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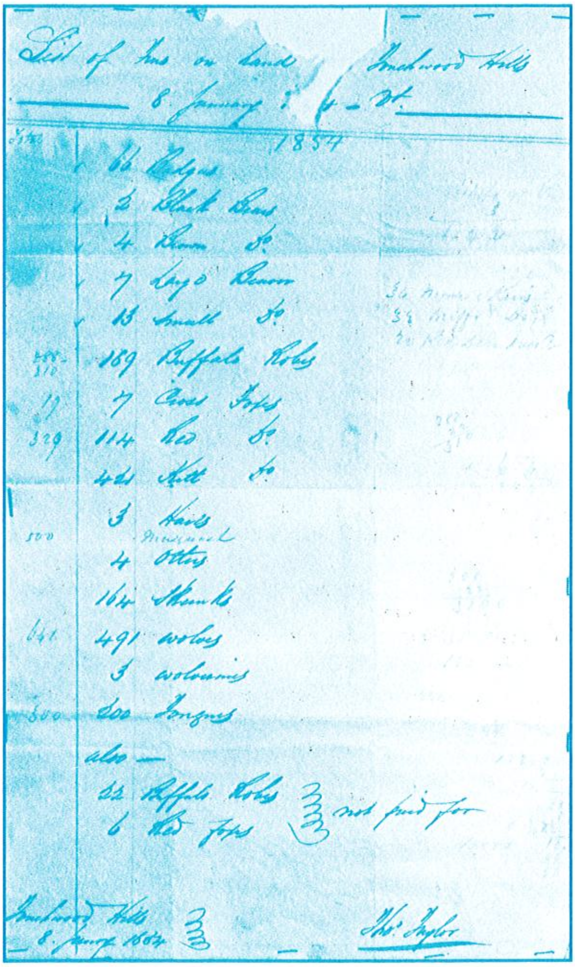
List of furs on hand Touchwood Hills
8 January 1854

66 Badgers
2 Black Bears
4 Brown Do.
7 Large Beaver
13 Small Do.
189 Buffalo Robes
7 Cross Foxes
114 Red Do.
421 Kitt Do.
3 Hares
4 Otters
164 Skunks
491 wolves
3 wolverines
200 Tongues
also —
32 Buffalo Robes
6 Red Foxes } not paid for

Touchwood Hills
8 January 1854
Thos. Taylor

Wage-Labour in the Northwest Fur Trade Economy, 1760-1849.

A Case Study in Urban Reform: Regina Before The First World War.

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: A page from an inventory journal at Fort Pelly Hudson's Bay Company Post showing furs on hand at Touchwood Hills, 8 January 1854. Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-C143.

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WAGE-LABOUR IN THE NORTHWEST FUR TRADE ECONOMY, 1760-1849

By Glen Makahonuk

Although the history of the fur trade has experienced something of a renaissance over the past decade with the publication of studies on such topics as demographic patterns, women and family relationships, and Indian/trader economic relations, there has been relatively little done on the wage-labour situation. In fact, except for a few articles on the subject there seems to be a general assumption that a capitalist labour relations system is not applicable to the Canadian fur trade.[1] In a recent review of H. C. Pentland's *Labour and Capital in Canada 1650-1860*, however, Allan Greer argues that the study is "fundamentally incoherent" in the treatment of the transition to capitalism. He suggests that because Pentland confined himself to a very "narrow range of class relations" he was unable to distinguish between "different modes of production," or address the concept of "free" labourers working for wages during a period of primitive accumulation.[2] In other words, what may appear to be contrary to popular opinion, the Northwest fur trade economy of the period 1760 to 1849 operated within an emerging capitalist labour relations system.

I

The Northwest fur trade economy operated during an early stage in the development of capitalism in North America. The Marxist economic historian Maurice Dobb writes that "the development of Capitalism falls into a number of stages, characterized by different levels of maturity and each of them recognizable by fairly distinctive traits."[3] The distinctive traits of the Canadian economy prior to 1850 were petit bourgeois farmers or habitants, family units of independent commodity producers, land and transportation companies, and commercial enterprises involved in the trade of fish, furs or timber.[4] The fur trade economy was based on what may be termed merchant capitalism.

The two main fur trade companies prior to their merger in 1821 were the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company (NWC). Although both were in competition with one another, they still held a monopoly of the fur trade in which they could pursue their wealth and profits. The NWC had established a large inland trading empire from its base in the St. Lawrence region, while the HBC had been operating from the shores of Hudson Bay since the late seventeenth century. The HBC had both economic and political objectives: the economic one was "to make a sustained profit or gain through trade" and the political one was to maintain the interests of the crown by carrying out exploration, territorial expansion and law making. As was explained by a contemporary writer and critic:

> . . . the Hudson's Bay Company enjoys a right of exclusive trade with the Indian population. This right of exclusive trade is, practically and positively, a right of exclusive property in the labour, life and destines of the Indian race. It is an absolute and unqualified dominion over their bodies and their souls — a domin-

> ion irresponsible to any legal authority — a despotism, whose severity no legislative control can mitigate, and no public opinion restrain. It knows but one limit, and obeys but one law, — "Put money in thy purse."[5]

A similar opinion was held of the NWC. From its beginning the NWC was a monopoly which sought "higher profits for the merchants and more ruthless exploitation of the native trappers."[6] Indeed, the NWC proved to be an extremely profitable organization in comparison to the HBC and commanded the lion's share of the fur trade by the end of the eighteenth century. Roderick Mackenzie, a Company partner, estimated that "the value of the adventure in 1787 was £30,000 Halifax currency and that this had trebled in eleven years. The profits from 1784 to 1798 totalled £407,151 Halifax currency."[7] The wealthy partners of the NWC, according to historian Stanley Ryerson, "wielded a power equivalent to that of rulers of the colony" and were to become "the precursors of the modern Canadian capitalist class."[8]

II

The profit motive of the fur trade companies had a direct impact on their labour relations policies. It has been argued that their labour relations policies were based on paternalism, or to use H. C. Pentland's term, "personal labour relations," that is, relations that were characterized by the employer's obligation to provide for the welfare of the labourer in exchange for a loyal and reasonably efficient labour force.[9] Historians like Jennifer Brown and Sylvia Van Kirk have used the model of paternalism and patriarchal society developed by Peter Laslett in *The World We Have Lost* to describe the organization and structure of fur trade company posts. But it is the renowned Canadian working class historian Bryan Palmer who has developed a definition of paternalism to include a class conflict relationship.

> Paternalism defined relations of superordination and subordination in an age of commercial capital and nascent industrialism, paternalism grew out of the necessity to justify exploitation and mediate inherently irreconcilable interests. It rationalized inequality and provided for a hierarchical order . . . In its historical manifestations, it included kindness and affection of superiors toward subordinates, as well as cruelty, harshness and gross insensitivity. But paternalism's ultimate significance . . . lay in undermining the collectivity of the oppressed by linking them to their "social superiors." This did not necessarily imply an absence of social, even overtly class, conflict . . . Paternalism was one part self-conscious creation by the merchants, independent producers, and landed gentry, and one part negotiated acceptance by the various plebeian subjects of the producing classes. But these two parts did not constitute the whole. Paternalism was reinforced by the material constraints of the social formation that had spawned it. For much of paternalism's sustaining power lay in the unique economics, politics and culture of each locality in early Canadian society.[10]

In carrying out their labour relations policies, the companies used a hierarchical and authoritarian management structure. In the case of the HBC, councils were established in the Northwest to regulate the local concerns of the company. A council was composed of chief factors who met each year usually at Red River to audit the accounts of the preceding year, to place orders with London suppliers for the goods required for the ensuing year's trade, to station company servants at various posts, to make recommendations in the filling of vacancies and to discipline or suspend any of the Company's servants.[11] After the chief factors came the chief traders, traders (who actually engaged in trade

with the Indians), chief clerks and the clerks and postmasters. The apprentice clerks were at the very bottom of what Jennifer Brown has termed a "white-collar" personnel structure.[12] The system operated in such a way that no upper position could be filled without passing through an apprenticeship of at least several years.[13] It was also possible for clerks to be promoted to the ranks of the factors and traders on the basis of "good conduct and seniority."[14] And at the very bottom of the company, what may be termed the "blue-collar," were the interpreters who were described as "intelligent labourers" knowledgeable in "a smattering of Indian" and the labourers (both Native and European), "who [were] ready to turn [their] hands to anything; to become ... trapper[s], fishermen, or rough carpenter[s], at the shortest notice."[15]

Management's power and authority were based on the requirement that all company employees had to follow a code of established rules and to "yield due obedience to such authority in all cases in which [the Governor, Chief Factor or Chief Trader] may find necessary to exercise it."[16] Any employee who did not follow these rules was subject to discipline, which in some cases reached the point of "tyrannical exploitation." For example, John Feeny, a vagabond boy at Red River, was "tied to a tree and flogged on the posteriors" for refusing "to assist in cooking."[17] In an attempt to eradicate private trade in 1773 Humphrey Marten, the factor at Severn Fort, put one of his workers in irons and gave him eighteen strokes of the cat for trading one skin.[18] The Governor at Churchill Fort, according to Edward Umfreville, was so despised by his employees for his cruel behaviour that Orcadian labourers refused to work for him. In one case Umfreville wrote about the woes of a tailor who had to quit and go back to his Orkney Islands' home because of the cruel treatment he received.

> From thence he wrote to the Company, representing in the most humiliating ... manner, the cruel treatment he had received from the Bay Governor; he informed them that the blows he had received would be the cause of unhappiness to him to the latest period of his life, as he was thereby unable to get a livelihood at his business; upon which account he humbly solicited a small consideration, to compensate in some measure for the injury he had undeservedly sustained in their service. Though it would have been an act of the greatest charity to have listened to the prayer of this poor man's petition, yet, so great is the partiality of the Company to their chief officers in the country, that no attention was paid to the petition; and, indeed, an inferior servant, may apply for redress till he is tired, before any notice will be taken of his complaints, or the slightest reprimand given to the authors of his misery.[19]

The NWC was not that much better; James Sutherland, an HBC servant, reported in 1793 that a number of employees of the NWC complained about the frequent beatings they received from the so-called "mad man," Mr. La Tour.[20] An apologist of the HBC justified "the exercise of strict discipline" on the grounds that it would prevent not only "anarchy among [the employees]," but also "neighbours" from "sowing discontent and rebellion among [them]."[21]

The economic historian H. A. Innis points out that by the late 1700s the personnel policies of the HBC, especially the discipline, actually discouraged Company employees from working harder or expanding the fur trade in the interior to counter the competition from the North West Company.[22] The NWC had labourers and traders who were quite willing to seek the rich harvest of furs in the interior regions. Many of the HBC employees, on the other hand, were loath to exert themselves because they had nothing to expect from the Company

in terms of fringe benefits. In testimony before the Select Committee on the HBC in 1857, Governor George Simpson was asked: "Is there any provision made for your servants in case of sickness or old age?" His reply was "There is no provision made for them."[23] And in the case of Indian labourers who were no longer valuable to the Company because of old age or sickness, they were "driven to the woods, to seek a lingering death by famine, with all the honour and dignity of British liberty."[24] Such policies and treatment created a lack of *ésprit de corps* and thus forced a number of employees like David Thompson and Edward Umfreville to leave the HBC and join the NWC, which seemed to have more flexible personnel policies. These policies provided for upward mobility and profit sharing, which, according to the explorer and trader Alexander Mackenzie, "excited among them a spirit of emulation in the discharge of their various duties, and, in fact, made every agent a principal who perceived his own prosperity to be connected immediately with that of his employers."[25] By the early 1800s, however, the NWC changed its policy on hiring ex-HBC employees, because there was no longer a need to win the affection of Indians who were willing to trade furs. And most important the NWC had more than enough employees to contest the bitter trade rivalry with the HBC. At a company meeting held at Fort William in July 1811, it was decided "that none of the Hudson's Bay Servants should in future be received into any of the Company's Forts except in cases of Starvation — and on *no account* to be engaged to the N.W. Co."[26] In a word, then, both companies had personnel policies to control their respective employees.

III

The recruitment of a suitable labour force to produce furs and make profits was a major personnel problem for both the HBC and the NWC during the period under study. To solve the problem the companies set up a two part labour process at each factory or post.[27] The first part involved the actual production of furs — a topic that has been subject to considerable scholarly debate. Historians such as E. E. Rich, H. A. Innis and Arthur J. Ray have clearly articulated the traditional role of Indians in the fur trade as that of hunters, trappers and middlemen.[28] Both companies vied with each other for the trade of the Indians inhabiting the Western Interior. The HBC, in particular, relied on the Indians to do the hunting and trapping. But as the hunting areas dried up the former Indian hunters turned into middlemen in order to control the trade and transportation routes from the new fur areas to the European posts. Furthermore, in their economic relationship with the fur trade companies the Indians, especially those acting as middlemen, were concerned with getting "good measure" in order "to satisfy their immediate needs, to maintain their political alliances, and to gain access to reliable sources of European arms."[29] The Metis researcher Ron Bourgeault, on the other hand, has a different interpretation to explain how the fur companies used the trading system to conquer economically the Indian people and turn them into a dependent labor force which would produce a profit. The companies did this by

> trading the products of European technology, such as guns, traps, hatchets, knives, in exchange for fur. These tools of work were more developed or advanced than the tools then being used in Indian society. These goods were introduced and traded to the people. Once the people had learned how to use

> them, they were able to reduce the amount of time and labour needed to provide for themselves (necessary-labour). They now had more time and better tools to produce more surplus (surplus-labour production). In other words, it became much easier and quicker to hunt food, cut wood and skin animals with the new European technology than with the old technology or work tools. What the European wanted from the Indians' labour was the ability to produce a surplus . . .[30]

The second part of the labour process needed European workers to operate and maintain both the fur trade posts and the transportation system. These workers were recruited from Lower Canada in the case of the NWC and from Europe in the case of the HBC. The NWC hired *hommes-du-nord* who were described as

> rough and simple men, and though used to doing hard work they preferred doing nothing at all and would not even hunt or fish for themselves unless told to do so by their employers. The work that they did while travelling was amazing. On the river at first light and going until dark, their usual respite from the hard work of paddling was the even harder work of portaging. The portages were many and difficult and everything had to be carried over them. Shouldering two or more ninety-pound bales of goods or fur, the voyageur set off at a trot across the portage, and later returned for more.[31]

They looked down on the "goers and comers" from Montreal and referred to them as the *mangeurs-du-lard* (pork-eaters). The so-called pork-eaters were employed for four or five months to transport supplies to Grand Portage and then to bring back the cargoes of furs to Montreal; at this point their seasonal contract was at an end and they were laid off. The NWC usually employed about 1280 workers in a season: 50 clerks, 71 interpreters and under clerks, 35 guides and the remainder canoemen.[32] Most of them were French-Canadians (with some Iroquois) and they formed a labouring class which, according to Sylvia Van Kirk, was ethnically and occupationally separate from the British officer class.[33]

The HBC, on the other hand, had a different labour market. The HBC had established regular recruiting policies as early as the 1680s and had relied on common labourers, tradesmen and urban workers from the London area and on some occasions from Ireland and Scotland. By the early 18th century, however, the HBC changed its policy of hiring Londoners because of the recommendation of Joseph Myatt, Governor of Albany. In 1727 Myatt had written to the London Committee that Londoners were becoming better "acquainted with the ways and debaucheries of the town" rather than the hard work necessary in the fur trade economy.[34] Myatt believed that young Orkneymen, who had a reputation for hard work and sobriety, could replace the unsuitable urban workers from London for a wage of only "£6 per annum."[35] Another 18th century writer, Edward Umfreville, had a good opinion of Orkneymen, for he described them as "a close, prudent, quiet people, strictly faithful to their employers . . ."[36] As a consequence the HBC started recruiting its labourers and some of its craftsmen from the Orkeneys by the late 1730s.

In his important quantitative study of the recruitment patterns of Orkneymen in the HBC, the historian John Nicks points out that most of the HBC employees prior to 1821 came from the middle and lower ranks of Orkney society. Most of them could be classified as plebeians for "they were young, unmarried sons of small tenant farmers, craftsmen, and cottagers."[37] The tradesmen, on the other hand, could be classified as proletarians, for they were

recruited from the urban centres like Kirkwell and Stromness in which a Scottish working class was in the making.[38] Although by the end of the 18th century English labourers were becoming a rarity, most of the skilled tradesmen positions and the so-called "white-collar" positions like writers, clerks and officers still continued to be held by Englishmen.

The Orcardians were useful employees at the HBC posts on the coast lines, but seemed to show little initiative to become voyageurs when the need to expand the trade to the interior developed in the late 18th century. The HBC was quite concerned that its employees might not be able to counter the NWC's push inland. The Orcadians were reluctant to move inland because they received no extra wage for a job that offered more toil, more misery, more hardship and the possibility of starvation.[39] As a consequence the HBC had to rely on Indian voyageurs to do the inland work until the Company could hire skilled Orcadian canoeists and canoebuilders who would be willing to do it. To speed the process along Samuel Hearne made the following proposal to the London Committee:

> All persons that may perfect themselves, so far as to be capable of steering a canoe up and down will in my opinion greatly embrace the value of their Services; if such person were to meet with some little gratuity it would not only be the means of inducing them to a longer continuance in the Service but would be a great inducement to other young fellows to make themselves qualify for that Station.[40]

The London Committee accepted the proposal and offered extra wages for skilled Orkney canoemen. It seems their skills developed to the point that they became specialists at being "Bowsmen," "Middlemen" or "Steersmen."

The lack of skilled canoemakers was another labour problem. Because of the competition with the NWC for the Western Interior, the HBC needed a greater number of large canoes which could carry as many men and goods as those of the NWC. Since the Orcadians were not skilled in the art of canoemaking, the HBC had to rely on the Indian labouring class to build canoes.[41] However, Indian labourers, according to both Hearne and Turnor, were not reliable in keeping up the production of canoes. And even those canoes that were built were often unsatisfactory because they were too small in comparison to the *canots de maître* and *canots du nord.* Turnor noted that it took ten HBC men with five canoes to carry as much as five Canadians with one canoe.[42]

Realizing the advantages of the Canadians over the HBC, Matthew Cocking, a company writer and commander at York Fort, proposed that "Vessels in Canoe form made of Fir might be contrived of a small Draught of greater burden than the Indian Canoes, and Yet of such a Weight as to be carried occasionally by those who go in them, and the Company's Servants will probably sooner learn the Management of these as they will be much steadier than Indian Canoes, which are dangerous to unskillful Persons."[43] If his proposal failed, Cocking suggested that it might be necessary to hire Canadians who could build canoes in "the Pedlers manner." The HBC's solution to its problems with the canoe was to have its own employees trained in the art of canoe building and canoe handling. In 1792 both Charles Isham, "a noted half-breed," and Robert Longmoor, who had joined the HBC as a sailor in 1771, became the first employees to "attain any degree of Proficiency in Bowing or Sterring Canoes" and "to perfect [themselves] in the Art of Canoe Building."[44]

A different type of personnel problem developed in the early 1800s when a

number of managers filed complaints about the laziness and lack of productivity of their Orkney workers. In fact, Governor Miles Macdonell's opinion of Orcadians had become quite negative:

> There cannot . . . be much improvement made in the country while the Orkneymen form the majority of labourers; they are lazy, spiritless, and ill-disposed-wedded to old habits, strongly prejudiced against any change, however beneficial . . . It is not uncommon for an Orkneyman to consume six pounds or eight pounds of meat in a day, and some have ate as much in a single meal. This gluttonous appetite, they say, is occasioned by the cold. I entirely discredit the assertion, as I think it rather to be natural to themselves. All the labour I have seen these men do would scarcely pay for the victuals they consume.[45]

As a consequence the HBC decided to recruit workers from Glasgow, Island of Coll, Ireland, Lower Canada and, on some occasions, even the jails of Norway.[46]

In a letter to William Auld, superintendent of Northern Department, Governor Miles Macdonell reported that the Orcadians working for the HBC did not like "the arrival of strangers among them" because "they have enjoyed the exclusive advantages of the Trade for a long time unmixed with any others; which might induce them to suppose that no people ought to be employed but themselves."[47] Macdonell was of the opinion that the HBC would be better off to hire workers from other parts of the United Kingdom and get rid of the Orcadians whom he claimed have become prone to insubordinate behaviour and disobedience:

> . . . the Company can get abundance of men from other parts of the United Kingdom and experience can be acquired. With regard to settling a Colony, people from other parts would I think . . . serve the purpose better than these from Orkney, particularly such of them as have already been in this Country, whose habits of insubordination, idleness, and inactivity will be very difficult to eradicate. One or two old hands is enough to poison any party — they tell the others that they ought to have this thing and that other thing, — make the whole discontented and keep themselves in the back ground. William Finlay has already occasioned a little difficulty, laying down *Factory Law* (as he explained it) and disobedience . . .[48]

It seems that Macdonell's suggestion of controlling the labour supply and eliminating the potential bargaining power of the Orcadians was soon adopted. Indeed, the establishment of Selkirk's colony and the introduction of the HBC's new employment policy started to diminish slightly the number of Orcadians and increase the number of French-Canadians, Scots, Irish, Metis and English, especially in the period between 1812 and 1821.[49]

The HBC's attempt at controlling the labour supply was made much easier after the union with the NWC in 1821. The merger meant that much of the existing manpower and the fur trade posts were both redundant and superfluous. Locations that at one time had both a NWC post and HBC post could now do with only one. It was also obvious to Governor George Simpson that if labour costs or the wage bill was reduced by 25 per cent, then profits could be increased.[50] Consequently 250 workers were laid off; the first being the older ones with larger families and "the leading turbulent characters," who had carried out various protests and strikes against the companies. Simpson was criticized for being too zealous in dismissing family men and retaining only those who were in debt to the company. It was pointed out to Simpson that the Company could not operate with "inadequate personnel."[51] Simpson, however, dismissed the warning claiming that he could always get new recruits when needed and

explained the HBC's new hiring philosophy:

> The relative qualifications and merits of Canadians and Orkneymen have been duly weighed and the preference is given to the former in so far as regards the duties and services to be performed, but in point of expense which is likewise a very important consideration the opinion is in favor of the Orkneymen. The Canadians, generally speaking are a volatile inconsiderate race of people, but active, capable of undergoing great hardships and easily managed by those who are accustomed to deal with them; the Orkneymen on the contrary are slow and do not possess the same physical strength, and spirits necessary on trying occasions . . . If brought young into the Country, however, say from 18 to 22 years of age they may be greatly improved; and upon the whole we consider it good policy to have about an equal proportion of each, which will keep up a spirit of competition and enable us to deal with them on such terms as may be considered necessary and proper. Scotch and Irish in any considerable numbers we have strong objections to being quarrelsome independent and inclined to form leagues and cabals [i.e. a secret organization and overthrow authority] which might be dangerous to the peace of the Country.[52]

The policy was to keep a balance between Orcadians and Canadians, especially those from Lower Canada in the regions of Sorel, Maskinonge and Montreal in the period between 1823 and 1849. Simpson's policy also recognized the value of the Indians and Metis in the Red River colony as an important reserve of labourers in this same period.[53]

IV

The determination of wages in the fur trade economy was based not only on a fixed contract rate or social custom, but also on the buying and selling of labour power. Workers had an understanding of the operation of the labour market and would try to increase their wages when the demand was greater than the supply. For example, John Ballenden reported in June 1799 that the workers at Gordon House wanted to negotiate new wage rates. In his report to the Company, Ballenden stated:

> the chief point I had for visiting the Settlement [Gordon House] was to settle terms with the men respecting their contracts which was the most difficult task I ever undertook — from time to time they have hitherto been only engaged for one year — now their times being all expired at once. They did not hesitate to think and tell me that they would get their own terms or leave the service. So one and all declared for home or extraordinary wages which I was determined not to comply with, finding me not to deviate — several came afterwards and entered into Contracts at what your Honours offered them . . . [54]

In the buying and selling of labour power Marx states that the "interests of capital and the interests of wage-labour are diametrically opposed to each other."[55] The workers (sellers of labour power) depend on their wages for their subsistence and are therefore forced to maximize them, while the buyers (employers) treat the wages as a cost and are perpetually trying to minimize them. The 18th century economic philosopher Adam Smith had the same conclusion:

> the common wages of labour, depends every where upon the contract usually made between those two parties, whose interests are by no means the same. The workmen desire to get as much, the masters to give as little as possible. The former are disposed to combine in order to raise, the latter in order to lower the wage of labour.[56]

In *A Sketch of the British Fur Trade,* the Earl of Selkirk pointed out that the NWC was able to maintain a monopoly and earn profits by the wage policy

it administered. This policy involved the payment of wages in "Grand Portage currency" or "North-West currency," which meant that a dollar in Montreal was only worth 50 cents in Grand Portage, and that goods transported from Montreal to Grand Portage were sold at double the price.[57] The company also encouraged its employees to drink because the profits on rum reduced wages in proportion. To support his argument, Selkirk referred to a description made by Count Paolo Andreani, who had travelled in the Upper Country in 1791.

> It is . . . considered as an essential point of duty in the master of a trading post, to take care that the men . . . shall have as little as possible of their wages to receive in cash at the end of the year . . . Whenever any of their servants begin to indulge in habits of expense, credit is allowed him with unbound facility, till he is deeply involved in debt to the Company. When this has been accomplished he is in complete bondage; and no alternative is left him but absolute submission to his employers, or a gaol. He must therefore submit to every imposition, which his superiors may think fit to practice upon him.[58]

The worker, as a result of this practice, was always in debt to the company and in "a degree of poverty seldom to be met with in other parts of America . . ."[59] While visiting Canada in 1797 Francois Alexandre Frederic la Rochefoucault Liancourt, a French nobleman and philanthropist interested in the abolition of slavery, had come to a similar conclusion about the NWC's wage policy and truck payments:

> As the men employed in this trade are paid in merchandize which the Company sells with an enormous profit, it is obvious at how cheap a rate these people are paid. They purchase of the company every article they want; it keeps with them an open account, and as they all winter in the interior of the country and beyond Lake Winnipeg, they pay as a consequence excessively dear for the blankets and the cloths which they bring with them for their wives. These servants of the Company are in general extravagant, given to drinking . . . and these are exactly the people whom the Company wants. The speculation on the excesses of these people is carried so far, that if one of them happened to lead a regular sober life, he is burdened with the most laborious work, until by continual ill-treatment he is driven to drunkenness and debauchery, which vices cause the rum, blankets and trinkets to be sold to greater advantage. In 1791, nine hundred of these menial servants owed the Company more than the amount of ten or fifteen years pay.[60]

This policy stayed in effect until the merger with the HBC in 1821.

The HBC did not have a so-called special currency but did have what Rich calls "the Canadian System" and describes it as "vicious and extravagant."[61] In essence the system was based on the London Committee's instructions to reduce all wages as much as possible, similar to what was being practised by employers in the British Iles. One way to prevent wage increases was to charge high prices for company goods, while commissioned officers paid only 33½%.[62] This policy seemed effective; for example, the wage bill for the Northern Department in 1825-26 was cut by approximately £5000. Another way of carrying out the "Canadian system" was merely to cut wages and post a new scale, despite protests from the servants. On one occasion in August 1822 James Bird, acting on behalf of the clerks, wrote a letter to Governor Simpson protesting the cut in their wages. Simpson's response was to dismiss their so-called "trifling grievances" because they did not "have a right to expect much relief." Simpson also warned the London Committee that "if you once begin to give way there will be no end to their demands and some of those useless old people will never think of

withdrawing from the concern but keep more enterprizing young men in the background."[63]

The "Canadian system," however, did not always work to the advantage of the HBC. Changes in labour market conditions and the bargaining strategies of HBC employees, as Simpson notes in his *Athabasca Journal,* contributed to a movement in (exorbitant) wages. [64] Simpson's reference to exorbitant wages was made in response to the Company being forced to pay higher wages than those in the British Isles in order to attract workers. For instance, prior to 1800 labourers, bowsmen and canoemen from the Orkney Islands received wages from £6 to £12 per annum plus room, board, and a basic set of clothing, which was 2 to 3 times greater than what they would have received as labourers on Orkney farms.[65] Skilled labourers or tradesmen, on the other hand, usually received a wage which ranged from £20 to £40, depending upon the craft and the market demand. For example, Nicholas Spence from Stromness, Orkney Islands was hired in 1793 as a boatbuilder at the rate of £25 per year on a three year contract. On the renewal of his contract in 1796 his wage was increased to £36 per year because of the shortage of skilled boatbuilders.[66] And when Indians and Metis were in great demand as hunters, they could earn as much as £30 per year, which was the equivalent of some skilled labour rates.[67] The wages of clerks ranged between £75 and £100 during the early 19th century.[68] And by the 1840s the Council minutes of the Northern Department were listing wages as follows:

> the following Servants be engaged for the Northern Department on 5 years Contracts Viz
> From Europe
> 2 Blacksmiths @ from £25 to £30 per an.
> 2 Coopers (Fishcurers) @ from £25 to £30 per an.
> 3 Masons @ from £25 to £30 per an.
> 2 Joiners @ from £25 to £30 per an.
> 6 Sloopers @ £20.
> 30 Labourers @ £16.
> 45
> From Canada 3 years Contracts
> 50 Voyageurs @ prix du Poste or £17 per an.[69]

In comparison to the wage rates paid in the Orkney Islands, the above listed HBC's wages were at least £5 to £10 greater. In fact, the higher wage rates made it possible for some tradesmen to save enough money in order to return home and set up their own shop or farm.[70] But before these tradesmen could return home they were often required to provide instruction in the HBC's apprenticeship program. Chief Factors and Chief Traders were authorized "to engage strong healthy half-breed lads not under 14 years of age as apprentices to be employed with those tradesmen with the purpose of acquiring of their business on a term not less than seven years . . ." The wages were £8 per annum for the first two years, £10 for the next two years, £12 for the following two and £15 for the last year.[71] The apprenticeship system was designed to get skilled work done at a cheap price.

V

The adversarial labour relations system in the Northwest fur trade economy created a significant number of disputes. These disputes were part of what both Marx and Adam Smith would call the continuous struggle between capital

and labour. The noted French economic historian Paul Mantoux argued that "the disputes between capital and labour afford the best possible illustration of the economic evolution prior to the coming of the factory system."[72] Many British Marxist historians in particular E. P. Thompson have also examined this ongoing relationship and have referred to it as class-struggle.

> That we choose to continue to employ the heuristic category of class (despite this ever-present difficulty) arises not from its perfection as a concept but from the fact that no alternative category is available to analyse a manifest and universal historical process. Thus we cannot (in the English language) talk of "estate-struggle" or "order-struggle," whereas "class-struggle" had been employed, not without difficulty but with signal success, by historians of ancient, feudal and early modern societies . . .[73]

Thompson further argues that far too little attention has been placed on the concept of class struggle. As he explains it

> . . . people find themselves in a society structured in determined ways (crucially, but not exclusively, in productive relations), they experience exploitation (or the need to maintain power over those whom they exploit), they identify points of antagonistic interest, they commence to struggle around these issues and in the process of struggling they discover themselves as classes, they come to know this discovery as class-consciousness.[74]

In a series of articles on Metis history in *New Breed,* Ron Bourgeault points out that it was in "the late 1700s that class formations within the economy of the fur trade became distinct."[75] The class formations, according to Bourgeault, led to class struggle between the fur trade companies and the Indian and European labouring class. Although the concept of class struggle in the Canadian fur trade company is subject to debate, it still may be used in the context of what E. P. Thompson has described as "fragments of proto-conflict." This proto-conflict marked a transition period in which the fur trade labour disputes were being carried out in both the cultural tradition of plebian struggles and the new class relations created by capitalism. One Canadian working class historian has come to the conclusion that

> These eighteenth-century disputes were but the opening skirmishes in a class war that would grow in both extent and intensity. In the years ahead workers would gather their forces for organized battle against an enemy grown more vicious in defense of their increase of wealth and power . . .[76]

The labour disputes focused on two major issues which were also common in European society: one involved the lack of adequate provisions, and the second involved insufficient wages.[77] Between 1767 and 1769 Andrew Graham, an employee of the Hudson Bay Company, observed a number of disturbances caused when the company failed "to keep up a stock of cheese, beef, pork or any other . . . commodities . . ."[78] Samuel Hearne noted in his Journal of 8 February 1775 that "the very scanty allowance of Provisions" has caused "many grumblings among some of the men . . ."[79] In a letter to Joseph Colen, resident at York Factory, dated 10 July 1798 William Tomison, Inland Master, describes the dangerous grumblings that his men had about the lack of adequate provisions in their trip from Gordon House to Trout River. He believed that unless a "larger stock of each article" was served to each worker, it "would create animosities disention among the people."[80] And a year later Tomison was still experiencing difficulties with his men when they discovered that he had tried to cut their provisions and brandy by one-half.

A series of these disputes broke out in the Red River region in the 1812-14 period. In most cases the workers carried out short work stoppage protests; they immediately stopped working when provisions were inadequate or when treatment from their overseer was too harsh. Both on 14 September and 6 November 1812 Miles Macdonell reported in his Journal that his "men refused to work under Mr. O. K." because of "bad advise." It seems that their problem was solved, for they "resumed work" the next day and "appeared satisfied."[81] On 11 December 1812 the workers walked off the job protesting the lack of provisions and demanding that more be given. Macdonell refused to give them any. Two days later their hunger forced them to send "one of their number to apologise ... and promise never to quit work again without orders."[82] The promise was shortlived for on 14 January 1813 another incident broke out in which three labourers refused to obey their overseer. Macdonell found them guilty of insubordinate behaviour and fined them £2 each.[83] Another similar incident occurred on 1 February 1813 when the men did not work because of the lack of provisions.[84] Approximately one year later in April 1814 Fort Daer was the site of a protest lead by James Toomy and Mr. Delorme, who used "inflamatory language" in their demand "for an augmentation [of] their daily rations." They held out a week before capitulating; Toomy and Delorme were dismissed and the others were reprimanded with a warning about their "future behaviour."[85] The warning had little impact because on 8 June 1814 fifteen labourers once again struck for more provisions. Two days later they returned to work after "paying a fine of 5 [shillings] per day while they were off."[86] And as a final example, in the summer of 1836 we find "a state of mutiny," as Thomas Simpson refers to it, breaking out in Red River. In a letter to James Hargrave, Simpson demanded that the "mutineers" never "be employed by the Company again."[87] Such discontent and protests continued throughout the period under study and became most acute when the HBC could not provide enough provisions to keep body and soul together.

It was the wage issue which generated the most discontent and heightened the conflict between the fur trade companies and their workers. Andrew Graham observed that much of the "grumblings and discontents" among the labourers, especially at York Fort, was caused by low wages. The labourers would show their unhappiness by getting drunk and then becoming "so haughty and impudent that they will dispute an officer's orders to do any duty but what they term their own business."[88] And another way to show their discontent was to strike.

A number of strikes broke out between 1760 and 1849. The first major one to involve the HBC was the great seamen's strike of 1768 on the Thames. The seamen had gone on strike because of a reduction in their wages. The HBC seamen had notified the Company that its three ships would be prevented from sailing until it agreed to raise their wages to 40s per month. Because of the critical shipping season, the Company agreed to the demand and the ships were allowed to sail.[89] Although combinations were illegal, workers did attempt to form combinations in order to raise wages by means of a strike if necessary.[90] For example, in July 1777 the Orkney labourers at Cumberland House, under the leadership of James Batt and William Taylor, formed "a kind of Combination" and struck for a wage of £15 per year, which was approximately £9 above the existing rate. Humphry Martin, the Factor, retaliated by threatening the labourers with a forfeit of all of their wages if they did not return to work.[91]

Even though the initial strike was defeated, E. E. Rich points out that the Company later responded to the labourers' wage problems by setting up a system of incentive-payments for those who made inland voyages.

Meanwhile the NWC also had its share of labour disputes. A number of them broke out in 1789 on the issue of insufficient wages. On 10 July 1794 the French-Canadian voyageurs at St. Helen formed a combination and struck against the Company's attempts to reduce wages. The magistrates were called in to punish the leaders by having them pilloried. The voyageurs, however, showed their defiance of the law by freeing their leaders and escaping. A month later on 3 August 1794 the voyageurs at Lac La Pluie formed a combination and went on strike for higher wages. Unfortunately, they lost both the strike and their jobs. And in March 1814 a group of voyageurs carried out a protest by going to Montreal to prosecute the NWC for failing to pay their full wages. They were unsuccessful in their case and were subsequently dismissed.[92]

Another major strike broke out again at Cumberland House on 1 August 1799 when canoemen formed a combination and refused to comply with orders to go to Beaver River until they received "additional wages." James Bird warned them that their strike was a "flagrant breach of contract" and they would be punished for it. The workers disregarded the warning and continued the strike. Tomison then wrote a letter to the Governor requesting that an example be made of these men which would "ensure obedience from all the rest on this establishment for the future: for should these escape with impunity the little subordination that has been (but very lately) ... established will be entirely subverted, and it will consequently be utterly impossible to carry on your Honours' concerns in this part with any degree of vigour."[93] Management, in other words, did not view the strike as a mere economic dispute, but rather as a test of power over the control of work. Indeed James Bird argued that it was a challenge to management authority:

> which of the two is esteemed the more probable method of advancing the interest of our Honourable Employers: whether to carry into execution a plan suggested by an experienced and vigilant officer undertaken by one not less active and enterprising aided by the prompt obedience of his men; or whether it be an implicit submission to the will of the servants and supinely to adopt or relinquish such schemes as they may think proper to approve or reject. Now will all know whether for the future the servant is to comply with the orders of his master to act under the immediate direction and control of his servant.[94]

The strike finally came to an end on 30 August 1799 when Joseph Howse notified the strikers that "they were no longer on duty or considered as the company's servants ..." The strikers responded by abandoning the strike and then deciding to join the NWC.

Another example of a strike that actually became a challenge to management authority occurred at Nelson Encampment in February 1812. Governor Miles Macdonell reported that fourteen men under the leadership of William Finlay formed a combination "against the authority of the officers set over them."[95] It seems that the labourers were supporting Finlay who had "refused to conform ... to regulations ... established for the health of the people" and to orders "to resume work." Macdonell had Finlay brought before a magistrate and charged with a number of misdemeanours. Finlay was found guilty and sentenced to "confinement as a refractory servant" and jailed in a small hut. The combination came to Finlay's rescue by burning the hut to the ground and

"triumphantly shouting in the most audacious manner . . ." Macdonell was unable to get them to return to work, despite threats of having them tried for mutiny. The strikers carried out a more defiant act when they armed and fortified themselves in a nearby house. In retaliation, wrote Macdonell,

> we . . . armed ourselves and went down with some of the Gentlemen to prevent insult being offered to the three officers who had first gone. These we met returning without having got any of the arms, and suffered gross abuse with threats of violence. We proceeded onto the Insurgent's authority to deliver up their arms immediately . . . and were further informed of the serious consequences of refusal, that they must be treated as people in open hostility who set all order at defiance; they not withstanding remained inflexible.[96]

The Company finally decided to starve them into submission. By June 1812 the strikers were unable to carry on any longer and surrendered. They were sent to Montreal for trial. They were found guilty and dismissed from service.

These disputes and strikes, then, were a clear expression of the disharmony and class tensions in the fur trade economy. Labourers, servants and voyageurs were quite prepared to challenge the authority and power of the Company in order to achieve their demands.

VI

In conclusion, this paper has attempted to examine the unique capital-wage-labour relationship in the fur trade economy between 1760 and 1849. It has tried to argue that even though this period has been considered by a number of historians as pre-industrial Canada, the fur trade workers, both Indian and European, were starting to operate under a capitalist labour relations system. Many economic and social historians would claim that this labour relations system was paternalistic or patriarchal. But "no thoughtful historian," writes E. P. Thompson, "should characterize a whole system as paternalistic or patriarchal."[97] Evidence has been provided to show that both fur trade companies and their workers had an astute understanding of the operation of the labour market, especially as it applied to the buying and selling of labour power. And it was this particular relationship which resulted in class tensions as expressed by the various disputes and strikes. More research, however, is still needed on labour-capital relations and the actual number of disputes in the fur trade economy in order to get a better understanding of this period in working class history.

Acknowledgement

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FOOTNOTES

[1] These examples are: Philip Goldring, "Labour Records of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1821-1870," *Archivaria,* 11 (Winter 1980-81), 53-86; John Nicks, "Orkneymen in the HBC, 1780-1821" and C. M. Judd, " 'Mixed Bands of Many Nations:' 1821-70" in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference,* edited by C. M. Judd and A. J. Ray (Toronto, 1980) and Allan Greer, "Wage Labour and the Transition to Capitalism: A Critique of Pentland," *Labour/Le Travail,* 15 (Spring 1985), 7-22.

[2] Allan Greer, "Wage Labour and the Transition to Capitalism . . .," 8-10.

[3] For a more detailed explanation see Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (New York, 1973), 17-32.

[4] George Heriot, *Travels through the Canadas, containing a description of the picturesque scenery on some of the Rivers and Lakes; with an Account of the Productions, Commerce and Inhabitants of those Provinces* (Rutland, Vermont, 1971) (reprint), 208-233, and H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto, 1977), Section II.

[5] James E. Fitzgerald, *An Examination of the Charter and Proceedings of the Hudson's Bay Company* (London, 1849), 135-136.

[6] Stanley Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada: Beginnings to 1815* (Toronto, 1975), 244.

[7] For a more detailed account of the returns on the capital of the company, the value of shares and rate of profit see H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada,* 258-259.

[8] Stanley Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada,* 250.

[9] For a more detailed discussion see chapter 2 in H. C. Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860* (Toronto, 1981).

[10] Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980* (Toronto, 1983), 14, 19.

[11] Canada. House of Commons. Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence . . . 1857. Evidence of E. Ellice, p. 325.

[12] Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver, 1980), 30.

[13] R. M. Martin, *The Hudson's Bay Territories and Vancouver's Island with an Exposition of the Chartered Rights, Conduct and Policy of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Corporation* (London, 1849), 67.

[14] B. Willson, *The Great Company, being a history of the Hon. Company of Merchant-Adventurers, trading into Hudson's Bay* (Toronto, 1899), 434.

[15] R. M. Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay; or Every-Day Life in the Wilds of North America, during six years' residence in the Territories of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company* (Edinburgh, 1848), 32.

[16] The Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, 1830 to 1843, being the Transaction and Enactment of the Rulers of the Country during that period . . . 3 July 1830, 656.

[17] Morton MSS C505/1/2.3 Selkirk's Papers. Miles Macdonell's Journal, April 22, 1813 to Feb. 11, 1815, p. 17.

[18] E. E. Rich, *The History of the Hudson's Bay Company. Vol. II: 1763-1870,* 103.

[19] Edward Umfreville, *The Present State of Hudson's Bay containing a Full Description of that Settlement, and the Adjacent Country; and Likewise of the Fur Trade with hints for its Improvement* (Toronto, 1954), 58.

[20] A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* (Toronto, 1973), 429.

[21] R. M. Martin, *The Hudson's Bay Territories . . .*, 73.

[22] H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada,* 155.

[23] Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the HBC . . . 1857, 61.

[24] J. Fitzgerald, *An Examination of the Charter and Proceedings of the HBC,* 139.

[25] Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal through the continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in 1789 and 1793 . . . Vol. I* (Toronto, 1911), x1viii.

[26] Minutes of the deliberations and transactions of the North West Company assembled at Fort William at their regular meetings in . . . July 1811 in *Documents Relating to the North West Company,* edited by W. S. Wallace (Toronto, 1934), 275.

[27] Morton MSS C505/1/2.2 Selkirk Papers. Miles Macdonell's Journal Sept. 6, 1812 to April 22, 1813, p. 270; Morton MSS C510/1/2 Journal of Robert Campbell, 1808-1851, pp. 11-12 discusses the division of labour at the HBC experiment farm at Red River in 1831; and David Thompson, *Travels in Western North America, 1784-1812,* edited by V. Hopwood (Toronto, 1971), 73.

[28] See E. E. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857,* H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada,* and A. J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto, 1974).

[29] See Arthur J. Ray and D. Freeman, *'Give Us Good Measure:' An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Company Before 1763* (Toronto, 1978), 5, and A. J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade.*

[30] Ron Bourgeault, "Metis History," *New Breed, 13,* 4, (April, 1982), 8.

[31] W. Sheppe, ed., *First Man West: Alexander Mackenzie's Journal of His Voyage to the Pacific Coast of Canada in 1793* (Montreal, 1962), 18-19.

[32] The Earl of Selkirk, *A Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America; with Observations relative to the North West Company of Montreal* (London, 1816), 33 and George Heriot, *Travels through the Canadas,* 242.

[33] Sylvia Van Kirk, "Fur Trade Social History: Some Recent Trends," in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference,* edited by Carol M. Judd and A. J. Ray (Toronto, 1980), 163.

[34] G. F. K. Davies, ed., *Letters from Hudson Bay 1703-40* (London, 1965), 123.

[35] *Ibid.,* 116.

[36] E. Umfreville, *The Present State of Hudson's Bay . . .*, 109.

[37] John Nicks, "Orkneymen in the HBC 1780-1821," in *Old Trails and New Directions . . .*, 122.

[38] For a discussion about the making of the Scottish working class in the period 1770 to 1820 see James D. Young, *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (London, 1979), 41-47.

[39] See R. Glover, "The Difficulties of the Hudson's Bay Company's Penetration of the West," *Canadian Historical Review* (hereafter *CHR*), XXIX, 3, (Sept., 1948), 245 and "North Western Explorations," *Report on Canadian Archives 1890,* 51.

[40] *Ibid.,* 191-192.

[41] Norman Zlotkin and Donald R. Colborne point out in "Internal Canadian Imperialism and the Native People," *Imperialism, Nationalism and Canada: from the Marxist Institute of Toronto,* edited by Craig Heron (Toronto, 1977), 163, that as the Indians were being replaced as middle men in the fur trade, they were being turned into proletarians. Also see Ron Bourgeault, "The Indians, the Metis and the Fur Trade: Class, Sexism and Racism in the Transition from Communism to Capitalism," *Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review,* 12, (Fall, 1983), 45-86.
[42] Turnor estimated that in 1779 the HBC lost 18,000 Made Beaver on the Saskatchewan alone because of the lack of adequate canoes. *Hearne and Turnor Journals,* 154.
[43] Cocking's account of his proceedings June 27, 1776 in *ibid.,* 47.
[44] HBCA. A. 11/116, fos. 6d., 13d. Journal of George Sutherland 1796-1797 in *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence 1795-1802,* edited by Alice M. Johnson (London, 1967).
[45] Cited in B. Willson, *The Great Company,* 381.
[46] R. Glover points out that Norwegian convicts were hired to build Norway House; see "The Difficulties of the Hudson's Bay Company's Penetration of the West," *CHR,* 253.
[47] National Archives of Canada (NAC). *Report on Canadian Archives 1886* (Ottawa, 1887). Miles Macdonell to William Auld, 25 Dec. 1811, p. cc.
[48] *Ibid.,* cci.
[49] Also see Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Co. 1857. Evidence of Sir. G. Simpson, p. 61; and Eric Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay. Some Observations on the State of the Canadian Northwest in 1811* (Toronto, 1973), 18-19.
[50] HBCA. D4/1, 20; D4/85, 3, Simpson's Official Reports, 1822 in C. M. Judd, " 'Mixt Bands of Many Nations' . . .," 130.
[51] John Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company,* 21.
[52] HBCA. D4/86, 14f-14 cited in C. M. Judd, " 'Mixt Bands of Many Nations' . . .," 130-31.
[53] A. J. Ray, *Indians In The Fur Trade,* 218-219.
[54] Journal of William Tomison 1798-1799 in *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence 1795-1802,* 173.
[55] K. Marx, *Wage-Labour and Capital* (New York, 1977), 39.
[56] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York, 1937), 66.
[57] W. S. Wallace, ed., *Documents Relating to the North West Company,* 272.
[58] Earl of Selkirk, *A Sketch of the British fur trade in North America, with observations relative to the North-West Company of Montreal* (London, 1816), 40-41.
[59] *Ibid.,* 37.
[60] Francois A. F., duc de La Rochefoucault-Liancourt, *Travels through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada* . . . translated by H. Newman (London, 1799), 330-331 cited in A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West,* 353.
[61] E. E. Rich, *The History of the HBC Vol. II,* 482.
[62] Appendix No. 8 George Gladman, Chief Trader, Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company . . . 1857, 393.
[63] G. Simpson to A. Colvile 16 Aug. 1822 in *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal,* edited by F. Merk (Cambridge, 1931), 186.
[64] *Journal of Occurences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report,* edited by E. E. Rich (Toronto, 1938), 2.
[65] Numerous examples of labourers hired at between £6 and £10 are contained in *Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay 1767-91,* 247; Journal of William Tomison 1795-96 in *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence 1795-1802,* 34-35, 42, 167; E. E. Rich, *The History of the HBC, Vol. II,* 268; E. E. Rich, ed., *Cumberland House Journals and Inland Journal 1775-82* (London, 1951), 19.
[66] HBCA. A. 30/7, fos. 27, 8/; A. 32/8, fo. 49 Journal of George Sutherland, 71.
[67] Morton MSS C505/1/2.2 Selkirk Papers. (16746-16818). Miles Macdonell's Journal Sept. 6, 1812 to April 22, 1813, 255.
[68] Minutes of the Council Northern Dept. 29 June 1831, 677-678.
[69] Minutes of the Council of the Northern Dept. of Rupert's Land, 1830 to 1843, 790.
[70] John Nicks, "Orkneymen in the HBC . . .," 119.
[71] Minutes of the Council Northern Dept. 3 July 1830, 660-661.
[72] P. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1970), 74.
[73] E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History, 3,* 2, (May, 1978), 149.
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] Ron Bourgeault, "Metis History," *New Breed, 13,* 8, (Sept., 1982), 4. Also see L. Bergeron, *The History of Quebec: A Patriote's Handbook* (Toronto, 1971), 12-38 for an interesting discussion of the chain of exploitation in the fur trade and the pyramid class structures in Canadian society during this period. And John Lambert defines the different classes of society in *Travels through Lower Canada, and the United States of North America in the Years 1806, 1807 and 1808* Vol. I (London, 1810), 277-278.
[76] Jack Scott, *Sweat and Struggle: Working Class Struggles in Canada. Vol. I: 1789-1899* (Vancouver, 1974), 18.
[77] For an excellent account of the European example see E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1968); John Rule, *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England 1750-1850* (London, 1986) and George Rude, *The Crowd in History, 1730-1848* (New York, 1964).
[78] G. Williams, ed., *Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay 1767-91* (London, 1969), 306.
[79] *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor,* 136-137.

[80] W. Tomison to J. Colen, 10 July 1798 in *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence 1795-1802,* 177.
[81] Morton MSS C505/1/2.2 Selkirk Papers. Miles Macdonell's Journal Sept. 14, 1812, p. 253 and Nov. 6, 1812, p. 271.
[82] *Ibid.,* Dec. 11-13, 1812, 280.
[83] *Ibid.,* Jan. 16, 1813, 287-288.
[84] *Ibid.,* Feb. 1, 1813, 291.
[85] Morton MSS C505/1/2.3 Selkirk Papers. Pp. 16819-16957. Miles Macdonell's Journal April 22, 1813 to Feb. 11, 1815, pp. 73-75.
[86] *Ibid.,* June 8-10, 1914, 86-87.
[87] G. P. de T. Glazebrook, ed., *The Hargrave Correspondence 1821-1843* (Toronto, 1938), 241-242.
[88] *Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay 1767-91,* 306.
[89] For an account of the strike see B. Willson, *The Great Company,* 295-297.
[90] Adam Smith notes that even though there were laws prohibiting the formation of trade unions, workers still combined to either increase wages or prevent a reduction, *The Wealth of Nations,* 66-67. And Marx and Engels wrote that "the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations . . . in order to keep up the rate of wages . . .," *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Moscow, 1975), 55.
[91] HBCA. A. 11/116, fo. 22, H. Marten to the Governor and Committee, Aug. 25, 1777 in *Cumberland House Journals and Inland Journal 1775-82,* edited by E. E. Rich (London, 1951), 142-143.
[92] For an account of these disputes see C. Lipton, *The Trade Union Movement of Canada 1827-1959* (Montreal, 1966), 1; H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada,* 241-242; A. S. Morton, *A. History of the Canadian West,* 348-350; and E. Coues, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest* (New York, 1897), 860-861.
[93] Journal of James Bird in *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence 1795-1802,* 196-197.
[94] *Ibid.,* 199.
[95] NAC, *Report on Canadian Archives 1886,* M. Macdonell to William H. Cook, 14 Feb. 1812, ccvi.
[96] *Ibid.,* M. Macdonell and William Hillier to William Auld, 15 May 1812, ccxiii.
[97] E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?", 137.

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A CASE STUDY IN URBAN REFORM: REGINA BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

By Girard Hengen

Regina — a progressive city in a progressive province has been the general conclusion. Public spirited citizens, municipally-owned public utilities, well-paved and well-kept streets, good buildings — such assets cannot but arrest the attention of even the casual observer. More intimate acquaintance shows that these are fair expressions of the civic spirit.
The other side — for there is another side — the narrow lots, the park corner granted to a railway corporation and the neglected East End are indications that civic regeneration is not yet complete.[1]

Such was Methodist minister J.S. Woodworth's description of Regina society in his September 1913 social survey of the city. He referred to contradictions found within this society, for despite amenities which contributed to the city's attractiveness, certain areas were neglected and unsanitary. This divergence developed in the almost two decades preceding 1914, when Regina grew into one of the major urban centres on the prairies. The economic prosperity of these years fostered the rapid expansion of the west; the prospects for riches seemed abundant for entrepreneurs who were able to exploit opportunities.

During this era of unstinted growth, economic inequalities were subordinated to booster visions of grandeur. Boom-enriched businessmen and speculators were engaged in a variety of entrepreneurial activities, but inequalities existed side-by-side with material evidence of progress. Immigrants and manual laborers who flocked to the cities lived in cramped, unsanitary quarters that were often not connected to basic public utilities. Conditions like this provoked a response from those dedicated to reforming their environment. Woodsworth wrote that "open-handed and open-hearted" citizens could not sit idly by while undesirable effects of urban growth threatened the society they wanted to create.[2] But cities could be saved; reformers "were inspired by the possibilities of improvement, by a belief in their ability to mold the urban environment and to create a humane, rational society."[3]

There were two general types of urban reformers in pre-World War I Regina. Some individuals, in most cases affiliated with church groups, sponsored social welfare and housing reforms, measures which provided some assistance to the city's destitute. Other individuals, usually businessmen and professionals under the umbrella of the Board of Trade, advanced municipal ownership of utilities, local government reform and city planning. Historian Paul Rutherford argued that as reformers became cognizant of the many problems that accompanied urban growth, they set out to make their cities moral, healthy and more

economically equitable. Thus, "urban reform was less a single creed and more a common approach to a wide variety of urban problems."[4] When "revisiting" Rutherford's reformers, historian John Weaver discovered incongruities between rhetoric and practise, for reformers advanced a reform program only when they benefitted from change. Weaver concluded that an element of self-interest lay behind reformist zeal, and thus, "an analysis of urban reform ... must go beyond the declarations of key reform figures, for the printed and spoken record does not wholly convey the meaning and significance of the reform movement."[5] The Regina experience suggests that elements of each assessment were prevalent during the reform era. Those who proposed social welfare and housing reforms sincerely tried to improve the conditions of others, whereas those who advanced a program of municipal ownership of utilities, local government reform and city planning were motivated by self-interest.

Social welfare reformers were appalled at slum conditions existing in their cities, for slums were regarded as breeding grounds for immorality, vice and disease. In western Canada, public resources were channeled toward the encouragement of business development, leaving the poor without steady employment, adequate housing and decent medical care. The realities of life were not pleasant in Regina's "East End," a district comprised mainly of immigrants and manual laborers. Almost one-half of the East End families interviewed for Woodsworth's social survey were tenants living in crowded quarters. Although many rented houses were "owned by well-known companies and prominent citizens," sixty per cent were so poorly constructed that sewer and water main connections could not be made. Most residents were new to Canada, and most wage earners were unemployed every winter. Often spouses had to work, supplementing their husbands' incomes at the expense of "the neglect of home and children."[6] Earl Drake wrote that "the rapid influx of immigrants, real estate speculation, high rents, and the lack of any organized housing scheme" were underlying causes of unsanitary conditions.[7]

Reformers tried to ameliorate conditions in the East End but often the results were only palliatives. Woodsworth believed the most pressing problem of the district, one that was not fully grasped, was housing. He wrote that the East End was "a district of small houses — many of them were 'shacks.' Until recently there have not been water or sewer connections and the roads and lanes have been in wretched conditions."[8] Some thought large-scale remedial housing projects were needed, but low-rental projects were too costly either for the city to provide as a public service or for private developers to tackle and still make a profit. More plausible reforms like developing building codes, controlling tenement housing and applying minimum standards of health and hygiene were put forward. A building code was enacted in 1913, but it did not increase the supply of inexpensive housing, and thus the problem was "left to the slow workings of the law of supply and demand."[9]

Reformers may not have responded adequately to Regina's housing crisis, but considering the poverty of the East End there was really little more they could have done. Weaver contends that they were spurred on by a concern for their own health and property values,[10] but this was only partially the case in Regina. Unlike civic boosters to whom Weaver is actually referring, altruists in Regina were not impelled by their pecuniary self-interests. It was not their fault that city councillors preferred to allocate large sums to undeveloped suburbs

while the East End did without low-cost housing or basic public utilities. Street railway lines were constructed "into areas well past the limits of heavy settlement where little and often no housing existed."[11] The speculator's real estate casino had shifted from downtown to the suburbs, and the provision of services which inflated land values in the suburbs was more highly regarded. Public spending served the self-interest of the commercial and professional elite, but another quite different type of reformer took practical steps to do something for East End residents.

According to J. S. Woodsworth, concerned citizens "cannot afford not to study the social significance of the rapid growth of industrialism, the vast influx of immigrants, rural depopulation, and the new mobility of labor and of industry that have come upon us."[12] He recommended establishing a social centre or settlement house in the East End to function like his All People's Mission in north Winnipeg. Church groups seized the initiative, for the social survey was discussed at meetings of the Regina Ministerial Association and the Methodist Metropolitan Brotherhood. The City Medical Health Officer proposed publishing a public health bulletin in several languages and distributing it throughout the district so that residents could be educated in sanitary and health matters. He also suggested converting an East End school into a settlement house.[13] Religious authorities concurred; the need, according to Reverend R. J. McDonald, pastor of Carmichael Presbyterian Church, was for experienced social workers to practise settlement work among the people:

> Neighborliness that helps those to whom it is extended must include a vital personal contact. Charity contributions, while affording temporary relief, do not meet the deeper need in the way of mental enlightenment and moral uplift. He who would really help his neighbor must get close to him and his needs.[14]

A settlement house was eventually established in 1916, its purpose being to help immigrants adjust to their new Canadian environment.

While Woodsworth's social survey did not generate a huge public response, groups and individuals often associated with various churches took the lead in providing services for Regina's poor. There is little evidence that they acted for personal gain, for their main concern was to do something about the deplorable conditions outlined in the survey. The relative silence of the business and professional community and city council in these matters indicates that social welfare reform was not one of their priorities. Rather, they confined their efforts to municipal ownership of utilities, local government reform and city planning, and the theme that emerges in these instances is that many reformers were actuated by motives of self-interest.

Many attempts to reform were indistinguishable from the booster ambitions of the local business community. Boosters desired growth to increase the wealth and prestige of both their city and themselves. In Regina, as in other centres across the west, businessmen and professionals dominated, and indeed were rarely opposed in, the decision-making processes of municipal government. Alan Artibise wrote that because local government in western Canada had no traditions to honor or established elites to cater to, it "was merely a device to be used for the benefit of the people who had managed to gain political power or influence. And in all prairie cities it was the businessman who early gained control of government and who continued throughout the period to maintain that control."[15] The role of local government was perceived to be one of

encouraging growth, investment and the entrepreneurial spirit, but as Woodsworth observed in Regina: "Real estate interests have too often exercised a predominating influence with the result that the public welfare has been sacrificed to private gain."[16] There was considerable overlap of membership between Boards of Trade and city councils, and often service on the executive of the former was a stepping-stone for election to the latter. Because the business community was such a close knit group in Regina, the Board of Trade's influence on civic politics was substantial. Businessmen and professionals often urged their friends in council to provide those public services deemed essential for any progressive community — electric light and power, sewers and waterworks, and a street railway. Municipal ownership of these utilities was regarded as a means of attracting investment through manipulation of the rate structure and as a valuable embellishment for promotional purposes. Thus, as Weaver wrote, many attempts at reform "blended all too completely with booster ambitions or arose from attempts of a local business elite to retain direction in municipal affairs."[17]

Booster ambitions figured prominently in the evolution towards municipally-owned power and waterworks systems in Regina. Because of the improved economic climate at the turn of the century, town councils were urged to attract business and industry, but this required a more extensive public utility network than that already in place. The 1902 local election was indicative of the surging movement to improve the town's utilities. Leading businessmen and professionals, wishing to avoid the factionalism which they thought had disrupted growth, urged the electorate to vote for candidates (progressive businessmen) who supported an expansive public works network.[18] Few communities had extensive power and waterworks systems, but the first that did gained a comparative advantage over other centres in the quest for rapid industrial development. Urban rivalry, especially with neighboring Moose Jaw, often prodded complacent Reginans into developing public services in the most expedient manner possible.[19]

In order to finance costly utility schemes, urban centres required an adequate capital base. Thus, centres across the west eagerly sought incorporation as cities, thereby broadening their legal power to borrow on the financial markets. Towns were able to borrow for expenditure purposes only ten per cent of the total assessment, but cities had double the borrowing capacity, or twenty per cent of the assessment. The restricted financial resources available to the town of Regina hindered utility expansion, and thus the Board of Trade lobbied for incorporation in January 1903. Council was naturally sympathetic to the Board's position as councillor H. W. Laird moved the following resolution:

> That application be made at the forthcoming session of the Legislative Assembly for a charter erecting the town of Regina into a city and providing for an increase in the borrowing powers for the purpose of installing a municipal electric light plant, and the building of a water works system for public and domestic purposes and for such other improvements as may be deemed necessary in order to maintain the standing and position of Regina as the capital of the Territories.[20]

Laird added that "to become a city ... would have a good effect in attracting settlers, for there is something in a name. Regina was now in a position that it must either progress or go back. They had either to do something or leave the

P E T I T I O N

To His Honour the Lieutenant Governor

and Members of the Legislative Assembly

of the North West Territories.

Gentlemen,--

The Petition of the Mayor and members of the Town C Council of the Town of Regina, humbly sheweth :

That along with the development which is taking place throughout the Territories generally, the population of the Town of Regina, as well as the volume of business transacted, has increased to such an extent as to render our present domestic facilities wholly inadequate to meet the growing requirements of the people,

Your Petitioners therefore pray that a Bill be introduced at the present session of the House, erecting the Town of Regina into a City, and granting to the City of Regina the necessary financial powers to instal an electric light plant and waterworks system together with all incidental powers thereto relating, and to make such other public improvements as may be necessary to meeting the growing and changed conditions.

And Your Petitioners will ever pray,

J W Smith
Mayor,
Jas. Balfour
Sec. Treas.

Petition by the Mayor J. W. Smith and the Town Council to the Lieutenant Governor to make Regina a city with financial aid, installation of electric power and water works, 1903.

Saskatchewan Archives Board R-D 1561

field; they had either to hold what they had and bid for more or quit the race altogether."[21]

The Board of Trade policy became civic policy when city status was joyously achieved on June 19, 1903. Incorporation enabled the city to construct public works which, it was thought, would attract investment and drive up property values.[22] At the ceremonies proclaiming Regina's new status, the Lieutenant-Governor was warmly "received by the Mayor and aldermen and members of the council of the board of trade."[23] This natural alliance of business and government indicated which segment of the community directed civic affairs, and in whose interest.

The Board of Trade's next item of business was to pressure council to expand both the sewer and waterworks systems and the electric power plant. In 1903, capital investment in a privately-owned power plant was needed to meet a rising consumer demand. The owner said he would expand capacity if guaranteed a twenty-year monopoly and if granted the freedom to sell his plant to the city at an arbitrated price at a time of his choosing. If unable to obtain a monopoly, he agreed to sell immediately at an arbitrated price. Because councillors could not bring themselves to give a private developer monopoly control over an essential utility, they opted for the second alternative. Waterworks development paralleled that of the power plant. The water supply could not keep pace with the demand, and in 1903 engineer John Galt was hired to design a new system. His proposal called for construction of a reservoir that would not only meet the needs of 15,000 people but would also "do much to build up and establish Regina as one of the attractive business centres in the North-West."[24]

When a bylaw was submitted to burgesses providing for municipally-owned power and waterworks systems, a campaign was launched by "progressive" businessmen to ensure its passage. They advocated municipal ownership in order to protect and expand their position in the western Canadian economy. As the editor of the *Leader* wrote: "The defeat of the bylaw will be a notice to the business world that we have not faith in our city, and instead of encouraging and inviting capital to come here it will drive it away."[25] The bylaw was not defeated though, as only four votes were cast against it. The editor of the *Leader* praised the public spirit of the citizens for giving such an overwhelming injection of confidence in the city's future: "Such a spirit is pregnant with greater possibilities for the future city than great wealth and resources, for it means civic pride, push, and perseverance, and these will win success."[26] The winning of success was important to the Board of Trade which stated that for the sake of "the public outside our City" (investors, that is), the bylaw should be passed unanimously, thus ensuring "the welfare and future progress and development of Regina."[27] The agitation for publicly-owned utilities and the concern for the "future progress" of the city were inextricably linked to the material well-being of the commercial and professional elite. It provides an example of the gap between the rhetoric and the underlying motives behind particular reform aspirations.

Another example is the street railway, which captured the imagination of boosters more than the other utilities. All cities of any substance had to have one — "A city without a tram is no city at all."[28] Not only a symbol of prestige, it provided local businessmen with yet another means of advertising their city. Some Reginans wanted a street railway system as early as 1903, during the

bylaw debate (such as it was) on public ownership of the power plant and waterworks system, but the Regina Municipal Railway only officially began operations amid much fanfare on July 28, 1911. Little progress was made until late 1909, when ominous rumors drifted eastward that Moose Jaw burgesses were poised to approve a bylaw granting a franchise to a group of Ottawa businessmen. The actions of Moose Jaw's city council prodded Regina's out of its relative slumber. Councillors from Regina decided to accept a franchise offer from a Winnipeg consortium to operate a street railway system, but unlike the Moose Jaw situation, passage of the required bylaw was in doubt.

The arguments against private ownership were many and varied. Citing examples from other centres as proof, some believed that a private company would act in its own interest and not that of the community. The Trades and Labour Council said the history of private company operations was marred by labour unrest. Also, a clause in the proposed charter which enabled the company to impose penalties in the event of obstruction of service was seen as an anti-strike weapon. The Lord's Day Alliance felt the need to keep holy the Sabbath. Because the company could initiate Sunday service without consultation, one speaker at an Alliance meeting raised the question: "Should not the people as a whole have a right to pronounce on the question of Sunday cars? He did not believe in giving these soulless corporations any more right than they had got, nor in the people relinquishing a single bit of power they now possessed."[29]

As desirable as public ownership was to many, Regina mayor R. H. Williams said, quite simply, that the city could not afford to construct, operate and maintain a street railway system. In spite of the mayor's position, opinion was decidedly against private ownership at a May 3, 1910 public meeting.[30] Prominent businessmen, supported by the *Morning Leader's* editorial page, suggested that money could be taken from a property sales account and used for street railway construction. The property sales account, intended as a source of funds for emergencies, was an accumulation of proceeds from civic property sales which were deposited in a special sinking fund. In addition, businessmen said the city could expand its borrowing powers simply by including outlying subdivisions within city limits, thus increasing the amount of property which could be assessed for borrowing purposes. Finally, they thought the city could seek, and probably obtain, approval from the provincial legislature to issue bonds as a revenue source for the utilities fund. The mayor's position was refuted; whether feasible or not, businessmen made it appear that the city could afford its own system. Three days after the public meeting, on May 6, Regina burgesses voted against granting a franchise to the Winnipeg group, and if public opinion was not already clear enough, it became obvious after a May 12 referendum decisively favored immediate construction of a street railway by the city.

Many proponents of municipal ownership were stimulated by their own private self-interests. A number of specific reasons were put forward by not entirely insincere special interest groups as to why public ownership was preferable. However, the debate must be understood within the context of the booster ambitions of the business community, for boosterism and urban rivalry were key motives in the drive for public ownership. The reform program dovetailed neatly into boosters' efforts to stimulate a healthier business climate. It also perpetuated the continued dominance of businessmen and professionals who, because they were concerned about their stake in the city's future progress, sought to

retain control of civic institutions for themselves. This will become evident when attention turns to the motives behind local government reform

Implementation of the reform program was contingent upon the support and assistance of local government. Control of this institution was vital, and in western Canada boosters who exercised control sponsored local government reforms to further consolidate power in their hands and eliminate opposition to their booster program. Many believed that problems of urban development could not adequately be dealt with by city councils composed of elected untrained aldermen. They wanted executive powers enhanced with appointed commissions and Boards of Control in order to "take city government out of the hands of parochial politicians whose loyalties were to individual wards and instill the principles of efficiency and economy in a business-like local government."[31] Reformers also campaigned for the abolition of the ward system to reduce political interference by aldermen from working class wards. Thus, behind the rhetoric in support of local government reform lay decidedly undemocratic motives.

Reformers placed much faith in the bureaucracy and the bureaucratic method — the expert knowledge of specialists could be applied in a commission form of government. Although popular representation would diminish, reformers said the whole community would benefit from a government run according to the principles of an efficient business. This attitude was very much prevalent in reform era Regina. The editor of the *Evening Province and Standard* wrote the following in early 1914:

> The city of Regina is a corporate body of no mean importance, but even small corporations would suffer if their business was as loosely conducted as Regina's has been in the past. Business science has developed greatly in the past few years, with Efficiency as the watchword. Regina, as a city where municipal affairs are less handicapped by entangling red tape than in the older cities, should be leading in applying all the best of business science to municipal government.[32]

Doubts were cast on the ability of elected aldermen to administer public utilities. For example, the superintendent of the Regina Municipal Railway suggested that "[t]here must be no interference in the affairs of the street railway by the aldermen." He wanted council to relinquish control to a commission, adding "that he is out to fight for this principle, and that he is backed by a large number of the business men of the city."[33] The "business men" in the Board of Trade lobbied for the appointment of a city commissioner in May 1910, and in 1911 and 1912 urban services were placed under boards and commissions. Decision-making powers were taken from the elected component of city council and streamlined for executive efficiency. The fact that the Board of Trade's wish became civic policy should not have surprised contemporaries, for R. H. Williams, who presided as mayor in 1910, had been president of the Board of Trade in 1909.

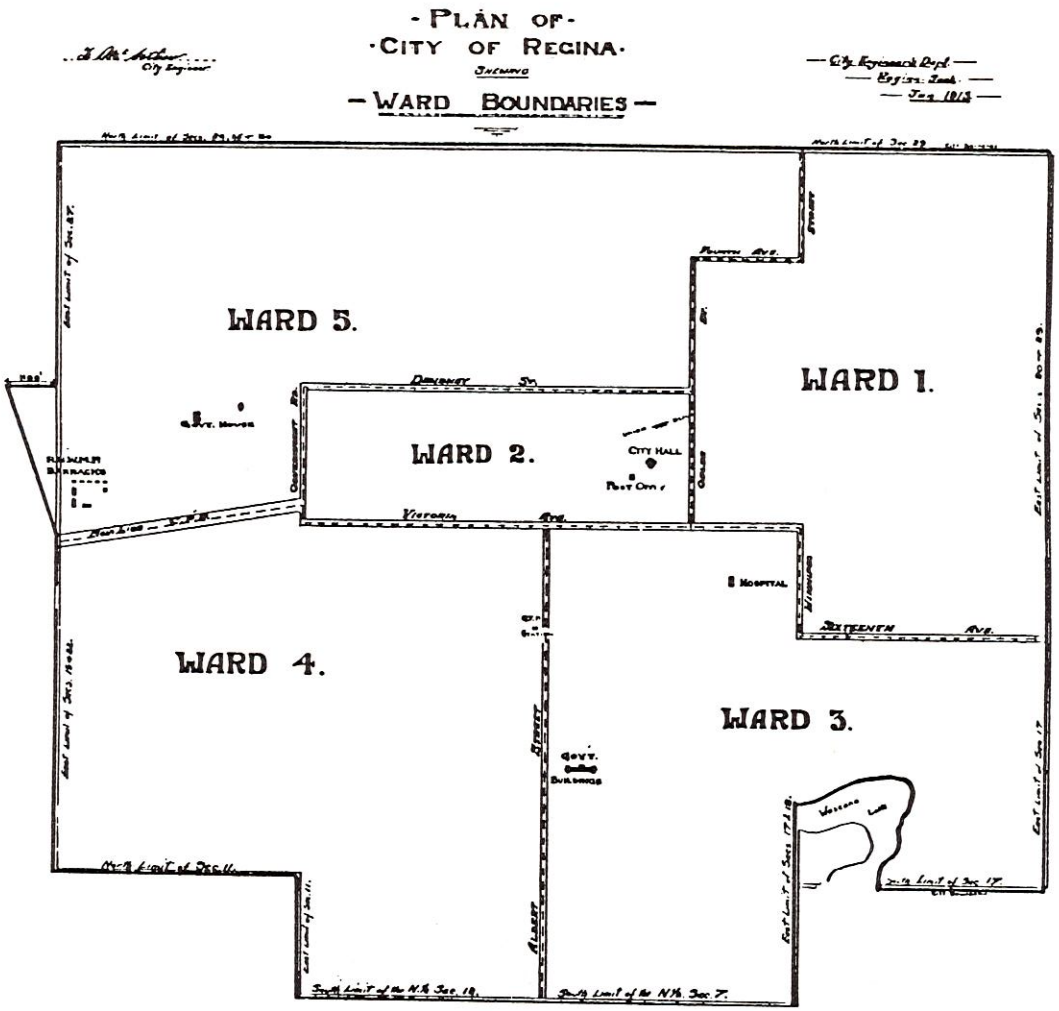
The business community also sought to minimize the influence of certain aldermen by abolishing the ward system. As James Anderson wrote: "The petty politician, the saloon keeper, the self-conscious representative of an ethnic bloc, or the nominee of organized labour was seen by the urban elite that spearheaded the drive for structural reform as the chief obstacle to civic progress."[34] Provision for the ward system was included in the new city charter of 1906, a docu-

ment drafted largely by and for Regina's business community. Businessmen and property owners hoped the ward system would strengthen their hegemony over city council, but it had the opposite effect, in fact facilitating opposition to their policies of growth. Much of the opposition came from Cornelius Rink, a bombastic alderman from the East End ward from 1911 to 1914, a model "petty politician," and a constant foil to the business and professional council majority. By 1914 the Board of Trade had had enough, and a concerted effort was made to abolish the ward system and thereby eliminate Rink from the civic stage.

The city charter submitted to the provincial legislature for approval in May 1906 provided for the commission form of government, for a new method of assessment and for the division of the city into four wards with two aldermen each. A controversial feature in the original draft of the charter was a cumulative voting arrangement that (1) enabled those with high assessments to receive more than one vote, to a maximum of four votes for assessments over $8,000, and that (2) allowed electors to vote in every ward they had property, permitting some a maximum sixteen votes in total. The charter as drafted by Regina's business community would have given property holders a preponderent influence in local elections, but the more reprehensible features of the cumulative voting arrangement were modified somewhat. A "one-man, one-vote" movement was quashed at a public meeting on May 14, 1906, so provincial legislators rushed to the defence of democracy. One member thought that "possession of a large amount of property . . . did not necessarily indicate good judgment in civic affairs," while another "refused to believe that sensible people could come to such a decision if they understood what it meant. He thought it was the duty of the Legislature to save them from themselves."[35] In saving the electorate from themselves, legislators nevertheless failed to uphold the "one-man, one-vote" principle, for the charter was amended to allow a person one vote in every ward in which property was owned, thus enabling some to vote four times.

In autumn 1906 a bylaw was introduced by alderman James Balfour providing for a ward system but with five wards instead of the required four. Balfour, a prominent lawyer and one of the more substantial property owners in the city, said that while there were compelling arguments against the ward system, the advantages in the way of direct regional representation and increased interest in local affairs outweighed the disadvantages.[36] The *Leader* was similarly lukewarm with its endorsement, agreeing with Balfour's two arguments while adding a significant third point — that every city in Canada "of any size and importance has adopted it and continued it. There must be some very good and sufficient reason for this."[37] Because they believed Regina was a city of "size and importance," and because even without cumulative voting it was still possible to receive more than one vote, businessmen endorsed the ward system in 1906 but with considerably less passion than they opposed it in 1914.

Gradually, the business community and the local press became dischanted with the ward system. When introducing his bylaw, James Balfour said each ward needed its own representatives to look after the particular needs of the ward, "always remembering, of course, that the general good of the community must be the first consideration."[38] The editor of the *Leader* hoped ward aldermen would not abuse the system by scrambling for improvements,[39] but by 1909, disgusted with sectional ward bickering, the newspaper heartily endorsed a



Map I. The Ward System in Regina, 1914. City of Regina, *Municipal Manual, 1914* (Regina, 1914).

bylaw for abolition of the ward system. These sentiments were contrary to the public mood, for voters chose to retain the system.

The campaign against the ward system became more urgent when Cornelius Rink aroused the "foreign voters" of the East End and won a June 1911 byelection in Ward One.[40] A resident of the East End, Rink was a Dutch immigrant who dismayed unilingual reporters with his command of several languages.[41] The two central themes of Rink's political campaign were his scorn for officialdom, launching a tirade "against the Mayor, the Council, the west end, the water system and the Fair Board to his heart's content," and his promise to get "improvements in the east end for the taxes which were being paid."[42] The latter was a popular message in a district long treated with indifference by city council. A crucial factor in Rink's political success was that the ward boundaries of 1906, which were revised but not fundamentally altered when the city's boundaries were extended in 1911, reflected the existing class and ethnic divisions of Regina society. Ward One, which in 1906 was bordered by Dewdney Street, Winnipeg Street, Victoria Avenue and Osler Street, and which in 1911 was revised as shown in Map I, almost exactly corresponded to East End Regina. The division of wards created a distinctive working class ward in the city, a fortuitous circumstance that aided Rink's public career.

Because Rink was able to assert opposing views to the commercial and professional majority in council, his opponents mobilized to banish him from civic affairs. Far from strengthening the business community's hold on council, the ward system as provided for in the city charter encouraged dissident voices. For example, the Board of Trade had for many years received a grant from city council for conducting publicity on council's behalf. Usually the Board received $25,000 per year but in 1914 it asked for $20,000. When council refused to oblige, demanding that the proposed grant be submitted to a plebiscite of voters, the Board felt humiliated and withdrew its application. Cornelius Rink did the humiliating. When caught by an *Evening Province and Standard* reporter, he said that if council approved the grant, he would prefer to "make a like generous contribution to the funds of any one of various organizations who are doing much more good to the city of Regina, and in whom I have much more interest than in [the Board of Trade's] progress, as for example the Regina General Hospital, the Bureau of Public Welfare, the Children's Aid Society, etc." Regarding the sympathies of certain council members, he said: "Rather generous, wasn't it, for these men to vote the people's money to themselves." Because of this incident, Board members vowed to begin looking after their own interests and not those of an unsympathetic city council. To this Rink retorted that "the public will no doubt be shocked at learning that some of the gentlemen in control of the board of trade will hence forth devote their energies to their own private interests. Those who know the situation will probably chuckle to themselves and ask when these men did anything else."[43]

The Board of Trade resented being "submitted to a tirade of unmerited and unfair criticism and insulting questions quite beside the mark by at least one member of the City Council."[44] No doubt this was a reference to the "unsophisticated foreigner" Rink.[45] City council had shown a want-of-confidence in the Board and had "failed as a responsible body" because it did not either approve or disapprove of the grant outright.[46] M. B. Peart, alderman from Ward Two, proposed at a later council meeting to grant the Board $5,000 because it

"was doing good work for the city in many ways and it was a desirable organization to have and to encourage."[47] In 1914 Peart was both chairman of the influential finance committee of council and an executive member of the Board of Trade. Council organized a publicity department under Peart's finance committee to perform the promotional work formerly handled by the Board of Trade. The appropriately named Norman A. Ruse was appointed publicity chairman of the new department; at the time he was assistant secretary of the Board of Trade. In the end, the Board's publicly funded promotional policies remained the city's promotional policies.

Not content with this victory of sorts, the business community pressed for the abolition of the ward system in 1914. Despite the rhetoric, the motive was to reduce Rink's chances for re-election, for as one businessman said, "We must place men on the city council who will not cater to a man who is unreasonable and has as little interest [property] in the city of Regina as Alderman Rink."[48] Peart sponsored a bylaw for the abolition of the ward system, saying that jealousies and petty arguments among aldermen of different wards had to be eliminated. Because those elected under the open system would be responsible to the city as a whole, Peart said taxpayers would benefit from more efficient administration. He did not have to add, because it was commonly understood, that the "ward boss" electoral base would be smothered by the vote of the city at large.[49]

Under Peart's bylaw, voters were required to fill all ten aldermanic slots on the ballot with names, otherwise the ballot would be declared spoiled. Thus, candidates who were not favored by a particular individual might end up receiving that person's support. The Trades and Labour Council opposed the bylaw for this reason: "Under the ward system, it was pointed out the working men had a chance of representation, but under the new system they would have no chance whatever."[50] The implications of the new ballot for immigrant East End voters, Rink's base of power, were discussed by the *Evening Province and Standard*

> The case of the East End voters commands particular attention. It is not likely that even a vigorous educational campaign could teach them to manipulate the long ballots properly. We do not think we are over-estimating the fact when we say that probably three-quarters of the ballots cast in the East End would be spoiled, through the inability of the voters there to understand that they must vote for men they do not want elected, along with those they do, in order to make their ballots count at all.[51]

The bylaw was passed on August 10, 1914, even though the city's working class districts overwelmingly rejected it. Little interest was shown in the vote however, as municipal issues were "swallowed up in absorption in war news."[52]

The experience of local government reform in Regina suggests that reforms were designed by members of the business and professional community mainly, in the final analysis, to suit their own needs. Changes which retained and strengthened their position in the conduct of civic affairs, and which reduced opposition to their booster program, were implemented. In a similar manner, the city planning movement of reform era Regina was fuelled by motives of self-interest.

City planning was an important component of the reform program, designed to counteract the debilitating effects of rapid growth upon urban centres. Importing City Beautiful ideas from the U.S., Great Britain and

Europe, reformers in Canada felt it within their power to shape the physical landscape of their cities. Some focussed their attention on the whole city; "no longer should beauty be confined to scattered and isolated buildings, its effects more often than not spoiled by an ugly setting. Instead, professionals would plan and regulate the entire city so that people might be surrounded by beauty."[53] There was another aspect to the City Beautiful movement though. Planning schemes were encouraged because their embellishments were ideal for the boosters' promotional activities. As Weaver wrote: "City Beautiful had its aesthetic appeal, but many adopted it as a tactic, like public ownership, for achieving further publicity."[54]

In Regina, some city planning reformers, motivated by a desire to improve the beauty and welfare of all areas of the city, proposed limited-scale park development. Church groups, most notably the Methodist Metropolitan Brotherhood, feared the spread of slums in the absence of sufficient park space. For them park development "was seen as a major step toward ensuring a healthy environment."[55] Support for park development was also drawn from those who regarded grandiose development plans, with their magnificent vistas, broad boulevards and exquisite civic centres, as valuable amenities for promotional purposes. Although quite costly, many believed such plans provided a new and uplifting environment for city dwellers, thus attracting people and investment. It was this "boosterism" point of view that "dominated the direction park development took in Regina."[56]

Park development proceeded at a slow space throughout the first decade of the 1900s. When the editor of the *Morning Leader* lobbied for more action in this regard, he was supported by organizations like the Methodist Metropolitan Brotherhood, but active planned development began only when city council regarded it as a way to expand the city's economic base.[57] Because so little progress had been made by 1910, council's parks committee came under fire. J. R. Peverett, an alderman and prominent Board of Trade member, suggested that if a commission assumed responsibility for parks, tax dollars would no longer be wasted on haphazard development controlled by aldermen who had neither the time nor the expertise to manage park development properly. According to the *Morning Leader,* Regina's status as a "really progressive modern" city depended upon the creation of a parks commission.[58] Commissions were designed to reduce political interference in the operation of a service deemed by the business community to be of value to their booster policies, but in this instance the proposed parks commission was defeated in council in May 1910. The editor of the *Morning Leader* bemoaned the defeat by writing: "Well, city councils come and city councils go but the idea of reform never dies, and in the end the principle of a Parks Commission will triumph in Regina as it has in nearly all progressive cities."[59]

As in nearly all progressive cities, city planning reforms in Regina were designed by boosters anxious for greater economic development. Because many were skeptical that beautification would aid economic growth, parks were developed in a piecemeal fashion before 1913. Only when convinced that a City Beautiful scheme might materially benefit the city did council allocate large sums of money for a comprehensive development plan. The result was a report prepared by the famous landscape architect, Thomas Mawson.[60] Mawson was hired in 1913 by city council and a private organization called the City Planning

Association to design a grandiose plan for the city, and to include within its scope "Parks, Playgrounds, Streets and Boulevards," but as J. S. Woodsworth noted in his social survey: "It is unfortunate that housing — which is the most important consideration — was not included."[61] Mawson was not hired to propose solutions to underlying social conditions of poor neighborhoods; his task was simply one of designing a more beautiful city that would impress visitors and inculcate in them a belief that the city had "come of age."[62]

Significant aspects of the Mawson plan were (1) that it recommended park development in an undeveloped shelter-belt around the city, thereby maximizing the future real estate potential of outlying regions, and (2) that it proposed embellishments for the southernmost part of Regina, centred around the Legislative Building and Wascana Lake. Mawson appealed to the business sensibilities of city councillors to convince them to implement the plan:

> As trustee of your city you must never forget the utilitarian value of beauty when it comes to the question: "In what city shall we place our new factories?" Regina's sites, roads and railway facilities can satisfy every reasonable demand. Regina however can offer more than this; it is in her power to create for herself a reputation for beauty which not only entices people to live within her borders but makes her name an advertisement for her industries. Thus your city's prosperity should be assured. In our plans, as you may observe, we have considered this utilitarian aspect of beautification in a very practical way.[63]

City Beautiful schemes soon fell out of favor because of the enormous expense involved and the lack of practical application. In 1914 council refused to endorse Mawson's plan, thus avoiding paying him his full commission.

The fact that Mawson stressed "utilitarian" merits of his proposal — that it would create valuable promotional amenities and stimulate investment — probably says much about the motives of city council and the City Planning Association in advancing City Beautiful reforms. The plan was finally accepted by council and put on public display in 1923, but it attracted little attention, for it was designed in the pre-World I boom era when more emphasis was placed on aesthetics than in the austere mid-1920s.

In Regina before the First World War, city planning, local government reform and municipal ownership of utilities were advanced most vociferously by businessmen and professionals, often through organizations like the Board of Trade. An element of self-interest was the key motive behind their reformist zeal, for booster ambitions played a prominent role in their advocacy of a reform program. In contrast were those who proposed social welfare and housing reforms, special interest groups favoring municipal ownership of the street railway, and some city planning reformers. They were usually affiliated with church organizations, and their actions seemed based on a genuine desire to improve the circumstances and environment of the city's poor.

It is impossible to conclude that all reformers of pre-World War I Regina were either altruists or boosters. Both types were active and able to implement parts of their programs, but the latter enjoyed much more success than the former. The growth ethic and booster ideology which offered immediate material dividends permeated society to the extent that boosters were able to dominate decision-making bodies, enact their policies with little dissent and control civic affairs in the most expedient manner to suit their own purposes. While the pecuniary rewards were substantial for some, others found life and living conditions in the boosters' west harsh and unhealthy. Historians have

debated the motives of reformers anxious to save their cities from urban squalor, but the experience of Regina suggests that elements from each of the two historical models were prevalent in the city's reform age. Further case studies may support the contention that there is a danger in aligning too rigidly with either camp.

FOOTNOTES

[1] J. S. Woodsworth, *Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Regina: September, 1913,* published by the Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church and the Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church, 4.
[2] *Ibid.,* 29.
[3] Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920," *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History,* edited by Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibise (Ottawa, 1984), 448.
[4] *Ibid.,* 437.
[5] John C. Weaver, " 'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform in Canada, 1890-1920," *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History,* edited by Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibise (Ottawa, 1984), 456.
[6] See Woodsworth, *Report,* 37-39.
[7] Earl G. Drake, *Regina: The Queen City* (Toronto, 1955), 155-156.
[8] Woodsworth, *Report,* 9.
[9] Drake, *The Queen City,* 120.
[10] Weaver, " 'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited," 467-469.
[11] Colin K. Hatcher, *Saskatchewan's Pioneer Streetcars: The Story of the Regina Municipal Railway* (Montreal, 1971), 15.
[12] Woodsworth, *Report,* 3.
[13] *Morning Leader,* January 19, 1914, p. 10.
[14] *Ibid.,* February 2, 1914, p. 2. The following is an excerpt from a sermon on the same theme by Reverend H. T. Lewis of the Methodist Metropolitan Church: "The greatest problem we have in Regina, as well as many other cities, is that of dealing with the immigrants who come to us with a challenge, which the church is not half meeting, of teaching them Canadian ideals and methods of living. And right here I want to say that the only efficient way we can teach them our ideals is to learn something of their history and methods of living, and the motives which actuate them." *Morning Leader,* January 19, 1914, p. 9.
[15] Alan F. J. Artibise, "In Pursuit of Growth: Municipal Boosterism and Urban Development in the Canadian Prairie West, 1871-1913," *Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process,* edited by Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibise (Ottawa, 1982), 128.
[16] Woodsworth, *Report,* 8.
[17] Weaver, " 'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited," 457.
[18] Donald S. Richan, "Boosterism and Urban Rivalry in Regina and Moose Jaw, 1902-1913" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1981), 24.
[19] *Ibid.,* 113.
[20] *Leader,* January 8, 1903, p. 5.
[21] *Ibid.,* January 22, 1903, p. 5.
[22] Artibise, "Municipal Boosterism," 131.
[23] *Leader,* June 25, 1903, p. 1.
[24] *Ibid.,* July 9, 1903, p. 4.
[25] *Ibid.,* July 30, 1903, p. 4.
[26] *Ibid.,* August 6, 1903, p. 8.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.,* July 23, 1903, p. 4.
[29] *Morning Leader,* April 19, 1910, p. 5.
[30] See Hatcher, *Saskatchewan's Pioneer Streetcars,* 7.
[31] James D. Anderson, "The Municipal Government Reform Movement in Western Canada, 1880-1920," *The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City,* edited by Alan F. J. Artibise and Gilbert A. Stelter (Toronto, 1979), 80.
[32] *Evening Province and Standard,* January 2, 1914, p. 4.
[33] *Ibid.,* January 5, 1914, p. 2.
[34] Anderson, "Municipal Government Reform Movement," 103-104.
[35] *Leader,* May 18, 1906, p. 2.
[36] *Ibid.,* October 2, 1906, p. 2.
[37] *Ibid.,* October 25, 1906, p. 2.
[38] *Ibid.,* October 2, 1906, p. 2.
[39] *Ibid.,* October 25, 1906, p. 2.
[40] *Morning Leader,* June 21, 1911, p. 14.
[41] *Ibid.,* June 20, 1911, p. 12.

[42] *Ibid.*
[43] *Evening Province and Standard,* March 17, 1914, pp. 1 & 8.
[44] *Morning Leader,* March 17, 1914, p. 4.
[45] A. T. Hunter, a Board of Trade executive member, called Rink "an unsophisticated foreigner," to which Rink replied: "I can only say in regard to my friend Hunter that if he is a fair type of civilized Englishman or Canadian, I very much prefer to remain an unsophisticated foreigner." *Evening Province and Standard,* March 17, 1914, p. 8.
[46] *Morning Leader,* March 17, 1914, p. 4.
[47] *Ibid.,* March 28, 1914, p. 15.
[48] *Ibid.,* March 17, 1914, p. 4.
[49] *Ibid.,* July 4, 1914, p. 17.
[50] *Ibid.,* p. 2.
[51] *Evening Province and Standard,* July 17, 1914, p. 4.
[52] *Ibid.,* August 8, 1914, p. 8.
[53] Walter Van Nus, "The Fate of City Beautiful Thought in Canada, 1893-1930," *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History,* edited by Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibise (Ottawa, 1984), 167.
[54] Weaver, " 'Tomorrow's Metropolis' Revisited," 466.
[55] Rodney E. Laporte, "The Development of Parks in Regina, 1882-1930: Private Initiative and Public Policy" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1984), 111.
[56] *Ibid.,* 112.
[57] *Ibid.,* 124.
[58] The editor of the *Morning Leader* wrote the following: "The important question which naturally suggests itself to every citizen as he or she passes along a boulevarded street or across a park is whether the city council — which loudly boasts of being the most progressive and up-to-date municipal body with which Regina has ever been blessed — proposes to remain content with the same old, illogical, hap-hazard and expensive system (rather lack of system) of administering our parks by a committee of the council, instead of adopting the plan now approved by all recognized authorities and followed in all really progressive modern cities, namely, the creation of a permanent parks Board or commission." *Morning Leader,* April 5, 1910, p. 4.
[59] *Morning Leader,* May 3, 1910, p. 4.
[60] Laporte, "Development of Parks in Regina," 194.
[61] Woodsworth, *Report,* 11.
[62] Laporte, "Development of Parks in Regina," 142.
[63] Thomas H. Mawson, *Regina: A Preliminary Report on the Development of the City* (Regina, c. 1921), 37.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SANDS OF TIME. By Ross Innes. North Battleford: Turner-Warwick, 1986. $18.35.

The Sands of Time published by a small Battleford company is a most interesting and informative book. It will be especially useful to the general public and to those interpreting the history of the North-West in the 1885 period at sites like Fort Carlton, Fort Battleford, Batoche and Duck Lake. For the most part the book is a reprint of *The Cree Rebellion of 1884 or Sidelights on Indian Conditions Subsequent to 1876* as compiled by Campbell Innes for the Battleford Historical Society in 1926. Ross Innes, son of Campbell Innes, has arranged and assembled *The Sands of Time.* Through the first thirty pages the book includes a Preface by Grant MacEwan, an Introduction by Alan Turner, a Memorial to Campbell and Verna Innes by Ross Innes, as well as some of Campbell Innes' own writings. While some of the contents might be dismissed as merely quaint and perhaps not to the taste of the academically trained, there is much of value in this book and many are given a voice throughout its pages. The section outlining the contributions and achievements of Campbell Innes as an historian of regional history, is well deserved; in fact he merits further recognition. Innes was a tireless pioneer in the field of heritage preservation through years when few had a vision of what was historically significant about the North-West where many had only recently settled. Campbell Innes along with historians and preservationists like Robert Hougham and A. S. Morton agitated, wrote and lobbied governments to have plaques established to commemorate the historical events of the North-West. These men were also responsible for persistantly badgering the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMB) to have sites like Batoche, Fish Creek, Duck Lake, Frenchman's Butte, Fort Pitt, Fort Carlton and Fort Battleford declared of national significance. This work was done in years when the HSMB did not believe that the history of the North-West was worthy of recognition on their version of the national stage.

Those today connected with the rather disorganized and fragmented heritage movement of the 1980s have much to admire in the energy and achievement of Campbell Innes through the 1920s and 1930s. He was successful in mobilizing his whole community to establish and participate in developing the "Indian Museum" at Fort Battleford. On the first letter head of the historical society appear not only the names of local teachers, ex-policemen and lawyers but also those of the local businessmen and merchants. It seems everyone was involved with preserving the past. Such community commitment would be the envy of many in today's heritage movement.

Under the direction of Innes the Battleford Historical Society also embarked on an ambitious publishing program. *The Cree Rebellion of 1884* reproduced in the *Sands of Time* was but one of its projects. Others of note in the series included *MacKay of The Canadian Northwest, Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan* by Robert Jefferson and *Early Surveys and Other Reminiscences* by R. C. Laurie. A number of these titles remain important documents of our early settlement history and might well be re-issued. This is certainly true of Robert Jefferson's *Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan.*

In some ways *The Cree Rebellion of 1884* as compiled by Campbell Innes in 1926 anticipates the attempts of post-modern historians to discard the single narrative voice of most academic histories and instead to let the story be told by a number of people. In relating the famous Craig Incident of 1884 Innes does not attempt to arbitrate among the various recorded stories reproduced about the event but instead produces them all. He does not invoke the closure by telling "the truth." The events on the Poundmaker Reserve in the spring of 1884 are recorded and related by the *Saskatchewan Herald,* the Cree Indian Fine Day, the farm instructor Robert Jefferson, Constable John Guthrie, William MacKay, the Report of the NWMP Commissioner Col. James Walker, Lt. Governor Laird's Report as well as reports of Constables W. C. Mikel, Cecil Denny and A. F. Grady. Of greatest interest among these eye-witness accounts is the version on the events from the point of view of the Cree and related by Fine Day. With it we get more than the usual government official perspective on this conflict.

The basic story of the Craig Incident is most succinctly summarized in the text of the Hudson's Bay Company trader William MacKay;

> John Craig was a Scotchman acting as a clerk in the Indian Department on Little Pine's Reserve. It seems that he did not succeed very well with the Indians, particularly when they demanded food. Man-that-speaks-our-language called for food, begging that he had been ill. Craig bundled him out of the store very roughly. The Indian resisted to the extent of using an axe handle on him. The clerk in his anger called for the police to arrest him.
>
> A few police were camped near, watching the activities of Big Bear who had come down from the reserve to hold a Thirst Dance. The police found that it would not be safe to attempt an arrest just then and sent for aid.

In the resulting confrontation between the Cree and the mounties Man-that-speaks-our-language was arrested. But the Craig Incident was more than just an isolated conflict between the NWMP and the Indians; it illustrated worsening Indian-white relations. The Craig Incident, along with the Yellow Calf Incident in the Qu'Appelle region, signaled the failure of government Indian policy as initiated in the North-West in Treaties 4 and 6. Government programs such as the "work for rations" plan and the Home Farm Policy were miserable failures. Incompetent farm instructors and inexperienced Indian Agents stationed in the West (often through patronage appointments) frequently had few skills in agriculture or administration. This worsened already tough problems created by major governments cutbacks to programs promised by the treaties. Ultimately the early enthusiasm by Indians to farm on their reserves was blunted by bureaucratic interference and self-defeating programs. Incidents like the Craig and Yellow Calf confrontations were harbingers of problems that culminated in the grizzly killing of Almighty Voice a decade later in 1897 when fugitive Indians were blown up by NWMP artillery. Increasingly as agriculture failed on the reserves the treatment of Indians by local settlers and the NWMP became more callous.

Missing from the book is a proper discussion of the historical significance of the Craig Incident nor does it provide enough context for the events as they have been analyzed by such historians as Blair Stonechild, John Tobias and John Jennings. It is also unfortunate that more is not said about the policies that produced the discontent among the Cree and Assiniboine Indians. The book does have a number of welcome highlights such as the excellent biographical information on little known figures in the history of the North-West. Ross

Innes has significantly added to the work of his father with this information. Some very interesting historical photographs are included throughout the book but unfortunately the quality of some reproductions is poor. The reissuing of Campbell Innes' book on the Craig Incident is a most welcome project. Hopefully others from the original series produced by the Battleford Historical Society will follow.

Walter Hildebrandt

THE NORTHERN REVIEW: a multidisciplinary journal of the Arts and Social Sciences of the North. Number 1, Summer 1988. Whitehorse, Yukon: The Northern Review Society, Yukon College. Individual subscriptions $20.00 yearly; institutions $30.00.

Few periodicals are launched with a statement of purpose and goals as extensive as *The Northern Review.* In the lead article of the first issue of this new journal editors Aron Senkpiel and N. Alexander Easton, both of Yukon College, discuss significant changes that have taken place in Canada's North in the past two decades. Among them they call attention to transfers of responsibilities and personnel from the federal to the territorial government; the increasing political activism of the North's aboriginal peoples; and the creation of the Arctic (in the Northwest Territories) and Yukon Colleges. They suggest that an indigenous scholarly community is beginning to emerge in the North. *The Northern Review* aims to become an outlet for publishing the results of research in the social sciences undertaken by northern residents. Studies and opinions originating "here" (that is in the North) rather than "there" (that is in southern Canada) are to be the staple of the journal. The rich oral traditions of the North are to receive the emphasis due them, especially because they are so often ignored by other publications. The focus will be on Alaska, Yukon, the N.W.T. and the northern extremities of the provinces.

Most importantly, the aim is to examine critically the frontier image of the North and thus to counteract the "colonialism" that has characterized the development of the North. To achieve this aim the journal will include opinion pieces, such as reviews of books and conferences, written by Northerners rather than outsiders. Although this first issue contains some contributions by authors residing "down there," in future the editors expect to alter the ratio of Northerners/Southerners as the *The Northern Review* gets a clearer sense of its own standards and of who "here" wishes to contribute.

Without specifically so stating, the editors' bias, if that is the right word, is anti corporate or individualistic enterprise and pro socialist humanistic collectivism. No wonder then that Thomas Berger appears in the references of four out of a total of six articles in this first issue.

The Northern Review contains articles, reviews, and northern notes (such as comments, publications, and announcements). On account of the great variety of contributions I have not attempted to review each one in detail. Suffice it to say that on reading through this issue it becomes apparent that the editors lived up to their own promises. Of the six articles two deal with general northern

problems, two are concentrating on parts of the Northwest Territories, and two are set in Yukon. Five of the eight reviews are contributed by Northerners.

The Northern Review appears in quarto format (6x9 inches) suitable for the kind of contributions that the journal will carry, which are predominantly text with some photographs, but not for papers having complex graphs or intricate maps that need the larger pages now provided by almost all scientific journals. As an example of what I mean: the map of the Mackenzie on p. 41 is barely readable.

The type used for the text is clear, pleasing, and suitable for the one-column lay-out. There are few misprints. One peculiar mistake is that the word "throughout" appears as "thought" on page 3, 13, and 146. Watch it, you editors!

The cover of *The Northern Review* is a sheer delight. It is a reproduction of *The Old Cache,* an acrylic by Ted Harrison. Anyone who has been to Yukon would be acquainted with this artist's distinctive works. So would they who have been in any Canadian bookstore in the last year where one could hardly miss the large books of Robert W. Service's poems "The cremation of Sam MacGee" and "The shooting of Dan McGrew" illustrated by Harrison. If you are still in the dark, reading Nicholas Tuele's "Studied Naivete: The Art of Ted Harrison" is a must. You will find it in this first issue of *The Northern Review* on pages 90-104.

It remains only to congratulate those who conceived the idea of this publication and to wish those who are carrying it out success in their endeavour.

W. O. Kupsch

ARMY WITHOUT BANNERS. By John Beames. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988. Pp. 304. $16.95 paperbound.

John Beames' *Army Without Banners* is a novel about pioneer life in parkland Saskatchewan in the first twenty years of this century. It was published in 1930, is now reprinted for the first time and if you're afraid of another sentimental pioneer reminiscence be reassured. This is a fine novel with many pleasures.

The story is roughly what I expected. The novel is a chronicle of what happened to a small group of settlers over twenty years. There are compelling sequences, the first years, winter freighting, Billy's wanderlust, but there are slow times too when one thing just follows another and we do meet the events we expect to in such an account, building a sod house, prairie fire, winter hardship, hail, dancing, debt, illness, etc. Yet such a story can hardly avoid these events and chronicle rather than plot is probably the most authentic way to tell this world.

If the story is like a typical pioneer reminiscence, characters, language and the author's view of his world are all superior. Beames' characters are clear and strong, their speech convincing. He hardly puts a word wrong and moves easily between a number of conversational and narrative styles. In an unobtrusive way it is a drama of language. His view of the world is complex and informs his presentation of characters. We side with our heroes Billy and Maggie yet see

plainly how wrong they often are. We side with the process of settlement but lament its cost to the natural world. There is no single answer in Beames' novel about what makes the good life.

Here's Beames at work early in the novel. It's Billy's first morning on his land.

> Morning and a meadowlark whistling gaily, the stiff purple crocuses, first flowers of spring, opening to salute the rising sun, and Billy crawled out of the tent into the sparkling air of the great upland, crisp with frost.
>
> 'Daylight in the swamp, old woman!' (p. 12)

That's the first lyrical passage in the book and it scared me. I don't much like meadowlark books. So Billy's vernacular salutation to his nineteen year old bride reassured me. Beames knew what this reader wanted. People talk to each other in posh English, Cockney Scots, French-English, southern drawl, Swedish and the flavoursome vernacular of the northwest.

> 'You take them yaps at Ottawa,' proceeded Billy. 'Do they care what happens to a homesteader? He can die an' stink for all them. They got to square a bunch of Bluenoses and Quebec Peasoups and Ontario yahoos. But the West — be damned to the West. No sir, a homesteader can't look for no help from man, an' God ain't got this far yet.' (p. 97)

There's energy in that language. Beames has a nice tone of ironic commentary too.

> The depression of parting soon wore off and their spirits rose. The sense of freedom and relief a man naturally feels at escaping from his wife for a season, with the prospect of new things to see and adventures to encounter, soon put them in a more cheerful mood than either had known for weeks. (p. 100)

It's the word "naturally" that makes the passage work, and if you put those two passages together you can gain some sense of the fierce individuality, the spirit of what next and the hatred of authority that Beames marks as true of the pioneer spirit. Lawyers and preachers and doctors are as low as drought, mosquitoes and typhoid. As for politicians: "He had himself been acquited on a charge of horse stealing, but his opponent was suspected of being a fraudulent bankrupt. Both were, therefore, equally fitted for Parliament" (p. 172). And that's the author, not Billy, talking. Beames has his exalted style too, used rarely and briefly. Here's the passage that gives the book its title. "And in this way the vanguard of the Army Without Banners, a mighty host, without sound of trumpet or drum, came into the beloved land to possess it." (p. 11) The story of settlement is indeed heroic and epic in Beames, but it's also as down-to-earth as Billy's language. As for the "beloved land," it is always a glint in Billy's eye, someplace over the next hill, through the next bluff, somewhere where there aren't fences anymore or neighbors, because Billy is the true pioneer always moving to the new frontier.

That spirit is the most deeply felt emotion in Beames' novel and Billy the true central character, more important than his wife because she only wants to make a home. Billy wants to move on. Yet in many ways Billy is a very unlikely hero. He's bad tempered to his wife, sloppy in his farming methods, prone to prejudice — he can't stand the Swedes who've finished fencing off his part of the world, and an indifferent father. "He was not a good father, but he fascinated his children." That's a good brief summary of Billy.

While Billy's drama of moving on is central, Beames creates an upper-class Englishman, Kent, as foil to Billy, for Kent's the man who learns how to farm

best, for the long stretch, who accumulates land, manages his buying and selling intelligently, creates an elegant house, works in the community. He's rooted and creative and there's no sense of him being anything but a successful man and farmer, far brighter than Billy (though without his natural physical instincts).

There's a deeper unresolved division in the book too. Whether you're Billy or Kent you still plough the land, and while one goes before and one remains behind, and both homesteaders are the heroes of the novel, yet there is a loser, the natural world, to balance all the gains.

> The Army Without Banners had made good its conquest. It lay encamped on the subjugated land. The wild had been driven back into the forests of the north, there to linger yet a little while before the invincible army took the field again and hurled it yet further into the frozen wastes about the Pole. (p. 283)

Man changed everything, drove the animals out, destroyed many of the flowers of the prairie, levelled the spruce bluffs and captured the land with roads and fences. Billy can't stand it there anymore and like the scout, the spyer-out of land, he must move forward. "The trumpet had sounded for him and he might not linger." He must go even if Maggie stays in the home she's made. There's no resolution between nature and man, or between the home and the road, but man and woman, who've worked and argued so fiercely, come together.

> 'All right, Billy boy, all right. No need to look so scared. I been thinkin' it over, an' I ain't goin' to scrap with you no more about it. If you got to pull out, go ahead, but I'm comin' too. Now give me a kiss for not startin' another fight.' With tears in his eyes he bent and kissed her. (p. 286)

And thus it ends, and works, for me, the tears or the laughter or the thinking. This novel works, and might work on prairie literature or history classes, if $16.95 isn't too steep a price for students to pay.

Don Kerr

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