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THE CCF VICTORY IN
SASKATCHEWAN, 1944

By Lewis H. Thomas

The victory of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and preceding developments in the political activities of the Farmer-Labor Party have been examined in numerous articles and a few books, written chiefly by political scientists and sociologists, rather than by historians. The only exception is by Professor Ivan Avakumovic, in Socialism in Canada, whose chapter entitled “The Saskatchewan Story” provides a good background for the victory of 1944, although it is less than satisfactory in its assessment of the CCF in office.

The first of these studies, and by far the most influential, was Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, published in 1950. The author, Seymour Martin Lipset, was a young New Yorker at Columbia University, who undertook the study originally as a Ph.D. dissertation. The basis and purpose of his study was clearly described in his preface as follows:

My own theoretical framework is derived largely from the sociologists who have been concerned with the problems of power, influence, class, organization, social change, and functional analysis. I am a supporter of the Democratic Socialist Movement of which the C.C.F. is a part, but I have been concerned with the wide discrepancy between the ideology and behaviour of most present day democratic socialist governments.

Subsequent writers, either political sociologists like Lipset, or political scientists, have examined the CCF from the point of view of determining whether it was truly a socialist party, as it claimed to be, and have discussed its alleged departure from their definition of socialism by the record of events prior to and during its term of office. The purpose of this paper is to contribute in a small way to the historical examination of the record of the CCF in office, by examining some events in the year 1944, and pertinent preceding developments.

The first point to be made is that the Farmer-Labor Party, founded in the summer of 1932 in Saskatoon, was not dominated by farmers, though they naturally constituted the largest group of paid-up members. Trade unionists, many of whom had been Labour Party supporters in the United Kingdom, contributed their brand of socialist ideology to the deliberations of the new party. Also involved were numerous professionals, including educators, who had been converted to socialism by the social gospel, by Fabianism, and by the writings of Fred Henderson and other democratic socialists. Knowledge of the ideas and policies of labour parties in the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries, Australia, and particularly New Zealand, was also widespread.

One glaring defect in the works of sociologists and political scientists is the failure to assess the impact of the social gospel on the ideology of the Saskatchewan CCF and of its record in office. All these writers are secularists, who are probably incapable of either appreciating the significance of the social gospel and Christian
Socialism, or of realizing its influence on the more important leaders of the CCF, notably like T. C. Douglas, A. M. Nicholson, Gertrude Telford, and many others in the party. There is no evidence that any of these writers have ever read Walter Rauschenbusch’s *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, published in 1907, Salem Bland’s *The New Christianity*, published in 1920, or the comprehensive *Towards the Christian Revolution*, written by nine Canadian scholars in 1936, including Old Testament authority R. B. Y. Scott, economist Eugene Forsey, and theologian and activist J. King Gordon. All of the authors were associated with the national CCF, and discussed socialism from the national and international viewpoint.

Rauschenbusch’s book is a classic in the literature of American theology. Like some other American theologians, notably Francis G. Peabody and Shailer Mathews, he was convinced that “Western civilization is passing through a social revolution unparalleled in history for scope and power.” He believed that in the history of Western civilization “the essential purpose of Christianity was to transform human society into the Kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them in accordance with the will of God.” The establishment of the Kingdom involved the peaceful reorganization of the economic systems along socialist lines. Rauschenbusch was one of the early Christian Socialists to use the term “cooperative commonwealth” — whose policies he describes at some length.

The writings of Rauschenbusch, Peabody, and Mathews were to influence J. S. Woodsworth when he composed *My Neighbor*, published in 1911, and there is a reference therein to the cooperative commonwealth. It was Salem Bland, however, who was the most vigorous proponent of the social gospel at this time. Bland, a Canadian Methodist minister widely acquainted with the Canadian scene, was a professor at Wesley College, Winnipeg, from 1903 to 1917. From the beginning of his ministry, Bland had attacked the lethargy of the church in confronting social and moral issues in the materialistic 20th century world. His book, though much shorter than Rauschenbusch’s, was much more popular in style and more specific in its definition of the principles of the social gospel in the Canadian setting. At one point he declared:

Does Christianity mean Socialism? It means infinitely more than Socialism. It means Socialism plus a deeper, diviner brotherhood than even Socialism seeks. It abhors inequality. Bland decried competition in economic affairs, and praised the virtues of public ownership:

Public ownership, more extensively and powerfully than other human agency, teaches men to say we and ours, it teaches them to think socially.

To discredit and attack the principle of public ownership is to discredit and attack Christianity. It would seem to be the special sin against the Holy Ghost of our age.

Bland was a revered associate of the distinguished group of reformers in the labour and farmers’ movements in Winnipeg prior to, and during, the First World War. No wonder that the publication of *The New Christianity* aroused hostility in middle class circles, and panic in the intelligence service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. On the other hand, it was praised by reviewers in the daily press in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and was promoted and sold by *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, which was received in most farm homes on the prairies.

There is clear evidence that the tenets of the social gospel became an important element in the propaganda of the organized farm movement in the prairie region.
By 1917," writes Professor Allen in *The Social Passion*, "all wings of the social gospel seem to have found a place of such prominence in the farmers' organization that it might well be termed the religion of the agrarian revolt." Also influenced was E. A. Partridge of Sintaluta, Saskatchewan, a towering figure in the western farm movement from 1901 to the late twenties. In 1926 he published *A War on Poverty*, a thoroughgoing attack on capitalism, combined with a proposal to establish a cooperative commonwealth imbued with Christian principles within a union of the four western provinces. Partridge did not define the cooperative commonwealth with precision, but it appears that he was advocating replacing monopoly capitalism with cooperatives, along with a comprehensive extension of educational and welfare services. The influence of the social gospel, therefore, must be taken into consideration in examining the ideology of the emerging third party in Saskatchewan in the 1930's.\(^9\)

The United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) had been organized in 1926 by the more militant elements in the earlier Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, and the professedly radical Farmers' Union. But in 1926 the UFC was not socialist. This was to change when George Williams (1894-1945) was elected president in 1928. The disastrous fall in the price of wheat in 1930 enabled Williams and his fellow radicals to promote socialist ideas in the UFC convention of that year. But despite the pronouncement of E. A. Partridge, honorary president, that "true co-operation has its final goal in socialism, which is the continuous observance of the Golden Rule,"\(^10\) the convention rejected direct political action that year, and adopted a platform of which the following was one item:

Abolition of the competitive system and substitution of a cooperative system of manufacturing, transportation, and distribution.\(^11\)
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The convention also called for the nationalization of the Canadian Pacific Railway, public utilities, and natural resources.

Meanwhile, the Independent Labour Party of Saskatchewan was organized in 1929 in Regina, and later in seven other cities. It was democratic socialist in ideology, like the British Labour Party. M. J. Coldwell was elected provincial president. Coldwell (1888-1974), a Regina school principal, was born in England and migrated to Canada in 1910. In 1925 he had run unsuccessfully for Parliament as a Progressive, campaigning on unemployment insurance and old age pensions, which existed in Britain as a result of Lloyd George’s influence on the Liberal government prior to the War. Coldwell had examined these measures during a holiday in England the year before. 13

The UFC, in contrast to the ILP, contained both conservative and radical wings, and was not organized for direct political action until 1931, when the impact of the depression permitted the radicals to induce the annual convention of that year to endorse a socialist program of political action. Between 1931 and 1933 there were lively discussions at the annual conventions of the UFC on land policy. Even conservative farmers, goaded by the fear that they would lose their land to the mortgage companies, were prepared to consider some change in land tenure. 14

In 1932 the UFC and the ILP held a joint meeting where it was decided to establish a political party to be known as the Farmer-Labor Party of Saskatchewan, which Williams had recently been advocating. 15 The next task was to adopt a platform. Dr. Carlyle King recalls the discussions: “Some wanted to socialize everything but their toothbrush, and then of course there were some who wanted to socialize just a few things.” 16 Land policy provided for the exchange of the Torrens (fee simple) title for a “use hold title” to be granted by the provincial government.

It would have been expected from the size of the two groups that a farmer, in particular George Williams, would have been elected as leader of the new party, but
he withdrew his nomination on the ground that the press attacks labelling him as a
communist following his visit to Russia (financed by the UFC), and the
publication of his booklet In the Land of the Soviets (published by the UFC in 1931),
would handicap the new party. Williams had nominated M. J. Coldwell, who was
duly elected leader by acclamation when the others who had been nominated also
withdrew.18

Coldwell was highly regarded in both rural and urban areas, and his election
meant that his considerable influence would lead the new party to model itself on
the democratic socialist British Labour Party, and the tenets of gradualist Fabianism
and Christian Socialism, though not neglecting the aspirations and needs of the
drought-stricken and debt-ridden Saskatchewan farmers.

Martin Lipset has misled a whole generation of historians, political scientists
and political sociologists by claiming that the Farmer-Labor Party advocated the
socialization of land in 1934. However, M. J. Coldwell at a conference held in
December 1933 to prepare for the forthcoming election stated categorically in the
published report of the conference: “We do not stand for the socialization of land.”
The Official Manifesto of the Farmer-Labor Group issued in 1934 and the smaller
pamphlet Agricultural Policy, made no mention of the socialization or nationalization
of land. The use lease title proposal was rather complicated but was certainly
alien to the land policy of the U.S.S.R.

Democratic socialism, it need hardly be said, is a complex and dynamic
political movement, which does not involve adherence to a monolithic, ideologically
rigid doctrine. Each party reflects the varying influences of groups having distinctive
ideological preferences. Moreover, change in party platform does not necessarily
mean that the party has ceased to be socialist. In the Saskatchewan case, there were
in addition to socialist-minded farmers, those who understood socialism in the same
terms as the British Labour-minded and the Fabian Society. Others were Christian
Socialist, a few were Marxian socialists, and there were cooperators who saw an
important role for producer and consumer cooperatives in a socialist society.

These varied elements were a source of strength to the movement, ensuring
self-criticism and tension that was basically constructive, rather than divisive. This
fact was recognized by the two distinguished socialists, David Lewis and Frank
Scott, who wrote in 1943, “the unity which emerges out of a recognition of difference
is a real, dynamic unity instead of an artificial front. And the resulting political
programme is a dynamic programme hammered out of the needs of the people,
instead of an arbitrary collection of preconceived notions.”19 These elementary facts
seem to be beyond the comprehension of those doctrinaire sociologists, Professors
John W. Bennett of Washington University and Cynthia Krueger of Brooklyn
College, who claim that “in retrospect, it appears that the early C.C.F. movement
suffered from the ideological cosmopolitanism of its leaders.”20 Other solecisms
which these academic gurus dispense are the following:

... the original socialist ideology was dropped, to be replaced by Liberal
democratic politics linked to practical expediencies.

... the farmers were never really radical socialists.21

These writers must be thinking of the record of the Nonpartisan League, which
gained control of the state of North Dakota in 1915.22 The League was a farmers’
party but, unlike the Farmer-Labor Party in Saskatchewan, its program displayed
little input from labour, professional, and intellectual sources. Insofar as it was
socialist, it provided for the creation of a state bank and state-owned mills and
elevators. But it was hardly democratic in its efforts to purchase city and rural newspapers with the objective of promoting League propaganda.

The long-standing popularity and influence of cooperatives in Saskatchewan affected the viewpoint of the UFC, as well as those middle class townsmen who were aware of the farmers’ hopes and objectives. When the representatives of the new Farmer-Labor Party met with the labour, farmer and socialist groups from the prairie provinces and British Columbia and central Canada in Calgary on August 1, 1932, to found a national party, they influenced the choice of the name of the new party — Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, sub-titled (Farmer-Labour-Socialist). Approximately half of the delegates at Calgary were drawn from the professional classes. This points to a second major error in the writings of sociologists and political scientists, who ignore the role of trade unionists and the middle class in both the Saskatchewan party and the national organization. The platform adopted at the Calgary conference, with very little dissension and with the assent of the Farmer-Labor Party of Saskatchewan consisted of the following eight proposals:

1. The establishment of a planned system of social economy, for the production, distribution and exchange of all goods and services.
2. Socialization of the banking, credit and financial system of the country together with the social ownership, development, operation and control of utilities and natural resources.
3. Security and tenure of the worker and farmer in his home.
4. Retention and extension of all existing social legislation and facilities with adequate provision for insurance against crop failure, illness, accident, old age and unemployment.
5. Equal economic and social opportunity without regard to sex, nationality or religion.
6. The encouragement of all co-operative enterprises which are steps towards the achievement of the co-operative commonwealth.
7. Socialization of health services.
8. Federal government should accept responsibility for unemployed and supply suitable work or adequate maintenance.

The first provincial election in Saskatchewan contested by the Farmer-Labor Party was in 1934. The Liberals took the threat of a new party seriously, and employed every influence they could muster. Coldwell, the leader of the party, was criticized by the Regina school board for engaging in political activity.

The platform of the Farmer-Labor Party in 1934 was contained in a four-page pamphlet. This began with the following statement:

What do you need at this time? First, to retain your home and land for your use, and prevent its confiscation by the financial interests.

The Farmer-Labor Group (C.C.F.) pledges itself to enact, immediately when returned to power, all the legislation necessary to secure to you the use and possession of your home and land. As long as you wish to use it, it will be yours to possess and enjoy. Then you may will it to your next of kin or dispose of your interest in it to someone who will use it.

The Farmer-Labor Group pledges itself to prevent your dispossession by financial corporations.

Subsequent proposals dealt with the burden of interest on the provincial debt, employment policy, creation of a Planning Board, provincial financing of education, minimum salaries for teachers and crop insurance. The Manifesto concluded with a vigorous endorsement of the social gospel as contained in a pronouncement of the United Church of Canada:
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...it is our belief that the application of the principles of Jesus to economic conditions would mean the end of the capitalistic system. (By the capitalistic system we mean that order of things under which capital, which is a vital factor in the economic field and represents the part of the economic product used as a means to further production, is owned and administered by individuals and special groups with a view to their own profit. Our contention is that capital, especially in those large scale forms that are essential to the life of the whole people, should be owned and operated instead, not for private gain, but in the service of the general good.)

Although their leader M. J. Coldwell was among those defeated, the Farmer-Labor Party had won 25% of the votes, and became the only opposition party in the Assembly. George Williams, who was a superb party organizer, was selected as leader of the opposition in the house. He labelled himself in The Parliamentary Guide as “Socialist Farmer-Labor.” The Rev. T. C. Douglas of Weyburn was induced to run in 1934, though he was too realistic to believe he would be elected, and regarded his role as essentially an exercise in educating the voters. As he later recalled it:

I think it laid the foundation, and we began to get people who understood the basis of our present competitive capitalist society, the monopolistic nature and structure of this society, what its basic weaknesses were, the fact that it could never adequately solve the problems of distribution.76

George Williams emerged after the 1934 election as the most influential leader of the CCF in Saskatchewan, following M. J. Coldwell’s election to the House of Commons in 1935. Williams, in addition to being leader of the opposition, became party president, director of the party newspaper The Commonwealth, and head of the party’s organizational staff. He was assertively opinionated, and his greatest weakness was his capacity for making abrupt changes in policy.

In 1935 Williams became embroiled in a bitter controversy over the candidature of Rev. T. C. Douglas of Weyburn during the federal election campaign of that year. Williams was obviously unaware of Douglas’s reputation in Weyburn as a preacher of the social gospel and practical social activist who had organized helpful projects for juvenile delinquents and the unemployed in Weyburn during the period 1930-35. A better-informed and more sensitive man than Williams would have realized that the eloquent Douglas would be an ideal candidate for the CCF. At this time Williams was strongly opposed to cooperation with Social Crediters, in sharp contrast to the position he would adopt in 1938.

Williams became convinced that Douglas was running as a CCF-Social Credit candidate.77 There were only a few hundred Social Crediters in the Weyburn constituency, and no official Social Credit candidate was nominated but the Liberals believed that there were enough that a Social Credit nominee would insure Douglas’ defeat. They arranged that a bogus Social Credit candidate be nominated. This plan was repudiated by the official provincial organizer, and apparently by Premier Aberhart, who encouraged their few followers to vote for Douglas. Douglas naturally accepted the endorsement, although he stressed that this did not make him a Social Crediter. “I have merely pledged myself,” he stated, “if elected to give Mr. Aberhart a free hand, and I am prepared to support any legislation at all times that will restore purchasing power to our people.” He noted that the same statement had been made by Mackenzie King during the course of the campaign.78 In the end, the “Social Credit” candidate received 362 votes as against Douglas’ 7,280.

In preparation for the 1938 provincial campaign, Williams favoured a united front (a popular idea among some leftists, including Leon Blum, Premier of France,
and a few dissident elements in the British Labour party). In the Saskatchewan setting, he hoped for an arrangement between the CCF and Social Crediters, left-wing Conservatives, and the miniscule Communist party. Aberhart rejected the united front scheme. The CCF contested thirty-one seats. But Social Credit nominated thirty-nine candidates, many of them in constituencies where the CCF was also running. There was a massive invasion of the province by Alberta Social Crediters, led by Aberhart, and the Liberals concentrated their efforts on the Social Credit threat. Their strategy was successful, for the Social Crediters elected only two members. The CCF conducted a lack-lustre campaign, and succeeded in increasing their membership in the House by only five; Williams was able to maintain his position as leader of the opposition, but his influence was weakened in the party by his adoption of the disastrous coalition ploy in 1938.

CCF conventions in the years after 1938 followed a more Fabian socialist approach to politics, eliminating some but not all references to the rhetoric which had used the word “socialism”.

In 1942 there was a significant change in the leadership of the party. Williams had enlisted, as had Douglas, in 1940 for overseas service. Williams was motivated by a strong commitment to the allied cause, and also because he believed his action would combat the charge that the party was disloyal. He submitted his resignation as president of the Saskatchewan CCF early in 1941, but did not surrender his position as political leader. He was overseas when the 1942 convention met, when the majority of the delegates felt that the party would suffer without a leader who could organize for the next election. Douglas would have preferred to continue his parliamentary career, but was, as he put it later, “literally dragged into a leadership contest.” Douglas and J. H. Brockelbank, M.L.A. were nominated, but the latter withdrew and nominated the absentee Williams. Douglas won by a large majority. One reason for his popularity among the delegates was the record which he had established in the House of Commons since 1935 as a knowledgeable and eloquent advocate of the wheat farmers’ aspirations with regard to the floor price of wheat, and government aid in constructing storage facilities on the farms.

Following his election as leader, Douglas engaged in a strenuous organizational campaign which greatly improved the effectiveness of the party in preparing for the next provincial election. The fact that he had no enemies in the CCF, meant that he was able to rally the forces of the party and achieve a high degree of efficiency. There was a dramatic increase in membership. He also set up a sort of shadow cabinet consisting of some of the more prominent party members and M.L.A.’s, who were assigned the task of formulating programs in various fields of government activity. As Douglas observed later:

This way we got a lot of people working, which of course is the secret of any campaign or any organization. And I think there were two reasons why we managed to pull things together. The first was that I personally had no part … in any little internecine warfare that had gone on, I had no enemies really, and I think was able to deal with everybody on a friendly basis. The second thing was that I refused to carry into the reorganization any old enmities. I was criticized by some of my friends for taking some of Mr. Williams’ supporters and even Mr. Williams himself into the Cabinet, into this new organization. I took the position that I was seeking to find people who had ability, who could serve the C.C.F. movement, and eventually serve the people of the province, and it made little or no difference to me whether they’d been one of Mr. Williams’ friends, or one of Mr. Coldwell’s friends. But my main job was to get everybody working together, pointing out to them that the party was like a symphony orchestra, and on the same program.

The Liberals made a strong campaign, which had been afraid of the just upcoming election. When the elections came, the CCF candidates were able to campaign on the following C.C.F. Program:

1. Stopped the defaulters.
2. Use of governmental agencies to help in the construction of schools, hospitals, and other public buildings.
3. Encouragement of co-operative societies to market farm products.
4. Encouragement of co-operative societies to market farm products.
5. A comprehensive medical, surgical, and hospital insurance plan.
6. Raising the rate of unemployment compensation to 60% of average earnings.
7. Establishing a more comprehensive system of education.
8. Reform of the present system of accountancy.
9. Provincial control over all aspects of education.
10. Financial support for the arts and cultural activities.
11. Revising the province’s land laws to better protect the interests of the farmer and the public.
13. The C.C.F. program and the demand for more public ownership of the province and its resources.
orchestra, and my job was to try to beat the time and keep everybody playing on the same score. Everybody had a part to play.31 The Liberals made the fatal mistake of postponing the election beyond the five year term, which had the effect of creating widespread suspicion that the government was afraid of the judgment by the electorate.

When the election was finally called for June, 1944, the CCF were ready. They campaigned on a program which was set out in a sixteen-page pamphlet entitled The C.C.F. Program for Saskatchewan. This may be paraphrased and summarized as follows:

1. Stopping foreclosure on and eviction from the farm home, and prevention of seizure of that portion of a farmers' crop that is needed to provide for his family.

2. Use of the power of debt moratorium, [that is, of suspension or postponement] to force the loan and mortgage companies to reduce debts and mortgages to a figure at which they could reasonably be paid at prevailing prices for farm products.

3. Encouragement of the development of the cooperative movement. The C.C.F. looks forward [the platform stated], to the day when the people of the province will own co-operatively all the means of supplying their every-day needs.

4. Freedom to organize labour unions, and compulsory collective bargaining. Also an increase in minimum wages, and employee representation on all boards and commissions that deal with labour matters, and the creation of a department of labour.

5. A complete system of socialized health services, with special emphasis on preventive medicine, so that everybody in the province will receive adequate medical, surgical, dental, nursing, and hospital care without charge.

6. Raising old age pensions with or without the cooperation of the federal government, and an increase in the amount of mothers' allowance.

7. Establishment of vocational guidance clinics and of a youth training program.

8. Reform of the penal system along the lines of the British Borstal System.

9. Provincial responsibility for education, establishment of a larger unit of school administration, an improved salary schedule for teachers, and free text books and supplies.

10. Financial arrangements to permit qualified students to attend university and extension of adult education.

11. Revision of the school curriculum along the lines favored by the Fabian Society of Great Britain.


13. The C.C.F. stands for the planned development of the economic life of the province and the social ownership of natural resources ... The C.C.F. maintains that our natural resources must henceforth be developed in the public interest and for the public benefit. They cannot continue to be exploited in a hit-and-miss manner for the benefit of promoters, investors, and absentee capitalists.

14. Public Ownership: Competent people will be appointed to the various public commissions or boards and entrusted with organizing a given industry. These commissioners will engage the experts, managers and superintendents. The various commissions will make full and detailed reports of their progress to the government...
periodically; and the people's representatives in the legislature will consider and discuss the reports. Lines of policy will be laid down by the legislature; the details of organization and administration will be the responsibility of those with specialized training, competence, and experience. The earnings of the public commissions will go to provide social, educational, and other essential services to all the people of the province.

15. The elimination of graft and inefficiency in the public service.

The pamphlet concluded with the following statement:

The C.C.F. has always recognized that it is not constitutionally possible to set up a complete co-operative commonwealth within the boundaries of a single province. There are, however, certain very definite powers vested in a Provincial Government by the Constitution of Canada. The C.C.F. in Saskatchewan intends to use these powers to carry the Province as far as possible ... to replace the present capitalist system with its inherent injustice and inhumanity by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated; in which economic planning will supersede unregulated private enterprise and competition; and in which genuine democratic self-government based on economic equality will be possible.

An examination of this program reveals that the distinctively socialist elements involved public ownership of natural resources and certain resource industries, the introduction of economic planning, and a more equalitarian society. But in other respects it also bears a striking resemblance to the New Deal program of "socialized capitalism" of Duff Pattullo, Premier of British Columbia from 1933 to 1941.32

The colorful campaign of 1944 seems to prove the adage that governments are never defeated by the opposition, but instead commit suicide. The Liberal government's postponement of the election, its reliance on the Gardiner machine, and its lack of a convincing progressive program to meet post war conditions, sealed its fate. A major factor in the success of the CCF was the personality and activities of its leader. Douglas worked night and day, travelling, speaking at numberless meetings and picnics, and preparing radio broadcasts. As the campaign wore on, the Liberals became apprehensive and resorted to calling the CCF Nazis or National Socialists. In the legislature, the Minister of Education referred to the CCF as "a proper cesspool and a political sewer which fails to conform to its Hitlerite prototype only in its lack of the swastika and the goose-step." The Liberal-dominated daily press augmented party propaganda with repeated assertions of the following type: "If the C.C.F. Socialists proceed immediately to bring into being their socialist program they must intend to reject and remove all vestiges of democracy."33 The Liberals were openly aided in their efforts by agents or mortgage companies, who predicted that the farmers would lose their land if the CCF were elected. But when the votes were counted, the CCF received fifty-three percent of the vote and won all but five seats in the fifty-two member Assembly.

The new government assumed office on July 10. One of its first tasks was to deal with the question of civil service reform. Douglas in his election manifesto had promised:

A. C.C.F. government will abolish patronage by setting a genuine civil service commission. All appointments and promotions will be on the basis of merit. Superannuation will be equalized and the wages of the lower paid government employees increased. Government employees such as those in one mental hospital now working 12 hours a day, will be placed on eight-hour shifts as soon as possible.
will consider and will not have considered; the details of the arrangements with specialized committees are commissions will be for the people of the province.

In a similar manner, the boundaries of a single purpose of the CCF. in the province as far as the inherent injustice and exploitation which business planning will result, and in which the majority will be possible.

Socialist elements in the case of industries, the community. But in other words, the term of "socialized ownership" from 1933 to 1941.

The Liberal Hammond machine, conditions, sealed and activities of government; at numberless places in Ottawa, the sign wore on, the "Nazis or Nationalists." 33 The CCF as "a bitter and destructive prototype dominated daily life," following type: "working their socialist democracy." 34 The companies, who were elected. But when they vote and won all

The first task was to write a genuine civil constitution on the basis of the lower paid than those in one eight-hour shifts
The CCF Victory

It is difficult to say, in these years, when the civil service took office, because the government in 1935 was not the one that would accept the new concept of 'humanitarian reform'. The CCF civil servants were the ones that had to deal with the problems of patronage.

In a review of the CCF cabinet, civil servants will have to adapt to the new situation. They must decide whether to support the government or to maintain their own policies. The government's policies are not in line with the CCF's concept of servatism.

With regard to the government, especially the attempt to establish private ownership, it is the provincial government that must have ownership. The provincial government must be the one to establish ownership.

Where ownership is establishes, the CCF civil servants will have to adapt. The province of Saskatchewan is the one to establish ownership.

This was essentially the party's objective, to implement the CCF's pronouncements.

It is the forces of the community complex that are at risk. We must plan in a way that protects the province, to ensure that ownership is established.

Governments

Legislation would be the home of 160 acre risks, with the support of trade unions would guarantee the proposals would be a deal of importa
properly constituted authorities of work and management. Appointments were made, not to those who had been loyal to the Liberals, but to those who were active politically. The issue was not a technical one of personnel sympathetic to new ideas and newly-appointed staff—most of whom had been in the Liberal party activities. There was no “house-cleaning” of the type instituted by the Anderson Conservative government in 1929. It must be kept in mind that the CCF’s official slogan was “Humanity First,” and this was to be more important than the vengeance which some constituency locals sought from the government in the treatment of certain civil servants who had been appointed by the Liberals.

In a review of Lipset’s book, O. W. Valleau, one of the original members of the Douglas cabinet, notes that the author had overlooked the fact that “in many cases civil servants will have a strong desire to seek new responsibility and new tasks in accordance with the work for which they are particularly trained.” Deputy ministers and their staff “wait only for the government to give them the ‘go ahead signal’, in accordance with the government’s conception of how far the public is prepared to accept new ventures. Indeed, the problem of a cabinet minister supervising staff today is that of preventing too much ‘Empire building’ rather than too much ‘Conservatism’.”

With regard to economic philosophy and policy, Douglas stated that his government, espousing the concepts of the cooperative commonwealth, would attempt to establish “the mixed economy,” comprising public, cooperative and private ownership. In a post-election press interview he declared:

The provincial government would definitely go into the field of public ownership. However, where it was not desirable to have public ownership on a provincial basis the government would encourage municipal and co-operative ownership.

Where it is better to have private ownership, we will encourage private ownership. This was essentially a Fabian Socialist policy stance, one which both Douglas and the party had repeatedly emphasized.

To implement its election commitments a session of the legislature met on October 19. Among the highlights of the speech from the Throne were the following pronouncements:

It is the feeling of my Government that the day is past when it can be left to the forces of private enterprise exclusively to develop the resources of the community and to organize its business activity. The modern economy is a complex one that demands control and direction if disaster and chaos are to be averted. Well aware of the obstacles confronting any attempt at planning on a provincial scale, my Government remains of the opinion that much can be done to plan in such a manner that the economic activities of the people of this Province may be carried on more efficiently. An economic advisory committee is to be established whose purpose it will be to make enquiries and to advise the Government in establishing a planned type of economy for the Province. Legislation would be introduced “to prohibit eviction under mortgage from the farm home of 160 acres.” Crop failure legislation would require the mortgagor to share risks with the farmer. Labour legislation would be introduced to guarantee the rights of trade unions and to guarantee collective bargaining. A vacations legislation bill would guarantee two weeks holiday without loss of income. Various social welfare proposals would also be the subject of legislation. The government attached a great deal of importance to the improvement of health services, and “some form of socialized health services would be provided. The government had already received
fear of the electorate.

most conspicuous corporation, say corporations —
a small operation.  The Liberals these times have haphazardly sold out to expediency, not the concept of the enterprise.  Many crown corporations were corporate enterprises which were subject to the whims of the election promises to which the chancellors and were subject to the whims of the election promises to which the chancellors must be subject.  Saskatchewan is no longer the province of the Conservatives.

Some writers demand a sharp departure which was seen in the previous period.  Ontario, Bracken, and the rest of the country, were called “the Columbia.”

The CCF’s premier or their leader of the Conservative party or their leader of the Conservative platform.  Their premier or their leader of the Conservative party or their leader of the Conservative platform.  Their premier or their leader of the Conservative party or their leader of the Conservative platform.

The following analysis of the CCF rise to power permits us to assess certain assertions by political theoreticians regarding the alleged abandonment of socialist doctrine both before and after 1944.  One must begin with the assertion that the elimination of land nationalization meant that the party was no longer socialist.  This implies that any socialist party which does not include this variety of public ownership is not socialist — a highly questionable dictum, but one which has become an obsession with practically all political scientists and sociologists who have written on the CCF.  This is coupled with the undocumented assertion that other programs were also abandoned.  The CCF were only simple minded populists, it is claimed.  The net effect of the writings of these academic theoreticians is to deliberately down-grade and trivialize the program of the Douglas administration.

It is significant that these observers have ignored the establishment of the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office, which was violently attacked because it threatened the structure of capitalist society to a greater degree than many other government initiatives.  The government proceeded with this measure, undeterred by the fear of the electorate.
fear of the electorate or of pressure groups. Another claim is that “the province’s most conspicuous public enterprises, the telephone monopoly and the power corporation,” were inherited from the Liberals. Neither, however, were true crown corporations — telephones were a department of government, and public power was a small operation until the power corporation was established in 1949. Under the Liberals these two enterprises are a good example of “socialism without doctrine,” a haphazard program of public ownership established on grounds of political expediency, not as a result of a belief in the values of public ownership. In these enterprises management and workers regard themselves as civil servants, whereas crown corporation employees see themselves as playing a role in an innovative enterprise which meets needs not supplied by private enterprise. The activities frequently show a profit, but profit is not the main objective. In fulfilment of an election promise, the government established a standing committee of the Assembly to which the chairman and managers of the crown corporations reported annually and were subject to criticisms and recommendations by the members of the House. Saskatchewan is still the only jurisdiction in Canada and the Commonwealth which has adopted this democratic practise.

Some writers claim that the policies of the CCF in office “did not represent the sharp departure from the practices of its predecessor or of neighboring provinces which was sometimes pictured.” Which were the neighboring provinces with reform governments is not specified — certainly they did not include Hepburn’s Ontario, Bracken’s Manitoba, Manning’s Alberta, or Hart’s Liberal-Conservative coalition in British Columbia. While it is true that there are elements of what later was called “the welfare state” in the policies of Dufferin Pattullo, Premier of British Columbia from 1933 to 1941, and Aberhart’s policies from 1935 to 1943, neither premier or their parties were able to transform the social services of their provinces in the manner which prevailed in Saskatchewan. Paul Fox notes that the “Conservatives and Liberals have appropriated many of its social welfare platforms.” The reason for CCF success lies in large part in the greatly improved morale of the public service. Not only were the employees encouraged to form unions and engage in collective bargaining with the government, but they gained a hitherto unknown sense of the importance of their role in the government of the province, along with the cabinet and legislature. This accounts for the ability of the Douglas ministry to recruit highly qualified and motivated public servants. It was not long before it was generally recognized that Saskatchewan had the most outstanding public service in any of the provinces of Canada. Lipset remained in the province too briefly after 1944 to recognize these facts in the final phase of his analysis.

Compared with other provinces, Saskatchewan during the Douglas administration possessed a disproportionate number of citizens and immigrants who were active in the party or in the affairs of the government. Historians of Saskatchewan will not be able to ignore these strong minded, vigorous, and colorful personalities, including at least a dozen women, who were leading participants in the political process. All of them would have called themselves socialists. Whatever they were, their opponents never labelled them “Liberals in a hurry,” the term applied to the Progressive Party. They were certainly not Liberal-Progressives of the Manitoba stripe. If they were not socialists within the great tradition of English-speaking socialism a more precise and accurate designation has not yet been supplied by Canada historians.
FOOTNOTES

3 Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, (New York, 1907), xi.
4 Ibid., viii.
6 Ibid., 28.
8 Ibid., 201.
9 Published privately in Winnipeg.
11 Quoted in Lipset, op. cit., 79.
12 Ibid., 357.
14 Quoted in Hoffman, op. cit., 55.
17 F. C. Wright, The Louise Lucas Story (Montreal, 1965), 72-73.
18 C. King, ibid.
19 D. Lewis and F. Scott, Make This Your Canada, A Review of C.C.F. History and Policy, (Toronto, 1943), 119.
21 Ibid., 357.
23 A. Kay, “Creating a National Federation,” Canadian Forum, Vol. XII, No. 144 (1932), 452. See also the pamphlet Organized Farmer and Labor Programme (Saskatchewan) [1932 or 1933] in CCF papers in Saskatchewan Archives Board, herinafter referred to as SAB.
26 T. C. Douglas Papers, SAB, interview with Chris Higginbotham, 1958, herinafter cited as T. C. Douglas interview.
29 See election appeal in The Leader-Post, June 2, 1938, 13.
30 Steininger, op. cit., 407-08.
31 J. C. Douglas interview.
34 T. C. Douglas Election Manifesto, The Leader-Post, May 21, 1944.
36 Lipset, op. cit., 261.
37 Ibid.
38 Memorandum to the Executive Council re Civil Service Appointments June 28, T. C. Douglas Papers, SAB, File No. 21.
39 T. C. Douglas Papers, SAB, File No. 21 and 10-2.
41 The Leader-Post, Sept. 2, 1944.
42 Journal of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 1944 (Second Session), 11-13.
46 A. Stephen, “Crown Corporation Procedure: Saskatchewan Legislative Practice,” Journal of the Society of Clerks at the Table in Empire Parliaments, Vol. 19 (1950), 183-91. The procedure was first adopted under the provisions of the Crown Corporation Act of 1945. The details of the procedure were modified in subsequent years, culminating in 1951.
47 E. Eager, op. cit., 15.

TR

The story of the train frac was no new organizing and Rauchet of the Department.

The immigrant didn’t give to bookin’ once bonus of one l’n’ the land in British Columbia and the others were g’ing on the pens. The man had not employin’ and he paid the money as a credit that he would pay.

When the stories of the ships, no ticket of the thing, an arra of this. They were appointed in Winnipeg.

They came back from the Russian revolution as fast as they could. It was about letting the farmer be a part of this. They had ended the Quaker movement and the story of the land was as far as Winnipe was concerned. The other countries of the world had ended the Quaker movement.

Beginning in Quebec.

Philip Harvey was to supervise the farm colony and theSession. In 1899, $20 was charged for meals.
TREK OF THE DOUKHOBORS

By Betty Ward

The story of how four groups of Doukhobors were handed across Canada by train from district to district in 1899 is a mission whose drama has never been fully appreciated. It necessitated a monumental piece of fast organizing and is told in remarkable detail in the records of the Immigration Branch of the Department of the Interior.

The immigration policy of the Canadian government from 1882 to 1899 was to give to booking agents of steamship companies, or local agents in small towns, a bonus of one English pound for each adult ticket sold in Europe, $1.75 in Great Britain and Ireland, and half that for “half-tickets” — presumably children. The bonuses were given as an incentive to sell more tickets. The Canadian Government had not employed any immigration agents on the Continent, so booking agents were paid “a sufficient amount to encourage [them] to ... act as agents for this country.”

When the Doukhobors came, the English Society of Friends had chartered the ships, no tickets had been issued, so no booking agents’ fees were involved. Because of this, an arrangement was made that the government would pay to a committee appointed in Winnipeg, one pound for each person, and this money would be held as a credit that could be used on the Doukhobors’ behalf when necessary.

They came, exhausted and fearful after four years of hounding and persecution from the Russian government because of their refusal to bear arms. They came as fast as they were able and before the Russian government could change its mind about letting them go, to a Canadian winter of “unprecedented cold.” Only a fraction of those who came had any means. The rest fled Russia with blind trust that nothing they might encounter in a foreign country could possibly be as bad as what they had endured in their own. They received financial assistance from the Friends (Quakers), concerned humanitarians like Leo Tolstoi, who donated royalties from his last book Resurrection to their cause, and his son, who came with them at least as far as Winnipeg, and the Canadian government, as well as private donations from many other compassionate and concerned individuals and groups, in England, Canada and the United States.

Beginning in late January 1899 the groups landed in Halifax, Saint John, and Quebec. Interpreters were sent from Winnipeg to meet them. Chief among them was Philip Harvey. Harvey made only the first trip, and then remained at East Selkirk to supervise incoming trains. Five other interpreters shuttled back and forth across the continent at a time when travel was neither easy nor taken for granted, assisted the Doukhobors from ship to train, saw they had what they needed and understood what was happening to them, and helped at each point to divide up and load the consignments of food. They talked, listened and worked endlessly.

Six days travel from Winnipeg to Halifax. It’s interesting to read, too, that in 1899, $20 was considered sufficient for each interpreter’s expenses, plus $2.50 a day for meals.
W. F. McCrea, Commissioner of Immigration at Winnipeg, and Frank Pedley, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, and their deputies, wrote countless letters during the months the Doukhobors were arriving. They scammed to order supplies, fought red tape, frightful weather and inadequate shelter buildings, tore their collective hair, and in a gentlemanly way lost their tempers from time to time. But they got the Doukhobors to Western Canada intact.

The first letter after the first group of Doukhobors arrived was a long and detailed one from McCrea to James Smart, Deputy Minister, Department of the Interior, in Ottawa, dated February 9, 1899. McCrea's secretary was ill, he was behind in his correspondence, working overtime and in haste. His letter shows it but tells its own story best, mistakes and all.

...in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, there has not been a more prolonged stretch of extremely cold weather, than we have had for the last two or three weeks. This morning, at nine o'clock, when I came down, the thermometer stood at forty four, [below zero, Fahrenheit] Last night, during the fire in the "Manitoba", it stood about fifty one, and it has been running from thirty-five to forty-five, with a keen wind, for many weeks. You can readily imagine, as an old resident, what that means.

These Doukhobors have hard leather boots with a piece of balnket (sic) about the foot, and no socks. The women also, have only a half slipper with leather soles. They have not mits (sic) whatever, or, at least, very few, so that the work of getting them out to the colonies has been stationary.

Yorkton Shed is, I believe, ready, but I have not even been able to send the people from Dufferin School there, because I could not risk loading the children on the trains in such weather. It will surely, however, moderate when the new moon comes in on Friday, so that I will possibly get them out on Saturday or Sunday. As I must have this building for the Superior people.

[Doukhobors coming on the Lake Superior]

I have heard from the gang of ten men whom I sent out to the White Sand Colony; [Canora area] they are getting along fairly well, but sadly hampered by cold weather, they were also some time finding timber, but have secured some now on the Hansack. [Kamsack?] They have built three houses 24 x 24 already, so that fifty or sixty Doukhobor men can be sent either there as well as to the camp at Thunder Hill, just as soon as the weather moderates.

I have a car of flour at Yorkton and the same at Cowan as well as other supplies. I have at each place five teams of horses and three of oxen. I tried to engage teamsters at Yorkton to exercise these horses taking out the flour, but Crear wires me tonight that he cannot get a man, even for big pay to face the cold.

Certainly Providence intervened in preventing the "Superior" people from coming up here, for I believe, had they been forwarded, they would have had to remain on the cars or would have perished. . . .

I deem this explanation of the weather necessary, in order that both you and Mr. Pedley, may understand thoroughly why more progress has not been made in getting the people forward. In fact, I have been urging such incessantly but Prince Hjikoff will not hear of the people being forced out in this weather.

I have loaded a car of supplies here, and will ship it to end of Dauphin track Monday night, taking fifty men from Dauphin Shed. I have bought fifty pairs of heavy rubber boots, one hundred pairs of socks, fifty pairs of mits, and fifty pairs blankets. . . .

The original intention seems to have been to settle the Doukhobors in Manitoba, which by that time was a well-organized province with schools, courts of law and other provincial institutions. In this regard, "When I learned that Hubbell was at the end of the Dauphin track," Mr. McCrea's letter continued,
I wired him to come down to meet Prince Hilhoff, as we wished to discuss Range 29 (in Manitoba), as I was having considerable difficulty over this matter ... the Prince, after consulting with the Doukhobors has agreed to release this Range and will afterward select other three Townships ... further west on the Saskatchewan.

... either the Prince or Sulerjitzky will go out with the deputation to select the villages, though, I imagine, for this winter at least, the houses will have to be erected wherever timber is found, and they can move the logs afterward to the village sites.

Now in regard to the East Selkirk Round House being ready, matters are not working very smoothly and have not from the first, for reasons which I need not explain here. I sent thirty Doukhobors down yesterday morning and wished Mr. Smith to go down with them, but so far he has not done so. I cannot possibly get away, and besides as the work is under his supervision, I could not give advice in the matter. I imagine these Doukhobors will be able to complete the building by Monday or Tuesday next, all except the roof, which Smith refused to repair, or, at least, says it cannot be done in the winter. I believe that, unless it is covered outside, or the building is plastered, or tar paper put on inside all the heat will escape through the roof and it will be impossible to heat it. We are going, however, to start all the caldrons and other stoves going and try it next week before the people come. I intend doing down on Saturday night to look over the situation there.

I presume that if these people leave [Halifax] on the 17th they will be here about the 22nd, so that we will have the work completed by that time.

Now in regard to supplies. There seems to be some hick in the financial arrangements. From your letters I understand that the credit by the government was to be supplemented by contributions from various sources, including the Doukhobors themselves, Quakers and so forth, but so far they have not materialized. I discussed it with Prince Hilhoff tonight, and he himself is disappointed, he tells me that the money which they expected to be sent here, has to be used in paying transportation for the 'Lake Superior' party, which the Quakers refused to pay although they had promised. It would appear ... the Government will either have to loan or guarantee a loan of seventy-five or one hundred thousand dollars to help these people out ....

Now I will send you a rough estimate of what, in my opinion will be required to feed these people, that is four thousand from now to the end of July, that will be five months ....

Since fresh vegetables could not be shipped to the colonies in winter, McCraey suggested that the chief diet consist of bread, rice, barley, butter, sugar, tea, cheese, molasses, rolled oats, salt, “pepper” [sic], and citric acid, “to sour their soup.” Meat was not needed as the Doukhobors were vegetarians. Their pacifist beliefs extended to the killing of any living creature, on the grounds that it was “brutalizing to the senses” as well as morally wrong. The list of foods was subject to change in different places, but it was not until they ran into trouble over some groups complaining that others were getting more variety that McCraey decided on a standard food list for all. Even at that he was sometimes over-ridden in the selections provided.

His letter of February 9 goes on to list the staggering quantities of food that would be required, the household effects, the costs of each, plus freight costs. He figured out how much would be needed for each of thirteen different items and this is how he did it:

Each soul here is now consuming one loaf of bread per day, and this with a copious supply of vegetables, but putting one loaf as the quantity for each soul, and supposing each sack of flour will make sixty loaves of bread, ... it would figure out this way, one sack of flour would feed two Doukhobors for one month ... for five months, 4,000 Doukhobors require 10,000 sacks of flour.
These 10,000 sacks of flour at $1.50 would mean $15,000.
He worked out each item in the same way until he came to the question of vegetables, at which point he threw in the sponge.

... It is useless to figure out these items, as, in my opinion we cannot buy them in [until] the spring but we could not freight them out [anyway]. But for the quantity we may have left on hand after feeding the people all winter, over and above what is required for seed, I think we can safely put down for this item $3,000.

This disposes of the whole supplies, although as you will notice I have not included cheese which we may have to buy, and many other items to be settled afterwards. This does not include all cooking utensils, stoves, hardware required for the buildings, such as sash and nails, farming tools, axes, hoes, farming machinery, such as mowers, rakes, plows, harrows, wagons, sleighs and so forth. Nor does it include the very large item for freighting all these goods over stiff trails to the colonies, nor the purchase of cows, clothing and so forth. I will endeavour to figure these out on a business basis and send you a copy, although it will be difficult to do so at the present time, as I pointed out before to Prince Hilkoff has not materialized the large amount of money that will be required, even to keep these people from actual starvation during the spring months. I told him to day, that there was one month last year, when every bridge in the Dauphin district was swept away, and close neighbours [sic] were unable to get from [one] place to the other. The snow is now pretty deep up there and, at the Thunder Hill especially, we may expect just such a state of affairs so that a large quantity of these goods should be in there before the frost goes out, or I would not like to predict the result.

February 11, two days after his first long letter, McCreary, still labouring away without his secretary, wrote again to Pedley in Ottawa.

... I understand you have about two thousand people there, and my present idea is that you should send four trains containing about six or seven hundred people to East Selkirk, and a smaller train with from three to three hundred and fifty people, to the Dufferin School, Winnipeg, now occupied by those intended for Yorkton, who will go out on Monday or Tuesday, if we can get the temperature above forty five below, where it has been standing practically for the last three weeks. I may mention, in this connection, that these people are poorly clad for a cold climate — some of them froze their toes even sawing wood in the yard, and are laid up. I had to buy nearly two hundred pairs of moccasins, four hundred pairs of socks, and other warm clothing for the men that I am sending out to the colonies. ...

In regard to utensils, I presume you will have to buy some to replace those kept here. I think it should be arranged that these people should keep the utensils you buy for use on the train, as they will require them in East Selkirk. The only utensils they use here, where we have six hundred, are about twenty-four ordinary knives for peeling potatoes, many of which they have; a number of table spoons, and of these they have quite a lot made of wood; heavy iron pails for carrying up the soup and tin milk cans in which to place the soup, seven or eight people eat the soup out of one tin. The bread is also put in these tin dishes; forks they do not use at all, neither tin plates.

Owing to some of the Doukhobors at other points, getting food different from what they have here, they are making a rule that all should be fed the same — cheese is going to be cut off, as well as molasses [sic], and fish, of which they are using some at Brandon and Portage. The regular diet is going to be potatoes, bread, cabbage where available, or if not, turnips or carrots, tea and sugar. As a substitute for vegetables, which we cannot get to the colonies, they will likely have to use cracked wheat, barley, rice or rolled oats, although they do not take kindly to porridge. Onions, of course, will be supplied to them, as well, but we cannot, I fear, get them out to the colonies, and of course they have to be imported from the south and are a little expensive.
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Doukhobor home near Saskatoon, about 1905

But Frank Pedley had his own ideas. On February 15, 1889 Pedley sent off a
note to R. E. Jamieson, a food merchant in Ottawa, as follows:
... the second party of Doukhobors ... will ... reach here next Monday or
Tuesday and I would be glad if you would have the following provisions
delivered at the Station here to be taken on board the several trains on arrival,
the prices to be similar to those charged in connection with the provisioning of
the first party:
7,500 loaves bread.
1,750 lbs cheese.
75 lbs tea.
160 gallons milk.
100 lbs salt.

You will be wired when the trains leave St. John so that you will be able to
judge when they will arrive in Ottawa. If any additional supplies are required
you will be telegraphed to that effect.

The matter of where the Doukhobors would be settled seems to have been
resolved. The only reference to it is in a letter from McCready (sounding a bit
tired and impatient by this time) to Pedley, dated May 25, 1899, when weather was no
longer a problem.

Please let me know either by letter or by wire ... what day you expect the
Doukhobors to arrive, and will they all arrive at or about the same time, at
Halifax or Quebec?

As already advised, I have purchased a large tent, 80 x 130, which I
intended forwarding to Yorkton, but since Prince Hilkofofhas an idea of starting
a new colony up the Saskatchewan, I have held the tent here as, of course, it would not do to pull the people out to Yorkton if they were going up that line.

My intention now is to try and get rid of the 1400 Galicians who arrive tonight and who will be placed in the Round House for a time, before the Doukhobors will arrive, pitch the big tent down at Selkirk and if it is necessary to hold them over, place the entire party there. This tent will, I imagine, hold about a thousand, the Round House 1600, and, of course, if necessary, we could put three or four hundred at Portage la Prairie....

The first year was difficult for any settler, as it was not possible to go onto uncleared prairie and turn it into a profitable farm at once. Most of the men worked for the railway, to get some cash income; and in the case of the Doukhobors the women put in the gardens, in some cases pulling the ploughs themselves, as they had no oxen or horses that first year. Those who needed help through the next winter got it from the government. When the Doukhobor men were settled into working for the railway, Mr. J. Niblock, Superintendent of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Moose Jaw wrote to Mr. McCready on June 30 forwarding a copy of the report made to him by J. Armstrong, Roadmaster, on June 29, 1899. The roadmaster's report said in part

The Doukhobors are giving very good satisfaction.... are doing very well and are improving.... where you can keep them together and not mix them with other men.... our greatest trouble is taking care of them, keeping them from getting pinched or jerked off the cars when moving, or hurt with slides when at work in the cuts.

By August 1899 only a handful of Doukhobors were still at Selkirk waiting for their accommodations at the new settlements on the Saskatchewan River near what is now the Borden district, and one near Duck Lake. By that time most of the villages were built and their occupants "well pleased with the country and in good spirits now."

Thomas Copland, the Land Agent in Saskatoon at that time, wrote to McCready August 26:

I have wired you re Doukhobors and location of three Villages... we had a stirring time for a few days owing to a commotion among themselves through the drawing of lots for the first location, disappointing some of them. This is all got over now and so far has resulted in good as it [before that] had seemed impossible to get them to consent to less than 75 families in the large Village, now that is divided into two, making a selection of lands near to each village more practicable and I would not be surprised if a fourth village branches out yet. If so all the better.

The rains have been very heavy and the Rivers are in high flood, — you will therefore not wonder if running of lines takes a little longer than expected. Mr. Batter will have returned to make his own report. He was very useful. Mr. Schultz is as you said, very good with a compass, needs setting right very seldom.

The first village located wishes to know the best terms the Government will give them for the North West ¼ of Section 19-39-7 — and exact acreage. I presume 160 acres. This is required for water, there are at least 2 good springs on it.

I have also to request that you will obtain the approval of the Department for my action in allowing them to have the homesteads on the west of Tshp. 39 Rg. 7 — viz: one ¼ of Sec. 30. — all of 20 — 18 — and 6. — Being on the spot and seeing the necessity of adding these to the first village. ... A full list of names with homesteads allotted to each, will be sent you as soon as possible.

Those men who have come into this Colony from Yorkton, are delight-
McCreary passed along this information to Pedley in Ottawa in a letter dated September 1.

You will observe that he [Mr. Copland] is making very satisfactory arrangements, and I think, while this will be a very small colony, they will get along all right. . . .

. . . Mr. Morrison . . . whom I have had for the last month at Duck Lake locating the large colony on the north side of the Saskatchewan returned this morning. . . . They succeeded in getting most of the people across the River and about one half of their baggage, when the ferry broke away with the high water, and as but little could be done at present to complete the work, they returned.

There has been a great deal of trouble with these people; . . . each one wanting the same quarter-section, and the only way it could be settled was by drawing lots, and even then come of them would not abide by the land given them in this way — so that Mr. Morrison had to use a great deal of diplomacy to get them settled at all.

It is difficult at present to state when the ferry will be replaced, as I understand the cable is buried in eight or ten feet of sand, and it will be useless for me to make a definite report until the matter has been finally adjusted.

. . .

In his yearly Report dated December 31, 1899, the Winnipeg Commissioner, W. F. McCreary said nothing at all of the turmoil involved in moving the Doukhobors across Canada, dismissing the difficulties by saying merely, “Public sympathy and attention have been so largely attracted by the settlement of this people . . . that little need be said . . . save as to their settlement.”

McCreary said the first group of 2,078 “souls” arrived January 27, 1899, followed by 1,973 in February; in May, 1,136 came, and July saw 2,335. Four more arrived in September and one in December. But his times and figures are inconsistent, as later in his report he speaks of the May group as the one which arrived in June. He reported the numbers variously as “7,427 souls”, and “7,354”; whereas if the above numbers are added up they come to 7,527. “There is thus,” McCreary concluded,

with some reasonable allowance for error, a total population of 7,354 souls, living in 795 houses, comprising 57 villages, and who, averaging 5 to a family, are settled on some 1,500 homesteads of 160 acres each.

The lands they have settled are fruitful, sufficient water is found in rivers, creeks, springs and wells, and the people are generally contented and satisfied with their prospects in their new home.”

FOOTNOTES

1Public Archives of Canada, files of the Department of the Interior, RG 76, Volume 183.

2It is not explained who Prince Hilkoff is, but it seems likely he is the Prince Khilko, an Officer of the Hussar Guards who turned pacifist and peasant liberator, mentioned in The Doukhobor Homestead Crisis, 1898-1907, by Kathryn R. Szalasny, M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, September 1977, p. 15.

JOHN THOMPSON AND THE HUDSON’S BAY COMPANY: DAVID THOMPSON’S BROTHER IN RUPERT’S LAND

By David Smyth

On May 30, 1789, the HBC ship King George (III) set sail from Gravesend under Captain Joshua Tunstall, carrying eight newly engaged servants. The ship anchored at Stromness harbour in the Orkneys on June 8, where she took on board more servants bound for Company posts in Rupert’s Land, and she set sail once again on June 23. In company with her consorts, the ship Sea Horse, bound for Moose and Albany under Captain John Richards, and the sloop Beaver, bound for Eastmain under Captain John Williamson, the King George (III) proceeded to Hudson Bay. The three ships hoisted their colours and parted company in the Bay on August 7, having kept close contact throughout the journey from the Orkneys through Hudson Strait. Ten days later, Tunstall anchored his ship at Churchill Factory and “Saluted the Factory with 5 Guns.” The ship remained only long enough to deliver passengers, cargo and the packet from England and to receive passengers, the year’s returns of trade, fresh water and ballast. She then set sail from Churchill on August 22, arriving at York Factory and anchoring in Five Fathom Hole on August 27. That same day, Tunstall landed the remainder of the Bay bound passengers. Among them was one of the newly engaged servants who boarded the ship at Gravesend, John Thompson, the younger brother of David Thompson.

John Thompson was born on January 25, 1772, in the parish of St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, England. He was nearly two years younger than his brother David. Their father died on February 28, 1772, leaving their mother to look after the two young boys. In 1777, David entered the Grey Coat School, an institution devoted to the education of poor boys. Seven years later, in 1784, he was apprenticed to the HBC and set sail for Hudson Bay under Joshua Tunstall, the same captain who later brought John to the Bay. John’s circumstances during these years are unknown. However, he apparently did not receive the benefit of an education such as his brother’s, for on John’s account with the HBC after his first year in service, he made his mark and did not write his signature.

Undoubtedly at the suggestion of and with the encouragement of his brother David, John Thompson contracted with the HBC as a labourer, on April 22, 1789. His contract was for five years and six pounds per annum, the usual salary paid to newly engaged labourers at that time. John was seventeen when he contracted with the Company in April and came ashore at York Factory in August, 1789. He was one of twenty-four men landed on August 27 and entered on the books by Joseph Colen, the officer in charge of York Factory. Colen had arrived at York Factory in
August, 1785 and the next summer succeeded Humphrey Marten in charge there. Although initially identified to be stationed under John Ballanden at Severn, the HBC post southeast of York Factory on the Bay, John Thompson spent his first season in Rupert's Land at York Factory. In fact, he is listed as being Colen’s servant for the season 1789-90, but he does not appear to have been shown any favouritism over the other men in the selection of his duties.

John Thompson’s first winter in the service of the HBC was one he would never forget. The rugged life and severe climate took its toll. Annually, several men were sent out from the factory in the early autumn to spend the winter either at one of the hunters’ tents or at the woodcutters’ tent. In the autumn of 1789, John was one of the men sent to winter at the woodcutters’ tent. The tasks of these woodcutters were described by David Thompson in his Narrative.

Axes are put in order, Boats got ready with Provisions, and about twenty men sent up the River to the nearest forests to cut down pine trees, branch then, lop off the heads, and carry them on their shoulders to the great wood pile, near the river bank; the trees are so small that a man generally carries two, or three, to the wood pile. When the quantity required for fuel, is thus cut and piled, the wood is taken by a large sledge drawn by the men to the bay of the River, where rafts can be made and floated to the Factory, which is completed in April, but not floated to the Factory until June and July.8

John Thompson was not to remain the full season at the woodcutters’ tent however, for, on November 6, the York Factory journal reads, “Two Men came from the Woods for Mr. Thomas — John Thompson having rece’d a hurt by a Tree falling on him.”9 Thomas Thomas, senior, the surgeon residing at the factory, was sent the next day to examine John, and on November 10, “John Thompson was brought from the Woods having receiv’d an accident by the falling of a Tree.”10 His injuries must not have been too severe, though they did prevent him from returning to the rigours of the woodcutters’ life, for, on November 16, he was sent to the woodcutters’ tent to retrieve his bedding. Two days later he was sent to the hunters’ tent at French Creek, seven miles southeast of York Factory.11

Apart from periodic trips to the factory to deliver the returns of the hunt, the time was spent in snaring, netting and shooting game. Grouse and rabbits were the principal game of the hunters at York Factory at this time of year. All the hunters, including John Thompson returned to the factory for the Christmas-New Year season, arriving on December 24, 1789 and returning to their tents on January 3, 1790. John’s stay at the hunters’ tent in the new year was short-lived. On January 18, he returned to York Factory. “Two came from Stoney Rivers hunting tent, much frozen one of them John Thompson, will I am apprehensive, be disabled a long time; his nose is almost froze solid.”12 While John was recuperating from frostbite, scurvy, a not uncommon affliction at the posts on the Bay, once again broke out at the factory, though not to the extent of the previous year. There is no indication that John fell victim to this disease. When he had recovered from his frostbite, he was sent back “to the Eastward hunting Tent,” on February 7. John spent four days on the sick list at the factory in mid-March, but the cause of his incapacity is not stated in the post journal. He returned to the hunters’ tent on March 12. The remainder of his year at York Factory must have been reasonably uneventful, for he is not mentioned again in the post journal until after the arrival of the inland brigades.

Led by William Walker, who was in charge on the Saskatchewan during William Tomison’s absence, and by Charles Thomas Isham, who had charge of a post at Cedar Lake, the inland brigades, consisting of fifty-two “Englishmen,”
arrived at York Factory on July 7, 1790. One of the members of the Saskatchewan brigade was the Company's apprentice, David Thompson, who had severely broken his leg at Manchester House in December 1788 and who had just spent the last season at Cumberland House, where he was taught astronomy and surveying by Philip Turnor, the Company's surveyor. The reunion of the two brothers must have been a happy one. They had not seen each other in more than six years. The two were now young men, David aged twenty and John eighteen. When they had last seen each other, probably in May 1784, they were only boys aged fourteen and twelve respectively. David must have had many tales to tell of life in the interior of Rupert's Land, while John must have brought David up-to-date on news of family and friends back in England.

July at York Factory was a hectic month, with the unpacking, sorting and accounting of the returns brought down by the brigades and with the preparations to send off the canoes and men inland again as quickly as possible. Just how much time the two brothers had to spend together is unknown. David was put in charge of the warehouse accounts and the packing. John, undoubtedly, was kept busy with more menial tasks. On July 27, 1790, William Walker and Thomas Stayner departed inland with the Saskatchewan brigade, consisting of thirty-five men and twelve canoes. John Thompson was a member of the brigade. Despite the difficulties experienced by him during the previous winter at the factory, John had received a good rating from Joseph Colen. John was now to be tried by the considerably more arduous post of middleman with an inland brigade, taking his place between the bowman and steersman with the other less skilled paddlers. His brother David was to remain at York Factory, still not fully recovered from his accident of one and a half years previous.

The journey inland was long and difficult. Travelling up the Hayes River, the brigade did not reach Lake Winnipeg until August 23. By August 27, it was at Cedar Lake and finally, on September 5, reached Cumberland House, the total distance travelled to date estimated by the Company at 760 miles. While at Cumberland House, John witnessed the departure of Philip Turnor, Malcolm Ross, Peter Fidler and their men on the HBC's Northward Expedition, the long delayed Company effort to challenge the Nor'Westers in the Athabasca, the richest fur area in the entire Northwest, and the mainstay of the Canadians. On September 14, Walker and the brigade embarked from Cumberland House. Seven days later, the brigade separated at the confluence of the North and South Saskatchewan rivers. Eight canoes proceeded up the North Saskatchewan, while Walker took four canoes to South Branch House. On September 28, Walker arrived at the North Saskatchewan from South Branch House and rejoined the eight canoes bound for Manchester House at la Montée, the point on the river at which the trail from the NWC and HBC forts on the South Branch ended. It was at la Montée, located at the northeastern edge of the plains, where, traditionally, part of the brigade took to horse to supply fresh buffalo meat to the men in the canoes. However, it was not until the next day that Walker and the brigade were met by horses and men sent by James Tate, who had been left in charge at Manchester House for the summer. Tate's men had brought fresh and dried buffalo meat and Walker gave the provisions to the brigade, taking to horse with thirty-two bails of goods from the canoes. On September 30, Walker left his canoes and men and set off by horse with Tate's men for the settlement. Travelling at a leisurely pace, he reached Manchester House on October 6, as did the brigade of canoes.
John Thompson had reached his destination, Manchester House, at that time the HBC's uppermost post on the Saskatchewan. Here the Company was opposed this season by Peter Pangman at the NWC's Pine Island Fort. William Tomison, the HBC's Inland Chief, who dominated Company affairs at York Factory and on the Saskatchewan for so many years, arrived at Manchester House on November 5, 1790, and took command of the post. He had just returned from a year's furlough in England. Walker soon after departed to take charge of South Branch House. A relatively uneventful year was spent at Manchester House during the 1790-91 season. Though visited on occasion by Blackfoot, Blood, Peigan, Fall, Sarcee and Cree Indians, among whom relations were not always peaceful, the season passed without incident. Provisions were scarce due to a fire which had burned the ground for a considerable distance about the post, but there was never the threat of starvation.

John was not mentioned by name in the post journal until May 1791. As a labourer, the lowest rank in the Company hierarchy, it is not unusual or surprising that he was not more frequently identified in the Company's records. In all likelihood, he spent the winter at the fort performing such duties as: chopping and hauling firewood; collecting meat from the hunters' tents; clearing snow from within the palisades; packing returns; or any of a number of other necessary chores. In May 1791, when Tomison and the brigade departed for York Factory with the season's returns, John was left to spend the summer at Manchester House, being judged "unfit for the Journey up and down."17 His annual assessment, which was made at York Factory in the summer of 1791, rated him as very good, "but as yet too weak for the Journey."18 John was one of seven men left by Tomison to take care of the fort and the horses. Of these seven, five were judged to be unfit for the rigours of the journey to and from York Factory. The other two men left by Tomison were James Gaddy and Isaac Batt. Gaddy, who was left in charge of the post, had joined the HBC in 1781,19 and was perhaps the HBC employee most knowledgeable of the Blackfoot, Blood and Peigan tribes. It was he who had led the party of Company men in which, three years earlier, David Thompson had travelled to winter with the Peigan Indians. Isaac Batt, who had initially joined the HBC in 1754,20 had also spent considerable periods of time among the Blackfoot, Blood and Peigan Indians.

The summer of 1791 was almost John Thompson's last. No post journal exists for Manchester House for that summer, but, when William Tomison returned there with the brigade in October 1791, he recorded,

I heard the disagreeable and true account of the unfortunate end of Isaac Batt, in which he himself was highly culpable, as also James Gaddy. The deceased made it up to go on hunting with two Villains that came to the Canadian House which had run away with other mens Women, he took with him six good Horses two Guns and several other articles with a good leather Tent accompanied by John Thompson a Woman and three Boys — the Villains seeing their booty, having nothing of their own, in the time he was handing the Calimet to one, the other shot him through the head stripped him and the Woman of their cloaths and went off with the whole. What I blame James Gaddy for, is his suffering him to go a hunting on the south side of the River with such unknown Villains.21

The tribal affiliation of the two "Villains" was not identified by Tomison or any other HBC personnel. John was probably spared, because as a relatively inexperienced person in the wilderness he posed no threat to Batt's murderers. There is no record of John Thompson being killed by Indians that he was not at Manchester House.

The 1791 winter was quite welcome after the previous year's rigours. The 80 men of the South Branch House were reduced to 27, Tomison and 62 men, and were strengthened by 17 recruits who arrived in June.

After a season of relative ease at York Factory, the next step was to be John's final promotion from his current posting at South Branch House. He was initially transferred to the St John's River, where he would be stationed at the new post.

A Canadian volley of lead and shot was fired into the ranks of the British, and the arrival. Durin...
is no record of how or when John, the woman and the three children returned to Manchester House after this incident. Isaac Batt was the first HBC employee to be killed by Indians on the Saskatchewan. John Thompson was extremely fortunate that he was not the second.

The 1791-92 season at Manchester House was quiet, which must have been quite welcome to John. At the end of this season, John was one of an advanced party which left Manchester House several days prior to the departure of the brigade of canoes. The advanced party was sent with horses, returns and letters to South Branch House, where William Walker was again in charge. Tomison and the main part of the brigade embarked from Manchester House on May 19, 1792 and two days later met John Thompson and three other men waiting at la Montée. By May 27, Tomison and the main part of the brigade had reached Cumberland House and on June 29, the Saskatchewan brigade was at York Factory. John would never again be stationed as far westward as Manchester House.

After a separation of two years, John’s spent at Manchester House and David’s at York Factory, the two brothers were together again at the Bay. At this reunion, it would be John who would have the more exciting stories to tell. Again their time together was brief, for on July 27, 1792 John left York Factory. He was at this time promoted from middleman to bowsman,²² a position which acknowledged his improved skills as a canoeist. He left the factory bound for Swan River, the district initially entered by the HBC in 1790, principally to provide canoes for its planned ventures in the Athabasca. Charles Thomas Isham headed the Swan River brigade which consisted of eighteen Europeans in five large canoes and several Indians in two smaller canoes.²³ By September 1, the brigade was at Lake Winnipeg and on September 18, it had reached Swan River House, where James Peter Whitford had been left in charge for the summer.²⁴

A Canadian party had been through earlier and had traded virtually all available provisions from the Saulteaux Indians, in whose territory the post was built, and the HBC men were faced with a food shortage immediately upon their arrival. During September and October, most of the men were involved in the construction of a new building at Swan River House: cutting and hauling logs; sawing boards; and, then putting up the building. By the end of October 1792, provisions were so scarce that Isham called for volunteers to winter away from the post on the “barren ground” or plains. Only three men were willing to winter away from the post,²⁵ and by mid-November they had left to winter with a tent of Indians, undoubtedly Saulteaux Indians.²⁶ By this time, the men at Swan River House had been put on half rations. John Thompson had been one of the three who volunteered, for, on March 25, 1793, the post journal states that, “J. Thompson J. Gun & M. Cooper came in from their winter quarters.” There is no record of John’s experiences on the plains during this winter.

John was not named again in the journal after his return to the post. From late March to early May, however, the principal activities at the post, in which he would have participated, were: the gathering of birch bark for canoe making; the actual building of canoes; maple sugar making; the preparation of pounded and dried meat and pemmican; and, finally, the packing and pressing of furs. On May 12, Isham and the brigade of eighteen men in six canoes embarked from Swan River House, arriving without incident at York Factory on June 29.

Again John’s stay at the factory was brief. Just enough time was allowed to sort out the last season’s business and to prepare for the next. On July 20, 1793, John was
one of seventeen men, in four large canoes, who left York Factory bound for Nelson River. The brigade was led by William Cook. York Factory's recent interest in the Nelson River had been prompted by increased Canadian activity in the Muskrat Country, the area lying immediately behind York and Churchill factories. This new and vigorous presence threatened to cut off the furs of the HBC's Home Guard Indians. The Company's establishments on the Nelson River were meant to challenge this Canadian incursion into what until then had been the HBC's private domain, as well as to open up a route from York Factory to the Athabasca.

However, internal HBC rivalry quickly materialized between York Factory's settlements on the Nelson, Gross and Burntwood rivers and Churchill Factory's inland settlements on the Churchill River.

No 1793-94 post journal exists for Chatham House, the house where John was posted for this season. One can only assume that he was involved in the usual day-to-day activities of wood gathering for heat and provision gathering for sustenance. On March 8, 1794, John Thompson, one other HBC servant and an Indian guide arrived at York Factory from Chatham House with the packet for Joseph Colen. On March 25, the packet men set off from the factory for Chatham House, but John was not with them. In a letter of March 23, 1794, Colen explained to Cook, "John Thompson having expressed a wish to go to the Athapiscow Country he is detained for that journey." Colen sent another man with the packet to take John's place at Chatham House. John's wish to go to the Athabasca was undoubtedly influenced by a desire to serve with his brother. David was this season posted at Buckingham House on the Saskatchewan River, but it was planned that he serve as second-in-command to Malcolm Ross on an expedition to the Athabasca, which was scheduled to depart from Cumberland House in the summer of 1794.

In early June, Joseph Colen announced that he planned to take trade goods in boats from York Factory, up the Hayes River to the Rock, Hill River. The previous year when he had declared the same intention he had been met with a storm of protests from the servants, who were almost unanimously opposed to the use of boats. The experienced servants saw the introduction of boats as a threat to their growing position of influence. They also did not want to lose the steersman's and bowman's bonuses or the bonuses paid to those who built canoes. Long at a disadvantage to the Canadians with respect to the production of canoes, Colen and others in the HBC saw boats as the possible solution to their transportation problems. Colen also hoped that the introduction of boats would put an end to the power of the canoe builders within the Company. The single boat sent in June 1793 returned to York Factory after failing to reach its destination. However, in 1794, Colen was pleasantly surprised to find that virtually all the servants at the factory volunteered for the trip, probably attracted by the bounty offered for such extra trips by the Company. Among those who volunteered and who were selected for the trip was John Thompson.

Colen's intention was to establish a depot at the Rock where goods from York Factory could be taken and stored, thus eliminating a difficult section of river for heavily laden canoes from the long journey of the inland brigades. This depot inland from the factory would also facilitate two trips being made each summer to and from Cumberland House, thereby allowing more trade goods to go inland each year and also allowing all returns from inland to be brought down to the Bay. Two boats left the factory in June, one on June 9 and one on June 13. The first boat to depart was hampered by the poor materials used in its construction, which caused it to leak.
JOHN THOMPSON AND THE HUDSON’S BAY COMPANY

freely. The second, and smaller boat, in which Colen travelled, passed the first and reached its destination, 120 miles above the factory, on June 21, 1794. At the successful completion of the trip, Colen praised his men for their efforts.

At 2 P.M. we got to the extent of our journey—the Rock. Whatever merit is due from bringing a Boat thus far up Hill River my Men are entitled to it—as, I was only a passenger on board the first wooden Craft that reached this fall.35

Two days later, the second boat arrived. Five years later, the Company’s York Boats were travelling as far as Acton House on the North Saskatchewan River, in the foothills of the Rockies.

The day of the arrival of the second boat, June 23, Colen put his men to work clearing ground and felling timber to erect Gordon House. That same day, with the arrival of the Swan River brigade and the first contingent of the Saskatchewan brigade, Colen learned the unhappy news that “the Athapescow Expedition is entirely knocked on the head.”36 Malcolm Ross and David Thompson had been unable to enlist men at Cumberland House for the expedition, and both men blamed William Tomison. It was reported to Colen that Ross’ intention now was to erect a house somewhere to the northward of Cumberland House. Tomison and the remainder of the Saskatchewan brigade arrived at the Rock on June 25. The next day several men were selected for the Northward Expedition. As an incentive to the men, who were for the most part unwilling to venture into the Athabasca, the Company offered a bonus of one quarter of the salary of each man who travelled north of Isle à la Croix, the NWC’s jumping-off point to the Athabasca. Colen and the brigade of canoes and the two boats embarked on June 28 for York Factory, which Colen and the canoes reached the next day; the boats arrived on July 3. Tomison returned inland from the Rock on June 29.

After a two year separation, the Thompson brothers were together again at York Factory when, on July 5, David arrived from Reed Lake. Malcolm Ross had remained at Reed Lake, a four day journey from Cumberland House, to erect a house. Both John’s and David’s contracts with the Company expired in 1794. John had finished a five year contract as a labourer, or middleman, at six pounds per annum. His most recent rating stated, “very good Leaves his Terms [for his next contract] to the Company.”37 He now reengaged for three years as a “Bowman” at fourteen pounds per annum.38 David had completed ten years service with the HBC, the first seven as an apprentice and the last three as a writer, or clerk, at fifteen pounds per annum.39 His abilities and skills being in great demand by the Company, David now signed a three year contract as a surveyor, at sixty pounds per annum.40

Aside from two periods of less than a month each spent at York Factory in the summers of 1790 and 1792, the two brothers had had no time together and had never been stationed at the same place since John’s arrival in 1789. However, they were now to spend more than one year together, for John was assigned, at his own request, to David’s party which was to return to Malcolm Ross at Reed Lake. David and his party, in company with the Nelson River brigade, left York Factory on July 25 and 26. “Men in two Canoes accompanied by M! Thompson in a smaller one, are to proceed direct to M! Ross in the Northward Track.”41 With the injury en route to James Hoorie, one of the most experienced men in the brigade, John was moved from David’s canoe into another and was replaced in David’s canoe by James Tate.42 Ascending the Nelson and Grass rivers, David’s party of seven “English-
men” and one Indian guide arrived at Reed Lake House on September 2, 1794. There they found that Ross and his three men had completed a house of twenty-two feet by eighteen feet to house the warehouse, trading room and Ross’ quarters, and a second house of the same dimensions for the men. The new arrivals also found a NWC house built during the summer, just ten yards away. Faced with wintering himself, David Thompson and ten men, Ross quickly put the men to work to enlarge one of the houses with a sixteen foot by twelve foot addition. Heated only by stone and mud fireplaces and covered with pine bark roofing, the accommodations were far from elegant.

On September 15, Ross sent David Thompson, John Thompson and Andrew Davey to Cumberland House to await the arrival of the fall canoes from York Factory “to receive articles [sic] that is wanted here.” The three men arrived at their destination four days later. On September 30, the canoes arrived from the factory, having left there on September 1, prior to the arrival of the Company ship from England. On October 1, the three men set off for Reed Lake with the sought after goods: flints, cloth, and tobacco. They arrived at Reed Lake on October 6, to discover that in their absence Mr. Robert Thompson, who was an NWC master and an American unrelated to John and David, had arrived and left men and goods at the NWC house. He had then embarked downstream to establish two other houses on the Grass River towards York Factory.

The months of October and November were spent in hunting, fishing and trading. By the end of November, Ross had still received no word from York Factory and he did not know whether the Company ship, upon which the factory and its inland settlements were all dependent, had arrived safely. He, therefore, engaged an Indian guide to take two of his men to the Three Tracks, where William Sinclair of the HBC had just built a house, to get news from York Factory. On December 1, Ross noted, “M. David Thompson, and his Brother, accompanied [sic] by an Indian for a pilot, set off for the Nest away ah to hear if your Honours ship arrived at York last fall.”

John and David were away from Reed Lake House over Christmas, but, on December 29, Ross recorded,

M. David Thompson, his Brother and Hames Hourston, arrived from the Neast away ahw or three trackers 12 ¾ yards of blue Corded Cloth. and also the agreeable New of the safe arrival of Your Honours ship, at York Factory. John was back at the house for just two weeks before Ross sent him and John Harper to live with an Indian man and his wife, probably Cree Indians, though neither these two Indians nor any other Indians who came to the house during the season were ever identified by tribe in Ross’ journal. The two men were sent both to encourage the gathering of furs and to lessen the burden on the house’s food supply. Thompson, Harper and two Indians returned to Reed Lake House on March 15, with 150 Made Beaver in furs. Four days later, Harper set off again with the two Indians, but John Thompson remained at the house. Both the Thompson brothers remained at Reed Lake House for the remainder of the season. A quiet spring was spent there, broken only by the news that the NWC master, Robert Thompson, had been shot and killed by an unidentified group of Indians.

The trading season at Reed Lake House ended in mid-June. Nine men, undoubtedly including John Thompson, set off from the house in three canoes on June 15; David Thompson left in one canoe the next day, with an Indian man and his wife; and Malcolm Ross embarked on June 17. By June 19, Ross and David

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SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY
Thompson had caught up to their men and they proceeded in one brigade down the Grass and Nelson rivers, arriving at York Factory on July 4, 1795.

The season just completed at Reed Lake House was to be John Thompson's last in Rupert's Land. For some reason, never explained in the records of the HBC, John was judged "unfit for Duty" and was allowed to return to Great Britain with two years still remaining on his three year contract. It is difficult to understand in what way he was considered "unfit" for service with the HBC. He was definitely not dismissed by the Company for unacceptable behaviour, for, as in every previous year, he was once again given a good assessment by his employers. Neither could the reason for his leaving the Company's employ have been poor health or physical incapacity, for John received the bounty of forty shillings in the summer of 1795 for making an extra canoe trip carrying goods inland either towards Cumberland House or to the Nelson River settlement. Just which of these trips he made that summer is not known. If to Nelson River, he must have left York Factory with his brother David, Malcolm Ross, William Sinclair, John Wright and the brigades for Nelson River and the Northward on July 18. After Sinclair took ill, John would then have been with Sinclair's and Wright's party which separated from Ross and David Thompson on August 11, arriving back at the factory on August 17. If towards Cumberland House, John would have left York Factory with the Saskatchewan and Swan River brigades on July 23, and arrived back at the Bay on August 17, with James Bird and party. Whichever trip he was involved with, this summer would be the last time that John would see his brother David again for many, many years, if, indeed, they ever did meet again.

On August 27, 1795, Captain John Richards anchored the King George in Five Fathom Hole. John Thompson was to leave Rupert's Land on the same ship which had brought him there six years earlier. Another HBC ship, the Queen Charolotte arrived at York Factory from Churchill Factory on September 10. On September 15, John Thompson was listed in the post journal as having been discharged from the factory and having boarded the King George. About noon on September 20, the ships King George and Queen Charolotte and the brig Beaver sailed from York Factory, the first two bound for the Orkneys and London and the last for Severn, on the Bay. During the return voyage, several crew and "Landsmen," or passengers, of the King George came down with scurvy, but it is not known if John Thompson was among them, as the victims were not named. The King George reached Stromness, in the Orkneys, on November 3, 1795 and John Thompson disembarked. Perhaps John, who had set sail from London in 1789, was landed here with the other passengers for his own safety. England had been at war with France since 1793, and the HBC ships sailed from the Orkneys to London with an escort provided by the Royal Navy.

John Thompson's career with the HBC was now over, having lasted almost six and a half years, first as a labourer, or middleman, and ending as a bowman. He did not rise high in the Company, but he was the type of man upon whom the HBC relied. He quickly developed from a "green hand" to an experienced servant, who never once failed to volunteer for the tasks which his superiors in the Company saw necessary. For some inexplicable reason, John was not mentioned even once in his brother David's Narrative, though the two served with the HBC for such a large part of their early lives and even spent one full season together in the Northward. David went on to become an explorer and surveyor with the NWC, and, in this century, with the 1916 publication of his Narrative, he became one of Canada's most famous
men from the fur trade era. John, a man of lesser achievements than his older brother, has been in total obscurity, but for an editor's footnote in the 1962 Champlain Society edition of his brother's Narrative. John Thompson's life after leaving the HBC and Rupert's Land remains unknown. A descendant of David's believed that John became a sea captain and later visited his brother at Montreal.

FOOTNOTES

1 Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), A.6/14, fol. 79d., Governor and Committee to Tomsom and York Factory Council, London, 27 May 1789.
2 Ibid., C.1/392, 17 August 1789.
4 HBCA, B.239/f/87, fols. 39d. and 47d. The problem of John Thompson's literacy, or lack of same, is a real and perhaps inexplicable one. For though he made his mark in the summer of 1790 at York Factory, in 1789, when he contracted with the HBC, he wrote his signature, seemingly that of an educated man, on the contract (see HBCA, A.32/3, p. 215). On later documents of the HBC, dated after 1790, he wrote his signature. Company servants' lists, complete for this time period, indicate the presence of only one John Thompson at York Factory or its dependencies, that man being the brother of David Thompson.
5 HBCA, A.32/3, p. 215.
6 Ibid., B.239/a/68, 25 July 1789.
7 Ibid., B.239/x/1, fols. 31d-32.
8 David Thompson, op. cit., p. 40.
9 HBCA, B.239/f/90, 6 November 1789.
10 Ibid., 10 November 1789.
11 David Thompson, op. cit., p. 40.
12 HBCA, B.239/a/90, 18 January 1790.
13 Ibid., 29 July 1790.
14 Ibid., B.239/f/1, fols. 37d-38.
15 Ibid., B.205/a/5, fols. 45-56d, 26 July to 5 November 1790.
16 Ibid., A.6/15, fol. 107, item 9, Governor and Committee to Colen and York Factory Council, London, 29 May 1794.
17 Ibid., B.121/a/6, 11 May 1791.
18 Ibid., B.239/f/1, fols. 47d-48.
21 HBCA, B.121/a/7, 3 October 1791.
22 Ibid., B.239/f/1, fols. 57d-58.
23 Ibid., B.239/a/92, 27 July 1792.
24 Ibid., B.213/a/3, 18 September 1792.
25 Ibid., 31 October 1792.
26 Ibid., 10 and 11 November 1792.
27 Ibid., B.239/a/95, 20 July 1793.
28 Ibid., B.239/b/55, fol. 10, Colen to Cook, York Factory, 23 March 1794.
29 Ibid., B.239/a/96, 25 March 1794.
30 Ibid., B.239/a/95, 29 May 1793.
31 Ibid., B.239/a/99, 17 July 1796.
32 Ibid., B.239/a/95, 29 May to 8 July 1793.
33 Ibid., B.239/f/1, fol. 88d.
34 Ibid., A.6/15, fol. 107, item 9, Governor and Committee to Colen and York Factory Council, London, 29 May 1794.
36 Ibid., 23 June 1794.
37 Ibid., A.30/6, fols. 33d-34.
38 Ibid., B.239/f/1, fols. 82d-83. John Thompson is listed as "Steersman" in HBCA, A.30/6, fols. 33d-34.
39 Ibid., B.239/f/1, fols. 50d-51.
40 Ibid., fols. 76d-77.
41 Ibid., B.239/a/96, 26 July 1794.
42 Ibid., B.239/b/55, fol. 29d., David Thompson to Colen, Moose Nose, 9 August 1794.
43 Ibid., B.178/a/1, 30 June and 1 August 1794.
44 Ibid., 1 July 1794.
45 Ibid., 11 September 1794.
46 Ibid., 13 September 1794.
47 Ibid., B.49/a/26, 19 September 1794.
48 Ibid., B.178/a/1, 6 October 1794.
JOHN THOMPSON AND THE HUDSON’S BAY COMPANY

[*ibid., 16 and 19 September 1794.*

[*ibid., 4 July 1794.*

[*ibid., 1 December 1794.*

[*ibid., 29 December 1794.*

[*ibid., 12 January 1795.*

[*ibid., 12 June 1795.*

[*ibid., B.239/b/79, fol. 9, York Factory Council to Governor and Committee, York Factory, 16 September 1795.*

[*ibid., B.239/f/1, fol. 102 and B.239/f/3, fol. 19.*

[*ibid., B.239/f/3, fol. 18.*

[*ibid., B.66/a/1, 11 August 1795.*

[*ibid., B.239/a/97, 23 July and 17 August 1795.*

[*ibid., B.239/a/97 and 98, 13 September 1795. The ship’s log lists Thompson and the other passengers from York Factory as having boarded on 16 September 1795. See HBCA, C.1/398, fol. 2 and 16 September 1795.*

[*HBCA, B.239/a/99, 20 September 1795. The King George’s log lists the departure date as 21 September, 1795. See HBCA, C.1/398, 21 September 1795.*

[*HBCA, C.1/398, fol. 2.*


[*David Thompson, *David Thompson’s Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812,* ed. J. B. Tyrrell (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1916), p. XXIII.*

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Book Reviews


Volume IV of the Dictionary of Canadian Biography will be a disappointment to Western Canadian scholars. The introductions contribute nothing to an understanding of eighteenth century Rupert's Land, and no single biography is so expanded as to fill the gap. The introductory essays both relate to the eastern half of the continent and one has to search hard to find a reference to the West. Yet these decades were crucial to the history of Western Canada. It was in the years covered by this volume that Prince of Wales' Fort was built, that Samuel Hearne made his northern voyages, that the Indians of the Interior focused on the bayside trade; and that the Hudson's Bay Company moved inland to the Pas to counter the traders from Canada. Most important were the years that saw the founding of the English speaking half breed peoples who were to become the backbone of the Hudson's Bay Company dominated fur trade.

This lack of context must not be construed as a criticism of the biographies themselves. They are rich in detail and thoroughly reliable. Those by Jennifer Brown, Sylvia Van Kirk, Arthur Ray, E. E. Rich, and Shirlee Ann Smith reflect years of careful familiarity with the records of the Hudson's Bay Company. Prof. Van Kirk's biography of Moses Norton, a bayside chief factor, is a particularly interesting piece of detective work. Poor Norton has always been haunted by the ghost of Samuel Hearne's damning assessment. Van Kirk sheds considerable doubt on the size of Norton's harem, indeed she suggests he might not have had one, and upon his alleged Indian parentage — he was probably European. Mrs. Smith's biography of Ferdinand Jacobs ends another myth. It has long been assumed by Manitobans that Jacobs was the first Jew in the province. Mrs. Smith has found nothing to indicate that he was other than a faithful member of the Church of England.

What is interesting to note is that most of the important fur trade figures in the Dictionary all had a hand in the construction of the greatest architectural monument of the fur trade — Prince of Wales' Fort. Indeed the fort is also the only remaining visible work of Moses Norton, Ferdinand Jacobs, Samuel Hearne and Joseph Isbister. It is unfortunate that the brevity of the various biographies makes it impossible to determine the precise sequence of construction. In some cases the biographies are wrong about the roles of their various subjects. Ferdinand Jacobs, for example, did not take three years to complete the southwest curtain wall, the west bastion and the gun platforms. Had he been so quick the London Committee would have been pleased indeed. The southwest wall was completed in 1759; only then was work on the exterior of the northwest square started. The north bastions, the southwest curtain, and the rampart walls of the northwest and northeast curtains all had to be rebuilt. Only in 1771 was the fort considered completed by Moses Norton after some forty years of construction. Van Kirk suggests that Moses Norton's difficulties with the construction of the fort centre on lack of materials and skilled labour. In fact, it was more likely the frost which split wooden beams, cracked stone and disintegrated mortar.

Lest it be assumed from the various biographies, especially Prof. Van Kirk's, that life on Eskimo point was reasonably pleasant; the lead roofs leaked and inside...
the stone walls were encrusted with hoar frost all winter, and dripped with condensation all summer. Firewood was impossible to obtain and the drifting snow buried the windows so that there was precious little light. Scurvy, depression, frost bite and riots were not uncommon afflictions in the desolate windswept point of land jutting into Hudson's Bay. How Norton kept his parrot alive is a mystery indeed. Samuel Hearne must have been extremely popular with his forty or so men when he allowed the French to blow up the fort.

F. Pannekoek


The western interior of Canada was often depicted as an arctic wilderness by leaders of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies who wished to preserve their empire from the incursions of settlement. And yet, in 1857, even as Governor George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company was testifying before a British parliamentary committee on the impossibility of farming in the North-West, Canadian pamphleteers were praising the potential of this next frontier. By the early 1880's immigration propaganda and popular scientific accounts suggested that the West was another Garden of Eden, that only a little cash and reasonable determination would convert a farm tenant into an independent yeoman, and that the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway would establish the most desirable settlement frontier in all the world. Despite the fulsome praise, settlers found that the North-West was no easy passage to prosperity and, in some districts in the late 1880's, almost as many left in failure as arrived to take up new homesteads. These hard times contributed to the development of a strain of disillusionment in western Canadian thought which was reflected in the writings of the first western "school of history". Prairie historians like George Bryce and R. G. MacBeth rejected eastern historical interpretations and created their own version of the western experience. This, in brief, is the story presented in Doug Owram's new book. A vision of Eden was created by eastern Canadian expansionists and, when the reality of pioneer farming failed to match the promises of the promoters, western disappointment was translated into regional protest.

The great contribution of Promise of Eden is its striking analysis of Ontario expansionism. Owram demonstrates that a very few individuals — perhaps fewer than fifteen — conducted the campaign to annex the West and that, almost without exception, they lived in either the Ottawa Valley or Toronto. Led by Allan Macdonnell, William Macdonnell Dawson and William N. Kennedy, they launched their drive in 1856-57 and, within a decade, had remolded the popular image of the western territories to fit their aspirations. Not only did this new image rely upon predictions of fertility but, as a result of the Red River resistance of 1869, it soon included an emphasis upon the British Protestant nature of their ideal nation. This is strong and convincing work.

The next phase of Owram's argument is less satisfactory. Earlier qualifications concerning western economic potential were abandoned in the late 1870's, he writes, and a "dangerously excessive" praise of prairie fertility commenced:

settlement would continue at as fast a pace as could be generated and the settler would be led to expect a relatively easy life in the new region. The commitment
of thousands to a precarious livelihood without any real understanding of the difficulties involved practically guaranteed future discontent, if not disaster. Moreover as the settler accepted this image of the North West, he focused his inevitable disillusionment not on the process of settlement itself but in other, external directions. (p. 167).

In shifting the focus of his book from the Ontario image of the West to the development of a western regional self-consciousness, Owram overstates the importance of Ontario expansionist propaganda in prairie life and thought. His pivotal chapter on western disillusionment in the 1880’s ignores the perspectives of Manitobans and Bow River ranchers — about 75 per cent of the prairie population in 1886 — and reduces the growing sense of regional consciousness to a negative reaction against “the East”. While Owram’s emphasis upon a new regionalism in the 1880’s is entirely appropriate, his characterization of it as simply a product of disillusionment is not convincing. To ascribe the historical interpretations of Bryce and MacBeth to this same strain of disappointment is similarly unsatisfactory. And the suggestion that the boom mentality of the early twentieth century was a “direct legacy” of Ontario expansionism is another exaggeration. Prairie utopian thought in the first decades of the twentieth century owed as much to Shakespeare and Henry George as to Alexander Morris and John Macoun. And prairie regional sentiments were as much the product of a federal system of government as of economic disappointment in the 1880’s.

These criticisms are intended to temper a work that in several places overstates the importance of its subject but are not to be taken as evidence of serious flaws. As a pioneering study in the history of popular thought in Canada, Promise of Eden deserves the attention of all students of western history. It is an engaging and enjoyable book.

Gerald Friesen


In this Jubilee year on the Canadian prairies, many people are showing a renewed interest in the past. James Gray’s latest book, Boomtime: Peopling the Canadian Prairies, is an enterprising response to this interest. The generally well-organized text and fascinating selection of well reproduced photos give a clear insight into the basic facets of the prairie ‘boomtime’ of settlement, social development and economic growth.

Gray has summarized the prairie experience of the boom. In seven chapters he focuses on the basic components of the founding of modern prairie society. The opening chapter outlines the ecological changes in the central plains of North America that opened them for settlement, the technological advances that made prairie farming possible and the international events that spurred millions of people to seek a new home.

An outline of the Canadian government’s reaction to these events and their vague notions of what was needed, follows. This includes a general history of the settlement of the three prairie provinces.

The next two chapters explain the settler’s life, the establishment of the homestead and a general view of the important elements of the settler’s daily existence. This is Gray at his best, detailing the myriad problems and considerations of people dealing with the book. The z of the book. The z...
of people dealing with a new land. However, it appears that there was too much for the book. The zesty changes of topic indicate an editorial conflict. There appears to be too much to say and too little space. In less than a page of text, Gray describes pre-fabricated housing, loneliness of prairie women and church union.

In the fifth chapter, Gray begins a study of the new prairie society. He highlights the urban growth, the staunch moralism of the Ontario immigrants and touches on the conditions that sparked the drive for urban renewal after the First World War. He talks of the new class of entrepreneurs, both the high and the low, the nouveau riche of the grain trade and the lucky speculators and businessmen who started towns on the expanding railway lines.

Government policies on immigration seem to have been clearly defined, but Gray asks in the sixth chapter whether or not there was any policy on immigrants. He criticizes the government's easy slip into assigning ethnic blocs and the laissez-faire educational policies. The eventual solution to the resulting crisis and its losses to Canada are covered and noted with sorrow.

Finally Gray sums up the prairie experience. Here the distinct character of the prairies is conjured. The magic moulding of diverse national personalities and the overcoming of a hostile environment combine to create a new breed of people. Perhaps only those raised on the prairies will understand the true meaning of the prairie experience, but this book presents many facts in the early history of its creation.

A key element in Gray's presentation is the extraordinary selection of photographs, over one hundred and fifty. These are very well paired with the text and make the entire book come alive. The reader can imagine the hard life and toil of the woman's world in the text when they are visually assaulted by the very real work day before them on page 76. The washday illustrated, with tubs of sooty steaming water, hot sweat streaming down the woman's face, while she stands in her long dress in the clouds of mosquitoes and flies, make the reader thankful for indoor plumbing and laundromats.

Gray is a popular historian. His straight forward text and plain faced exuberance in the topic make it a pleasure to read such a book. This type of book is important. It makes history accessible to the general public, the format is attractive, not awesome and the contents are easily digested, not overweight with factual cases and footnotes. It is written for an audience whose alternative entertainment might be television and I think it will have some success against it.

David Neufeld
Notes and Correspondence

CANADIAN INVENTORY OF HISTORIC BUILDING
SCHOOL STUDY

The Canadian Inventory of Historic Building is about to begin a study on early schools in Canada. As a base for this work, they would like to locate any buildings constructed as schools in Canada before 1930. If there is such a building in your area and you would like to see it included in the study, please write to: School Study, Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, Parks Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1G2.

MANITOBA HISTORY

We have received a copy of a new magazine called *Manitoba History*. Published by the Manitoba Historical Society three times a year the magazine is available at a yearly subscription rate of $8.00 from Manitoba Historical Society, 190 Rupert Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0N2. We welcome this new magazine which judging from its first issue will be an important addition to the ranks of Canadian historical journals.

MANITOBA RECORD SOCIETY

Dr. A. B. McKillop has recently been appointed General Editor of the Manitoba Record Society. Under the editorial direction of Professor McKillop the Society will publish one volume per year beginning with Alan Artibise's *Gateway City: Winnipeg in Documents 1873-1913*. The volumes will be available to members with the annual membership fee being $16.00. Readers interested should write Manitoba Record Society, 500 Dysart Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2M8.
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