

Saskatchewan History

Volume XXXIII No. 1
Winter 1980
\$1.50



* J. T. M. Anderson and Departmental Policy on the Education of New Canadians, 1918-1923.

* Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, 1879-1884.

* The Myth That La Corne Grew Wheat in 1774.

SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: TOPOROUTZ and CHERNOWKA schools at
Wroxton field day, 25 June 1914.

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Published three times a year by the Saskatchewan Archives Board. Chairman, Hon. D. McArthur;
Vice Chairman, Dr. N. Ward; Members: Miss C. MacDonald, Dr.
B. Zagorin; Secretary and Provincial Archivist, I. E. Wilson.

Subscription rates: \$4.50 a year or \$1.50 a copy

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ISSN 0036-4908

J. T. M. ANDERSON, DIRECTOR OF
EDUCATION AMONG
NEW-CANADIANS AND THE POLICY
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION: 1918-1923

By Caroline Melis

EDUCATION in the Prairie West of the early twentieth century was mainly centered around a conflict between the multiethnic nature of the population and a dominant ethic which sought to displace multiculturalism with a Canadianism imbued with a particular definition of British values. The massive immigration of European peoples, both non-English and non-French, created in the West a multilingual, multicultural society based on small rural communities. The pattern of settlement, that is, the ethnic enclave, compounded the existing multicultural nature of this rural society and was largely responsible for the perpetuation of mother tongues. On the other hand, the provincial governments of the Western provinces sought some method of Canadianizing their heterogeneous populations, thereby creating new societies based on one language.

In the West, public schools were regarded as the chief instrument of assimilation, the institution responsible for anglicizing the heterogeneous population. The public school could accommodate the diverse population because religion, a potentially major source of conflict between immigrant groups was absent from it. The existence of the public school was further justified because it insured that no ethnic minority would receive special linguistic privileges. Thus public schools would insure that ethnic strife would be a minimal problem, since the major contributing factors to it, religion and language, were not allowed expression within the confines of the school system.

While assimilation aroused sporadic interest on the part of the general population, opposition to the policy of English first, English only in the schools was often evident at the level of the individual school district and, as in 1921 was often misinterpreted by public authorities. However several factors combined in the early twentieth century to arouse racial passions and to signal the approach of a new era of majority/minority relations concerning education. Chief among these were the War-Time Elections and Military Service Acts which, it was argued, were "... an affront to thousands of loyal citizens."¹ These twin Acts of the federal Parliament heightened awareness of the alien problem and contributed to the formation of a generally intolerant attitude towards all aliens.² Racial tensions remained in the public eye with the controversy over Regulation 17 in Ontario and the 1916 repeal of the bilingual clause of the Manitoba School Act. Thus, by the end of the first World War, federal and provincial policies had antagonized an overwhelming proportion of the Western Canadian population.



J. T. M. Anderson

In Saskatchewan, English was early adopted as *the* language of instruction in the public schools. The nature of the province's population had made such action a necessity if Saskatchewan was to avoid the anarchy which had prevailed in the school system of Manitoba until mandatory bilingualism was revoked in favour of mandatory unilingualism in 1916. While the French language retained a limited freedom of use within Saskatchewan schools, it was clearly understood that the English language was to predominate and was to be the medium for immigrant assimilation to Anglo-Saxon values, norms and institutions. According to Ramsay Cook and R. Craig Brown, "the underlying assumption was that efficiency and the English language were co-partners . . . while the primary aim of the . . . legislation may have been to anglicize 'foreigners', the French Canadian found himself swept into the melting pot too."³

However French Canadians were not the only minority which was discriminated against by provincial education policies. As the Saskatchewan government became more active in asserting its powers in the field of education, it sought to displace ethnic particularisms by creating a new society which would contain the valuable qualities of each ethnic group without the group retaining a separate identity. Such work was officially sanctioned when, in 1918, J. T. M. Anderson was appointed Director of Education among New-Canadians.

Prior to accepting his new position with the provincial government, J. T. M. Anderson wrote a book⁴ in which he presented the case for public schools which were, according to him, the only force at work in immigrant communities which could Canadianize the children. Anderson advocated that the state exercise its right ". . . to see that every one of these New-Canadians obtains what in free Canada should surely be one's birthright — a public school education!"⁵ The public school was seen as not only the sole institution in which to Canadianize the immigrant, but also the "proper" institution since it was the "greatest agency in racial assimilation."⁶ In Anderson's view, the public school was responsible for creating the ideal Canadian, the true citizen: "This is the great melting-pot into which must be placed these divers racial groups, and from which will eventually emerge the pure gold of Canadian citizenship."⁷ Anderson was here expressing a common sentiment of his time: the only solution to the alien menace was to anglicize it and the only institution which could achieve that end efficiently was the public school.

Anderson desired that all ethnic groups conform to the image of a Canadian society based on English language, English institutions and loyalty to the British flag and Empire.⁸ This could only be achieved if the teachers were the prime examples of Anglo-Saxon values and norms.

The only logical way of training and educating our New-Canadians to be loyal and patriotic citizens is to place before them in the public schools strong types of Canadian manhood and womanhood. . . . The mere teaching of English is not the most important part of a teacher's work in our non-English schools. This should be but a means to an end.⁹

A strong education that focussed on the perceived values, norms and institutions of the Canadian state was of prime importance if the ethnic minorities were ever to become true Canadian citizens.¹⁰

Anderson advocated that English be used as the language of instruction: English was to be used to teach English, not 'Ruthenian', French or otherwise. If English was to be taught effectively, the teacher should not lapse into the language of the majority of the population of the school district in order to explain a concept.

All instruction had necessarily to be conducted in English if these children were ever to learn and have any great command of that language. No other language but English could be taught during school hours, otherwise the intent of the public school would be destroyed.

Anderson resented that there was "in the busy life of the western prairie farmer too little time . . . devoted to social and intellectual improvement, but every nerve had been strained to increase the cultivated acreage, and materialism has held sway to an alarming extent."¹¹ Anderson suggested reforms which would increase contact between the school and the community, between the provincial department of education and education departments of other provinces. These reforms included a joint provincial commission, better supervision of parochial schools, night schools, literate trustees with a minimum grade four education, qualified teachers with competent training, and a campaign to promote knowledge of English and of the principles of Canadian Citizenship.¹² Anderson believed that these reforms would make education more relevant in the daily lives of the immigrant, as well as increase his knowledge of the dominant language of the Canadian West.

J. T. M. Anderson was appointed to the office of Director of Education among New-Canadians on September 14, 1918, a post which he retained until his 'promotion' to Inspector of Schools for Saskatoon on October 11, 1922.¹³ The policies which he pursued while in this position were largely those outlined in his book, that is, the promotion of the English language and of British values and norms. The need for such a Director was defined in words which clearly outlined the problem of immigrant education:

While many of the new comers to the Province from foreign lands have shown a splendid eagerness to learn English and to become full-fledged Canadian citizens, there are certain localities where the indifference or ignorance of the ratepayer has greatly lessened the efficiency of the schools. In order to obtain better administration, and hasten the assimilation of the population in such areas, a Director of Education among the Non-English has been appointed . . .¹⁴

The primary goals which Anderson was to pursue were efficiency, better administration and assimilation of the population.

Several problems confronted the Department during the period 1919-1923. Certification and qualification of teachers assumed prime importance, largely because there was an acute shortage of trained teachers until 1921. A further problem arose from the teacher's background: was he or she of the same nationality as the majority in the school district, or of English or other background? Second language instructions, even if after-hours, encouraged complaints from the minorities whose languages were not being taught. The composition of the school board often reflected the ethnic mixture in the district and animosities developed if some ethnic groups were over-represented. Whether or not English was being efficiently taught, as well as whether or not the schools were impartial to religious convictions were also matters of prime importance.

Several minor problems compounded the existing situation. Teachers' residences were often inadequate, salaries were low, and school-rooms were overcrowded. In some cases, contracts were not honoured and departmental regulations were disobeyed. Taxes were generally not deemed too high, but Roman Catholic ratepayers objected to having to pay both a public and a separate school tax.

Complaints were received on the distribution of school grants and on the unsanitary conditions of the schools, as well as on the poor health care given to children.

Several new programmes were initiated by the department during this period, such as night schools for adults, adopted schools,¹⁵ field days, school papers, Boy Scout organizations and slide shows. The success of these new programmes was enormous given the rather limited facilities of the local school boards for providing them. Outside aid was welcomed and ladies groups responded well to the call to foster a spirit of Canadian citizenship among children.

The story of the Canadianization of the immigrant in Saskatchewan schools was one, in Anderson's words, of "ignorant trustees"¹⁶ and of teachers with missionary zeal. The department of education was a largely decentralized one: the local school boards appointed teachers, ran the affairs of the district and were in charge of the school curriculum. Teachers, being the best educated citizens in most communities, were often the leading or the only representatives of Anglo-Saxon culture and institutions. The trustees were, on the other hand, largely illiterate and in many cases opposed to education, since it was being given in a language other than their native tongue.

On May 1, 1917, the Compulsory School Attendance Act became law and henceforth children between the ages of seven and fourteen were required to attend school. This law created a two-fold problem: enforcement of school attendance and the acquisition of teachers. Enforcement was a problem insofar as the trustees and the parents in many cases simply did not send their children to school if the teacher was not of their nationality and could not use their language for instruction. However the practice of using foreign languages in the schools met with little approval from the department, but was allowed to continue only as long as the trustees could prove they could not secure an adequately qualified teacher.

The chronic shortage of teachers induced the Saskatchewan government to grant special assistance to teachers who would work in the foreign districts. Teachers often entered areas which were primitive by any standard, where their residences were one-room shacks, where they had to "... [preach] clean hands, tooth brushes, politeness and incidentally a little arithmetic."¹⁷ In 1918 the department was short one thousand teachers; the supply simply did not meet the demand and, as a result, improperly qualified individuals were often granted temporary certificates so that the children would receive some education.

The problem of teacher shortages was accentuated by the condition brought on by the war.¹⁸ Many teachers who had contracted in 1914 for nine hundred dollars a year found that by 1918 local school boards as yet could not honour their half of the bargain. Inflation was a major cause of complaint for the cost of living had doubled during the war period. At the outset of the war, some school boards had been without funds and could not afford to pay their teachers. Some teachers had agreed that instead of earning nine hundred dollars immediately, they would work up to that sum; nine hundred dollars was thus to be the maximum income. After five years of war, many school boards still could not discharge their responsibility, so many female teachers either left the profession or sought employment in other districts. Male teachers largely honoured their contracts for they had ties of family and debts for the construction of their homes.

Four main categories of teachers' certificates were issued by the department of education during this period. First class standing signified that the teachers had successfully completed all departmental requirements, including, generally, an

education at the university level. Second class certificates indicated that the teacher was competent and had met the requirements. Third class certificates were issued to those whose standing did not include completion of the senior form. No certificate was, however, more dependent on a satisfactory inspector's report than the provisional certificate, for the teacher had to rely on that report for a permanent certificate. Provisional certificates were often granted to teachers from outside the province until an inspector's report was available on their work. A provisional certificate issued to a teacher who was employed by a district because no other more qualified individual was available, could be extended for a period; but if that teacher possessed only a provisional certificate (which was not a provisional first, second or third), then that teacher had to undergo some formal training at a provincial Normal School in order to obtain a permanent certificate.

Because of teacher shortages, many certificates were issued on a temporary basis. This created several problems in that teachers continually applied to renew these certificates or school boards re-applied for them. The department increasingly felt that those

... who had been granted temporary certificates were not taking the necessary steps to qualify for permanent standing and that year after year requests are received not only from these persons but from boards of trustees for extensions of those certificates or for new Provisional Certificates in [*sic*] their behalf.¹⁹

In many cases, renewal was an excuse to retain a poor teacher or one who was of the majority language in the district and who taught that language after school hours.

Saskatchewan law required that ten months of school be taught during one school term. School grants were based on two standards: all schools received a general grant which helped to pay teachers' salaries, general upkeep of the school building and required texts and equipment. Special grants were issued to schools that promoted and encouraged "... certain factors contributing to the efficiency of our schools."²⁰ These factors included the number of days the school was open during the year, the first two years of operation of new districts, the provision of a noon lunch for students and the inspector's grading of grounds, buildings, library and equipment.²¹ Abuses of general grants were encountered in some localities.²² Schools in such districts were often closed at the end of term even if the required number of school days had not been met and some trustees refused to fulfill the school attendance law claiming that the children were needed to help around the house and the farm.²³

Dr. Anderson, in his *Annual Report* of 1920, stated that "... there has been an apparent earnest desire on the part of all concerned to unite in an effort towards loyal Canadian citizenship."²⁴ Anderson cited progress made in the non-English districts largely as a result of new programmes such as night schools, adopted schools, field days, English papers, Boy Scouts, winter schools and lantern slides. But progress also occurred in the line of more and better teachers' residences, higher salaries, fewer official trustees, and teachers.

One hundred thousand dollars has been spent on teacher's residences in 1920, sixty-thousand of the total in non-English districts. Teachers' salaries were usually higher than fifteen hundred dollars a year, with free house and fuel in most cases, with the German districts paying the highest salaries (\$1800 per year). Teachers' qualifications had improved, but seventy-five per cent of teachers retained second and third class certificates; very few, only nine per cent, had attained first class

standing.²⁵ In 1920, twenty-four school boards were re-instated in non-English districts and only four official trustees remained. Anderson could claim that where "non-English trustees are being encouraged to engage educated men as secretaries . . . trouble ceases."²⁶

Night schools were becoming a significant activity by 1920. Their expressed intent was to eliminate illiteracy among the adult population, who had not attended school or who had not received much education in English or in their native tongue. Special grants of two dollars per evening session were initiated in 1919 in order to encourage more instruction in night schools. But the problem was that the decision of whether or not there would be a night school was at the discretion of the teacher. If a teacher refused to conduct a night school, the department could not alter that decision.²⁷ As a result, those who began instruction in night schools continued; those teachers who felt they did not have the time did not conduct night classes. As a further result, some communities received additional educational services and prospered because of the efforts of zealous educators, while other districts received fewer services from their less ambitious teachers.

Various societies were interested in helping to supply schools with books, pictures, and various teaching aids such as newspapers and magazines. Interest in individual schools was encouraged and these schools became known as "adopted schools." Some one hundred schools were so adopted by 1920 by organizations such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and women's sections of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. Correspondence between the teachers, the pupils and the members of the organization was also recommended so as to foster an interest on the part of the students in affairs outside of their locality.

Field Day sports and school fairs were encouraged on the grounds that "Canadian games are playing a mighty part in overcoming racial hatreds and animosities that in many cases are centuries old."²⁸ Boy Scout troops were organized and English papers were published. Winter schools or longer terms were encouraged and, along with them, lantern slides to teach civics, history, geography, household science and hygiene.²⁹

According to Anderson, the teachers of Saskatchewan were ". . . engaged, on the one hand, as interpreters of our citizenship to these people, and, on the other hand, interpreting to us these various races whose blood infused with ours will leave its mark on the Canadian citizenship that lies before us."³⁰ Teachers were indeed expected to be more than just instructors of the elements of science, reading, writing and arithmetic. They were the representatives of a civilization whose values and norms were very different from those of foreigners. They were to be the prime example of the benefits of assimilation and in Anderson's opinion "the safety and happiness of our nation depend upon their [the immigrants'] assimilation."³¹ One teacher claimed that "it is not necessary to go to Japan to do missionary work"³² the implication clearly being that much missionary work could be done at home.

Teachers often entered communities where no other person spoke the English language, where customs and food were different from their past experience. One teacher described conditions in her community where four or five people slept in the same room, where baths were never heard of, where children did not attend school regularly because there was only one dress to share between three girls. Complaints that children were being married too young (at age fourteen) were often received and it was the department's opinion that only education could remedy this 'unpleasant situation.' In 1923, a Saskatoon *Star* editorial read as follows: "What the

department of education should have in view is not the elimination of foreign languages or habits but the training of the New Canadians in the British point of view, respecting conformity to law, payment of taxes, agricultural methods . . ."³³ But it was implied that before anyone could be trained in abstract principles or in moral standards, the bare minimum of knowledge required from the British concepts of hygiene and cuisine had to be given to the children.

According to Keith McLeod, ". . . in 1915 . . . although the use of languages other than English was criticized there was not a prevalent demand that these languages be completely eliminated, rather there was an insistence that all children receive an adequate knowledge of English."³⁴ As early as 1916, Ruthenians showed the greatest desire to have English efficiently taught so that their children would have more than just a bare minimum of English knowledge. But with the recurring problem of teachers' qualifications and temporary certificates, foreign language instruction was allowed in the school if no competent English teacher could be found.

By 1919 the question of foreign language instruction in the public schools assumed prime importance. Premier Martin asserted that foreign languages ought to be eliminated from the schools during school hours. He further stated that ". . . we have succeeded in eliminating foreign languages in a good many cases without having any change in the law at all."³⁵ Yet foreign language instruction could not be prevented if it was conducted after school hours since the School Act did not forbid it.

Second language instruction, even if after school hours, brought complaints from the minorities whose native tongue was not taught. The Polish minority was especially adamant in this regard usually because Ukrainians were using school houses for teaching their language after school hours and on Saturdays.³⁶ Anderson resolved to urge teachers to discontinue this practice "in the interests of harmony."³⁷ In 1922 Anderson wrote to one Miss Romanzova that ". . . *absolutely nothing but English* should be used in the school room and it is advisable to encourage the pupils to speak English on the school grounds."³⁸ Anderson felt that once strong teachers were acquired in the foreign settlements where minority squabbles existed "things will run along smoothly."³⁹

In 1921, "systematic opposition to Canadianization" was at its peak, especially in Ukrainian settlements.⁴⁰ In a confidential Royal Canadian Mounted Police report, the Ukrainian Labour Temple was identified as the institution responsible for the creation of such opposition. The society, labelled "anti-religious and Bolshevistic," encouraged ". . . the teaching of the Ukrainian language; the singing of Ukrainian revolutionary songs; and the instilling of the principles of Communism into the minds of the children."⁴¹ This report confirmed Anderson's conclusion that the closing of Ruthenian schools was due to a "deep-laid and widespread scheme."⁴² In Anderson's opinion such closing was an attempt to thwart the achievements of the department in obtaining qualified teachers and to violate the school law which allowed closing between January 1 and February 15. Anderson stated that ". . . they [the Ruthenians] have been in the habit of doing this for years and it will take some time to impress upon them the necessity of obeying school law. . . . the scheme [of acquiring good teachers] is going to fail if we allow . . . ignorant trustees to have their way."⁴³ Teachers could not afford to continue teaching in these districts if they only conducted irregular night classes. Premier Martin however saw no cause for alarm since in his view ". . . it would be unwise to force the people to keep the school open

during the winter months. . . ."⁴⁴ He suggested that Anderson deal with the situation with the . . . fullest consideration from every possible angle."⁴⁵

In late 1920 and early 1921, interest in the department was focussed on a proposed federal increase in grants to provincial departments of education. Resolution Nine, passed at a conference of representatives of provincial departments of education and sent for opinion to the various governments concerned, was greeted well in Saskatchewan, as long as distribution of the grant would be entirely in provincial hands. Mr. Ball, Deputy-Minister of Education, replied in the absence of the Premier, that such federal aid would be welcome:

. . . for the last two years . . . Dr. J. T. M. Anderson has been dealing with the problem of Canadianization in this province with very considerable success. The type of work he is doing, however, is capable of very great expansion, and the more of it that can be done the better it will be for the future citizenship of Canada.⁴⁶

The Saskatchewan government was in agreement with its neighbour, Alberta, in that the education policy of neither department was to be interfered with in any way by any outside authority. But Resolution Nine never came into effect since the federal government's financial position was not secure due to the war.

Slawa school district was perhaps one of the greatest successes of Anderson's policy. In 1916 Mr. Ball had remarked that ". . . Wherever an English teacher has shown insight into the characteristics of the Ruthenian people and has treated them sympathetically there has been no request for a teacher of Ruthenian nationality."⁴⁷ Slawa school district was of predominantly Ruthenian background. By 1920, the local school board followed a policy which was contrary to the wishes of the majority of ratepayers of the district. Instead of engaging a qualified teacher, two trustees⁴⁸ ". . . in spite of the instructions of the Department have engaged Mr. T----L----, who has not the necessary qualifications, but who happens to be a brother-in-law of the secretary-treasurer. . . ."⁴⁹ The wishes of the majority of the ratepayers were respected when Anderson appointed an official trustee to supervise and to coordinate the affairs of the district until such time as the board was willing to implement desirable policies.

Slawa gained one of the best teachers in the province, a man born and educated in England. The conditions of Slawa school district were typical of those which confronted most teachers who instructed in 'foreign' settlements.

. . . The house is not furnished, and is only a one-room shack, but fortunately we brought a tent along. . . .

We have managed to get all the windows cleaned and the floor scrubbed in the school . . .

Even under primitive living conditions we are certain to enjoy the work . . .

We re-packed most of our trunks and we are living on the minimum requirements of civilization.⁵⁰

A new teacher's residence was promised shortly after Mr. England took up his duties. From that time forward, Slawa school became a model school for other schools in the province. The first Ruthenian Boy Scout troop was organized there in July 1921, the first consolidated Field Day Sports with two thousand in attendance was at nearby Hafford, in June 1921, and a local newspaper, the *Slawa Weekly News* was organized by the teachers and published at the school. Furthermore, Mrs.

England, a trained nurse, administered a successful health programme for the community, providing her services free with the aid of Red Cross supplies. The services of the official trustee were no longer required by 1921, and the school board was once again elected by the ratepayers.

The office of Director of Education among New-Canadians was abolished in 1922. The major reason for termination of the office was that the work involved in such a position was largely completed. In reply to questions in the Legislature, Mr. Latta, Minister of Education, stated that

School districts . . . are now generally employing experienced secretary treasurers who are able to assist the boards in carrying out the school law and regulations. They have ceased to employ unqualified teachers and generally are operating efficient schools.⁵¹

Dr. Anderson's work was assumed by regular school Inspectors who now gave special attention to troublesome districts. Mr. Latta, in reply to a question on why there had been a need for a Director of Education among New-Canadians, remarked that inefficient school districts, deficient school management, inability to understand the school law, and employment of unqualified teachers had necessitated such a post.⁵² Furthermore,

. . . A number of these districts also had internal troubles, chiefly owing to racial antagonism, which operated against the efficiency of the school. Such districts needed special assistance by way of supervision. The problem was a special one . . . and it was deemed advisable at the time to assign a special inspector to this work.⁵³

J. T. M. Anderson accepted a promotion (a demotion in terms of salary) as the Inspector of Schools for Saskatoon, a position which he retained until his election to the leadership of the provincial Conservative party on March 26, 1924.

The policies pursued by provincial departments of education differed among the provinces, but these policies were by no means dissimilar in intent. In the West, diversity had somehow to be accommodated and a ready solution to the problem of linguistic heterogeneity was found in the adoption of English as the common language of communication. Relatively isolated rural settlements, however, worked contrary to the policy pursued inasmuch as local school board autonomy assured, in the early years of these provinces, the perpetuation of linguistic multiplicity in the schools.

With the appointment of the Director of Education among New-Canadians came the assertion of control over local autonomy by provincial authorities. This was the beginning of the long road to rural school consolidation. But Anderson's role was different from that of later inspectors for he was to attain the support of local authorities in the use of the English language and to consolidate local educational administration.

The role of the teacher as educator, missionary and model Canadian citizen cannot be over-emphasized, for rural problems largely disappeared as a result of the influence of a teacher with good qualifications or largely remained because of a teacher inadequately trained in the English language. If English was to be a common meeting ground of various nationalities and a medium through which to destroy ethnic particularism and ethnic barriers, then the quality of English instruction was of prime importance.

New programmes proved to be instrumental in fostering a sense that Canada

indeed could make one a better person, a better citizen. The educational system fostered the development of a society based on the one language and one school policy. This policy helped to create an intolerance which would be amply demonstrated in the rapid inculcation of the Ku Klux Klan mentality in Saskatchewan people in the post-1927 period. The education system was a great levelling agency, one which discouraged national loyalties based on un-Canadian terms, and which encouraged the promotion of Canadian ideals: how to create a truly Canadian nationality. In the light of all this, it is easy to understand why teachers saw their role in terms of a civilizing mission, as bringing enlightenment to the uneducated, illiterate New-Canadians. The relatively rapid assimilation of peoples of such diverse ethnic origins is an eloquent testament to the success of Saskatchewan's education policy.

FOOTNOTES

¹David Edward Smith, *Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan 1905-71*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, p. 112.

²"Alien" was a term used in the Acts to describe all immigrants who had been naturalized after 1902 and is throughout this paper used in that sense.

³Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921, A Nation Transformed*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974, p. 259. While the authors are referring to the Manitoba legislation of 1916, the statement applies equally well to Saskatchewan.

⁴*The Education of the New-Canadian: A Treatise on Canada's Greatest Educational Problem*. Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1918.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 34. ⁶See *Ibid.*, p. 114. ⁷*Ibid.*, p. 114. ⁸See, for example, *Ibid.*, p. 89. ⁹*Ibid.*, p. 153-154.

¹⁰See, for example, *Ibid.*, p. 54-55. ¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹²See *Ibid.*, passim., p. 215-237 for a complete list of suggested reforms.

¹³There was some controversy between Anderson and the department concerning the term "promotion", since Anderson accepted a lower salary. See correspondence, Saskatchewan Archives Board (S.A.B.), Latta Papers, M5-19, Anderson, J.T.M., Personal.

¹⁴S.A.B., Martin Papers, Memorandum, November 26, 1918, "Educational Progress in Saskatchewan", p. 15167, by J. Duff, Chief Inspector of Schools.

¹⁵'Adopted schools', for example, see Martin Papers, 56, Education: New-Canadians, 1919-22 (1), p. 19112 where Poplar Leaf school district (Ruthenian) is sponsored by Salisbury Chapter, I.O.D.E., Regina. Also see below.

¹⁶Martin Papers, Anderson to Ball, December 9, 1920, p. 19298.

¹⁷Martin Papers, E. Alma Motherwell to Anderson, June 2, 1920, p. 19194.

¹⁸The following example is based on a letter of September 26, 1918, Martin Papers, H. Coristine to Martin, p. 15145-15148.

¹⁹Latta Papers, Latta to Morrier, April 20, 1923, file 20, I.A.C.F.C.

²⁰Martin Papers, McColl to Martin, October 25, 1920, p. 15370-15371.

²¹*loc. cit.*

²²Martin Papers, Blanche M. Baden to Anderson, May 27, 1920, p. 19183-19187.

²³Therefore implying a greater importance to the latter (farm and home) than to school (education).

²⁴Latta Papers, Anderson to Latta, *Annual Report*, January 1, 1921, file 18, Anderson, J.T.M. The following figures and examples are taken from this report except where otherwise noted.

²⁵Does not equal 100% due to temporary certificates not being included.

²⁶Martin Papers, "Educational Activities Among New-Canadians, 1920". Anderson to Martin, December 31, 1920, p. 19313.

²⁷See Martin Papers, Martin to Rev. John Kovach, January 5, 1921, p. 15424-15425.

²⁸Latta Papers, *Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, "Field Days".

²⁹See Martin Papers, "Educational Progress in Saskatchewan", November 26, 1918, p. 15167.

³⁰Latta Papers, *Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, "Good Teachers".

³¹Anderson, *Education of the New-Canadian*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

³²Martin Papers, p. 19168.

³³Latta Papers, file 19, Anderson, J.T.M., Personal, *Star* "New Canadian Schools", February 26, 1923.

³⁴Keith Alwyn McLeod, "A History of the Status of the French Language in the Schools of the North-West Territories 1870-1905 and in Saskatchewan 1905-1934", unpublished M.A. Thesis, Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan, September, 1966, p. 130.

³⁵Martin Papers, Martin to A. G. Hopkins, January 2, 1919, p. 15191-15192.

³⁶See Martin Papers, Anderson to Martin, March 10, 1921, p. 19353. ³⁷*loc. cit.*

³⁸Latta Papers, Anderson to Miss Romanzova, May 13, 1922, file 18, Anderson, J.T.M., emphasis his.

³⁹Martin Papers, Anderson to Martin, July 9, 1920, p. 19219.

⁴⁰Latta Papers, Commander A. Burman Perry (R.C.M.P.) to Anderson, May 4, 1921, file 18.

⁴¹*loc. cit.* ⁴²Latta Papers, Perry to Anderson, *loc. cit.*

⁴³Martin Papers, Anderson to Ball, December 9, 1920, p. 19298.

⁴⁴Martin Papers, Martin to Anderson, December 23, 1920, p. 19299. ⁴⁵*loc. cit.*

⁴⁶Martin Papers, Ball to L. W. Gill, February 7, 1921, p. 19319.

⁴⁷Martin Papers, Ball to Mr. Kerr, August 9, 1916, p. 14828.

⁴⁸A board consists of three trustees but is governed by majority rule. The majority of trustees could act against the wishes of the majority of ratepayers and minority of the board, but, in such a case, an official trustee was usually appointed.

⁴⁹Martin Papers, Otto Marx to Anderson, April 17, 1920, p. 19143-19145.

⁵⁰Martin Papers, Robert England to Anderson, June 3, 1920, p. 19188-19189.

⁵¹Latta Papers, file 19, Anderson, J. T. M., Personal, (AL356), No. 9, Legislative Assembly, Province of Saskatchewan: Routine Proceedings and Orders of the Day, Wednesday, February 21, 1923. Order of the Day, Questions Put By Members — Replied to February 21, 1923; the questions were asked by Mr. Agar, Independent M.L.A. for Saskatoon County: The question, "... (1) What situation existed in the Province of Saskatchewan requiring the appointment of a Director of Education among New-Canadians at the time of the appointment of Dr. Anderson?"

⁵²*loc. cit.* ⁵³*loc. cit.*

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EDGAR DEWDNEY INDIAN COMMISSIONER IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD OF INDIAN SETTLEMENT, 1879-1884

By Jean Larmour

THE IMMENSE and relatively unknown area of the North-West Territories and Rupert's Land, with its Indian and Métis population, was acquired by Canada in 1870. This new area was distant from the seat of government and administration was difficult because of the lack of any easy means of communication. By 1879 most of the Indians had signed treaties giving up vast areas of land in return for small reserves, hunting and fishing equipment, farm implements and cattle. However, few of the Indians had settled upon their reserves, preferring to roam the plains in search of the disappearing herds of buffalo. With the imminent extinction of the buffalo and of the hunting economy it was imperative that the Indians be persuaded to settle upon the reserves and to learn to till the soil as the white man did. Until this was accomplished, starvation would haunt the land and its people.

The government was concerned about the large number of American Sioux Indians, led by Sitting Bull, who had taken refuge in Canada from the American army after defeating Custer at the battle of the Little Big Horn. They imposed a heavy drain on the already scarce game and on the supplies available in the Territories. There was also the danger of inter-tribal clashes that could lead to an Indian war.

To cope with these problems a man of vigour and experience was needed for the position of Indian Commissioner. The man chosen was Edgar Dewdney, a civil engineer and member of parliament for Kootenay. He had the friendship and the confidence of the Prime Minister. In justifying Dewdney's appointment Sir John said, "He understands the Indian character . . . he is accustomed to rough it . . . and he is a most active person."¹

The new Indian Commissioner, Edgar Dewdney, was instructed to recommend changes in the administration, to encourage the Indians to cultivate the soil and to rear cattle, and to report on the disposition and movement of American Sioux Indians.² A further guideline taking precedence over the others was given by J. S. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior: "All matters of expenditure . . . in carrying out these instructions," he said, "shall be regulated with a view to the strictest possible economy consistent with efficient administration."³ This policy of maintaining the strictest possible economy was emphasized throughout the period.

Dewdney left for the West with Lieutenant Colonel J. F. Macleod, Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, a detachment of 100 recruits for the police to replace those who had not re-enlisted after their original term, and two



Edgar Dewdney

farmers for the two proposed government farms. His diary reads: "May 19, 1879: Left Toronto for the North-West via Collingwood, Duluth, Bismark and Fort Benton."⁴ After twenty-two days of travel on railroad and steamboat on the Missouri, the party reached Fort Benton, Montana Territory. Here Dewdney spent a week outfitting the two farmers and purchasing supplies; then the party moved north to Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills, a North-West Mounted Police post, arriving June 26.

Dewdney's first task upon arriving in the Territories was to make contact with the Indians. Commissioner Macleod, who had spent considerable time with the Indians and was trusted by them introduced the new Indian Commissioner to the Indians. Dewdney told them that "the Government had heard with great sorrow, the hardships they had suffered, and had sent me to their country to devote my whole time to their interest."⁵

The new Indian Commissioner held innumerable interviews with the chiefs explaining that the government's objective was to try to help the Indians to become independent. He urged them to locate their reserves that they might be surveyed and recorded by the several dominion land surveyors in the Territories for that purpose. These reserves would then be protected from encroachment by the white man. Assistance would be given the Indians in farming their reserves, to help them become self-sufficient. Two of the principal chiefs at Cypress, one an Assinibioian and the other a Cree, agreed to select their reserves.⁶



Public Archives of Canada c17494

J. F. Macleod

In earlier times the Cree and Assinibioian Indians had roamed the plains from the North Saskatchewan to the Missouri harvesting the abundant buffalo. Now that the few remaining herds were located near the Missouri, the Indians tended to congregate in the Cypress Hills where supplies would be received from the police post and within easier access to the remnants of these herds. Dewdney interviewed Big Bear, a prominent Cree chief, trying to persuade him to sign the Treaty, but Big Bear refused to do so. However, Little Pine and Lucky Man were persuaded to sign adhesions to Treaty Six. This left Big Bear as the only important chief who had not signed the Treaty.

From July 10-15, Dewdney was in the vicinity of Fort Macleod and Pincher Creek conferring with the chiefs of the Blood, Piegan and other tribes of the Blackfoot confederacy. He sent provisions ahead to Blackfoot Crossing for, as he wrote in his diary, the French (presumably the Métis) and Father Scollen told him "woeful tales of the state of the Indian."⁷ He was told that they had been selling their horses for a few cups of flour, eating gophers and mice and that they had nearly killed off the antelope. On July 16 he was at Blackfoot Crossing with Chief Crowfoot and other chiefs of the Blackfoot Indians. His diary recorded that Crowfoot had told him:

If you will drive away the Sioux and make a hole for the buffalo to come in we won't bother you about grub, but if you don't you must feed us, for we are starving.⁸

This was the chief of the proud Blackfoot Indians. Dewdney reported to Ottawa that

"young men who were known to be stout and heavy some months ago were quite emaciated."⁹

If they would take up farming as the white man did, Dewdney told them, he would assist them to earn their living in this way. "We know nothing of farming," Crowfoot said, "but we want you to show us." He added, "I will do it, I will farm. . . ."¹⁰ Dewdney then arranged to have some land broken on the reserve and sent a man with supplies for those who worked and for the sick and aged. However, care was to be taken to issue rations only when absolutely necessary, in accordance with the government policy of economy.

The same destitute condition was evident in the Sarcee Indians, and with the Blackfoot, Cree and Stonies around Fort Calgary.¹¹ Inspector Denny of the Police had issued rations in large quantities to the Indians, on his own initiative. He was supported in this action by Dewdney. However, as beef was expensive at Calgary, it was desired that these Indians should not remain there. Dewdney persuaded the Blackfoot and Sarcee Indians to return to Blackfoot Crossing. The Crees were sent north to the Edmonton district. Then he stated that no more supplies would be issued at Calgary.¹²

Complaints had been received from the Stoney Indian reserve at Morleyville, west of Calgary, about the farm implements supplied to that reserve. These Indians visited Dewdney at Calgary to present their grievances. He found that the implements and tools were very poor for breaking purposes, but that this was what had been ordered. He arranged to exchange these implements for some more suitable for farming conditions in the West. He also arranged for the survey of the Stoney Indian reserve at Morleyville.¹³

Dewdney had seen for himself the deplorable state of the Indians and had agreed that they must be fed. On the other hand he had been ordered to be economical. The two conditions were irreconcilable, but he did his best to find a compromise. He refused to authorize complete rations for all the Indians, as Colonel Macleod wished but he did agree "to take my share of the responsibility of feeding the Indians."¹⁴ However, he insisted that economy must be practised and that the officers issuing rations "must be guided by circumstances." Thus although agreeing to take some responsibility himself, he insisted that others exercise some responsibility too. In this way he did achieve economy, but prevented outright starvation. This became characteristic of Dewdney's administration; he insisted that those on the spot not only take, but must be given the responsibility for on-the-spot decisions. Unforeseen circumstances might render a general order impractical and inadvisable.

Edmonton was the next settlement on the itinerary of the new Commissioner, and he arrived there August 6, 1879. Here he had the benefit of the experience and knowledge of the Hudson's Bay factor, Richard Hardisty, as well as that of Lieutenant Governor David Laird whom he met there. Laird warned him of possible trouble at the payment of treaty at Sounding Lake. On being assured by Hardisty that the Indians were peaceful and fairly satisfied around Edmonton, Dewdney decided to accompany the Lieutenant Governor and Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Richardson, a stipendiary magistrate and member of the Territorial Council, on their return journey down the Saskatchewan.

The problems of transportation and communication in the Territories were illustrated on this trip. The steamer *Lily* ran on a rock and had to be abandoned. Fortunately a messenger sent to Fort Saskatchewan managed to procure another

boat with which to continue the journey. From Fort Pitt, Dewdney had planned to take a route south to Sounding Lake; he was unable to obtain horses and wagons, so continued with the government party to Battleford.

En route Dewdney had interviewed the Whitefish Lake chief. His complaints were similar to those of the Stoney Indians at Morleyville, the plows and spades were unsuitable for Western Canada. He also stated that the cattle they had received were wild. Dewdney agreed that these complaints might be justified and promised that action would be taken to prevent poor or faulty implements being given to the Indians. The re-organization of the Indian administration in the Territories, which was to be undertaken, would place responsible individuals near the reserves so that treaty obligations would be carried out honorably.¹⁵

The capital of the Territories, Battleford, was reached on August 14. Here Dewdney learned that the money with which to make the treaty payments had not arrived. Telegraphic communication with Winnipeg revealed that the agent bringing the money, Mr. L. W. Orde, had left Winnipeg later than had been anticipated, but his whereabouts was unknown. There was no way of knowing when he would arrive. This presented a problem, for the Indians had been told to gather for treaty payment at Sounding Lake. Supplies had been sent on the 13th, but these would be exhausted if there was a delay. Unless the Indians broke camp and went out to hunt, they could not be fed, but if they scattered to hunt, they could not be paid their treaty money. More supplies would thus have to be sent to Sounding Lake.

Dewdney improvised an imaginative means of making treaty payments without the money.¹⁶ Although authorization for such a step was not received until treaty had been so paid, Dewdney requested the newspaper office in Battleford to print \$15,000 worth of cheques. These he signed and then took them to Sounding Lake. Whether or not the traders who had gathered for commerce with the Indians would accept these cheques, payable at Battleford, was the first problem. When their acceptance was assured he called together the chiefs and head men for treaty payments. Dewdney explained the situation with regard to supplies and tried to hurry the payments, but this was difficult. Indian courtesy demanded a dance for the new Indian Commissioner, and Indian orators liked to talk. However, the Commissioner suggested that buffalo had been reported, which fact inclined the Indians to hurry with the payments.

There was a little trouble with non-treaty Indians, but it did not develop into anything. Dewdney attempted to explain the policies of the Government to the Indians. He spent considerable time listening to both treaty and non-treaty Indians. He felt that much of the ill feeling was rooted in falsehoods, spread by "designing white men and lazy half-breeds."¹⁷ When Indian Department officials were closer to the reserves, Dewdney felt that they would be able to counteract the stories which trouble makers had spread.¹⁸

From his experience with the large gathering at Sounding Lake Dewdney suggested that a policy of making payments on each reserve should be adopted.¹⁹ This would save the money now spent for provisions to feed the Indians who gathered for treaty payments. Ceremonies, and oratory which took place at treaty time, extended the period over which payments were made and increased the supplies needed during payments. Dewdney recommended that the money so saved should be used to purchase clothing. This aspect of the waning buffalo herds whose hides had been used for clothing, had not been considered at the signing of the treaties.²⁰



Fort Walsh

At Battleford, Lieutenant Governor Laird had received a telegram asking him to call a conference with Edgar Dewdney, Colonel Macleod, Colonel Richardson, M. G. Dickieson, who had been acting as Indian Commissioner until Dewdney's appointment, and Pascal Breland, a Métis member of the Territorial Council, to consider the condition of the Indians and to recommend what steps should be taken. Although Breland had not arrived, the meeting was held. Laird was reluctant to participate in Indian affairs, but he authorized Dewdney to carry out the task of procuring supplies. No doubt his reluctance was based on the lack of support he had received in Ottawa, as well as on the knowledge that Dewdney would be supported. When Breland did arrive in Battleford he suggested that the estimates of supplies needed were too low. The hunt had been poor and many of the Indians would be destitute. His opinion carried weight and more supplies were requested. Even with the extra supplies, the agents were short of supplies when the winter proved difficult.

From Battleford Dewdney went to Carlton and Prince Albert to make treaty payments. In interviews with the Indian chiefs there, he found that they had substantial and well founded grievances. There was trouble over size of reserves and treaty cattle. Disagreements over the reserve had apparently been resolved, but when the surveyors came to carry out what they understood the agreement was, they found there was still disagreement. The cattle supplied under the terms of the treaty, to the Carlton Indians had been "sorefooted, poor and wild."²¹ Most of them had died over the winter. Dewdney reported that he had promised "that these two grievances . . . should be redressed." Although these Indians were not self sufficient they were farming. "I am satisfied from what I know of these chiefs," he said. "that they as well as the Indians under them, will be able to make their own living in the course of very few years."²² This prediction proved to be highly optimistic.

Dewdney participated in the treaty payments made at Fort Macleod during the

first week in October. There was some trouble during the payment, as a number of ranchers claimed that the Indians had been shooting their cattle. However, upon hearing all the witnesses he concluded that "the complaints of cattle killing by Indians have been greatly exaggerated."²³ Dewdney was not to be pressured into prejudice against the Indian.

During the payments at Blackfoot Crossing, Crowfoot requested that Dewdney participate, which he did. He soon came to the conclusion that many Indians were being paid several times. Hard feelings over rations issued was used as an excuse to count the Indians.

I notified the chiefs that I wished the whole of the Indians to come outside of their lodges, to get together under each of their chiefs . . . I got them together after a great deal of difficulty, and although it was stated that numbers that had been paid were away trading . . . I was unable to count as many on the ground as I had paid the afternoon previous. I was then perfectly convinced that the head chief had misrepresented to me the number of his Indians.²⁴

Dewdney later proposed that metal tags be issued to the Indians, that only those with the tags should be paid, and that the payment be checked on the tag.²⁵ This system was adopted the next year and numbers of Indians paid dropped considerably. He also procured account books for use on the reserves, designating which Indians had been paid.²⁶

Returning to Fort Macleod he interviewed several white squatters on the Indian reservation, to negotiate their removal. At Fort Walsh he again interviewed chiefs and discussed reserves and farming possibilities. On October 30 he set out for Wood Mountain to visit the American Sioux, as he had been requested to do. When he was advised that a Catholic priest had just visited them, Dewdney cancelled his own visit. On his return to Fort Walsh the Commissioner contacted Chief Little Child, who had chosen an unsuitable location for his reserve to suggest that he look at land along the White Mud, where Dewdney's party had just passed.²⁷ Thus was Dewdney alert and observant to possible advantages for the Indian as well as to possible fraud by the Indian. A busy, eventful and challenging summer had not dulled his attention.

This extended tour of the Indians in the North-West Territories was Dewdney's introduction to his duties and responsibilities as Indian Commissioner. He travelled to most of the settlements and reserves throughout the Territories, omitting only those in the south eastern section. He had talked with most of the important Indian chiefs; he had participated in the distribution of treaty money; he had attended the Indians in their farming efforts and had sided with them in choosing sites for reserves. In addition he had used his own initiative in solving some of the problems which he encountered. Dewdney did not shrink from facing a problem or making a decision, nor yet from listening to advice when it was proffered. When complaints were made he tried to evaluate the evidence and to arrive at a fair decision. He viewed with compassion the plight of the Indian people, even while he kept in mind his orders to be economical. It was an auspicious beginning for the new Indian Commissioner. For the Indians in the Territories the outlook was hopeful. Here was an active and ingenious Commissioner who had the ear of the Prime Minister, and who was charged with carrying out a new program aimed at helping the Indian to help himself. The only rumblings of discontent came from the Indians who were feeling the pangs of hunger and from the members of the House of Commons who objected to a policy of feeding so many Indians.²⁸

Dewdney returned to Ottawa in November to report on the state of the Indians in the North-West. Sir John said that his presence had been requested to consult with the Department.²⁹ While there, Dewdney's office as Indian Commissioner for the Territories was expanded to include the Manitoba and Keewatin Superintendency.³⁰ This added Treaties One, Two, Three and Five to his administrative duties. "On your approaching visit to Winnipeg," Lawrence Vankoughnet, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, wrote to Dewdney, "it will be for you to consider and report on the expediency, or otherwise, of continuing the Indian Office at that point."³¹

In the spring of 1880, Dewdney went to Winnipeg, where the office of the Indian Commissioner was located. For a time he moved the office to Shoal Lake, to be closer to the Indians in the Territories, but as it did not receive telegraphic communication as expected, headquarters returned to Winnipeg.³² During the next two years he operated out of Winnipeg in his position as Indian Commissioner. When Regina became the capital of the Territories, Indian headquarters were moved there.

In 1880 Edgar Dewdney undertook a tour of those parts of the territory along the Qu'Appelle valley, the Touchwood hills, Fort Ellice and the Winnipeg area into which he had not ventured in 1879.³³ His reminder book, dated May 17 to July 14 consisted of a few notes, impressions of his trip and reminders of action to be taken. He had interviewed a number of the Indian tribes when he was informed that Sitting Bull wished to meet with him. Although he had no authority to grant him a reserve in Canada, Dewdney agreed to meet the Sioux chief on May 25, at Qu'Appelle. The Commissioner noted the famous chief as "an ordinary looking Indian with large features but small eyes, a thick set man about 5'4"."³⁴ Archi Veleni was sent for, to interpret the Chief's speech to Dewdney. The next day he held a further interview with the Sioux and then gave them a few provisions while they held a council. Yet another meeting was held, but as the Commissioner said, "it did not amount to much for Sitting Bull is afraid to go back and the other Indians are afraid of Sitting Bull."³⁵

The American Sioux were refused reserves or rations and gradually, as starvation haunted their camps, groups returned to the United States. These Indians were promised safe conduct and good treatment, but Sitting Bull did not trust the American authorities. Starvation finally persuaded him to return to the United States.³⁶ He surrendered on July 19, 1881.³⁷ This reduced the source of friction between the American and Canadian Governments. It also removed the danger of friction between the Canadian and the American Indians.

Many of the Indians in the Qu'Appelle Valley had made a start at farming. Dewdney inspected the gardens, fields and buildings at Standing Buffalo and Pasqua reserves. On his return trip on June 4, he mentioned camping on the flat near Fort Ellice with a survey party as well as with three Saulteaux chiefs, Coté, Ke che Kan [Kee see Koos] and O'Soup. He interviewed these three chiefs who had taken reserves on the Assiniboine River. From Fort Ellice he travelled to Birtle and then to Winnipeg, arriving June 15. After a day in the office he took the train to Portage la Prairie, reverting to the old form of travel from there to Shoal Lake, Fort Ellice and Birtle.³⁸ In this area he visited Wa Waseasson's [Way Way See Cappo's] reserve and Gambler's Reserve near Bird Tail Creek. A start at farming had been made at the latter place, but there were some complaints. He also mentioned problems of cattle killing by the Indians at Fort Ellice.³⁹



Sitting Bull

In the fall Dewdney was again at Fort Walsh. Despite the policy initiated at his recommendation, that the Indians be paid treaty money on their reserves, he authorized these payments at Fort Walsh. He realized it was better to risk some overpayment in order that the Indians might be given every opportunity of supporting themselves by the hunt.

Inconvenient and irregular as this payment was, with the chance of having to pay some Indians who had already received their annuity money . . . I thought it to be in the interest of the Government . . . as they [the Indians] were anxious to again return to the Buffalo.⁴⁰

Through this action Dewdney demonstrated his sympathy for the Indians and his willingness to modify regulations according to a particular circumstance.

The note section of Dewdney's diary contained items showing his concern that the Indian schools be encouraged and that the Government live up to treaty obligations. It also pointed out Dewdney's interest in the Indians effort to acquire some trappings of the white man's civilization. Such items as "bell for school house" or "stove for school" and "pipes are bad — Reserve ought to have a new one," appear in his book.⁴¹ He also noted that one bull was old and that an oxen's hoof was bad.

The record of Dewdney's travels in 1880 showed that he had made a great effort to visit his charges and to talk with them, to ascertain their outlook and their prospects. Travel was still difficult and most of the way was made by buckboard, camping out on the prairie. The Indian Commissioner's work was not for a sluggard.

It required patience, determination, sympathy, as well as interest, understanding and ability to endure hardship. Edgar Dewdney's patience was evident when he spent three days interviewing Sitting Bull; his endurance was obvious in that he continued in the role of Indian Commissioner. That he had a keen eye for detail was noticeable in the reminders which occurred in his book.

Dewdney returned to Ottawa for the winter of 1880 to 1881, advising the Minister of Indian Affairs, Sir John A. Macdonald, on the Territories. He was there during the session of Parliament in 1880 to 1881. Questions were asked over the fact that he had spent the last two winters in Ottawa⁴² rather than on the plains with his charges.⁴³ Sir John stated in the House that Dewdney was "specially called here for the purpose of consulting with the department," and that he had given an "account of his experience, along with suggestions as to working out the system, which is yet, I must admit, in an experimental state."⁴⁴ Sir John further defended the appointment of an Indian Commissioner for the Territories, Manitoba and Keewatin on the grounds that it was necessary to co-ordinate information on Indian affairs, to be directed to Ottawa.

The work load had increased for the Indian Commissioner and there was criticism of his administration as well as of his appointment.⁴⁵ It may be inferred that Dewdney was unhappy over his situation. However, Sir John emphasized how important Indian matters were to the "general policy of the Government" — so important that he wished to keep this department under his own control.⁴⁶ The position of Indian Commissioner in the Territories was most important to government policy. Dewdney, however, asked to be relieved of his charge in 1881. In a letter dated August 19, 1881, Sir John decried the waste of Dewdney's ability if he were appointed to the senate and promised "I can do much better for you than that."⁴⁷ He went on to state his full confidence in Edgar Dewdney as well as his knowledge that the position was onerous. Later when the position of Lieutenant Governor became available, this was offered to Dewdney to increase his salary and no doubt, to make the job as Indian Commissioner more palatable. Sir John said that it would add very little to his work load but \$2,000 to his salary.⁴⁸

During 1881, Dewdney was active in promoting farming activities, developing schools and generally in persuading the Indians to settle down on their reserves. He held a council at Qu'Appelle in the spring to talk with the Indians in Treaty Four and ascertain their grievances. He also toured the province with the Governor General. Disputes between the Sarcee and Blackfoot Indians were heard and settled by Edgar Dewdney. These Indians had occupied the same reserve at Blackfoot Crossing, but disputed over distribution of supplies and over crops. Dewdney agreed to a separate reserve being established for the Sarcee, upon their written release of the land at the Crossing.⁴⁹

In December 1881, Dewdney took on the additional charge of the Lieutenant Governor of the Territories. Although this position required an increasing proportion of his time and energy Dewdney remained interested and active in Indian Affairs. Sir John reported in the House of Dewdney's activities for 1882.

From the beginning of the spring, and during the whole season, until mid-winter, these two gentlemen, the commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner were travelling from one end of that country to the other, at intervals as much as possible — one remaining at headquarters while the other was travelling.⁵⁰

Such activity continued through 1883-1884.

In his annual report for 1884, Dewdney mentioned where his travels as Indian Commissioner had taken him.⁵¹ He had visited all the reserves in the south, as soon as the snow disappeared, and those in the north just after spring sowing. All of the reserves in the Battleford area, as well as those at Fort Pitt were inspected. Early in the year he had also visited the Blackfoot Indians and late in the fall, just after treaty payments he visited the Indians around Edmonton and Victoria.⁵² The pressure of work in his position as Lieutenant Governor is obvious from the statement that "I have spent as much time among the Indians as my other duties permitted." He also pointed out the increasing role which the Assistant Commissioner was playing. "Mr. Reed has also made a lengthy tour through the Territory and has made many suggestions which I think of value."⁵³

Although by 1884, his duties as Lieutenant Governor combined with general supervision of Indian Affairs absorbed most of Dewdney's time, he still took an interest in matters of detail. His attention is evident from the marginal comments which he noted on Hayter Reed's letter of September 10, 1884, concerning the Indians in Treaty Four.⁵⁴ This letter was sent to Sir John for his information on September 30, with Dewdney's comments in the margin. In the letter Reed stated that some of the Chiefs had no copies of the treaty, that all the Indians needed clothing, that Little Pine, a Cree chief on a reserve near Battleford had been promised a cooking stove, and Okemasis, a chief from Duck Lake, wagons and harness, and that Moosomin's reserve near Battleford had been promised two sows and a boar. Cod-liver oil was also needed at Battleford and Carlton. Dewdney noted that these had all been sent. However, he commented that the clothing provided was not enough.

The Assistant Commissioner, Hayter Reed, by his letters kept Dewdney well informed on the attitudes, condition and progress of the various Indian groups. These reports, with his own personal contacts, which, while less frequent were still maintained, kept him aware of the situation. His marginal comments on Reed's letters with Dewdney's comments served to indicate, to the government, the opinion of the man on the spot and to add weight to the requests for more money for the Indians.

The underwriting of a proposal to peacefully change the way of life of a whole people was a substantial drain on the treasury of a newly established nation. That there was constant demand for economy was not surprising. The fact that by 1884 most of the Indians were established on reserves, that a start had been made on agricultural pursuits and that this had been accomplished without bloodshed was a tribute to the organizational and administrative ability and to the humanity of one Edgar Dewdney. This would have been impossible without the active cooperation of the Indian leaders, but for the most part Dewdney managed to retain this cooperation.

FOOTNOTES

¹Canada, *Debates of the House of Commons* (Hereafter cited as *D.H.C.*), 1880, p. 1944.

²Glenbow, Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta, Dewdney Papers, 1861-1926, Vol. II, J. S. Dennis to Dewdney, May 31, 1879, pp. 182-88.

³*Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁴*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 1039.

⁵Canada, *Sessional Papers*, (House of Commons), 1880, No. 4, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior," p. 77.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Dewdney Papers, Vol. IV, p. 1056.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 1057.

⁹*Sessional Papers*, 1880, No. 4, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior," p. 78.

- ¹⁰Ibid., p. 79.
¹¹Ibid., p. 80.
¹²Ibid., p. 81.
¹³Ibid.
¹⁴Ibid., p. 82.
¹⁵Ibid., p. 83.
¹⁶Ibid., p. 84.
¹⁷Ibid., p. 85.
¹⁸Ibid., p. 85.
¹⁹Ibid.
²⁰Ibid., p. 86.
²¹Ibid., p. 87.
²²Ibid.
²³Ibid., p. 90.
²⁴Ibid., p. 93.
²⁵Ibid., p. 101.
²⁶Dewdney Papers, Vol. V, Vankoughnet to Dewdney, December 14, 1881, p. 1094.
²⁷The White Mud is not the Frenchman's Creek.
²⁸*D.H.C.*, 1880, Vol. II, Mr. David Mills (Bothwell), p. 1691; *Ibid.*, Mr. E. Blake (Durham W.), p. 1692.
²⁹*D.H.C.*, 1880-81, Vol. II, p. 1,352.
³⁰Order in Council, 4 February, 1880, (R.G.2.1, vol. 189) P.C. 156, Public Archives of Canada. This minute indicated that Dewdney's Commission of 1879 had not been defined, therefore the new minute extended the Commissioner to include Manitoba, Keewatin and the North-West Territories.
³¹Dewdney Papers, Vol. II, Vankoughnet to Dewdney, February 21, 1880, p. 200.
³²*Ibid.*, Vol. V, Vankoughnet to Dewdney, December 14, 1881, p. 1097.
³³Dewdney Papers, Vol. IV, "Reminder Book and Notes," pp. 985-1039. Undated, but must be 1880 or 1881 as Sitting Bull had returned to the United States by 1882.
³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 988.
³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 991.
³⁶Paul Sharp, *Whoop Up Country*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955, p. 272.
³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 291.
³⁸In 1880 construction was complete or under contract for 100 miles west of Red River. G. P. deT. Glazebrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, Vol. II, Carlton Library Series No. 12, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1964, p. 70.
³⁹Dewdney Papers, Vol. IV, "Reminder Book and Notes," pp. 985-1039.
⁴⁰*Sessional Papers*, 1880-1881, No. 14, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," p. 86.
⁴¹Dewdney Papers, Vol. IV, "Reminder Book and Notes," pp. 1007-08.
⁴²*D.H.C.*, 1880-81, Vol. II, David Mills (Bothwell), p. 1352.
⁴³*Ibid.*, 1883, p. 1109, *Ibid.*, 1884, p. 517.
⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 1880-81, Vol. II, p. 1354.
⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 1880 David Mills, p. 308; *Ibid.*, 1880-81, d. Mills, p. 1352.
⁴⁶Dewdney Papers, Vol. III, Macdonald to Dewdney, May 10, 1881, p. 389.
⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 392.
⁴⁸*Ibid.*, Macdonald to Dewdney, October 28, 1881, p. 398.
⁴⁹*Sessional Papers*, 1882, No. 6, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," p. 40.
⁵⁰*D.H.C.*, 1883, May 3, p. 1109.
⁵¹*Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 3, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," pp. 156-159.
⁵²Saskatchewan Archives Board, *Macdonald Papers*, Duplicates of the Dewdney, Macdonald correspondence held in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Letter, Dewdney to Macdonald, October 3, 1884, p. 151.
⁵³*Sessional Papers*, 1885, No. 3, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," p. 159.
⁵⁴*Macdonald Papers*, Reed to Dewdney, September 10, 1884, pp. 130-33.

THE MYTH THAT LA CORNE GREW WHEAT IN 1754

By K. Rasmussen

THE EXISTING literature, referring to La Corne's fort on the Saskatchewan River, has recorded time and time again that this was the place where agriculture was first carried on in Saskatchewan and that wheat was grown there in 1754. Unfortunately, none of these authors has cited an original document that gives unequivocal support to this statement. Assumptions and inferences notwithstanding, there is grave doubt that these well-entrenched claims are correct, as the following analysis will indicate.

The first step is to review the various published statements that appear to give substance to the assertion. In the biography of Chevalier La Corne in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* the statement is made: "During his term in the west La Corne improved Fort Paskoya [The Pas, Manitoba]. He travelled farther west than his predecessors, built Fort Saint-Louis [near the later site of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort-à-la-Corne], near the forks of the Saskatchewan River, seeded several acres of grain, and explored the Carrote [Carrot] River valley."¹ The *MacMillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* is more modest in one respect but more specific in another when it states: "here he made some experiments in the growing of wheat, and he may thus be described as the first agriculturalist of the Canadian West."² *The Encyclopedia Canadiana* states: "Carrot River, in north-east Saskatchewan, rises to the S. [outh] of the Saskatchewan River, flows almost parallel with the latter and joins it near The Pas, Man. On its banks in 1754, the Chevalier la Corne grew the first grain grown in the Canadian West."³

Alexander Mackenzie makes no specific reference to wheat but notes: "It may be proper to observe, that the French had two settlements upon the Saskatchewan [*sic*], long before, and at the conquest of Canada; the first at Pasquia, near Carrot River, and the other at Nipawi, where they had agricultural instruments and wheel carriages, marks of both being found about these establishments, where the soil is excellent."⁴ Henry gives some support to this statement when he notes: "At six o'clock we camped at the spot where the French formerly had an establishment called Fort St. Louis built by St. Luc de la Corne in a low bottom on the S. [outh] side, where some years ago were still to be seen the remains of agricultural implements and carriage wheels. Their road to the plains is still to be seen, winding up a valley on the S. [outh] side."⁵ A. S. Morton adds some support when he writes: "In verification of this is the fact that the Indians of the reservations call the spot Ne-cha-me-ka-gihans, which is said to mean the place where we first saw vegetables grow. The first efforts at agriculture in Saskatchewan, were put forth by La Corne between 1753 and 1756."⁶ J. W. G. MacEwan becomes more specific when he writes: "It was another Frenchman, La Corne, who made some experiments in the growing of wheat in the Carrot River Valley, Saskatchewan, between 1753 and 1756."⁷

Arthur S. Bennett adds real life to the story with a series of statements, all made without notation of the source of his information. He states of La Corne: "... the

following spring [1754] seeded a few acres of land, thereby deserving to be called the first agriculturalist of the Canadian West."⁸ In reference to Henday's (mistakenly referred to as Hendry by Bennett) visit to Paskoya and La Corne's fort he states: "... where Chevalier de la Corne and his followers constructed the crude agricultural implements that were used to perform the first tillage of the soil in the whole of Western Canada."⁹

Later he notes:

Hendry's surprise was unbounded when crushed cereal was served at the meal, which De la Corne informed him was the product of grain grown from a patch he had put in seed the spring previous. Hendry was shown the crude implements of agriculture that has been used, and was informed of the great delight of the Indians when a share of the grain grown was given to them in exchange for furs.¹⁰

Then referring to Henday's visit to Paskoya in 1755, he notes:

The following morning De la Corne took Hendry into his storeroom and "there was revealed to my gaze as much floury meal as would do the Frenchman's party throughout the whole winter. Certainly no other man, save this resourceful officer, would ever have thought of trying to grow grain in this wild, unknown land. Of a surety, the meal is of fine flavor, and what he does not use will make him rich in skins from the Indians."¹¹

The final statement, by Bennett, is most surprising:

When Chevalier de la Corne returned to Canada and exhibited samples of grain grown in the great mysterious north-west, there was a great amount of almost incredulous interest manifested by the Frenchmen, who had never before dreamed of anything but valuable furs coming out of the vast unknown.¹²

Saskatchewan Farm Science, from the University of Saskatchewan, picked up the story, giving it further authenticity, including the statement: "The Archives Office at the University of Saskatchewan records that Professor A. S. Morton, a noted authority on western history, reported that wheat was sown at Fort à la Corne about forty miles west of Prince Albert, in 1754, and that this information was included in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. However, Dr. Morton had not included this information in any of his books."¹³ More recently Champagne¹⁴ has made a determined effort to expound the idea that there was grain production at Fort Paskoya and Fort La Reine in Manitoba and on a larger scale at La Corne's fort in Saskatchewan.

All of this makes an interesting story but it does not provide any real proof that wheat or any other grain, was grown at Fort St. Louis, or any other site in Saskatchewan, in the period 1754-1757. Not one of the specific statements regarding the growing of grain is supported by citation of an original document. The assumption that La Corne grew any wheat at all is unsubstantiated and there is even greater doubt that he grew several acres of grain. What then can be deduced from the information available?

La Corne's Fort St. Louis was in existence for a maximum of four years, built in late 1753 and abandoned in 1757. The records indicate that it was an outpost of Fort Paskoya [The Pas], with a limited complement of men. When Henday¹⁵ visited La Corne's fort in May 1755 he reported that there were five men, but this was prior to the spring movement of furs to the east. This movement usually took all, or most, of the men from a post for the summer. For example, in 1754, when Henday visited Paskoya in July, on his way west, there were only two men at that fort, the others had all gone down with the furs. When he revisited Paskoya in May 1755, he found

the master and nine men, but they were waiting for the furs from La Corne before setting out for the east. The point is that neither post had a large complement of men during the summer months and during the spring months they were occupied primarily in preparation for the movement of furs to the east.

Mackenzie's¹⁶ statement suggests that agricultural activity had been carried on at both La Corne's fort and Pasquia (Paskoya) but makes no specific mention of crops of grain. He does not claim to have seen the remains of implements or carriages, only the marks of them. He visited the sites of these two posts some thirty or more years after they had been abandoned and one may question seriously that marks of cultivation would still be in evidence after that lapse of time. The presence of carriages presupposes the use of these for transportation and also presupposes the presence of and use of horses or oxen for drawing them. The term "carriage" implies the use of horses, the term "cart" would have been more fitting if oxen were involved. We can be quite sure that there were no oxen in the Saskatchewan country in the 1750's. Henday, in his diary, makes no mention of any horses at either Paskoya or La Corne's fort, the first reference to them being considerably farther south and west. Actually horses still were a relatively rare item in this part of the country at that time. The point is that there is nothing to indicate that the people at either post had possession of, or made use of, horses or oxen for any purpose. This throws into question the presence of carriages or carts, and the marks of them at La Corne's fort in the 1750's. The first valid records of the presence of carts in the west places them in Manitoba some twenty years later than La Corne's fort.

The statement by Henry,¹⁷ who visited the site of La Corne's fort over fifty years after its abandonment, does not claim to have seen any agricultural implements or carriage wheels, merely noting that "some years ago were still to be seen the remains of agricultural implements and carriage wheels." However, he does state that: "their road to the plains is still to be seen, winding up a valley on the S. [outh] side." Any road that would be visible fifty or more years after last being used would have to be a well-travelled road, leaving noticeable wheel ruts, implying a large amount of travel. There is nothing to indicate that such travel occurred during the few years that the fort existed, in fact, there is no logical explanation why it would have occurred considering the fact that very few, if any, men remained at the fort during the summer. All in all, there is every reason to doubt that carriages or wheeled vehicles had been in use at La Corne's fort in the 1754-57 interval.

We turn now to Bennett's statements.¹⁸ It should be noted that Bennett cited no sources but, in view of his statements regarding Hendry (Henday), one may assume that he had had access to a journal written by Henday. However, the information that he quotes from this source cannot be found in any of the transcripts of the journal that are in existence at the present time.¹⁹ None of the transcripts of this journal mentions any form of agricultural activity at either La Corne's fort or Paskoya, or agricultural implements, or crushed cereal, or having been shown floury meal. The only reference to any cereal product is to half a biscuit which he had been served with a dram of brandy after supper. The only reference to being shown anything is to furs in the storeroom. This throws Bennett's account completely into question and, yet, it would appear to be the basis for most of the later statements regarding grain or wheat being grown by La Corne.

The statement in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*²⁰ that several acres of grain were seeded in 1754 does not stand up to scrutiny. In correspondence the editors of the *Dictionary* have been unable to produce a citation supporting the

statement. From a strictly practical standpoint it is almost impossible that La Corne could have had several acres of grain seeded. Unless a special allotment of men had been made for this purpose, and this seems to be unlikely, the normal pattern of operation of the post would not have provided sufficient manpower to use the primitive equipment of that time. Certainly, the evidence from Henday's²¹ journal makes it quite clear that in 1754, at Paskoya, there was a staff of only two men in the summer. We do not have specific information of the number of men at La Corne's fort in 1754 but, in 1755 there was a smaller complement of men than at Paskoya and it may be assumed that this was the case in 1754 as well.

Saskatchewan Farm Science referred to Professor Morton's biographical note on La Corne.²² In addition to the biographical note a memorandum by Morton was located on the first wheat grown in Saskatchewan. In this memorandum Morton makes reference to Captain John Franklin's visit to Fort Carlton in January 1820 in which Franklin reported on wheat, barley, oats and potatoes being grown there. Further Morton wrote:

The only other spots which could compete with Fort Carlton for the first crop of wheat are Cumberland House and the French post of Francois at à la Corne, 1772. Speaking from memory, I would say that the farm at Cumberland House did not exist before Governor William's residence there in 1819-21. Franklin who was there in the autumn of 1819 does not mention it. He simply says: — 'soil capable of producing corn (wheat) and vegetables.' He mentions the fine potatoes.

All we know of Francois' post at à la Corne is that he had something of a farm, and had farm implements. — wheels are mentioned, perhaps of his hay-carts. The Indian name of the spot is said to mean "the place where we first saw vegetables grow." We can make no statement about wheat. Indian corn is much more likely to have been his crop.²³

It should be noted that in none of these does Morton refer to La Corne in the period 1754-1757.

It seems safe to say that, unless new evidence can be brought forward to definitely verify that La Corne grew wheat in 1754, the stories that now exist about this will have to be classed as myths without any foundation in fact. There is more reason for doubt of this activity than for support of it. The first documented production of wheat in Saskatchewan was at Carlton House in 1815 when the diary recorded for May 3: "This day sowed 1 Bushel of Barley, 3½ pints of wheat."²⁴ Barley had been recorded as early as 1783 at Cumberland House²⁵ and Hudson House.²⁶

FOOTNOTES

The material from the Hudson's Bay Company sources is published by permission of the Hudson's Bay Company.

¹*Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974, Vol. 2, p. 332.

²*The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Toronto: Macmillan 1973, p. 377.

³*Encyclopedia Canadiana*. Toronto: Grolier, 1972, Vol. 6, p. 43.

⁴W. Kaye Lamb (ed.), *Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1970, p. 118.

⁵E. Coues, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry (the younger) and David Thompson*. New York: Harper, 1897, Vol. 2, pp. 482-483.

⁶A. S. Morton, *Under Western Skies*. Toronto: T. Nelson, 1937, p. 137.

⁷J. W. G. MacEwan, *Between the Red and the Rockies*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952, p. 14.

⁸A. S. Bennett, *Chevalier de la Corne and the Carrot River Valley of Saskatchewan*. Toronto: Atwell Fleming Printing Co., 1914, p. 4.

⁹*Ibid.* p. 7.

¹⁰*Ibid.* p. 9.

¹¹*Ibid.* p. 10.

¹²*Ibid.* p. 12.

- ¹³Saskatchewan Farm Service. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, October 1965, p. 2.
- ¹⁴A. Champagne, *Les Verendrye et les postes de l'Ouest*. Quebec: Les Presses de l'université Laval, 1968.
- ¹⁵L. J. Burpee (ed.), *York Factory to the Blackfeet Country the Journal of Anthony Henday 1754-1755*. Transactions Royal Society of Canada, Sec. 2, 3rd series, Vol. 1, pp. 307-364. Also original transcripts in PAC, HBC B239/A/40, E/2/4, E/2/6, and E/2/11.
- ¹⁶W. Kaye Lamb (ed.), *Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1970, p. 118.
- ¹⁷E. Coues, "Journals of Alexander Henry (the younger) and David Thompson," Vol. 2, pp. 482-483.
- ¹⁸A. S. Bennett, "Chevalier de la Corne," p. 4.
- ¹⁹L. J. Burpee (ed.), "Journal of Anthony Henday," pp. 307-364. Also original transcripts in PAC, HBC B239/A/40, E/2/4, E/2/6, and E/2/11.
- ²⁰*Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974, Vol. 2, p. 332.
- ²¹E. Coues, "Journals of Alexander Henry (the younger) and David Thompson," Vol. 2, pp. 482-483.
- ²²Saskatchewan Farm Service. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Oct. 1965, p. 2.
- ²³Saskatchewan Archives Board, A. S. Morton Papers, Memorandum re first wheat in Saskatchewan.
- ²⁴PAC, HBC B27/A/4, Carlton House Post Journal, 1815.
- ²⁵PAC, HBC B49/A/14, Cumberland House Post Journal, 1784.
- ²⁶PAC, HBC B87/A/6, Hudson House Post Journal, 1783.

THE LA CORNE FARMING HOAX

By C. Stuart Houston

WHAT a remarkable history an erroneous statement may have, when it is repeated so often that it becomes accepted as the truth. I am reminded of Margaret Morse Nice who, wondering why incubation times for birds' eggs in otherwise authoritative books were wrong, traced the misinformation from one source to another and another, almost *ad infinitum*, for over 2000 years back to the original misstatement of Aristotle.¹

I became interested in the supposed agricultural exploits of La Corne on the Saskatchewan River after I gave a talk on the history of the north to the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists meeting at Waskesiu in June 1976. Ken E. Bowren of the Agriculture Canada Research Station at Melfort wrote to dispute my statement concerning the priority of small fields near Hudson's Bay Company trading posts. Bowren enclosed a page from the *History of Melfort*² which in turn quoted from Arthur S. Bennett's 1914 booklet on *The Chevalier de la Corne and the Carrot River Valley of Saskatchewan*.³ In this 39-page booklet, Bennett claimed that Anthony Henday on 29 May 1755 had visited La Corne's fort and had been served "floury meal" "of fine flavour." As quoted by Bennett, Henday said of La Corne, "Certainly no other man, save this resourceful officer, would ever have thought of trying to grow grain in this wild, unknown land."

I replied to Bowren that I was most skeptical, since these quotations and indeed anything like them, were absent from Burpee's published version of Henday's journal,⁴ and that good historians such as Arthur S. Morton, Marjorie Wilkins Campbell and James McGregor would have recognized the historical importance of such an early agricultural attempt, yet made no mention of it.

My friend, the late Tom Melville-Ness, then registrar of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists then added fuel to the fire when he published an article, "First Western Wheatfield," in the *Western Producer* of 21 October 1976.⁵ Melville-Ness gave as his authority Dr. David Smith, the Historic Sites and Monuments representative for Saskatchewan, who had presided at the ceremony in September 1975, when a cairn and plaque commemorating Louis de la Corne were unveiled at the fort site on the Saskatchewan River.

Tom Melville-Ness when challenged provided photocopies of the *Saskatchewan Farm News* of October 1965⁶ and the *Kinistino Post* of 8 October 1975,⁷ the latter quoting Dr. David Smith with the statement that La Corne had planted some four acres of grain in 1754. A similar story with further embellishments then appeared in the *Regina Leader-Post* on 6 February 1976.⁸ Doreen Mierau in a byline story reported that La Corne cultivated three acres, and claimed that barley, wheat, oats, turnips, carrots, cabbage, peas and potatoes had been grown. Mierau also claimed that on one occasion La Corne had received 1000 of the finest furs from the Indians in trade for flour. The veracity of this story was perhaps suspect from Mierau's erroneous claim that Joseph Smith of the Hudson's Bay Company was a missionary.

I next contacted Dr. David Smith. He denied making the statement ascribed to

him by Melville-Ness and the *Kinistino Post*, and sent me a copy of the speech he made at the unveiling of the La Corne plaque. There was indeed no mention of La Corne and agriculture, though Smith thought a mimeographed handout prepared by the federal department for the occasion might have contained such a statement.

I next wrote the local historian of the Kinistino area, Jerrold Armstrong. Armstrong was extremely skeptical of the claims concerning agriculture. He replied, "I wonder why the Chevalier or any of the voyageurs would be carrying seeds? What interest would such men have in cultivating a few acres in the wilderness? Louis Chapt de la Corne was a soldier, a commander, an explorer, engaged in extending the French fur-trade and territorial claims. True, the French did use parched corn as a portable ration — but is parched corn viable? The 'half a bisket' that the Commander served Henday would, I suppose, be pilot biscuit or hardtack. Henday makes no mention of meal."

In the fall of 1976 I began a more serious investigation of the matter. The *Saskatchewan Farm Science*, published by the University of Saskatchewan, printed a note in their February 1965 issue⁹ stating that the first wheat was grown in Western Canada in 1754. W. S. Frazer, an Assistant Commissioner with the Board of Grain Commissioners in Winnipeg, and A. J. Harder, a grain buyer at Lewvan, Saskatchewan, each enquired promptly as to the basis for this statement. Since the initial statement was "lifted" from the newsletter, *Budget*,¹⁰ of the Alberta Wheat Pool, Professor Lorne C. Paul of the Extension Division of the University wrote to the Alberta Wheat Pool and learned that the authority for their little "filler" was page 6 of *Quick Canadian Facts*, 16th edition.¹¹ Professor Paul then wrote to C. J. Harris, editor of this book, and learned that his source was the *Encyclopedia Canadiana*.¹² Correspondence with J. Cromwell Young gave the Encyclopedia's source in turn as Bennett's little booklet already mentioned, supported by a note by A. Fauteux in *Bulletin des Recherches Historiques* in 1920¹³ and a sentence in the *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.¹⁴ Armed with this seeming documentation, Professor Paul then wrote the little article in the October 1965 issue of *Saskatchewan Farm Science* which Melville-Ness had given me. Paul also referred to an unpublished note of Arthur S. Morton's in the Saskatchewan Archives.

The 1936 and 1945 editions of the *Encyclopedia of Canada*, edited by W. Stewart Wallace,¹⁵ and the 1963 *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, also edited by Wallace,¹⁶ each stated that La Corne "explored the Carrot River valley . . . Here he made some experiments in the growing of wheat; and he may thus be described as the first agriculturist of the Canadian West." Wallace's source was the already-mentioned one-page note by Fauteux.¹⁷ Fauteux faulted the editor of *Recherches Historiques*, Pierre-Georges Roy, for not correcting, in his review of Bennett's booklet in volume 20,¹⁸ the obvious fact the Bennett had named the wrong La Corne brother, Luc instead of Louis. Fauteux, having identified one of Bennett's errors, nevertheless unhesitatingly gave credence to Roy's review of Bennett by repeating that in the Carrot River valley, "au printemps de l'année 1754, de La Corne ensemencait quelques arpents de terre . . ."

All trails thus led back to Bennett's little booklet. What sources might Bennett have had? I began work in the University of Saskatchewan library and continued in the McGill University library. The biographical dictionaries provided the best sources. Much the best and most succinct account of the life of Louis La Corne was the two-page account by C. J. Russ in the 1974 edition of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Volume 3, 1741-1770).¹⁹ This led to many detailed accounts in French of

La Corne's exploits both before and after his appointment as commandant of the *poste de l'Ouest*. Russ did make it clear that both La Corne's posts were on the Saskatchewan, correcting the inference of his predecessor, Wallace, that the farming was in the Carrot River valley. Russ was content to continue a reference to the early farming activity, but changed the wording to that of Roy's review, "seeded several acres of grain."²⁰

Russ' references in turn led me to Father Le Jeune's *Dictionnaire General du Canada*, vol. 2, 1931,²¹ with detailed entries about many more members of the accomplished La Corne family, including La Corne's father, Jean-Louis and six of La Corne's brothers, all with confusing and overlapping names. Of the four references given by Le Jeune, the most useful was Father A. Morice's *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*.²² Father Morice, unfortunately, was hopelessly confused about the identity and deeds of Louis and his brother Luc. Morice claimed, without any supporting documentation, that "it was La Corne who was responsible for the first attempt at agriculture in the Canadian Northwest. This took place in the valley of the Carrot River, a tributary of the Saskatchewan which he reached by the end of 1753." Here was obviously the source of Bennett's information — and an uncorroborated source at that.

Next I was able to borrow a copy of Bennett's much-quoted but scarce booklet on interlibrary loan from the University of British Columbia.

Bennett's work was quite obviously a hurried job to publicize the big fair scheduled for Melfort in 1914, and incidentally to publicize the value of adjacent land for homesteading. To achieve this Bennett took a great many liberties with the truth. Bennett used the novelist's quotation marks as though he were quoting verbatim from Henday, whereas no documents containing such statements is known to exist; he exaggerated 'bloody conflict between the Indians and venturesome white'; he claimed the original survey for the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway went 'close to the present town of Melfort' when in fact it was nearly 50 miles away; he claimed that General Middleton's troops during the Riel Rebellion were fed with cattle raised in the Melfort district; he said the Melfort creamery was in its second year of operation whereas its production had been listed for five years; he claimed the creamery's butter production that year was 240,000 pounds whereas it was listed officially as 122,679 pounds; he gave the distance to Lake Lenore station as only 20 miles whereas it was 39 miles; he gave the 1913 population of Melfort as over 1500 inhabitants whereas in 1916 it was still only 971; he spoke of the country being 'simply swarmed every Fall by ducks that may almost be knocked with clubs'; he quoted a 'prominent Winnipeg capitalist' who referred to Melfort as 'The Edmonton of Saskatchewan'.

Bennett's work was not that of a careful historian. It was the work of a publicist (perhaps hired by a land company or the local Board of Trade?). Armed with two unvalidated sentences in Morice's work, and knowing the years of Henday's visit, Bennett parlayed all this into a fanciful booklet calculated to promote trade and settlement if not knowledge. Bennett's use of quotation marks for statements he undoubtedly fancied that Henday might have made, gave such statements a ring of authenticity that has not yet been lived down. The favourable review of Pierre-Georges Roy gave Bennett the stamp of approval, so that ever since he has been quoted, secondhand and thirdhand by historians of both languages who should have known better. It is highly unlikely that Father Morice had access to some unique manuscript not known to anyone else before or since.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Margaret Morse Nice, "Incubation Period through the Ages," *Centaurus*, 1954, Vol. 3, pp. 311-359.
- ²Timothy Ryan, *Voices of the Past, A History of Melfort and District*, Melfort, Golden Jubilee Committee, 1955, pp. 8-9.
- ³Arthur S. Bennett, *Chevalier de la Corne and the Carrot River Valley of Saskatchewan*, Toronto, Atwell Fleming Pub. Co., 1914.
- ⁴Anthony Henday, "York Factory to the Blackfeet country; the journal of Anthony Henday, 1754-55;" edited by Lawrence J. Burpee, *Roy. Soc. Canada, Trans.*, 3rd ser., v. 1, sect. 2, 1907, pp. 307-359.
- ⁵Tom Melville-Ness, "First Western Wheatfield," *Western Producer*, 21 October 1976, p. C3.
- ⁶"First Wheat in Western Canada," *Saskatchewan Farm Science*, October 1965, p. 2.
- ⁷"Plaque unveiled to honor 'Le Chevalier de La Corne'," *Kinistino Post*, 8 October 1975.
- ⁸Doreen Mierau, "Fort Site of West's First Farm," *Regina Leader-Post*, 6 February 1976, p. 7.
- ⁹*Saskatchewan Farm Science*, University of Saskatchewan, February 1965.
- ¹⁰*Budget*, newsletter, Alberta Wheat Pool, January 1965.
- ¹¹C. J. Harris, (ed.), *Quick Canadian Facts*, 16th ed., Toronto, Quick Canadian Facts Ltd.
- ¹²"Carrot River," *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, Ottawa, Canadiana Co., Vol. 2, 1957, p. 253.
- ¹³Aegidius Fauteux, "Le Chevalier de La Corne," *Bull. des Recherches Historiques*, Vol. 26, 1920, p. 352.
- ¹⁴W. S. Wallace, (ed.), *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 3rd ed., Toronto, Macmillan, 1963, p. 377.
- ¹⁵W. S. Wallace, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Canada*, Toronto, University Associates of Canada, 1936, Vol. 3, p. 369, and W. S. Wallace, (ed.), *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Toronto, Macmillan, 1945, Vol. 2, p. 330.
- ¹⁶W. S. Wallace, (ed.), *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 3rd ed., Toronto, Macmillan, 1963, p. 377.
- ¹⁷Aegidius Fauteux, "Le Chevalier de La Corne," *Bull. des Recherches Historiques*, Vol. 26, 1920, p. 352.
- ¹⁸Pierre-Georges Roy, review of "Chevalier de la Corne and the Carrot River Valley of Saskatchewan," *Recherches Historiques*, Vol. 20, 1911, pp. 11-12.
- ¹⁹C. J. Russ, "Louis La Corne," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 1741-1770, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974, Vol. 3, pp. 331-332.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*
- ²¹L. Le Jeune *Dictionnaire General du Canada*, Ottawa: Universite d'Ottawa, 1931, Vol. 2, pp. 18-21.
- ²²A. G. Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, from Lake Superior to the Pacific, 1659-1895*, Toronto, Musson, 1910, Vol. I, pp. 46-52.

Book Reviews

THE PLAINS CREE. An ethnographic, historical, and comparative study. By David G. Mandelbaum. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1979. Pp xvii, 400, Illus., map. \$14.50.

This book describes the final phase of aboriginal Plains Cree life from 1860 to 1880 in central and southern Saskatchewan. It includes a history of Cree expansion during the 1600s and 1700s from Hudson Bay and Lake Superior through the boreal forest to the Rocky Mountains and subsequently a southward offshoot which stayed on the Northern Plains to become the Plains Cree. It is also about the mainstays of Plains Cree economy (the buffalo, dog, horse, other game and vegetal foods, the annual cycle and property) and about Plains Cree manufactures and artifacts, the individual life cycle, religion, ceremonialism and warfare. Finally, it concludes with a comparison of Cree traits before and after the prairie invasion in an attempt to determine what changes in tribal culture followed the change in environment.

The Plains Cree is a superb scholarly record of an obscure and fast disappearing phenomenon. Today, written records and second or thirdhand recollections are all that is left. But when Mandelbaum visited Plains Cree reservations during the summers of 1934 and 1935 he found men and women still alive who could recall, firsthand, the free-ranging buffalo days in clear and vivid detail. Their testimony is the basis for the ethnographic record, while Mandelbaum's own research in the scattered writings of early explorers, missionaries and ethnographers is a tempering component which reinforces the record throughout. I admire the organization, the clear simple writing and the timeliness of this record, yet, because it is so rich, it is best read in bits and pieces for specific information.

In essentially the present form, *The Plains Cree* was submitted as a doctoral dissertation at Yale University in 1936. Four years later the American Museum of Natural History published the historical and ethnological sections as part of their series of Anthropological Papers. That 1940 version seems to have circulated rather widely among students of Plains Indians as it is cited often, even though it has been out of print for many years.

Scholarly, political and also public interest in accurate Plains Cree history began to rise in the mid-1960s and has continued abreast of the modern Cree's own rising assertiveness. In October 1975 the Canadian Plains Research Center organized a conference of anthropologists (including David Mandelbaum) and Plains Cree elders, several of whom had been young adults at the time of Mandelbaum's field work. The purpose was to explore further the ways of the Plains Cree, but at the end of the conference little new light had been shed upon the work started 40 years earlier. In a way, however, the search for new information which prompted the conference was answered by the republication of Mandelbaum's classic ethnographic and historical studies together with his old, but never before published, comparative study.

This new edition of *The Plains Cree* contains the complete text and illustrations of the 1940 edition, plus 13 new illustrations from Mandelbaum's collection, plus eight paintings about Cree Indians, plus the comparative section, a new index and an enlarged bibliography. The text has been completely reset in a slightly larger type and in one column rather than two per page. The end result is considerably bulkier but also easier to read than the original. The new Mandelbaum illustrations have

been integrated into the text, significantly enhancing it. Unfortunately no attempt was made to integrate the new paintings: the basis for their selection and placement is a puzzle to me. One last technical comment — this book is available only in paperback. The majority of the copies I've seen are poorly bound.

The comparative section adds about 30% to the size of this new edition. In it Mandelbaum compares the Plains Cree with their eastern forest-oriented relatives including the Eastern Cree, various Ojibwa groups, the bands of the Labrador Peninsula, the Menomini and other Central Woodlands tribes. The basis of comparison is a host of traits organized in a fashion similar to the ethnographic section. Next he repeats the exercise comparing the Plains Cree with Northern Plains tribes in order to discover western affiliations. Thus Mandelbaum shows that the Plains Cree maintained many basic similarities to the Eastern Cree groups while assuming 17 of the 21 traits thought to be particularly characteristic of Plains culture. The Cree of the Plains relinquished the canoe, tailored clothing, hunting magic and perhaps also pottery and the sororate, but gained the horse and many ceremonial forms and society organizations. Mandelbaum concludes that the many common denominators underlying the Forest and Plains cultures may be explained if it is assumed that they are both derived from an archaic Northeastern Algonkian base. This conclusion fits rather well with early 20th century anthropological theories including the idea that the peopling of the Plains was a recent phenomenon. However, archaeologists have since shown that the Plains have been occupied for at least 12,000 years. Consequently there is no compelling reason why Plains traits should be derived from the east. They may have been, but isn't the reverse also possible? Furthermore, perhaps a joint ancestor should be sought a good deal farther back in time and in the old world.

Academic interests aside, the elements of *The Plains Cree* that have lasting value are mainly its ethnographic and historical records. Thanks to the efforts of the Canadian Plains Research Center this information will be much more readily available than it has been in the past.

Ian G. Dyck

CHAUTAUQUA IN CANADA. By Sheilagh S. Jameson in collaboration with Nola B. Erickson. Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1979. Pp. 168. Illus. \$12.50 cloth.

Chautauqua was a little like a genteel (very genteel) and educational travelling circus. The idea originated in the United States in Methodist summer camp meetings, and expanded into a lyceum where lecturers of the stature of Alexander Graham Bell, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendall Holmes, Henry Thoreau, Mark Twain, and even Charles Dickens held forth. In both the United States and Canada, this high intellectual pitch was tempered by performance of a lighter nature — by "The Sunshine Girls," Swiss hand bell ringers, Russian Cossack choirs, and patriotic pageants put on by the local children.

Sheilagh Jameson, the Chief Archivist of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute writes of the eighteen years Chautauqua flourished in Canada between 1917 and 1935. Then the big brown tents — the Chautauqua trademark — were taken down for the last time, not only because of the Depression, but also because cars, radio, and movies were making cultural life in small-town Canada a little less meagre. Nola B. Erickson, who with her husband J. M. Erickson, brought the Chautauqua circuit to Canada, provided much of the material which makes this book such a human

document. As a result, it is not the Chautauqua audiences, nor the performers and lecturers, but the workers who are the focus.

Chautauqua may have been more rough-edged and "folksy" than the movies and radio that replaced it, but local people helped arrange it, local children performed in it, and occasionally local notables spoke on the platform. As well, it allowed many Canadian university students to tour Canada in the summer as "tent boys" and "story hour girls," and gave the young lady superintendents, who coordinated the whole effort in each town something more challenging to do than traditional "women's work." Three chapters are written through the eyes of one of these young women, describing Chautauqua week and the week before it in a small prairie town in 1921. Towns that made a loss often rebooked anyway, for the sake of children who never otherwise would have seen a stage play or listened to Schubert. Wallace Stegner went, much to the relief of his culture-hungry mother, and for the three days of the Chautauqua was something more than a "sensual little savage." Lots of children who didn't grow up to win the Pulitzer Prize may have benefitted from it too.

On the Rocky Mountain circuit in 1921, there were 63 towns, and the circuit ran from May 17 to August 3. At all times Chautauqua personnel were in seven towns in a row along the line, selling tickets, setting up tents, and so on, with the performers moving along each day from one town to the next. At first Chautauqua stayed along the rail lines; later the automobile made it possible for performers to take to the roads, as several dramatic photographs of horses pulling out mired cars make clear. Chautauqua even went to Alaska and the Peace River between 1918 and 1923, this time by boat.

In the United States, Chautauqua became a platform for presidential campaigns, for early social crusades, and for the opinions of the leading intellectual men of the nation. Canada's Chautauqua generally imported speakers, usually from Great Britain, to avoid any suspicion of American domination of the organization. Few Canadian speakers of national importance were ever booked. One exception was Henry Wise Wood of the United Farmers of Alberta, whose speaking circuits may have had something to do with the founding of the wheat pools in Saskatchewan and Alberta. One weakness of the book is that we discover very little about what was actually said on the Chautauqua platform; for example, all we find out about Emmaline Pankhurst was that she was very charming, and wanted a hot cup of tea after her lecture.

Physically, the book is attractive, and the photographs (all those little girls on dusty prairie streets in white stockings, and the performers in those wonderful 'twenties hats) fascinating. Occasionally, as in the somewhat artificial account of a Chautauqua evening which serves to allow the introduction of "funny reminiscences," the style falters. During this evening, when "no drink stronger than coffee was served, and none was expected," I began to feel a little as William James did after spending a week at Chautauqua in 1896: "The Chautauqua week . . . has been a real success. I have learned a lot, but I'm glad to get into something less blameless. . . . The flash of a pistol, a dagger, or a devilish eye, anything to break the unlovely level of 10,000 good people — a crime, murder, rape, elopement, anything would do."

Margery Fee

CANADA AND THE BURDEN OF UNITY. David Jay Bercuson, ed. Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1977. Pp. 191. \$6.95.

This is a book about regionalism, a subject which editor Bercuson rightly describes as one of the most basic, yet least understood facets of the Canadian experience. Many Canadians, he tells us, while paying "lip-service" to the fact of the country's regional make-up, simply "wish regionalism would go away." The wish is unrealistic and Bercuson thinks it is time Canadians finally accepted the regional character of their country and made it the basis for a thorough re-assessment of national ideals and priorities.

To this end he brought together essays by seven Canadian academics (five historians, an economist and a political scientist). The dominant and unifying theme of these essays is that Canada's hinterland regions — namely the Maritimes and the West — have been unfairly burdened by the institutions and policies which serve to maintain the country's unity.

Despite this common focus the range of the essays is wide, making a short critical review which does justice to each contribution rather difficult. Four of the essays deal with the Maritime provinces. Carman Miller examines the source and viability of proposals for Maritime union — both past and present. E. R. Forbes assesses the effect which national transportation policies have had on the Maritime provinces, while T. W. Acheson's essay concerns itself with the impact of national and economic policies on the region's development. The concluding chapter on the Maritimes, by Colin Howell, offers an historical overview of Nova Scotia's tradition of political protest.

Readers of *Saskatchewan History* will no doubt be most interested in the two prairie contributions. T. D. Regehr turns his attention to that long-standing western grievance, national transportation policies. He argues that the absence of effective competition to and among the railways in Western Canada is primarily responsible for the region's consistently higher freight rates. This fact is not only recognized by the federal government, but is given official sanction with a policy bearing the odd title, "fair discrimination." Regehr contends that a discriminatory transportation policy has greatly hindered the development of a diversified economy within the region.

Regehr is convinced that a non-discriminatory transportation policy will only emerge as a result of concerted action by the provinces. The historical example upon which he bases this hope is the railway legislation introduced by the Manitoba government at the turn of the century. He also suggests that, ironically, the two federal railway policies most vigorously defended in the West — the Crow rates and the reduction of obsolete branch lines — are now impediments to the creation of a policy of non-discriminatory freight rates. As long as the federal government is compelled to support these costly policies it is unlikely to make the necessary concessions which would establish equitable freight rates in all the country's regions.

David Smith's essay deals with politics and the long history of prairie discontent with certain aspects of federalism. Smith attributes this discontent to the prairie's prolonged frustration of "unfulfilled expectations" for economic development and to the distinctive political culture which has evolved in the region. He believes the problem stems in large part from the fact that the West has not had a strong voice in

Ottawa because, in recent times at least, it has consistently opposed the party in power.

To rectify the problem, Smith argues — none too convincingly in my view — that more Western participation in the deliberations of the Liberal party is necessary. In addition to a stronger vote at the centre, he thinks much of western discontent could be alleviated by giving greater control and power in certain key areas to the region itself. To this end he recommends a qualified form of decentralization — little more than moving government offices and agencies out into the region most concerned with their activities. Of more significance is his proposal for devolution whereby the delegation of authority in certain matters is handed over by the federal government to subordinate agencies. Smith sees these agencies acting as intermediaries between the provinces and the federal government. As examples he proposes a Western Canada Planning Council and a Western Canada Resources Development Council.

The remaining essay is more general in its focus and somewhat different in tone. Economist Paul Phillips, argues that regional disparities are the product not so much of national policy, but of the control now exercised over the Canadian economy by multinational corporations. Phillips sees the only solution lying in “a reaffirmation of the federal authority over the national economy and regional investment priorities.” His reply to the litany of regional grievances is not a reduction of federal authority, but a “new national policy” every bit as centralist in its intention as that of John A. Macdonald’s.

On the whole these essays make a notable and worthwhile contribution to the literature on regional discontent with Confederation. Yet each falls well short of the editor’s account of their intent. In his introductory essay, Bercuson describes these contributions as a type of “anti-national history . . . intended to go against the grain of Canadian history.”

Undoubtedly there is an element of truth in this claim. English Canadian historians have generally shared a centralist bias and are far more likely to interpret regionalism as a burden to national unity than to see the instruments of unity as burdens on the regions. It is also true that the essays in this book, with the possible exception of Professor Phillips, take the opposite point of view. Nonetheless they can hardly be said “to go against the grain of Canadian history.” The theme of regional discontent with national policies is a firmly entrenched theme in Canadian historiography, while complaints about the centralist bias of Canadian historians have now entered the domain of the cliché.

In short, while Bercuson argues for the need to radically reassess the place of the region within the country, his contributors have simply not achieved that end. Indeed, they do not even seem to share in this intention. All contributors — Professor Bercuson included — seem to hold with the same basic assumptions about regionalism that have been and still remain the basis of Canadian nationhood. This concept of the region is based on the economic specialization and interdependence of regions within the country and on the dependence of resource hinterland regions on external markets, capital, industry and technology. It seems to me that with this notion of the region, and the assumptions that follow from it, any hinterland region is almost surely to be placed in a disadvantaged position irregardless of national policy. Government policy, it is true, can and does contribute to regional inequalities. But that policy is secondary to — indeed it is a product of — our concept of the region and its relation to the nation and the world as a whole.

Unfortunately for those enticed by the promise of a new perspective of regionalism, the contributors to this volume have focused their attention almost solely on government policy with respect to the region and thus neglect the assumptions which underlie that policy. As such they have not achieved the sort of radical re-thinking of the region's place within Confederation envisaged by Professor Bercuson.

This fact should not deter readers, however. Apart from the editor's false promise — primarily the result of a propensity for overstatement — the book is to be recommended. It is a useful collection of readable and well-researched essays dealing with regional responses to several national institutions and policies. To have accomplished this important task — albeit a more modest one than the editor hoped for — makes the book a welcome addition to the literature on Canadian regionalism.

E. H. Wood

AGRICULTURE IN THE GREAT PLAINS, 1876-1936, Thomas R. Wessel, ed. Washington: Agricultural History Society, 1977.

In 1976 the sixth of a series of interdisciplinary symposia on major aspects of agricultural history was sponsored by the Agricultural History Society. The subject chosen was Agriculture in the Great Plains, 1876-1936; the setting was Montana State University; and sponsoring organizations were the Agricultural History Society, United States Department of Agriculture, the Montana Bicentennial Administration, and Montana State University. This volume, edited by Thomas R. Wessel, and originally published as volume 51, number 1 of *Agricultural History*, is a compilation of the papers presented on that occasion.

The papers included are varied. Academics from as far afield as Ontario, Manitoba, Minnesota, Georgia, Oregon and Alberta focus their expertise as historians, economists and geographers on the development of plains agriculture. Their analyses and research studies, coupled with the personal reminiscences of ranchers, and the accounts of government administrators involved over a long period of time with the practical problems of plains farmers, guarantee presentations diverse in style, content, and point of view. And the time parameters also suggest a broad spectrum of coverage, which does indeed range from the settlement of Kansas in the early 1870's, to range management experiments in Texas circa 1895, to the career of the spectacular farm entrepreneur Thomas D. Campbell following the first World War, to a study of farm income on the Canadian prairies after 1920.

Although, as might be anticipated, the majority of the papers deal with American data, much of the discussion has relevance to the Saskatchewan scene and is of interest to residents and historians of the Canadian plains. Three of the twenty papers included were written by Canadian university personnel and merit special mention in the context of this review. Kenneth Norrie of the University of Alberta analyzes "Dry Farming and the Economics of Risk Bearing: the Canadian Prairies, 1870-1930" (p. 134-148); Garin Burbank of the University of Winnipeg compares "Agrarian Socialism in Saskatchewan and Oklahoma; Short-run Radicalism, Long-run Conservatism" (p. 173-180); and Robert E. Ankli of the University of Guelph discusses "Farm Income on the Great Plains and Canadian Prairies, 1920-1940" (p. 92-103).

In a note as brief as this, space does not permit critical examination of

individual contributions. Moreover, it is somewhat dangerous to single out specific papers lest the significance of others be inadvertently downgraded. But, on the assumption that the professional will seek out and identify those papers bearing on this specialized field of study, the reviewer risks bringing two papers to the attention of the lay person interested generally in the history of plains farming and ranching. The first, by Hiram Drache, documents the career and farming ventures of Thomas D. Campbell who is credited with personally owning and operating the world's largest wheat farm. Campbell was an innovative Montana farmer who, in 1917, set out to prove that mechanized farming was the most economical; that through proper conservation practices the Great Plains could profitably produce grain; and that farms based on hired labor and management could compete with farms based on family labor. He set himself the goal of producing one million bushels of grain in a single year and by 1922 was on the way with 100,000 acres of land plowed, and 110,000 acres fenced. By 1927 he was seeding 64,000 acres annually. His story speaks directly to farmers and others today interested in, or concerned about, the spread of the giant, mechanized farm business.

The second paper noted is the reminiscences of Dan Fulton, a retired Montana rancher, entitled "Failure on the Plains." The editor of the books notes in his introduction that Fulton's comments and attitudes led to lively discussion at the symposium meetings. Fulton relates his family's experiences in Montana beginning in 1881 through to his own personal recollections of the 1930's. The people of whom he writes were in his words, "typical of the range livestock operators of the period," neither rich nor overweening, friends of the homesteaders. In describing their lives and times he hopes to add, he says, "realism to the history books by talking about some real people."

As has been indicated, the papers included in *Agriculture in the Great Plains, 1876-1936* vary markedly in content, depth, referencing, and point of view. They are, however, an extremely interesting collection, touching as they do upon those many aspects of rural plains life and dryland agricultural history studied by academics and pondered by other thoughtful Saskatchewan residents.

Arlean McPherson

Notes and Correspondence

The Regional History Committee of the Canadian Historical Association wishes to announce that it is soliciting nominations for its 'Certificate of Merit' Awards. These annual awards are given for meritorious publications, or for exceptional contributions by individuals or organizations to regional history. The awards will be announced at the CHA Annual Meeting in Montreal in June 1980. Please send your nominations to the prairie representative on the committee at the following address: Professor Gerald Friesen, Department of History, St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2M6.

Saskatchewan History was one of the recipients of a 'Certificate of Merit' at the Canadian Historical Association's annual meeting at Saskatoon in June 1979. The award was received on behalf of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, publisher of the magazine, by its editor, D. H. Bocking.

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