

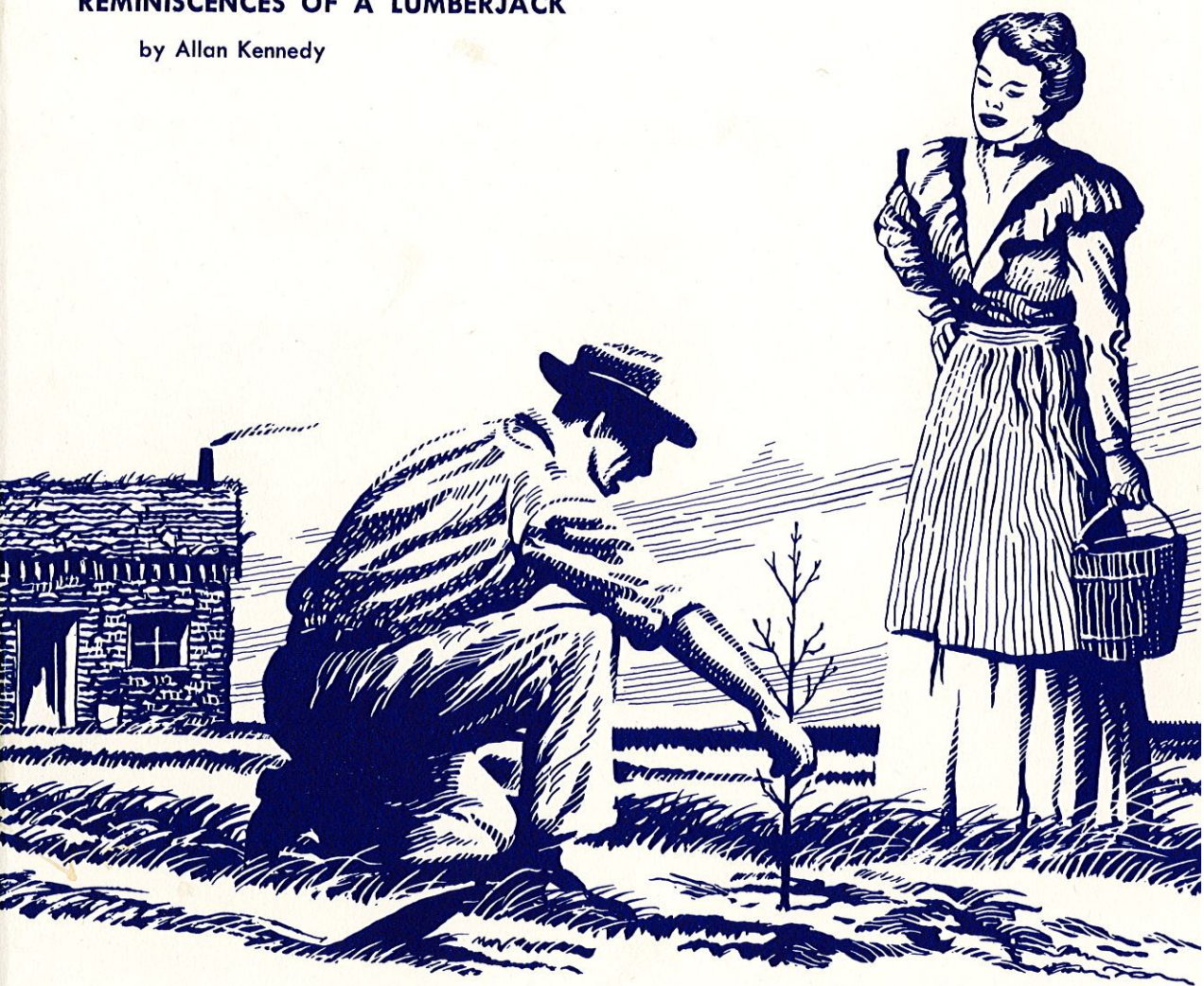
# SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

## LAND CLAIMS IN THE PRINCE ALBERT SETTLEMENT

by Lloyd Rodwell

## REMINISCENCES OF A LUMBERJACK

by Allan Kennedy



# Saskatchewan History

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## Land Claims in the Prince Albert Settlement

ONE hundred years ago the Reverend James Nisbet established a mission of the Presbyterian Church on the banks of the North Saskatchewan river on the present site of the city of Prince Albert. Within a few years, the mission workers and other farmers who had settled nearby laid the foundations for a settlement which became one of the thriving centres of the North-West Territories. With good farm land, a plentiful source of lumber and fuel in the adjacent forests, and a means of transportation provided by the river, the district was an ideal location for an agricultural community. Its prospects were further enhanced by its proximity to the proposed northern route of the Canadian Pacific Railway, with which it could be connected by a branch line. With such access to the markets of the east, the success of the rising community would be assured. One of the problems which cast a dark shadow on the settlers' hopes for economic progress was the difficulty in obtaining title to their land claims. Residents of the nascent townsite and farmers in the surrounding district realized that their squatters' rights had no legal basis and that it was only by gaining title to the land that this insecurity could be overcome. The only authority to which they could turn for help was the Canadian government.

At the time of the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Company territories to the Canadian government in 1870, all rights to the lands were vested in the Crown. In 1872 the Department of the Interior was created to handle the disposition of Crown lands, and it was only by fulfilling the regulations established by this department that title could be transferred from the Crown to the settlers. Many settlers felt that the slow process of gaining title to the land was one of the leading causes of economic stagnation in the community. This problem became more complex, and the agitation to settle it became greater, as the population of the district increased.

Few settlers were in the district in the late 1860's but gradually Scottish and English half-breeds from Manitoba took up lands in the vicinity of the Mission. They were either immigrant farmers or servants at the Mission who simply marked land which they thought was desirable or, as in a few cases, purchased lands from Indians who had settled near the Mission but then decided to move to reserves. These settlers were followed by more from Manitoba, and even a few from Eastern Canada and Britain. By 1874, according to Reverend James Nisbet, there was a total population of 288 in the vicinity of the Mission and the settlers' improvements extended along the river bank for 14 miles.<sup>1</sup> In 1879 there was a large influx of settlers into the district and petitions and correspondence filed with the Department of the Interior gave population figures ranging from 1,000 in 1878 to 5,000 in 1882. These were only rough estimates and possibly represented an attempt on the part of the correspondents to impress the Department with the magnitude of affairs in the settlement. The census figures for 1881 only gave a population of 3,236 in the entire Prince Albert census district, consisting of an area of some 135,000 acres.

<sup>1</sup> A.S. *Department of the Interior* Lands Branch, transcript File 293.

In the minds of the settlers, the term "Prince Albert Settlement" included an area larger than the Prince Albert Special Survey of 1878 but smaller than the census district. Residents of the Lower Flat, Red Deer Hill, the Halcro Settlement, Lindsay Settlement and Snake Plains considered themselves part of the Prince Albert Settlement. Settlers in the Kinistino and a la Corne districts and the Métis along the south branch of the Saskatchewan River did not, even though there was a constant communication between all of the communities. The majority of the settlers were in the Prince Albert Settlement, and the difficulties they had in obtaining legal title to their claims illustrate difficulties which existed in districts in the vicinity and in other squatters' settlements throughout the North-West Territories. Before the squatters' claims to land could be settled, accurate surveys had to be made.

As early as 1873 surveys were made of the Hudson's Bay Company reserves throughout the North-West Territories. Under the terms of transfer, the Company had to claim its reserves within 12 months of date of surrender and the surveys had to be made "with all convenient speed." Thus the government was compelled by legislation to make prompt surveys of the Company's reserves. Although the cost of these surveys was to be paid by the company, the work was to be done under the direction of the Surveyor General of Dominion Lands.<sup>2</sup> Instructions were given to the surveyors that they were to follow the north-south meridian lines when they were surveying special reserves, river lots or square sections. As squatters usually marked their boundaries at right angles to the river it was inevitable that the two methods of marking claims would clash. When the Company's reserve one mile east of the Mission was surveyed, antagonism arose between the settlers and the Company because the lines cut across adjoining farms at a considerable angle.

Lieutenant Governor Morris of the North-West Territories received a complaint from the Reverend James Nisbet in August, 1873, that the encroachment of the reserve onto the settlers' lands had caused great dissatisfaction.<sup>3</sup> In June, 1874, Morris forwarded to the Minister of the Interior another complaint which he had received from John Mackay of Prince Albert, who stated that the Hudson's Bay reserve was on land claimed and cultivated by settlers who refused to give up the land.<sup>4</sup> The troubles arising from the survey of the reserve might not have been as great as the letter claimed because W.S. Gore, the surveyor, reported that although the reserve included about two acres of land which had been broken, but not cultivated or fenced, the settler who had claimed the land had made no objection to the survey and seemed quite satisfied.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that the dissatisfaction arose from the apparent neglect of the settlers by the Department in not having all the settled areas surveyed. No reason has been advanced explaining why the squatters' claims were not surveyed at the same time. Perhaps it was cost, lack of time, or even because the Department was unwilling to survey large tracts of land before the main survey was worked westwards from Winnipeg. Perhaps the

<sup>2</sup> A.S. Department of the Interior Order in Council, June 1, 1872.

<sup>3</sup> A.S. *Department of the Interior* Lands Branch, transcript File 293.

<sup>4</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> A.S. *Department of the Interior*, Lands Branch, transcript File 293.



Department felt that a survey of the Prince Albert Settlement was not really urgent, whereas it had received a schedule of all reserves claimed by the Company and had been requested by Donald Smith to have the surveys proceeded with.<sup>6</sup> Whatever the reason for the failure to survey all the district, the incident resulted in an antagonism existing among the settlers toward the Hudson's Bay Company for a number of years and when land problems were discussed, the "land lock" caused by Hudson's Bay grants in each township was always mentioned. However, this dispute was not the main problem of the settlers for what they really wanted was a survey of all the lands so that title to their claims could be settled.

Reports of troubles caused by lack of surveys reached the Minister of the Interior from various sources. Lieutenant Governor David Laird forwarded extracts from a letter from Inspector James Walker of the North-West Mounted Police dated December 29, 1876, in which he stated that he had been called upon several times during the winter by settlers from the Prince Albert Mission in reference to disputes they had had with their neighbours:

concerning cutting wood on each other's claims and encroaching on each other's land, but as no survey has yet been made of the disputed lands, it is impossible for me to give any satisfactory answer as to how these disputes are to be settled, or when a survey will be made.<sup>7</sup>

Despite requests urging prompt surveys, the survey of the river lots in the Prince Albert district was delayed until base lines and meridians were worked out from the Winnipeg Meridian. In February 1874, an Order-in-Council authorized a special survey of these lines.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of these lines was to establish a basis for the extension of township surveys at any point along the proposed route of the Canadian Pacific Railway, to locate the railway land grant along the route and to obtain a preliminary estimate of the character and resources of the country. Work was not begun on this special survey until the end of July, the delay being caused by the difficulty of getting suitable and accurate instruments, some of which had to be specially designed in England. In all of the work, the survey teams were hampered by the great distances to be surveyed, the rough terrain of certain parts of the Territories and climatic conditions. Work in eastern districts, upon which an accurate survey of western regions would have to be based, was held up by the extreme cold winters, even though in some years the surveyors worked until cold and depth of snow prevented any further work. In one particularly dry summer, forest and prairie fires all but halted survey work when many of the surveying parties had their base camps and equipment wiped out.<sup>9</sup> Some surveyors barely escaped with their lives. One of the other hindrances to a speedy survey was the defective condition of the telegraph line which followed the proposed route of the railway from Selkirk to the narrows to Lake Manitoba, to Fort Livingstone in the Swan River valley, to Humboldt, Battleford, and Edmonton. This line was in operation as far as Edmonton in 1876 but its poor condition made it impossible for the surveyors to get telegraphic signals which they could

<sup>6</sup> Department of the Interior Order in Council June 1, 1872.

<sup>7</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 c, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1892, No. 13.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

use to easily determine the longitude of the principal meridians. Surveys of both Battleford and Prince Albert were held up because of this, and the progress of base lines across the prairies was delayed because of the checking needed to assure accuracy in the surveys. The Dominion Land Surveyors insisted on a high degree of accuracy in their work as they had learned from the experience of surveyors in the United States that rough, hasty surveys only had to be resurveyed at a later date. Not only was the cost of re-survey avoided but settlers and communities were saved the additional expense of litigation in cases of conflicting claims arising from inaccurate surveys.

In 1877 E Section of the Special Survey, headed by A. L. Russell, produced the Third Principal Meridian north across the Canadian Pacific Railway line to the east end of the St. Laurent Settlement on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River and to the west end of the Prince Albert Settlement on the north branch. As this survey party was charged with the survey of meridians and base lines, only a preliminary survey was made of the river lots in the Settlement and of the Indian Settlement which was about 14 miles south-east of Prince Albert on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River. When Russell visited the Indian Settlement he reported that constant enmity arose between the Indians and the white settlers because of a lack of official surveys, the posts which the Indians put up to mark their holdings being torn down by the white settlers. Under Russell's direction, a topographical survey was made of the river lots around Prince Albert showing the buildings, fences and other improvements made by the settlers, and other information which he thought would be of value to the government. In an accompanying schedule he listed the river lots by number, width, area in acres, name of occupant, improvements and remarks on the extent of farming. In the general reports on the settlements he visited during the year, Russell stated:

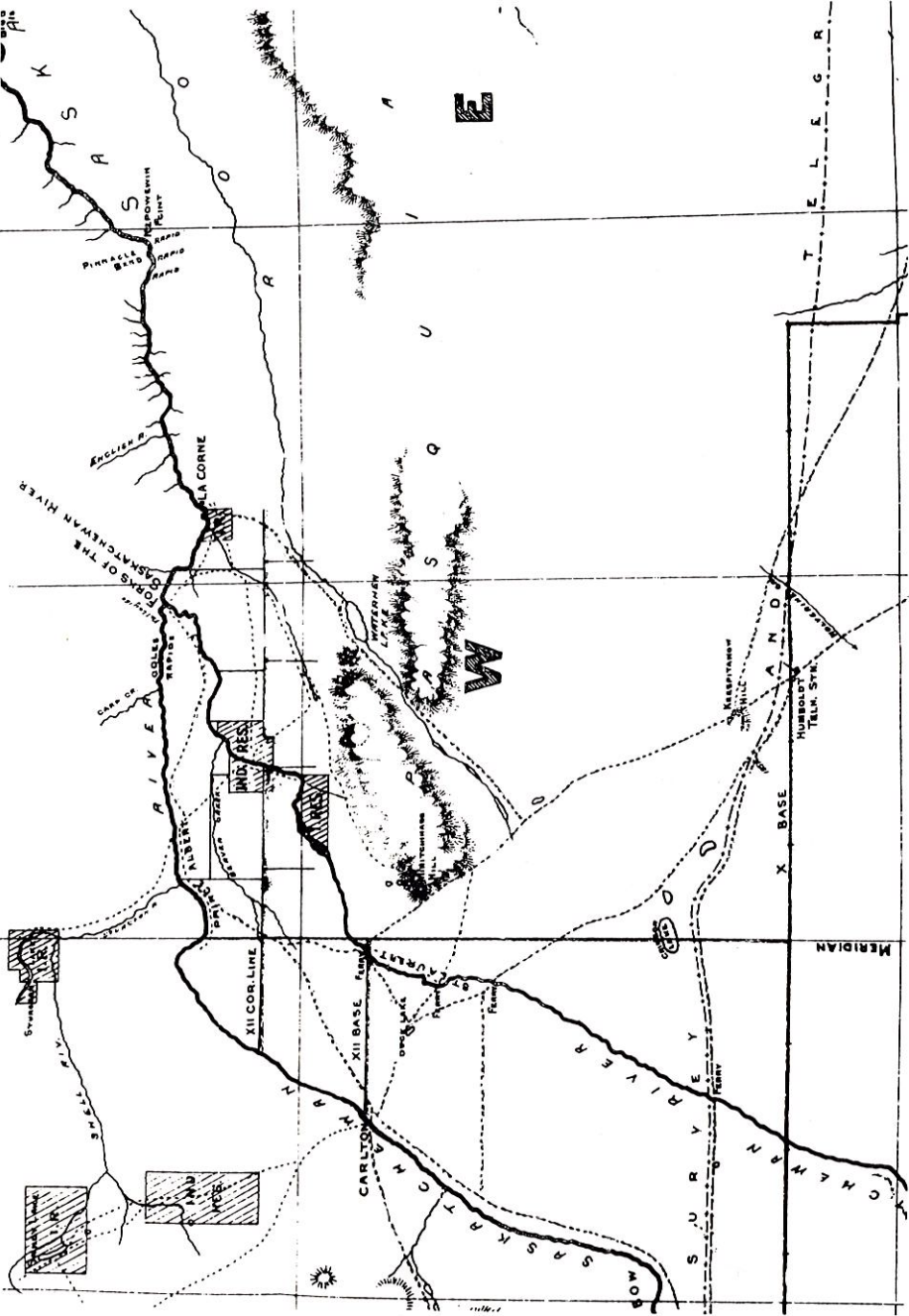
The most important [settlement] is at Prince Albert and immediate vicinity, where there are nearly one hundred houses with a population of about five hundred souls, principally English . . . being a long way off from the main line of travel westward, has attracted but little attention until of late, when the Saskatchewan steamers and a visit from the C.P.R. and Special Survey parties have brought it more into notice.

It is in a thriving condition, boasting of two fine general stores, (H. B. Co., and C. Mair) a splendid steam saw and grist mill (Capt. Moore) and a water power grist mill, Ch. of England Bishopric, Presbyterian mission and school, blacksmith shop, &c., &c. An experienced doctor has promised to take up his abode here and several minor stores are laying in stock, as well as another grist mill spoken of.

The land here is very nearly equal in richness to the famous Red River valley, the proportion of clay being somewhat less and the land more undulating. It is the first section of really excellent land of large extent met with since leaving the Province of Manitoba, and it was an agreeable surprise that so many improved agricultural implements had found their way this early into this comparatively remote district.

The crop was occasionally injured by early frosts, but last year a most abundant harvest was gathered; every one being satisfied and cheerful as regards the prospects for the future of this enterprising settlement.





Map showing base lines and meridians laid out by the Special Survey of 1877. (Department of the Interior, 1879)

Over twelve hundred acres were under crop last year among the settlers on the river front and many large fields were to be seen on Red Deer Hill and various other parts of our work. I noticed wheat (sample herewith) oats, barley, turnips, cabbages, carrots, onion, &c., &c., of equal excellence to those grown in Ontario.

As high as fifty and one hundred dollars is asked per acre for small lots on the immediate river bank in the heart of the settlement.

The settlers were much pleased at the extension of the surveys to their settlements as they were all anxious to have their individual land limits defined, and, as several of the block lines in their vicinity have been run, any proposed subdivision can now be immediately carried out. This satisfactory state of affairs rendered abortive the efforts of a certain intriguing person who had come to raise discontent among the English, Half-Breed and Indian settlers of the Saskatchewan district on the matter of land surveys, &c.<sup>10</sup>

In surveying the settlement into river lots, Russell was not only acceding to the demands of the half-breed settlers and others throughout the Territories, but was carrying out an established policy of the Department of the Interior. In reply to a request that established settlements be surveyed in river lots, Lieutenant Governor Laird was informed that a memorandum of the Surveyor General stated that in all cases where settlements had been formed along the rivers in the Territories, the farms would be surveyed with 10 or 20 chains frontage and extending back from the river far enough to make lots of 160 acres.<sup>11</sup> In making these surveys, the lines would have to conform to the direction of section lines.

A departure in having river lots conform to these specifications was made in Prince Albert and other places where the intention of the Government to follow such a plan had not been made known prior to settlement. The holdings of older settlers were surveyed in sizes conforming fairly accurately to those laid out by the settlers. As a result, lots in the Prince Albert Special Survey varied from 85 acres to well over 200 acres. River Lot 78 claimed by the Presbyterian Church consisted of 314 acres. The report also pointed out that the work of subdivision of land into river lots was left largely to the discretion of the surveyors doing the work. Since the cost of a river survey was about nine times as large as that of the rectangular survey and the profits of the surveyors were proportionately larger, there was no desire on the part of the surveyors to ignore requests in this respect.

Survey into river lots was not the unanimous request of settlers for the Surveyor General stated in a letter to George Duck, the Agent of the Dominion Lands at Prince Albert, that he had received a petition from some settlers living east of the main Prince Albert settlement that they be permitted to retain their lands with the half-mile width of frontage as they had taken up their lands in such a way in accordance with the Dominion Land regulations.<sup>12</sup> It would appear that it had been the intention of the Department to survey this part into river lots

<sup>10</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1878, No. 10, Appendix No. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, p. 37.



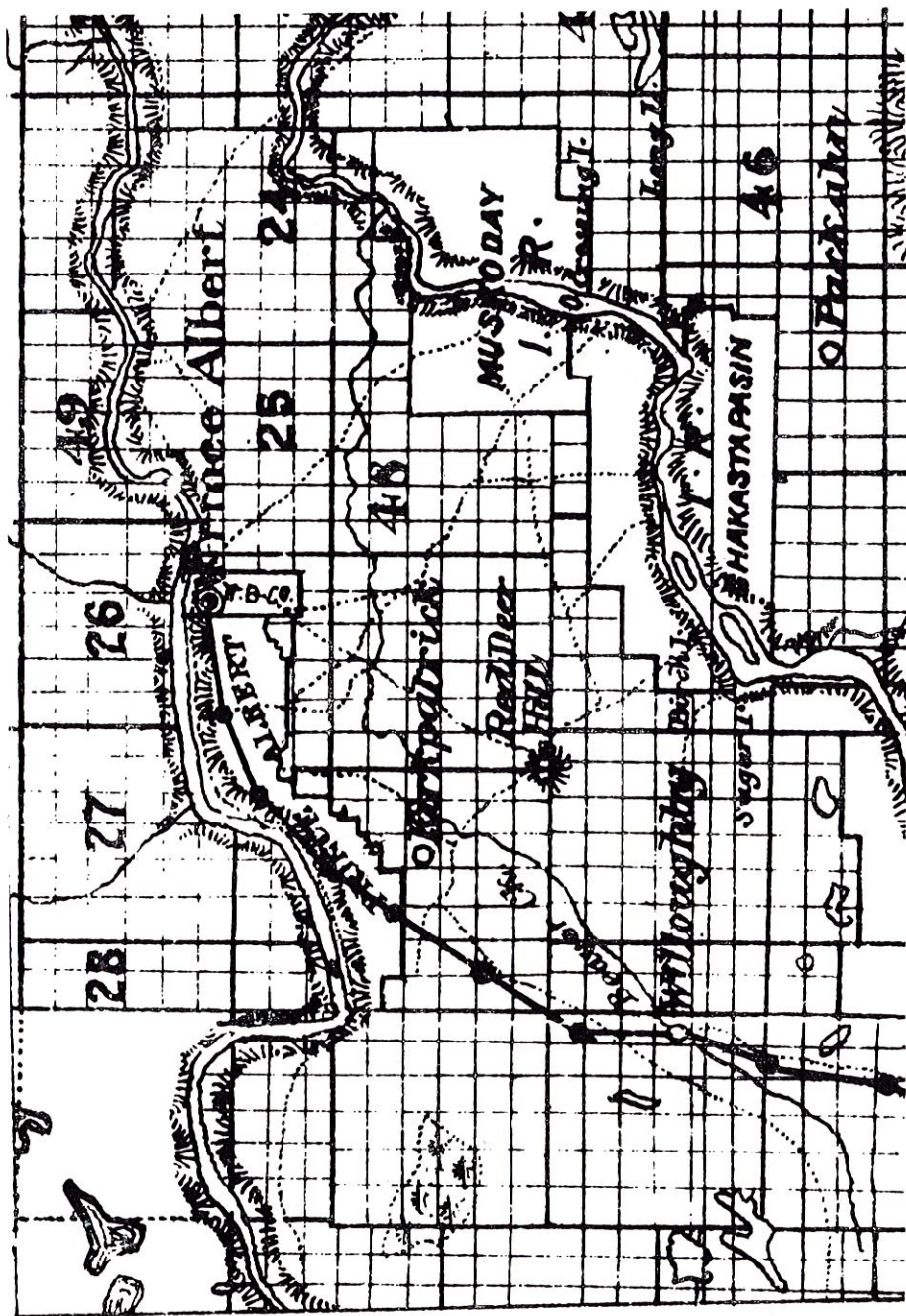
also because the Surveyor General had to get special permission to survey the lands in the rectangular system.

Despite the obvious intentions of the Department to proceed with the survey, the Department received a petition on February 21st, 1878, signed by 147 residents of the Prince Albert Settlement outlining their grievances.<sup>13</sup> They urged the survey of the settlement and surrounding areas at an early date because serious disputes were arising among the settlers because of encroachments on each others' lands where legally constituted boundaries did not exist. The petition forecast that these disputes would increase in number and bitterness because in the following year there would be a large increase of immigrants into the district. The petition also requested that the Dominion surveyors grant the same rights and privileges to the settlers in the Prince Albert district as were granted to the old settlers in the province of Manitoba because considerable portions of lands occupied on the Saskatchewan River in the settlement were settled upon before the transfer of the North-West Territories to the Dominion of Canada. The rights and privileges which the petitioners wanted was the granting of free lands such as were given to the half-breeds and old white settlers in Manitoba and the survey of their holdings into long river lots. The petitioners also pointed out that many half-breeds, both minors and heads of families, resided in the Territories at the time of the Manitoba census which served as a basis for the distribution of scrip. Because of this the absent half-breeds did not get scrip and the petitioners felt that their rights to half-breed and old settlers scrip was as binding as those in Manitoba. To effect this, the petitioners suggested that a census be taken to determine who should be granted scrip.

The reaction of the Department to this petition cannot be readily ascertained, because any subsequent correspondence concerning it was not published. By the time of its receipt, the Department had already made it clear, both by its correspondence and by the action of A. L. Russell, that the wishes of the settlers would be met in regard to a survey in river lots. It is of interest to note that of the 147 signatories, 36 had already received scrip or land in Manitoba and another 40 had been awarded scrip certificates by the North-West Half-Breed Commission. Of the remaining 74, who were classified as persons "who have not proved their claims" there were a number who could not possibly qualify as old settlers as they were immigrants from Canada or the British Isles, or were obviously engaged in pursuits other than farming and their interests in land were possibly of a speculative nature.

On July 3rd, 1878, Montague Aldous, Dominion Land Surveyor, arrived at Prince Albert in charge of the surveying party which was to make the special survey of the Prince Albert and St. Laurent Settlements. Base lines were laid out and the settlement was surveyed into river lots. Roads were laid out and in cases where it was required that settlers to the rear of the river lots be given a legal quarter section, the widths of the river lots were adjusted so that the front claims would have 160 acres or more as a homestead right. In settling disputes over boundaries, Mr. Aldous reported:

<sup>13</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1886, No. 45, p. 6.



Map showing Prince Albert Special Survey, Hudson's Bay Company Reserve, Prince Albert Townsite and surrounding townships, 1886.  
(Department of the Interior, 1886)



In every case when land was occupied and improved and there existed any dispute between the occupants of adjoining claims, I had them agree together before me on some point which was to be established as their common boundary: in the majority of instances they requested me to decide between them; their post was then planted where, under the circumstances of the case, I considered it best divided their claims, and they mutually agreed to it as their boundary line.

Where the land was unoccupied and unimproved, merely having been "taken up," I surveyed it into ten-chain lots, and entered the claimants' names for it on the plan, stating my opinion to them that such claims could at most merely give them a preferential right of purchase.<sup>14</sup>

In one case, Aldous resolved conflicting claims arising from overlapping of river lots in a particularly ingenious manner. The original claimant was allowed to continue cultivation of his fields for another three years, at the end of which time they would become the property of the claimant on whose lot they were located as a result of the survey. On the 5th of September, the survey of the Prince Albert Settlement was completed and on the following day, the surveyors moved to St. Laurent where they surveyed the Métis settlement at that point. These surveys served as the basis on which land claims were settled when investigations were made in 1884 by William Pearce at Prince Albert and George Duck at St. Laurent.

With the survey finished, the next problem to be dealt with was the confirming of ownership of claims by means of issuing patents transferring the land from the Crown to the settlers. This problem had two aspects. Not only did the settlers want patents but many claimed that cultivation prior to date of survey and entry should be counted as fulfillment of homestead duties by squatters. Many also mistakenly believed that mere occupancy of the land meant that the land would be theirs whether they had improved it or not. On the other hand, the Department at first insisted on a strict adherence to the regulations of the Dominion Lands Act in its attempt to permit only *bona fide* settlers, rather than speculators, to gain possession of the agricultural lands of the North-West Territories. By the time final settlement was reached in 1884, these two opposing aspects were reconciled by changes in regulations largely brought about by the Department's acceptance of some of the views of the settlers but the Department continued to insist that only *bona fide* settlers obtain free lands.

The earliest regulations under which settlers could obtain free lands were passed by Order-in-Council in 1871 and the first Dominion Lands Act was passed in 1872. Extensive amendments and consolidations of the Act were made in 1874, 1876, 1879, 1883 and 1886. These were supplemented by a large number of Orders-in-Council. Some regulations appeared to place more obstacles in the way of settlers gaining title to their claims. Squatters feared that they would lose lands which on survey proved to be reserved for specific purposes such as Hudson's Bay, school or railway lands. Other lands were removed from homestead entry and the price of purchased lands was increased. At the same time, none of the amendments seemed to work to the advantage of the settlers. The Dominion Lands Act

<sup>14</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1879, No. 7, Appendix No. 6.

amendments of 1876 permitted the Minister of the Interior to vary or waive requirements of residence and cultivation. Although this was done for colonization companies and special groups it was not done for the squatters.

In 1877, Lieutenant Governor Laird attempted to gain some relaxation of the homestead regulations when he suggested to the Minister of the Interior that:

Should settlers who have located before the transfer be obliged to enter their lands under the homestead provisions of the Dominion Lands Act, and consequently be required to wait three years after the survey before they receive their patents such a requirement would seem to be harsh to those who have been many years in the country.<sup>15</sup>

The Surveyor General replied that this problem was a matter of policy which would have to be left for the consideration of the Minister. However he expressed his personal opinion that as long as the land had not been taken up for speculative purposes, it would more than likely be granted free to claimants who had been living on it and cultivating it since July 15th, 1870.<sup>16</sup> The opinion of the Surveyor-General, even if embodied in legislation as was promised by a subsequent letter, failed to answer the point raised by Laird concerning a three years' wait after survey before patent could be issued. Among the powers delegated to the Governor in Council by the Dominion Lands Act of 1879, was one which could have met the request of Lieutenant Governor Laird. A clause enabled the Governor in Council:

To investigate and adjust claims preferred to Dominion land situate outside of the Province of Manitoba, alleged to have been taken up and settled on previous to the fifteenth day of July, eighteen hundred and seventy, and to grant to persons satisfactorily establishing undisturbed occupation of any such lands, prior to, and, being by themselves or their servants, tenants or agents, or those through whom they claim, in actual peaceable possession thereof at the said date, so much land in connection with and in satisfaction of such claims, as may be considered fair and reasonable.<sup>17</sup>

However, nothing was done under this clause until 1881 when the Dominion Lands Branch was appointed. This clause illustrates the fixed idea which pervaded the thinking of the Department officials. If a squatter was on the land prior to July 15, 1870, he had a right to the land but any subsequent squatters, even if on unsurveyed land, only occupied the land at the pleasure of the Canadian Government. The powers delegated to the Governor General, even if exercised, would not really benefit many in the Prince Albert district because very few had settled there prior to 1870. The majority of settlers took up land between 1870 and the surveys of 1877 and 1878. It was their requests which needed the attention of the Governor General.

In 1879 and 1881 two Orders-in-Council were passed which provoked protests from the settlers in the Prince Albert district. Regulations published on July 9th, 1879, and amended on October 9th, 1879 withdrew all odd-numbered sections from homestead and pre-emption entry. On May 25th, 1881, regulations were

<sup>15</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, pp. 20-21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> *Statutes of Canada*, 42 Vict.c.31.



issued which set the price of pre-emptions at \$2.00 per acre. Thus many squatters, who, on survey proved to be on odd-numbered sections, found that they would not be allowed to homestead or pre-empt the land. If they were on even sections, they would have to purchase the pre-emption at \$2.00 per acre, whereas previously they only had to pay \$1.00 per acre. In the fall of 1881, the settlers drew up a formal complaint outlining their grievances concerning land regulations.

On October 8th, 1881, a large public meeting was held in Prince Albert and resolutions were passed expressing the views of the settlers:

1. Whereas land was reserved for railway purposes only as late as May, 1881, and previous to that date many *bona fide* settlers in the district of Lorne, N.W.T., had performed homestead duties on odd-numbered sections—Resolved, that the Right Hon. the Minister of the Interior be requested to grant homestead patents to such settlers.

2. Whereas the price of land for pre-emption and purchase was largely increased in May, 1881, and many persons had settled in the district of Lorne, N.W.T., previous to that date—Resolved, that the Right Hon. the Minister of the Interior be requested to grant to such settlers their land at a price in accordance with the Order in Council existing at the time of settlement.

3. Whereas, previous to the survey of this section of the country, many land claims were taken up, occupied and improved by *bona fide* settlers, and on the survey being made, found themselves on Hudson Bay Company's and school lands; Resolved, that the Right Hon. the Minister of the Interior be requested to secure such occupants in their holding.

4. Whereas many persons have been settled on land in this district for three years and more, and have performed the homestead duties required by law, and many persons have bought land from such settlers, depending on the good faith of the Government for security in their holding—Resolved, that the Right Hon. the Minister of the Interior be requested to grant patents to such persons with as little delay as possible.

5. Whereas the Indian title in this Territory has not become extinct, and the old settlers and half breed population of Manitoba were granted scrip in commutation of such title, and such allowance has not been made to those resident in the territory—Resolved, that the Right Hon. the Minister of the Interior be requested to grant such scrip to those settlers, thus placing them on an equal footing with their *confreres* in Manitoba.

6. Resolved, that no land entries be made unless they are accepted in accordance with the Order in Council existing at the time such lands were taken up.

7. Resolved, that the hon. the member for the district of Lorne be requested to present a copy of the above resolutions to the Right Hon. the Minister of the Interior, and to obtain a reply.<sup>18</sup>

These resolutions were printed in the Sessional Papers of 1885 over the signature of Thomas McKay as chairman of the meeting. Other versions of the resolutions also appear in the Sessional Papers over the signature of H. MacBeath, secretary of the meeting. Although the versions are essentially the same, resolution number six as forwarded by the secretary expressed a more forceful attitude than that

<sup>18</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 f, pp. 69-70.

forwarded by the chairman. It read: "Whereas the Lands Office being at last opened—Resolved that no entries of land claims shall be made until a satisfactory reply has been received to the above resolutions."<sup>19</sup> Copies of the resolutions were forwarded to the Department by Lawrence Clarke, the Member of the North-West Territories Council for the district of Lorne. He received a reply from Lindsay Russell, then acting Deputy Minister of the Interior, granting many of the requests of the settlers. Russell stated that although the settlers were mistaken as to the date when odd-numbered sections were withdrawn from homestead entry, it being July 9th, 1879 rather than May, 1881, those settlers who had been in residence and cultivating their claims prior to July 9th, 1879, and continued to reside on the land since then, would be allowed homesteads and pre-emptions on those lands. However, permission of Parliament would have to be obtained before patents could be granted earlier than the three years after entry required by the Dominion Lands Act. Lands would also be granted for purchase at the prices in effect at the time the settler occupied the land, but it would have to be proved that he had been in residence at the time. Where settlers had occupied and improved lands which upon survey proved to be school lands, their occupancy would be confirmed and other lands in lieu of them would be allotted for school purposes. A similar guarantee could not be given concerning Hudson's Bay lands because the option rested with the Company to surrender lands allotted to them. Hitherto, the Company had always consented to such an exchange, where *bona fide* residence by settlers had been proved prior to survey. Russell also assured Lawrence Clarke that further inquiries would be made into the subjects of the resolutions and that action would be taken as would be in accordance with the law.<sup>20</sup>

These replies were presented by Clarke to a meeting of the settlers held on January 19th, 1882. The settlers were satisfied by the concessions granted but expressed regret that immediate patents for lots would not be granted even though all settlement duties had been performed prior to the opening of the land office. They hoped that the Minister would have the law amended so that this grievance would be redressed. It was not until April 14, 1882, that the Secretary of the Department of the Interior informed Lawrence Clarke that the Minister of the Interior had included in the amendments to the Dominion Lands Act, a provision for the case of settlers who had "complied fully with the spirit of the homestead law before it was possible for them to obtain regular entry."<sup>21</sup>

Resolutions from the October 8, 1881 meeting were also forwarded to Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant Governor of the Territories, by D.H. Macdowall, a prominent resident of Prince Albert. In an accompanying letter, extracts of which were forwarded to the Department by Dewdney, Macdowall pointed out that lack of patents had caused a lack of money in the settlement. No banks would open in Prince Albert because of a lack of security. Farmers lived on credit and as a result had to pay far more for the goods than would be the case if they had cash. Macdowall claimed that the increase of the price of land from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per

<sup>19</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1886, No. 45, p. 45.

<sup>20</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.



acre really amounted to a tax on enterprise as far as some settlers were concerned, for they had come to the settlement when land was at the lower price and were among the most advanced of pioneers. If they had stayed in Manitoba they could have obtained land at \$1.00 per acre and would have received patents years previously. Macdowall also pointed out that despite the fact that patents had not been issued, many transactions had been carried on as if there was the security of patents. As a result, further difficulties arose for merchants who had purchased land after it had been occupied by two or three settlers. The merchant could not take the homestead oath, no one else could homestead it as it was improved, and if it was an even numbered section, it could not be sold.

The resolutions and Macdowall's letter were not forwarded by Dewdney until March 27th, 1882. By that date, the settlers already had the replies sent to Lawrence Clarke. The only additional information forwarded to Dewdney was contained in a letter from the Secretary of the Department, dated June 16th, 1882, in which it was stated that it was found impossible to pass amendments to the Dominion Lands Act through all their stages and they had to be withdrawn at the last moment, the Minister promising to re-introduce them at the next Session.<sup>22</sup>

One of the amendments which had been withdrawn was one which would have acceded to the request in the fourth resolution of the 1881 public meeting that patents be issued with as little delay as possible to persons who had bought land from settlers who had fulfilled homestead requirements. When the amendments were placed before the House again in 1883, the one covering this type of entry was not included. In his report of 1884, William Pearce, Inspector of Dominion Lands, stated that "... it certainly was wise that, on re-submission in 1883, the proposed clause treating of this particular point was omitted"<sup>23</sup> indicating that it was not re-submitted because of policy rather than neglect. He did not give his reasons for saying that it was wise, but it might have been due to the aversion to allow lands to get into the hands of speculators.

Of the actions of the Department of the Interior, none could have been more exasperating to the residents of the Settlement than the operation of the Lands Branch office in Prince Albert. George Duck had been appointed Land Agent in 1878 but it was not until August, 1881 that the office was officially opened for business. Exactly what the Agent did in the intervening period to justify his salary of \$1,000 per annum is hard to determine, although he did accept correspondence concerning assignments of land from one settler to another through purchase and in 1880 he took statutory declarations of occupancy of land prior to 1870. It was not until a memorial was sent by Lawrence Clarke to Lieutenant Governor Laird of the Territories on June 7th, 1881, that something more definite was done to get the office operating.

Clarke pointed out that the appointment of the Land Agent had been an impetus to immigration and many settlers were encouraged to improve their holdings because some security of tenure seemed possible. A Registrar of Deeds,

<sup>22</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 f, p. 64.

<sup>23</sup> P.A.C. *Department of the Interior*, Lands Branch, File 65366.

Alexander Sproat, had even been appointed but with the land office being closed, this latter appointment was of no use. Thus, despite surveys having been made, settlers did not have official recognition of their claims. Clarke reported:

... serious disputes between neighbours about boundaries of claims have at times arisen . . . in some instances recently serious quarrels, with threats, in more than one instance, to use weapons, arising from such disputes, have with difficulty, by personal persuasion of intermediates, been for the time prevented.<sup>24</sup>

He appealed to the Lieutenant Governor through the North-West Council to appeal to the Governor General to have the Lands Branch take action which would enable the settlers to obtain official recognition of their claims. The appeal was received by the Department of the Interior on July 14th, 1881. Scarcely a week later the Deputy Minister of the Interior recommended that:

Unless the Surveyor General is aware of some reason why it was inexpedient to open forthwith the land office at Prince Albert . . . it is suggested that he give the necessary orders for Mr. Duck to open his office . . .<sup>25</sup>

On August 2nd, 1881, a letter written by the Acting Surveyor General to George Duck stated:

I am directed by the Acting Minister of the Interior to instruct you to open the Dominion Lands Agency at Prince Albert, for the homestead pre-emption and sale of Dominion Lands within the surveyed townships in your district, and for the registration of claims to lands not yet open for entry.<sup>26</sup>

The agent was informed that a list of regulations would be promptly forwarded to him. These were to take effect on January 1, 1882, and outlined the lands which were reserved for homesteads and pre-emptions, and the cost of pre-emptions and sale lands. However, due to oversight, or miscarriage of the letter, it was not until some time in the summer of 1882 that the agent received a copy of the regulations,<sup>27</sup> and a chance was lost to allay the criticism of the Department which was being expressed in the community. One regulation in particular would have pleased the settlers because it protected the entries of those who were on odd numbered sections prior to the Order-in-Council of October 9th, 1879, which excluded such sections from homestead entry. Providing the settlers continued to occupy the land, they could obtain patent and pre-emption rights as if the sections were even numbered.

Another important action was taken by the Department of the Interior in October, 1881, when the Dominion Lands Board was established at Winnipeg.<sup>28</sup> After having received numerous memorials and petitions the Department had finally reached the conclusion that a speedier method of handling claims and settling disputes was needed. As long as mail only had to go from Winnipeg to Ottawa, only short delays existed, but with the settlement of areas further west,

<sup>24</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>27</sup> P.A.C. *Department of the Interior*, Lands Branch File 65366.

<sup>28</sup> A.S. *Department of the Interior*, Order in Council, October 31, 1881.



delays were becoming too long. In fact, it was claimed in a memorial presented by Charles Mair and D. H. Macdowall to Sir John A. Macdonald in April, 1882, that it took nine weeks to correspond with Winnipeg from Prince Albert. This was no exaggeration on their part for in 1884 William Pearce reported that after the establishment of a Post Office in 1879 Prince Albert had regular mail service once every three weeks which would mean that it would take nine weeks to obtain a reply to a letter. Pearce also pointed out that in 1880, from January until the opening of river navigation, Prince Albert was without mail.

A Commissioner of Dominion Lands, resident in Winnipeg, was appointed to have, under general instructions from the Minister of the Interior, "general charge and supervision of the land granting, timber and mining business of his Department in Manitoba and the North West Territories." An Inspector of Dominion Lands was also appointed to inspect and report on all activities of the Department in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. The inspector could also report "without instructions when any matter comes under his observation which is, in his judgement, of sufficient importance."

Together, these two officials constituted the Dominion Lands Board which could "investigate and settle all disputed questions arising out of the duties imposed upon the Commissioner of Dominion Lands and the Inspector of Dominion Lands Agencies and all matters connected with the administration of the Dominion Lands system in Manitoba and the North-West Territories." The Boards' decisions were final except where they were subject to the jurisdiction of law courts. All decisions of the Board were to be signed by both members and their decisions were to be carried out by the proper Departmental officials. When the Board members differed in their decisions, cases were to be referred to the Minister of the Interior. With such sweeping powers, the Board was ideally suited to deal with the Prince Albert claims. However, it was decided that Lindsay Russell, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, was to investigate the claims while the Lands Board was dealing with other matters in the Territories. When the Lands Board was finally assigned the task of settling the Prince Albert claims, it showed its competency. Within a three month period in 1884, it gathered evidence and made and confirmed its decisions. Before the investigation was made more memorials were sent to Ottawa, the *Prince Albert Times* vigorously attacked the Department of the Interior, and the settlers continued in the situation of insecurity concerning their land claims.

In the spring of 1882, Charles Mair and D. H. Macdowall were in Ottawa where they had an interview with Sir John A. Macdonald. At his request, they subsequently presented a memorial to him based on topics discussed at the interview such as the difficulties of commercial interests at Prince Albert, the benefits which could be gained by granting provincial organization to the district, the need for representation in the Commons and the inadequacy of the judicial system.<sup>29</sup> In mentioning the lands problem in the district, the memorial re-stated many of the grievances concerning the lack of patents, the claims of old settlers and half-breeds, squatters on school and Hudson's Bay lands, and the increased

<sup>29</sup> P.A.C. Department of the Interior Lands Branch File 44719.

cost of pre-emption lands. Lack of patents was claimed to be causing a shortage of money in the district because no one could raise money on land without a title to it. Although the memorial claimed that banks would not locate in the community because patents were not issued, this statement was proved incorrect when two banks were established later in the year. The memorial pointed out one of the basic reasons why the problems of the West were not effectively handled by government department. Mair and Macdowall stated that when they presented solutions to the problems of the West to persons in Ottawa, opinions different to their solutions were repeatedly expressed.

The *Prince Albert Times*<sup>30</sup> attacked the actions of the Department of the Interior which led to unrest in the district: odd-numbered sections being withheld from entry, lack of definite word concerning the claims of squatters on school lands and Hudson's Bay lands, regulations making abandoned homesteads only available for sale, and the lack of surveys in outlying districts. These difficulties, claimed the *Times*, caused settlers to turn away from the district and settle in lands along the Canadian Pacific Railway route across the southern part of the Territories. It expressed the feelings of the settlers when it said:

The want of tact displayed by the Government in dealing with our lands is really deplorable. The constant issuing, counter-manding and re-issuing of [ill-framed and worse-digested] orders-in-council, the delay in granting patents and the locking up of parts of our lands, all tend to confirm the very general impressions, that the interests of those parts of the country where the people cannot exercise the rights of the franchise, receive little or no attention at the hands of the Dominion Cabinet.<sup>31</sup>

The *Prince Albert Times* might have been doing a much better service had it attacked the actions of the North-West Territories Council. Lieutenant Governor Dewdney did not forward the October 1881 petition to Ottawa until six months after the meeting. Then he forwarded the petition with excerpts from an explanatory letter from D. H. Macdowall, but did nothing more to strengthen the requests of the petition or Macdowall's letter other than to suggest that the sooner the matter was dealt with the better. In October, 1883, the Council drew up a memorial, the second clause of which summarized the complaints of the early settlers but the force of this clause could easily have been lost by being included with 15 other clauses relating to many other aspects of Territorial affairs.<sup>32</sup> The Council's lack of knowledge concerning some aspects of decisions of the Department of the Interior is shown by the memorial when it was requested that action be taken on certain matters about which the Department had already made decisions meeting the settlers' requests. Unfortunately, neither the Sessional papers or the Journals of the North-West Territories Council indicate that a reply was received to this memorial. Perhaps an explanation of Dewdney's action in not presenting the complaints of the Prince Albert settlers more forcibly than he did lies in letters he wrote to Sir John A. Macdonald. In these letters, Dewdney almost adopts a casual tone which would only serve to diminish the urgency of complaints reaching Ottawa. On November 5, 1883, he wrote:

<sup>30</sup> *Prince Albert Times*, May 16, 1883.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, May 16, 1883.

<sup>32</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, pp. 59-61.



Everything is getting on quietly in the Territories, some discontent at Prince Albert among the old settlers who want their Patents; they appear to have been in bad luck. Lindsay Russell was to have arranged their matters this Summer, but his accident caused delay.<sup>33</sup>

Within one week of sending this letter, Dewdney received a letter from a reliable person in Prince Albert, stating "The people as a whole are smarting under what they consider the contemptuous neglect by the Dominion Government of many grievances, so that we could not depend on them to supply special constables"<sup>34</sup> in case of trouble over the location of the telegraph station. Another letter stated:

A strong feeling is being fostered against the Govmt. & all officials relative to the non-issuing of Patents; leagues are being formed throughout & of course where a grievance exists (imaginery or otherwise) the most is made of it—until the people are egged to the belief that nothing short of a rebellion is necessary in order to obtain their rights.<sup>35</sup>

In a letter to Sir John A. Macdonald, dated November 22, 1883, Dewdney forwarded copies of these letters and outlined the difficulties at Prince Albert. The presentation of the difficulties lost much of its force when Dewdney dismissed them as being caused by drunks, whiskey, hard times and the location of the Telegraph station,<sup>36</sup> despite the fact that he had been advised that the basic cause was lack of patents and neglect of grievances. Although it cannot be said that there was a lack of communication between the Territories' government and Ottawa, the plight of the settlers was certainly presented in a most ineffectual manner. However, some aid was forthcoming, brought about by Departmental officials such as Lindsay Russell, William Pearce and A. Walsh, the Dominion Lands Commissioner at Winnipeg.

These men were more conversant with the problems of the settlers, had been among them and were sympathetic towards the settlers' claims. Although hampered to a degree by controls issued from Ottawa, they were able to present the settlers' viewpoint more forcibly and more knowledgeably than junior officials in the Department and officials of the Territorial government. When they spotted injustices in the working out of land regulations their suggestions to remedy the situation were usually accepted and acted upon. Oddly enough, easing of land regulations in the Prince Albert district came about because of conditions elsewhere, rather than those existing within the district.

On July 9th, 1879, the size of homesteads and pre-emptions had been reduced to 80 acres, a size which would have proved uneconomical, even as the 160 acre farm later proved uneconomical. The decision in October, 1879, to restore homesteads and pre-emptions to the 160 acre size was not made on economic considerations but was based on a decision of the United States government to increase the size of homesteads in the American west to 160 acres. The Canadian government feared that many potential immigrants to Canada, and also farmers resident in Canada, would go to the United States where land grants had become more generous.

<sup>33</sup> A.S. *Macdonald Papers*. Transcripts. Dewdney to Macdonald, November 5, 1883.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, J. Campbell to Dewdney, November 12, 1883.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Hayter Reed to Dewdney, November 8, 1883.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Dewdney to Macdonald, November 22, 1883.

Still further easing of the land regulations occurred in 1882 and 1883 as a result of a situation which arose in the Souris district where squatters had applied for entry on lands but the decision confirming their entry was delayed. An Order-in-Council of October 19th, 1882, authorized the Minister of the Interior to ante-date such entries so that the time between the application for entry and the granting of entry would be included in the term of residence required before the granting of patent. This did not help the settlers in the Prince Albert district to any great extent because their problem was different. They wanted to include in the term of residence time spent on the land prior to application. The Surveyor-General had issued a notice to the effect that this could not be done and this notice had been distributed to all Lands Offices. In view of this notice many squatters, when filing for entry, did not declare such periods of occupancy. The restrictions of the Surveyor-General were reversed by a decision of the Minister of Justice which permitted the ante-dating of entries. He gave the opinion:

. . . that a squatter upon unsurveyed land, making application for entry within three months from the time the land is open for entry, and submitting evidence of previous occupation and cultivation, is entitled to the benefit of the time covered by such previous occupation . . .<sup>37</sup>

This opinion not only cleared up the matter of ante-dating entries but also served as a basis for the Commissioner of Dominion Lands to inquire of the Department if applications for patents could also be ante-dated. On July 17th, 1883 he was notified that:

. . . in all cases, where indisputable evidence is furnished of three years *bona fide* residence and cultivation, it would be inequitable and unfair in view of the erroneous construction placed upon the law by the Department for several years, and of the publicity given to that construction if any person who accepted the situation and failed to do what the law actually required should suffer loss or delay in the issue of his patent.

Carrying out this principle to its legitimate conclusion, it follows . . . that the authority may also be exercised when application for patent is made.<sup>38</sup>

Thus many settlers in the Prince Albert district could qualify for patent as soon as they made application and could include in the term of residence period which they had not declared when making entry on the land. It was on this basis that patents were granted in 1884 as a result of the investigation by William Pearce.

It had been the intention of the Department to have Lindsay Russell investigate the claims in the Prince Albert district early in the summer of 1883, but in February he had an accident and was unable to go to the North-West Territories. It was decided that the Lands Board at Winnipeg should be made responsible for the investigation, but it was not until October, 1883, that the matter was referred to it. Meanwhile the basis for settlement of the claims had been formulated.

An Order in Council of July 7th, 1883, adopted a report made by Lindsay Russell suggesting ways of treating the claims of settlers at Prince Albert and Edmonton. This report recommended that persons, provided that they were in

<sup>37</sup> Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 116 e, pp. 58-59.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58.



occupation of land prior to and on July 15th, 1870, either by themselves or their agents, or by those through whom they claimed the land, would be granted a free patent for the quarter section, or other lot, not exceeding 160 acres in area which most nearly included their improvements. If their claim was a river lot which was larger than 160 acres they would be able to purchase the balance at \$1.00 per acre. Once a person had established such a claim, no similar claim could be established subsequently on any other land by that person, his tenant or agent. This prevented claims for more than one lot being established through the occupancy of land by one individual. However, a person who was the assignee of different occupants of different lots could obtain patent for all which were assigned to him. Lands occupied after the transfer of the Territories to Canada would be classified according to the date at which occupation began, and the regulations in force at that time would govern the amount to be paid for the land. To make instructions more specific the report enumerated the regulations that were in effect at various times. The report acknowledged that it would be unfair to charge settlers the 1882 price of land when they had settled on it much earlier, which, in effect, would have been a "tax on enterprise." Thus, the memorials, petitions and letters appear to have had some influence on the actions of the Department.

Finally, on January 15th, 1884, William Pearce and his assistant, W. Ruttan, arrived in Prince Albert and remained there until February 27th. During this time they took over 1,000 affidavits concerning the land claims. Despite previous reports of "disputes arising daily" concerning land claims, Pearce did not have to deal with any disputed claims. The most difficult part of his work was obtaining accurate information concerning terms of occupancy and amount of improvements. However, this difficulty was due to inability on the part of the settlers to recall details rather than unwillingness to give him the information. Many settlers never bothered keeping indentures concerning the purchase of land, a fact that can be readily understood of certain segments of the population. Pearce found that even among the more commercially active claimants, affidavits had to be accepted in lieu of actual agreements of sale. When it came to verifying dates of occupation of the land or of sale, Pearce had to do a lot of questioning, comparing of dates and ascertaining of facts from other settlers. Many settlers, rather than being able to refer to specific dates, usually referred to significant events such as the Red River Rebellion, 1869-1870, the smallpox epidemic in 1871, or the year of the flood on the North Saskatchewan River in the Spring of 1875. Pearce felt, though, that evidence about term of residence or value of improvements, was truthfully given, and where inaccuracies existed, they were unintentional. His patience with two individuals must have been coming to an end, because he attributed very obvious discrepancies in their evidence as being due to either "ignorance or stupidity." However, he was not always this harsh in his estimate of the claimants. One settler entered a claim for his father, and the nephew and the brother of the settler were supporting witnesses for the statements. This was an unusual procedure because usually the Department would not allow members of a family to testify on behalf of each other. In this case Pearce noted on the transcript of evidence that "I have no doubt the evidence from them is just as good as if there

was no relationship." Another difficulty Pearce encountered when dealing with the settlers was that a lot of confusion arose from a very common misunderstanding of the Dominion Lands Act. Many settlers were oblivious to the fact that provisions of the Manitoba Act applied only to those persons who occupied land prior to July 15th, 1870. Instead, they thought it applied to all land prior to survey and mistakenly thought a claim would be theirs as long as they were on it before it was placed on the market by the Government.

Besides being guided by Russell's 1883 report, Pearce used other tests as a means of assessing values and claims for *bona fide* residence. Improvements were based on their value as of 1882, the boom period in the settlement, when values were at their highest. Improvements were greater at this time because settlers hoped to realize more from the sale of their lands. Many settlers at this period also had cultivated their lands to a greater extent than at any other time as many thought that by fulfilling homestead requirements quickly, they would be able to get their homestead, and apply for a second homestead immediately. However, this trend to greater improvements slackened when second homestead entries were no longer allowed. By basing the value of improvements on a period when they would be at their highest, the settlers were really given the benefit of the doubt by Pearce. On the other hand, using the cash value of improvements as a test of *bona fide* residence, worked to the detriment of some.

Pearce stated in his report that since the Dominion Lands Act required each person to reside on and improve his land for at least six months in each of three years, a settler would be a poor one if, in that period, his improvements did not amount to \$600.00. On any other basis he would have found that many claims would be preferred by persons who had never been a *bona fide* resident in terms of or in the spirit of the Lands Act. Pearce was aware of the view urged by many that it really made no difference whether homestead duties were carried out in the letter of the Act, that is, by one person over a period of three years, or in the spirit of the Act, by a number of persons over a three-year period. He claimed that no Act ever contemplated fulfillment of duties in such a manner, but rather:

The object of granting homesteads was to make permanent settlers of those who took up the land at least to such an extent that the value of the improvements made by them would be such that the land would not be in danger of reverting to a state of nature, owing to its falling into the hands of speculators. The very fact of short periods of residence is a good criterion that the occupation has been of a speculative or make-shift character. In such cases it will probably be found that the occupants devoted very little attention to improving their holdings. If improvements in such cases should be really valuable, they as a matter of course, deserve more consideration.<sup>39</sup>

In assessing the claims, Pearce divided them into classes according to the terms of residence and the value of improvements, and made recommendations on this basis giving free grants of land, or fixing purchase price at \$1.00 or \$2.00 per acre. It is not necessary to make a study of the 17 classes which were established but an analysis of some indicates the results of the investigation.

<sup>39</sup> P.A.C. Department of the Interior. Lands Branch File 65366.



Class 1 was for settlers who claimed land by reason of their residence on it, and peaceable possession of it, on and prior to the date of transfer, July 15th, 1870. For this group, it was recommended that those on river lots receive 160 acres free, 160 acres at \$1.00 an acre and the balance, if any at \$2.00 an acre. Only six river lots out of 82 were in this category, one claimed by the Presbyterian Church, two by an original settler, John MacDonald, and one each by three settlers who based their claims on the right of purchase from the original settlers.

Class 9 is of interest to mention as it shows how the value of improvements affected the amount of land a settler received. This class was for claimants who applied to purchase odd sections at \$1.00 per acre by reason of residence, or improvements, or both, made prior to June 1st, 1880. For this group it was recommended that if the improvements were maintained until May 1st, 1882, the land would be sold at \$1.00 per acre, and the amount of land that could be purchased at this price would depend on the value of improvements. If the improvements were worth up to \$400 in 1882, the settler could get 160 acres; if worth up to \$900, 320 acres; if worth up to \$1500, 480 acres; and if worth \$2200, 640 acres. The file which Pearce compiled on this classification shows that one settler could only claim 80 acres because he improved the land but did not reside on it; eight settlers were able to receive 160 acres and 12 settlers were able to receive 320 acres. There were none in the higher categories. One of the interesting aspects of the claims of this group was that before the Lands Board made its decision, five claimants sold their lands to Martin Mossom Boyd, a lumber merchant of Ontario, who operated a large farm in the Prince Albert district from the 1890's to the 1900's. Boyd paid these settlers \$1200 for a 320 acre farm and \$850 for a 160 acre farm. He also had to pay the Department of the Interior the amount which the settlers would have paid. As a result of these sales, one-quarter of the 5200 acres claimed in this class were purchased by a person other than a *bona fide* settler.

Class 12 was for claims for lands which on survey proved to be part of the Hudson's Bay Lands. It was about this class that so many bitter remarks had been made in the *Prince Albert Times* and in petitions and memorials because they constituted part of the "land lock" which deprived settlers of readily available land. The file compiled by Pearce on this group listed eight settlers who claimed a total of 1760 acres. Mr. Pearce recommended that the only thing that could be done was to request that the Company accept other lands in lieu of those claimed by settlers. This the Company agreed to do and formal exchanges were made in May, 1886, and the settlers gained their lands. The small number of claimants in this group does not deny that a "land lock" existed, but it does suggest that the attacks on the Company were out of all proportion to the number of actual claimants of Company lands. It is possible that the attacks on the Company either grew out of animosity which arose in 1873 over surveys or the grievances were exploited for political reasons.

William Pearce and his assistant left Prince Albert on February 27, 1884. They were to have proceeded to the Duck Lake-Batoche area to take evidence from the Métis. Owing to the fact that neither could speak French and were

unable to get an interpreter, George Duck was charged with the duty of getting evidence from the Métis concerning their claims. This he did in May, 1884. Meanwhile Pearce had returned to Winnipeg, completed his report and the Lands Board verified his decisions in April, 1884.

During the period prior to the settlement of these claims, the settlers had put up with a frustrating situation in which petitions and memorials were only answered by piecemeal solutions to their problems. In the face of this they showed a great deal of forbearance, although some of the more discontented settlers expressed their dissatisfaction by participating in the agitation which led to the rebellion of 1885. Even while Pearce was in Prince Albert in 1884, farmers' meetings in outlying districts were voicing the settlers' grievances. The granting of half-breed scrip, one of the earliest grievances, was not a matter for Pearce to investigate and it was not cleared up until after the rebellion. With all the information in its files from various sources concerning grievances in the Territories, and with rumors and actual reports of unrest, it was nothing short of appalling that the demands of the settlers were never effectively handled by officials of the Department of the Interior.

In many instances, the apprehensions of the settlers concerning their land claims could have been allayed by clear cut statements of policy. Instead, complicated regulations smothered in official phraseology were issued and these were made worse by incorrect interpretations. The number of regulations and the constant changes made by Orders in Council certainly indicates a great deal of experimenting and a groping around for the correct solutions to the many problems. Even top officials of the Department had to obtain clarification of some regulations and Land Agents made matters worse when they passed incorrect interpretations on to the settlers. This confusion can be attributed in part to the newness, magnitude and complexity of the problems of western settlement. The difficulties the Department faced and the work it was accomplishing, were more than likely never presented to the settlers. The Department thus received sharp criticism, some of which it did not deserve. But these explanations do not exonerate the Department of its deficiencies. Long delays in answering letters, the delay in opening the land office, and neglect of petitions alienated the good will of the settlers. Many of these deficiencies possibly arose from lack of direction from the Minister of the Interior. Quite often correspondence indicates that a certain problem involved a matter of policy which could only be decided by the Minister or which required a change in legislation. When the large amount of legislation affecting railway and colonization companies is considered, the small amount required to meet the demands of the settlers could have been handled easily. The companies were possibly more effective than the settlers in presenting their requirements in Ottawa and therefore received more attention.

The Council of the North-West Territories should be censured for failing to present the claims of the settlers more forcibly than it did. Possibly the idea that the West was a "Crown Colony" of the Canadian Government, the fact that the Lieutenant-Governor was an appointee of Ottawa, and the fact that the Council's purse strings were controlled by the Department of the Interior com-



bined to place the Lieutenant-Governor and the Council in an inferior position. Like the Department of the Interior, the Council was a newly created body and had problems of procedure and organization to deal with, and, until it included elected representatives it was not subject to the pressure of local opinions. But this does not exonerate it from pressing more strongly the claims of the settlers.

Despite the lack of proper presentation of their grievances, the validity of many of the settlers' claims were finally acknowledged by legislation or by decisions of the Lands Board, but the delay in doing so was at the expense of the good will of the settlers. Not only did the Department have an obligation to look after their requests promptly, but it would have been expedient to do so. An earlier settlement of the land claims would have eliminated one of the many factors which prevented the Prince Albert Settlement from achieving the great promise of the early years.

LLOYD RODWELL

## RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

# Reminiscences of a Lumberjack

by ALLAN KENNEDY

Mr. Allan Kennedy was born on a farm on Allumette Island which is an island in the Ottawa River not far from Pembroke, Ontario, although it is in the Province of Quebec. When he was a young boy, Mr. Kennedy learned to walk logs by practising on the logs which came down the Ottawa River near his home. When he was about fifteen years of age he began working with various lumber companies and learned the skills of a river driver and lumberjack. First he worked on the Ottawa River and then at various places in Ontario including the Petawawa River, Spanish River and Blind River. Then for a period of two years Mr. Kennedy and his brother Ed operated a draying business in Thessalon, Ontario. In the summer of 1910 they sold their business and came west on a harvest excursion.

Harvesting over, as Mr. Kennedy relates in his reminiscences, they began to look around for other work and found out somewhat to their surprise that there was a lumbering industry in northern Saskatchewan. In the summer of 1911 the two brothers filed on homesteads in Alberta intending to become farmers. However, when they were advised that the lands they had chosen had been withdrawn from homesteading they gave up the idea of farming and returned to the lumber industry. They became associated with the company that eventually became The Pas Lumber Company. Mr. Allan Kennedy was employed by this company in various capacities including that of superintendent of the Reserve operation until the depression struck in 1930. In the years that followed he worked for other lumber companies, farmed and engaged in the manufacture of chaffer screens. His brother Ed, who is now deceased, worked continuously for The Pas Lumber Company for a period of fifty-one years which must be a unique record in the Saskatchewan timber industry.

These reminiscences were selected by the editor from the transcripts of a series of tape recorded interviews he conducted with Mr. Kennedy in October, 1965. We are indebted to Mr. Ernest Morris of Saskatoon, a former employee of The Pas Lumber Company, for suggesting the interview and arranging for us to meet Mr. Kennedy.

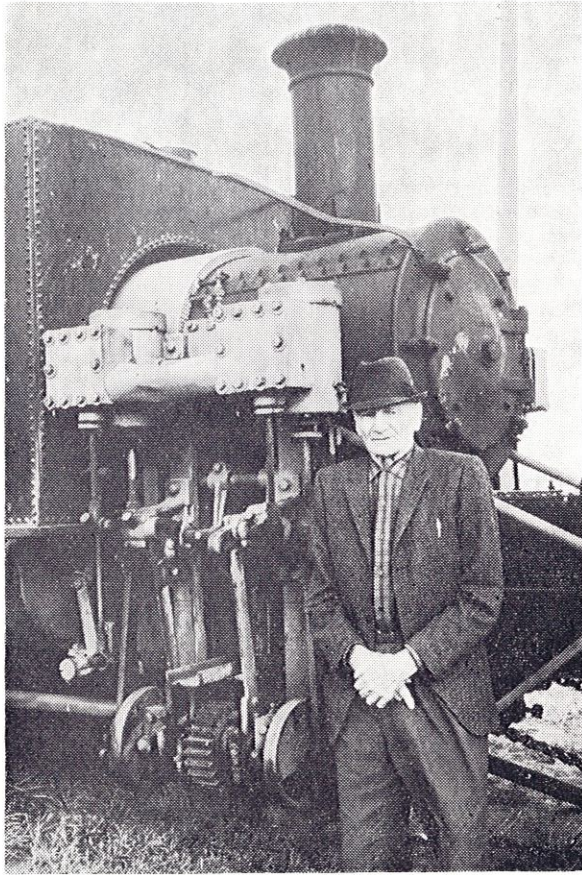
THE EDITOR

MY brother Ed and I decided to go west so we came out on a harvesting excursion in 1910. We threshed at Arcola for 30 days and were paid \$2.75 a day and board. Threshing over we went to Regina and took a room at a hotel. We really did not know where to go from there. Then we heard that there was logging going on at Prince Albert which was a surprise to us because we did not know there was any logging in Saskatchewan. So we decided to go to Prince Albert. When we got to Prince Albert we went to the old Prince Albert hotel which was the lumberjack's hotel. That very next morning there was a man around hiring for the lumber camps. Wages for the winter months were \$35.00 per month and board. He told us to have our sacks outside next morning and be ready to take a freight team up to Shoal Creek which is where the buffalo park in Waskesieu National Park is now located. This was the headquarters camp for the Prince Albert Lumber Company.

The Prince Albert Lumber Company was owned by a group from Minneapolis. David N. Winton was the President and Charles Winton the Vice President. The Wintons had started lumbering in Minnesota. They started with a small sawmill, buying timber from the homesteaders who were allowed to cut it on their own land. From this small beginning they grew into a larger company with their headquarters at Thief River Falls. They came to Prince Albert bringing with them a few of the original people from whom they had bought timber, and who had gone to work for them. This included Harry Hanson, Jack Mulhall, the Landons and a number of others.



When they came to Prince Albert there was already quite a large mill which the Telford Lumber Company had built. The Telford company had timber berths of their own and they had also bought out the Sanderson Lumber Company and the Shannon and Bell Lumber Company. However, they were not doing too



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*Mr. Allan Kennedy taken beside a Pas Lumber Company tractor at the Western Development Museum, Saskatoon, 1965.*

well because they could not get all the drive down the river so they sold out to the Wintons who formed the Prince Albert Lumber Company. The original manager was Mr. A. L. Mattes and they had different logging superintendents such as Black and Elliott. Well the Prince Albert Lumber Company also "hung up" its log drives, as they say, and in 1910 the mill had to shut down early because they could not get the logs down. It was then that Mr. Mattes sent for Mr. James A. McDonald who took over as logging superintendent. His job was to keep the mill going with logs and he was the best river driver that there ever was. He built new dams and from then on they were never short of logs. Now this same condition applied at Big River, The Pas and the Red Deer. Their

drives would hang up and the mills would shut down because they could not get logs to the mill although the river was full of logs. When Mr. McDonald took over this condition was corrected and they were able to keep the mills running.

The company maintained a camp at the entrance to what is now Waskesieu Park. They had made a small lake there to unload the logs on for the landing by building a dam across the Little Red River. Of course they also had a stopping place there for men going into the bush and a camp for the landing crew who unloaded the logs. They kept a cook there in the fall for the stopping place and as the story goes he would never know how many men would come, as it was hard to judge how much food to cook. On one particular day there had been quite a bunch for dinner and pretty well used up his grub when an unexpected bunch of men came walking down the road. Since the cook did not have much soup left he told the cookee to add water to make enough to go around. From that time on the stopping place was called the soup kitchen because the soup was pretty weak.

The landing crew would be quite large as the logs would all have to be decked—or stacked up. They would use a steamjammer to pull the logs off the sleighs and pile them up. At the end of the season there might be as much as 20-25 million feet of lumber piled on the little lake waiting for the spring breakup. This would mean that there would be at least 400,000 logs which would be quite a big pile.

A large logging camp would consist of 175 men or later on 200 men. There was a cook, blacksmith, foreman and what we would call the camp crew. For 200 men they would have four bunkhouses 28 feet by 40 feet built in hundred foot lengths which left a washroom of 20 feet in between. There would be a dining room 28 feet by 50 feet with a kitchen 24 feet square on the side. There would also be an office, a blacksmith shop, and a barn 28 feet by 172 feet big enough to accommodate 72 horses. When the buildings were this long they were built with the logs vertical so you could make a building any size you wished. The bunkhouses would accommodate probably 75 men and they would have muzzle loading bunks which means end on to the walls and you went into them head first. They built them this way because it saved space. The bunks were double deckers and were built four feet wide and six foot six inches long, with sides and ends one board around. Then we would have only blankets and hay. In later years we got the steel double decker bunks with springs and mattresses and they built much better buildings.

The food was the very best that could be obtained and the lumber companies employed good cooks. A typical breakfast would be bacon and hotcakes every morning except Sunday when it would be replaced by toast. Also, of course, porridge, stewed fruit of all kinds and there was always cookies or cake on the table. There was always a hot lunch which was brought out if we were more than one mile from camp. Regular lunch was roast beef, beans and pies. Everything was put in a large box with shelves and compartments and taken to the lunch spot, which was usually a clearing with some shelter. The “jungle” cook as he was called, cut wood and kept seven or eight fires going for warmth and he made



big pots of fresh tea. In the evening we would have cold meat as a rule, usually roast beef. Sunday was roast pork which was considered a treat and, of course, fish on Fridays.

Sunday was a day off except for what they called the 30-day-a-month men or those who were paid by the month. This included the cook, all the camp crew, the blacksmith, the helper, the handyman, the barn boss, four horse teamsters and especially the tank crews. If there was rutting to be done by the hauling teams, it was usually left until Sunday because then we could gather up 16 horses to haul the rutters. The rest of the crew, especially the younger fellows, would do a lot of visiting if there were other camps within three or four miles. If they did not visit, they would write letters or sleep. With the advent of radios with loudspeakers we listened to programs, especially Foster Hewitt. Later on every Sunday there were movies shown in the dining room which would seat the whole crew.

In the large camps there were two bullcooks and one of their duties was to haul water for the kitchen and the bunkhouses. Tanks were kept on top of all the heating stoves in the bunkhouses and so there was always lots of warm water. The bunkhouses were swept out each day and the floors were scrubbed every Saturday. There was not much room in the bunkhouse to store clothes. Men at that time did not bring any more clothes than necessary. As a rule if anyone brought in a good suit of clothes they could arrange with the clerk in the office to hang them up in a storage area. The company ran little stores in the office called wannigans where you could get anything that was required in the line of clothing for bushwork. You could also buy tobacco, cigarettes and many of the patent medicines that could be sold over the counter anywhere.

Every man in the employ of the company had to pay a premium for medical care. In the early days it was fifty cents a month. The Holy Family Hospital in Prince Albert had the contract and they employed the doctors and paid them. So if you were sick or got hurt you were taken to the hospital and you had your choice of doctors. In some cases hospital tickets were sold at five dollars a year. This arrangement continued until about 1920 when it was changed and medical services were contracted out to the physician. The fees rose to seventy-five cents a month and then to one dollar. The company maintained a small bush hospital where most patients could be treated, but if the case was serious the patient was taken to The Pas or Prince Albert and, of course, his hospitalization was paid for by the doctor who had the contract.

My first winter job was using a cant hook loading logs onto sleighs. The logging sleigh runners had an eight foot run, that is the runners were eight feet apart with eight foot stakes. We loaded with a jammer or tripod set beside the sleigh on the side of the road and anchored with two guy lines to trees back in the woods. There were pulleys on the jammer and the logs were hoisted on to the sleigh by a cross haul team. Instead of whipple trees a loading bar was used. The loading bar was hung high on the horses from the crupper and backstrap on the harness. The loading bar was a straight hardwood bar with a pulley in the center and two solid hitches on the outside. There was a triphook in the center





*Lunch Break.*



for a loading cable with a short chain on the end so that when they put the link of the chain into the triphook the teamster could hold the handle of the triphook in his hand. When the top loader called for the log to be dropped in a certain place on those large sleighs the teamster would only have to give the handle a little pull and it would automatically unhook from the horses.

A loading crew consisted of eight men. Four men to tail the logs down and take them from the skidding team and roll them to the skids. Then two bull rope men as you would say who pulled back the chains and chained the logs; then, of course, the top loader who puts the logs in the proper place on the sleigh and the teamster for the cross haul team. To begin the load we would take down our stakes on the skidway side. We put skidways to the bunk of the sleigh and we would pull the logs on until we got possibly three parts of a load. Then we would replace our stakes on the skidway side and roll the logs against them. That would hold the stakes rigid and they were connected with corner binds so they could be tripped either side. There was a top cable six inches from the top of the stakes. When the roads were good we could carry heavier loads and we might load four or five tiers above the stakes. Very often the load would be four feet above the stakes so the load would be practically twelve feet high. With the stakes spreading at the top the load might be 17 feet wide at the top. This was equivalent to one heavy flat car load. There were four horses as a rule for one sleigh, but on a longer haul we would use six horses and haul a trailer. So those six horses on a heavy load could really haul two flat car loads of logs at once and make two trips a day on a six mile road.

The roads prior to the advent of bulldozers were all cut by hand. Every tree above six inches was grubbed out by the roots. The roads were cut 24 feet wide and were levelled with graders. Then rutters that were made like a snow plow but with knives made from heavy steel were hauled over the road by sixteen horses. Its purpose was to cut a rut through the roots, moss, leaf mold and such down to solid earth. When this was done they would haul water tanks over the road and flood it. By spring, on the main road, we might possibly have ten or twelve inches of ice. The sleighs would be pulled down the ruts and it was pretty much like a railroad. We could make side roads and switches that they could pull into from the main road. The horses would be sharp shod for hauling on the ice road. The Prince Albert Lumber Company would only allow sharp toe calks [pronounced corks] to be put on the horses' shoes, never a sharp heel calk. The reason for this was that a horse would cut itself with sharp heel calks.

Our main roads were cut to a little stricter specification than our branch roads. It was found to be a good practice to leave the timber on our main roads uncut during the winter as this timber would keep the road shaded and clean and early thaws would not affect the main road. The branch roads would be cut two hundred and fifty paces apart leaving a skidding distance of 125 paces to each road. It did not pay to skid logs with horses on the ground farther than this distance unless in very scattered timber.

In those days timber was cut down to a diameter of ten inches breast high or in other words any tree that would make two logs 16 feet long. The saw gang

consisted of six men. There was an undercutter who notched the trees directing the direction they would fall so as not to lodge. Then there were two men to saw the trees down, and one man to cut the limbs off, and two swampers to cut the roads and pile the brush out of the way. They were very fussy in the measurement of logs. They asked for three inches over length because the lumber market would not allow for any short lengths. They had a man going around checking lengths all the time.

Winter was not finished as long as we could haul logs but it was finished at breakup which we considered April 22. Some years we were finished logging by March 17. When logging was finished we would go up to town to wait possibly two or three weeks before the river would break up and it was river driving time. Prince Albert was the headquarters for the lumber industry in Saskatchewan. So while waiting on the drive in the spring Prince Albert was quite a gathering place for lumberjacks and river drivers. There might be as many as a thousand in town. The hotels then were mostly wooden hotels: the Queens, Windsor, Royal, Saskatchewan, Avenue and Prince Albert. Of course, with the bars wide open it was a little rowdy at times. Many of the lumberjacks liked to tear splinters from the old wooden sidewalks with those calked shoes.

In our first operation in what is now Waskesieu Park, the logs were all taken down the Little Red River which empties into the Saskatchewan river behind an island opposite the mill. This is close to where the sanatorium now stands. However, the logs, once they reached the Saskatchewan River, had to be towed upstream by steamboat and around to the south side in order to reach the pond at the mill site. In order to move the logs down the Little Red River they had dams so the water flowage could be flattened out and sluiced steadily. The river would be lined up with men, possibly as many as 250 men in small crews so they could watch every bend of the river. The logs had to be kept going 24 hours a day if at all possible. We always thought we could run a million feet of logs a day so with possibly 20 to 25 million feet the drive would take 20 to 25 days. During that time the Little Red River would be full of logs for about 45 miles. This would represent about half the capacity of the mill and the balance of the logs were driven down from Sturgeon Lake through the Shell River to the Saskatchewan River at a point about five miles above the bridge at Prince Albert. Of course these logs also had to be rafted and towed to the mill.

In order to tow the logs they had to be made into rafts of about 2500 logs. As a rule these would be tied together by a boom of twenty-two 40-foot boom sticks in lengths. Every log had to be placed endwise. You could not have a log cross wise because it would roll out if you tried to pull it upstream against the current. The logs had to be towed through the bridge so it was necessary to put cross lines every two or three lengths so they could not spread and strike a pier. If they struck a pier and the raft broke up the logs would be lost down the river. We put a jail boom in the river in a bend in the river six miles downstream to catch any stray logs. It was a spot where the current hit the south bank of the river. When we got 200 or so logs we would make them into a small raft which would be towed upstream on the wheel.





*Saw gang at work.*



*Loading logs with an end jammer.*



The large rafts could not be towed up the river on the wheel but had to be winched up. They used a flat-bottomed stern wheeler specially built on the pattern of the Mississippi river boats. The boat was called *The City of Prince Albert* and it was 24 by 100 feet and equipped with grouser. A grouser was made of a 14 by 16 inch 36-foot fir timber with heavy angle irons on the corner riveted both ways and a heavy square steel point, and it went through a well in the boat. When you wished to stop your boat you stopped the motion and dropped the grouser. This held the boat firmly and you could winch rafts with your hoist up to the boat, anchor the raft and then hoist your grouser and go back as far as your cable would let you and start over again. In this way the rafts were moved upstream to the mill pond. In order to keep the mill operating a full 24-hour shift we had to make up three of the large rafts every day.

The Prince Albert Lumber Company was dissolved the year the war ended in 1918. By that time the company owned the Big River Company and had renamed it the Ladder Lake Lumber Company. I went to Big River in the fall of 1918 running the camp for one winter and also running the spring drive. That year the company bought out the Finger Lumber Company at The Pas and we moved headquarters to The Pas. The company was renamed The Pas Lumber Company.

In those days timber berths were not run or located so that they adjoined each other. There were strips of land with good timber between all of the timber berths. The timber berths were simply run out in order to corner all of the timber in the country without paying too much money or paying ground rent. There was not sufficient timber in any place between the berths to warrant another company coming in and operating. When the Wintons bought out the Finger Lumber Company it was not really the timber actually on the berths controlled by the Finger Lumber Company that interested them but it was all the timber adjoining the berths. This timber, of course, was controlled by the government and had to be purchased at so much a thousand.

From The Pas we cut on the Carrot River and the Saskatchewan River. Most of the timber was cut on the Carrot River above Red Earth Creek. It was driven down the Carrot River and at the mouth of the river which is three miles west of The Pas they had a boom to make certain they would not lose the logs down the Saskatchewan River. As the Carrot River was declared a navigable river we had to leave a channel which could be used by boats. The Finger Lumber Company had the Carrot River divided with pilings and booms so that a channel was kept free down one side for boats. When The Pas Lumber Company took over I was given the job of increasing the length of that boom to 18 miles. To do this we had to drive pilings every 50 feet to which we attached the boom. The logs in the boom were lap-jointed so that the logs would run down and not get caught on the boom. This represented a lot of work. In the spring the log channel and boat channel would both be full and probably the river for three or four miles beyond the boom. During that time The Pas Lumber Company would have to transport everyone going up the river. They would have to do this until they could saw up enough logs to bring the tail of the jam inside the log channel leaving the boat channel clear. Later on when the roads and transportation



conditions improved, we got rid of the boom and used the whole river and then the company had to look after everyone going up the river.

The timber we cut on the Saskatchewan River began about fifteen miles east of Nipawin or roughly about halfway between Nipawin and Squaw Rapids. We had to take those logs down the Saskatchewan River. We could not take the logs all the way down the Saskatchewan River to The Pas because there are too many channels in the river. So we had to take them out at the Sipanok Channel which crosses over from the Saskatchewan River to the Carrot River. The logs would be run into the Carrot River and down to the mill.

In order to take the logs out of the Saskatchewan River and run them through the Sipanok Channel we would use fin booms. Our main booms were made of British Columbia fir because fir floats much deeper than spruce. Each unit in the boom was made of three 12 by 14 inch 40 feet long timbers; bolted together on their edge. On each one of those lengths we would put heavy hinges. On each of these hinges we bolted a plank 16 feet long, 12 inches wide, four inches thick at one end and tapered to two inches thick at the other end. We would bolt the thick end to the hinges. In the center of these planks or fins we would put an arm so the angle of the fin could be adjusted to any angle you wished. You would have to have a current to operate a fin boom but with the fins you could put out a boom at any angle you wished. Of course you would not put the boom out at a stiffer angle than the logs would follow or the logs would roll under the boom and you would lose them. We never liked to hang more than half a mile of boom in one length. If we needed more we would drive large clumps of pilings out in the river and anchor another length of boom to that until we had the necessary length. Of course they were only anchored at one end. Usually the booms would be put together in one place. They would be built on skidways and when they were finished the skids would be greased and the booms would be sent broadside into the water. They would then be towed by boat to where they were needed.

In the spring of 1928 The Pas Lumber Company bought out the Red Deer Lumber Company whose mill was located on Red Deer Lake four miles from the main line of the Canadian National Railway at Barrows, Manitoba. The Red Deer Lumber Company drove logs down the Red Deer River, the Etomami River and the Little Swan River. However, as they did not have the proper reserve dams or enough reserve water, their drives hung up four years in succession and they were forced to sell. I was sent to look over the remaining holdings and the government timber bordering the timber berths. On this trip locating and looking over this timber we used a buckboard and a good team of cruising horses. We could go through young brush eight feet high and jump windfalls where there were no trails. Where we could not travel with the buckboard we would tie up the horses, water and feed them good and leave them tied up until night while we walked. After several months cruising and the preparation of a report it was decided that it would not be practical to construct new dams. At this time a railway was being built between Sturgis and Hudson Bay with a branch line going west to Crooked River and ending at Arborfield. The company decided that the best way to handle the timber in the area was to build a planing mill at the junction of these roads

which was later named Reserve by the railway. It was planned to locate a number of small mills throughout the timber and to haul the rough lumber to our planing mill at Reserve. I was put in full charge of the operation at Reserve.

We began operations in the fall of 1928 but it was New Years before we were able to get our four sawmills in operation. We had to have ice roads for our



E. MORRIS

*Hector McLeod, with six up hauling trailer, Sipanok Channel, 1935-36.*

sleighs so we were quite late in starting our operations the first year and were only able to produce six million feet of lumber. The next year we got started earlier and by employing about 400 men we were able to produce in the neighborhood of sixteen million feet of lumber. But that was the last of the operations as we were forced to close down because of the depression.

I moved my family on to a rented farm at Portage la Prairie and stayed there for six years. After being there for one year I went with the B. F. Harris Lumber Company at Crooked River and I supervised their winter operations for possibly four or five years. I worked for various other lumber companies after that including a year or so with The Pas Lumber Company cruising for timber in the Carrot River area. During this time I was also in partnership manufacturing the Bremner screens which were top chaffer screens for threshing machines and combines.

## Contributors

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## Book Reviews

WHY SHOOT THE TEACHER. By Max Braithwaite. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965. Pp. 162. \$4.95.

MAX BRAITHWAITE was born in Nokomis, Saskatchewan, and educated in the public schools of Prince Albert and Saskatoon. His plans to enter university in 1929 were frustrated by the effects of the stock market crash and he attended the Saskatoon Normal School instead. After a prolonged and desperate search for a teaching position, he was offered a school near a small town west of Alsask, Saskatchewan, where he was given a teacherage in the basement of the school and paid chiefly in food. *Why Shoot the Teacher* is his account of the winter and spring term he spent at that first school.

In an appreciation on the dust-jacket of the book, Farley Mowat states that "Canadians seem to be perversely unwilling to read truthful books about themselves" and that "there have been few such books of merit." On the contrary, Max Braithwaite's book now forms a part of a long Canadian tradition of autobiographical books about life in small towns or frontier situations. Presumably such books will be written as long as there are frontier areas in Canada or people to recall what frontier life was like.

A brief comparison of *Why Shoot the Teacher* and one of the best known accounts of early Canadian pioneer life, Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852), shows how deeply rooted many of our attitudes are and reminds us that it is only very recently that the development of mass communications and the growth of large cities have tended to alter some of them. Both authors struggled against the kind of loneliness that isolation in a vast landscape brings, both were considered outsiders by local inhabitants because of background and education, both encounter hostility to education because it was considered impractical, they discovered the toughness and self-reliance that Canada's geography and climate demand, and, although anxious to escape, they found themselves curiously drawn to something in the loneliness and asceticism of the frontier experiences.

The books are similar in form as well. Like Mrs. Moodie, Braithwaite writes sketches of incidents or phases in his career, presenting them with humour and reasonable detachment. He laughs at his own mistakes and regards other people charitably. Portraits of the most interesting people in the area are given and even a history of one distressed and perhaps quite typical wife. Like *Roughing It in the Bush* Braithwaite's book comes close to being a novel unified by the narrator's personality, reflecting on and adjusting to a variety of situations.

If Braithwaite had given a little more attention to continuity, *Why Shoot the Teacher* would be an ironic novel of prairie life in the 1930's. It is, in any case, a sketch-book with some of the qualities of fiction and it should appeal to both the nostalgic and the curious reader. Such prairie phenomena as severe weather, gophers and coyotes, Christmas concerts in the school-house, marathon dances, early efforts for political and social reform, and teaching conditions are recollected here and tempered by Braithwaite's sense of humour.

CARL BALLSTADT

WEST OF YESTERDAY. By *George Shepherd*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965. Pp. 157. Illust.

IN the main, this book is an autobiography of George Shepherd, at present curator of the Western Development Museum in Saskatoon. But it is much more. Into his life story, and that of his family, Mr. Shepherd has woven a description of many facets of rural activity from 1908 to 1950. The book is further enriched by a preface and by an introduction to each chapter by John Archer, formerly Legislative Librarian in Regina, and at present Director of Libraries at McGill University. The association of Mr. Archer with this publication makes unnecessary any comment on the authenticity of its subject matter, or on its value as a contribution to the epic story of prairie settlement.

The Shepherds arrived on the crest of the last great wave of immigration which broke over the virgin plains of central and western Saskatchewan during the first decade of the present century, and also rounded out the older settlements which had followed the lines of railway or had crept up the wooded valleys during the eighties and nineties. To this reviewer, it is disappointing to find only a vague reference to these earlier settlements in the commentary, and none whatever on the map. A reader, unaware that there was a newspaper in Battleford in 1878; a college in Prince Albert in 1879, and that 130,000 bushels of grain are said to have been harvested on the Bell farm at Indian Head in 1884, might infer that practically the entire area of the province was a wilderness prior to the early nineteen hundreds. A shaded map, showing the areas of older settlement would have clarified the picture for the reader unfamiliar with the earlier history of the West.

The story opens with Mr. Shepherd's recollections of his childhood in Victorian England. In 1908, the Shepherd family decided to emigrate to Canada, and in the spring of that year George, then a youth of 18, and his father, embarked as steerage passengers to prepare a home for the family in Western Canada. After a brief, but frustrating experience as hired men on a farm near Brandon, the Shepherds moved on to the Girvin-Stalwart district in central Saskatchewan where they homesteaded and were later joined by the rest of the family. Of special interest are the concise, yet vivid accounts of almost every aspect of pioneer life in that district at the time. There are descriptions of food, housing, clothing, straw-burning heaters, schools, funerals and of life in a railroad construction camp—all related with the voice of experience.

New frontiers beckoned. In 1913, the Shepherd boys moved on to the cattle country south of the Cypress Hills where they engaged in ranching, while keeping "one foot in the furrow." In chapter IX, the reader is given a concise, clear-cut picture of the historical background of the cattle kingdom. There are droll sketches of "characters" rarely found except in frontier settlements such as that of the American lawyer, turned homesteader, who spiked his porridge with stewed gophers, and who discouraged the threshing crew from staying to dinner by picking up a dead hen in his yard and laying it on the doorstep. The scope of the author's reminiscences then broaden to include the impact of the two World



Wars, the formation of the Wheat Pool and the heartbreaking years of the depression.

Largely as an antidote to the dismal and frustrating conditions of the thirties, Mr. Shepherd made an "escape to yesterday" by collecting data and photographs relating to the early history of Southwestern Saskatchewan, and by writing and lecturing on that subject. His repute in this field of research, together with his familiarity with the older types of farm implements, led to his appointment in 1953, as curator of the Western Development Museum in Saskatoon. The concluding chapter of the book gives a brief history of that institution, and a vivid account of the Royal visit to the museum in 1959.

This is a well-written and attractively-bound book which should enjoy wide popularity among those interested in the history of prairie settlement.

GILBERT JOHNSON

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A PROTEST MOVEMENT BECALMED. *By Leo Zakuta.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964. Pp. 204. Illust. \$5.95.

THIS book is about the rise and, as the author sees it, eventual failure of the federal CCF party in Canada. The theme is developed in a somewhat unexpected way. Professor Zakuta, who is a sociologist, has chosen as the framework of his analysis, not the Canadian political system, but an hypothesis concerning the "life cycle" of left-wing parties like the CCF. For successful third parties—successful in that they ultimately become major parties—the "life cycle" typically proceeds from protest movement to minor party to major party. The CCF broke from this pattern, according to Professor Zakuta, by jumping directly from protest movement to major party, only afterwards finding itself in the position of a minor party. The reasons advanced for attributing major-party status to the CCF at any time in its career are at best flimsy—a single Gallup poll in September 1943 which had the CCF narrowly leading the major parties in popular support, and not much more. Hence this part of the theme is rather unconvincing.

More illuminating is the discussion of the CCF's career in relation to those of other third parties whose climb to eminence was cut short. The CCF was able to resist the temptation which the setback in the late 1940's presented to abandon its ambitions of achieving broadly-based electoral support in favor of the moral consolation of doctrinal purity. Instead, the CCF began to take on what Professor Zakuta calls a "worldly" disposition, evidences of which were a willingness to participate in politics according to the ruling customs and conventions (unlike the earlier Progressives) and a desire to move towards the centre of the political spectrum.

"Third parties are like bees," an American historian has observed; "once they have stung, they die." The remarkable thing about the CCF is its hardiness as third parties go. Indeed, the CCF together with its heir the New Democratic

party could enter a fairly substantial claim to being the most successful third Party in North America in this century. This surely points to something singular in the Canadian party system—more particularly, in the behavior of the two major parties whose business it is to keep third parties out of the field. Professor Zakuta is not very helpful here; the political “environment” within which the CCF grew up is declared to lie outside the scope of his analysis. He does offer the suggestion (quoting Professor F. H. Underhill) that the CCF was prevented from becoming a major contender by the waiting tactics of Mr. Mackenzie King who, wise in the lore and ways of North American politics, knew that a party like the CCF wouldn’t get anywhere. But if Mr. King is to be regarded as an astute politician in this regard, then what encomiums are grand enough for F. D. Roosevelt? The New Deal pulled the carpet out from under the left-wing parties in the United States, and its author had the satisfaction of seeing an independent socialist party wither away. Mr. King’s response to the onset of the Depression and the imminent birth of the CCF was to dust off the tariff issue for another try. For this and other unimaginative strokes of policy which were to follow his party paid by being harassed from the left by a persistent and articulate third party for the next several decades. No analysis of the career of the CCF can hope to achieve much if it does not give a great deal of attention to the behaviour of the other parties, who were as much master of the CCF’s destiny as the CCF was itself.

There is an interesting account of the clash of ideas which developed within the party as its fortunes and prospects changed in the 1940’s and 1950’s (the study does not extend past the creation of the NDP), notably the tensions between the radical left of the Regina Manifesto and the moderates who sought a more central position in the tenets of the Winnipeg Declaration. Readers in Western Canada might be disappointed to find that their role in the story is represented very skimpily. Almost all of the illustrative material is drawn from the activities of the Ontario party organization of which Professor Zakuta was a member while gathering material for his book.

D. S. SPAFFORD

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WESTVIKING. *By Farley Mowat.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965. 472pp. Illust. \$10.00.

**W**ESTVIKING is Farley Mowat’s account of the tenth-century exploratory voyages of the Norse in the North Atlantic. So much of his personal love of sea and ships, his practical knowledge of navigation, wildlife, ocean currents, winds and native people is superimposed upon the historic content of the old Icelandic sagas, that the adventures of men like Erik the Red, Leif Eriksson, and Thorfinn Karlsefni seem once again to live.

Mr. Mowat is highly selective in excerpting from the sagas. He consolidates the pertinent information into one chronological fabric; then applies his geographical and archeological studies to reconstruct this particular period in history. In dealing with the Norse and their voyages, he considers ports and harbors of



the area; he reports on archeological sites and excavations; he enumerates the natural resources of the region; he discusses sea winds and ocean currents of the North Atlantic; he describes the cultures and characteristics of his Celt, Norse and Eskimo heroes. In short, whenever the skeleton information provided by the original sources is open to contradictory interpretation, as frequently happens, Mowat considers geographical factors, sailing craft of the period, social mores of the Norse, only to ask himself: "Given like circumstances, what would I have done?" His decisions, and the conclusions he derives from them, are inevitably personal, often unorthodox, always interesting.

The first two thirds of *Westviking* tell the story of the Norse and their voyages west. The last third includes a series of supplementary *Appendices*, which cover such subjects as source material, ancient climatic conditions, Norse methods of navigation, and recent archeological discoveries.

Bjarni Herjolfsson is credited with being the first European known to have reached North America. As Mr. Mowat tells the story, Bjarni was blown off course in a storm on his way to Greenland, and made his way to the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador in 984. Some ten years later, Leif Eriksson set sail from Greenland to find the country Bjarni had seen. According to Mowat's theory, Leif reached Baccalieu Island and the Bay de Verde Peninsula in 995; he then coasted deep into Trinity Bay until he found a wintering place in the lagoon now called Tickle Cove Pond or Broad Bay. This Mowat identifies as Vinland. When it is recalled that there are some thirty different theories as to Leif Eriksson's voyage, and point of landing, the controversial nature of Mr. Mowat's conclusions is evident.

Appropriately enough, Mr. Mowat, who grew up in Saskatoon, and worked for a time among the Eskimo of the Far North, now lives in the fishing outpost of Burgeo on the Newfoundland Coast.

ARLEAN MCPHERSON

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EARLY UKRAINIAN SETTLEMENTS IN CANADA, 1895-1900. DR. JOSEF OLESKOW'S ROLE IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST. By V. J. Kaye. Toronto: Published for the Ukrainian Canadian Research Foundation by the University of Toronto Press. 1964. Pp. XXVI, 420. Illust. \$10.00.

DR. KAYE's book is unquestionably the most important and reliable study which has appeared on early Ukrainian settlement in Western Canada. It was sponsored by the Ukrainian Canadian Research Foundation, an organization founded in 1957 by three Ukrainian veterans' branches of the Royal Canadian Legion. This study is intended to be the first in a series of cultural, historical and research projects which the Foundation will sponsor. With such an excellent beginning the projected series should make a significant contribution to ethnic studies in Canada.

The book is really divided into two sections. About one third of the book is devoted to a study of Dr. Josef Oleskow's role in promoting and directing Ukrain-

ian emigration to Canada. The main source of information for this section of the book was a series of files which were found amongst the records of the old Department of the Interior. The other two thirds of the book gives the early history of a number of Ukrainian settlements in Canada. The book also includes a useful biographical section, a bibliography, a section on the ethnic name and some interesting illustrations gathered from a variety of sources.

Dr. Josef Oleskow, who was a Professor of Agriculture at a teachers' seminary in Galicia, first became interested in the possibility of large scale Ukrainian emigration to Canada because of the activities of unscrupulous agents who travelled about his country promoting emigration to Brazil. He felt some action had to be taken if many Ukrainians were not to be trapped into going to a country which was unsuitable for them. As it was, many of them were anxious to find a new land because of overpopulation, shortage of land, heavy taxes and unfavourable political conditions at home. Canada, in Dr. Oleskow's opinion, offered much more favorable conditions than did Brazil for the successful resettlement of his fellow countrymen. With this idea in mind he wrote the Canadian government in March 1895 for more information about Canada. Anxious as they were to get immigrants to take up the lands of western Canada, the Canadian officials received the inquiry with what might be termed cautious enthusiasm. After carefully checking on Dr. Oleskow arrangements were made for him to visit Canada and discussions were held. Dr. Kaye describes in detail Dr. Oleskow's subsequent work in promoting Ukrainian emigration to Canada and the problems he had with officials in Canada and Austria. As a result of his work about 27,000 Ukrainian immigrants came to Canada between 1896 and 1900. Due to ill health and the opposition of Austrian officials, Dr. Oleskow's work came to an end after 1900 but the flow of emigrants he had started continued to grow. Dr. Kaye believes that Oleskow "deserves at least a modest niche amongst the builders of the Canadian West" and obviously this is part of his reason for writing this book.

The largest section of the book contains a wealth of detail on community histories which will be of particular interest to Canadians of Ukrainian origin. Included are the early histories of Stuartburn, Dauphin, Pleasant Home, Strathclair, Yorkton, Rosthern and Edna-Star. Much of the material for these histories is gathered from official records and in many cases includes detailed records about individual settlers. There are also, of course, descriptions of the founding of the colonies, the privations and successes of the settlers as they struggled to make new homes in a new land.

Dr. Kaye stated that one of his objects in writing this book was to provide a documentary history of the beginnings of Ukrainian settlement which would provide future students with factual material. There is no doubt he has achieved his goal because this book contains a wealth of information which should be of considerable assistance to future researchers. At the same time Dr. Kaye has written an interesting account which makes an important contribution to the history of prairie settlement.

D. H. BOCKING



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