SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

Volume XXXV  Autumn 1982  Number 3

THE BARRColonists: Their Arrival and Impact on the Canadian North-West .................................................. Keith Foster  81
EDMUND MORRIS AMONG THE SASKATCHEWAN INDIANS AND THE FORT QUAPPELLE MONUMENT ........................................ Jean McGill  101
THE REGINA PAINTERS' STRIKE OF 1912 ......................... Glen Makohonuk  108

BOOK REVIEWS ................................................................. 116

Smith, The Regional Decline of a National Party: Liberals on the Prairies.
By R. Douglas Francis.

Kerr and Hanson, Saskatoon: The First Half-Century.
By J. William Brennan.

Dunae, Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier. By Peggy Brunsdon.

COVER: Acoose painted by Edmund Morris.
Print Number 64-757-07. Saskatchewan Government Collection

THE BARR
AND
Isaac M. Barr

settled on a tract of land in 1903 near
mass
settlements on the plains. The type of people who would antagonize
between the colonists and the Indians controversy would have
make no

The controversy which the former (the Barrs) and the latter (the Department of Indian Affairs) had over the nature of the connection was:

“The problem of the twelfth of July 1830 was the problem of stan

That was the problem of the newspaper in regards to these. All of the
impossible to ex

The coming of the War, a con
THE BARR COLONISTS: THEIR ARRIVAL AND IMPACT ON THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST

By Keith Foster

Two thousand British settlers who immigrated to the Saskatchewan prairies in 1903 to form an all-British colony created quite a sensation, not only in Canada, but also abroad. These colonists, under the direction of Reverend Isaac M. Barr and Reverend George Exton Lloyd, were not the largest group to settle on a tract of reserved land; 10,000 German Catholics were reported to be settling en masse between Yorkton and Saskatoon that same year. Nor were they the type of people who, like the Doukhobors, entertained habits or beliefs that would antagonize the established settlers. Yet considerable controversy developed between the colonists and their self-designated leader, Isaac Barr. It was this controversy which made the trek of the Barr colonists so sensational.

The controversy between Barr and his colonists emerged over the manner in which the former conducted the expedition; many colonists felt Barr was enriching himself at their expense. This conflict inevitably involved the Immigration Branch of the Department of the Interior, under whose auspices the trek was conducted. The Canadian press, and particularly the newspapers of the North-West, also played a part in the fray. By aligning themselves either for or against Barr — to either commend or criticize his policies — they not only reported the news, but also helped make it.

The controversy which was to tear apart Barr’s scheme showed no sign of emerging when Barr first proposed his plan. Indeed, Barr initially intended to lead only about 500 settlers to the Canadian North-West, but the response to his pamphlets describing his plan was so great that the number of applicants mushroomed to over 2,000. This mass immigration took place at a time when European nations were shifting their surplus population to foreign shores because they expected to find better opportunities in Canada. As one scholar pointed out: “The problem of population in the seventeenth century had been one of room, in the eighteenth of food, but by the end of the nineteenth century it had become a problem of standard of living.”

That this was true seems to be borne out by the observation made by one newspaper in reference to the Barr colonists: “They were no common emigrants these. All of them were of a fairly well-to-do appearance, as if they had not found it impossible to exist in England, but had decided that they might do even better in the fertile land out west.” Dr. Robbins, one of Barr’s managerial assistants, concurred with this view. He felt that the party of colonists had not been “carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment. They had counted the advantages and disadvantages in sober earnest, and had decided that Canada offered a better field for them and for their children than did Britain.”

The coming of the Barr colonists also took place in the aftermath of the Boer War, and a considerable number of veterans joined the ranks of the colonists.
Unable to find employment in their native land, these veterans undoubtedly felt, as many people in Britain undoubtedly felt, that Canada offered better opportunities than a colony such as South Africa.

Barr's plan, which he elaborated in a series of pamphlets, had several purposes. Barr proposed an all-British colony that would be neither denominational nor communist. He suggested that the settlers should farm their own land rather than congregate in villages. Barr expected that by locating together on a reserved tract of land, the colonists would be able to avoid the isolation inherent in prairie pioneering.

Barr's plan also had an imperialistic flavour; he wanted to spread the British Empire to the Canadian North-West. In a general circular to prospective colonists, Barr sounded the clarion call: "Let us take possession of Canada. Let our cry be CANADA FOR THE BRITISH!" This sentiment was echoed by the colonists. One, a colonist, when asked why he came to Canada, replied: "Why, to claim Canada for the bloomin' Empire."

Bringing British settlers to the Canadian North-West was not only an end in itself; it was also a means to a further end. The British would serve to balance the influx of Americans who were migrating to the Canadian prairies after the turn of the century, thus averting annexation to the United States. An American, writing to The Saskatoon Phenix, expressed just such a warning. He wrote: "Americans have been pouring into Canada to such an extent that Britain now realizes that she must send English settlers in large numbers, else the Americans will become so numerous as to make annexation an easy step." Barr hoped to avert such an eventuality.

Barr painted a glowing picture of conditions in the North-West. His pamphlet promised, among other things, transportation from Saskatoon to the colonists' homesteads, company stores to supply food and equipment at reasonable prices, and a hospital service which was to be a forerunner of medicare in Saskatchewan. Yet he also pointed out some of the pitfalls that would await the colonists in their "Promised Land." Since considerable controversy arose over whether Barr led the colonists to expect too much, his pamphlet warrants quoting in extenso:

I do not desire to present a picture that is highly rose-coloured. There are difficulties and drawbacks to be encountered, but for the brave man obstacles are something to be overcome, stepping stones to victory and success. Britons have ever been the great colonizers. Let it not be said that we are the degenerate sons of brave and masterful sires.

Let me say, in brief, you cannot pick up nuggets of gold on the surface of the soil — you must dig for the wealth of the land. Hard work, and plenty of it, lies before you; more or less of hardship, and not seldom privations. You must sometimes sweat, and sometimes you may suffer from the cold. You shall not always find everything to your hand. Many of the comforts of England you must leave behind.

Some years the crops may not be a perfect success; may even prove a failure. It may even be that hail may sometimes strike your crop and destroy part of it. Sickness may come to you there as here, and also losses. Don't expect to be rich in a day. It is not possible anywhere except for a few fortunate ones.

Barr concluded with a warning that was also a dare:

If you are afraid, stay at home — don't come to Canada. It is a land of brave and conquering men. But if you are honest and brave, and intend to work hard, if you purpose to lead the temperate and strenuous life, then come and cast in your lot with us, and we will stand together and win."

Barr threw down the gauntlet, and the colonists, in true British tradition, responded to the challenge in overwhelming numbers.

---

THE BARR COMPANY

Isaac Barr, Ontario. He re worked as a mi England at the however, and in naivity of cond colonist. "I no somethin of the Crossley, Barr should judge ti Colony." Barr Canada, or Flo

In spite of North-West pre cheawan Herald was under the h Battleford to se next column en

The Herald commented: "'t will se chosen if the se will secure this most of the col integrate some int intention to int settlemen, who British settlers. He then added: Barr hoped to h British colony.

The Herald reserve. It state asked the gover to pay the entr Although such million acres, it an undertaking This report, ho near that amou The Herald was criticiit accor Mr. Barr is have too m who can g milions of have been known and leaving the The Herald pointed out the
THE BARR COLONISTS: THEIR IMPACT ON THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST

Isaac Barr, the leader of this grandiose scheme, was born in Halton County, Ontario. He received his education in Ontario, served several parishes there, and worked as a missionary on an Indian reservation for fifteen years before moving to England at the turn of the century. For someone who had been born in Canada, however, and who had lived in the North-West, Barr displayed a disconcerting naivety of conditions in the North-West. He wrote, for instance, to one prospective colonist: "I notice that you lived in Boston Mass. for a time and therefore know something of the life in the far West." To another prospective colonist, Ivan Crossley, Barr wrote: "As you have been in Florida and had experience there I should judge that any man who can successfully farm in Florida can do so in my Colony." Barr seemed to be woefully uninformed of the climate in Western Canada, or Florida, or both.

In spite of Barr's apparent ignorance, the initial impression of his scheme in the North-West press ranged from neutral to favourable. The reaction of The Saskatchewan Herald at Battleford was one of cautious optimism. Its first mention of Barr was under the heading "A Big Undertaking" in which it noted that Barr had been in Battleford to select a site; its comments were in stark contrast to an editorial in the next column entitled "The Crazy Doukhobors."

The Herald reported that the site chosen by Barr was a very desirable one. It commented: "There can be no two opinions as to the suitability of the section chosen if the settlers are given an insight into prairie farming; and Mr. Barr says he will secure this by putting amongst them men accustomed to the work." Since most of the colonists were artisans and professional men, it was imperative that Barr integrate some experienced farmers among them. He therefore proposed: "It is my intention to introduce a few experienced Canadian and American farmers into the settlement, whose farms may prove object lessons to the less experienced of our British settlers. I am already in touch with a number who wish to join our ranks." He then added: "These farmers, however, shall be of British descent." In this way, Barr hoped to have the advantage of experience and still retain the concept of an all-British colony.

The Herald, however, was not very keen about the prospect of an all-British reserve. It stated that, according to a reporter for the Winnipeg Tribune, Barr had asked the government to reserve forty additional townships for his colony, offering to pay the entry fees immediately and to locate the colonists within six months. Although such a concession would have involved the sequestration of about two million acres, it appeared to the Tribune that Barr had the financial support for such an undertaking as it reported that Barr had $2,500,000 at his immediate disposal. This report, however, was obviously highly inflated; Barr did not have anywhere near that amount of money at his disposal. And even if he did have sufficient funds, The Herald was not prepared to endorse the reservation of such a large area, and it criticized accordingly:

Mr. Barr is undertaking what can not be done in six months and is asking to have too much territory tied up. We would gladly receive all the British settlers who can get here, aided by friends or otherwise, but we do not want to see millions of acres tied up so that the free settler cannot get in. Big reservations have been the curse of this country, and now that the country has become known and is attracting settlers on its merits it is time to give them a chance by leaving the land open to the first comer.  

The Herald not only pointed out the disadvantages of a reservation, it also pointed out the advantages that would accrue to the colonists by integrating with
established settlers: "It would really be a benefit to the British settlers to have amongst them a liberal sprinkling of farmers familiar with work on prairie farms, as their example and advice would certainly in many cases save a waste of labor and subsequent disappointment." At any rate, the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, did not grant Barr’s request for an additional reservation of land. Sifton expressed his reasons in a cablegram: "With the present movement of population it is absolutely impossible to make reservation. Government has no way of keeping squatters off this land. There is no need of reservation. Plenty of land for all Barr’s settlers."

Although The Herald was impressed with Barr’s selection of a site (even though it objected to the reserve concept), it certainly was not impressed with Barr’s preparations. It reported that Charles May, Barr’s advance agent, had been in Winnipeg to make preparations for outfitting and transporting the colonists, but left empty-handed. The Herald commented that while in Winnipeg May had "found himself in an anomalous position — an agent without money or official credit; and when a cable was sent to Mr. Barr asking for funds, the reply said Mr. May’s duties were only "to find out where things could be procured:" the purchases would be made by a syndicate of business men now on the ocean." The Herald, however, was not favourably impressed with the English businessmen either. It stated: "They may be good business men in England, but unless they have had colonial experience it is safe to count upon their mission being a failure."

Barr, perhaps feeling that he was the only one capable or knowledgeable enough, refused to authorize anyone else to make purchases; he trusted May to look, but not to buy.

Since Barr seemed either unwilling or unable to deal with the problems of preparation, perhaps he expected the problems to take care of themselves. The Herald sarcastically commented: "Schools, churches, saw mills and stores will grow up spontaneously wherever needed." At any rate, The Herald noted: "Time is passing rapidly, and nothing visible has been done towards receiving or forwarding the colonists." In this respect, The Herald was not quite correct; some steps had been taken. But a lot more remained to be done. The Herald feared that, as a result of Barr’s lack of preparation, the federal government would be forced to intervene. It stated: "The Immigration Department will have to step in at the last moment, handicapped by want of time, to bring order out of chaos and help the immigrants out of the dilemma into which the dilatoriness of the managers has placed them."

In spite of the lack of preparation, the colonists were scheduled to leave England on March 25, 1903. On that date, The Herald commented: "The first vessel with Mr. Barr’s colonists is to leave England to-day, but we have not yet seen any of his promised arrangements for carrying the people to their destination." The departure, however, was delayed. In a circular informing the colonists of the postponement, Barr emphasized that this change in schedule was not his idea. He wrote: "I wish it to be distinctly understood that the change of date from March 25th to March 31st is the action of the Elder Dempster Shipping Co., of Liverpool." The circular utilized bold-face print to accentuate the point. Since Barr was to be blamed for so much on the sea voyage and afterwards, it is perhaps appropriate that he should emphasize that the delay was not his fault.

The colonists sailed on the SS Lake Manitoba. Originally built to accommodate 550 passengers, the Manitoba managed to crowd 1,962 colonists, replete with their personal and household effects, into its hold. The cramped quarters were made almost unbearable by the seasickness which seemed to preoccupy many of the passengers. On swaying ship’s those who had soon learned, hung upper bunk sh

To add to their pets; "on ship, barking, excrement and compassion, to The coloni quantity of the We had a it smelled seated at t... He’d d by. Some cro a saucer a margarine Crossley pointed passengers may salt water mor baked." Still a

The coloni "abominable," ever, was not w

Privacy was rotten; a monkey c whitewash, flakes of it

In addition to bunks had to b had to hire col

Nor did E Manitoba near and had the shi Since the price convinced that to induce Barr to pl plummeted to chosen an amat twenty-five or t

Whether of he was. At any was responsible reverend gentl opposite; they Lloyds. In spit
settlers to have prairie farms, as the result of labor and enterprise, Clifford Sifton of land. Sifton of population in a way of keeping it for all Barr’s life (even though he was preparing in Winnipeg to but left empty-handed, found himself in the act; and when a day’s duties were new, he could be made by a however, was not to be said: “They may be of experience it is safe for; that he was the anyone else to take the problems of themselves. The stores will grow noted: “Time is going for forwarding steps had that, as a result needed to intervene. The last moment, the immigrants placed them.”19 and scheduled to leave the “The first vessel yet seen any of in action.”20 The consists of the post-idea. He wrote: 3 March 25th to the ‘perpool.”22 The was to be blamed inappropriate that he to accommodate complete with their quarters were made by many of the passengers. One of the colonists, P. S. Hordern, recalled what it was like in the swaying ship’s hold: “We lay on our bunks in our crowded quarters and suffered; those who had recovered would lean out of their bunks to read in the dim light. They soon learned, however, to pull their heads back in a hurry when a seasick mate in an upper bunk shouted ‘Duck!’”24

To add to the crowding and confusion, many of the colonists brought along their pets; “one hundred and fifty dogs of all shapes, sizes and breeds roamed the ship, barking, howling and fighting, polluting all corners of the vessel with excrement and seasickness.” One night, however, the deck crew, tormented beyond compassion, tossed the dogs overboard.25

The colonists registered numerous complaints about both the quality and the quantity of the food served on board ship. Ivan Crossley, for example, recalled:

We had a horrible concoction called “ling fish.” It was yellow smoked cod and it smelled to high heaven. That and hard-boiled eggs. When everybody was seated at the table the steward would come around with a big basket of eggs. He’d start rolling the eggs down the table and you grabbed an egg as it went by. Some of those eggs were half-hatched. No bread, just ship’s biscuits, big as a saucer and about half an inch thick. No butter; they did give us some margarine near the end. We didn’t die but we darned near starved to death.

Crossley pointed out, however, that he was in steerage and that the first-class passengers may have fared better.26 Another colonist wrote: “Tea was made with salt water more often than not. Food was not properly cooked. Bread partly baked.” Still another complained of “dirty knives and forks all rusted.”27

The colonists’ opinions of conditions aboard ship varied from fair to “abominable,” with all shades of opinion in between. The general consensus, however, was not very flattering. One colonist described the conditions:

Privacy was impossible. No one could undress properly. The drinking water was rotten; the food was worse. The sanitary conveniences would have shamed a monkey cage. The snow-white paint on the woodwork turned out to be merely whitewash, and, when the vessel received a smart smack from a wave, large flakes of it fell off along with the dried undercoat of manure.28

In addition to the lack of sanitary facilities and the poor ventilation, temporary bunks had to be set up in the ship’s hold, and, due to a shortage of staff, the ship had to hire colonists as stewards. None of this served to make the voyage a pleasant one.

Nor did Barr’s conduct at sea endear him to the colonists. As the Lake Manitoba near St. John, New Brunswick, Barr bought up all the flour on board and had the ship’s cooks bake it into bread. He intended to sell it at ten cents a loaf. Since the price at St. John was only five cents a loaf, many colonists became convinced that Barr was “on the make.” Although Reverend Lloyd was able to induce Barr to lower the price, the damage had already been done — “Barr’s stock plummeted to zero.”29 If Barr had indeed planned on reaping a profit, he had chosen an amateurish way of doing it; the scheme would only have netted him about twenty-five or thirty dollars.30

Whether or not Barr was “on the make,” many colonists certainly believed that he was. At any rate, they blamed Barr for the problems, regardless of whether he was responsible for them, and “ventured their wrath by drawing cartoons of the reverend gentleman all over the ship.” Their attitude to Lloyd, however, was just the opposite; they subscribed $250 for a fund to buy a wagon and two horses for Lloyd.31 In spite of several violent confrontations between Barr and delegations of
colonists, one authority nevertheless asserted, perhaps with tongue in cheek, that “it speaks well for British love of law and order to record that only eleven fights, seven incipient mutinies, three riots, and twenty-two violent interviews with Barr ... occurred during the voyage.”

Upon their arrival in St. John, considerable confusion, and consequently complaints, arose among the colonists over the distribution of their baggage. After some delay and another confrontation with Barr, the luggage was more or less sorted out and the colonists entrained for the overland journey to Saskatoon. The overall opinion of the colonists was that the railway coaches were an improvement over the ship, and they were grateful to the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian government for the assistance they rendered.

Yet the railway also received its share of complaints. Alice Rendell, one of the colonists who made the journey by rail with her husband and two children, described the experience in a letter to relatives in Britain:

I have heard a great deal about the travelling on the C.P.R., and being a shareholder too, felt a special interest in it. I have always understood its cars and accommodation to be unequalled for comfort and luxury, but if you substitute for the two latter terms discomfort and misery you will be nearer the mark. I can only say the third class carriages on the English Railways are a king to the filthy cars we were huddled into. No sleeping accommodation and as to the lavatory arrangements they were simply a disgrace to civilization and in this misery we were boxed up to spend just over a week. I do think for the sake of others it ought to be exposed. With so many little children to be cared for it was a wonder there was not a serious outbreak of illness. Owing to the overcrowding of the carriages it was almost impossible to get at our provisions and many a time we have felt faint and famished with hunger to say nothing of being starved with the cold.

Another female colonist, Miss Laura Sisley, related the same type of experience:

These crude Canadian roadbeds. Jolting us constantly in our seats, shaking us so continually and so violently it is a wonder the flesh was left clinging to our bones. Many of the passengers suffered frightful bruises from being thrown about in their seats, especially when we came to curves in the track. We went around some of the curves so fast that many of the women cried out in terror, fearing we would be thrown off the track and hurled down into some of the deep and dreadful canyons and gullies that bordered the track. If being seasick on board the Lake Manitoba, in the crowded and polluted atmosphere of the steerage had been bad, this was much worse.

Little did they know that the worst was yet to come.

Since many of the colonists held a flattering view of the railway coaches compared to the Lake Manitoba, one wonders if the derogatory remarks of Alice Rendell and Laura Sisley were exaggerated. Aside from being crowded, due to the large influx of colonists at once, the colonists probably did not suffer much more than the average Canadian railway passenger of the time. And they were far better off than the pioneers who had to blaze their own trails. Perhaps the colonists had been spoiled in Britain and were not prepared to “rough it” in Canada. At any rate, this group of colonists seemed to contain more than its share of chronic complainers.

When the colonists reached the end of track at Saskatoon, they encountered more problems. One colonist reported: “sanitary arrangements were almost nil, our water supply was the river which was a nice coffee color.” As a result, *The Saskatoon Phenix* was forced to report: “Dr. Keating, one of the medical men in charge of the Barr colony has warned the colonists against drinking any of the water without first}
THE BARR COLONISTS: THEIR IMPACT ON THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST 87

R. Dill photograph, Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-87

Barr Colonists Camp at Saskatoon.

...without first boiling. One case of typhoid has already been discovered in the camp."

After securing wagons and supplies at Saskatoon, the colonists set off overland to Battleford. The Phenix provided a fairly complete commentary of the trials and tribulations the colonists faced on the overland trek. It reported that “more than one party was stuck [in swampy ground] and obliged to unload at least three times in the first day.” Fording streams provided its own peculiar hazard, as The Phenix noted:

We know of one wagon being clean overturned and its riders pitched into the stream they were crossing, of other instances, not few and far between, where the drivers left their seats in the quickest way imaginable, and of one young lady who suddenly found herself thrown into the refreshing water of a running creek."

As a means of providing transportation, the colonists had their choice of oxen or horses. Although stronger and thus better suited than horses to pulling wagons, the oxen did have some disadvantages, as more than one colonist found out:

We found that our oxen, though good at pulling, were much slower at the walk than horses and not so easy to handle. At times they would become very obstinate. Taking it into their heads that they wanted a drink, regardless of the risk of getting bogged, they would bolt off the trail into some slough or swamp in spite of all we could do to prevent them. As we had only a piece of rope for reins, we might as well have tried to stop an express train."

When the oxen got to the slough, the water was often impure and sometimes caused sickness among the oxen, and occasionally among the colonists too.

Most of the colonists grossly overloaded their wagons; when items fell off, they were simply heaped back on the wagon so that it resembled a Christmas tree with articles dangling at precarious angles. The jolting of the springless wagons punctured bags of flour, and coal oil became freely mixed with food. As the oxen were unable to pull heavy loads up steep hills, Eagle Creek, the most notorious of the numerous streams the colonists had to cross, must have appeared to be a formidable obstacle. One colonist described it: “Eagle Creek was a deep chasm cut through the prairie, with banks almost as steep as the side of a house.” It is little
wonder that J. J. Merry, one of the sixty clergymen’s sons who came with the colonists, recalled: “The trip overseas was agony but the overland was even worse.”

Many of the problems, however, were either caused or accentuated by the colonists’ own ignorance of conditions in the North-West. One man, for instance, when he had to descend a hill, hobbled the front legs of his oxen so that they would not slide too fast, as if the oxen did not move slowly enough as it was! Another man never took the harness off his beasts from the time he left Saskatoon until he reached his homestead for fear of being unable to put it on again! Still another colonist got stuck in the mud, a common occurrence, and swore profusely as he waded in the bog to unload his marble clocks and other dead-weight luxuries. (The colonists brought about half a dozen pianos with them.) His wife sat on the wagon, weeping bitterly. She explained: “My husband never swore in his life till we came to Canada.” Swearing, however, was not the only skill the colonists acquired; ultimately they also learned how to survive.

The ignorance and inexperience of the colonists was surpassed only by the ignorance and inexperience of their leaders. W. S. Bromhead, one of Barr’s representatives, felt that not all the colonists were inexperienced at farming. He stated: “A very considerable number of them are people who have had experience in Australia and New Zealand. . . . Needless to say, the agricultural industry is carried on in Australia under conditions which, barring the winter, are the same as the conditions in Western Canada.” Bromhead wanted to defuse “apprehensive forebodings;” the colony, he felt, “will not prove to be an assemblage of absolute greenhorns.” He pointed out that Barr himself was Canadian born, implying that he would therefore be familiar with prairie conditions. He also stated that some Canadians would be among the colonists.

Bromhead, however, exaggerated the number of experienced farmers among the group; only about ten per cent of the colonists were farmers, and most of them were from England, where conditions differed vastly from the prairies. Besides, conditions in Australia were not the same as in Canada. Indeed, conditions in Eastern Canada were not the same as in the North-West. There were even different types of land on the prairies which required different cultivation techniques, and some of the land, such as grazing land, was not fit for cultivation at all. The winter in the North-West, furthermore, with its harbinger — an early frost — could make the decisive difference between success or failure. Although the winter was a very significant difference between Australia and the North-West, it certainly was not the only difference. In addition, Bromhead’s inference that Barr’s birth in Canada made him knowledgeable about farming in the North-West simply does not hold up to scrutiny. Barr’s correspondence, indeed, indicated his ignorance of conditions on the prairies.

Another of Barr’s associates, Dr. Robbins, also displayed his ignorance of prairie conditions. Robbins portrayed the colonists as “hard-working colonists” who were not at all like “the sons of rich men reared in the lap of luxury” who had been such dismal failures at previous farming ventures in the North-West. He stated that the colonists “all came out ready and expecting to work.” Although a number were the sons of clergymen, Dr. Robbins reassuringly asserted that “these young men had been hardened by cricket and football in the public schools for a life of outdoor labor.” Unfortunately, however, the type of “outdoor labor” they had been preparing for so ardently was not the type they found in the Canadian North-West.
the colonists acquired;

farmers among

and most of them

prairies. Besides,

and conditions in

were even different

techniques, and

all. The winter

it — could make

inter was a very

mainly was not the

birth in Canada

does not hold up

of conditions on

his ignorance of

working colonists”

“luxury” who had

-West. He stated

through a number

at “these young

for a life of

labour” they had

the Canadian North-

Even when Barr or his assistants did present the colonists with accurate information, the colonists did not always heed it. Barr, for instance, wrote in one of his pamphlets:

All Indians in North-West Canada are now practically civilized. They live on reservations, in houses of their own building, and farm the soil under Government instructors, possessing in many cases fine herds of cattle, and horses. There are some reservations about 30 to 40 miles from our settlement, and I met many of the people and conversed with them. They are now quiet and law-abiding citizens. There are only about twenty thousand scattered over the whole vast North-West. There is nothing to fear from our Indian friends, any more than from the gypsies of England. 44

Despite Barr’s assurance that the Indians were tame, some colonists nevertheless appeared to be undertaking some rather warlike preparations. The Manitoba Free Press made the following observations when the colonists were passing through Winnipeg:

A lot of the younger men have evidently been reading the Boys’ Own or some kindred adventurous work and have come fully prepared to meet the Indians in deadly combat. Guns, revolvers and sheath knives are common. One man, about six feet two . . . [had] a wicked looking knife over his hip, the sheathed blade sticking with a grim suggestiveness eight inches out of his woolen [sic] jersey. It is going to be a bad day for the first Indian he meets. 45

The Free Press, however, did point out that many of these accoutrements were intended for hunting game.

In spite of their seemingly abnormal behaviour, the colonists were, on the whole, welcomed in Canada. The Free Press tried to determine the consensus of opinion among the citizens of Winnipeg:

The universal verdict is that the Barr people are all right, and fully up to expectations, and with ordinary conditions will do well in the west. No body of people coming into the country has created such a stir since the arrival of the Doukhobors four years ago. The latter was due mostly to religious sentiment; the former is due to sheer admiration of the quality. 46

Several Eastern news correspondents (James Lawler of the Toronto News, Victor Ross of the Toronto Globe, John Ridington of the Manitoba Free Press, and L. E. Marsh of the Toronto Star) travelled with the colonists on their overland trek. According to The Saskatchewan Herald, these journalists all praised the colonists, even though they felt the settlers had not been given sufficient information and had been led to expect too much. 47

The Saskatoon Phenix was also impressed, and it commented on the arrival of the advance contingent of colonists at Saskatoon:

a better impression has not been created by any of the many batches of immigrants who have arrived at this point . . . They are very industrious, and generally willing to work at anything almost until they are able to proceed to their homes on the prairie. The arrival of this first batch of Barr colonists has had the effect of removing from the minds of Canadians any doubts which may have existed as to the ability of these immigrants to cope with conditions in western Canada, and all will be glad to extend the right hand of welcome to the sons of Britain who have cast in their lot with us. 48

Its initial impression seems to have been the correct one, for two weeks later, after it had time to examine the new arrivals at some length, The Phenix still praised the calibre of the colonists: “Our own impression, as a result of conversation and observation, is that there is among these colonists first rate material; just the kind we need in this great west to develop its abundant resources.” The Phenix felt that, in
spite of the colonists' lack of experience in the North-West, ""Two years will make excellent Canadians of them."" The Herald was also complimentary to the colonists, referring to them as ""all a splendid class of people"" and ""the material of which good settlers are made."

Lieutenant-Governor A. E. Forget welcomed the colonists on behalf of the government and people of the North-West Territories. Although he warned that there would ""be discomforts to face and difficulties to overcome,"" he felt confident that ""British pluck, British energy and British cheeriness will make light of them."" After all, he felt, the problems the colonists faced were those that all pioneers had faced, and overcome.

A dissenting view, however, came from an American newspaper, The Minneapolis Journal. The Journal felt it was a mistake ""to turn these raw Englishmen loose on the great plains of the Canadian west. The mosquitoes alone will be enough to rout them."" The Journal felt that news of the harsh experiences of the colonists would deter further immigration from England.

Although public opinion, at least as reflected in the press, was decidedly in favour of the colonists, opinion was strongly divided over their leader, Isaac Barr. Even before Barr was able to implement his scheme, the skeptics and critics emerged. W. J. White, an agent for the Department of the Interior, expressed his reservations about Barr: ""I do not feel that Mr. Barr will have the success that he hopes and looks for . . . on the whole Mr. Barr's propaganda has assumed such magnitude and the many schemes he has in connection with it are so great and multifarious, I am afraid very little will come of it."" T. G. Pearce, an Alberta farmer who had perused Barr's plans, also expressed doubt. He confided to James A. Smart, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, that he felt Barr ""is not a practical man to undertake such a responsibility."" Pearce simply did not feel that Barr was qualified to undertake the type of project he envisioned.
The Herald, while praising the colonists, denounced Barr. It strongly condemned him for not carrying out his promises to the colonists. Under the heading “Promises vs. Performance,” The Herald spewed forth a cascade of caustic criticism against Barr: “the truth is that not one of the many things he says have been done by him have been performed.” The Herald felt that the only preparations made were those of the Immigration Branch of the Department of the Interior. In order to make its point more effectively, The Herald drew up two lists; the first, compiled from the Weekly Irish Times of March 28, 1903, cited the arrangements Barr said he had made “for the comfort and convenience of the colonists,” and the second showed the state of affairs as The Herald saw it.

Barr, for instance, stated that he had reserved “about a thousand square miles of the most valuable lands in the North-West, with good water and coal in abundance.” The Herald retorted “There are no coal deposits known to exist, or mines being worked within well on for two hundred miles of the colony.”

Barr also wrote that “the Canadian Northern Railway, now in process of construction, will traverse the whole of this British settlement, and every farm will be within a few miles of it.” Again The Herald retorted: “The colony being from twelve to thirty miles in width from east to west, without counting the forty additional townships recently added to their domain, many settlers will find that they are far removed from being within a few miles of it.”

Barr also promised a stores syndicate to supply the colonists with food and equipment, but The Herald stated that the syndicate “fell to pieces at Saskatoon, so that there is nothing to buy except such necessaries and supplies as the business men of the place carry in the ordinary course of their trade.” (The Phenix, on the other hand, reported that Barr’s store was alive and thriving.)

The Herald followed the same tact with respect to Barr’s pledge to provide transportation for the colonists: “The only horses provided for sale to the party was a bunch of thirty cayuses brought in by Mr. Barr’s brother in fulfillment of a promise to have four hundred serviceable animals in waiting. The other horses, waggons, harness, etc., are those brought in by private parties on speculation.” Thirty cayuses were hardly adequate to provide the transportation needs of 2,000 settlers.

The Herald also referred with disdain to Barr’s proposal to provide accommodation by having “a corps of assistants to put up tent hotels.” It stated:

This is a brilliant stretch of fancy; for no hotel or any other kind of tent has been provided on the trail by the managers of the colony. The Immigration Department has at the public expense put up tents and provided wood and hay and placed men in charge of them at intervals of twenty miles on the trail; but neither the Stores Syndicate nor Mr. Barr nor any of his advance agents had ought to do with the plan.

The Herald summed up by saying: “We shall soon see whether the purveyors and caterers to the moving column materialize or not.” It was careful to point out, however, that it revealed these discrepancies “as a protest against syndicates and managers of such schemes being permitted to operate as if they had official endorsement unless the Government have ample guarantees that the promises made to the public will be carried out, regardless of whether or not there is a commission in it for the promoters.”

One of the major complaints that both the press and the colonists lodged against Barr was the accusation that he was selling goods at exorbitant prices. The Phenix, for example, reported: “Returning colonists complain bitterly of the prices
at the Barr store. For instance paying $6 per hundred pounds of flour; $7 for a two-bushel bag of potatoes; $1 a bushel for oats, Mr. Barr having bought all the surplus supply of oats from the farmers."

Dr. Robbins, however, defended Barr against such allegations. He asserted:

Mr. Barr bought potatoes in Winnipeg and shipped them to Saskatoon, and there sold them for $1 per bushel, which barely covered cost and freight. It was the same with flour. It cost $1.90 at Saskatoon station, and after being teamed to the stores tent, was sold at $2, surely not an exorbitant price."

The complaints, nevertheless, were so numerous and so strong that it is difficult not to believe that Barr was trying to make a profit.

Another cause for complaint concerned the commissions Barr was to receive for bringing the colonists to Canada. The Phenix stated: "The Rev. Mr. Barr will make enormous profit out of his all-British community idea. Besides the $5 per capita from the government he gets $7 per head from the steamship companies and a commission on supplies." This belief, however, was not altogether true. The Canadian government did not pay Barr a commission, even though he insisted for over a year that it owed him money.

Although Barr did receive a commission from the steamship company, he claimed that he had expended it on the colonists:

My commissions on the steamship tickets were all I got, and they amounted to $13,000. I charged no direct fee to the colonists, although I might have done so. Of the amount I received, [ ] over eight thousand dollars was spent in my London office, clerk hire, postage, and printing, and rent and other expenses, and incidental and unforeseen expenses have more than used up the $5,000 left. I was not in this work out of feelings of pure philanthropy, and would think it would only be fair that I should have my services appreciated."

At an earlier date, Barr had appeared to be somewhat more philanthropic. He had written to James A. Smart before the colonists left Britain:

I beg to say here most emphatically that I am not "on the make" in this matter, but that I wish to use every penny of my commission from the Steamship Co. and also my bonuses from the Government in order that I may make adequate provision for this large party and so help on the future of emigration to my native land."

The Minneapolis Journal, however, was somewhat skeptical of Barr's philanthropic principles. It quoted Barr as saying: "It has been said that I am making money out of this. I am not making a cent." The Journal then added: "A moment later he qualified this by saying all he had made had been in a legitimate way.""

Some newspapers, nevertheless, defended Barr against the accusations levelled against him. The Phenix, for instance, stated that Barr had never "pretended that he was running his party on philanthropic principles [sic]." It stated, furthermore, that it was "a matter of common knowledge that the movement is expected to pay its way on a commercial basis, and the best method that could be devised is that of indirect commissions." The Phenix especially objected to the criticism heaped upon Barr by The Herald. It accused The Herald of fostering doubts in the minds of the colonists in an "effort to persuade some of the new comers to swell the ranks of Battleford inhabitants." It also warned that the failure of the colonists would be fatal to inducing further British immigration to Canada.

The Herald, in spite of the criticism unleashed upon it by The Phenix, defended the policy it had pursued toward the management of Barr's colony:

The Herald has never spoken otherwise than well of the colonists and of the scheme as laid down in Mr. Barr's pamphlet, and it was only when it became evident that to keep the Immigrants Association from undertaking the scheme, failing to fulfill their promise of the 10,000 acres of land for the North-West, that they exposed some of the facts.

There seems to be a common belief that the colonists will be worse off under the new arrangement. The Herald declared, however, that it was the custom of barratry and that the North-West had previously been exposed to such practices.

The Herald did not think it necessary to trust fellow colonists to pay for their own emigration. It would have been cheaper and more efficient for the government to have paid for the emigration, and it would have been better for the colonists to settle near Battleford. The Herald stated that the government was entitled to the benefit of Barr's unp
THE BARR COLONISTS: THEIR IMPACT ON THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST
evident that the colonists were likely to suffer from the failure of the managers to keep their promises that we decided to take the matter up; and the fact that the Immigration Department has felt called upon to intervene and at great cost undertaken to do many things that the management had in their literature announced as their own work is proof of the soundness of our position. The Herald sympathized with the colonists; it was the managers it opposed for failing to fulfil their promises. The Herald agreed with The Phenix that if this scheme failed, it would be more difficult than ever to attract British immigrants to the North-West. It was in order to avert such a failure, The Herald contended, that it exposed some of the more obvious examples of internal bad management.44

There seemed to be some substance, however, to The Phenix's charge that the Battleford press wished to induce some of Barr's colonists to settle in its environs. The Herald did indeed encourage the colonists to break away from the colony and settle near Battleford. The advantages of such a move, it felt, were obvious: "The colonists will, after locating near here, be in a position to obtain provisions and other requirements at a third of the price asked by the Barr Store syndicate. The many other advantages are so prominently seen in viewing the situation that mention is needless."45 The disadvantages of remaining in the colony, The Herald felt, were equally obvious:

Under the circumstances we would advise the colonists to withdraw from the colony and take up land within reach of neighbors, civilization and supplies. To continue in a party where every advantage conferred is measured by the amount of commission it will yield to the managers is courting disaster, and this we would avert as far as we are able. The Herald felt that the colonists would be better off on their own rather than trusting "leaders whose willingness to help is measured by the amount of the commission they can gather on every transaction."

Although The Herald reiterated that it was proffering this advice to the colonists for their own benefit, and not to make money out of them, its motives were not altogether altruistic. It suggested that the colonists should settle between Saskatoon and the site of the colony; in other words, in the Battleford district. This would bring more business, and hence greater prosperity, to Battleford.

The Herald suggested that the colonists should "take matters into their own hands while there is time and before they have exhausted their means."46 Some colonists obviously heeded this advice as 140 of them signed a petition asking James Clinkskill, a member of the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territory, to call a meeting of the colonists to discuss their situation. Clinkskill called the meeting for Friday, May 1, in the Barr restaurant tent, but Barr refused to permit it. The Herald recorded the exchange that took place at the abortive meeting:

Mr. Barr said that it had been called by Mr. Clinkskill, who was a Conservative to gain party advantage. Mr. Clinkskill showed the petition, but Mr. Barr getting very angry ordered him out of the tent, called him an infamous scoundrel and shook his fist in his face. . . . It was certainly a very unfair and trying position to put any gentleman in.47

After a series of vociferous, if not violent, incidents, the colonists deposed Barr. The Phenix noted: "Mr. Barr has resigned and my people can now sing with heart and voice, Briton's [sic] never shall be slaves."48 To prevent Barr from leaving without refunding their money, several colonists patrolled the Battle River bridge east of Battleford. Barr claimed that his life had been threatened and that it was not safe for him to return to the colony.49

Barr's unpopularity was not restricted to the colonists. The Phenix reported
that Barr received "a rather unenviable reception" when he passed through Regina.
A number of Englishmen gathered at the depot and just as the eastbound
express pulled in they presented the reverend gentleman with some rather
ancient "hen fruit," or wingless chicken. Mr. Barr made a gallant dash for the
car and succeeded in getting on board the train without even a smell of the over-
ripenes, but a couple of by-standers were not so fortunate, the porter receiving
one of the bouquets in the eye.19
Reverend Lloyd and twelve advisors assumed control of the colony. Lloyd tried
to reassure the colonists. In a circular dated July 3, 1903, Lloyd addressed "the
members of the British Colony of 1902:"

The British Colony is not dead, neither has it been "broken up into sections and
scattered around Battleford."

The "Barr" Colony is dead and the members of the British Colony now living
in the 20 or more townships of the first reservation desire that the name "Barr"
shall no longer be applied to them. I need hardly add that Mr. Barr is no longer in
the Colony.20

The Immigration Branch, however, expressed concern about the welfare of
colonists. George Langley, the Sub-Land Agent in the Britannia Colony, wrote that
their buildings "are so primitive as to be practically useless beyond the immediate
present." Nor did Langley have a high regard for the capabilities of Lloyd and the
committee that tried to run the colony after Barr left. Langley wrote:

This committee, for the work it has to do, is one of the most incapable bodies of
men ever got together, for while it does its best to prevent the men from leaving
the colony to get work, it is helpless beyond hope to provide work for them.
The promise of work on the railway has resulted in nothing; nothing in fact it
promises is ever realized, while its running of the stores is (tho its total in-
experience) one succession of blunders.21

Langley also filed a disquieting report on the colonists themselves. He wrote
that "quite a number of them seemed unable to free themselves from the idea that
the whole thing was a sort of picnic, and even those who set seriously to work did
not produce proportionate results." Langley then explained:

... the settlers are the victims of a complete ignorance of the necessities of
Canadian life... it is not that they do not work, but that their work produces
so poor a result. Two young men near camp have been at work early and late
for seven weeks, and yet more could easily have been done by two experienced
men in 3 or 4 days."

In spite of these drawbacks, however, the Immigration Branch expected that the
colonists would develop into a thrifty and progressive community. The problems
they encountered, after all, were the same as all new settlers had to face.24

Fortunately for the colonists, however, Lloyd and his committee did not have to
handle the problems alone; the Immigration Branch rendered invaluable assistance.
The Herald rejoiced when the Immigration Branch had stepped in to take over
matters from Barr: "the Department of the Interior is to be congratulated in the able
manner they rescued the sinking ship from destruction and put it afloat to glide on
through years as prosperously as the picture of living in Western Canada was first
painted."25

The Department of the Interior, nevertheless, did face criticism from some
quarters. Some Members of Parliament argued that by aiding Barr in his under-
taking, and reserving land for him, the government virtually made him an
immigration agent and was therefore responsible for seeing that Barr's promises
were carried out. The government must, the critics contended, clear itself of

complicity in the
Liberal newspaper, again
against Sifton.

The bulk
against Barr hit him. Lloyd stated
Government, but
Barr allowed him
with making a
funds to secure
was tricky and

Yet opinion
"I don't think
Englishman."
"sharp business
againts Barr for
highly flattering.
Barr had reside
which was veri
high character
recommending
critics might ha
Some new
stated that Bar
will be bl
through Regina: the eastbound train with some rather elegant dashed for the telephone of the observer receiving
very. Lloyd tried to address "the
into sections and
nly now living with the name "Barr"
Barr is no longer
the welfare of
nly, wrote that the immediate
Lloyd and the
able bodies of
en from leaving
work for them.
nothing in fact it
bro its total in-
elves. He wrote
the idea that
sy to work did
the necessities of
work produces
early and late
experienced
pected that the
The problems
face."
he did not have to
able assistance.
line to take over
ulated in the able
to glide on
Canada was first
of
icism from some
uur in his under-
ade him an
Barr's promises
-clear itself of
complicity in the mishandling of the colonists. The Leader (Regina), however, a Liberal newspaper, defended the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, also a Liberal, against such attacks. The Leader implied that the Conservative attacks against Sifton were motivated purely by politics."

The bulk of the criticism for the near fiasco of Barr's scheme, however, fell against Barr himself. Even Reverend Lloyd, Barr's closest associate, turned against him. Lloyd stated: "The trouble of the Barr party was not the fault of Canada or the Government, but was directly due to Mr. Barr." Several critics seemed to feel that Barr allowed his all-British scheme to disintegrate because he was too preoccupied with making a profit. Charles May, the man whom Barr had sent to Canada without funds to secure supplies, later recalled: "There was no question about it that Barr was tricky and 'on the make.'" May, of course, was obviously biased in his view.

Yet opinions of Barr were not entirely one-sided. A man who knew Barr stated: "I don't think the Reverend Barr was a crook, seemed like a nice man. Spoke like an Englishman." Canon W. H. English, one of the colonists, described Barr as a "sharp business man, but one who was not downright dishonest. The settlers turned against Barr for other, more personal reasons." Some appraisals, indeed, were highly flattering. George H. Bacon, the mayor of Whatcom, Washington (where Barr had resided for several years), had written a letter of recommendation in 1901 which was very complimentary of Barr's character: "Rev. Barr is a gentleman of high character and standing and of exceptional force and ability. I take pleasure in recommending him most highly — also as a man of affairs." To which Barr's critics might have added: But what affairs!

Some newspapers also came to Barr's defence. The Toronto Star, for instance, stated that Barr

will be blamed for everything that has gone wrong... he serves as a buffer
between the newcomers and the country, but these people came of their own accord, and if they had not Mr. Barr to vent their feelings on they would, while their periods of homesickness last, condemn the country, the climate, landscape, air and water." The Star felt, in other words, that Barr was being used as a scapegoat.

Barr, of course, had the same opinion. He defended himself against his critics by implying that he was too busy implementing his scheme to be bothered by chronic complainers. He stated:

Naturally, as the director of the work, I am the target at which all missiles [sic] are aimed, but I don’t pay any attention to them, for I haven’t got the time... I have been working eighteen, twenty, and more, hours a day. In a gigantic enterprise like this the work is enormous. I have had to personally open 150 to twice that number of letters a day, and answer a perfect avalanche of questions, and the work is no child’s play.14

In one sense, Barr was right — he did not pay attention to the colonists’ complaints; or to their needs. He appears to have been too tied down in paper work to plan effectively. He was not an able administrator or organizer for the mammoth task he set before himself, and he seemed either unable or unwilling to delegate authority. If Barr indeed did all the secretarial work he claimed to have done, then there is little wonder why he was not able to carry out his plans properly.

In addition to Barr’s poor planning and lack of preparation, the problems appeared worse than they were because the colonists’ expectations were too high. One colonist recalled: “We still visualized the land we could get as picturesque park land, with grassy, gently rolling slopes interspersed with clumps of trees, a sparkling stream and possibly a silvery lake thrown in, and the whole estate alive with game of all kinds.”15 Another colonist, William Hutchison, described the problem selecting land: “Every settler seems to have an ideal quarter section in his imagination, and if the land is not exactly up to to [sic] the ideal it will not suit. It is surprising how much it takes to suit some people when they are getting something very cheap.”16

Perhaps the colonists had been spoiled in Britain and expected too much in Canada. Henry Bowra, one of the colonists, wrote to Inspector Thomas McGinnis of the N.W.M.P. recounting his hardships and destitution. Although he had $1,000 when he left England, his finances had been reduced to sixty-five cents, and he relied on the government to support him. Even then, Bowra bit the hand that was feeding him. In January, 1904, he wrote:

since Xmas (“merry Xmas” save the mark) I have had the pleasure of seeing my children feasting sumptuously at the Canadian Government Expense on dry bread and oats one meal and for a change oats and dry bread at the next, the mother and I looking on and sipping hot water discoloured with a few leaves of tea, we were afraid to use too many at once for fear of being unable to discolour the water later on. It is hard sir on children who have always had enough of good plain wholesome food.

Bowra said he preferred to die outright rather than suffer through this “semi starvation,” and he demanded to know: “Will the Government provide food or not. Kindly spare us from half measures.”17 The government, however, was not prepared to spoon-feed Barr’s colonists.

Although most Canadians had a favourable impression of the Barr colonists, some, such as Senator Lougheed of Calgary, did not have a high regard for the calibre of English settlers. He stated:

There are few immigrants so helpless as the English landing on our shores. He is not familiar with the rigours of under fair civilization very princ Barr himself, a British-born man, a public servant, a man of the highest possible character, whom I have known for the past 18 years, away from his own country and the average En

Barr, neve

Although he had a reputation as a man of many mistakes of Barr, was not the East. When he came to the West, he was welcomed ther

sentiments: “I am appalled to give a far better impression. All that is necessary is that the minister of the interior in Canada and it is the

Western Canada to realize that supply was produced, co-operatives were-established to establish transportation and transportation to something

The Immigrant’s Union was a fatal flaw in the North-West, and the Minister of the Interior explained that the people had no time to take any notice of them. Therefore, the government besides giving them better it was

The Barr Co.
THE BARR COLONISTS: THEIR IMPACT ON THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST

not familiar with the conditions which obtain in this country. He has been living under fairly comfortable conditions and expects to have all the comforts of civilization, and we very well know that if these are not accorded him he is the very prince of grumblers."

Barr himself, after he had left Canada, expressed a harsh view of the very type of people he had led to the “Promised Land.” In March, 1904, he stated: “After my experience I am convinced that the English do not make the best immigrants for a new country . . . . Even the despised Doukhobors look down with contempt upon the average English settler.”

Barr, nevertheless, was partly responsible for the colonists’ high expectations. Although he had tempered his statements with warnings of what might befall the settlers in the North-West, his pamphlets essentially painted a glowing picture. Yet Barr was not the only one to over-estimate and over-state the potential of the North-West. When the colonists arrived in Saskatoon, Immigration Agent Speers welcomed them to a land that was “flowing with milk and honey,” and which required only hard work to “bring it to perfection.” The Phenix echoed the same sentiments: “There are abundant resources in our soil which, when developed will give a far better living to the faithful toiler than he ever enjoyed in the old country. All that is necessary is grace, grit and gumption.” These are commodities which most of the colonists seemed to possess.

Although it was mainly the implementation of Barr’s plan which elicited so many complaints, the plan itself was not entirely devoid of criticism. Professor James Mavor, a political economist at the University of Toronto, summed up the mistakes of Barr’s scheme after touring the region where the colonists had settled. To begin with, Mavor felt it was a mistake to set up a British colony because virtually all of Canada was British; he did not deem it wise to draw a distinction between “British” and “Canadian.” “The colony idea,” Mavor felt, was “at the bottom of practically all the hardships, disappointments, and failures these immigrants have suffered.” In addition, the new settlers were unfamiliar with Canada and its ways. Even experienced British farmers had to re-learn farming in Western Canada; but most of the colonists were from cities, without even a rudimentary knowledge of farming. They would have been better off to come individually and settle among experienced Canadian and American neighbours. Furthermore, Mavor stated, the colony was initially a consuming, rather than a producing, community. The demand for all sorts of produce was great, but the supply was practically nil; hence the high prices. Barr accentuated this problem by establishing the colony 200 miles from its base of supplies, thereby adding transportation charges to the cost of the goods.

The Immigration Branch concurred with Mavor that the “colony” scheme was a fatal flaw in Barr’s plan. One of the after-effects of the influx of Barr colonists to the North-West was the shift in the government’s immigration policy. Deputy Minister of the Interior James A. Smart outlined this change of policy:

There will be no more reservations of land and no more colonies in the West, the people must come out entirely on their own responsibility. If the Government takes care of them on arrival and assists in their location, providing them with accommodation in the meantime, that is all they have a right to expect. Therefore, it is my opinion that if these people have come out expecting to have the Government, or anyone else, provide them with houses in which to live besides giving them the land free, the sooner their minds are disabused the better it will be for themselves.”
The Immigration Branch was determined not to allow a repetition of the errors made by the Barr colonists.

Although Barr was held personally responsible for the plight of his colonists, he does not deserve all the blame. It would have been difficult for even the most astute leader to control 2,000 colonists, under any circumstances. Many of the problems would have existed regardless of who was in charge. Barr, indeed, blamed the Elder Dempster Company for the overcrowding on the Lake Manitoba, for the lost baggage, and for the shortage of crew members. Barr was not responsible for the “inconveniences” of the Canadian railway coaches. Nor can Barr be held responsible for all the trials and tribulations of the overland trek; the steep banks of Eagle Creek, for example, cannot be blamed on him. He had, after all, warned the colonists in his pamphlet that they would have hardships to face. To this extent, therefore, Barr had been used as a scapegoat.

Barr, nevertheless, was responsible for many of the difficulties, either through his actions or, more often, by his lack of action. He accentuated the problems when he should have tried to ameliorate them. His outlook was certainly not that of a public relations officer; he could not stand criticism, so he downgraded his critics, thereby adding fuel to the flames of discontent. He tried to gloss over the problems; the colonists continually complained about the poor preparations and the high prices, and Barr just as constantly assured them that he had everything under control. His ego would not let him admit that he could not care for the needs of 2,000 colonists; in this way his ego was his own worst enemy. He was unable to avoid the appearance that he was “on the make,” seemingly charging a fee for every service he provided; this appearance was an important factor leading to his removal as leader. Barr, indeed, almost seemed to have a penchant for making enemies out of friends. The Phenix, for instance, stated: “Saskatoon people are anxious to help the British Colony, but Mr. Barr makes help impossible, and almost precludes sympathy.” Even Barr’s closest associates, such as Reverend Lloyd, turned against him.

Whatever may be said against Barr, however, one must admit that he was ambitious. Even after he had encountered the wrath of the colonists at sea and on the prairies, but before he was deposed, Barr proposed to try the scheme again, on a larger scale. He stated that this initial party of two thousand “is but the herald of the colony. After spending the summer in the country, I will return to England in the autumn, and will bring over 10,000 more next March, and I can assure you that if we are successful it will be only the beginning of the emigration of this class to Canada.” It seems that if Barr had his way, he would have transported every man, woman, and child in the British Isles to Canada.

The Barr colonists gained prominence and significance for several reasons. Although some returned to Britain, most stayed, and they formed the city of LloyDMINSTER and added to the populations of Battleford and Saskatoon. The colonists also brought considerable capital into the country; according to the Montreal Gazette, they brought with them more than £500,000 and spent it freely."The colonists also attracted international attention because of the controversy which arose between them and their leader. The Cologne Volkszeitung, for example, referred to Barr’s scheme as a “grotesque undertaking.” The very notoriety of the scheme was one of its assets; it advertised conditions in the Canadian North-West. The primary significance of the Barr colonists, indeed, arises from the interest they aroused in immigration; Europeans and Americans were becoming aware, not only...
of the hardships, but also of the potential of the North-West. One might say that, in this case, all advertising was good, regardless of how bad it may have been.

In spite of their hardships, both genuine and exaggerated, the colonists survived and prospered. They came, they saw, they conquered. The very hardships, indeed, steeled them to greater effort. As fire is the test of gold, so too adversity is the test of men. Out of the turmoil, they left a legacy of perseverance, even though for some of them this simply meant bungling through. Yet, of the contributions the colonists made, they are most remembered for the controversy which emanated from their arrival in the North-West. Indeed, it was that controversy which has earned the Barr colonists their niche in Saskatchewan's history.

FOOTNOTES

1 The Saskatchewan Herald (Battleford), 10 June 1903, p. 5.
3 Evening News and Evening Mail (no city), 31 March 1903, in "Barr File," Public Archives of Canada, Department of the Interior, in Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB). Hereinafter referred to as "Barr File."
5 Untitled circular, March, 1903, p. 5, in "Barr File."
6 J. Hanna McCormick, Lloydminster Or 3,000 Miles with the Barr Colonists, p. 37, in the George Exton Lloyd Papers, SAB.
7 The Saskatchewan Phenix, 10 April 1903, p. 4.
8 I. M. Barr, British Settlements in North-Western Canada on Free Grant Lands, p. 23, in "Barr File."
11 Barr to Crossley, 16 March 1903, in local history file — Lloydminster — clippings, SAB.
13 Ibid., 12 November 1902, p. 1.
14 Barr, British Settlements in North-Western Canada, p. 20, in "Barr File."
16 Ibid., 4 March 1903, p. 1.
17 Ibid., 25 March 1903, p. 1.
18 Sifton to Torous, London, 18 February 1903 in "Barr File."
19 The Herald, 11 March 1903, p. 1.
20 Ibid., 18 March 1903, p. 1.
21 Ibid., 25 March 1903, p. 1.
22 Saskatchewan Historical Society file #133, Lloydminster. Emphasis in original.
24 "Saskatchewan Star-Phenix," 13 April 1903, p. 10, in Local history file — Lloydminster — clippings, SAB.
26 Reid, All Silent, All Damned, p. 60.
27 Affidavits of passengers, in "Barr File."
30 Reid, All Silent, All Damned, pp. 67-68.
31 Unidentified newspaper, 17 April 1923, in Local history file — Lloydminster — clippings, SAB.
In 1872 the Justice of the Peace of Ontario, Archibald Round, was negotiating Treaties No. 3 (North-Western Canada) and No. 5 (North-Western Canada) with some Manitoba Indians. Morris’s term of office in 1872 was extended, and he was re-elected to the Canadian parliament. In 1875, he wrote a book entitled "West Territories" and represented the Indian family and later represented Toronto, where he settled.

Edmund Morris and his wife, Emma, and their three children, were not the only Morris family to come to call on Edmund. He was often called "the man with the book" and was well known for his knowledge of the treaties and the law. His expertise in this area was recalled by many who knew him.

Edmund Morris was a man of great integrity and was respected by all who knew him. He was an avid reader and was known to be enthralled by the world of books.

He had many friends and acquaintances, among whom was the famous Canadian politician, John A. Macdonald, who was influential in the drafting of the Treaty No. 9 of 1875.

Impressed by the work of the government in the negotiation of Treaties in the Northwest, Morris became involved in the work of the government and was appointed as a representative of the government in the negotiations with the Indians. His knowledge of the treaties and the law was instrumental in the signing of Treaty No. 9, which established the boundaries of the Northwest Territories.

Morris was a man of great principle and was determined to see that justice was done to the Native peoples. He was one of the few who understood the importance of the treaties and the law, and he worked tirelessly to ensure that the rights of the Native peoples were protected.

Despite the many challenges he faced, Morris was determined to see that justice was done. He was a man of great integrity and was respected by all who knew him.
EDMUND MORRIS AMONG THE SASKATCHEWAN INDIANS AND THE FORT QU’APPINELLE MONUMENT

By Jean McGill

In 1872 the government of Canada appointed Alexander Morris the first Chief Justice of Manitoba. The same year he succeeded A. G. Archibald as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and the North-West Territories.

Archibald had already acted as a commissioner of the federal government in negotiating Treaties Nos. 1 and 2 with the Indians of Manitoba. Morris was commissioned in 1873 to carry on negotiations with Indians of the western plains and some Manitoba Indians not present at the first two treaties. By the time Alexander Morris’s term of office had expired in 1877 he had negotiated the signing of Treaties No. 3 (North-West Angle), 4 (Fort Qu’Appelle), 5 (Lake Winnipeg), 6 (Forts Carlton and Pitt), and the Revision of Treaties Nos. 1 and 2. Morris later documented the meetings, negotiations, and wording of all of the treaties completed prior to 1900 in a book entitled The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories which was published in 1888. He returned to Toronto with his family and later was persuaded to run for office in the Ontario legislature where he represented Toronto for a number of years.

Edmund Morris, youngest of a family of eleven, was born two years before the family went to Manitoba. Indian chiefs and headmen in colourful regalia frequently came to call on the Governor and as a child at Government House in Winnipeg, Edmund was exposed to Indian culture for the Indians invariably brought gifts, often for Mrs. Morris and the children as well as the Governor. As an adult, he recalled those early days and retained an empathy for the Indians.

Edmund grew up in Toronto, studied art in New York City and Paris and became one of a group of landscape artists who in the early twentieth century were enthralled by the Quebec landscape.

He had painted a few portraits of deceased Indian chiefs from photos, one of whom was the famous Crowfoot, when the Ontario government perhaps through the political connections of his late father, commissioned him to travel through northern Ontario with a Treaty Party in 1906 and paint portraits of chiefs and headmen of the tribes they met. This journey marked the final negotiations and signing of Treaty No. 9 with the James Bay Indians.

Impressed by the portraits Morris painted on this assignment, the Ontario government further commissioned him in 1908 to travel through Saskatchewan and Alberta searching out remaining chiefs and headmen who had participated in the Treaties negotiated by his late father. Edmund consulted his cousin, Murney Morris in Winnipeg as to where he might find a source of information on the western Indians. His cousin suggested a visit to Colonel A. G. Irvine, then warden of the Stoney Mountain penitentiary north of Winnipeg. Irvine had been present at the signing of Treaties Nos. 6 and 7 as Assistant Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police and had known Alexander Morris well. Edmund went to Winnipeg in 1907 to see Irvine whom he found a fund of information on the earlier days of the northwest, the Rebellion, and the different tribes of Indians. Irvine also was able to provide him with names and addresses of Indian agents and inspectors as well as
missionaries who were living near or on Indian reserves and who could help him in his search.

One of the first agents Morris wrote to was William Graham of the Qu'Appelle agencies at Balsaros who suggested that he go to Lebre where the Reverend J. Huggard who ran the Industrial School and who had been present at the signing of the Qu'Appelle Treaty could assist him. Another source of information was the Reverend J. Matheson, missionary at Onion Lake, Saskatchewan, an 'oldtimer,' knowledgeable on the subject of Indians, past and present. Matheson told him that the best representatives of the Cree could be found near there. He named one Thunder Bird — "a fine type of Cree Indian, mentally, morally and physically." Matheson added: "They all knew your father at the time of the Treaty of 1876 (Fort Pile) ... I do not know in Canada where you can find a purer specimen of the Cree tribe. They have not been contaminated by contact with the white man as in too many other places."

Other contacts were made relating to Indians in Alberta where much of Edmund's work was done.

By July 1909 he had painted sixty portraits for the Ontario government representing tribes of Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta. He offered to do a series for the Saskatchewan government. Writing to the Honourable Walter Scott, then premier, he suggested a series of portraits for the new parliament buildings to be built in Regina.

"No time should be lost," he wrote, "as the Indians who went on the warpath and hunted the buffalo are fast disappearing from the scene, and the younger generation are losing their identity." He proposed to visit the Saskatchewan tribes again that summer and said that he had "become deeply interested and would like to

EDMUND MORRIS
continue this important work, the value of which from a historical, ethnological as well as artistic standpoint is very important.” The Saskatchewan government accepted the proposal and ordered fifteen portraits for the new legislative building which was to open in Regina in 1910.

Camping by the lake at Fort Qu’Appelle, Morris met the Chief of the Muscowpetung Reserve and a group of his Saulteaux kinsmen. The Chief told him that their treaty had been broken by the government and most of his band had been persuaded to sell a portion of their reserve, a tale Morris heard many times when painting among the Indians.

Still searching for pure Cree types, he wrote to W. J. Chisholm who was the Inspector of Indian Agencies in Northern Saskatchewan. Chisholm replying from Prince Albert in November 1910 directed him to areas where he might find some of the older chiefs of that district, commenting that most of the local Indians showed too much admixture of white blood for the distinct types Morris was seeking. “Yet,” he wrote, “there are a few individuals who have the salient points, in my opinion, of the Cree character rather well expressed in their features.” He thought Morris might find a good specimen of the Stony characteristics at the reserve south of Battleford. Chisholm was gratified that some action had been taken by the provincial governments “to preserve the features of the primitive races of these regions before they have quite disappeared, for each generation brings a marked change and very soon no examples will remain of the Plains Indian as he was before he entered into treaty relations.”

It is interesting to note that in December 1910, Chisholm mentioned having written the Indian Affairs Department at Ottawa, some time previously suggesting that it would be fitting if the graves of those killed at Frog Lake in 1885 and other scenes of that year could be marked in an appropriate way. This, he said, had recently been done. Edmund was then proposing to mark the signing of the Fort Qu’Appelle Treaty and this was much approved by Chisholm.

In March 1911 Morris shipped off five portraits to the Honourable Walter Scott. In acknowledging the safe receipt of the portraits Scott said that as the legislative chamber was not yet complete, they had been temporarily hung in the offices of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Public Works.

As he travelled among the Indians and saw the extreme poverty under which many of them lived and listened to their unhappy stories of what had happened to them since the signing of the treaties of the previous century, his sympathy for their cause grew and periodically he defended them by writing letters to newspapers. He had also developed a plan for a memorial to commemorate the signing of the treaties at Fort Qu’Appelle, Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt. He intended the memorial to be in recognition of the Plains Indians as well as the work of his late father who had negotiated the signing of these treaties and who was remembered with respect by the Indians.

In order to get the memorial built Morris began by organizing a committee to raise money through the Saskatchewan Branch of the Western Art Association for a Fort Qu’Appelle memorial. The committee was composed of Miss MacDonald, President of the Saskatchewan Branch of the Association, and Messrs. Edmund Morris, W. M. Graham, J. S. Court, Barnet Harvey, and C. Spring-Rice. In Toronto, Edmund approached his friend, Walter Allward, a well-known sculptor, to design the memorial, and John Pearson to act as architect.

Edmund had found a sacred carved stone used for rituals by the Crees and
offered to purchase it as his family's contribution to the memorial. Writing to William Graham in August 1912 Morris said that Pearson had arranged to have the memorial stone transported free from Toronto. The Indians, he added, were interested in the memorial.

In launching their appeal for funds, the Saskatchewan Branch of the Western Art Association, prepared a brochure stating:

It is proposed that the Memorial should take the form of a slab of native rock with names of Signatories to the Treaty carved upon a Bronze Tablet which will be let into the face of the stone. This enshrined stone will then be erected on the Site pointed out by Mr. Archie MacDonald and the Reverend Father Huggonard of the Mission, who were both personally present at the signing of the treaty.

The Committee hope to be able to mark off a Plot of Ground around the Memorial Stone with a suitable enclosure... Like the Maisonneuve Statue in Montreal, it will mark forever, we may hope, the spot where the Western country entered on its new and wonderful development.

Edmund, however, had drawn up a more elaborate design in which the sacred stone was to be flanked by two stone pillars representing the two races and at the top the pillars were to be joined by a slab of granite symbolizing brotherhood. On the memorial would be inscribed the names of all participants.

Not content with commemoration of the three treaties, Edmund was urging what was probably the forerunner of the commemorative historic plaques we now see from one end of Canada to the other placed by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. For this to become a workable plan, he sought the help of Sir Edmund Osler, influential financier and patron of the arts, in Toronto. As early as April 1912 he was writing to Osler regarding ancient landmarks in the northwest urging him to do something about their preservation because of Osler's "great interest in the west." Later in the year in another letter, Morris said he was preparing a report for Osler regarding certain ancient monuments of the aborigines, their old forts and the few Hudson's Bay Company posts left, as well as spots where treaties were negotiated and the major battlefields, all of which should be marked appropriately.

In order to get the latter under way, he suggested a committee composed of: The Governor, Sir D. S. Cameron, Sir E. Osler, Colonel Irvine, Sheriff Inkster, Colonel Sam Steele, Captain Gautier, Charles Mair, T. W. Tyrrell, Father Morris, Agnes Laut, T. C. Wade, D. R. Wilkie, D. M. Graham, and himself. Some of these were already working for the Qu'Appelle memorial as fund-raisers.

In October 1912 Spring-Rice of the Saskatchewan Branch of the Western Art Association wrote to Morris saying that he had no idea that the memorial stone for Fort Qu'Appelle was to be so decorated and wanted a brochure to be prepared explaining the meaning of the Indian ideographs on the base of the stone. "We would try later to have a bronze relief of your father's head and a typical Indian Chief's," he added.

Replying to Spring-Rice, Morris reported that T. C. Wade was busy promoting the project in England. Morris wanted the village of Fort Qu'Appelle to lay out a public park and place the monument in it. He spelled out the inscription he desired:

Treaty made and concluded 15 September 1874 between Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, and the Cree, Saulteaux and other Indians. Commissioners: The Hon. Alex. Morris, Lieut-Governor, the Hon. David Laird, Minister of the Interior, Wm. J. Christie, Esq.
MEMORIAL. Writing to his friends engaged to have the memorial, were inter-

ELDREWAN HISTORY

med in the Western

lab of native rock

Tablet which will

be erected on the

Father Hugon-

neauve Statue in

round around the

knee of the

her the Western

which the sacred

ages and at the top

of Osler’s “great

he was preparing

origines, their old

ots where treaties

should be marked

re composed of:

, Sheriff Inkster,

al, Father Morris,

lf. Some of these

Western Art

memorial stone for

e to be prepared

the stone. “We

a typical Indian

busy promoting

appelle to lay out a

dscription he desired:

Gracious Majesty,

Commissioners:

, Minister of the

Treaty Memorial, Fort Qu’Appelle.

Indian Chiefs and Headmen who were party to the Treaty:

(list of Indian names)

The stone on this pedestal was carved by ancient aborigines. The Creebs regarded it as sacred and were wont to journey north of the Red Deer River to Berry Creek where on a hill the rock stood. Here they assembled in large numbers and went through certain religious rites.

Subscriptions for the memorial came in from as far west as Vancouver and from eastern Canada as far as Quebec. Also from England. However, before the eventual monument could be completed, Edmund Morris drowned accidentally on 21 August 1913, while on a sketching holiday at Port-Neuf, Quebec, along the St. Lawrence River.

Regarding the Fort Qu’Appelle Memorial a curious anomaly exists. A report in the Regina Daily Province for 17 October 1912, describes the unveiling of the sacred stone which was to become the centre of the memorial as Morris had designed it.

The report related that a memorial ceremony was held marking the site where the first treaty with the Indians of the North-West Territories was signed in 1874 and that the Governor General the Duke of Connaught was to unveil it but was unable to attend. It goes on:

The town was suitably decorated and a large number of people gathered to witness the ceremony. . . . the members of the association . . . decided to request Mr. Archibald McDonald, the last Chief Factor of the Hudson’s Bay Company who assisted the Commissioners in negotiating the treaty and whose connection with the company dates back to 1854, to perform the ceremony.

Rev. H. A. Lewis opened the proceedings . . . the stone itself was one of great historical interest, being a sacred stone held in great reverence by the Indian tribes and used as their meeting place for many generations. It had been
purchased from them by the family of the late Governor Morris of the N.W.T.,
who, in conjunction with the Hon. William Christie and the Hon. David Laird
negotiated the treaty in question in September, 1874, on the very site of the
present Fort Qu'Appelle. . . .

Two great columns, connected by another great block of unhewn granite,
would shelter the sacred stone and thus typify the union of the white and red
races in the bonds of brotherhood under the imperial flag. Situated on the very
site of the old fort, the memorial would be visible for many miles up
and down the valley and would, he hoped, form one of the province’s chief landmarks in
history.

There was no reference to Edmund Morris.

The fate of this memorial remains a mystery.

On 9 November 1915, the Regina Leader-Post carried a news story entitled:
“Treaty Memorial to be Unveiled by His Honor Lieutenant Governor Lake Today
at Fort Qu’Appelle.”

It stated that the Treaty Memorial had been erected on the old school site in the
village of Fort Qu’Appelle, the original site of the signing of the Treaty.

The memorial was described as a monument of Tyndall stone thirty-four feet
high on a base eleven feet square. It was in the form of an obelisk. It is the memorial
that stands there today.

A brochure prepared by the Saskatchewan Branch of the Western Art Association
for the occasion stated that “the Village [Fort Qu’Appelle] has agreed to keep
the grounds in order as a park. The monument is composed of Tyndall stone from
the province of Manitoba, with four granite panels from the Province of Quebec on
which the inscriptions and Coats of Arms are shown.”

The Coats of Arms, one on each side of the monument above the panels, represents
the different forms of government under which the country has been
administered in the past and present — Great Britain, the Hudson’s Bay
Company, the Dominion of Canada, and the Province of Saskatchewan.

The names of the commissioners, Indian Chiefs and witnesses dates and places where the Treaty was signed are inscribed in the granite panels.

No mention was made of Edmund Morris’s part in the memorial concept either
in the brochure or the newspaper report of the unveiling despite the fact that the
newspaper gave considerable space to the occasion and included the extent of the
territory ceded to Her Majesty’s government. The news report reads in part:

The territory ceded by the Indians extended from a point on the United States
frontier south of Moose Mountain, thence north-easterly to Lake Winnipeg-
osis, through Fort Ellice, thence in a southeasterly direction to the source of the
Qu’Appelle river and to the mouth of the Maple Creek, thence west of the
Cypress Hills, south to the International boundary, thence east along the
boundary to the point of commencement; a territory comprising the greater
part of the present province of Saskatchewan.

The monument was erected through the efforts of the association and by
individual subscriptions from members and others interested in different parts
of Canada, as well as the United States and England . . . [and] with substantial
contributions from the Dominion Government, the Provincial Government of
Saskatchewan, the Woman’s Canadian Club at Winnipeg, and a number of
Chapters of the Daughters of the Empire.

The treaty was signed by twenty-one Indian chiefs and the three Indian
commissioners, the Hon. Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor; Hon. David
Laird, Minister of the Interior, and afterwards Lieutenant-Governor, and the
Hon. William Christie. There were thirty-six witnesses to the treaty of which

The Royal
Morris painted
Indian artifacts
includes relics fr
part of the first
It's disappea
there are only seven alive today. All the Indians and the commissioners who signed have passed away.

The Department of Indian Affairs has arranged for two delegates from each band within the treaty to be present at the unveiling. A large number of Indian children will be present from the Indian industrial school at Lebret, with the brass band of that institution. Several hundred Indians are expected to be present also from the various reserves throughout the province but more particularly those reserves in or near the Qu'Appelle Valley.

The monument is the first of its kind in Canada...

All efforts by the writer to find what became of the earlier memorial have proven fruitless. Perhaps a reader of Saskatchewan History may offer a clue or could suggest an explanation. The Western Art Association has long since been disbanded and the writer has been unable to find records beyond those extant in the offices of the Saskatchewan Archives Board from which the information on the present monument came.

Of the fifteen portraits painted by Morris for the Saskatchewan government, six were Algonkin Crees. Of these Pimoitat (The Walker) and Keh To Kope Chamakasis (Tying Knot) were from the File Hills Agency. Walter Ochapowace was from the Ochapowace Reserve ten miles northwest of Whitewood. His father was chief and a son of Loud Voice, the principal chief of the Crees, who had signed the Qu'Appelle Treaty. Piapot, Chief of the Piapot Band living thirty miles north of Regina in the Qu'Appelle Valley was the only one who had participated in signing the Fort Qu'Appelle Treaty. One of the portraits was of the famous Chief Poundmaker, Pitikwanapiwiyan, who had sided with Riel in the 1885 Rebellion. Another chief whose band had caused the government a lot of trouble during the 1885 rebellion was Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear). Some of his band had been sentenced to hang and he himself spent a term in the penitentiary. Peeaysaw Musquah (Thunder Bear), an Algonquin Ojibway Saulteaux, who lived in the Qu'Appelle Valley was another subject. The Saskatchewan government possesses the only known portrait of Thunder Bear. Big Darkness, an Assiniboine from Carry the Kettle Band living south of Sintaluta along with a chief from the same band, Chakagin (Carry the Kettle), a Dakota Sioux, were also among the portraits painted by Morris. There was also one of Medicine Man, Pahnap, a Cree from the Sakimay Band in the Crooked Lakes Agency and of Acoose, Chief of the same reserve. Of all those painted for Saskatchewan, only Piapot had been present at the signing of the Qu'Appelle Treaty.

The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto which has the sixty Indian portraits Morris painted for the Ontario government, inherited from him a collection of Indian artifacts many of which were acquired by his father. Although this collection includes relics from a much earlier Indian culture, the sacred stone which formed part of the first memorial at Fort Qu'Appelle appears not to be among them.

Its disappearance along with the other parts of the memorial is as yet a mystery.

For further information on Edmund Morris painting among the Western Indians, see article: “The Indian Portraits of Edmund Morris” by Jean McGill in The Beaver, Summer, 1979.
THE REGINA PAINTERS' STRIKE
OF 1912

By Glen Makohonuk

For most working class historians the Western Canadian labour movement has had a tradition of radicalism. It is in the west that we find the emergence of revolutionary parties like the Socialist Party of Canada and radical, militant unions like the Industrial Workers of the World and the One Big Union. Keir Hardie, a socialist and the militant leader of the Scottish miners, summed up his tour of Canada in 1907 by pointing out the difference between the east and the west: "In the West the Trade Unionist has no use for Socialism, and in the West, beyond Winnipeg, only Socialists need apply."

But in Saskatchewan the urban labour movement was inclined to the socialism or radicalism that Hardie would have us believe. This does not mean that there were no socialists or radicals working in Saskatchewan, for there were "pockets of socialist strength." But rather the urban labour movement seemed to be preoccupied with 'bread and butter' issues. The Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America Local 509 is an example of this form of unionism. Local 509 was not quick to engage in militant action. In fact, their strike of 22-31 July 1912 was their first attempt at any form of militant action. The purpose of this paper is to examine the painters' strike of 1912, which centred on four major issues, namely working conditions, wages, the cost of living, and the breakdown in their harmonious relationship with their employers.

Local 509 of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America was organized in August 1906 after an organizing drive initiated by the international head office, which was located in La Fayette, Indiana. The International had initiated organizing drives throughout the United States and Canada in order to control the continental labour market of craft painters and decorators. It was believed that if these workers were organized, they would be able to achieve job security and high wages. Consequently, sixty-five painters and decorators in Regina joined Local 509 in order to improve their conditions.

The painters worked and lived in a new prairie city. Regina had been founded in 1882 in an area that had an inadequate water supply, poor drainage, no natural building materials, and no natural resources. But by 1912 Regina could boast that it had become the headquarters of the political, judicial, legal, and educational systems in Saskatchewan. It had more than thirty factories and was the home of many industries. It was a city of 2,249 in 1901 to 30,213 in 1911.

Even though the building cycle was relatively favourable for the painters and other building trades workers prior to 1912, there was still an important seasonal factor. Because of the harshness of the prairie climate, particularly the cold winters, construction usually proceeded during the spring, summer, and early fall months. In terms of the number of days idle per painter, not including holidays and days off, it worked out to approximately 120 a year. Thus the seasonal nature of the painters' employment had an obvious effect on their working conditions, wages, and standard of living.
The Regina Painters’ Strike of 1912

The painters’ working conditions were certainly not ideal. Their work exposed them to poisonous pigments and materials. For example, because arsenic and lead were common chemicals in paint, painters were exposed to the dangers of lead and arsenic poisoning. Cobalt and its compounds were used as pigments in dryers, and persons exposed to it could experience stomach pains, weaknesses in the arms and legs, and the vomiting of blood. Robert Tressell, a British painter who wrote a novel about his working and living conditions in 1906, described the air that his fellow workers breathed as being “heavily laden with dust and disease germs, powdered mortar, lime, plaster, and . . . dirt . . .”

In addition to these chemical hazards, there was the danger of construction accidents. Because of the nature of the construction industry, there were a significant number of fatalities and injuries. In fact, the average number of yearly injuries was in excess of one hundred. There were a variety of sources for these accidents. For instance, the openings in the floors and walls could lead to a fall. Often scaffolds were hastily constructed out of unsuitable material which could easily collapse. The protruding nails left in waste lumber often led to injury.

The building trades unions responded to these occupational hazards by pressuring not only the employers to adopt safety measures, but also to demand the protection of government legislation. In 1912 an Act for the Protection of Persons Employed in the Construction of Buildings was passed. Section 6 of the Act stated that “In the erection, alteration, repair, improvement or demolition of any building no scaffolding, hoists, stays, ladders, flooring or other mechanical and temporary contrivances shall be used which are unsafe, unsuitable or improper or which are not so constructed, protected, placed and operated as to afford reasonable safety from accident to persons employed or engaged upon the building.”

In order to enforce the Act, the inspector had the authority to force an employer to close down construction until he met the provisions. If the employer failed to do so he would be liable, upon conviction, “to a penalty not exceeding $50.00 for every day upon which any violation or prevention as aforesaid occurs and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.”

Even though no evidence exists to indicate that an employer received such a penalty, the threat seemed to persuade some employers to comply with the safety regulations.

Another important factor was the hours of work issue. The painters had a continual grievance about their long hours of work, which were 10 hours a day Monday to Friday and 5 to 8 hours on Saturday. They claimed that the sixty hour work week was far too long and demanding. They were of the opinion that if they had a shorter work week, they would be able to have more free time and continuous employment. Consequently, the hours of work became a major issue in their strike of 1912.

A more crucial factor affecting the working conditions was the threat of unemployment caused by the employers’ attempts to use non-union men or immigrants instead of union painters. Indeed, many contractors were prepared to employ anybody who was able to hold a brush and just ‘slap-on-the-paint’ if it meant a saving in the wage bill. The painters viewed such an attitude as a threat to their craft skills, job security, and union rules. Indeed, their concerns were very important to them when considering the fact that of the 347 painters and decorators working in Regina in 1911, less than 80 were union members.

To combat the flood of non-union workers into their labour market, the Brotherhood attempted to set up some internal and external controls. Amendments
were made to the by-laws in order to prevent non-union painters working with union painters. Restrictions were placed on applications for membership into the union. The application was designed in such a way that the applicant had to answer ten questions ranging from previous membership in any other union to his marital status. In addition, he was required to take an oath and swear to uphold the constitution and by-laws of the union. An investigating committee would then examine each application and make the final decision. Finally there was the initiation fee of $10.00, and the monthly dues which ranged from $.75 to $5.25.\textsuperscript{19}

The painters tried to introduce external controls through the Regina Trades and Labour Council. William Cocks, the financial secretary of the Brotherhood of Painters, raised the immigrant issue a number of times at the Regina TLC meetings during the winter of 1910-1911. Lengthy debates arose about the attempts of the employers and the Greater Regina Club to bring in immigrants in order “to flood the labour market . . . .”\textsuperscript{20} The debate ended with the passing of Cocks’ motion “that this council protest against the Greater Regina Club carrying on an Emigration scheme which is detrimental to the working class of Regina.”\textsuperscript{21}

The controls and protests seemed to be effective in some cases. An example was the painting contract on the new parliament building. The contractor was attempting to reduce his wage bill and thus increase his profits by using non-union painters. The Brotherhood responded to this job threat by sending a deputation to the Provincial Fair Wage Officer on 10 February 1911 to protest their grievance. After an investigation was carried out, it was decided that the contractor had to employ union members at union wage rates.\textsuperscript{22} Thus the Brotherhood was to some extent successful in protecting its craft interests by restricting entry to the trade. The second major cause of the 1912 strike was the wage issue. Even though the Brotherhood of Painters was one of the building trades unions who were the highest paid of the Regina working class, they still received a relatively low wage rate. Table 1 illustrates the hourly union wage rates of the Regina building trades between 1906 and 1912. Of the seven trades, the painters ranked sixth until 1911 when they caught up to the electrical workers and the rough carpenters. But if the painters’ average yearly income is compared, a different conclusion is reached. Since the construction industry was a seasonal operation, their employment was measured in average working days. A comparison of the yearly income of the Regina building trades can be illustrated by the example in Table 2. Thus the painters, even though they were not a part of the industrial proletariat, ranked at the bottom of the building trades in terms of the wage rates.

Furthermore, the Regina painters complained that their wages were lower than those of their brothers in the other western Canadian cities. According to a Trades and Labour Congress study carried out in 1910, the Regina painters’ wage rate was ranked the lowest at $.30 per hour while their brothers in Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Calgary, Victoria, Edmonton, and Vancouver received $.35, $.35, $.40, $.45 and $.50 respectively.\textsuperscript{23} The Regina painters were thus striving to achieve wage parity with their brothers in the other cities.

The painters’ wage rates had an obvious impact on their standard of living. The third cause of the 1912 strike and the standard grievance of the painters was that their wages were not keeping up to the high cost of living. In fact, a 1910 Trades and Labour Congress study reported that Regina had the highest cost of living in Western Canada.\textsuperscript{24} The Bureau of Labour of the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture initiated its own study of the cost of living in Regina. The Bureau wanted to make a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Brick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>$.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Lower rates were paid for registration.

Source: Finlayson, R., Statistical Abstract of the Province of Saskatchewan 1912-1913, King’s Printer, Regina.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonemasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All calculations are clear and readily made by measuring a commodity in butter, cheese, apples, and potato, data, the cost of a quantity of living would be.

If the pain period, we find the painters we keep up the standard of living would be much higher. The lowest wages were often
working with union men, and try to get up into the union. ...alleged to have devoted his income of $1000 to marital support. It was an order to uphold the rights of the committee to the order of the court. (Burlingvill et al, 1919). The Regina Trades and Labor Council, in its annual TLC meetings in the fall of 1911, condemned the order “to flood the whole country with the hands of Cocks' motion picture work of the Emigration Board.”

An example was the response of an unorganized union painters. The painters wrote to union members in the city, “If you have a grievance, you must go to the union. A union member must have a union card. If you have a grievance, you must go to the union. A union member must have a union card. We are going to make a fight for our rights. We are going to fight for our wages.”

Even though the union members were the highest paid painters, the average wage rate was $2.50 per hour. Table 1 gives the wages for 1906 to 1912. The table shows the wages for 1906 to 1912 for bricklayers, carpenters, electrical workers, painters, plumbers, stonecutters, and labourers. The wages are given in the table in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bricklayers</th>
<th>Carpenters</th>
<th>Electrical Workers</th>
<th>Painters</th>
<th>Plumbers</th>
<th>Stonecutters</th>
<th>Labourers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>$5.25</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>$5.75</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>$5.75</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Lower rate indicates wage paid to rough painters; higher rate indicates wage paid for more skilled work.


Table 2 Yearly Income of the Regina Building Trades for 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Wages per Hour</th>
<th>Average Working Days</th>
<th>No. of Hours per Day</th>
<th>Yearly Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayers</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$1170.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$85.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>$.35</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$756.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>$.35</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$637.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>$.50</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$1000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonecutters</td>
<td>$.60</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$1080.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>$.273</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$761.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All calculations my own.

Clear and readily understood comparison of the cost of living between 1910 and 1912 by measuring a certain list of commodities in terms of dollars and cents. The list of commodities included: “One pound each of beef, veal, mutton, pork, bacon, fish, butter, cheese, flour, laundry starch, sugar, tea, coffee, rolled oats, rice, beans, apples and prunes; 1 loaf of bread, 1 quart of milk, 1 dozen eggs, 1 bushel of potatoes, 1 quart of vinegar, 1 cord of wood and 1 ton of coal.” Based on this data, the cost of living in terms of food and fuel had increased from $34.26 in 1910 to $40.68 in 1912, an increase of nineteen per cent.

If the painters' wage rates are compared with the cost of living for the same period, we find that their wages were six per cent above the cost of living. Thus, if the painters were able to remain employed each week, then they would be able to keep up with the cost of living in terms of food and fuel. If, however, they experienced any unemployment, which most did during the winter season, their standard of living would decline significantly. Furthermore, if we include two other important factors, clothing and shelter, in the cost of living figures, we find that the painters' wages were often insufficient.
In order to have a better understanding of the painters’ standard of living, it is necessary to examine the factor of housing. Housing was important because of the shortage caused by the rapid influx of immigrants, real estate speculation, and high costs. The majority of painters lived in the working class districts which were located both in the north end, near the Grand Trunk Pacific Shops, and the east end, which was known as Germantown. Both of these areas were populated by the various ethnic groups, particularly the Germans, and had the worst conditions. Over sixty per cent of the houses were small, lacking in sewer and water facilities, and overcrowded with an average number of 5.4 persons.

The average cost of such a house when available was usually $2,000 with a down payment of $150 cash and $25 a month with interest till paid for, or $2,200 on the same terms without interest. According to a Regina historian, the average worker who could afford such a house had to be earning at least $71.20 a month and his wife had to be employed, probably as a domestic or a laundress. If, however, a worker could not afford to buy a house, he could rent one without any conveniences for $15.00 a month.

The ability of painters to purchase homes depended upon their continuity of employment and wage rates. In 1911, for example, the average monthly income of most painters was about $33.08, which would not have made it possible for them to purchase their own homes. But for those painters who had continuous employment, they were able to earn monthly incomes of about $84.00 which would have made it possible for them to purchase houses when they were available. Because of their economic condition, most painters were not able to purchase homes until the 1911–14 period.

Thus, the painters’ standard of living was adverse. Their low wages and high cost of living gave them cause to prepare for strike action. But there was one other factor that contributed to the strike of 1912, and that was the breakdown of the relationship between the painters and their employers.

Prior to the 22–31 July 1912 strike the painters and the employers had a relatively amiable bargaining situation in which a compromise was usually negotiated. W. B. McNeil, the recording secretary of the Brotherhood of Painters, wrote a letter to the editor of Labor’s Realm, explaining the “amicable state of affairs” his union was experiencing with their employers.

Never in the history of Regina has there been such an amicable state of affairs existing between Local Union 509, Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America, and the Master Painters Association of this city, as at present prevails. . . . It is apparent that satisfaction prevails on both sides,... When one considers the bitter conditions which was evident only three months ago between the boss painters and union, and that six months ago there were painters receiving the grand remuneration for their labor to the tune of 20, 22½ and 25 cents per hour, to say nothing of the bosses telling the union to go to Moose Jaw. Is [sic] it not satisfactory to know that these same men are now receiving 30 to 35 cents per hour, and that the Master Painters and the union are working in unison? Why, sure it is, and long may the existing conditions prevail.

The amicable state of affairs, however, did not last long. By the beginning of 1912 the painters were suffering from a number of grievances involving poor working conditions, the long hours of work, the decline in wage rates as compared to their brothers in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, the high cost of living, the threat of unemployment, and hostile employers who were willing to use immigrants to under-
Reckoned of living, it is evident because of the population, and high which were located in the east end, which by the various conditions. Over sixty facilities, and over-

ally $2,000 with a for, or $2,200 on therian, the average a month and

If, however, a any conveniences

their continuity of monthly income of possible for them to successful employment, would have made it. Because of their homes until the

wages and high there was one other breakdown of the

lers had a relatively usually negotiated.

ers, wrote a letter "affairs" his union

vide state of affairs

Decorators and tion of this city, as on both sides....

ly three months ago there were tune of 20, 22½ union to goto... men are now and the union are existing conditions

the beginning of involving poor states as compared living, the threat of immigrants to under-

The Regina Painters' Strike of 1912

cut union rates. Consequently, at a membership meeting on 22 January 1912, the painters drafted their demands: forty cents per hour straight time for painters, forty-five cents for paperhangers, and fifty cents for signwriters; time-and-a-half for the first four hours overtime and double time for each hour after that or for work on Sundays and holidays; all travelling expenses to be paid by the bosses; a nine hour day; a closed shop; and binding arbitration to settle grievances. The demand for arbitration indicated a lack of militancy, and the painters' interest in working within the capitalist wage system.

Negotiations soon commenced between Local 509 and the Master Painters Association who represented eighteen employers. Both sides held on to their original positions and consequently dragged on the negotiations. Finally, after a number of months of futile meetings, the painters decided to back their position by taking a strike vote on 21 July. An ultimatum was set, if the negotiating committee could not conclude an agreement by noon on 22 July, the painters were to go on strike.4

Negotiations broke down on 22 July, thus forcing the executive to call the strike. Seventy-nine painters in eighteen firms answered the call.5 The strike was viewed as "a protest against unfair conditions caused by the refusal of the masters to grant adequate protection to skilled workmen."6 It seemed to be the appropriate time for taking strike action, because there was a great building demand which had been stimulated by the destruction caused by the 1912 cyclone. In short, the painters believed that they had the economic clout to force a speedy settlement of the strike in their favour.

The employers, however, did not take the strike too seriously, because they believed that the economic situation was in their favour, and the union would be
forced to come to their terms. In fact, the employers claimed that there was a great surplus of immigrants and non-union workers available to fill union positions. G. Powell, secretary of the Regina Builders’ Exchange, reported in an interview to The Leader that the employers were getting along without the union painters.

‘There are plenty of men coming from outside points who are willing to work for the wages given by the bosses, . . . and there should be no difficulty in having the places of the strikers filled.’

W. E. Cocks, the financial secretary of Local 509 and a leading Saskatchewan socialist, responded to the bosses’ attempts to use scabs and strikebreakers. He advocated that the painters should establish workers’ control and go into business for themselves in order to compete with the employers.

‘If it comes to a show down, we can contract for ourselves just as well as the bosses. The men intend to hold out until their demands are granted. There should be no trouble whatever in getting the same scale of wages given the painters in other cities in the province, at least.’

The painters, however, did not take Cocks’ advice nor engaged in any militant strike activities, even though it was reported to be a “fight to the finish,” and that they had the support of other unions like the Electrical Workers’ Union Local 572.

Because of their lack of militancy, the painters were quick to participate in a joint meeting with the Master Painters’ Association. On 31 July, as a result of the meeting, it was agreed that the painters would return to work, while negotiations continued until a settlement was reached. The rank and file returned to work without a protest.

Meanwhile, deliberations between the union officials and the Master Painters’ Association continued. Finally, by mid-August a compromise was hammered out. The Association offered a nine hour day and wages of forty and forty-two and a half cents per hour, which was two and a half cents below the union’s original demand.

The Painters were placed in a situation that they had no choice but to accept the offer. They realized that they had not received all their demands, but agreed that they could enforce a closed shop provision “by refusing to work with non-union men in the shops,” and that they could fight for a wage of forty-five cents per hour next year. Consequently on 31 August Local 509 signed a collective agreement with the Master Painters’ Association.

Thus the Brotherhood of Painters’ first strike had come to an end. Initially, the employers were not viewed as the enemy to be fought in a class conflict way; rather, harmonious relations were to prevail. It was not until the painters started experiencing the adverse effects of poor working conditions, inadequate wages, the high cost of living, the threat of unemployment and the job competition in their labour market that they decided to take action. Their strike was not one of defiance, but rather of defence. They wanted decent working conditions, adequate wages, continuous employment and job security. These basic economic demands remained the major concerns of the Brotherhood of Painters. Their strike of 1912 had thus set the stage for their future conflicts.
FOOTNOTES

1 The Voice, (Winnipeg) Nov. 29, 1907, pg. 1.
3 The Brotherhood of Painters was carrying out Samuel Gompers’ objective of expanding into Canada in order to develop a continental trade union movement. Gompers’ chief justification for international unionism in Canada may be summarized in his own words: “When the Yankee capitalist did this it was but natural that the Yankee ‘agitator’ should follow him.” See R. Babcock, Gompers in Canada: A Study in American Communism Before the First World War, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974, p. 36.
4 Labor’s Realm Sept. 6, 1909, p. 17.
5 Hereinafter the word painters will also refer to decorators and paperhangers.
6 Regina The Capital of the Province of Saskatchewan. Board of Trade, 1914, n.p.
7 Ibid.
10 For a complete list of these toxic chemicals and hazards, see J. Stellman and S. M. Daum, Work is Dangerous to Your Health New York: Vintage Books, 1973, pp. 401-402.
13 Statutes of the Province of Saskatchewan, Regina: King’s Printer, 1912, p. 78.
14 Ibid., p. 81.
15 Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB). B120 Brotherhood of Painters’ and Allied Trades Local 509 (Regina) (hereafter referred to as Brotherhood) Minutes, Dec. 1, 1913, p. 116.
16 Ibid., Minutes, Jan. 1, 1913, p. 71.
19 Brotherhood, Minutes, August 14, 1912, p. 38.
20 SAB. Regina Trades and Labour Council (hereafter referred to as RTLC) Minutes, November 18, 1910, p. 61.
21 Ibid., Jan. 6, 1911, p. 67.
23 Labor’s Realm, March 1, 1910.
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid. The report records a 12 per cent increase in the cost of living. But if one calculates the change in the cost of living using their figures, it works out to a 19 per cent increase. It seems a mathematical error has been made.
27 I would like to thank Ruth Dyck Wilson and Cathy McComb of the Saskatchewan Archives Board for their research assistance in tracking down the addresses of various painters living in Regina between 1906 and 1912. Also see Henderson’s Regina Directory 1906-12.
28 SAB. Report of a Preliminary and General Survey of Regina September, 1913 made by the Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church and the Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church, p. 36.
29 Ibid., p. 18.
34 Ibid., July 21, 1912, p. 30.
35 According to W. B. McNeil, the recording secretary of Local 509, 79 painters were affected directly and another 25 indirectly. See Public Archives of Canada (PAC), RG. 27, Vol. 300, file 3552, W. B. McNeil to F. A. Acland, July 24, 1912.
36 The Daily Phoenix (Saskatoon) July 23, 1912.
38 W. J. C. Cherwinski, op. cit., p. 59.
40 The Leader, July 24, 1912.
41 Brotherhood. Minutes, July 30, 1912, p. 33.
42 PAC, RG. 27, Vol. 300, file 3552, Canada, Department of Labour Trade Disputes, Aug. 26, 1912.
43 Brotherhood. Minutes, Aug. 12, 1912, p. 36; and Aug. 24, 1912, p. 44.
Book Reviews

THE REGIONAL DECLINE OF A NATIONAL PARTY: LIBERALS ON THE PRAIRIES. By David E. Smith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981. Pp. 188. $17.50 cloth; $8.95 paper.

David Smith's *The Regional Decline of a National Party: Liberals on the Prairies* is a timely book on a subject much on the minds of western Canadians. In his study, Smith, a political scientist at the University of Saskatchewan, concentrates on Liberal policies, party organization and leadership from 1957 to 1977, a period in which the Liberals reformed their political strategy after their defeat by the Progressive Conservative party under John Diefenbaker. His thesis is that "The Liberal party has been the author of its own demise in western Canada."

The book is divided into three parts. Part I examines the distinctiveness of the prairie West, taking as its theme the heterogeneous population, the evolution of its economy, and the divergence of its political traditions. Students of Western Canadian history will be familiar with much of the material in this section. Smith shows how initially (up to 1957) the prairie West was an integral part of the nation. The expansionist programme of the central government largely benefited the West, and it, in return, sent to Ottawa several powerful regional spokesmen like Clifford Sifton and Jimmy Gardiner. Yet even at this time, the West was placed in a quandary. It wanted to believe that it was an integral part of a national scheme, and yet it faced policies and programmes instituted by the national government which at times, went against their local interests. Such programmes were associated with the Liberal party in particular as they dominated federal politics for so much of the twentieth century. Consequently, the Liberals lost strength provincially in the three prairie provinces — usually to third parties. Yet federally, Smith notes, the Liberals, thanks to powerful regional cabinet ministers, continued to dominate federal elections in the West until 1957. Diefenbaker's victory in that year resulted in the alteration of the Liberal party's strategy which in turn led to its demise.

Part II is the most important section of the book. Here, Smith shows how the federal Liberal party unwittingly plotted its demise in the West. The villains are not, surprisingly, the leaders, Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau, but rather the party organizers, Keith Davey (national organizer from 1961 to 1968) and Richard Stanbury (party president from 1968 to 1971). Davey, Smith claims, attempted to create 'pan-Canadian' structures, free from provincial entanglements. This policy worked to the detriment of the West, as 'pan-Canadian'quickly became equated with Ontario and Quebec, where the Liberals gained their greatest support. Stanbury's attempt to promote individual participation in the Party also hurt the prairie provinces as the new 'modern mass democratic party' became more than ever a central Canadian one as the majority of party members lived in the East. These transformations in the party led to new economic and cultural policies which showed the Liberals' complete disinterest in, or misunderstanding of, western needs and interests. As Smith notes: "Farmers, farm organizations, provincial governments, and westerners generally became alarmed and then angry at federal policies intended to reform the wheat industry, to direct the development of natural resources, and to promote bilingualism." (p. xvii)

Part III examines the traditional association of the West and the nation. Smith argues that initially the tension between the region and the nation was a healthy one because each looked upon the other as essential for their own well-being. This was particularly true in the pre-World War II era when the federal government had a


This is a fine book. A native of Saskatchewan, L and agrarian politics is the star of this province are urban histories have a focus that seldom critics can be have written a detailed account of the city of Saskatoon, second largest city in Saskatchewan, and not of the other cities in the province.

The book focuses on the city of Saskatoon, which was founded in 1882 as a stop on the Transcontinental Railway from Regina to Prince Albert. It was not until the early 20th century that the city began to grow, and it was not until the 1940s that it became a major city. From that point on, the city has grown rapidly, and it is now the second largest city in the province, after Regina.

The book is well-written and well-researched, and it provides a detailed account of the history of the city. It covers a wide range of topics, from the early days of the city to the present day. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of Saskatchewan, or in the history of Canadian cities in general.
strong hand dictating western interests. After World War II, provincial power, and conflicting interests in the West, have led to provincial conflict with the federal government. The West has balked against “the hold of the centre” at a time when the Liberals, as wielders of national unity, have argued for the necessity of a strong central government to hold the nation together.

The moral of Smith’s well-presented study is the realization, so often brought to mind, that Canada is a loose association of regions extremely difficult to coordinate and to govern. Ironically, the Liberals have lost the West simply because they pursued the “national policies” of Macdonald and Laurier: a strong federal presence on national issues, an economy based upon the production of staple products to serve the growth of manufacturing and industry in central Canada; and (what is new) the promotion of a bilingual and bicultural nation. What has changed is the view that one region at least, the West, has had of its role in the grand design. Initially the West felt it was a participant, albeit too often a very minor one, in fulfilling the “national dream”. Now, it sees itself as the victim, rather than the bearer, of national unity.

The book leaves one with some reservations about Smith’s basic thesis that the Liberals alone are to blame for their demise in the West, when they were simply pursuing policies which have consistently been associated with “national policies”. Perhaps it was not the Liberal Party that changed so substantially — rather it was the West itself, which in the 1960s and 1970s no longer wanted to serve as a minor participant in the country’s development.

R. Douglas Francis


This is a fine book, and one which offers a fresh approach to the history of Saskatchewan. Long preoccupied with chronicling the growth of cereal agriculture and agrarian politics, historians have been slow to recognize that not all residents of this province are, or have been, tillers of the soil. Saskatchewan’s few published urban histories have been remarkable chiefly for their uncritical approach and a focus that seldom extended beyond the civic boundaries. Happily, neither of these criticisms can be applied to Saskatoon: The First Half-Century. Kerr and Hanson have written a detailed, and critical, account of the early history of Saskatchewan’s second largest city, and successfully place its development within the larger provincial and national context. Saskatoon is by far the best history of any Saskatchewan city to appear to date.

The book focusses primarily upon the economic development of Saskatoon. Founded in 1882 by the Temperance Colonization Society, Saskatoon did little more than mark time for the first twenty years of its history. Not even the arrival of the railway from Regina in 1890 provided much of a stimulus to its growth. Still a small village in 1901, it seemed unlikely indeed that Saskatoon would ever amount to anything. From that point on, though, fortune smiled on Saskatoon. In a single decade a village of 113 was transformed into a city of 30,000. The expansion reached its climax in 1912, after which the city and region fell into a sharp depression that forced some of its new millionaires like J. C. Drinkle into bankruptcy and the city council into a policy of retrenchment.
Saskatoon was stopped in its tracks, only half built. Its downtown core would long be "... a mixture of the elaborate and the plain — a neo-classical bank next to a wooden shack, an office tower next to an empty lot." (120.) The collapse of the boom left its mark on residential development as well; in 1914 five-sixths of the land within the city limits was undeveloped. Prosperity returned again in the late 1920s, but Saskatoon's principal economic function did not change. Saskatoon was, and would remain, a service centre for the agricultural region which surrounded it.

Kerr and Hanson emphasize that Saskatoon was only partly created by outside forces. It owed its very existence to the settlement of the west and the dramatic expansion of the wheat economy, and its economic fortunes were closely tied to the price of wheat. Its location was important too. Saskatoon was well located, on a good site and far enough away from Winnipeg and Edmonton to command its own extensive trading region.

However, Saskatoon's rise to preeminence was also due to the actions of a business elite which worked with a single-minded devotion to build up the community. The efforts of this small group, whose willingness to forego business or political rivalries to work for the city's good became known as the "Saskatoon Spirit," had an impact not only on Saskatoon's development, but that of the province as well. If Saskatoon businessmen had accepted the more southerly route of the Grand Trunk Pacific as a fait accompli, they argue, Hanley would doubtless have become a larger place, and urban development in central Saskatchewan might have been characterized by a number of smaller centres rather than one large city. Had Saskatoon's businessmen not lobbied so hard, and successfully, for the provincial university, the prize might have gone to its southern rival, Regina, and Saskatchewan might have come to more closely resemble Manitoba with its single dominant city. Of course, there were limits to what could be achieved by local initiative. The same business elite which lured the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific to Saskatoon and won the important freight rate concessions which fostered the growth of wholesaling utterly failed to bring industry to that city.

Those who read this book will have a better appreciation of the economic forces which shaped Saskatoon's development, but will wonder why the authors ended their narrative in 1932. The economic morass of the 1930s is intimidating to the historian, to be sure, but having led the unwary reader into that decade they might at least have brought him safely out again. Indeed since Kerr and Hanson readily admit that, in terms of its economic function, little changed in Saskatoon until after the end of World War II, they might well have even carried the story up to 1945.

Saskatoon is more than a detailed economic history of the city. Historians will also welcome its accounts of the rise of an urban society, the evolution of municipal services and the efforts of a few Saskatonians to bring more order and rationality to their city's development through town planning. Politics are not neglected either. The issues and personalities that dominated municipal elections are described in detail. Kerr and Hanson also offer a fresh perspective on the rise of the Progressive party by demonstrating the extent of urban support afforded John Evans in his bid to win the Saskatoon riding for the new farmers' party in the first postwar federal election. There are, of course, omissions in the book. The ethnic composition of Saskatoon is not treated at all. This is not a particularly serious omission; as the authors readily admit, Saskatoon did not become a very cosmopolitan city until after World War II.
BOOK REVIEWS

What Kerr and Hanson have done, they have done well. The illustrations nicely complement the text, and the authors have also provided a series of statistical tables which will be a valuable aid in comparing Saskatoon’s development with that of other prairie urban centres. *Saskatoon: The First Half-Century* is a most welcome addition to the still rather modest collection of histories of Saskatchewan cities, and should serve as a stimulus to other historians. There is more to Saskatchewan, after all, than fields of waving wheat.

J. William Brennan


*Gentlemen Emigrants* discusses the movement of English middle and upper class settlers to Canada during the period from the 1840s to the First World War. Patrick A. Dunae categorizes these men according to their social status in England — they were products of British Public Schools.

At that time the English middle class was enjoying the economic benefits of the Industrial Revolution. Fathers naturally wished their sons to profit from their increased income so sent them to reputable Public Schools (in Canada called private schools) where they would become “gentlemen.” Dunae never precisely defines gentlemen but suggests a background in Classics, a refined accent, a preoccupation with sports, an abhorrence of trade, a WASPish attitude towards religion, politics and empire building and Old Boys ties seems to suit.

In any case an expensive education was not preparation for a career. Because the Public School System neglected to include modern subjects like sciences and reinforced privilege, it inhibited a young man’s chance in the real world i.e. commerce, industry, business. One nineteenth century journalist condemned the Public School Man as “bright-eyed, clean-limbed, high minded, ready for anything and suitable for nothing.” The introduction of the merit system in traditionally suitable occupations like the army, civil service, law and medicine exacerbated the situation.

British Public Schools were producing generations of men who couldn’t or wouldn’t support themselves. Primogeniture and agricultural depressions left younger sons without enough money to live according to their station in life. For many families the English gentlemen was redundant.

A timely and patriotic solution to this embarrassment was to send these boys overseas. “Colonizing and empire-building” was promoted as “every whit as noble and as important as any profession.”

Canada was particularly attractive to these gentlemen. It was closer to home than India, Africa and Australia and somehow not so “foreign.” The Canadian government made a determined effort to appeal to these young men. In the 1870s the government set out to open the great northwest, securing it for national aims. Along with the incentive of the Dominion Land Act, an ambitious advertising campaign was undertaken. Under the guidance of Clifford Sifton, posters, pamphlets, side-shows and testimonials extolled the virtues of prairie fertility, climate and game.

It seems many a young sportsman was seduced to Canada by bribes of good hunting, cheap stables and outfitters — gentlemanly accoutrements that were expensive in England. Young Frederick DelaFosse was one of those whose guardians decided to ship him out when he stood last in all his school subjects. The literature
he read on Canada greatly impressed him. "I discovered that Canada possessed boundless resources and when I read of its wonderful prairies and magnificent forests, of its splendid lakes and rivers, of the fishing and hunting, of its glorious summers and bright cheery winters, the sporting heart within me leapt and I was almost reconciled to the abandoning of my summer's cricketing."

How these young men managed in the new world depended on their attitude and preparedness. Obviously, if they held themselves above the other settlers, they would meet unfriendly response. Prejudice was not a suitable attitude where experience and co-operation were important ingredients of settlement. A remittance from home, too often protected them from the necessity of hard labour on which nations are built. Gentlemanly pursuits of hunting, fishing, horse racing, dances and theatricals meant farm work was neglected. These gentlemen were at the mercy of "greenhorn" jokes. Drunkenness and deserted homesteads were not uncommon.

However, for those with pluck and the ability to adapt to new surroundings (and to democracy) — the frontier served them well. Many a failed farmer eventually showed up in a white collar job in larger centers and proved much more capable there. The gentlemanly spirit of noblesse oblige made these men responsible for the establishment of much of our British tradition in Canada. According to Dunne, what is most admirable in these pioneers was their faithfulness to their traditions and their determination to carry them on in the Empire. We owe to them the establishment of many of our cultural institutions, athletic clubs, churches, colleges and philanthropic organizations.

England's ultimate solution to these supernumerary gentlemen was that great common denominator, World War I. Not only did it decimate a generation of young men — it finally convinced British Public Schools to reform their curricula to allow their students entrance to occupations.

Peggy Brunson

**Contributors**

Keith Foster is a graduate of the University of Regina. This paper was originally prepared for a class assignment.

Jean McGill is an Ontario writer who has been researching the life and art of Edmund Morris for some time.

Glen Makahonuk is a member of the staff of the Library, University of Saskatchewan working in Special Collections.

R. Douglas Francis is a professor in the Department of History, University of Calgary. Professor Francis is presently on leave.

J. William Brennan is Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Regina.

Peggy Brunson, a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, is Information Officer, Energy Conservation Branch, Saskatchewan Energy and Mines, Regina.
NOW AVAILABLE

The Saskatchewan Oral History Conference Proceedings 1981
Edited by Krzysztof Gebhard

Proceedings of an oral history conference sponsored by the Saskatchewan Archives Board and held at the University of Regina, May 1-2, 1981 are now available.

Copies at $5.00 each may be obtained from Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Regina or Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Saskatchewan.

BACK ISSUES OF SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

Copies of many of the previous numbers of this magazine are still available for your reading enjoyment.

Issues available are:

Vol. I, No. 1; Vol. VIII, Nos. 2 and 3; Vol. XI, No. 3; Vols. XII and XIII (3 issues each); Vol. XIV, Nos. 1 and 2; Vol. XV, No. 2; Vol. XVII, Nos. 1 and 2.
Price: 85 cents per issue
Vol. XX, Nos. 2 and 3; Vol. XXI, Nos. 1 and 2.
Price: $1.00 per issue
Vol. XXVI, No. 3; Vol. XXVII, Nos. 1, 2 and 3; Vol. XXVIII, Nos. 2 and 3; Vols. XXIX, XXX, and XXXI (3 issues each).
Price: $1.50 per issue
Vols. XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV (3 issues each); Vol. XXXV, No. 1.
Price: $2.00 per issue

Cost of available back issues to the end of Volume XXXV, No. 2, $61.25.

Send to: Saskatchewan History,
Saskatchewan Archives Board,
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 0W0