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Asleep in the trenches

**With the Midland Battalion to Batoche
Pastor vs. Politician: The Reverend Murdoch
MacKinnon and Premier Walter Scott's Amendment
to The School Act.**

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With The Midland Battalion To Batoche

By R. H. Roy

IN THE EARLY SPRING of 1885 the people of Eastern Canada were startled by the news that Louis Riel, together with his Metis and Indian followers, had taken up arms against the authority of the Dominion of Canada in the North-West Territories. It became apparent immediately that a military expedition would have to be sent to crush the rebels since neither the North-West Mounted Police nor the few local militia units in Western Canada had the capability to deal with the problem. Major-General F. D. Middleton, the British officer who commanded the Canadian Militia, was sent by the Prime Minister to Winnipeg late in March. He assumed command of the military forces which were raised locally as well as the reinforcements which were ordered sent from Eastern Canada. Among the many units which volunteered for service was the Midland Battalion. It was composed of about 370 officers and men drawn from existing military infantry and rifle companies in Belleville, Lindsay, Port Hope and Kingston.

Among the young men in Belleville who signed up to go to the North-West was Charles Salyer Clapp. He had joined the 15th Battalion, Argyll Light Infantry, in 1880 and had just celebrated his twenty-first birthday when the rebellion broke out. A descendent of a well respected United Empire Loyalist family, a Liberal in politics and a Methodist in religious persuasion, he served as a private during the Rebellion, later being promoted to sergeant. In 1890 Clapp was commissioned in the 15th Battalion and served with that unit as a lieutenant until 1902.

In 1893 Clapp wrote an account of his service with the Midland Battalion which he called "Reminiscences of '85".* The account which follows is a very good description of the campaign as seen through the eyes of a private soldier of more than average intelligence. Written only eight years after the Rebellion, Clapp assumes that the reader (or perhaps his audience?) is familiar with the major events he describes. Thus he does not go into the reason for the Rebellion, the problems of mobilizing and equipping the enthusiastic but poorly trained militia, nor the post-Rebellion arguments between Middleton and a number of senior Canadian militia officers over the conduct of the campaign. His account is more valuable for his view of the Rebellion from the ranks of the private soldier. He has no knives to grind, no political favours to ask, no reputation to seek. His patriotism and sense of duty, both when he was campaigning and later as a young businessman in Belleville, were taken for granted. Victorian England was still "home" to many of the descendants of Loyalist families, despite the fact that they had resided in Canada for over a century. Clapp's quotations from several patriotic poems tells something of the spirit of the age just as his own account of the fighting reveals much of his own feeling.

The paper which follows is told in Clapp's own words. Some obvious spelling errors have been corrected, a few punctuation marks have been added and an

attempt has been made to sort out paragraphs. Certain people, places and events mentioned in the text have warranted additional information in footnotes for the modern reader.

The year 1885 will be ever memorable in the annals of Canadian history as the year of the North West Rebellion, and will become a historical landmark by which other events will be determined. During the brief but eventful period the volunteers who were so fortunate as to be called into active service had ample opportunity of proving themselves to be worthy sons of worthy sires, and that the British pluck, perseverance, bravery and powers of endurance so characteristic of our ancestors of old have not degenerated in the sons of the land of the maple leaf and beaver, and their conduct on the battlefield has shown that here in Canada

We have still the same breed of man and the steel
That wore nobly our Waterloo wreath's
We have more of the blood that formed Inkerman's floods
When it poured in its whirlpool of death
And the foeman will find neither coward or slave
Neath the Red Cross of England, the flag of the brave.

It is not my intention to rehearse before you the details and circumstances in connection with the outbreak of the Rebellion, as they are matters with which most of you are familiar. Suffice to say that the breaking out of hostilities practically began by the conflict at Duck Lake on March 26th. The story of the engagement has been read, told, and repeated so many times that it is well nigh impossible to get at the exact facts. Whatever they may be we have sufficient evidence of the fatal results, eleven of Major Crozier's¹ command were killed and eleven wounded, while the rebel loss was only four killed and three wounded. The news of the fight soon flashed over the length and breadth of this broad Dominion and was read everywhere on the 28th and with the news came the call to arms.

Wherever a call was made there was a prompt patriotic, loyal and hearty response; in fact, in a great many cases, a rivalry as to who should fill the ranks. Belleville had the privilege and honour of furnishing her quota of volunteers (one company each from the 15th and 49th Battalions known as A and H Companies respectively of the Midland Provisional Batl. under the command of the late Lt. Col. A. T. H. Williams, M.P.²) and right worthily did they uphold the honour of their city and the credit of their regiment. I have not time nor is there need to dwell upon the scene in our fair city of the Bay from the time of the call to arms of our local volunteers, to the day of their departure. The citizens were fairly wild with excitement and it must have recalled to mind, to a great many, a similar scene nineteen years previous when the 15th Batl. was called out and departed for Prescott to guard the frontier and repel the Fenian horde³ who at that time were attempting to invade our fair land.

The response was none the less loyal and hearty here than elsewhere, and our citizens were just as enthusiastic as were the citizens of Montreal, Toronto, and other places. As we left Belleville on April 1st, it was prophesied by a great many that we would have an All Fool's trip to Kingston, remain there a couple of weeks and return home again; subsequent events, however, proved "that prophets are not without honour save in their own country." On the occasion of our departure the enthusiasm of our citizens was simply unrestrained, and in the words of Will Carleton

They cheered us as we walked the streets,
 They marched us to and fro,
 And those who stayed spoke loud of us
 How brave it was to go.

During our stay in Kingston, which lasted five days, we were fully equipped for the field. Sunday evening, the 5th, the welcome orders came for us to proceed at once to the front. The following morning we bade adieu to the old Limestone City replete with all its old historic and military associations, and embarked on our special train for Renfrew, via the Kingston and Renfrew Railway,⁴ taking with us 21,000 rounds of ammunition, 1,128 blankets, and 58 tents.

After a very tedious ride of 105 miles, through a rocky and mountainous country, Renfrew was reached at which place we changed cars and embarked on the C.P.R. Nothing occurred to vary the usual monotony of railway travel from the time we left Renfrew until our arrival at the "Gaps"⁵ with the exception of the following exciting incident — on Tuesday morning the 7th about 9 o'clock, the news flashed through the train that a man had jumped overboard. As quickly as possible, the engine was reversed and the train backed along slowly until we arrived at the scene of the "jump off." We found that he left quite an impression and considerable blood in the snow where he alighted and his tracks were in the direction of the adjacent forest. A number got out and followed his tracks to the woods, where after half an hour's fruitless search they gave up the chase, and retraced their steps to the train. The only wonder was that he wasn't killed as our train was running at the rate of 25 miles per hour at the time, and he literally dived out, breaking the double windows of the car. Afterwards he turned up in Brockville pretty well shaken up and looking generally demoralized. He was a member of C. Co. and hailed from Bowmanville. The only reason his comrades were able to assign for his rash act was that his fears of having to fight had so worked on his mind as to cause temporary insanity. Evidently the poor fellow's sentiments were not those contained in the lines:

We all must die, then better far
 For home or country's weal
 The bullet in the thick of war,
 The sharp quick thrust of steel
 In cowards ease, and better fame
 Adown the ages rung
 Than only an unhonoured name
 unknown, unwept, unsung.

Dalton, the end of the track, was reached Wednesday morning, the 8th at eleven o'clock, and here began our first experience of crossing the "Gaps". Fifty teams were awaiting our arrival to convey us across the first gap — a distance of 50 miles. Camp Desolation⁶ was reached at one o'clock the following morning, after a cold tedious ride during which the men suffered terribly. We bivouacked for the night around a huge crackling log fire. Such a bitter cold night I never before or since have experienced and the very memory of it almost sends cold chills through me.

Thursday morning, the 9th, we embarked for the first time on the construction trains or open cars. I will describe, briefly, them — They were ordinary flat cars, boarded up about four feet on either side with seats around the same and one through the centre, while straw was strewn on the bottom, and stoves were conspicuous by their absence.

There was one redeeming feature about them, however, being open they afforded us an excellent opportunity for viewing the rugged and picturesque scenery

through which we passed. After a cold and cheerless ride of 125 miles we arrived at the end of track, disembarked and had supper in a small log shanty and remained for the night at the C.P.R. Camp on the shore of Lake Superior. The next day, Friday the 9th, we performed our first march across the ice of Lake Superior, a distance of 23 miles, through a blinding storm of sleet, snow and rain, and at McKellar's Harbour took the construction train again and proceeded to Jack Fish Bay, 15 miles distant, where we remained until Sunday morning, the 11th, recuperating our lost strength occasioned by the fatigue and exposure of our trying march.

During the stay at this place, Col. Williams issued the following commendatory order: —

Jack Fish Bay, Lake Superior
April 11, 1885.

To the Officers and Men of the Midland Batl.

The words of confidence in you which I uttered in the Barracks Square, Kingston, and which I placed on record in the Batl. Orders were not misplaced. During the last few days hunger, fatigue and exposure have been borne without a murmur. Discipline and order have been most severely tested and I thank you for the noble response given by all ranks; no irregularity even of the most trifling nature has occurred desiring even a reprimand. There has been a readiness and alacrity on the part of all to discharge the various duties assigned to them. The march of 23 miles across the ice of Lake Superior yesterday during a severe and blinding storm of sleet and snow, and the plucky endurance and steadiness evinced by all the Batl. on the march, and as it stepped from the ice to the shore with ranks so well locked up, as well as the night passed in the open and snow, before the bivouac fire must be forever impressed upon our memories and as soldiers we can always refer to them with feelings of pride. The honour of our Queen and the integrity of our Country are safe in the hands of such men as you have shown yourselves to be, and I feel inspired to say that when duty calls, be it on the line of march, on parade, or in front of the enemy, the response will be such as to enable us to adopt as our motto "Nulli Secundus" (Second to None).

signed "A.T.H. Williams"
Lt. Col. Commanding.

We proceeded Sunday morning in sleighs across the third gap, and if the night which I mentioned a few moments ago was the coldest one I ever experienced, this ride was the same. What must have been the sufferings of the Queen's Own,⁷ [The] Grenadiers,⁸ and other Regiments who passed over the gaps a week previous when the weather was even colder than when we crossed them, only those who have passed through the trying ordeal know. A great many people at home were wont to treat the reports in the papers of the intense cold, and the sufferings of the men in crossing the gaps and in the open cars, as well nigh incredible and believed them to be grossly exaggerated, but I want to state here that any I ever heard were not exaggerated in the least and only those who have been there know of the terrible hardships, privations, cold, hunger, and fatigue that had to be endured. And I will venture further and say that they were borne with an uncomplaining spirit and heroic devotion that would reflect no discredit on the heroes of Peninsular, Crimean, Indian and Egyptian fame.

But we must proceed. Arriving at Wincett's Dock⁹ after covering twenty-eight miles, the third gap was accomplished and here we embarked for the third time and last time on the flat cars. On our way we passed through two long tunnels cut through the solid rock, also one huge rock cut which when completed we were

informed cost the enormous sum of \$300,000.00. The further we proceeded and the more I saw, the more I was impressed with the fact that building the C.P.R. was indeed a gigantic undertaking, and those who have never seen, or been over it, can form no conception of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that have been overcome. That monstrous rock whose very heart was blasted out to allow trains to pass through, to and fro, through which we passed and from whose towering summits trains must look like toys, stands a silent but eloquent monument to the indomitable perseverance and energy of man.

We disembarked at 7 in the evening after travelling a distance of 65 miles and proceeded on our march over the ice, across the fourth and final gap. This, although not a very long one, was the most trying march of all. The night was very dark, the snow deep and full of holes. We had gone only a couple of miles when the left half got separated from the right half of the Batl. which caused considerable delay. The powers of endurance of the men were tested to a wonderful degree and not a few were compelled, through fatigue, to fall out and resort to the sleighs. All were glad when we arrived at Nipigon, where we embarked once more on the passenger train which conveyed us through to Winnipeg, at which place we arrived Tuesday morning, the 14th.

Here we expected to go into camp and to that effect had disembarked and were proceeding on our way to Fort Osborne marching to the martial strains of our bugle band, when, just as we had turned down Portage Avenue, we were called to a halt. Fifteen minutes later we wheeled to the right about and marched back to the Depot, the Colonel having received a despatch ordering us on to Qu'Appelle¹⁰ This news was hailed by all with joy as we were proud of the distinction of being a chosen corps. As soon as a train was made up for us we bade adieu to the Metropolis of the West and were soon speeding across the boundless prairie. What contrast the weather in Manitoba presented to that which we experienced a couple of days previous when traversing the North Shore. Not even the slightest signs of snow, frost or rains were visible and the agriculturalists of the Prairie Provinces were busily engaged all along the line in putting in their spring crops. Portage la Prairie was passed during the afternoon and Brandon reached at six in the morning.

Our train had no sooner stopped at Brandon then it was captured by the ladies of that beautiful and enterprising city. The invading host were not belligerent, however, their ammunition a plentiful supply of Coffee, Cakes, Sandwiches and Pie, and in the place of the crash of great guns of war to repel them, there was only the resounding huzzas of goodwill to welcome. This kind and generous act of the ladies was highly appreciated and as our train rolled out from the depot three rousing cheers from nearly 400 soldiers rent the evening air.

While at Brandon, Col. Williams received another despatch ordering us on to Swift Current¹¹ which was still further west of Qu'Appelle and distant from Winnipeg, 512 miles, at which place we arrived Wednesday afternoon at three o'clock, having passed Regina, Qu'Appelle and Moose Jaw on our way, and, at which latter place we breakfasted. Our arrival at Swift Current was marked by a cold and terrific storm of wind and rain and it was with difficulty our tents were pitched.

Guard was at once mounted and sentries posted. I was one of the number that composed that highly important body and also one of the first to be placed on sentry. Sentries were served with two rounds of ammunition (ball Cartridge) each and every precaution was taken to guard against an attack, as only a few days previous to the



ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF PARLIAMENT IN FORCE BY ORDER OF THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

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North-West Rebellion Transportation

arrival of troops a band of fifty Indians entered the Town and in a threatening manner demanded of the inhabitants provisions and ammunition, but upon hearing of the approach and proximity of troops they beat a hasty retreat. The storm prevailed all night, the heavens were black with clouds and neither moon or stars were visible. The wind raged, the rain poured and froze as it fell, I must confess a feeling of timidity during my hours of weary sentry go in the night which was from 12 o'clock until 2, the wind was so strong that I was blown from my beat several times and glad was I when the Corporal came around with relief, but gladder still when the grey streaks of dawn were visible in the East.

Camped to the west was a portion of the 35th Batl.¹² of Infantry under Lt. Col. O'Brien, M.P., the remainder of the Regiment being stationed at Qu'Appelle whither the former proceeded a day or two after our arrival. Six days were spent at Swift Current during which no time was lost in perfecting the drill and discipline of our corps, while one day was spent in target practice at which some excellent scoring was made. Pursuant to orders the right half of the Batl. marched out of Swift Current Wednesday morning the 22nd, at 8 o'clock, proceeding to the Saskatchewan Ferry¹³ a distance of 35 miles, accomplishing the distance in 12 hours, having arrived there at eight in the evening.

This was one of the longest, if not the longest, march performed by any corps during the North-West Rebellion and one that will never be forgotten by those who were called upon to perform it. The men and officers marched every step of the way and although there was considerable suffering from want of rest there were no complaints to be heard. Thirty teams of supplies, ammunition and baggage accompanied the column as well as a company of Field Hospital Corps. The trail was dry, dusty and zig-zag, making the track tedious to march over. A number of

Alkali Beds were passed which looked like snow drifts in the distance. The water along the line of march was unfit for man or beast, but we drank it only to suffer the consequences. The country was a rolling prairie but as we approached the Saskatchewan Valley it became mountainous, several steep declivities being seen hundreds of feet in height. Several short halts for rests, while longer ones for dinner and tea, were made at which military soup and tea made from Alkali water taken from a bog-hole, the best that could be procured, were partaken of. It was here seen what hunger could drive men to. They drank the horrid stuff readily and clamoured for more.

The advance being sounded we proceeded, some marching in their sock feet with boots hanging around their necks, some sang, others whistled, some smoked and some wrestled with a hardtack. The mule drivers grumbled at having to pass through so quickly. Badger holes, gopher holes and buffalo trails were the only things that relieved the monotony of the prairies. The wind was very high and blowing from the north, directly in our faces, and as we marched we became as dark as Indians, the ashes of the prairie grass which had been burned, blowing in our faces in black clouds. We kept marching wearily on wondering as we went when we would reach the long looked for Saskatchewan Valley, darkness came upon us and still we were on the march.

That we were getting worn out with fatigue was sufficiently evident from the fact that singing was no longer to be heard in the ranks. Something was needed to revive the drooping spirits of the men. That something came and came at a very opportune time. A flame was seen to shoot up and leap along the ridge of hills away to our front, this inspired us with new courage and the march became brisker, someone struck up a familiar song which was taken up and re-echoed down the column. Soon we were descending through the passes and valleys towards the river and ere long were met by Major Smith,¹⁴ two other officers, and a few men from the companies of our Regiment stationed there. They informed us it was they who lit the grass on the hill tops and that we were only a mile distant from the river. We pressed on anxiously, but wearily, and ere long the desired goal was reached. Yes, reached but not a moment too soon, as I very much doubt if any of us could have marched another mile.

As for myself I was completely exhausted, and while going on board the Steamer "Northcote"¹⁵ was about to faint and would have fallen in the River had it not been for two comrades of "E" Company who, noticing my weakness, hurried to my assistance grasping my rifle and knapsack and with one on either side they escorted me safely on board. As soon as I stepped on the Steamer I dropped my knapsack, sank upon it and was unable to rise for half an hour, when I mustered up strength enough to drag my weary frame, rifle and knapsack upstairs; here in the fore part of the cabin I threw myself upon the floor with about twenty-five others and tried to sleep, but very little of that blessing was received that night as we were so crowded and too tired.

The pale faces, stiffened joints and sore limbs of the men the following morning plainly indicated that they had suffered great physical fatigue. Some were laid up for several days afterwards, but all recovered from the effects of our justly celebrated forced march. "E" and "F" Companies of the Midland were stationed at the crossing guarding the supplies, having proceeded there from Swift Current three days previously to our leaving the latter place. The Steamer "Northcote", like all steamers which ply these waters, was built upon the manner of the Mississippi Boats, i.e.,

flat-bottomed, entirely open between the decks and with a huge paddle-wheel at the stern. She was of moderate dimensions substantially built, with powerful engines and cabin fitted up very nicely. Lashed on either side of her were two large barges in which supplies were stowed, as well as in the hold. They consisted of corned-beef, hardtack, baled hay, oats, flour, sugar, beans, fat pork, tea, dried apples and ammunition. Accompanying us were the Field Hospital Corps composed of eight surgeons and four assistants, Lt. Col. Van Straubenzie, D.A.G.,¹⁶ Capt. Kirivan,¹⁷ also Capt. Howard¹⁸ of the 201 Conn. Nat. Guard who was in charge of the Gatling Gun.

At eleven o'clock Thursday morning the 23rd of April began the perilous and difficult undertaking of descending the South Saskatchewan River and the old Northcote, with the right half of the Midland Batl. on board, has now the honour of being the first steamer that attempted and accomplished that difficult feat. It was certainly a perilous undertaking because we knew not what moment we would be attacked by Indians from both shores, in fact we expected it and were fully prepared to give them a warm reception should they have done so. Fortunately, however, we proceeded to our destination unmolested by the redskins. The difficult part of the undertaking will be readily understood as we proceed. The same morning Col. Williams issued the following order and caused it to be read to all:

On Board Steamer Northcote
South Saskatchewan River,
April 23, 1885.

Lt.-Col. Williams commanding the Midland Batl. desires to place in Batl. Orders the achievement of yesterday. In pursuance of Brigade orders the right wing marched out of Swift Current at 8 a.m. and reached the Saskatchewan Ferry at 8 p.m. accomplishing the distance of over thirty-two miles in twelve hours, deducting rest by the way, at the rate of 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ miles per hour. The pluck and endurance as well as the discipline and general steadiness displayed on the line of march could not have been excelled and the commanding officer desires to thank all ranks for the magnificent result of yesterday's effort which they had been called upon in an emergency to perform, viz. the forced march of over thirty-two miles in order to start from the ferry by boat at the earliest hour via the South Saskatchewan River to join Gen. Middleton now in the immediate front. The Commanding Officer desires the express the future confidence in his command that in the advance down the river the strictest discipline and watchful steadiness will be evinced and if called upon to meet the enemy as a probable all will stand shoulder to shoulder and the utmost steadiness and calmness exhibited in carrying out such orders as may be issued.

By Order Signed
E.G. Ponton, Capt. and Adjt.

The descent of the river was by no means rapid. We were thirteen days in accomplishing a distance of 200 miles. Our progress was greatly impeded by the presence of numberless sandbars which characterized that branch of the Saskatchewan, and we were delayed fully two-thirds of the time in endeavouring to get loose after having ran aground on them. The depth of the river had to be poled all the way and to this effect two men were stationed, one on the bow of the steamer and the other at the bow of the large barge, with sounding poles in their hands, on each of which was marked a scale of feet, and which they continually dipped in the river, drew them out and from the height of the water mark knew how deep the water was. Notwithstanding these precautions, we amiably succeeded in running aground on from two to half a dozen sand bars daily. Every time they drew the pole from the river they would roar out, in stentorian tones, the depth of the water to the mate

*Peters Album, Public Archives of Canada**Northcote before Batoché*

who, seated on the hurricane deck, passed it on to the Captain in the Wheelhouse. Six feet — four and a half — no bottom — two feet — three feet — one foot. Being so accustomed to call out “feet” after every number it became quite habitual and when it came to one foot they would roar it out in a louder tone, for, of course, it meant grounding. Now a scraping, grating sound of the boat’s keel upon the sand and she was fast. Then the spars would be set to work to try and push and raise her off. The engines were put back, the steamer throbbed from stem to stern, the steam hissed and roared in the escape pipe, the sand was stirred up from the bottom of the river until the water grew thick and yellow, and if she was not very hard aground, after a few minutes of this kind of thing she was loose, but if unfortunately, as in the great majority of cases we were high and almost dry on a bar, the tow line was thrown out and the services of the Midland were called into requisition when they generally made short work of it.

On many occasions of this sort the strength of the gallant Midlanders was fully tested and before we reached our destination patience had well nigh ceased to be a virtue. I have a distinct recollection of one occasion on which we ran on a bar which caused a delay of twenty-four hours. The barges had to be poled ashore and relieved of their loads, brought back to the steamer and her cargo transferred to them and she then being light floated off easily. The work of the reloading being concluded we resumed our trip. Two or three times each day we had to stop and “wood up” when about thirty men with axes would be detailed to chop while the remainder of the detachment carried on board the wood.

The Valley of the Saskatchewan abounds in scenery, stern and wild, and many excellent views would have delighted the most fastidious artist; while the forest and the prairie would prove a veritable paradise for the sportsman as every variety of

game is plentiful from the moose to the gopher and from the eagle to the prairie chicken.

Saturday night, May 2nd, we anchored near the shore when the guard was doubled and extra sentries posted, as we were then in the vicinity of White Caps Reserve where the Indians first applied the war-paint and took the war path.

Although the night passed quickly there were very few of us slept as soundly as usual as we had been ordered to have our clothes and accoutrements convenient to don in case of a sudden attack. We arrived at Saskatoon Monday morning, May 4th. Here was located the Brigade Hospital. The Medical Staff disembarked and we left some supplies, and all the medical stores. A number of the wounded ¹⁹ came down to the landing to see us, some with crutches, some with heads bandaged, others with their arms in slings, while one young fellow, a mere boy, belonging to "A" Battery was minus his right arm. They seemed bright and cheerful and all expressed a desire to have another round with the rebels before the campaign closed.

Clark's Crossing was reached at half-past two in the afternoon of the same day, here "B" and "D" Companies disembarked and remained guarding supplies until they joined us two days after the capture of Batoche. The same night a strong picquet was posted on the shore and in the morning following we arrived at Camp Middleton, after having worked our passage for thirteen days. The 90th Batl.²⁰ band were at the landing awaiting our arrival and escorted us into camp amid the cheers of the soldiery. Our Batl. was now divided into four sections as follows — "A" and "C" Companies were with Gen. Middleton's Brigade; "B" and "D" Co's were at Clark's Crossing; "E" and "F" were at the Saskatchewan Ferry; while "G" and "H" were at Maple Creek, one hundred miles west of Swift Current. When Gen. Middleton observed the fine physique and soldierly bearings of our detachment, he expressed his regrets to Col. Williams that we had been so separated.

We now heard all the facts and details regarding the recent engagement at Fish Creek which battlefield lay only three quarters of a mile southeast of our camp. The brave lads who were killed in that engagement were buried within the confines of our camp in the north-east corner and when we arrived we found a large number of the men erecting with willing hands and loving hearts a huge stone cairn over their graves.

The recollection of my visit to that sacred spot on the afternoon of our arrival is still fresh in my memory. Beneath that pile of stones peacefully reposed in their last sleep ten of Canada's bravest sons who had sacrificed their young lives in defence of the country and flag they so dearly loved and cherished. We approached the hallowed precincts with reverence and sadly and silently gazed upon the sacred spot. On that occasion what words could have been more appropriate than those contained in the following beautiful lines by Theodore O'Hara, that brilliant poet, soldier, and journalist of the Southern States as he wrote of his comrades killed in the Mexican War —

The muffled drums sad roll has beat
 The soldier's last tattoo
 No more on life's parade shall meet
 That brave and fallen few
 On Fame's eternal camping ground
 Their silent tents are spread
 But glory guards, with solemn rounds
 The bivouac of the dead.

After viewing the spot for some minutes we retraced our steps to camp with sad

and sympathetic hearts not knowing but what some of us, ere another week passed, would be sleeping beneath the prairie sod, for we knew that within a few days we would engage the rebels at Batoché.

Being now fully located at the seat of war we had to submit to that severe discipline necessary for the safety of an army in the field. Drill was pursued by all corps incessantly and with persistence. While here the slow going and inoffensive looking old "Northcote" was placed in a state of defence as she was to drop down the river with a portion of "C" Company, Infantry School Corps, under Major Smith, on board and cooperate with our army at Batoché.

It was while here that we received our initiatory experience on outpost duty. Our camp was completely surrounded by a chain of sentries thrown out from the outlying picquets, beyond and surrounding which were scouts, familiarly known as the mounted patrol, riding two by two and patrolling the bush and prairie for a mile or so beyond the picquet line. Thus it will be seen that nothing was left undone to ensure the safety of the camp. The second night after our arrival at Camp Middleton twenty-four men from "A" Co. were detailed for duty on outlying picquet and as usual I was one of the number; Lieut. Halliwell²¹ was the officer in command of our detachment and we took up our position, at dusk, on the south-west side of the camp when sentries were at once posted and given their instructions. My hours on sentry were from twelve to two o'clock. The night was very dark; consequently [we] had to be all the more alert and vigilant. All went well until about half past one when the report from a discharged rifle rang out upon the still midnight air. In less time than it takes to tell it all the camp was alive. Now could be heard from all quarters the voices of wary sentinels calling upon their guards and picquets to turn out. For a while, too, "there was mounting in hot haste." Aides-de-camp and orderlies dashed to and fro while scouts were dashing here and there endeavouring to ascertain the cause of the alarm, but shortly quiet was restored and the watchful soldiers paced their rounds the remainder of the night undisturbed.

It seems a sentry away on the east side of the camp saw, or imagined he saw, an Indian or half-breed approaching his beat and upon challenging the object and receiving no reply, fired. Having been there to some extent myself I can easily understand how far imagination will carry a young and inexperienced soldier. I have on many occasions when on sentry duty in the night challenged horses, cattle, bushes, stones, shadows of clouds, etc. It is one of the humorous phases of outpost duty; at all events it shows that one is watchful, and was it not far better to challenge every object that excites one's suspicion than to have run the risk of letting the enemy pass inside the lines unobserved. While speaking of the humorous side of guard and picquet duty recalls to mind a couple of amusing incidents that occurred at Swift Current during our stay there, in fact it was the same night of our arrival at that place.

The first one is in connection with myself. As I said before, a perfect hurricane prevailed all night. There was a pile of empty barrels which had contained hard-tack, just at the north of my patrol and a heavy gust of wind swept down and upset them and sent one rolling across my pathway only a few feet away. It was so dark I couldn't see but I called out at the top of my voice — "Halt, who goes there" — but received no reply. This incident caused considerable amusement for the guard who, knowing what it was, laughed heartily. The second incident which I am about to relate caused considerable amusement to those who heard it and I am told our gallant Colonel, who was lying awake in his tent at the time, could not suppress

an outburst of laughter upon hearing it. Each sentry was numbered and as near as they could judge were to call out every half hour their number, and, providing everything was all right, all's well. The sentry [was] No. 3 and in the deep stillness of the night, Nos. 1 and 2 called out and when it came to No. 3 he yelled — No. 3, All's well and everything is mag-nif-icent.

But I am diverging. To return to our camp. As we were to be on the march the following morning (Thursday), we deserted our picquets, arrived at our private parade and were dismissed as Reveille was sounding at 5 o'clock. We at once breakfasted, after which knapsacks and blankets were packed, tents struck and we were on the march at half-past seven o'clock.

Although ours was a comparatively small one, still it was something new for us to see an army advance, especially in an enemy's country. Col. Williams, who always took such a deep interest in soldiers in general and his own regiment in particular, called upon us to witness the movements of the advancing columns and explained to us the minutest detail in connection therewith.

A troop of scouts formed the mounted advance guard and extended in detachments to the front, right, left and rear, each section being 40 to 50 yards apart, the rear one forming a connecting link to the infantry advance guard, which was composed of a company from the 10th Royal Grenadiers²² who extended in a similar manner with either an officer or sergeant in charge of each section. Following them came the balance of their regiment. "A" Battery, R.C.A.;²³ 90 Rifles; Winnipeg Field Battery and a portion of "C" Company School Corps;²⁴ the Gatling Gun with Capt. Howard in command, followed by fifty or sixty teams of supplies, ammunition and hospital stores. Next came "A" and "C" companies of the Midland, behind which were 150 more teams with camp equipment, etc., while another troop of scouts brought up the rear.

We passed over the battlefield of Fish Creek shortly after leaving camp, nothing was to be seen but a few dead horses and cattle lying about the ravine, otherwise there was no traces left of that heroic struggle of a few days previous in which so many young lives paid the price of their devotion. We halted for dinner and after an hour's rest, resumed our march when at half-past four we halted and pitched our tents for the night. Guards and picquets were at once mounted and sentries posted. We had just nicely got our tents pitched and were lying about in the grass in front of them when we received orders to be in readiness, at a moment's notice, for action, as some of our scouts had been fired upon by rebel scouts down near the river which was only a short distance from our camp. We at once buckled on our accoutrements and were soon in readiness but our services were not called into requisition and the night passed away quietly.

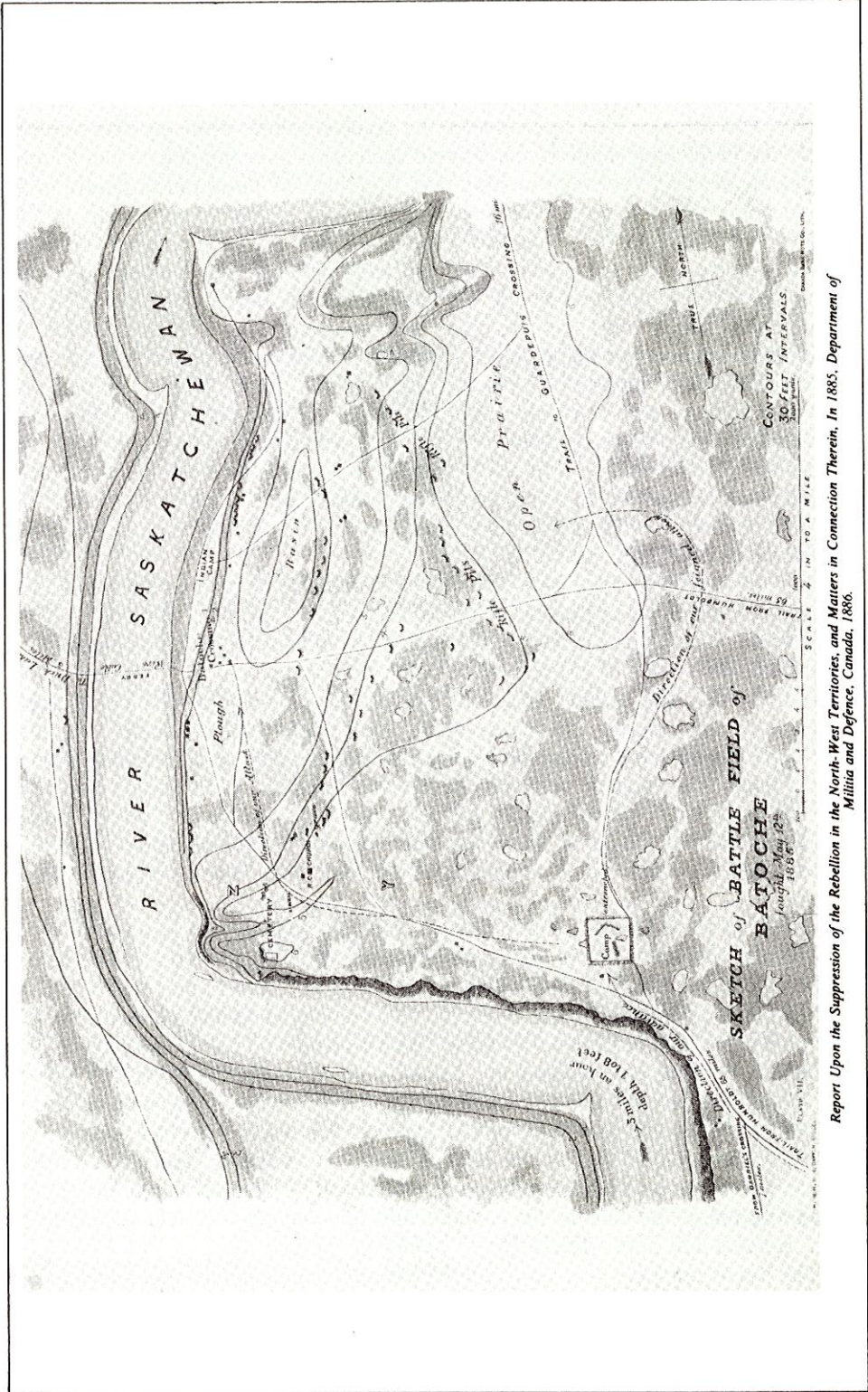
The next morning, Friday the 8th, we were on the March at 7 o'clock sharp and after accomplishing fourteen miles, halted and camped for the night within nine miles of Batoche. Our camp was pleasantly situated on a plateau overlooking the Saskatchewan in the distance and was, of course, protected by guards, outlying picquets and mounted patrols. Twenty-four men from our company were again warned for duty on outlying picquet and I was once more one of the number. Lieut. (C.E.) Kenny had command of the detachment.

All sorts of rumours were afloat regarding Riel and the rebels at Batoche, and groups of soldiers might be seen scattered here and there through the camp seriously discussing the situation, for all we knew "that with the morning would come the fight." While pacing my weary patrol during the night I realized more than ever

before the great responsibility of single sentry and in my own weak way endeavoured to exhibit that "eternal vigilance" which "is the price of liberty". The moonlight was uncertain, numerous small clouds drifted across the sky, and as they veiled the moon the darkness was intense. My mind was filled with sombre thoughts, and my ears were open to even the slightest sound, while my eyes watched sharply the perplexing shadows that chased each other over the prairie like wanton Indian boys at play. Yet ever watchful, ever listening, my mind found leisure to fly back to home and friends and in fancy I visited the scenes of my childhood. As memory was fondly surveying "those scenes the heart can ne'er forget", an object seemed to move across the prairie to my left which brought me suddenly from my musing back in the north-west with my heart fluttering like a bird in a cage. My ready Snider²⁵ was at once lowered to the "port" but only for a moment. It was only a shadow of a cloud passing behind a clump of bushes, yet it seemed strange how much it resembled a human being to my highly strung vision. Within camp all was silent as a hermit's cell. The only noise that broke the stillness of the night was at intervals the sharp challenge and prompt reply which plainly indicated that the sentries were on the alert and the outpost officer was going his lonely round. During the night it was reported that Big Bear²⁶ was marching to re-inforce Riel and the combined forces would attack us that night, but this report, like many others, was groundless and the night passed in quiet.

The following morning, Saturday, the 9th, the camp which was placed under a strong guard, was left standing and at 6:30 we advanced cautiously towards Batoché. When within three miles of Batoché we halted and one of the guns was placed on a slight knoll near by and a blank shell fired as a signal for the "Northcote" to proceed. We then proceeded and arrived without hindrance to a spot within about 800 yards of the Catholic Church in which some rebels were concealed, but they soon dispersed on the buildings being shelled and some rounds from the Gatling fired at them. The buglers were now ordered to distribute ammunition and each man received fifty rounds extra, making one hundred in all which added considerably to the weight of our haversacks. The 90th and Grenadiers were now extended and the rebels [pushed] back until the crest of the hill was reached where our men took cover and opened a steady fire. The first day we "A" and "C" Companies of the Midland, were in reserve, a most unsatisfactory position to be in, and at the same time acted in the capacity of rear guard and were supported for a while by a couple of guns of the Winnipeg Field Battery²⁷. The bullets were whizzing about and dropping around us in a desultory sort of way all the forenoon and as this was our first baptism of fire we, of course, like all young and inexperienced soldiers, indulged in ducking and dodging our heads in all directions in instinctive fear of those avant-couriers of death and wounds. The guns of the batteries were posted in advantageous situations and were thundering forth death sentences in a manner that made one feel glad he was in the rear of them. The Gatling kept up a rattling fusilade, under the supervision of Capt. Howard, who, by the way, won the esteem and admiration of the men by his coolness and bravery. He was ever willing to go where directed and never flinched even before the hottest fire.

The din of musketry was now intense, the houses and stables that were shelled in the morning were now lying in smoking ruins at our rear. We remained horribly inactive all the forenoon and I can truthfully say we were glad when Col. Williams rode up and gave us the order to advance. This was about half-past one o'clock. We advanced to a little hollow within a few yards of the church only to halt and remain



Report Upon the Suppression of the Rebellion in the North-West Territories, and Matters in Connection Therein, In 1885. Department of Militia and Defence, Canada, 1886.

inactive again for some time. Our dead and wounded were temporarily placed in the church where they were attended to by the medical men assisted by R.C. Sisters who did all in their power to help the doctors, their services being rendered cheerfully and willingly.

Having received permission during the course of the afternoon, I visited the church and found there one poor fellow lying cold in death. He was a gunner of "A" Battery and was killed by a gunshot wound. There were also five or six wounded lying on stretchers with wounds bandaged and suffering intensive pain. It was a sad sight, but there were still sadder ones in store for us before Batoché was taken.

About the middle of the afternoon Col. Williams, who had hitherto been riding over the field near the skirmish lines taking in the situation, having received orders from the General, rode up and taking with him "C" Company advanced down a coulee to the left where they poured in a steady fire for some minutes, so as to distract the attention of the enemy from the spot where a wounded man lay while some men from the Garrison Artillery were sent with a stretcher to rescue him, which they did most creditably and without any further casualties, but the poor fellow himself was dead.

Mr. C. G. Henty,²⁸ special war correspondent of the "London Standard" in writing to the Toronto Mail after his return home to the Old Country, speaks thus concerning this action of which I was an eye witness —

On the first day of the fight the palm must be given to the Midland, the manner in which they, led by Col. Williams, marched into the coulee to the left of the church on the occasion of their covering the men who rescued the body of one of our poor fellows, must be fresh in the mind of every man who watched, as I did, the two movements.

By his coolness and intrepidity the General set a fine example for the men. He was as cool as the proverbial cucumber and instead of commanding an army in the field while under the fire of a determined and well entrenched enemy, one would almost have thought, by the cool and unconcerned manner in which he rode about the field and smoked his Havana cigar, that he was only superintending a brigade at field manoeuvre.

As the shades of evening began to fall, the General ordered the advance parties to be gradually withdrawn, which was done in a creditable manner. It was the duty of our detachment and the Gatling [gun] to cover the retiring force which we did in very commendable style. Some of the enemy followed us up a short distance thinking, no doubt, that our force was retreating, they were soon forcibly impressed with the fact that such was not the case, by receiving a heavy fire which arrested their progress and we made our way to the Zareba without any further firing.

Just here let me state that during the course of the afternoon, the General had despatched one of his transport officers with all the available teams to bring our camp and equipage to the front, which they did in a short time and with their wagons formed a zareba inside of which was room enough for our whole brigade and all the horses. We had just nicely got inside the zareba when two or three hot volleys were poured in upon us from short range, no doubt a number of the more desperate half-breeds had climbed to the top of the river bank on our left, only about 50 yards distant, and emptied the contents of their Winchesters and their fire was rather high to do much injury but one man was wounded having been shot through the leg while on the top of a wagon looking for his knapsack, and two horses were killed.

Col. Straubenzie, who had commanded one of the Infantry Divisions, at once ordered Col. Williams to advance his command in skirmishing order around the crescent-shaped crest of the hill from whither had come such a withering volley, which he immediately did. We advanced and extended in rather a confused style at first, I remember as so many of the Officers were giving orders we could scarcely hear our Col. distinctly. Besides this, we were receiving a heavy fire from our front. However, we soon succeeded in taking up our positions and began pouring in a hot fire upon them which had the effect of silencing theirs considerably. Still they kept up a harrassing fire until nearly midnight and we returned the compliment until they abandoned it altogether. They must have returned to Batoche, for in the deep stillness of the night we could distinctly hear some person, Riel, I presume, addressing them in French. At any rate whoever it was held his audience in rapt attention as only the one voice was audible until he would complete some eloquent or inspiring clause in the course of his harangue when they would give vent to their blood-curdling warwhoops by way of applause, I suppose.

The whole force, with the exception of our detachment, bivouacked inside the zareba where a picquet was mounted and sentries posted. Each side of the zareba was under the charge of a Field Officer with so many sentinels on each patrol who kept watch while the force slept. We occupied the position around the edge of the hill, each man acting as a sentry and in this way we put in the night. A heavy dew had fallen during the night, but a more charming morning than the 10th of May never dawned. Our force partook of an early breakfast after which Gen. Middleton advanced the Infantry, with the exception of the Midland, to a position as far in advance as possible and opened fire upon the rebels. They had not, however, been idle during the night and their forces had augmented rather than diminished as they were out in greater force than the previous day, and almost the very spot where the Gatling had been in position the day before. They had constructed rifle pits during the night and now held them, as well as the ground near the cemetery.

While all this was going on, and while the prayers from thousands of homes and churches throughout the length and breadth of our Dominion, were ascending to the Great Creator, Perservor and Saviour of Mankind, for the preservation of the volunteers and victory for our arms, what were the Midlanders doing? Were we remaining inactive? — No. We had been directed by Col. Williams to throw up entrenchments and dig rifle pits as a means of protection from the harrassing fire from the opposite bank. With pick-axes and shovels we began our work but were not allowed to proceed unmolested as we would frequently receive a heavy volley from the front and sometimes from the right flank which rendered it necessary for us to abandon, for a time, our implements and resort to our firearms; when we would drop down behind our half-constructed entrenchments and direct a heavy fire against the desperate and defiant rebels. It continued this way until we had our rifle pits completed. Fortunately no one was wounded during our operations. The teamsters, who numbered about 200, lost no time in rendering the zareba well nigh impregnable as they were chiefly engaged during the day in throwing up formidable earth-works so in case of our being driven to extremity, the whole force could occupy and retain it against the whole rebel force.

During the forenoon "A" Battery was engaged chiefly in shelling houses and bluffs on the opposite bank where the enemy were visible and in the afternoon the two guns of the Winnipeg Field Battery shelled the cemetery which was in possession of the halfbreeds and some rifle pits on the right front of the zareba. Like

the previous evening, the advance parties were withdrawn and detachments from the Midlands were directed to advance and cover the retiring force on the extreme right, which we did. We were again followed by the enemy for some distance who, no doubt, thought we were retreating and who gave vent to their bloodcurdling warwhoops as they advanced. I have often wished I could accurately describe a genuine Indian Warwhoop, but cannot; it must be heard in all its terror to be appreciated. The surrounding circumstances have a great deal to do with one's feelings and had it not been dark, it would not have sounded half so fiendish. But darkness was upon us and every half minute a furious yelp, half human, half beastly in its sound, told us they were in close pursuit, which made one feel as though his hair was standing on end and his blood running cold. I can safely say that only those who have heard the dread original can imagine the sensation of horror they produce.

Notwithstanding all this, we retired in a deliberate and dignified manner as we were becoming accustomed to this mode of war-fare. Their advance was impeded by a heavy fire from a party of infantry who occupied a line of shelter trenches, which had been constructed during the day, some 200 yards in front of the zareba, also from a party of the 90th Batl. occupying some pits on the right front and nearly flanking the enemy's advance. They did not attempt to withstand the unexpected fire and speedily retreated to their stronghold.

We were re-inforced during the afternoon by the Land Surveyor's Scouts,²⁹ 50 strong, under Capt. Dennis. We had a quiet night of it, the Midland again acted as picquet and held the crest of the hill where we took up our position on the first night. General Middleton, in his Official Report, says this of the two days operations — "We had rather lost than gained ground as compared with yesterday. I still feel it was good practice and training for my men, who were being taught, by somewhat painful experience, the necessity of using their enemy's tactics, and keeping themselves under cover."

That "Fortune favours the brave" was certainly a truism in our case or I might rather say "Old Probabilitist" as the weather was charming and all that could be desired for bivaoucing. The days were warm and the nights cool and the blue sky cloudless. As usual the parties of Infantry advanced to their old positions and the Midlands, of course, holding theirs. With Bolton's Scouts³⁰ and the Gatling under Capt. Howard, the General reconnoitered the Prairie ground to our right and upon finding there were a series of rifle pits in the bushes below the bluffs held by the enemy, he ordered some of Bolton's Scouts to dismount and line the crest of the ridge, which they did and soon drew a sharp fire from their occupants. This little piece of strategy on the part of the General had the effect of drawing a considerable number of the enemy from the right to repel what they feared was a general attack. Col. Williams, with a portion of our detachment, was in possession of a bluff overlooking the river in the rear of the cemetery and taking advantage of the General's feint on the enemy's left, dashed down beyond the cemetery, drove the Indians who had been left to hold the rifle pits on the right, out of them, captured and brought back to camp, amidst the cheering of those who were left there, pick-axes, shovels, pots, kettles, blankets and a dummy which had been used to draw our fire, and which was riddled with bullets.

We had now regained all our lost ground but as it was getting dusk we had to return to the zareba which we did in good order and we were not pursued at all neither was there any firing after we had retired. During the morning "A" Battery

shelled the cemetery and some pits beyond the church. In the afternoon the two guns of the Winnipeg Battery shelled some houses on the opposite bank in which rebels were seen, and were speedily dispersed and took refuge in the bushy slopes some distance beyond the river. The Midland detachment were the recipients of some sharp volleys during the day but the enemy's fire was kept under and silenced by them.

Having now been three days and three nights in succession without any sleep, the Midland began to feel the need of a well earned rest. It was rather hard work performing the duties of "a soldier by day and sentinel all through the night" for that length of time so we petitioned our Captain to lay the matter before the Colonel, which he did and we were granted our request. Accordingly a picquet was posted in our stead and we lay down in the rifle pits to try and sleep. We were almost too tired to sleep but "wearied nature asserted her rights" and ere long we were in the embrace of Morpheus. We slept so soundly that some of us had to be awakened the following morning by the D.A.G., Col. Straubenzie, himself.

Of all the events in connection with the Rebellion that of the 12th of May was the most memorable; Batoche being captured and the Rebels completely routed. In the morning the General took the whole of the mounted force consisting of 150 men, with one Gun of "A" Battery and the Gatling, and took possession of the piece of ground to our extreme right, the same position which they held the previous afternoon, extending his force and engaging the rifle pits in front, and at the same time firing shell and the Gatling. It seems the General's intention was to try and convince the Rebels that he intended attacking them on their left flank and he succeeded admirably in convincing them thus. About noon he gradually withdrew the mounted force and returned to camp in good order. In the morning about 9 o'clock, the Midland were formed up on parade and awaited final orders as we were informed we would be called upon to attack the enemy on their right, which was the Key of the position.

On the General's return to camp, he was much annoyed owing to a misconstruction of his orders, that the infantry had not, as he had ordered, been advanced to hold the regained position and push forward, as he drew the enemy from their right by his feint.³¹ He afterwards thought and so expressed himself that it was fortunate they had not, as no doubt the absence of fire from our left tended to strengthen the belief of the Rebels that he intended to attack them from the prairie ground to our right.

We immediately partook of our dinners and I might say, by way of parenthesis, that I relished it more than any dinner I ever ate, if it only consisted of hardtack, corned beef, pork and beans. After which Col. Williams addressed us briefly. His remarks were firm, kind and encouraging. He wanted us to follow him, listen to his commands, obey them, all of which we afterwards did. We then advanced and extended to the left and moved up to the cemetery. The Grenadiers followed and prolonged the line to the right, while the 90th were in support. With a cheer we dashed into the ravine to our left. By a series of impetuous rushes, cheering as we went, and led by our gallant Colonel with cap and sword in hand, we succeeded in completely driving them from their pits on the river slope. With ringing British cheers, which re-echoed through the wooded hillside, we forward dashed, but were met by such a withering volley from our front that compelled us for a time to lie down and seek cover as best we could. The bullets were now cutting the bark and

branches from the trees, while the dead leaves on the ground were being torn up all around us.

While speculating as to where these bullets were coming from I raised my head from behind a dead log, which I had sought for cover, to see if any of the Grenadiers on the bluff were firing on us by mistake, when I was ordered by Lieut. Halliwell to keep down or I would be shot. Unfortunately a few minutes afterwards both he and his brother were wounded, the former, seriously. As soon as a stretcher could be brought up, the Lieut. was carried to the rear and left to the tender mercies of the surgeons. All this time the roll of musketry was incessant, the shells from the cannon were thundering forth their awful sentences, while the Gatling kept up a steady whirring sound which resembled the buzz and roar of machinery.

During all this time also, a heavy fire was kept up from the other side of the river which caused us much annoyance. As soon as it slackened up we rose and dashed along the river slope until we reached the crest of the hill, when the whole line advanced, the 90th prolonging the line of attack on the right. While rushing across the open field the most of the casualties occurred. Finally the mounted infantry dismounted and still further prolonged the line on the right. The Gatling was now pushed forward in front of the 90th and the houses on the flank were gallantly taken after which some rounds were fired and a general advance was made. Like autumn leaves before a gale, the confused and dispirited mass of half-breeds and Indians were swept before the onset of disciplined valour. With ringing cheers we forward dashed and the whole of the houses were taken and the prisoners released. A white flag was now hoisted on a house across the river and the "Retire" was sounded and we returned to the village for we knew our fighting was over for the Rebels were beaten from their stronghold and Batoché was won.

"Chas. S. Clapp"
Lieut. 15th Batl. A.L.I.
Belleville, Ontario
1893

FOOTNOTES

*The original MS is in the possession of his nephew's wife, Mrs. William Nightingale of Belleville, Ontario.

¹Superintendent L.N.F. Crozier was born in Ireland in 1846. After some service in the militia, he joined the North-West Mounted Police in 1874. He is remembered mainly for his abortive attack on Gabriel Dumont and his Métis followers at Duck Lake on 26 March 1885. Crozier's force suffered about two dozen casualties, half of whom were killed. Crozier retired from the N.W.M.P. after the rebellion.

²Lt.-Col. A.T.H. Williams was born in 1830 in Upper Canada. During the Fenian Raids he commanded the 46th Battalion. An M.L.A. for East Durham from 1867 to 1875, he became Conservative M.P. from 1878 until his death on board the steamer "Northwest" on July 4th, 1885, on the Saskatchewan River, N.W.T. He raised and commanded the Midland Battalion during the Rebellion.

³A reference to the Fenian invasions of 1866. Lt.-Col. Williams commanded the 15th Battalion at that time, and saw duty on the frontier during the period when the Fenian scare was at its height.

⁴Kingston and Renfrew R.R. Probably means the Kingston and Pembroke Railway which went to Renfrew. There the battalion would take the Canadian Central Railway to Callander where it connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway.

⁵The Gaps. At this time the Canadian Pacific Railway was still under construction. Along the northern shore of Lake Superior there were four uncompleted sections or gaps in the railway between Lochalsh and Red Rock. These had to be crossed by foot or by using horses and sleighs provided by the C.P.R. "The Gaps" were completed by the end of the rebellion.

⁶Camp Desolation — the appropriately named site of the C.P.R. construction camp at the beginning of the next stretch of railroad which went westward to Port Munro on Lake Superior.

- ⁷The Queen's Own Rifles, from Toronto, were commanded by Lt. Col. A.A. Miller.
- ⁸Possibly the 10th Royal Grenadiers from Toronto. Lt. Col. H.J. Grasett was the Commanding Officer.
- ⁹Wincett's Dock. The actual name was Winston Dock, sometimes termed Winston's Landing. It was the western end of the gap from Jackfish.
- ¹⁰Qu'Appelle. Nearest point on the railway to Batoche. It would be the base for Maj. Gen. Middleton's column which, on April 6th, had started on its way north to strike at the heart of the rebellion at Batoche.
- ¹¹Swift Current. The point on the C.P.R. nearest to the South Saskatchewan River and the base of the centre column, commanded by Lt. Col. Otter, which would strike against Riel. When the river was navigable, Swift Current would become the major supply base for Middleton's forces.
- ¹²35th Battalion. The York and Simcoe Rangers, formed from the 12th and 35th Battalions, were commanded by Lt. Col. W.E. O'Brien, M.P. O'Brien was born in 1831 at Thornhill, Upper Canada. Educated as a lawyer, he was a newspaper editor and farmer at the time of the rebellion, as well as the Conservative M.P. in the House of Commons representing Muskoka.
- ¹³Saskatchewan Ferry. After waiting for almost a week at Swift Current, and annoyed by the delay in being provided with team transport, Lt. Col. Williams decided to make a forced march to reach the steamer which would carry his men down the river to Clark's Crossing where he would meet with Middleton's main column. Williams had sent two of his companies to Saskatchewan Ferry several days previously.
- ¹⁴Possibly Major Henry Smith who commanded the detachment of "C" Company, Infantry School Corps, which was with Middleton's column.
- ¹⁵"Northcote". A Hudson's Bay Company steamer commanded by Captain James Sheets. It was hired by the Department of Militia and Defence to help transport both troops and supplies during the rebellion. Later it was to be used in an unsuccessful attempt to attack the rebels along the river front at Batoche.
- ¹⁶Lt. Col. B. Van Straubenzie was born in England in 1829. When 18 years old he joined the British Army and saw service in various parts of the Empire, as well as the Crimean War, until he retired in 1868. He entered the Canadian service in 1876, was Deputy Adjutant General in several military districts, and during the rebellion was the commander of the infantry brigade in Middleton's column.
- ¹⁷Captain Kirivan — possibly Major M.W. Kirwan, an Irish soldier of fortune who had served with the British and French Armies. He was a Transport Officer.
- ¹⁸Captain A.L. Howard, an American, had served during the American Civil War and in the U.S. Army for five years following the end of the war. In 1885 he was with the Gatling Machine Gun Co. of Hartford, Conn. when the Minister of Militia, Adolph P. Caron, ordered two of the guns. The company sent Howard to instruct and train the Canadian gun crews. Howard volunteered to serve in the campaign with the guns — surely an unusual and unique example what might be termed the "hard sell".
- ¹⁹Presumably wounded from the engagement fought at Fish Creek on April 24th. During this fighting Middleton's force suffered fifty-five casualties including ten killed. The rebels, led by Gabriel Dumont, lost five men killed in action and probably some wounded.
- ²⁰The 90th Battalion of Rifles from Winnipeg, Manitoba was commanded by Lt.-Col. Alfred MacKeand.
- ²¹Lt. J. Halliwell was the senior subaltern in "A" Company. He was wounded in the battle of Batoche. Some years later he was to command the 15th Battalion, "Argyll Light Infantry".
- ²²The 10th Royal Grenadiers was a Toronto battalion commanded by Lt. Col. H.J. Grasett.
- ²³"A" Battery, Regiment of Canadian Artillery, was one of the few regular force units available to Maj.-Gen. Middleton. Stationed at Quebec, it was commanded by Lt. Col. C.E. Montizambert.
- ²⁴"C" Company, Infantry School Corps, was based in Toronto. It was commanded by Major Henry Smith.
- ²⁵Snider — most of the militiamen were armed with the breach-loading single shot Short Snider rifle.
- ²⁶Big Bear — Chief of the Cree band near Frog Lake. It was this band which was involved in the massacre at Frog Lake and the surrender of Fort Pitt. At this moment, Big Bear was still at Fort Pitt.
- ²⁷The Winnipeg Field Battery was commanded by Major E.W. Jarvis.
- ²⁸The author is referring to Mr. G.A. Henty, who was a special correspondent for the "Evening Standard" in London. Henty is remembered as the author of a large number of adventure books for young boys.
- ²⁹The Dominion Land Surveyor's Intelligence Corps was commanded by Captain J.S. Dennis. The unit is also referred to as a "mounted corps" and as "Scouts". Captain Dennis, who had been in Western Canada since 1872, formed this 50-man unit from land surveyors working for the government in the North-West.
- ³⁰Boulton's Mounted Infantry was another small unit raised by Major C.A. Boulton. A Canadian, he served in the British Army and later in the Canadian militia. He had been a surveyor and had been taken prisoner by Riel in 1869-70. In 1885 he was ranching about 200 miles north of Winnipeg when his offer to raise 60 men for service was accepted by the Minister of Militia.
- ³¹The advance was to be made when the officer in charge of the infantry units, Colonel Van Straubenzie, heard the fire from cannon which Maj.-Gen. Middleton had with his group some distance to the east. The noise from the firing would be a signal that the Métis were engaged defending the eastern end of their line, thus weakening their western end. Owing to a change in the wind, the sound of the artillery was not heard and consequently the main body of the infantry did not move. This accounts for the general's ill-temper. When, after their mid-day meal, the Midland and other battalions did advance, they charged far deeper into the enemy's defences than Middleton anticipated!

Pastor vs. Politician: The Reverend Murdoch MacKinnon and Premier Walter Scott's Amendment to the School Act

By Raymond Huel

In the period 1913 to 1916, the Reverend Murdoch MacKinnon of Knox Presbyterian Church in Regina and Premier Walter Scott became involved in a controversy. The argument began as an exchange of private letters and developed into a vicious public debate. The subject of contention was Scott's amendment to the School Act which MacKinnon objected to on the grounds that the legislation forced Catholics to support separate schools and enhanced the financial status of separate schools at the expense of the public school. A cursory examination of the dispute might suggest that the main protagonists were a crank clergyman who made "much ado about nothing," and a politician who engendered the polemic with redundant legislation and whose deteriorating state of health caused him to malign the character of his adversary.

A closer examination of these events, however, reveals that the affair was much more complex. The Scott-MacKinnon controversy transcended the boundaries of Saskatchewan and it was related to the nature and character of the Canadian identity and the role of the school as an agent of cultural conformity. The issue also raised fundamental questions such as minority rights, individual rights and freedom of conscience. The arguments in favor of freedom and rights were not universal in application: they were valid only insofar as they made it possible for Catholics to support public schools. In the early twentieth century, many Protestant clergy were convinced that the good society could come about only if Anglo-Saxon norms and values were given a dominant status. This was especially true in western Canada where the cosmopolitan nature of the population was much more obvious and where the Protestant clergy became actively involved in movements of social and moral reform. Thus, separate schools, foreign language instruction, and the presence of "New Canadians" who resisted assimilation were regarded as threats to the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon millenium.

The Reverend Murdoch MacKinnon represented the zealous element within the Anglo-Protestant population and clergy who felt duty bound to save Canada from the foreign elements, to liberate it from the influence of Rome and make it a constituent part of the British Empire, the highest manifestation of civilization. MacKinnon was a man of strong convictions and narrow outlook who believed that Rome was attempting to influence politicians and statesmen to promote its nefarious interests. He was vehemently opposed to this interference in politics. During the debate over the Autonomy Bills in 1905, for example, he complained to J. S. Willison of *The Globe* that provincial rights in educational matters had been sacrificed to the interests of the Vatican and that party bias had enslaved Members of Parliament. He added that the majority found itself in the "anomalous position of finding few men to champion our cause."¹ Prior to leaving Halifax for Regina, MacKinnon incited a public controversy by censuring a Catholic missionary lecturer.² In Regina, a Catholic priest who gave a conference on the implications of

the *Ne Temere* decree on mixed marriages contracted outside the Catholic Church, presented MacKinnon with another opportunity to rebuke Rome. Speaking to a packed church, MacKinnon stated that the sacredness of marriage was determined by the fact that two lives had been "voluntarily blended." Affirming that the state sanctioned this relationship and the church blessed it, he declared, "do you wonder that we should look for knotted cords and apply them to any impious, petticoated Ecclesiastic who would disturb that relationship and wreck the new home thus set up."³

Walter Scott, on the other hand, represented the more liberal and tolerant segment of the Anglo-Saxon population. In the first provincial election in 1905, Scott and his Liberal party had defended the educational provisions of the Saskatchewan Act on the grounds that the federal government was morally bound to guarantee minority rights that had existed under territorial school ordinances. His opponents responded with the charge that the Liberals had formed a "compact" with the Catholic Church.⁴ The presence of Catholics and non-Anglo-Saxon elements caused no dilemmas for the Liberals who believed that assimilation would come about naturally through an evolutionary process. In the meantime, minor linguistic concessions would make the process of adaptation less abrupt and severe and, if the foreign-born responded by voting Liberal, so much the better. The Conservatives, on the other hand, opted for coercive assimilation through compulsory English-language instruction in non-sectarian schools. In addition to bigoted candidates and speakers, the unreserved support of patriotic institutions such as the Orange Lodge contributed to keeping the Conservatives in the political wilderness. To many Conservatives and zealous Protestant clergy, this state of affairs created the illusion that the Saskatchewan Liberal party was subservient to Catholic and foreign interests.

The genesis of the controversy that would transform the Reverend MacKinnon and Premier Scott into irreconcilable adversaries and ultimately resurrect the school question as a political issue in the province was a legal decision handed down by Judge McLorg of Saskatoon on 14 September 1911. This judgement dismissed an appeal by the Town of Vonda against a Court of Revision ruling concerning the assessment of separate school supporters. In upholding the lower court's decision, McLorg ruled that, under the provisions of the Town Act, the option of supporting the public or the separate school system rested with each individual ratepayer.⁵ Prior to this decision it had been held that members of a minority constituting a separate school district were legally compelled to support that school but the School Act was not explicit in the respect.⁶

McLorg's judgement had serious implications for the financial status of school districts that contained both public and separate schools. The lawyers for the appellant advised Attorney-General W. F. A. Turgeon that the decision would provide "no stability for the debentures of a separate school" and, furthermore, it was contrary to the intent of the School Act.⁷ In some instances, the assessment which should have accrued to public and separate schools was jeopardized. In Kipling, for example, a public school had been erected at a cost of \$20,000 but the town was not prospering and the debt became a burden to taxpayers. In the meantime, Catholic ratepayers had established a separate school and, following McLorg's ruling, many of the Protestant ratepayers were exercising their option to support the separate school because it had a lower rate of assessment. The Department of Education had taken steps to prevent this from happening but

Premier Scott, who was also Minister of Education, feared that, unless the law were changed, similar developments were bound to occur elsewhere in the province.⁸ Consequently, on 18 November 1912, Scott introduced an amendment, in the form of a proviso to the School Act, making it mandatory for the ratepayers of the religious minority to support their separate schools.⁹ The provisions of the School Assessment Act, pertaining to the manner in which corporate property was to be assessed for public or separate school purposes, were also amended.¹⁰

In late December, MacKinnon, who ironically was the Premier's pastor, informed him that the new provision was radical and that it deprived "many intelligent Roman Catholics" of the "right" to send their children to the public school and to support such schools. He contended, furthermore, that the legislation placed "a whip in the hands of the priest which he may be inclined to use."¹¹ Scott replied that the amendment did not alter existing legislation and that it was intended to make explicit what had been implicit prior to McLorg's decision. The Premier also stated that the proviso would not prevent any parent from sending his children to the school of his choice but that it would prevent ratepayers from exercising an option to change their support in order to escape a heavy burden of taxation.¹²

This explanation failed to satisfy MacKinnon who maintained that every ratepayer, except those responsible for establishing a separate school or in sympathy with that school, should be free to support the public school. He added that McLorg's decision had given satisfaction to Protestants in Saskatchewan and that it was "in harmony with the law and in line with our ideas of freedom."¹³ MacKinnon was also critical of the amendment to the School Assessment Act which he regarded as "another lever to raise the separate school and to lower the public school."¹⁴ He claimed that this legislation would force companies to provide some support to separate schools even though they were not anxious to do so. He argued that the only motive for this legislation was to make it "possible and convenient and legal" to divert support from the public school to the separate school. Scott replied that the government could not give serious consideration to the allegation that Catholics were being coerced to support separate schools until at least one Catholic had complained "and so far I have not heard from a Roman Catholic on any phase of the question."¹⁵

In the meantime, MacKinnon organized a delegation which met with the Premier on 9 January 1913. The forty member group included members of the Regina and Moose Jaw Public School Boards, the Orange Lodge and clergy of Protestant denominations. In presenting the views of the delegation, Knox's pastor reiterated his conviction that the proviso interfered with individual liberty and that it was contrary to the principles of "British law and equity." J. F. Bryant, a Moose Jaw barrister argued that the legislation would coerce a minority. Another member suggested that the government submit the amendment to the Supreme Court to ascertain its validity. Scott replied that the proviso did not alter the law but merely clarified its intent. He added that he would not submit the matter to the courts because he did not want the separate school question to become a subject of excited public discussion or friction.¹⁶ After listening to the Premier, the delegation retired to another room and formed itself into a council presided over by MacKinnon. A committee was struck to draft a resolution and forward it to Scott. The resolution "respectfully" urged the government to submit the question to the Supreme Court before proceeding any further and to leave the legislation in abeyance until the next session of the legislature.¹⁷

Two days later, on January 11, the amendment received assent. The only objection came from F. C. Tate, Conservative M.L.A. for Lumsden, who charged that the bill had been rushed through with "unnecessary haste." The Premier pointed out that the legislation had been the first to be introduced in the session and the last to be considered before prorogation. Indicative of developments to come, Tate reiterated MacKinnon's contention that the amendment would deprive a citizen of the right to support the school of his choice.¹⁸ After the legislation had been assented to, MacKinnon informed Scott that he had been responsible for organizing the delegation and that his sole objective was to prevent the passage of bad legislation. Since the matter had not been dealt with satisfactorily, MacKinnon stated his intention to discuss the question from his pulpit in order to bring "public opinion to bear upon it."¹⁹

MacKinnon's stance, in the meantime, was endorsed by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Saskatchewan at its 1913 annual meeting. The Synod unanimously passed a resolution condemning the government for having enacted the recent amendments to the School and School Assessment Acts. According to the Synod, the legislation was "calculated to encourage the Separate School at the expense of the Public School" and it made the appropriation of school taxes subject to a faith test.²⁰

In December, Scott introduced new amendments to the School Assessment Act and MacKinnon charged that this was "an attempt to press a false principle still further." He contended that this legislation was necessary because, in practice, the amendment of 1912 had not been effective and that it was "vicious and wrong" to subject a company to legislation that enquired into the religious faith of its shareholders.²¹ The Premier stated that the 1912 legislation worked well and that the amendment was to make it operate more efficiently.²²

On 24 May 1914, MacKinnon made good his promise to discuss the school question from his pulpit. He could not have chosen a more opportune time because his sermon was delivered on the eve of the convention of the Grand Orange Lodges of British North American meeting in Regina and if any Orangemen were present, they undoubtedly heard him gladly. Calling separate schools an ugly question, he declared that "duty, stern daughter of the voice of God" had commanded him to raise his voice in protest. He began by stating that the School Act amendment had been designed to place the public school at a disadvantage and that it whipped Catholics "into line" by forcing them to support separate schools. On the other hand, the changes in the School Assessment Act gave separate schools an unwarranted claim on the tax monies of companies. MacKinnon affirmed that it was the duty of government to unite the people rather than separate them. The greatest enemy of the "unifying movement" was the separate school which the Saskatchewan government had fostered by its unwise legislation. According to MacKinnon, it was the French-speaking Roman Catholic Attorney-General, W. F. A. Turgeon, who was responsible for the present state of affairs because he had drafted the amendments. He concluded his remarks by calling upon all lovers of "freedom, justice and fair play" to smite hard against legislation which was an "insurmountable obstacle" to the attainment of unity.²³

The impact and significance of this sermon can be understood only if it is interpreted in its proper context. MacKinnon's comments were more than the opinion of an individual pastor on a contemporary issue; they were a warning to Protestants that Rome, their enemy, was seeking additional privileges in educational

matters and that Catholicism was infringing on individual liberties. To those who equated Anglicization and national unity as synonymous, the message from Knox pulpit was a reminder that the ideal had not been achieved and that the efforts of the public school were being hampered by the sectarian influences transmitted by separate schools. To opposition politicians, the sermon provided an important issue with which to stir up public opinion and embarrass the administration.

The political ramifications of the controversial legislation were brought into sharper focus at the celebrations of the Glorious Twelfth in Swift Current when 4,000 Orangemen heard their Grand Organizer denounce separate schools and extol the public school as the "brightest star in the diadem of heaven." R. J. Gibson, Past Grand Master of the Saskatchewan Lodge, castigated the amendments and declared that they endowed Saskatchewan with the worst system of separate schools and he prophesied that, in the next election, the Orange Lodge would use its influence to drive the Liberals from office.²⁴

A few months later, in November, the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Synod of Saskatchewan reaffirmed its 1913 resolution censuring Scott's amendments and it expressed the hope that the government would soon take steps to "entirely remedy" the evils created by the legislation.²⁵ In June 1915, MacKinnon and Reverend A. A. Graham, Principal of Moose Jaw College, brought the Saskatchewan legislation before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. The assembly expressed its concern over the infringement upon civil liberties in Saskatchewan where the minority was now precluded from supporting public schools.²⁶

In the meantime, Premier Scott added another dimension to the controversy when he introduced an amendment to the language clause of the School Act. This legislation stipulated that, if the regular teacher were competent to provide instruction in a foreign language, the school board would no longer have to impose special rates to pay for such instruction.²⁷ While the amendment was innocuous it, nevertheless, created additional dissatisfaction with government policy. The *Evening Province and Standard*, for example, referred to the legislation as "A Wedge for Bi-Lingualism" and claimed that the non-English majority in districts would engage one of their own nationality as the teacher to escape the extra cost of foreign language instruction. Under such circumstance pupils would not be exposed to English-speaking teachers and the public school's assimilative function would be hampered seriously.²⁸ For his part, the Conservative leader, W. B. Willoughby, declared that public schools should not become a medium for teaching foreign languages and he asked that the legislation be withdrawn because it introduced bilingualism into schools. The Premier denied these allegations but, to prevent the suspicion from spreading, he moved that the clause be withdrawn and the legislature unanimously concurred.²⁹

Scott's proposed amendment had significantly altered the course of the controversy. Henceforth, it would no longer focus on separate schools and their financing because the school issue and the language question had coalesced. This variation on a theme was evident at the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Church of Saskatchewan in November 1915. Reporting on the educational situation, MacKinnon claimed that since Scott's amendments had been passed, the separate school system had made rapid advancements whereas the public school, the one agency to build up the community, was being destroyed.³⁰ Acting on a recommendation of its educational committee, the Synod passed a resolution urging

that, upon leaving school, children in Saskatchewan possess an education adequate for Canadian citizenship and "at least be able to read, write and speak the English language." The resolution also viewed the presence of unorganized school districts and private schools as "a serious menace to the best interests of our citizenship."³¹

MacKinnon elaborated on his remarks on 26 December 1915, when he discussed the school question in a 100 minute sermon delivered before a packed audience including Premier Scott. MacKinnon declared that one-half of the separate schools in the province had been established after 1911 whereas only one-third of the public schools had been organized in the same period. More significant than the growth of separate schools, however, was the fact that these schools had become clerical schools staffed by teachers dressed in religious garb. He charged that the clerical school that had been "blasted" out of Europe had found fertile soil in Saskatchewan as a result of the amendment to the School Act and that it was perpetuating "non-Anglo-Saxon ideals and features." According to MacKinnon, the real issue was not separate schools *per se* but legislation that increased their privileges and enhanced their financial status. He declared that the Presbyterian Church was not dictating terms or asking for special favors and he accused Scott of complicity with Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface in the passage of the amendments.³²

MacKinnon went on to declare that German, Polish, French and Ruthenian Catholics were enemies of the public school system because these groups were determined to use the schools "for the propagation of their own sectarian ends." He affirmed that compelling a man to support a separate school against his will and against the interests of his children was "a lapse into the atmosphere of pagan slavery." He concluded his sermon by stating: "Shall freedom be defended upon the fields of Flanders and slain upon the plains of Saskatchewan? Men of Saskatchewan the issue is yours."³³

The Scott-MacKinnon controversy received even more publicity in January, 1916, as a result of a series of open letters which both men addressed to the Regina press. The terminology used in these epistles was becoming to neither man. Charges of "manufacturing evidence" and "falsifying facts" were among the more moderate of the vituperous expressions that were exchanged. This lengthy polemic encouraged 'educational authorities' such as "Twilight," "Libertas" and "Daylight" to present their views in letters to the editor.

In the midst of these exchanges, MacKinnon preached "The Crime of Coercion," the third and last of his pontifications on the school question. He spoke to a packed church and M.L.A.'s had been invited to attend. Quoting from Alpheus Todd, Victor Hugo, Tennyson, Robert Burns and "Rule Britannia," MacKinnon demonstrated that Scott's amendments had been a betrayal of the sacred legacy of freedom handed down by past generations. He charged that, in Saskatchewan, that heritage had not been preserved because civil liberties had been rendered subservient to ecclesiastical domination while freedom and justice had been subordinated to sectarian designs. He declared that it was a brazen "crime" against the future citizenship of the province to compel fathers to support separate schools and thus isolate their children from the ideals of the larger community. He added that the more educational and social ideals were compromised to accommodate Ruthenian, Polish, French and German elements, "the more confused the future will be." Affirming that the interests of the English-speaking Catholic minority had

been frequently sacrificed for bilingualism in separate schools, MacKinnon repudiated the "legal dis-qualification of any man for the undenominational public school of the province."³⁴

A short time later, Premier Scott informed MacKinnon that he intended to bring the controversial legislation to the attention of the legislature and invited him to attend. Stating that he would arrange House Orders to suit MacKinnon's convenience, Scott added: "I shall not detain you longer than you held me under your pulpit with your Christmas message."³⁵ On 24 February 1916, Scott discussed the amendments before the Legislative Assembly and a packed gallery in which MacKinnon and other prominent Protestant clergy were present. The Premier informed the assembly that correspondence between himself and Judge McLorg had revealed that in the Vonda judgement, the latter had not been aware of the earlier and contrary decisions of two higher court judges. McLorg had stated that while he might not agree with the opinions expressed by the two judges, he was bound by their decisions. Scott then announced that the contentious proviso would be repealed because it was no longer required. The Premier then flayed Willoughby who had pledged that the Conservatives would repeal the amendment. Scott declared that Willoughby had failed to keep his promise because he lacked the sincerity and courage to do so. According to Scott, the Conservative leader was "afflicted with that malady, to use a vulgarism, cold feet."³⁶

The most dramatic part of the speech was yet to come as Scott directed his comments to MacKinnon's actions. He quoted from a letter than MacKinnon had written to a school inspector asking for information on a Catholic school in his inspectorate and promising not to reveal his name. The Premier also read letters from church elders who were indignant at the language used by Knox's pastor as well as his tactics. Scott justified his lengthy public correspondence with MacKinnon on the grounds that it had been his duty as an honest person to expose a "moral leper" who was running loose in the assembly and in the city. MacKinnon was a menace to society because he was using his "sacred position" to contaminate souls. Claiming that his "unpleasant duty" was now fulfilled, Scott declared that a "further duty" had to be discharged by Knox Session and the Higher Presbyterian courts. According to the Premier, MacKinnon had "knowingly and intentionally misinformed and misled" the Church into condemning the government and it must now decide whether or not it still had confidence in him.³⁷

Scott's intemperate language was in all probability a reflection of the deteriorating state of his health which was soon to lead to his early retirement from political life and his replacement as premier by W. M. Martin. Feelings naturally ran high in Knox Church and Scott was formally censured by the Session for his injudicious remarks concerning MacKinnon's actions and character. Twenty-one elders signed the resolution censuring him; six-elders were present but refused to sign and six were absent.³⁸ In the interests of tranquility, however, members of Knox Session advised their pastor to discontinue the polemic and he heeded this advice.³⁹

Although the two main protagonists had withdrawn from the arena, the controversy was not terminated. Scott had not succeeded in discrediting MacKinnon and many disciples had emerged to continue and expand upon the arguments which MacKinnon first raised in 1913. What had begun as an objection against legislation affecting the financial status of separate schools had, by 1916, been transformed into an assault against the existence of separate schools and the teaching of languages

other than English. By 1918, the cry "English only in schools" would become a panacea for all of Saskatchewan's ills.

In the meantime, the Scott-MacKinnon dispute had an unusual sequel. On 31 July 1918, the Privy Council rendered its decision in the Bartz case involving a Roman Catholic ratepayer in Regina who had asked to be registered as a public school supporter. The Privy Council ruled that, once a separate school district was established, all ratepayers of the religious minority were bound to support it.⁴⁰ Scott was jubilant because the judgement upheld the intent of the School Act and, for that matter, his proviso. Informing George Langley, Minister of Municipal Affairs, of the decision, Scott stated that he had dismissed MacKinnon's contentions in the first part of his speech in February 1916. He complained, however, that outside Regina, the impression was created and still prevailed that he had in "derangement attacked a Church reprehensibly." Two years after these events, Scott concluded that if the record were to be "set right," he would have to do it himself. He felt that Knox Session should rescind its condemnation of him.⁴¹ In his reply, Langley demonstrated a firm understanding of the situation and a sound insight into Scott's character and motives. Langley advised him not to "further thrash" or punish MacKinnon. The issue was dead: it could be reviewed but not revived. Langley suggested that Scott approach a friend and have him write a magazine article in which MacKinnon was depicted as "a warning to fervent clerics to avoid dogmatizing outside theology." If this were done, Langley felt that Scott would be vindicated "and there would be no danger of the boomerang that would certainly attend any attempt on your part to again hammer this truculent priest."⁴²

Scott's vindication by the Privy Council was lauded by an individual using the pseudonym "Presbyterian" in a letter to the editor of the *Morning Leader*. In this letter, an obvious behind the scenes observer presented some revealing information on the origins and motives behind the dispute. Expressing the hope that MacKinnon would apologize to Scott for having misrepresented his actions, "Presbyterian" added that MacKinnon also deserved an apology from "certain members of the legal fraternity who belonged to his congregation." He charged that these individuals had misinformed Knox's pastor and used him to "further selfish political ends, trusting his burning zeal as an Orangeman to blind his reason and blunt his sense of British fair play."⁴³ The essence of these observations was substantiated by the comments of J. A. Allan, a lawyer and Elder of Knox Church, who informed Scott that, prior to the January, 1916, sermon, MacKinnon had discussed the amendments with him. Allan had pointed out that the proviso had not altered the School Act but MacKinnon claimed to have information that it had been the practice of the territorial government to recognize the freedom of Catholics to send their children to public schools. Although Allan could not convince MacKinnon that his interpretation was incorrect, he was impressed by the clergyman's sincerity and convictions.⁴⁴

As could be expected, the Privy Council's decision brought little consolation to MacKinnon who resigned as pastor shortly after the judgement was made public. In his letter of resignation, he stated his desire to enter the military as chaplain of a Calgary unit. In discussing MacKinnon's letter, Knox congregation debated the alternative of giving him a year's leave of absence but decided to comply with his wishes and accept his resignation.⁴⁵

For his part, Scott was elated after being advised of his adversary's resignation. He informed George Langley that no news had ever been so "intensely gratifying."

He alleged that MacKinnon had "deliberately set out" to ruin his reputation by "foul means." Scott claimed that when he carried on the polemic in the press, he intentionally acted in a deranged manner to attract support for his policy because, had he appeared vindictive or angry, few Catholics would have realized that he was being assailed for championing their cause.⁴⁶ Scott argued that the public should not be left with the impression that he had acted in "temporary derangement" or "ungovernable anger." Reiterating his intention to clear his name and inform the public of the true facts, Scott added that his desire was "not any small-minded, petty vengeful wish to further metaphorically batter MacKinnon's face."⁴⁷

Scott's correspondence indicates that, prior to the decision in the Bartz case, the events of 1916 loomed large in his mind and he had begun to think of exonerating himself. From the evidence available, the second and more minor phase of the Scott-MacKinnon controversy was precipitated by a letter Scott received from J. A. Allan, an Elder of Knox Church in June 1918. In this communication, Allan stated that he had always appreciated the splendid services Scott had rendered to the province and that he had always regretted Scott's recent uncharacteristic behavior. Allan added that had he known of Scott's state of health in 1916, his judgement of those "events would probably have been very different."⁴⁸ In acknowledging this letter, Scott admitted that it had been a mistake to drive MacKinnon "so utterly and so defenselessly into a corner." Scott claimed that despite the fact that he had been "wholly right" and his opponent "wholly wrong," Knox Session had passed a resolution condemning him in no "light language" because he was a politician and it continued to support MacKinnon who was "a slanderer and a liar" because he was a clergyman.⁴⁹ He declared that he had nothing to retract because all his assertions had been true and he had only defended himself against "false and unjust attack." Affirming that he had done nothing more than to speak out against the "untrue accusations of a Minister of the Gospel," Scott claimed that his last speech in the assembly, "the sincerest speech I ever made," had been falsely represented.⁵⁰

Allan replied that he was not interested in the status and position of the participants but with the manner in which the different sides of the controversy had been presented. According to him, Scott had approached the question with the "clear conviction" that MacKinnon "was deliberately and maliciously perverting and distorting the facts" and acting in a dishonest manner. Allan claimed that while MacKinnon's interpretation of the legislation was incorrect, his motives were sincere. He described MacKinnon as a zealous Protestant, suspicious of Rome and its influences, but one who bore no animosity against Catholics. If Scott had limited his discussion to a presentation of the government's case, Allan felt that the majority of the people would have supported him. He asserted that many government supporters were surprised at Scott's vehement language and words on an issue that "called only for quiet and deliberative discussion."⁵¹

On the other hand, Scott felt that, in view of the circumstances surrounding the controversy, the tone of his speech was not surprising. He added, furthermore, that he could not understand why Allan supported the Session's motion of censure if he believed that the government's amendments had not altered the intent of the School Act. Scott claimed to have been censured for stating that MacKinnon was guilty of misrepresentation and falsification. According to Scott, MacKinnon had altered a *Free Press* report to create the impression that Archbishop Langevin had obtained school concessions for Catholics in Saskatchewan. He claimed that MacKinnon had revealed himself as a "black-hearted" and "malicious slanderer" in that Christmas

sermon. Scott claimed that Allan had kept himself in a state of amazing innocence on this matter but, nevertheless, as an Elder of Knox, he still believed himself competent and informed to support the motion of censure.⁵²

It is apparent that Scott was not interested in the fact that people were willing to make allowances for his past behaviour because of his state of health. He wanted total vindication for his actions and this could be obtained only at MacKinnon's expense. It also implied those who allegedly had sided against him had to admit that they were wrong.

This perspective becomes obvious in the developments which took place after Principal Graham congratulated Scott on the outcome of the Bartz case. Graham had indicated earlier that he would abide by whatever decision the courts rendered. He reiterated that promise and stated that the Privy Council's decision completely vindicated Scott's position. Turning to his own part in the controversy, Graham stated that his intention had been to be "kind and courteous" in stating his convictions and he regretted any suffering that he might have caused.⁵³ In his reply Scott stated that Graham's letter did him infinite credit and that only one matter remained to be cleared up before their relations could return to normal. Scott claimed that as the Saskatchewan correspondent for the journal *Presbyterian*, Graham had written an article alleging that he had an immoral character. Scott claimed that he had been able to overcome the pressures facing him in 1916 — three Royal Commissions, MacKinnon and an unfriendly Lieutenant-Governor — but Graham's attack was the straw that broke the camel's back. Scott now wanted to know the real facts surrounding the matter.⁵⁴

Scott also wrote to the Minister of Agriculture, W. R. Motherwell, who had brought the article to his attention. For his part, Motherwell did not believe that Graham was trying to charge Scott with immorality. The article concerned Scott's speech in the legislature and Graham's unmeasured condemnation of it. According to Motherwell, Graham had wanted to make a reference to Scott's poor health and in some way exonerate him for his attack on MacKinnon. Graham admitted that the reference was unfortunate and capable of being misinterpreted.⁵⁵ A copy of the communications exchanged between Scott, Graham and Motherwell, over the *Presbyterian* affair was sent to Lieutenant-Governor R. S. Lake at Scott's request. There was a statement that a reference to Lake was to be found on page 13: it was underscored for the Lieutenant-Governor's benefit and it is indicative of Scott's frame of mind:

My Opposition had a fellow conspirator against me in the person of the occupant of Government house, not merely willing but anxious to do or help do, that which it is the business of an Opposition to do but neither the business nor the privilege of the Crown to take part in.⁵⁶

After having chastized the Lieutenant-Governor, Scott turned his attention to Knox Church and he addressed a letter to "certain members" of its Session. In this letter to those whom he considered among his "most intimate personal friends" Scott stated that of the twenty-one elders who supported the motion of censure, at least thirteen were men he knew and counted as personal and political friends. He felt that his friends should have remained loyal to him. Scott added that he held no resentment against anyone "not even MacKinnon himself, who uselessly, fruitlessly . . . and against reason, argument or anything else, persisted in making the row." He stated that he was sick and weary of a wretched affair that had produced nothing by "disturbance, bitterness, misery . . . and broken friendships." This letter was to

advise the recipients that Scott would be in Regina shortly and that he wished to renew acquaintances.⁵⁷

Scott then wrote to MacKinnon informing him of the letter to the members of Knox Session. He also asked his former adversary to come and see him during his forthcoming visit. Scott claimed that if he were facing the Germans "over the top" he could wish for no better comrade than MacKinnon who possessed "not a single cowardly fibre." In a *post-scriptum* Scott added that he was looking forward to learning of MacKinnon's farewell sermon adding: "But no matter what you said, come and see me."⁵⁸

It is not known whether MacKinnon received Scott's invitation prior to his departure for Calgary or what his reaction was. From the documentation available, the second phase of the Scott-MacKinnon controversy ended when MacKinnon left in late September, 1918. While in Calgary MacKinnon continued to interest himself in developments in Saskatchewan and to comment on them. In December, 1918, for example, when foreign language instruction in schools was being hotly debated and the government was being assailed for maintaining French as a language of instruction in grade one MacKinnon declared:

French must go, Quebec failed us during the war. We do not want Quebec reproduced in Saskatchewan. Let all enlightened citizens speak, write and wire until French goes with German. Let the legislature be besieged with delegations. Favoritism and compromise today means contention and endless strife tomorrow.⁵⁹

On the eve of this declaration, Knox congregation met and decided to present a call to their former pastor. Of those present, 269 voted to call him while eighty-nine were opposed.⁶⁰ R. F. Blacklock, Registrar of the Department of Education, informed Scott that MacKinnon's return was causing concern. He claimed that a few people had been busy circulating a petition and canvassing individuals personally to sign the petition and this explained why the congregational meeting voted overwhelmingly for MacKinnon's return. Blacklock cited the example of James Balfour, a barrister and Conservative candidate, who urged his Sunday School and Y.M.C.A. class of seventeen to eighteen year old boys to sign the call and then made it appear that they had done this voluntarily. Blacklock claimed that a substantial number of influential people were opposed to MacKinnon's return but they were too decent to resort to "ward politics" to gain their ends.⁶¹

The Regina Presbytery unanimously decided to sustain the call and MacKinnon accepted.⁶² In his letter of acceptance, published in the daily press, MacKinnon declared that letters from laymen and ministers in Saskatchewan convinced him that his duty lay in that province. He added:

Not only Knox Church but the people of Saskatchewan want me to continue to relate on occasion, the broad principles of Christian freedom and fair play to the educational and national problems of our time. These problems will not be less acute with the passing of the great war and any service that I can render in enunciating these principles and in crystalizing the people's impatience with temporizing opportunists will be vigorously and dutifully rendered by me. I am more assured than ever of the support of the people of this province in this respect.⁶³

Despite his promise to speak on contemporary educational and national problems, MacKinnon did not participate in the renewed debate over the school question in the 1920's. He continued his pastoral duties at Knox and became a strong advocate of Church Union. He joined the Union with his church in June,

1925. In the fall of that year he became pastor of Runnymede United Church in Toronto.⁶⁴

In the meantime, MacKinnon's return and his comments created anxiety in some quarters. After reading the letter of acceptance, Attorney-General Turgeon informed Archbishop O. E. Mathieu of Regina that it foreshadowed the beginning of a new anti-French, anti-Catholic crusade. Turgeon had received information that a group sympathetic to MacKinnon's views intended to investigate school districts, single out any irregularities which might exist and incite Protestant ratepayers in those districts to protect against real or imaginary grievances.⁶⁵

As events were to prove, Turgeon's fears were not unfounded. In the summer of 1919, the Orange Lodge began to circulate petitions to test the strength of the movement for one school and one language. In late 1920, the anti-French language, anti-separate school sentiment coalesced into a formal movement to abolish separate schools and French language instruction under the aegis of the Anti-Separate School Campaign. Thus, by 1926, the soil had been well prepared for the appearance of the Ku Klux Klan of the Saskatchewan scene. With a platform adapted to the province's needs and aspirations, the Klan quickly galvanized nativist and patriotic sentiment into a sweeping campaign to eradicate the evils facing society and usher in a millenium based on Anglo-Protestant norms and values. Viewed in this perspective, the issues which the Reverend Murdoch MacKinnon raised in his debate with Premier Scott were the opening notes of a call to arms.

FOOTNOTES

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²Archives of the Archdiocese of Regina, Correspondance de Mgr. Mathieu, Diverse, Harnet to Tosquinet, 9 May 1912.

³*Leader* (Regina), 19 February 1912.

⁴D.H. Bocking, "Saskatchewan's First Provincial Election," *Saskatchewan History*, XVII (Spring 1964), pp. 42-43, p.47.

⁵Archives of Saskatchewan (hereafter cited as AS), Papers of the Hon. Walter Scott (hereafter cited as Scott Papers), The Town of Vonda Appeal from Court of Revision, 15 September 1911, 35193-94.

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⁷AS, Scott Papers, Lindsay to Turgeon, 19 October 1911, 35192.

⁸*Ibid.*, Scott to MacKinnon, 2 January 1913, 35274.

⁹*Statutes of Saskatchewan* 1912-13, chap. 35, sec. 3.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, chap. 36, sec. 3.

¹¹AS, Scott Papers, MacKinnon to Scott, 30 December 1912, 35271-73.

¹²*Ibid.*, Scott to MacKinnon, 2 January 1913, 35274-75.

¹³*Ibid.*, MacKinnon to Scott, 6 January 1913, 35276.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 35284.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, Scott to MacKinnon, 13 January 1913, 35287.

¹⁶*Daily Province* (Regina), 10 January 1913.

¹⁷AS, Scott Papers, Petition of the Delegation, 9 January 1913, 35294-98.

¹⁸*Daily Province*, 13 January 1913.

¹⁹AS, Scott Papers, MacKinnon to Scott, 19 January 1913, 35299-309.

²⁰*Ibid.*, Henderson to Scott, 15 November 1913, 35374.

²¹*Ibid.*, MacKinnon to Scott, 17 December 1913, 35384-87.

²²*Ibid.*, Scott to MacKinnon, 23 December 1913, 35388-90.

²³*Daily Province*, 25 May 1914.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 13 July 1914.

²⁵AS, Scott Papers, Henderson to Scott, 30 November 1914, 35420.

²⁶*Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 1915, p. 84.

²⁷*Evening Province and Standard* (Regina), 26 May 1915.

²⁸*Ibid*

²⁹*Ibid*

³⁰*Ibid.*, 4 November 1915.

³¹AS, Scott Papers, Henderson to Scott, 7 January 1916, 35585-86.

³²*Evening Province and Standard*, 27 December 1915. Reproduced *in extenso*.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴*Ibid.*, 24 January 1916. Reproduced *in extenso*.

³⁵AS, Scott Papers, Scott to MacKinnon, 21 February 1916, 35797.

³⁶*Morning Leader* (Regina), 25 February 1916.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸AS, Scott Papers, 78707.

³⁹*Ibid.*, Sinton to Scott, 30 September 1918, 78596.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, Judgement of the Privy Council in the City of Regina and Others vs. McCarthy, 31 July 1918, 78510-13.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, Scott to Langley, 3 August 1918, 78404-05.

⁴²*Ibid.*, Langley to Scott, 16 August 1918, 78418-20.

⁴³*Morning Leader*, 16 August 1918.

⁴⁴AS, Scott Papers, Allan to Scott, 18 July 1918, 78395.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, *Morning Leader* news report, 78724.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, Scott to Langley, 5 September 1918, 78423.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 78425.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, Allan to Scott, 25 June 1918, 78355.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, Scott to Allan, 4 July 1918, 78377-79.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 78280.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, Allan to Scott, 18 July 1918, 78394-97.

⁵²*Ibid.*, Scott to Allan, 26 August 1918, 78434-35.

⁵³*Ibid.*, Graham to Scott, 9 August 1918, 78411.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, Scott to Graham, 1 September 1918, 78506-08.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, Motherwell to Scott, 13 September 1918, 78531-32

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, Scott to Graham, 1 September 1918, 78921.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, Scott to Certain Members of Knox Church Session, 23 September 1918, 78540-41.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, Scott to MacKinnon [sic], 28 September 1918, 78556.

⁵⁹*Daily Post* (Regina), 18 December 1918.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 17 December 1918.

⁶¹AS, Scott Papers, Blacklock to Scott, n.d. 78696-97.

⁶²*Daily Post*, 28 December 1918; 10 January 1919.

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⁶⁴*Leader-Post* (Regina), 14 June 1954.

⁶⁵Archives of the Archdiocese of Regina, Affaires Personnelles de Mgr. Mathieu, 1916-21, Turgeon to Mathieu, 15 Jan. 1918 [sic].

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“WELCOME TO SASKATOON”: A Late-Depression Glimpse

By Richard Slobodin

I greatly enjoy visiting Saskatoon. Besides the many charms of the city and its people, Saskatoon has a special place in my affections because of my first passage through it, on 1 August 1938.

My pal Bob Fuller and I arrived in Saskatoon that morning by train. This was a mistake. It happened because we had slept so well, having enjoyed what was possibly the most comfortable ride I have ever had. I am probably justified in adding — or ever will have, for at my time of life, I am unlikely to find again a boxcar knee deep in excelsior on which to spread bedroll; plenty of room, soft and springy, and for young bones, smooth enough.

At Craik the evening before, we had been warned to jump off where the train slowed at a water-tower south of the city.

“The Saskatoon Exhibition is just over,” the old hobo had told us in the jungle just outside Craik. “Conmen and drifters from three provinces and half a dozen states have been there, and Chief Donald’s got cops in from towns all around. They’ll vag you as soon as look at you. The yard will be full of railroad bulls.”

For his wisdom of the road, that old ‘bo was worth listening to. He wasn’t one of the migrant workers or men in search of employment such as were riding freights in multitudes all over North America during those years. He was the real thing, one of a now vanished breed. He had been on the road since the ‘90’s. To pass the time for us until the northbound freight came along, he told stories reflecting a view of North America to which justice has hardly been done.

That northbound train stopped for several minutes at Craik and we had time to look into several boxcars until we found that beauty carpeted in excelsior. There were only one or two occupants. We spread out our bedding and promptly corked off.

The next thing of which we were conscious was a bumpety-bump-bump as the train jounced over points and switches. There were fifteen or twenty men in the car now; we had slept through all the stops, changes of speed, comings and goings, and were now well into the Saskatoon yard of the C.N.R. The riders were in groups at the central sliding doors. As the train slowed, the doors were opened a few cautious inches.

“The place is lousy with cops,” somebody groaned.

My partner Bob, at twenty-five, was only two years older than I, but immeasurably more experienced in the seamy side of life, including travel by freight. When a group of men dropped out of the lefthand door, Bob pulled the righthand one a bit and muttered, “Let’s go.”

His choice was sound. Railroad guards converged on the others, momentarily giving us a clear run to a boundary fence not far away.

I can remember running to a chain-link fence and throwing my bedroll over it. I seem to remember stepping over the fence, but since it was six or eight feet high, this is unlikely. The next thing, I was picking my bedroll out of a roadside ditch and brushing some of the excelsior off.

Now we found ourselves strolling up the King’s highway, as I considered it to

be, on our lawful occasions. I was just able to savor the beauty of the prairie dawn, birds whipping to and fro, a little breeze starting up, when a dusty sedan heading south pulled up and out stepped two R.C.M.P. men, who asked us to stop — or perhaps they didn't, and we just got the idea.

They addressed themselves initially to a youth who had made it out of the yard with us and was walking nearby. Asked his identity, he gave a Ukrainian name and a prairie-province home town.

"And what about you guys?"

Perhaps the similarity of our bedrolls, pack-sacks, boots and other gear suggested that we were a twosome. There was a slight pause. Fuller and I exchanged quick glances. In mine, I asked, "What about it? Shall we hit them with the truth?" And Full in his replied, "What the Hell; let 'em have it."

One reason for Fuller's decision, besides sheer devilment, was that, as he later explained to me, he had noticed our Ukrainian friend edging away from the group and toward the fence of the railroad yard, for we were still alongside C.N.R. property. Fuller was confident, and rightly so as it turned out, that once the police began to hear our story, they would have little time for such a commonplace product as a home-grown Ukrainian farm-boy.

By slow degrees, we sidled around so that we were facing the yard and our interlocutors had their backs to it. During the ensuing conversation we had heart-warming glimpses, over the shoulders of the policemen, of our short-term companion stepping quietly to the fence, climbing it, walking casually to a freight train and hopping aboard.

We gave our names, and our home as New York City. What were we doing here?

"We're on a canoe trip from New York to Alaska," I explained.

I do not remember what, if anything, was the reply to this assertion. Anyone in authority, confronted on a Saskatchewan road by two dusty young men garnished with excelsior who explain their presence as I had done, may be puzzled for an immediate comment.

Realizing this, Bob put down his bedroll, unslung his knapsack and said, "Look, we'll show you a few items to prove our point." Between us, we produced newspaper clippings, customs declarations, letters from officials in Ottawa, a railroad bill of lading for a canoe shipped from Winnipeg to Edmonton, and a statement of (some) financial solvency.

The police brooded over the collection in silence for several minutes. Then one turned to the other.

"All I can say is, the booby-hatches in the States must be overflowing, and they're sending the nuts up here."

They folded up the papers and returned them. "Well, you seem to be what you say you are, though God knows what it's all about. Look, do you know that riding the freights is against the law in Canada?"

No, no; we didn't know that.

"Well it is, and besides, you meet some hard characters on the freights these days. You boys are lucky you didn't get rolled. Now go on in to the station and buy tickets to Edmonton. You'd better ride the cushions from now on."

"Thanks a lot for the advice, sir." We parted on affable terms, the Ukrainian youth quite forgotten. The patrol continued southward and we lightheartedly walked northward into the city.

We had been telling the unvarnished truth. We were on a canoe trip from New York to Alaska, and in fact, June of the following year was to see us descending the Porcupine River to Fort Yukon, Alaska, in our canoe. However, making a canoe trip from New York to Alaska doesn't necessarily entail canoeing every inch of the way. At least it didn't in our case. For reasons of logistics and time, we had decided to ship our canoe from Winnipeg to Edmonton and were now hitch-hiking and beating our way on the same route.

It was now not yet six o'clock on the morning of August first, 1938. Although neither police nor boxcar riders could be aware of it, the Great Depression was drawing to a close, to be superseded by a great war; the Munich Pact was signed in the following month. However, I do not remember the date of our Saskatoon traverse in terms of world events; nor did either of us keep a diary at this time. The reason I know the date will soon appear.

City blocks sprang abruptly out of the prairie. Our road was now a city street, almost surely Lorne Avenue. All was quiet. "Our footsteps echoed —" but in fact the boots we wore were rubber-soled.

It soon, however, appeared that we were not quite alone. We were walking on the righthand or eastern pavement. Up ahead on the other side of the street we discerned two men who in any setting would have been an arresting pair — as it turned out, they were that in both senses of the phrase. One was short and rotund; the other a grey-haired giant, strongly-built and about six feet seven inches in height, I later estimated. Both were dressed in business suits. I remember that of the short man as rather lively plaid, while the tall man was in sober navy blue, with a wide-brimmed grey felt hat.

As we approached, the short man called out, "Hey, you boys." We slowed. "Like to speak to you for a moment."

The pair crossed the street to join us, and then we could see that the large metal buttons pinned to each man's left lapel bore the legend: WELCOME TO SASKATOON.

Although I would claim that the passing publicity our canoe trip (actual and projected) had gained in various towns along the way had not gone to my head, so dreamlike was this situation that for just an instant I thought these worthies had been deputized to greet us. Then reality asserted itself as I remembered the Saskatoon Exhibition.

"What are you doing here at this hour?" It was the tall man.

I retreated a bit, remembered the old hobo's account of crooks swarming into Saskatoon for the fair.

"Before we go into that," returned Fuller, "would you be so good as to tell us who you are?"

"This is the Mayor of Saskatoon, and I'm the Chief of Police," replied the tall man.

I remained silent and let Fuller carry the ball. Visions of con-men were certainly not banished by this Gilbert-and-Sullivan-esque announcement. I was quite beyond my depth in this situation. Fuller again opted for the truth, but in a curtailed version. Assuming that freight-riding, if a federal or provincial offense, was not punishable *ex post facto* in Saskatoon, he said that we had just gotten off a freight from the southeast, that we were on our way to Edmonton, and were touring around. We may have produced our entry permits into Canada, but no other documentation.

Fuller told me later that he decided the less said to indicate we had money on us, the better.

After mulling this information over for a few minutes, the welcomers dismissed us not unkindly. Like the R.C.M.P. men, they advised us to head for the C.P.R. station downtown, pointing out that freight-riding was both illegal and inadvisable, and that hitch-hiking was a misdemeanor in Saskatoon.

As we walked away, it struck us that they seemed preoccupied and hurried.

We had gone only a few streets farther when we were hailed again. This time it was a city police constable on a bicycle who pulled up to us. I was interested, indeed charmed, to see that he was wearing a striped On Duty armband, similar to one I had worn when playing a London bobby in a high-school production of Barrie's "A Kiss for Cinderella."

"Up early, aren't you?" he commented. "What are you doing here?"

"Before we answer that question," Fuller returned, "may I ask you two things? Is your mayor a short, stout man?"

"Bob Pinder? Yes, he is."

"And is your chief a very tall, grey-haired man?"

"Yes, Chief Donald is that."

"By God, they really were the Mayor and Chief of Police. We've just explained ourselves to Mayor Pinder and Chief Donald. We met them, wearing WELCOME TO SASKATOON buttons, about two blocks back."

"Yes," the constable agreed. "They're back there somewhere."

At this, I piped up. "Would you mind telling us why the mayor and the chief of police are patrolling the steets?"

Pinder's drug store on Lorne Ave. had been broken into the previous night, he told us.

The Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* for Monday, 1 August 1938, reports this crime, "discovered at 3:00 A.M. this morning." It was the eighth time, according to the news story, that the store had been robbed. No wonder the mayor and chief seemed preoccupied.

Pointing the way to the depot, the constable dismissed us and wheeled away. We walked on down toward the river and the center of the city. The morning was advancing and we were moving into busier streets. It looked as if we had made our way successfully into Saskatoon. Now our problem was to get out. We had no intention of buying train tickets at the depot and "riding the cushions." I felt that we should conserve our cash, and as for Fuller, he was on principle opposed to paying for fares anywhere.

We breakfasted well at a hash-joint downtown; we hadn't eaten much since the previous afternoon. Then we headed north again, toward the highway to North Battleford. We enjoyed the view of the South Saskatchewan valley and the pleasant streets of Saskatoon, but as the cloudless August morning grew warmer, our bedrolls and packs weighed us down. Rest-stops became more frequent, and we were thirsty. As I recall it, places to buy soft drinks were few and far between on that route. Going up to a residence to ask for a drink of water involved some risk, or at least complication. Two strangers appearing at a side door might alarm a housewife. Travellers in our position were always wary, in those days, of being "vagged": arrested for vagrancy. It could, and did, happen sometimes for no reason at all.

So we trudged on. Finally, the city seemed to be petering out; houses were widely-spaced, and we passed mileage signed to North Battleford and Edmonton. At

last it seemed time to try hitch-hiking. Following common custom, we separated. I stopped, and Fuller moved on. If I could not persuade a driver to pick him up, we would meet in Edmonton that evening, or so we hoped.

It seemed I was in luck, flagging down the first car to come along. There was plenty of room in it; only a driver. As I bent to open the door, I found myself face to face with Chief Donald.

"Didn't I tell you, no hitch-hiking in the city of Saskatoon?"

"Sorry sir," I mumbled. "Thought we were outside the city."

"You're not. City limits are a mile and half down the road. Now get going and keep going."

I seem to remember saying Yes sir, thank you, sir. I suppose the thanks were for his forbearance in not running me back to the city jail. In retrospect, I am inclined to think that Chief Donald was headed for bed; not, however, before he had satisfied his conscience that the law was not being flouted in his doorstep, as it were.

As I heaved up my bedroll and walked on, the chief's car turned off the highway, drove up a hilly residential street and into a driveway, all in plain sight. There he stood on his front lawn, a stern and towering guardian — yet a fatherly one, as I see it now — watching as Fuller and I plodded northward out of Saskatoon.

Afterword

We did reach Edmonton together. Eight o'clock that evening found us in the Hotel Macdonald (the pre-highrise Macdonald) accepting drinks from a Toronto newspaperman back from covering the Spanish Civil War. His many television fans may be surprised to learn that this generous host was Gordon Sinclair. It's true that the drinks were from a gin bottle he took out of his suitcase, supplemented with tap-water; he had asked us up to his room. However, we were very grateful for the refreshment, and we weren't really dressed for the Macdonald bar.

We were more suitably equipped for the place where we turned in later that night. Walking away from the hotel in the dark, we put down our bedrolls in what turned out to be the city dump, at that time beautifully situated on a slope overlooking the North Saskatchewan River.

My thanks to Dr. Richard Rempel, Department of History, McMaster University, for urging me to set down this slight reminiscences of his native province, and for obtaining some corroborative detail. I wish also to thank those who obligingly provided Dr. Rempel with this information: Professor Duff Spafford of the University of Saskatchewan, and Mr. Wilbur N. Lepp, Local History Librarian, Saskatoon Public Library.

As most of the foregoing comes from my memory, I alone am responsible for any errors or mis-statements.

Book Reviews

CHARCOAL'S WORLD. By Hugh A. Dempsey. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978. Pp 178. Maps. Illust. \$10.95.

The physical world of Charcoal was the territory of his tribe, the Blood Indians of south-west Alberta, and particularly "the high lonely buttes, vision-quest hills and burial places" in the Porcupine Hills, where in 1896 he eluded capture for weeks, having committed murder.

The title of this book is concerned much more with Charcoal's tormented inner world of the "crazy coyote," a way of life in conflict with all around him. "This was the pathway that Charcoal had chosen. Now he was feared by the Bloods and Peigans for they knew that he could kill without reason."

Yet, in the preface to this work, Hugh Dempsey writes: "In many ways, Charcoal's one-man war against the white man is a classic example of Indian-white confrontation . . . a clash between two cultures, neither completely understanding what was motivating the other. And like so many other frontier tragedies, a better understanding could have prevented it."

Dempsey contends that "for too many years, people have accepted as final truth the cold simplistic statements contained in the official reports of the North West Mounted Police and the Department of Indian Affairs."

To present his account, Dempsey has studied court testimony at Charcoal's trial, and records of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, the Oblate Collection in the Provincial Archives of Alberta, The Walter McClintock Papers in Yale University, and the R.C.M.P. Archives of Canada. But his interest in the story goes back at least twenty-five years, and in addition to such research, he was able to gather information from Indians who still remember Charcoal or were related to him and knew stories of his exploits.

In the light of such scholarly preparation and Hugh Dempsey's unquestioned ability, it is all the more regrettable that he should have chosen to present this story of Charcoal as "one-man's war against the white man . . . a classic example of Indian-white confrontation." Frequent contradictions in the account would seem to indicate that Dempsey himself is not convinced that this claim is valid, though to support it he draws upon the bitter experience of the Sioux at Wounded Knee and the tragic story of Almighty Voice, the Saskatchewan Cree. But to raise Charcoal's story to that level of tragedy requires more than understanding of the culture in which it found motivation. Tragedy should draw forth admiration or respect or, at the very least, compassion.

This account is simply the grim story of a hunted man, and hunted for good reason. He was wanted by the North West Mounted Police, it is true, but upon information from the Indians themselves; and he was tracked by Indian scouts.

"They did not like to feel so helpless and afraid," Dempsey explains, "so when the chance came to put an end to Charcoal's freedom, the Bloods volunteered willingly. This was not done to please the Mounted Police, not to help the white man; it was simply a matter of self-preservation. They did not hate Charcoal; they simply feared him for what he had become . . . only his brothers refused to support the search . . . The murder (of Medicine Pipe Stem, another Blood Indian) had been justified, they felt; Charcoal's wife was the one who had driven him to commit his

warlike deeds." In the end, however, his brothers did quite deliberately betray him.

Dempsey's use of such terms as "warlike deeds," "proud warrior spirit," "holy man" in reference to Charcoal are misleading; and other statements contradict them. In any case, as Dempsey notes, "But this was in 1896: the days of warfare were but a dim memory. Charcoal was not a warrior, but a crazy renegade who had broken the white man's law. His actions were no signal for acclaim but a reason for fear." Yet as justification, it is repeated that those same actions were "all part of the old way of life, the Indian way."

It is this argument that makes *Charcoal's World* a most troubling book, for that is a dangerous fallacy. If Charcoal's actions in 1896 needed only "understanding," then why not violence on the part of any Indian today? In fact on the part of anyone? We know what fearful deeds have always been done by man in the name of his culture or religion.

It was the Indians themselves who would not accept such "old ways." Even before the Mounted Police took any action, "Indian guards were posted all along the Belly River in case Charcoal should return. To them, he was now the *enemy*, a coyote-crazy renegade who was capable of killing either friend or foe. No one knew if his family was alive or dead, and with nothing to lose, he might appear out of the darkness to kill again."

In the end, the "chief" whom Charcoal killed happened to be Sergeant Wilde of the North West Mounted police, but that was due to the Sergeant's own rash courage. To make this account of a hunted and desperate murderer, whatever interpretation is given for his motives, into a "one-man's war against the white man . . . a classic example of Indian-white confrontation" is an injustice as much to Indian culture as the the Mounted Police — and particularly when their dangerous duty was carried out for the protection of Indians, with Indian scouts to track the murderer.

Even after his execution, the Indians feared that Charcoal would return to life "in the form of a grizzly bear which would wreak vengeance upon the whole camp." Still, as final proof of the white man's lack of understanding — his perfidy, it is made to appear — the priest who attended him in prison insisted that Charcoal had become a convert to Christianity and must be buried in consecrated ground. His family were refused the body for their own form of burial.

"The ultimate awful fate that Charcoal had feared in life had become a reality in death. After weeks of running, fighting, and hiding, he had finally found a worthy courier to send to the land of the dead . . . the way had been prepared for the great warrior. But his spirit would never come. It was trapped beneath the earth in a white man's coffin, trapped forever with underground spirits. The white man never understood."

Must we forever convince ourselves that wrong-doing can be only on the white man's part?

Ruth M. Buck

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