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Batoche Election 1888

Edgar Rossie: Dean of Saskatchewan Photographers

**Early Twentieth-Century Jewish Farm Settlements in
Saskatchewan: A Utopian Perspective**

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Editor: Kathlyn R. Szalasznyj

Acting Business Manager: Maureen Fox

Correspondence should be addressed to: *Saskatchewan History*
Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0

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BATOCHE ELECTION 1888

By D. H. Bocking

A central theme in the history of the former North-West Territories was the development of its constitution. The first constitution provided by the Canadian government for the area that now includes both present-day Saskatchewan and Alberta was government by an appointed Lieutenant-Governor and Council.¹ In 1875, provision was made for the election of some members to the Territorial Council but the Council remained only an advisory body with little real power.² By the end of 1887, there were only fourteen elected members of Council and vast areas of the Territories were unrepresented.³ In 1888, after much pressure for change, the North-West Territories Act was amended. One of the key changes was the replacement of the Council by an elected Legislative Assembly.⁴

The amended Act did not provide increased powers for the Assembly⁵ and fell far short of meeting the wishes of those who wanted responsible government, but it did redress a wrong by at last providing representation for all the settled areas of the Territories.⁶ Of course, not everyone had a chance to vote for their district representative in the new Assembly. The franchise was restricted to male British subjects, other than unenfranchised Indians, who were twenty-one years of age and had lived in the Territories for twelve months and in their electoral district for three months.⁷ Limited as it was, the new legislation was a step forward in the constitutional development of the Territories.

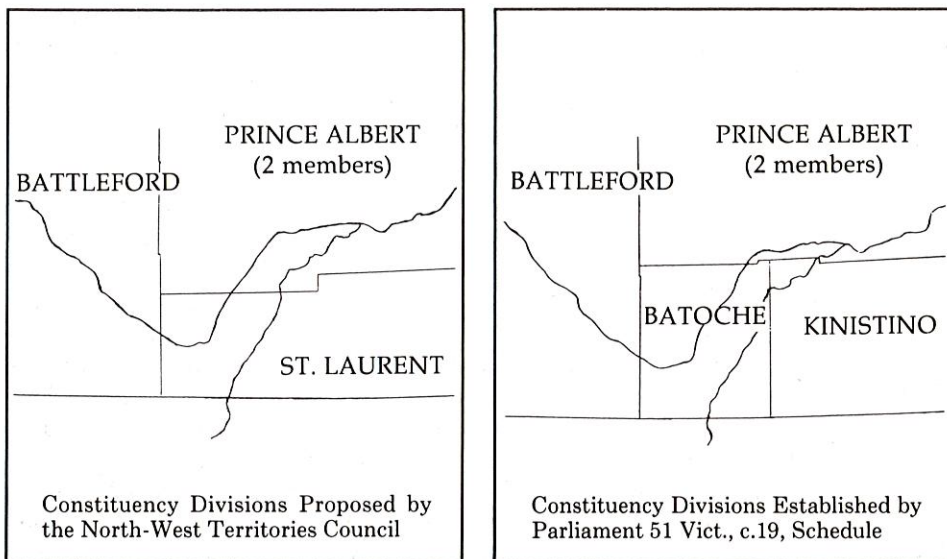
In preparation for the election of a Legislative Assembly, the whole settled area of the North-West Territories had to be divided into electoral constituencies. This meant scrapping the old Council constituency boundaries and abandoning the population-area ratio used in establishing those boundaries. How the Territories would be divided into constituencies caused a division of opinion among the elected members of Council. Interestingly, the discussions took as a basic premise that each provisional district would be treated as a separate unit and that no constituency boundaries would overlap district boundaries.⁸ When Council met for its last session in the fall of 1887, it was asked by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney for its advice on the form of government and how the Territories should be divided into electoral districts.⁹

Council deliberations did not take long, evidently because most of the decisions had already been reached in the executive sessions of the previous year.¹⁰ Council proposed that there be twenty-five electoral districts¹¹ giving Assiniboia, the most populous area, thirteen seats, Alberta eight and Saskatchewan four. In an accompanying schedule they drew up boundaries for the proposed electoral districts.¹²

The number and distribution of the electoral districts proposed by Council were not accepted in Ottawa evidently as a result of representations made by D. H. Macdowall, the Member of Parliament for Saskatchewan.¹³ Ottawa

created twenty-two constituencies giving Assiniboia eleven seats, Alberta six and Saskatchewan five. The net change was that both Assiniboia and Alberta lost two seats and Saskatchewan gained one.¹⁴

To create the extra seat in the provisional district of Saskatchewan, Parliament reduced the size of the constituency of Prince Albert proposed by Council and subdivided the proposed constituency of St. Laurent to create the constituencies of Batoche and Kinistino.¹⁵ Batoche was physically the smallest of the two but it included the communities of Duck Lake, Carlton, Batoche, Clark's Crossing and Saskatoon. The division brought a protest from the Métis who were upset because it divided their vote by cutting off the French community of Saint Louis de Langevin.¹⁶ The protest does not seem to have brought any response, nor is there any explanation for the way the division was made.



The net result of the division was to create a constituency, which, while it had a French-speaking majority, also had proportionally, a large English-speaking component. Because of the linguistic makeup of its population and the recent uprising which was centered at Batoche, the way the constituency voted was going to be very interesting. As it turned out it was the only constituency where the results were challenged, albeit unsuccessfully and a Métis bid for representation in the Assembly was turned back. The fortunate survival of some of the papers of Hillyard Mitchell, one of the candidates, gives us some interesting insights into what happened in the Batoche constituency.

The Amendment to the North-West Territories Act received Royal assent on 22 May¹⁷ and writs for the election of the new Legislative Assembly were issued on 4 June.¹⁸ The closing date for nominations in the electoral district of Batoche was 23 June with voting to take place on the 30 June.¹⁹ In keeping with the linguistic makeup of the constituency, the contest in the end came down to a choice between Hillyard Mitchell, an English Protestant merchant from Duck

Lake²⁰ and Georges Fisher, Jr., a Francophone Catholic merchant from Batoche.²¹

Edgar Dewdney,²² the Lieutenant-Governor, was responsible for choosing the returning officer²³ and no doubt, although party divisions were not a factor in the election, he chose as officers those favorable to the Conservative interests. For Batoche, he went outside of the constituency to choose a French-speaking returning officer. He chose Rudolphe Ouellet²⁴ of Prince Albert. While it was right that he should select a Francophone returning officer, the wisdom of going outside the constituency for his appointment is open to question.

Little is known about Ouellet. Where he came from is not known although he does not appear to have been born in the settlements of St. Laurent or Duck Lake.²⁵ It is known that he was a merchant and at the time of his appointment as returning officer he was in charge of the Prince Albert store of William Stobart and Company.²⁶ In this capacity he came under the direct supervision of Hillyard Mitchell, who was a partner in the Stobart Company, a fact that Dewdney probably knew when he appointed Ouellet. Ouellet had to apply to Hillyard Mitchell for leave to take the position of returning officer.²⁷ In a private letter written on the same day that he granted Ouellet leave Mitchell wrote, in part:

I received your letter of 13 and am glad to hear that you are doing what you can in my support and am also glad that you have accepted position of returning officer for the district. Kindly let me know when you will be up, also the boundary of the district and polling stations "names of clerks" etc. . . .²⁸

The independence of the returning officer, given the relationship between him and one of the candidates, was certainly open to question and Ouellet's choice for the position in the circumstances, is difficult to understand except as a blatantly partisan appointment.

Hillyard Mitchell was clearly the establishment's choice as candidate for the Batoche constituency and he was asked to run by a group of people in Prince Albert headed up by Dr. H. U. Bain, the Mayor of Prince Albert and a well known Conservative. In response to Bain's request that he become a candidate, Mitchell wrote agreeing to do so on 11 June:

. . . I was quite unprepared for such a proposal and the idea took me by surprise. I have been thinking the matter over and conclude that I will accept the kind offer of yourself and my other friends who ever they maybe [*sic*] . . .

In the meantime I will feel around and find out the ideas of the people. . . . I should not like to come out unless my chances were good as it would be rather galling to be beaten by Nolin. . . .²⁹

Evidently Mitchell was expecting that Charles Nolin, a former member of the Manitoba government and a prominent resident of Batoche, would be his opponent. Mitchell did not regard Nolin as a serious threat, probably because he felt Nolin would not have widespread support among the Métis in view of his testimony for the prosecution in Riel's trial.³⁰ Nolin's possible candidacy may have been a deciding factor in Mitchell's decision to run because it looked like his chances for an election victory with Nolin as his opponent would be very good.

But Nolin did not run. Mitchell and others later alleged that Nolin did not run because he had been bought off.³¹ Instead of Nolin, Mitchell had to face Georges Fisher, Jr. Fisher was described by one observer as a "*bon catholique*,

parlant bien français et anglais."³² Mitchell told Bain that some of his supporters had originally asked Fisher to run but when they found out that Mitchell had decided to be a candidate they tried, without success, to persuade Fisher to withdraw.³³

Mitchell set about trying to win all the support he could. He felt that he was hampered in his campaign because he had made the decision to run so late and he was just getting over an illness that made it difficult for him to work hard. In an effort to make certain he had the non-Francophone support, he wrote to Thomas Copland,³⁴ agent for the Temperance Colonization Society at Saskatoon, who was reputed to have a great deal of influence among the settlers in the small community around Saskatoon, asking him for his support and assuring him that if he were elected he would do his utmost "to forward the interests of Saskatoon and the district I represent."³⁵ He also wrote to R. W. Caswell of Clark's Crossing, one of the first of the Temperance Colony settlers, asking for his support. He told Caswell that he knew slightly two of his brothers and that they had already assured him that they would at least not vote against him.³⁶

How he conducted his campaign among the Francophone population is not known. He did, however, ask Dr. Bain to make certain that it did not get out that he was getting support from the people in Prince Albert as the people were "rather suspicious that I am being helped for some object by the P/A people."³⁷ He seemed to be very concerned that Lawrence Clarke,³⁸ the influential Prince Albert resident, was going to use his influence against him. He wrote directly to Clarke asking for his support and telling him that he had decided "to accept a half-breed nomination" and that he had come out as a North-Wester and "have nothing to do with party."³⁹ There is nothing to indicate how Clarke responded to his request, nor is it known who nominated Mitchell.

Mitchell received, as might be expected, assurance that the returning officer was doing all that he could to help him.⁴⁰ Perhaps surprisingly, he also received good wishes from the Reverend Father Paquette who was the priest at the Muskeg Indian Mission northwest of Duck Lake. In acknowledging the good wishes extended by Father Paquette, Mitchell used the opportunity to make a strong appeal for Francophone support:

Should I have the honor to be elected it will be my desire to arrange affairs as regards school ordinances and laws to suit the majority of the people and more particularly the school ordinance shall have my attention. . . . I consider the French language is more necessary in our district than English, the majority of the people being French. I trust my Dear Father that I may depend on your vote in my favour as well as your kind wishes for my success, and you may rest assured that I shall do my utmost for the good of the country and the people that I represent. . . .⁴¹

He added a postscript to his letter to say that he had just received a telegram from Saskatoon and Clark's Crossing to say that sixty-two voters there were willing to give him their support and he was "happy to say that I have met with great success wherever I have canvassed so far and hope to go in with a large majority."⁴²

Mitchell, later, attributed his support at Saskatoon and Clark's Crossing to the efforts made on his behalf by Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney.⁴³ What Dewdney did to get support for Mitchell is not known but evidently he took an active

part in the Batoche campaign. Despite this kind of help, Mitchell knew by late June that he did not have any support at all at Batoche and that his support at St. Laurent and Carlton was, at the best, shaky.⁴⁴ His statement to Paquette that his canvassing was going well and that he would go in with a large majority seemed to have been designed to win support and was not justified by the facts.

When the votes were counted, Mitchell's worst fears were realized. The initial reports gave Fisher the victory by a total of eighteen votes.⁴⁵ A total of 282 votes were polled. Of these, according to one analysis, 189 were French votes and 119 English. Mitchell received a total of 145 votes so if he received all the English votes, and it is assumed that he did, he only managed to win twenty-six French votes.⁴⁶ As voting was open during this election it can be assumed that the way the votes were cast could be fairly accurately determined and that the analysis is substantially accurate. Clearly the voting was almost entirely along ethnic lines although, apparently, Mitchell did gain a small percentage of the French votes.

On the 16 July, there was a dramatic change in the election results when the returning officer issued his official certificate declaring Mitchell elected.⁴⁷ What had happened? The explanation given was that some of the deputy returning officers filed their returns on separate sheets instead of in the polling books as required. As a result the votes polled at Saskatoon, Clark's Crossing and Batoche had to be disallowed and the votes remaining gave Mitchell a majority of seventeen. The final tally was eighty-two to sixty-five in Mitchell's favor.⁴⁸

Commenting on the result, *The Prince Albert Times and Saskatchewan Review* exonerated the returning officer and placed the blame entirely on the deputy returning officers. According to the newspaper, some individuals were trying to create discord among the Métis as a result of the Batoche situation. The editor said, in comment on the election results in Batoche that,

We do not intend to champion the cause of either of the candidates, nor the returning officer. If wrong has been done, those aggrieved can have a remedy in the courts. We believe the returning officer acted throughout the election with the greatest impartiality, and was perfectly justified in making the return he did. The only error he appears to have made was in appointing men as deputy returning officers who, as the result shows, were not qualified; but he appointed the most intelligent men he could in the district, and no doubt Metis would have objected very strongly had he taken his officers from outside.⁴⁹

This obvious attempt to excuse the returning officer probably had little effect in placating the disenfranchised Métis voters and did little to resolve the problem created by the decision made by the returning officer.

As the editorial pointed out, the remedy lay in the courts. The amendment to the North-West Territories Act which provided for the creation of the Legislative Assembly and set the stage for the election provided that,

Until the Legislature of the North-West Territories otherwise provides, as it may do, the law in force therein at the time of the passing of this Act relating to the election of members of the Council of the North-West Territories shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, apply to the election of members of the Legislative Assembly.⁵⁰

The Act which applied was "An Ordinance respecting Controverted Elections" assented to in August 1884.⁵¹ Under this Act any elector could file a petition against the "undue" election of any candidate. The petition accompan-

ied by affidavits and a ten-dollar fee had to be forwarded to the Lieutenant-Governor within two months of the receipt of the official return. The petition was then to be forwarded to clerk of the district court closest to the constituency. At this stage a five hundred dollar deposit had to be forwarded by the petitioner for payment of possible costs "that may become payable by the petitioner." Failure to post the five hundred dollar deposit within ten days ended all proceedings. Clearly there was a way open to seek legal redress but it was somewhat complex and involved the raising of considerable amount of money, which was probably very difficult in the Métis community.

Mitchell's reaction in the strange situation was interesting. On 17 July, the day after the returning officer made his return, Mitchell, assuming that Dewdney, who had been replaced by Royal on 4 July, was still Lieutenant-Governor, wired him to ask if he could resign and a new election be called.⁵² Dewdney thought that Mitchell should leave it up to the other side to act if they wanted to dispute his return.⁵³ Meanwhile Mitchell had received advice from his friends at Clark's Crossing that he should not resign,

Your friends think you have a perfect right to hold the seat if Fisher had not corruptly got Nolin out of field you would have won by a larger majority than you have now therefore you are perfectly justified in continuing to hold it.⁵⁴

Mitchell decided to hold on to the seat and wrote to Dewdney to say so giving as his reasons that he had not had fair play and that his supporters and "many of Fisher's supporters now ask me to retain the seat."⁵⁵ Action, if any was to be taken, was up to the supporters of Fisher. Dewdney was satisfied that Mitchell had made the right decision.⁵⁶

At the *fête nationale des Métis* held at Batoche on the 24 July a petition authorized by Charles Nolin and Louis Schmidt was prepared⁵⁷ "praying that Mr. Mitchell, the sitting member for the Electoral District of Batoche, be expelled from his seat and that George L. Fisher be called to take his seat and that punishment be inflicted on the Returning Officer."⁵⁸ Named among the petitioners was Charles Boucher. There is no evidence about when the petition was forwarded to or received by the Lieutenant-Governor. It is known that the sworn affidavits required under the Controverted Elections Act and the ten-dollar fee were not included. For these reasons, apparently, the petition was not forwarded to the district court for action although the record is silent on this point.⁵⁹

Obviously the Métis expected the new Lieutenant-Governor, a French-Canadian compatriot, to take some decisive action in their cause but with the petition incomplete, the only action that appeared to be open to the Lieutenant-Governor was to do what in fact he did: submit the petition to the new Assembly.

There may, however, have been other reasons why the new Lieutenant-Governor Joseph Royal, a native of Quebec, did not forward the petition to the courts. Rumors of Royal's appointment had circulated for some time before it was made and had brought adverse comments from the Territorial press "much of it motivated by prejudice against French Canadians."⁶⁰ In the circumstances, Royal would probably want to steer a very cautious course on the petition. He is reputed to have said that he had to refer the petition to the Assembly because it could become a racial issue.⁶¹ The issue may have been further clouded for Royal

by a letter he received from Louis Schmidt, one of the authors of the petition. The letter is not extant and information on its existence and contents are based on a letter that Ouellet wrote to Mitchell on 24 September. This letter said:

Mr. Louis Schmidt has written a long 4 page letter to his Honor the Governor of the N.W.T. and the whole of it is indeed in your favour he has shown me the letter and I know it has been mailed. I was surprised of [*sic*] the sudden change . . . the document is very well and ably drawn it must have taken the study of a few to express to his Honor their appreciation toward you.⁶²

If indeed such a letter was written and there appears to be no reason to doubt Ouellet's statement, then much of the force and urgency of the original petition was removed. In any event, for whatever reasons, Royal decided not to forward the petition to the courts but to have it tabled in the legislature and leave any action on it to the newly-elected Assembly.

The first session of the Legislative Assembly opened on the 31 October and the petition was tabled on 3 November. It was ordered, received and read and then referred to the legal experts for their opinion "as to the powers of this House to deal with controverted Election cases."⁶³ The answer came back that in the opinion of the legal advisers "the right of determining all matters relative to its own Elections is inherent in the Assembly."⁶⁴ Clearly the problem was in the hands of the Assembly. The petition was referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.⁶⁵

On the 5 December the Committee on Privileges and Elections reported to the Assembly. The petition, the Committee reported, had not been accompanied by the necessary affidavits and fees and the "consequent steps had not been taken by the Lieutenant-Governor."⁶⁶ The petitioners, the report went on to say, "from that or other causes did not seek relief at the hands of the Court."⁶⁷ The Committee was of the opinion that the remedies offered under the Ordinance respecting Controverted Elections should, in the language of the report, "have been exhausted before recourse was had to the assembly."⁶⁸ Since the remedies offered by the Ordinance were available to the petitioners and had not been used, the Committee did not feel justified in recommending that retroactive legislation be introduced to deal with the situation. In the opinion of the Committee the returning officer had "apparently acted in good faith."⁶⁹

In the debate that followed, a number of members spoke on the questions raised by the report. The chief objection was raised by J. H. Ross, the member for Moose Jaw, and also a member of the Committee on Privileges and Elections. Mr. Ross opposed the report and recommended that legislation be passed to amend the ordinance on controverted elections so that the petition could be sent to a judge.⁷⁰ Mr. Ross moved an amendment that the report be referred back to the Committee and that the following words be added:

Your Committee would recommend that the Controverted Election Ordinance No. 7 of 1884 be so amended as to cover the case of the petitioners against the Return of Hillyard Mitchell the sitting Member for Batoche.⁷¹

The amendment was lost and the report as submitted was approved by the Assembly.⁷²

With the vote approving the report of the Committee on Privileges and Elections the challenge to Mitchell's election ended. As the petitioners had not submitted affidavits in support of their petition there is no information on what specific charges, if any, they had to level against the returning officer or the

conduct of the election. Their failure to provide affidavits in support of their charges badly weakened their case. It does not appear that if the returns were made on separate sheets contrary to the election act then the returning officer was justified in making the return that he did. It seems inconceivable that he could have arranged such a return no matter how partial he was to one of the candidates. However, he does bear responsibility for the choice and instruction of the deputy returning officers and he may well have failed in some area of that responsibility. While Mitchell seemed to have convinced himself that he had not received fair play, there is no mention in his correspondence of how he reacted to the decision of the Assembly.

What the returning officer did to try to ensure the election of his friend and employer remains a mystery. That he did something appears clear. Mitchell recognized that he owed Ouellet a debt of some sort. In time-honored tradition he repaid it by sending Ouellet on 15 October "two gallons of scotch whiskey which you will do me great pleasure in accepting."⁷³ But he also looked after the needs of one of the most influential Métis leaders. He arranged, on 17 November, at the request of Louis Schmidt, to get him a liquor permit and to forward to him the liquor he requested. Mitchell also assured Schmidt that he would do all that he could to persuade the federal government to pay for losses sustained by the loyal half-breeds during the 1885 rebellion "despite the opposition to him in the election."⁷⁴

Mitchell was returned albeit for another constituency in the elections of 1891 and 1894, and in 1897 was appointed to the Executive Council. He did not contest the election of 1898. As far as is known Georges Fisher was never again a candidate for elective office.

ENDNOTES

1. L. H. Thomas, *The North-West Territories, 1870-1906* (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, Booklet No. 26, 1970), 4. "An Act for the Temporary Government of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories when united with Canada."
2. Canada, 38 Vict., c.49, "An Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting the North-West Territories." Section 13 provided that when any portion of the territories not exceeding 1,000 square miles contains a population of not less than 1,000 inhabitants of adult age "exclusive of aliens or unenfranchised Indians" an electoral district was to be proclaimed.
3. L. H. Thomas, *The Struggle for Responsible Government in the North-West Territories* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 2nd edit., 113-114.
4. Canada, 51 Vict., c.19, "An Act to amend the Revised Statutes of Canada, chapter fifty, respecting the North-West Territories."
5. The Lieutenant-Governor retained control over the parliamentary grant. See Canada, 51 Vict., c.19, s.14.
6. Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 97. By Order-in-Council 2 May 1882 the North-West Territories was divided into four provisional districts — Assiniboia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Athabaska. No representation was provided for Athabaska as it was not settled.
7. Canada, 51 Vict., c.19, s.7.
8. Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 138-139. The matter was discussed and a memorial prepared in Executive session which was reported to have proposed the division into twenty-four constituencies with Assiniboia to have thirteen, Alberta seven, and Saskatchewan four.
9. North-West Territories (hereafter NWT), Council Journals, 1887, 7.
10. Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 149.
11. *Ibid.* This was one seat more than proposed in 1886. Alberta received an additional seat to give Lethbridge representation.
12. NWT, Council Journals, 1887, 74-77.
13. Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 157.

¹⁴ Canada, 51 Vict., c.19, Schedule. The Act provided for twenty-five seats (s.2.2) but three of the seats were to be filled by appointed legal experts who could take part in the debates but could not vote. This avoided the necessity of appointing a law clerk to draft bills. See Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 153.

The representation by population excluding Indians provided by the distribution proposed by Council and that provided by the Act based on 1885 population figures (see Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 104) was as follows:

Provisional District	Population	Council	Act
Assiniboia	17,591	1,353	1,599
Alberta	6,115	764	1,019
Saskatchewan	4,486	1,121	897

Clearly the Act gave the advantage to Saskatchewan and Assiniboia, in comparison, was badly under-represented.

¹⁵ See maps.

¹⁶ Diane Payment, *Batoche, 1870-1910* (Saint Boniface: Les Editions Du Blé, 1983), 112. It is interesting to note that the division proposed by Council would have kept the Francophone population in one constituency. It would also have included many English-speaking voters and, as a result, probably would have brought the same criticism from the Métis. What the Métis apparently wanted was a separate French-speaking constituency which, given the population figures, was probably an entirely unacceptable proposal.

¹⁷ Canada, 51 Vict., c.19.

¹⁸ Saskatchewan Archives Board (hereafter SAB), NWT, Minutes of the Lieutenant-Governor, 4 June 1888, 201-207.

¹⁹ *Regina Leader*, Nomination date was 20 June and election day 27 June except for the constituencies of Edmonton, Battleford, Prince Albert, Kinistino, and Batoche where the dates were 23 June and 30 June.

²⁰ Hillyard Mitchell was born in Huntington, England in 1853 and came to Canada at the age of nineteen. He was a member of the force sent to relieve Fort Garry during the Red River Rebellion. Following the Rebellion he took a position with Stobart and Company and moved to Duck Lake in 1876. On 16 March 1888, Mitchell became a partner in the firm of William Stobart and Company and at the time of the election was resident at Duck Lake. See *The Saskatchewanians* (Regina: Saskatchewan Diamond Jubilee and Centennial Corporation, 1967); *The Nor'westers* (Regina: SAB and Brown and Associates Limited, 1985), and SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, "Declaration of Partnership," 16 March 1888.

²¹ Georges Fisher, Senior operated a store at Fort Qu'Appelle and opened a branch store at Batoche in 1883. The store at Batoche was managed by Georges, Junior and his brother Joseph. (See Payment, *Batoche*, 19.) The family appear to have been at Fort Qu'Appelle during the rebellion. (See Diane Payment, "Monsieur Batoche," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, (Autumn, 1979): 93.)

²² Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 159. "Dewdney's term as Lieutenant-Governor had expired in December 1886, but the government . . . had found it convenient to continue him in office for another year and a half. . . . His successor, Joseph Royal, did not assume office until July 4, 1888."

²³ SAB, NWT, Minutes of the Lieutenant-Governor, 4 June 1888, 201.

²⁴ Rodolphe Ouellet signed his name as given here. See for example SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Correspondence, Ouellet to Mitchell, 23 June 1888, 16 July 1888. The official minute appointing Ouellet, however, spells his name "Ouellette" (see SAB, NWT, Minutes of the Lieutenant-Governor, 4 June 1888, 207). I have chosen to follow the spelling of his signature as being the correct one.

²⁵ See Payment, *Batoche*, 126, fn. 111. Payment notes that Ouellet's name does not appear in the St. Laurent or Batoche church registers and concludes that he must have come from outside these parishes.

²⁶ SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, "Declaration of Partnership," 16 March 1888. The partnership had been in effect since 1 January 1888. Mitchell had been responsible for the Prince Albert store as early as 7 April 1886 (see *Ibid.* "Know all men by these Presents that I William Stobart"). This document appointed Mitchell his "true and lawful attorney." There are several letters of instructions from Mitchell to Ouellet regarding the operation of the store. (See for example, *Ibid.*, Letter Books, Prince Albert, Mitchell to Ouellet, 13 July 1886, 24 January 1887 and 6 May 1888.) On the basis of these letters it appears that Ouellet was a long-time employee of the firm.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter Books, Prince Albert, Mitchell to Ouellet, 17 June 1888.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter Books, Private, Mitchell to Ouellet, 17 June 1888.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Mitchell to Bain, Prince Albert, 11 June 1888.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, and also Mitchell to Ouellet, 17 June 1888.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Mitchell to the Honorable Edgar Dewdney, 21 July 1888. See also *Regina Leader*, 11 December 1888. The newspaper reporting on the debates in the Assembly stated "Mr. Hoey related some interesting and pertinent facts which Fisher himself had communicated in conversation. Fisher told him he did not intend to push the matter any further — it had cost him money enough, considering the \$100 he had paid the other candidate to get him out of the field and other expenses during the election."

³² Payment, *Batoche*, 112. Quoted from a letter written by Father Fourand to his Supérieur-Général.

³³ SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Letter Books, Private, Mitchell to Bain, 17 June 1888. Mitchell was hoping that if Fisher could be persuaded to withdraw he would receive a "half-breed" nomination.

34. Don Kerr and Stan Hanson, *Saskatoon, The First Half-Century* (Edmonton: NuWest Press, 1982), 24.
35. SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Letter Books, Private, Mitchell to Copland, 17 June 1888.
36. *Ibid.*, Mitchell to Caswell, 17 June 1888.
37. *Ibid.*, Mitchell to Bain, 17 June 1888.
38. Clarke had been the Hudson's Bay Company factor at Carlton. He was moved to Prince Albert in 1881 and served a term on the North-West Territories Council as the representative for the District of Lorne. See *The Nor'westers*, 10.
39. SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Letter Books, Private, Mitchell to Clarke, 17 June 1888. Who formerly nominated Mitchell is not known. See also Mitchell to Bain, 22 June 1888. In this letter Mitchell tells Bain that Lepine is in Prince Albert and asks Bain to make sure he gets Lepine into Clarke's presence. He is sure Lepine will gain Clarke over as a supporter for Mitchell.
40. *Ibid.*, Mitchell to Ouellet, 17 June 1888.
41. *Ibid.*, Mitchell to the Rev. Père Paquette, 22 June 1888.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, Mitchell to Dewdney, 21 July 1888.
44. *Ibid.*, Mitchell to R. J. Molloy, 26 June 1888. Molloy was government telegraph operator at Clark's Crossing.
45. *Saskatchewan Herald* (Battleford), 7 July 1888.
46. *The Prince Albert Times and Saskatchewan Review*, 27 July 1888.
47. SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Correspondence, "Copy of return to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Regina", 16 July 1888.
48. *Regina Leader*, 31 July 1888. See also SAB, NWT, Proclamations, Honorable David Laird, 3 February 1881, section 40. Vote totals were to be entered in the poll books.
49. *The Prince Albert Times and Saskatchewan Review*, 28 September 1888.
50. Canada, 51 Victoria, c. 19, s.5.
51. NWT, Ordinances, No. 7, 1884, "An Ordinance respecting Controverted Elections."
52. SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Letter Books, Private, Mitchell to Dewdney, 17 July 1888.
53. *Ibid.*, Correspondence, Dewdney to Mitchell, 25 July 1888.
54. *Ibid.*, R. J. Molloy to Mitchell, 19 July 1888.
55. *Ibid.*, Letter Books, Private, Mitchell to Dewdney, 21 July 1888. On the same date the Mitchell sent the following telegram to Dewdney, Bain, and MacDowall, "Halfbreeds have general satisfaction re my election therefore shall not resign."
56. *Ibid.*, Correspondence, Dewdney to Mitchell, 7 August 1888.
57. Payment, *Batoche*, 113.
58. NWT, Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 1888, 90.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Thomas, *Struggle for Responsible Government*, 160.
61. Payment, *Batoche*, 114.
62. SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Correspondence, Ouellet to Mitchell, 24 September 1888.
63. NWT, Journals, 2 November 1888, 15.
64. *Ibid.*, 6 November 1888, 17.
65. *Ibid.*, 12 November 1888, 25.
66. *Ibid.*, 5 December 1888, 90.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*, 91.
70. *Regina Leader*, 11 December 1888.
71. NWT, Journals, 5 December 1888, 91-92. The vote was 5 for the amendment and 14 against.
72. *Ibid.*, 91-92.
73. SAB, Hillyard Mitchell Papers, Letter Books, Private, Mitchell to Ouellet, 15 October 1888.
74. *Ibid.*, Mitchell to Louis Schmidt, 17 November 1888.

EDGAR ROSSIE: DEAN OF SASKATCHEWAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

By Brock V. Silversides

For a province with only a century of settlement history and always a sparse population, Saskatchewan has produced a surprisingly large number of talented photographers. At the top of this list during the first half of the twentieth century was Regina lensman, Edgar Charlotte Rossie.

Edgar Rossie, born in 1875 in London, Ontario, descended from an ancient titled Scottish family. His father, William C. Rossie, a banker by training, came to Canada in 1870 as a remittance man, that is, a younger son of a high-ranking but impecunious British family who was, in essence, paid to emigrate. Within a year, he had secured employment as a bookkeeper for F. Westlake & Co., wholesale confectioners of London. Shortly thereafter, he married Lucy Jane Westlake, his employer's daughter. The Rossies produced a cultured and literate family. The eldest son, Melville, gained fame as a writer and later was the editor of *The London Advertiser*. Edgar, the younger brother, was drawn to the visual arts, becoming a photographer and collector of paintings.

Edgar Rossie received his elementary education in London's public schools and his secondary education at Pickering College in Oshawa. His first job in the mid-1880s was working part-time in the photographic studio of his uncle, Francis (Frank) Westlake, a longstanding London photographer. According to one biographer, "He started in photography at the early age of ten, putting tintypes into little pink envelopes used in those days."¹

By all accounts, he was an independent and precocious child, perhaps as a result of being left fatherless by the death of William Rossie in the mid-1880s. A family tradition has Rossie leaving home at the age of fourteen to go wandering down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. He spent some time in St. Louis where he faced the ordeal of an appendix operation alone. A further damper was put on his travelling plans when someone stole all his clothes from the hospital where he was recovering. Thoroughly discouraged, he returned home to London and by 1893 he was working as an operator for the Bell Telephone Company.

In 1894, Francis Westlake moved to Winnipeg to work for Mrs. Rosetta Carr, whose photographic studio, the American Art Gallery, was located on the corner of Main Street and Graham Avenue. Rossie accompanied his uncle, finding employment as a laborer with the C.P.R.² in the fall of 1894. They both returned to London in 1895.

Between 1895 and 1899, Rossie's name is in the *London City Directories* but no occupation is given. We can safely assume however, that this is the span of his official apprenticeship, served at the studio of his uncle.

Rossie moved to western Canada in late summer, 1899, settling in Winnipeg. He purchased the premises (and possibly the equipment) of Mrs. Carr and for the next two years he worked hard at establishing both a solid business and an artistic reputation. In October 1899, he displayed a series of photos at the Manitoba Art Gallery which attracted enough attention for a review to be included in the local newspaper, *Town Topics*.³

By 1901, Rossie was well regarded in the Manitoba capital. A paragraph in the pamphlet *Souvenir of City of Winnipeg* explained that:

The Art of making photos that will pass the critical test of an aesthetic and refined public is an art in the truest sense and one that few can claim to have mastered. However, the above firm [Rossie's] is classed as leading artists [*sic*] and every picture that leaves their gallery is a picture in the truest sense of the word.⁴

It went on to say that "a visit to this gallery would convince one that work here possesses a charm of originality in design and detail and for finish would be hard to excel."



Edgar C. Rossie, ca. 1900.

M. Rossie

In 1903 and 1904, business flourished, not only in Winnipeg but in neighbouring territory as well. As a consequence, Rossie hired another photographer for the firm, W. B. Steele. In the summer of 1904, Rossie and Co. were commissioned to do some photography for the Royal North-West Mounted Police at its Regina depot. The *Regina Leader* noted his presence in town — "Mr. Rossie of Winnipeg, spent a few days in the city last week. He returned home on Sunday evening."⁵

Regina and its people appealed to him and, after favorably assessing its potential for patronage, he decided to relocate to the Queen City. The *Regina Leader* announced his decision in its 12 October 1904 issue:

Rossie and Co. who have been in the photographic business in Winnipeg for the past seven years will open a studio in the Burton building on Scarth Street about the first of next month.⁶

It is probable that he took over an already established business. If true (and the newspapers make no mention of it), the most likely firm would be the Regina Photograph Art Studio which had been operated by Robert Rigby on Scarth Street since 1887. Regardless, Rossie started off in a new studio on the upper floor of the Burton Block at 1731 Scarth Street. The building, constructed by W. Burton for his clothing store, was considered "an ornament to the city" and was completed at the end of October, 1904.

Rossie's premises had a large southward-facing skylight which gave dramatic lighting effects. A sumptuous interior was soon added: Rossie chose intricately-carved and padded posing chairs, wood grain and brick backdrops, a painted fireplace and randomly-placed small statuettes on pedestals. Compared to the small wooden frame studios with blanket backdrops of the typical prairie photographer, this establishment exuded a sense of class which appealed to the citizens of a just barely-civilized Regina.

As in Winnipeg, business was very good. In January 1907, *Bradstreet's Book of Commercial Ratings* set the value of the firm at five hundred dollars or less with second grade credit,⁷ but already by July 1907, *Dun's Reference Book* reported an increase to between one thousand and two thousand dollars and fair credit.⁸ In July 1909 the firm's value had again jumped to between three thousand and five thousand dollars with good credit, a figure confirmed in January 1911.⁹ Finally in 1912, that great boom year for the prairie region, Rossie's



M. Rossie

Interior of Rossie Studio, ca. 1910.

financial standing stood in the range of five thousand to ten thousand dollars with good credit.¹⁰ These figures prove that indeed, Rossie had quickly settled into the community and rebuilt the reputation he held in Winnipeg.

Other signs of his good fortune surfaced as well. In 1906, he caught the eye of the very popular Eva Chatwin, a clerk in the Land Titles office. She was the daughter of James N. Chatwin, master tailor to the Royal North-West Mounted Police. Her activities and travels were regularly reported in local social columns and it is from an item in the 18 July 1906 issue of *The Weekly Standard* that we learn of their engagement:

Mrs. A. D. Wright is entertaining Miss Chatwin, and the ladies of the Land Titles Office to a tea tomorrow, the occasion being in honour of Miss Chatwin, who is leaving the government service prior to her marriage next month to A. [sic] Rossie, of Regina.¹¹

The Rossies were married on 9 December 1906 at the home of the bride's parents by Reverend A. E. Henry. Again, the local newspaper stressed that "the popular young couple were the recipients of the warmest congratulations and good wishes on the part of their many friends."¹² They were to have three children: a son, Melville, and two daughters, Rossie and Elsie. Mrs. Rossie was occasionally employed in her husband's studio, adding the finishing touches to portraits, including airbrushing and hand-tinting.

Rossie first entered the Regina spotlight on 28 April 1906 when, exactly one month after the opening of the first Saskatchewan Legislature, he assembled a composite group portrait of its members. The *Regina Leader's* editors were impressed by its presentation and devoted an article on the newspaper's first page to the image:

ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHED

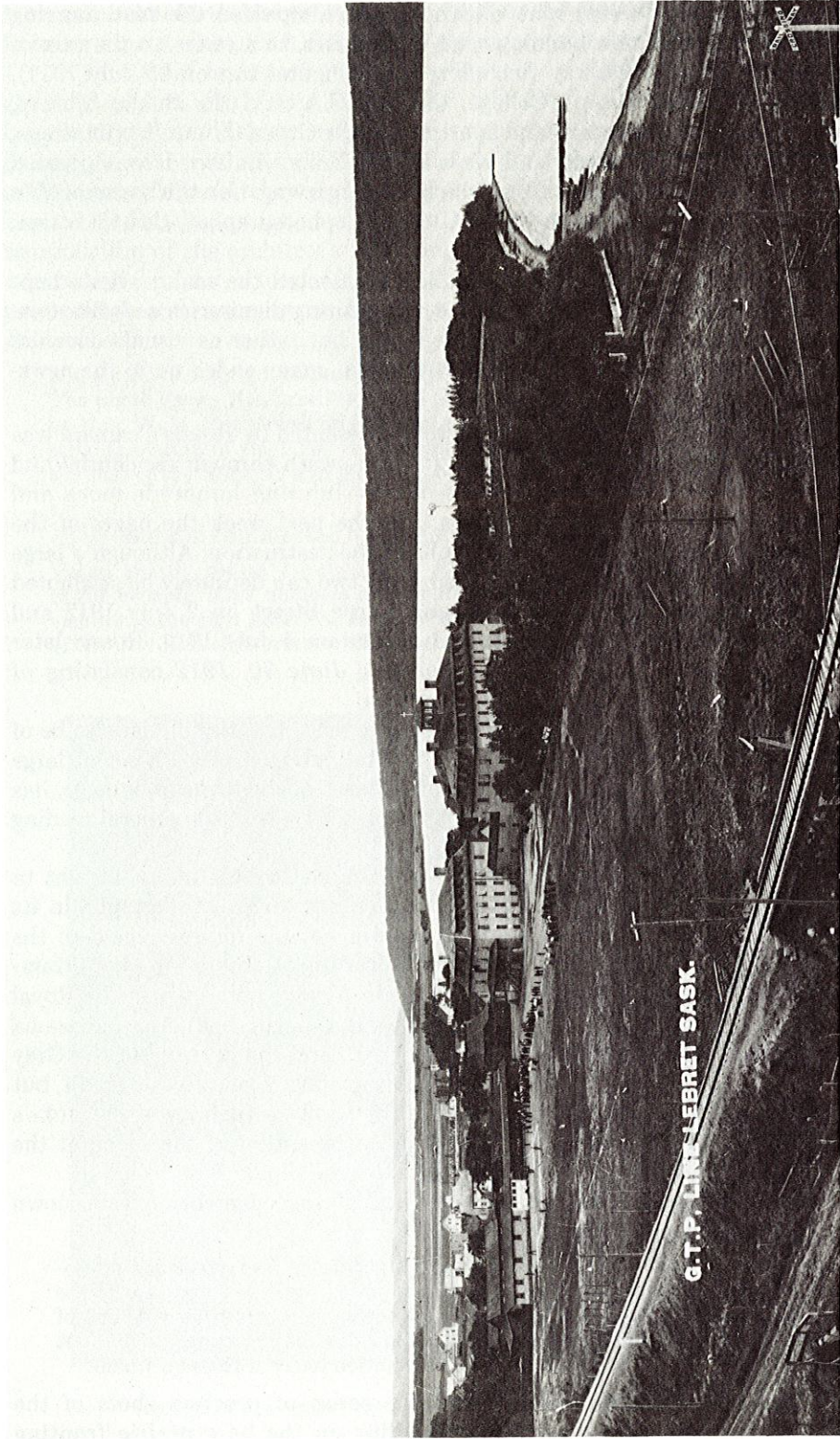
Fine Grouped Picture of Members of the Legislature

An interesting photographic record of the first Saskatchewan Legislature has just been completed by Mr. E. C. Rossie, Scarth Street, and will be exhibited in a window at the Regina Trading Co's. store today. It consists of a cabinet photo of each of the Members and officials of the House, specially taken by Mr. Rossie for this historic piece and mounted on a background decorated with a design in which wheat and the maple leaf, emblematic of the province and of Canada, are introduced. The whole measures 40 inches by 80 inches and is mounted in a solid oak frame, the effect being highly artistic. Some of Mr. Rossie's best work has been put into the portraits, all of which are exceptionally good, and the picture is in every way in keeping with the historical associations which it will one day possess. It is expected that the picture will be purchased by the members of the Assembly and hung in the legislative chamber.¹³

It was indeed an impressive work and to ensure that its marketing would remain in his hands, Rossie patented it.

The next sign of Rossie's growing importance became evident in 1907. On 27 April the *Regina Leader* published a fifty-six page Special Spring Building Number outlining the recent progress made by the city of Regina and describing the city's prospects and opportunities. All the photographic illustrations — twenty-eight portraits, one panorama and sixty-three buildings, landscape and cityscape shots — were supplied by Rossie. In addition, among the biographies of prominent politicians, businessmen and real estate dealers, was a portrait of Rossie over the caption "A Well-Known Photographer."

A similar Building Supplement was issued by the *Regina Leader* on



West's Studio

"G.T.P. Line Lebreton Sask." (detail), ca. 1912.

30 November 1911. Twenty-nine illustrations accompanied the text, ranging from exterior views of new buildings and warehouses, to a series on the cars of the Regina Municipal Railway (including the inaugural run on 25 July 1911), construction shots of Regina College, the Y.W.C.A. and the Public Library, various street shots, residences and apartments, the Grand Trunk Pacific shops, roundhouse and freight sheds, and views of the Union Station. It was pointed out that: "all the photographs from which the engravings for this issue of *The Leader* were made, were taken by E. C. Rossie, photographer, Scarth Street, Regina."¹⁴

Like all urban photographers, Rossie documented the major events happening in his city such as fires, fairs, speeches, visiting dignitaries and disasters. This was undertaken not as press photography, but rather as visual souvenirs sold as mounted prints or postcards. Nevertheless, many ended up in the newspapers.

One of the more significant events to be presented by Rossie's camera was the disastrous cyclone of 30 June 1912. It cut a swath through residential and downtown Regina killing twenty-eight people, injuring hundreds more and destroying about five hundred buildings. For the next week the pages of the *Regina Leader* were filled with photographs of the destruction. Although a large number are Rossie's, they are not credited. Only two can definitely be attributed to him: a panorama of Victoria Park and Lorne Street on 2 July 1912 and another panorama of a razed residential avenue on 4 July 1912. Rossie later published a booklet entitled *Regina Tornado June 30, 1912* consisting of twenty half-tone illustrations and one panorama.

The board of Regina Public Library considered this series of views to be of enduring value. Accordingly it purchased several enlargements: "a set of large photographs by Mr. Rossie, showing various phases of the tornado damage, has been secured and these pictures are displayed on the walls of the general reading room."¹⁵

Rossie also covered the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught to Regina later that year. The *Regina Leader* used ten of his photographs in its special issue on 14 October. Some of the more notable images included: the Duke and Duchess Leaving City Hall and Government House" (p.1); "Triumphal Arch Erected on Albert Street at Sixteenth Avenue under which the Royal Party Passed on their way to the Legislative Buildings" (p.8); the panorama "Firing the Royal Salute in Wascana Park" (p.9); and the opening of the Grey Nuns Hospital (p.10). Not only did all the photographs have a Rossie credit, but the editor proudly pointed out to his readers that: "all the pictures of the Duke's visit to Regina published in this issue with the exception of the scene at the Station, are reproduced from photos by E. C. Rossie."¹⁶

Rossie also flirted with fashion photography, especially when a well-known or controversial figure arrived in town:

Miss Verna Felton, leading lady of the Allen Players was yesterday photographed by E. C. Rossie in some of the fancy gowns which she will wear in the performance on Saturday evening next. The gowns, it is stated, include one of the famous Harem skirts, and will be worn on Saturday evening for the first time publicly. The photographs will be on exhibition today at Rossie's studio.¹⁷

A long-term project of Rossie was the series of progress shots of the erection of the provincial Legislative Building on the bare prairie fronting

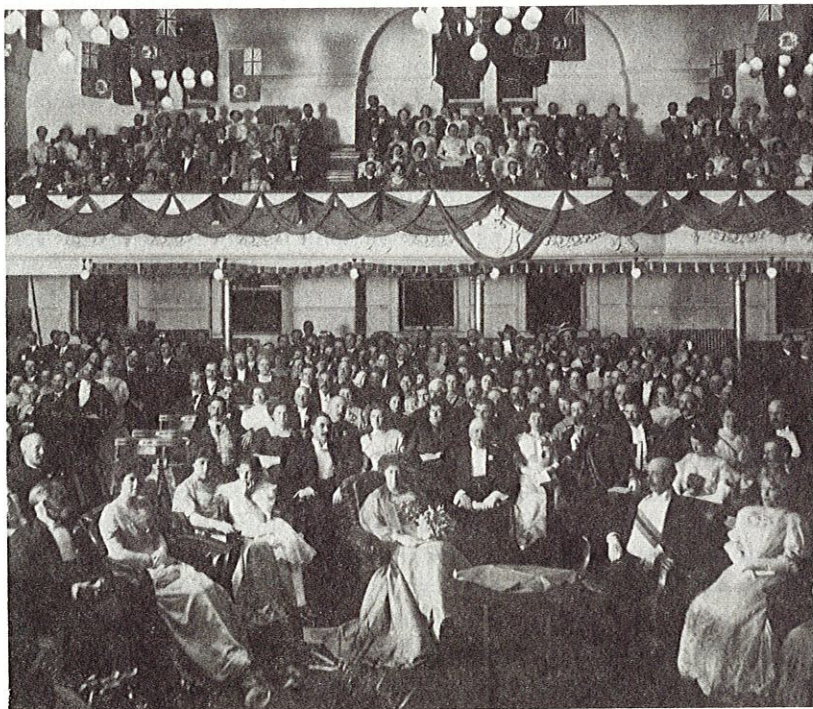
Wascana Lake. From the excavation in 1908 to the first sitting of the Assembly in its new quarters in 1912, Rossie photographed each step of construction.

The official laying of the cornerstone on 4 October 1909 by Canada's governor-general, Earl Grey, was another milestone in Rossie's career. Inside a box cemented into the cornerstone were mementos such as contemporary newspapers, currency and stamps. Also included was Rossie's composite photograph of the Second Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, one of his images of the Legislative Building at its latest stage of construction, as well as a photographic reproduction of the architect's rendering.¹⁸ For this, the provincial government reimbursed him for a total of \$34.00.¹⁹ As well, Rossie documented the day's proceedings and, once again, his work was commented on at length by the *Regina Leader*:

A splendid photograph of the stone laying ceremony was taken by E. C. Rossie. The photo shows His Excellency Earl Grey replying to the address read to him by Hon. W. H. Motherwell on behalf of the Executive Council and gives a really striking picture of the 1,200 school children massed upon their grandstand to the east of the stone. It also gives a good view of the members of the vice-regal party and of the greater portion of the invited guests.²⁰

The editorial commented on his industriousness:

Taken shortly before 4 o'clock. Mr. Rossie had the photos on sale at eight in the evening, large numbers being purchased as souvenirs of the occasion by visitors to the city. Later the same evening Mr. Rossie took a flash-light photo of the City Hall auditorium while the Orchestral Concert was in progress.



Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B 3159

Reception at Regina City Hall for Governor-General Earl Grey,
4 October 1909.

Finally, it related the first of a long line of celebrity praise and commendation for the photographer's work: "yesterday afternoon His Excellency personally visited Mr. Rossie's studio and expressed his great pleasure at the photos which he considered extremely excellent."

Other photographic shots taken during this period of urban growth included the King's Hotel, the Bank of Ottawa, and the Northern Bank. He also photographed the Post Office at the corner of Scarth Street and 11th Avenue.

Perhaps Rossie's most dramatic photographs were taken on 25 July 1917 on the occasion of the famous Grandstand Fire. A standing room crowd watching various acts at Regina's annual agricultural exhibition was surprised by a sudden conflagration which destroyed both the grandstand and the main exhibit building. Fortunately, there were no fatalities as the orderly crowd of five thousand vacated the grandstand in seven minutes.

Although many prints and postcards of the fire still exist, two shots in the possession of Rossie's son are unique in that on the reverse his father pencilled a few fragmented remarks about the events. The first photo reads:

Am getting all kinds of congratulations. Katie from Edmonton was with me. Some man yelled fire. We were in Directors Box. I jumped off on the railing and swung my hat yelling NO FIRE, stopped the stampede. Got all out safely and was last to leave.²¹

The second photo continues:

I made Katie sit down after the fire yell, then I said get up and go out quietly as . . . the flames through the cracks . . . ladies heard me and jumped [over] the front 15 feet. I had my camera along and was able to . . . The world illustrations . . . I sold one hundred and fifty dollars with these . . . 25¢ each.²²

One of these shots received front-page coverage on the following day. Another, "General View of Fire Swept Area," accompanied an article in the newspaper. Balancing the promotional possibilities of these photos, Rossie suffered a personal setback, as his studio's commercial exhibit, "New Works in Photography," had been located in the main building, now destroyed.²³

Rossie's business was remarkably successful during the years of the Great War. His published commercial ratings from March 1916 to January 1917 indicate an unbelievable company value of between fifty thousand and seventy-five thousand dollars with the highest possible credit.²⁴ His business came down somewhat in 1918 and 1919 to between twenty thousand and thirty-five thousand dollars. However, it increased again at the beginning of 1921 to between thirty-five thousand and fifty thousand dollars, and remained there for the rest of the decade.²⁵

From the time of the establishment of his studio, Rossie made a point of offering amateur processing as an integral service. In the early years he was able to cope with the extra business personally but by 1909 he found that the time expended on finishing was affecting the quality of his own professional work. Accordingly, he hired a young man, Charles J. Lord, as a second photographer and head of the Amateur Work Department. For five years this arrangement worked smoothly and his clientele mushroomed.

But by 1915 the amateur finishing had become so overwhelming that Rossie decided to set up a separate establishment to take care of this aspect and to retail cameras and photographic supplies. He called it the "Rex Photo Supply"

and took over the premises at 1805 Cornwall Street, although he also had a pick-up and drop-off depot at Kelly's Drug Store at 1794 Hamilton Street, next door to the Rex Theatre. The day-to-day operation was turned over to his trusted assistant, C. Lord.

A 1917 advertisement read:

Do you want your snapshots developed, printed and finished in first class style? If so, send them to us. We handle all Eastman supplies and cameras. Catalog mailed on request. Rex Photo Supply, Hamilton Street.²⁶

Throughout his career, Rossie engaged in two other non-photographic ventures. *Industrial Canada* reported in October 1912 that: "E. C. Rossie, Regina, Sask., is constructing a store and candy kitchen to cost \$9,900."²⁷ Neither its name nor lifespan can be determined. Between 1933 and 1937, he also operated Rossie's Jewelry Shop, which was managed by Samuel Zalkind. It was first located at 1784 Hamilton and by 1935 had moved over to 1831 Eleventh Avenue.

The main thrust of the Rossie Studio remained portraiture and a most impressive patronage did he receive. His first royal sitter was the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) who visited Regina on 4 October 1919 during his Canadian tour. The *Morning Leader* reported under the headline "E. C. Rossie Honored" that:

By Special Appointment, E. C. Rossie went to Government House yesterday at noon and photographed His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, Lady Lake and children, the Prince of Wales and other guests. Later in the day His Royal Highness congratulated Mr. Rossie upon the results achieved.²⁸

For his strongly royalist clientele, this was a significant nod of approval and his reputation was assured. After this, a portrait taken by Rossie became a type of status symbol. Another account described his notable patrons:

The city's leading photographer for many years, he was commanded on numerous occasions to appear at Government House to photograph leading personalities among them the Duke of Windsor when he was Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, Sir Robert Borden, the Bishop of London. He had made portraits, some in his studios, of every governor-general of Canada who visited Regina since Mr. Rossie settled here. He had photographed prime ministers of Canada and every lieutenant-governor of Saskatchewan in his time.²⁹

Rossie did not, however, confine himself to photographing celebrities. After the Great War he took what might be considered his most valuable series (in both the ethno-cultural and artistic senses) of portraits known as "The Indian Heads." This is a group of head shots of Saskatchewan Indian Chiefs taken at a province-wide meeting in Regina. The subjects include many of the notable native leaders of the period including Ben Pasqua of the Pasqua Reserve, Day Walker of the File Hills Reserve, Ometaway from the Muscoptung Reserve and White Eagle, Charlie Fox and Rock Thunder of the Piapot Reserve. Also included is Ka Ka Kabecca, first chief of the White Bear Reserve (near Carlyle) at the venerable age of 105.

The resulting images are undeniably powerful. Through a combination of dramatic lighting, a serious attempt to bring out character, and large format (all were on 8 x 10 inch negatives), Rossie succeeded in capturing the dignity and strength of the various Saskatchewan chiefs, comparable to the series of head-and-shoulders native portraits taken by Edward S. Curtis in the first decade of

the 1900's. Like Curtis, Rossie subordinated their costumes, no matter how impressive, to their faces and, like Curtis, used selective focus. The major difference however, is that Curtis took his portraits with natural light while Rossie used artificial studio light. Both Curtis and Rossie exhibited exquisite control over their presentation. But while Curtis' portraits have an undeniable tranquility and timeless grandeur, Rossie's photographs are more immediate, with a sharper edge to them. Curtis' photographs present the noble race, while Rossie's photographs deal with specific individuals.

It is possible, though not likely, that Rossie was familiar with Curtis' work. A more logical source of inspiration would probably have been Edmund Morris'



Saskatchewan Archives Board R-B 3840(2)

Chief Ben Pasqua of Pasqua Reservation, n.d.

fifteen painted Indian portraits commissioned by the Saskatchewan Government in 1909-1910. As they were hung in both the old and new legislative buildings, it would be safe to assume Rossie was familiar with them.

The exact date(s) of Rossie's series is difficult to determine. They could not have been taken later than 1926 when two portraits: "Ohoo, Sioux Chief" and "Achim, Young Chief, Cree" were hung at that year's Royal Photographic Society Exhibition. An obvious guess would place them in 1919 on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit to the capital. Not only is it logical that a royal visit would call for a meeting of chiefs in full regalia, but it is thought that the Prince either asked for or was presented with a set of these photos. The Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History in Regina recognized the value of the images and in March 1930, purchased sixteen hand-coloured and framed portraits for its permanent collection.

Rex Photo Supply Co. Ltd. was incorporated as a joint stock company on 6 March 1930 — with a registered capital of twenty thousand dollars.³⁰ The three directors were Rossie (with the largest number of shares equalling fifty percent) Charles Lord the manager, and Lord's wife Nellie.

The Memorandum of Association shows that the twenty-nine objectives of Rex Photo were all-encompassing and rather ambitious when one realizes that Saskatchewan had just entered into the Great Depression.³¹ These included processing and printing for both professionals and amateurs, enlarging, retouching, tinting and colouring, framing and the wholesaling and retailing of photographic supplies, "pictures of all manner and description," "all kinds of picture frames," "all painters supplies including paints, oils, brushes, and pigments."

The firm also intended to buy, sell and repair "all kinds of cameras, Kodaks, including moving picture cameras of every nature and description, and all supplies for the repairing of said articles and also for their operation." One odd and far-sighted objective read: "to develop and do all things necessary to finish and perfect pictures sent by the Radio or other similar means."³² Yet another, which does not appear to have been fulfilled was "to establish, maintain and carry on for profit, a studio for the purpose of teaching and training students in the art of photography . . ."³³

Finally, the firm seemed to have had a fully-developed public relations program. It would:

adopt such means of making known the business of the Company as may be expedient and in particular by advertising in the press, by circulars, by purchase and exhibition of works, or art, or interest, by publication of books and periodicals and by granting prizes, rewards and donations.³⁴

It is impossible to judge how well the Rex Photo Supply did throughout the 1930s, as no commercial ratings are available after 1933. We can assume fairly well as it survived for thirteen years. The firm was dissolved in 1943, the year after Rossie's death and was struck off the province's registry of joint stock companies on 10 April of that year.³⁵

Rossie was a pioneer in several aspects of photography. He was the first Reginan to engage in panoramic photography. Using the Eastman Kodak Cirkut outfit, Rossie documented the growth of the various industrial and residential areas of the capital in the 1910s and 1920s. As well, he took panoramas of the farms around Regina and the beautiful scenery in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Rossie

also has the distinction of taking the first moving pictures ever shot in the province, although the specific date and subject are as yet unclear.³⁶

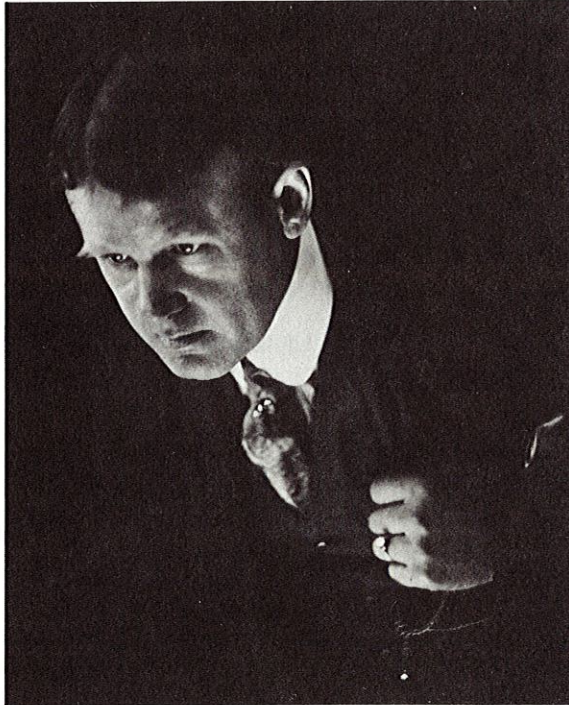
Finally, Rossie was possibly the earliest and undoubtedly the most skilled practitioner in Saskatchewan of pictorial photography. This was a significant aesthetic movement that originated in England. It became exceptionally popular in North America with the advent of New York's Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession in 1902, and Toronto's Sidney Carter and the Studio Club in 1905. The major characteristics of pictorialism are described thus:

Pictorialism sought to emulate traditional art media by using broad compositional design, suppression of detail, atmospheric effect, selective high-lighting and diffused or "soft" focus to create photographs that could be judged as works of art.³⁷

These ideas naturally appealed to Rossie, but due to the conservatism of his clientele, he experimented with them only as a pastime. His handiest subject was, of course, himself.

Rossie experimented with different types and surfaces of photographic paper and used a range of toners in his finished prints. As well he tried unorthodox poses and lighting. The resulting images are of much interest as much for the obvious artistic sensibilities as for the fact that they would not have sold commercially and would not have been requested by his customers.

His exposure to current developments in his particular art probably came from his extensive reading of art and photography journals. As well, his children remember that he refreshed his knowledge by attending seminars at the International School of Photography at Winona Lake, Indiana.



M. Rossie

Edgar C. Rossie: pictorial self-portrait, n.d.

Increasingly confident in his own abilities, Rossie became a regular contestant in the various national and international photographic salons held throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Rossie first exhibited his work in the Royal Photographic Society Annual Exhibition in 1924. The next year he was inducted as a full member of this British society, one of a handful of Canadian photographers to be so honoured. In August, 1924, he entered six photographs in the International Exhibition in Milwaukee and won honours for four of his submissions. In 1927, Rossie was inducted into the Photographers International Association of America.³⁸

A writer for the Parisian art magazine *Revue du vrai et du beau* noticed his work in the 1924 show and drafted a short critique. The assistant editor, Cadors, corresponded with Rossie requesting a number of photos to accompany the article.

It was both interesting and flattering public exposure. Beginning with generalities, the article proclaimed that:

Photography, which until now has been more or less left aside, has happily developed during these last few years and has now taken on a most artistic character. Thus it now has its place in the "Salons" on the same footing as painting or sculpture.³⁹

After explaining the three types of art photography; portrait, landscape and genre, it put forward the idea that:

... the portrait presents the greatest difficulties and discourages amateurs. Consequently we have particularly admired at the Royal Photographs [*sic*] Society the altogether remarkable exhibits from Edgar C. Rossie, of Regina Canada.

The praise was lavish:

... these works, imposing by the amplitude of dimensions, are master-pieces of beauty and of delicate execution. The portraits of men have a character which is martial, energetic without harshness and full of dignity. The portraits of women express the goodness, gentleness, and grace which constitute feminine charm. Those of children have all the candor of their age.

The summation was unreservedly enthusiastic:

... in all his works one remarks a surprising individuality of conception and of interpretation together with that impression of authority which belongs only to a master. While remaining faithful images, his photographs reveal marvelous designs, and are so expressive as to procure the illusion of contemplating the living person. Thanks to the effects of light and to his artistic sensibility, E. C. Rossie attains perfection and the press is unanimous in praising his superb portraits.

Rossie's next achievement was his inclusion in the very prestigious *Who's Who In Professional Portraiture In America* (Cleveland: Abel Publishing Co., 1927). While the vast majority of the entries were American, the editors realized the importance of Rossie's growing stature. Somewhat condescendingly, the brief biography began: "that mastership of photography is not confined to the big centers of population is shown by the work of Edgar C. Rossie up in the wide Northwest."⁴⁰ It went on to relate the fact that he had received the personal compliments of the Prince of Wales on the excellence of his work and that another of his achievements "... is that of having photographed every Prime Minister, Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament since Saskatchewan became a province in 1905."⁴¹





"Regina Looking South" (detail), ca. 1913.

West's Studio

He continued to exhibit with the Royal Photographic Society every year until 1934. Like many a talented Canadian artist, Rossie was more renowned outside his own country.

While the Depression affected his business adversely, Rossie could always depend on patronage from the municipal and provincial governments and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Private sittings fell off considerably, but Rossie continued to photograph in exchange for products such as butter or eggs.

His commercial ratings are only available for the first years of the 1930s. From July 1930 to January 1932 his firm's value was reported as between twenty thousand and thirty-five thousand dollars with first-rate credit.⁴² One can see the effect of the Depression already by July 1933 when a rapid decline can be observed to between five thousand and ten thousand dollars and only good credit. It was all downhill from there.

Rossie had a multi-faceted and interesting character — a mixture of quiet generosity and egotism, sensitive artistry and financial prowess. During the Great War his contribution was as official government photographer to the 195th Battalion but, like everyone else, he made personal and business sacrifices:

Mr. Rossie happened to mention to a friend a few days ago, he apportioned \$75 a month to buy comforts for troops overseas as sort of a one-man assistance bureau and in this war he was photographing members of the armed forces at cost.⁴³

Rossie was aware that he was professionally head and shoulders above other photographers and came to expect commissions to take the portraits of visiting royalty or top government representatives. Unabashed self-promotion was the accepted method of marketing in this period and Rossie was not unique in practicing it. When his pictures were acclaimed at a prestigious salon he would include that fact in his latest ad. When he exhibited photos in England or had a photo published in a French art magazine, he made sure that news of it went into his advertisements.

When the famous English actor, Sir Martin Harvey, visited Rossie's studio in the early 1920s he said "Your photographs are wonderful — why don't you go to a bigger city?"⁴⁴ Of course, Rossie could not keep the compliment to himself and included it in his next advertisement.

His public relations skills would have been of little use had Rossie not possessed sound business sense. He invested in real estate (promoting the development of Regina Beach from 1912), stocks (such as the Saskatchewan General Trust Company and the Similkameen Fruits Land Company of British Columbia) and art from regional artists such as John Perry. During the 1920s, he was probably better off financially than any other Saskatchewan photographer.

In 1940, Rossie suffered the first of several heart attacks. He was thereafter confined to studio portraiture and most of his exterior work was taken over by his friend and fellow photographer, Wilfred West.

Rossie died on 14 March 1942 at the age of 66 years, succumbing to a heart attack. He was buried at his summer residence, Regina Beach. The studio was dissolved and much of the equipment and the negatives were purchased by West's Studio, as well as the studio's customer list, or "good will", as it was called.

Acknowledged as the "Dean of Saskatchewan Photographers" in his obituary, Rossie was an artist in the true sense of the word. A progressive, innovative

photographer, he was also, owing largely to his own efforts, the most famous in the province. On the eighty-fifth anniversary of his start in Regina, it is time to acknowledge and appreciate his photographic legacy.

ENDNOTES

1. *Who's Who In Professional Portraiture in America* (Cleveland: Abel Publishing Company, 1927) 112. Rossie's uncle, Francis Westlake, was one of London's best-known photographers who operated a studio there between 1878 and 1910. Westlake moved to Rochester, New York and worked there from 1910 to 1912, after which he relocated to Swift Current, Saskatchewan. He continued his business there until his death in 1942.
2. *Who's Who and Why* (Toronto: International Press Ltd., 1917-1918), 198.
3. *Town Topics*, 28 October 1899.
4. *Souvenir of City of Winnipeg* (Winnipeg, 1901), 23.
5. *Regina Leader*, 24 August 1904.
6. *Ibid.*, 12 October 1904.
7. *Bradstreet's Book of Commercial Ratings* (New York: Bradstreet Co., 1907), 35.
8. *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book* (Toronto: R. G. Dun & Co., 1907), 931.
9. *Ibid.*, (1911), 1078.
10. *Ibid.*, (1912), 1135.
11. *Weekly Standard*, 18 July 1906.
12. *Regina Leader*, 10 December 1906.
13. *Ibid.*, 28 April 1906.
14. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1911.
15. *Annual Report* (Regina: Regina Public Library, 1912), 13.
16. *Regina Leader*, 14 October 1912.
17. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1912.
18. *Ibid.*, 5 October 1909.
19. *Public Accounts of the Province of Saskatchewan For the Financial Year Ended February 28, 1910* (Regina: John A. Reid, Government Printer, 1910), 134.
20. *Regina Leader*, 6 October 1909.
21. Reverse of photograph in possession of M. Rossie, Regina.
22. *Ibid.*
23. "Listing of Exhibitors" *Regina Leader*, 24 July 1917, 4.
24. *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book* (Toronto: R. G. Dun & Co., 1917), 1364.
25. *Ibid.*, (1921), 1362.
26. *Regina Leader*, 2 July 1917.
27. *Industrial Canada* (Vol. XIII, No. 3) October 1912, 522.
28. *Regina Leader*, 6 October 1919.
29. "E. C. Rossie Is Dead", *Regina Leader-Post*, 14 March 1942. One distinct memory of Rossie's son is that few of the truly important politicians were considerate enough to actually pay the photographer's fees.
30. Rex Photo Supply Co. Ltd., Certificate of Incorporation No. 4317, Province of Saskatchewan, 6 March 1930 on file at office of Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Regina.
31. Rex Photo Supply Co. Ltd., Memorandum of Association, 26 February 1930 — on file at office of Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Regina.
32. *Ibid.*, 2.
33. *Ibid.*, 1.
34. *Ibid.*, 5.
35. Rex Photo Supply Co. Ltd., Notice of Dissolution, 10 April 1943 on file at office of Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Regina.
36. J. Hawkes, *The Story of Saskatchewan and Its People*, Vol. III (Regina: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1924), 1549.
37. L. Koltun (ed.), *Private Realms of Light* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1984), 32.
38. In accepting his membership certificate, Rossie had to agree to follow a nine-point Code of Ethics. Some of the more noble points which coincided with his view of photography included:
 1. The practice of photography both as a science and an art is worthy of the very best thought and endeavor of those who take it up as a vocation.
 2. Having accepted photography as a vocation, the practitioner should at all times and all places esteem it an honour to say "I am a professional photographer."
 3. Our brother photographer's name and reputation should be as sacred as our own. Unnecessary criticism should have no place in our daily lives.
 4. We recognize our responsibility to give aid and advice to those whose knowledge is less than our own who seek our help, so they may progress in the practice of photography.
39. "Edgar C. Rossie", *The Revue of the True and Beautiful* (English translation), undated, on file at National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
40. *Who's Who In Professional Portraiture*, 112.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Bradstreet's Book of Commercial Ratings* (New York: Bradstreet Co., 1930), 100.
43. "E. C. Rossie Is Dead", *Regina Leader-Post*, 14 March 1942.
44. *Western Woman and Rural Home*, Vol. I, No. VI (April, 1924): inside back cover.

EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY JEWISH FARM SETTLEMENTS IN SASKATCHEWAN: A UTOPIAN PERSPECTIVE

By Anthony W. Rasporich

Even a cursory reading of the documentary material relating to the Jewish rural settlements in western Canada, particularly those in eastern Saskatchewan, at Hirsch, Sonnenfeld, Qu'Appelle (Lipton and Cupar), and Edenbridge, reveal something other than the quasi-harmonious co-operative model implied and often stated in the histories written about them.¹ This historiography demonstrates, for want of another term, the need for a more dialectical or conflict-model of analysis, one which might permit for example some deeper exploration of the themes of: paternalism and/or dependence on the various metropolitan jurisdictions which governed these communities; factionalism, discord and litigation in intra- and inter-community socio-economic relations; and, settlement strategies and personal economic choices in the first, second and third generations and conflict related thereto. In short, it may be possible to read the histories of these Jewish settlements as much in the harsher daylight of social reality, of settlement survival, and even abandonment, than to perpetuate the social idealism which inspired their creation.² To do so does not diminish the communitarian values at their root or detract from the enormous collective achievement of the first generation in sticking on the land, but it does address critical questions relating to the realities of persistence and adaptation to rural change in early twentieth-century Saskatchewan.

My own interest in the question of the Jewish farmer in western Canada stems from a scholarly project on the utopian aspects of communitarian settlements, secular, religious and ethnic, which addresses both their survival and failure, on the Canadian prairies.³ Tantalizing references in contemporary historiography to the "New Jerusalem" quest in prairie Jewish settlements and to the influence of the "Am Olam" back-to-the-land movement on the evanescent Jewish farm colony at Moosomin in the 1880s, known briefly as "New Jerusalem," established an interest in historic parallels to other religious and ethnic settlements in the Canadian North-West.⁴ Further reading uncovered Baron de Hirsch and his idealistic views on philanthropy enunciated in the *North American Review* in 1891.⁵ That piece, which confidently exploded the myth of the non-agricultural Jew, also advocated an ambitious programme of "moral and physical regeneration" for the oppressed Jews of Europe by promoting their migration as farmers to the Argentine, Canada and Australia. Acting as philanthropists often do, as the pragmatist rather than utopian, the Baron

proclaimed that "every age in the History of the Jews teaches us that in thinking this I am following no Utopian theory," but this was belied by a grandiose conviction in "this huge cosmopolitan scheme [which] would scatter my strength broadcast." Further, he believed that concentrations of Jews in American cities should be avoided in future, and he expressed a strong preference for establishing rural communities in the Argentine and Canada where they would be scattered through "different lands and spread over a large space, so that there should be no opportunity for social and religious rupture." That the social reality should depart so markedly from the ideal was mercifully spared to de Hirsch who died shortly after in 1896, but his rural design gave a profoundly different stamp to Canadian Jewry for a generation on the Canadian prairies.⁶

The metropolitan complications of a Bavarian Jewish philanthropist resident in Paris supporting a scheme of prairie settlement in Canada via a charitable corporation based in London, the Jewish Colonization Association (hereinafter J.C.A.), and administered both from Paris and Montreal, were legion. Nor did they get any less complicated over time. In the first instance, Canadian involvement in the project was managed through the Montreal branch of the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society, which in 1892 attracted J.C.A. funds from Paris to support the western settlement of refugee Russian Jews in the Hirsch-Oxbow region of southeastern Saskatchewan.⁷ Further institutional and metropolitan complications occurred in 1900 when the J.C.A. provided finances directly to the Canadian Department of the Interior in Ottawa, which took over direct control and management of the next settlement of Roumanian Jewish farmers in the Qu'Appelle region east of Regina.⁸ Then, in 1903, the J.C.A. transferred control of its western Canadian colonies to its American agents in New York, the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society (hereinafter J.A.I.A.S.), until 1907 when the Canadian committee in Montreal again took them over.⁹ Thus in less than two decades, the management and operations of the Jewish farm colonies in western Canada had changed four times, resulting in profound policy changes with each shift in managers. No surer prescription for chaos could have been devised as settlers consistently fell into the institutional interstices which governed not only the ownership but the use of their lands.

Examining the first phase of metropolitan control over the establishment of the Hirsch settlement in the 1890s, it is apparent that London continued to play the pre-eminent role it had previously in the Moosomin failure of the 1880s, presided over by the Canadian High Commissioner, Alexander Galt.¹⁰ But in this instance, the London Committee and the Mansion House Fund were no longer involved since the dispersion of the first settlement in the 1880s. Instead, the combined interests of the Montreal Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society (Y.M.H.B.S.) and the London-based J.C.A. promised better management, via the Montreal office of the Baron de Hirsch Institute and a non-Jewish farm manager in the Qu'Appelle, Charles McDiarmid.¹¹ After a year of considerable expense and frustration in establishing some sixty families on the land, the Montreal Board had spent the entire \$16,500 initially allocated to the venture. They naturally concluded by the end of 1892 that the manager McDiarmid was to blame, adding that, "it is impossible for our Society here at a distance of 1,700 miles from the Colony to overlook in a manner satisfactory to ourselves, what is going on there."¹² McDiarmid himself was called to Montreal

for an accounting, and he defended himself as best he could, claiming that it was nearly impossible to instruct through an interpreter a group of unwilling and inexperienced settlers, whom he also claimed would not work on religious holidays and appropriated colony property from him.¹³

The next Hirsch administrator, Isaac Mendels, wrote an even more devastating report in 1894 to the Montreal Board. He compared the low productivity of the Russian Jews at Hirsch not only to the "Christian settlers" nearby but also to unsubsidized Jewish farmers at nearby Oxbow, notably Ascher Pierce, who was about to harvest over twenty-five hundred bushels of wheat.¹⁴ Some sixty thousand dollars later, the Board decided on consultation with Paris to take out liens on the settlers' property, and the settlement suffered further setbacks via desertions and poor productivity. As A. M. Burgess, the Deputy-Minister of the Interior in Ottawa, explained somewhat patronizingly to his deputy on the colony's tribulations: "I am afraid that the Baron de Hirsch Institute in Montreal are merely having the experience which other philanthropic individuals and societies have had before, and that meddling interference of outsiders on the ground is having the direct effect of making the colonists dissatisfied and encouraging them to persist in bad resolutions."¹⁵

With the failure and then gradual stabilization of the diminished colony, metropolitan direction began to shift once again in 1896.¹⁶ With de Hirsch's death that year, the J.C.A. in Paris re-oriented its direction of the Canadian colonies by appointing Professor Sabsovitch of the Woodbine colony in New Jersey to report on the Hirsch colony and its future prospects.¹⁷ Predictably, his report recommended the expenditure of more money to make the colony viable: funding for a Hebrew school, the acquisition of a threshing machine, and the building of a creamery.¹⁸ Despite the considerable consternation of the Montreal colonization committee, control of the Hirsch colony gradually revolved to the central office in Paris and then back towards New York. By 1901 a representative of the J.A.I.A.S. in New York forwarded a report on the Hirsch colony, and characteristically placed the blame on excessive paternalism, stressing the need for the American virtues of self-reliance, equality and independence:

Your representative can form no other conclusion than this, that the colonists have come to believe whenever they are in a tight spot all they have to do is call upon the Paris Society for assistance and their requirements will be met; that, in consequence the colonists, or at least the old members thereof, have lost their manly self-reliance, and to a certain extent are incapable of carrying on farming operations with the success that one [may] have who had had to rely largely upon his own resources and has thus become accustomed to overcome his obstacles.¹⁹

The solutions to the problem were equally predictable, as the New York office of the J.A.I.A.S. was advised to put everyone in possession of their own title in order to reduce the colonists' indebtedness, and to locate the farmers independently on homesteads nearer to market towns rather than in Hirsch. Further suggestions by other American observers even included the settling of lands vacated by the colonists with non-Jewish "Canadian and foreign settlers, who by their skill and experience become useful neighbors to the Jewish farmers as proven beneficial in New England."²⁰

In 1903, the Paris J.C.A. transferred official authority to Louis Kahn, the New York agent of the J.A.I.A.S., thereby promoting further tensions between

the communal ideals formerly encouraged by Montreal and the individualistic values now being prized by New York. Kahn himself favoured the idea of disposing of the several deserted quarter-sections by sales to Gentiles, but was cautious in his approach to the Paris J.C.A. since "it is possible that you would rather sell these lands to Jews at a lower figure than you would to non-Jews."²¹ He then encountered some unexpectedly stiff communal resistance from some newly arrived Russian Jews from North Dakota who wanted to settle *en bloc* like the Doukhobors on a tract of seven thousand acres,²² and in Hirsch itself, the same fear and distrust of previous J.C.A. administrators and agents before him. Tensions of the latter sort emerged in the voice of the English-trained rabbi *cum* farmer, *schochet* (ritual slaughterer) and schoolteacher, Marcus Berner, who enjoyed considerable authority in the local community since his arrival in 1899. His repeated requests for increased local funding and services, from a cemetery to a school and synagogue, were sent to the central office in Paris, and back to Kahn for resolution.²³

An important parallel development in the shift of jurisdictional control to New York occurred in the nearby Qu'Appelle colony of Roumanian Jews established in 1900. As has been well documented in previous community and ethnic histories, the federal Ministry of the Interior had, only with great reluctance, bowed to pressure from London to admit persecuted Jews from Roumania into western Canada. Despite the active opposition of the Minister of the Interior and his deputy, James Smart, the London spokesman for the J.C.A. was successful in persuading Lord Minto and Sir Wilfrid Laurier with generous cash outlays to support an initial shipment of Roumanian Jews into Canada as farmers.²⁴ Eventually, the Deputy-Minister himself became the trustee for the settlers and a sum of £10,000 was forwarded to a local banker in Fort Qu'Appelle, Donald H. McDonald, who chose over eight thousand acres of land at Qu'Appelle some seventy miles northeast of Regina for the fifty families who arrived in 1901. It was this group of some three hundred colonists at Qu'Appelle which fell under Kahn's New York management in 1903, when the Ministry of the Interior withdrew as its trustee.

The Qu'Appelle colony rapidly became embroiled in controversies which swirled about ownership of colony property with the shift in jurisdiction to New York from Ottawa. Louis Kahn himself came under extreme fire from a number of the colonists led by H. Bolocan, who penned a classic immigrant critique of the intermediaries and agents who exploited them. Addressed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the petition eloquently addressed a "sort of slavery, serfdom and oppression . . . unheard of since the days of Pharaoh of old," and roundly condemned Kahn as a "New York real estate drummer," intent on acquiring all of the colony's property in the name of the J.C.A.²⁵ Further challenges to Kahn's authority prompted a counter-offensive in the form of a lawsuit against one of the Roumanian dissidents, one Janku Baratz, who had apparently appropriated a mower and a buggy provided to the colony by the Ministry of the Interior.²⁶ The subsequent litigation proved a rather nasty affair involving the Deputy-Minister, James Smart, who gave testimony in Ottawa, and it also gave the dissident colonists a platform for their grievances which were aired as far away as London. The vocal Baratz voiced his many concerns to such powerful figures as Israel Zangwill in England, touching upon a sensitive nerve with his complaint, "shall we again go peddling or do something of that kind after we have

begun already to apply ourselves in agricultural work?" For greater effect he included a lament on the frustrated utopian aspirations of the Roumanian colony, whose hopes to become "heroes of our nation" and "a substratum of Zionism" had been dashed.²⁷

Given such a negative experience with New York superintendence, it was not surprising that the J.C.A. decided in 1906 to re-organize again its Canadian operations through Montreal.²⁸ Early in 1907, the Canadian Committee of the J.C.A. was established in connection with the Baron de Hirsch Institute, and its duties were specifically enumerated to include: the dispersal of immigrants across Canada; the control, reporting and bookkeeping on western settlements and J.C.A. loans and liens; and generally to act as the agents for the Paris head office. Among its specific western objectives, the committee was to satisfy the Canadian government that "the Jew can be a successful agriculturalist."²⁹ To this purpose it would take over the Hirsch and Qu'Appelle colonies from the J.A.I.A.S., collect interest payments on loans granted by the J.C.A., and further, it would purchase more land — some twenty thousand acres within reach of the existing colonies. In specific terms, the Hirsch and Qu'Appelle colonies would receive greater loans assistance, economic diversification to dairy-farming was to be encouraged, and cultural institutions were to be heavily subsidized.

The persistence of the utopian-communal vision among certain elements in the Canadian Committee was apparent in the further recommendations made concerning the Qu'Appelle colonies later in 1909. While congratulating the J.C.A. that it had placed 166 Jewish farmers on 28,160 acres, their visiting correspondent, M. Rosenblat, proposed further improvements to remedy persistent colony defections, stemming in his view, from a lack of agricultural expertise. The solution which would make the colony viable was to establish a J.C.A.-sponsored model farm in the colony, something along the lines of an experimental farm where local farmers could keep abreast of new agricultural methods, and earn prizes for noteworthy achievements. And, to keep the colony more effectively Jewish, since fifty or more farmers were now too distant from the local Hebrew school, a central boarding school should be established for the teaching of Hebrew as well as English. Such a central school would also act as a disseminator of accurate local information, both cultural and agricultural, and thereby advance the cause of these Jews "in the heart of the prairie."³⁰

How did the Jewish colonists on the prairies react to the directives of the Canadian Committee in Montreal? In the first place, the harsh winter of 1906 and difficulties with early frosts and inadequate supplies of seed grain in 1907-1908 brought renewed pleas for financial assistance. The J.C.A. as usual came to the rescue with further loans and distribution of five hundred sacks of flour to one hundred and fifty homesteaders.³¹ Given the J.C.A.'s encouragement of diversification, further pleas for assistance in purchasing dairy herds flowed in during 1908 so that the farmers would not be abandoned — in the colourful metaphor of one petitioner — "in the middle of the ocean, without oars and without hope of ever reaching shore."³² Their requests were accompanied by eloquent oratorical flights condemning the local administrator of the Lipton colony, and representations were even organized by self-constituted local committees to present their case in Montreal. The Canadian Committee there predictably aligned itself with the local administrator, hectoring the colonists that the Paris office would no longer support them, unless they "should settle down

to serious work, as the colony cannot prove successful while the impression prevails that their debts will always be paid for them and they will be nursed forever."³³ The colony superintendent echoed these sentiments, arguing that the disaffected petitioners continued "to look on the J.C.A. as their Godfather" and was somehow "morally bound to dig them out of the ditch."³⁴ The net result was that while deaf ears were turned towards Saskatchewan in Montreal and Paris, colony defalcations on loans increased and twenty percent of them abandoned their farms in 1909.

The Qu'Appelle colonies, particularly the northern Lipton group, persisted as a troublesome area through and after World War One. Factionalism boiled on, with periodic visitations to Montreal by one group or another seeking competitive advantage. In particular, the Bolocan group caused the local administrator considerable grief, for example, in counselling other settlers to assign their property and chattels to their wives and relatives in order to escape their creditors in case of farm failure.³⁵ Later administrators after the war also expressed considerable frustration in making their collections in the postwar depression of the early 1920s. The frustrations of eighteen disaffected Lipton debtors was evident in a petition of 1920 which lamented their perpetual indebtedness ever since their first arrival. Their intention was, if at all possible, to sell their land *en bloc*, and to purchase lands purportedly owned by the J.C.A. in Palestine.³⁶

Tensions between farm colonies and the Jewish Colonization Association and its agents were common to nearly every Jewish community in western Canada.³⁷ Given the inherent conflict embedded in the debtor-creditor relationship, difficulties naturally emerged in the fall of each year when the crops were harvested and the colony administrator appeared requesting payment of loans.³⁸ This hostile relationship was painfully detailed, for example, in a published reminiscence, *Land of Hope*, by Israel Hoffer, one of the pioneers of the Sonnenfeld Colony sixty miles west of Hirsch. As a later agent for the colony which came under J.C.A. jurisdiction in 1917, Hoffer suffered considerable abuse at the hands of prospective settlers and established farmers alike. The most sensational legal case involving Hoffer occurred in 1931 with a civil action launched against the J.C.A. and its western manager, Simon Belkin, for \$124,150. The case involving a disgruntled new immigrant named Baum, was tried in Montreal, where the trial judge reprimanded him for false testimony against Hoffer and others, and charged him with perjury in dismissing the case against the J.C.A.³⁹ The attitudinal source of such actions against the J.C.A. was perhaps best summed up in a comment on recalcitrant farmers by the administrator of the sister Rumsey colony in central Alberta during the early 1930s, ". . . Several of them adopt an irresponsible and very deplorable attitude . . . some even refuse to give us statistical information when requested, on the ground that they are not indebted to us and that we are therefore not entitled to know anything of their activities."⁴⁰

Further tensions were produced within the colonies by communal institutions and voluntary associations, and by factional rivalries, some familial, and others ideological and religious. In Hirsch, which was regarded as one of the more harmonious settlements, one second-generation respondent recollected: "It can truthfully be said that poor or even bad relationship [*sic*] existed between some of the older generation of Jewish settlers quite often. Friction quite often

developed and split the community into two factions, with animosity prevailing for years."⁴¹ Conflicts arose, for example, over who the teacher or *schochet* should be. Some Hirsch settlers supported Rabbi Berner in this latter role after 1900, but others did not, with the consequence that they would not buy meat that he had slaughtered, and it would have to be disposed of to Gentile farmers or butchers in Estevan or Bienfait. Indeed, Berner himself had decided by 1914 that he had endured enough, and tendered his resignation to the J.C.A. with passionate eloquence: "Why shall I devote my time, labour and ability for such a class of people who instead of appreciating are opposing and at the same time are also torturing my life to the very *extreme*. It is really needless to explain any more for you had the opportunity to witness the many abuses and ill-treatment towards me at the last two succeeding great meetings at Hirsch. It is enough!"⁴²

Perhaps the strongest instances of intra-colony strife were manifested in the highly successful Edenbridge (Yid'n Bridge) colony established in 1906 near Melfort on the C.N.R. line. There, the settlement was split into two physically separate ideological camps, the "Am Olamite" left-wing (Russian-English-Jewish) socialists on the north end who arrived after 1911, and the original founding fragment of Orthodox Jews from South Africa at the south end.⁴³ Tensions soon emerged with the establishment of two distinct sets of institutions by 1914. In fact, peace was secured only by the active intervention of the J.C.A. administrator, E. C. Guilaroff, who forced a detente between the two groups with the considerable financial leverage at his disposal:

Socially the farmers of Edenbridge are the worse [*sic*] people I have come across. There was no social peace for some years. Their acrimoniousness towards each other exceeded all bounds. Two halls had been erected at enormous cost, the second solely for the reason that the first was used as a Synagogue which others considered superfluous.

Whilst there I had them all at a meeting in the Synagogue and told them plainly that the Committee is not going to tolerate such a state any longer. Unless they all join together, work together as Jews, support their own Jewish institutions we will have nothing further to do with them, and will probably know how to deal with recalcitrants.

I had them all join the Credit Union, obtained promises of joining the two halls together, and they all agreed to pay for a Hebrew teacher, though for years they refused to countenance such a thing.⁴⁴

The J.C.A. was further able to force the Edenbridge colonists to united action on key issues affecting them in the 1920s. With increased prosperity reflected in a viable colony of over two hundred settlers, Edenbridge farmers unanimously disavowed any threat to colony stability and survived. Thus, when criminal charges were laid against seven of their number for illegal manufacture and sale of alcohol, all factions supported the decision of the J.C.A. administrator to evict any criminal offenders from the colony after foreclosing on their mortgage and liquidating their accounts. In early July, 1922, the colonists formed an ethics committee reflective of all its diverse elements to "supervise the moral [*sic*] of the Jewish farmer."⁴⁵ Trouble would be anticipated by warning an offender to discontinue breaking any law "which causes shame and blasphemy on the Jewish name."⁴⁶ Such draconian treatment of moral offenders was directly reminiscent of other failed utopian ventures in western Canada, both imaginary and real, from the real Hamona colony near Tantalton in the 1890s to

E. A. Partridge's fictional puritan commonwealth COALSAMAO described in his *War on Poverty* in 1925.⁴⁷

The tenuous intra-community relations in the Saskatchewan colonies also appeared to militate, within the first generation at least, against the formation of effective self-help credit institutions, such as had arisen among Jewish colonies in the United States and among other communitarian societies such as the Mormons in Utah and southern Alberta. The pattern in the Saskatchewan settlement appears to have been a relatively early establishment of credit unions (Hirsch, 1910; Edenbridge, 1910-1911; Sonnenfeld, 1917), and their abandonment or liquidation in the 1920s.⁴⁸ The key stimulus to action seems to have been the ubiquitous J.C.A., which provided the start-up capital in their formation. In 1912, for example, the Edenbridge Hebrew Loan Society began with great hope in emulating similar associations in the United States, and immediately asked for a five hundred dollar initial loan from the J.C.A. to begin operation.⁴⁹ By the early 1920s, the credit union was defunct, and while there was some talk of its revival, the colony's leaders first felt that there should be the building "of a proper spirit of mutual aid and co-operation which so far was apparently lacking in the colony."⁵⁰ Similarly, the Hirsch Co-operative Credit Union experienced considerable difficulty in attracting farmers to it, indeed of even securing anyone to co-sign a promissory note covering the initial five hundred dollar loan from the J.C.A.⁵¹ By 1922 the Hirsch credit union had closed shop with an indebtedness to the J.C.A. of nearly four thousand dollars.⁵² While other credit unions appeared to hang on at Lipton and Sonnenfeld, they seemed to have played neither a vital nor indispensable role in the economic life of these communities, particularly as they became more self-sufficient.⁵³

A more vital component of economic co-operation to the Jewish farmers appeared in fact to lie in the co-operative institutions of the larger Anglo-Canadian society. An early interest was expressed in the Qu'Appelle colony in the resolutions of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association against the exploitative practices of the elevator companies in 1909.⁵⁴ After the Great War, there was also considerable interest among the Edenbridge socialist faction in particular when Aaron Sapiro made his first tour of Saskatchewan in 1923 promoting co-operative elevator companies.⁵⁵ By the time he made his visit, the Edenbridge farmers had already participated in the formation of rural telephone companies, had taken out shares in the construction of a local co-operative elevator, and were marketing their cream at the nearby Melfort co-op dairy.⁵⁶ By 1931, Louis Rosenberg, the socialistically-inclined representative of the J.C.A. in Saskatchewan, proudly reported that of the 165 farmers for whom there were records, "there were none who were not marketing at least some of their products through a co-operative organization."⁵⁷ This activity, he noted, contrasted favorably with the participation rates of about one-third for farmers of all origins who were marketing with the producer co-operatives.

The assimilative power of the larger Canadian society was further evident in the rapid depletion of Jewish farm settlements within a generation. Rosenberg noted in his pioneering demographic study that, of the 573 Jewish farmers for whom records were available, 351 or 61.3% who had farmed for some time, were no longer resident on farms in 1931.⁵⁸ Although he also noted that the continuous farm-occupancy rates for Jewish farmers were *higher* than for all

farmers in western Canada and that Jewish sons persisted in farming longer than the average universal rate of rural persistence among Canadians in the second generation, it was also evident that the total Jewish farm population in Canada had dropped in Canada between 1921 and 1931, and particularly in Jewish farm settlements established between 1911 and 1931.⁵⁹

The salient fact was that for Jews, as well as other ethnic groups, economic opportunity beckoned in the towns and cities of the West. While these communities did not vanish as the earlier Moosomin experiment had in the 1880s, the future was, as one pioneer's son recollected, "not very bright for the younger generation," and when any of them departed to larger centers for their schooling they did not return to farming.⁶⁰ In personal terms, this odyssey to the city was compellingly recollected in Fredelle Bruser Maynard's *Raisins and Almonds*, which details the entire family's departure from Birch Hills, Saskatchewan for "the golden city" of Winnipeg in the late 1920s.⁶¹ Other variations on the theme were occasional departures even in the first generation, such as Herschel Wolfvitch, one of the original South African pioneers at Edenbridge, who was forced to trek once again in 1923 when his second wife departed with their children for St. Louis.⁶² Such departures were characteristic strategic choices made by many of the second generation of settlers on the prairies in the 1920s and 1930s. They had to make the invidious choices of succession on the land or migration, and as John Bennett had observed of southwestern Saskatchewan in the 1930s, even those who opted for "holding on, financial need still forced many of these out of Saskatchewan for a period of time."⁶³

Tragically, it was the cruel use of these statistics of migration to the cities by the Federal Deputy-Minister of Immigration, F. C. Blair, which led to the exclusion of European-Jewish refugees from entering Canada and from taking up land on the prairies. When pressured by the J.C.A. to accept more refugees in 1936, Blair laconically referred to the "shrinkage" of families on the prairies, concluding his refusal by noting that "it is evident that in the southern part of the prairies there has not been much of an attraction to Jewish farmers."⁶⁴ Then, despite a close investigation of the continued viability of these settlements and the demonstrated persistence of the Jewish farmers by local farm inspectors, it was apparent that neither Blair nor the federal Liberal government in Ottawa was listening. A request to allow the directorate of the J.C.A., which was fleeing Paris in 1940, to move to Canada was refused, completing the bureaucratic ignomy. Thus, Blair and his political superiors ensured that there would not be another generation of Jewish farmers in western Canada. Blair thus personally helped fulfil the prophetic rural sceptic's comment, who upon witnessing a grain exhibition in Regina in 1933 extolling Jewish farming exploits on six continents, arrogantly proclaimed, "*Doch Giebt's kein Judische farmer!* (Nevertheless there are no Jewish farmers!)"⁶⁵

As has been amply documented elsewhere, Jewish farm settlements did in fact disintegrate further in the 1950s and 1960s, partially as a result of the restrictive official attitudes which persisted during the Great Depression and war years. This farm depopulation also occurred in part as a result of a change in postwar J.C.A. policy which encouraged the entry of Jewish immigrants into some specialized forms of farming in eastern Canada.⁶⁶ Finally, the upward and outward social mobility from these prewar settlements accelerated the depopula-

tion of these farm enclaves so that by the 1970s only a few residual farm families remained.⁶⁷

The final failure to sustain Jewish farm colonies in southeastern Saskatchewan should not lead to the historical fallacy that they never existed, but neither should they proclaim a mythology of harmonious co-operation before their decline. Indeed, it is somewhat ironic that the farm colonies projected for western Canada in the utopian visions of Baron de Hirsch and the J.C.A. should be faltering in their communitarian purpose at the same time that the *kibbutzim* and *shifutim* ideals were taking hold in Palestine. The latter have in fact been often used as highly successful examples of the implementation of utopian-socialist aspirations of rural communal living.⁶⁸

Among those studies, for example, which analyze the Israeli communes and compare them to other communitarian experiments is Rosabeth Moss Kanter's *Commitment and Community*, pointing out three essential forms of community commitment which must exist in order for communitarian ideals to survive: (1) the instrumental or cost commitment, which entails sacrifice and economic deprivation, often the holding of property in common, life in physical isolation from other communities and communal residence; (2) affective commitment to the community's collective ideals in terms of unique social arrangements, rituals and celebrations which distinguish the community from the *outside*; and, (3) moral commitment to community standards achieved partially through negative reinforcement of punishment or banishment, and positively through a sense of communally-transcendent values.⁶⁹

While it is apparent that several communitarian experiments for a time at least presented a successful realization of these principles, notably the Hutterites, Doukhobors, and the *kibbutzim*, the Jewish farm colonies on the prairies did not. Like many other ethnic and utopian experiments which vanished within a generation, the Jewish farm settlements also dispersed eventually in the second and third generations. Both the reasons for and the rates of their dispersion varied, but their abandonment cannot be seen strictly as failure induced by a hostile public policy discouraging replenishment of these communities. The causes were also internal and reflect an essential failure to achieve the necessary commitment from the settlers. Lack of sufficient communal institutions, both economic and social, and an excessive metropolitan dependence on the financial largesse of the Jewish Colonization Association were persistent themes even in the early history of the colonies. Affective commitments were equally lacking in the sense of an insufficient social boundary against the outside community, and an extreme internal divisiveness which militated against the articulation of a common set of values. While a somewhat greater degree of success was attained in the realization of a moral sense of commitment, particularly in the matter of social discipline against "bootlegging" in 1923, once again the impulse was provided by the external agency, the J.C.A., which provided the economic sanctions against the offenders.

Thus, the reluctant conclusion is advanced that despite its noble intentions and considerable patience in developing the farm colonies in western Canada, the J.C.A. likely contributed unwittingly to their eventual demise. By providing the settlers with a common economic enemy to rail against since it was the prime creditor in the community, and acting as it often did as an external outlet

for their extreme divisiveness, the J.C.A. must bear some of the burden for the colonies' inability to establish a sound communitarian base in the first generation. Additionally, there were confusing institutional signals emanating from Montreal, New York, London and Paris which offered yet further opportunity for colonists to divide rather than to unite.

From a comparative perspective, the troubled history of the early Jewish farm settlements in western Canada offers yet another variation upon a common Canadian settlement theme, that is, sudden or gradual suffocation by paternalism. In common with a whole host of agricultural settlements from the Selkirk colony in the nineteenth century forward to the Barr colony in the twentieth century, those colonies with a strongly articulated philanthropic impulse most often foundered because of their dependence on a distant and narrow power base or ideology. These vital metropolitan lifelines, when suddenly or even gradually withdrawn, created havoc in, and even destruction of, these precarious communities in the harsh environment of the Canadian prairies. While the Jewish settlements in Saskatchewan lasted longer than many similar experiments, it was perhaps testimony more to the paternalistic persistence of the J.C.A. through to the Second World War than to the resolve of the settlers themselves.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See B. G. Sack, *A History of the Jews in Canada, From the Earliest Beginnings to the Present Day*, Vol. 1 (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1945); Erna Paris, *Jews: An Account of Their Experience in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981). Further manuscript references may be found in Lawrence F. Tapper, *Archival Sources for the Study of Canadian Jewry* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, second edition, 1987). Other more dated works which deal in part with the theme of Jewish settlements on the prairies, include: Leonard G. Robinson, *The Agricultural Activities of the Jews in America* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1912); Vladimir Grossman, *The Soil's Calling* (Montreal: Eagle Publishing, 1938); Martin Wolff, *The Jews of Canada* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1926).
- ² For a critique of current trends and pitfalls in ethnic history in Canada, see Robert Harney, "Ethnic Archival and Library Materials in Canada: Problems of Bibliographic Control and Preservation," *Ethnic Forum: A Journal of Ethnic Studies and Bibliography*, Vol. II, No. 2 (Fall, 1982); Roberto Perrin, "Clio as an Ethnic: The Third Force in Canadian Historiography," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LIII, No. 4 (December, 1983): 441-467.
- ³ See e.g. A. W. Rasporich, "Utopia, Sect and Millennium in Western Canada, 1870-1940," *Prairie Forum*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (Fall, 1987): 217-243, and A. W. Rasporich, "Utopian Ideals and Community Settlements in Western Canada, 1880-1914," in H. C. Klassen, ed., *The Canadian West: Social Change and Economic Development* (Calgary: Comprint, 1977), 37-62, 197-201.
- ⁴ Cyril Leonoff, *The Jewish Farmers of Western Canada* (Vancouver: The Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia and the Western States of the Jewish History Association, 1984); Abraham Arnold, "New Jerusalem on the Prairies: Welcoming the Jews," in B. G. Smillie, ed., *Visions of the New Jerusalem on the Prairies: Religious Settlement on the Prairies* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983), 91-109.
- ⁵ Baron de Hirsch, "My Views on Philanthropy," *North American Review*, CCCCXVI (July, 1891): 1-4.
- ⁶ For the role of Baron de Hirsch and the Jewish Colonization Association in the United States, see Samuel Joseph, *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund: The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society for the Baron de Hirsch Fund, 1935). See Leonoff, *Jewish Farmers of Western Canada*, 26; A. J. Arnold, "Jewish Immigration in the Era of Macdonald and Laurier," Unpublished ms., Mar. 17, 1971, 25.
- ⁷ Simon Belkin, *Through Narrow Gates: A Review of Jewish Immigration, Colonization, and Immigrant Aid Work in Canada, 1840-1940* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress and Jewish Colonization Association, 1966), 75-76.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 77; Leonoff, *Jewish Farmers of Western Canada*, 39.
- ⁹ See Arnold, "New Jerusalem on the Prairies," 94-97; and Sack, *History of the Jews in Canada*, 190-191.

10. National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Louis Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 13; Charles McDiarmid to Harris Vineberg (Montreal), Winnipeg, 5 March 1892 and Calgary, 13 March and 16 March 1892.
11. *Ibid.*, L. A. Hart to the President of the J.C.A., Montreal, Dec. 12, 1892. W. Charles McDiarmid was an experienced Canadian-born farmer of Scottish parentage, and was hired at \$100.00 per month for a period of one year, having posted a bond of \$3,000 for the faithful discharge of his duties as colony manager.
12. *Ibid.*, L. A. Hart to Dr. Sonnenfeldt, 12 December 1892.
13. *Ibid.*, Charles McDiarmid to the Board of the Baron de Hirsch Institute, Montreal, 9 January 1893.
14. *Ibid.*, Isaac Mendels, Report Submitted to a Special Meeting of the Board of the Baron de Hirsch Institute, 9 September 1894.
15. NAC, Ministry of the Interior, RG 15, vol. 651, ff. 269180(2), A. M. Burgess to T. M. Daly, Ottawa, 28 October 1893.
16. NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 14, Extract of a Report of the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society, 19 October 1896 and Montreal *Herald* clipping, n.d.
17. The Jewish settlement experience in New Jersey and Sabsovitch's role is described in Joseph Brandes, *Immigrants to Freedom: Jewish Communities in Rural New Jersey since 1882* (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 126-142; Katherine Sabsovitch, *Adventures in Idealism: A Personal Reward of the Life of Professor Sabsovitch* (New York: Arno Press, 1975, reprint of 1922 edition).
18. *Ibid.*, Sabsovitch to Mr. Reichow, 16, 19, 20 June 1897. Also *ibid.*, D. A. Ansell, Report to Paris J.C.A., Montreal, 1 July 1897.
19. *Ibid.*, C. H. Ambler to the J.A.I.A.S. (New York), Devil's Lake, North Dakota, 30 April 1901. Simon Belkin notes in his *Through Narrow Gates*, that the J.A.I.A.S. was established jointly by the Baron de Hirsch Fund and the J.C.A. which contributed roughly equal funds to its support, Rosenberg Papers, vol. 14, 74.
20. *Ibid.*, Joseph Blaustein to Julius Goldman, New York, 25 May 1901.
21. *Ibid.*, Louis Kahn to J.A.I.A.S., New York, 24 August 1904.
22. *Ibid.*, Louis Kahn to J.A.I.A.S., New York, 8 May 1904.
23. *Ibid.*, Special Meeting of the Jews of Hirsch and Oxbow, 3 February 1904. Also, *ibid.*, E. Myerson, M. Schwartzfield of the Paris J.C.A. to J.A.I.A.S. (New York), Paris, 11 September 1903; Kahn to Paris J.C.A., Indian Head, N.W.T., 18 September 1903.
24. NAC, Governor-General's Correspondence, 618, vol. 97(1)-100(5). Correspondence of Alfred Cohen and Lord Revelstoke with Lord Minto, 1900-1901.
25. NAC, Ministry of the Interior, RG 15, vol. 906, ff. 838450, H. Bolocan to Sir Wilfred Laurier, Fort Qu'Appelle, June, 1904.
26. NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 16, 31 March 1905, In the Supreme Court of North-West Territories, Judicial District of Assiniboia. *The Jewish Colonization Association v. Baratz*. Testimony of James Smart, former Deputy-Minister of Interior, in Ottawa.
27. *Ibid.*, Jak Baratz to Monsieur Israel Zangwill, Fort Qu'Appelle, N.W.T., 20 February 1903.
28. See Belkin, *Through Narrow Gates*, 43-44, 83.
29. NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 15, "Recommendations of the J.C.A. and Mr. Goldsmid," signed Mortimer B. Davis, Chairman, Montreal, 3 April 1907.
30. *Ibid.*, vol. 18, M. Rosenblat to Montreal J.C.A., Canadian Committee, Qu'Appelle Colony, 1 December 1909.
31. *Ibid.*, see e.g. Max Heppner to Montreal J.C.A., Winnipeg, 24 January 1908.
32. *Ibid.*, Lipton Petition to Baron de Hirsch Institute, Montreal, 28 September 1908.
33. *Ibid.*, Lyon Cohen and S. Jacobs for the J.C.A., Montreal, 26 February 1909.
34. *Ibid.*, Colony Superintendent to Montreal J.C.A., Lipton, 27 May 1909.
35. *Ibid.*, Max Heppner to Montreal J.C.A., 3 January 1913.
36. *Ibid.*, Louis Rosenberg to M. C. Ellman, Lipton, 20 October 1920; translation of document dated Lipton Colony, Tiferes Israel District to J.C.A. in Montreal, 15 October 1920.
37. See NAC, MG 31, A4, "The Baron de Hirsch Colony," questionnaire by Lawrence Tapper, Carleton University, May, 1974. Answers by Alex Muscovitch, former member of Hirsch community and current member of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 66.
38. See Clara Hoffer and F. H. Kahan, *Land of Hope* (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1960). See also "Reminiscences of Mr. Israel Hoffer," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Winter, 1952): 28-32.
39. *Ibid.*, 128-137.
40. NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 20, Colony Administrator to Canadian Committee, Montreal, 23 August 1933 re: Rumsey Colony. I am indebted for this reference to Dr. Howard Palmer, Department of History, University of Calgary.
41. NAC, MG 31, A4, Tapper-Muscovitch questionnaire, 10, 46.
42. NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 14, Marcus Berner to E. C. Guilaroff, 5 November 1914.
43. See Paris, *Jews*, 243. See also anonymous critique of the Vickar family in a letter from "an Edenbridge farmer", 1 March 1915, NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 18. For a description of the back-to-the-land movement of the late nineteenth century, see Branden, *Immigrants to Freedom*, 46-49; and Michael B. Scheler, *The Back to the Land Movement for the Jews* (Chicago: Reflex, 1930). See also, N. Rosenberg, comp., *Edenbridge: The Memory Lives On . . . A History* (Melfort: Phillips Publishers, 1980).

44. *Ibid.*, MG 30, C119, vol. 18, E. C. Guilaroff to H. Horsfall, Montreal, 21 July 1914, "Edenbridge Special Recommendations."
45. *Ibid.*, Edenbridge Colony Inspector's Report, 6-10 April 1922, 16-20 June 1922.
46. *Ibid.*, L. Vickar, Secretary of Edenbridge Committee to M. C. Ellman, Administrator, 10 July 1922, included in Inspector's Report, 2, 10 July 1922, to J.C.A. in Montreal.
47. See A. W. Rasporich, "Utopian Ideals and Community Settlements in Western Canada, 1880-1914," reprinted in R. D. Francis and H. Palmer, *The Prairie West: Historical Readings* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985), 338-361.
48. See Leonoff, *Jewish Farmers of Western Canada*, 43, 61, 64; see also NAC, Ministry of the Interior, RG 15, vol. 626, Inspection Report on Rumsey Colony, Drumheller, 9 June 1922. The Rumsey Credit Union was liquidated in 1921 when the shareholders failed to pay their debts.
49. NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 18, Max Heppner to Montreal J.C.A., 9 June 1912.
50. *Ibid.*, Inspector's Report, 16-22 June 1922, Edenbridge.
51. *Ibid.*, vol. 15, E. C. Guilaroff to Canadian Committee of J.C.A. in Montreal, 2 July 1915; Jewish Farmers Cooperative Credit Union, in E. Guilaroff to M. Shopp, 20 April 1915.
52. *Ibid.*, L. Rosenberg to W. Niminsky, Hirsch, 8 November 1921.
53. *Ibid.*, vol. 18, M. C. Ellman for Mr. L. N. J. Rosenthal, re: Lipton, 20 June 1921.
54. *Ibid.*, vol. 16, M. Rosenblat to Canadian Committee of J.C.A., Qu'Appelle, 1 December 1909.
55. See Michael Usiskin, *Uncle Mike's Edenbridge* (Winnipeg: Peguis, 1983), 3-5, 42-50.
56. NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 18, Louis Rosenberg General Memo re: Edenbridge, 20 November 1920; General Report of Inspector of Colonies, 22 April 1920.
57. Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews: A Social and Economic Study of the Jews in Canada* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1939), 243. Rosenberg himself became a committed member of the CCF Party during the Depression and authored several studies for the C.C.F. Research Bureau on land collectivization, co-operative dairies, and other reforms, and produced for the national office of the CCF an exposé of oligopolistic industrial ownership in Canada, entitled *Who Owns Canada?* See NAC Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 26, ff. 1, 36; also Paris, *Jews*, 238-239.
58. *Ibid.*, 235. Of the remaining 165 farmers or 28.8% who still farmed the land in 1931, 25.5% farmed for thirty years and over, 40.9% for 20-29 years, 9.1% for 10-20 years, and 14.5% for less than ten years. Of those 351 who left: 45.9% spent less than ten years on the farm; 47.2% from 10-19 years; 6% from 20-29 years; and only .9% were on the farm over thirty years.
59. *Ibid.*, 227, table 136.
60. NAC, MG 31, A4, Tapper-Muscovitch questionnaires, 26. Muscovitch himself left for Winnipeg in 1918 to work in wartime industry, but walked back to Hirsch during the Winnipeg General Strike, returning thereafter to work in the Transcona Shops in the 1920s.
61. Fredelle Bruser Maynard, *Raisins and Almonds* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1972), 66-70.
62. See NAC, Rosenberg Papers, MG 30, C119, vol. 18, translation of an article by M. Shallit appearing in the *Israelite Press*, 30 March 1923, entitled "Herschel Leaves for the United States."
63. See J. W. Bennett & Seena Kohl, "Characterological, Strategic and Institutional Interpretations of Prairie Settlement," in A. W. Rasporich, ed., *Western Canada: Past and Present* (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), 14-28. See also Lyle Dyck, "Factors Affecting Prairie Settlement: A Case Study of Abernethy, Saskatchewan, in the 1880s" in *Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers* (Montreal: 1985), 11-28.
64. Belkin, *Through Narrow Gates*, 123-124. For a thorough critique of the obstructionist activities of F. C. Blair in the exclusion of Jewish refugees see H. Troper and I. Abella, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe* (Toronto: Lester, Orpen and Denys, 1982).
65. Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews*, 217. For a similar anecdote, see Usiskin, *Uncle Mike's Edenbridge*, x.
66. Belkin, 203; Leonoff, *Jewish Farmers of Western Canada*, 77.
67. Paris, *Jews*, 263-283.
68. See Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 196-201.
69. *Ibid.*, 186-196 for a summary of Kanter's arguments presented in R. M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), *passim*.

Contributors

D. H. Bocking retired as Associate Provincial Archivist for Saskatchewan in 1986, and edited *Saskatchewan History* from 1960 to 1987.

Brock V. Silversides is the Senior Archivist for the Audio-Visual and Technical Services Section, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Anthony W. Rasporich is Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Calgary, and Professor of History.

Marie-Louise Perron is the Francophone Archivist for the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina.

Reg Good is a Ph.D. candidate with the Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

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

THE FIELD NATURALIST

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W.A. WAISER

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Saskatchewan Archives Board

The Saskatchewan Archives Board is sorry to report that Glenda Leslie, editor of *Saskatchewan History* since 1987, has left Saskatoon to become the Olympic Archivist at the City of Calgary Archives. Active in archival and historical circles in Saskatchewan for several years, Ms. Leslie's valuable contributions will be missed. We wish her well in her new appointment.

We also regret the delay in commencing publication of Volume XLII of our journal, due to our search for an editor to replace Ms. Leslie. We are pleased to announce that a new editor is now in place and the publication schedule for the journal can now resume.

The editor of *Saskatchewan History*, beginning with this issue, is Kathlyn R. Szalasznyj, B.A., M.A., B.Ed., a previous staff archivist at the Saskatoon office of the Saskatchewan Archives Board from 1981 to 1986. She was first employed there in 1979, assisting in the selection of textual material for *Saskatchewan: A Pictorial History*; she was Acting Business Manager of *Saskatchewan History*, 1985-1986. Ms. Szalasznyj is currently employed as a lecturer at the University of Saskatchewan and as an historical researcher. We wish her much success in her editorial endeavors.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FRANCOPHONES OF SASKATCHEWAN: A HISTORY. By Richard Lapointe and Lucille Tessier. English adaptation by Lucille Tessier. Regina: Campion College, 1988. Pp. 329. Illustrations. \$34.95 (Cloth).

It is almost impossible to review a version of a work translated/adapted into another language without also considering the original. This is particularly true of *The Francophones of Saskatchewan: A History*. The *raison d'être* of its French-language counterpart, *Histoire des Franco-canadiens de la Saskatchewan* was an ambitious project by the Société historique de la Saskatchewan to document the history of Francophones in the province and thereby help in the preservation of their culture. The Société recognized that in order to make the history of the French in Saskatchewan better known to its own constituency and to the general public, a major historical work on the subject would have to be written. It also felt that in order to reflect the life of the French minority in this province, such a work would have to be written by Francophones from the province, making use of French-language resource material which documents the realities of the life of Francophones on the plains of the Canadian West. No documents of this kind existed in sufficient numbers until 1980 for such a work to be undertaken.

A major project therefore got underway that year to assemble the bases of the present collection of the Société historique. This endeavor was begun in close co-operation with the Saskatchewan Archives Board where the collection is now on deposit. Throughout 1980, a researcher hired by the Société travelled to different French communities in Saskatchewan collecting archival documents and recording interviews with individuals from all walks of life. On the basis of these documents, photographs and recordings, *Histoire des Franco-canadiens de la Saskatchewan* was written by Richard Lapointe and Lucille Tessier. It was published in 1986. Two years later, Tessier undertook the translation/adaptation of this volume into English.

Comments in this review will address the substance of the work, as well as the effectiveness of the English translation/adaptation. The format divides the history of Francophones in Saskatchewan into chapters covering, respectively, the background to Territorial history, the main period of Francophone immigration to what is now Saskatchewan, and the subsequent struggle for cultural and economic development of this group. Because of the relatively recent period in which colonization of western Canada took place, any reader, Francophone or Anglophone, who is of first or second generation immigrant stock is soon struck by the realization that this work is describing his or her own history and the conditions surrounding the decision to relocate to a new home in a new country or even on a new continent.

The background section in the first chapter takes 1885 as the focal year and sweeps both backward and forward in time to cover events which took place and to lay the foundations for events yet to come. The background section is very general, the authors of the original version having decided that this was not the place to write another comprehensive document on the fur trade. This chapter gives a rapid overview of transportation and communication, land sur-

veying, the role of the North-West Mounted Police and throughout, the presence and influence of the Catholic Church whether performing the functions of missionary to the "uncivilized" peoples of the plains or negotiating the corridors of power for the control over the masses of immigrants soon to arrive.

The two subsequent chapters on the immigration period and the early years are the best documented of the whole work. To understand the history of the French minority in the province, it is vital to understand the role of the Church in the immigration of Francophones and the vision that it had for their future. In the context of today's experience, the *ultramontain* ideal that the Church had for Francophones in North America was narrow indeed: agriculture was considered to be the only natural way of life for them. The second tenet of this ideal, that French Canadians had received from God the mission of propagating Christian civilization and the catholic, apostolic and Roman faith in the New World led directly to Church involvement in immigration to the Canadian West. In spite of this sense of mission and the activity of the Church in promoting immigration, Francophones from Québec and Europe did not arrive in large enough numbers to avoid being almost swallowed up in the huge waves of immigrants of other nationalities.

It was to come to pass that the type of Francophone immigrant selected and the small numbers that came obliged the Church to play a major role, until very recently, in the spheres of language rights, education and culture in the province. These themes are the thread which bind together the events in the fourth chapter on cultural and economic development. Having chosen people with little education who would be able to adapt to the harsh conditions of pioneer life in a new land, the Church soon found that its newly-founded French communities lacked leaders when rapid development changed the face of the West within a single generation. This had a direct bearing on the struggle for cultural and economic survival in the dark years of economic depression and political repression that followed the initial period of euphoria at the turn of the century when the Canadian West was known as a new "Promised Land."

The last chapter describes the founding of associations such as the Association culturelle franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan which played a major role in French education when the Department of Public Instruction (later, the Department of Education) for the province either actively suppressed or passively abdicated its role in this matter. For Francophones, these pages are not easy to read because they deal with events which cut deeply into the heart of each family's history. The scars of the political struggles and internal divisions over French schooling, language, and media in communities a generation ago have not disappeared and they resurface from time to time to the present day, in forms all too familiar to the many cultures for whom Saskatchewan has become, or always was, home.

A number of observations on the translation/adaptation are in order. Some illustrations have been changed, and supporting documents added, sometimes using existing English documents to describe events happening in the French community rather than translating the original document into English. This tends to introduce descriptions of how Anglophones perceive Francophones. The intent of the original version was exactly the opposite: to describe how Francophones see themselves.

Tessier has also made a number of other changes which tend to "flatten" the rendering of equivalents in this work. From time to time in the first chapter, for example, the work betrays the translator's unfamiliarity with fur trade history. In the French version, the part dealing with the contact period between aboriginal people and the white trader/explorer uses the expression *à la façon du pays* to describe marriages contracted between Native women and the traders. In the English version, this is translated as taking women *as companions, often without any formal ceremony*. In reality, the traders who took Native wives did so by observing the customary ceremony of the people they were visiting. In the case of marriage ceremonies during the contact period, this included the formal request to the woman's father for her hand in marriage, and the offering of gifts to her family. To simply take her and leave would have been considered a kidnapping. While this translation hitch is one of lack of comprehension, others, such as using the term *firewater* for *eau-de-vie* or brandy are unexplainable.

All summary paragraphs which exist in the French version have been eliminated, as have the many different terms used by newcomers to the province to describe the land, the culture, different tools, or farming techniques. In the chapter on the immigration period, Tessier does not differentiate Quebeckers from French Canadians from other regions of the country, and in the chapter on the early years of the province, the terms *land, property, and homesteads* are all rendered by the term *homestead*. In the same way, all biting insects are *mosquitoes*.

Other equivalents are simply incorrect. A number of these appear in the third chapter. For example, an ancient method of construction, *pisé*, akin to adobe, is described as a plastering technique. The reader will also no doubt be surprised to learn of herds of elk roaming the plains! The word *cerf* (deer) has been translated to *elk*. Another equivalent which describes a *wood stove* as a *wooden stove*, gives a humorous effect where none was intended.

For her own reasons, Tessier has rewritten the conclusion to include an overview of modern events including the case brought forward by Father André Mercure to test the right to use the French language in the courts, and subsequently expresses the opinion that Fransaskois are presently being encouraged by a society which is more tolerant towards them. This conclusion is also in line with the adaptations of the text which soften the descriptions of the conflicts between the Francophone communities and their neighbors which marked the history of this group. While most of the text is faithfully rendered, some parts are deleted, and some given another tone. Some illustrations have been substituted for others, and the conclusion wholly rewritten. Thus, while retaining the main thrust of the original work, and succeeding in presenting an interesting account of the French in Saskatchewan, the English version does not quite give the feeling or the colour of the original. It is however, well worth reading.

Marie-Louise Perron

THE WINDMILL TURNING: *Nursery Rhymes, Maxims, and Other Expressions of Western Canadian Mennonites*. By Victor Carl Friesen. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1988. Pp. 139. Illustrations. \$24.95 (Cloth).

Victor Friesen graduated from the University of Alberta in 1975 with a Ph.D. in English literature. The same year he began collecting Low-German

folklore from Mennonites living in Canada's prairie west. His research was published as a coffee-table book, *The Windmill Turning*, in 1988.

The Windmill Turning is divided into two parts. The first part contains four chapters, written in the first person, which define Mennonite identity in ethnic terms. Friesen describes the "uniqueness" of Mennonite history and the "distinctiveness" of the Low-German dialect which, as English Professor Al Reimer states in his introduction to the book, "became the warp and woof of Mennonite identity" (p.xi). Western Canadian Mennonites are said to have originated in Friesland and Flanders as a religious group in the early 1500s, and migrated to Canada's prairie west via the Vistula River delta and Russia. As a result of their migrations, Mennonites "developed a rich and varied culture unique to them" (p.21). While living in the Vistula delta, for example, Mennonites adopted the Low-German dialect spoken there as "the language of their culture" (p.21). Several variations of the Low-German dialect were introduced to Canada's prairie west by Mennonite immigrants from Russia.

The second part of *The Windmill Turning* is the main section of the book. It is an anthology of Low-German folklore arranged in fourteen chapters, with an appendix of grammar, vocabulary, and bibliography of Mennonite history and Low-German studies. The rhymes, songs, maxims and so on all appear in Low-German transcription, a literal translation and a poetic translation. They are illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings by Wendy Kershaw.

The Windmill Turning is an attractive book, professionally designed, and the folklore is entertaining to read. The historical section, however, is simplistic, romantic and filial. The myth that Mennonites from Russia trace their racial origins primarily to Friesland and Flanders, first propounded by "racial scientist" H. H. Schroeder in his 1936 study *Russlanddeutsche Friesen*, has been rejected by scholars. Further, not all Mennonite immigrant groups to Canada's prairie west came from Russia. The first Mennonite settlement in Saskatchewan consisted primarily of Mennonites who came directly from the Vistula delta, speaking a variation of the Low-German dialect not discussed by Friesen. A subsequent Mennonite settlement at Guernsey, Saskatchewan at the turn of the twentieth century consisted of Mennonites of Swiss/South-German origin who neither spoke Low German themselves, nor descended from persons who spoke Low German.

Probably the best scholarly overview of Mennonite history is *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1981) by Saskatchewan native, Cornelius J. Dyck. This cogent history is listed in Victor Friesen's bibliography, but obviously not relied on extensively by him.

There is a large body of scholarship on the Low-German dialect spoken by Mennonites from Russia, in the German language, which has been ignored altogether by Friesen. A good introduction for the linguistic specialist is John Thiessen's *Studien zum Wortschatz der kanadischen Mennoniten, deutsche dialektgeographie* Band 64 (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1963). Thiessen includes a three-page bibliography of sources, dictionaries and lexikons, most of which are written in German.

Reg Good

WHEN FREEDOM WAS LOST: *The Unemployed, The Agitator and The State*. By Lorne Brown. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987. Pp. 208. \$34.95 (Cloth), \$14.95 (Paper).

Lorne Brown, a University of Regina political scientist, has made an important contribution to the growing literature on the unemployed struggles of the 1930s with the publication of *When Freedom was Lost*. Although the major portion of *When Freedom was Lost* is a revised version of Brown's Ph.D. thesis, "The Bennett Government, the Single Unemployed and Political Stability 1930-35" (Queen's University, 1979), it also has a relevant section on the economic and political conditions of the 1980s. In short Canadians, according to Brown, are "living through the worst economic depression since the 1930s."

It is in light of present conditions that Brown has turned to the 1930s to examine Prime Minister R. B. Bennett's "iron heel of ruthlessness" policies in dealing with unemployment and the unemployed. The examination of Bennett's policies is placed in the context of the economic conditions which produced the catastrophic unemployment problem. It is in the discussion of this problem that the reader encounters the first part of Brown's three-part book. He points out that the unemployment problem was serious even during the so-called "Roaring Twenties," owing to the inherent contradictions of capitalism. The problem was exacerbated by the "Great Crash" in October 1929.

Brown, in the second part of the book, analyzes the state's handling of the unemployed. For the first two years of the Depression, the unemployed had to rely on the relief system provided by municipalities. The system unfortunately had such strict residency requirements that only married unemployed were able to obtain a mere pittance. The single unemployed were left to seek assistance from private charitable organizations or "ride the rods" in search of work. Even the federal Unemployment Relief Acts of 1930 and 1931 did little to assuage the growing unemployment problem.

It is interesting to note that it was Major-General A. G. L. McNaughton, Chief of the General Staff, who, after a tour of the country in 1932, developed a solution to deal with the problem. His approach consisted of the establishment of a relief camp system under the control of the Department of National Defence. The purposes of these camps were to: (1) "provide administrative experience for armed forces personnel;" (2) "enable the Department to construct military installations at a minimal cost which would otherwise probably not be built at all;" and (3) "remove the single unemployed from the cities to prevent them from becoming politically organized."

Ironically, the state's actions prompted the organization of the unemployed. The relief camps, under military administration, not only had appalling working and living conditions but also a "captive" audience for organizers of the Workers Unity League (WUL), an affiliate of the Communist Party of Canada.

These conditions set the stage for the workers' response, which constitutes the third and major part of *When Freedom was Lost*. The workers realized they needed to organize and formulate demands which could be achieved in the short run. The WUL helped them organize the Relief Camp Workers Union (RCWU) in 1934 with three immediate objectives: abolition of the relief camps, a work and wages program and state-funded unemployment insurance.

Together, the WUL and RCWU developed a strategy for applying political pressure on the federal and provincial governments by means of various camp protests, marches, demonstrations, occupation of public buildings and relief strikes. But, whenever riots broke out, as they did in Saskatoon in 1933, Vancouver in 1934 and Regina in 1935, they were prompted not by the actions of the workers but by the government and its police. It was the state, as Brown argues so forcefully, that attempted to crush the unemployed workers' movement and the On-to-Ottawa trek.

Although *When Freedom was Lost* is mainly concerned with the unemployed and the agitator, readers will find very little, if any, of their personal accounts or recollections. Although much of this material is available, Brown has not included interviews with former RCWU members in his study. Furthermore, the only agitator for whom Brown provides any biographical information is Arthur (Slim) Evans, leader of the On-to-Ottawa Trek. It would have been beneficial to hear the workers' views and opinions of themselves, rather than relying on the state's evaluation of them. Not all relief camp workers saw themselves in the way the state did — that is, as potential revolutionaries. Nevertheless, the workers' struggles and agitation eventually led to the defeat of the Bennett government in 1935 and the elimination of the relief camps the following year.

Despite some minor shortcomings, such as the absence of an index, *When Freedom was Lost* is a valuable source for anyone interested not only in the unemployed struggles of the 1930s, but also in the strategies needed by today's unemployed and working poor to defend their rights and, eventually, achieve their demands.

Glen Makahonuk

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