

Volume XXIV

Spring 1971

Number 2

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# Saskatchewan History



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COVER: A study of an early farmstead north of Blaine Lake.  
Photographed by W. N. Lepp, Saskatoon.



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Saskatchewan Archives Office, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Published three times a year under the auspices of the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

Yearly subscriptions, \$1.50; special 3-year rate, \$4.00  
Bulk order of 10 or more, \$1.00 per subscription (1 year)

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## The Scottish Crofter Colony, Saltcoats, 1889-1904

In the late nineteenth century the British government undertook to relieve the poverty and congested conditions of crofters and cotters<sup>1</sup> in the Western Isles of Scotland by arranging for their resettlement in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. Between 1755 and 1850 the population of these islands had risen 80 per cent, an expansion based on increased cultivation, high prices for livestock, the development of fishing, and a precarious kelp manufacture.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter inherent weakness in this economy became evident. The cattle and sheep trade declined due to the adoption of more successful methods on the mainland and a fall in agricultural prices, while an upward movement of rents dictated by changing money values led to the displacement of many land owners and the impoverishment of countless crofters.<sup>3</sup>

“The West Highland problem remained the struggle for an adequate cash income to pay for necessary purchases both by the individual and the region, since for most people, the natural resources were so inadequate that agriculture could not provide an adequate subsistence income.”<sup>4</sup>

Hebredian Scots were unable to acquire many of the comforts essential to cultural development,<sup>5</sup> and their typical homes were small and dark, with dirt floors covered with heather or bracken, usually without chimneys, and only separated by low, thin partitions from quarters for livestock.<sup>6</sup> In promoting a scheme for the transportation of these people to Canada the British government “had nothing more in view than the betterment of the individual conditions of the settlers themselves.”<sup>7</sup> That objective was eventually realized for the members of the two colonies established under the scheme in Canada, but whereas the settlement at Killarney in Manitoba was a fairly successful venture, the settlement at Saltcoats in the North-West Territories, the subject of this article, was unsuccessful from its commencement.

The Imperial government in 1888 voted a subsidy of £10,000 for the crofter colonization scheme, conditional upon the sum of £2,000 being raised by public subscription for the same purpose, and vested the amount for purposes of administration in a Board of Commissioners.<sup>8</sup> On the Board were representatives of the Imperial government, the Canadian government, private subscribers, and land companies. The Board acquired two paid agents, one in Scotland and one in Canada, to aid in the selection and final settlement of the emigrants. In order to meet the cost of emigration and to comply with the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act, \$600 was to be advanced to each family. The repayment of this sum would be secured by liens registered against the homesteads of members of

<sup>1</sup>“Crofter” denotes a peasant in Scotland who rented land, usually five to ten acres, from an estate owner. A “cotter” was a peasant in Scotland who occupied a cottage on an estate and worked as a labourer for a fixed rate of income when his services were required.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Hamilton, *An Economic History of Scotland*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>R. H. Campbell, *Scotland Since 1707*, Bristol: Western Printing Services, 1965, pp. 293-294.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>5</sup>Malcolm A. MacQueen, *Skye Pioneers and “the Island”*, Winnipeg: Stovel Company, 1929, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup>Henry Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

<sup>7</sup>*Public Archives of Canada, Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch*, 198738, Vol. II. Microfilm copy in the Archives of Saskatchewan.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. I. April, 1888.

the respective families to whom advances were made. When the emigrants arrived in Canada, the Canadian Pacific Railway was to carry them to their final destination for a fixed low rate of passage.

As a result of the operations of the Board, a crofter colony was established at Killarney in 1888. When thirty families, 183 persons in all, arrived there in late June, land had not been purchased by the Imperial Government or the Board of Commissioners. However, the Board entered into negotiations with the Canadian government and the North-West Land Company and was able to acquire land.<sup>9</sup> Owing to the late arrival and poor crops the Board found it necessary to help with provisions during the first winter and to provide seed-grain in the spring of 1889. Combined with initial advances for the purchase of stock and implements to commence farming operations, the result was that by July, 1889 "the thirty families had \$23,600 loaned to them, or on an average, about \$776.66 per family."<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile the Imperial government had decided to abandon the system of using a Board of Commissioners to co-ordinate the plan. Legislation was passed by the British Parliament in December, 1888 creating an Imperial Colonization Board for the purpose.<sup>11</sup>

With the experience gained from the settlement at Killarney, the new Colonization Board realized that an earlier start must be made in despatching another group of crofters the next year. Therefore, in February and March, 1889, representatives of the Board signed families to emigrate to Canada and arranged for their departure early in April. The Canadian government was consulted about a suitable location for this second settlement. H. H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, chose Wolseley as the location. However, a problem arose when he was informed that not only were homesteads to be given to the crofters, but also the right to pre-emptions. In the selection of land in the Killarney district, no pre-emption rights had been granted. Smith had further inspections made but found that a sufficient number of half sections could not be obtained within a reasonable distance of the railway at Wolseley, since it was necessary for homestead and pre-emption sections to be adjacent to one another according to the Dominion Lands Act.<sup>12</sup> It was decided to examine as an alternative a township and a half which had been relinquished by the York Colonization Company just north of Saltcoats, then terminus of the Manitoba and North-Western Railway. A detailed inspection carried out by officials of the Dominion Lands Branch and the Colonization Board revealed that the area was suitable for both grain and cattle raising. Also the Manitoba and North-Western Railway Company agreed that an experienced farmer who superintended operations of settlers on its lands should perform the same services

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, "Report Of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed To Carry Out A Scheme Of Colonization In The Dominion Of Canada Of Crofters And Cottars From The Western Highlands And Islands Of Scotland," 1890 (The Canadian government supplied the land for the settlement free of charge, except for the \$10 registration fee, but the North-West Land Company was allowed to choose land elsewhere equal in value to the land it relinquished for the colony).

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. II.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. I, H. H. Smith, to Sir Charles Tupper, April 24, 1889, pp. 9-10.

for the crofters, with no expense to the Board.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the Colonization Board approved this area twelve miles north of Saltcoats.

Forty-nine crofter families, consisting of 282 persons, sailed from Lewis, Harris, and North Uist on April 1, 1889 to Glasgow and from there departed for Canada on April 3, 1889. The crofters disembarked at Halifax. An agent for the Canadian government, G. B. Borradaile, met them and travelled with them by railway through the United States to Winnipeg and Saltcoats, where they arrived on April 24,<sup>14</sup> and met the agent of the Imperial Colonization Board, Mr. G. McKay. It was his job for three months to look after the interests of the Board and to give the crofters the benefit of his advice and counsel.<sup>15</sup>

The colony was plagued with problems from its very inception. There was a great deal of difficulty in settling the families; many had not chosen their homesteads by the beginning of July. The plan for settlement was:

to consult the crofters, to see how they wished to be placed, and then, each man was to choose the partner he wished to work with. Next the five different districts of Stornoway, Harris, Barvas, Uist, and Loch were to appoint one of their members to represent them, and draw lots for the location of their different districts in the land set apart for them. After this was done, the crofters were located on paper so arranged that partners were on the same section, and their immediate relatives and friends around them.<sup>16</sup>

Reflecting the considerable confusion and changing of minds, only eleven families accepted the homestead locations originally assigned to them, twenty-five families selected new locations in the vicinity while eleven families took up locations rejected by this group, and two families departed from the colony. Despite the pre-emption right only twenty-four families took pre-emptions but during 1890 and 1891 twenty-three more homesteads were selected by older sons of the crofter families.

Another immediate problem arose in connection with the \$600 advance for each settler. The cost of conveyance from Glasgow to Saltcoats was approximately \$163 per family and the balance available for expenditure in Canada was nearly \$437. The highest amount at the disposal of any one family after deducting travelling expenses was \$521 and the lowest \$358.<sup>17</sup> With the remaining money, the crofters were to buy oxen and harness, wagons, plows, lumber, and provisions. The original plan intended that a wagon should be provided to every other family, and a plow to the family not receiving the wagon; that each family should have one ox and a half set of ox harness, thereby providing a complete outfit between two heads of families, compelling them to work in partnership. Since the planting season was short the oxen were in demand by both farmers and it was impossible to work a farm with half an outfit.<sup>18</sup> It became apparent that

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, "Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1890.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, "Report to Imperial Colonization Board" by J. C. Colmer, Secretary, Imperial Colonization Board, 1889.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. I, "Report on Crofter Settlement near Saltcoats with General Remarks on Aided Colonization," July 3, 1889, p.5.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, "Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1890.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. I, "Report on Crofter Settlement near Saltcoats with General Remarks on Aided Colonization," July 3, 1889, pp. 3-4.

each settler must have a complete outfit. However, the amount remaining from the original \$600 was not sufficient; it was estimated that an extra \$300 per family would be needed to purchase machinery and provide for supplies.<sup>19</sup> The obvious solution was for the Colonization Board to advance the settlers further money to purchase the needed equipment but the slowness of parliamentary procedure presented little hope of obtaining the extra money during the summer. Fortunately the Manitoba and North-Western Railway Company offered to advance sufficient money to allow each family to purchase a wagon, a plough, a yoke of oxen, an additional cow and a harrow. The difference between the cost of the extra articles per family and the \$300 was to be expended in provisions to help the crofters over the winter.<sup>20</sup> The Imperial government agreed to repay the railway company as soon as necessary legislation was passed by Parliament, and this was done in the fall of 1889.

The provisioning of the settlers was another problem faced by the Colonization Board. Under the general instructions of the Board the agent was:

to arrange for the supply to each family of such stores and provisions as may be deemed necessary on their arrival, and to carry them on until they should, in the opinion of the agent, be in a position to maintain themselves, having particular regard to the winter's requirements.<sup>21</sup>

The arrangement was that orders be issued on Buchanan and Company at Saltcoats, with the crofters to be allowed a month's supplies at one time. However, at the start, McKay complicated matters by issuing an enormous quantity of small orders. For example, one order was for one pound of butter valued at eighteen cents! McKay issued approximately 900 orders, where a third of that number would have sufficed, before he was replaced in June by G. B. Borradaile.<sup>22</sup>

A letter deploring the condition of the crofters at this time was written by their missionary, Rev. I. J. Macdonald, to H. H. Smith, Dominion Lands Commissioner, at Winnipeg. He stated that the crofters:

were born free and slavery is done away with, and has no sympathy either in the New or Old World and that nearly 300 poor innocent crofters should be used, abused and treated according to the impure motives and selfish desires of disinterested individuals is in the latter end of the nineteenth century absolutely out of the question. . . . I want to remark in the contract with Mr Buchanan & Co. I find that the poor crofter has to pay \$3.25 for flour and now after making some enquiry I find flour sells in Saltcoats for \$3.00. . . . It is really too painful to follow out these things in detail and yet these are the things that must be looked after.<sup>23</sup>

H. H. Smith replied to Rev. I. Macdonald that:

. . . the settlement in the northwest had been undertaken and the advances of money used to assist the crofters had been made by the Colonization

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, "Report to Imperial Board" by J. C. Colmer, n.d.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. I, H. H. Smith, to A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister, Department of the Interior, July 4, 1889.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, "General Instructions for the Agent of the Colonization Board," April, 1889.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, "Report on Crofter Settlement near Saltcoats with General Remarks on Aided Colonization," July 3, 1889, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, Macdonald to Smith, June 29, 1889.

Board constituted by the British Government for that purpose. Any agreements which the crofters entered into with the Board and any promises made by them were made by agents, not of Canada, but of the Imperial authorities. However, the Dominion Government will do everything it can to promote the success of the settlement.<sup>24</sup>

Nearly all of the complaints registered by Macdonald in his letter were unfounded. Although he said there was no temporary work, jobs had been secured for men on the railway but the majority had not stayed with them and returned home. The delay in getting settlers finally located on their homesteads had been attributable entirely to themselves, since the majority took a great deal of time making up their minds. A proof of the crofter's captiousness in this matter was that some of the lands they rejected were selected by the Manitoba and North-Western Railway Company in lieu of lands surrendered by it to the government for location of the dissatisfied crofters. The railway company would not take in exchange lands of inferior quality to those surrendered. Also, much of the seed given to the crofters was not planted.<sup>25</sup> Clearly, the crofters were not prepared to settle down at once, and the Colonization Board was not prepared to "spoon feed" them. Nevertheless hardship arose from Borradaile's misunderstanding his instructions. With only five or six exceptions, all the crofter families had some credit remaining, but Borradaile refused orders for provisions to all, whereas his instructions were simply to refuse orders to those who had exhausted their credits. Smith visited the settlement and straightened the problem out, with the result provisions were granted to all who needed them.<sup>26</sup>

The Canadian government was put in an embarrassing position by the seeming indifference of the Colonization Board. As evident in Macdonald's letter it was blamed for the mistakes of the Imperial authorities even though it had given the land for settlement free of charge, and had not undertaken any responsibility for the expenses of the colony.<sup>27</sup> During the ensuing winter serious distress may have been experienced. Explaining the situation to Smith, A. F. Eden, Land Commissioner of the Manitoba and North-Western Railway, wrote:

The crofters are responsible for their fate! It was true that many of the families were in need of food but there was a reason for this need. In the Fall, no food allowances were allowed for children over 13 years of age. They were to be out earning wages and not living at home being idle and feeding at the expense of their families and the Colonization Board.<sup>28</sup>

Clothing was issued in the fall to the crofters, and during the winter of 1889-90 the Imperial Colonization Board expended \$400 a month for provisions and clothes for the crofter families.<sup>29</sup>

The extra \$300 advance which had been arranged for the crofters had enabled the purchase of materials for buildings, but they were by no means

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, Smith to Macdonald, July 3, 1889, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, Smith to Burgess, July 9, 1889.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, Burgess to the Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, July 8, 1889.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 212189, Vol. I, Eden to Smith, February 11, 1890.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

pretentious! Two designs for houses were provided, and aided by a carpenter, the crofter built his own home with supplies brought from Saltcoats. The cost of materials and labour for one design, "New Shanty No. 50," was \$60 and for the other, "McKay House No. 99," \$78.75. The outside walls were covered with sod for insulation and tar paper was put on the roof. The stable had a wooden frame but the walls were of sod, and hay covered the roof.<sup>30</sup>

Although solutions were found or were available for all of these immediate problems, and the district was well adapted for mixed farming, the Saltcoats settlement did not succeed. By 1891, eighteen of the homesteads had been abandoned, and, by 1894, forty-eight had been abandoned.<sup>31</sup> Only one of the original homesteaders was still on his land in 1899. Donald McIver proposed to remain and meet his obligations.<sup>32</sup> What developments caused the abandonment of the colony? Many of the crofters were fishermen, unaccustomed to farming and evidently did not take to the work. Many of the men preferred to work as daily or weekly labourers. During harvest men earned between \$20 to \$60 per month, plus board, elsewhere, and during the winter they cut and drew wood to Saltcoats, earning \$3.50 a load. Also work on the railway offered \$1.25 per day. However, the main reason for failure may have been poor farming practices and ill-luck with the weather.<sup>33</sup> Much time had been lost in the planting of crops in 1889. To add to the difficulties, there was only a light summer rainfall and the crops did not grow.<sup>34</sup> In 1890 the estimated yield of wheat on 188 acres brought under cultivation was sixteen bushels per acre, but because of improper storage facilities a large quantity of grain was damaged after the harvest by rain. Potatoes were grown in great quantity. In 1891, the crops were damaged by frost.<sup>35</sup>

Following a dry year in 1892, and discouraged by their previous lack of success, the crofters did not prepare much land for cultivation, but decided to go in more extensively for livestock. What little wheat was grown in 1893, yielded between eighteen to twenty bushels per acre, but meanwhile ill-luck had again struck the colony. In the winter of 1892-93 a large number of stock were lost due to abnormal weather and insufficient hay having been cut in the fall for winter feeding.<sup>36</sup> Although the crofters made little progress at Saltcoats, they were much more self-supporting than the more prosperous colony at Killarney. It was pointed out that:

It must be remembered that Killarney occupies a very favourable position. There the new settlers were surrounded by experienced farmers, whose example proved to be of great value.<sup>37</sup>

The liabilities incurred by the crofters at Saltcoats was only \$800 per family by 1893, while at Killarney the liabilities of the crofters was approximately

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. II.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, Report submitted by Charles Tupper to G. Trevelyan, April 2, 1894.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, "Eleventh Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1901.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, Report submitted by Charles Tupper to G. Trevelyan, April 2, 1894.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, "Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1890.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, "Seventh Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1896.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 363679, "Fifth Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1894.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, "Third Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1892.



\$25,000. However, in both colonies, they had not paid their first installments to the Colonization Board.<sup>38</sup> In dealing with the record of the crofters, it must also be recognized that local prices for wheat, livestock, and other farm products were 50 per cent below what they had been when the settlement was formed.<sup>39</sup> If prices had remained higher, the rate of failure at Saltcoats may not have been so great. The only complaint registered by the crofters was that the low prices offered for their products did not enable them to meet their obligations to the Colonization Board.

In 1894 the crops suffered from drought and in June, 1895 they were damaged seriously by hail. By 1895, only twenty-two of the original settlers remained on the land. A comparative report for the years 1890 and 1895 illustrated the slow progress of the crofters at Saltcoats. In 1890 the total number of acres under cultivation was 188, and in 1895, 162 acres, a decrease of twenty-six acres. They had practically given up grain growing, and were devoting their attention to raising livestock, which they said, "pays best, and allows us to go out and earn money during the sowing and harvest season."<sup>40</sup> The price of wheat had fallen to 35 cents per bushel and oats to 12 cents per bushel. The colony in 1895 contained 207 head of livestock as compared to fifty-five in 1900. The price paid for stock was 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  to 4 cents per pound live weight.<sup>41</sup> None of the crofters paid the installments due to the Colonization Board. Many of them wanted to give up their farms and enter for new holdings in other districts.<sup>42</sup>

The years 1896 to 1900 saw the decline and final collapse of the Saltcoats settlement. Had the settlers who abandoned their homesteads remained they might have done well, and had no difficulty in meeting their obligations to the Colonization Board.<sup>43</sup> Those settlers who remained until 1896-97 and new settlers who took up the abandoned lands had begun to prosper but family ties lured all but one of the original settlers from their homesteads to other districts in the West.<sup>44</sup> A. M. Burgess, in attempting to analyse the failure of the colony, wrote:

The Crofters and the Highland people generally are excellent settlers when they emigrate of their own accord, and are placed alongside of people of other nationalities, but when settled in compact body they are like the Indians in that they spend a great deal of time in talking over their grievances, real or fancied . . . they are content to make very little progress when left to themselves.<sup>45</sup>

Burgess also believed that the Colonization Board gave more assistance than was necessary, thus "the crofters became dissatisfied and the result was an unsuccessful colony."<sup>46</sup>

The assistance given to the crofters, whether too generous or not, proved to

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 363679, "Fifth Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1894.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, (The price of grain dropped continuously from 1889 until 1896).

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, "Seventh Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1896.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

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

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, "Eleventh Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1901.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, Report submitted by Charles Tupper to G. Trevelyan, April 2, 1894.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. I, Burgess to Dewdney, July 18, 1889.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

be an administrative headache for the Imperial Colonization Board and, to a degree, the Canadian government. Problems of repayment of money loaned, repayment of seed grain, second homestead entries and foreclosures, had to be resolved. The grant of \$600 made to each family in 1889 was for a period of twelve years, bearing no interest for the first four years. The rate of interest was 8 per cent. The repayment of the principal and the interest was by equal annual installments on the annuity plan commencing in 1893. If all the required payments were met, the 160 acres of land would become the absolute property of the settler.<sup>47</sup> However, to safeguard the investment of the Colonization Board, the crofter was required to give security in the form of a lien. This was a signed contract stating that if the settler did not fulfill his obligations to the Colonization Board, foreclosure could take place and the crofter would lose his land, chattels and stock as provided under the Dominion Lands Act.<sup>48</sup> The Colonization Board had also to secure the amount the British government had paid the railway company for the additional loans per settler in 1889 but it could not, according to the Dominion Lands Act, take security for more than \$600.<sup>49</sup> The majority of the crofters owed the Board \$700 to \$750.<sup>50</sup> The solution to the problem was to create a lien on the homestead of one of the younger members of each family for the amount advanced in excess of \$600.<sup>51</sup> In the spring of 1890 some of the crofters had also obtained advances of seed grain from the Dominion government. The repayment of the advance was secured by an additional lien on the homesteads. L. Pereira, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Interior, stated in May, 1891, that "the Dominion government wanted repayment for the seed grain."<sup>52</sup> The Dominion government held the Colonization Board responsible for the debt, and it could not rescind the debt for fear that it would create a great deal of dissatisfaction in other districts where seed grain had been loaned and the settlers agreed to repayment.<sup>53</sup>

By the summer of 1890, Colmer, Secretary of the Colonization Board, concerned about the number of crofters abandoning their homesteads, wrote to the Hon. E. Dewdney, suggesting that:

some legislation of a restrictive character should be introduced in order to make it difficult and undesirable for settlers who have been assisted to settle on new land to just get up and leave it in a free and easy fashion.<sup>54</sup>

If restrictive legislation were provided, as Colmer wanted, it would not prevent the dissatisfaction which led a settler to break his contract, and would probably drive him to take refuge in the United States.<sup>55</sup> No restrictive measures were taken. In the autumn of 1894, several of the crofters decided that they would

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. I.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>Canada, *Revised Statutes*, 1886, Chapter 54, Section 44 (2).

<sup>50</sup>*Dominion Lands Branch*, 198738, Vol. I, "Report on Crofter Settlement near Saltcoats with General Remarks on Aided Colonization," July 3, 1889.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, Burgess to Colmer, June 22, 1889.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. II, L. Pereira to G. B. Borradaile, May 27, 1891.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 212189, Vol. I, Dewdney to the Governor-General in Council, April 10, 1894.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 198738, Vol. II, Colmer to Dewdney, November 1, 1890.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, Burgess to Dewdney, December 10, 1890.

never be in a position to pay off their obligations to the Colonization Board. They wanted the Board to take over their present homesteads for the amount they owed and to arrange with the Dominion Government to allow them to make second entries for new homesteads. Since the crofters had not made the payments on their homesteads, the Colonization Board decided to discuss the situation with the Dominion government with the idea of selling the land to new settlers.<sup>56</sup> Charles Tupper proposed that:

the crofters should be permitted to take up second homesteads on their understanding that a charge upon their new holdings for the balance of their debts to the Board after crediting the accounts with an amount representing a fair evaluation of the abandoned homesteads would be made.<sup>57</sup>

The Dominion government prepared a bill for the purpose of permitting crofters to abandon their homesteads and take up second entries, and an amendment to the Dominion Lands Act to that effect was passed by Parliament in the fall of 1897.

When the crofters abandoned their homesteads, land patents presented a problem. The Colonization Board believed that the abandoned land would be patented to the Board, and the cattle and chattels which were left would be sold, and the proceeds credited to the accounts of the crofters. Little loss in revenue was foreseen.<sup>58</sup> Application was made to the Minister of the Interior by the solicitors of the Colonization Board for the issue of patents to them for the abandoned homesteads, but there still remained the government liens registered at the time of the seed-grain loans. The Colonization Board stated that it would be difficult to obtain any more money for the purpose of discharging the seed-grain liens.<sup>59</sup> The Minister of the Interior replied that "the Dominion government would not be justified in foregoing the repayment even though the security on the seed-grain advances were considered as secondary to the liens of the Colonization Board."<sup>60</sup> However, the government would issue patents to the Colonization Board irrespective of the liens which were taken from the crofters as security for the advances, but the government would rely on the Board to make good the amount of the seed-grain advances as soon as the lands were disposed of by the Board.<sup>61</sup>

The Dominion government prepared legislation in the fall of 1896, granting patents to the Colonization Board for lands abandoned. The proposed Bill was passed in the spring session, 1897, providing, however, that a *bona-fide* settler purchase the land within two years from the date of issue of the patent to the Colonization Board.<sup>62</sup> Having secured patents to all of the abandoned homesteads lists of lands held by the Colonization Board were distributed throughout the west, advertising them for sale. By 1900, the Board had not sold any of these lands, and the Dominion government informed the Board that they would aid in

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, "Extract from G. B. Borradale's Annual Report on the Saltcoats Settlement," 1895.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, Tupper to T. M. Daly, Minister of the Interior, November 30, 1895.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 176811, Vol. II, Report submitted by Charles Tupper to G. Trevelyan, April 2, 1894.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 212189, Vol. I, "Extract from a Report of the Committee of the Honourable the Privy Council," July 24, 1894.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, L. Pereira to Borradale, August 8, 1894.

<sup>62</sup>Canada, *Statutes*, 1897, Chapter 29, "An Act to Further Amend the Dominion Lands Act."

the placing of *bona-fide* settlers on the land. The Colonization Board accepted the offer. At the time, the Board was paying a tax of four dollars per quarter section a year and they were losing money.<sup>63</sup>

Early in 1903, the Dominion government informed the Colonization Board that the payment for seed-grain was still outstanding, and that it had not only to pay the principal but added interest at 6 per cent from April 1, 1891, to July 7, 1900, and at 5 per cent from the latter date to the date of payment.<sup>64</sup> When the Board stated it would pay the principal but not the interest, P. G. Keyes, Secretary, Department of Interior, informed the Board that "there was no reason why the interest should not be paid."<sup>65</sup> The Colonization Board asked the Dominion government for the sum of the total claim, principal and interest. The total amount owed by the Board was \$1,105.98 consisting of principal \$643.74, and interest, \$462.24. The Colonization Board sent a cheque to the Dominion government to cover the total amount in the fall of 1903.<sup>66</sup> It was at the same time agreed that if and when the crofters took out new homesteads and if they had seed-grain indebtedness, they would be required to pay the debt plus interest. The government would collect the debt before land patents were granted for the new homesteads and reimburse the Colonization Board for the principal and interest of each seed-grain debt paid.<sup>67</sup>

The Imperial Colonization Board now wanted to bring its work to a conclusion. The crofters at Killarney by 1904 had finally discharged their remaining installments to the Board and were to receive patents to their land, but the Board had been unable to sell the abandoned lands at Saltcoats at a satisfactory price.<sup>68</sup> However, in 1904, it was able to sell the land to the Charles W. Sexton Company of Minneapolis, and nearly recovered the indebtedness upon it.<sup>69</sup> The final report on the Colonization scheme stated that:

had the settlers at Saltcoats remained on their homesteads they might ultimately have achieved the same measure of success as those at Killarney. They were however, led away by bad advice, and many of them did not realize the fortunate position in which they were placed, or the opportunities open to them.<sup>70</sup>

This statement does not take into account the unfavorable climatic conditions and the declining prices for farm produce experienced during the first ten years at Saltcoats which, with other factors discussed in this article, not just "bad advice," resulted in the abandonment of the colony. The scheme to establish a crofter colony at Saltcoats must be considered a failure but, it had achieved its objective of alleviating the poverty suffered by these crofters in Scotland.

Kent Stuart.

<sup>63</sup>*Dominion Lands Branch*, 212189, Vol. I, Borradaile to L. Pereira, February 22, 1900.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, L. Pereira to Messrs. Tupper, Phippin and Tupper, Solicitors, Winnipeg, January 17, 1903.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, Keyes, to Messrs. Tupper, Phippin and Tupper, January 17, 1903.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, Messrs. Tupper, Phippin and Tupper to Keyes, October 17, 1903.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, Keyes to Messrs. Tupper, Phippin and Tupper, December 3, 1903.

<sup>68</sup>A. S., *Provincial Secretary Files*, No. 150, "Fifteenth Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1906.

<sup>69</sup>*Dominion Lands Branch*, 212189, Vol. I.

<sup>70</sup>A. S., *Provincial Secretary Files*, No. 150, "Fifteenth Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners," 1906. (From reports studied, the author was unable to establish where the crofters moved after leaving Saltcoats.)

## The Saskatchewan Board of Film Censors, 1910-1935

Exactly when the first motion pictures were shown in Saskatchewan is not known. Probably the motion picture theatre as such really did not appear until four- and five-reel features became available after 1909.<sup>1</sup> The new industry presented many problems and it was not long before governments found that they had to pass new laws to control the showing of motion pictures. The early machines and film were far from the high standards of safety in the industry today and so the first concern had to be the safety of the patrons. Regulations had to be passed governing the type of building that could be used for the showing of films, the type and use of projectors and for the proper training and licensing of the projectionists. Governments also found that they had to introduce some sort of control over just what was being shown on the screen. They were not so much concerned with the artistic quality as they were with the possibility that the films might prove to be a corrupting influence on the patrons. As a result, censorship was imposed upon the motion pictures licensed for screening in Saskatchewan.

The first move toward censorship of moving pictures in Saskatchewan appears to have been taken in connection with the film of the Johnson-Jeffries boxing match for the heavyweight championship of the world. It was announced on July 12, 1910 that the film of this fight would be prohibited and that in future moving pictures of any boxing match past or future would not be allowed to be shown in Saskatchewan.<sup>2</sup> The move came about as a result of pressure on the government by interested parties. Among these was S. D. Chown, General Secretary of the Department of Temperance and Moral Reform, who wrote the Premier asking him to prevent the showing of the fight pictures because "they are universally recognized to be very demoralizing to the people, particularly the young."<sup>3</sup> Pressure was also exerted by J. G. Shearer, Secretary of the Social and Moral Reform League, who stated that the pictures were "offences against decency and inevitably demoralizing."<sup>4</sup> The *Regina Leader* commented on the Government's decision:

The banning of the pictures would appear to be in line with the widely prevailing opinion that civilized society will no longer tolerate the prize-fight. One of the greatest incentives to the promoting of such contests in the past has been the great value attaching to the moving picture rights; make these rights of no value and unquestionably a heavy blow will be aimed at the promotion of prize-fighting on anything like the scale of the recent fight. The prize ring today is purely mercenary and to attack it in that quarter is to attack it in its most vulnerable point.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>K. Macgowan, *Behind the Screen*, New York; Delacorte Press, 1965. p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>*The Morning Leader*, Regina, July 12, 1910.

<sup>3</sup>Archives of Saskatchewan, (A.S.), *Scott Papers*, S.D. Chown to Hon. W. Scott, July 12, 1910, p. 31708.

<sup>4</sup>*The Morning Leader*, Regina, July 12, 1910.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, July 15, 1910.

Obviously boxing in some circles at least was not recognized as a legitimate and wholesome spectator sport.

The complaints about the boxing films raised the major issues which were to lead to wider censorship of motion pictures. It showed an early recognition of the fact that the moving picture industry was big business and that it carried with it all the odium attached to that concept. Those who controlled the industry were concerned with profits and they would turn the industry in whatever direction that would serve their mercenary interests. The industry would have to be watched to prevent abuses occurring such as the link with the prize fight world. Probably the more significant and related conclusion was the belief that what people saw on the screen could affect their future behaviour. Movies were not only big business but they were also a powerful medium of propaganda. Many critics of course felt the films would have mainly harmful effects. Illustrative of this fear was a news item which appeared in *The Leader* about the same time as the announcement about boxing.<sup>6</sup> The story described how some youths after seeing a moving picture of a train robbery went out and held up a street-car and in the process shot a policeman. The incident occurred in Philadelphia and led to the banning in that city of all films depicting train robberies or other crimes. The effect motion pictures have on behaviour is still being debated but it is clear that there were always those who believed films could lead the viewer to imitative behaviour patterns which, depending on what was shown on the screen, could be good or bad. It was this conviction that led to censorship of the movies. Motion pictures were a mass medium of entertainment and the question the censors were asked to answer was what could safely be shown without harmful effects on the audiences ranging from the very young to the elderly. It was not an easy question to answer.

The first Saskatchewan legislation regarding the moving picture industry came in a bill passed during the 1910-11 session under the title of "Egress from Public Buildings."<sup>7</sup> There was no provision in the legislation for censorship but it did provide for the licensing of motion picture machines under regulations to be made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. An Order-in-Council was published on November 3, 1911 which set out detailed regulations. This order also stated:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint a board of censors to examine all films to be exhibited in Saskatchewan and the film exchange shall submit all films to such board to be examined and stamped.<sup>8</sup>

The exhibitors were required to show the censors' stamp before the film was shown. Film not stamped was liable to seizure by any constable or peace officer. As far as can be determined it was not until 1912 that the first attempt was made to state what films were unacceptable and that there was a formal prohibition of films on boxing. An Order-in-Council dated August 3, 1912, provided that:

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, July 13, 1910.

<sup>7</sup>*Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1910-1911*, Chapter 11.

<sup>8</sup>*Saskatchewan Gazette*, 1911, Volume VII, No. 21, p. 6.

No exhibition shall be permitted on the Lord's Day except in connection with a religious service by permit of the Provincial Secretary and no picture of an immoral or obscene nature or depicting crime or pictures reproducing a prize fight shall be shown or exhibited.<sup>9</sup>

The power to prohibit the showing of moving pictures described in the regulations was given to the provincial police as no board of censors had been established.

The first censor of moving pictures for Saskatchewan was William Mackay Omand appointed on January 16, 1913.<sup>10</sup> He was joined by Samuel Clarke who was appointed on February 24, 1913.<sup>11</sup> Later on in the year a Theatre and Cinematographs Act was passed which provided that a board of censors of three or more could be appointed and that this board would have the power "to permit the exhibition or absolutely to prohibit or reject all films or slides."<sup>12</sup> The act provided for the right of appeal from the ruling of the board of censors under prescribed regulations.

A censor room was set up in the Legislative Building equipped with a projector. Within a few short months the censors found the volume of work so great that a second projector had to be installed. Saskatchewan censors immediately tried to establish high standards and reported that they had rejected or cut a number of films submitted to them despite the fact that the films had already been passed by the National Board of Censors of New York as well as by the Board of Censors of Ontario and Manitoba. Their aim, they reported, was to raise the motion picture industry to its highest possibility by eliminating all objectionable features of an immoral or criminal character. "The process may be slow, but with persistency and care the time is not far distant when the moving picture will be not only a source of delightful entertainment, but will also be of splendid educational value to the public."<sup>13</sup> Later on the censors, as reported in a newspaper, tried to define what they considered objectionable in motion pictures. These included scenes that:

depict drunkenness, gambling, domestic infidelity, indecency, murder, suicide, insanity, burglary (where the actual theft is shown), cruelty and others to which it was considered there is a moral objection. . . . When a picture showing the opening of a safe by burglars is shown this committee will not necessarily condemn the incident, but it will condemn any detailed representation of the opening of the safe. Representation of the crime of arson could hardly be approved of under any form.<sup>14</sup>

The censors explained that they would not, for example, permit the showing of details of mixing poison because it might influence people of a weak nature to commit similar acts. They would not forbid all scenes of violence but only those that were excessively brutal or harrowing or that would suggest similar acts to the viewers. Similarly they would not say that infidelity could not be shown

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 1912, Volume VIII, No. 16, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 1913, Volume IX, No. 2, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 1913, Volume IX, No. 5, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup>*Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 1913, Chapter 28.

<sup>13</sup>*Public Service Monthly*, Saskatchewan, Volume 1, No. 12, July 1913, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>*The Morning Leader*, Regina, January 23, 1914.

but it "cannot be treated in an irresponsible manner which tends to break down the moral standards of the audience."<sup>15</sup> In making their decision the censors kept in mind the fact that about one quarter of the audience were children or young people of susceptible age. Therein lay part of the problem as there was no system for classifying pictures as to age of audience.

The Saskatchewan Board of Censors continued their work in Regina until May 1, 1914, when, as a result of an agreement worked out with Manitoba, a joint board of censors for Manitoba and Saskatchewan was established in Winnipeg. The change came about as a result of discussions initiated by Saskatchewan possibly as a result of representations made to the Provincial Secretary by the film exchanges.<sup>16</sup> Attempts were made to have Alberta and British Columbia join to form a single Western Canada censorship board but they were without success.<sup>17</sup> The final agreement was actually between Saskatchewan and the City of Winnipeg as that city had been assigned the powers of censorship for Manitoba.<sup>18</sup> The agreement provided that Winnipeg and Saskatchewan would each appoint a censor to the board and that the license inspector for the city of Winnipeg would act as chairman of the board. In case the two censors were unable to come to an agreement the chairman would make the final decision. The salary of the Saskatchewan censor was to be paid by the city of Winnipeg out of funds realized from the charge of \$1.00 a reel made for censoring. After all expenses were paid any funds remaining were to be divided equally between the contracting parties.<sup>19</sup> In the fall of 1914 the Alberta censor suggested the formation of a Dominion censorship board with representation from each province<sup>20</sup> but the idea was rejected<sup>21</sup> and Manitoba and Saskatchewan continued with the joint board.

The agreement for a joint censorship board was renewed in April of 1916 but this time the agreement was between the two provincial governments<sup>22</sup> as Manitoba had reassumed the powers of censorship which it had previously delegated to the city of Winnipeg.<sup>23</sup> At the same time an attempt was made to have Alberta join the Board but it failed.<sup>24</sup> Apparently Alberta could not see any advantage in such an arrangement as it already accepted films censored by Ontario and Manitoba and there was the problem that they paid their censor a considerably larger salary than that paid by Manitoba and Saskatchewan.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>A.S., *Department of Labor, Theatres and Public Halls Branch*, E. J. Wright, Deputy Provincial Secretary, Saskatchewan, to B. L. Baldwinson, February 5, 1914. The letter stated in part, "It has been brought to Mr. Turgeon's notice that this multiplication of censoring is somewhat unreasonable." Unless otherwise indicated all subsequent quotations are from these papers. The acts relating to the motion picture industry were administered by the Department of the Provincial Secretary until 1931 when they came under the Department of Railways, Labor and Industry. From 1935-1943 they were again administered by the Department of the Provincial Secretary. In 1944 the Department of Labour took over administration of these acts.

<sup>17</sup>W. J. Bowser, Attorney General, British Columbia, to E. J. Wright, April 28, 1914.

<sup>18</sup>E. J. Wright to W. F. H. Turgeon, Provincial Secretary, March 23, 1914.

<sup>19</sup>Agreement, April 28, 1914.

<sup>20</sup>R. B. Chadwick, Chief Censor of Alberta to Provincial Secretary, September 2, 1914.

<sup>21</sup>E. J. Wright to R. B. Chadwick, September 4, 1914.

<sup>22</sup>E. J. Wright, to E. Brown, Provincial Treasurer, Manitoba, April 20, 1916.

<sup>23</sup>E. J. Wright to E. Trowbridge, Deputy Provincial Secretary, Alberta, April 10, 1916.

<sup>24</sup>E. J. Wright to E. Brown, April 21, 1916.

<sup>25</sup>E. J. Wright to E. Brown, April 22, 1916.



It appeared that the apparently harmonious co-operation that existed on film censorship between Manitoba and Saskatchewan could be expected to continue for some time. However, the situation changed rapidly and by the end of the year the joint board was terminated by mutual agreement.

The reasons for the termination of the agreement appear to be a matter of sovereignty and a growing fear that the censorship standards of the Board were not high enough for Saskatchewan. Mr. Turgeon, the Provincial Secretary, gave the question of sovereignty as the main reason for terminating the agreement:

I gather . . . that you agree with me that the time has come for Saskatchewan to resume the responsibility for censoring the moving pictures shown within its boundaries . . . it is, I am sure, unnecessary to state that this suggestion arises from no want of accord but from a realization that the dignity of the province requires it to be the sole arbitrator of so important a question of what it considers most suitable to have shown in its moving picture theatre and other public exhibitions.<sup>26</sup>

This issue of sovereignty was unquestionably precipitated by rulings passed in Manitoba on the showing of one particular film. This film called "Damaged Goods" was a film dealing with the problem of venereal disease. The film was rejected by the joint censorship board on the grounds that it was not suitable for general viewing and they had no grounds for imposing a restricted exhibition category. The decision of the Censor Board was appealed and the Appeal Board decided that the film could be shown to restricted audiences provided the government could impose such restrictions. Following this ruling the Government of Manitoba passed an Order-in-Council which gave the Censor Board the power to approve of a film feature subject to any restrictions they cared to impose. Special regulations were established for showing the film "Damaged Goods" which restricted it to segregated adult audiences only.<sup>27</sup> The problem for Saskatchewan was, of course, that films approved by the censors could be shown in Saskatchewan without restrictions. The only recourse the Saskatchewan Government had would be to pass a special Order-in-Council of its own regarding the showing of each of the films that the Censor Board was prepared to be allowed to be shown only under special conditions. But here the problem was that the film might very well be shown before the Government had a chance to pass any order. There was also the fear, which had some foundation in fact, that Manitoba was going to lift all restrictions on fight pictures which were prohibited from being shown in Saskatchewan.<sup>28</sup> The Manitoba position on special regulations did present a serious problem for Saskatchewan.

In addition to the problem of differing legislation and sovereignty there was growing suspicion in Saskatchewan that censorship standards were being lowered much below that acceptable to the province. In a personal letter to the Saskat-

<sup>26</sup>W. F. H. Turgeon to E. Brown, November 6, 1916.

<sup>27</sup>A. H. Garland, Director of Public Amusements, Manitoba to E. J. Wright, November 7, 1916.

<sup>28</sup>E. J. Wright to J. A. Calder, President of the Executive Council, November 7, 1916. Saskatchewan did not remove its prohibition of fight pictures until 1927. S.S. 1927, Chapter 57, Section 3.

chewan representative on the Censor Board E. J. Wright, the Deputy Provincial Secretary, raised the question of standards:

I shall be glad if you will let me know in confidence if your board is growing more broad-minded in its view of the scope to be allowed to moving pictures and their influences on the public morals or whether the people who are behind the gun, so far as the moving picture exchanges are concerned are modifying the policy of the powers that control the censor board.

A film, just exhibited here, called "Three Weeks" has raised an outcry. I did not see it myself. . . . Please understand that I am not criticising your work in the least but as an older man and for many years in touch with the public, I would suggest that it is not well to offer dishes that are too meaty for the digestion of our pure-minded population. . . .

I am quite confident that passing such a film was against your judgement and that you voted for its rejection but I want you to do all you can to have these erotic films cut out or otherwise I fear another outcry when it may be necessary to take the censorship under our parental care and retire from the joint board. Prize fights and gun plays are rigorously excluded but in my opinion they do not do a one hundredth part of the harm that a suggestive film can do.<sup>29</sup>

The answer to this letter, if there was one, has not been located but it is quite conceivable that Mr. Robson, Censor for Saskatchewan, did not have a chance to answer before he had a person to person meeting with Mr. Wright who visited Winnipeg on November 2. In his report on that meeting Mr. Wright stated:

Mr. Robson . . . defended his action in passing the films about which an outcry had been made in Regina on the grounds of their educational value. . . . He informed me that Mr. Garland had been added to the censor board making a preponderance of three to one in favour of Manitoba when passing films . . . I gathered that the board does not work at all times too harmoniously and that a break in the present arrangement is anticipated before long and (in my private opinion) would not be unwelcome.<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Wright also stated that the Hon. E. Brown, Provincial Treasurer for Manitoba, seemed to feel conditions in the two provinces were not alike as far as motion pictures were concerned due to the larger urban population of Winnipeg. According to Wright, Mr. Brown expressed the view that he had no objection to Saskatchewan taking over its own censorship whenever convenient. From the evidence available it appears that Manitoba's action in establishing a system of special category films forced Saskatchewan to withdraw from the joint Board. Manitoba's appointment of an additional member to the Board was undoubtedly a factor. There was nothing in the contract preventing Manitoba from appointing additional members but it put them in control of the Board. The lone Saskatchewan representative could do little to prevent the passage of any film and maintain the high standards desired by his superiors.

Effective January 1, 1917 the joint board of censorship came to an end and Saskatchewan once again assumed sole responsibility for censoring all films to be shown in the province. The censor continued to live in Winnipeg and to use

<sup>29</sup>E. J. Wright to C. A. Robson, October 25, 1916.

<sup>30</sup>E. J. Wright to J. A. Calder, November 7, 1916.

the censoring facilities provided by Manitoba. At first this new arrangement apparently cost Saskatchewan very little beyond the censor's salary as they used Manitoba's equipment and the projectionists were supplied by the film exchanges. In 1919 the cost increased as Manitoba decided to hire its own projectionists and Saskatchewan was asked to make a grant to pay the salary of one projectionist and to provide for some equipment maintenance.<sup>31</sup> This arrangement appears to have worked well for all concerned and to have been an excellent arrangement from a financial point of view for Saskatchewan.<sup>32</sup>

Interestingly enough the Manitoba-Saskatchewan arrangement did create some problems in union negotiations. In 1926 the projectionist union sought a quite large increase in salaries. When they approached the Manitoba government they were told the salaries for one operator could not be raised because it was paid from the grant from Saskatchewan. When they then contacted the Saskatchewan government they were told that the projectionists were hired by the Manitoba government and Saskatchewan could do nothing about salary negotiations.<sup>33</sup> The problem was resolved when Saskatchewan voluntarily increased its grant to Manitoba to provide the sum required to pay the salary increase for a projectionist.<sup>34</sup>

Despite periodic suggestions that Saskatchewan's censorship board should be made up of more than one person<sup>35</sup> and the existence of legislation that would have permitted expansion of the board<sup>36</sup> the province continued to operate a one man board. Very little information is available about the persons who served as censors over the years. As was mentioned earlier, W. M. Omand and Samuel Clarke were appointed censors in 1913. When the joint board was established Clarke went to Winnipeg and served as censor until April 1916 when he resigned while Omand remained in Regina as a theatre inspector. Mr Clarke had apparently been secretary to the Regina Young Men's Christian Association before accepting appointment as censor. He was succeeded by C. A. Robson who also had served as secretary to the Regina Young Men's Christian Association. When Robson retired due to ill health in April 1923, W. M. Omand once again took up the duties of censor. On his retirement on October 31, 1927, he was succeeded by W. E. Gladstone, a former resident of Duck Lake. Mr. Gladstone's services were dispensed with on May 15, 1930. Although no reason was given for his dismissal it is possible that it was related to the change of government. Gladstone was succeeded by A. D. Gordon who served from 1930 to 1934. He in turn was succeeded by the Reverend R. B. Milliken who held the post until 1944. Reverend Milliken long before his appointment as censor had gone on record as being a

<sup>31</sup>J. Anderson, Chief Inspector to J. M. Uhrich, Provincial Secretary, September 5, 1926.

<sup>32</sup>In 1925-1926 the salary for the censor and his assistant amounted to \$3,600, the grant to Manitoba was \$1,850. During that year 7,547 reels of film were censored at a fee of \$2.00 per each reel over 500 feet in length.

<sup>33</sup>J. Anderson to H. Spurr, Secretary, International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees, June 14, 1926.

<sup>34</sup>J. W. McLeod, Deputy Provincial Secretary to T. C. Davis, Provincial Secretary, December 23, 1926.

<sup>35</sup>See for example A. S., *Martin Papers*, Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association to W. M. Martin, January 26, 1922, p. 13191.

<sup>36</sup>Statutes of Saskatchewan, (SS.), 1919-1920, Chapter 59, Section 9.

strong critic of the motion picture industry while admitting that "the screen held to him no appeal."<sup>37</sup> The appointees in at least three cases were men closely identified with religion and presumably in all cases they were men recognized as of some moral stature.

Occasionally suggestions were advanced that all censorship should be done within the borders of the province. A petition forwarded to the Government in March 1922 is typical of the type of representations made for this move. The petitioners claimed that such a move would be in the best interests of both patrons and exhibitors of motion pictures, that it would save great expenses in express charges, supply more work for local men and, if the board were enlarged, provide better censorship.<sup>38</sup> The Government's reply was that to make such a move would greatly increase the cost of the board as new equipment and staff would be required, space would have to be found somewhere and that it would actually increase costs to the exchanges and these costs would undoubtedly be passed on to the exhibitors.<sup>39</sup> Behind the government's reply were strong representations made by the industry which had learned of the proposal. The industry claimed that if the board was moved to Regina shipping costs would not be reduced but that they would be increased as a central exchange would have to be maintained in Winnipeg from which films would have to be shipped to Regina for censoring and then after their return again shipped out to the individual theatres. The industry spokesman stated that the Saskatchewan territory accounted for 6 percent of the total distribution and that;

. . . while business in motion picture theatres is in a depressed condition it is equally bad with exchanges because of strenuous competition in the shape of over production, high duties, and heavy overhead expenses, which should be cut down instead of increased.<sup>40</sup>

They went on to argue that the proposed move would increase their costs at a time when the industry was barely covering its costs in its Saskatchewan operation. They felt there was little possibility of increased returns from Saskatchewan as the territory was large with film possibilities limited since most theatres were in small centres that only operated one or two nights a week. Whether it was the industry's arguments or the government's own unwillingness to increase its costs which won the day it is impossible to say but the censor stayed in Winnipeg. According to a newspaper report even the local exhibitors became convinced that it was in their economic interests to have the censor stay in Winnipeg.<sup>41</sup>

One of the problems that existed among movie censoring and one which seems to be endemic with federalism was the different standards applied by the provincial censoring boards. The answer it seemed to some was for the censors

<sup>37</sup>*Saskatoon Phoenix*, March 7, 1921.

<sup>38</sup>L. H. Thornton, City Commissioner for Regina to Deputy Provincial Secretary, May 10, 1922. The petition was supposed to have been endorsed by the Trades and Labor Council, motion picture theatre owners and local businessmen.

<sup>39</sup>Deputy Provincial Secretary to L. H. Thornton, March 24, 1922.

<sup>40</sup>Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association and Film Exchange Managers Association to C. A. Dunning, April 11, 1922. Copy to W. W. Amos, Deputy Provincial Secretary.

<sup>41</sup>*The Leader*, Regina, April 4, 1922.

to get together and set up a uniform standard of censorship which would strengthen them in their fight to prevent the industry from misusing the film medium. To this end a meeting of censors was held in Calgary in June 1919 but unfortunately only the censors in the four western provinces were in attendance. Nevertheless, the four censors went ahead to form a national organization and to establish a set of standards which in theory would be applied by all of them in their work. The list is indicative of the moral climate of the times and of the censor's approach to their job. In part it states:

The Board will condemn pictures and parts of pictures dealing with:—

(1) White Slavery, unless a true moral lesson is conveyed by such portrayal. The procuration and prostitution in all forms, of girls and their confinement for immoral purposes. The seduction of women, particularly the betrayal of young girls, assaults upon women with immoral intent. Scenes showing men and women living together without marriage, and in adultery. Scenes dealing with abortion and malpractice.

(2) Gruesome and distressing scenes including shooting, stabbing, profuse bleeding, prolonged views of men dying and of corpses, lashing and whipping and other torture scenes, hanging, lynching, electrocution and views of persons in delerium or insane.

(3) Scenes dealing with venereal disease of any kind, unless shown as an educational feature under reliable supervision.

(4) Gross and offensive drunkenness, especially if women have a part in scene.

(5) Exploitation of notorious characters.

(6) Pictures will be judged as a whole with a view to their final effect.

The Board will disapprove of pictures and parts of pictures dealing with:—

(1) The drug habit, e.g., use of opium, morphine, cocaine, etc. Views of women smoking, especially if shown in suggestive positions or if their manner of smoking is suggestive or degrading.

(2) Scenes showing the modus operandi, of criminals which are suggestive or incite to evil action, such as murder, poisoning, house breaking, robbery, pocket-picking, lighting or throwing of bombs, use of ether, chloroform, etc., to render persons unconscious, binding and gagging. Scenes showing burning, wrecking and destroying of property which may put like action in the minds of those of evil instincts or may degrade the morals of the young. Scenes which deal at length with gun play and use of knives and are set in the underworld.

(3) Pictures which deal with counterfeiting.

(4) Brutal treatment of children and animals.

(5) Scenes dealing with ridicule or reproach of races, classes or social groups, as well as irreverent and sacriligious treatment of religious bodies, or other things held to be sacred.

(6) Vulgarities of a gross kind such as appear often in slapstick or other screen comedies, comedies burlesquing morgues, funerals, hospitals, insane asylums, lying in of women and houses of illfame. Bathing scenes which pass the limits of propriety, lewd and immodest dancing, needless exhibition of women in their night dresses or underclothing. Studio or other scenes where the human form is unduly exposed. Sensual kissing and love-making scenes, vampire scenes, men and women in bed together whether in comedies or pictures of other classes.

(7) Objectional titles, as well as subtitles of pictures, particularly if profanity be resorted to.

When the whole or the greater part of the theme is devoted to any of the above classes, it may lead to the picture being condemned.<sup>42</sup>

It is doubtful if the list was really of much value in standardizing censorship in Canada although the Saskatchewan censor seemed to be convinced that it had improved the standard of films being submitted for censorship.<sup>43</sup>

Further attempts were made to promote the establishment of a Canada-wide board of censors but they do not seem to have been very successful partly because it seemed to be impossible to get a representative meeting of censors. The Government of Saskatchewan after its initial willingness to support the formation of such a board developed a distinct coolness toward the whole idea. When pressured by J. G. Shearer, General Secretary of the Social Service Council of Canada, to send a representative to a meeting of censors in Toronto in the fall of 1922, the Provincial Secretary, C. A. Dunning replied:

Frankly, I have not very much faith judging from past experience, in the possibility of accomplishing results at all commensurate with the expense involved in gathering boards from all parts of Canada. . . . after all, the personal interpretation by the individual censor of what falls within the language of any agreement really constitutes the difficulty.<sup>44</sup>

He went on to add that he was tired of having his people spending all of their time running back and forth to Toronto when there was seldom any disposition on the part of the eastern provinces to come to Western Canada. On the same topic Premier Martin pointed out that unless the censors were all together censoring each picture there was really no hope of establishing uniform standards and nothing really could be achieved by a conference.<sup>45</sup> However, in this instance Saskatchewan yielded to pressure and did send their censor to a conference in Toronto in November. The conference failed to establish any list of agreed standards for censoring but its members did agree to exchange condemnation cards and to reject "all films known to be made in Germany, or that appear to be German propaganda."<sup>46</sup> Another meeting failed to produce any standards for censorship but confined itself to agreeing to disapprove of films where divorce and infidelity were the main theme.<sup>47</sup> As there are no further references to meetings of censors it must be assumed that 1922 marked the last attempt to establish a common set of standards which could be applied by the censors in each province.

The abortive attempts to formulate a common standard of censorship left the individual censor on his own except for what guidance his government gave him in trying to determine what was suitable for public showing. Saskatchewan censors' reports indicate that over the years the percentage of rejections based on film subjects varied from a low of 1.30 percent to an unusually high figure

<sup>42</sup>C. A. Robson, "Report of the Censors Conference, Calgary, June, 1919."

<sup>43</sup>C. A. Robson to W. W. Amos, June 17, 1920.

<sup>44</sup>A.S., *Dunning Papers*, C.A. Dunning to J. G. Shearer, September 8, 1921, p. 18224.

<sup>45</sup>A.S., *Martin Papers*, W. M. Martin to J. G. Shearer, September 19, 1921, p. 13177.

<sup>46</sup>Report of the Provincial Censors Annual Meeting, November 19, 1921.

<sup>47</sup>Minutes, Provincial Censors Meeting, September 18, 1922.

4.11 percent one year. The average rejection was about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  percent each year. An analysis of the rejection reports indicates that a very large percentage of the films were rejected because they were what might be termed sex films. Of this group 41 percent were classified as too vulgar, suggestive or indecent while 21.5 percent were unacceptable because they were immoral, cast reflections on the institution of marriage or depicted such things as white slavery or seduction. Only 11.8 percent were refused the censors approval because they showed crime in some unacceptable way and only 2.8 percent because there was too much use of alcohol. Another 7.6 percent of films were rejected because in the censor's opinion they either dwelt on prejudice or were mainly caricatures of religion, races, the sick, especially the mentally ill or cripples, or of some particular group in society. Not surprisingly some of these included pictures which cast reflections on royalty or were in some way against Canadian national interests. The remaining films were rejected because they were not in the public interest or they had objectionable themes.<sup>48</sup>

Although the censor might be without the support of his fellow censors in making his decisions he could be certain that there were always those willing to offer advice. The representatives of the motion picture industry could be depended upon to complain that censorship was too rigid or that their films were being ruined by all the cuts the censor insisted on. In their opinion the public was getting good films "despite reformers and their stupid fulminations."<sup>49</sup> While the industry complained about too much censoring there were always some, although not any large numbers, who felt censoring should be more rigid. The oft repeated theme of these complaints was simply that many films were unsuitable for children and led them astray.<sup>50</sup> Some went so far as to claim to have been able to trace bad conduct on the part of boys and girls to films.<sup>51</sup> In reply to such criticism the censor could only state as he did in regard to one particular complaint that while he agreed the film was not suitable for children that was hardly reason enough to ban it. In his opinion as there was no classification system it was up to the parents to exercise care in choosing the films their children could see.<sup>52</sup> Classification of films as to audience suitability was specifically opposed by one censor who felt that without supporting legislation it would only provide gratuitous advertisement and encourage juveniles to attend pictures restricted to adults.<sup>53</sup> This censor was quite willing to suggest suitable films if requested.

There were reasons other than the fear that children would be adversely affected put forward for strengthening censorship. Complaints were made that there was still too much violence, crime, and sex being shown on the screen.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>48</sup>This information is based on annual departmental reports and an analysis of a sample of 500 returns made by the censors in which they gave their reasons for rejecting films.

<sup>49</sup>*The Saskatoon Daily Star*, March 7, 1921.

<sup>50</sup>See for example A.S., *Martin Papers*, W. MacWhinney to W. M. Martin, March 14, 1922, p. 13207.

<sup>51</sup>A. S. Wright, Childrens Aid Society, Saskatoon to W. M. Omand, January 17, 1920.

<sup>52</sup>A.S., *Martin Papers*, C. A. Robson to J. R. Kelly, February 18, 1922, p. 13200.

<sup>53</sup>Saskatchewan, *Department of Railways Labor and Industries*, Annual Report, 1931-1932, p. 30.

<sup>54</sup>H. Dobson, *Evangelism and Social Service* to W. M. Omand, June 24, 1921.

Only rarely according to evidence available were films attacked because of factual errors. The motion picture "Queen of Sheba" drew a long and bitter attack from the Moose Jaw Ministerial Association because the main features were "unhistorical, and the aim and spirit of the story are entirely unbiblical."<sup>55</sup> Only one critic raised the question of artistic quality. He pointed out that a lot of time is spent trying to educate children and expose them to good books and art and nothing is done about the quality of moving pictures. All the censor does is remove obscene and immoral parts but this leaves a lot of poor quality material. The writer suggested that some system of merit rating should be introduced and the films graded accordingly.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to censoring all thirty-five and sixteen millimeter films intended for public showing the censors had other work to do. Beginning in 1918 he was required to censor all slides intended for public showing.<sup>57</sup> The fee for this service was fifteen cents a slide but this charge was reduced to five cents in 1926.<sup>58</sup> Slide censoring appears to have been abandoned in 1931 as revisions to the act in that year made no reference to slides in the accompanying scale of fees.<sup>59</sup> In 1920 the censor was also required to censor all advertising material intended for display at the theatres.<sup>60</sup>

It is impossible to give any evaluation of the censor's work over the years. The fact that Saskatchewan did not experience either an unusual decline in moral standards or an abnormally high crime rate is probably insufficient grounds for concluding that the censor's work was successful. It is doubtful that the Canadian market had any real effect on the industry's standards and at least one censor accepted this fact and concluded that the only answer was constant vigilance.<sup>61</sup> The Saskatchewan censors appeared to have a strong anti-American bias at least as late as the Thirties. This bias can probably be explained by the fact that the United States had an almost complete monopoly of the film industry during that period and it was their films which gave the censors most of their trouble. The censor in 1932, for example, was pleased to be able to report an increase in the quality and number of British films available on the Canadian market and suggested that it might soon be possible to impose compulsory quotas of British films for Canadian theatres.<sup>62</sup> Judging from the rejection reports the Saskatchewan censors over the years did maintain high standards or, alternatively, as some might prefer to put it, low standards of tolerance. Their work was apparently generally acceptable as there appears to have been little criticism of it. Most of the criticism that was advanced came from people with special cases to plead.

D. H. Bocking.

<sup>55</sup>Moose Jaw Ministerial Association to C. A. Robson, January 9, 1922.

<sup>56</sup>A.S., *Martin Papers*, F. B. Reilly to W. M. Martin, August 17, 1918, pp. 2168-73.

<sup>57</sup>Theatre and Cinematographs Act and Regulations Thereunder, 1918.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 1926.

<sup>59</sup>S.S., 1931, Chapter 70.

<sup>60</sup>Saskatchewan, *Department of the Provincial Secretary*, Annual Report, 1920-1921, p. 10. Censoring of advertisements began on May 1.

<sup>61</sup>Saskatchewan, *Department of the Provincial Secretary*, Annual Report, 1920-1921, p. 10.

<sup>62</sup>Saskatchewan, *Department of Railways, Labor and Industry*, Annual Report, 1931-1932, p. 30.



## In Memory of Mary Rose (Pritchard) Sayers The Last Witness

In the early morning of April 2, 1885, Wandering Spirit and his Indian brothers perpetrated the Frog Lake massacre. Eighty-five years later on the morning of December 27, 1970, the last witness to that frightful event passed away. Mrs. Joseph Sayers nee Mary Rose Pritchard was born at Rocky Mountain House on February 12, 1874. Her parents were John Pritchard and Rose Delorme. At the time of the massacre her father was working as an interpreter for the Indian Agent at Frog Lake and Mary Rose, then only eleven years old, was in her father's house with four brothers and three sisters.

Mary Rose saw it happen right in front of her home.<sup>1</sup> There Wandering Spirit shot down Thomas Quinn, the Indian Agent. Quinn was of mixed Irish, French and Sioux blood.<sup>2</sup> The killing of Quinn started the shooting which took the lives of eight other men. The men killed besides Quinn were John Delaney, farm instructor; John C. Gowanlock, partner of R. C. Laurie of Battleford in the construction of a combined flour and saw mill;<sup>3</sup> George Dill, a trader; John Williscraft, a mechanic working at the mission; William C. Gilchrist, Gowanlock's clerk; Charles Gouin, a carpenter working at the agency; and the two French priests Leon Adelard Fafard and Felix Marie Marchand.<sup>4</sup>

One white man, William B. Cameron, a clerk for James K. Simpson agent for the Hudson's Bay Company escaped the massacre and lived to write its story under the heading of *Blood Red the Sun*. Cameron, while recognizing that he probably owed his survival to several friendly Indians felt that he owed special thanks to Louis Patenaude, the Cree step-son of his superior, James K. Simpson, for food and shelter and protection during the two months of captivity.<sup>5</sup> In his book Cameron tells something of the part played by John Pritchard and his wife in the events of that day and the subsequent two months captivity. Pritchard was absent from his house at the time Quinn and Gouin were shot<sup>6</sup> but he got back to the house while Wandering Spirit was some distance off shooting down the Priest Fafard.<sup>7</sup> When Wandering Spirit returned to Pritchard's house he found his entrance barred by Mrs. Pritchard who told him to be gone and that he had done enough mischief for one day. Whatever Wandering Spirit's real intentions were, Pritchard in later years assured his descendents that he was certain Wandering Spirit had intended to shoot him also. Though he had Indian blood Pritchard also had English blood and, besides, he was the interpreter for the Agent Quinn and, therefore, an enemy.<sup>8</sup> But Rose (Delorme) Pritchard was of French and Indian blood; and she was a brave and resolute woman.

<sup>1</sup>Harry Sayers, Edmonton, personal interview.

<sup>2</sup>W. B. Cameron: *Blood Red the Sun*, Calgary; Kenway Publishing, 1926, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>A. R. Turner, "The Letters of P. G. Laurie," *Saskatchewan History*, Volume XIV, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup>Cameron, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 56, 79.

<sup>6</sup>Harry Sayers, Edmonton, personal interview.

<sup>7</sup>Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 62

<sup>8</sup>Harry Sayers, Edmonton, personal interview.



Left to right: Joseph Sayer, Mary Rose Pritchard Sayer, Solomon Pritchard, 1962

How it happened is no longer known, but when the Pritchards were forced out of their home before it was burned, they were able to set themselves up in a large "A" tent.<sup>9</sup> Solomon, the eldest was 16, John Jr. was nearly 14, Mary Rose was 11, Amelia (Emily) was 10, Adeline was 8, Ralph was 6, Fred was 4, and Margaret was about 4 months. There is no doubt that although they were a scared and unhappy family they kept their heads. John Pritchard shortly began to be concerned for the welfare of the unfortunate widows of Gowanlock and Delaney. While many a man in his position would have left them to their fate as unwilling wives of the murderer of their husbands, Pritchard was so filled with compassion that he urgently pondered how he might accomplish their release. In this he was fortunate to have the aid of Adolphus Nolin, another mixed blood of French and Indian ancestry, who was his confidant and friend and who was equally concerned.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 68.

Obviously the English<sup>11</sup> blood in John Pritchard was a hindrance to his making any progress toward the rescue of the women. Nolin being part French, they believed would be reasonably safe so he made his way among the tents of the Indians. In the tent of Manichoos, one of the murderers, he found Mrs. Delaney, cowering and ashen white, among his Cree wives. Adroitly Nolin manoeuvred Manichoos into offering to sell Mrs. Delaney to Nolin. She was "not young" he admitted; "neither is she pretty." So he would not ask much—maybe two horses. That, of course, was a fearful price. Nolin had a pony but it was not enough. So he hurried back to John Pritchard, who didn't hesitate to add one of his two horses to Nolin's horse. Fortunately the Indian had not changed his mind, nor had another Indian bought her so Nolin shortly returned with Mrs. Delaney and she was added to the eleven or more people already in Pritchard's tent.<sup>12</sup>

The next question was what had become of 19 year old Mrs. Gowanlock? This time he sought the aid of Pierre Blondin,<sup>13</sup> another French métis, who had worked for Gowanlock. So he went in search of the unfortunate widow. There was only one horse left but John Pritchard had \$30.00. So for one horse and \$30.00 Blondin secured her freedom.<sup>14</sup>

But were the women really safe? The Indians took the view that they could acquire wives by barter or as trophies of war. It would be perfectly proper for them to steal them or take them again from Pritchard. So John Pritchard, his wife, his sons Solomon and John Jr., as well as Adolphus Nolin, had to maintain an around the clock vigil to protect the women.<sup>15</sup> For two months these brave and selfless people (half-breeds!) guarded the distraught and helpless widows day and night. On more than one occasion the situation was extremely "delicate," and as Cameron reports, they were never reimbursed for their outlay let alone rewarded.<sup>16</sup>

For two months John Pritchard, Solomon, John Jr., Mary Rose, the smaller children, Adolphus Nolin, and the widows were forced to suffer with Big Bear's

<sup>11</sup>Cameron quotes John Pritchard as saying he was Scotch and he may have thought he was. However, his grandfather, John Pritchard, was born in 1777 at Shrewsbury, England and came to the Lake Winnipeg area with the Montreal fur traders as early as 1801. In the winter of 1814-15 he made a journey from Montreal by way of James Bay to the Selkirk colony. After leaving the fur trade he became active in the Selkirk colony and for many years played a prominent part in the business, governmental, educational and religious life of that area. He had at least one son by his first wife, an Indian woman. This son, William, had a large family most of whom lived in the Fort Ellice—St. Lazare—Spy Hill area. One of his sons is the John Pritchard of this story.

<sup>12</sup>Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 61, 70. Joseph Hicks, "With Hatton's Scouts in Pursuit of Big Bear," *Alberta Historical Review*, Volume 18, No. 3, p. 19. Hicks states that they "found the two women in a camp of a half-breed named Pritchard who had bought them by paying four fine eastern heavy brood mares, harness and democrat." Mr. Hicks does not explain how John Pritchard would have the four heavy eastern horses and harness while serving as an interpreter at Frog Lake. It is doubtful if Indians at war would be interested in "heavy brood mares." Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 139 further confuses the story when he states that "Mrs. Delaney and Mrs. Gowanlock rode with Pritchard on his wagon when camp was moved." Cameron, p. 189 seems to say that Pierre Blondin secured Mrs. Gowanlock's release with his own horse and money and for his own purposes.

<sup>15</sup>Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 70

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 221.

camp as it moved, first into battle, and then in retreat, through the bush, swamp, snow, rain and mosquitoes of April and May until Big Bear's camp disintegrated and the swaggering painted war chiefs released the prisoners. It should be noted that the Pritchards, Nolin, Cameron, and the J. K. Simpsons were not the only prisoners of Big Bear's unmanageable warriors. They also had as prisoners the Hudson's Bay Company Trader from Fort Pitt, W. J. McLean and his numerous family, one of whom was 8 year old Duncan. In addition they had brought in John Fitzpatrick, the Farming Instructor at Cold Lake, as well as H. R. Halpin, the Hudson's Bay Company Agent and the Rev. Pete LeGoff. From Onion Lake they had George G. Mann, the farming instructor, and his family, and the Anglican Minister, Rev. Chas. Quinney and his family. They had also the rest of the Hudson's Bay Company staff from abandoned and looted Fort Pitt.<sup>17</sup>

Following the collapse of the "Rebellion", John Pritchard and his wife were witnesses at the trials at Battleford and at Regina. After the trials John Pritchard took a homestead at Bresaylor. While developing his homestead he also taught school at Little Pine and Red Pheasant reserves and he did some freighting. John and Rose had another son born to them on the 23 of November, 1892. He they proudly called William after John's father. William grew up to be a handsome big man and a good businessman. For many years he was prominent in the business affairs of Battleford, where he now lives in retirement.

About 1895 John's wife, Rose, developed tuberculosis. John had heard of someone in Medicine Hat who was able to effect marvelous cures so he sold his Bresaylor farm and stock, loaded his family into carts or wagons and headed across country to Medicine Hat. Alas, it was a false hope and they returned to Battleford, where Rose died in March of 1897.

Though John had spent his all in the effort to save his wife, he somehow managed to secure a half section of land in the Prongua district. There, over a period of years, he not only raised his younger children but also built a sizable herd of good horses of considerable value. But prosperity was not for John. His horses contracted "pink-eye." One after the other their heads hung down and they died. That was bad enough, but to add to the problem was the requirement that the dead horses be buried deep in the soil. One hundred years from now, or one thousand, excavators may find the skeleton's of John Pritchard's horses down deep in the soil of the Eagle Hills.

The loss of the horses was too much. John was broke and dispossessed. Besides, he was no longer young. At the Indian Industrial School on the hill south of old Battleford the Principal, superintendent, and manager was none other than his distant cousin, Rev. Edward K. Matheson. Mr. Matheson one day needed an assistant farm instructor for the summers and a night watchman and fireman for the winters. John was elected to both positions. What an assistant farm instructor was is not clear but the night watchman—fireman bit is clear enough. First of all, all the houses, and the rooms in the houses, as well as some of the outbuildings, were heated by wood-burning stoves. Since wood has a habit

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 100.

of disappearing astonishingly fast in winter weather, firing or feeding these stoves with wood was a tiresome steady occupation. On top of that, of course, the stoves were a constant danger and concern, for they could become too enthusiastic in their efforts to keep the rooms warm. They were then said to be "overheated" and overheated stoves or stove pipes frequently caused the house to be burned down. So John was a watchman.

Though the school never did burn down, it did shut down in 1914. As an institution it had outlived its usefulness. John was again out of a job. Moreover, because he was ever generous toward his large and struggling family and particularly to his son John Jr., (Black Jack) he had precious little money. At 73 years of age he needed a new job. Mr. Risdale, an old acquaintance, had started a clothing store and later a grocery department. He gave Pritchard work and there "gentleman Johnny" was a well-loved and respected clerk and generally useful man for the rest of his working life. In his childhood John was schooled at Red River for the ministry of the Anglican Church. How much education he actually received, or where, and why he abandoned that objective, are now mysteries. He was a fairly well-educated man, and in earlier years he served the Government in several capacities. He had a great love for his Bible, which he read every day and knew so well that callers interested in converting him to some sect by quoting the Bible out of context were frequently discomfited.

As a young man John Pritchard had worked in the offices of Urbaine Delorme a free trader. Where that was is not clear but it was probably at St. Francis Xavier.<sup>18</sup> There John learned not only to trade, but also to keep the records. There he must have made the acquaintance of Delorme's daughter Rose. As so often happens, the boss was not happy when his daughter indicated she wanted to marry the servant. But, as so often happens, the daughter went ahead anyway and married the servant on May 5, 1863, at the St. Francis Xavier Church. With his marriage John ceased to be a servant—he was fired.<sup>19</sup>

What John did after that is not clear but he must have gone to Rocky Mountain House, probably as an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. There Solomon, John Jr., and Mary Rose were born. And from there he seems to have gone to Frog Lake in 1875, for Amelia (Emily) was born there April 17, 1875. It is doubtful if he stayed at Frog Lake continuously until 1885, for Adelaide (Adele) and Raphael are supposed to have been born at Red Deer River in Saskatchewan and Alfred (Fred) and Margaret (Maggie) at Battleford—all before 1885.

The story of Joseph Sayers, the husband of Mary Rose Pritchard, seems to begin with a John Sayer born about 1750, possibly at Montreal, of English background. He was engaged in the fur trade as an agent of the North West Company and was for a time proprietor in charge of Fond du Lac. Apparently he married a French Canadian half-breed woman. One of their sons was Pierre Guillaume Sayer who was born about 1795 somewhere in the Northwest.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup>M. A. MacLeod and W. L. Morton: *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown Warden of the Plains of Red River*, Toronto, McClelland, 1963. p. 93.

<sup>19</sup>William Pritchard, Battleford, personal interview.

<sup>20</sup>W. S. Wallace: *Documents Relating to the Northwest Company*, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1934, p. 497.

He was baptized at Saint Boniface on July 18, 1832 and married at St. Francis Xavier on March 2, 1835 to Josephite Frobisher, daughter of Alexander Frobisher and his Indian wife Marguerite. Pierre became one of the farmers, traders, hunters and freighters who made up part of the population of the Red River settlement.

Generally it is indicated that the fur trade wars ended with the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. But it was hardly so for west of the Great Lakes the American Fur Company was a distressing influence. Though the Hudson's Bay Company did not withdraw from the Mississippi and the Missouri country for many years, they had to contend with the American Fur Company and numerous free traders for the business they received. They had no chartered monopoly there and it could not be kept a secret from the Red River settlers and the métis that it might be profitable to bypass the Hudson's Bay Company posts and trade with people south of the 49th parallel. In the early years following the union this temptation was not too strong but as time went on free traders started penetrating the Hudson's Bay Company country. Then George Simpson hit on the happy expedient of licensing Cuthbert Grant, Andrew McDermott and James Sinclair to trade on their own but to bring their furs to the Company. They and others also were kept busy as freighters for the Company.

This ploy worked while the economy was relatively under control but in 1843 the Chief Factor, Duncan Finlayson, refused to renew the McDermott and Sinclair freighting contracts. This made a lot of people angry both on the Red and the Assiniboine—even in the Scotch settlement. So it is not surprising that Norman W. Kittson of St. Paul got the message and arrived in Red River in December of the same year. Nor is it surprising that he opened a trading post at Pembina the next summer. Both French and British half-breeds were so discomfited in the economic struggle that they, quite determinedly if quite illegally, entered the fur trade in numbers. When they did not dispose of their furs to Kittson at Pembina they took them to St. Paul or to St. Peters away to the south.<sup>21</sup>

Naturally the Hudson's Bay Company and the Council of Assiniboia reacted with all the means provided by its charter. Houses and premises were searched for furs, cart trains were stopped and searched, mail was made subject to inspection, higher duties were imposed on goods from the United States and furs were seized wherever they were found. The Scotch settlers wanted to do things legally. They petitioned. But the company was desperate. So were the settlers.<sup>22</sup> They needed food; they needed markets; they needed money. So the half-breeds and metis defied the laws. As the year 1848 wore on the new Chief Factor, John Ballenden, decided he had to make a show of enforcing the laws of trade. So he laid charges against Guillaume Sayer and Angus McGillis of St. Francis Xavier and someone named Laronde and Alexis Goulet from the Red above the Forks.<sup>23</sup> Why only those four is not clear. Perhaps he did not want

<sup>21</sup>MacLeod and Morton, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-134.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 134.

to take on the whole of the half-breed and métis population. But he might as well have planned it that way; for it is what really happened.

Numerous writers have described the event, with varying details, occurrences, and inaccuracies. For some reason or other Guillaume Sayer seemed to be the first one on the list. Only he was arrested, imprisoned, and released on bail. The others merely put on bail.<sup>24</sup> It is said the authorities dared not arrest others.<sup>25</sup> One could make a long story of the ineptitude of the Governor, the indiscretions of the Chelsea Pensioners who were there in place of the troops to help support the court, the dislike of Recorder Thom by all the métis, the failing power of Cuthbert Grant to control the métis and half-breeds, the growing belief that the company's charter and its monopoly of trade were invalid and the métis half-breed belief that they with the Indians were the owners of the country and were not responsible to the Company. But it will be sufficient here to record the events of May 17, 1849, when the accused were summoned to trial.

May 17, 1849, was Ascension Day. Because all the métis would be going to Mass on the other side of the river from the Fort that morning, the day was set deliberately by Recorder Thom on the assumption the métis would then not be free to make trouble. But it was a tremendous tactical error. The métis did indeed all go to Mass. They went early; they were purposeful; and they were armed. A comparative newcomer to the area, Louis Riel Sr., addressed them. They organized themselves, and they crossed over the River to the house of Sheriff Alexander Ross to tell him a few things: there was going to be no punishment for either Sayer or the others. Then with him they approached the court. Ross was an observant man. And what he observed was that there were 377 men with guns and numerous others "armed with other missiles of every description."<sup>26</sup>

It wasn't a very good atmosphere in which to hold court and it quickly became obvious that this court was going to make history of some kind. When Sayer was called at eleven o'clock he did not appear. "He, with the other offenders, was held in close custody by an armed force of their countrymen outdoors, and we were not so imprudent as to direct the application of force, or even to insist on his bail bringing him forward," says Sheriff Ross.<sup>27</sup> So the Court busied itself with other things. At one o'clock it called for Sayer again. But again he did not show. So the court decided to send out a message that the half-breeds might name a leader and send in a deputation to assist Sayer.<sup>28</sup> James Sinclair was appointed spokesman and twelve entered, leaving their arms with some twenty others who stood just outside the door. Sinclair was permitted to act as counsel for Sayer, a jury was formed with difficulty, and the trial proceeded.

Whether anyone was really surprised or not is not recorded; but Sayer's young son Louison testified that his father had traded furs, and Sayers himself

<sup>24</sup>A. Ross: *The Red River Settlement*, Minneapolis, Ross and Haines, 1957, p. 373.

<sup>25</sup>W. L. Morton: *Manitoba—A History*, Toronto, University of Toronto, 1967, p. 77.

<sup>26</sup>A. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

admitted he had traded furs and that John Edward Harritt, a Chief Factor of the Company, had outfitted him. So the jury dutifully brought in a verdict of "guilty of trading in furs." Then Donald Gunn, foreman of the jury, asked Chief Factor Ballenden to extend "mercy" in view of Sayers, and the others holding the view that they were doing so with permission. Ballenden expressed satisfaction that the principle had been upheld and withdrew the charges against the other three.<sup>29</sup>

"Not a word was said whether the half-breeds were, or were not to trade furs in future."<sup>30</sup> but when the juror, Ducharme, reached the door he shouted: "Le Commerce est libre!"<sup>31</sup> The 400 or so assembled there believed it, too, and proceeded to put on a show of happiness. What is more, the Company officers discovered they believed it—the Charter notwithstanding. Trade was free. And Guillaume Sayer, the accidental vehicle for it all, as well as dozens of others henceforth practiced it in that part of Rupert's Land and some of them grew rich.

Pierre Guillaume Sayer, sometimes called William, did not live too long. Both he and his wife seem to have died before 1870 but they left a family of nine. Though the family scattered in 1882, Harry, Cleophas, and Joseph joined with Taylors, Bremners, Spences, and others to go to Edmonton, the booming land of promise.<sup>32</sup> The trip across the prairies with cattle, horses, machinery, household effects, and numerous wives and children took a long time so when they got about 30 miles west of Battleford, still the capital of the North West Territories, they decided it was too late in the season to go further. They stopped, put up hay and prepared winter quarters for themselves. By the next spring they had decided they were well satisfied with the spot where they were. It had everything they needed. So they proceeded to build permanent homes—and to call the place Bresaylor—a compound of parts of three family names. Joined by more Spences, Fidlers, Morrisons, Swaynes, Tait and others in that season of 1883, they quickly made Bresaylor a name to remember.

Of the Sayers who arrived in 1882 we are chiefly interested in Harry. There are two reasons for that: first, he married twice, first to Mary Bremner and second to Elsie Beauchaine and fathered 21 children; second, one of the children born to his first wife at Headingly on January 1, 1870 was Joseph. It will not be surprising that Harry Sayer was a freighter when he lived in Manitoba. Following the "freeing of trade," he made many trips to St. Paul, St. Cloud, Georgetown, or to Pembina. Though freighting in the Red River area was no longer plentiful, there was lots of it at Battleford and Bresaylor. First from Qu'Appelle, and then from Swift Current, to Battleford, Prince Albert, Green Lake, Onion Lake, Fort Pitt, Frog Lake, Cold Lake, Edmonton, St. Albert, Lac Ste. Anne and Athabasca. Harry had equipment and he had boys. At an unbelievably young age, his son Joseph was travelling in all directions.

In 1885 Joseph was 15. That practically made him a man. Without commenting on his age, Inspector Francis Dickens of the N.W.M.P. at Fort Pitt on

<sup>29</sup>R. St. G. Stubbs: *Four Recorders of Rupert's Land*, Winnipeg, Peguis, 1967, pp. 28-29.

<sup>30</sup>A. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

<sup>31</sup>R. St. G. Stubbs, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>32</sup>Arlean McPherson: *The Battlefords: A History*, Saskatoon, Modern Press, 1968, p. 58.



February 10, 1885, recorded in his diary "Joe Sayers arrived from Battleford with freight for Indian Department," and then that, "Sayers brothers left for Frog Lake." How "Joe Sayers" became "Sayers brothers" so quickly is not explained. On February 16 he records: "Sayers Bros. (freighters) passed in route to Battleford after delivering freight at Frog Lake."<sup>33</sup>

If Inspector Dickens had had even a little bit of the imagination and story telling ability of his famous father he would have told that "Sayers Bros" had come all the way from Swift Current with two huge mill stones on two sleighs, in winter, through wide open and unfenced country where it would be easy to be caught in a blizzard and to become lost, where there was a great scarcity of wood for fuel, where all the water for man and beast was frozen, and where in that winter there was a great scarcity of snow for sleighs. He would also have recorded that the boys were under a contract to deliver the huge stones to the Roman Catholic Mission at Frog Lake by a certain date or suffer penalties and would have commented on what a bad time they had on side hills getting from Fort Pitt to Frog Lake and the skill with which they extracted themselves from near disaster. Of course, he would have had to record that the people who were to build the mill were all murdered on April 2, 1885, and that the stones lay where they were unloaded for ever and ever thereafter.<sup>34</sup> But Inspector Dickens was not a writing man. Why, even on April 15, when the police with great hardship crossed the river and fled toward Battleford in a hastily made scow, all he said was: "Very cold weather. Travelled."

The people of Bresaylor were of mixed blood and the people around Batoche expected that they were going to join in the 1885 uprising. It came as a shock to Riel and to quite a few others that most of the Bresaylor people were not inclined that way at all. As at Winnipeg fifteen years earlier, the Scotch half-breeds did not suffer from the same persecution complex as did the métis. So the Bresaylor people quickly found themselves in the centre of considerable attention and pressure. Joubert, the school teacher at Bresaylor, and allegedly the only one there in sympathy with Riel and his supporters, had sent word to the rebels that the Bresaylor people had no intention of joining them.<sup>35</sup> They were rich in cattle and possessions and stood to gain nothing, but to lose much.

Riel and his Council were desperately trying to get all the Indians and all the half-breeds and métis from all over the west to join them. Indeed, only by that means could they succeed at all. Messengers were sent everywhere. Very persuasive ones, too. The Stonies from Poundmaker's Reserve were easy victims. Under the heady influence of a group of agitators that had come from Duck Lake they became impossible to control. They terrorized the countryside, killed James Payne and Barney Freeman, and, under a man from Duck Lake by the name of Norbert Delorme, forced the Bresaylor people to go to Poundmaker's Reserve.<sup>36</sup>

The Bresaylor people had been advised to go into the barracks at Battleford

<sup>33</sup>V. LaChance: *Diary of Francis Dickens*, Kingston, Jackson Press, 1930, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup>Joseph Sayers, Bresaylor, personal interview.

<sup>35</sup>Norma Sluman: *Poundmaker*, Toronto, Ryerson, 1967, p. 211.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 213.

but they could not believe their danger. Finally some of them, particularly the Taylors, did go in, less for protection than to exhibit tangible proof of loyalty. Most of the rest including the Sayers family—Harry, Alexander, Joseph, and all the rest of Harry's first family were too slow, or too anxious to stay home and protect their possessions. By implication they were rebels. The people in Battleford reviled them. To complete the irony of their situation, when they ceased to be prisoners of the Indians they became prisoners of the Government. On July 4 Henry and Baptiste Sayer were charged with high treason, but the charges were dismissed by Francis J. Dickens acting as a Justice of the Peace. As if that were not enough, they were then charged with treason felony. But again they were discharged as there was no case against them.<sup>37</sup>

Following the rebellion the people of Bresaylor began the painful task of restoring their economic position as well as their social position. The cattle the Indians did not eat and the household effects not destroyed by them were frequently taken or destroyed by the volunteers who had come to restore law and order.<sup>38</sup>

Henry Sayers, and his sons Alex and Joseph were hard put to make a new start. There was a lot of freighting to do for every settler in the country was in want of food, clothing, shoes, crockery, and house furnishings. Many needed new homes and all the supplies had to be brought from Swift Current. Henry Sayers was able to rebuild his freighting outfits and he and the boys were soon back on the trail to Swift Current. The Sayers also set to work to make good the destruction of property on their farms. Fortunately their houses had not been burned but just looted.

Now, if you will recall, John Pritchard took a homestead at Bresaylor after the rebellion. So there in that community it was not unusual that young Joseph Sayers should meet the attractive and intelligent Mary Rose Pritchard. As frequently happens when boy meets girl it was not long until they found they had more in common than the rewards of freighting or of raising chickens. On January 6, 1890, Father Vachon out on the Sweet Grass Reserve united in marriage these two young people. There was a world of opportunity, adventure and enduring love and affection ahead.

When Joseph and Mary Rose celebrated their 75 wedding anniversary on January 6, 1965, they were a proud couple surrounded and supported by 9 of their 13 children: Joseph, Edward and Cecil, successful farmers at Bresaylor and Paynton; Harry a retired lawyer and civil servant at Edmonton; Leonard, chartered accountant and lawyer, Assistant Auditor General for Canada; Gordon, an orthodontist in Toronto; Lena, Hilda, and Helen, the wives of responsible businessmen. Also far too many grandchildren and great grandchildren to mention here. They celebrated their 76th anniversary on January 6, 1966, but on September 23, 1966 Joseph Sayers laid down the burden and entered into his rest. On December 27, 1970 his wife, Rose, the last living witness to the massacre at Frog Lake, died.

C. D. Denney.

<sup>37</sup>Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1886 No. 8, pp. 103, 111.

<sup>38</sup>R. Jefferson, *Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan*, Canadian North-West Historical Society Publications, Volume 1, No. V., p. 159.

THE NEWSPAPER SCRAPBOOK

*Report of General Meeting of The Doukhobor  
Community Held at Verigin, January 25th, 1910.*

There were present one man delegate and one woman from each village, also some honorary members. The number of people attending were about fifty men and fifty women.

The meeting was opened by each person present reading a Psalm, and all joining in the singing of the hymn, "Glory to God," and by common expression of hearty gratitude to God for the success of present life.

After this there was long and serious conversation in regard to the universal meaning of Christ's teaching. It was clearly explained from the conversations that Christ in His teachings gave us to understand that God is a universal God. So there were some examples taken from the life of people before Christ's time. People at that time understood Divinity as a destructive force, taking for instance the worshipping of thunder, winds, fire and other elements. People of such belief often themselves committed actions of destruction. Wars and other illegal actions were allowed.

Christ clearly explained to us that the most superior force by which the universe is ruled, is the force of good and people wishing to worship this good force must first themselves be good. By so doing one would become nearer and adopt himself to the good force of the universe what is called "God." The winds and thunder are temporary occurrences, but the world is guarded by this force of Good.

After that, various questions of economy were presented to the meeting for consideration.

(1) It was stated to the meeting that this year was closed by the payment of all debts in full, the funds for which came from outside works and the sale of grain.

(2) The delegates from each village presented a report of the quantity of wheat, oats, barley, flax, pease, etc., remaining.

(3) It was decided by all present that from this date until the arrival of new crops, six bushels of wheat be retained for the personal use of each person, and that in the spring one bushel of wheat and one bushel of barley be sown for each individual; the remainder of the land to be sown with oats. Flax and pease can be sown in accordance with the desire of each village. The majority of the members of the meeting expressed their wish that each village should keep on sowing flax and pease; to keep feed for stock: one hundred bushels of oats for each team of horses and fifty bushels of barley for each yoke of oxen.

(4) It was decided that by the 15th of February each village must have grain for food of people, seed grain and grain for horses and oxen separated. The seed grain must be carefully cleaned and stored in good granaries, and all balance of grain in each village, after 15th February will be hauled to railroad

points for sale. As per the reports the community has at present, the grain for sale will amount to seventy-five thousand dollars. Shipments of grain will be made as heretofore, through the community offices. All moneys received from the sale of grain will be deposited with the Home Bank of Canada at Winnipeg and withdrawn when required.

(5) All merchandise will be purchased, as before, through the community office at Verigin and those villages which have credit accounts, will receive goods to the value of same. All villages having a credit account, are willing that goods be bought for villages which have none. And in view of this it was decided at this meeting that no person should purchase goods individually.

(6) An inventory of all property belonging to the community beyond the village outfits was made and is attached to general accounts.

(7) The community has in all villages about four hundred teams of working horses, valued at \$350 per team, which amounts to one hundred and forty thousand dollars; five hundred yokes of oxen, valued at \$100 per yoke, amounts to fifty thousand dollars; five hundred milch cows, valued at \$35 each, amounts to seventeen thousand and five hundred dollars. Besides that there are full outfits for horses and oxen as: Harness, farm implements, wagons, sleighs, etc. All affairs of the community consisting of 42 villages are in good shape.

(8) The community accounts for 1909 were presented by V. A. Potapoff, S. Reibin and M. W. Cazakoff. Accounts were found correct in every respect and approved by all present. The copy of accounts is attached herewith.

(9) Vasil Potapoff and Simeon Reibin requested the meeting to allow them to resign their positions. Their resignations were very reluctantly accepted, and the meeting tendered them a hearty vote of thanks in acknowledgement of their services in the interest of the community in the past.

(10) It was decided to proceed with the election of managers of the community affairs. The following were elected for 1910 for purchasing goods and implements and distributing same to villages: Nicholas Fofonoff, of village Vernoe, Vasil Hleboff, of village Lubovnoe, John Podovinnikoff, who was in office at Veregin before, Alex Reibin, of village Vosnesenie, and Paul Potopoff, of village Bogom-Dannoe, M. W. Cazakoff was re-elected as a manager of office and financial affairs.

(11) As the community had good heavy crops and full success in life during the year 1909, it was decided by all those present to send no men on outside work this coming summer, but instead to increase cultivation acreage at home.

(12) It was decided by this meeting to deliver to Verigin Flour Mill all wheat in excess of amount reserved for the purpose of grinding and selling the flour. Prices on wheat were set as follows: For highest grade 85c per bushel, and for second grade 80c per bushel. The villages situated at the north colony will receive for long hauling 10c per bushel extra, and villages Tambovka, Trudolubivoe, Vossianie, Petrovo and Voskresenie 5c per bushel extra.

(13) The question was raised before the meeting in regard to the immigration to British Columbia. It was definitely shown that in Saskatchewan where

the Doukhobors live at present, in consequence of wide prairies lying a considerable distance from the sea, the climate in winter is very dry and cold, the temperature is often over 30 degrees Reaumur, and therefore some sickness prevails, such as bad coughs and rheumatism. Immigration to British Columbia was decided as most necessary.

A particular report of the British Columbia climate was submitted by Peter V. Verigin and by Nicholas Ziboroff, delegate from British Columbia. The first party of community Doukhobors immigrated to British Columbia for the purpose of starting work, and have been living there for two years. They have found the climate exceedingly mild in winter: temperature not being over 15 degrees Reaumur. This occurs about ten times during all the winter, but generally, the temperature is 3, 5 and 7 degrees below zero Reaumur, and sometimes 2, 3 and 7 degrees above zero Reaumur.

In consequence of the mountains, the water for drinking is very pure, and the air also very clear and healthy. The reporter, Peter Verigin, is under the impression that the air and waters are similar to those in Switzerland in nature, and even much more healthy. Therefore, with the view to become healthier, immigration to British Columbia has been decided on possibly sooner than intended.

In British Columbia it is possible to grow fruits of nearly all kinds: apples, pears, plums, cherries, etc. small fruits and vegetables are grown wonderfully good. The community have already bought about ten thousand acres of fruit lands. There is splendid timber on it for building purposes.

Toward the close of the meeting there were several conversations in regard to the necessity of the moral enlightenment of the Doukhobors as a Christian Community of the Universal Brotherhood. As already stated, God is universally good, and consequently his followers also must be good, which is their superior degree of nobleness and enlightenment. Such followers of spiritual necessity must not be blood-thirsty, and therefore their food must not be slaughterous. A person whose object is to be pure in spirit, must also be anxious about the cleanliness of his body, as for instance, all houses as far as possible clean, especially in living rooms the air always must be as like as possible to the outside air, which is given by the Lord for the nourishing of all people and animal. We deem necessary the water in every village must be kept in clean wells. It is also necessary that every well must be laid round inside with stones or brick, and good pumps installed.

The meeting continued four days. It was open every day for eight hours.

With sincere wishes for every success from the Lord in their future life and with greetings to all brothers and sisters in every village the meeting was brought to a close.

S. REIBIN,

Ex-Secretary to Doukhobor Community.

—*Free Press*, Winnipeg, March 1, 1910.

## Book Reviews

*On Canada: Essays in Honour of Frank H. Underhill.* Edited by Norman Pennington. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971. Pp. ix-xvii, 196, \$11.50.

One of the penalties of having been an intellectual radical in one's youth is to be patted on the head by intellectual eunuchs in one's old age. Frank Underhill was one of the most mind-expanding teachers who ever appeared in a Canadian university, as I can testify from experience in the years at the University of Saskatchewan when Professor Underhill taught political science under the guise of giving lectures in History. Students emerged from his classroom either seething with rage because Professor Underhill had kicked several of their sacred cows in the teeth or else whooping with glee that those sacred cows had got their comeuppance. It happened again when he moved to the University of Toronto in 1927. In the thirties and the forties he was teacher to the nation in the columns of *The Canadian Forum*; we waited for each issue to see where F.H.U. had broken out this time. And at conference after conference wherever a group of intellectuals had gathered to discuss Canadian "problems", he was the gadfly, irritating, stimulating, forcing you to look at your unexamined premises. Now, when he is in his eighties, a group of scholars come to bury him.

None of the intellectual excitement which Frank Underhill generated over a period of fifty years comes through in this group of sedate essays in "honour" of him, although most of the essays are on subjects about which Frank Underhill felt and wrote passionately. Margaret Prang contributes a lack-lustre piece on "F.H.U. of the *Canadian Forum*," and Graham Spry writes perfunctorily on the Canadian Radio League which led to the establishment of publicly owned radio broadcasting in Canada. William Ormsby discusses the recommendation of Lord Durham in his famous *Report* that French-speaking Canadians ought to be assimilated into Canadian life; he makes throughout the uncritical assumption that of course Lord Durham was wrong. Fred Cogswell writes on modern Quebec's poetry; most of contemporary Quebec poets are bleak, bored, and nihilistic, but presently they will come out of their trauma, because the French-Canadian brand of existentialism is "like separatism, a temporary phenomenon." Escott Reid tells us what a good fellow Louis St. Laurent was, and Arnold Smith gives us the usual bromides about what a fine contribution Canada has made to the Commonwealth, the United Nations, and the North Atlantic Alliance. Naim Kattan, writing in French on "Le Canada et La France", informs us that everybody ought to learn to speak French and so make Canada genuinely bicultural. This may have been news in 1967, when the essay was written, but it sounds a little pathetic to-day. The best and most spirited piece in the book is that in which Neil Compton takes issue with Underhill's oft-repeated reproach that in Canada we have no lively liberal tradition; Professor Compton explains and defends our cultural conservatism.

The editor contributes a pleasant introductory sketch of Underhill's career and a first-class bibliography (60 pages of it) of Underhill's writing. The bibliography, however, is arranged chronologically, which makes it very difficult to

track down a particular item unless you happen to know the year of its writing. The bibliography needs to be supplemented by a subject index.

Carlyle King.

*Pen, Paper and Printing Ink.* By Andrew King, Saskatoon, Modern Press, 1971. Illus. Pp. 242, \$6.95.

This is a story about the editors, printers and publishers of weekly newspapers on the western prairies. While these local newspapers depended upon the support of the local community for survival they were also, particularly in the period before the advent of radio, important factors in molding local opinion. It is interesting to note that since the publication of the first newspaper in what is now Saskatchewan in 1878 this province has had over 500 weekly newspapers.

The author gives the early history of publishing in Saskatchewan. The author writes, "Experience became the sole teacher and the pupil gained in knowledge and understanding through the study and application of the lessons taught." There were no schools of printing, but the trade journals were well read. New settlers and the influx of capital brought changes in the prairies, and there was a revolution in farm methods and practice because of the introduction of power machinery drawn by gasoline and diesel tractors. It was possible to increase the size of the newspaper when the stationary gasoline engine was introduced to the printing shops. During the depression years of the Thirties economic pressure changed the course and future of business and the professions, and the weekly newspapers were no exception. The people during this time were brought to a fuller understanding of each other's problems.

Mr. King, who has had 70 years experience in the field of journalism and printer's craft, was born in Winnipeg in 1885, and served his apprenticeship with the *Souris, Manitoba Plaindealer*. From 1905 to 1909 he published his own weekly newspaper at Elgin, Manitoba before moving to Saskatchewan to establish the *Rouleau Enterprise*. An American printer failed to ship the required posters to advertise the coming of a circus, and this accident of fate led to the start of a poster printing plant in Rouleau in 1915 by Mr. King. The *Enterprise Show Plant*, later known as *King Show Print*, was at one time the only poster printing plant in Canada. Mr. King purchased the *Estevan Mercury* in 1944 and the acquisition of this newspaper probably was the highwater mark of Mr. King's career as a newspaperman. One realizes he has written very modestly about his own efforts in community affairs, but it is clear that he was constantly and deeply involved in public affairs at many levels throughout his career.

There is an interesting chapter on the Chautauqua movement, which was an attempt at adult education. The headquarters was in New York, and was an outgrowth of Methodist camp meetings. Smaller towns of the western prairies were given a high standard of entertainment by noted orators, dramatic plays and musical items. The author has given colorful accounts of some of the speakers, and has described the characteristics of the people and the social atmosphere in the community. Some of the important events in Saskatchewan are highlighted such as the establishment of Notre Dame College at Wilcox.

The western country printers were very ingenious men and the book, *Pen, Paper and Printing Ink* is a tribute to the editors, printers and publishers in the western prairies. The reader gains the impression that the earlier weekly newspaper editors were craftsmen first, and writers last. There was no space for sensational writing, individual privacy was to a large extent respected. A key feature was the column headed "Local Notes", and there was good news coverage. Mr. Andrew King has made an important contribution to the historical records because of his personal descriptions of the men he knew so well. The facts are presented in an interesting manner and the author's style is forthright, not ponderous, and makes easy reading. His book should be read by all who would wish more fully to understand the early years in the west.

Helen M. Williams.

## Recent Publications in Local History

From time to time *Saskatchewan History* has published lists of local histories which have not been individually reviewed in this magazine. This list includes twenty-nine titles received by the Regina office of the Saskatchewan Archives since 1968, some of which had been published during the Centennial of Confederation in 1967. Because of the passage of time, some of them may no longer be available, and, as many of them have been donated, we are unable to cite prices for all of them.

A. R. TURNER.

### ANERLEY

*Anerley Invicta Monmawala Surbiton of Yesteryear*. Compiled by local committee, 1970. Pp. 117, illus., \$5.00. Available from Miss Mary Tweedie, Macrorie.

### BATEMAN

*Journey to Yesteryear*. Reminiscences of Bateman district pioneers, edited by Irene Lightbody, 1967. Pp. 76, illus. Available from Bateman Homemakers' Club, Bateman.

### BIG MUDDY

*Big Muddy Valley*. Compiled by Mrs. Isabelle Eaglesham, 1970. Pp. 13, mimeo. Available from Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society, c/o the Secretary, Rev. M. B. Banting, 2306 Athol St., Regina.

### CATER

*Lest We Forget*. Early days in the Medstead and Cater districts. Edited by Mrs. Evelyn Casson, 1969. Pp. 40, map, illus., mimeo. Available from Cater Homemakers' Club, Cater.

### CONQUEST

*Proud Heritage*. Compiled by Centennial History Committee, 1968. Includes history of Conquest and village of Ardath. Pp. 260, illus., \$7.25. Available from Mrs. Helen C. Moran, Box 154, Conquest.

### DEMAINE

*Pioneer Trails*. Compiled by Busy Bee Club, 1968. Pp. 65, illus. Available from Mrs. Lucy Shirley, R.R. 1, Demaine.



## ELLISBORO

*Man! Man! Busy Look at that Land.* By Angelena Hughan Campbell. Published by Ellisboro Old-Timers' Association, 1967. Pp. 87, illus. (Out-of-print; microfilm copy in Saskatchewan Archives.)

## EVESHAM

*Home Coming Booklet.* Compiled by Evesham Back Home Week Committee, 1968. Pp. 75, illus. Suggested source: Secretary, Village of Evesham.

## EXCELSIOR

*History of Rural Municipality of Excelsior No. 166.* Compiled by Charles Lee, 1967. Pp. 50, illus. Available from Secretary-Treasurer, R.M. of Excelsior, Rush Lake.

## FILLMORE

*Footprints in the Sod.* Compiled by Book Committee, Estelle Rebekah Lodge, Fillmore, 1970. Includes histories of Fillmore, Osage, Huronville, and Creelman. Pp. 158, illus., \$5.00. Available from Mrs. Gordon Hart, Fillmore.

## FRANCIS

*Community Flashback. Francis and District.* Compiled by Francis Centennial Committee, 1967. Pp. 110, illus. Available from Mrs. Nellie Farquharson, Francis.

## GLADMAR

*Homesteading in Surprise Valley.* Compiled by Alice Henderson and Mrs. Nick Stefan, 1970. Pp. 144, maps, illus. Available from Gladmar Community Club, Gladmar.

## GRIFFIN

*Griffin Prairie Wool 1900-1967.* Compiled by Mary Scarrow and Mabel Carlton, 1969. Pp. 196, maps, illus., \$4.00. Available from Mrs. Frank Scarrow, Box 88, Griffin.

## HOLBEIN

*Pioneer Days.* Compiled by Wild Rose Homemakers' Club, Holbein, 1970. Includes histories of Wild Rose, Sturgeon Valley, and Holbein. Pp. 76, illus., \$3.50. Available from Mrs. Georgia Lawrie, Holbein.

## KYLE

*Early Settlers and History of Kyle and White Bear Districts.* By Alex Gillanders, 1968. Pp. 21, mimeo. Available from Alex Gillanders, Kyle.

## LACADENA

*Homestead to Centennial. Lacadena 1900-1967.* Compiled by local history committee, 1967. Pp. 77, maps, mimeo. Available from Farm Women's Club, Lacadena.

## LANDESTREU

*Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Landestreu, 1895-1970.* By Rev. Norman J. Threinen, 1970. Pp. 28, illus. Available from Rev. N. J. Threinen, MacNutt.

## LAKE PARK

*Lake Park Patchquilt.* Edited by Mrs. Selmer Gjesdal and Mrs. Ralph Silde, Centennial Book Committee, 1969. Pp. 107, illus., \$2.70. Available from Mrs. S. Gjesdal, Birch Hills.

## LEROY

*History of Leroy and District.* Edited by Mrs. R. S. Woods, Leroy Centennial Committee, 1967. Pp. 80, map, illus. Available from Mrs. R. S. Woods, Leroy.

## LOCKWOOD

*Story of Lockwood Community.* Edited by Mrs. R. T. Stephenson, Centennial Book Committee, 1968. Pp. 68, illus. Available from Mr. R. H. Plaster, Secretary, Village of Lockwood, Lockwood.

## ROSTHERN

*Historical Review of Rosthern Superintendency.* Edited by J. Andres, Miss H. R. Newman, and Mrs. G. Hanson, 1967. Pp. 145, mimeo. Available from Superintendent of Schools, Rosthern School Unit No. 49, Rosthern.

## SANCTUARY

*Bygone Communities of Saltburn, East Gap, South Dean, Sanctuary & Hamlet.* By Sanctuary Community Club, 1970. Pp. 108, illus. Available from Mrs. W. Thompson, Secretary, Sanctuary Community Club, Box 86, Sanctuary.

## SCOTT

*Memories of Scott. A Tapestry of Sixty Years at Scott, Saskatchewan.* Compiled by Historical Section of the Scott and District Centennial Committee, 1967. Pp. 84, illus. Suggested source: Secretary, Town of Scott.

## VANGUARD

*The Changing Years.* By Mrs. Margaret Sonder, 1967. Pp. 37, mimeo. Available from Mrs. M. Sonder, Box 213, Vanguard.

*Vanguard School District No. 3126, 1915-1967.* By C. H. Peart, 1968. Pp. 77, mimeo. Available from Principal, Vanguard S.D. No. 3126, Vanguard.

## VICTORIA PLAINS

*Victoria Plains Story.* Compiled by Local Women's Club, 1968. Pp. 44, illus. Available from Mrs. J. A. King, R.R. No. 1, Regina.

## WEYBURN

*Let's Go to the Fair. A History of the Weyburn Agricultural Society, 1908-1968.* By Kay Flury, 1968. Pp. 24, illus. Available from the Society.

## WILLOW BUNCH

*La Montagne de Bois, 1870-1920; Willow Bunch, 1920-1970.* Par L'Abbé Clovis Rondeau, 1923, et L'Abbé Adrien Chabot, 1970. (French language.) Pp. 493, illus., \$8.50. Available from Rev. Adrien Chabot, Willow Bunch.

## WOOD MOUNTAIN

*They Came to Wood Mountain.* Compiled by Wood Mountain Historical Society, 1969. Pp. 238, maps. Available from Mrs. Marie Tonita, Wood Mountain.

## Contributors

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