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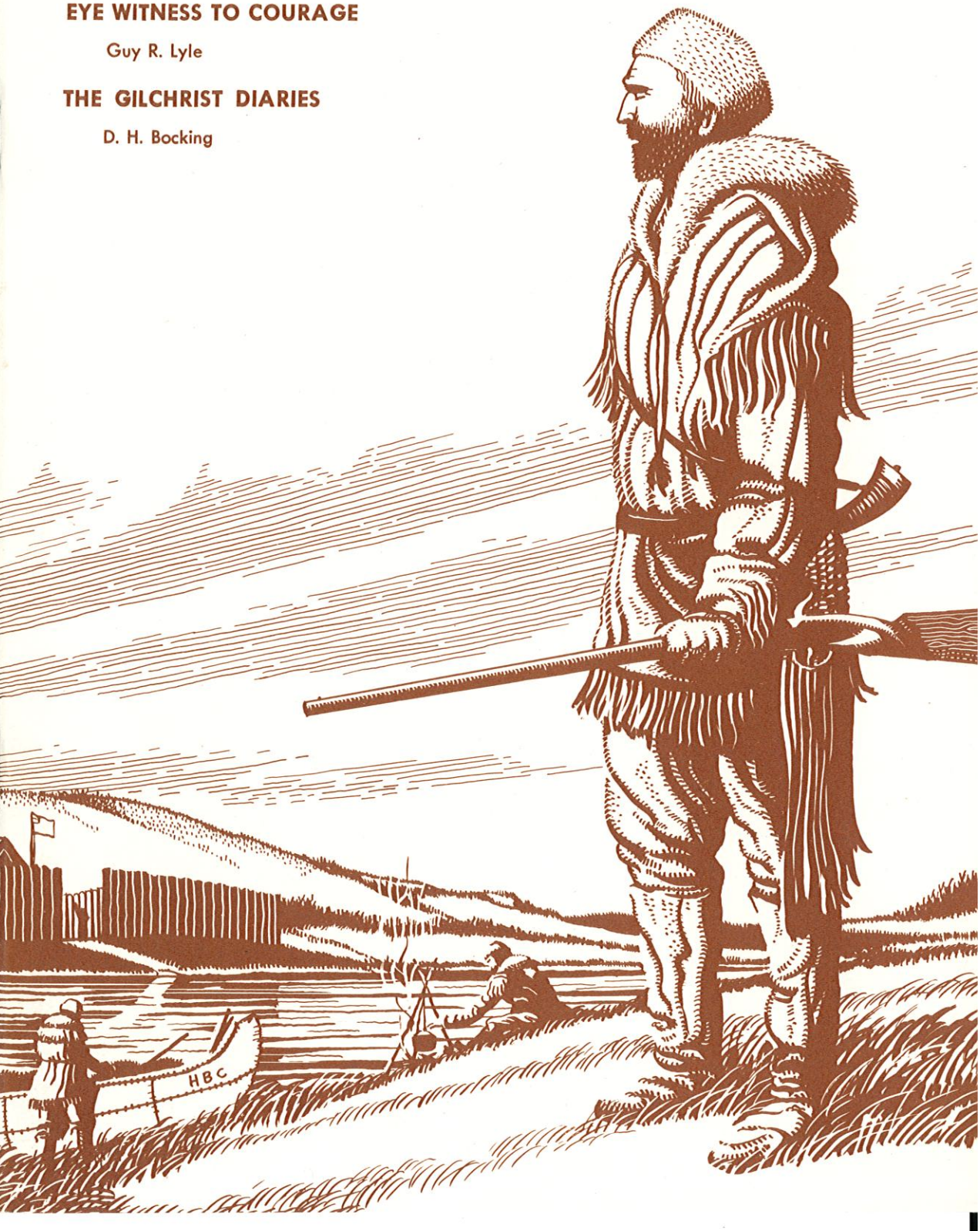
EYE WITNESS TO COURAGE

Guy R. Lyle

THE GILCHRIST DIARIES

D. H. Bocking



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Eye Witness to Courage

DURING the first decade of this century's westward expansion across the Canadian prairie, no single episode involving large numbers of people of one nationality and faith drew more attention or stirred more controversy than the "all-British" migration to Saskatchewan in the Spring of 1903. The self-styled founder and director of this British colony was the Rev. Isaac M. Barr, a Canadian born in Halton County, Ontario, who at the time was serving as curate in charge of a London church. Inspired by his persuasive propaganda, some 2,000 men, women, and children sailed from Liverpool the last day of March, 1903, entrained at St. John for Saskatoon, and trekked approximately 200 miles west to a site in the Saskatchewan Valley reserved for the settlement.

What survives to tell the story of the Barr Colony after six decades? At Ottawa, there is a mound of government correspondence, annual reports, and parliamentary debates, as well as records of special commissions. At Regina and Saskatoon, there are pamphlets and circulars, hundreds of contemporaneous newspaper and periodical articles, church reports, minutes of council meetings, programs of societies, homestead records, maps, and pictures. Diaries, letters, and reminiscences have accumulated as have secondary accounts of a biographical, autobiographical, and fictional character. The truth of the matter is that there is no shortage of primary sources although some important letters are missing, others were destroyed in World War II, and much of the material is widely scattered. In reconstructing the story, therefore, the problem is not so much the availability of the materials as it is that the record is so confused, contradictory, and tainted with prejudice and self-justification as to produce in its final effect only a blur.

One of the most characteristic and long-remembered experiences of the migration—for many the "moment of truth" with the rest of life becoming nostalgic for that experience—was *the journey* itself. The only perfectly contemporaneous and authentic record of this journey are the diaries, sets of letters written in the form of diaries, and other accounts written by participants at the time. There are, surprisingly enough, quite a few of these. For the purpose of introducing them, the writer has extracted a portion of the account of William Hutchinson, a conventional, solid citizen of twenty-seven years from Southey Green, near Sheffield, whose account of the voyage, trek, and early days of the settlement was contributed in letter-installments to the Sheffield *Weekly Telegraph.** William sailed with his brother Ted on the S.S. *Lake Manitoba*, March 31, 1903, along with the main party of the Barr colonists, and was joined by his wife and daughter five months later. His first appearance in the *Weekly Telegraph*, dated May 12, 1903, was written aboard ship; fifteen more installments followed in 1903, forty-five in 1904, seventeen in 1905, and four in 1906. Each runs from three to five thousand words and affords one of the fullest and most objective blow-by-blow accounts of the birth of the settlement.

One need not apologize for this cellophane-wrap of a portion of a man's journal in order to provide another installment in the documentation of the Barr

*The excerpts from Hutchinson's account are reproduced here by courtesy of the *Morning Telegraph*, Sheffield, England.

Colony (see "The Rev. Isaac M. Barr: Apostle of the Canadian Northwest" in the October, 1966, *American Book Collector*). Hutchinson's account is a primary source, publishable in its own right. In the pages which follow, he serves usefully as a narrator of the event and also as a gentleman usher to the reports of other eye-witnesses. These latter are introduced as footnotes in order to explain what Hutchinson fails to make clear or prefers to remain silent about. They are cited by name only in the footnotes but with full bibliographical references at the end of Hutchinson's text.

Hutchinson is a good reporter. He is more observant of the passing scene than most of his fellow chroniclers and he describes what he sees in great detail. He writes with insatiable curiosity and discernment. There are some disappointments: while he has a camera eye for places and events, he does not give more than a few hints of self-revelation; he sounds strained and pretentious when he tries to soar above what he observes ('westward the star of Empire wends its way and so westwards we plodded on'); and his attitude toward authority and the Canadian government is almost too uniformly praiseworthy to be entirely disinterested. But these limitations, if limitations they may be called, only confirm what matters most in good reporting and that is the quality of personal vision. Hutchinson had settled views on thrift, diligence, persistence, and the superiority of the British scheme of things. If he conveys less of the feel and smell of the journey than Holtby, if he lacks the audacious prejudices of Buck, or if he is not gifted with the pictorial eye of Rackham, he nonetheless summons up the essence of this adventure into a land of untamed prairie and hostile climate. It would be a dangerous illusion to believe that his account tells the whole story, even when complemented by the diaries of his fellow chroniclers. One must go to the official archives, contemporaneous newspaper accounts, and other primary sources. Nevertheless, Hutchinson provides a record which is important for understanding the motives which led the Barr colonists to emigrate and the hardships which they experienced. His story is their story—one of individual courage and endurance.

The text of Hutchinson's accounts of the journey to the settlement is reprinted without tampering of any sort except for minor deletions which were made in the interest of brevity and which are indicated by three dots. Words inadvertently omitted by the author in the text are inserted in brackets.

GUY R. LYLE

EMBARKATION

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1903

For the voyage of the party from Liverpool the steamship Lake Manitoba was chartered from the Elder, Dempster Shipping Co. to convey the entire party.[1]

[1] Although the main body of the Barr colonists sailed on the *Lake Manitoba*, some individuals and parties took passage on the *Lake Champlain, Lake Montrose, Lake Erie, Lake Simcoe, Lake Michigan,* and *Lake Megantic*. Hutchinson estimated the number aboard the *Lake Manitoba* at 2,000, the figure most commonly given by other Barr colonists such as Rackham and McCormick. The purser's list, signed O. J. Ellis for the master of the ship and dated April 11, 1903, gives a total of 1,960 passengers. Rackham notes that the *Lake Manitoba* was licensed by the Board of Trade to carry 700, including the crew.

The process of embarkation commenced in good time on the morning of March 31, and lasted several hours. The scene was of a most animated character, and a feeling of exhilaration was maintained by the spirited performance of the band of the First Liverpool Volunteers, who played first on the stage and afterwards on the ship, discoursing tunes reminiscent of home and friends.

After all the baggage had been taken on board the gangways were taken away and the people were allowed on the landing-stage near the ship. Thousands of people lined the stage, and about four o'clock as this great liner thronged with people all eager to catch a last glimpse of some friend, every accessible point being occupied, many of the passengers having even climbed the rigging, began to sheer away, the band played "Auld Lang Syne," and cheer after cheer rent the air. As the ship moved away from the stage the great crowd of people was seen to advantage, all waving handkerchiefs. It was a sight to move even the stoutest heart, and we all stood taking a farewell look until the crowd became but a speck in the distance.[2]

VOYAGE

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1903

Day by day, during the voyage, our future chaplain, the Rev. G. E. Lloyd,[3] gave instructions regarding the disembarkation, hints as to the methods adopted by farmers in the Canadian North-West, and all were duly informed of all arrangements made. Mention should be made of the courtesy of the master of the vessel, Captain W. H. Taylor, who allowed all classes of passengers free access to all parts of the boat, thus facilitating the formation of friendships and discussions as to future plans.

Three services were held on board on Sunday, April 5, when we were about 1,200 miles from Old England. The evening service was held in the single men's quarters aft, and there was a grand congregation. It was the most interesting and impressive service I ever attended. Mr. Lloyd, our chaplain, conducted the service, the music consisting of three violins, and we had several good hymns. Imagine a very large room with rows of cots built all round, long rows of narrow tables, where the men have their meals, with an open space in the centre. It was a sight to glance round. All the men quartered there were in their cots, some lying down, some sitting up, others leaning on the rails with their chins resting in their hands, without collars, without coats, some smoking pipes (we were

[2] Hutchinson's account conveys little of the snarl and confusion attendant upon the embarkation. Rackham: "The steamer did not leave the stage until after 3 o'clock—the amount of baggage to be taken on—being enormous—and the smashed boxes, woeful to behold—. . . ." Holtby: "The crush is something tremendous. My camera which I have slung over my shoulder nearly bored a hole through me . . ." The London *Times*, April 1, 1903, covers the ceremonies described by Hutchinson above.

[3] In the course of his duties as travelling secretary to the Colonial and Continental Church Society (London), the Rev. George Exton Lloyd, English by birth and Canadian by education and experience, received many inquiries about migration to Canada which he encouraged. His letter entitled "The Canadian Wheat Belt" was widely circulated through newspapers (*e.g.* London *Times*, September 22, 1902). He and his family accompanied the Barr colonists under the sponsorship of the Society. His vigor, honesty, and courage quickly brought him to a position of leadership, in recognition of which the colonists named their settlement Lloydminster.

allowed to smoke)—men from all parts of the world—the orange-coloured ribbon of the South African medal seen here and there, gun cases, coats, hats, and kit bags hung on nails, boxes, trunks, bundles of rugs and bedding lying all about, this was our church in mid-Atlantic.[4]

During the voyage a more southerly course was taken than usual to avoid icebergs, four only having passed south of the Banks of Newfoundland, and these between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., the night being clear with a good moon an excellent view was obtained of these Arctic relics by all on board.

Cape Sable[5] was passed at 10 p.m. to-night, and all are eagerly looking forward to landing to-morrow.

ARRIVAL AT ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1903

The steamship Lake Manitoba, conveying the members of the all-British colony which the Rev. Mr. Barr is founding in the Canadian North-West, arrived at St. John, New Brunswick, on Saturday, April 11th, at about noon, but the vessel did not go alongside the quay until about midday on the following day, which, by the way, was Easter Sunday.[6] We were thus kept on board a day after our arrival, and, as you may imagine, it was somewhat trying to our patience, for after being cooped up for about a week everybody was anxious to feel terra firma once again.[7]

We were allowed to land after dinner on Sunday, and went into the town to procure a stock of provisions for the railway journey up country. Hundreds of people were waiting outside the Government sheds to see us pass. St. John is a very cosmopolitan city, for many races were represented in the concourse of people—Canadians, Americans, Indians, negroes, Jews, half-castes, and many Chinese, but everybody was well-dressed, and seemed prosperous, in fact, quite

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4 Nothing in Hutchinson's account of the steerage quarters hints at the discomfort, crowdedness, and unsanitary conditions about which many of the emigrants complained. Holtby's entry for April 3 reads: "When dinner time came around today I felt as though I could eat something so I went down into our hole and captured some corned beef & potato and took it up & eat it on deck. I simply could not stand our hold with its smell of soap, potatoes, sawdust, the foot & half of bilgewater at the bottom that has been washing too & fro with a swish all night."

5 Southern tip of Nova Scotia.

6 Rackham attributes the layover to navigation problems: ". . . the tide was too low for us to reach the stage and it was finally decided that we should lie off until Sunday morning . . .," but the Montreal *Gazette* (April 13, 1903) has another explanation: "Owing to the crowded facilities of the docks at West St. John the steamer was forced to anchor in the harbor until Sunday morning."

7 The day was not entirely wasted. Passengers purchased their tickets for the train ride west, bought provisions from the ship's food stocks, and made a presentation to the Rev. Lloyd and his family. Lloyd writes (*Greater Britain Messenger*, No. LIX; p. 121): "On the Saturday evening, however, when all the passengers were sent down aft so as to pass singly before the doctor, a message was sent to Mrs. Lloyd and myself that we were wanted on the aft bridge. Here we found the whole ship's company of 2,000 assembled, and I was informed that over 500 had subscribed towards a testimonial in recognition of my service rendered on board the boat. This was to buy a pair of ponies and a buckboard."

equal to the middle classes of England. The Chinamen wore their pigtails hanging down, some inside their coats, others wearing them outside.[8]

ST. JOHN TO SASKATOON

SUNDAY, APRIL 12 TO FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 1903

Four special trains were required for the party, and the one to which we were allotted left St. John at 8:30 on Easter Sunday night[9] on the run of 2,400 miles west to Saskatoon, and consisted of eleven passenger coaches, two baggage cars, and one car for the thirty-one dogs belonging to the passengers. Although necessarily limited with regard to room we were most comfortable in the train. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company did everything possible for us, providing good cars, while a plentiful supply of good water, coal, etc. was maintained.[10] We managed to get a few hours' sleep, but were on the alert at daybreak anxious to get a glimpse of the country, which is very wild the first 500 miles of the journey, that is from St. John to Montreal.

The land was still in the grip of winter, the lakes and rivers all frozen, some of the former stretching away as far as the eye could see, apparently one solid block of ice, whilst there was a great quantity of snow. The first view of the Dominion was somewhat disappointing to many when we continued to pass countless miles of timber—mostly fir trees—and a great amount of rocky country, hardly the land for farming operations.

Montreal was reached on Easter Monday afternoon, and after a brief stop we proceeded West, arriving at the capital, Ottawa, at eight o'clock, where a good number of people had assembled to greet us. I am pleased to say we created a favourable impression, being described as the finest body of settlers yet seen in the Dominion.

Fort William, Ontario, was reached at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, April 15, and here we stayed some time to re-provision. We obtained our supplies at the Hudson Bay Company's store, which was the cheapest and best place we had yet found,

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[8] Holtby: "There is no platform at St. Johns Emigrant Station the trains ran down the middle of the road. As we were sitting there the churches closed & to get into the town from one of the churches the people had to pass right by us so we got a good look at them. They are very smart looking people & most of them are very well dressed. They are very kind & answer my questions in a very polite way. They are mostly dark haired & dark skinned. I think most of them have a bit of French blood in their veins. They all look healthy & have a pleasant expression that you don't see on every English face."

[9] The handling of the huge amount of baggage delayed the departure of the first train until 5 p.m. Rackham observes: ". . . owing to the enormous amount of luggage, the disembarking was a slow business and the scene in the freight shed was a very confused one, it being almost impossible to move amongst the piles of luggage, and the people vainly searching for their own trunks. It was at last decided to put the luggage into the freight cars—wholesale—to be claimed at Saskatoon." The loss and damage to the baggage when it finally arrived at Saskatoon was a contributing factor leading to dissension between Barr and the colonists.

[10] A description of the passenger coaches is furnished by Black: "Each of these cars is about 70 feet long and has accommodation for 60 passengers, (10 or so cars form a train) with a corridor or rather passage in the centre; the seats are arranged *vis a vis* with a good high back, overhead the roof is fixed so that it pulls down and forms a bed for 2, and the seats draw out and accommodate the same, so that a party of four are shut off from the rest. There is a good cooking range and washing apparatus on each car and they are splendidly heated."

and I am glad to think there is to be one in our settlement, for they supply everything from ladies' dresses and millinery down to a cent's worth of popcorns.

Leaving Fort William at 11 o'clock, we proceeded through the Province of Ontario for Winnipeg. Thus far the country has been one of snow and ice, but during the daytime it has been very warm, and we have been sitting in our shirt-sleeves by the open window. The sun is as warm as on a day in the middle of our English summer, the sky a deep blue, and not a cloud to be seen. To-day a cage containing a canary was hung outside one of the coaches in the sun.

We arrived at Winnipeg, the great centre for the North-West Territories, at 4.30 a.m. on Thursday, and made but a brief stop, and as it was dark we were unable to get a view of the city,[11] but one curious, and evidently also thirsty soul, strayed off for a drink and in the vicinity of the Occidental Hotel met a gang of roughs, who went through his pockets and relieved him of his loose cash.

Our party was given an excellent bill of health by the doctor, who said he had never seen a more promising and healthy lot of settlers, and gave us a clean sheet. A large number had made Winnipeg their destination, their plan being to look for situations where they can spend a year in learning farming and acquiring experience before starting out independently, meanwhile depositing their money in the banks while learning the ways of the country.[12]

Before we left Winnipeg members of the Society of the Sons of England distributed pamphlets containing useful information for colonists. Passing through Manitoba all the snow had disappeared, and homesteads, grain elevators, etc., dotted the landscape as far as the eye could see, just the scenes we had seen at home at some of the many lectures given early this year, and, needless to say, our spirits rose at the sight. The weather was fine and the sun shining brightly when we reached Saskatoon, the end of the railway journey, at 11 a.m. on Friday, April 17th, and we were glad to alight after being in the train for five days and six nights.[13]

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[11] A young Englishman of some 20 years, a passenger on one of the other four trains which stopped briefly at Winnipeg, offers this description: "Thursday, April 16.—We reached Winnipeg at 7:30 this morning. This town has a very wide street (Main Street), with electric trams running down the centre. As the rails are not sunk properly in the ground, carts have to be very careful in crossing them, and bump horribly. In Canada the rule of the road differs from ours; vehicles always keep to the right. Along Main Street there are some fine buildings of brick and stone, and perhaps next door there is a wooden one, which gives the place a queer look. After strolling about to see things we all went to have a bath, which we very much needed (25 cents). Then about 11.30, as we had finished breakfast about 7 a.m., we went to an hotel and had a table d'hote luncheon (25 cents)—hot meat and vegetables, very nice indeed after a week of tinned stuff. It was a hot day, and in Main Street there was no shade at all with much dust.

We left Winnipeg about 3.30 p.m. The pavements in most of the places we passed through were of wood, though at one end of Winnipeg there are stone slabs. . . ." (*Weekly Telegraph*, Sheffield, July 18, 1903).

[12] Later in his journal, Hutchinson estimates the number at 235. Winnipeg is given as the terminus for 246 passengers in the purser's list. Still another estimate is reported by the *Manitoba Free Press*, April 16, 1903. This paper states that on arrival at Winnipeg, 400 of the 426 passengers on the first section of the Barr colony train detrained in order to get work and experience before proceeding to the settlement.

[13] A detailed description of the arrival of the trains and the response of the colonists to their new surroundings is given in the *Saskatoon Phenix*, April, 1903.

No mishap occurred during the railway journey, excepting an unfortunate accident to a young man, G. Blekler, 23 years of age, who fell under the train at Chapleau, and lost his leg. A collection, amounting to 93 dollars, was taken for him on the train, and it is intended that he shall be given some work which he can do on his recovery.[14]

SASKATOON AND PREPARATION FOR THE TRAIL

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1903

Saskatoon is only a small place, a typical prairie town, but with a more pleasant aspect than the general run, on account of the Saskatchewan river flowing through it. Supplies of all sorts are very limited, and consequently high in price, and some things are very dear. This is owing to the tremendous distance the goods have to be brought. Mr. Barr's arrangements were behindhand, the stores syndicate had collapsed,[15] and we did not get the tents we had paid for until two days after our arrival.

The Canadian Government has been our best friend, and had large marquees erected to accommodate us.[16] Had it not been for the foresight and prompt action of the Government we should have had to sleep on the open prairie. There is much discontent amongst some of the party, and for men with wives and children it is justified. These people have never been away from home before, and feel the discomfort and exposure very keenly.[17]

[14] The *Lake Manitoba* purser's list gives the name as G. Blakler, 25, ironmonger. Geo. O. Johnston, travelling agent, employed by the Immigration Department to accompany this section of the train, reported to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, April 22, 1903: ". . . A Mr. G. Blakler, a young man, attempted to leave the train while in motion, missed the platform and fell under the wheels. His left leg was badly crushed, below the knee. The poor fellow was taken to Sudbury, in charge of Dr. Evans, where the limb was amputated. I understand he has since died." (Department of Interior, Canada, file no. 194804, Public Archives of Canada).

[15] There would appear to be some discrepancy between the assertion about the collapse of the stores syndicate and Hutchinson's description of a few paragraphs later (p. 90) of a central co-operative store. But of the delays, frustrations, and breakdown in the transport plans there can be no doubt. Black writes: "According to the Barr prospectus arrangements were to have been made for everything to assist us in making our outfit but this was a dismal failure."

[16] From the very beginning the Canadian Government kept a fatherly eye on the progress of the Barr colonists. Quite independently of Barr's arrangements they were getting ready for the colonists months before they arrived. Government agents accompanied the colonists on the train journey from St. John; tents and supplies were provided on arrival at Saskatoon and along the trail to the settlement; farm instructors were employed to explain the fundamentals of Canadian farming; and efforts were made to find employment for those who had no funds for an outfit—horses, oxen, wagons, and supplies. On arrival at Saskatoon, Black found that "Tents that we had bought from Barr were to have been waiting for us but they had not arrived however the Government had come to the rescue and fixed up marquees so that about 7 families could be fixed together in each." Holtby notes that "The Canadian Govt. have made a point of making this party a success. . . . If Mr. Barr does not manage this business properly they will take it into their hands as yet they have done a good deal."

[17] Contrary to the opinion above, the colonists would appear to have dropped into camp life with an adaptability that was amazing. A contributing cause of discontent at Saskatoon was the delay in the transportation of baggage from St. John. Mrs. Rendell writes: ". . . we are only waiting now for our baggage. Sat. night,—still waiting for baggage. It does seem a shame and all this irregularity on the world renowned C.P.R. There is absolutely *no* organization whatever. . . ." Rackham's entry for April 19 reads: "Meeting at the railway station to discuss the question of delivery of luggage. Rather stormy—the opinion of the settlers on the matter being divided." Boden writes: "What is the most annoying thing we have had to put up with since our arrival here, is the humbugging & waiting that one has to suffer from the railway Co."

William Hutchinson's brother George cutting ice from the Saskatchewan River at Saskatoon. "When we require water we take an axe and bucket and go down to the ice on the river, which is still three feet thick, and chop a few lumps off." (*Weekly Telegraph* (Sheffield) July 4, 1903).

We are encamped on the banks of the Saskatchewan river, and have a splendid view. During the day the sky is cloudless, and it is hotter than any day I have experienced during an English summer, being 80 degrees to 85 degrees in the shade, but with a gentle breeze. With jackets and waistcoats off and shirt sleeves rolled up, it is an ideal, easy, and free life. We make earth ovens and cook our food. When we require water we take an axe and bucket and go down to the ice on the river, which is still three feet thick, and chop a few lumps off. This sounds impossible with the thermometer so high. But the nights!

When the sun drops down across the prairie the breeze falls, the stars begin to twinkle, and it commences to freeze, and it does freeze, too. Water we have melted during the day and lifted into our tents is coated with ice three-quarters of an inch thick when we are called up by the bugle at five a.m. With the setting of the sun there is quite a transformation, for within half an hour all are muffled up in great coats and scarfs, out come all the fur coats, and it seems as if we had been suddenly carried into the Arctic Circle. We dare not undress to sleep, but put on all available clothing, and even then we are simply stiffened by morning, and are glad to get up with the first streaks of dawn.

When the sun rises we feel more cheerful, and by seven a.m. coats are again discarded so intense is the heat. We are not allowed to have any fire about after 10 p.m., for fear of setting fire to the grass. We have seen four prairie fires by now, and at night time it is an appalling sight.

Saskatoon is the nearest point on the railway to the land reserved for the Barr Colony, and it was intended that waggons, horses, ploughs, and other implements, seed, etc., should be procured here, and the people should then trek the 180 miles to the reservation. The great influx of settlers, nearly 2,000 and most of them requiring outfits, has afforded to the dealers an opportunity to raise prices, of which they have not been slow to take advantage. The prices quoted for a team of two horses range from £60 to £80, whilst there are no Indian ponies to be bought. Many men are purchasing oxen in lieu of horses and these cost from £36 to £46 for the two.[18] Oxen in harness look comical to our eyes, and, although they are rather slow, they are patient, plodding animals, and as they feed on the prairie grass, not needing corn, they are cheaper to keep than horses.

The first party for the reservation left here on Thursday, April 23rd, but we have decided to wait a few days, hoping that the prices for outfits may get more reasonable, and people from the Old Country who know the prairie for years advise us not to hurry, as the ground is yet wet and soft. There are places on the prairie known as "sloughs," that is, patches of wet, boggy land, caused by the melting snow, and waggons passing through these sink up to the axles, and for those with poor horses or oxen it will be terribly hard work, and almost impossible to make progress. The spring is unusually late this year, and competent people say that a day's delay here will mean two days' gain on the trek.

Saskatoon is to-day probably one of the most-talked-of-places in the North-West. It has had a truly mushroom growth, being scarcely known but a short time ago, while it is now a most thriving town, and during our encampment there we had much that was fresh and strange to interest us. First Avenue is the chief business street, and runs parallel to the Canadian Pacific Railway, which indeed, occupies one side of the street, with a busy railway yard which did not exist a year ago. All the length of the road newly-arrived settlers, farmers, horse-dealers, and dealers in agriculture implements carry on their business in loud voices and without a too strict regard as to the language employed. The business houses are almost all of wood, large boxes rushed up without regard to architecture or comfort to meet the growing demands of the town. On the broad road crowds of people move up and down from dawn to long after dark, and it has a resemblance to a country fair. Cowboys ride recklessly up and down in the bright

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[18] All complain of inflated prices. Holtby, who paid £16 for a wagon "made of second rate stuff," writes: "The prices of horses & oxen are enormous here & we have been told that if we wait a few days the government will have a lot of both horses & oxen sent up to be sold at reasonable prices, so we wait. . . . After lounging about for a day or two we hear of a car load of horses which Mr. Barr has had sent up & we promptly go & inspect them & the result is that we buy two chestnuts for 375 dollars the two." Boden notes: "The prices of stock, (horses & oxen) are a 'way up' out here and it is almost impossible to obtain a decent pair under 350 to 400 dollars. . . ." Rackman's entry for April 21 reads: "Bought the ponies & oxen—2 of the former & 3 of the latter—giving big prices—Ponies, harness & 2nd handwaggon $262.50, and 3 oxen & harness $215." Discouraged by abnormal prices, Hutchinson and his brother left for the Mennonite farming country in the vicinity of Rosthern, some fifty miles north, where they obtained a yoke of oxen at $160, a wagon at $78, and provisions at what they considered reasonable prices. The excursion cost them seven days delay.

sunlight, whilst the scarlet tunics of the Mounted Police blaze here and there like danger-signals.[19]

Seven-tenths of the crowd are British, large numbers being young men in flaring riding breeches and top boots; painfully new, shirt-sleeved, and wearing broad-rimmed harvesters' straw hats, the latter being the only concession yet made to Canadian prairie styles. These are buying draught horses, or, what is pretty general, oxen, together with ploughs and harrows, while some go as far as binders and reapers, which will not be required for months. Implements of every variety strew the sides of the road, and strong, heavy waggons are being sold in large numbers, for every settler must have a good waggon, and the pioneers who have already secured a team and a waggon drive proudly up and down, displaying their purchases before their friends. . . .[20]

We found that but little change had taken place during our absence from the temporary canvas city on the banks of the South Saskatchewan.[21] Between 450 and 520 tents dotted the rolling slopes, and ranged from the large five-pole marquees 90 feet long to diminutive bell tents, many of the latter probably having been last used at some peaceful English seaside resort. Many of the colonists had decorated their tents with ensigns, the bright colours of which, fluttering in the brilliant sunshine of a Canadian spring, with hundreds of busy figures moving amongst the white tents, made up a most animated scene. In the centre of the camp was situated the store, a big marquee fitted with rough lumber counters and stocked with everything from butchers meat to axe handles. The arrangements and the display of the goods would certainly not be admired by a city merchant. The boxes, barrels, and crates in which the goods had been shipped were roughly broken open and their contents exposed to view. Rows of shovels, hay, and stable forks, stood against the sides of the tent, a stack of brooms stood in one corner, another of camp stools was piled outside, barrels of coal-oil (paraffin) and supplies of bread were grouped in various parts of the tent, and behind the counters every imaginable kind of tinned commodity was displayed. Half-a-dozen clerks were busy handing out goods. Of courtesy or consideration little was shown; the clerks were too busy and the customers too numerous. . . .[22]

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[19] Other diarists confirm Hutchinson's opinion that the Barr Colony was a significant factor in the commercial beginnings of Saskatoon. Rackham: "Saskatoon at present is merely a collection of stores & hotels, many partly built—some 50 or 60 altogether—mostly new since last fall when the town consisted of 6 or 7 houses. The storekeepers—mostly quite recently arrived were doing a roaring trade as fast as they could unpack their goods." Holtby: "It is a peculiar looking place dumped down facing the railway line all the buildings but one are of wood & all have a new look. The one exception to the wooden rule is the Windsor Hotel, which is built of stone where they got the stone from & how they got it put up is a mystery to me, but there it is one solitary Stone building among the wooden ones."

[20] For a more detailed description of the tent city, which confirms the accuracy of Hutchinson's observations, see John McBean's "The Barr Colony." *Farmer's Advocate*, May 5, 1903.

[21] Trip to Rosthern to buy oxen, wagon and provisions.

[22] In his prospectus for a stores syndicate, Barr promised that the stores would be open at Saskatoon and the colony site. Hutchinson's description would suggest that a co-operative store was provided in the camp even though prices were high. Another visitor to the camp site at Saskatoon, John McBean, testifies that Barr's medicare program was in full operation: "The colonists are well provided with medical facilities. A hospital tent has been erected, where the services of two doctors and three nurses are available."

The majority of the Colonists had little or no knowledge of the necessities of camp life, and their want of knowledge as to the best way of making themselves comfortable was very evident. There were many men in the party who had served in South Africa, and these took to tent life as a duck to water. They had many ingenious dodges for bettering their condition. They built army stoves of sods, and their plan was soon imitated all over the camp.

To make these a trench about five feet long is dug. The last three feet of this is carefully sodded over so as to make a flue. At the end of this turf is piled up so as to form a chimney. When any cooking has to be done a sod is lifted away, and the saucepan, frying-pan, or kettle put in its place. We found on our return that this was the general run of things all through the camp. The first-class passenger, who had had a grand time on the boat, with every luxury and attention, was to be seen bending down over a smoky fire cooking his modest "rasher" side by side with a typical English labourer, for out here class distinctions perish. We are all on a level, and we shall all have to work. . . .

We soon discovered signs which proved the existence of a strong under-current of dissatisfaction. . . . This is especially the case with young men with little or no capital. They were given to understand that work in the colony would be abundant, and that they would be hired at good wages. Instead of this they find themselves at a place where the labour market is hopelessly glutted, and for them to think of going up country 200 miles is a serious matter, and I should not advise any man with only a few pounds to think of finding immediate employment here. We British are not the only people: American, along with other nationalities, are to be seen everywhere.

Work is to be found in other parts, it is certain, but railway travelling here is an expensive item; Canada is a big place, and a railway journey of three or four hundred miles is as little thought of here as a ride on a 'bus is at home. Two hundred and thirty-five men of small means who came out with the party stayed behind at Winnipeg to obtain employment. As to the demand for labour there I cannot say. I am simply giving the state of things at Saskatoon.

At a mass meeting held here 140 men raised their hands who had less than £10. One-half of these men were married, and ten of them had their wives and families with them.[23] Their original idea was, as suggested in the pamphlet they received from London, to go out to the Colony with the confident, expectation of securing work. They did not realise, nor were they enlightened, that as yet there were no farms or villages, that the land was an untilled wilderness, and

[23] The *Saskatchewan Herald*, Wednesday, May 6, 1903, reporting this meeting states that "eighty of the colonists said they had less than this amount [$50] while a number of others had insufficient money to buy the outfits which they now saw to be necessary if they were not to stand idle on their homesteads." C. W. Speers, the government agent who addressed the meeting wrote his superior W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, April 30, 1903: "I requested every man with less than ten pounds to hold up his hand—about seventy hands went up; I requested those who were married men to hold up their hands—about 25 hands were exhibited. I moved these people into separate columns—then I wanted to know how many wanted to work—about 150 hands went up. . . . I was obliged to establish my employment bureau, and have sent 155 of these people to service—40 to Prince Albert and about 110 to Moose Jaw after telegraphing and securing employment for these people." (Dept. of Interior, Canada, file no. 194804. Public Archives of Canada).

that after getting 180 miles from a railway they would have nothing to do but sit on a pile of baggage until their scanty funds were exhausted. They are now face to face with the grim circumstances, and this fact does not tend to create harmonious relations between them and the organiser of the movement. . . .

With the breakdown of the Barr Organisation the spirits of the settlers were at a low ebb, but the action of the Government came at a most opportune moment, and infused life and goodwill into the people and created a feeling of faith and confidence in the ability and willingness of the Government to help them. . . .

ON TREK: FROM SASKATOON TO BATTLEFORD

EARLY MAY, 1903

The journey from Saskatoon to Battleford, a distance of slightly over 90 miles, we did in five days. Only those people who have had any experience of colonial life can imagine what this means. Concerning our outfit for the journey to the reservation, a distance in all of nearly 200 miles, a few words will be interesting. Here, you are entirely on your own resources; your comfort and feeding depend upon yourself. There are no electric trams, hotels, or restaurants.

We were on trek through a new country, where Dame Nature holds full sway. We therefore took in at Saskatoon a good stock of provisions consisting of flour, bacon, rolled oats, jam, pickles, canned meat, and fruits, not forgetting tobacco and matches, a couple of tents, waterproof sheets, blankets, a camp stove, a Canadian axe, the handy friend to the pioneer. Our prairie schooner, *i.e.*, waggon and team of oxen, being loaded with our baggage, farming implements, and provisions, we take a last look around.

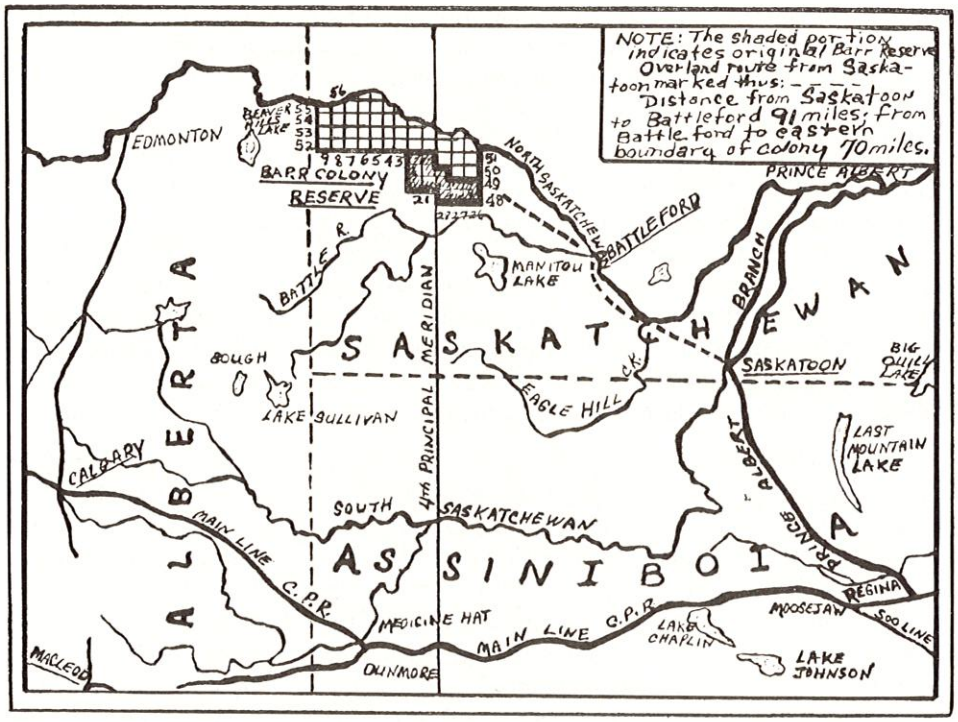
The majority of the main party have already left Saskatoon, and the romantic camp on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River is but a remnant.[24] The white canvas city has become a page of past history, but a page which will never fade from the memories of those who took part in it. . . .

With an improvement in the weather, great activity was displayed by the colonists, and the prairie schooners, many drawn by oxen, some by horses, could be seen wending their way in broken lines from early morning to late at night along the tortuous trail, the white canvas canopies of the waggons, appearing and disappearing, looked to the distant spectator like ships on the ocean.

Many mishaps—but happily no disasters—befell us on the journey. Sticking in the treacherous spring mud was an incident all too common. We came upon a party of four teams in such a plight less than five miles out from the starting point. The teams were oxen in each case, all down at the same time. They had pulled as long as it was any use to do so, but now they had given up the struggle

[24] Allowing several days for investigating the prices of stock and supplies in Saskatoon after his arrival April 27, six days for the side-trip to Rosthern to secure an outfit at a reasonable price, and a final delay in Saskatoon awaiting good weather, it would seem probable that Hutchinson left for the trek west in the first or second week of May. Boden, among the first to leave, departed April 23; Rackham, April 24; Holtby, April 27; McCormick, April 28; Rendell, April 29; and Buck, May 6.

THE BARR COLONISTS ARRIVED TO-DAY



This sketch map, reproduced from the *Manitoba Free Press*, April 16, 1903, shows the "trail" followed by the Barr colonists from Saskatoon to the site of the settlement. The location of townships shown in the crosshatching as the Barr Colony Reserve is only approximately correct.

and looked round with wistful eyes for something to eat—not, like Mark Twain's horse, for something to lean up against. A friendly farmer who had been superintending seeding operations in a field near by, came to the rescue. He brought a team from the harrows and soon these colonists were expressing their heartfelt thanks in unstinted terms, while the oxen and waggons stood on terra firma, to which their benefactor's team had hauled them. . . .[25]

Day after day, from sunrise to sunset, we travelled slowly. The landscape changes greatly in appearance, from flat prairie land to rough, mountainous country, where rugged hills and peaks stretch across the horizon and appear as a barrier across the trail. This road to Battleford is an old one, having been used by freighters for many years. Battleford is as yet without railway communication, and all goods are taken by waggons from Saskatoon, which is the nearest point on the C.P.R. These carriers, or freighters as they are here called, are mostly Cana-

[25] Frequent reference is made to acts of helpfulness under the most difficult of conditions: Rackham: "Got out by putting the 3rd ox on ahead with the help of a Russian. . . . Up early & went back with the ponies about a mile to pull another man's waggon out"; Holtby: "As we go on we keep coming up to people stuck in the sloughs & after stopping to help we push on": McCormick: "a short stream slue ox wagon of other stuck—get it out with ours again. Boerms with his wouldnt assist & gets a bit of Watson's mind over it."

dian born, and when in search of a good track they thread their way over hill, through dale and ravine, round sloughs, miles and miles. When they decide on a route, it is a good one, and such was the trail up to Battleford. There were certainly a few wet places, but these were not bad.

The worst place we had to cross was Eagle Hills Creek, a huge ravine about five miles across from hill to hill, but by locking the rear wheels of the waggons, and exercising great care in driving, we cleared the stones and reached the valley, or bottom of the ravine, in safety, and found a very good bridge built across the stream.[26] This valley formed a capital camping place and we had some lunch here. Green trees covered the hill sides, the young grass was beginning to show, and after leaving the bare wind-swept prairie with not a green blade as yet to be seen, it being still covered with long dry grass bleached by the frosts of last winter, this ravine looked a perfect picture. Later I met some settlers who were so charmed with this place that they camped in it no less than a week.

Many who were on trek made the journey a regular picnic; others made it hard work. The weather up to Battleford was good, showery one or two days, but not cold. We took two half-days off out of the five, which we spent in having some good sport in the shape of shooting prairie chickens and ducks. These prairie fowl are fine birds, and have plenty of flesh, in fact, most of the flesh in the right place—on the breast. You can cut quite easily eight good slices of meat from the breast of one of these birds, which are about the size of an ordinary domestic fowl, and any man with a prairie chicken and a loaf of "damper"[27] need not starve. After having so much tinned meat, the game was very acceptable. The ducks are also very good for flesh, but difficult to shoot. They are always swimming on the sloughs, and we can generally count upon getting wet in securing them.

Great consideration was shown to us on the journey by the Dominion Government, who had caused large marquees to be erected every 20 miles on the trail. These shelters had boarded floors, with a good large cooking stove erected in each one, and a huge pile of firewood stacked up outside for the use of the travellers. Cut hay was also provided free of charge. We frequently passed these Government tents during the afternoon, which was too early to camp for the night, and, proceeding, we had to pitch our own tent when camping time arrived. But when

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[26] The difficulties of descent and ascent at Eagle Creek taxed the ingenuity and stamina of the colonists. Rackham's entry for April 27 recounts a safe descent using the logging-chain but few parties attempted this obstacle without help from those behind or in front. Boden writes: "On Monday after going some distance, we reached Eagle Creek, a notoriously bad place to get across, having to go down on very steep hill across a bridge and then up another steep hill the other side, where we had to get the assistance of another yoke of oxen." Phillpotts describes the place as "a terror": "We had both back wheels chained and on each side of the waggon with a long pole ready to sprog the front wheels. . . How we got up the other side? Well, I don't know, save we had a narrow escape; just after starting; (we had three teams of oxen on,) the hauling chains broke, and the waggon began to run back. Luckily it ran into a bank, and was thus saved." Black echoes Boden's comment: "One place was a terror "Eagle Creek," a terrific hill to go down and a creek at the bottom and another hill to pull up. Here it takes four horses to pull a waggon up. . . ."Holty writes: "About 12 oclock we came to a terrible place. Eagle Creek it was called. It looked to me as though at sometime there had been a tremendous earthquake. There was a drop of about 100 feet & the road was the steepest I have ever seen."

[27] Hutchinson describes what a "damper" is a few paragraphs later.

we did strike a Government tent about the right time, we made very good use of the excellent oven which the stove contained. Making preparations, we commenced baking bread and trying to make cakes, about 9 p.m., and managed to get a good stack of eatables piled up by about 2.30 a.m. This gave us but one and a half hours under the blankets, for we were usually astir by 4 a.m. in order to be on the move by six o'clock, for preparing breakfast, packing up, and putting all things in order, for a day's march, could not be accomplished under two hours. All goods had to be carefully packed each day, for the oscillation caused by rough ground played havoc with anything left loose in the waggon.

The third day out from Saskatoon we passed through the only village in all the 90 miles journey to Battleford. Winding our way up the slope of a hill, about 10 in the morning, we suddenly came upon this village nestling between two hills. The houses, built of trimmed logs and plastered with clay, had ridge roofs, most of them thatched, whilst the windows, which were sheltered from the hot sun by verandahs, were painted all colours, pale green and white and pale blue and white predominating. The village was very clean, with the houses built on one side of the main thoroughfare, and all the farm buildings and stables on the other. We were, of course, very anxious to know what place we were arriving at, but could not see anyone about. On our near approach, however, a few young men came out towards us and from one who could speak a little English we gathered that we were in the Doukhobour village.[28] We did not hurry away, for here we could purchase such luxuries as butter and eggs.

The dress of these people was one of the first things to attract our eyes. All the male element, without exception, were without coats and wearing spotless white shirts, black trousers, and black velvet waistcoats, the buttonholes of the latter being worked in silk in the palest shades of lemon yellow, pink and blue alternately. The young women and girls were very delicately dressed in all the lightest tints one could imagine. Of course this was Sunday morning, so we could account for this show of dress.

Proceeding through the village we came upon a party of about 30 children walking two by two in a very orderly manner down the road. I should judge they were going to Sunday School. In the bright sunshine they appeared like a living rainbow, owing to the bright colours of their dresses. All had dresses full length, which completely hid their shoes, and wore a turban sort of headgear. They reminded one of the children's ballet at a Christmas pantomime.

We could not gather much from the young man, whose stock of English was very limited, but judging from appearances these Doukhobours are in a well-established and prosperous way. There were plenty of young cattle grazing on the surrounding hills, and looking into the many corrals built on the outskirts of the village we saw droves of calves, etc., and in the farmyards there were abundant agricultural implements, disc harrows, ploughs, mowers, self-binders, hay rakes, drills, and waggons.

[28] Great interest was shown by the colonists in the Doukhobors, and many stopped to enjoy the hospitality of these people, but none of the chroniclers add to the detailed description given by Hutchinson.

All these things pointed to the fact that the few years these people had been established in the West must have been spent in industrious labour, for people cannot get together herds of cattle, erect houses and farm buildings, secure implements, and plough the land in a new country in one or two seasons. We, therefore, took particular notice of the methods adopted by these people in building and working the land, for here, surely, was an example of what really could be accomplished by strangers in a strange land.

Continuing our journey, we quickly left the village which had proved so interesting to us, and were soon over the hills and on the open prairie again. This Sabbath evening we were compelled to camp on a wind-swept plain without a scrap of shelter, and a strong west wind made it most uncomfortable. We had also to bake "damper." This "damper" is bread made with baking-powder, and mixed into dough with slough water, which is deep brown in colour, and contains enough living insects to stock an aquarium. This bread, though generally somewhat sad and heavy, never lasted long, and it had to be the rule to bake three meals in advance, for to give us bread newly baked was madness—we should have eaten an entire baking at one meal. But with a bit of age on its back this staff of life would spin out a day longer, and had it not been for rolled oats, which formed the staple dish at every meal, and of which six of us demolished 12 lbs. in five days, the bread would have suffered still more severely. We adopted the Canadian system of three meals a day—breakfast at 5 a.m., lunch at mid-day, and supper at camping time, sometimes 8 p.m., frequently 10 o'clock, which made it midnight before we were cleared and turned in.

The only fault we have to find with this country up to now is that the appetite one seems to develop is simply out of all control. No matter how much we eat a bit more would find a very warm welcome. However, we make the best of our position, and count the hours which must pass before the next meal time arrives.

We don't spend much time in slumbering, as you may see. Neither is the use of soap much in demand. We lay down at night just as we have been dressed all day, but use our great-coats and blankets for warmth, so that in the morning to get up and just shake ourselves like dogs is not much trouble, and it is wonderful how fit and fresh we feel. There is no washing, brushing, and general messing about for an hour. The moment we rise we are ready for breakfast and the trail.

The waggons were too heavily loaded to permit us to ride, and as we travelled from 20 to 24 miles each day we had plenty of exercise, and during the heat of the day the sun's rays could only be called fierce. We did not have that "clammy" feeling one experiences on a hot day in England, and walking on the soft, spongy turf was a perfect luxury after the hard roads of the Old Country. These trails do not wear the soles of your boots at all; the tops wear out first. Our puttees which were the army regulation weight, were soon in ribbons, the edges becoming frayed and hanging in a fringe an inch long all round, and after a few days it was no uncommon thing to see a chap, looking as happy as a king, and whistling merrily, without jacket or waistcoat, one leg encased in a ragged puttee tied

up with a piece of string, and the other leg entirely innocent of any covering whatever. With faces bronzed by the sun we presented a pretty picture.

I remember one day we had the misfortune to get both waggons stuck in a big slough about a quarter of a mile wide, and in which we were fast for four hours, with grey-slate-coloured mud up to the axles.[29] In such cases all had to give a helping hand, and putting both teams to one waggon, which required two drivers, and with a man at each wheel we managed to pull through. All these difficulties usually ended up in a good laugh when we looked round at each other and saw the pickle we were in, but with the aid of a good knife we scraped away the mud with which we were splashed up to the eyes and caked above the knees. Then, after a wade into a neighbouring slough to rub off what mud we could, we resumed our way and very quickly dried in the warm sun, and were ready for the next adventure. . . .

More than once we helped people with poor teams and heavy loads in this way, and often with one yoke of oxen we pulled through ten or twelve yards of heavy mud a load which a team of horses could not move. Horses are all right with a good load when on hard ground, but oxen, though slower, can pull double the weight. We passed many parties on the trail who had been compelled to rest a few days as their horses were completely worn out; and we did the first 90 miles of the journey with our oxen in half the time taken by many with teams of horses which were considered good. One man we saw had a team of oxen—he called them "oxen," but "calves" would have been more to the point, for they were but eighteen months old, and almost unbroken, and had not, as one farmer termed it, strength enough to pull off a sitting hen. Their owner had a piano and packing cases innumerable, not to mention the heavy waggon, which he expected them to haul up country, nearly 200 miles.

The last 25 miles of this trail to Battleford runs through a range of hills, in view of the North Saskatchewan River. These hills, which had been graded and the streams bridged, were thickly wooded with Canadian poplar and spruce down to the edge of the river. It is a very picturesque stretch of country, and was a welcome change after the unbroken prairie. Game was also plentiful here, and we had some good sport. Nearing Battleford, and leaving the Saskatchewan River to our right, we entered another valley through which runs the Battle River, from which Battleford takes its name. Here again we found a few very steep hills, and passing these we came to an open stretch of land running alongside the river.

Crossing the water by means of a wide and excellent bridge constructed of wood and iron, we proceeded up the hillside and came into full view of Battleford, the houses and other buildings of which, stretching out in the distance, and all built of wood, resembled a military camp on account of the neat and orderly manner of their arrangement. Away to the left we saw several large marquees and a number of bell tents which we knew to be our encampment, and to which

[29] Black adds this note about sloughs: "The sloughs here you will wonder what they are like, well they are a sort of marsh with grass growing in them and vary from 3 inches to 2 feet of water. Sometimes they have an alkali mud and then are very treacherous as you may sink in and get stuck and have the pleasure of unloading everything."

we directed our steps. The site was on the open prairie, about a mile from the town, and proceeding to the Government marquee we found ample accommodation awaiting us, together with a quantity of firewood and the customary good stove. Tethering our oxen out to feed, we unpacked blankets and food, and prepared for a few days rest and a look around the town.

BATTLEFORD

Battleford is situated on a kind of flat tableland between the North Saskatchewan and Battle rivers, and during the summer months forms an ideal place of residence. Standing high as it does between the two rivers, and with an unbroken stretch of prairie to the west, it is open to the cool summer breezes which blow from that quarter. The town itself is not large, and it is possible to walk all over the place in half an hour, but being the only trading post within a radius of 80 miles on the south and east, and of over 200 miles to the north and west, the many settlers who have located within this area do their business in Battleford. There are about half-a-dozen good stores, including the Hudson Bay Co.'s depot, where almost everything can be purchased.[30]

Of course, as may be expected, at Battleford prices are high, from the fact that all goods have to be transported by waggons from Saskatoon, though in the summer months, when the river is free from ice, stores are brought in barges from Edmonton, in Alberta, a distance of considerably over 200 miles.

At Battleford we paid 2 dollars 40 cents per 100 lb. bag of flour against 2 dollars at Saskatoon. Butchers' meat here we considered very reasonable compared with prices at home—10 to 15 cents or from 5d. to 7½d. per lb. for the best cuts; at Saskatoon we paid 15 cents. There are also several stores here opened by the leading farm implement makers of Canada and the United States. These, together with a postal and telegraph office, a church, two hotels, and a few private houses comprise the town.

A short distance to the south and near the Battle River, are built the Barracks of the Canadian North-West Mounted Police, Battleford being the headquarters for the North-West Territories.[31] The police here are as fine a body of men as one could wish to see. Their uniform is very neat and suitable to the life they lead—a life in the saddle. A scarlet tunic, cut after the pattern of the kharki tunics worn in South Africa, and furnished with large brass buttons, dark blue riding breeches with a yellow stripe running down the seams; brown laced-up boots, with spurs; and a kharki wide, stiff-brimmed felt hat, together with brown

[30] Other chroniclers were impressed with the town's bustling activity and picturesqueness. Black writes: "Battleford is the old capital of the North West and has about 600 inhabitants, four good stores, saw mills, flour mills, etc., and although it has been stagnant for some years, looks like becoming a most important town as it is a big centre for the district round for a hundred miles is being rapidly filled up and all supplies have at present to come from here." Rackham: "Friday 1st. For a town some 90 odd miles from a railway Battleford is quite a flourishing looking little town with the N.W. Mounted police barracks at one end—looking very spic and span, painted white with red roofs, while on the other side of the battle River crossed by an iron girder bridge is the Indian school & one or two nice houses."

[31] In 1903 Battleford was only a divisional headquarters and Regina was the main headquarters. (Report of the North-West Mounted Police, 1903. Ottawa, 1904, p. 25-31, Appendix B.)

gauntlet gloves completes their very attractive dress. These men scour the country for hundreds of miles, and woe betide any cattle thieves carrying on operations! They are sure to be caught. . . . Our encampment at Battleford was about half the size of the Saskatoon canvas city, and mostly composed of bell tents owned by the colonists. In addition to a large marquee provided by the Government, the married people had the use of a wooden building which had been utilized formerly as an agricultural hall. This structure the good people of Battleford had, by means of subscription in the town, turned into a very comfortable habitation. The place was newly boarded inside, and extra windows, tables, shelves, and curtained partitions provided.[32]

Many of the settlers, after reaching Battleford, appeared to have had enough of the trail, and decided not to go farther, but to take up land in the neighbourhood.[33] Various reports were abroad concerning the trail up to the reservation, and these had the effect of subduing the spirits of the people. However, we had come out with the intention of going to the site reserved for the Colony, and go we would, if it took us a month to do the remaining portion of the journey, which was nearly 100 miles. So, after resting a couple of days at Battleford, we took in provisions sufficient for three weeks, purchased more implements and tools, posted letters home, and donned a new rig-out of clothing, and then made a start for the reservation, full of hope and determination.

ON TREK: BATTLEFORD TO THE SETTLEMENT

The country we found to be more interesting than that traversed during the first stage of the trek, it being nicely wooded in clumps, with hills and lakes at intervals, and excellent camping grounds were to be found without much trouble. The trail for the first 30 miles, up to the village of Brasaylor, was fairly good, but specially so through the Indian reservations. The Indians of the Thunderchild reserve, through which we passed, evidently pay attention to their trails, for the whole 18 miles we passed over we found as dry and as well kept as a turnpike road in England.

Passing through the Indian reservations, we found much to interest us. The wig-wams of the red men, which up to this we had only seen in illustrations, were here actually before us—the tops coloured brown with smoke from the open fire they still have in the centre of the tent, and the sides patched here and there with the skin of some animal. . . .

These people do not go in much for corn growing, cattle raising being their chief occupation, their stock being bred from cattle imported by the Government,

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[32] As reported in the *Saskatchewan Herald* (Battleford) May 6, 1903: "Members of the Barr Colony have been arriving in Battleford during the past six or seven days and have been located at the immigration hall, which has been reinforced by a large tent erected near by. The tents of the colonists erected about have made a small village on the spot."

[33] Boden writes: "I have heard that some of the party lost heart at Saskatoon & have returned to England, many are very much upset with the trek here so I shall not be surprised to hear of more returning home or seeking homes elsewhere soon." Holtby: "There are a number of people who are not going up to the land set apart for Barr colonists but who are going to homestead near to Battleford." McCormick: "Watson-Taylor bought a lot of gear Etc. from party of Barr colonists pulling out & going back . . ."

and under Government control. We saw great droves wandering about the prairie. The young calves are all branded and turned out in the spring, and rounded up in the fall of the year. No care or trouble whatever is expended over them. They roam the boundless prairie, and feeding on the rich prairie grass, make fine animals, and when large enough are exported.

All growing crops on the Indian land, and there are only small patches here and there, are well fenced in, but no attempt is made to fence in the cattle. The milk cows are also turned out, but with a large bell attached to the neck of each one, the tinkling of which can be heard over a great distance, breaking such stillness as is only known on this unbroken prairie.

Continuing our journey, we came to the Brasaylor district,[34] which is fairly well located by settlers who came out ten or twelve years ago. Here there are many Canadians and Americans whose substantially-built houses and farm buildings show what it is possible to accomplish with the aid of an axe and 30 to 40 loads of poplar logs, which grow in quantities round about. Seeding operations were in full swing, and patches of ploughed land 30 to 40 acres in extent were to be seen all around. On passing the last farm in this district, about 40 miles from Battleford, we were warned concerning a large prairie fire which was ahead of us.

For several days we had seen a cloud of smoke on the horizon, but had thought little of it. We were soon, however, in a country where a fire had been burning recently. The ground was still hot and the air heavy with the odour of burning wood. We were entering what had been a very thickly wooded district, but all that remained of the great trees and bushes was a stretch as far as the eye could see, of charred tree stumps and blackened ground.[35] This was about mid-day, and until seven o'clock in the evening we were passing through this region of desolation.

At last we emerged from the hot dust and smoke on to clear ground, and finding water a mile ahead we camped for the night, not forgetting to burn a fire-guard round our tents and waggons, for a prairie fire propelled by a good breeze is a formidable foe.

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[34] Bresaylor and Paynton were the only places of rest and supplies encountered by the colonists between Battleford and the settlement. McCormick notes that he "reached Bresaylor district yesterday about 7 oc drove light wagon & camped near Peter Paynters farm . . . at Paynters buy 9 bushels oats. . . ." Rackham, camping near the Bresaylor district on his second day out from Battleford, made the following entry May 6: "About 10 o'clock we stopped at a ranch (Peter Painter's) and had a drink of milk & bought some bacon." It was probably Peter Painton's ranch (Paynton) that Holtby admired: "This man is the last farmer on our way up. He has got a grand place a house as big as a villa & lots of stables &c. He employs about a dozen farmhands & has a threshing machine of his own. He has a large herd of both horses & cattle & he must have nearly a hundred pigs running round."

[35] Prairie fires were a serious hazard to the colonists on the trek from Battleford to the settlement site, particularly in the last stages of the journey. Mrs. Rendell writes: "Whilst in the Barr camp we were greatly terrified at the terrible prairie fires which simply surrounded us on all sides and we had some very narrow escapes of being burned out of 'house and home'." McCormick is impressed by the "grand sight as it catches the dead grass in the forest makes volumes of smoke in varying colours." Black is appalled by the barren desolation of the burnt off area: "Just after leaving Paynters we had our *first* experience of a prairie fire & only just missed have to drive through it. Mr. Barber was ahead of us about ½ a mile and just got over before the fire crossed our trail, by [the time] we got up to him the whole country for miles round was burnt off and not a tree or blade of grass to be seen, just a black smouldering turf left."

On turning out next morning clouds of smoke were to be seen away to the westward, the direction in which we were travelling, and towards nine o'clock the sun began to look gloomy, and we could also smell the smoke again.

On and on we continued through this smoke, which was like a fog, and not meeting any fire we hoped the wind might have changed and taken it in another direction. Noon came and still we encountered no fire, and being again in a wood and finding water in an adjacent slough, we decided to camp for an hour or two, have lunch and bake some bread. It was my turn to bake, and lunch over, all the others stretched themselves out under the trees and were soon asleep. Taking an axe I got a pile of firewood, and quickly had the dough mixed and in the portable oven we carried with us.

Meanwhile the smoke from the prairie fire gradually became more dense, when suddenly I became conscious of a loud crackling sound not far away. Off I went in the direction of the noise, but had barely got a hundred yards when I was obliged to turn back on account of the terrific heat and blinding smoke. Quickly rousing my slumbering companions, we decided to find a way out if we could, and all went out in different directions. Shouts of "Fire here!" "Fire here!" came from all points, and we were hemmed in a circle of fire caused by the changing wind.

Hurriedly holding a consultation, we decided to do the only thing possible to avoid being burnt out, and that was to "back fire" the wood, that is, fire it on our side with the wind. A few lighted matches, and the thing was beyond our control, tearing and roaring away through the long dry grass and the trees. As soon as this was burnt we drew our teams and waggons on to the newly-cleared patch, and looking round saw the oncoming fire about fifteen yards in our rear. You will see what a narrow escape we had.

Suddenly hearing shouts in the distance, and seeing one of our party run in the direction of the noise, we followed, and coming up the trail through dense volumes of smoke was a team of oxen and a waggon, the driver vainly endeavouring to keep the frantic animals on the trail. Hurrying to his assistance, and leading the oxen by the halters, we galloped them safely through the fire for about 200 yards, and drew up alongside our own waggons. Then, with faces blackened by the smoke and dust, and wet with perspiration, we stood behind the waggons, trying to evade the smoke, which made our eyes sting and smart so that we could scarcely see. We were all engaged in the same occupation, that of rubbing our eyes and coughing.

After waiting a couple of hours, the smoke cleared a little, and we felt relieved, and about 5.30 we decided to try and push ahead. Slowly we moved on through a wilderness of ruin, not a green blade of grass or a leaf to be seen anywhere to break the monotony of blackness, and it was 10 p.m. before we found a small patch of ground which was unburnt, the fire having been checked by a wide slough. Here we camped, tired and hot after our first experience of a prairie fire. When darkness set in we could see by the glow in the sky several fires all round us in the distance, but they were burnt out when we moved on next day.

Then came a couple of days of ordinary travelling during which we passed through stretches of burnt ground five and six miles in extent, and also managed to get stuck fast in the worst slough we encountered in all the 200 miles we traversed, and I am not far out when I say that almost every waggon going up to the colony had some trouble here.

We struck this particular slough about 7 o'clock in the evening, and after vainly spending an hour trying to find a dry place to cross, we were compelled to try and get through the best way we could. The leading waggon, which had the lightest load, attempted first, and just managed to get about 30 yards off the hard ground when it came to a standstill, up to the body of the waggon box in mud. The next thing to do was to get it out, so putting two teams to the vehicle we endeavoured to pull it out, but after trying for upwards of an hour we were obliged to abandon that plan.

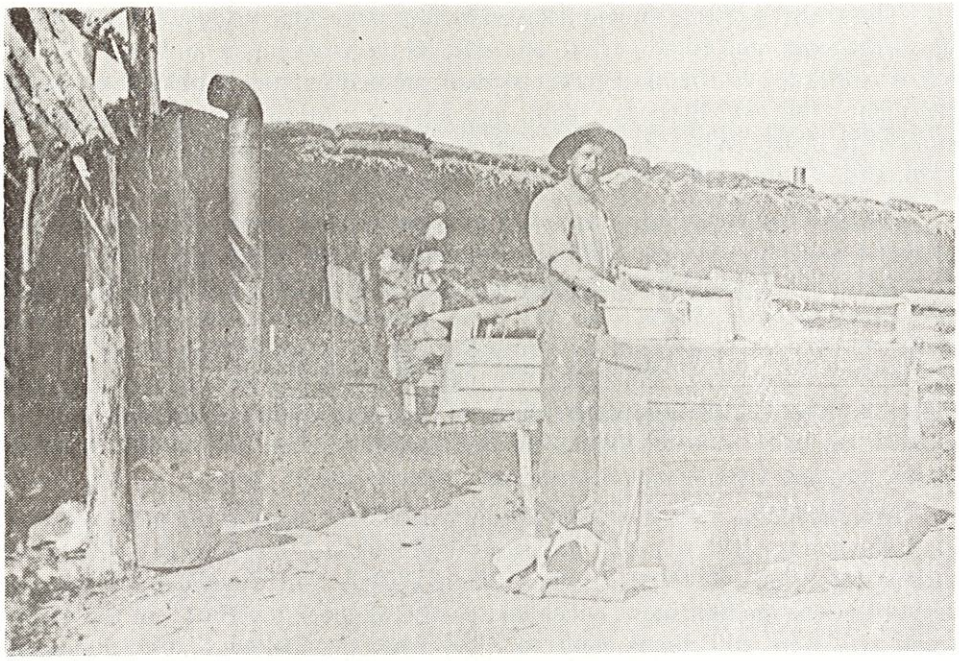
The only course left was to unload the waggon, and we had to carry the heavy goods and baggage through mud and water waist high. But even the empty waggon would not budge, and so obtaining three axes we chopped half-a-dozen trees down, and sawing them up, managed to prize the wheels about a foot out of the mud; then, using a set of pulley blocks and a strong rope, we succeeded, by the united efforts of ourselves and two teams, in hauling the waggon on to firm ground once more.

With the second waggon we had even more trouble, and it was pitch dark before we were through on to dry ground. I say dry ground—it was very soft and damp, and covered with grass about two feet high. This was totally unfit for a camping ground, so two of the party decided to go ahead and try to find a dry place. After some time had elapsed we saw a light in the distance from a fire they had managed to kindle, and heard them calling, telling us to go straight ahead and make for the fire. This was easier said than done, so dark was it.

However, the first waggon moved on, and was soon lost to sight in the black night, and driving the second I kept an eye on the fire and followed, when suddenly out of the blackness came warning shouts, but too late, I was in the mud again as fast as a church, and the other waggon was in a similar fix about half-a-dozen yards ahead of me. Here we decided to leave them until daylight, and unloading our tents we pitched them by the firelight, and getting the blankets we turned in with clothes wet and covered with mud, our consolation being that we had a fire and dry blankets.

Daybreak found us engaged scraping the mud from our clothes, and after breakfast we turned out, anxious to see where we were and get the waggons free again. On taking a survey we found a level stretch of country about three miles long and one and a half wide, surrounded by woods, and all about us were sloughs and pools of water, but having daylight we managed to get through without further trouble and were thankful for a dry, hard trail again, and for another day and a half we moved on in good style and came to more open country.

During this time we met several batches of colonists who were returning to Battleford to locate there, as they were not satisfied with the land reserfvde or



William Hutchinson, with his dog Toby, setting up housekeeping.

us, and had all kinds of discouraging reports to give, but paying little heed to their grievances we pushed on and made good progress.

We were now about 60 miles out from Battleford and 35 from the colony, and in a day or two, after passing through a range of small hills, we came upon an encampment near the trail. Making inquiries, we found we were at last just entering the eastern side of the land granted us by the Government, and, of course, our spirits rose at the idea of seeing land which might, for anything we knew, eventually be ours. But we were still 30 miles from the stores tent and the principal township centre, and had to proceed there before we could obtain any definite information.

We met several waggons which had been badly scorched by the prairie fires. Their owners had lost all their belongings and were returning for a new outfit. They were undaunted, even though everything they had brought out from England had perished. They had been encamped with tents pitched and waggons unloaded, and had only been able to save their teams and waggons, having to leave everything else, so rapidly did the fire travel, aided by a good breeze. . . .

We pushed on, for our stock of food was not very large, and we were already on so much per man each meal, and, therefore, were anxious to reach the stores as soon as we could. We made good progress for another day. The wind was cool, and we could travel quickly, but towards evening it veered off north, and turned very cold. We were among some hills, and we were trying to get through them before camping time, when we came to a stream rather wide, and which looked treacherous on account of the deep mud on each bank.

The crossing of this stream delayed us four days. One waggon became stuck up to the axles, and tilted over to one side, and as it was dark and very cold we left it embedded in the mud by the stream, pitched our tents and turned in for the night. That was Saturday night, and what a time we had! We were nearly starved to death. When daylight came on the Sunday morning it was snowing hard, and continued all that day and the following day.

On Tuesday morning it was dull and heavy, but we hauled out the imprisoned waggon, and were thinking of making a start when the snow recommenced falling. It was Thursday morning when we got away from this uncomfortable camping place. There was very little firewood about, our clothing, greatcoats, and blankets, were all wet through, and to make matters worse we had to live from Saturday to Thursday on a plate of boiled rice and one pancake each man per meal. The pancakes were made of flour and water, mixed with snow to make them light—our calculation on this occasion being, one handful of snow equals one egg. How would that suit for a Sunday bill of fare?

After spending a very wet and uncomfortable four days in the snow, we were glad when on the fifth morning we rose at daybreak and found the sky clear, with promise of a fine day. We were off by seven o'clock, but travelling was slow on account of the melting snow, which caused the waggons to "slide" on the loamy track. We were still about eighteen miles from the Colony Camp, and were anxious to reach this goal. The trail during this latter portion of the journey was hilly and very rough, and caused us much trouble, and made progress slow. Mile after mile was slowly covered, and all the day we were passing colonists, who, with tents pitched at the side of the trail, were anxiously waiting for better weather to move on again. All came asking how the roads were; but the verdict was "bad," and I don't think more than half-a-dozen waggons moved that day.

Some of the settlers were very much depressed, and altogether sick of the tedious journey, and many along the trail were offering ploughs and farming implements for sale, intending to return down country to Battleford or Saskatoon. And no wonder, for all the week we were never dry. Our clothes and blankets were wet through, comfort was unknown, and the country looked as cheerless as only a stretch of Western Canadian wild land does at the spring of the year. It was black through the recent fires, with patches of snow to break the sombreness.

Our passage through the hills and rough country was an affliction on account of the small running streams (narrow) but with about twenty feet of soft mud on each bank. We had crossed three of four, and about seven in the evening we came to one which was about six yards wide. Turning off the trail I found a place where the long grass was unburnt on account of the water, and trying the stream bed with a stick, I found it grass covered and fairly solid, so, doubling up with two teams, we pulled the first waggon across in good style. I may mention that this waggon had 3-inch tyres (the majority being 2-inch) and had a load of 2,010 lbs.

Returning for the other waggon, which was the lighter, but only had 2-inch tyres, we managed to [pull] through the water, but came to a stop on the mud bank, one side of the waggon being up to the axles and the other only about six

inches deep. This position looked like throwing half the load into the water, and so once again we had to unload. We then pitched our tents for the night, and found we were only about six miles from our destination.

Half the next day was spent in hauling the waggon from the stream bank, and it was late in the afternoon when, after climbing a few hills, we saw the camp stretching away in the distance on a flat tableland, the tents showing very prominently against the black, burnt ground. It would be difficult to find a more perfect piece of flat tableland in the whole North-West than that chosen for the Colony Camp, which is in Township 50, Range 28, Section 2, west of the third meridian.

OTHER EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS

A list of accounts written at the time of the migration, either diaries or letters or sets of letters which, in content, were almost like diaries.

Black, Arthur Morley, 1869-1937, and Alexandra Louisa Anderson Black, 1863-1958. [Letter-diary] Bresaylor, Near Battleford, N.W.T., Canada, July 12, 1903. 14 p. University of Saskatchewan Library.

Captain Black, his wife, two sons, John Herbert and Fred, and one daughter, Winifred, sailed from Liverpool, March 17, 1903, on the *Lake Megantic*, accompanied by a party of Barr colonists numbering about 50 persons. They disembarked at St. John, April 2, and journeyed by rail to Saskatoon, arriving April 7, ten days ahead of the main body. Describes failure of Barr's transport service and encounter with Barr at the colony site regarding the homestead land assigned to him. Published in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 11, 1952.

Boden, Bernard d'Este, 1880-1949.
[Letters, April 7, 1903-January 6, 1907] 179 letters (microfilm). Saskatoon Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Saskatchewan.

The letters, addressed to Boden's fiancee in England, are numbered consecutively: 37 (actually 36) in 1903; 46 in 1904; 47 in 1905; 50 in 1906; 1 in 1907. Madeleine came to Canada early in March, 1907, to marry Bernard. The letters begin with the arrival of Bernard and his brother, Percy, in Saskatoon, April 5, after disembarking from the *Lake Erie* at St. John, and spending two days in Winnipeg en route. There are interesting observations on the preparations for the trek, but the principal importance of the letters lies in the day-to-day account of the struggles of a farmer to survive and develop a homestead just outside the town site of Lloydminster: breaking the virgin sod, building log cabin and sod outhouses, planting a garden, haying, seeding, harvesting, marketing produce, helping neighbors and being helped in turn, sharing implements, etc. Public figures are mentioned, particularly Lloyd, but there is a good deal of information about other settlers, their work, social life, and adaptability to the rigors of colonial life. The reading and exchange of books among neighbors as well as books and papers mailed from England are mentioned frequently. The early beginnings of the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches are described. Reference is made to events of major importance to the settlement.

Buck, Henry Richard, 1879—
[Four Letters to His Family in England, April 26, 1903-June 20, 1903] 29 p. Privately held.

Henry Richard Buck, born in England, son of Martha Ann Buck, came to Canada as a Barr colonist on the *Lake Manitoba*. He was joined shortly afterwards

by his brother, Herbert Buck. In 1905, his mother, half-sister Edith Ann Davies, half-brother John Davies, and brothers Frank and Charles Buck, followed. The four letters are dated: April 26, 1903, Saskatoon, to Chibs (his brother Charles); May 20, 1903, and June 5, 1903, Battleford, to Mother; and June 20, 1903, Battleford, to Edith (his half-sister). Highly critical of Barr ... parts of these letters have been published in the *Leader-Post*, Regina, July 23, 1963, in an article credited to Bessy [sic] Marshall, who is Peggy Mackenzie Marshall.

Gayford, William, 1880-1915.
[Diary, January 1908-December 1914] 381 p. Privately held.

Largely weather and day-to-day comments of the "To town this morning" type but still useful for complementing and supplementing the information found in Miles's diary (*q.v.*) and in W. S. McCallum's reminiscences *A Scot in Canada* (Calgary, North Hill News Ltd., 1963). Reveals close working relationships among colonists during its formative years. Gayford was killed in World War I.

Holtby, Robert, 1885—
Day by Day [A Diary of a Journey, March 30-July 22, 1903] 63 p. (microfilm). Saskatoon Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Saskatchewan.

For the period April 1-13, 1903, the diary is a day by day account of the voyage aboard the *Lake Manitoba* and the first day of train travel out of St. John, N.B. The remainder of the train trip, April 13-19, is recounted a week after the events related. The last entry, July 22, written weeks after the trek from Saskatoon to a point half-way between Battleford and the colony site, covers 16 days en route. Holtby conveys the feel, the smell, and the life of the voyage and trek.

McCormick, James Hanna, 1875-1955.
Barr Colony, Diary of a Trail Journey [April 28, 1903-December 31, 1903] 150 unnumbered p. University of Saskatchewan Library.

Written by a young Belfast Irishman who had just completed three years of service in the South African War (1899-1902), this diary begins with the trek from Saskatoon to the colony site and ends with the Christmas celebration, December 31, 1903. McCormick came across on the *Lake Manitoba* with his brother, R. H. McCormick, and two brothers, R. J. and W. C. Morrison. They homesteaded together the first year and are frequently mentioned in the diary as the "2 Bobs" and "Will". Except for one month (November 24-December 24), which summarizes McCormick's experiences laying the telegraph line to Onion Lake, the entries are daily. They describe the hardships of the trail. There are accounts of seeing Barr and of the suffering caused by his business deals. Much of the diary concerns the first year of homesteading, ploughing, planting, building a house and stable, and drilling for water. There are also notes on visits to town, food, holidays and celebrations, church services, and one hair-raising experience with prairie fires. McCormick's reminiscences appeared later under the title *Lloydminster; or* 5,000 *Miles with the Barr Colonists* (London, Drane's, 1924).

Marfleet, Harold, 1877-1955.
[Letters, April 8, 1903-September 15, 1906, and Other Documents] 64 letters. Privately held.

Harold (Harry) Marfleet and his brother Edward (Ted), listed as bricklayer (age 26) and fishmonger (age 19) respectively in the purser's passenger list of the *Lake Manitoba*, came from Hertfordshire. Sixty of the letters are from Harry to his fiancée, Alice Warren, also of Hertfordshire, who came out October 1907 and married Harry November 27 at Streamstown, Saskatchewan. Harry's letters number 13 in 1903, 15 in 1904, 17 in 1906. There are two undated letters from

Harry's sister, Emma (Emmie) to Alice; one letter from Harry's sister, Floss (Mrs. Ashworth) to Alice (November 29, 1905); and one letter from Harry's sister, F[anny] C[reasey] Marfleet, to Alice (April 24, 1903). Harry and Ted were among the Barr colonists who found work at Prince Albert before proceeding to the settlement. Harry's letters alternate from Prince Albert, where he worked at bricklaying, and "Lloydminster, P.O. British Colony", where he and Ted, and later other members of the family, worked their homesteads. The letters give an unusually full account of the formative years of the settlement.

Miles, Henry Robert, 1867-1918?
Diary, January 17, 1906-January 3, 1919. 204 p. Privately held.

Cambridge-educated Henry Robert Miles, son of a Shropshire clergyman, was in the Argentine when he heard of the Barr colonists and decided to join them. He took up a homestead near Marshall, May 1903. Attesting to his wide popularity, his succinct diary entries mention more than 35 persons, many of them repeatedly, in less than nine months. A founder and president of the Lloydminster Agricultural Society, he became a leader in the early years of Lloydminster and adjoining villages. There are frequent references to masonic meetings, agricultural society meetings, sports, church, and social events. Miles spent a two-month visit January to March 3, 1908, with his family in England in which the diary is given over largely to a calendar of social events. On his return, the entries refer laconically to his political race against H. C. Lisle for the Conservative seat in the newly formed province. He served in World War I and was killed in action.

Phillpotts, J. S., 1871-1955, and Phillpotts, Harold, 1884-1964.
[Letters, June 28, 1903-July 19, 1906] 17 letters. Privately held.

Harold and J. S. Phillpotts, brothers, and the latter's wife, Annie, are listed among the passengers of the *Lake Manitoba*, Harold as mechanic, age 19, and Joe as grocer, aged 32. Ten of the letters are from Harold to his father and stepmother Emily (Mrs. Seymour Phillpotts), six from Joe to his father, and one from Annie to Emily. The first and last letters are undated so beginning and ending dates as given above are approximate. The letters summarize events for several days and weeks. They are well-written and informative. Joe feels that many of the causes of discontent among the settlers were unfairly attributed to Barr.

Rackham, Stanley, 1877-1937.
Diary [November 1, 1900-December 31, 1911] 532 p. (microfilm). Saskatoon Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Saskatchewan.

One of a large and distinguished family, Stanley Rackham studied agriculture in England, emigrated to Canada before the turn of the century, worked on farms as far west as Manitoba, returned to his home, and then came out again with the Barr colonists on the *Lake Manitoba*. His diary kept while in transit is one of the best as well as one of the fullest. He is a particularly good observer of nature but he also makes shrewd judgments about the leaders of the colony and gives a candid but sympathetic impression of his fellow settlers.

Rendell, Alice (Mrs. William), 1857-1944.
[Ten Letters Written by Alice Rendell and One by Her Husband to Friends and Relatives in England, April 11, 1903-November, 1905] 29 p. Public Archives of Canada.

Mrs. Rendell and family preceded the main body of the Barr colonists, leaving Liverpool April 8, 1903, on the *Lake Simcoe*. These letters are too well-known to require description. They were published in the Canadian Historical Association *Annual Report* (1926, p. 75-87); also in the *Alberta Historical Review* (Vol. II: 12-27, Winter, 1963) without the letter by William Rendell.

The Gilchrist Diaries

It is interesting to speculate on why diaries are kept. No doubt each diarist has his own personal reason and obviously some diaries are meant only for the author's eyes while others are written with a reader in mind. Whatever the reason for keeping them, diaries, when they survive the ravages of time, often prove to be a useful source of information for the historian. An example of such a diary is that kept by F. C. Gilchrist, pioneer resident of the Fort Qu'-Appelle area. His diaries[1] for the years 1883-93 and 1895-96 provide interesting insights into what life was like on the prairies seventy or eighty years ago.

Frederick Charles Gilchrist, 1859-96, was the first Fisheries Overseer for the Qu'Appelle River and adjoining lakes, and later, was appointed the first Inspector of Fisheries for the North-West Territories. A self-taught expert on fish, Gilchrist was also a naturalist, a taxidermist, a pioneer farmer, and an excellent canoeist. Throughout his life in western Canada he took an active interest in his community and served at times in local government as a councilman, school trustee, municipal assessor, license inspector, and justice of the peace. His diaries are rich in information on community affairs but they also contain much information about life on the farm, the fisheries, and on his observations of nature.[2]

Frederick Gilchrist was the second son of Charles and Belle Gilchrist of Port Hope, Ontario. His grandfather, a medical doctor, was a United Empire Loyalist who moved his family from New England to Ontario. Charles Gilchrist was Fisheries Overseer for the Rice Lake district in Ontario. Apparently Frederick hoped to be a doctor but the death of his mother when he was eighteen changed his plans. Obviously much affected by his mother's death, Frederick turned to working for his father. In 1889 he met Miss Harriet Newbegin, a missionary teacher working among the Indians in the Rice Lake area. They married on July 1, 1882 and early in 1883, Frederick, leaving his wife behind with her parents, moved to western Canada to become a farmer. He homesteaded SW 12-23-15 West of the 2nd Meridian near present day Dysart. There he built a small shack which became home for his wife and their new daughter when they joined him on the homestead in September 1883.

One interesting aspect of the diaries is the careful record which Gilchrist kept of his farming operations. The summer of 1885 is perhaps a good example of this type of record. On April 14 "Ploughed 1¼ acres of stubble for wheat. Frost at ploughing depth." On May 4 he put in Red Fife wheat and Welcome oats. Gilchrist planted parsnips, carrots, beets, chicory and asparagus on May 8, but he found that gophers and blackbirds did a lot of damage to his garden. On May 9 "Ploughed 1½ acres 6 in. deep. . . . Put in 3 kinds of cabbage and rhubarb seeds." He sowed barley on May 11 and put in garden peas. On August 24 Gilchrist "Cut

[1] Copies of the diaries are in the Archives of Saskatchewan and the originals are in the possession of Mrs. Una Nichols, one of the daughters of Mr. Gilchrist. Excerpts from the diaries are reproduced here with the kind permission of Mrs. Nichols.

[2] For the contributions Gilchrist made as an amateur ornithologist see Mary and C. Stuart Houston, "F. C. Gilchrist's Diary—Fort Qu'Appelle, 1883-1896," *Blue Jay*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, pp. 169-170.

2¼ acres of barley with mower" and the following day he began raking it up with a hand rake. He began cutting his Red Fife wheat on September 1 with a scythe rigged with a bow which he described as "clumsy and a poor makeshift." The Wheat had to be raked, cocked and hauled to the yard for threshing. On September 26 despite the fact that his wife was ill, they had to turn out to fight a prairie fire which had jumped their fireguard. He noted that:

> at noon a fire came along and although I had a space of 20 yds. burnt on S.W. side of break a high wind carried some sparks from a willow bluff, and it took three hours terrible work on the part of Hattie & myself to save our place—the fire burnt through four of my nicest bluffs.

The municipality of Qu'Appelle was established on May 1, 1884 and Gilchrist was elected a councillor to serve until December 31, 1884. He was a member of the Health and Markets Committee and was also on the Road and Bridges committee which involved planning projects. On one occasion while laying out improvements on a trail with a surveyor Gilchrist not only lost his rubber coat and game bag but after a full morning's work they discovered they had been working on the wrong trail and had to do the work all over again and as a result "Got specifications and plans finished very late." At the request of his neighbors, Gilchrist agreed to stand for re-election in January, 1885. In his nomination speech he was reported to have said that "he was not there to make promises, but if they thought him a fit and proper person to represent them at the council board he hoped they would put him there."[3] In all there were fourteen candidates for seven places on council and when the votes were tallied, Gilchrist stood eighth losing out by eleven votes to his nearest opponent. He blamed his defeat on the failure of some of his friends to support him and on stories that were spread by one of the candidates that he was ineligible for office because he held a government post. Gilchrist added "he knew better because I told him. However I gave him a terrible dressing in public after the election." Gilchrist tried once again for council in a special by-election held in June 1885 called to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Captain French in the battle of Batoche, but he was unsuccessful. However, he continued to maintain an active interest in municipal affairs.

When an agricultural society was formed in 1884 Gilchrist was appointed a director. One of the first decisions of the society was to help the government in its efforts to have the North-West Territories represented at the Colonial Exhibition in London in 1886. Apparently there was some real division of opinion on this question as Gilchrist reported that "T. W. Jackson and Capt. French came to blows but were quickly separated." Gilchrist continued to serve as a director of the society for a number of years and on occasions served as a judge of some of the exhibits. The Gilchrists often exhibited at the society's annual show and won prizes for exhibits of chickens, vegetables and home canning.

On March 28, 1885, Gilchrist went into Fort Qu'Appelle for a meeting and learned of the Riel rebellion. He wrote in his diary that:

> the breeds have risen in rebellion at Prince Albert, great excitement, a

[3] *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, January 1, 1885.

> detachment have gone up, a large number of volunteers will leave Troy on Tuesday $10 per day is given for horse teams.

Thereafter he records bits of news about the rebellion such as "Police hard pressed have burned the Gov't store at Fort Carlton and retreated to P. Albert. Wild rumours everywhere." His brother joined the Midland battalion which fought at Batoche but the brothers do not appear to have had a chance to meet during the rebellion. Strangely enough the diary contains absolutely no comment on the subsequent trial and execution of Riel.

Gilchrist's recorded thoughts on some of the politicians of his day are interesting. One candidate for Parliament he described as a "windy demagogue" who would be for himself "first, last and always." The opposing candidate was a "hard headed Scotchman" who would, he thought, do right if elected. Gilchrist's favorite lost and he reported that he did not vote. Of a prospective candidate for the Territorial Council he wrote, "I do not understand why people would entertain such an idea as he is an ambitious schemer and a man of low moral feeling and the people know it." Apparently this candidate was not nominated and another candidate who Gilchrist describes as "not much mentally" and "utterly unfit to represent this riding" won the seat.

Frederick Gilchrist received title to his homestead near Dysart in 1888. In September 1886 he purchased just over twelve acres of land at Simpson's Point on Echo Lake near present day B-Say-Tah. The family moved on to this land shortly after he purchased it and there Gilchrist built a new home. As his second homestead he applied for the fractional south half of 22-21-14 west of the second meridian which adjoined the land at Simpson's Point and bordered the lake. He was allowed to homestead 160 acres of this land and purchase the remaining three acres at $2.50 an acre. On his thirtieth birthday, April 20, 1889, he recorded in his diary that he had "two ponies, buckboard and harness, two cows, three heifers, one steer, a new house and 336 acres of land and $1084 in debt. I will have to rustle but with the help of one of the best of wives (bless her) I will pull through."

As a result of a recommendation made on his behalf by T. W. Jackson, a local lawyer and member of the North-West Council, Gilchrist was, in the fall of 1884, appointed Fisheries Overseer for the Qu'Appelle River and adjoining lakes. The position only carried a salary of $300.00 per year but it was work that Gilchrist was very interested in and he obviously welcomed the appointment. However, Gilchrist realized that if the fishing regulations were to be at all effective in protecting the fisheries they would have to be applied all over the Territories. With this in mind and, of course, his own welfare, he sought to convince the authorities that his duties should be enlarged to give him jurisdiction as an Inspector over the whole North-West Territories. This involved the establishment of new positions which meant some reorganization of the department and it also involved the complex system of political patronage. It is perhaps not surprising in these circumstances that Gilchrist did not receive the appointment of Fisheries Inspector for the Territories until 1891 and then only after strenuous efforts had been made on his behalf by leading political figures and local organizations.

In his diary, on October 6, 1886, Gilchrist noted that he had expressed strong opposition to issuing special licenses to halfbreeds to catch pike, pickerel and tullibee during the closed season. However, as a result of a petition by the halfbreeds and strong representations made in support of it, the Minister of Fisheries agreed to allow each family to use one net for fishing for their own use each day. The Minister advised Gilchrist that the policy was decided upon because of the halfbreeds' need for food and that he would have to do the best he could in the circumstance "to prevent the privileges from being abused."[4] In Gilchrist's opinion to allow fishing during the closed season was "simply suicidal to the interests of the country, as well as their [the natives] own fish-food supply."[5] He placed part of the responsibility for the situation on members of the Indian department who, he claimed, encouraged the Indians to fish during the closed season "thus helping to destroy in a few years that inestimable boon to any community-fresh fish."[6] The problem continued to be one of serious concern to Gilchrist throughout his period of office.

There were other problems in the administration of the fisheries. Low water in the Qu'Appelle Lakes caused special difficulties in the early years of his administration. In his report for 1886-87 he stated that the water was so low the spawning beds were in danger of freezing and they were more readily attacked by birds who gorged themselves on the ova.[7] One remedy of this situation was to build dams to raise the level of the water and Gilchrist recommended this policy. On June 22 he recorded in his diary that he had received "instructions to proceed immediately with dams" and after the four dams were completed the water level improved.

Of course, part of the fisheries job involved making certain the regulations were followed. The diary has the following entry for October 31, 1888: "Captured Mrs. Kavanagh fishing one small net. Saw Peltier fishing with 8 seine S. side of lake at Katepwa, ran him so close he had to leave his net & light out with his team." Peltier escaped but Gilchrist managed to seize his net and his catch. Gilchrist enforced the law but tempered it with mercy as this entry for October 6, 1889 indicates:

> Picked up a net with a few fish in it at Kline's, the woman followed me along the shore and overtook me at Kavanagh's where I was picking up two of Mrs. K's nets. She said she had no horse, no cow, no husband, he was killed in the rebellion, she was very poor and had two children who would have no breakfast in the morning. I gave her back her net & all the bacon I had & told her she might set her net once in a while.

Sometimes enforcing the fishing regulations brought attacks on him. On one occasion Gilchrist was attacked in the editorial columns of *The Leader* for his actions. The editorial said in part:

> Mr. Gilchrist . . . displays at times little judgement in the administration of his office, and the sooner the Government gives us a man that will know

4 Archives of Saskatchewan, Department of the Attorney General, G. Series, 400.
5 Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1889, No. 8, p. 227.
6 Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1890, No. 17, p. 245.
7 Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1888, No. 6, pp. 304.

> how to transact his business with firmness and justice, but at the same time with judgement and consideration, the better for the North-West and for all parties. [8]

At the first opportunity Gilchrist went to see N. F. Davin, the editor of *The Leader* and also the member of Parliament for West Assiniboia and as recorded in his diary for December 10, 1894 was told that, "It is politics, that is; my actions re the Fisheries are injuring him with the voters. Comment is unnecessary."

As Inspector of Fisheries for the North-West Territories, Gilchrist had to travel throughout the area under his jurisdiction to check on the fisheries and arrange for the appointment of local officers. Soon after he took office as Inspector he made a trip through his territory travelling to Moose Jaw, Lethbridge, McLeod, Pincher Creek and on to the Kootenay Lakes. On June 8, 1891 they had to cross a river using a buckboard with a team of horses. Here is Gilchrist's description of what must have been a memorable crossing:

> We had a great many stones on buckboard to keep it down. The Ford was a bar that ran at an angle across the stream making the passage about ¼ mile long upstream. When we got a little over halfway over and everything except the seat was covered with rushing water, one of the horses stopped, then the other did the same. Frayer shouted and struck at them with a landing net handle, they went on a little further, plunged a little then the upstream horse laid down, the water rushed over everything, covered up the horse except his nose, which Frayer managed to keep above water. We began to turn round, the buckboard commenced to get groggy. I had my valise on my knees on seat, I climbed back and got on the upstream wheel to keep it down, the water kept slewing us around. McMann and the buck kept their ropes taut and turned slowly around and by the time we got facing downstream the old horse got on his feet and we went back to shore. Had Frayer allowed his horse's nose to get underwater or had McMann lost his head, we would have all been swept under a cut bank where the trees were hanging over and into a terrifically swift running deep part of the river and some of us drowned.

They went further up the river and found a safer place to cross. On this trip Gilchrist visited Banff, Lake Louise, Calgary and Edmonton. From Edmonton he travelled by canoe down the North Saskatchewan River to Prince Albert and then overland by rail to Regina and home.

In 1894 Gilchrist made a trip down the Saskatchewan River from Prince Albert to Grand Rapids. The trip took him from May 22 to August 4 and was made mainly to study the sturgeon and to instruct the Indians along the way about fishing regulations. One Indian encampment he visited he described as being "Full of dogs and kids: and reeking with the smell of fish and dogs. All are happy and dirty. We saw them at their supper, fish alone, eating the fish and drinking the water they were boiled in." Along the route he had Indians bring him all the sturgeon they caught and these he examined to learn as much as he could about them. Near the end of the trip he noted in his diary:

It is only now that I am *beginning* to understand some things about stur-

[8] *The Leader*, Regina, November 22, 1894.

> geon that have been perplexing me. It will require at least another season of investigation to get the question of the spawning time of the sturgeon in fairly good shape.

Throughout his career Gilchrist was constantly studying the fish and the lakes and streams they lived in. His departmental report for 1893, for example, includes an extensive report on the spawning habits of the whitefish in Long Lake which, in his opinion, proved that it was right to extend the closed season to January 1. His philosophy toward his work is best summed up in this comment.

> One may theorize, but theories and ideas are not the things upon which to base laws and regulations that will, on the one hand, prevent people from catching and using fish they are really in need of, or, on the other allow them to go and fish at a time when, if the fish are to be preserved, netting should be strictly prohibited. The many ideas we see advanced in print and on platforms, without proof even when it is asked for, as to the feeding and breeding habits of different fishes, the destructiveness of one kind of fish upon the ova, fry, or adults of another, and as to the many other questions pertaining to the life history of fishes, teaches one the necessity of care and accuracy . . .[9]

He was constantly studying and trying to improve his knowledge and this often meant a long day as this entry in his journal for December 18, 1894 indicates

> Before breakfast saw wood, girls feed & harness the ponies, after breakfast clean stable, leave for office between 8 and 8:30. Reach home about 1700 dinner 1730. I then turn to a little reading and from one to three hours writing and study.

He wrote some articles for *Forest and Stream* and was in contact with the Smithsonian Institute in Washington which has many of his reports on fish.

The last entry in the diary is dated March 13, 1896. On March 20 Frederick Gilchrist was dead from pneumonia. At the time of his death he was just a month away from his thirty-seventh birthday. What he might have achieved had he lived longer no one can say but it is obvious that his death cut short a promising career. Perhaps his most enduring contribution will be the record he left of life on the prairies through the diaries which he so carefully kept.

D. H. BOCKING

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[9] Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1894, No. 10, pp. 276.

Book Reviews

DOCTOR'S STRIKE: *Medical Care and Conflict in Saskatchewan.* By Robin F. Badgley and Samuel Wolfe. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967. Pp. xiii, 201. Cloth $4.95, paper $2.95.

READERS who are acquainted with the fight over medicare in Saskatchewan will expect this book to contain a peppery account of the machinations of Organized Medicine and its opposition to social progress. The mere use of the word "strike" in the title is provocative, because the medical profession maintains that its "withdrawal of normal medical services" was in the nature of a fight for freedom rather than anything so sordid as a labour dispute. Furthermore, one of the authors, Dr. Samuel Wolfe, has little reason to regard the medical profession dispassionately, having been reviled by a host of his medical confrères because of his outspoken support of the Government's Medicare program and his association with the Community Health Clinic movement. However, after frankly admitting their bias in favour of "paying for social security and specifically for health services through taxes," the authors go on to present a moderate, well-balanced account of the event and the issues, remarkable for its lack of spice.

In the first Part of the book, the authors trace the history of the struggle for medical care insurance, beginning with the Municipal Doctor System and concluding with an assessment of the operations of the Medical Care Insurance Scheme to date. The history presented is not a detailed one, but it gives the "broad picture"—which is what the average reader wants.

The second Part of the book is of a philosophical nature. Here one finds the authors' views on medical care as a social issue, medical care and social welfare, the doctor in society and the medical profession's relation to the government. Though the views expressed in this Part of the book are not new to readers who are acquainted with the literature in the field, it is probably the first time that they have all been drawn together in a form readily available to the laity. It is not the purpose of this review to summarize the conclusions reached by the authors; suffice it to say that both the Government and the medical profession come in for their licks, with the profession receiving the more severe chastisement.

It is to be expected that in a book which covers such a broad spectrum there will be a few errors of fact. None of the following apparent errors seriously affect the author's case, and they are mentioned here only because this review is appearing in an historical journal. On page 39 it is stated that Dr. W. P. Thompson, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Medical Care, offered his resignation to the Premier following the Committee's disagreement over the Government's request for an interim report. It is submitted that Dr. Thompson offered his resignation only once, and that was on November 7, 1960, almost seven months prior to the Government's request for an interim report. On page 58, the Diefenbaker Tories are credited with administering a resounding defeat to all N.D.P. and Liberal candidates in Saskatchewan in the 1962 federal election. Actually, Hazen Argue won the Assiniboia seat for the Liberals. On page 106 it is stated that the C.C.F. Party, while losing the 1964 provincial election, obtained more

votes than the victorious Liberals. However, according to *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, 1965, the C.C.F. obtained 268,652 votes while the Liberals received 269,402 votes.

The reviewer would also argue with a statement which appears on page 95, which suggests that only on one occasion did the non-medical faculty of the University of Saskatchewan take a public stand on the medical care dispute. It is true that neither the Faculty Association nor the University Council became involved in the dispute—and properly so. However, the reviewer can recall offhand at least three important statements by non-medical faculty members which were carried by the press during the heat of the dispute. In another case, a serious analysis of the issues was submitted by a faculty member to the Regina *Leader-Post* in mid-July, 1962, only to be held for two weeks and returned after the signing of the Saskatoon Agreement with a note from the editor saying that the conditions upon which the analysis was based no longer obtained. Finally, if one treats the medicare dispute as continuing until the defeat of the C.C.F., the faculty must be credited with three lengthy articles in the *Saskatchewan Bar Review* and two books on particular aspects of the subject.[1] These few instances do not rate as the equivalent of manning the barricades, but would public stand-taking by large numbers of university faculty members have done any good in the tension-filled days of June and July, 1962?

With the federal medicare scheme scheduled to go into operation on July 1, 1968, the rational survey of the issues involved in the Saskatchewan imbroglio which the authors present in *Doctors' Strike* should be of great value to our sister provinces.

E. A. TOLLEFSON

THE WINTER YEARS. *By James H. Gray.* Macmillan: Toronto, 1966. Pp. 220. $4.95.

THIS is a personal history of the 1929-39 Depression on the prairies by one who was there. Mr. Gray, who grew up in Winnipeg, considers himself "a typical child of the Twenties" because he was infected by the get-rich-quick-fever which he takes to be the essential mark of his city at the time. "I bought a half-interest in a couple of race-horses, fell for one swindle after another, sent good money after bad to promoters of oil wells in Louisiana, gold mines in Colorado, and silver mines in Ontario. In between times I took losing fliers in the grain market." He went broke in a shoestring business of making candy, and again in a plunge into operating a miniature golf course, could not get back his job on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, and at the age of twenty-five had to go on relief. At the time he was married and had one child. After two years on relief he was lucky to get a job on the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and he sat out the rest of the Depression as a labor reporter for that paper.

This is essentially then a city man's account of the Depression, and the best part of the book comes out of his personal experience of that disaster. When

[1] W. P. Thompson, *Medical Care, Programs and Issues.* Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1964. E. A. Tollefson, *Bitter Medicine, The Saskatchewan Medicare Feud.* Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1964.

Mr. Gray writes of what happened to him and his family and his friends, or of what he observed in Winnipeg as a newspaper man, he is dead right about the infamies and stupidities of those incredible years. He knows the humiliations of being on relief, the shifts to which the unemployed resorted to get food and fuel and clothes and housing and entertainment, the political apathy of the poor, and the destruction of morale which came from boondoggling, that is organized time-wasting on useless relief projects. As a reporter he had first-hand knowledge of the numbed helplessness and despair of the single unemployed, he witnessed their relief-camp treks, and he noted with indignation that "whenever any government tried to find work for the unemployed, it collided head on with some vested interest." He also does justice to the kindness and helpfulness which he experienced and observed in the most unexpected places among those who were down and out.

He is less successful when he tries to convey the impact of the Dirty Thirties on the rural population, chiefly because his experience of farming folk was brief and from the outside. He describes the weather vividly enough, and the dust storms and the grasshopper plagues and the abandoned buildings; but it will come as a surprise to anyone who was here at the time that there was "enough to eat for everybody in the Dust Bowl" of southern Saskatchewan, that Saskatchewan farmers were overwhelmed with goodies sent by the kindly folk of Eastern Canada, and that the Saskatchewan Relief Commission was "a system for maintaining the people that was without equal in Canada." If the last statement is true, one wonders what kind of concentration camp sadists were in charge of relief distribution in, say, British Columbia! A feeling for what the depression was really like in Saskatchewan one can still get best from Ann Marriott's powerful poem *The Wind Our Enemy.*

When he leaves Winnipeg, Mr. Gray sometimes gets his facts twisted, as when he announces that "in Saskatoon a policeman was beaten to death" in a relief-camp riot. The facts are sadder but less dramatic. The Saskatoon Chief of Police provoked a riot at the Exhibition Grounds by leading his men into the mess hall at mealtime to arrest the unemployed men's leaders. When all hell broke loose on the grounds outside and bottles, chunks of wood, and stones flew in all directions from the hands of angry men, a policeman was knocked off his horse by a flying missile, hit his head, and died in consequence. Some of the unemployed men were charged with manslaughter and in a travesty of justice which I shall never forget (I was in the courtroom during their trial) sentenced to long terms in prison.

Mr. Gray is also superficial on the political by-products of the winter years. He makes a great deal of the rise of Aberhart and Social Credit in Alberta as a response to what he calls "the prices-debts-interest depression," possibly because the antics of a superb clown and hot-gospeller make very lively reading; but he says almost nothing about the much less spectacular political action of organized farmers and workers in Saskatchewan which issued in a movement that changed the face of Saskatchewan in the twenty years after 1944 and had social repercussions all over Canada.

Mr. Gray says that "the depression brought out more of the best than it did the worst in people" and that "so much was learned from the depression that it will never happen again." These seem to me statements of doubtful validity. The first reflects the unconscious Calvinism deep in the heart of Canadians that "a little bit of suffering does yer good." The other underestimates human stupidity.

Carlyle King

The Sparrow's Fall. *By Fred Bodsworth.* Toronto: Doubleday, 1967. Pp. 255. $4.95.

The northern precambrian shield, an inhospitable land where live the Atihkanishini Indians, is a country of evergreens, swiftly-flowing rivers and much snow. Woodland caribou, or atihk, which are the main source of food for the Atihkanishini, roam the forest in search of the lichen that forms a thick, spongy cover for the ground. The long winter can be harsh when deep snows and falling temperatures drive the caribou further north in search of food. The novel *The Sparrow's Fall* depicts the plight of one man battling with this northern winter in its cruellest aspect in an almost unsuccessful fight for survival—his own, and that of his new wife and unborn child.

In rhythmic prose the author describes vividly the last days of Jacob Atook's hunt for caribou, days when he is near death from starvation and exposure. But the struggle to get enough food to stave off starvation is not his only predicament. The hunt itself brings forth conflicting emotions as Jacob Atook does not like to kill. Beset by all kinds of problems of a moral or religious nature, he works out many tentative conclusions during the course of his prolonged courtship with death. He begins with an idea, given him by a missionary, of a Christian God who loves all creatures, and arrives at a picture of nature as being "a great elemental, impersonal leviathan without heart," and of a creator having similar qualities.

In spite of the fact that one of Bodsworth's major aims is to show Atook's developing self-image and world view, it appears to the reviewer that he has not been entirely successful in making the struggle in the Indian's mind meaningful to the reader. The passages dealing with Jacob Atook's inner conflict are lacking in clarity, and the connection of his mental turmoil with the Christian religion is confusing. For example, Jacob disliked hunting before he had any contact with Christianity, and yet his aversion to killing has become bound up with what the missionary has taught him. But the nature of the influence is vague. By portraying the missionary as one of the more ineffective of Christian interpreters, the author weakens the religious conflict by making it more a matter of misunderstanding than a real problem with which the general reader can identify.

The knowledge to be gained from the book about Indian customs and attitudes is not great. The Indians' religious attitudes as implied in the book ought to be approached with caution. Attention ought to be given to Bodsworth's implied distinction between Jacob Atook, who is not presented as typical, and Indians in general. Atook's distaste for killing when not necessary is presented as being divergent from the attitudes of his fellow Indians, as is his feeling of oneness with

the whole of the natural world. That most Indians enjoy killing for sport or feel a barrier between themselves and nature is doubtful. In fact, the author himself seems to contradict the latter statement when he says, "the Atihkanishini, too are a part of their land in that vital, intense, interdependent way that only primitive people can belong to the land on which they dwell."

Where Bodsworth does excel is in telling the story of the cruel struggle to catch the atihk, and in describing the natural life of the area. The story of the caribou herd's winter activities, skilfully intertwined with the main plot, points up the similarity of the plight of man and animal and emphasizes the bond between man and all nature that is felt by Jacob Atook. In the reviewer's opinion, the book is not as valuable for giving insight into the way of life of the contemporary Indian or for treating some of the basic problems that man confronts when he attempts to understand himself and his world, as for inspiring a fascination with the locale of the story. Above all, *The Sparrow's Fall* is enjoyable because of the author's simple narrative style and his warming sympathy with the human and animal dwellers of the north.

MAUREEN WHITEHEAD

I'LL TAKE THE TRAIN. *By Ken Liddell.* Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1967, Pp. 196. Illus. $4.50.

WHEN an author has produced three highly successful and readable books and brings out a fourth, one naturally buys it sight unseen confident that it will be good. Such a book is *I'll Take the Train* by Ken Liddell of the Calgary *Herald.* Liddell just had to write this book to get it out of his system. It's surprising how he held himself in as long as he did.

The author began his railroad career as a now defunct breed, a newsie, more generally known as a train butcher. This relic of the past sold everything from books, magazines, sandwiches, to candy and apples. It was an art in itself. After making the rounds with salted peanuts it was good business to follow up with soft drinks!

Just why Ken Liddell got into the writing game is an unexplained mystery. During the Dirty Thirties he was editorial writer and country correspondent for a Regina daily newspaper. For this he received the munificent salary of fifty dollars a month. Your reviewer had to sell six cows to equal that amount of money in 1937.

One of the most interesting stories in the book concerns the case of the runaway caboose. It became detached from a freight train at the top of the east bank of the Peace River above the town of that name. Roaring down grade through the station and town at a mile a minute the caboose came to rest at the upper side of the valley, preparatory to hurtling back on the return trip. For gallantly boarding the caboose on the dead run the station agent received fifteen merit marks and ten demerits for failing to report the incident.

The chapter on smoking compartments portrays the round-the-clock discussions that were just as important as the debates in the House of Commons,

and were, perhaps just as fruitful. This was where the bewildered passengers tried to comprehend the signs in the railway time tables. Liddell suggests that the man who invented the railway time table had a son who developed the cross word puzzle and another son who invented the computer.

Good reading for a hot July day is the account of the bad winter of 1947. At Victoria Plains, a few miles north east of Regina, three locomotives on a snow plow failed to budge huge snow drifts a half a mile in length and twenty-two feet in height above the tracks. Men shovelling snow hung their coats on the cross arms of the telegraph poles a few feet above the snow line. On one branch line a train was buried completely and was snowed in until spring.

The book isn't so much about railroads as it is about people. It portrays a type of railroader and passenger who has vanished from the scene in today's swift moving times. There are excellent, and now unobtainable, photographs of railroading but you will look in vain for a picture of a diesel locomotive.

This book is a gem for the raconteur and after dinner speaker. There are a thousand stories to delight both young and old. It's about the day of the coal dock and water tower, when the hall mark of the train conductor was a coon skin coat and a gold watch chain on an expansive waist line.

George Shepherd

Notes on Books Received

Brave Heritage. *By George Shepherd.* Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1967. Illus. Pp. 130. $4.50.

This new book by Mr. Shepherd, the well-known Curator of the Western Development Museum at Saskatoon is a collection of articles which he wrote for a number of different publications over the years. Unlike his first book *West of Yesterday* this is not a book of personal reminiscences but rather a series of articles on the history of the west. There are chapters on such subjects as the Palliser expedition, the North-West Mounted Police, business in the early west, the Cypress Hills massacre, buffaloes, harvest excursions, frontier fables, prairie bachelors and the Riel rebellion. Most of the articles are based on sources which are not readily available to the average reader and collectively they give an interesting account of some aspects of the history of the west.

Manitoba, A History. *By W. L. Morton.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2nd edition, 1967. Illus. Maps. Pp. 547. Paperback $3.95.

Originally published in 1957 Professor Morton's history of Manitoba has always been regarded as one of the best provincial histories available and as a major contribution to Canadian historiography. This new edition has an added chapter which the author calls an "epilogue" which reviews the developments in Manitoba since 1955. The University of Toronto Press is to be

commended for making this book available again by the publication of this revised paperback edition.

OCEAN TO OCEAN. *By Rev. G. M. Grant.* Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Limited, 1967. Pp. 396. Illus. Maps. $4.75.

FIRST published in 1873, *Ocean To Ocean* is the account of an expedition led by Sandford Fleming which crossed Canada in 1872. The purpose of the expedition was to assess surveyors' field reports and to recommend possible routes for a railway across western Canada. The Reverend George M. Grant was appointed secretary to the expedition and this book is his account of the journey from Halifax to Victoria. This new edition has a special introduction by Dr. L. H. Thomas, Chairman of the Department of History of the University of Alberta at Edmonton. Long considered a classic account of travel in western Canada, this new edition of *Ocean To Ocean* is very welcome.

JOHNNY CHINOOK. *By R. E. Gard.* Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Limited, 1967. Pp. 360. $5.50.

JOHNNY CHINOOK is a mythical character who tells stories, some tall tales and some true, about Alberta. The author, Robert Gard, uses the character of Johnny Chinook as a means of telling the stories which are part of the folklore of Alberta. Here the reader will find stories about "Twelve-Foot" Davis, Bob Edwards, Peter McGonigle, the lost lemon mine and many others. This is another reprint by the Hurtig press of a popular book that has been out of print for some time. This new edition retains the introduction written by Senator Cameron for the original publication in 1944 and includes a special introduction by Lieutenant Governor the Honourable Grant MacEwan, who is well known as a writer on western history.

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