

Volume XXVII

Winter, 1974

Number 1

\$1.00

# Saskatchewan History





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 MODERN PRESS. SASKATOON

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*Editor:* D. H. BOCKING

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University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0

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

Subscription rates: \$3.00 a year or \$1.00 a copy.

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# The Mounted Police and the Doukhobors in Saskatchewan, 1899-1909\*

by CARL BETKE

**A**FTER the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, settlement in the prairie lands of western Canada increased gradually and the Indian and Metis population came to be regarded as a lessening threat to agricultural development. In the Canadian House of Commons critics of the government began to insist on reductions in the size of the North West Mounted Police force. In answer Sir John A. Macdonald, though he admitted that the previous principal purpose of the force, "to protect the few struggling settlers who were going in there from Indian outrages," might now have ceased to exist, contended that the police were still required to keep the peace. He alluded to the influx from below the border of "people with all kinds of habits" including raiding, stealing of cattle and smuggling of liquor.<sup>1</sup> His listeners, however, were not long satisfied, for what sort of advertisement was Macdonald's description for intending immigrants? Every increase in western immigration and settlement ought to reduce the need for a special police force.<sup>2</sup>

Some reductions were made in the size of the force but, even before the accession of the Laurier government, a new justification of the North West Mounted Police was developed. From the early 1890's until the advent of the first World War supporters of the force argued that increasing settlement required greater distribution of the police to perform new services for the struggling pioneers. Besides protecting property and watching the normally docile Indians, the police were now required to take responsibilities for prairie fire prevention and suppression, quarantine enforcement during times of epidemic and quarantine enforcement at the border to prevent the spread of contagious animal diseases.<sup>3</sup> As the North West Mounted Police Comptroller at Ottawa, Fred White, remarked in 1903, "'Police' is almost a misnomer . . ." But, White assured Laurier, should their services be administered separately by the different government departments, not only would the cost rise but the country would be deprived of the presence of a disciplined force ready for instant mobilization.<sup>4</sup>

Importance was now attached to those police duties which increased the "comfort and security of the settler" who was unaccustomed to the pioneer life and required not only information but also assistance, even to find stray animals.<sup>5</sup> The police often provided relief to destitute farmers or those overcome by winter conditions.<sup>6</sup> New patrol procedures initiated in the late 1880's, while intended to prevent crime by circulating police officers visibly throughout the countryside,<sup>7</sup> were in fact used to watch over a remarkable range of pioneer activity:

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\* This paper is based on research done for and with the assistance of Royal Canadian Mounted Police Historian S. W. Horrall during Summer, 1970.



In each District a number of small Detachments are placed at convenient points, each, immediately under a non-Commissioned Officer, or senior Constable. These detachments patrol all the time, and carry patrol slips with remark columns, which are signed by all the settlers they call upon, and every week each of these detachments send in their slips, with a report on the state of the country, crops, crime, settlers coming in and stock they bring, disease, if any, among stock; Indians seen, etc., etc. . . .<sup>8</sup>

The police often encountered the immigrants as early as at their first disembarkation from the train: the police would even sometimes drive them "over the most desirable districts for settlement," providing not only transport but also "cooking utensils, and giving advice and information."<sup>9</sup> In special cases the police were asked to supply transportation to foreign immigration promoters: one Berliner was driven "to see the German colonists near Regina, who have made the best progress in farming, as he proposes to take letters from them to further his work in Europe."<sup>10</sup> Once settlers were established countless police reports on their progress were submitted to the offices of the Commissioner and the Comptroller, for referral to the appropriate officials should action seem necessary.

Instructions to patrolmen emphasized that reports should include fairly detailed information about the agricultural progress of the settlers but they did not normally require comment about the ethnic background of the settlers. Among patrolmen it was common, nevertheless, to identify ethnic groups in reports, so that the relative suitability of different groups was thus incidentally compared. One report, for example, stated that:

the majority of the settlers who are in reduced circumstances are Austria-Hungarians, Bulgarians, Romanians and Russian-Germans from the Black Sea District, but few of whom appear to have brought a single dollar with them into the Country. With the British and German settlers it is otherwise.<sup>11</sup>

While the British, American, Scandinavian and German settlers were generally believed superior acquisitions, other groups distinguished themselves with the police by their unacceptable behaviour. In police reports it is difficult clearly to distinguish personal antipathies to "foreign" elements from legitimate careful judgments of the limits of their agricultural suitability. Ultimately, however, the most important criterion of a settler's merit was the measure of his self-sufficiency and prosperity, despite any patrolman's private feelings about a group. So, for example, early doubtful expressions about the desirability of the "unclean" Galician settlers were eventually replaced by grudging approval of their productive success. In fact the police were often called upon to produce reports to counteract sweeping condemnations levelled at the "Galicians" by fellow settlers. Similarly, a distaste for allegedly isolationist habits among Mennonites was overridden by evidence of obvious agricultural ability. On the other hand, disapproval (sometimes accompanied by overtones of personal prejudice) of certain Belgian, French and Jewish colonies in police reports was never reversed, at least in part because those colonies quickly proved to be economic failures.

In only two outstanding cases did alien habits threaten to overshadow productive expertise in importance. In the Mormon example, police attention to the settlers' supposed polygamous propensities was discontinued in order that Canada



might reap the benefits of their irrigation experiments; in the Doukhobor example, the Canadian government waited in vain for disturbances to subside, repeatedly pointing out their remarkable farming progress. In these situations, in which the police sense of outrage was not matched by that of the government, we see most clearly that the police were meant to minimize alien social variables while maximizing agricultural expertise in their evaluations of immigrants. They were to assist the settlers in adjusting to the new environment.

By describing a most extreme case, the following account of Mounted Police confrontations with Doukhobors in Saskatchewan illustrates the tolerance with which settlers of diverse habits were treated as long as the majority proved to be successful farm producers. One must keep in mind that Doukhobor demonstrations never involved a majority of the Doukhobor settlers and that, as a rule, the demonstrators did not employ violent tactics. The police were not, that is to say, confronted with anything like a Doukhobor "uprising". It is remarkable, nevertheless, that despite some animosity on the part of neighbouring settlers and despite the limits to which police patience was occasionally driven, the demonstrators received exceptionally benign treatment. Much more serious aberrations would have to have been displayed to undermine the Canadian government's determination to fill the west with good farmers.

Doukhobor immigrants<sup>12</sup> to the North-West Territories began arriving at Winnipeg on January 27, 1899; by September, 7,427 Doukhobors had entered the area. 1,472 of them shortly established themselves on the North Saskatchewan river west of Carlton near Battleford; 1,404 settled in the "Thunder Hill" or "North" colony on the border of Manitoba and the Territories, and the largest group, some 4,478, located in the vicinity of Yorkton. Occasionally the North West Mounted Police would refer to members of the last group as "Cyprus" Doukhobors because about a quarter of them had been temporarily situated in Cyprus.<sup>13</sup> Canadian officials had accepted from Russia's Count Tolstoy and other Russian and English patrons recommendations of the moral uprightness and agricultural ability of the "Russian Quakers". Upon their arrival even their appearance fostered great expectations:

. . . their fine physical appearance . . . coupled with the not less important fact that they are skillful agriculturalists, thrifty and moral in character, affords good grounds for congratulations to those who have been instrumental in their coming to this country, especially when it is considered that this has been brought about without incurring any expenditure of public moneys, other than about the amount usually paid in the form of bonuses for continental emigrants.<sup>14</sup>

The police found much to admire in the Doukhobor pioneer operations. They showed unique skills in breaking horses, constructing ovens of "home-made sundried bricks" and building clean and sturdy though dark houses and stables of sod, mud and logs. They were orderly, quiet, well-organized, "patient, industrious and self-supporting;" the women proved equal to the men in strength and skill at manual labour and attended to household duties besides.<sup>15</sup> From the Yorkton area nearly seven hundred Doukhobor men left to work for wages during the first summer, principally at railway construction. Some of the women sup-



plemented their income as domestic servants. It was true that the police learned of one case of collective "indecent exposure", that many were slow to depart from their vegetarian principles and that "their communistic way" would prevent them from quickly assimilating Canadian customs,<sup>16</sup> but no objections had been noticed to the announcements which the police made to various Doukhobor assemblies about the ordinances relating to prairie fires, game regulations, registration of births and deaths and control of contagious diseases.<sup>17</sup> The signs in general were of peaceful and successful adaptation to western Canadian life. The greatest excitement was provided by the efforts of California land agents and speculators to lure several hundred Doukhobor families to California, efforts vigorously and successfully resisted by Canadian Immigration officials.<sup>18</sup> They were not willing to give up so easily a people as productive as the Doukhobors were showing themselves to be.

But it soon became evident that not all of the Doukhobors were happy with the laws requiring individual registration of land holdings and registration of the births, marriages and deaths among their people.<sup>19</sup> These requirements evidently violated an ingrained Doukhobor tradition to submit to no human authority. The federal government officials, according to one recent analysis, had three alternatives open to them: they might immediately have insisted on total compliance with the laws (but the cause of the "Russian Quakers" was popular abroad and, to a degree, in Canada), or they might have effected a clear special set of compromises with the laws for the Doukhobors. Instead, they elected to follow a third course, evading the issue and hoping that the conflicting demands of the Doukhobors and the State would work themselves out without any irrevocable government intercession.<sup>20</sup> Officials were optimistic "that as they come to appreciate the benefits of Canadian laws and customs, the prejudice will gradually



19. Doukhobor House

*July 6 on Lat little letter with  
L. H. H. to me at H.*

Doukhobor House.



disappear, and they will gladly comply with the requirements of the government.”<sup>21</sup> It was a plausible course of inaction, but it left the Mounted Police to oversee the “gradual” but turbulent transition stage. There was no set strategy for such an operation and Christen Junget (later Assistant Commissioner Junget), the North West Mounted Police Commanding Officer at Yorkton in those years, recalled in his retirement that Mounted Police policy with respect to the troublesome Doukhobors in his district amounted to the single catchphrase: “Leave it for Junget.”<sup>22</sup>

Some remarks of Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, illustrate the ambiguity of the police role in relation to the Doukhobors. On February 15, 1902 two delegates from the Thunder Hill colony presented to Sifton the Doukhobor claims for communal exemption from registration of land tenure, births, deaths and marriages. In the manner of a teacher setting school boys straight, Sifton suggested that if the Doukhobors would simply get on with registering their homesteads individually they would be permitted to live and work together in village communities and would not be compelled to fulfill homestead requirements individually. Aside from that concession, though, Canadian laws (which, Sifton was sure, had proven universally beneficial) would be “carried out in every case without fear” by “the strong hand of the law which protects you and your families from danger . . .” Of course, the Doukhobors were to rest assured that the officials of his department would “willingly do no injury to your conscience or your principles.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps this position, which required the police to be simultaneously not only the “strong hand of the law” but also sympathetic to unique Doukhobor principles, justified the police in referring to the Doukhobors as “Sifton’s pets”.<sup>24</sup>

A massive Doukhobor demonstration took place in the fall of 1902. The recruits, most of whom came from the villages just to the north of Yorkton, undertook a somewhat undirected march. This phenomenon has been attributed to a combination of factors arising from the adjustments necessary for the Doukhobors to live in this new setting and from the erratic leadership of Peter Verigin. In the first place, the pressure to have the Doukhobors register their land individually<sup>25</sup> exacerbated divisions within the Doukhobor communities. Those inclined to obey the law were joined, in the eyes of zealous traditionalists, with those heretics who had worked on the railways and adopted other such non-Doukhobor habits as wearing “English” clothes and eating meat. In addition, though, the entrenchment of the traditionalists were strengthened by their desire to please Peter Verigin upon his expected imminent arrival among them: Verigin had been sending fancifully philosophical letters condemning the use of cattle in such a paradise of easily cultivated vegetation and speculating about the benefit to the brain of “solar heat” in some haven “near the sun.” Thus, mystical Doukhobor claims to be searching for this kind of hot paradise during their marches were joined to that desire of some to embarrass the government and force concessions to their demands on the issues of land and personal registration.<sup>26</sup>

At first Corporal Junget registered some alarm. On October 22, 1902 he reported that there had recently been



considerable missionary movement amongst them. From the Kamsack and Assiniboine villages they have walked in bands of several hundred (men and women) visiting other villages holding meetings and trying to make converts to their very extreme and somewhat dangerous views.

But the march was soon recognized to be non-violent and Junget's concern changed:

. . . the Doukhobors themselves are quite harmless, but they carry no provisions with them whatever, and their number increasing every day, it will be impossible for them to find shelter and food in the villages they go through, and no doubt many of the women and children will perish if a snow storm sets in. I have reported the above to the different officials of the Department of Interior up here . . .<sup>27</sup>

North West Mounted Police Commissioner Perry detailed Inspectors D'A. E. Strickland and J. O. Wilson with a party of men to afford protection to settlers along the Doukhobors' way if the need should arise and to give any assistance Interior Department officials might ask.<sup>28</sup> When the marchers reached Yorkton on October 28 the enormity of the situation appalled Junget: there were about 1,800 of these "Doukhobors seized by religious mania" for whom shelter had to be found and special guards posted to prevent disturbances in the town. The "pilgrims" were judged "peaceful and law-abiding" but "the immediate assistance of three or four constables is required to assist Dominion officials in their treatment of the people and for patrolling of abandoned villages" to "protect property." Perry sent the desired four constables and wired Comptroller White in Ottawa for instructions, but was advised only to continue assistance to the Immigration officials.<sup>29</sup> Colonization Agent C. W. Speers posted a "public notice" warning that all persons interfering with or appropriating any property of the marching Doukhobors "without legal right" or without giving notice to Inspector Strickland or his officer in charge would be prosecuted according to the law.<sup>30</sup>

Efforts to disperse the missionaries back to their villages failed; the Doukhobors determined on October 29 to push on in a south-easterly direction. On November 2 Speers asked Inspector Strickland for a police escort to accompany the "pilgrims" in order "to prevent any inconvenience or annoyance to the other inhabitants of the Country, and avoid as far as possible, any breach of the Peace or collision which would be likely to result in violence." On November 4 an officer and twenty non-commissioned officers and constables were placed under instructions from the Superintendent of Immigration, Frank Pedley.<sup>31</sup> As this force travelled to catch up with the marching Doukhobors, a comical incident illustrated the extent to which the Department of the Interior (and, therefore, the police) were willing to take care of the stubborn "fanatics". "We came to Birtle, Manitoba," recalled Junget later,

and we heard that they were short of diapers. I told Jim Spalding to go to the departmental store and buy up a lot. And he blew up: "I didn't join the Force to buy diapers for Doukhobors!"

Nevertheless, the diapers had to be obtained: Junget bought them himself.<sup>32</sup>





Provincial Archives of British Columbia.

Doukhobors on the March, October 1902.

Wintry conditions were setting in; it was decided the zealots should be stalled at Minnedosa, Manitoba, then returned to Yorkton and thence to their homes. At noon on Sunday, November 9 the wanderers were located in the Minnedosa rink with a Mounted Police guard at the door. At 5:00 p.m. a special train arrived to take them back to Yorkton but, upon leaving the rink, some 200 of the Doukhobors seemed determined to resume once more their eastward journey. Inspector Wilson's report indicated only that "a few of the leaders" offered resistance "and had to be carried. About one hundred would get in a bunch and lock their arms and then bunches had to be broken up, which took considerable time." The Yorkton *Enterprise*, however, provided a more graphic description: after the Doukhobors' way had been blocked by the townspeople,

Agent Speers grabbed a fussy pilgrim by the arm and proceeded with him toward the cars, at the same time saying the others must follow. Some seemed inclined to do so, seeing which the spectators encouraged their wavering inclinations by vigorous means. Many of them, when seized by the arm, walked quietly to the cars, and were there received by the policemen in charge and placed in the cars. Others required vigorous application of Manitoba muscle, in the form of shoves and pushes, to make them at all inclined to obey the voice of authority. Others, resisting stubbornly all attempts to guide them in the desired direction, were unceremoniously downed by the more athletic of the spectators, and bodily carried to the train.<sup>33</sup>

Once this minority was aboard, the others, who had remained in the rink observing the disturbance, resignedly followed and there were no further incidents during the train trip back to Yorkton. From Yorkton they were the next day escorted on their final foot journey to their villages; some had just thirty miles



to walk, others as far as Swan River. The presence of crowds of spectators encouraged the Swan River men to hold back for a mile or two but they too soon followed the police lead, in fact developed a readiness to "do anything" for the police, as it was "snowing very hard and cold." One escorting patrolman found it "very difficult to get information from the Doukhobors, as very few of them could or would speak English," but they "all seemed to pay the greatest respect to the police, and at all times during the trip would do anything you told them to do." Moreover, they were "a very clean people, their houses, stables, etc., being far ahead of the majority of settlers that I have seen in the country."<sup>34</sup>

It subsequently became North West Mounted Police policy to "arrange for patrols to visit their [Doukhobor] villages occasionally, and keep an eye on them generally." If pilgrimages occurred police were directed to assist Immigration officials "towards persuading these people to remain at their villages."<sup>35</sup> Coincidentally Peter Verigin's impressive arrival at Yorkton in late December, 1902 convinced most officials that their troubles with the Doukhobors were at an end.<sup>36</sup> Whether, as Junget originally thought, Verigin controlled and quieted the majority of the pilgrims,<sup>37</sup> or the police patrols created the entire effect despite Verigin, in any case no further mass wanderings occurred. Instead the police were involved with fragmentary groups of two or three dozen demonstrators who began to develop some highly embarrassing tactics. The first report of nudity came at the end of November, 1902 from the Rosthern area in Battleford district. The Doukhobors in question were evidently naked at their own meetings, not particularly in revolt, but Commissioner Perry thought it opened "a very large question as to our treatment of the Doukhobors." Clearly they were "not conforming to the laws of the country," but Perry hesitated to enforce them without specific authority from the Interior Department, "as in all cases of infractions of the law it is on account of their religious belief."<sup>38</sup> No such specific instructions were forthcoming.

Soon the demonstrations and the nudity coincided; it is to be suspected that the curiosity and discomfiture with which certain police officers investigated meeting-house nudity<sup>39</sup> simply demonstrated to the Doukhobors how effective public nudity might be. Enterprising newspaper and private photographers then increased the temptation by "offering inducements" to encourage Doukhobors to pose in a nude state.<sup>40</sup> Heading off a march by a group of determined nudists took some ingenuity. One naive young constable in the Battleford district was forced to desperate measures:

I told a Doukhobor girl to tell the others that if they would stop and not march, but get their picture taken I would send it to the papers. They stopped and asked me to stand alongside of them. I told the photographer not to show the photograph or plate to anybody until I had seen it. . . . It was my intention to destroy the plate. . . .

Needless to say, his trust in the photographer was misplaced: information about the circulation of a photograph of nude Doukhobors flanked by a strapping North West Mounted Police constable reached Inspector Parker at Saskatoon by way of a Toronto *Globe* reporter who saw a copy in Moose Jaw. Constable Melanson



was found guilty of disgraceful conduct, fined \$5.00 and sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour. Two weeks later the Commissioner was still sending out confidential letters trying to retrieve circulating copies of that photograph.<sup>41</sup>

Punishment of nude pilgrims refusing to be dispersed to their homes was never very effective. They would be charged under the Vagrancy Act for indecent exposure and incarcerated in the Regina jail for several months.<sup>42</sup> In jail, however, they were no less uncooperative than outside, refusing to eat regularly, carrying vegetarianism to the extremes of eating grass and refusing to work. Sifton believed it useless to flog them or to apply other normal disciplinary measures; surely a period of time on a frugal diet of bread and water with minimal special attention would bring them around. Rather than to free them all at the same time, the policy was to release them in "batches".<sup>43</sup>

By 1905 the Interior Department concluded that the Doukhobors had been in the country too long to remain in the position of special wards of the government; the Deputy Minister announced that henceforth they should be treated "exactly as other members of the community." The police took that to mean much more harshly than previously and were delighted to see a Yorkton magistrate recommend that the men in a marching party apprehended in August, 1905 should be committed to Brandon Asylum. Unfortunately the North West Territorial Government refused to send the men to the Asylum, doubting that they were in fact insane. The police expressed disappointment: "if we are permitted to deal with them with a firm hand," thought Comptroller White, "they will soon become reconciled to obedience to the laws of the country."<sup>44</sup>

But Junget did not consider this occasional restlessness "to be any trouble compared with what may arise between the Community and Non-Community Doukhobors," that is, between those who wished to keep to the traditional communal style of life and those who wished to register their own homesteads. By February, 1905 Junget had lost all faith in Peter Verigin; he now believed Verigin's influence to be instrumental in inciting dedicated "Community" Doukhobors to intimidate and even occasionally to assault prospective independent Doukhobor settlers, particularly in the northern villages near the Swan River. The police strength in Yorkton sub-district was increased to permit a strong detachment at Kamsack for constant patrol of the troubled area, evidently with good calming effect.<sup>45</sup> The most worrisome villages were those near Fort Pelly, where the police kept anxious watch in order to try to prevent recurring incidence of "Community" Doukhobors taking forceable possession of or burning down the houses of "Independent" Doukhobors.<sup>46</sup>

In April, 1906 the Interior Department inaugurated special investigations in areas of Doukhobor concentration of "unpatented homesteads entered for prior to September 1, 1905." The purpose was to have all entries of Doukhobors in the community cancelled and then to ask the displaced Doukhobors to indicate their intention to become British subjects and conduct semi-regular homestead operations. If they did not re-enter the homesteads before May 1, 1907 they were to be placed on "reserves" of fifteen acres of land per occupant, the vacated



lands to be opened for homestead application.<sup>47</sup> Communities on non-registered land were no longer to be tolerated; the new Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, wanted them treated as any other squatters, to be served notices to vacate by the police.<sup>48</sup> This news alone caused great excitement in the Fort Pelly area in early 1907; the tension was increased by orders to the police to put an end to the traditional illegal cutting of timber in that area and to seize the timber already cut.<sup>49</sup> Further confusing the Doukhobors, Verigin had left them to their own devices since late 1906. The Fort Pelly police detachment expected another pilgrimage in the spring; Junget fretted that, as usual, "I presume we can do nothing with these people except watch their movements closely." He worried that "the Doukhobor fanatics who have been repeatedly sent to prison from here" were once more gathering together, numbering near sixty in March. He would have liked to round up the leaders and have them "given the limit under the vagrancy act," but was permitted only to give his detachments orders "if it should come to the worst to have them shut up in some uninhabited village and placed under guard."<sup>50</sup>

The police presence seems to have delayed the group's journeys' meanwhile Junget was occupied with the land rush which resulted from the opening of Doukhobor lands in May.<sup>51</sup> He had "never experienced a meaner job," he wrote, than that of preserving order in the struggle for position at the land office in Yorkton.<sup>52</sup> Then there was the associated problem of removing resistant "squatter" Community Doukhobors near Yorkton, an operation also necessary to some extent in the Prince Albert district. No sooner were the difficulties of these transfers cleared away than the anticipated pilgrimage from the Fort Pelly and Swan River areas got underway,<sup>53</sup> triggered by the final dispossession. Over seventy strong, these Doukhobors proceeded in July in an easterly direction, rapidly passing from the jurisdiction of the Royal North West Mounted Police.

It was not long before they were back. Wintering at Fort William, they thoroughly alienated the populace of Ontario and were shipped by the Ontario government to Yorkton in late April, 1908. Junget, still having his troubles with the occasional local case of assault by Community Doukhobors on their independent neighbours, was in no mood to welcome them. The "seventy-one religiously demented Doukhobors, vagrants, consisting of men, women and children" were "absolutely destitute, have no homes to go to, most of them are nude and committing indecent acts already," he reported. Verigin was typically unwilling to help and Junget, once the police did manage to get them off the train, struggling and disrobing, could not get any room for them at the Immigration Hall. He was ordered to see that they did not suffer or walk the streets nude; a disgruntled Junget would have preferred to send the worst of them "to a lunatic Asylum, and [have] the remainder of them charged with vagrancy, and . . . divided up between [sic] the different jails throughout the province."<sup>54</sup> The townspeople continued to resist Junget's efforts to find lodging for the Doukhobors, but he finally succeeded in securing the Exhibition Building of the Agricultural Society and in having the naked Doukhobors carried in one by one. On May 18 they were moved, in the 1:00 a.m. stillness, to a house just outside the town.<sup>55</sup>



The Saskatchewan government rejected Junget's suggestion to commit the "worst" eighteen men and ten women to Brandon Asylum and the other thirty-one adults to jail as vagrants. Saskatchewan jails did not have the room and the idea of such a concentration of Doukhobors in Brandon Asylum was not likely to appeal to the Manitoba government. Instead, on June 5 the Doukhobors were placed, again by a pre-dawn surprise manoeuvre, in a compound featuring a seven foot board fence three miles from Orcadia. An attempt to separate the men and women was soon abandoned; simply to prevent them from breaking out proved to require fifteen to twenty constables. Junget's suggestion to remove eleven leaders in a body to await proceedings in a guard house, thus defusing the risk of an uprising in the enclosure, was evidently followed. The result, though, was unexpected: the remaining group went on a hunger strike, the adults preventing the children from eating. The children were removed, but the starvation continued, raising the spectre of embarrassing deaths in the compound. The police were therefore greatly relieved when Verigin was finally induced to take charge of the children and use his influence to bring the hunger strike to an end. The Doukhobors became sufficiently orderly that the camp was broken up in September.<sup>56</sup>

Six men and six women identified as the "worst" ringleaders had in July been sentenced to six months in jail pending further proceedings. Junget would still have liked to see all of them incarcerated in Brandon Asylum and the rest of the party jailed<sup>57</sup> in order to avoid recurrences of the march but only four of the men were sent to Brandon, one by one to avoid too great a collective shock to their followers, and the others were released. This precipitated a re-congregation in an abandoned Doukhobor village; there followed continual reports that they intended marching to Brandon to demand the release of their leaders.<sup>58</sup> A constable was placed on constant watch. Although he once had to bury a corpse left by the nude "fanatics" to decompose in the sun,<sup>59</sup> his presence seemed to prevent any march. By the end of the summer some of them were departing from tradition to look for work.<sup>60</sup>

At this time Verigin's plans to locate a true Doukhobor community in the Kootenay area of British Columbia were maturing and a new chapter would soon be inaugurated in the history of relations between the Mounted Police and the Doukhobors. On the prairies the disruptive activities of a minority of the Doukhobor immigrants had been handled very gently in order to assure the agricultural production of a massive number of effective farmers. The police had been asked repeatedly to forego punitive measures to let the new settlers find their own way to an acceptable mode of behaviour.

The police did not act out of personal sympathy for the demonstrators. One may search Mounted Police records in vain for information which will lead to the least understanding of the motivations of the discontented Doukhobors. Police reports referred repeatedly to "Doukhobors seized by religious mania", "fanatics", "religiously demented Doukhobors" and "lunatics"; the police did not begin to exercise the considerable patience necessary to discover explanations for the Doukhobors' unusual behaviour. Total lack of perception only increased police irritability, particularly when the activities of a small band of Doukhobors



could command the attention of nearly a like number of policemen. Responsibility for the nature of the Mounted Police response to the Doukhobors rests elsewhere: with the federal government.

It is true that 1906 had marked a change in federal government policy: Doukhobors ignoring prescribed homesteading regulations were thereafter to be treated more harshly. It must be remembered, however, that those refusing to re-enter for homesteads according to the letter of the law were not quite summarily evicted: they were conceded reserves of land, even though this was at the inadequate rate of fifteen acres per occupant. The police, moreover, received no revised instructions for disbanding the ensuing Doukhobor march more roughly than they had preceding ones. Nor did that march involve massive numbers of recalcitrants reacting against harsh police treatment.

The very fact that so few Doukhobors (less than one percent of the Doukhobor population of Saskatchewan) participated in that final demonstration, despite its genesis as a result of what might easily have been described as a treacherous reversal of government policy, is significant. It sustains the argument that the peculiar indecisive course prescribed for the Mounted Police in this situation was justified. Nearly 2,000 had participated in the first march in 1902; it is remarkable that only a handful found sufficient reason to demonstrate thereafter. The police themselves apparently provided no cause. The adjustment of the great majority of the Doukhobors to peaceful agricultural pursuits represented a gratifying conclusion to the efforts of the Mounted Police and the government that directed them. That the policy they had enacted was not altogether successful would be proven in British Columbia, not in Saskatchewan.

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *Canada: Debates of the House of Commons, (D.H.C.), 1890, 2345, March 21, 1890.*
- <sup>2</sup> *D. H. C. 1891, 4821, September 1, 1891; D.H.C., 1892, 2671, May 16, 1892.*
- <sup>3</sup> *D.H.C., 1894, 4629, comments of Hon. William B. Ives, June 19, 1894; D.H.C., 1897, 4079 - 80, comments of Frank Oliver, June 14, 1897; D.H.C., 1901, 3442 and D.H. C., 1904, 2686, comments of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, April 19, 1901 and May 6, 1904.*
- <sup>4</sup> *Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), Laurier Papers, 222579-81, report of N.W.M.P. Comptroller Fred White to Laurier, 1903.*
- <sup>5</sup> *D.H.C., 1905, 8659 and D.H.C., 1911, 8599, comments of Laurier, July 3, 1905 and May 8, 1911.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Canada, Sessional Papers, (C.S.P.), 1911, No. 28, part I, 23-24.*
- <sup>7</sup> *C.S.P., 1890, No. 13, 1-2.*
- <sup>8</sup> *P.A.C., Record Group (RG), 18 - A1, File 680, Commissioner Herchmer to H. H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, October 25, 1893.*
- <sup>9</sup> *C.S.P., 1893, No. 15, 11, 102, reports of Commissioner Herchmer and Superintendent Griesbach.*
- <sup>10</sup> *P.A.C., RG 18 - B1, File 191, Commissioner of Immigration, W. P. McCreary, Winnipeg, to Commissioner Herchmer, June 30, 1898.*
- <sup>11</sup> *P.A.C., RG 18 - A1, File 157, report of Constable R. Casimir-Dickson, Hednesford, October 1, 1894.*
- <sup>12</sup> *For an account of the history of the Doukhobors before their arrival in Canada, see George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, The Doukhobors (Toronto/N.Y., Oxford University Press, 1968).*



- <sup>13</sup> C.S.P., 1900, No. 13, xv and part II, 112 - 113, reports by Deputy Minister James A. Smart and Commissioner W. P. McCreary.
- <sup>14</sup> C.S.P., 1899, No. 13, xii, report of Deputy Minister Smart. See also Smart's testimony to the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization, *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. XXXV (1900), Appendix No. 1, 307.
- <sup>15</sup> C.S.P., 1900, No. 15, 76, report by Superintendent Sanders with excerpts from special reports by Corporal Lindsay of the Henrietta detachment. See also P.A.C., *RG 18-B1*, File 199, Superintendent S. V. Gagnon to the Commissioner, August 14, 1899.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, 76.
- <sup>17</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 199, Superintendent Gagnon to the Commissioner, August 14, 1899.
- <sup>18</sup> C.S.P., 1901, No. 25, part II, 142, report of Immigration Agent J. S. Crerar, Yorkton. See also C.S.P., 1902, No. 25, part II, 121, report of Commissioner of Immigration J. O. Smith.
- <sup>19</sup> C.S.P., 1901, No. 25, xvii, report of Deputy Minister Smart.
- <sup>20</sup> Woodcock and Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors*, 171.
- <sup>21</sup> C.S.P., 1901, No. 25, xvii, report of Deputy Minister Smart.
- <sup>22</sup> Transcript of an interview with Assistant Commissioner Junget by S. W. Horrall, January 21, 1969, 11.
- <sup>23</sup> P.A.C., *Laurier Papers*, 62749 - 62755, copy of a letter from Sifton to Ivan and Feodor Suchorukoff, February 15, 1902.
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with Junget, *op. cit.*, 16.
- <sup>25</sup> P.A.C., *Laurier Papers*, 62749 - 62755. Sifton had set a deadline for the Doukhobors: there would be no special treatment after the first day of May, 1902.
- <sup>26</sup> Woodcock and Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors*, 174 - 181.
- <sup>27</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 189, Junget to Officer Commanding at Regina, October 22 and 26, 1902.
- <sup>28</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 263, Perry to White, October 28, 1902; *N.W.M.P. Report*, 1902, 79, report of Inspector J. O. Wilson, Regina.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, File 263, Perry to White, October 29, 1902; White to Perry (telegram), October 30, 1902.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, File 189, Strickland to Wilson, Regina, with copy of poster, November 4, 1902.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, File 263, C. W. Speers to Strickland, Yorkton, November 2, 1902; White to Assistant Commissioner McIlree (telegram), November 4, 1902.
- <sup>32</sup> Interview with Junget, *op. cit.*, 12.
- <sup>33</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 263, Inspector J. O. Wilson to Commissioner Perry, November 11, 1902; *Yorkton Enterprise*, November 20, 1902.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, File 263, Wilson to Perry, November 11, 1902; Perry to White (telegram), November 10, 1902; Sergeant Major Frank Church to the Officer Commanding at Regina, November 20, 1902.
- <sup>35</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A2*, Vol. 89, Comptroller White to Deputy Minister of the Interior J. A. Smart, May 12, 1903; P.A.C., *RG 18-A1*, File 263, Perry to Commissioner of Immigration J. O. Smith, Winnipeg, May 7, 1903.
- <sup>36</sup> See, for example, *Journals of the House of Commons*, 1904, appendix No. 2, Report of the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization, 29. See also P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 148, Junget's optimistic report of February 12, 1903, and P.A.C., *RG 18 - B3*, Vol 39, 841, Perry's assurance to White, July 30, 1903.
- <sup>37</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 263, Junget to Superintendent Deane, Regina, May 21, 1903.
- <sup>38</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B3*, Vol. 39, 427, Perry to White, November 29, 1902.
- <sup>39</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 189, report of Constable G. S. Pook, Rosthern, December 13, 1902. See also P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 263, the account of Corporal J. W. Spalding, Saskatoon, to Inspector Parker, Saskatoon, May 14, 1903.
- <sup>40</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 263, Commissioner of Immigration J. O. Smith to Deputy Minister of the Interior James A. Smart, May 14, 1903.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, testimony of Constable Melanson at his own court proceedings, June 3, 1903, reported to Perry by Superintendent A. H. Griesbach, Battleford, June 10, 1903; Victor Ross to Inspector Parker, Saskatoon, June 2, 1903; Perry to Messrs. Brock and Co., Winnipeg, June 20, 1903.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Superintendent R. B. Deane, Regina, to White, May 21 and 27, 1903.
- <sup>43</sup> P.A.C., *Laurier Papers*, 74723 - 26, correspondence between Laurier and Sifton to recommend policy for Doukhobor prisoners, July 1 and 2, 1903; P.A.C., *RG 18 - B3*, Vol. 39, 880, Perry to White, August 14, 1903.
- <sup>44</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 263, Deputy Minister of the Interior to White, March 21, 1905; Perry to White (telegram, including report of Sergeant Junget), August 14, 1905; memorandum from White to Laurier, August 22, 1905.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Junget to Officer Commanding at Regina, August 29, 1905; Perry to White, February 28, 1905; extract from the inspection report of Staff Sergeant Junget, November 20, 1905.



- <sup>46</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 223, Ft. Pelly diary, May 5, 1906.
- <sup>47</sup> *C.S.P.*, 1906-7, No. 25, part I, 4 - 5; *C.S.P.*, 1907-8, No. 25, part I, 27.
- <sup>48</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 18, Oliver to Perry, January 4, 1907.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, File 48, P. G. Keyes, Secretary, Department of the Interior, to White, January 9, 1907; report of Junget, January 28, 1907.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, File 223, Junget to the Officer Commanding at Regina, February 20 and March 18, 1907.
- <sup>51</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 148, Assistant Secretary Pereira, Department of the Interior, to Perry, May 21, 1907, requesting police presence at land offices in Prince Albert and Yorkton.
- <sup>52</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18-A1*, File 433, Inspector Junget to Officer Commanding at Regina, June 16, 1907.
- <sup>53</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18-B1*, File 148, Superintendent J. V. Begin, Prince Albert, to Perry, June 29, 1907; Corporal K. Duncan to Junget, July 7, 1907.
- <sup>54</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 223, correspondence between Superintendent Sanders, Regina, and Junget, April 29, April 30 and May 2, 1908.
- <sup>55</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 148, Junget to Sanders, May 2, 1908; *Yorkton Enterprise*, May 21, 1908.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, correspondence from Junget to Sanders, May to September, 1908; Saskatchewan Deputy Attorney General Frank Ford to Perry, May 12 and 19, 1908; Inspector J. H. Heffernan, Regina, to Junget, July 23, 1908.
- <sup>57</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18-A1*, File 223, extracts from Junget's inspection reports on Canora detachment, November 16, 1908 and March 18, 1909.
- <sup>58</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 148, Ford to Perry, January 4, 1909; Inspector Taylor, Moosomin, to Sanders, January 10, 1909; Junget to Sanders, February 27, 1909.
- <sup>59</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - A1*, File 223, Const. S. R. Waugh to Junget, July 25, 1909.
- <sup>60</sup> P.A.C., *RG 18 - B1*, File 148, Junget to Sanders, n.d., 1909.



# Louis Riel's Religious Beliefs: A Letter To Bishop Taché

by THOMAS E. FLANAGAN

**L**OUIS RIEL was not only a political leader, he was a religious prophet — “the prophet of the New World,” as he styled himself. This fact is well known, yet his religious beliefs have not been taken very seriously. Sceptics have claimed that Riel's religious activities were a ploy to impress his credulous métis followers. More sympathetic observers have argued that his unorthodox religious behaviour proved his insanity, a point of view favoured by most psychiatrists who have studied the case. In historical retrospect, the thesis of insanity seems to have won the day, in spite of Riel's vigorous protest at his trial that, rather than be condemned to life in an asylum, he would prefer to be judged guilty and be executed, thereby demonstrating his sanity and the validity of his divine mission.

I believe that Riel's religious beliefs should be studied more seriously than they have been. Two results should come from this exercise.

First, analysis will show that the North-West Rebellion of 1885 resembled the typical pattern of nativistic millenarian movements like the Cargo Cults of Melanesia, the Ghost Dance of the Plains Indians, or the rebellion of Anthony the Counsellor in Brazil immortalized in Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*. The religious aspects of Riel's leadership were not an historical accident caused by one man's unbalanced mind, but an essential part of the attempt to recover the integrity of the métis way of life.<sup>1</sup>

Second, it will become apparent that Riel's teachings were not so utterly fantastic as they are often made out to be. The impression that his teachings were nonsensical is largely derived from the testimony of the missionaries, who were naturally concerned to discredit Riel as a prophet, and from his friends, defense attorneys and psychiatrists, who wished to demonstrate his insanity. In actual fact, Riel's doctrine, in two major aspects, was a rather logical deduction from what we today call “French-Canadian messianism,”<sup>2</sup> i.e. the belief that the French-Canadians had a special religious and civilizing mission amid the Protestant, capitalist environment of North America. Riel simply transferred this mission to his own métis people. His notion of the removal of the papacy from Rome to Montreal and thence to St. Boniface was a way of symbolizing the succession of Chosen Peoples. Furthermore, if it seems paradoxical that Riel, who earlier in his life showed such exaggerated loyalty to the clergy, should have broken with Rome, it must be remembered that he associated closely with the ultramontanists in Quebec, led spiritually by Bishop Ignace Bourget; and the latter were greatly disillusioned by the conquest of Rome in 1870, and by the subsequent decisions of Leo XIII against their party in the internecine ecclesiastical squabbles of Quebec. Once again, Riel simply took their position a step further.

It would take a full length article to document either of the two points mentioned above. I propose them here only to suggest where study of Riel's religious



beliefs might fruitfully lead. In the rest of these pages I wish to begin laying the groundwork for such studies. Riel's religious beliefs are not well enough known from the original sources. Our impressions are often derived from description by hostile witnesses, or from brief remarks by Riel at his trial or to newspaper reporters. Therefore it is important to let Riel speak for himself, and at sufficient length that he may be understood. Below I present a translation of a document which does this. It is a letter written by Riel to his one-time patron, A. A. Taché, Archbishop of St. Boniface, on July 24, 1885. Riel was in the Regina jail undergoing trial which had begun on July 20 but had been adjourned to July 28. Earlier in the month he had written long letters to Sir John A. Macdonald setting forth his religious and political views at length; now, in his hour of distress, he turned again to the man who had singled him out to be educated in Montreal, thereby launching his career.<sup>3</sup>

The situation suggests that the letter is not an entirely complete or accurate statement of Riel's beliefs. On trial for his life, Riel wanted to regain the support of Taché. His letter thus is silent about certain aspects of his activity during the Rebellion, including his treatment of the missionary clergy and his own assumption of priestly functions. The letter is written in the tone of extreme deference to the clergy which Riel was wont to use before his outburst of anti-clericalism in 1885. But in other respects the letter is a coherent exposition of Riel's leading ideas.

One must also bear in mind that Riel was not a systematic thinker. Although his main religious ideas remained more or less the same from late 1875, when he first assumed his prophetic mission, until his death ten years later, there was remarkable fluidity in detail, corresponding to changing circumstances. Thus this letter to Taché represents Riel's views at a certain time and in a certain situation. There was no totally consistent, systematic, and fixed doctrine of "Rielism." If nothing else, Riel's continued visions, with their ever fresh revelations, would have made such a system impossible.

In spite of its rambling style, the text is carefully constructed. Riel begins by describing his past life, his education, and his close association with the clergy, in order to show that his prophetic credentials are in order. ". . . Our Lord Jesus Christ has only granted me extraordinary support in His Church because he wanted to lead me to an exceptional result . . ." Having established his prophetic legitimacy, Riel then summarizes his revelations. His major teachings are that the papacy has been transferred to the New World, first to Bishop Bourget of Montreal and now to Bishop Taché himself; and further that an unprecedented wave of immigration will come to the North-West to re-establish the nations of Europe in new splendour. Finally Riel closes with obscure prophecies of wars and disasters in Europe which will be followed by a millennial reign of peace.

The letter has been used before by scholars. Its existence was apparently known to Dr. Daniel Clark, the alienist who testified at Riel's trial and later published an article about him.<sup>4</sup> In modern times, the letter has been used by G. F. G. Stanley, who cites it in his biography of Riel.<sup>5</sup> However the letter has never been published or copiously excerpted.



The location of the original is unknown. This translation is made from a typed copy preserved in the Public Archives of Manitoba.<sup>6</sup>

No answer from Monseigneur Taché is recorded. The Archbishop was extremely busy at this time. In June, he was in Ottawa to plead the case of the métis with the government. On June 13, he delivered the funeral oration in the Church of Notre Dame, Montreal, for Bishop Ignace Bourget. He did not arrive back in St. Boniface until July 12. Once returned, he had to travel in his diocese to administer the sacrament of confirmation. And on September 3, he left once again, accompanied by Joseph Dubuc, for a reunion of the pupils of the Collège de Montréal.

But by this time there was no doubt about Taché's opinion of Riel. He was convinced the latter was a hopeless lunatic. He had written to Bishop Laflèche of Trois Rivieres in May not to support Riel's cause because he "was a miserable madman and lunatic."<sup>7</sup> On August 14, no doubt strengthened in opinion by reception of Riel's letter, he wrote to Bishop Grandin: "Your travels and mine prevent us from meeting. Your letters have been slow to reach me and my response has not been quick . . . alas! What disasters caused by a madman!"<sup>8</sup> And in his pamphlet on the North-West Rebellion, Taché set forth his opinion at greater length:

"I have had too many reasons to study the moods and behaviour of my unhappy protégé in intimate detail not to be able to see what he was and what has led him on the deplorable path he has followed. For many years I have been convinced, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the unhappy chief of the Métis, along with his brilliant qualities of mind and heart, was the victim of megalomania and theomania. Only this can explain everything he has done right up to the present."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have developed this argument in greater length in "A New View of Louis Riel," Canadian Political Science Association, Montreal 1973. On millenarian movements, see Vittorio Lanternari, *Religions of the Oppressed* (London, 1963); W. Mühlmann, *Chiliasmus und Nativismus* (Berlin, 1961); G. Guariglia, *Prophetismus und Heilserwartungsbewegungen* (Horn-Vienna, 1959); Sylvia Thrupp (ed.) *Millennial Dreams in Action* (The Hague, 1962); two special issues of the *Archives de sociologie des religions* 4 (1957) and 5 (1958).

<sup>2</sup> A term popularized by Michel Brunet, "Trois dominantes de la pensée canadienne - française: l'agriculteurisme, l'anti-étatisme et le messianisme," *La présence anglaise et les canadiens* (Montreal, 1958) pp. 112-166.

<sup>3</sup> It was characteristic of Riel to turn, in an hour of crisis, to correspondence with powerful public figures. Some of his most interesting and revealing letters are to Sir G. Cartier and Bishop I. Bourget as well as to Taché and Macdonald. Cf. also his letter to President Grant, published by *Saskatchewan History*, 21 (1968).

<sup>4</sup> "Only a few days before his execution [sic] he wrote to his clerical friend in Winnipeg a farewell epistle. It was closely written in French and contains fourteen pages of foolscap." Clark then quotes approximately from the letter. "A Psycho-Medical History of Louis Riel," *American Journal of Insanity*, 44 (1887-88), p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> G. F. G. Stanley, *Louis Riel* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Public Archives of Manitoba, *Riel Collection*, No. 422. I am grateful to the staff of the PAM for their cooperation. There is also a partial hand copy of the letter, certified by Taché, in the archives of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. It is dated July 27.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Mason Wade, *The French-Canadians* (2 vols.; revised; Macmillan, 1968) I, p. 418.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Dom Benoît, *Vie de Mgr. Taché* (2 vols.; Montreal, 1904), II, pp. 480-481.

<sup>9</sup> Mgr. Alexandre Taché, *La situation au Nord-Ouest* (Québec, 1885) p. 17. This quotation is translated from the original.

A final word on style: Riel was at times capable of a direct and vigorous prose style, especially when he wrote quickly or informally. But his writing could also be extremely florid, especially when he was attempting to win the favour of someone in authority. The English translation of this letter may seem unduly prolix; but I have tried to render, as faithfully as I could, the florid, verbose, and at times obsequious tone of the original. These aspects of literary style are themselves significant historical facts, for they bear witness to Riel's effort to present his heretical ideas in a way that would regain the favour of his erstwhile patron.

## LOUIS RIEL TO MONSEIGNEUR TACHÉ

Regina, July 24, 1885

Jesus, pray for us. Mary, intercede for us. Joseph, protect us.  
To Your Grace Monseigneur A. A. Taché, Archbishop of St. Boniface.

Monseigneur:

The pleasure which you gave me last week by sending the Reverend Father Dugast<sup>1</sup> to console the métis prisoners at Regina is a fresh reminder of your goodness.

To thank you for it is natural to my heart, and to tell you is sweet and joyful to my mouth. I was happy to re-enter your Archdiocese a little more than a year ago, and at the same time to be in the diocese of St. Albert.<sup>2</sup> The two letters which I was privileged to write to you in the course of the last year brought my sentiments to you and showed my reverence. These feelings have only grown, instead of diminishing, as some would like to believe. Do not be astonished at that; for nearly thirty years my letters have assured you of my undying gratitude, and of my unceasing attempts, according to my limited ability, to repay the good which you have done me.

Evil is not the root of my character. My mother is good. My father was a man of good. And I am confident that he is in heaven. My earliest years were scented with the sweet perfume of faith, for my beloved father permitted no one to speak evil in my presence. Family prayers and the rosary were always before my eyes. They were part of my nature like the air I breathe. The meditative figure of my mother, the attention which she habitually paid to heaven, her respect, her attentiveness, her devotion to the exercises of piety always impressed their good example on me. When I was nine, I had the good fortune to enter the religious school of the Sisters of Charity, and, the next year to attend the school of the Christian Brothers and be taught by men. And when I attained the third level in instruction, I was allowed to study at the age of twelve in your episcopal library with a most zealous priest for an instructor, Father LeFloch, who had prepared me the year before for my first communion. The good Father had succeeded in teaching me the fear of God. The first time I received the Holy Eucharist I trembled. But in the reverence of my adorations I also felt sentiments of love arise in my heart. The priest had opened the way for aspirations towards God.





Louis Riel.

The same excellent catechist prepared me to receive the sacrament of confirmation. And when I ascended to the railing to genuflect before you, Monseigneur, and to be confirmed, my preparation had been so well directed that there was, to the best of knowledge, no blemish on my conscience. You yourself know with what faith we approached each other.

O Holy Spirit of God, it was the bishop of St. Boniface who confirmed me in You. That extraordinarily generous missionary, an apostle dedicated to the sanctification of souls, is the one You have chosen to transmit to me Your

gifts and the abundance of Your grace. Although I am unworthy of Your mercy, please bear witness before the soul of my holy bishop that I was confirmed and that I did everything in my childlike power to receive Your seven gifts worthily.

In order that the precious and celestial benefits of the sacrament might be strengthened through everything which is most necessary to men, You inspired my charitable pastor to send me not to an ordinary college but to a minor seminary.<sup>3</sup> To the age of twenty, I had the good luck to grow up not only surrounded by learned and pious teachers and by good students, but also under the guidance of one of the wisest directors of conscience in the world, the Reverend Father de la Vigne, my confessor. M<sup>o</sup>nseigneur, the seven years I spent in that wonderful institution taught me good principles, so that my soul was filled with them. It is true that subsequently I fell, sadly and profoundly. But my first communion, my holy confirmation, the good education given me by my family and college, had their good effects. The tempest of passions raged and wanted to seduce me so that I might be lost, but I remained, thanks to God, anchored in the port of salvation. Thanks to divine grace, I was led at the right time to approach the confessional and the Eucharist. I am confident this will save me.

I have received much from God and man. When I was twenty-four, the occasion arose for me to profit from the good which had been lavished upon me. The troubles at Red River seem to have been what I needed. They gave me the double opportunity to work for the public good and to suffer morally without dying, to expiate the sins which I had unfortunately committed. My elections of '72 and '74<sup>4</sup> put me in contact with the holy bishop of Montreal<sup>5</sup> as well as other holy priests. They gave me much advice: what makes me believe that their guidance was good is that they never dispensed me from obedience. That is their justification. I will not undertake my own justification. I will leave that to the good God and to our beloved Saviour Jesus. For the rest, I leave you the task of passing judgment on all my conduct. You know my way of acting. You know me. You also know what my faults have been. No one will appreciate better than you the good which I have tried to accomplish in politics. And concerning my actions in the field of religion: I do not believe any prelate in the world would be more capable of weighing the pro's and con's. There is probably no one who has received more affection from his bishop than I from you. And if it pleases God to let this help reach me through the favourable judgment of one man, whom I would expect to act deftly, why not through you? These are the reflections which console me when I seek to understand all that has happened. I am the eldest, I was consecrated to God from my infancy through the piety of my beloved parents. I was inspired with Christian virtues at their knees when I was very young. They were in the mother's milk which nourished me. The Catholic instruction with which my adolescence was favoured until I was twenty, the outstanding care which I received from the Sulpicians and the Grey Sisters, and which was accorded me in the Masson household<sup>6</sup> and the Savrevoie home, give me confidence that God has prepared me and made these things happen in order to give me what I need. Without wanting to resort to pretentious comparisons, it seems to me that Moses at the court



of Pharaoh and at the house of the priest of Madian, and David with Saul and sought out by the good Samuel were not placed in a better position than I to play their roles. The care which Providence took to make you return from Rome in 1870,<sup>7</sup> at the moment I was running so many dangers; the shield which you have been to me in every way; the immeasurable assistance I received from Father Ritchot and all your clergy until my banishment, assistance which I have happily received from all the clergy of Canada; the help which was given me by the same clergy in the United States, the benefits rendered me from Concord in the little state of New Hampshire to the mission of St. Peter in the huge territory of Montana — all make me understand that God has guided me with His hand, for His own end. In leaving Montana last year when I went through Benton, the Reverend Father Ebersville, pastor of Immaculate Conception parish, invited me to go with my family to his church because he wanted to bless me. I was greatly affected. Gabriel Dumont came with us. The holy priest put on his surplice, bade us kneel at the railing, said a prayer of blessing, and gave us the divine benediction. With his approval and permission while he blessed us, I directed to God the following prayer: "My God, bless me in accord with the intentions of your Providence which we are to love without being able to comprehend their infinity. Bless me also with my wife, and our son Jean, our Daughter Marie Angelique, and Gabriel Dumont." Some months later the venerable bishop of St. Albert deigned to bless me. But that time I was blessed with all the métis, particularly the French-Canadian métis. The blessing was given to us at St. Laurent in the presence of the Reverend Father;<sup>8</sup> and perhaps you have even seen the text of it, for it was written down.

These two blessings, one on top of the other so to speak, and the way they came from both sides of the border seem to indicate to me that God was leading me through His Providence to a difficulty greater than any of my earlier ones, and that it was to make me victorious, through His grace, His clergy, and His church, that He armed me so mercifully with holy, powerful, and precious blessings.

I call upon your magnanimous heart and spirit — only your holy witness and the holy witness of your clergy is missing, it seems to me, to ascertain that my vocation is that of the prophet. Little Louis, your little protégé, implores from you in the name of God this precious testimony, which would so much advance the cause of good, languishing so long.

Monseigneur, as great causes are created to arrive at great results, it enters my mind that Our Lord Jesus Christ has only granted me extraordinary support in His Church because he wanted to lead me to an extraordinary result, according to the intention of His Providence. What would that extraordinary result be?

Monseigneur, let me find favour with Your Grace. You are my protector. I ask you in the name of Jesus Christ to protect me in what I have said to you. Let my first statement [i.e., that Riel is working toward "extraordinary results"] be acceptable to you because of the reasons which I am about to explain.

Revolutionary ideas are trying to make Rome into a city of tradesmen and merchants. A majority of governments has contributed to despoiling the Papacy

of its possessions. Their machinations have gone to the extreme of daring to rob the successor of St. Peter of his royal patrimony and give it to Umberto, who purposely remains in Rome to mock Catholicism by making the sceptre he has stolen from us shine before our eyes.<sup>9</sup> Rome, with the thieving Umberto for a king, is the capital of a Brigand King. And for the Bishop of Rome — he comes from a society which evil governments and impious people scandalise unceasingly. Were he an angel descended from heaven, he would be hard put to escape these deleterious influences.<sup>10</sup> The level of morality practiced around him sinks ever lower. And as he is obliged to see what is possible for himself and others, the degree of perfection to which he practices virtue and causes it to be practiced diminishes every day in the same proportion as his liberty and means of accomplishing good decrease. On the one hand, Rome is profaned, she is held captive in the service of the revolutions as completely as one can put her. Simply by common sense, it is reasonable to assume that the jealous spirit of God could not remain in Rome, after she had been definitely dedicated to the prostitution of the impious ideas which unfortunately rule today in Italy and France. Rome is like the ravished spouse of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, how could the fullness of gifts of the Papacy be content to remain in a bishop remaining in Rome? Moreover, even if the Pope were personally a most holy man, the sole fact of his presence in the midst of the abomination of desolation seems naturally contrary to the desire of God. But just as a healthy person cannot stay in a disease-ridden place without becoming weak or sick, so in the present conditions of things as they are, the bishop of Rome cannot prevent his moral condition from being affected and deteriorating enormously.

Therefore it is as much because of Europe and Rome as because of the Pope himself that the Holy Spirit has left him.

Monseigneur, forgive the assurance with which I speak to you. For that assurance is not simply mine. I humble myself before you and before all your clergy to please God, who, I am profoundly convinced, helps and guides me.

The Comforter, the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, has chosen another vicar. He dwelt in Bishop Ignace Bourget after December 8, 1875.<sup>11</sup> God wants to consider that holy Archbishop the first successor of Saint Peter, in spirit and in truth, in the New World. Divine Providence mercifully aided me to proclaim that in Saskatchewan with the métis. But since the death of the good Archbishop Bourget,<sup>12</sup> see how God has cast his ineffably sweet eyes upon us. He wants to compensate you in the sight of the whole world and return to you a hundredfold the good works which you have sacrificed to Him during forty years of serving and pleasing Him. Through divine election, you are the true successor of Archbishop Bourget. And even as you rendered the last honours to the mortal remains of that great servant of God, you became yourself, to the good fortune of many and to the misfortune of none, the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth. God willed that I, captured in a terrible defensive war and in the midst of the greatest dangers, but aided by His loving help and by the firm faith of the métis, should proclaim the pontificat of Ignace Bourget. Mercifully, Providence has kept me, my wife and my children from death, wounds, and all kinds of injuries. Miraculously, Providence has saved Gabriel Dumont as well as the existence of the métis as a people. Let us render to God countless acts of thanks.





Monseigneur Taché, Archbishop of Saint Boniface. Public Archives of Canada.



Now that I am imprisoned, accused of High Treason, without any means of defence, unable to call my witnesses and with my best witnesses displeased with me, I confide myself to the paternal Providence of God who has everything and everybody in His care. *Today, July 24, 1885,*<sup>13</sup> I proclaim humbly from the padlocked compound of Regina prison that you are the pontiff chosen by God to instruct, console, succour, guide, bless, and save the New World through the grace of Jesus Christ.

The day that the pontifical Holy Spirit adopted Archbishop Bourget He simultaneously deigned to choose Ville-Marie for the religious capital of the continent and the French-Canadian people for his sacerdotal people. Today, when the divine Spirit of consolation lives in you, He wishes to anticipate the choice of the French-Canadian métis people as His sacerdotal people and St. Boniface as His city. After you, the papacy will return to Ville-Marie, to remain there fifteen months and a week of years, that is four hundred fifty-seven years, counting from December 8, 1875. Finally it will return to pick up the line of our succession in Manitoba and it will remain thus 1876 years. Every Catholic is free to leave Rome. Having had to proclaim this truth, it was fitting that I should have had the courage of my convictions and that I should have set the example. That is why I separated from Rome and why I beseeched the métis to do likewise, if they wished. In order to march ahead, both in word and deed, I encouraged my métis brothers in Saskatchewan to recognize Archbishop Bourget as Pontiff of the New World.

Today I could, if I wished, recant my ideas, put another face on my actions, profess blind submission to all the remonstrances of your clergy or yourself, and try in this way to win friends and the support which is necessary for my justification in court. But the confession of my lips would be condemned by my heart.

I continue, at the peril of my life, to set an example and I am doubly fortunate to proclaim and speak openly about you what I did not fear to make known about a bishop whom so many virtues and so much experience truly made venerable in my eyes, but who certainly never did me a tenth the good that you have.

My present position is a position which can be numbered among the most desperate which history mentions. To escape triumphantly is a blessing which can only come from God and His Church. I pray you and your clergy to come to my aid. And the proof which I offer of the will of Our Lord is that you will succeed miraculously. You are going to save me easily. My rescue will lead to the obvious conclusion that my difficult task is authorized by heaven and will mark with a divine seal the sublime vocation which I announce to you with all the joy of proven knowledge.

If you prefer to remain subject to the bishop of Rome, as Archbishop Ignace Bourget did until his death, it pleases God that you should have the title: *Pontifex Major Totius Novi Mundi* (Greater Pontiff of the Entire New World.) And even when you judge it proper to leave Rome, it would be agreeable to God that your title remain the same. For there is no longer a single Sovereign Pontiff here below. The only Sovereign Pontiff which the world has had was crucified; He rose again and ascended into heaven; it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.



The numerous qualities with which you have been endowed, the means which have been put at your disposal, the moral force and glory you enjoy have been given you to make you able to accomplish an immense task: America must offer a future to the Catholic nations of Europe who no longer have room, and to the Catholic nations of your own continent. Here is how it can be done. In 1870, Canada negotiated with the *métis*. It granted to the *métis* of Manitoba 1,400,000 acres of land out of nearly 9,500,000 acres, constituting less than a sixth but more than a seventh of the province as it then existed.<sup>14</sup> Through the intercession of your Grace as well as through our delegates, the federal government gave us an assurance that all future treaties with the *métis* of the North-West would be similar to the Manitoba treaty.

By the grace of God, I am again at the head of the *métis* as in 1870, but in a more precarious position than ever. If Your Grace deigns to bless the ideas which I am privileged to present to you, if you help me to get a trial before the Supreme Court of Canada on all the charges which have been weighing on me for fifteen years, I will be exonerated by the ineffable grace of God, with the continuation of your protection. And I will be acquitted. My influence on the public will revive. With the help of your advice and the assistance of Mgr. Richot, I will be able to negotiate once more with the federal government, but this time on a constitutional footing. Then we will yield to the sovereign six-sevenths of the land of the North-West. And as there is a great number of French-Canadians and Irish who are Catholics in Confederation, we will make sure that the stipulations of our treaty assure to those of different faith and nationality a fair share of the lands bought from us. Our conditions will be that Canada with its population take for itself a seventh of the entire extent of territory, and that it consent to give the rest to a new Italy, a new Bavaria, a new Ireland, a new Poland in that country which we are glad to let all the religious denominations and the glorious Anglo-Saxon race have, but which we would also like to see settled in good measure by immigrants of our faith and a population of our origin.

Governor Dewdney is a man favoured by providence with a handsome appearance. He should have excellent qualities of mind and heart. For it is rare that beauty of body should not naturally be a mark of fine endowment. If the ideas which I am privileged to write should soon begin to attract your attention, it would be important for their success that a man with the disposition of Governor Dewdney should remain quite a while as head of the North-West. May God keep him then happy and prosperous, and may He deign to maintain him in the high position he occupies until he can supervise the beginning of the most beautiful emigration which the world has ever seen. Soon enough, in all probability, a constitution which suits that vast land will be drawn up. It will be good for the North-West that its civil liberties be inaugurated under the administration of a man who is not only eminent but also has in our eyes the advantage of being one of your friends.

With Providence leading the way, human efforts could well lead to the foundation of a new Belgium based on extinction of the aboriginal title of the *métis* beyond the Rocky Mountains. Belgium is a country where good principles find remarkable support. Would it not be beautiful to see that country born again,

surrounded by the water of the Pacific, on the island where Vancouver made merry? And would it not be delightful to see rising up on firm ground across from there a new Judea for Jews who agree to recognize Jesus Christ as the only Messiah and to recognize you, you Monseigneur, as the leader authorized by faith? So that our brothers, the Protestant Christians, would not be offended at the sight of so many Catholic establishments, the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Danes would equally enjoy the privilege of immigrating to British Columbia, there to lay the foundations of a new Sweden, a new Norway, and a new Denmark.

The officer in charge of the Regina post is a man whom I had the honour to meet fourteen years ago. He is a gentleman. You know him. It is Colonel Irvine. He has experience and ability. British Columbia would find him a Lt. Governor capable of making her happy. If you wish, you could support his nomination to that high honour. And before long, the Province of the Pacific would be indebted to you for a most glorious statesman.

While England and the English of Canada let their immigration come and spread in waves from all sides in British North American, Your Grace, seated in the papal throne of the two Americas, could give the Catholic nations of Europe the signal to depart for the New World. The good Christians of France to whom the faith remains dear and who experience every day greater and greater difficulties in practicing their religion, would turn to Canada. They would swell the population of Quebec and Manitoba. This country would become one of the most prosperous centres of the world, thanks to God, thanks to the Catholic, Apostolic, and living Church of the New World.

Monseigneur, the prestige of eighteen centuries which crowns the bishop of Rome and the apostolic authorization which remains with him externally because of his succession in the direct line of St. Peter, remain sources of immense moral force for him. A word from him can establish you, humanly speaking, as Greater Pontiff of all Catholic nations of this continent. He would only have to charge you to take his place, to maintain discipline and good morals, to care for the people who obey him on this side of the ocean. The will of God is that Leo XIII himself give you *carte blanche*<sup>15</sup> in relation to Rome; that he come to spend a few months at Ville-Marie; that he assemble the bishops of all America; that he make you recognized as their Archbishop of universal jurisdiction; that he himself aid you to invite the Catholic nations of Europe and to direct the current of the valuable emigration to this side of the Atlantic.

Let the glorious heir of the Roman tiara come himself to point out the place in the North-West where he would like to found a new Italy, in Alberta for example, on the slopes of the great Rocky Mountains, if he so desires, so that the land will appear to their enchanted gaze like a vision of the Alps and continually reminds them of the memory of their mother country. May he be himself the first founder of that Italy which God only wants to see in the New World to furnish him the means of working longer for His glory and the honour of religion.

The voyages of Leo XIII in America will be but absences from Rome, for the ancient city of the popes should be dear to his heart. If the venerable patriarch of the Vatican wishes to leave you to yourself, to give you *carte blanche*



as a good father gives his son a *free hand*<sup>15</sup> to act as he sees fit once he is established and on his own; if he wants to leave *me also*,<sup>15</sup> humanly speaking, to my own devices, *carte blanche*,<sup>15</sup> to do good, as a tender grandfather gives his grandson *permission*<sup>15</sup> to run his house in his own way and reflecting credit on his father, his recompense will be great and his joy will be renowned. For almighty God will compensate him magnificently in the sight of all nations. And the more that he has the courage to leave you happily on this continent, the more Providence will hasten to help him admirably. God, who holds all the affairs of men in His hands, will suddenly abandon the French Republic to the evil spirit which torments it. And soon France will declare war against governments better than herself, to try to conquer and even to overthrow them. That will be the signal of terrible events. Then it will be advantageous to the venerable Pontiff to be at Ville-Marie. For the fire of war will light up all of Europe. But let him take courage. God will strengthen the voice of his old age. His bulls will traverse the sea and go throughout the Old World. Italy, Bavaria, Poland, Belgium, Ireland, which Leo XIII will have gladdened by aiding the emigration of their children to America, will be ready to listen. He will only have to advise them to rush to the aid of the eldest daughter. The good Catholics of all of Europe will lend a strong hand to the good governments. And the monster of the French Revolution will be demolished. Then the bishop of Rome will cast his eyes upon the house of St. Louis. And if there is a prince who tries to render to God what is God's and to each what is his, the pope will call him to govern France. He will return the Papal States to the Pontiff, give the bishop of Rome his kingdom back, but for the last time. The Roman Church will remain pleasing to God in proportion to the force with which she continues to combat the revolution and in proportion to the intensity of the frankness and sincerity with which she opposes wickedness. That will make her triumphant again in Europe. The two churches, the one of the Orient and the other of the Occident, the one European and the other American, successful because of their mutual help, will act separately without interference or opposition. The help they will have given one another will serve as proof that the difference in their articles of faith does not come from malevolence, but from the will of God who reveals more to the New World than He had judged appropriate to reveal to the Old. For the explanation of Scripture also progresses, and the more humanity studies the Gospel, the more it will understand. Ville-Marie, do not weaken! The star which shone upon you during such a long episcopal reign and which accustomed you to the contemplation of heavenly things is no longer above you, it is true. But as it sets, it is not entirely hidden from your view. The glory and the virtues of Ignace shine from all sides in what he founded, in the foundation of your great church, like a meteor which eventually is burnt out, but which even when extinguished long retains its warmth to radiate around it, for many days. Spirit of Ignace, thank you for having aided and blessed me. No more remains for me than to *follow scrupulously the Archbishop of Saint Boniface and to raise my family in Christian fashion*.<sup>16</sup>

Monseigneur, believe me, I am *entirely yours*<sup>16</sup> always.

Louis Riel

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Riel refers to his old friend, the Abbé Georges Dugast, who, along with the Abbé Ritchot, had played an important part in the Red River uprising of 1869-1870. Dugast had been sent by Taché. He left Riel convinced of the latter's madness. Stanley, *Louis Riel*, p. 420, note 24.
- <sup>2</sup> Riel had arrived at Batoche about the beginning of July, 1884.
- <sup>3</sup> The Sulpician College of Montreal.
- <sup>4</sup> Riel withdrew his candidacy in the riding of Provencher in the general election of 1872 to open a seat for Sir George Cartier, who had been defeated in Montreal East. After Cartier's death, Riel won a seat in the by-election in Provencher in 1873 and in the general election of 1874.
- <sup>5</sup> The reference is to Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montreal from 1840 to 1876.
- <sup>6</sup> The Masson family of Terrebonne was connected with the Riel family over many years. Louis Riel Sr. received assistance from them when he attempted to set up a mill in Red River. Louis Riel Jr. often visited them when he was a seminarian. Rodrigue Masson, a Conservative M.P. and cabinet minister, was a supporter of Riel in the 1870's (he later became Lt. Governor of Quebec.)
- <sup>7</sup> Bishop Taché had gone to the Oecumenical Council in Rome in the fall of 1869. He was asked to return by the Canadian government when trouble broke out in Red River.
- <sup>8</sup> Bishop Grandin visited St. Laurent early in September, 1884. There he met Riel and heard the complaints of the métis.
- <sup>9</sup> Rome fell to the Kingdom of Italy in September, 1870. The Quebec Church had been a strong supporter of the Papal States. Bishop Bourget had raised a contingent of Zouaves to help the pope.
- <sup>10</sup> Leo XIII succeeded Pius IX as pontiff in 1878. The ultramontane party within the Quebec Church, which was engaged in incessant quarrels with the more liberal element, now began to see its opponents gain the ascendancy. The faction which had preached exaggerated deference to the clergy and hierarchy now found itself in opposition to the hierarchy.
- <sup>11</sup> The date needs explanation. In the Catholic calendar December 8 is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. On that day in 1875 Riel attended Mass in St. Patricks Cathedral in Washington, D.C., where he experienced a vision which he later described as follows: "At the moment the priest finished his sermon, said the Credo, and while the people were still standing, and me with them, I suddenly felt in my heart a joy so intense, that to hide my face from my neighbours, I covered it with my handkerchief, my hands on my mouth and eyes. In spite of my precautions, a boy of twelve, just in front of me, saw my great joy. Two minutes later this great sweep of joy was followed by a great sorrow of the soul. With an effort I tried to suppress my sobs, but my sobs and tears made a terrible noise in the church. My pain was as intense as my joy. It too passed in a little time but my spirit was full of this thought: 'The joys and sorrow of man are short'".
- Cited in Olive Knox, "The Question of Louis Riel's Insanity," *Papers Read Before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba* Series III, No. 6 (1951), p. 24. Thus the selection of December 8, 1875, as the date of transfer of papal authority was not arbitrary; it referred to an important event in Riel's own spiritual life.
- <sup>12</sup> Bishop Bourget died on June 8, 1885. His funeral oration was given by Bishop Taché.
- <sup>13</sup> Riel's underlining. July 24 would have seemed an especially appropriate date to Riel. During his visit to St. Laurent, Bishop Grandin had made St. Joseph the patron of the French-Canadian métis, with a feast day of July 24, one month after the feast of John the Baptist, patron of the Canadiens. R. P. E. Jonquet, *Mgr. Grandin* (Montreal, 1903), p. 376. Subsequently the Union Metisse St. Joseph was formed. In selecting July 24 to announce the pontificate of Mgr. Taché, Riel was thus reflecting his theory that the métis were the successor to the French-Canadians as the Lord's Chosen People.
- <sup>14</sup> I have corrected the French text, which contains an arithmetical error: ". . . plus qu'un sixième et pas tout a fait un septième de toute la province . . ."
- <sup>15</sup> Riel's underlining. The repeated emphasis of these permissive words suggests Riel's concern for the religious autonomy of the New World, and his own prophetic mission.
- <sup>16</sup> Riel underlines the conclusion to demonstrate the sincerity of his return to the fold.



## Gold Mining Claims

by EMMET K. CULLITY

**A**S A FRESHMAN engineer I was working in San Francisco in 1914 when a letter came from my brother in Regina telling of a gold discovery at Beaver (Amisk) Lake in northern Saskatchewan. He proposed to grub stake me to join the rush that was expected to occur after the spring break - up. So I left San Francisco, stopped off in Butte, Montana, where a former classmate, Zar Crittenden, decided to join me and we headed for Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. After outfitting in Prince Albert we took off in mid-April down the Saskatchewan River for Cumberland House, a Hudson Bay trading post. There we became acquainted with Mr. H. M. S. Cotter, Factor of the post. The following day we continued on across Cumberland and Namew, Sturgeon Lakes to Sturgeon Landing and the 18 mile portage which had just been cut through from the south end of Beaver Lake by Will and Jack Hayes with a few helpers. Ours was the first pay-load over the portage — via team and wagon. At Beaver Landing (later Beaver City) the Hayes had constructed several log buildings including a bunkhouse and cookhouse. Charlie Geddes was the cheery little old camp cook who broke out some good food and robust coffee when our bedraggled group pulled in after a rainy fifteen hour hassle with mired down horses and wagon. In addition to freighting the Hayes family fished the lake during the winter, by means of long nets strung out beneath the ice, for Booth Fisheries in The Pas.

From Beaver Landing we paddled up Beaver Lake to Missi Island, stopping near the southern end at the Revillon Freres post where we had a pleasurable visit with the post manager, and his charming wife. We were to have further enjoyable meetings with the Cotters when we would come down there to replenish our larder. A few miles more and we arrived at the camp of Beaver Lake Gold Mining Company Limited, (later renamed Monarch Mine), — a cluster of log buildings on the northwest shore of the lake whose Prince Albert mine was the initial discovery in the area. The Company's head office was in the city of Prince Albert where it was initially financed. Its officers and directors included A. H. Woodman, Jas. H. Sanderson, A. I. Besnard and J. E. Morrier.

At the camp we met the prospectors who had made the Prince Albert discovery. Dan and Jack Mosher, Tom Creighton and Leon Dion, an experienced and able group of which Creighton was the most knowledgeable. He was a big, rangy and rugged individual and of a studious bent. John Ashby, a solemn Englishman, was the Company Clerk, Dan Milligan was the first-rate camp cook and the mine superintendent was an ex-miner from Minnesota whose name I have forgotten. Also there was an elderly physician, Dr. Mathieson who was on the Company staff. A small crew had been sinking an inclined shaft on the discovery vein, using hand tools, J. E. Morrier of the Prince Albert firm of Montgomery and Morrier was there surveying the Company's claims. Lionel Moore,

the so-called bannock king, was operating a general store of sorts in a small cabin and tent but business was poor and he was gone a few months later.

Early in the summer an in-board motor launch began operating between Beaver Landing and the Prince Albert camp carrying the mail and supplies and occasional passengers. The operator was a young man named Dave Collett who continued this service until freeze-up. While there was considerable prospecting and claim staking in the area, the activity was something less than of boom proportions. A few mining representatives came in to investigate the Prince Albert discovery and other prospects. Of these I recall only John "turn-down" Reid, a ranking Toronto engineer, Chief Geologist Bateman of Canadian Exploration Company and Peacock and Jamison, Washington State mine operators. E. L. Bruce and F. J. Alcock of the Canadian Geological Survey spent the summer mapping the area.

In September the Beaver Lake Company asked Crittenden and me to take charge of its mine development and assay laboratory. So this we did, operating the laboratory on a custom basis for our own account with Crittenden as assayer while I served as mine superintendent. Not long thereafter it was decided to suspend shaft sinking until power equipment was obtained. The shaft was then down 70 feet in ore that averaged about 4 feet wide and \$15.00 per ton gold which was then valued at \$20.67 per ounce. During the winter the Company purchased a second-hand small steam power plant, shaft sinking equipment and an incomplete amalgamation mill from a defunct mine in the Lake-of-the-Woods area in Ontario. This was shipped by rail to The Pas and hauled over the ice by freight teams to the mine in March 1915 — and the Company was out of money. It did have a bountiful food supply in the camp ice-house, so Crittenden and I with Dan Milligan and chef were at ease for several months while the Company endeavored to refinance, but without success.

Meantime in 1915, the Creighton-Mosher party continued prospecting in the area with the backing of J. E. (Jack) Hammell, mining entrepreneur of Toronto. In midsummer they brought to us a large number of samples to assay for gold, silver and copper. They said the samples came from the surface of and trenches in a partially oxidized, copper bearing massive iron sulphide deposit up to 300 feet in width — close to a lake they had named Flin Flon. Creighton explained the name derived from a book he had read wherein a mythical prospector named Flintabatty Flonatin ended up in hell and there discovered the origin of a huge ore body.

The sample assays were indeed encouraging and, as I recall, ranged up to \$10.00 in gold, several ounces silver and 3% copper. The prospectors then suggested that we meet them at Flin Flon Lake a few days later if we wanted to locate claims adjacent to theirs, and described the route to the Lake. This we did and staked five claims, tying in on the south and north with the initial Flin Flon group of eleven claims.

When word of the important Flin Flon discovery spread to The Pas and beyond, incoming prospectors and others looking for a piece of the action became more common. Mostly they came in via Beaver Landing and stopped off at



the Prince Albert mine camp, where Crittenden and I were still headquartered, before continuing on to Flin Flon. Some whose names I remember were Sam Colt, Sinclair Snell, Jack Callinan, Dan McDonald and the Graham brothers, Bob and George. The Grahams had located, several miles north of the Prince Albert, a low-grade gold deposit of considerable width. This was examined before freeze-up by engineer, William Dunn and geologist George Warren Tower of New York, but there was no follow-up action. Prospector Davenport and partner, whose name I do not recall, discovered and staked in the summer of 1915 a high grade copper deposit at Schist Lake that became known as the Mandy mine. Within a few months the Mandy was sold to Tonopah Mining Company of Nevada after examination by consulting geologist J. E. Spurr. I was at the Mandy when Spurr arrived and remember his complaining of the discomforts of the trip which to me in those days could only be rated as a pleasurable experience.

Late in the summer the inimitable Jack Hammell, accompanied by his wife, came in to see what his boys — as he called them — had discovered at Flin Flon. He was highly enthusiastic about the discovery and by year-end he had arranged for the financing of exploratory drilling. Before this arrangement became known to us at Beaver Lake, I had accepted a job offer in Butte, Montana, and left camp for there in January of 1916. Crittenden remained in the north until the following summer and from him I learned that core drilling was commenced at Flin Flon in March but was discontinued several months later. During this period we optioned our five claims at Flin Flon to the then manager of Hollinger Gold Mines and Timmins, Ontario Associates, but the claims later reverted to us.

The following year (1917) the United States was in the World War and I was in the Army. Discharged in the spring of 1919 I again contacted Crittenden, then working in Michigan and recently married, and a few weeks later we met in The Pas — the bride, Daryl included, for another go at prospecting. We outfitted in The Pas and embarked on the Ross Navigation Company's stern wheeler *S. S. Minasin* for its first trip of the season to Cumberland House. Harvey Weber was captain of the *Minasin* and his wife was along for the trip. About midway the *Minasin* tied up at the river bank to take on a load of wood for its boiler. At Cumberland House we took to our canoe, crossing Sturgeon Lake to Goose River and thence to the Mandy Mine Camp on the northwest arm of Schist Lake. There we met the caretaker Herb (?), Rose, his wife and small daughter, who made available to us one of the camp cabins to which we returned several times during the ensuing months. The Mandy was at that time closed down after mining out a lens of high grade chalcopyrite ore and shipping about 30,000 tons to the smelter at Trail, British Columbia. Ore shipments involved a combination of winter hauling, stock-piling, summer barging to The Pas and rail transportation to the smelter. Henry Carlisle was the manager during the Mandy operation and in later years was a prominent consulting engineer in San Francisco.

Our first move from the Mandy was to visit Flin Flon which we found deserted except for Tom Creighton and Leon Dion. There was not much change to be seen at Flin Flon other than several additional cabins, as exploration after 1915 had been limited almost entirely to core drilling. Tom told us of their discovery

and staking of rather high grade but narrow copper vein at Hook Lake, a few miles south of Flin Flon, and there we staked two claims on the strike of their discovery, adjacent to their claims on the south.

In the progress of our field work that year (1919) we met some other of the prospectors who had been in the Beaver Lake-Flin Flon area in 1914 and 1915 but mostly the men were newcomers to us. Of the latter I recall the names of George Bancroft and his principal, J. P. Gordon, Charlie Stabeck, Bob Hassett, Billie Baker and his neighbor Moody, living at Bakers Narrows with their wives and children. Patton, who with Baker located the Baker-Patton copper prospect situated, if my memory is correct, near the north arm of Lake Athapupuskow.

Crittenden and his wife returned to Michigan after freeze-up while I remained in the north. Early in 1920 I met Holman Pearl, a Minnesota engineer then in The Pas, and through him arranged to represent the John A. Savage syndicate of Duluth in scouting the reported mineral discoveries in the area extending from Beaver Lake to Herb Lake. We also set up an assay office in The Pas in charge of D. W. Warnock, chemist, for custom work and to assay our own samples.

The area experienced substantially increased activity in 1920. By the first of the year the W. B. Thompson interests who controlled the Magma Copper Company, an important Arizona copper producer, had optioned the Flin Flon property and William Koerner as manager arrived in The Pas with several key men to get their exploration program underway. The boiler and shaft sinking equipment at the Prince Albert mine was moved in to Flin Flon over the winter trail to begin sinking.

When travelling north out of The Pas by dog team the first overnight stop was usually Sam Cook's place on the Indian reservation. There for 25 cents the traveller could lay his bedroll on the floor of a large over-heated room which was shared by others including Sam and his wife whom he always addressed as Sweetheart. The 25 cent fee included limited cooking privileges, but preferably Sweetheart would provide supper and breakfast for 50 cents a meal.

Some of the men I had met in 1914-1915 or in 1919 were again or still in The Pas or in the field such as: Mayor B. M. Stitt, Grant Rice, the editor and publisher of the weekly *Herald*; B. B. Syndal, manager of the Union Bank, H. S. Johnson, manager of Booth Fisheries; Tom Creighton and Leon Dion, Jack Callinan, J. P. Gordon, George Bancroft, Patton, Baker, Moody, Stabeck and Dan McDonald. There were others not previously known to me, including: engineer Harry Darling, mining scouts Austin McVeigh and McCutcheon and prospectors Lavasseur, Mike Hacket, Ski Stewart, Dave Collins and Tom Webb. Also the Murray brothers, who, acting for J. P. Gordon, had located on the east side of Herb Lake a gold prospect which created much interest due to surface showings of free gold in narrow quartz stringers. The Hollinger company optioned this property but did not exercise the option. The Rex and Bingo mines at Herb Lake were inactive and endeavoring to refinance. The Diamond Queen, reputedly a participant in the Klondike gold boom, continued as before the operation of



a cafe of sorts at Mile 80 on the Canadian National Railroad, the jumping off place for Herb Lake.

At Flin Flon in midsummer I was taken underground by manager Koerner. Number 1 shaft was down 180 feet and Number 2 shaft 120 feet with a crosscut west of 40 feet long on the 100 foot level in massive sulphide ore. Koerner told me the underground work so far had verified the findings of prior core drilling. He said that by September 15th he expected to have both shafts down 200 feet, connected at that level, and crosscuts east and west to the walls of the ore deposit.

Base metal prices began to weaken in world markets near the end of 1920. Curtailed production followed in 1921 and many of the high-cost underground mines in the United States suspended production. In this situation my Duluth employers decided to terminate their north country program and in March of 1921 I returned to the United States.

So ended my carefree years in the northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba areas. However, in 1927 I was transferred to Montreal by my Los Angeles employer — Southwestern Engineering Corporation — to establish and manage a district office. While there I had the pleasure of one more visit in The Pas and a flight north to the Sherritt Gordon mine.

In 1927 we sold our five Flin Flon claims to Mandy Mines Limited, a Canadian Corporation formed that year to acquire the Mandy property from the Tonopah company. Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company subsequently acquired the property of Mandy Mines Limited, including our claims.

## Book Reviews

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ASSINIBOINE CHIEF. By Dan Kennedy (Ochankugahe); edited and with an Introduction by James R. Stevens. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1972. Pp. 160. Illus. \$7.95.

With re-awakened pride, an increasingly critical eye, and considerable clamor, Canada's native peoples are examining and questioning their role in contemporary society. Their more vociferous spokesmen publicize grievances, formulate demands, and maneuver to mobilize an effective political power-base, while news media headline such social issues as treaty-rights, discrimination, and the reservation welfare-trap. Accompanying this overt, noisy, action-oriented concern is a quieter, more reflective interest in Indian history and tribal culture on the part of those who intuitively feel that an in-depth appreciation of the past may contribute to the illumination of present perplexities. Such, this reviewer suspects, is Dan Kennedy, Ochankuga'he, chief of Carry the Kettle reserve near Qu'Appelle who, from the vantage point and with the perspective of his one hundred years, records the history of his people, recalling much from personal experience and supplementing his own recollections with the rich oral tradition of the Assiniboine.

Kennedy's slim volume, as the title suggests, is anecdotal in format. Not surprisingly it is a fascinating blend of history, autobiography and tribal legend, presumably selected by the old chief for the edification of a generation far removed in time and experience from the Indian's initial confrontation with white culture. The Assiniboine, who once numbered some twenty-eight thousand and who roamed the whole of the north-central plains, today are reduced to four thousand and confined to eleven reserves in central Canada and the midwestern United States. Kennedy's life and memory span the greater part of this era of incredible and tragic change.

During his boyhood buffalo were the mainstay of the Assiniboine, their source of food, clothing and shelter, and Kennedy describes a time when his tribe wintered in their traditional hunting grounds in the Cypress Hills. By 1879 the buffalo were wiped out and by the winter of 1880-1881, he recalls, his people were so hungry they ate their horses. In the spring of 1882 Chief Took The Coat, Chu-wikuaka Eyaku, led his tribe across country to the site of their present reserve near Qu'Appelle, then called Skull Mountainttes, or "land of the dead", so named because the hills were littered with the skulls of those who had died in earlier smallpox epidemics.

Kennedy tells us much about reserve life in those early years — the petty restrictions, hardships, day to day routines, hunting skills, womanly work, taking coup, and the first contacts of his people with white men and their technology. One episode illustrating this last point describes Kennedy's "introduction" to school. This excerpt not only portrays the Indian's bewilderment with unfamiliar ways, but also the one-sided adjustment that was required; and moreover, does so with a characteristically tempered restraint rather than rancour.

" 'Ochankuga'he,' Path Maker, was the name bestowed on me by my grandfather to commemorate his warpath exploit, in which he led a war party



across the blizzard-swept plains in the dead of winter. I am very proud of my name.

In 1886, at the age of twelve years, I was lassoed, roped and taken to the Government School at Lebreton. Six months after I enrolled, I discovered to my chagrin that I had lost my name and an English name had been tagged on me in exchange.

The interpreter explained to me that there were technical difficulties at the time of my enrolment:

'When you were brought here, for purposes of enrolment, you were asked to give your name and when you did, the Principal remarked that there were no letters in the alphabet to spell this little heathen's name and no civilized tongue could pronounce it. 'We are going to civilize him, so we will give him a civilized name', and that is how you acquired this brand new whiteman's name.'

In keeping with the promise to civilize the little pagan they went to work and cut off my braids, which, incidentally, according to the Assiniboine traditional custom, was a token of mourning — the closer the relative, the closer the cut. After my haircut, I wondered in silence if my mother had died, as they had cut my hair close to the scalp. I looked in the mirror to see what I looked like. A Halloween pumpkin stared back at me and that did it. I ran away from school, but I was captured and brought back. I made two more attempts, but with no better luck. Realizing that there was no escape, I resigned myself to the task of learning the three R's.

Visualize for yourselves the difficulties encountered by an Indian boy who had never seen the inside of a house; who had lived in buffalo skin teepees winter and summer; who grew up with a bow and arrow. With long braided hair I was thrust into a new world called civilization."

The young student's confusion was compounded by the fact that he had to unlearn many tribal concepts.

"For instance, every school child today is taught in the textbooks the elementary laws of our solar system, discovered by the Polish astronomer Copernicus and the Italian scientist Galileo. But according to our tribal teachings, the earth is flat and stationary, with the sky resting on its outer perimeter.

And again, the stars you are studying with your scientific instruments, to determine the elementary laws of the universe, are, according to our mythology, personified immortals, deified in our traditional lore."

Interspersed with historical and autobiographical data are Kennedy's impressions of native religious practices, his retelling of myths, comments on tribal mores, and translations of passages from the old oral tradition. In all, it is an interesting blend, amplified by the introduction and footnotes of editor James R. Stevens. Chief Kennedy's *Recollections* do not pretend to be a definitive historical account of the Assiniboine people, but they are a valuable first-person record of a vanishing way of life and a time of transition.

Arlean McPherson

CROWFOOT, CHIEF OF THE BLACKFEET. By Hugh H. Dempsey. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972, pp. 230, illus., \$8.75.

Of all the books about Indian leaders in Canadian history Hugh Dempsey's biography *Crowfoot, Chief of the Blackfeet* is one of the most convincing and

satisfying. Dempsey, Director of History at the Glenbow-Alberta Institute in Calgary, has both personal and family ties with the Blackfeet, his father-in-law being the late Senator James Gladstone, the first Indian appointed to the Canadian Senate. In his biography of Crowfoot he is above all an historian who places Crowfoot within the reality of the prairies in the 19th century and does not use his work, as the tendency in most writing about Indians does today, to plead a cause based on present day realities.

Quite properly for an historian he seeks answers to certain questions and bases his answers on the source material at his disposal. Why is it, he asks, that Crowfoot, known to Canadians as a peacemaker, was acceptable to the warlike Blackfeet? Was he, as the traditional interpretation has it, a lackey of the white man; was he a weak man under the influence of clerical and Mounted Police personnel? Dempsey's conclusion is a definite NO. On the contrary, Crowfoot was a strong leader and was given the loyalty of his people because his one and only goal was to provide for them and guide them in a direction he perceived best under the circumstances they faced. A tribute to his ability and strength, Dempsey says, is that in two decades he led his people from the traditional life of the buffalo hunt to the alien world of the reservation and did so without bloodshed.

One of the strange "twists" to the Crowfoot story is that this Blackfoot chief was not a Blackfoot. In his research Dempsey discovered that Crowfoot was a Blood Indian and "became" a Blackfoot when his widowed mother married a Blackfoot. By 1870 when he became chief, the Blackfeet were but a shadow of their former greatness — 6,000 had fallen victim to the small pox epidemic of 1837 and hundreds succumbed to the disease in 1869. Never again, is Dempsey's assessment, were they as arrogant and troublesome to the fur traders. Crowfoot's role was to lead them in a period of adjustment to their changing world.

Using fur trade journals, church records, government reports and interviews with Indians who had lived in Crowfoot's camp Dempsey has put together a story of both achievement and tragedy. He presents Crowfoot in all his facets and moods — as a warrior and peacemaker; as a proud, often bad-tempered man who as chief expected to be obeyed; as a generous and humane man, a man grateful to the Mounted Police who drove out the whiskey traders and protected his people "as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter"; as a man angry and frustrated when treaty promises were not fulfilled but above all a wise man, sadly resigned to the white man's strength and determination. Crowfoot's firm leadership held back those of his people who were eager to join Riel in 1885. He did not ignore the Indian grievances but he recognized a losing battle. There was no escape for the buffalo were gone and life on the plains had changed. As chief and "father of his people" his policy was to make peace with the new society that had invaded his country. He would cooperate and make the best of the changed society because he believed that was the best policy for his people.

Dempsey's research on Crowfoot began some fifteen years ago. He did not have at his disposal any neatly arranged archival collection of correspondence,



diaries, etc. for Crowfoot left no written record. Yet he has conveyed what is the essence of good biography — his subject's thoughts and reactions to the disturbing events of the time. We are not likely to have a better understanding of the man than is given in this biography which will undoubtedly remain the definitive study.

H. Bowsfield.

TELEGRAMS OF THE NORTH-WEST CAMPAIGN, 1885. Edited by D. Morton and R. H. Roy. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1972. Pp. 431. Maps.

Although a collection of old telegrams would seem to guarantee boring reading, this book, in fact, turns out to be a fascinating study of the administrative aspects of the 1885 campaign. It adds substantially to our knowledge and understanding of that campaign. Unfortunately most readers will have to borrow a copy of this book if they want to read it as publications of the Champlain Society are available only to members of the society and subscribing libraries.

The main part of this book is a chronological arrangement of the telegrams exchanged between the Minister of Militia and Defense Adolphe Caron and his commander, field officers, contractors and "miscellaneous bystanders in the field". Originally gathered together in 1886 possibly for a return to Parliament that was never called for the telegrams have been edited for publication. An excellent introduction reviewing the events of the campaign has been provided by Professor Desmond Morton, while the other editor, Professor Reginald Roy has provided the annotations for the telegrams. In addition, there is a good index and some maps to help the reader follow the main features of the campaign.

The chronological presentation of the telegrams allows the reader to follow the events as they occurred with the same knowledge that the participants had at the time. It is obvious, as the editors point out in the preface, that military decisions are often made in haste and on the basis of incomplete or even erroneous information. The telegrams probably give us clearer understanding of the true motives of the commanders than their subsequent reports do.

There are other things apparent from the telegrams. It is generally known that the Canadian Pacific Railway company played an important role in the campaign. What is perhaps not as well known or understood is the enormous importance of the administrative organization of the Hudson's Bay Company in the successful conduct of the campaign. Once the fighting was over the bills had to be paid and problem of handling this difficult question and arriving at a fair settlement is illustrated in the exchange of telegrams. Also it is evident from the telegrams that even in a crisis situation "nothing could prevent politicians from remembering friends and punishing opponents". The telegrams show that the Minister used one subordinate to check against another and illustrate other unsavory aspects of the conduct of the campaign.

This book does provide a lot of information about the campaign of 1885 and it is interesting reading. It is obvious that Canada was not prepared for

even a small scale war. It is interesting to speculate on whether the strain would have been too much for the weak and inadequate military machinery had the rebellion become more widespread. On the whole it appears that Caron managed the administration pretty well. Certainly anyone who takes the time to study this work will come away with a much better understanding of the administrative and military aspects of the campaign.

D. H. Bocking.

**CAULIFLOWER CROWN.** By Klaas de Jong. Arranged by Martha Knapp. Saskatoon: Prairie Book Service, 1973. Pp. 198, illust. \$7.50.

*Cauliflower Crown* is the autobiography of a Dutch immigrant who came to Canada in 1893. Penniless when he arrived Klaas de Jong became an internationally known market gardener by the mid-1920's. He died at the age of 86 in 1959.

In Holland, Klaas de Jong frequently suffered from hunger, as did his parents and siblings; in fact, one of his sisters died of starvation. In Canada, too, he suffered from hunger. He experienced the usual problems of pioneering but in addition was beset by a number of unusual misadventures. He nearly froze to death walking through sub-zero weather in the Canadian prairies. On a railroad construction project, he escaped being blown to bits by dynamite that exploded prematurely. As a foreman on the project, he escaped death in the Rockies when one of the jealous workers set a trap for him on a bridge spanning a canyon. In the Crowsnest area he escaped being run over by a herd of cattle. He was stricken with mountain fever and overcame that as well. His first new suit was stolen in Spokane and his trunk-full of mementoes, souvenirs, and photographs were stolen by an evangelist who rented his cabin in Winnipeg. Added to this were set backs caused at various times by hail storms, floods and human acts of sabotage.

Klaas also experienced cases of true friendship and acts of human kindness. There was the time that an unknown Indian saved him from timber wolves; when a bachelor shared the remainder of his food with him; and when the expert advice and encouragement of an agricultural specialist helped him grow his prize vegetables. Reciprocally, Klaas never failed to share his good fortune with his parents and with anyone who came to his door.

One of the most tender moments in the autobiography was the reuniting of Klaas with Betje, the girlfriend of his youth — after eleven years of being apart and not hearing from one another.

We are grateful to Klaas and his daughter for bringing this rich pioneering record to us. It is our hope that perhaps the book might stimulate others to share their experience with us as well. This is especially useful for young Canadians to develop a sense of the exciting history and heritage of this country and its people.

Koozma J. Tarasoff



## Notes on Books Received

WAKE THE PRAIRIE ECHOES. Collected by Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society. Saskatoon: Western Producer Book Service, 1973, Pp. 87. Illus. \$2.00.

This book of poetry about the Mounted Police brings to a successful conclusion a project of the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society. The thirty-four poems were collected from a number of sources including back issues of *Scarlet and Gold* and the *R.C.M.P. Quarterly*. The poems cover many aspects of the police story and are arranged in groups under topical headings including the following: Heroes of the 1880's, The Last Patrol, Fact and Fiction, Recruits and Training, and Life in the Force. This collection makes some of the poetry about the police accessible to the average reader for the first time and clearly illustrates the fact that poetry has played a role in telling the story of the police. Readers interested in the story of the police will find this book of considerable interest.

HURONIA. By Conrad Heidenreich. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971. Pp. 337. Maps and charts. \$14.95.

*Huronía* is a history of the geography of the Huron Indians, 1600-1650. This study won for its author the Sainte Marie prize in History in 1971 being judged the best work embodying original historical research and interpretation of 17th century Canada. The author has in this extensive and detailed study created a picture of the many ways in which a group of people interacted with each other and with their environment. Anyone interested in the Canadian Indian and his culture will find this study of particular interest. Many regard this book as an outstanding illustration of historical geographic interpretation.

WILD DRUMS. By Alex Grisdale as told to Nan Shipley, Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers, 1972. Pp. 78. Illus. \$4.95.

This is a book of tales and legends of the plains Indians as told by Alex Grisdale. Mr. Grisdale began to write Indian stories in 1914 but lost his original collection in a fire in 1932 and had to start a new collection. The fourteen stories published in this volume are an excellent selection of the stories and legends of Mr. Grisdale's people.

PAINTERS IN A NEW LAND By. M. Bell. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. Pp. 224. Illus. \$22.50.

This book contains reproductions of rare drawings and paintings depicting pioneer Canada as it appeared to the amateur and professional artists who drew or painted the pictures. The texts accompanying the pictures are taken from

memoirs and other period literature and they provide appropriate settings for the pictures. The book is a visual history of pioneer Canada which will help readers reach a better understanding of our early history. It is a beautifully produced book and it is to be hoped that it will not be used to decorate coffee tables but will be widely read and studied.

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Miss Christine MacDonald was recently appointed Legislative Librarian and by virtue of her appointment becomes a member of the Saskatchewan Archives Board. Miss MacDonald has been a staff member of the Legislative Library for some twenty-seven years, during part of which time she assisted with the work of the Provincial Archives. She has written a number of articles and numerous book reviews on Saskatchewan's history, and is the author of *Historical Directory of Saskatchewan Newspapers* (1951) and of *Publications of the Governments of the North-West Territories and Province of Saskatchewan* (1952).

Other members of the Saskatchewan Archives Board are: Hon. Gordon MacMurchy, Chairman; Dr. Norman Ward, Vice-Chairman; Hon. Elwood Cowley, Dr. B. Zagorin and A. R. Turner, Secretary.

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The current issue of *Grain*, a semi-annual magazine for fiction and poetry published by the Saskatchewan writers' Guild is now available. *Grain* aims to publish high quality writing by either well established or unknown authors. Although wanting the magazine to be national in scope and appeal, the editors would like to have a large proportion of contributions from Saskatchewan writers.

Submissions for future issues should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscription rates are \$2.00 a year, \$5.00 for three years and \$1.00 for single copies. Submissions and subscriptions should be sent to *GRAIN*, Box 1885, Saskatoon, Sask.

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