarding the training school, which was operated for nine months in each year, was contained in a letter from R. Fletcher, Manitoba's Deputy Minister of Education, to D. P. McColl. In this letter, Fletcher stated that no conditions for admission were laid out but:

. . . in selecting students we endeavor to get young men who have at least a fair education in their own country, and who are able to speak the English language with some degree of efficiency.<sup>17</sup>

Through the information received concerning the successful operation of the school at Brandon, Calder became a convert to the idea of foreign origin teachers for non-British districts. As was indicated above, Saskatchewan had a similar problem to Manitoba, in its large number of ethnic groups located in isolated settlements. Saskatchewan was different from Manitoba inasmuch as bilingualism, in the Manitoba meaning of the term, was not legally sanctioned in the schools. Under certain conditions, French could be used as the language of instruction in the primary grades, and a foreign language, under certain circumstances, could be taught from three to four o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>18</sup> But while

<sup>14</sup> Yuzyk, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> It was at first located in Winnipeg, but in 1907, it was moved to Brandon. During its eleven years of operation, approximately 150 teachers received training in the school some of whom obtained teaching permits only. A few, later became distinguished leaders in politics, law, and the church.

<sup>16</sup> Archives of Saskatchewan, (hereafter cited as AS), Education, 106G. 4. Correspondence re Ruthenian Matters, McColl to Calder, March 10, 1908, p. 139.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, Fletcher to McColl, Feb. 11, 1909, p. 89.

<sup>18</sup> R.S.S., 1909, C. 100, sec. 135. This legislation was continued in the Ordinances of the North West Territories, 1901, c.29, sec. 136. See also "Regulations" in the *Annual Report*, 1906, p. 77.



these were the legal restrictions, it was still the practice in some schools to use, for instructional purposes, the language of the community's ethnic group.

In the case of the Saskatchewan Ruthenians, some school boards were employing teaching personnel without certification from or approval of the Department of Education.<sup>19</sup> One way of preventing such actions, on the part of school boards was through the alertness of the provincially appointed inspectors of schools and supervisors of school district organization. But such alertness did not increase the supply of teachers.<sup>20</sup>

In 1909 the Saskatchewan government decided to follow Manitoba's lead in the establishing of a Training School for Teachers for Foreign Speaking Communities. Unlike Manitoba, it was the intention of the government to include in the school not only Ruthenians but young men of various ethnic groups. During the lifetime of the school, 1909-1914, the Ruthenians brought strong pressure to bear upon the government, by petition and by political influence, to limit the attendance to Ruthenians and to change the name of the institution to Training School for Ruthenians. Similarly there was the insistent demand by the Ruthenians for the employment of a teacher, in the Training School, of their own nationality. The government did not grant any of these requests.<sup>21</sup>

The Training School was opened in the old Legislative Building, Dewdney Avenue, Regina, on October 13, 1909. The first and only principal of the School was Joseph Greer, who at the time of his appointment, was principal of the public school at Fort Qu'Appelle. It is difficult to understand why Greer was selected for the principalship. In 1898, at the age of thirty-two, he had come from Ontario to the North-West Territories. On the basis of his Ontario qualifications, he had been granted a second class professional certificate. Since 1898, the inspector's reports had consistently rated him "a capable teacher." But there was no evidence that he had experience with people of non-British background; he had never been engaged in teacher training; and his lack of academic preparation was a definite handicap. Subsequent events proved that he was unable to cope with the turbulent behavior of groups of young men who were resentful of being forced to receive instruction entirely in English and to submerge their own language and cultural heritage.<sup>22</sup>

According to the regulations, applicants for admission to the school had to be at least sixteen and not more than twenty years of age, but the records show that several men twenty-five to thirty years old were enrolled. The academic requirements stated that prospective trainees:

. . . shall have a knowledge in their own language equivalent at least to that required for Grade IV in the following subjects of the Public School Course: Reading, Writing, Composition, Arithmetic, Geography, Spelling. Shall have in addition a fair speaking knowledge of the English language.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Education 106G, *op. cit.*, McColl to Bryce, Aug. 1, 1908, pp. 106-07, McColl to MacNutt, July 7, 1907, p. 127.

<sup>20</sup> Violation of school law and regulations were not limited to school districts in non-British communities.

<sup>21</sup> Education, 106G, *op. cit.*, see pp. 9-52.

<sup>22</sup> Saskatchewan, Department of Education, Personal File of Joseph Greer.

<sup>23</sup> Education, 106G, 5. Training School for Teachers in Foreign-Speaking Communities, n.d. p. 140.



Even this minimum of Grade IV was not sacrosanct; there were at least six out of the 58 students in attendance during the School's final year of operation with a Grade III standing, and a proportionate number in other years.<sup>24</sup>

The Course of Study was divided into two parts, Scholarship and the Art of Teaching. Under the Scholarship section there was to be instruction:

... in the following subjects of the Public School Course up to and including that prescribed for Third Class Diploma: Reading, Spelling, Composition and Rhetoric, Physical Geography, Algebra, Botany and Agriculture, Grammar, Arithmetic and Mensuration, Geometry and Physical Science.<sup>25</sup>

Instruction in the Art of teaching was to be given during the last two months of the year and was to consist of:

... Class Management, Discipline, Duties of Teachers, Trustees and Pupils as outlined in the School Ordinance and Regulations of the Department, School Hygiene, and Sanitation. Students shall also have the privilege of observing lessons taught in the public schools and shall be required to record these observations. Each student shall be required to teach at least four lessons under the supervision of the Principal of the Normal School or some member of the staff appointed by him.<sup>26</sup>

The Training School was planned as a boys' residential school. It was really to have been a branch of the Regina Normal School, but there was little evidence of close working relationships between the two institutions. There is in existence a voluminous correspondence, in the form of memoranda, between Greer and McColl but a paucity of communication between Greer and the Normal School principal.

From October, 1909, to January, 1911, Greer was principal and only teacher. During 1911 and part of 1912, J. McDermid was an assistant teacher and during 1913 and 1914, S. M. Johnson was Greer's assistant. In addition two or three others were employed for short periods.<sup>27</sup> But, throughout the whole period, Greer had the major responsibility for managing a boarding school, for the purchasing of all supplies, for the teaching of all subjects, and for the general discipline of the School. Add to these burdens, the fact that Greer had a definite lack of understanding of the people with whom he worked and an apparent inability to delegate duties even when he had assistance, one is forced to the conclusion that the chances of success were heavily loaded on the negative side.

From the beginning, Greer had trouble with discipline. To discourage him from sending students to the Department of Education for admonition, McColl issued a directive on February 11, 1911, instructing Greer that in future it would be advisable to discuss all "difficulties" in connection with discipline or management of the school with the principal of the Normal School before reporting them to the Department. McColl also indicated in this directive that it was the

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 10-19.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Saskatchewan, *Public Accounts*, 1909-14.



Minister's order that the Training School "is hereafter to be regarded as part of the Normal School."<sup>28</sup>

In the original plan each year's session was to open about September 1 and close April 30. In actual practice the school seldom opened before the middle of October and closed about the middle of April.<sup>29</sup> This six month's term was too short to achieve the purposes for which the school was established. This situation was worsened by late admissions and students leaving early.

The aim was to try to raise the academic level of the students so that as many as possibly could pass the Grade VIII examinations, enter high school, and subsequently prepare themselves at the provincial Normal School for at least third class teaching certificates. In the meantime, after each six months' session, permits were issued on the recommendation of the principal, valid for teaching during the in-between school sessions.

Howard A. Everts, who was inspector of schools in the Canora area, in 1911, expressed very great dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching being carried on by the Ruthenian teachers:

From what I have seen of the work of Ruthenian teachers, I would conclude that the standing required of them is entirely too low. I find teachers who cannot speak two sentences in English without making errors . . . . The teachers speak broken English, their methods are very defective, their knowledge of subject matter is inefficient, and, in some instances their interest is very lukewarm.<sup>30</sup>

While this may be an extreme statement and possibly indicative of considerable bias, nevertheless, there is positive proof that conditions in these schools were very inadequate.

The records at the Training School were not kept in an orderly manner. Greer reported only on request and his reporting followed no fixed pattern. In Table Two, the writer attempted to summarize some of the salient data relating to the students. Another record revealed that forty students attended the school for one year; thirty-nine for two years; twenty-three for three years; and two

TABLE TWO  
Students enrolled in the Training School  
For Foreign Speaking Students<sup>31</sup>

Enrolment by Years							
Year	1st yr. Students	2nd yr. Students	3rd yr. Students	4th yr. Students	No. granted Grade VIII	No. granted Pt. 1. 3rd	No. who taught at close of Session
1909-10.....	21						19
1910-11.....	16	20			5		29
1911-12.....	6	27	15		4	7	40
1912-13.....	29	11	7				
1913-14.....	24	25	7	2			

<sup>28</sup> Education, 106G, 7. Correspondence with Principal, McColl to Greer, Feb. 11, 1909, p. 100.

<sup>29</sup> Education, 106G, 5. Training School for Teachers in Foreign-Speaking Communities, Ball to Students, Sept. 10, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* Everts to Ball, Oct. 11, 1911.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*



for four years. On the basis of this calculation, one hundred and four students received instruction at the Training School for varying periods during October, 1909 to March, 1914.

The government assisted the students by making special arrangements for the payment of board and lodging. Agreements were signed by the students and parents whereby the costs incurred, at the rate of \$25.00 per month, could be repaid by the students, without interest, over a three-year period in six semi-annual instalments.<sup>32</sup> Recruiting for the school was at first the responsibility of Joseph Megas.<sup>33</sup> Later, however, the school inspectors were called upon to recommend candidates for admission.

Throughout the five year period, the students bitterly complained about the treatment received at the hands of the principal. Some of these complaints might have arisen out of disappointment, on the part of the Ruthenians, in not having one of their own nationality as teacher; others, out of the unsatisfactory lodging conditions at the school. However, the evidence seems to point to considerable inadequacy on the part of Principal Greer. To undertake a task of this kind, a principal with high qualifications and superior personal attributes, including the ability to get along with those with whom he was associated, should have been found.

The life of the school came abruptly to an end, late in February, 1914. On February 25, a petition signed by every student in the school was presented to the Department. The petition contained a list of grievances against Principal Greer. This list included accusations of incompetence including poor teaching, injustice, severe discipline for minor infringements of regulations, disparaging remarks concerning students, "and many causes which we do not mention here."<sup>34</sup>

The Department of Education appointed three men, Dr. R. A. Wilson, principal of Regina Normal School, Inspector J. H. McKechnie of Wilkie, and Julius Androchowicz, school district inspector at Vonda, to investigate the charges. This committee of investigation largely exonerated Principal Greer and recommended the expulsion of six of the strike leaders. By this time, however, outside influences were making conditions more difficult even to the extent of providing students with money to continue their opposition to the authority of the school. The final result was the closing of the school and the forced resignation of Principal Greer.<sup>35</sup>

In the closing days of the students' strike, Deputy Minister Ball did not feel kindly disposed toward Greer. In his memorandum to Minister of Education

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> In 1908, Megas had the title of Supervisor of Ruthenian Schools; in 1909 this title was changed to Supervisor of Ruthenian and Galician Schools; in 1911, the title became Supervisor of Schools in Foreign-Speaking Districts. See Department of Education, *Annual Reports* for 1908, 1909, 1910 and 1911.

<sup>34</sup> AS, Scott Papers, 18. Education, (1) Training School for Foreign Students, Letter from students to Ball, Feb. 25, 1914, p. 36022.

<sup>35</sup> The students had refused to attend classes unless a new principal was appointed. After Greer resigned, he obtained a teaching position in Midale. After two years he became principal of Weyburn elementary school. This position he held successfully until his retirement in 1932.



Scott, Ball stated it was "his (Greer's) tactless management . . . and prison-like regulations which had precipitated the trouble." Continuing, Ball wrote that:

. . . the difficulty of negotiating with the students was increased by reason of the fact that in all the petty disciplinary measures and harsh regulations of the school the principal held the department up to the students as the arch-tyrant, supporting him in any position he might care to take.<sup>36</sup>

In retrospect, Deputy Minister Ball, expressed dissatisfaction with what had been achieved by the Training School during its five years' existence. He stated that:

The separation of students undergoing special training for work in foreign speaking communities had not been found in the best interest of the students or of the phase of education concerned . . . .<sup>37</sup>

The Department was not willing, however, to surrender the idea of special training for foreign speaking students. In place of separate institution, such students were in future to be:

. . . attached to the Provincial Normal School, Regina, and their training placed in charge of two . . . school inspectors Messrs. W. E. Stevenson, B.A. and H. A. Everts, B.A.<sup>38</sup>

For the first time, a teacher of foreign extraction was appointed, in 1914, to be a member of the Normal School staff in Regina. The stated purpose of his appointment was to assist in the training of foreign-speaking students. The appointee was N. Romaniuk, a young man who had received his education in Austria and who had been less than ten months in Canada. During the year, 1914-1915, his services were apparently quite satisfactory, but in December 1915, he was accused of subversive activities, interned, and, as a result summarily dismissed from government service.<sup>39</sup> Ill fortune seemed to "dog the footsteps" of the government's attempt to solve the teacher shortage problem in foreign-speaking communities.

The term for the special classes at the Regina Normal School extended from October 15 to March 31. During 1914-1915, there were fifty-one students in attendance; this increased to fifty-six in 1915-1916, but declined to twenty-nine in 1916-1917.<sup>40</sup>

Finally in April, 1917, the Department of Education decided to discontinue the special classes. In announcing this decision, Acting Deputy Minister Blacklock stated:

It is felt that students who have been in attendance at these classes will make as satisfactory progress in their work if they attend the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes in the Province.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Scott Papers, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1914, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Scott Papers, *op. cit.* See also Saskatchewan, *Journals of the Legislative Assembly*, 1916, pp. 75, 170.

<sup>40</sup> Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1914, p. 38; 1915, p. 56; 1916, p. 66.

<sup>41</sup> Education, 106G, 11. Normal School Classes for Special Students, n.d., p. 232.



This brought to an end an interesting but poorly conceived and badly mis-managed experiment. That the government officials failed to grasp the magnitude of the task in setting up the Training School seems evident in their failure to appoint highly qualified people to carry out the School's program. The program itself, with its low standards, appeared doomed to failure. That the School might have been more effective under different leadership is, of course, mere speculation.

In 1915, eighty-five of those who attended the School were teaching in foreign-speaking communities on provisional certificates. In 1918, this number was reduced to thirty-three, of which twenty-two held provisional and eleven, third class certificates.<sup>42</sup> It is doubtful if these results justified the cost of maintaining a separate institution for five years.<sup>43</sup> No information was available concerning the number of students in attendance at the special classes in the Regina Normal School, 1914-1917, who were teaching in 1918.<sup>44</sup>

But while results of the Training School and the Special Classes might not have justified the expenditure, far more important was the principle involved. Pyke, who was principal of the Collegiate Institute in Saskatoon, in a letter to Blacklock under date of June 7, 1917, expressed his ideas, concerning special classes in the Normal School, as follows:

The particular advantage of having these students in segregated classes is that the teacher can proceed more slowly especially in the English subjects and give more individual expression. The disadvantages are many and serious. In the first place such a class in a school is treated as a class of foreigners and is kept aloof from the activities and social life of the student body. These students lose a great deal from lack of close contact with the others, by reason of elimination of competition, by not hearing constantly the familiar expressions of our language and thus acquiring a facility in the use of English, by not assisting in the various functions of school life and thus fitting themselves for citizenship.<sup>45</sup>

The principle of segregation did not prove to be successful. The change in policy in 1917, whereby all young people, regardless of ethnic origin, attended a common high school and normal school, was long overdue and appeared to be fully justified.

In 1918 out of a provisional total of 6,062 teachers,<sup>46</sup> there were 246 with foreign names.<sup>47</sup> These 246 teachers were classified according to certificates held as follows:<sup>48</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> The cost of the Training School for the five years 1909-1914, was \$35,582.47, exclusive of repairs to the Old Legislative Building. See Saskatchewan, *Public Accounts*, for the years, 1909-10 to 1913-14.

<sup>44</sup> These classes involved an additional cost of \$16,966.00. Saskatchewan, *Public Accounts*, 1914-15 to 1916-17.

<sup>45</sup> Education, 106G, 11. Normal School Classes for Special Students, p. 195.

<sup>46</sup> Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1918, p. 33.

<sup>47</sup> Education, 106G, *op. cit.*

<sup>48</sup> As was indicated above, of the 246 teachers, 11 holding third class certificates and 22 holding provisional certificates had attended the Training School.



<i>Number</i>	<i>Certificate Held</i>
105.....	Provisional
14.....	Third Class pending
86.....	Third Class
32.....	Second Class
7.....	First Class
2.....	High School Certificates

The experiment in teacher education was only one of several steps taken in the process of attempting to assimilate, through education, the many peoples from many lands. By 1925, the original problems, which were presented in the first part of this study were on their way towards solution. The younger generation of Mennonites were much less rigid than their fathers. Doukhobor extremists left the province and those who remained assumed active roles as Canadian citizens. The Ruthenians or Ukrainians were quick to realize the advantages to be derived from education. As a result, the political, religious, economic, and cultural life of Saskatchewan communities was enriched and strengthened by the outstanding contributions of people of non-British origin.

M. P. TOOMBS



## The Story of the Ahenakews

Edited by

RUTH MATHESON BUCK

This account has been prepared from notes and an unfinished manuscript written by the late Reverend Canon Edward Ahenakew, D.D. (1885-1961). The notes have had to be reconstructed, but as far as possible, the original wording has been used. They are supplemented by passages from Edward Ahenakew's manuscript called "Old Keyam" meaning "I do not care." This work reflects the experiences and thoughts of the writer and his own attitude to life when age and discouragement had made him another like Old Keyam, "who seemed not to care as much as he really did." Editorial notes have been added in order to provide a complete story.

**A** HENAKEW was my grandfather's personal name. It has no known meaning. I may say here that not all Indian names have a meaning. An hour ago a man went out of my office. He has a little girl name Mā-mā-mauch. This name has no meaning. It is neither English nor Indian. It is conceivable that seventy years from now one may ask the meaning. An Indian scholar may manipulate an Indian word or words which would have a similar sound and thus feel himself justified in giving some meaning to it. I might give an instance which will bear this out.<sup>1</sup> But I know the origin of Mā-mā-mauch. When the little girl was born, an older sister, then hardly able to talk, called the baby sister by that name. My grandfather's name may have had some similar origin.

Edward<sup>2</sup> Ahenakew was born in 1885 at Sandy Lake, seventy miles west of Prince Albert, on the Reserve selected in 1876 by his grandfather's brother, Ahtahkakoop—Chief Starblanket. He attended the Anglican mission school, under his uncle, Louis Ahenakew, a man who in later years might have been mistaken for a distinguished Frenchman, with his grey hair and neat pointed beard. Of his teaching, his nephew noted: "What I learned stood me in good stead when I arrived at the school in Prince Albert." This was in 1896, and the school was the Indian boarding school to which Emmanuel College<sup>3</sup> was converted during Bishop Pinkham's episcopate. The Ahenakew family travelled with horses and wagon from Sandy Lake. When they arrived, ice was forming on the Saskatchewan and they camped on the north bank of the river.

It was two or three days before we were able to cross on foot. With much trepidation, I allowed myself to be handed over to the principal of the school,

<sup>1</sup> W. Bleasdel Cameron wrote in an article entitled "A Militant Churchman" in "The Western Producer," March 30, 1950: "I asked Ahenakew shortly after I first met him what his name meant. Tracking an Indian name to its etymological lair is high entertainment. Ahenakew has taken a prominent part in compiling a 26,000 word Cree-English dictionary and I took it for granted he could tell me. But he said, "It doesn't seem to mean anything." "Do you know how it originated then?" . . . I proceeded as here set out . . . (A Story of a Blackfoot ambush of a Cree raiding party which included Ahenakew's grandfather, then named Crowskin, and of his wounding and his rescue) . . . "They bound up Crowskin's wound. The Blackfoot's bullet, they found, had struck him in the leg and severed a sinew. 'I have in mind' their leader said 'to give our brother a new name. When he was halted, one among you cried out 'Ha-ha-hai! Nakew! (Alas! He stops!) It is well we do not forget the day we held off the dog-face swarm and rescued him. Let his name be Ha-hai-nakew! So, we shall not forget.'" Ahenakew laughed. "Well," he said, "I never thought I'd see the time when I'd learn from a white man the meaning of my name. It may be true. Anyway, my grandfather had a crooked leg."

<sup>2</sup> He was named for Edward Matheson (The Rev. Canon E. K. Matheson) who taught at Sandy Lake 1877-1879. "The Mathesons of Saskatchewan Diocese," by Ruth M. Buck, *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XIII, No. 2 Spring 1960.

<sup>3</sup> "An Early History of Emmanuel College," by Jean E. Murray. *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. I X, No. 3, Autumn 1956.





The Reverend Canon  
Edward Ahenakew

an old Archdeacon<sup>4</sup> with flashing eyes beneath hairy eyebrows, and on his chin a royal beard which forked fiercely at the lightest touch of wind.

I shed no tear, but the pain in my heart was great, as I watched my father walking away. He did not look back once. I was much depressed, and scarcely noticed the boys kicking a football about the school grounds. Then two who were my cousins ran over and took charge of me. They had been in the school for more than a year, and they told me about it, persuading me to join in the game. In a short time, I forgot my troubles. Gradually I fell into the ordinary round of school life<sup>5</sup> winning a few minor honours both on the playgrounds and in the class room. Our recreation during the winter was skating and sliding; and in the summertime, cricket; but always whenever the weather permitted, there was football.

The boys were very good players indeed, fleet of foot, fearing neither hard bumps nor violent exercise. They tried to play together in what is known as team-work, although they were hampered in this by the Indian's desire for individual prowess.

Life in the open prairie tended to breed into the Prairie Indian a freedom which sometimes closely bordered on license. He was, in the main, of a daring and reckless temperament . . . The Horse has played a large part in stimulating the reckless and somewhat wild character of the Prairie Cree. I remember, as a youth, riding around wildly with others like myself. As we raced, I would feel within me an intoxication of spirit, almost inhuman. An old missionary, who knew the Indian well, told us one day that horseback riding was undoing all that he had been able to effect in us and that we were fast turning into savages.

The Prairie Indian is lacking sadly in what is generally called "stick-to-it-iveness." He dislikes any work that has in it an element of plodding; he is not good at sustained effort, but desires quick returns. He will put forth almost super-human effort when an object that he desires is within view, but when his work has its only reward somewhere beyond the horizon and to get it means the exercising of much patience, he is liable to continue in a most apathetic way, if, indeed, he does not give up altogether. This is sad, but it again is the teaching

<sup>4</sup> The Venerable Archdeacon John Alexander Mackay, 1838-1923. See Introduction, "Documents of Western History. The Journal of The Reverend J. A. Mackay." *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XVI, No. 3, Autumn 1963.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Ahenakew became a strong advocate of day-schools. The arguments which he supported appear in Chief Thunderchild's letter of 1923, in his reports of the school at Little Pine, and in "Old Keyam on the Indian Educational Problem"—all of these among his papers, unpublished.



of the prairie. While he roamed it, engaged in anything, it almost invariably meant that instant application of all his powers of body and mind. In the buffalo chase, he needed courage, skill, and the best of everything that was in him. But he would soon be finished, tired himself, and his horse panting almost to death. Then he would perhaps have nothing to do again until the next chase. Likewise in raiding the enemy country, he might travel hundreds of miles, creep into the Blackfoot encampment, and take away horses from under the very noses of the vigilant enemy. Bareback, he would ride hell-for-leather home with the stolen horses, resting only for breathing spells.

It was ever thus in the prairie, a quick application of all human powers, a superhuman effort, followed by total relaxation. This is what the prairie bred into us, and it is not at all conducive to our advancement now.

In 1903, Edward Ahenakew passed his junior matriculation, and then worked with his father at Sandy Lake, or taught school on other Reserves. He entered Wycliffe College, Toronto, to begin the study of Theology, and completed the work in Saskatoon after the re-establishment of Emmanuel Theological College. He was ordained priest in 1912, and was sent to Onion Lake<sup>6</sup> to assist the Rev. John Matheson, whose health was failing, and who died in 1916. Dr. Elizabeth Matheson gave up her practice at Onion Lake when she was appointed medical inspector in the Winnipeg public schools in March 1918. Late that year there was the dreadful influenza epidemic; and the suffering of his people moved Edward Ahenakew to undertake the study of Medicine at Edmonton. Within three years, however, he was compelled to abandon this when he developed stomach ulcers. During his long convalescence he turned seriously to writing, and his journals and papers date from this period.

The years were not wasted, for what knowledge I gained has come in handy from time to time. I think also that my outlook on things has been widened, and my association with the medical students was of value. I worked in various missions and then was appointed general missionary, until (about 1940) I took charge of the mission at Fort à la Corne.<sup>7</sup> During these years I worked with Archdeacon Faries to complete the Cree-English dictionary. I have translated some booklets into Cree, and (since 1923) I have published a Cree paper, called "The Monthly Guide."

When the League of Indians of Canada was established about 1920, Edward Ahenakew served as president in Western Canada. For his people again he was delegate year after year to the Anglican Synods, diocesan, provincial, and general. In 1949, Emmanuel College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. He retired in 1955, but his work in certain missions continued, and he helped in the summer schools for Indian catechists and lay-readers. It was on his way to one of these schools in July 1961, that he died. Edward Ahenakew never married. During the last few years of his life he lived with the family of his brother,

<sup>6</sup> "The Mathesons of Saskatchewan Diocese," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1960.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Budd established the mission at Fort a la Corne in 1857. He was the first western Indian ordained to the Anglican ministry. His son, also the Rev. Henry Budd, died at Fort a la Corne in 1863. In his papers, Edward Ahenakew notes that he erected crosses on the graves of the younger Henry Budd and Luke Caldwell who was catechist at that mission when Bishop MacLean came to the Diocese of Saskatchewan in 1874.



Shem Ahenakew, at Sandy Lake—a place for which he had the deepest affection. In “Old Keyam” he writes of Sandy Lake “with its promontories covered with spruce, a dark-wooded hill commanding the view from the north, while on the south are the rolling undulations of the parklands of Saskatchewan. White-washed Indian houses are all around the shore, neat-looking dwellings sheltering a band of Indians, peaceful and, on the whole, industrious; while on an elevation the church stands, with its high tower visible from all around. There is an air of well-being and contentment not known usually to such an extent on an Indian reservation.”

My grandfather Ahenakew had three brothers—Sasukwamoos (One who adheres), Napāskis (a word which denotes manhood), and Ahtahkakoop (Star-blanket). The Hudson’s Bay Company factor respected and liked the brothers, and he made the eldest, Ahtahkakoop chief of those Crees who hunted for Fort Carlton. He was only confirming what was in the minds of all the members of the tribe in that area. The three younger brothers were pleased at the appointment, for does not the eldest of a family take the place of father in Indian life? There was no better physique nor greater nobility of features to be found in all the West. The stamp of leadership and the calm consciousness of strength were in his every movement. His eye was clear and true, but dangerous when it glowed. He led his band to a life of peace and prosperity.

When the British Crown thought fit to make Treaty with the Indians of the West, Ahtahkakoop and Mistawasis, an equally powerful chief, had many council meetings together before they placed their names on Treaty Number 6, at Fort Carlton. When the Rebellion broke out in 1885, they both refused to take part, although threats were made against them. They had fought too many battles to be intimidated. “We will not fight against our own relations,” they said, “but on the other hand, we will not fight against the Queen. If any come to molest us or try to force us to join them, them we will fight. The Sioux Indians are with us in this.” No one bothered them again.

After the Rebellion, the Government of Canada decided to give these Chiefs a trip to Ottawa to reward them for their loyalty and to show the might of the Canadian Government. They were accompanied by an interpreter, and later on they told many a story about the things they had seen, and they laughed about each other’s reactions to the adventures they had had.

Henry McKay, son of the late William McKay of the Hudson’s Bay Company, told me that, when the House was in session, a cannon used to be fired at noon near the door of the old Parliament Buildings. Some of the members who wanted to see what the Chiefs would do, took them to a balcony over the door, just before the noon hour. The Chiefs waited calmly, ignorant of what was in store. The others, a bit uneasy themselves, kept checking the time of their watches, for everyone knows that the roar of a cannon is hard on some nervous systems. At twelve sharp, the cannon was fired. The Chiefs made no movement, showed no surprise. It was as though the sound had made no impression upon them, for they were long used to hiding their feelings, and were trained from early years to show no sign of fear. The only one who spoke was Mistawasis, and his voice was calm: “Tapwā so ke ta kwan,” he said. (Verily, the sound is loud!).





Public Archives of Canada.

Indian Chiefs at the unveiling of the Brant Memorial, October 16th, 1886.  
Front Row: Flying in a Circle, Big Child (Mistawasis), Starblanket (Ahtahkakoop).  
Back Row: Osoup, Peter Hourie, Interpreter.



Another story that Henry McKay told me was this: Sir John A. Macdonald liked Starblanket (Ahtahkakoop) very much. One evening he invited some of his own friends to have dinner with him, and included Starblanket, with Hourie as interpreter. Speaking to the Chief after dinner, he pointed to his daughter. "she has always wanted to have an Indian name. I would be so thankful if the Chief would be good enough to give her one this evening." Without hesitation, the Chief stood. "I shall give her part of my own name. She will be called 'Atahk' (The Star)." Sir John was most pleased, and it is said that the girl was always called by her Indian name after that.

A suggestion was made to send Starblanket on to England from Ottawa, but this he refused politely. In 1897 he died. The Indian Department sent an official to represent them at the funeral. He ordered black crape for the inner walls of the church, and black carpets for the aisle and the pathway to the gate. Starblanket, the Chief of my band, gifted in ability and person, was honoured and respected all through life; but he never seemed to realize that he was in any way above the average Indian. On the wall of the mission church, a plaque carries an inscription which reads in part (Cree syllabics) "The memory of the just is blessed."

His brother Sasukwamoos was named Jacob at his baptism. Unlike Starblanket he was small, quick in both speech and temper. He had two distinguishing features—a hunched back which failed signally to rob him of manlike qualities, and a beard which failed on its part to add to what comeliness he did possess.

Much of his standing on the Reserve, he owed to an innate worthiness not always recognized by those who did not know him well. Before he adopted Christianity, like his brother, Chief Ahtahkakoop, he had been well up in the ranks of those who belonged to the secret society of medicine men, called Mitāwiwin. This alone was enough to give a man standing amongst Indians, who valued such things. A son of his, Joseph, was the teacher in the day school, but he died in an epidemic which struck the Reserve.

The youngest of the brothers was Napāskis. He seems to have been handsome and likeable, for an important white man took him with him to Montreal. He was away for more than a year. When he returned, he brought many gifts, and being unmarried he distributed these amongst his sisters-in-law. They were proud of their good-looking brother-in-law, but they noted that he was preoccupied and restless. Then before the spring came, he went with about twenty young men on a raid into the Blackfoot country. Two of the young men were his nephews, Bad Owl, and Kaminawa-cha-kwāo (Antoine Starblanket). They left the Eagle Hills while there was still snow on the ground and they started on snowshoes, crossing the prairie and travelling along the Red Deer to the Belly River and Old Man's Creek, to surprise the Blackfeet in their encampments, and steal their horses. Napāskis was quite fearless, and at first they were successful. Finally however, with the Blackfeet aroused, the main party escaped with the stolen horses; but Napāskis waited as he had agreed, to meet his nephew, and Kaminawa-cha-Kwāo failed him. Five other Crees stayed with Napāskis to face the Blackfeet.



They fought all day, and into the night, and when morning came all the Crees but Napāskis had been killed. The Blackfeet heard him sing his song. Then he spoke: "I could still kill some of you—but why? You have killed all my men, and I do not want to live." He jumped up—stood tall and straight. "Shoot, you dogs, shoot!" The Blackfeet shot from all around him and he fell dead. They found on his body a paper of credit signed by the white man who had be-friended him. They showed it to Father Lacombe, and he had the body buried and the grave marked. In 1905, when an uncle of mine travelled to the Blood Reserve, the Blackfeet still remembered the story and knew the grave of Napāskis.

The last of the four brothers was of course Ahenakew, my grandfather. As a young man, he had been crippled in a buffalo hunt, when his horse stumbled and he was thrown, striking his knee against a stone and shattering the joint. He became the first of our band to be converted to Christianity, and he was given the name David in baptism. His body was the first also to be laid to rest in the mission graveyard.

Edward Ahenakew's account then turns to consider his grandmother's and his mother's families. The chart included will make these relationships clearer.

The first Ahenakew married a woman from the Battleford country. Her Christian name was Mary, her Indian name Kees-ka-na-kwas (Cut Sleeve). She had three brothers, of whom the second, Kamekosit Peyāo (Red Pheasant), was Chief of the band. The eldest, Wuttunee (Tail Feathers), had two wives and he raised six sons and several daughters, who take a leading part today on the Reserve called Red Pheasant's. Her youngest brother was named Baptiste, and she gave this name in turn to her son, my father.

Baptiste Ahenakew married Ellen Ermine Skin the daughter of Notōkwāwīkumik (Old Woman's Lodge) who was the sister of Chief Poundmaker. Of all my grandparents, Notōkwāwīkumik is the only one whose parents are known to us. Her father was a Stoney Indian and her mother was a Cree with some French blood, a sister of Chief Mistawasis. My great-grandfather, the Stoney Indian, went by the rather unromantic name of "Skunk skin." Unlike the typical Indian, he had a good-sized beard of which he was inclined to be proud. He was probably born before 1800, as my grandmother, his daughter, was born about 1820 as nearly as I can reckon it.

Three stories were often told about my great-grandfather. One was his great love for playing cards and checkers. It is said that when the band was travelling he used to walk with a checker-board hanging on his back for ready availability; and he owned two or three packs of cards at a time. Whenever the Indians stopped to rest in their travelling, he would sit down to play either checkers or cards with the young men who were always friendly towards him.

Another story about him is that he committed murder twice. Even in her later days, I sometimes would hear my mother mention her grandfather, greatly concerned as to the ultimate fate of his soul. However, there was some provocation for the killings. I have not the time here to tell about them. The last one



took place at York Factory on Hudson Bay, where he had gone with a flotilla of boats to bring back trading goods for the Hudson's Bay Company posts scattered through the West.

The third thing told about him had great practical value to the tribe. He was considered to be supernaturally endowed, in a manner not to be described here now—able to make what was known as a "pound" and to bring success to such pounds as he made, so that the buffalo would be enticed into them.

Whenever word was passed from camp to camp that Skunk Skin was starting to build a pound, the other Indians would come to help him, for the enclosure had to be strong enough to hold the powerful animals once they were in it.

After every animal had been killed, the women would dress the meat and skins, making the former into pemmican and dried meat, the latter into leather for shelter and clothing. Skunk-skin was thus a very useful man in the tribe, as were others who were similarly able to take charge when pounds were being built and operated.

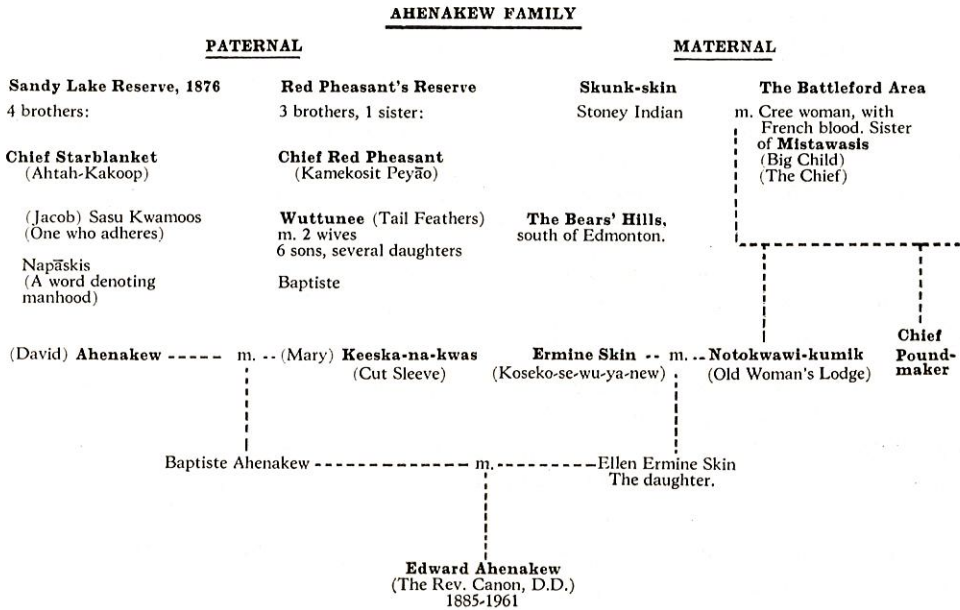
It was because of this skill of his own that he chose the name Poundmaker (Pe-to-kwa-han-ap-e-vey-in) for his younger son, the man who is mentioned in Canadian history for his part in the North-West Rebellion.

It was on his Reserve that the battle of Cutknife Creek took place. There was a large Indian camp just over the shoulder of a high hill which ascended gradually from Cutknife Creek towards the south. Not expecting trouble of any sort, the Indians had slept through the night; and all the while, troops from Battleford, forty miles to the east, were advancing towards them. A young man who had ridden out west from the camp, to hunt chanced to see the advancing soldiers. He yelled, "Our friends have come to call on us!" And at the same time a field gun was fired, the shot going over the encampment to kill a horse farther away. In a moment, women and children were fleeing, while the men arranged themselves so as to take full advantage of the topography so favourable to themselves.

All day the battle went on, and at sundown the soldiers had to retreat, their way to Battleford a country of rolling sandhills, ideal for ambush. The Indians, who were familiar with every foot of it, might easily have waylaid and massacred the tired troops, carrying their wounded and their dead. Instead they were followed to the edge of the reservation, and then allowed to go in peace, Poundmaker restraining his angry and undisciplined men by the power of persuasion alone. Archdeacon Mackay, whose services were asked for by the Canadian government in the interval after the Rebellion until things were settled and quiet again in that area, said to me: "Had Poundmaker not stopped his men, as he did, there would not have been many soldiers alive in the morning."

After the Rebellion, and his imprisonment, Poundmaker went to visit the renowned Blackfoot chief, Crowfoot, who had made him his adopted son. While there, Poundmaker had a haemorrhage and died almost immediately. Crowfoot ordered that the body should lie in state. "First, all the Bloods will see my son





before his burial." Crowfoot was heartbroken. "I too will not be far behind." He died in his turn, a broken-hearted but a great-hearted man. These are the words of Chief Thunderchild as told to me many years afterwards.

Poundmaker's only son, Sukamotā yani (Alexander Poundmaker) in time became chief. A war-bonnet which had belonged to Chief Poundmaker is still kept by a nephew of this son. This young man is the Western president of an Indian organization which is recognized by the Government of Canada.

The Queen's Own Rifles, which included young men who were students at the University of Toronto, took part in the battle at Cutknife Creek, and two of those young men became Bishops. Many years later, when we were building a church in that district, Bishop Acheson in the United States saw our appeal for funds and sent a subscription, saying how thankful he was to know of this evidence of Christianity where he as a young man had fought with the Indians; and Bishop Lloyd, who had been wounded in that battle, consecrated the church. It was good to see him and the son of Pe-to-kwa-han-ap-e-vey-in take each other by the hand.

Poundmaker's sister, Notōwāwi-kumik, my mother's mother, married a western Indian, who came from the Bear's Hills, south of Edmonton. Because he was uncommonly fair-skinned, the Indians called him Koseko-se-wu-ya-new (Ermine Skin).

He took part in many battles, but ill luck seemed to dog his footsteps. Once he was on horseback, chasing a Blackfoot who was also riding. Ermine Skin's gun was not loaded. Opening his powderhorn, he spilled powder into the bore of his gun. So far so good. He had a bullet in his mouth, to moisten it with saliva.



This he dropped also into the bore of the gun. It was the way that men loaded while racing after buffalo. The saliva on the bullet acted as a wad between powder and bullet. When Ermine Skin was close to the Blackfoot, he aimed the gun at his bare back and pulled the trigger. But no bullet hit. There was only the black mark of the powder on the Blackfoot's skin. The bullet must have rolled out as Ermine Skin raised his gun to shoot, and he missed the chance to make a great name for himself.

He was successful once when with a raiding party he secured a large number of Blackfoot horses; but he was so accommodating that he ended by having none himself, giving them all away to the other members of the expedition. Whether this was out of weakness or goodness of heart, I do not know. I always like to think it was the latter. There was however one achievement of my grandfather's which was given recognition.

Before a sun dance, a structure of trees had to be built; and when these were cut and ready, there was a special ceremony to bring the trees to the site. Women accompanied the men; and it was my grandfather's honor to select these women from the camp. Each horse carried a man and a woman. They would ride to the bush, tie a rope to one of the trees that had been felled, and then race to the site of the sun dance lodge, full speed, dragging the tree behind them. The work was usually done in a surprisingly short space of time.

This business of selecting the women was earned by my grandfather when, single-handed, he captured a number of Blackfoot women! He had—secretly, he thought—helped an old Blackfoot couple and a girl to escape when the Crees attacked their camp; but the women had learned of it, and, afraid for their own lives, they gave themselves up to him, somewhat to his embarrassment. Most of these women were in time taken by single men and they became Crees, married to men who were their hereditary foes. Some may have had Blackfoot husbands before they were captured. I knew a woman who was the daughter of such a captive. She was married to one of our most influential chiefs.

My grandfather was much prouder of his great ability as a runner. No one was ever found to beat him at a foot race—a long race or a short one made no difference. His brother-in-law told me of one race that my grandfather won. "There was a butte far enough away to look blue," he said. "The runners had to run to that hill, around it, and back to the starting point. Men on horseback went with the runners to see that all the rules were followed. Some runners stopped exhausted before they came to the hill. Your grandfather was about a mile ahead of any other when he finished circuiting the hill. From there on he lengthened the distance between himself and the others. Two of the men he ran against were supposed to be so swift that they had never been beaten in that part of the country where they lived."

My grandfather died in 1906, well over eighty years of age, the "Old Man" of our Reserve. All the children referred to him as "Nemoosoom" (my grandfather), and he was mourned by many who had listened with eager interest to his stories of Indian adventures on the prairies.



The Old Men of Reserves are an institution. The fact that there used to be no written language among the Indians forced them to depend entirely on the memory for things of the far past, as well as for those of more recent date. Because of this, the accuracy of the memory of the old men of the race is surprising. The minutest details regarding events that took place in childhood are remembered, and it is most interesting to hear two or more old men comparing notes as to the surface markings and points of a horse which may have lived some forty or fifty years before.

The Old Man had a responsible and important position to fill in the band. In a sense, he supplied our moral code, he took the place of legal advisor, and of written history. His also was the task of firing the spirits of the young men with stories of daring deeds done in the times past.

The Indian religious dances did not have much moral effect on the people. It is true that in them, the people were exhorted to be kind and to live at peace with each other—tribal loyalty also required this of them—but beyond this, these dances seem to have had no elevating effect. It was the old men who were the influence for good. At impromptu moments they spoke to the young men, assembled perhaps on a hill-top on a summer evening. By moral suasion alone they sought to right wrongs and to settle disputes. Their own youthful fires being burnt out, and they having passed through most of the experiences of life, they were qualified to speak. Even the least of them had some wisdom; but the greater the warriors they had been in their past, the greater the effect of their words upon youthful listeners.

I have listened to them often. Eloquence, enhanced by the natural richness of the language and by a superb mastery of gesticulation, was general among them. Never does one find an old prairie Indian at a loss for a suitable word. Naturalness, simplicity in the use of a language that is rich in itself, skill in weaving the great primary bigness of things into the smaller actualities of every day life, make him a truly eloquent man.

It was in the narrating of past events, of the frequent battles, that his genius came out most strongly. He could weave comedy into a tragic subject, making it more tragic in effect; introduce a melting touch of pathos; sweeten it with love and loyalty. And all this he would present in a language so highly figurative yet suited to the subject, that his listeners would sit entranced, imagining themselves seeing and hearing the events as if enacted before them . . . Stories were hoarded and kept intact in the minds of our old men who held with great tenacity to that which had been entrusted to their keeping by the previous generation . . . In telling these stories, the Old Man dared not lie, since ridicule, keen and general, would have been his lot, and his standing as the teller of authentic events would have suffered. He dared not lie, for there were always a number of other old men in the encampment who could contradict him and who would delight in doing so, for there was always rivalry among them. So his veracity had to be a settled fact, and this, together with his well-developed powers



of observation made him a reliable depository for the annals of his race, and a worthy medium through whom the folk-lore of preceding generations might be passed on to the future.

Edward Ahenakew's own stories of his family are such; and he closes with an example of that perception rare in any folk-lore—the recognition of a woman's courage and endurance. This is the story of his grandmother.

Her name was Keeskanakwas (Cut Sleeve), her Christian name being Mary. As her husband, Ahenakew, was the brother of a chief, so was she the sister of one, of Chief Red Pheasant Kamekosit-Peyāo who had his hunting grounds in the Battleford country. When the Rebellion broke out, Cut Sleeve was visiting her daughter in that country. All the others of her sons and daughters were in the Prince Albert country. Anxious for them, she left Poundmaker's Reserve, where her daughter lived, and started for Sandy Lake, some one hundred and fifty miles away. She determined to travel over the Thickout Hills. The winter had ended but there was still snow on the ground and there was no road. More than that, she had little food, for her daughter's house had been broken into and ransacked. Snaring a rabbit when she could and eating withered rosehips and shrivelled berries, she was able to keep alive and to go a few miles each day. She mended her moccasins until they could no longer be mended, and then she made others for her feet from pieces of her blanket. Growing steadily weaker, she could travel only a few miles each day, and it was more than a month before she reached Sandy Lake. Fortunately the band had returned from the neutral encampment at Prince Albert. But when she came within sight of her son's camp, it seemed deserted. She crawled towards it, for her stumbling weakness, her worn feet made walking too painful. And at the door to the teepee, she found that still more effort was required of her. My mother was quite alone, and it was the hour of my birth. Had she not come, had she not sound still the strength to help, I might not be here to write this today.



RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

## Experiences of Starting and Conducting a Store In Saskatchewan in the Early '80s

By JAMES CLINKSKILL

Mr. James Clinkskill (1854-1936), a member of the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories, 1888-1899 and 1902-1905, emigrated from Scotland to Winnipeg in 1882 and later in the same year opened a general store in Prince Albert. In 1883 he and his partner, Thomas Mahaffy moved their business to Battleford. Although Mr. Clinkskill maintained his interest at Battleford until 1908, he moved to Saskatoon in 1899, and was later mayor of that city. The following recollections of his early storekeeping experiences at Battleford are taken from his extensive unpublished reminiscences, copies of which are preserved in the Saskatoon Public Library and the Saskatchewan Archives.

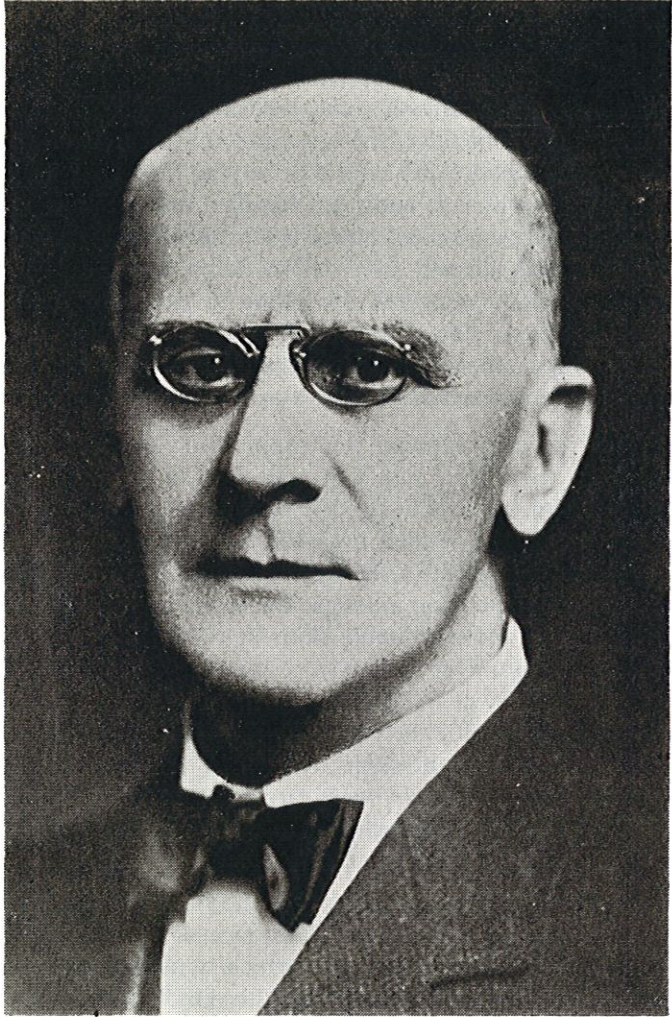
THE EDITOR

FOR some years our goods came by rail to Swift Current, a divisional point on the Canadian Pacific Railway situated two hundred miles south of Battleford. This place was a small hamlet consisting of one general store and a few shacks housing railway employees. From thence the goods were transported in carts to Battleford. The loading of the goods was a particular job, each piece had to be weighed separately for two reasons. The first was that the freighters were desirous of getting paid for every pound loaded and the second was to enable them to balance the load properly so that there would be no heavy weight on the back of the pony. It was wonderful to see how carefully the pieces were tightly packed to prevent friction of one piece against another during the shaking going over the prairie trail. The loads varied from six hundred to a thousand pounds each cart according to the strength of the pony. The freighters were almost entirely composed of halfbreeds who had for years transported freight for the Hudson's Bay Company. It was a rare thing for us to complain of damages during transit, much less than the damage by rail and there was a total absence from pilfering. One cause of damage for which we had no redress was that done by field mice. Should a brigade be delayed on the road and compelled to camp for a few days the mice would get into the cases or bales and nibble at the goods. I had the experience when unpacking a package containing overalls to find that the mice had nibbled the folded ends completely across the bundle. A piece of silk folded in the usual manner had the selvedge eaten away. A hole in a sack of flour would leave a white stream on the trail. These damages had to be added to cost of transportation. The rate we paid at first was four dollars per hundred pounds gross weight. Later as competition became keen the price was lower till in the '90s when we could get our goods to Saskatoon by rail (ninety miles from Battleford) the rate had declined to two dollars per hundred pounds. There was never any difficulty in obtaining freighters, these people had no other means of livelihood. During the season April to October they were continually on the trail. During the winter months after the snow had fallen it was hard to get them to travel except at very high rates. It was necessary for us to buy largely in the fall forecasting our requirements for six months trade at least.

After the goods arrived at Battleford there was the task of carefully calculating the total cost of transportation rail and overland. Each case or bale had to



beweighed separately. Each item of the contents was also weighed and cost and weight of case added to find rate per pound (there were no pasteboard containers in these days). The rail and overland rate added together would often run to nine or ten cents per pound. The rate being ascertained for each article or a number of the same articles had the net cost added to invoice cost. Each garment or article had a ticket put on stating cost in code and selling price in plain figures. The first was required when making up an inventory, the other was to guide our assistants, some of whom were weak in memory and short in morals. This meticulous costing was necessary. In the same case there



James Clinkskill (1854-1936).

might be some articles of low value but heavy in weight, others of higher value in proportion to weight. Each had to bear its legitimate cost of transportation. We were annoyed at one time at one of our competitors selling some goods just a little over invoice price and other goods at much higher prices than we were asking for the same class of goods (the latter did not interest us so much). We discovered how it occurred. Their man being new to the business had been working on a percentage of value. For instance, split brogans were being offered by them at about our own cost and ladies fine boots at a much higher price than we were asking for similar class of goods.

After getting goods unpacked and cost ascertained the next thing was to sell them. Silver currency was notably scarce, for small amounts, 5c, 10c, 25c and 50c. Following the example of one of our competitors, we adopted the practice



of issuing our own paper money for these amounts. When trading we had to barter, taking in exchange any kind of produce that we could afterwards dispose of such as grain, cattle, beef, pork, fish and frozen milk in the winter time, cordwood, charcoal for blacksmith's use, lime, furs and seneca root. Butter and eggs were not offered plentifully, these we had to import from the East. Furs were freely offered. One had to be careful in buying furs; the kind of skin, its primeness and the way in which it had been handled and stretched all entered into its value. Shortly after we started business I bought in trade what I considered a fine silver fox skin and allowed fifty dollars for it in the trade, it was well furred, color was good and pelt clear. In selling it afterwards in Winnipeg, to which point we sent all our furs, I got only twenty-nine dollars for it. The buyer held it up to the light sideways and pointed out a slight reddish tinge in the under fur indicating that it was not quite prime.

In the early summer the trappers and traders from the North came in bringing with them their catch or collection of the previous winter. The stores each in turn sent out a man to visit them in their camp taking with them presents of tea and tobacco, looked over the furs and gave quotations of supplies. After a few days palaver the seller decided with whom the trade would be made. There was keen competition amongst the stores particularly should there happen to be many of the more valuable skins in the lots. Sometimes a collection would run to two thousand or twenty-five hundred dollars. After the decision was made the whole party of Indians and halfbreeds would, with all their children, camp all day in the store for the several days whilst the supplies were being selected. The odor these people brought with them was neither desirable or pleasant. The Hudson's Bay Company were rarely successful in getting these trades. They were furnished with a fixed schedule of prices to pay for furs sent from headquarters and the manager could not vary his prices. . . .

When buying bear skins you had to look out for signs of the bear having been caught in a deadfall. The place where the log had fallen on the animal caused an injury to the pelt which could be discovered by holding the skin against the light. A blemish of this kind affected the value materially. These points were taught to us by experience because when we started business neither of us had any knowledge of furs. Moose meat, pemmican and dried deer meat was in great demand, the halfbreeds bought these up quickly. We also bought seneca root but not from Indians. These people would not dig it for us. They used an infusion of it as medicine and they considered that if they dug it and sold it commercially that evil would befall them. The large bulbous roots were less valuable than the fine tendrils of a younger growth.

Amongst our other activities we occasionally took contracts for freighting from contractors for the Indian Department supplies. One contract was to transport a steam engine and separator from Swift Current to Saddle Lake about four hundred miles. It arrived at Battleford late in the fall and there being no time limit for delivery we held it there till the ice formed on the river then sent it up on the ice to within a few miles of its destination, avoiding the difficulties of a hilly trail. This proved a profitable contract.



We were awarded a contract to supply the Indian Department with flour for the winter use. Before tendering I had arranged with the local flour mill to grist our wheat for us at a price per bushel, we to supply the wheat, he to give us so much flour, bran and shorts in return. Depending on this arrangement we bought a quantity of wheat. On asking him when he intended to start grinding our wheat for us to my amazement he said he had changed his mind he would buy our wheat and sell us the flour but at a higher price than that of our contract with the Indian Department. I found out he had been an unsuccessful tenderer on the same contract and intended putting us in the hole. The freighting season was well advanced towards winter and we could not induce our freighters to carry flour from Swift Current. We were in a fix. Shortly afterwards I was in Regina attending the Legislature. There through Mr. Hunter, Manager of the Bank of Montreal, I got in touch with a miller who was overstocked with flour. I purchased enough to fill my contract. I immediately wired to Battleford to send our own brigade of carts which we had acquired shortly before. I loaded the flour and being favored with good weather delivered in time to complete our contract. We did not make any money on that transaction, but had the satisfaction of outwitting the miller as he expected we would be compelled to buy the flour from him.

There was another deal in flour which eventually ended better for us. When in Winnipeg I was approached by McMillan Bros. who had a mill at Qu'Appelle, to purchase some flour made from smutty wheat. I had not handled any flour of this kind before and was dubious about it. It had a grey color and emitted a slight odor. The price was attractive. I bought two carloads. After selling a few sacks we had complaints. After being cooked the bannock was brown in color and had an offensive smell. No one would buy it a second time.

Early in the winter the Indian Agent came to us in a dilemma. The flour for the Department had not arrived and there was no prospect of it coming before spring. The Indians were demanding their rations. The Department would not authorize him to buy locally, suggesting that he borrow enough to keep going returning it when his contract should arrive. No one else in town would lend him any. I offered to lend him three hundred sacks of this flour. I told him exactly what it was made from and how it cooked. He accepted my offer saying it was either that flour or starvation for the Indians. The flour we got in exchange was a lower grade than we usually sold but it was made from clean wheat. We came out of our experiment of trying to sell flour from smutty wheat without loss.

The worst set back we suffered was in 1885 during the halfbreed rebellion. To save our lives we took refuge in the North West Mounted Police Barracks; practically all we saved was what clothes we had on our backs.

When the danger was over, we had to consider our position as a business firm. Our principal store building was destroyed along with its contents and only a few goods were on hand that had been in a new building which had been under construction on the site of the "new" town, near the Police Barracks. We had only a small sum of money on hand, and with large obligations for goods



destroyed in the store and on the trail, we were in a bad fix. My partner went to Winnipeg to interview our creditors, he travelled with the transport wagons returning to Swift Current. We had a legitimate claim against the Government but this could not be realized for some time. The creditors proposed to accept an assignment of our claim against the Government for payment of our indebtedness and agreed to wait for payment till we got a settlement with the Government, without charging us any interest, they also offered us all the goods on time that we required to go into business again. It was a generous offer and was immediately accepted by us. I never forgot the kindness of these houses, and up to the date of my going out of the general merchandise business, I had continued purchasing from them. We experienced great difficulty in obtaining freighters to transport our goods, all of the local freighters had lost their ponies so we had to look elsewhere. The price we had to pay was extremely high, the scarcity of available outfits, and the sense of dangers still existing put the prices up. Eventually we got some freighters, but had to pay them \$5.00 per hundred pounds; this charge added to the railroad freight of \$2.85 per hundred pounds, ran up the cost of goods tremendously, of course, as usual the ultimate consumer had to pay the price. The demand was for supplies, cost did not figure in the matter at all. Some traders who anticipated the demand, had through their connections outside rushed in supplies before we could get ours in, they did a tremendous trade, selling out the goods as fast as unloaded. Just consider the situation. Every one of our settlers was in want of food, clothings, shoes, crockery, house furnishings, and everything for a home. Besides there were two troops of Police, and a number of Volunteers left, who had to be supplied with their everyday needs outside of the rations. The trade we did for the next two years was very large, only limited by our ability to buy and transport. Our store building had to be enlarged and new storehouses built. The flooring for our new store, spruce lumber freighted from Prince Albert in wagons cost us after paying freight, \$120 a thousand feet. Our customers had no money, we had to sell on credit, but they like ourselves had a valid claim against the Government, many of them cleared off their accounts when paid for their losses, but some black sheep never paid us a cent. A peculiar feature about accounts with us was, that the people who owed us accounts for supplies given before the trouble, seemed to consider that the Rebellion cleared off old scores and of the thousands of dollars owing to us at the outbreak we never collected a penny. We had to have a wide margin of profit, or we could not have survived.

Commercial travellers were seldom seen. A few adventurers risked the journey once but not a second time. Seeing the long brigades of carts being loaded with goods for Battleford when passing Swift Current in the train, some conceived the idea of visiting this town with visions of some fat orders from the stores there. If these men had enquired before embarking on the trip they would have learned the futility of making such a journey. Of the three stores at Battleford two of them, the Hudson's Bay Company and A. Macdonald, indented all their goods from headquarters, our firm made regular trips to Winnipeg and refused to give any orders, had we bought from them thereby encouraging them to visit us again



we would have felt bound to give them some trade whether to our advantage or not.

The first to essay the trip was Geo. R. Gregg, representing McLoughlan Bros. of Winnipeg, dealers in fancy goods and stationery. He started from Edmonton on the river in a scow drifting down to Battleford. There were no settlements on that long stretch of river where he could hope to do any business. His trunks got wet and on opening them he found his samples damaged by water. He went no further on the river, but took stage to Swift Current a sadder and wiser man.

MacNamara representing a clothing firm tried it next. Loading his trunks on a wagon at Edmonton he started out by trail. The wagon with his heavy trunks broke down about half way, he came in riding on the front wheels of the wagon. Another wagon was sent out for the load.

Mr. M. Mewburn of James Turner and Company of Hamilton made a trip from Saskatoon. When travelling along he had thrown away a lighted match. After a time the stage driver noticed a prairie fire behind. The driver rubbed it into him that the Mounted Police would see the fire and would be after him for setting it out. He had visions at night of being arrested and punished for his carelessness.

Mr. Stull representing the Imperial Oil Company made a trip on the stage from Saskatoon. About half way the stage had stopped to allow him to watch a flight of birds. He was sitting on the back seat, when the horses started with a jerk, he was thrown out over the back of the wagon rendering him unconscious for a time. He afterwards entered suit for damages against Leeson & Scott the mail contractors, on the ground that the seat was not properly fastened. Nothing, however, came of the suit.

My business was not expanding, no new settlers coming in to increase the volume of trade. In thinking over what could be done, I considered the situation at Saskatoon. It was surrounded by excellent farming land ready for occupation, and as soon as the immigration started in this direction, I knew these lands would be taken up. Up to this date the immigration Authorities had been directing the incoming stream to Alberta along the Calgary and Edmonton Railroad. The land along that line adjacent to the railroad was rapidly being settled and I was confident that before long there would be a movement in our direction. The remnant of the original Colonization Society settlers living near Saskatoon were getting into better shape since the Prince Albert line was opened and formed a basis for a certain amount of trade. Another factor that induced me to consider opening a branch there was that all my goods for Battleford were shipped through Saskatoon and I had to pay forwarding and loading charges on all my shipments. When it became known in Battleford that I contemplated opening a business at Saskatoon and possibly moving myself and my family there, I was strongly advised against such folly. However, their arguments were futile. I had waited patiently at Battleford for seventeen years, for the opening of railway communication, and had my hopes raised time and again, but that desired consummation



looked as far off as ever. The strongest factor of all was the advice of my worthy helpmate. She urged me earnestly to make the venture, she declared her willingness to start roughing it again till we could afford to build a comfortable home and that meant much to me. It was going to make a strain on my resources starting a new enterprise and made it undesirable that I should expend capital outside of my business. This willingness on her part was all the more commendable when it is kept in mind that we had a family of eight children and were leaving a commodious comfortable home in Battleford. Again I had to be thankful that I was blessed with a considerate, helpful and brave companion in life.

This venture proved to be the wisest step we had ever taken in our somewhat strenuous life. We endured hardship and discomfort for a time just as was anticipated, but when affairs came our way all these were forgotten.



# Archives of Saskatchewan Photograph Collection

John Howard Photographs



A Hockey Game

Players: Mary McPhee, Mae McKenzie, Donald McPhee, Little Angus McPhee, Harvey Howard, Big Angus McPhee.



Skiers

Mrs. John Howard, Alex McKenzie, Mae McKenzie, Horace Hunt, Harry Howard.



## Book Reviews

THE MONTANA CREE: A Study in Religious Persistence. By *Verne Dusenberry*. Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962. pp. 280. \$12.00.

THE Montana Cree are a heterogeneous group of refugee Saskatchewan Cree, homeless Chippewa (related to Canadian *Saulteaux*), and whites and Indians of other tribes who married into the group or sought land on its reservation. The core of the group was Big Bear's band of Cree, who fled into Montana after the Rebellion of 1885. After wandering about for years in direst poverty, the Cree were allotted a reservation by the U.S. Government, but they have continued to maintain close ties with their Saskatchewan relatives.

Dusenberry was struck by the strength with which the residents of the Rocky Boy's Cree reservation "remain close to the values and religious beliefs that served their ancestors," a strength that is particularly remarkable because the ancestors of many Rocky Boy residents were not Cree. "Experience away from the reservation, age, formal training, association with the members of the dominant white culture—none of these" seemed to affect the adherence of the Rocky Boy people to the Cree religion. Dusenberry's study describes the Cree religion practised on Rocky Boy's reservation, and seeks to analyze the factors that may explain the persistence of that religion.

The bulk of the monograph is a detailed, sympathetic, first-hand account of the religious beliefs and practices of Rocky Boy's Cree. It is the first published study of modern Cree religion, and as such is invaluable to all who are concerned with the Cree. The remainder of the monograph is a history of the Montana Cree and a discussion of the persistence of the Cree religion among them. Dusenberry concludes that "through their religion these people have achieved some degree of security . . . become welded into a new tribe," and he attributes the present strength of the Cree religion on Rocky Boy's reservation to its function as the nucleus of group identity.

This reviewer, who has recently completed a study of Saskatchewan Cree religion, agrees that its usefulness as a means of identifying the group is a factor in the persistence of Cree religion, but feels that Dusenberry's analysis missed the vital point: why has the Cree religion, of all the religions available to the Rocky Boy residents, been chosen as the group church? If Dusenberry had visited Saskatchewan, he would have discovered that the Cree religion is retained by most Saskatchewan Cree, in spite of the fact that they did not suffer the homelessness and hardships of the refugee Montana band. Group identity is, in this reviewer's opinion, a byproduct of the persistence of the Cree religion; the strength of the religion lies in its effectiveness in relieving the tensions and frustrations of modern Cree life. It is because the present-day Cree religion (which has been modified from the aboriginal Cree religion) is adapted better than any other religion to the spiritual and emotional needs of modern Cree that it persists.



Although this reviewer believes Dusenberry's concluding analysis is not sufficiently penetrating, the monograph as a whole is heartily recommended for the picture it gives of a modern Cree community. It is regrettable that the Swedish publishers have priced the volume so high. Perhaps Dr. Dusenberry can be persuaded to rewrite the descriptive sections so that an American firm can print them in a reasonably-priced edition.

ALICE B. KEHOE

TIDES IN THE WEST. By *Leonard D. Nesbitt*. Saskatoon: Modern Press, n.d. (1962). pp. 413. \$3.50.

THIS book is about the marketing of wheat and this review goes to press on the fortieth anniversary of the first pooling of wheat by Canadian growers.

On October 19, 1923, provisional directors gave notice that the Alberta Wheat Pool would "commence operations" on October 29, and on the specified date the Pool opened its first office in the Lougheed Building in Calgary. Meanwhile 25,601 farmers had signed delivery contracts covering 2,416,413 acres and John Martin of Dalroy had delivered the first carload of grain to the new organization which sold 34,192,805 bushels of wheat by the end of the crop year, July 31, 1924. Slower on take-off, the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Pools did not operate until 1924 by which time the three provincial organizations had secured a Dominion charter for the Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited, the "Central Selling Agency" and the entire massive untried machine was in motion.

The focus of attention in this volume is on the Alberta Pool over a period of forty years—as I expected when the book first came to hand. I had corresponded with the author, Leonard Nesbitt, from time to time in years gone by and knew him as the obliging and informative superintendent of publicity for the Alberta Wheat Pool for many a year. But a quick look at the forty-five chapter headings gave the hint, fully confirmed by reading, that here was much more than the Alberta story. While the Alberta Pool consistently occupies the centre of attention, Mr. Nesbitt has set the Alberta organization neatly in the broad historical framework so essential to its proper understanding. A brief but adequate glance at the speculative system and the experiences during World War I brings readers to the "Period of Frustration—1919-23" with a closer look at the Pools' beginnings and the eight years of contract pooling. With the 1930's we are into "Boom and Bust in the Wheat Market," government guarantees, stabilization, and the recreation of the Canadian Wheat Board. A sketch of wheat policy in World War II is followed by a survey of the British-Canadian and International Wheat Agreements, a look at the Wheat Board in its expanded role during the 1950's, and a miscellany of relevant chapters including significantly one on the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement—a chapter which, incidentally, if the Dominion Government pays any attention to the MacPherson report on transportation, may serve as a nostalgic epitaph for the Agreement and for the rates which it purported to establish in perpetuity.

A survey of such extent in time and space can obviously not be minutely detailed. The question is whether the author has selected the most relevant materials and marshalled them in good perspective. This is a matter of judgement

and perhaps of opinion but in my view he has done an exceptionally fine job of achieving proportion and balance. To one who has lived through the decades and in reasonably close observation of the events touched on in the book, the account is consistently authentic. To the present generation of wheat growers, for whom much of the story will be ancient history, it ought nevertheless to be history with fascination and meaning.

While as interested as the next one in the lucid recapitulation of events of the past half century, I confess to a particular liking for the author's biographical side-lights. A more or less formal description of half a dozen of the Alberta farm leaders comprises a "Biographical" section appended to the main chapters. This is satisfactory within its limits but I found much more interesting the personality glimpses scattered liberally throughout. Here the references included, with complete impartiality, farm leaders of Alberta and the other Prairie Provinces along with political and financial figures who in their prime were concerned with the marketing of Canadian wheat. I particularly appreciated the intimate side-lights on such people as Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett and John I. McFarland and others involved in the painful metamorphosis of wheat policy during the 1930's. I enjoyed the reference to the Euler-Grant correspondence of 1935 when in the course of cleansing the Wheat Board offices of Tory undesirables the newly elected Minister of Trade and Commerce commenced a letter to Professor Grant with the phrase, "Referring to your offensive letter . . . . ." I had not known of the details of the exchange but knew that Professor Grant eventually received a substantial cheque which might be regarded as severance pay, that he used it to complete his graduate studies at Stanford, and that he did so in time to act as soloist at his cousin's wedding in Vancouver in June 1936. I can vouch for this because I married the cousin in question.

Two "facts" for verification and, if I'm right, correction in subsequent editions: Cornell University is surely located at Ithaca instead of Utica, New York (p. 208); and the Saskatchewan Royal Grain Inquiry Commission of 1928 (Report published 1929) was headed by Mr. Justice J. T. Brown rather than "J. T." Turgeon (p. 362). I have been unable to find a date on this volume and I have a strong conviction that no publication should appear undated. The photographic inserts and the illustrations by Perhudoff add greatly to the finish of the book.

V. C. FOWKE

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EDMONTON TRADER. By J. G. MacGregor. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd. 1963. pp. 262. Maps, Illustrations. \$6.50.

**E**DMONTON TRADER is a biography of John McDougall who, with Richard Secord, formed the prominent Edmonton business firm of McDougall and Secord in 1897. In 1873, at the age of 19, McDougall left his Ontario home to seek his fortune and thereafter spent most of his life in the West. He died in 1928. His activities as a trader, first working out of Winnipeg and then later out of Edmonton, meant that he was a very active participant in the stirring events of the opening of the West. He traded with Indians and Métis, attended the Indian Treaties at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt, settled at Edmonton in 1879, was there



during the 1885 Rebellion and supplied merchandise to those who went to the Klondike in 1896-97 in search of gold. Still later he became mayor of Edmonton and an MLA. During his life he saw some of the settled areas of western Canada expand from mere hamlets to large cities. His letters to his future wife, Lovisa Amey, and later, her letters to relatives in Ontario provide the main source of material for this book. It is fortunate that these letters have been preserved and that they have been supplemented by reminiscences because they are an important documentary description of life in western Canada in the late 1800's. The letters are well written and show that Mr. and Mrs. McDougall were highly intelligent individuals with wide ranging interests. Their biography is an absorbing and interesting story. Notwithstanding the excellent material which provides the basis for the story, the book is marred by some defects which occur in the passages used to relate the episodes in John McDougall's life with the events of his times.

After mentioning the entrance of British Columbia to confederation in 1871 and the election promises of 1872 made by John A. Macdonald concerning the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the author points out that the Mackenzie Government, which was formed in 1873, believed that the railway would never pay for itself. It would have to be built through the wilderness north of the Great Lakes and beyond that was ". . . the vast emptiness of Manitoba, which had already burned so many fingers, and the prairies beyond, the Palliser desert . . ." The next paragraph goes on to say that:

Somewhere out there lay the district of Assiniboia, an area within a fifty-mile radius of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Garry. In it, somewhere, lived a few whites, three thousand half-breeds, and uncounted Indians. At its heart lay Winnipeg, a collection of shacks and saloons and 250 people. Across the Red River from it lay St. Boniface with its Roman Catholic bishop and 750 people of French extraction.

Because of the chronological sequence and the mention of Manitoba, the reader could easily assume that the author is writing about Manitoba as it was in 1873. Since the District of Assiniboia was included in Manitoba in 1870 when the province was formed, the author must really have been writing about Assiniboia before 1870. An illogical time sequence is created in the mind of the reader when mention is first made of events from 1871 to 1873 and then, without clarification, pre-1870 and pre-Manitoba conditions are related. The population figures also give rise to doubts. Those for Winnipeg and St. Boniface are close enough to the 1871 census figures to be considered acceptable. But if the author is using 1871 figures, he cannot refer to the area as the District of Assiniboia. To say that in the District of Assiniboia "lived a few whites, three thousand half-breeds and uncounted Indians" is to be at variance with census figures. As early as 1856, the population of Assiniboia was estimated to be around 6,700 and the 1871 census figures show that the population of the Red River Settlement consisted of 5,720 French-speaking half-breeds, 4,080 English-speaking half-breeds and 1,600 white settlers.

There are also errors in statement of facts and interpretation of historical events. The North-West Mounted Police left Winnipeg on their historic march across the prairies on July 8, 1874, not "early in June." The author misinterprets



the causes and effects of the Red River troubles in 1869 when he states that:

It was Louis Riel with his Resistance at Red River in 1869 who drew the attention of Ontario to the West and, by aligning Protestant Ontario more firmly against Catholic Quebec, made everyone realize that there might be some value in the prairies after all.

The Red River Rebellion was one of the factors which drew the attention of people in Ontario toward the prairies but this was a continuation of the interest in the West which existed even before Confederation. Many Canadians wanted to follow the pattern of American conquest of the western plains. It was the threat of a large influx of settlers which made the Métis at Red River fear that their way of life would be swept aside. Riel led the Métis in their attempt to get constitutional safeguards for the inhabitants of the Red River settlement. The rebellion did cause an increase in the racial and religious animosity between Ontario and Quebec but to say that Riel used this increased animosity to make "everyone realize that there might be some value in the prairies after all" is to distort the effects of the rebellion and to attribute to Riel a devious foresight which he did not possess. The results of the Indian Treaties are misinterpreted when the author states that:

Treaty No. 1 . . . relieved the Indians of worrying about the welfare of the Province of Manitoba . . . . Treaty No. 2 . . . relieved the Indians of more land and removed the necessity of them having to build railways or towns or even to till the soil.

Possibly the author is being ironical in this passage but there is nothing to indicate this when the passage is considered in context. No action is submitted by the author to support the assumption that the Indians were worried about the welfare of Manitoba or were going to undertake certain works but were relieved from doing so by the signing of the treaties. There is nothing to show that the whiteman took up the Indian's burden. The author claims that "starvation, heartbreak and degradation" were the inevitable results of the sale of the Indians' land to the whiteman. A study of the reports of certain Indian Agents would certainly dispute the "inevitability" in this statement. Nor was the end of the 1885 Rebellion the "end of the road" for the Indian. Such generalizations need qualification.

When narrating the dispute over the location of the Edmonton Land Office, the author mentions that Dewdney was a "former Governor of the Northwest Territories" but this statement is not relevant to the incident. The pertinent point is that at the time of the dispute, Dewdney was the Minister of the Interior and as such had the authority to move the land office to Strathcona.

There are other judgements in this book which show historical misinterpretation or which need qualification before being accepted as valid conclusions. These errors present a problem because now that they are in print they will be accepted by many readers as being fact, and only an observant reader with some knowledge of the history of the West will detect their falsity. The errors could be caused by a lack of scholarship. They could also be the result of trying to write a book in the manner of a novel. In some places the book is written in an interesting manner and in others dialogue is used to good advantage but in an attempt to achieve a popular, breezy and dramatic style, some passages convey the



wrong historical conception. Some passages become nonsensical in attempt to make descriptions colorful. McDougall, as a youth in Ontario is described as a person who:

Though he remained there until he was nineteen, he kept an eye on the road ahead. While he always kept one foot on the ground and worked faithfully at the job in hand, the other, like the forefeet of a climbing mountain goat, was ever reaching for a foothold higher up.

If a person does not object to passages such as this, and wants to read the story of a person who left a fine record of his achievements in western Canada, *Edmonton Trader* might be of interest. If a person wants to read history this book will have to be read with very close scrutiny.

LLOYD RODWELL

THE CARLETON LIBRARY. *Robert L. McDougall*, General Editor Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963.

1. G. M. CRAIG (ed.), *Lord Durham's Report*, \$1.95.
2. P. B. WAITE (ed.), *The Confederation Debates in the Province of Canada, 1865*, \$1.95.
3. J. W. DAFOE, *Laurier: a Study in Canadian Politics* (With an Introduction by Murray S. Donnelly), \$1.95.
4. MORRIS BISHOP, *Champlain, the Life of Fortitude*, \$2.35.
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10. AILEEN DUNHAM, *Political Unrest in Upper Canada* (With an Introduction by A. L. Burt), \$2.35.

THIS series of paperbacks, of good quality and fairly low price, represents one of the most praiseworthy and welcome Canadian publishing enterprises in many a long day, one for which nobody interested in Canadian history can fail to be grateful. It has often been remarked that we have lagged behind our British and American friends in producing paperbound books of history, as in so many other respects. No doubt there are good reasons for the lag, above all the relative smallness of the market for books of this type and also the comparative paucity of good historical materials, both primary and secondary, to satisfy such demand as there may be. Both the group of people at Carleton University, who conceived and sponsored the project, and McClelland and Stewart Limited, most venturesome of Canadian publishers, are entitled to the praise and to the purchase money of a wide reading public.

It is unnecessary, as well as impossible in a short space, to attempt a detailed review of each of these volumes. On the one hand are four which provide us with important documentary material. Gerald Craig's abridgement of Lord Durham's *Report on the Affairs of British North America* preserves all the real meat of that most readable and significant state paper and Professor Craig has contri-

buted an informative Introduction which adds to the value of this edition. Peter Waite has made a judicious selection from the lengthy debates on the proposed federal union of the colonies in the legislature of Canada in 1865. The excerpts are arranged chronologically day by day so that one can get the gist of the discussions as they proceeded. All the important participants on both sides of the question are represented, as well as a number of the less important ones. The *Rowell-Sirois Report*, though of relatively recent vintage, is also in the nature of source material, "a landmark," as Donald Smiley rightly says, "in the study of governmental institutions in Canada." This abridgement of Book I gives the essential portions of the Commission's fascinating analysis of the history of Canadian federalism. Finally, S. R. Mealing has taken from the huge mass of *Relations*, or reports, sent by the Jesuit missionaries in North America to Paris, and from related documents, a number of items illustrative of different aspects of Jesuit activity among the Indians and of the history of New France. This is material of basic importance and it is good to have even so small a portion of it so readily available.

The remaining six titles in the series are reprints of important monographic or biographical works. J. W. Dafoe's little book is still in many respects the best one on Laurier. It, too, might be classed as a source in the sense that Dafoe either participated in or observed at very close range many of the events he writes about and this personal involvement of his must be kept in mind in assessing the validity of his judgments. The fact is, of course, that we have not as yet a really first class biography of Laurier and it is high time that someone did for him what Donald Creighton has done for Sir John A. Macdonald. In the Introduction to this edition of his very estimable life of Champlain, Morris Bishop proposes that the great explorer-statesman be adopted as our national hero. Few other men could equal, much less surpass, Champlain's qualifications for this distinction but, as we are now alleged to be not one nation but two, it may be that a second hero will have to be found.

R. A. MacKay's classic work on the Canadian Senate, first published in 1926, has been extensively revised for its very welcome reappearance under the Carleton Library imprint. One can say of Senate reform what Mark Twain is supposed to have said about the weather: "Everyone talks about it but nobody does anything about it." In the course of his careful and thoroughgoing analysis Dr. MacKay not only demonstrates that reform is needed but offers some interesting suggestions as to what directions it ought to follow. Eight chapters of the late Chester New's monumental and definitive biography of Lord Durham, the ones dealing with "Radical Jack's" work in British North America, are included in *Lord Durham's Mission to Canada*. New's book has been out of print and a very scarce item for many years and his magisterial treatment of the Durham mission in this edition should find a place on the bookshelves of all students of Canadian history.

The same may be said of Donald Masters' *The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854*, which has long been unobtainable except occasionally from second-hand dealers. It is an indispensable book for the study of mid-nineteenth century Canadian



history in setting forth so clearly the origins, terms, effects, significance and final collapse of the treaty. One can be, if anything, even more enthusiastic about the latest title in the series than about the others. As Dr. A. L. Burt remarks in his preface to this edition, Aileen Dunham's *Political Unrest in Upper Canada* "revolutionized the history of Upper Canada prior to the so-called Rebellion of 1837, and it has not been superseded." Rare is the historian who can hope to have that said about a book of his nearly forty years after its first publication!

So the Carleton Library is off to a very good start. One will await with interest the appearance of additional volumes and hope that the high standard set thus far will be maintained.

ROGER GRAHAM

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## Recent Publications In Local History

*A Record of Activities in Connection with the Settlement of Avonlea District, Pioneer Reunion, 1912-63.* Prepared by Avonlea Historical Committee. 1963. 39 pp. Available from Mr. E. R. McRorie, Chairman, Avonlea Pioneer Reunion Committee. \$1.00.

*History of Cabri and District, 1912-63.* Prepared by History Committee, Cabri Community Development Council. 1963. 86 pp.

*The Night the Cat Froze in the Oven, A History of Weyburn* by Isabel Eaglesham. 1963. 168 pp. Available from Weyburn Review. \$1.30.

*Memoirs of Hillsburgh R.M. No. 289.* Prepared by the History Committee. 1963. 431, [6] pp. Available from Hillsburgh Rural Municipality, Brock. \$3.75.

*History of the Rural Municipality of Kutawa, No. 278, 1912-62* [5] pp. mimeo.

*Memoirs of Yesteryear, Rural Municipality of Miry Creek No. 229, 1913-63.* 1963. 121 pp. Available from Mr. W. Fifield, Miry Creek Rural Municipality, Abbey, \$2.50.

*Hafford and District Golden Jubilee, 1913-63.* By Peter J. Oschipok and others. 27 pp.

*West Plains Oxarat.* Prepared by Oxarat Ladies Club. [1963]. 108 pp. mimeo. Available from Mrs. Gladys Johnson, Oxarat. \$2.00.

*A Brief History of Lawson and District.* 1963. By Joseph Paton. [3] pp. Available from Mr. J. Paton, Box 96, Central Butte. .25c.

*The Town of Kindersley. 50 Years of Progress, 1910-60.* By Robert S. Reid. 1960. 100 pp. Available from the Secretary, Board of Trade, Kindersley. \$1.00.

McCallum, W. S. *A Scot in Canada*, 1963. 77 pp. Available from North Hills News, Calgary. \$10.00. The reminiscences, in part, relate to the Barr Colony.

## Notes and Correspondence

THE Reverend J. A. Mackay was ordained at St. John's, Middlechurch not at St. Peters as stated in the introductory note to *The Journal of the Reverend J. A. Mackay* published in the last issue of *Saskatchewan History*. We wish to thank the Reverend T. C. B. Boon, Honorary Archivist for the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land for drawing this error to our attention.

The Reverend Boon, who is the author of *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, has provided us with following additional information on the history of Stanley mission.

The mission was opened in 1845 at Lac la Ronge by James Beardy, who was sent there by the Rev. James Hunter of The Pas. Beardy was replaced a year later by James Settee, who is generally regarded as the real founder of the work in this district. He was indeed so successful that the Church Missionary Society decided to send an ordained man there. The Rev. Robert and Mrs. Hunt came out on the same ship as Bishop David Anderson in 1849 and proceeded to Lac la Ronge in the summer of 1850. . . . Robert Hunt appears to have moved to the site on the English or Churchill River in 1852. Hunt and his wife built Holy Trinity Church at Stanley during these years, very largely at their own expense, and it appears to have been consecrated by Bishop Anderson when he visited Stanley in the summer of 1859. The Bishop named the place after the name of the home of Mrs. Hunt on the western side of the Cotswold Hills, overlooking the wide Severn valley.

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