

Saskatchewan History

TWEED & EWART

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Private

Medicine Hat, N.W.T., 29 June 1892

Dear Mitchell

I need will write you at length on the subject, so I will merely ask you whether you will join the Executive Committee as the member ~~of~~ from Saskatchewan. A great deal of nonsense has been written in the newspapers on both sides of this question, which should not affect the case at all.

I have always been anxious to keep up the District representation and went a great deal out of my way to induce Chidskill to remain on the Committee. The School question, upon which he resigned, has not become an open question at all. The Roman Catholic section of the Board of Education as well as the Roman Catholic Press are quite satisfied and I have heard no complaints from any quarter. The true

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COVER: Letter written by F. W. G. Haultain to Hillyard Mitchell of Duck Lake,
June 29, 1882.



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Protest Songs of Saskatchewan

The people's flag is deepest red,
It shrouded oft our martyred dead,
And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold
Their hearts' blood dyed its ev'ry fold.

THE WORDS OF "THE RED FLAG", which have united English-speaking socialists of the twentieth century on both sides of the Atlantic, can still anger or excite men and women who have fought in the political forums and the streets for the causes that sprang up in those turbulent years. Undoubtedly many in the union movements could name its author, Jim Connell, the Irish journalist, who wrote the words in 1889.¹ How many, I wonder, could identify the tune? Although Connell set it to an old Jacobite tune, "The White Cockade", it was soon being sung to the refrain of a popular Christmas song from Germany, "O Tannenbaum".² But Connell's words have almost pre-empted the original words (in translation) and the song, words and music, lives on as the rallying cry of the left wing.

It is little emphasized, how ubiquitous the practice of writing new words for old tunes has been, and especially amongst protest groups. The need for a marshalling voice to describe the ailments and prescribe the cures was felt by labourers, farmers, women, and unemployed alike. With Saskatchewan's record of protest movements, it might be anticipated that here the voices of dissent and discontent were often raised to the familiar tunes sung and known by every community on the prairies. Many of the resulting songs are merely amusing curiosities; some, however, can still stir the listener-reader to the plight of men and women who experienced the injustices of the economic, social and political systems of their day. But all of them evince the human community that can be created in song and which is for its members often more vital and real than the abstract and distant solutions that might eventually be effected through their united political efforts.

The first large scale organization of Saskatchewan farmers was the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, originally Territorial Grain Growers' Association. From its beginnings in Indian Head in 1901 to its eventual merger with the United Farmers of Canada in 1926, it became the dominant voice of the prairie farmer and the nexus for his hopes of more control over the marketing of grain, the purchasing of machinery, and the setting of interest rates on bank loans. The story of its successes is written in the history of its leaders and organizers;³ the story of its creation of a sense of purpose and community is written in its songs.

¹E. Fowke and J. Glazer (eds.), *Songs of Work and Freedom*, New York, Dolphin Books, 1960, p. 191.

²*Ibid.*, the tune is the same as "Maryland".

³See, for example, L. A. Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada*, Toronto, Ryerson, 1924.

The earliest inclusion of protest songs in the annual convention handbooks of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association comes in 1919 at the organization's eighteenth meeting. "The Grain Growers' Militant Song", for example, proclaims the assertive apotheosis of their cause.⁴ The tune is the Welsh patriotic song, "Men of Harlech"; the words unite righteous fervour with political purpose.

Neighbors all with exultation
Join the Farmers' Combination,
Spreading wide throughout the nation
With a peaceful soul.
There's no time for grumbling; rather help the stumbling;
Quell your fears and buckle on the armor without fumbling.
There are times that ask aggression,
From the last recruit accession,
Fighting greed and long oppression
For the good of all.⁵

There follow two more stanzas, which become more general, exulted and obscure in their proclamations. How the lines

Wake up from the recess; He who trod the winepress
Was alone and yet emerged triumphant from the process.⁶

for example, can have much bearing on the cause of self-help through the Grain Growers is difficult to see, but it undoubtedly gave the undertaking tone by setting their own struggles alongside the cause of Christ.

The "Militant" song seems to have gone the way of many official songs; more rousing, more specific songs, such as "The Day of Right", became a mainstay of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and lived on under the United Farmers of Canada after 1926.⁷ The tune the author of "The Day of Right" chose was well-trying in the annals of rousing songs. It was originally a revivalist hymn, "Say Brothers Will You Meet Us", written by William Steffe in the United States in the 1850's.⁸ But it became successively the refrain for three of the most popular songs of American history. Immediately after the hanging of John Brown in 1859, an unknown author wrote the words which became the Union marching song, "John Brown's Body". Shortly afterwards, in 1861, Julia Ward Howe, wrote another set of words, that were given the title, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":⁹

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

⁴In 1917, the "Christian Church" set aside "one Sunday in the Year as 'Grain Growers' Sunday", Regina, *The Leader*, May 19, 1917.

⁵Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (S.G.G.A.), Eighteenth Annual Convention, 1919, p. 86. The author is given as John Holmes, Asquith.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷S.G.G.A., Nineteenth Annual Convention, 1920.

⁸Fowke and Glazer, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 172.

Chorus:

Glory, glory hallelujah
 Glory, glory hallelujah
 Glory, glory hallelujah
 His truth is marching on.

Later, Ralph Chaplin, who wrote and worked for the cause of the "Wobblies", the Industrial Workers of the World, picked up the tune for his song, "Solidarity Forever". No Union song has achieved the popularity of this one and it is sung today as it was after its composition in 1915.¹⁰ The tune, then, for the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association's "The Day of Right" could not have had solid recommendation than the success of its three predecessors. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association songwriter did not produce the stirring words of his American counterparts, but the song long remained a favorite of the farm organizations.

1. The farmers of the prairie lands are massing in their might,
 Exulting in a Principle, a Cause for which they fight;
 The sacred cause of Justice, the establishment of Right
 And Equal Rights to all.

Chorus:

Oh! 'Tis time to get together;
 You will help us get together
 Pledge we all to stand together,
 For the day of Peace and Right.

2. The farmers of the prairie lands have right upon their side;
 Their platform is the people's, democratic, nation-wide;
 Their cause, the ancient cause for which brave-hearted men have died—
 Of Equal Rights to all.
3. The farmers of the prairie lands know well the foe they fight,
 The Profiteers of Privilege, full armed with legal right;
 Against that giant bluff we aim to solidly unite
 For Equal Rights to all.
4. The farmers of the prairie lands today extend a hand
 To town and country, East and West, where men for freedom stand;
 Their "fiery cross" flames out today till every field be manned
 For Equal Right to all.¹¹
5. The farmers of the prairie lands, their wives and kith and kin,
 Link up today with true hearts all to help the fight to win;
 Assured that for our Canada a new day will begin
 With Equal Rights for all.

"The Grain Growers' Militant Song" and "The Day of Right" are songs that have something solemn and important to say. The hymn-style marching tunes establish the mood and give the songs an earnestness beyond the actual words. Many of the songs that were sung at meetings of the Grain Growers, however,

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

¹¹The use of "fiery cross" is arresting when we think of the Ku Klux Klan activities that were to begin in Saskatchewan in the late 1920's. There is, however, no reason to believe there is any connection.

were written as less serious channels of protest. "The Tariff" is typical of these lighter, even if still bitter, sing-along compositions. It was written to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean".¹²

1. My money lies east by the ocean,
My money flies east to the sea,
Because of a mistaken notion,
The East will return it to me.

Chorus:

- Bring back, bring back, bring back my money to me, to me;
Bring back, bring back, oh, bring back my money to me.
2. The tariff has taken my money,
Protection has filched it from me,
Home markets, they say—oh, it's funny,
Some day will return it to me.
 3. The factory's purse it is swelling
The nabobs down by the sea;
For more and yet more they are yelling,
When will they return it to me?

Here the enemy is clearly defined—federal government policies backing up Eastern money and manufacturing. The fifth stanza suggests a solution that was to become more and more central to the farmers' movements—political action.

5. But now we have come to our senses,
The N.N.P. shall make us free;
Each fact'ry shall make its expenses:
No more shall it lean upon me.

The N.N.P. mentioned is the "New National Policy" which was a policy formulated by the Canadian Council of Agriculture. The Grain Growers were a member organization of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and the political wing of the body was called "The New National Policy Political Association". The New National Policy Political Association was later officially called the Progressives.

These then, were the songs that were popular enough to be included in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association Convention Handbooks for the singing and amusement of its annual delegates. There are others, in the Grain Growers' papers, which were composed and sung at local chapter meetings, but which were not widely accepted. Mrs. Geo. Galbraith of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (Women's Section), for example, sent the following song to Miss Stocking of Delisle, Saskatchewan, "composed by the Wiseton W.G.G. Assoc." and to be sung to "Auld Lang Syne":¹³

1. We are grain growers hard we toil
From early spring till fall
Now leagued for Social help and hope
And equal rights for all.

¹²S.G.G.A., Twentieth Annual Convention, 1921, p. 157.

¹³Archives of Saskatchewan (A.S.), S.G.G.A. Papers, IV, 10, Mrs. G. Galbraith to Miss Stocking, September 13, n.d.

The chorus is equally unexceptional but in the second stanza they come quickly to the overriding concerns of the women:

2. We're leagued to help our men, our selves
 To win Equality
 To crush the tyrants, drink and graft
 And immorality.

The rest of the song is devoted to specific explication of these aims:

3. Rejoice, the tyrant "drink" we see
 Thrust from these prairies far:
 And hope that soon all Canada
 Will be with out a bar.

But if these aims seem frivolous, it should be pointed out that by "equality", the ladies meant wages for women, the vote and

- To give each mother a right
 To the children that she bore.

Or there is this one, composed by William James Thompson of Saskatoon to the tune of "Tipperary", and sent to Mrs. John McNaughton in 1914:¹⁴

1. To the House of Commons
 Came the farmers for their rights
 Where the halls are paved with gold
 And M.P.'s spend their nights
 Singing songs for banks and railroads
 Trusts and charters queer
 Till the farmers in amazement
 Had to shout into their ear:—

Here, too, the realization that they need direct political involvement comes to the fore:

2. It's no use resolving
 In conventions every year
 Let's send men to parliament
 etc.

The early years of the farmers' organization, then, produced a good number of protest songs, in which the prairie wheat growers united in spirit against the inequities of a system built in the first instance to answer the needs of the East. It is interesting to note that the successor to the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), produced practically nothing in the way of songs. They took a rather poor Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association song based on the tune "The Maple Leaf Forever"¹⁵ and changed the key phrase, "The Golden Sheaf Forever", to "The UFC Forever".¹⁶ In World War II the song was changed back, perhaps out of patriotic feelings, to "The Maple Leaf Forever". And, finally, songs disappeared

¹⁴*Ibid.*, W. J. Thompson to Mrs. V. McNaughton, December 18, 1914.

¹⁵S.G.G.A., Twentieth Annual Convention, 1921, p. 154.

¹⁶United Farmers of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Section, "The United Farmers' Song Book", 1928, p. 7.

from the convention handbooks. The tradition and some of the songs passed on into the more exclusively political movements of the prairies.

It was the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation movement of the Thirties that was most active in continuing this practice of writing protest songs.¹⁷ Drawing on both international socialist songs and the traditions of the farm organizations, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation attempted to present a strong, united programme that would bring together farmer and labourer in the common cause of transforming not only the economy but the society of Western Canada and eventually all of Canada.

Songs, such as the campaign song of the Farmer-Labour Party (Socialist), were preserved in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation files.¹⁸

The song sheet lists the names of Williams and Lunn at the bottom and the tune for this election song was the "Red River Valley":

1. They say that the Liberals are going
That the Tories are going also
You ask the reason they are leaving
The people have asked them to go.

The third and fourth stanzas of this song evince the growing political dimension of protest which has now been successfully wedded to the interminable problems the western farmer has had with eastern institutions.

3. Mr. Bennett believes in sound money
Mr. King he dotes on old gold
The people once thought it was funny
But now they are leaving the fold.
4. Will there be any bankers in heaven?
Will there be any interest to pay?
Will there be any Liberals or Tories
To show us poor sinners the way.

At one point the national executive of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation toyed with the idea of using the "Tolpuddle Martyrs Song" as their official song,¹⁹ but they settled for "The C.C.F. Victory Song" with words written by "Federal Members" and music by Carl Edy and Evelyn Paisley.²⁰

1. A call goes out to Canada; it comes from out the soil,
Come and join the ranks thru' all the land, to fight for those who toil;

Come on Farmer, Soldier, Laborer, from the mine and factory,
And side by side we'll swell the tide, C.C.F. to Victory.

The other stanzas were set at the same general level and, as far as I know, the song never achieved wide popularity in the party.

¹⁷There is a clear organizational and personnel link between the political advocates in the U.F.C., the "Farmer element" of the Farmer-Labour Party and the C.C.F.

¹⁸A.S., Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, Saskatchewan Section, II, 260, mimeographed copy, n.d.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, "Tolpuddle Martyrs Song".

²⁰*Ibid.*, printed card.

The practice of writing doggerel to light-hearted tunes continued as well and probably provided a welcome respite to the serious task of formulating party policy. One written to the tune of "Little Brown Jug" is not typical, but the chorus does give a good idea of the lighter vein.

Chorus:

Ha, ha, ha, don't you see
 Walter Tucker's up a tree
 Ha, ha, ha, don't you see
 The CCF's the group for me.²¹

The tradition of songs, protest and politics has continued in the successor to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the New Democratic Party. In 1961, the party issued a booklet, "Songs of Peace and Progress". On the whole, the choice of lyrics has swung away from the more exclusive farm interests of the earlier politics and the writers attempt to strike a happy medium between labourer and farmer. "There is Power" is an example of the re-focussing of the protest songs.²²

1. Would you have freedom from monopoly?
 Then join the grand New party band.
 Would you make the world a better place to be?
 Then come! Do your share like a man.

Chorus:

There is power, there is power
 In a band of working men
 When they stand, hand in hand
 That's a power, that's a power
 That will rule in every land
 One co-operative grand.

There are still some songs oriented exclusively to the farm situation, such as "The Farmer is the Man Who Feeds Them All"²³ and "The Prairies". But it is now very obviously the age of Woodie Guthrie, Joe Glazer, and Pete Seeger and the local practitioners of the art take a minor place in the book. The main organizational song is "That New Party Train", with words written by Joe Glazer to the tune of the "Wabash Cannon Ball".

Beside these songs of permanent organizations of protest, there were occasions when short-lived, but critical developments gave rise to a flurry of songwriting. One of these occasions was the massive discontent that had surfaced among the Barr colonists by the time they reached Saskatoon in 1903.²⁴ The stowing of 1,962 of them like cattle in the *Lake Manitoba*, the failure of provisions, and, finally, the suspicion that their leader Reverend Isaac Barr, was making secret deals with the local merchants drove the colonists into revolt. Soon after their arrival in Saskatoon a confrontation took place between the

²¹*Ibid.*, typed copy, Walter Tucker was leader of the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1946-1953.

²²New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan Section, *Songs of Peace and Progress*, 1961, p. 4.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Helen Reid's *All Silent, All Damned*, Toronto, Ryerson, 1967, is the most recent account with emphasis on the person of Rev. Isaac Barr.

minister and his flock over the method of claiming personal belongings and as the Reverend Barr stood on one of the black sea trunks to explain to them the need for patience, the words of protest rose in song. As Harry Pick, one of the colonists, reports, "with diabolical clearness, the ribald voices wafted verse after verse" across to the crowd:

Barr, Barr, wily old Barr,
He'll do you as much as he can;
You bet he will collar,
Your very last dollar,
In the Valley of the Saskatchewan.²⁵

Pick claims there were another eighteen verses to the song and that it was composed by one of the colonists on board the *Lake Manitoba* just before he died of seasickness.²⁶ Also in these memoirs, it is noted that the tune used for the song was "The Nautch Girl".²⁷

A more dramatic occasion was the cross-country trek of unemployed men that the R.C.M.P. and Federal Government stopped at Regina in 1935. About 1,400 of the 1,800 men "housed" in the Stadium at the Exhibition Grounds in the city had boarded the freights at Vancouver and were determined to reach Ottawa to lay their grievances before the Prime Minister, Hon. R. B. Bennett. Others had joined along the way. Songs were written on the "Trek" and sung at their meetings along with many popular union songs. "The B.C. Marchers Song", for example, was meant to be a triumphal march song to accompany the trekkers as they made their way across the country.²⁸

Arise and organize ye workers,
Arise like men and take your place,
For justice thunders condemnation,
A better world and better race.

Arise and cheer with exultation,
The B.C. Marchers when they come,
Let's swell the city with our voices,
Swell! Loud! Their battle must be won

Arise and wave our flag of freedom,
Behind them let us solid stand
And bear them ever onto victory,
They are the slaves, they shall be free!

Arise and fight this cause like workers,
Give them support, their's is our aim,
They are our comrades, they are our brothers,
With them we'll join our might and main.

²⁵H. Pick, *Next Year*, Toronto, Ryerson, 1928, p. 42.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷G. R. Lyle of the Robert W. Woodruff Library for Advanced Studies has written that the tune may have been "The Rajah of Bong".

²⁸Regina Riot Inquiry Commission, Preliminary Hearing of Indictable Offences, July-August, 1935, Exhibit 2, pp. 729-730.

They need support, we shall not fail them,
 No bars shall rise to block the way,
 Their goal at all costs they must reach,
 So comrades, act, and act to-day!

The bourgeois class will try to crush them,
 We never shall let them succeed.
 The police may try to drive them backwards,
 Our forces, Comrades, they will need.

This song was obviously felt to be the rallying song of the protest march and is alluded to in another song which not only gives the complaints and demands of the trekkers but also some indication of having been composed in Regina while they waited for negotiations with the Federal Government to clarify their future course of action. It was written to the tune of "There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding".²⁹

1. There's a long, long, trail before us,
 But we care not how long,
 To Mr. Bennett we are going,
 And he'll listen to our song;
ABOLITION OF ALL SLAVE CAMPS;
BETTER FOOD AND CLOTHES FOR ALL,
 And we sure will have good news, Boys,
 When we all come back next fall.
2. Never more will they ever treat us,
 As they treat a dirty dog;
 But we're going to live like men now,
 Not be fed like droves of hogs—
 They have run their gauntlet with us,
 Now we're going to have our say,
 When we boys arrive in Ottawa,
 One of these fine summer days.
3. They can bring their police to stop us
 But we're going through just the same,
 For the boys are all well organized,
 And our hearts are stout and game;
 And we are not to be bluffed or turned back,
 And we're not to be scared away.
 But when our freight leaves Regina,
 We'll be right on top to say
4. There's a long hard trail before us,
 But we care not a rip for that,
 For we'll be paid a thousand fold
 When Bennett's pulled up on the mat;
 If he thinks we boys are spineless,
 He'll find out he is wrong,
 And his old fat knees will tremble,
 When he hears the Marchers' song.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 728-729. I have made some very minor changes in what are obviously typing errors and omissions.

The police build-up in Regina had been going on steadily during the two weeks before July 1, the night when the situation blew up into a full scale riot on the streets of downtown Regina. The third stanza suggests this song was written sometime in the last weeks of June.

Another song written in all probability during the trekkers stop-over in Regina was entitled "Bennett Foiled". The tune chosen was "The Wreck of Old 97".³⁰ In this song reference is made to the attempt on the part of the trekkers to assemble Reginan citizenry at the freight yards as public support for their cause in general and their use of the C.P.R. freight trains in particular. Again allusion is made to the police build-up and the attempts to prevent them from continuing eastwards. The culprit is, of course, the Prime Minister.

1. Oh! They rounded up all Mounties,
From all over Canada,
To stop our onward march;
But we laughed in their faces,
And we beat them to first base,
Can't you hear old R. B. Bennett roar?
2. Oh! We laughed when they told us,
That we couldn't go any further;
But return to our respective homes,
We paid no attention
To their intimidations,
But we marched right along down East.
3. Oh! We marched to the freight yards,
With the Public all behind us,
And we thanked them for their support.
When the engine left Regina,
We were all on top behind her
Waving good-bye to the Yellow Stripes.
4. Now Bennett you had better take warning
From this a lesson learn;
Never speak harsh words
To any Worker's UNION,
You may leave us and never return.

There is more than just protest in these songs; general protest has turned to defiance and threats. The attorney for the Federal Government, Mr. B. D. Hogarth, K.C., at least, saw in these songs justification for fearing for the personal safety of Mr. Bennett.³¹ He even included a rather lighter song in the group of offending ones. It was written to the tune of "Home on the Range".³²

1. We're headed down east
Where the big shots do feast
On the blood of the hard working class
But they're on the spot
The whole hot air lot
And they think we boys will not pass.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 727-728.

³¹Regina Riot Inquiry Commission, Record of Proceedings, Volume 5, pp. 39-43.

³²*Ibid.*, the last lines are illegible.

2. But they're up the tree,
 For we boys are all free,
 To go where we will or we may
 We never will stop
 For no flat foot cop
 We're as happy and bright as the day.

3. And we're on the tramp
 From Bennett's slave camp,
 Our demands before him we will place
 We soon will be there
 And we want no hot air
 And he won't get no thirty days grace.

Chorus:

Home, home in the slave camps,
 Where the boys live like hermits of old,
 Where they never were free,
 And there is nothing to see
 And the skies are so cloudy all day.

This song is the least satisfactory of the three. Its phrasing is clumsy and the impact of the sentiments much weaker than in the preceding two. The words do not state clearly the discontent of the men or their hoped-for solution. It does, however, show the bullying bravado into which protest can change when the conditions finally deteriorate beyond what is tolerable for the people who feel themselves to be the victims of injustice.

It is not possible to assign protest songs to a place in the concatenations of cause and effect that are built into the analyses of most historical writing. The words, long dead, unsung, can however, bring to life a dimension of the past which is often ignored: the hopes and emotions of the common man. The songs were the vehicles for man's feeling which cannot be captured in the abstracted, historical argument. The voices of thousands have been raised in protest as they aired their grievances, sometimes humorously, more often with bitterness, at the meetings where the most important issues for the future of the prairies were debated. They tell another story of the events on the prairies and, in so far as this story resuscitates the communities of men who made its history, it is a contribution to our understanding of the political and economic history of the region.

T. G. Heath

Indian Treaty No. 5 and The Pas Agency, Saskatchewan, N.W.T.¹

THE REGION

DURING HIS TOUR of the Lower Saskatchewan Valley in 1876 the Commissioner, Thomas Howard, experienced a "dreariness [that could] hardly be realized";² he had entered the margins of the Muskrat Country of the fur traders, the land of the Swampy Cree. Joseph Courtney, Indian Agent at The Pas a quarter of a century later, was similarly struck by the distinctive character and homogeneity of this natural environment over the 250 miles which lay between Grand Rapids on Lake Winnipeg and the two small inhabited reserves at Pas Mountain, respectively the eastern and western limits of his Agency (see Map). He described its "hay swamps, marshes and muskegs, fringed by low ridges covered with spruce, birch, poplar, willow and elder, with an occasional bluff of cedar and interspersed with innumerable lakes and streams which find their outlet into the Great Saskatchewan";³ and he complained of its low, damp and monotonous character. The core of this region, linking Grand Rapids with The Pas and Cumberland House, was that "great alluvial delta" which John Fleming had described in detail in August, 1858, an "immense marsh with tall reeds and rushes . . ., a maze of reticulating branches" and constantly shifting channels.⁴

THE INDIANS AND THE FUR TRADE

The area appears to have lain at the westernmost limit of the Cree Indians in the late seventeenth century. At that time, the "Savannahs" were differentiated from amongst the other Cree, and this group has been identified with the *Maskegons* or *Swampy Cree*,⁵ the eventual inhabitants of the lower Saskatchewan. The Cree expanded westwards, until in the later eighteenth century they were to be found as far away as the Peace River, having displaced both the Assiniboine and Chipewyan. Even so, they themselves had been squeezed in towards Hudson

¹Thanks are due to the Canada Council for supporting the project of which this preliminary essay forms a part.

²T. Howard, Commissioner, to A. Morris, Lieutenant-Governor, 10 Oct. 1876. The reports and correspondence referred to in this account derive chiefly from the Annual Reports of the Departments of the Interior and of Indian Affairs, with corrections where these differ from extant ms. copies; and directly from documents in the Public Archives of Canada (particularly Record Group 10 Black). Unless otherwise noted, the citations are to the Department of Interior until the separate Department of Indian Affairs was created in 1880; and to correspondence addressed to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, Ottawa.

³J. Courtney, Indian Agent, Pas Agency, 12 July, 1904. More northerly lands came within his jurisdiction when the Pelican Narrows community was added to the Agency in 1902.

⁴Hind, H.Y., *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 . . .*, London, 1860, Vol. 1, p. 457.

⁵Tyrrell, J.R., (ed.), *Documents Relating to the Early History of Hudson Bay*, Toronto, 1931, pp. 263 and 355 in a letter by M. de Bacqueville de la Potherie.

Bay by the Saulteaux (Ojibwa) from the south.⁶ In the earliest period of the fur trade on Hudson's Bay, the Swampy Cree had already been in close contact with Europeans, and this had profound effects upon the Indians' culture, particularly their mode of livelihood.

There were well-established trading routes down to Hudson's Bay by the early eighteenth century. Along these, expeditions set out each spring for York Factory. From the Saskatchewan area, Cree and Assiniboine journeyed across Lake Winnipeg and descended the Echamamish and Hayes Rivers to exchange their winter catch for an ever-increasing range of manufactured goods. Though the French threat to the English trade had been averted, subsequent competition to the Hudson's Bay Company from the Pedlars stimulated the establishment of a rival string of trading posts by the former, connecting the Bay, the Saskatchewan Valley and the further Northwest. These included Cumberland House, which was founded in 1774 at a strategic location at Pine Island Lake on the Saskatchewan Delta, the main approach to both the Saskatchewan and Athabaska territories.⁷

For almost half a century the post was used as the Hudson's Bay Company's administrative centre for the whole inland trade. But, with the cessation of the bitter and often violent struggle between the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, a struggle which inevitably had a demoralizing effect upon their Cree suppliers, and with the establishment of the Bay's monopoly, Cumberland House underwent a relative decline. Norway House, off the northern end of Lake Winnipeg, became the main depot and administrative centre for the trade.

A close interdependence had come into existence between the Indian and the trader, the bands' autonomy now undermined by new appetites and the systems of credit which characterized the seasonal intercourse between bands and posts. At the same time, furs had become scarce, though the network of trading posts was maintained both as a market for any local furs which might be available and also to service the Company's transport routes between the Bay Forts and the Far West. As for the people upon whom the earlier prosperity had been based, they had become, as one ethnologist phrases it, "dejected and melancholy";⁸ the post employees made some effort towards their rehabilitation, which were similar to many of the activities later assumed by both the Indian Affairs Department's agents and the missions in the later nineteenth century. The Company, too, had encouraged the support of permanent missions: in 1840 a

⁶Hlady, W.M., *Indian Migrations in Manitoba and the West*, *Papers, Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society*, Series III, No. 17, 1960-61, pp. 24-31 and *passim*; Mason, L., *The Swampy Cree: A Study of Acculturation*, *Anthropological Papers of the National Museum of Canada*, No. 13, Jan. 1967, p. 1. See the references cited in Murdock, G.P., *Ethnographic Bibliography of North America*, New Haven, 1960, pp. 198-202. Of especial interest is the paper by J.J. Honigmann, *The Attawapiskat Swampy Cree: An Ethnographic Reconstruction*, *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska*, Vol. 5, 1956, pp. 23-82.

⁷Substantial material on the fur trade and its regional impact is available in Morton, A.S., *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, Toronto, 1938; Innis, H.A., *The Fur Trade in Canada*, New Haven, 1930; Rich, E.E., *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, Toronto, 1967; Ross, E., *Beyond the River and the Bay*, Toronto, 1970.

⁸Mason, L., *op. cit.*, p. 8.

land grant had been made to the Church of England at The Pas, near the site of an eighteenth century French fort (Fort Pascoyac), and continuously a centre much-frequented by the Indians partly owing to its excellent fish resources. Though of less importance than Pine Island Lake, the site was a strategic one, lying as it did on trails connecting the more northerly Muskrat Country with the Southern Plains and their different resources. The Devon Mission was established and a priest was soon encouraging the Indians to settle on the land and begin cultivation.⁹ Mission activity spread to Cumberland House, into which a Roman Catholic mission and church soon followed, and to other places in the region. As a result, by 1880 the Agency census numbered 1076 Anglicans, 116 Roman Catholics and 229 "Heathens". These last were chiefly at Moose Lake.

THE TREATY AND THE RESERVES

By the time the Treaty came to be considered, soon after open competition had been reestablished in the fur trade, further hardship had come to the Indians through the continuing scarcity of furs and through the deflection of transport off the Indian-manned York boats onto steamboats, with Fort Garry as the main depot.¹⁰ As with the Plains tribes, which included their fellow Cree who had assimilated much Plains Indian culture, economic distress facilitated the conclusion of the Treaty, though the situation was by no means as desperate as it was among the former peoples. It lacked the abrupt transition experienced on the southern plains, with its grave economic and social consequences, since the lower Saskatchewan Indians had not lost their traditional resource base.

The Dominion Government maintained that there were "paramount considerations on public and general grounds" for gaining the surrender from the Indians of the lands on both sides of Lake Winnipeg and in the Lower Saskatchewan Valley. There had been indications of valuable natural resources, both mineral and timber, in the area about the Lake, and applications had been made for the purchase of lands thought to overlie the minerals.¹¹ There were expectations, too, that settlers would soon move into the western areas. Of more immediate concern were the Lake itself and the Saskatchewan River, the former now with steam navigation upon it; these waterways were thought to be destined to become the "principal thoroughfare of communication between Manitoba and the fertile prairies in the West",¹² at least until the advent of the Pacific Railway. Through surrender of any claims they might have to these lands and waters, the Indian population would allow for the undisturbed legal access of both settlers and traders and the growth of communications centres such as the one that some anticipated would be built at the Grand Rapids of the Saskatchewan.

⁹Boon, T.C.B., *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, Toronto, 1962, p. 61.

¹⁰See Alcock, F.J., Past and Present Trade Routes to the Canadian Northwest, *Geographical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Aug. 1920, pp. 57-83.

¹¹*Report of the Dept. of the Interior for the Year Ending 30 June, 1875*, p. viii.

¹²*Loc. cit.*

The adhesion of the Indians at Grand Rapids to Treaty No. 5 was achieved in September, 1875, immediately after the assent of the Indian bands at Berens River and Norway House had been gained. Not until the following autumn was it affirmed by the Swampy Cree who had gathered at The Pas from the local area, from Cedar and Moose Lakes and from Cumberland. The Treaty as a whole pertained to some 100,000 square miles of territory bounded by Treaties Nos. 2 and 3, by the latitude of Split Lake on the Nelson River, and extending westwards to Cumberland House.

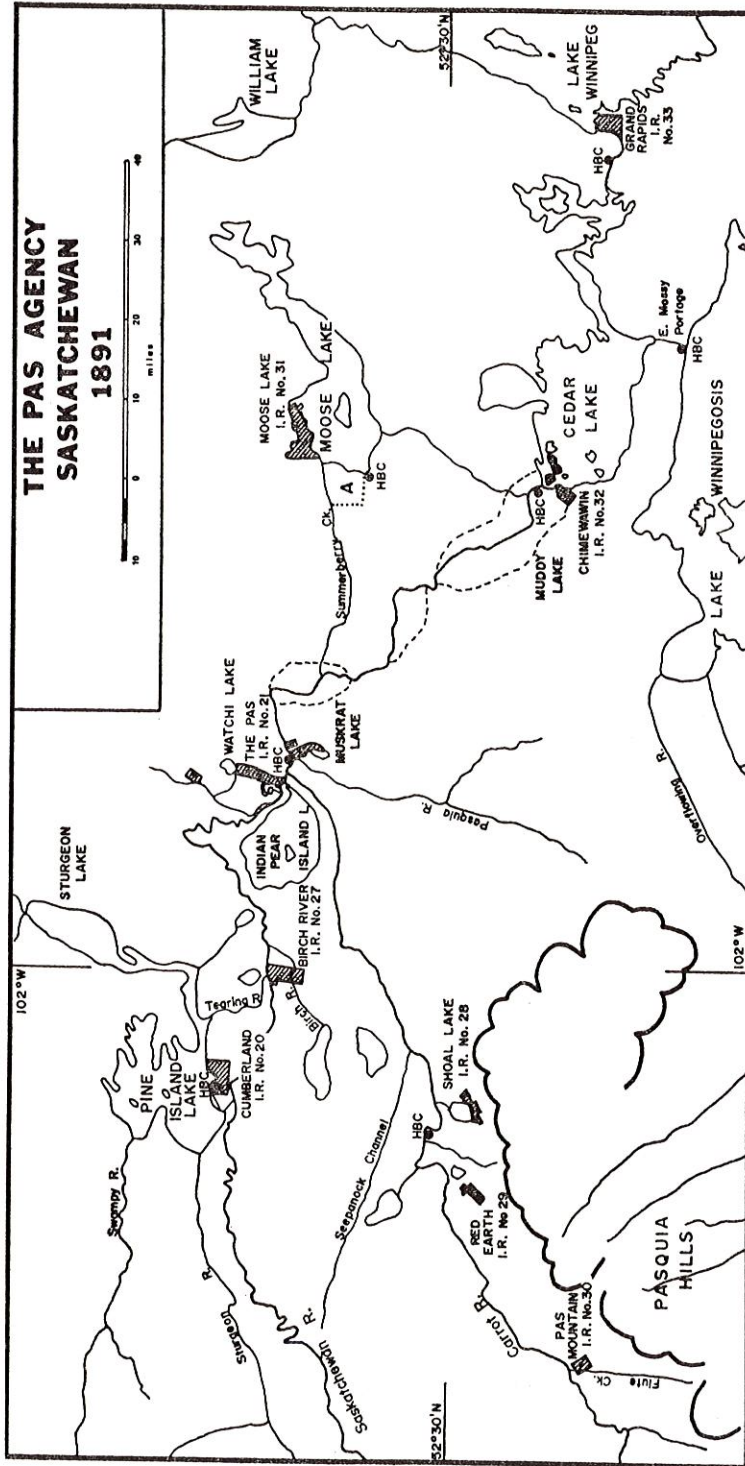
The terms of the Treaty were similar to those set out for part of Northern Ontario in Treaty No. 3 and for Assiniboia District (Treaty No. 4), excepting that the area of land granted to each family of five as a reserve was set at 160 acres, as opposed to 640 acres, and that the amounts paid as gratuities were reduced from \$12 to \$5 *per capita*. As in the deliberations at Norway House, the Government's negotiator first dealt with the Treaty *per se* before passing on to the more contentious questions of the size and location of the reserves. Unfortunately for the Commissioner, the Indians at The Pas were acquainted with the terms of the Treaty concluded that summer at Carlton House, also in the District of Saskatchewan (Treaty No. 6). But, as he put it, "I at last made them understand the difference between their position and the Plain Indians, by pointing out that the land they would surrender would be useless to the Queen, while what the Plain Indians gave up would be of value to 'Her' for homes for 'Her white children'".¹³ And so the matter rested; no one is reported as asking why, if such were the case, the Queen wanted the land in the first place.

Strategic considerations were notably to the fore in the location of the reserve for the band at Grand Rapids. The Indians had been occupying an area to the north of the Rapids and claimed an extensive reserve on both sides of the channel upstream to the head of the Rapids. But it was anticipated that the northern area would soon be the site of a tramway to bypass this obstacle to navigation and, as noted, that a town would also develop with extensive wharfage facilities to utilize the deep-water navigation. Consequently, the band was induced to take a reserve on the south side of the river by an offer of \$500; as set out in the Treaty, this was "to be paid in equitable proportions to such of them as have houses, to assist them in removing their houses to the said Reserve, or building others".¹⁴ The band had moved to the south by the time the Commissioner arrived late in August, 1876 to pay the annuities, deliver tools and implements and distribute the money. No preparations had by then been made to build houses: the Indians were, he said, "merely living in tents".¹⁵ After much dispute within the band, the whole sum was equitably distributed.

¹³T. Howard to A. Morris, 10 Oct., 1876. Reprinted in Morris, A., *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*, Toronto, 1880, p. 162.

¹⁴Morris, A., *op. cit.*, p. 349, which sets out the "Adhesion of Saskatchewan Indians".

¹⁵T. Howard to A. Morris, 10 Oct., 1876, (Morris, A., *op. cit.*, p. 160).



The people of the Moose Lake Band were also present at the adhesion of The Pas and Cumberland Indians, but unlike these two bands they had no generally acknowledged "chief" owing to dissensions. One group desired a separate reserve at Chemawawin about the entrance of the Saskatchewan River into Cedar Lake, a location very highly valued by the Indians on account of its fishing advantages. The Commissioner considered the suggested area to be unfit for a reserve and apparently succeeded in inducing the band to unite at least temporarily and agree upon lands on the northern shore of Moose Lake, a site thought to be "a most suitable locality" and to contain "considerable good land."¹⁶ In 1879 there were some six families living at Chemawawin, principally by fishing and hunting, and Ma-mee-quan-we-ka-poo, a Councillor of the parent band at Moose Lake but resident at Chemawawin, asked that his group be allowed to retain their lands at that site, and also that annuities should be paid there, rather than fifty miles away at Moose Lake.¹⁷ A favourable response to the Department from the Surveyor-General brought the assignment of a reserve to them. It was not surveyed until 1883, and then in response to a plea from the Indians for protection of their timber from trespass.¹⁸ It covered an area of about 3,000 acres, most of the entitlement of the ninety-five persons then living there. A request from the group for band status was denied; the Inspector had commented that, ". . . if such be encouraged there will be no end to petitions of this description".¹⁹ Annuities were, however, paid at the new reserve to the people living there and they continued to form part, if only a tenuous one, of the Moose Lake Band.

As for the rest of the group, the Government persuaded them to move off their original reserve (see Map Area A) and occupy a new one on the southwestern side of the lake, adjacent to the Hudson's Bay Company's post. The land of their first reserve had proven to be poor for gardening, and hay was distant. Nevertheless, the Indians opposed the move, saying that they had good fishing where they were, with good hunting nearby.²⁰ Reasons of health were also cited by the Department in support of its argument, since, as Hines described it, shallow burials among the Indians' houses meant that "in the mornings and evenings, quite a blue mist could be seen hanging over the graves of the recently departed, and the mortality among the Indians was such as to threaten the extinction of the whole band".²¹ Here were "the cherished graves and ancient hunting grounds of their fathers".²² Again, the prospects for the further

¹⁶*Loc. cit.* (Morris, A., *op. cit.*, p. 162). On the value of Chemawawin, see L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to J.F. Graham, Indian Superintendent, Winnipeg, 19 April, 1881.

¹⁷E. McColl, Inspector of Indian Agencies, Winnipeg, 6 Aug., 1879.

¹⁸L. Vankoughnet to J.F. Graham, 10 June, 1882, quoting E. McColl's Report of 10 December, 1881.

¹⁹E. McColl, 6 August, 1879.

²⁰Quoted in J. Cotton, Supt. Commanding "F" Division, North West Mounted Police, *Annual Report*, 30 Nov., 1892.

²¹Hines, J., *The Red Indians of the Plains; Thirty Years' Missionary Experience in the Saskatchewan*, London, 1915, pp. 240-242. It was difficult to bury the dead more than two feet deep.

²²E. McColl, 6 August, 1879.

development of the general area were thought good, though only over a long period: "The shallow, marshy lakes through which [the branches of the Saskatchewan, leading to and from Moose Lake] run are now being filled up by the fluvial deposit of the Saskatchewan, and . . . may, in future, be beautiful arable prairie land, when the river has excavated by its sweeping current a channel of sufficient depth".²³

Around The Pas, as around Cumberland House, several localities were broached at the time of adhesion as potential sites for reserves. All the suitable lands in the former area were found to be under cultivation, these being "a vegetable garden and one field attached to the mission, and a few patches of potatoes here and there". Otherwise, the location had little to recommend it from an agricultural point of view; continued the Commissioner, "A short distance from the River the marsh begins, and extends to the south for miles; and the same thing occurs to the north. In fact, on both banks of the River at this point [The Pas], and from the Che-ma-wa-win up to it, 150 acres of land fit for cultivation cannot be found; and about Cumberland House the country in every respect is similar".²⁴

Despite this, reserve lands for the Indians were surveyed at The Pas in the fall of 1883. Aside from some haylands and small islands, the major portion of the reserve consisted of 4,300 acres in a narrow half-mile wide strip fronting on the north bank of the river, skirting Pike and Whitefish (Ä-tic-à-make) Lakes and extending north to Watchi (Mountain) Lake. As along the mainstream, the Surveyor found that almost the entire area back of this strip was occupied by extensive swamps broken by occasional gravelly patches and ridges covered by a scattered growth of spruce, tamarack and other species. Lands within the surveyed reserve here only merited the second, marginal category of his threefold classification of suitability for agriculture,²⁵ though it did contain some sizable timber in the north. A further area of 1,560 acres in a second narrow strip extending south from The Pas was also backed by swamps with a similar "heavy moss bed from one to two feet in depth, under which at this season of the year [late August] in places it was frozen".²⁶ Timber here was smaller, but a higher rating was given to some of the land. Several "islands" were also surveyed for the band, notably Fisher Island to the north of Pike Lake and rated Class II. Hay was a scarce resource at The Pas at that time, more so since the Hudson's Bay Company and the Church of England Mission claimed most of what there was. To overcome this problem, it was felt that hay could be brought downstream on timber floats from Birch River, where a further reserve was surveyed. The 5,370 acres there contained much "Class No. 1" land and several hay marshes; half of the total area was for the members of the Birch River band and the balance for the band at The Pas.

²³W.A. Austin, April, 1883 (date not included in letter).

²⁴T. Howard to A. Morris, 10 Oct., 1876 (Morris, A., *op. cit.*, p. 163).

²⁵W.A. Austin, April, 1883.

²⁶*Loc. cit.*

Birch River Reserve extended in a strip from about one hundred chains south of Birch River to a frontage of poplar, elm, ash, birch and willow on the mainstream of the Saskatchewan, opposite the mouth of the Tearing River. Yet even including its lands at Birch River it had still not been possible to complete The Pas Band's quota with suitable land, even at the reduced *per capita* acreage. Early in 1884 The Pas Band petitioned the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and amongst other requests asked that the lands still to be surveyed for them should be located "toward the Oopasquaya Hill where there is firm land, and we think fit for farming". In this they were supported by the native catechist at Devon Mission, who went so far as to say that "the only firm land . . . good for farming" in the Agency was at the Hill.²⁷ These lands, 170 miles by water from The Pas, had earlier been described by Mackay as containing "very good land, high and dry, but very difficult to get to".²⁸ A favourable report in June, 1884 by Reader, Mackay's successor as Agent, led to the survey of the two reserves of Red Earth and Shoal Lake. He described the sequence of landscapes at Red Earth from the swamps about the river and lake in the north-west to the "fine arable flat of some ten acres of excellent soil" (which he thought liable to flooding), and then over gradually rising ground onto open poplar woods in which the Indians had opened up small patches for cultivation. Hay was abundant, and also in contrast with the vicinity of The Pas, he commented that, ". . . a stone is rarely found anywhere".²⁹ Of Shoal Lake, he later wrote that the land was almost all that could be desired to produce excellent crops.³⁰

The two reserves were located between Pas Mountain, a high, rounded and heavily timbered upland to the south, and swamps of reeds and bulrushes to the north: which last produced, according to Joseph Courtney, "enough mosquitoes to supply the whole continent".³¹ They were so isolated that when the Indians concerned asked to have their annuities paid to them on their reserves the Agent countered that this would entail too great an expense; it was argued that since they traded with the Hudson's Bay Company at The Pas it would be no additional hardship to them to go there for treaty payments too. Nevertheless, the Agent continued to relay their case to his superiors, and transmitted a similar request from the Birch Lake Indians.

Northwest from Birch River lies Cumberland House. There, the Surveyor was confronted with the band's assertion that they would have no reserve in that area at all. They sought action on promises they said had been made to them of a reserve near the Hudson's Bay post at Fort à la Corne, well upstream

²⁷J. Bell, Chief, Pas Band *et al.*, 3 Jan., 1884; J. Settee, Devon Mission to E. McColl, 9 Jan., 1884.

²⁸A. Mackay, Indian Agent, Treaty No. 5 to J.F. Graham, Acting Indian Superintendent, 26 Nov., 1880.

²⁹J. Reader, Indian Agent, Pas Agency to E. McColl, 6 June, 1884.

³⁰J. Reader, 4 Sept., 1885.

³¹J. Courtney, Indian Agent, Pas Agency, 31 July, 1900.

on the Saskatchewan River. The argument, as transmitted by the Surveyor, is most relevant:

The Chief expressed his pleasure at finding that the Queen took such an interest in the welfare of her Indian children and was prepared to fulfill her promises in giving them land to live upon. He has often presented the petition of his people to get land suitable, and had never yet obtained it his people were poor, very poor, often starving, they had, two years ago to get relief from the Hudson's Bay Company. [sic] Last year [1882] the supply of fish in the lake ceased almost entirely, the crops on account of high water were injured and were generally a failure.

The land, also, in this part of the country is utterly incapable of supplying the means of existence, we cannot plough it on account of the great stones, and the small stones in many places are so many that we strike them at every stroke of the hoe, some is all stone. There is very little hay in our country, in fact our country is covered with wood, stones and muskegs, no one could live here without means, neither he nor his people wanted to remain here, all trusted in the goodness of their Grand Mother (the Queen) to fulfill all her promises, *i.e.*, to procure good land for them so that they might be able to till it and not starve . . .³²

It was argued in reply that the Government would not grant to the Indians of one Treaty a reserve in another, (*i.e.*, No. 6) and that the intention was to give them the best land in their own Treaty. It had evidently been forgotten where The Pas Mountain Reserves themselves lay. At this the Indians asked whether the Government would support them where they were, and made a further plea: "The fish have gone and the fowl are scarce, we want some place where we can have land to till, where we may be able to feed our cattle". A visit to the Métis Agent, Angus McKay at The Pas, and the latter's agreement that he would arrange matters with the band since "the survey would have to be made" led to the Surveyor's return to Cumberland and the continuance of his work. But, "The generality of the land", he found to be "hard for the Indians to work".³³ Only one-fifth of the 11,040 acres needed to fulfill the Treaty requirements of 345 people concerned were surveyed, and the sole way Austin could see to allocate the rest was to accede to the Band's desire to have islands outside the Treaty area surveyed as portions of their reserve.

MIGRATION AND DISCHARGES

One solution, then, to this problem of inadequate natural resources, particularly suitable land for farming, was through migration. In August, 1882 the Agent had conveyed to the Department the Cumberland Indians' contention that the Government had the choice of either giving them better farming lands or feeding them; their urgent petitions were also recorded by the Inspector three months later. By the following year, nine families had already settled in the

³²W.A. Austin, April, 1883. See also the letter from Albert Flett, Chief at Cumberland to E. McColl, which concludes with the remark, "At the first, when you came to buy my land, you said 'look for good land. I will give it to you.' I have found it now."

³³*Loc. cit.*

Fort à la Corne district and further petitions were made by the band.³⁴ The Deputy-Superintendent had even made personal enquiries about the situation at Cumberland during his western tour, and to his apparent surprise "ascertained from reliable sources that the statements made by the Indians and others on their behalf are quite correct".³⁵ Yet the Agent relayed to the band the Inspector's assertion that the land in question was reserved for public purposes and was not available for an Indian reserve; the thirty families involved said they would settle at nowhere but Fort à la Corne,³⁶ and their expectations of such a move were given as reasons why the band had not completed its school and neglected its "rocky, unproductive gardens".³⁷

Early in 1885 the Government granted those who wanted to leave Cumberland a reserve adjacent to Chekastapaysin's about the present site of Fenton, Saskatchewan, but none wanted to go there since they had invested much time and money in breaking land at Fort à la Corne and they simply did not want to move elsewhere. The Agent, Reader, wrote to the Chief at Cumberland, advising the band to reconsider this "unkind act towards the Department", but in response the band reiterated its request once more, saying that they had been told there was "no fish or game or much wood" at the proposed location; resources which were plentiful at Fort à la Corne. The Acting Agent at Prince Albert strongly supported the Indians' request, adding his opinion that "these Cumberland men have always been used to hard work and are totally different from the Plain Crees".³⁸ A reserve was granted them in the desired place later that year, and when it was finally laid out in the summer of 1887, the Surveyor found that those settled there were "doing very well" and "evidently accustomed to hard work".³⁹ The reserve had an area of 65 square miles and was located immediately to the south of James Smith Reserve (No. 100). Within a few years it was inhabited by almost a hundred persons, though a portion of these had come from the declining Chekastapaysin band.⁴⁰

The Agency was markedly affected by discharges from Treaty of half-breeds who took scrip to extinguish their titles.⁴¹ This meant that they forfeited all right to Treaty privileges, including land inside the reserve. About a hundred families had withdrawn by July, 1886; most of these had occurred in the previous spring, when "the idea of leaving the Treaty and receiving scrip in compensation for annuity . . . spread almost like an epidemic".⁴² Most affected was the Birch River community, an offshoot from the group based on The Pas. This group of about ninety had earlier been making "considerable improvement"

³⁴A. Mackay, 6 Sept., 1881; E. McColl, 28 Nov., 1882; E. McColl, 30 Nov., 1883.

³⁵*Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 Dec., 1883*, p. xlvii.

³⁶J. Reader, 14 July, 1884.

³⁷E. McColl, 30 Oct., 1884.

³⁸J. Reader to E. McColl, 25 March, 1885; J.M. Rae, Acting Indian Agent, Prince Albert, to E. Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, Regina, 8 Sept., 1885.

³⁹J. C. Nelson, 30 Dec., 1887, in which an account of the new reserve's resources is also given.

⁴⁰R.S. McKenzie, Indian Agent, Duck Lake Agency, 10 Sept., 1888.

⁴¹See the valuable account in Giraud, M., *Le Métis Canadien*, Paris, 1945.

⁴²J. Reader, 2 July, 1886.

in farming, and particularly in growing potatoes,⁴³ but the whole band took scrip. Thus, the reserve was vacated and the cattle were eventually given to Indians at The Pas.

The bands of Chemawawin, Moose Lake and Pas Mountain were generally unaffected, though the other communities experienced significant losses: Grand Rapids, for example, had lost some forty persons by 1888.⁴⁴ Such changes necessarily affected the schools in the area, both regarding their decreased enrolments and changes in "quality"; thus, at the Eddy School (The Pas) it was soon reported that progress had lapsed since "some of the best scholars had left, being half-breeds".⁴⁵ The cause of agriculture was retarded, as at Grand Rapids where one result of the exodus was a major cutback in the area under cultivation and in the procurement of hay. Missionary work also suffered, since some of the Indians at The Pas left their homes near the Mission. Though they then settled at locations between five and thirty miles away in different directions, they still expected the same amount of attention from the Minister.⁴⁶

MORTALITY AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Over the period between 1875 and 1905 the population of the Agency experienced a slow increase once the economic hardships of the early 1880's had passed: those who had survived the famine were "reduced to skeletons".⁴⁷ By the middle of 1905 there were some 1,190 people on the six reserves. The persistent effects of a nutritionally poor diet and inadequate living conditions, evident also in the incidence of tuberculosis, increased the severity of the sporadic epidemics of whooping cough, smallpox, measles and other diseases against which the Indians had little resistance. Thus, whooping cough killed at least fifteen children at The Pas and Cumberland House in the winter of 1881-82.⁴⁸

The fall fishing at Cumberland House in 1887 was curtailed by a severe outbreak of influenza, and this was immediately followed by an epidemic of measles during the haying season. According to the Acting Agent, ". . . no house at Cumberland escaped", and from the church records he found that at least 33 had died,⁴⁹ over one-fifth of the total population. Fortunately, the disease did not attain epidemic proportions at The Pas, the largest of the communities. There it caused but one death. Medical attention could not be procured. The Agent, himself, was recuperating in England, after some fifteen years in the area as an Anglican missionary, during which time he said that he "had many opportunities of witnessing distressing cases of destitution which

⁴³E. McColl, 10 Dec., 1881 and 30 Nov., 1883.

⁴⁴J. Reader, 3 July, 1888 (re-dated 7 Aug., 1888).

⁴⁵J. Reader, 6 Sept., 1886.

⁴⁶J. Hines, Devon Mission to Fern, C.M.S., London, 28 May, 1889.

⁴⁷E. McColl, 10 Dec., 1881.

⁴⁸E. McColl, 28 Nov., 1882.

⁴⁹W.G. Gow, Acting Indian Agent, Pas Agency, to E. McColl, 24 Feb., 1888

have too often (especially in winter) resulted in premature death".⁵⁰ In 1892, a Corporal in the N.W.M.P. termed one band the most sickly and deformed people he had ever seen.⁵¹

Any form of medical attention was slow in forthcoming to the Indians and, as with so much else, it took disaster to effect a change: in 1882 medicine cases were sent to The Pas and Cumberland House, and points of vaccine went to traders, clergy and teachers.⁵² When a doctor finally arrived to vaccinate Indians in 1886, the Agent commented that he was of valuable service not only for this, "but also in numerous cases of sickness, some of which are of long standing and needed the attention which they have now received".⁵³ Illness prevented families from setting out to hunt and fish, so adding to their destitution and suffering in poor seasons and straining the already inadequate supplies of relief provisions, as in the winter of 1887-88.

Meanwhile the white administrators attributed the causes for these conditions to the Indians themselves, whether it was their living in too close proximity to one another, rather than dispersing more to hunt and fish, so that "they themselves have thus been the main cause of sickness and starvation in the winter"; or that it was their loafing in summer when they ought to have been drying fish and getting wood; or their "habits of uncleanness and untidiness . . . together with their small and miserable houses"; or the evils of crowding stemming from new stoves.⁵⁴ A detailed study of the Indians' housing conditions was made by Reader in 1889. Both his comments upon each house and the accompanying analysis give particular stress to overcrowding, of which he felt, "filth, precocity, and at times immorality, must be the natural outcome". One-roomed houses might contain three families; for part of the winter one had four, including discharged halfbreeds who had been married to Treaty Indians. Only one of the ninety-four houses could be "stamped as clean in every respect".⁵⁵

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

As with all the reserves set up in Manitoba and the North-West Territories in the late 19th century, agriculture and stock-rearing were regarded as prime instruments in the struggle to civilize the Indian. Indeed, civilization itself tended to be seen in terms of such sedentary pursuits.⁵⁶ Aside from such reasons, the bands' problems in gaining a meagre subsistence in years when hunting and fishing were difficult, formed basic arguments for encouraging farming on the newly created reserves.

⁵⁰J. Reader, 14 July, 1884.

⁵¹Quoted in J. Cotton, *op. cit.*

⁵²E. McColl, 30 Nov., 1883.

⁵³J. Reader, 12 July, 1887; cf. S.R. Marlatt, Inspector of Indian Agencies, 15 Sept., 1902.

⁵⁴J. Reader, 2 July, 1885 and 3 July, 1888.

⁵⁵J. Reader to E. McColl, 11 March, 1889.

⁵⁶E. McColl's Report on the Manitoba Superintendency, dated 31 Dec., 1878 contains pertinent comments on the significance of the "arts of husbandry".

As has been mentioned, the natural resources upon which the bands' traditional economies were based were especially depleted in the early 1880's. This occasioned much native anxiety and some inclination to farm, though Angus McKay reported that they found "the work hard and unsatisfactory to make even a small garden".⁵⁷ In 1880 not only did heavy rain and early frost cut down the crops, but owing to exceptionally high water the fishing failed in the fall and fur-bearing animals were drowned out; further, wildfowl left the region prematurely owing to an early winter. All this left the Indian with little in the way of resources for subsistence.⁵⁸ Mass starvation was averted only through the issue of staple rations of flour and pork by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Department. Even so, the Indians "suffered greatly from want of food" both during the winter of 1880-81 and in the subsequent spring, and there was no special provision for the destitute, sick and aged. Fortunately, the fall fisheries were successful and most reserves secured enough for winter use the following year.⁵⁹ The wildlife resources, whether of fish for consumption or furs for earnings to allow the Indians to purchase supplies, continued to be undependable. Especially severe was the setback of 1884-85, when the fall fishing was again unsuccessful and the muskrats nearly became extinct in a very severe winter. The Agent made the Indians scatter widely both to hunt rabbits, which were luckily abundant in the early part of the winter, and also to angle trout. Relief supplies from the Department only partially allayed the suffering, for there was insufficient food in the district as a whole. Poor hunts in such seasons meant that they would be but poorly supplied with ammunition, net, and thread for the future.

Among the reasons for the poverty in the Agency in this earlier period, Reader had noted both this "frequent failure" of the fishing and "the waning condition" of the fur trade. To these, he added the Indians' "extravagance when in possession of anything, the long and severe winters . . . (and) . . . the extreme lack of work for day labourers . . ."⁶⁰ Their destitution was self-reinforcing, as when lack of clothing prevented them from setting nets on the lakes in winter or travelling in search of moose, deer or fur-bearing animals. In general, the years of scarcity continued into the early 1890's, and markedly contrasted with the comparative affluence of the early 1900's.

Resource depletion stimulated agriculture, though the initial enthusiasm for wheat and barley did not persist. Crops of potatoes and other vegetables were grown in the period, but generally in quantities sufficient only for fall and early winter needs. But aside from environmental constraints, cultivation brought with it requirements for seed, implements, oxen necessary to carry on the pursuit on an adequate scale and persistent instruction by a competent staff. As might be expected, problems of communication and transportation

⁵⁷A. Mackay to J.F. Graham, 26 Nov., 1880.

⁵⁸*Loc. cit.*

⁵⁹A. Mackay, 6 Sept., 1881; E. McColl, 10 Dec., 1881; A. Mackay, 10 Oct., 1883.

⁶⁰J. Reader to E. McColl, 11 March, 1889.

between the Agent, initially based on Grand Rapids, the administrative headquarters at Winnipeg and Ottawa, the Hudson's Bay Company's organization and the Indians themselves produced a spate of problems, and complaints were rife. After the first few seasons, the Indians were expected to supply most of their own seed from the previous season's crops, but where these had been poor and where the succeeding winter had been harsh, by spring little was left.

The Hudson's Bay Company's Factor at Cumberland House supplied the Saskatchewan Valley reserves in Treaty No. 5 with seed potatoes in 1879, when the Inspector had found it impossible to forward the seed from Winnipeg in time for planting. The cost of transporting potatoes would have been over \$7 a bushel.⁶¹ The Factor was clearly aware of what supplies the Indians had on hand, and advised the Department of the local situation. Thus, in October, 1882, he wrote to Winnipeg to say that the Indians would have insufficient potatoes to plant in the spring of 1883 "owing to the limited supply they received last spring".⁶² Supplies were in any case not always locally on hand for purchase, and when the reserved seed potatoes were frozen, only small quantities could be sown.⁶³

Some agricultural implements had been delivered to the bands by 1880, but when they arrived the Indians complained that they desired not garden hoes, but rather the more effective grub hoe; at Cumberland House they refused to take the four dozen garden hoes sent there in 1880, maintaining that they were "unsuitable for the cultivation of that rocky and wooded country",⁶⁴ a complaint also voiced by the Berens River band, then in the same Agency. Soon, too, there were requests for replacements for worn-out tools and implements, and there were reports of the Indians' lack of care for them. At Chemawawin, it was alleged that the ploughs had been either not assembled or buried in the mud, as were the harrows; implements were reported to be lying around the gardens at Grand Rapids.⁶⁵

As with seeds and implements, the Treaty stipulated what cattle should be given to the bands, though the Department decided that these would not be supplied until the Indians were deemed able to care for them. So, even where the seed was available, lack of implements and cattle necessitated the use of sticks to break and dig up the ground so that potatoes could be planted. Again at Chemawawin, as in other parts of Treaty No. 5, where ploughs but not cattle had been supplied, the Indians had to hitch themselves to the ploughs to break up the land.⁶⁶ "The Department was prodded into action by the somewhat

⁶¹E. McColl, 6 Aug., 1879.

⁶²H. Belanger to E. McColl, 9 Oct., 1882.

⁶³J. Reader, 12 July and 12 Sept., 1887.

⁶⁴E. McColl, 10 Dec., 1881.

⁶⁵A. Mackay, 30 Sept., 1882.

⁶⁶A. Mackay, 25 June, 1879. Joseph Reader's letter of 2 July, 1886 contains an outline of his attempt to teach the Pas Mountain Indians how to cultivate their land; the harrowing was in part done by the Indians themselves, since "one of the oxen was too poor for continued hard work."

embarrassing petition received early in July, 1879, purportedly from the Chiefs at Cumberland and The Pas and a Councillor from Chemawawin.⁶⁷ It was laid before Sir John A. Macdonald by Chief Henry Prince of St. Peter's Reserve, Manitoba, and was sent to McColl in Winnipeg for comment. While the Inspector cast serious doubts on the authenticity of the document, he admitted the truth of the complaints of the Cumberland and Pas Indians that they had not received their stipulated allowance of cattle and agricultural implements. This he attributed to the frequent change of Agent in Treaty No. 5, because of which no reliable requisitions had been received. He recommended the immediate shipment of the cattle, since this would be impossible once the summer was over.⁶⁸ The Agent, too, asked that the stock should be supplied, to the extent of the full complement of seven animals per band. They were sent to the reserves later that year.

While some were brought to Grand Rapids "in excellent condition", most were transported from Carlton. The long journey from Fort à la Corne meant that they arrived "much fatigued and reduced in flesh".⁶⁹ Some died shortly

TABLE I
Population, Production, Livestock and Destitution
Pas Agency Reserves, 1894-95

	Grand Rapids	Chemawawin	Moose Lake	Pas	Cumberland	Pas Mountain
<i>Population, 1895</i>	110	139	122	392	139	171
<i>No. Destitute, 1895</i>	6	30	21	88	41	46
<i>Acres Cultivated, 1894</i>	3	1	3	20	7	... ³
<i>Crops lbs. seeded/ bushel harvested, 1894²</i>						
Potatoes	1260/150	600/70	1200/250	11,820/3000	279/1	....
Barley	—	100/15	100/15	788/50	....	....
Corn	10/1	14/1	15/1	35/5	10/	....
Turnips	/5	/5	/5	5/50	2/	....
Carrots	2/2	2/2	2/2	5/30	1/	....
<i>Cattle, 1895</i>	12	8	14	99	18	85
<i>Furs Sold (\$)</i>						
Trade	....	....	....	3000	2600	2830
Cash	....	....	....	....	500	....
<i>Fish Sold and Consumed (4)</i>	....	....	....	2700	....	200
<i>Other Industries (\$)</i>	....	....	....	....	....	900
<i>Relief Supplies 1893-94² (lbs.)</i>						
Flour	300	800	1000	3610	284	....
Bacon	106	150	170	700	1768	....
Tea	6	....	8	51	10	....
<i>Dried Meat</i>	....	....	....	....	224	....

Source: Department of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1896.

¹"An estimate had been made of the crop, but it was out of proportion to what appearances indicated."

²Approximate

³Not known

⁶⁷H. Prince, Chief, St. Peter's Reserve, Manitoba *et al.* to J.A. McDonald, 29 June, 1879.

⁶⁸E. McColl, 6 Aug., 1879.

⁶⁹A. Mackay to J.F. Graham, 26 Nov., 1880 and E. McColl, 25 Nov., 1880.

after delivery and others failed to survive the following winter. This was by no means restricted to the Lower Saskatchewan Indians, for the Superintendent for Manitoba admitted that his charges had generally been given "inferior and worn out cattle, or cattle too wild for working or dairy purposes, and with supplies of all kinds of the most inferior quality".⁷⁰ At Grand Rapids, however, the Indians' laziness and mismanagement were blamed for the starvation of three cows and a bull during the 1879-80 winter; by October, 1883 all the animals originally supplied were dead. At the end of the 1880-81 winter only two oxen and a cow remained at Moose Lake, the rest having been either killed for beef or allowed to starve.⁷¹ No cattle had been sent to Chemawawin, since Moose Lake had had the full quota, and of these only one cow remained by 1882. At Cumberland, where Mackay had said it was impossible to raise stock on account of the lack of grass, their fate was similar. Only at The Pas itself among the lower-lying reserves was a reasonable degree of care accorded the stock, despite the problems which high water levels posed for the provision of hay. A spring calf was saved, and the herd gradually expanded at the same time as some progress was underway in other facets of agriculture. They had fifty-six head by 1886,⁷² yet the Pas Band incurred the wrath of the Department's Inspector in the summer of 1893 for neglecting to care for their cattle during the previous winter. In an unusual printed report, however, Inspector McColl blamed the Indian Agents in his Superintendency for having "grievously failed" to have their bands provide enough hay for wintering their cattle: ". . . a large number of them miserably perished from starvation".⁷³

Unfortunately, only fragmentary economic data are available for the reserves in the mid-1890's (see Table I), though there is evidently some support for the frequent references to the "progressive" character of the Pas Band. Reader's son cited their proximity to the Agency headquarters, a matter of about fifteen miles, as the reason why they were "the most forward in civilization" in the Agency. In contrast, Fred Scott, who paid the 1894 annuities with Reader's son, wrote that in view of this it was "a wonder that they are not farther advanced".⁷⁵ As elsewhere in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, the bands within an agency were in this way ranked in terms of their development along the prescribed route to civilization. Thus, the Agent went on to describe the Red Earth band as "a quiet and industrious band", "the cleanest and tidiest". Scott, indeed, after citing the Shoal Lake Indians as "another lazy section of the Pas Band", considered Red Earth to be "the star section of the Pas Band", and heathen at that, and may they ever remain so, if the advent of the missionary would make them like the rest of their brethren viz.

⁷⁰E. McColl, 31 Dec., 1878.

⁷¹A. Mackay to J.F. Graham, 26 Nov., 1880 and A. Mackay, 6 Sept., 1881.

⁷²E. McColl, 7 Dec., 1886.

⁷³E. McColl, 18 Oct., 1893.

⁷⁴H. Reader, 20 Aug., 1894.

⁷⁵*Report of Fred J. Scott, Assistant, to Mr. Indian Agent Reader, Pas Agency, Summer, 1894.*

lazy, dishonest and N.G. in general".⁷⁶ Comments by others on the Red Earth community confirm that Scott's remarks cannot be attributed simply to his hostility to the ex-missionary Agent. The majority did not become Christian until 1903, despite some overly-optimistic reports by John Hines of the Church Missionary Society.⁷⁷

Agriculture had been seen as the way to render the Indians self-supporting, but despite the Department's concern that civilizing farmwork should become as much the mainstay of the bands as possible, hunting and fishing formed the mainstay of their economies over most of the period. For some reserves this had

TABLE II
DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS
PAS AGENCY, 1886-1908

Year	Population (resident)	Crops Harvested (bushels)		Cattle	Hay (tons)	Income from Other Industries i.e., Fur, Fish, etc. (\$ thousands)				
		Grain	Roots			Farm Prod.	Fish- ing Wages	Hunt- ing	Other	
1886-87	925	26	1200	113	70	16.7				
1887-88	929	72	2678	106	94	9.0				
1888-89	945	94	5271	127	96	5.9				
1889-90	944	26	4629	146	127	31.4				
1890-91	994	1	4215	166	184	30.7				
1891-92	1041	—	2785	218	170	37.0				
1892-93	1051	71	6328	195	269	16.9				
1893-94	1073	40	2710	236	292	22.8				
1894-95	1069	—	3045	277	319	17.0				
1895-96	1067	—	3974	308	341	21.4				
						Farm Prod. Fish- ing Wages Hunt- ing Other (\$ thousands)				
1896-97										
1897-98	1129	—	5336	245	477	6.9	3.2	3.5	10.8	1.3
1898-99	1140	—	3150	276	401	3.3	2.1	2.8	10.3	0.9
1899-1900	1145	—	1884	173	287	3.0	2.4	2.8	23.1	0.8
1900-01	1139	—	4045	207	279	3.9	2.9	3.1	24.8	1.0
1901-02	1151	—	3931	227	302	3.9	3.6	3.6	30.7	0.8
1902-03	1161	—	2971	177	260	3.4	3.8	3.0	30.1	0.8
1903-04	1193	—	3630	181	261	4.1	6.8	3.4	30.1	0.8
1904-05										
1905-06	1192	—	3975	192	272	4.9	8.1	3.4	29.1	1.1
1906-07	1217	—	3410	214	449	3.6	11.5	16.4	16.9	1.3
1907-08	1154	—	2744	235	526	2.9	8.2	15.4	18.1	0.3

Source: Department of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports*.

been recognized at an early date, as when the Inspector commented in 1881 that it was impossible to make much advancement in agriculture on Moose Lake, or any other in the district, on account of the limited quantity of land available for cultivation and of its unsuitability for that purpose since nearly

⁷⁶*Loc. cit.*

⁷⁷See, for example, John Hines' *Journal* for the period May through August, 1889, in which he found that "the time of Harvest is near".

the whole country was flooded with water;⁷⁸ on Chemawawin, “. . . no progress in farming can ever be made on such a barren, rocky, marshy reserve”; Cumberland has already been mentioned.

By the end of the century, then, only the Pas band had emerged as prominent cultivators, growing sizable quantities of potatoes in favourable seasons when drought and frost did not interfere. Like the Pas Mountain communities, they had built up their herds. But the very conditions which favoured the proliferation of the wildlife resources of the Indians were most detrimental to these new pursuits. Unusually high waters in the Saskatchewan River in the fall of 1899 flooded much of the country about the Pas, and as a result not only did the band lose all the hay it had stacked for the use of its cattle over the winter, but most of the garden crops as well. The cattle could not be moved to a secondary hay supply some forty miles away until the water froze; thirty-five of the near-starving cattle died on the way there, leaving a balance of just over one hundred head.⁷⁹ This problem continued, since the environmental conditions persisted well into the next decade. Except at Pas Mountain the high water covered all but the stony ridges of the reserves and curtailed agricultural production; thus, most of the gardens of roots and other vegetable crops at the Pas were submerged in June and July, 1902 and the early 1900's did not see a repetition of the 4,000 bushel potato crops of the late 1880's and early '90's (see Table II). At Moose Lake the band had a hard struggle to keep any of their cattle alive since all their hay-grounds were under water for several seasons running. After the water froze in the winter of 1903-04 they managed only to cut enough hay on top of the ice to maintain the best of the cows and one bull.⁸⁰

Although depletion of the herds continued until 1904, the Inspector did at least note that this loss was not of much consequence since the bands were too distant from markets and because, as a food-supply, stock were “of little value in a country where moose, bear and fish are so plentiful”. “As a matter of fact”, he continued “they would not raise cattle at all if it were not for their desire to please the Department, for whose desires and wishes they appear to have the most profound respect.”⁸¹

TRADITIONAL ECONOMIES

By the mid-1890's there was resignation that the staples of these Swampy Cree were “the musk-rat and rabbits in winter and fish more or less all the year round”.⁸² At that time both furs and fisheries were once again depleted and relief needs were high everywhere, except at Grand Rapids where fishing, moose-hunting and labouring on the wharf were possible. This low water, as usual, not only

⁷⁸E. McColl, 10 Dec., 1881.

⁷⁹S. R. Marlatt, 1 Oct., 1900

⁸⁰J. Courtney, 6 July, 1903.

⁸¹S. R. Marlatt, 1 Oct., 1904.

⁸²J. Reader, 9 Aug., 1895.

reduced the rat population and increased relief levels, but also hindered travel, especially into the Pas Mountain reserves.

Proliferating muskrats, in demand particularly for their fur, attracted traders and fur buyers into the Lower Saskatchewan Valley when conditions had again become favourable. In season, from November through May, vast numbers were killed; some $\frac{1}{4}$ million skins were sold at The Pas in 1900-01 alone. Prices were high and maintained themselves after the peak of supply had passed. The Indians were "never more prosperous", with muskrats bringing 9c each for fur, while also providing food and one man reportedly killing 5,000 in one season. Other fur was also abundant, as were moose and waterfowl; whitefish and sturgeon were available in the restocked rivers and small lakes. The image turns idyllic as the early 1880's and subsequent hardships are forgotten, and the Inspector wrote that:

Fish also are very plentiful; to my knowledge all the Indian has to do to insure a meal is to set forty or fifty feet of net for a few hours, then take it up, with the result that he has a food supply for a day or two. I noticed no less than five different varieties taken in one haul — whitefish, goldeyes, pickerel, jacks and suckers. This easy mode of obtaining food is not conducive to thrift, but it suits the Indian exactly. For Indians following the Indian mode of life, this agency is unsurpassed. Two mornings that I was around early at the Pas I noticed that the Indians did not take the trouble to go away in their canoes to hunt for ducks, they just sat down on a stone or a log in front of their houses, and shot them as they passed over.⁸³

Grand Rapids possessed a consistently excellent fishery close by. Mackay had reported in 1881 that the Indians should never starve, yet he cited their "reckless improvidence" in being "too indolent to catch and dry fish for winter use" as one reason why they were "among the poorest and most depraved perhaps on the Indian bands in Treaty No. 5".⁸⁴ At Chemawawin, Moose Lake and Cumberland fishing was also a major occupation, though winter was the difficult period: then, "Small jack fish (which are caught by cold angling on the ice), often serve merely to satisfy the pangs of hunger". Reader made a similar comment about the band at The Pas in May, 1881. Although he felt sure the absence of many of his people in winter and spring was a hindrance to themselves and himself, ". . . yet", he wrote, "I am not surprised, for nothing much better than Jack fish (and these at the risk of health) can be caught in winter. No wonder then they wander about!"⁸⁵

In view of this continuing dependence on fishing in most of the Agency, attempts by the Government at control of it in the interests of conservation, and competition from white commercial interests drew understandably concerned responses from the Indian administration and the Indians themselves. There had been a disastrous attempt in 1893-94 to enforce a close season on fishing in the Agency, but the experiment was discontinued. Reiterating that "The mainstay

⁸³cf. S.R. Marlatt, 15 Sept., 1903.

⁸⁴A. Mackay, 6 Sept., 1881; J.F. Graham, 22 Nov., 1882.

⁸⁵J. Reader, *Notes of Services, Meetings Classes, Visits (Pastoral and Missionary), etc., from time-to-time, 1881*, forwarded to C.M.S., London.

of these Indians' food is fish", the Agent went on to comment in answer to a Departmental questionnaire that under such controls a large quantity of imported provisions would be required to prevent starvation, and many of the Indians' dogs would be lost.⁸⁶ As with natural depletions in the fisheries, such restrictions would also affect hunting, since caches of fish caught in the fall allowed the Indians to leave their families for considerable periods.

There was fear of starvation, too, owing to the activity of commercial sturgeon operations at Cross and Cedar Lakes; at Chemawawin the Indians subsisted principally upon that fish. Both Indians and half-breeds on Cedar Lake had been catching sturgeon for buyers, receiving in return "a mere pittance for the roe to make caviare",⁸⁷ and a great quantity of fish was wasted. During the period, however, pressure from United States' fishing companies to have these lakes thrown open was successfully resisted by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Extensive complaints and many petitions were levelled against the wholesale fishing in Lake Winnipeg particularly near Grand Rapids; even though a number of Indians there annually made an amount of fish oil from the offal, Reader felt that this did not compensate for their leaving the Reserve and living at the fisheries. Not only was this "a source of immorality", but the children lost the advantages of the day school.⁸⁸

Lack of appreciation of a quarter century's experience by the Department in this milieu is clearly apparent in the argument surrounding the surrender for sale of a substantial portion of the Fort à la Corne Indian Reserve in 1902. Archdeacon J. A. Mackay, Superintendent of Indian Missions in Saskatchewan for the Church of England, a man of considerable local experience, appealed to the Indian Commissioner, David Laird, against the surrender. He reminded the Department that the land at Fort à la Corne had been reserved for any of the Cumberland Indians who might wish to settle on it, and that the imbalance between the population and the fishing and hunting resources presaged a serious problem for the future.⁸⁹ The Indians' reluctance to move onto the new reserve was stressed by the Commissioner who wrote that the Department "... would not be justified in keeping land locked up an indefinite number of years for a migration of Indians which they may never be willing to make".⁹⁰ Against this point, the Archdeacon had contended that this situation was simply due to exceptional conditions in the region, and that with the inevitable failure of the muskrats the Indians would be "reduced to greater straits than before".⁹¹ In rebuttal, Laird made a surprisingly illogical argument. "Why", he asked,

should muskrats become less abundant? For the last few years the floods have been so destructive in the Cumberland region that scarcely any hay

⁸⁶J. Reader to Secretary, Dept. of Indian Affairs, 11 Feb., 1898.

⁸⁷A.L. Robertson, a Fisheries Officer, who was sent to Cedar and Moose Lakes in 1899 (cited in "Memorandum re Cedar Lake, N.W.T.", E.E. Prince to Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 4 June, 1902).

⁸⁸J. Reader to Secretary, Dept. of Indian Affairs, 11 Feb., 1898.

⁸⁹J.A. Mackay, Archdeacon and Superintendent of Indian Missions, Saskatchewan, 12 Nov., 1902.

⁹⁰D. Laird, Indian Commissioner, Winnipeg to J.A. Mackay, 19 March, 1903.

⁹¹J.A. Mackay, 12 Nov., 1902.

could be saved for the Indians' cattle. To all appearance, therefore, for the next half century it will be more of a rat country than one for white settlers, in which case the Indians will probably be undisturbed in a hunt which yields them a means of subsistence which they highly appreciate.⁹²

Others in the Administration were similarly aware that since the attempts to turn the reserves themselves into potential economic bases had failed, the Indians would have to continue depending on regional wildlife resources; but, like the Archdeacon, both Agents and Inspectors knowledgeable of the area realized how precarious such dependence could be. Courtney reported that "when seasons of scarcity in game and fur-bearing animals occur, as they do periodically, the Indians have a hard struggle for existence".⁹³ Supplies of wildlife for consumption and trade had certainly fluctuated greatly. The Indians' particularly close dependence on the state of the River was emphasized by the Inspector, Marlatt:

The Indians of this agency are all hunters or fishermen, or dependent on these pursuits for their livelihood; the country that they live in could not support them in any other way, consequently they will always have their ups and downs, according to the seasons: high water is in their favour, low water against them. May the good times continue!⁹⁴

WHITE CONTACTS

Regarding the various forms of white contact with the Indians during the period, the Indian Affairs administration of the area in Treaty No. 5 was originally in the hands of a single Agent. This was soon deemed to be too extensive an area for one man to superintend properly, and a second Agent was appointed to the Pas in February, 1884, the previous incumbent retaining control at Beren's River on Lake Winnipeg. Again the distress during the winters in the early 1880's was a major factor, since the Indians had been "suffering very greatly from sickness and actual starvation" in the less accessible bands "without the Agents being aware of it and even if he had known, could not have had supplies transported soon enough".⁹⁵ The new arrangement was expected to help prevent a recurrence of such a situation, but the Agent still had an exceedingly widespread charge, and hardship persisted. A visit to each reserve entailed a journey of some 660 miles by canoe in summer, and of 530 by dog train and cariole in winter.⁹⁶ Reader was quite aware of the discrepancy between the Government's stated policies of strengthening the Indians' economy and the extent of the aid actually extended to them. Even monthly visits around the Agency were obviously impossible, and with no effect he advised the Department that at least one man was required on each reserve "if real and substantial progress is to be made amongst a more or less ignorant, unenlightened, and poverty stricken people".

⁹²D. Laird, 24 Nov., 1902.

⁹³J. Courtney, 26 July, 1902; cf. Hines, J. *op. cit.*

⁹⁴S.R. Marlatt, 15 Sept., 1902.

⁹⁵E. McColl, 18 Oct., 1893.

⁹⁶H. Reader, Acting Indian Agent, 20 Aug., 1894.

Initially, the Government, maintaining that its treaty responsibility ran to paying teachers and not to building schools, had made use of Indian houses for schools where mission buildings did not exist.⁹⁷ Nomination of teachers fell to the Church, subject to inspection. The mode of life of the Cree had a deleterious effect on attendance, and wholesale environmental change had rather interesting results, since high streamflows contributed to the educational progress of at least one band, that at Cumberland. As both fish and game could then be obtained much closer to the Reserve, the Indians were able to spend more time at home, and less away trapping and fishing with their families. After several years' closure, a teacher was hired and the school reopened in the summer of 1901; this occasioned some short-lived optimism which was subdued when it was found that the Indians continued to travel away long distances and took their families with them. As elsewhere in the Agency, competent teachers were difficult to obtain, owing both to their low, tardy pay and their isolation "far away from civilization".⁹⁸ The day-school system was not conducive to regular attendance at classes, but of the value, if not the progress, of education there was no doubt. While Reader could wax that "the influence of knowledge is penetrating the clouds of ignorance and superstition which overshadowed their mental faculties for ages unrecorded in the annals of history",⁹⁹ of Cumberland his successor thought that the money spent on keeping up the school had been wasted. Eight day schools were in operation in the Agency by the end of the period, but only three teachers carried over through the summer of 1904, and only one of those was at all regarded as competent. The teachers were encouraged to enforce the use of English at school: to the Inspector, "The Indians will never become enlightened, loyal subjects until they can understand the language of the country . . ."¹⁰⁰ Hence his hostility against the missionaries in the Agency who insisted on learning and using Cree.

By this time, at least nominal Christianity had been achieved on all the Reserves, excepting for a few "modern pagans" at Red Earth. Most were adherents of the Church of England, and the Church Missionary Society was maintaining ordained missionaries at Cumberland, The Pas, Chemawawin and Grand Rapids, together with lay readers on the other reserves. There was much concern among the clergy about Roman Catholic incursions; about the threat of the breakaway sect led by the ex-Anglican missionary, Reader; and about the C.M.S.'s native agents. To the embarrassment of the Rev. John Hines, these last were "only too ready to contract a debt with anyone and to any amount and never think for a moment how they are going to pay".¹⁰¹

For the Anglican church, as for Indian Affairs, The Pas was the administrative centre; the band there came to be well regarded, even to the extent of being considered "the paragon to which the other bands look for an example".¹⁰²

⁹⁷See Hines, J., *op. cit.*, p. 287 *et seq.*

⁹⁸J. Courtney, 12 July, 1904. A forthright summary of the shortcomings of the Government's educational policy is contained in *The Bishop's Address, Fourth Meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Saskatchewan*, Prince Albert, 1889.

⁹⁹E. McColl, 7 Dec., 1886.

¹⁰⁰S.R. Marlatt, 1 Oct., 1904.

¹⁰¹J. Hines to C.M.S., London, 19 Nov., 1890.

¹⁰²S.R. Marlatt, 1 Oct., 1904.

Against these uplifting influences and the morally beneficial effects of isolation must be set the contamination of the Indians by such activities as gained them wages for their labour. Opportunities for earning money aside from trapping were few, being confined to work as deck hands and carriers for the Hudson's Bay Company at Grand Rapids, which had also retrograde effects on farming, and summer work as boatmen on the North Saskatchewan.¹⁰³ Further dangers stemmed from such people as the fishermen who operated increasingly extensively in the winter on Cedar and Moose Lakes. Against these, the Inspector unsuccessfully sought the establishment of a permanent police post. Detachments had been stationed at both Grand Rapids and Cumberland. Their presence at least ensured smooth treaty payments: the Hudson's Bay Factor at Chemawawin wrote in 1892 that,

The sight of the red-coats, hand-cuffs, rifles and revolvers, etc., had a decided effect in cooling the, at times, rather exuberant spirits of the noble red man. The Moose Lake "bullies" were as civil and quiet as lambs, and could have claimed a first prize for being a docile and orderly band of Indians.¹⁰⁴

In general, according to their Agent, they were found to be "loyal and peaceable and generally moral, where no unprincipled white men have introduced their vices that usually follow the march of civilization".¹⁰⁵ Only towards the end of the period was there fear for their moral future, owing to the coming of the railway.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the quarter century, the Cree of the Pas Agency preserved a good measure of economic independence, particularly in the later years when both the natural environment and market conditions were especially favourable to their economy. Their lands were still unwanted and unsettled, "the district being very different from most localities where Indian reserves are situated".¹⁰⁶ The small number of Europeans engaged in trading, mission work and teaching were themselves dependent upon the Indians for personal success. Some help came to the native people both through these and also through the Agents themselves in extreme cases of destitution and in difficult seasons, though upon nothing like the scale maintained in some of the agencies elsewhere in the North-West Territories. Certainly, in the years of relative prosperity, the Indians' "careless, indolent life" did much to confirm some myths about aboriginal existence, but the neglect of sedentary pursuits did engender suspicion. To quote Marlatt, "The life he leads is anything but conducive to thrift, and the development of those qualities which go to build up a vigorous independent manhood".¹⁰⁷

S. RABY

¹⁰³A. Mackay to J.F. Graham, 26 Nov., 1880; S.R. Marlatt, 1 Oct., 1904.

¹⁰⁴Quoted in J. Cotton, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵J. Reader, 11 July, 1889.

¹⁰⁶J. Courtney, 26 July, 1902.

¹⁰⁷S.R. Marlatt, 1 Oct., 1904.

Book Reviews

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF WESTERN CANADA. By Tony Cashman. Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Limited, 1971. Pp. 272. \$12.75.

According to the note on its dust jacket, this is a "history of the four western provinces written specifically for the young-adult reader, but offering a concise introduction to the subject to any age". It begins in the prehistoric period and deals with subsequent developments including such recent events as Saskatchewan's Homecoming '71. In the course of twenty-seven chapters, many of which are exceedingly brief, the author touches upon, among other things, the Indians, exploration, the fur trade, the Canadian Pacific, the Mounted Police, the North West Rebellion, immigration, creation of the provinces, farm organizations, politics, the two wars, the depression, post-war mining developments, and the "affluent western life" of the 1960s.

The main theme of the book is progress; progress, it would appear, toward a time when "an upgrading of almost every sector of life" (p. 249) became clearly visible. This plateau is said to have been reached in the 1960s as a result of advances in such fields as education, health, highway construction and mining. Unfortunately, Cashman at times supports his case for progress by limiting his discussion of evidence presented. For instance he uses exports to demonstrate western advance. He points out that in the 1960s exports included sulphur and coal to Japan and wheat to China whereas the first exports were sea otter pelts to the latter. "There was," he states, "a significant difference," (p. 260) but fails to note that there was also a significant similarity. The exports cited attest to the fact that the west remains essentially an exporter of primary products.

Not surprisingly, since the text comprises only about 120 of the 272 pages, the author deals with his subject very superficially. For example, agrarian dissatisfaction with the C.P.R. in early years is attributed to high freight rates, no reference being made to the company's monopoly position, tax exemptions, delay in selecting its land, and slowness in building branch lines. Cashman also conveys false impressions concerning certain matters as a result of such superficiality. On p. 192 respecting the early 1920s he states that Saskatchewan's organized farmers were barred from entering politics by their constitution; and on p. 211 concerning 1932, he writes that the restriction had been removed, enabling the organization to join with labour in establishing the Farmer-Labour party. Both statements are true, but an impression they convey, namely that the same farmers' organization existed throughout the period, is not. In 1920 farmers were banded together in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. Soon afterwards a rival body sprang up, the Farmers' Union of Canada. In 1926 the two united to form the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), the organization existing in 1932. It is also worth noting that in 1922 the S.G.G.A. took steps to enter politics and for about two years thereafter was committed to direct action in politics. Nor is

this the only instance where the reader might be misled. From the discussion of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern Railways on p. 168 one would conclude that the Laurier Government backed only the Grand Trunk in its efforts to establish a second transcontinental railway. It actually supported transcontinental schemes of both the Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern.

Cashman is also on occasion highly uncritical in the use of sources. At one point he claims that but for the Leduc oil strike, there would be "fewer people on the prairies than before the first war," (p. 235). This conclusion is evidently based on nothing more than a statement by an economist of the Canadian Petroleum Association, an organization scarcely noted for underestimating the benefits accruing to Western Canada from the oil industry. The Winnipeg General Strike is similarly treated, blame for it and the violence which erupted being placed on Communists and the One Big Union.

On numerous other occasions one cannot avoid concluding that the book was inadequately researched. In connection with the birth of the C.C.F., the reader is informed that Walter Mentz "coined the name" Cooperative Commonwealth (p. 210). That expression, however, was used quite frequently in earlier years. On p. 91, Cashman describes the San Juan Island dispute of the 1870s as the last major border dispute with the United States. Should not that distinction go to the subsequent Alaska Boundary dispute, in which President Roosevelt was evidently prepared to use the American Army to uphold his position? Chapter XV is particularly suggestive of skimpy research. In it Cashman mistakenly contends that the west enjoyed continuous prosperity from the arrival of the C.P.R. to 1893-94. There are even a couple of instances in the work where the author does not seem to understand the terms he employs. On p. 162 he refers to the electrical system lighting Vancouver as "a twenty thousand volt system". The Vancouver distribution system in 1903 certainly did not operate at that voltage. It is possible he means that electricity was transmitted to the city over a 20,000 volt transmission line, but more likely he should have said that the city was supplied with power produced by a hydro-electric station with an installed capacity of 20,000 kilowatts.

The book is further weakened by a rather substantial number of factual errors. The author states that the C.P.R. supplied farmers with Red Fife seed free of charge (p. 107). It merely transported such seed free. The C.P.R. is incorrectly credited with building the branch line from Regina to Saskatoon in 1890 and extending it to Prince Albert in 1891 (p. 145). It simply leased the line for a time. F. W. G. Haultain was premier of the Territories; he was never Lieutenant-Governor (p. 167). LaColle Falls, the site of Prince Albert's hydro-electric disaster, is located on the North Saskatchewan not on the Shell River (p. 181). The initial payment for wheat set by the pools for the 1929 crop year was \$1.00 not \$1.50 per bushel (p. 203). The premiums for coverage under the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan mentioned on p. 235 apply to certain later years not to 1947. On p. 178 one reads that farmers gathered at Indian Head in 1901 to found both the Territorial Grain Growers' Association and a cooperative

to market their grain and that "in 1903 a Manitoba association was formed and the two merged into the United Grain Growers". Just what the author means by "the two" is not clear, but whatever he means is incorrect. To begin with, those attending the Indian Head meeting did not establish a marketing cooperative; they simply organized the T.G.G.A. The Grain Growers Grain Company, a farmers' marketing organization, not mentioned by name by Cashman, was established in 1906. Furthermore, it was this organization and the Alberta Farmers' Cooperative Elevator Company which merged to form the United Grain Growers in 1917. Finally, the total lack of documentation, omission of a bibliography, a number of spelling errors, and excessive concern with chronology, resulting in frequent digressions also detract from the work.

As a history of the four western provinces, Cashman's book leaves a good deal to be desired. Nevertheless, it does have some merit. It does present a general though not altogether accurate picture of the opening up and development of the west. It does bring out how important certain discoveries were for the colonization of the prairies, for example, an early maturing strain of wheat. And it is a handsome volume, containing as it does over a hundred pictures, photos and sketches, quite often in color. Despite its shortcomings, its publication may result in more Canadians becoming interested and hopefully better informed concerning our past.

Clinton O. White

CANADA'S CHANGING NORTH. By W. C. Wonders. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971. Pp. 364. \$3.75.

This collection of short essays about northern Canada is designed in the author's words to make "accurate information more readily available . . . for students and the general reading public," and to focus upon the changing nature of Canada's North. Professor Wonders hopes that his book will fill a gap in the information presently available between the "narrowly specialized articles of the professional scholar and the extremely generalized accounts of the popular writer". To achieve his end Professor Wonders has chosen a standard framework for geographical writing and selected articles from a wide range of sources which seem relevant to his headings. His headings are general: Defining the North, Historical Perspectives, Physical Nature, Native People, Economic Resources, Transportation and Communications, Regionalism and Northern Settlements, and finally Problems of the North. While the headings are general, some of the articles grouped under them are highly specific. The format of the book aims at a broad description of the north. Its success in achieving this aim must be gauged by the applicability and quality of individual articles.

The two articles under the heading of definition are well chosen and strike a nice balance between the detailed analysis of boundary problems and the desired general statement of the limits of arctic and sub-arctic. The numerous charts in Professor Hamelin's article are rather confusing as is evidenced by a serious typographical error in Table 1 on page 14. In category three of this table "above"

is inserted for "below" with the result that places with a large number of degree days above 32°F are given a rating as highly arctic.

The historical section is made up of a series of papers chosen to cover the history of the north in several ways. In time they range from the Vikings to the Plaisted (Ski-doo) expedition; they cover the area from the pole to the southern limits of the sub-arctic and from Labrador to the Yukon. In intent they range from the detailed analysis of archaeological evidence to the discussion of the historic place of the north in Canadians' appreciation of their national existence. The articles are all readable and the intent of the section to give a general overview of northern history and, at the same time, a peek at the type of detailed scholarship going on is clearly achieved.

In subsequent sections the aim of the book to blend the particular and the general begins to be lost. The articles on the physical geography are for the most part quite specific and there is no clear idea of what the general physical nature of the north is. The article by F. A. Cook on fluvial processes in the arctic is highly specific, as is that by W. O. Pruitt on the ecology of snow. At the present when an ecological view of physical landscapes is being stressed it is unfortunate that Dr. Wonders chose articles with a narrowly specialized approach. This is doubly tragic in view of the existence of a traditionally ecological approach to landscape in regional geography. In fairness it must be pointed out that articles stressing the interrelationship of the various aspects of the northern physical landscape are rare. This fact coupled with the failure of this section to give a general view of the physical nature of the north calls in question the adequacy of Professor Wonders' method to achieve his aim. It seems probable that a physical description of the north written by a scholar of Professor Wonders' background and with his aim in mind would have gone much further to inform the student and the general public than did this collection of articles.

This problem of the inability of the articles chosen to achieve the aim of the book is more clearly evident in the succeeding sections. Many of the articles chosen are in themselves interesting but in aggregate they give an inadequate and sometimes misleading impression of the north. The number of articles on native people is small, and gives no picture of the variety of people, attitudes and local economics which characterize the north. The section on resources follows the line of many commentators in giving a distorted importance to mineral wealth. It is nowhere clearer than in such northern growth points, as Atkinson Pt., Pine Pt., Norman Wells and Yellowknife, that the impact of mineral development on the improvement of the local area and the local people might be more negative than positive. Moreover the amount of mineral output in the North-West Territories, about one-third of Canada's area, is about one percent of the national output by value, and the place of mineral production in the Canadian economy is usually exaggerated. It should be noted here that few of these articles are reproduced from scholarly journals. A better appreciation of the role of northern resources might have been derived from Dr. K. Rae's book, *The Political Economy of the Canadian North*, or articles in such journals as *Canadian Forum*. The final three sections of

the book suffer from the same difficulties and expose again the need for a scholarly digesting of the kinds of information available in the articles reproduced.

In summary it might be fair to say that except for those articles on resources the material chosen for this collection is interesting and informative. The aim of the book is not achieved by the method chosen. The student and the general public are not given a view of the north which combines the general with the specialized. Nor is it clear in what direction change is occurring. In its attempt to improve on the general books presently available this book has succeeded. It is for example much more objective and informative than Mr. R. A. J. Phillip's book *Canada's North*. In its attempt to analyze and present the results of more specialized scholarship it has succeeded only insofar as it points up the need for a book which does this and challenges Canadian northern geographers to get busy and write one.

J. G. McConnell

POWER FOR PRAIRIE PLOWS. By J. W. G. MacEwen. Saskatoon: Modern Press: 1971. Pp. 111. Illus. \$8.95.

Mr. MacEwan's book, *Power For Prairie Plows*, surveys the sources of power, animal and mechanical, that played such a large part in transforming Western Canada into one of the great agricultural areas of the world. As the author suggests in his forward to his book, it is a story well worth telling and he approaches the subject with obvious enthusiasm.

The necessity of a power source which would enable the farmer to carry out his farming operations with efficiency and economy was apparent from the earliest days of settlement in Western Canada. As times changed so did the farmer's reliance on various types of power. The homesteader replaced his slow, plodding yoke of oxen with a team of draft horses. But it was not long before the supremacy of horses as a source of power was threatened by mammoth, steam-driven tractors, and steamers in their turn by smaller, more practical gasoline powered tractors. It is the story of these changes that is told in this book.

It should not be suggested, however, that the transition from one form of power to another was a smooth one. The author makes it clear that it was not, and much of the appeal of his book is rooted in the stories of struggle between opposing interests. For instance, horsemen and horsebreeders for obvious monetary reasons and less tangible sentimental ones were loath to see the age of the horse pass. They experimented with larger and larger hitches to enable them to compete with tractor power and in the Dirty Thirties when cash for parts and gasoline was scarce, they saw a resurgence of the horse. But the horse, even though he lingered longer, was to share the fate of the steamer whose death was hastened by the fact that most machinery companies ceased to produce the giant steam tractors and concentrated on the manufacture of gasoline burning models.

The title of Mr. MacEwan's book proves, however, to be something of a misnomer. He does not restrict himself exclusively to his subject but includes

chapters on such topics as "Binders and Bicycles", "The Horseless Carriage", and "Horsemeat and Gravy", the latter chapter dealing with a horsemeat processing plant. A discussion of binders, early cars and bicycles does not make this work a comprehensive history of agricultural machinery and rural transportation. Though such material was obviously introduced for "interest sake", it succeeds only in detracting from the flow of an already somewhat disconnected narrative. The author's arrangement of his material in short, episodic chapters, some of which are only two pages long, is somewhat disconcerting and at best unnecessary. For example, there are four consecutive chapters which deal in some way with horses, yet together they comprise a sum of only 19 pages.

Despite these faults this book is an interesting look at the development of the various sources of power which played such an important role in Western Canada. One of the real strengths of the book is its more than 100 excellent illustrations and photographs that depict that development. There are some minor errors such as a reversal of captions of the illustration and photograph on pages 34 and 35 respectively, but an error such as this detracts little from the value of the book. All in all *Power For Prairie Plows* is an attractive way for old timers to reminisce and members of a younger generation to discover something of Western Canada's agricultural past.

G. C. Vanderhaeghe



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Notes and Correspondence

New Subscription Rates

As often happens in the magazine publishing business today, increased costs of production and distribution inevitably lead to higher subscription rates. *Saskatchewan History* is no exception to this and recently the Saskatchewan Archives Board, publishers of the magazine, decided that effective with the next issue, Volume XXVI, No. 1, the subscription rates will be advanced to \$1.00 an issue and \$3.00 a year. There will be no reduced rate for three-year subscriptions. The previous increase in our rates was in 1965 when they were advanced from 35 to 50 cents a copy. This modest increase simply did not keep pace with rising costs and these have had to be met by the recent increase. Many subscribers have given us faithful support throughout the years and we hope that this increase in subscription rates will not deter them from doing so in the future so that we will be able to continue to publish articles on Saskatchewan's history.

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test is the practical working of a law, and it is idle to discuss and fight over abstract questions.

I know what your opinions are on the School question and consider that holding those opinions and representing a French Roman Catholic constituency, you are more likely to be able to give effect to your opinions and protect the particular interests you represent, by taking a place on the Committee, than by fighting outside. I think that judging from our past experience we can work well enough together.

Hoping to have a favourable and early answer through Tweed

I am
Yours faithfully
J. W. S. Hamilton