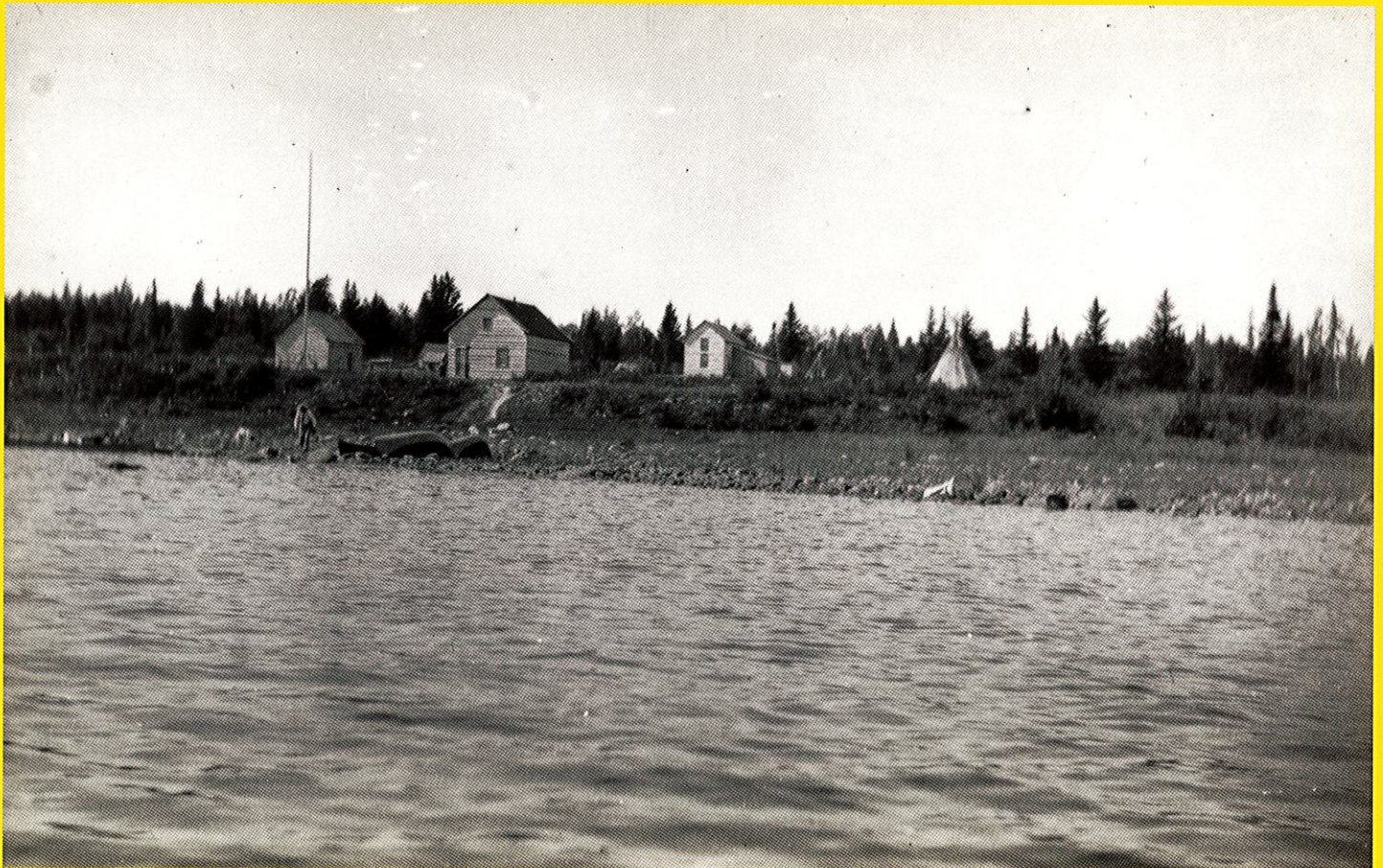


Saskatchewan History

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Was Eckhardt Kastendieck one of Saskatchewan's most active Nazis?

Treaty 8 and Northern Saskatchewan

Karloff in Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Archives Board

The Saskatchewan Archives Board was established by provincial statute in 1945 under the Archives Act (RSS 1978, Ch. A-26). The board is responsible for appraising, acquiring, preserving and making accessible documentary records in all media on all aspects of the history of Saskatchewan as well as facilitating the management of the records of government institutions. Two offices, affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, are maintained to provide public access to a rich collection of archival materials for research and reference.

In addition, the Saskatchewan Archives Board has produced several authoritative works on the province's history and a number of reference booklets and directories to assist historical research about the province. The journal, *Saskatchewan History*, first issued in 1948, has earned a reputation for excellence, receiving awards in 1962 from the American Association for State and Local History and in 1970 from the Canadian Historical Association.

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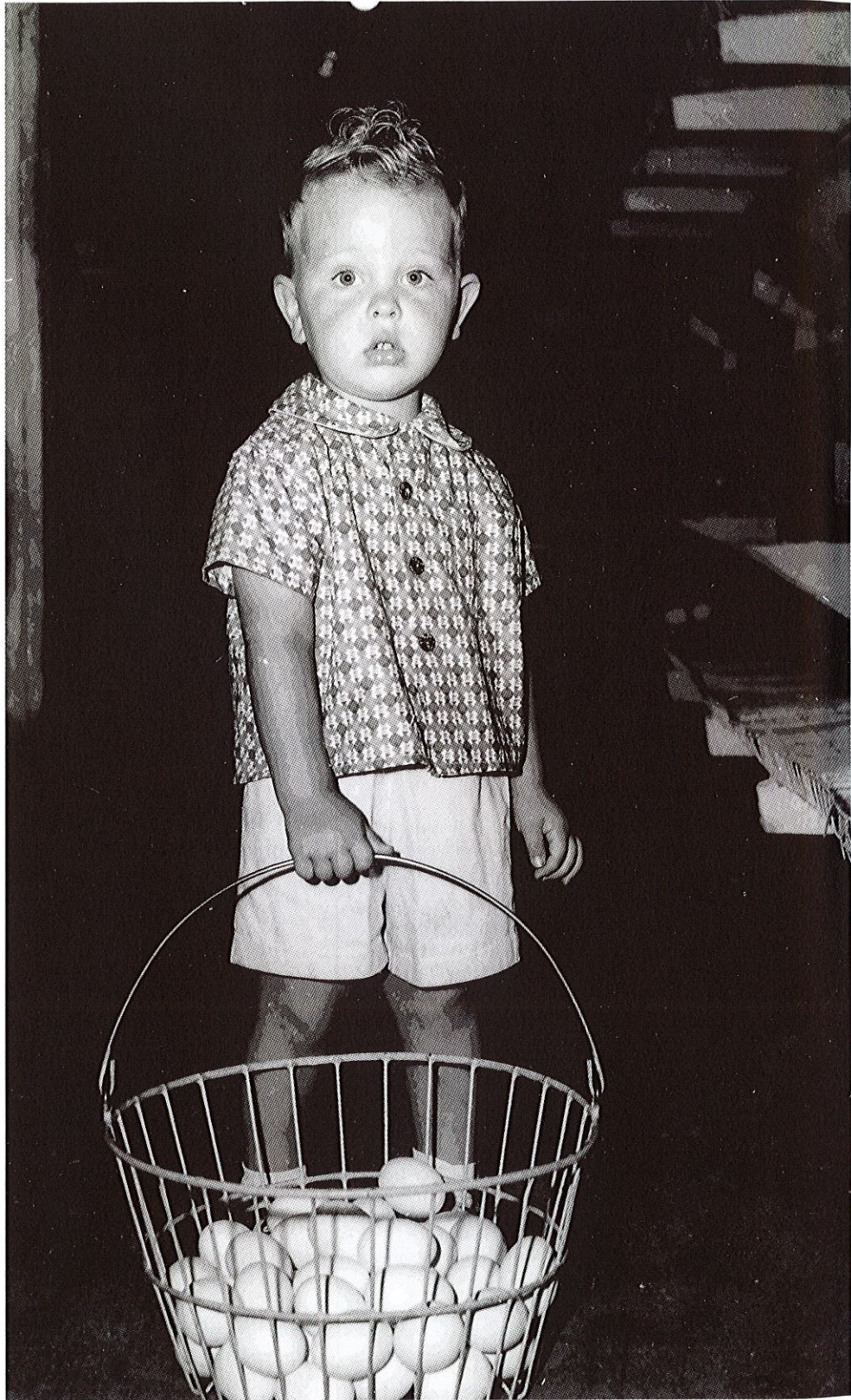
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Cover Photo: Stanley Bay, Saskatchewan, 1919 (Saskatchewan Archives Board S-B 589)

Saskatchewan Archives Board News

Staff in Archival Records Processing at Saskatchewan Archives has recently completed a six-month *National Archival Development Programme (NADP)* grant titled "Historical Photographs Index and Description of Photographic Archives." Through the generous funding support of the Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Saskatchewan Archives added 4,695 entries to our photo database from our manual card catalogue and reviewed 8,350 cards for contextual information and access points. The automation of our photograph index allows greater access to keyword searches while also identifying records by provenance and photographer. Since efforts first began with the automation of the photo catalogue in June 2005, one-quarter of our holdings representing 20,108 entries have been included in the database. LAC funding made possible a concentrated effort beyond regular resources for this activity.

The second part of this project involved new description of photographic images from our backlog. Many of these images related to textual records already available in our permanent collection. A total of 1,605 images from 57 accessions of material were added to our photo database. In addition, 34 fonds and collection descriptions were completed and added to our Saskatchewan Archives Finding Aids (SAFA) system. The records described and now more visibly accessible to researchers represent a broad spectrum of our holdings including cultural, community, business and women's organizations; entertainers, politicians, photographers, architects,



"Art Conrad's poultry farm, Estevan district. David Duane Conrad holds One of the 1,605 new images with captions added to the Saskatchewan Archives Board R-B14336-7, E.M. Campbell fonds F 46"

writers and artists; families interested in preserving their personal histories, experiences, and the activities of local life in Saskatchewan.

Letter from the Editor

These descriptions have also been made available on the *Saskatchewan Archival Information Network (SAIN)*, and will be in the national catalogue *Archives Canada* shortly. Access to the photograph components is expected to be available electronically on the reference computers by March. Anyone wishing to search this database should consult our reference archivists.

In the discipline of history there are essentially two types of histories and for lack of better terms we will call them revisionist history, which seeks to re-examine old questions, and new history, which attempts to shed light on previously unexplored areas. In this issue of *Saskatchewan History* both areas are ably covered. In our first article Grant Grams takes another look at the evidence and controversy surrounding Eckhardt Kastendieck and his Nazi sympathies. In our second article Christine Smillie breaks new ground with her examination of Treaty 8 and Northern Saskatchewan. Meanwhile, in our People and Places section, Stephen Jacobs narrates the experiences of William Henry Pratt, better known as Boris Karloff, in Saskatchewan. I hope you enjoy the issue,

Jason Zorbas

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through Library and Archives Canada.

Nous reconnaissons l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada par l'entremise de Bibliothèque et Archives Canada.

We also wish to extend our thanks to the Canadian Council of Archives and the Saskatchewan Council of Archives for their assistance with this project.



Bibliothèque et Archives
Canada Library and Archives
Canada



Canadian Council of Archives
Conseil canadien des archives



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chives Board photo database.

(69)

Articles

Was Eckhardt Kastendieck Saskatchewan's most active Nazi?

by Grant Grams

Saskatchewan resident Eckhardt Kastendieck was one of the province's leading pro-Nazis.¹ He was born on December 16, 1905 in Kothen, in the state of Brandenburg, Germany. In Germany he could not find appropriate work, prompting his immigration to Canada. Kastendieck blamed his departure on the depression, high unemployment, and a rigid class system in Germany which allowed little social mobility. He settled in Paradise Hill, Saskatchewan, a community that had a mixture of diverse peoples with the main groups being Ukrainians, British, Hungarians, French, and German speakers.² Prior to the Second World War the town and its immediate area contained roughly three hundred German speakers.³ In the 1930's Kastendieck was sympathetic to Nazi ideology which led to his internship for most of The Second World War. After the War Adolf Hitler still held his admiration. Due to the esteem he felt for fascist Germany and Adolf Hitler, and the evidence presented in 1939 at a judicial hearing, Canadian authorities had reason to worry about his affiliations and possible subversive tendencies. He would remain sympathetic to Nazism after the War until his death in 1980.

Although there were German speakers in and around Paradise Hill, the immigration of German nationals to the area increased the local level of German culture and language. In 1927 several German families settled in St. Walburg, eighteen kilometres from Paradise Hill.⁴ Another group of German nationals settled along the Loon River, roughly forty kilometres from St. Walburg, sixty kilometres from Paradise Hill.⁵ St. Walburg had already consisted of Canadian-born, American-born and Russian-born German speakers, as well as German nationals. This settlement was bolstered through the immigration efforts of Dr. Justus Schmidel.

The Canadian National Railway (CNR) employed Schmidel as an immigration agent. He intended to establish a new German-speaking colony that would preserve and protect their common German culture. After examining the best locations to found a new German colony in 1926 he chose St. Walburg due to its already established German speakers, its German library and German language church. In June 1927 Schmidel arrived with twenty-one Germans. Those with larger amounts of money bought farms close to St. Walburg; others with smaller amounts took over homesteads eight kilometres away. Schmidel tried to ensure the colony's survival and returned to Germany in October 1927.⁶ In 1929 twenty families from Germany agreed to settle together near the Loon River. Most were from the state of Thuringia, but some members of this group were from Holstein, Mecklenberg and Westphalia. Nazi ideology was able to make inroads with this group in the 1930's: they became known as the Loon River Nazis.⁷

After his arrival in Saskatchewan Kastendieck worked for local farmers in west central Saskatchewan until he was able to acquire his first quarter section of farmland near Paradise Hill. One of his initial employers included a German national from Westphalia who owned property in Germany and received a monthly income from his German estate. Owing to the recession in Canada his land was not profitable enough to pay Kastendieck his

Dr. Grant Grams has degrees from the University of Saskatchewan (B.A., 1989), Albert Ludwigs University (M.A. 1995) and Philips University (Ph.D 2000). He is currently a History Lecturer at Grant MacEwan College.

income. Compounding the problem, in 1933 Hitler was elected Chancellor in Germany and the man from Westphalia was unable to have money sent out of the country. He once again could not pay Kastendieck his monthly wage.

In order to settle his debt to Kastendieck, his sister in Germany booked passage on a German steamer from New York to Bremen and paid for it with German funds. Kastendieck pooled his finances and with help from neighbours and friends was able to gather two hundred dollars, enough money for himself, his wife and three sons to travel to New York and back by train. In this way Kastendieck made a trip to Germany for Christmas 1935, returning to Canada in early 1936.

Soon after his arrival in Kothen, he was summoned to the city hall to meet with local Nazi officials. Kastendieck was told that farmers were needed in Germany and a family with three boys was ideal for the country. The Nazi administrators invited Kastendieck to remain in Germany and they proposed he resume farming in eastern Prussia.⁸ The emigration of farmers in Germany was discouraged in an attempt to build up the strength of German agricultural labour. Nazi Germany wanted to increase the settlement of Germans rurally throughout Germany, but especially in eastern Prussia.⁹ The German government had been trying to support German agriculture for years, largely through protective tariffs against imported agricultural products, rescheduling and reducing farm debts.¹⁰ The policy of Nazi Germany towards farmers and settlement policies took form slowly but were designed to increase agricultural production, discourage emigration, and Germanise Eastern Prussia. The Polish population was to be assimilated. Germans returning from abroad that had no specific destination in mind were encouraged to settle in eastern Prussia. The fact that Kastendieck was encouraged to return to Germany and reside in eastern Prussia represents an example of the future Nazi return migration policy.¹¹ But Kastendieck, who had become a naturalized Canadian in 1935, told the officials that he intended to return to Canada causing Nazi officials to end their interview. Owing to his Nazi affiliation in Canada in the late 1930's and his continuing admiration of Hitler why Kastendieck returned to Canada in 1936 from his visit to Germany remains somewhat of a mystery.

While living in Saskatchewan, Kastendieck attended a German Lutheran Church in St. Walburg. Churches served the community at many levels for newcomers throughout Canada often offering social, cultural and religious events. These informal meetings eventually led to the formation of a German club, which was later merged into the Deutsche Bund, a Nazi organization. His affiliation with this society caused Canadian authorities to cast doubt on Kastendieck's loyalty to Canada and led to his incarceration during WW II.¹²

On Jan. 1, 1934 the Deutscher Bund Canada was founded. Initially membership in the Bund was open to all German nationals and ethnic Germans regardless of their citizenship or country of origin. Hitler issued a decree in late 1934 that German citizens were not to be involved in the Bund. Thereafter the Bund worked almost exclusively amongst German Canadians, claiming to merely advocate the advancement of German culture. The Bund in Canada tried not to arouse the antagonism of the Canadian authorities. In 1934 Bund membership was not more than five hundred but it would grow and at the height of the organisation in 1938/39 it had nearly 2000 members.¹³

Although there were Bund groups throughout much of Canada, the Bunds' strength was in western Canada and largest provincial membership was in Saskatchewan. This was due to its large number of recent immigrants and high percentage amongst the total population.¹⁴ In 1941, Canadian statistician W. B. Hurd, noting past immigration trends, thought assimilation in Saskatchewan would be a serious problem. He saw a precarious situation for Canadian authorities there. He wrote: "in Alberta almost half of the population is now of non-British extraction and in Manitoba and Saskatchewan more than half – indeed in Saskatchewan, considerably more than half." He added "Saskatchewan had over twice as many foreign as British-born, and just under two thirds of the former were of European birth."¹⁵

Saskatchewan had, at one time or another, more than forty Bund groups for a total of eight hundred to a thousand national memberships. Nationally the Bund was divided into eastern, middle and western Gau (administrative districts). The western Gau was divided provincially with Saskatchewan forming a separate unit (Gebiet) within it. These units were subdivided into Bezirke. These Bezirke were subdivided again into

Ortsgruppen or Stützpunkte. An Ortsgruppe had fifteen or more members; a Stützpunkt contained a minimum of five members. Within this hierarchy the leadership principle prevailed where all members would, in theory, obey those higher up in the hierarchy. The Gau leader obeyed the national leader in Montreal, the Gebiet were guided by the Gau leadership, Bezirk leaders headed the orders of the Gebiet and the local Ortsgruppen and Stützpunkte obeyed the wishes of the Bezirk leaders.

Kastendieck was typical of many Bund members, the majority were recent immigrants that had become Canadian citizens or first generation Canadians and most were under the age of forty-five. It was because of their youth, lack of integration to life in Canada and poverty that many Bund members identified with Nazi Germany. According to historian Jonathan Wagner the Bunds goals were supposedly cultural and social not political. Yet the Bund activity actively dabbled in politics and was not the innocent organization it claimed to be.¹⁶ In 1938-39 there were 71 Bund units in Canada with 57 percent located in Saskatchewan. St. Walburg, Loon River and Paradise Hill all had Ortsgruppen.¹⁷

According to Kastendieck, Bund contact with German speakers was limited. He refuted claims that the Bund was an organized group with a formal hierarchy or administration. Kastendieck was adamant that he and his fellow Bund members felt no pressure from Nazi officials in Germany or in Canada.¹⁸ Kastendieck claimed that the Bund he knew was not political, but he acknowledged;

As far as I know the Bun[d] was sponsored or backed up by money coming out of the German government, so naturally there was a certain element of propaganda there. The Nazi[s] were the German government and that's it. There is no question about that. You couldn't really expect from any government not to spend their money in any other way. There was a point to that, there's no doubt in my mind. [...] it was a matter of old Germany trying to maintain its culture and keep the emigrants the people who left Germany in contact with the German culture and German traditions.¹⁹

A comparison between Kastendieck's interrogation with Canadian authorities in 1939 while interned at

Kananaskis, Alberta and an interview given in 1977 reveal that thirty-eight years later he still had Nazi leanings. One of the only consistent elements was his evasive and vague answers on all matters relating to Nazism in Canada. Despite the fact that Kastendieck was president of the local Bund chapter from 1937 until 1939 he acted as if he had little to do with its' activities. On December 7, 1939 he stated that he became a Bund member first in June 1938. But nearly forty years later Kastendieck acknowledged that he became Bund leader in 1937. Canadian authorities found it hard to understand how Kastendieck did not have an intimate understanding of the Bund. His interrogators concluded that he was lying about his Nazi affiliation, which warranted his incarceration for the duration of the war.²⁰ Kastendieck stated that he could not recall when he took over the administrative duties of the Bund. When questioned about Bund functions and membership he was evasive, "I can't even tell you whereabouts they [Bund members] came from anymore. I think at first we were approached by letters and pointing out all the advantages we would have if we joined." This was put to a vote and it was agreed that the Bund would bring advantages to the existing German club. Kastendieck mentioned literature received from Nazi Germany had a "political tune to parts of those books." Bund meetings also viewed Nazi films. According to Kastendieck Bund members viewed Hitler sceptically. The group could not identify with "this Hail Hitler stuff that was demonstrated in some of these films. We couldn't grasp it really." But Kastendieck was not aloof to Nazism, or its leader:

I think some of the things were done by Hitler and changed by Hitler, especially in the first years were quite recognized. Let's not forget he did away with unemployment. He was, as far as I know, the first one who ever had a baby bonus and other things of this kind were quite recognized; that families with more kids should have more income. Things were not all negative that came from there. [...] In his first years Hitler brought about quite a change in Germany itself and I think that was quite impressive on a lot of our people here. You see, we left there in a really bad time, depression and inflation and all that. We talk about depression in Canada but this is nothing you know. You can't imagine what happened over there.²¹

Adolf Hitler



Another measure that drew praise by Kastendieck was the establishment of the Reichsarbeitsdienst (State Labor Service - RAD).²² This was implemented on June 26, 1935, which made it compulsory for all Germans between 19 and 25 to serve in RAD. This labour force worked for six month time periods and mainly performed agricultural work. In this way these Germans were taken out of the labour force and did not compete for jobs with older individuals.²³ This also created other jobs because this labour source needed to be housed and fed. Kastendieck added "I still believe it was a real good idea of Hitler, no matter what."²⁴ Such defences of Nazism were typical of pre-WWII Nazis.²⁵

During his incarceration by Canadian authorities Kastendieck encountered a fellow Nazi sympathizer named Bernhard Bott. Bott came to Canada in 1923 and worked in Regina as editor for the German-language weekly newspaper, *Der Courier*. Throughout the interwar time period he advocated the support of German culture in Canada and was praised for being a pillar of the German community within Saskatchewan. He struggled tirelessly for the well being of its German speakers. His editorial work was read in

Germany for information on what German emigrants would find in Canada. Bott also collected data for cultural organisations in Germany, these reports dealt with all German speakers within western Canada but predominantly in Saskatchewan. The details often explained the province's topography, German settlements and farming opportunities.

Bott had a healthy relationship with the Deutsches Ausland Institut (German Foreign Institute); in 1934 he became a firmly affiliated with another German cultural organization, the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Society for Germans Abroad).²⁶ In 1934 he travelled to Germany and returned an enthusiastic, fully committed Nazi. Due to his rabid Nazism he was fired by *Der Courier*, but soon found employment in June 1935 editing the *Deutsche Zeitung für Kanada*, (German Newspaper for Canada - DZK), a Nazi propaganda instrument. The DZK reprinted articles from Germany for its German readers in Canada. Bott energetically defended all aspects of Nazism. His "increasing radicalism" and "hate filled editorials and hostile tirades" alienated both Canadian and liberal German speakers in Canada.

Prior to his incarceration Bott was a driving force behind the Deutscher Bund Canada and the DZK.²⁷ The DZK stressed Nazi ideology and defended Hitler's actions.²⁸ Kastendieck admitted that copies of the newspaper were around the community but he was not in a position to say how many. He also claimed to have no idea how many individuals read the Nazi publication and he tried to explain that the DZK was around the same as other German language newspapers. Kastendieck claimed that he did not subscribe to the DZK²⁹ but his 1939 statement acknowledged that he received copies and was its agent for obtaining subscriptions.³⁰

When questioned by Canadian authorities after his arrest in September 1939 Bott admitted that the policies and views expressed in the DZK were compatible with his own. They found Bott to warrant internment due to his affiliation with the Bund, DZK and pro-Nazi views.³¹ In detainment Wagner described how Bott took it upon himself to serve as official news interpreter for his fellow internees. He acted as their leader holding evening meetings at Kananaskis explaining the falsehoods of Canadian news related to the Second World War. Bott also took it upon himself to actively protest conditions, and internee transfers to and from detention camps.

Bott resisted his confinement and was one of the most stubborn and adamant Nazis detained.³²

This assessment of Bott contrasts sharply to that given by Kastendieck. He found Bott to be dejected and lethargic during his incarceration. Bott "was typical to the man who didn't match up to the situation at all. He was not capable of adjusting himself to the thing, he was lying on his back most of the time and complaining about something."³³ When asked about Bott's political leanings Kastendieck said, "I don't think he was very active in any direction. He definitely was not 150 per cent Nazi. He didn't belong to that group. I remember him often saying that two wars are too much for one human life, while he was lying on his bed, talking to himself."³⁴ Frank Bott, Berhard's son, wrote that after the War his father "remained a devoted German nationalist to the end and refused to acknowledge, at least openly, the worst manifestations of National Socialism."³⁵ Why Kastendieck would minimize Bott's actions in Kananaskis is unknown, but he may have wanted to down play their common Bund connection. Both men were believers in Nazi ideology and harboured deep respect for Hitler and Nazism.

Kastendieck stated that the Nazis "sent people over here with the aim of finding out why we left and what happened to us." Karl Götz was one researcher that Kastendieck admitted remembering.³⁶ This Nazi researcher and apologist toured Saskatchewan in the summer of 1936 and provided illustrated lectures in both Paradise Hill and Loon Lake. In Nazi Germany Götz's travels through North America were praised as an important mission that was essential to maintaining ties between German nationals abroad and the Third Reich. Götz advocated to German nationals residing in North America that they should return to Germany where, according to his assessment, life was.³⁷

One family that Götz visited was the von Schillings. In 1934 a Bund group had been founded in Loon River with Hugo von Schilling as leader. Schilling had been leader of this settlement group since their immigration in 1929. At one time Schilling also served as provincial Bund leader for Saskatchewan. The von Schillings were increasingly radicalized by the depression in Canada, their social, material, and possibly their own physical decline. They had been taxed to their physical limits in the Saskatchewan bush. By 1938 ninety-five-percent of the Loon River settlers were living on relief, most members were ready to give up and go home. This

coincided with a distrust of Nazis by most Canadians, which only further isolated such groups. Anti German sentiments in Canada and a negative press, plus the depression combined to encourage Germans to return to the Reich.³⁸ The speculation at the time was that the Germans were leaving Canada because they could not endure the jeers of anti-Nazis. The real reason, however, appears to be that the German Government was now recalling as many German farmers as it could persuade to leave Canada because of the labour shortage in Germany.³⁹

The Ausland Organization (Foreign Organization - AO) of the Nazi party encouraged return migration. The AO was responsible for all party members abroad and had legal jurisdiction over all German nationals outside of Germany. These administrative duties included a Rückwandereramt (Return Migration Office - RWA), responsible for administering and controlling the return of German nationals from abroad.⁴⁰ The RWA advised and aided German citizens in their return to Germany, they found accommodations and work. The German Consulates abroad were of primary importance in this government-sponsored movement.⁴¹ In Canada the German Consul in Winnipeg was responsible for interviewing and screening the potential return migrants in western Canada, while the embassy-consulate in Montreal was responsible for those in eastern Canada.

In early 1939 the Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office - AA) representative in Winnipeg wrote Berlin that his office was flooded with inquiries about return migration. These came from both German nationals and ethnic Germans throughout the Prairie Provinces, with the majority coming from Saskatchewan. This return migration movement was encouraged by poor agricultural conditions in Canada, the anti-German press in Canada and the lure of Grossdeutschland (Greater Germany) after the unification of Austria and the Sudetenland with the Fatherland. Most of those who wanted to return were farmers. The Loon Lake Nazis represented just a hand full of the hundreds of German speakers that wanted to migrate to Germany from Canada during the late 1930's.⁴²

The entire von Schilling group, all nineteen families sold their property. From a group of roughly fifty people, at least nineteen were Bund members. They left Saskatchewan by bus for New York in mid July 1939 and departed from New York on July 25, 1939. Nearly

one month before the outbreak of the war the Loon River Nazis were in Germany. This group consisted of German nationals, but some held Canadian citizenship. In theory they were German citizens and could obtain any services offered by the AO. Unfortunately they suffered, as many return migrants did, from their years away from the Reich.⁴³

They were assigned to labour in the Fritz Saubel works in Weimar making war materials. What they desired, as many return migrants wanted was a position where their experiences abroad would be taken into consideration and appreciated. Little is known about their existence in the Reich, but Götz wrote that because some of them became Canadian citizens they were treated as foreigners, not as returning German citizens. This made finding decent employment in Germany very difficult. The Loon Lake Nazis had wanted to aid Germany by residing in eastern Prussia. They felt that their years of farming challenges could be put to use in eastern Prussia as farmers. But in Germany the wishes of the Loon Lake Nazis were ignored. They were told that they could best serve the Reich as factory workers; their farming knowledge could be put to usage after the war.⁴⁴ Ironically Kastendieck had been recruited in Germany during his visit in 1935/36 to take up farming in eastern Prussia. Three years later von Schilling and the Loon Lake Nazis were denied, what had been offered to Kastendieck.⁴⁵ Possibly Kastendieck suggested their settlement in East Prussia, although this is pure speculation.

Both von Schilling and Kastendieck were Bund leaders in rural Saskatchewan and were not separated by long distances. Both controlled Ortsgruppen. Kastendieck had contact with Bund members in other locations in Saskatchewan and attended Bund meetings in nearby communities such as Frenchmans Butte and Hillmond. Both Frenchmans Butte and Hillmond had a Stützpunkt.⁴⁶ The fact that he had contact with the smaller groups and not the larger groups seems unlikely. It is very probable that Kastendieck had known of von Schillings intentions. But why Kastendieck never returned with the group remains an unanswered question. Possibly Kastendieck, although an admirer of Hitler and a believer in National Socialism, did not see his fate linked with Nazi Germany. When questioned about the return of the Loon River Nazis Kastendieck claimed not to know “these Loon River people”. But surmised that “some of these people really didn’t have much

of anything and not much to look forward to, so they started blaming someone else for it. Whether this Nazi stuff had much to do with it or not, I am not quite sure. They had letters from across from their relatives that they found jobs again and that they had an income and all at once these things looked rosy you know. This is the way I see the whole thing. They were in a desperate position at that time.”

Although Kastendieck refutes knowing much about this return migration he acknowledged that Nazi Germany was trying to “get some of the emigrants back. There [was] a government sponsored deal.” Despite apparently knowing something about the RWA Kastendieck claimed to have only superficial knowledge of the AO.⁴⁷ In light of his connections to the Bund, DZK, Götz, von Schilling, Nazi literature, films and propaganda this lack of knowledge is hard to explain.

It would seem that Kastendieck had some prior knowledge of this groups intended departure; perhaps he shared their reasoning. Wagner in his examination of this group of Nazi returnees gave the same basic explanation.⁴⁸ Evidently the Schilling group believed Nazi Germany could provide for them better than Canada. This was at a time when Canada was in a deep recession while it appeared that Germany was going through an economic boom. In the late 1930’s Germany needed additional manpower. This insatiable desire for labour dictated that healthy Germans could receive support from the Germany government to return.⁴⁹

Kastendieck, ironically, was involved in assisting German immigrants who fled Nazi persecution. Hitler’s annexation of the Sudetenland in 1938 put the anti-Nazis residing in the area were at great risk. These were members of the Sudeten German Social Democratic Party (GSDP); they were strong opponents to fascist Germany. The GSDP wanted to save as many of their party member as possible from Nazi revenge. According to T.O.F. Herzer, Lutheran Minister and manager of the Canadian Colonization Organisation, the refugees migration to Canada in the wake of the Nazi annexation was an effort to save lives.⁵⁰

The Canadian government gave permission in January 1939 for the Sudetenland anti-fascists to enter the country. Wagner erroneously reported that roughly three thousand five hundred immigrated to Canada.⁵¹ Although this figure was given permission to enter the



A boxcar village housed the refugees on their arrival at St. Walburg, Sask.

A box car village temporarily housing Sudeten-German refugees at St. Walburg, awaiting settlement on agricultural land (Saskatchewan Archives Board S-B 7618)

country only one thousand and twenty four Sudetenland refugees migrated to Canada. One hundred and fifty two families and thirty-seven single men founded the colony of Tomslake, British Columbia. One hundred and forty seven families and twenty-seven single men settled in St. Walburg, Saskatchewan. Five hundred and eighteen refugees went to British Columbia, five hundred and six set off for Saskatchewan.⁵² The Canadian immigration office together with the Canadian Pacific Railway and CNR were in charge of transporting and settling the refugees. The CNR bought farms in and near St. Walburg, Sask. Some of the land had been bought, ironically, from the Nazis that had returned to Germany.

One of the German speakers in the area hired by the CNR, despite his pro-Nazi affiliations, was Kastendieck. He supervised forty-two families for roughly one year.⁵³ Another individual that was involved with the Sudetenland Germans was Alois N. Schneider, another adamant Nazi. He lived in St. Walburg, working as a real estate agent for the CNR; he was also the Bund leader for St. Walburg. It was alleged by the *Star Phoenix* that Schneider sold land and farm machinery at exorbitant prices to the Sudetenland newcomers but no formal charges were laid.⁵⁴ Kastendieck was adamant that he had nothing to do with Schneider. Yet he did recall that Schneider “was not a Nazi sympathizer by any means”,

he was a businessman without political convictions.⁵⁵ Schneider was arrested on September 5, 1939, released on December 21, 1939, re-interned on June 10, 1941 for fear he would jeopardize public safety. He was later released in 1944.⁵⁶

Needless to say the anti-Nazi refugees were dismayed to find their concerns in Canada being looked after Nazis. These were men that heartedly advocated what they had just fled in Europe, while conversely the Nazi supervisors viewed the Sudetenland Germans as traitors to Nazi ideals and their common German heritage.⁵⁷ Franz Rehwald one of the Sudeten leaders noted “all the Sudeten settlers were strongly opposed to the supervision by Nazis, but they were informed by representatives of the CNR colonization department that those Nazi supervisors had their full confidence.”⁵⁸ Despite Rehwalds and other Sudetenland Germans repeated protests to Canadian officials Kastendieck and other Nazis remained affiliated with the Sudeten settlement in Saskatchewan.⁵⁹ The *Star Phoenix* noted “it will be remembered that the Sudetens came here as refugees and it doesn’t appear to be in keeping with the spirit of the invitation which was extended to them to come here, to be under the direction, at least to some extent, of Nazi sympathizers, when they had been driven out of their former homes by Nazi invasion.”⁶⁰ Modern historians have come to the same conclusion; Wagner

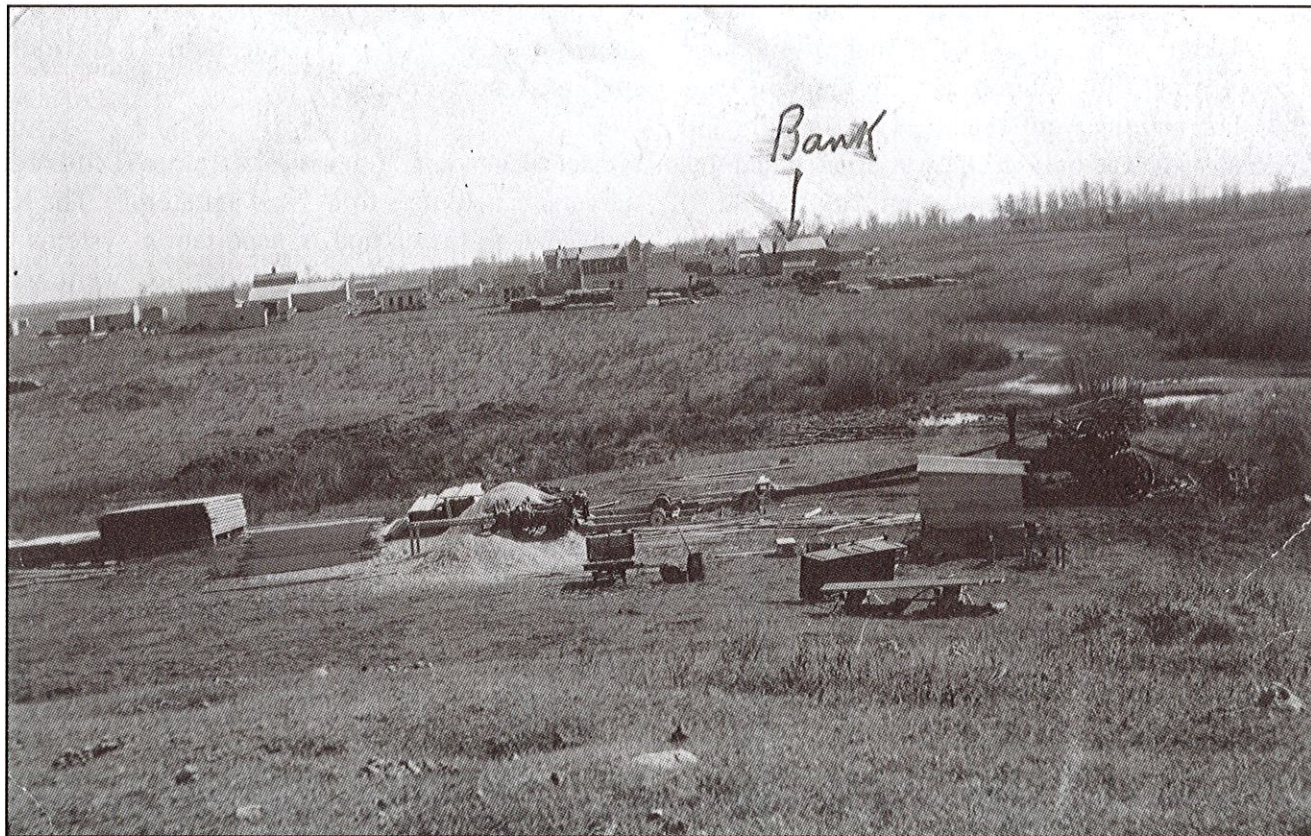
noted that Kastendieck was one “of the province’s leading pro-Nazis”.⁶¹ Historian Rita Schilling does not mention Kastendieck by name but noted that the Sudetenland supervisors were all pro-Nazi.⁶²

In his 1977 interview Kastendieck stated that he did not work for the CNR until the arrival of the Sudetenland refugees. He was hired because he was fluent in German, familiar with the local area and was a farmer. According to Kastendieck the whole group “were quite suspicious of anything that came along.” This included the Canadian government, German speakers living in the area and the individuals in charge of supervising them. When asked about the Sudetenland’s accusation of having Nazi supervisors Kastendieck disassociated himself by stating, “that sounds to me like what happened in the more northern districts in the Loon Lake area.”⁶³

On May 13, 1939, over three months before Canada declared war on Germany, Arthur G. Slaght, distinguished lawyer from Ontario, Member of Parliament for Parry Sound, informed parliament that German subversive elements threatened Canada.⁶⁴

Due to anti-Nazi sentiments that were rippling through Saskatchewan shortly before the War, Kastendieck approached the local RCMP asking if authorities were suspicious of him or other Germans. The RCMP assured Kastendieck that no one was leery of any locals. But on September 3, 1939, before the Canadian parliament declared war on Germany, Kastendieck was arrested.⁶⁵ With the start of the War many in Canada anticipated Nazi espionage to be at least as pronounced as it was in the First World War.

During the First World War the Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office – AA) had elaborate plans, including invasions of Canada, involving Germans, Irish, and East Indians to disrupt the Canadian war effort. The United States was a convenient location to conduct sabotage in Canada.⁶⁶ During the Second World War a Nazi invasion of Canada from the USA was rumoured, and was a topic within the Canadian parliament. It was also believed that the fifth column and Nazi sympathizers in Canada would actively support any Fascist attack or espionage.⁶⁷ When speaking to the Greater New York Safety Council in New York City on April 17, 1940 William J. Scott, Fire Marshal of Ontario,



View of St. Walburg
(Saskatchewan Archives Board S-B 2755)

warned that “to judge what anti-sabotage precautions should take place on this continent during the present pre war emergency, one of the best methods is to look back to the days of the First Great War of 1914-1918.” C.D. Conant Attorney-General of Ontario on April 19, 1940 warned “that sabotage attempts and troubles have commenced in the last months is repeating the history of the first Great War, when it took a similar length of time for subversive forces to organize and start action. Again there is no doubt that these troubles are directly instigated by European dictators and their representatives on this continent.”⁶⁸ Conant had been praised by some for bringing to the attention of Canadians the dangers of subversive elements living in the country.⁶⁹ The RCMP reported that “in Saskatchewan only, of the Western Provinces, had there even been any degree of support for the [Fascist] movement” but due to a lack of leadership and proper organization the movement never attracted large numbers.⁷⁰

Due to the fear of Nazi espionage and the supposed investigative work by Canadian authorities, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) quickly incarcerated German speakers linked in any way to the Nazi Party. These affiliations were sometimes merely assumed, not proven. The Canadian government bended to public pressure making arrests due to the fear of sabotage and a concern of ‘fifth column’ activity. These fears of secret Nazi actions were enhanced by memories of the Great War. It was only as the war approached that security issues and Nazism took top priority.

On September 4, 1939, six days before Canada went to war, 303 Germans and German-Canadians were arrested. The public appeared to be grateful that such dangerous elements had been nullified. When the phoney war ended in Western Europe fears raged about fifth columnists in Canada. The government of Canada caved once again with further arrests on June 10, 1940. One RCMP superior noted that such internments had a calming effect on the public. By 1941 there were 780 Germans and German-Canadians interned.

Canadian authorities were completely unaware of the political left and once war approached were desperate to calm the public and give the impression of police surveillance on any subversives. They feared the possibility of subversive operations from German and Canadian born elements. The Defence of Canada Regulations (DCR) suspended civil rights, giving the

Canadian government the power to intern anyone considered a threat.⁷¹ Kastendieck was arrested under the DCR. His 1936 trip to Germany and membership in the Bund made him appear as a possible candidate for Nazi intelligence and sabotage. His disconnected answers to questions posed by Canadian authorities and denial of knowing anything about the functioning of the Bund or Nazi party heaped scorn upon him. His circulation of Nazi books, films and newspapers was sufficient circumstantial evidence to detain Kastendieck.⁷²

Norman Robertson, an advisor to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, noted that Germans arrested were not victims of a mass round up but considered dangerous individuals.⁷³ Yet Robertson thought the internment of thirty-seven German Bund members from Saskatchewan, including Kastendieck, unnecessary due to their isolation on farms. There was little they could do which could be construed detrimental to Canada’s interests or war effort. Due to anti-Nazi concerns and fears of sabotage these individuals remained detained.⁷⁴ In early 1940 an inquiry considering the possible release of some enemy aliens detained in Kananaskis revealed that the majority of interned Germans expressed loyalty to Hitler and the Third Reich. All Bund members in Canada were viewed suspiciously and Canadian memories of WW I played a role in rural Bund members continued incarceration.⁷⁵

Western Canadian authorities also feared fifth column subversive activities from Nazi agitators.⁷⁶ The RCMP knew that railroads and transportation systems could be sabotaged.⁷⁷ Canadian authorities were worried about the possibility of subversive actions throughout the country.⁷⁸ The RCMP noted that in November 1939 grain shipments aboard the SS *Lysaker V* and SS *Letitia*, which departed from Montreal destined for Great Britain, found broken glass and metallic substances in its hold. It is unknown at what stage of transportation the foreign substances were added but British authorities rejected both ships cargo.⁷⁹

From Kananaskis, Kastendieck was later moved to Petawa, Ontario and from there to Fredericton, New Brunswick. The Canadian government later softened their rigid stance and released Kastendieck in September 1943. He returned to his family in Saskatchewan.⁸⁰ Kastendieck stated that every emigrant’s life involved some tragedies and struggles. But his voluntary association with a repressive European regime through

the Bund and his defence of certain actions of Nazism in his 1977 interview makes one question his true allegiance. The responses to questions asked in 1939 and 1977 were vague, disconnected and at times contradictory. Due to this information it is hard not to come to the conclusion that he was a dedicated Nazi with possible subversive tendencies. Yet if he was an ardent Nazi he could have remained in Germany during his visit to his hometown in 1935/36. He also could have left with von Schilling in 1939. Perhaps there were other factors that have not surfaced. But why he chose to remain in Canada when he admired Hitler so strongly remains a puzzling, unanswered question. Even in 1977, twenty-two years after Nazism was defeated and the horrors of the regime were well known he was still loyal to many Nazi ideals.⁸¹ Kastendieck died in 1980 and the true nature of his intentions likely went with him.⁸²

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Treaty 8 and Northern Saskatchewan

by Christine Smillie

Treaty 8 is one of Saskatchewan's numbered treaties including, as it does, territory in the north-west corner of the province. There has been, however, virtually nothing published regarding the Treaty 8 negotiations in Saskatchewan between 1899 and 1900, nor has there been much written about problems related to the implementation of the treaty since then.¹

In 1876 the Dominion of Canada signed Treaty 6 with Indian bands in Central Alberta and Saskatchewan. The areas north and west of this area, covering the Northwest Territories and the northern half of Alberta and Saskatchewan, made up what was referred to as the "unceded portions of the Territories." After the signing of Treaty 6, Indian people living in the unceded part of northern Saskatchewan and Alberta petitioned for assistance from the government. Government records show that Indian people, in what later became Saskatchewan, began petitioning the federal government for a treaty in 1879. On February 7, 1879 a petition was sent to David Laird, Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territories, on behalf of people living in the communities of Stanley, Pelican Narrows, and Ile a la Crosse in northern Saskatchewan, asking for a treaty.² The people told Laird that game was scarce and they did not have enough food or clothing to survive the next winter. The local missionary sent a separate letter supporting the petitioners' request for a treaty. Their appeals fell on deaf ears and no action was taken.

On July 28, 1883 the Bishop of St. Albert forwarded a petition from the "Montagnais Indians at Ile a la Crosse," to John A. Macdonald, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, asking for clothing and food. The Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs forwarded the petition and covering letter from the Bishop to John A. Macdonald on November 5, 1883. He argued that because the application was 50 miles north of Treaty 6, it was outside of the treaty limits and re-opened the question of what to do with Indians living there.³ He informed Macdonald that he understood that the situation was deteriorating and at the same time

cautioned that, "the Indians could of course do great injury to any railway or other public work which might be constructed in their country, unless the Government had a previous understanding with them relative to the same."⁴

Macdonald forwarded the petition and letter from the Bishop to Edgar Dewdney, Commissioner of Indian Affairs for Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, on November 19, 1883 asking for his opinion on the "expediency" of signing a treaty with these Indians and for information on the "Bands and Tribes, their number, etc. also as to the best limits for new Treaties – how far North and East the same should extend, together with an approximate estimate of the costs."⁵ Dewdney responded on April 26, 1884 with information he had obtained from HBC Chief Factor Lawrence Clark from Carlton. In response to Macdonald's questions Clark said that there were about 850 people at Ile a la Crosse according to records kept by the Roman Catholic missionaries. He reported that the conditions of the people were "fairly good with but very few destitute."⁶ With this information in hand the Department wrote to the Bishop of St. Albert on May 29, 1884 saying that negotiating treaty with the Indians in that area could in fact be postponed until there was a chance that the land would be required for settlement purposes.⁷

The government's position was clear, no treaties and no help, unless the government needed the lands occupied by Aboriginal people for white settlement. Except in a few instances, the Department of Indian Affairs staff, under the direction of Sir John A. Macdonald, refused to provide assistance to Aboriginal people living in unceded territory. The official government position

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was that in areas where there had been no development or white settlement the Hudson's Bay Company should continue to provide for sick and destitute Indians as it had before the transfer. In a memorandum to Macdonald from Lawrence Vankoughnet, his deputy superintendent, Vankoughnet elaborated on this policy. In his view there were two main questions, what was the relationship between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians before the official transfer of land to Canada and has that relationship been in fact affected by the transfer?⁸ He argued that the Hudson's Bay Company had provided for the sick, old and destitute Indians prior to the transfer and that, as far he was concerned, this relationship was unaffected by it.⁹

This rationale was repeated in a number of government documents from this period.

There are many examples of the government's policy of not negotiating a treaty until Indian land was needed for settlement or development. Historian Frank Tough, writing about treaty negotiations in northern Manitoba after 1875, argued that,

Aboriginal title negotiations were carried out solely at the convenience of the government. The Department of Indian Affairs ignored Indian requests for a treaty for three decades. . . . Despite Indians' desire for a treaty to cover the area north of Treaty Five (1875), the timing of the adhesions and, consequently, the scope of the treaty talks were controlled by the government. This transparent case of a one-sided use of authority during this phase of treaty-making challenges the conviction that Indian policy was generally well-meaning and just.¹⁰

No treaty and no help were offered to Indians in the unceded territory in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan until the 1890's, when significant quantities of petroleum were found in the District of Athabaska and the Mackenzie River valley and the Klondike Gold Rush was bringing many white prospectors into conflict with Indian people living in that area. The decision was taken in 1890 to go ahead with a treaty for the extinguishment of Aboriginal title over a vast tract of land north of the boundary of Treaty 6.

After a number of delays, Treaty 8 commissioners were sent into northern Alberta to negotiate with the First Nations and the Métis in the summers of 1899 and

1900. There was also an expectation on the part of the government that Treaty 8 commissioners would meet with Indians and Métis in the northwestern corner of what later became Saskatchewan, as these people had been asking for a treaty since at least 1879. However, because of the vast area of land that needed to be covered and the route that the commissioners took, they did not end up meeting with the actual source of the petitions.¹¹ Furthermore, the Portage la Loche and Ile a La Crosse regions where the petitions were coming from was unaffected by the Gold Rush with the result that the commissioners felt little obligation to extend their work into those unceded areas.¹²

Treaty 8 commissioner David Laird did make one trip into northern Saskatchewan when he crossed Lake Athabasca and met with Indians at Fond du Lac on July 25 and 27, 1899.¹³ Father Gabriel Breynat traveled back to his mission at Fond du Lac with Laird's treaty commission, but had not intended to take part in the negotiations.

By the time the commission arrived the Indians assembled at Fond du Lac had waited a long time and were impatient for the negotiations to begin. They elected a chief, Maurice Piche (also known as Moberley) as well as councilors, and then Laird read the terms of the treaty. Immediately, as Father Breynat later reported, there were problems.

The meeting took place a few steps from the mission. Right after the text of the proposed treaty had been read, translated and explained, the Honorable Laird knocked at my door.

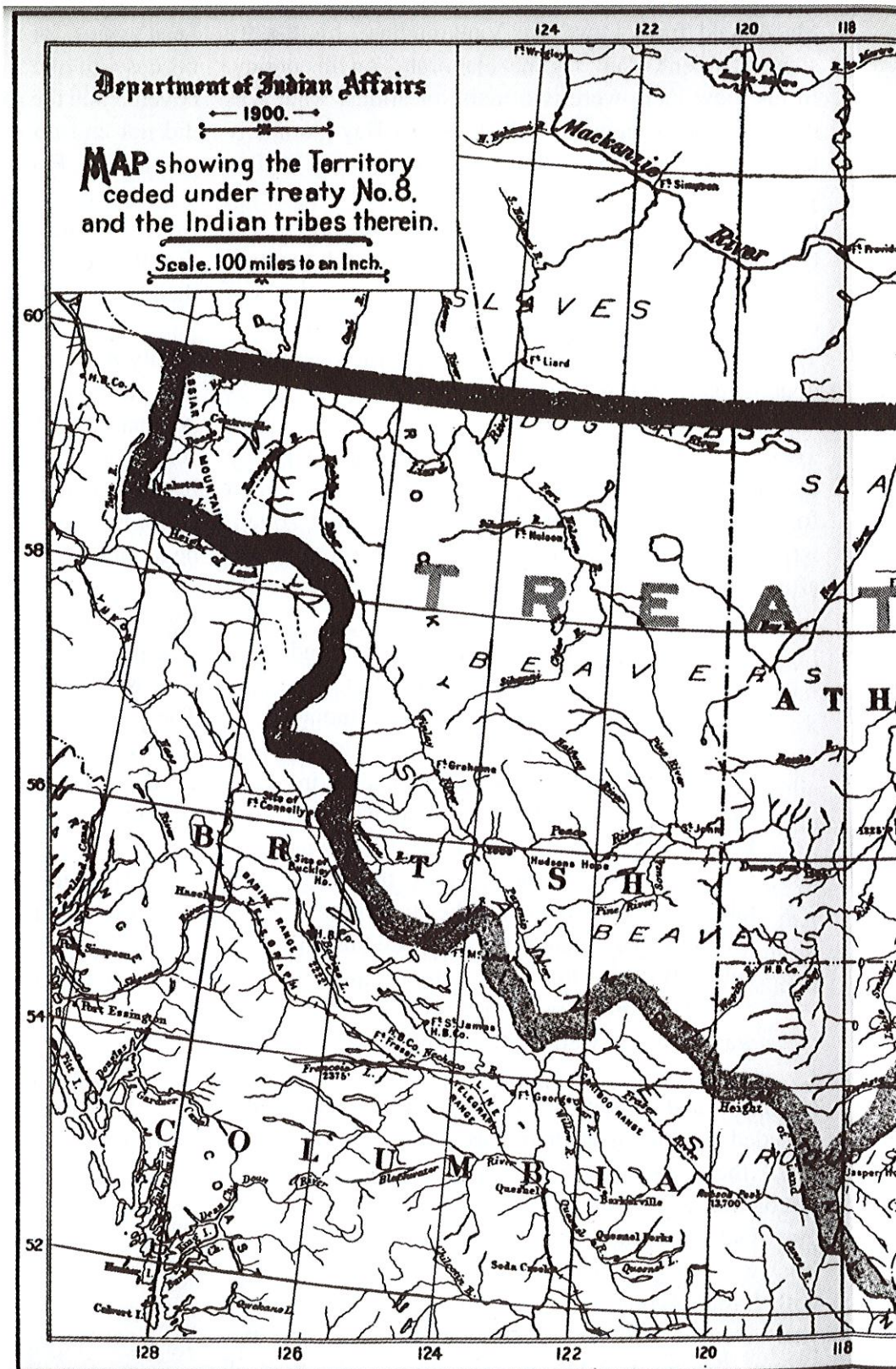
"Complete failure!" he said. "We must fold down our tents, pack our baggage and leave."

He explained that as soon as the discussion started, Chief Moberley . . . nearly got into a fight with the interpreter, good-natured Robillard. . . . The chief had jumped into his canoe and left to the other side of the bay.¹⁴

The fact that Chief Moberley left the negotiations after the terms of the treaty had been read and translated would indicate that he was not happy with the terms that were being offered.

Father Breynat wrote that Laird's distress convinced him that he needed to intervene in the negotiations even though he had decided earlier to not get involved. Rather than speaking with Moberley directly, Father Breynat approached someone whom he thought would be able to influence Moberley to sign the treaty.

I called for one of the elected councilors, Dzieddin ("The Deaf"), known for his good character, his great heart and his good judgment. I explained to him: "If Chief Moberley, a great hunter and a very proud man, can despise and reject the help offered by the government, many old people without any income and many orphans will appreciate receiving a five dollar annuity along with free powder, bullets, fishnets, etc." I added, "Accept and sign the treaty on behalf of all those poor people. Anyway, even all of you together, all the Caribou Eaters, you cannot help it. You may accept the Treaty or not, but in either way the Queen's Government will come, and set up its own organization in your country. The compensation offered by the Government may be quite small, but to refuse it would only deprive the poor people of much-needed help."¹⁵



A Map of
(Saskatchewan Archives Board)



Dzieddin was convinced by this argument and he signed the treaty. Chief Moberley himself finally signed the treaty after seeing some of his friends sign the treaty.¹⁶ Fumoleau said that treaty records indicated that 383 members of Maurice's Band took treaty at Fond du Lac on July 25 and 27. He also wrote that Breynat "never regretted his role in the Fond du Lac negotiations. He considered the Treaty to be primarily a friendship treaty, as did most of the people in the North."¹⁷ Oral testimony from Treaty 8 elders in northern Saskatchewan quoted in Fumoleau and *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* also supports this position.¹⁸

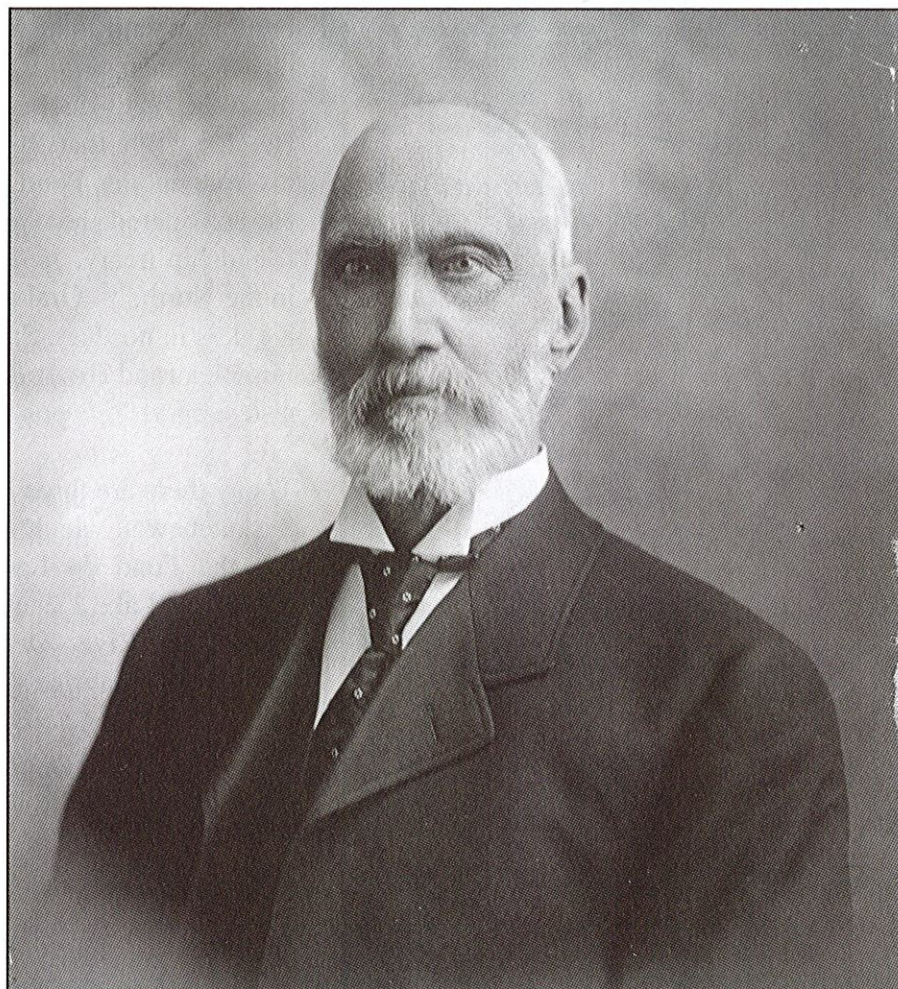
Today there are three First Nations Bands in Saskatchewan which are covered by Treaty 8: the Fond du Lac Denesuline Nation, the Black Lake Denesuline Nation and the Clearwater River Denesuline Nation. At some point Maurice's Band became known as the Fond du Lac Band. The Black Lake Band, formerly known as the Stony Rapids Band, was formed in 1949/50 when 258 members broke away from the Fond du Lac Band.¹⁹

Members of the Clearwater River Dene Nation, formerly known as the Portage La Loche Band, signed Treaty 8 at Fort McMurray on August 4, 1899. The Treaty Commissioners' report of September 22, 1899 said that Commissioner McKenna "secured the adhesion of the Chipewyan and Cree Indians" at Fort McMurray on August 4. While McKenna likely met with members of different Cree and Chipewyan bands on that day, government reports refer to this group as the "Cree, Chipewyan Band". The people who signed Treaty 8 at Fort McMurray who were not from the "Fort McMurray Band" were referred to in government reports as "stragglers" of the "Fort McMurray Band."²⁰

As with the Indian people who signed Treaty 8 in northern Alberta, the main concern of the Indian people living in Saskatchewan who signed Treaty 8 was to ensure "the

*David Laird, Commissioner for Treaty Eight and later
Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories*

Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-B 7400



survival and well-being of their children, grandchildren and future generations of First Nations people.”²¹ They asked for assurances from the treaty commissioners that they would be as free to hunt, trap, and fish over their land after signing the treaty as before. The Commissioners’ report acknowledged that this was one of the chief difficulties in the negotiations and that assurances had to be given that,

only such laws as to hunting and fishing as were in the interests of the Indians and were found necessary in order to protect the fish and fur-bearing animals would be made, and that they would be as free to hunt and fish after the treaty as they would be if they never entered into it.²²

Most of the First Nations who signed Treaty 8 did not want to be confined to reserves, so it was agreed that the allocation of reserve land could be done at a later date.

As with the bands in northern Alberta who had signed Treaty 8 in 1899 and 1900, most of the Indian people living in the area covered by Treaty 8 in Saskatchewan were still able to subsist from hunting, trapping and fishing. The bands understood that if and when they wanted reserve land it would be given to them according to the land provisions of Treaty 8.

Yet when the Treaty 8 bands in Saskatchewan decided that they needed reserves and began petitioning the government for their land entitlements beginning in the 1930s, they were obliged to wait for decades before they received the reserve lands they were entitled to. One of the reasons for the delay was that the provincial government had given mining companies mineral leases on land claimed by the bands. Negotiations for reserve land were now complicated by the fact that mining companies had legally binding contracts with the provincial government and the federal and provincial governments had to find solutions which would satisfy

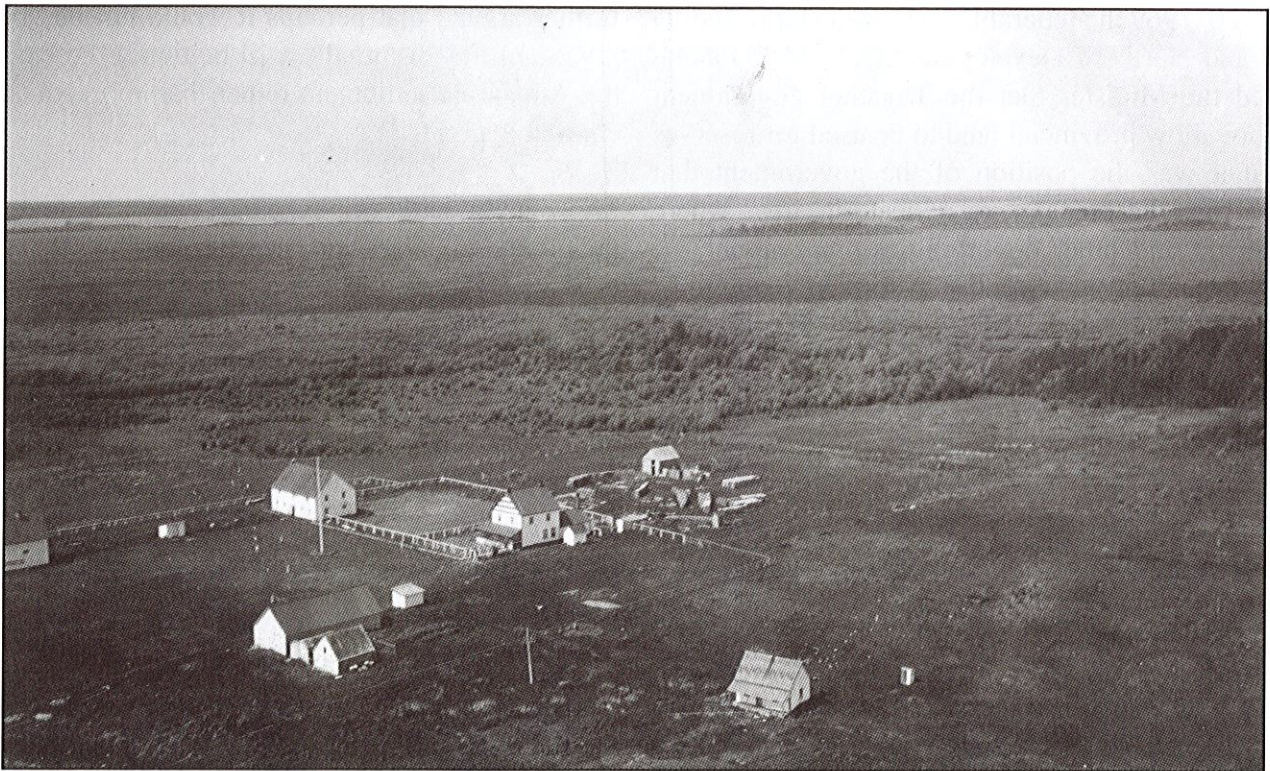
the bands as well as the mining companies. The other reason for the delay may simply have been that these were people and land in the remote north-western corner of Saskatchewan and the needs of these people were not seen as a priority by the governments of the day.

Chief Alphonse Piche of the Portage La Loche Band wrote to the Indian Agent in 1937 asking for reserve lands to be set aside for the band at Whitefish Lake and Swan Lake.²³ Reserve lands, however, were not finally transferred to the band until 1970. Government records indicate that discussions regarding the creation of reserves for the Stony Rapids Band began in 1959. Indian Reserve (I.R.) #226 was transferred from the province to the band in September 1970,²⁴ I.R. #224 in April of 1972,²⁵ and I.R. #225 in October 1973.²⁶

In August 1977, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs, Warren Allmand, announced that an agreement had been reached among the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSI), the Province of Saskatchewan, and the federal government on how to move to resolve outstanding treaty land entitlement claims in Saskatchewan. One of

the principles of the "Saskatchewan Formula" was that, for the purposes of calculating treaty land entitlement, band membership would be as of December 31, 1976. On October 13, 1978 the provincial Minister of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, Ted Bowerman, wrote to the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Hugh Faulkner, indicating the province's willingness to transfer an additional 31,076 acres near Elizabeth Falls "to meet the full and final land entitlement of the Stony Rapids Band." The land was finally transferred to the band through Order In Council 1981- 898 dated April 2, 1981.²⁷

The Treaty 8 band that had the greatest difficulty in getting the reserve lands that it was entitled to was the Fond du Lac Band. On October 29, 1959, W.G. Tunstead from the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration wrote to N.J. McLeod, Regional Supervisor for Saskatchewan, stating that members of the bands in northern Saskatchewan who had still not received reserve land had raised the issue following treaty payments that year at La Loche. Tunstead recommended that outstanding treaty land entitlement be resolved quickly. He pointed out that,



Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan, 1920
(Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-B 785)

The present mineral development throughout the north that if it is the intention of the Department to have lands set aside for the Bands, who have not as yet received their reserve locations, consideration should now be given to have suitable sites set aside for the different Bands before the land is all taken up by staking or otherwise.²⁸

By January 1961 there was government correspondence which confirmed that the northern bands had made specific requests for reserve lands, but it still took years before the transfers were finalized. In the meantime, the provincial government granted permits to mining companies that wanted to do exploration work on land which had been chosen by the Fond du Lac Band for their reserves. This greatly complicated negotiations once all of the parties were finally ready to come to an agreement.

Another reason for the delay in getting reserve lands approved was the provincial government of Ross Thatcher. In power from 1964 to 1971, the government initially refused to release provincial land for reserves, even though they were obliged to do so under the terms of the Saskatchewan Natural Resources Act of 1930.²⁹ On June 20, 1969 the federal Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, J.A. MacDonald, informed the Minister that the Thatcher government would not allow provincial land to be used for reserves and that it was the position of the government that "Indians must be prepared to relocate in areas where employment and other opportunities are available."³⁰ Macdonald predicted that the Attorney General of Canada may have to become involved.³¹ Fortunately it did not go that far and the provincial government did finally agree to release land for the establishment of northern Indian reserves. A final treaty land entitlement agreement with the Fond du Lac Band, however, was not signed until March 20, 1986.

The discussion so far has focused on the those who initially signed Treaty Eight. There remained, however, other people in northern Saskatchewan who had petitioned for a treaty but who had not been included in Treaty 8. The Treaty 8 commissioners therefore recommended that the gap between the various treaties be absorbed into Treaty 8.³² However, nothing happened until 1902 when the Métis people at Ile a la Crosse asked to be given scrip. Two letters supporting

their petition were sent to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Prime Minister, who on March 6, 1902 asked J.A.J. McKenna of the Department of Indian Affairs for his response. McKenna responded on April 7, 1902 saying:

The territory being unceded, I have no authority under my Commission to extinguish the aboriginal claims of the Halfbreeds. Following the policy adopted in the making of Treaty 8, the Indian title and the claims of the Halfbreeds would be concurrently extinguished; and an arrangement for the issue of scrip would therefore have to wait until a decision were come to as to taking a cession of the territory.³³

Undeterred, petitions on behalf of the Indians and Métis at Ile a la Crosse continued to be sent to the government, and on September 27, 1902 McKenna wrote a memorandum to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, in which he acknowledged the petitions, estimated that the number of people living in the area was "20 whites, 150 Halfbreeds and 700 Indians" and pointed out that if there was another hard season for them then the petitions would begin again.³⁴ He further argued that perhaps it would not be "better to give them (as eventually will be done) the benefits of the Athabasca settlement rather than to make a further charitable grant."³⁵

McKenna's letter gives clear evidence that Indian people living in the "unceded territory" north of Treaty 6 in Saskatchewan in 1902 were still experiencing the same hardships that they had been experiencing since at least 1879. McKenna also acknowledges that there would be reason to suggest that this area should have been included in Treaty 8 negotiations in 1899 and 1900.

On October 14, 1902 McKenna wrote a memorandum to the Minister of Indian Affairs in which he recommended that "a cession of the country be taken in the form of an adhesion to Treaty 8." He also said that "as to the extinguishment of the Halfbreed title we shall have to guard against an issue of scrip to children born since 1885 of parents who have participated in the recent issue who may move to the Isle a la Crosse country for the very purpose of getting scrip as well as against an issue to children born to Athabasca Halfbreeds since

the cession of that country.”³⁶ On October 21, 1902 McKenna wrote to Bishop Pascal of Prince Albert and T. Davis, MP for Prince Albert, advising them of the government’s intention of “having the aboriginal title extinguished in the Isle a la Crosse country.” In his letter to Bishop Pascal, McKenna wrote,

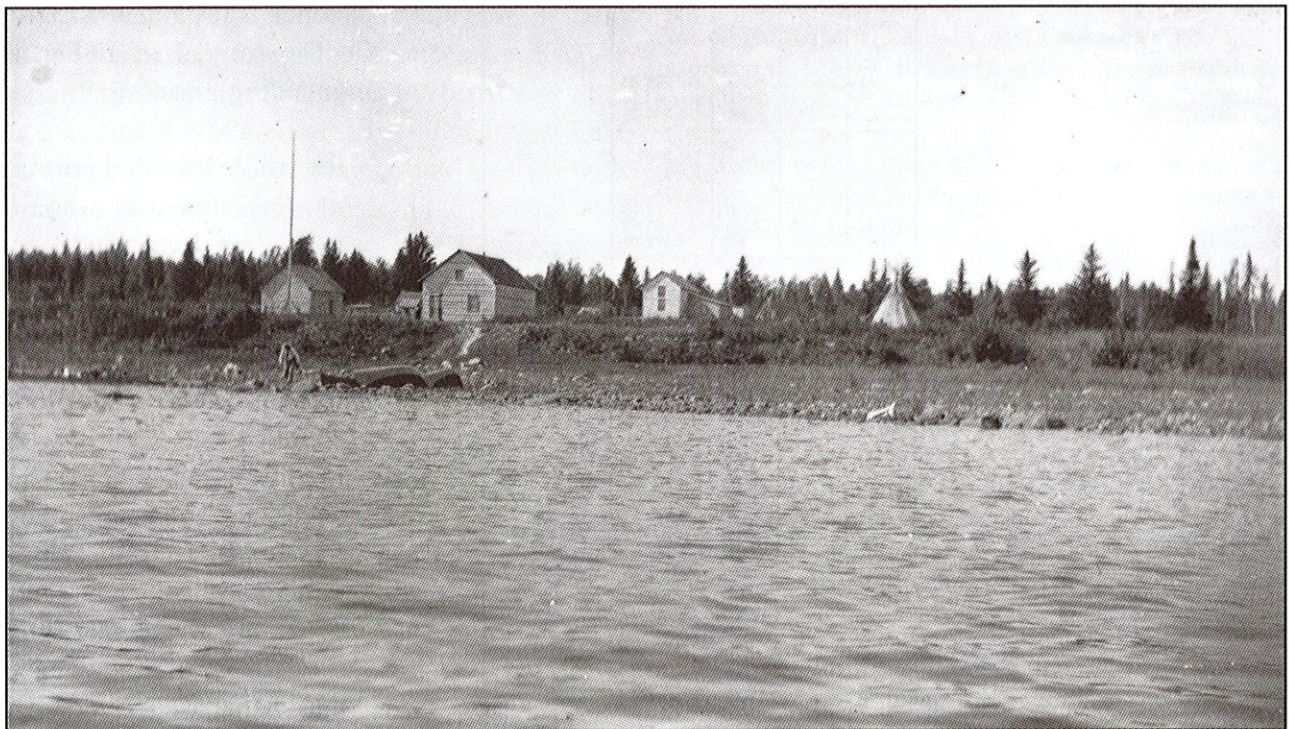
Your Lordship will observe that there is a gap between Treaties 5, 6 and 8. I think in the taking of a surrender of the Isle a la Crosse country this gap should be covered. It might perhaps be well to confine ourselves to the small northern portion of Saskatchewan not yet ceded and the portion of Athabasca not covered by Treaty 8 so as not to impinge on Keewatin . . . I should be obliged if your Lordship would kindly indicate on the map the points at which the Indians and Halfbreeds are grouped and the approximate number of each.³⁷

There continued to be correspondence among federal government employees regarding the “Indians at Portage La Loche and Isle a la Crosse” for several years. On March 15, 1904 Treaty 8 Inspector Conroy

wrote to Mr. Frank Pedley in the Department of Indian Affairs saying “On my last two trips to Fort McMurray these Indians asked to be brought into Treaty. I do not know why they were not included in the Treaty when made by the Royal Commissioners. As far as I can see they have as much right to be included as those Indians already treated with.”³⁸

The Department forwarded Conroy’s letter to David Laird, who had been one of the Treaty 8 Commissioners. Laird responded on April 29, 1904 saying that

The scope of the Commissioners’ instructions was to obtain the relinquishment of the Indian and Halfbreed title in the region of Lesser Slave Lake, Peace River from above Fort St. John to Great Slave Lake, and the Athabasca River – or in other words, that tract of territory north of Treaty 6 to which Governmental authority had to some extent been extended by sending Northwest Mounted Police there to protect and control whites who were going into the country as traders, travelers to the Klondike, explorers and miners.³⁹



Stanley Bay, Saskatchewan, 1919
(Saskatchewan Archives Board S-B 589)

STATEMENT of Indians paid Annuity and Gratuity Moneys in Treaty No. 8, during 1899.

	Chiefs.	Headmen.	Other Indians.	Cash Paid each Band.	Total Cash Paid.
				\$ cts.	\$ cts.
LESSER SLAVE LAKE					
<i>Keenostayo's Band (Crees)—</i>					
Chief at \$32.....	1			32 00	
Headmen at \$22.....		4		88 00	
Other Indians at \$12.....			241	2,892 00	3,012 00
<i>Captain's Band (Crees)—</i>					
Headman.....		1		22 00	
Other Indians.....			22	264 00	286 00
PEACE RIVER LANDING.					
<i>Duncan Tastawit's Band (Crees and Beavers)—</i>					
Headman.....		1		22 00	
Other Indians.....			46	552 00	574 00
VERMILION.					
<i>Ambroise Tete-Noire's Band (Beavers)—</i>					
Chief.....	1			32 00	
Headman.....		1		22 00	
Other Indians.....			148	1,776 00	1,830 00
<i>Tall Cree Band (Crees)—</i>					
Headman.....		1		22 00	
Other Indians.....			64	768 00	790 00
DUNVEGAN.					
<i>Beaver Band—</i>					
Headman.....		1		22 00	
Other Indians.....			33	396 00	418 00
RED RIVER POST, PEACE RIVER.					
<i>Crees paid as part of Band—Cree Band at Vermilion—</i>					
Indians.....			66	792 00	792 00
FORT CHIPEWYAN.					
<i>Chipewyan Band—</i>					
Chief.....	1			32 00	
Headmen.....		2		44 00	
Other Indians.....			407	4,884 00	4,960 00
<i>Cree Band—</i>					
Chief.....	1			32 00	
Headmen.....		2		44 00	
Other Indians.....			183	2,196 00	2,272 00
SMITH'S LANDING.					
<i>Chipewyan Band—</i>					
Chief.....	1			32 00	
Headmen.....		2		44 00	
Other Indians.....			280	3,360 00	3,436 00
FOND DU LAC.					
<i>Chipewyan Band—</i>					
Chief.....	1			32 00	
Headmen.....		2		44 00	
Other Indians.....			376	4,512 00	4,588 00
FORT McMURRAY.					
<i>Cree and Chipewyan Bands—</i>					
Headmen.....		2		44 00	
Other Indians.....			130	1,560 00	1,604 00
WABISCOW.					
<i>Cree Band—</i>					
Chief.....	1			32 00	
Headmen.....		4		88 00	
Other Indians.....			191	2,292 00	2,412 00
Total.....	7	23	2,187		26,974 00

SUMMARY.

7 Chiefs at \$32.....	\$ 224 00
23 Headmen at \$22.....	506 00
2,187 Other Indians at \$12.....	26,224 00
2,217.....	\$ 26,974 00

Certified correct,

DAVID LAIRD,
J. H. ROSS,
J. A. J. McKENNA.

Indian Treaty Commissioners.

(Saskatchewan Archives Board "Indian Treaties" S-X-150-4)

He further argued that there was no need to extend the treaty and that the "Indians and Halfbreeds were better left to their hunting and fishing."⁴⁰

Laird's comments are defensive and not entirely accurate. The Privy Council order of June 27, 1898, which established the Treaty 8 Commission gave the Treaty 8 commissioners the discretion to determine the lands to be included in the treaty. While it is true that the government's priority was to negotiate a treaty with the Indians in the territory which was affected by mining activity in northern Alberta, north-eastern British Columbia, and the Great Slave Lake region, the commissioners were nevertheless given the authority to extend negotiations further if they had the resources to do so.

Thus the issue of a treaty with the Indians living north of Treaty 6 was not addressed until after the Province of Saskatchewan was created in 1905. On October 7, 1905 David Laird wrote to the Department of Indian Affairs recommending that

the whole unceded portion of Saskatchewan should next year be covered by a treaty with the Indians occupying the same. . . I, however, do not think that this large unceded territory should be dealt with merely as an adhesion to Treaty 8. The nearest way to reach it is from Prince Albert, while the payments of Treaty 8 are made by the route of the Peace and Athabasca rivers. . . The terms of Treaty 8 are probably more suitable to these northern Indians than those of Treaty 6.⁴¹

On July 20, 1906 the Minister of Indian Affairs established a commission to negotiate Treaty 10 with the Indians living partly in the Province of Saskatchewan and partly in the Province of Alberta and lying to the east of Treaty 8 and north of Treaties 5 and 6. J.A.J. McKenna was appointed as the Commissioner for Treaty 10 and empowered to negotiate a treaty with the Indians and to issue scrip to Métis living in the area. On August 26, 1906 McKenna arrived at Ile a la Crosse, and on August 28 he met with the Indian and Métis people who had gathered there to meet with him. Thus the people in this area were finally admitted to treaty twenty-seven years after they first petitioned the government for a treaty.

While Indian people near Ile a la Crosse, Pelican Narrows, and Stanley Mission began petitioning the federal government for a treaty at least by 1879 and were supposed to have been included in Treaty 8, these people were not in fact included in a treaty until Treaty 10 was negotiated in 1906. Those Indian people living in Saskatchewan's far north-west corner who were included in Treaty 8 negotiations at Fond du Lac and Fort McMurray spent many years petitioning the government to give them the reserve lands that they were entitled to under treaty. Reserve lands were not finally transferred to these Dene bands until the 1970s and 1980s, and there are still outstanding treaty land entitlement issues related to at least the Clearwater River Dene Band.⁴² In Saskatchewan as elsewhere, when the federal government was anxious to acquire Indian land for development it was quick to negotiate treaties with First Nations, but our governments, both federal and provincial, have been very slow to give First Nations people the land and resources that they were promised under those treaties.

Endnotes

1 In *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties*, there is a chapter on Treaty 8 which makes reference to the fact that Treaties 8 and 10 "cover most of the boreal forest country of northern Saskatchewan,"² but the chapter does not describe negotiations which took place with groups living in what later became Saskatchewan. The authors also do not address the fact that it was petitions from Indian people in northern Saskatchewan beginning at least by 1879 which initially prompted discussions of a new treaty to cover the territory north of Treaty 6, yet the focus for Treaty 8 negotiations in the summers of 1899 and 1900 was northern Alberta. The only other historians who have addressed this issue are Kenneth S. Coates and William R. Morrison in their *Treaty Research Report: Treaty*

Ten (1906), which was published in 1986.

2 National Archives of Canada, RG 10, Black Files, vol. 3692, File 13,979 (Ile a la Crosse Agency – Correspondence regarding a petition of the Stanley, Lac La Ronge and Pelican Narrows Indians asking that a treaty be made with them, 1879), microfilm reel C-10121.

3 RG 10, vol. 4006, File 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.

4 RG 10, vol. 4006, File 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.

5 RG 10, vol. 4006, File 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.

6 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.

7 RG 10, vol. 4006, File 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.

8 RG 10, vol. 4006, File 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.

9 RG 10, vol. 4006, File 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.

10 Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail": Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1996), p. 99.

11 Kenneth S. Coates and William R. Morrison, *Treaty Research Report: Treaty Ten (1906)*, Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1986, p. 20.

12 Kenneth S. Coates and William R. Morrison, *Treaty Research Report: Treaty Ten (1906)*, Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1986, p. 20.

13 "Treaty No. 8: Report of Commissioners for Treaty No. 8", Winnipeg, September 22, 1899. Report submitted by David Laird, J.H. Ross, J.A.J. McKenna, Indian Treaty Commissioners.

14 Father Gabriel Breynat, OMI, *Cinquante Ans au Pays des Neiges*, (Montreal: Editions Fides, 1948) vol. 1, pp. 188-90, as quoted in *As Long As This Land Shall Last* by Father Rene Fumoleau (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), pp. 81-82.

15 Father Gabriel Breynat, OMI, *Cinquante Ans au Pays des Neiges*, (Montreal: Editions Fides, 1948) vol. 1, pp. 188-90, as quoted in *As Long As This Land Shall Last* by Father Rene Fumoleau (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), pp. 81-82.

16 Father Gabriel Breynat, OMI, *Cinquante Ans au Pays des Neiges*, (Montreal: Editions Fides, 1948) vol. 1, pp. 188-90, as quoted in *As Long As This Land Shall Last* by Father Rene Fumoleau (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), pp. 81-82.

17 Rene Fumoleau, OMI, *As Long As This Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and 11, 1870-1939*, 2nd Edition (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), p. 83.

18 "The Elders believe that they never gave up their territorial rights as they are defined by the concepts of *witaskewin* and *pimacihowin* – these rights are fundamental and integral to the treaty relationship and in fact stand at variance with the written texts of the treaties in Saskatchewan." Quote taken from Harold Cardinal and Walter Hildebrandt, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day be Clearly Recognized as Nations*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), p. 58.

19 Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) file 601/30-1 (Letter from N.J. McLeod to Chief, Reserves and Trusts, October 30, 1959).

20 From DIAND file in Claims and Historical Research Centre, entitled "Treaty 8: Portage La Loche Band". The document is dated January 1974.

- 21 Harold Cardinal and Walter Hildebrandt, p. 43.
- 22 http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/trts/trty8/rpt_e.html , “Report of Commissioners for Treaty No. 8,” September 22, 1899.
- 23 DIAND file 671/30-19, vol. 1.
- 24 DIAND file 672/30-7-226, Claims and Historical Research Centre, INAC, Gatineau, Quebec.
- 25 DIAND file 672/30-7-224, Claims and Historical Research Centre, INAC, Gatineau, Quebec.
- 26 Privy Council Resolution 1970-1822, October 21, 1970, DIAND file 672/30-7-225, Claims and Historical Research Centre, INAC, Gatineau, Quebec.
- 27 Privy Council Order 1981-898, April 2, 1981, Instrument Number 74423.
- 28 DIAND file 601/30-1, vol. 1, Claims and Historical Research Centre, INAC, Gatineau, Quebec.
- 29 On March 20, 1930 a “Memorandum of Agreement” was reached between Saskatchewan and Canada by which the administration and control of the natural resources of the province were to be transferred to the Province. This agreement became the Saskatchewan Natural Resources Act which was assented to on May 30, 1930. Section 10 of this Act requires that the Province “will from time to time, upon the request of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, set aside, out of the unoccupied Crown lands hereby transferred to its administration, such further areas as the said Superintendent General may . . . select as necessary to enable Canada to fulfill its obligations under the treaties with the Indians of the province . . .” DIAND file 601/30-1, vol. 2.
- 30 DIAND file 601/30-1, vol. 2.
- 31 DIAND file 601/30-1, vol. 2.
- 32 Coates and Morrison, p. 20.
- 33 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 34 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 35 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 36 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 37 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 38 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 39 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 40 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 41 RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241,209-1, microfilm reel C-10171.
- 42 “Abstract: Clearwater River Dene Nation [Treaty Land Entitlement] The claimant alleges that the Crown owes it additional reserve land under Treaty 8. The file is currently closed at the request of the First Nation.” <http://www.indianclaims.ca/english/fqueryhit.idq?CiRestriction=Clearwater+River&CiM...11/26/2004>.

People and Places

Karloff in Saskatchewan

by Stephen Jacobs

On the 17th of May 1909 a twenty-one year old Englishman, William Henry Pratt, arrived in Canada. Within a quarter of a century people around the world would know this man by his adopted name - Boris Karloff. Yet when Billy, as he was known, disembarked from the liner 'The Empress of Britain' in Montreal his initial intentions were far removed from the bright lights of Hollywood.

The early years

Billy was born on the 23rd of November 1887, at the family home in Camberwell, South London.¹ His father, 61-year-old Edward John Pratt, was a retired 'Assistant Collector of Salt Revenue' from the Indian Civil Service in Bombay.² In 1864 Edward, then aged 38, married 16-year-old Eliza Millard.³ By the time the couple had returned to England in 1879, Eliza had presented her husband with six sons and a daughter. A seventh son, Richard, was born in London in 1882 and was followed by Billy five years later.⁴ Despite the birth of another baby, Edward and Eliza's marriage had reached the end of the road. It was never a happy union and in 1888, after twenty-four years of marriage and nine children, they parted company.

Karloff later stated he lost both parents when he was young. "Both my parents died during my childhood," he said. "I was reared by one amiable stepsister⁵ and seven stern older brothers, who knew exactly what I was to be - a government servant in the family tradition."⁶ It

was a claim he made several times in interviews, one that has been repeated by journalists and biographers ever since. However, this statement is untrue.⁷ Both of Karloff's parents were, in fact, alive throughout his early years. The 1901 census records show his mother Eliza (aged 52), her sons George (33), Richard (18) and William (13), Eliza's nephew, Havelock J. Millard (20), and the family servants, the cook, Rosetta E. Brightman (18) and, presumably, her sister the housemaid, Eliza J. Brightman (16) as being in residence at 38 Uplands Park Road, Enfield on March 31st of that year.⁸



Boris Karloff, 1919
Author's Collection

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Billy's father, Edward, passed away later that year. On the 28th of October 1901 he made his will at St. Thomas's Home, part of St. Thomas's Hospital in Lambeth, South London. He died two days later, aged 75. He left no provision for his family from his sizeable estate.⁹

Growing up in a fatherless environment, Billy was spoiled by his mother. Yet being the baby of the family had its drawbacks. "[M]y brothers were always keeping me in my place," he recalled, "or what they considered was my place."¹⁰ It was intended that Billy would follow his father and brothers into Government Service but Billy's interest lay with the theatre.

His enthusiasm for acting had already taken him onstage. For two nights each Christmas a parish play, or pantomime, was produced at St. Magdalene's Church Hall in Enfield. On one of the nights the 'Band of Hope', a temperance organisation for working-class children, put on an entertainment. At Christmas 1896, at the age of nine,¹¹ Billy made his acting debut appearing in one of the plays – a version of *Cinderella*. "Instead of playing the handsome prince, I donned black tights and a skullcap and rallied the forces of evil as the Demon King," he recalled. "From then on I resolved to be an actor."¹²

The family had already produced one actor in George. Although his theatrical career had not been too successful,¹³ George was to prove an influence on Billy. His childhood friend Mrs. Noel Horsey (née Hearn) recalled, "He worshipped his brother George, who was the only one who was good to him. George was an actor. I expect possibly that's why Billy always wanted to be one."¹⁴ Of this brotherly influence Karloff said, "His dramatic experience was really no encouragement for me. Despite the fact that George was an extraordinarily handsome man, he never went very far on the stage, which was the reason he gave it up for a city job. But I tried to emulate him."¹⁵ Sadly, on 23rd January 1904 George died from double lobar pneumonia.¹⁶ He was thirty-six years old. When Billy's mother died on the 15th December 1906¹⁷ his future was left in the hands of his siblings.

The toss of a coin

Even after an unimpressive academic career, his brothers' expectations for a career in the consular service career remained. "After I left school I went to a crammer in London," Karloff explained. "I was

supposed to be reading for the exams, instead of which I haunted the galleries of all the theatres of that time."¹⁸ The time at King's College, in which he specialised in Chinese customs and languages,¹⁹ proved fruitless. "[T]he first-term reports amply reflected the fact that I had attended more plays than classes," he said. "I was, in fact, fast becoming a disgrace to the family name."²⁰

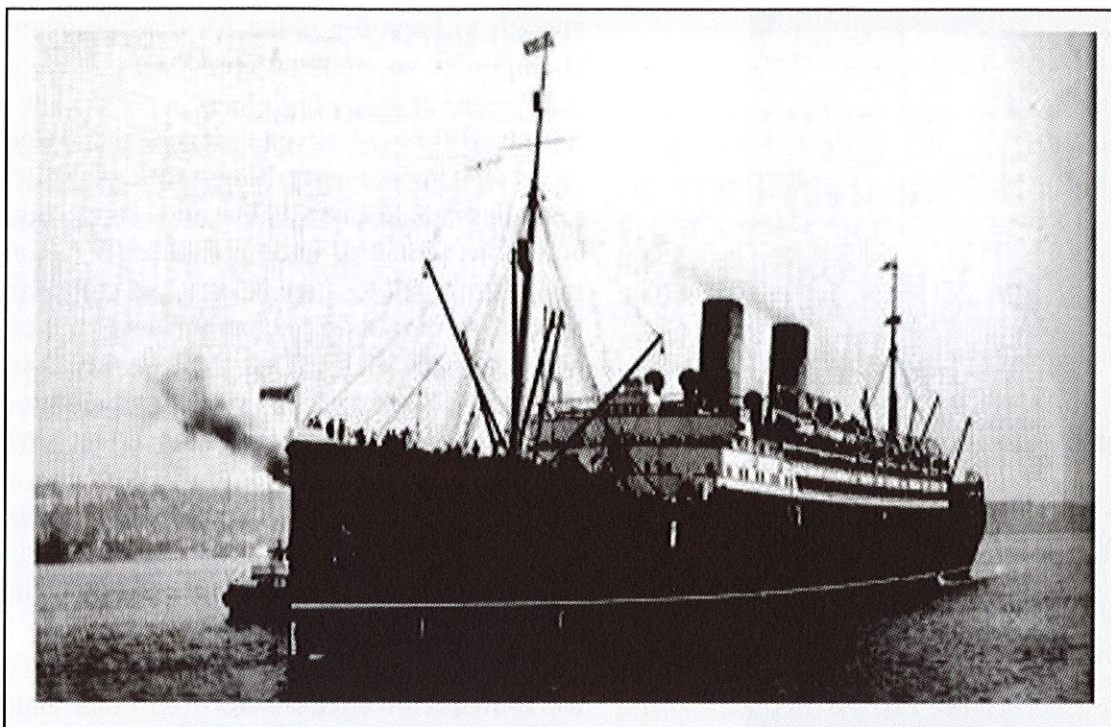
An opportunity to escape came when Billy turned twenty-one. An indenture provided him with £100 from his mother's estate.²¹ When Billy collected the money he had already determined to leave the country. "The family had been informed that I intended to leave home," Karloff said. "I felt I had to get away and work things out on my own."²² He limited his choice to two destinations but, unable to decide, trusted to chance. "I tossed a coin as to whether I should go to Canada or Australia... with the idea of being an actor in shows, and I knew nothing about it."²³ The "unfortunate losers"²⁴ were the Canadians. "[J]ust about that time the Canadian Government was sending out an appeal for immigrants," Karloff explained. "I had no idea what Canada was like. It was all a fantastic and frightfully exciting adventure."²⁵

A second-class passage was arranged and Billy left home, bound for Liverpool, on the first leg of his journey. His departure was surprisingly easy, as he recalled. "Fortunately, there were no brothers at home at the actual time of my departure. I don't remember that any obstacles were placed in my way or that I had to overcome any great difficulties."²⁶

Alone at Liverpool Billy boarded his ship, the liner 'The Empress of Britain' and on the 7th May 1909, set sail bound for Canada. He was finally free from his nagging brothers and they, equally, were free of him. "I imagine," he said, "that when I got on the ship, brotherly sighs of relief could be heard in various far-flung British outposts. There was no weeping and no distress. I was on my way. To what, I didn't exactly know."²⁷

A life on the soil

Before leaving England Billy had arranged for employment in Canada as a farmer. He was told that when he reached the Canada Company's Toronto office he would be given his assignment. "There were some plans to go on to a farm in Ontario to learn farming," he said, "then to buy some virgin land and develop it by myself."²⁸ The Toronto office directed him to a



farm in Hamilton, Ontario, owned by an Irishman, Mr. Terrance O'Reilly. On arrival, however, he found things had not gone to plan. "I arrived all smiles and blushes - but the fellow had never heard of me, wasn't expecting anybody, didn't want anybody. Farmer O'Reilly and I just looked at each other - I had only pennies left, no way to get back to Toronto. Thank God it was spring and work on the farm was beginning. O'Reilly finally said, 'All right, you can stay.' I stayed three months²⁹ at ten dollars a month - and what a rough ride! O'Reilly would get me out of bed with a pitchfork at four in the morning to catch the horses in the fields and bring them in. I'd never known a horse personally before and knew nothing about them... I soon learned."³⁰

When Billy left O'Reilly's farm he made his way westward. "Banff appealed to me, but it was no use as a place to find a job," he later said. "So I went on to Vancouver. With exactly a pound to my name, I arrived in this delightfully situated metropolis of the west and began to look for employment."³¹ All he found was disappointment. "There wasn't a hope of stage work," he recalled. "There was little doing in the theatre at that time and, in any case, managers were not interested in gangling youths with no experience. The dire necessity of eating was soon apparent."³² Billy took what work he could. "Men were wanted to dig a race track and a fair

ground," he said, "and the pay was one and threepence an hour."³³

A chance encounter allowed Billy to put aside the pick and shovel, albeit temporarily. "Walking on the street one day, Hugh Arthur, a friend of a brother of mine in China, spotted me," he said. "There was a boom in land at the time. He suggested that I should become a real estate salesman."³⁴ Billy took the advice and was employed as a broker with 'Ward, Burmaster, and von Graevenitz'.

Wedding bells

It was during his time with the company that Billy met Grace Jessie Harding. Grace was the daughter of English parents, Harry Laurie and Mary Jessie Maria Harding (née Dallimore). They had married in Kingston, England in 1885 before emigrating to New Zealand, where Grace was born the following year. While Grace was still a child the family moved again, relocating to Canada. It is not known how Billy met Grace or for how long they were courting but on the 23rd February 1910, 22-year-old William Henry Pratt wed 23-year-old Grace Jessie Harding in Vancouver's Holy Rosary Cathedral.³⁵



Along with a new wife came new responsibilities. Unfortunately the broker job was not as productive as Billy had wished. "Little better than a glorified office boy, I made some money and gave Hugh £2 occasionally towards buying a lot for me," Billy recalled. "This did not work so successfully and, when there were no immediate returns, I shovelled coal and did some more ditch-digging. It was less of a hardship this time. Youth soon gets used to work, no matter how rigorous it may be."³⁶

While in the metropolis, Billy received an interesting business proposition. "Probably one of the greatest things that happened for me was in Vancouver when I was 22 years old," he later said. "Someone offered me a half interest in a goldmine for £100. I had the money. I asked the advice of a banker friend. He said, 'No.' That mine was subsequently sold for £3,000,000. But imagine what would have happened to me. It would have ruined me."³⁷

Fortune did, however, occasionally smile on Billy. "Late in December, 1910, I called at the Hotel Vancouver for

some reason," he explained. "A man passed through the lobby. His face seemed distinctly familiar to me. Upon inquiry, I found he was my brother, John, on his way from China to London. Sportingly he loaned me £20, enough to keep me going for a while in my planned attempts³⁸ to get on the stage."³⁹

So far Billy's work experience had extended only to manual labour and office work. Despite this, and regardless of his newly married status, his theatrical ambitions remained undiminished. "For months, I had made overtures to three Vancouver stock companies," he said. "There didn't seem a chance, not even a faint hope, of becoming an assistant to the assistant stage manager."⁴⁰ Then one day while looking through an old copy of *The Billboard*, Billy noticed an advertisement for a theatrical agent in Seattle. "His name was [Walter] Kelly. I went to see him⁴¹ and shamelessly told him I'd been in all the plays I'd ever seen, that I was forced to retire to Canada temporarily for my health and was now hale and ready for a comeback."⁴²

An inauspicious beginning

While despondent at his lack of success Billy saw an advertisement in a newspaper. A stock company, the Jeanne Russell Players,⁴³ were looking for a character actor. He applied for the job using the name 'Boris Karloff.'⁴⁴ "I cast around for a name because I felt the name Pratt was not the best stage name one could choose," he explained. "I remembered the name Karloff, which was on my mother's side, though so far back it didn't make any sense.⁴⁵ I took the Boris out of the air, put them together, and I must say the combination has been extraordinarily lucky for me."⁴⁶

Two months after the trip to Seattle Billy was working once more for the B. C. Electric, surveying at Lillooet Lake, when he received word from Walter Kelly. "A letter from him arrived... telling me that I had been engaged to join the company at Kamloops at the princely salary of £6 a week."⁴⁷ Karloff left without hesitation. "I left my axe in the air, practically, and hot-footed it down to Kamloops and joined this little company," he said, "and that was the beginning of my so-called theatrical career in western Canada"⁴⁸ It is likely that Karloff 'hot-footed' alone, leaving his wife in Vancouver.

The Jeanne Russell Stock Company had been in existence since around 1908. Although Karloff later joked the troupe "had such a bad reputation that nobody

would join it. That's why they sent for me,"⁴⁹ they were, in fact, well respected.

The company had regularly played at Edmonton's Dominion Theatre, which was managed by Russell's brother-in-law, Lee Brandon. The company was directed by Jeanne Russell's husband (and Lee's brother), Ray F. Brandon, who also appeared as its leading man. Their repertoire included *The Galley Slave*, *Paid in Full*, *The Squaw Man* and *The Young Mrs. Winthrop*.⁵⁰

With no professional acting experience Karloff arrived in the city of Kamloops "feeling no slight trepidation at the prospect of my first professional stage work. I hadn't the foggiest idea of how to take stage direction. Rehearsal routine and make-up were both completely foreign to me."⁵¹ Although Karloff joined the troupe in Kamloops he did not tread the boards there. "They were rehearsing new plays for the new season," he later wrote, "and all I had to do for the few days I was there before we moved on to the next town was to watch the rehearsals. And thank God that WAS all as I was a green amateur and I didn't know right from left so far as the stage was concerned."⁵²

Boris Karloff's first professional appearance with the Players was in the role of 'Hoffman', the sixty-year-old banker in Ferenc Molnar's play *The Devil*.⁵³ Although he had bluffed his way into the troupe his performance betrayed his lack of experience. "I had finally become an actor, but I mumbled, bumbled, missed cues, rammed

into furniture and sent the director's blood pressure soaring," he admitted. "When the curtain went up, I was getting thirty dollars a week. When it descended, I was down to fifteen dollars."⁵⁴

Karloff had, however, ample opportunity to learn his new craft. The troupe travelled through western Canada playing in towns and cities such as Grand Forks, Crossland, Nelson, Cranbrook, Fernie and Calgary. Their 1912 season of plays included *The Man From Home*, *The Little*

Minister, *The American Girl*, the Irish comedy *Cousin Kate*, Ouida's *Moths*, Harry D. Cottrell's play *The Halfbreed*, *A Texas Ranger*, *The Devil*, *Jesse James*, and *Emanuella*.

The troupe, which included Jeanne Russell, Ray F. Brandon, Margaret Beaton, Gavin Dishart, Irving Cook, Donald Gray, Frank Burton (or Bertrand), G. C. Garretts, and Karloff,⁵⁵ would take accommodation in the towns' hotels or, more commonly, in its rooming houses where they were forced to live as best as they could. "Karloff was a profound student on this subject," Samuel Grafton later wrote. "A stock-company actor had to learn to fry an egg on the bottom of an electric iron, propped up on his hotel room floor between the bedpost and the Gideon Bible. (No butter was used, because that would have made the egg slide off; and one had to keep jiggling the iron.) Canned soup, always mulligatawny, because it had meat in it, was cooked in a dresser drawer over a canned-heat fire. New suits were selected from uncalled-for garments at cleaning establishments at a standard price of \$5. Since the cast pressed their own clothes, a man's electric iron, which also served as his egg cooker, was his most precious possession, thoughtfully bought and fiercely guarded. "If you were going to be in a small town for any length of time and needed a boarding house," says Karloff, "you enquired around as to where the local schoolteachers stayed and asked for lodging there. You could be sure the place would be very cheap and very clean."⁵⁶



The Regina Theatre
Author's Collection

On stage in Regina

By April 1912 the company had arrived in Saskatchewan's capital city, Regina, where they were booked to play the 800 seat Regina Theatre on 12th Avenue and Hamilton Street. The troupe took to the stage for the first time in the city with a presentation of the comedy drama *The American Girl* on Monday, 1st April. The story, the *Regina Leader* informed its readers, ran thus:

[A] young Southern girl meets and falls in love with a young English artist, who is living in the vicinity of her mountain home. They are secretly married and shortly after the wedding he is called to England by the illness of his brother. While he is away a former suitor of the girl obtains possession of a mortgage on the farm where she and her mother live. He forces them from their home and they take refuge in the city. The husband returns from England but cannot find his bride. After years of searching he returns home mourning her as dead. Twelve years elapse when by chance they meet in London."⁵⁷

The play and its performance, however, did not meet with the newspaper's theatrical reviewer who later commented that 'the insipid melodrama... with its idiotic plot and amateurish lines without doubt prejudiced many of the audience against the company, but the error of including such rubbish in the repertoire was undoubtedly righted to a large extent by the rather clever bill of last evening."⁵⁸ This second production, Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson's satirical comedy *The Man From Home*, was, the reviewer wrote, 'so distinct an improvement on that of the night before... that one should never have known without glancing at the programme that it was the same company which was playing it."⁵⁹

Tarkington and Wilson's comedy told the story of an American girl:

... who becomes enamoured of a worthless young English nobleman. Her ward, a young American, "The Man From Home," rescues her by showing her how false are her ideals

and she eventually turns to him. A scheming English earl and a countess of like character, together with a Russian archduke and some others, assist the plot to its foregone conclusion.

... The title part is taken by Ray F. Brandon, and is fairly well handled... Miss Jeanne Russell is also good in the part of the girl... The role is not a brilliant one, but Miss Russell does as well as possible with it...

It would be impossible to say how truly Boris Karloff presented the character of a philanthropic Russian grand duke [Vasili Vasilivitch] - the species being up to the present unknown. He appeared quite convincing, however, and the character was pleasing if not familiar."⁶⁰

Although the reviewer praised the production in general, one aspect of the evening's entertainment proved irksome. "One thing with which the company might well dispense is the so-called vaudeville between acts," he wrote. "It spoils the theme of the play, and further, is distasteful to those who are yet forced to sit and listen. More than that, it cheapens the quality of the company as a whole. This, however, in no way refers to the singing of G. D. Gray, who could not be classed as a "vaudeville singer". He is well-known in this city as the finest baritone who ever made Regina his temporary home. He also has the good taste to choose songs universally known and liked. "Thora" and "Three for Jack" were those he chose for last evening. Mr Gray was a one-time resident of this city, and his excellent voice is still remembered by many."⁶¹ The following evening the company presented the Irish comedy *Cousin Kate*.

Arrival in Saskatoon

In mid April the company arrived in the city of Saskatoon. The *Daily Phoenix* announced:

Canada's representative stock organisation, the Jeanne Russell company, will be the attraction at the Empire theatre [for] three nights starting Thursday, April 18th. The opening play will be Booth Tarkington's and Harry Leon Wilson's clever satirical comedy,

“The Man from Home.” This play, founded upon the prevailing tendency of American heiresses to marry titled foreigners, has enjoyed a popularity both in the United States and England that has never been surpassed.

It is picturesque, appealing in theme, and delightful in action. The scenes are all laid in the grounds of the fashionable hotel Regina, Margireta, near the city of Sorrento, [*sic*] Italy. The two leading characters, Daniel Voorhees Pike, the “Man from Home,” and Ethel Granger Simpson, the heiress in search of a title, both hail from Kokomo, Indiana, U.S.A. The other characters in the piece are either Italian, French, English or Russian. The Grand Duke of Russia plays an important part in the telling of the story...⁶²

Within days of this announcement a tragic story was filling the newspapers. On the 15th April the ‘unsinkable’ R.M.S. Titanic struck an iceberg on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York and sank in the cold Atlantic with the loss of 1,523 lives.

On the 18th of April, the Jeanne Russell Players took to the stage in Saskatoon. According to *The Daily Star*, the performance of *The Man From Home* attracted “a fairly large audience, and the show was one of an enjoyable character. The opening act was not so well done as it might have been, but as the play progressed the work of the company improved. Mr Ray F. Brandon has many admirers in Saskatoon, and in the role of a hard-headed, although romantic, Yankee, he was seen to great advantage. Miss Jean [*sic*] Russell possesses considerable talent and her interpretation of the role of the young lady who was determined to marry a title no matter what it might cost her in the way of money she was spirited and attractive. Mr. Boris Karloff, as the Russian grand duke, proved himself a capable artiste...”⁶³ The *Daily Phoenix* wrote:

Ray F. Brandon’s friends were glad to see him again last night though he was hardly to be recognized in his Indiana slicker and accent. He was “the man from home” who had journeyed to Sorrento to save his ward from marrying a title at a cost of hundreds of

thousands of dollars in stage money. A real monkey-wrench and a more or less saleable motor car had a part among the stage settings, the car furnishing a splendid hiding place for the escaped Russian insurgent... Miss Russell was the American girl who would be a countess even though the title was costing as much as a whole street in Sorrento was worth. In the early acts her ruling passion leaves no room to be civil to D. V. Pike, the man from home while Mr. Pike in turn does not waste many endearments upon the duke his ward is buying. Mr Karloff gave a good portrayal of the Russian nobleman and Mr. Cook was quite admirable as the smartly dressed American. Between acts were vaudeville stunts. Among the best of them were two songs “Italian Love” and “Which would you rather, a grand baby or a baby grand” sung by a young lady act in Venetian red costume.⁶⁴

The following night the company staged J. M. Barrie’s comedy *The Little Minister* and on Saturday, the 20th of April, the company presented a matinee and evening performance of Molnar’s *The Devil*.⁶⁵

On Monday the *Daily Phoenix* headlines ran: “INVESTIGATION INTO TITANIC DISASTER ADJOURNED TO MEET IN WASHINGTON.” Inside, the paper announced a performance of *A Texas Ranger*, to be staged that night by the Jeanne Russell Players. The review appeared the following day:

A full house got round to the Empire last night to see the Texas Ranger range and to watch how cowboys make love and war with the accents on the war. Ray F. Brandon was the hero of this play of the plains, who graduated from ranching to being a mine owner. Miss Jeanne Russell played leads for the ladies. Her role got her into a mock marriage from which she gets rescued in the last act at which point also the villain dies a melodramatic death. Frank Burton was seen as the comedy purveyor, Dalrymple. Donald Gray had a slim part but made up for

that by singing between acts. "America Girl," will be the play presented tonight by Mr. Brandon and his company.⁶⁶

The *Saskatoon Daily Star* commented, "[*The American Girl*] gives Miss Russell the best chance that she has been afforded since the company came here. Ray F. Brandon will appear as a theatrical manager, a part in which he stars. The balance of the company will be cast to the best advantage and a special scenic production has been prepared."⁶⁷ On Wednesday, the Players presented *The Squaw Man* and followed this, the following evening, with *Jesse James*. We cannot know how these plays fared in Saskatoon as, unfortunately, none of the local newspapers ran reviews for these one-night productions.⁶⁸ The next night the company staged *Emanuella*, as the *Daily Phoenix* announced:

It is not often that an absolutely new play is seen in Saskatoon, but Miss Jeanne Russell will appear tonight at the Empire in the title role of "Emanuella," a three-act farce written especially for her by Helene Riplay [*sic*], whose stage name is Margot Beaton.⁶⁹ Miss Russell determined to make it part of her repertoire in order to test its power with critics and public. The verdict of both has been so encouraging that she has determined to make it her only vehicle next season, opening for a run in Chicago, before touring the United States and Canada... The weak point in the play is the name. It seems to indicate a religious subject. In spite of Shakespeare, there is everything in a name. Can you suggest a good name for this farce? A prize [*sic*] of \$10 will be given for the best name suggested. Study the situations carefully tonight and present your suggestion at the box office before five o'clock tomorrow evening, at the end of the third act of "The Halfbreed" which is Saturday's bill.⁷⁰

It is unclear whether the Players remained in the city or did a brief stint elsewhere but, two weeks later, on the 9th of May, the company began a three-night run of *The Moonshiner's Daughter*, "a gripping story of life among the makers of moonshine whiskey."⁷¹

The company remained in Saskatoon, at least until mid May, before moving on. Life in a stock company was an exhausting existence. They had been on tour for a year. "[H]ow we worked!" Karloff said. "We rehearsed all day and every day, and we played in the evenings in any sort of barn or shack wherever we happened to be."⁷²

An ill wind

By June the company found themselves in the centre of the Canadian plains stranded back in Regina. "Everyone in the company, including myself of course, was absolutely flat broke," Karloff said. "The situation was rotten and the prospects dismal. Maybe the finger of Fate was pointing at me. The day after the manager announced our complete lack of funds and inability to proceed, there was a terrific storm in Regina..."⁷³ At 5 p.m. on a hot Sunday, the 30th of June, a 500-mph tornado tore through Regina's downtown. Twenty-eight people died, 2,500 were rendered homeless and \$4 million of property was damaged. The tornado had ripped through the city in three minutes. "However," Karloff mused, "it was a case of an ill wind blowing no good all right - because we all got jobs clearing up the debris..."⁷⁴

It has been reported that following the tornado the Jeanne Russell Players announced it would stage a benefit performance of the comedy *The Real Thing* and would donate half the receipts to the city. The performance, we are told, never occurred and the Players disbanded. In fact, Henrietta Crossman and her company, and not the Jeanne Russell Players, gave the benefit performance on the 4th of July.⁷⁵

Moving on

When the debris was cleared, and with no prospect of any further stage work, Karloff searched for other employment. He discovered that the Dominion Express Company, a haulage concern owned by Canadian Pacific, required men. "Being fairly husky, I got temporary employment," Karloff said. "Again a stroke of luck. The company sent me to the railway station to collect some crates of goods. As I crossed the tracks to the warehouse, someone threw an old copy of *The Billboard*, a theatrical journal, from a train window. Casually I picked it up and glanced at it. I saw an announcement that the Harry St. Clair players, a

Aftermath of the Regina Tornado
(Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B216-4)



repertory company, at Prince Albert, wanted a young leading man. I dashed off a letter of application post haste and, to my surprise, I received a reply a few days later asking me to join them in Prince Albert.”⁷⁶

With the promise of another acting job Karloff made his way to the Harry St. Clair Players. “St. Clair was absolutely honest,” said Karloff. “If there was no money in the office, the ghost didn’t walk, but when business was good he paid us what he owed us. In some towns we stayed a week, in others we settled down for a run. I was a quick study and the quickest study got the longest part. So I played leads in *Paid in Full*, *Charley’s Aunt*, *East Lynne*, *Way Down East*, *Bought and Paid For*, *Baby Mine*, *What Happened to Jones*, *Why Smith Left Home*, and many other melodramas. We all took turns at being stage manager, and we never had a dress or prop rehearsal.”⁷⁷

Being constantly on the road took its toll on Karloff’s marriage and, if the surviving documents can be taken at face value, Karloff had an affair with Jeanne Russell’s sister, Helene. It is unknown how Karloff’s wife, Grace, became aware of her husband’s indiscretions but she petitioned for divorce citing Helene Russell, along with Karloff, as co-respondent. On the 8th of January 1913, the petition was placed before the Honourable Mr. Justice Murphy in the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Neither Grace nor Karloff was in attendance when the marriage was dissolved. Karloff was ordered to ‘pay to the Petitioner her costs of this action as between Solicitor and client forthwith after the taxation thereof.’⁷⁸ It must have been an unwelcome financial burden on an already meagre existence. Karloff’s ex-wife, Grace, remarried ten days after the verdict, this time to one Cecil Angus Hadfield.

Initially Karloff stayed with Harry St. Clair for a year. “At the end of the engagement I had \$800 simply because St. Clair held back a certain amount each week and paid it at the conclusion of the season. With that nest egg I went to Chicago determined to have a chance at the big time. I arrived there October 13, 1914, and found that no one was the least bit interested in my experience. The British army had rejected me because of a heart murmur,⁷⁹ my money was disappearing rapidly and I decided that I had better get back to the sticks where I was appreciated.”⁸⁰ After rejoining St. Clair for another year Karloff left the troupe for the last time in 1916. He then spent the next couple of years touring with various companies across the western states of America. Then, in Los Angeles in 1919, following an abortive attempt to appear in vaudeville, Karloff turned to the film studios for employment. “I appeared before the camera for the first time⁸¹ in a crowd scene being directed by Frank Borzage at Universal City,” he later recalled.⁸²

Even after he began to rise in films, Karloff’s first love remained the theatre and he would revisit the stage in the years leading to his success in *Frankenstein*.⁸³ Yet he never forgot the early days when he learned his craft in the towns and cities across western Canada. “Sometimes I barely managed to keep alive. It was hard work but it was valuable experience,” he later said.⁸⁴ “We must have done some terrible acting, but let me say a word for the intelligence of our audiences. In towns where we did a different play each night we asked the audience to vote for the one they wanted us to repeat as our closing bill. You really can’t fool the public. Our audiences invariably picked the best play.”⁸⁵

Adapted for *Saskatchewan History* by the author from his forthcoming book – *More Than a Monster: The Life and Work of Boris Karloff*

Acknowledgements

Sara Karloff; Elaine M. Kozakavich and the staff of the Saskatoon Public Library; Sharon Maier and the staff of the Regina Public Library; Hugh Dempsey; the staff of the Principal Probate Registry in London; Sabina Ebbois and the staff at the Kings College London Archives; the Staff of the British Newspaper Library, London; the staff of the Theatre Museum, London; Mark Pratt; Ray Strothers; Greg Nesteroff; Michael Dawe, Red Deer and District Archives.

Endnotes

- 1 William Henry Pratt birth certificate: Quarter Oct-Dec 1887, District: Camberwell. Vol. 1d, Page 8.
- 2 Details of Edward John Pratt: *Bombay Civil Lists – Services* (January 1877), pg. 63.
- 3 Details of the marriage of Edward Pratt and Eliza Millard: Oriental and India Office Collections, The British Library – N/3/38/336.
- 4 Edward Pratt also had two children, Emma and James, from two previous marriages. Both stayed in India when the others left for England. Emma later returned to England and moved into the family home following the death of Eliza Pratt.
- 5 Actually Billy’s half-sister, Emma Caroline.
- 6 Boris Karloff as told to Arlene and Howard Eisenberg. “Memoirs of a Monster.” *Saturday Evening Post* (3rd November 1962), pg. 77.
- 7 It is unclear why Karloff should make such claims about his parents, who, the evidence suggests, were both of Anglo-Indian parentage. Perhaps, once Karloff reached Hollywood, he felt it prudent to hide his ethnic origins.
- 8 1901 census: Public Record Office reference – RG13/1270/164/27.
- 9 Last Will and Testament of Edward Pratt, 28th October 1901 and Record of Probate, 6th May 1902.
- 10 Jonah Maurice Ruddy. “The “Monstrous” Life of Boris Karloff.” *Film Pictorial Annual 1938* (London, Amalgamated Press, 1938), pg. 133. Karloff was interviewed by Ruddy in February 1936.
- 11 In an interview with Colin Edwards circa 1963, Karloff stated he was ‘about ten’ when he appeared in the play. In 1960 he claimed the play was stage when he was eleven.
- 12 Eisenberg. Op. Cit., pg. 79.
- 13 In the Ruddy interview Karloff claimed his brother, George, had appeared in the play ‘The Royal Divorce’ (actually, ‘A Royal Divorce) with Fanny Ward. In fact, George did not appear in the play. The only recorded appearance by George Marlowe (George’s stage name), at least in London, between 1890 and his death is a single matinee performance of Arthur Fry’s comedy *A Rescued Honour* at the Avenue Theatre on the 4th June 1896. Marlowe played a character named ‘Tommy Tabor.’ (Theatre Museum Enquiry Service, Theatre Museum, email to author, 8th November 2002).
- 14 Cynthia Lindsay. *Dear Boris: The Life of William Henry Pratt a. k. a Boris Karloff* (Nick Hern Books, London, 1995), pg. 4.
- 15 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 134.
- 16 George Marlow Pratt death certificate: Quarter Jan-Mar 1904, District: Chorlton, Vol. 8c, Page 626 and Record of Probate, 11th March 1904.
- 17 Last Will and Testament of Eliza Sara Pratt, 24th November 1905 and Record of Probate, 2nd February 1907.
- 18 Denis Gifford. *Karloff - The Man, The Monster, The Movies*

(Curtis Books, New York, N. Y. 1973), pg. 14.

19 On the 4th March 2003 I visited the archives of King's College London. Assisted by the Archive Assistant, Sabina Ebois, I searched for evidence of Billy's time there. Billy would probably have attended the Civil Service Department, which was part of the Strand School. Unfortunately we were unable to find any trace of him.

20 Eisenberg. Op. Cit., pg. 79.

21 The amount Karloff was given varied depending on the interview. In 1953 Karloff said he was left £100 from his mother's estate. In 1936 he told Ruddy he had left home with £150, although it is unclear whether all of this came from the indenture.

22 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 135.

23 Colin Edwards. *Between the Bolts – An interview with Boris Karloff* (circa 1963)

24 Eisenberg. Op. Cit., pg. 79.

25 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 135.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Karloff is inconsistent about the amount of time he spent on O'Reilly's farm. In his interview with Jonah Maurice Ruddy Karloff said, 'From Ontario, where I lasted six months, I went on to Banff.' In another interview, with Colin Edwards circa 1963, he stated he stayed 'about two months.'

30 Lindsay. Op. Cit., pg. 13

31 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 135

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 135. There has been some confusion over the role of Hayman Claudet during Karloff's time in Vancouver. Karloff claims it was Hugh Arthur who suggested he become a real estate salesman [Ruddy, pg. 135]. In a 1953 interview Karloff also said that a day or two after arriving in Vancouver he was stopped in the street by a friend of his brother. "He gave me a note to the Works Superintendent of the British Columbia Railway, and I got a job at twenty-eight cents an hour with a pick and shovel laying tracks." While Karloff does not say who this man is, it may well be Claudet.

35 Marriage of William Henry Pratt and Grace Harding. B. C. Archives, Reg. No. 1910-09-062223, Microfilm No. B11375 (GSU No. 1983703).

36 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 135-136.

37 Ibid., pg. 142.

38 If Karloff's recollection is correct it would mean he had not joined the Jeanne Russell Players until 1911 at the earliest, which contradicts his later assertion that he joined the troupe in 1910. In his letter of 24th December 1960 to Dr. Knowlton of Kamloops Karloff also mistakenly refers to the Regina cyclone (tornado) of 1911. He appears to be a year too early in both cases.

39 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 136.

40 Ibid.

41 In his interview with Ruddy Karloff said he only wrote to Kelly.

42 Eisenberg. Op. Cit., pg. 79.

43 Karloff sometimes referred to this troupe as the 'Ray Brandon Players.'

44 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 136.

45 The origin of Billy's stage name has caused much speculation. I have found no trace of the name 'Karloff' in Billy's ancestral lineage, as he claimed. Cynthia Lindsay, in her book 'Dear Boris', did discover a man named Lazarus Kholoff who was living in Bombay at the same time as Karloff's parents. It is possible that Billy's parents may have spoken of the man. Also feasible, as Canadian historian Greg Nesteroff has indicated, is the notion that the actor took his surname from the villainous character 'Count Karloff' in Harold McGrath's 1904 novel, *The Man on the Box*. McGrath's book was serialised in the U. S. press and a stage version did appear in Canada in 1909. It is, therefore, possible that Karloff may have seen the play and been influenced by it. Of course, we can never be certain of the origins of Billy's stage name. Only the actor knew the truth and even his own account would often change in the telling. However, it seems somehow appropriate that the name that sent shivers around the world should always remain shrouded in mystery. Whatever its origins it was a fortunate choice.

46 Gifford. Op. Cit., pg. 19.

47 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 136.

48 Colin Edwards. *Between the Bolts – An interview with Boris Karloff* (circa 1963).

49 Pratt. Op. Cit., pg. 6.

50 Sharon Maier, Prairie History Room, Regina Public Library, letter to author, 11th April 2003 and E. Ross Stuart. *The History of Prairie Theatre: The Development of Theatre in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 1833-1982* (Simon & Pierre, Toronto, Canada, 1984), pg. 70.

51 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 136.

52 Ray Strothers, email to author, 7th July 2006 and letter from Boris Karloff to Dr. Knowlton, 22nd April 1961.

53 In an interview for the *Radio Times* Karloff said he made his first stage appearance in Nelson. (Dorothy Pratt: "The Most Celebrated Monster in the World." *Radio Times*, 27th November 1953, pg. 6).

54 Eisenberg. Op. Cit., pg. 79.

55 The names of the Jeanne Russell Players have been gleaned from various reviews from their time in Western Canada in 1912.

56 Samuel Grafton: "All He Needed Was One Good Scare." *Good Housekeeping*, August 1955, pg. 134.

57 *The Regina Leader*, 30th March 1912.

58 *The Regina Leader*, 3rd April 1912.

59 *The Regina Leader*, 3rd April 1912.

60 Hugh Dempsey, email to author, 13th January 2007 and *The*

Regina Leader, 3rd April 1912. This review, unearthed by Hugh Dempsey for this article is, I believe, the earliest yet found that mentions Karloff by his full stage name.

61 *The Regina Leader*, 3rd April 1912.

62 Elaine M. Kozakavich, Saskatoon Public Library, Saskatoon, letter to author, 25th April 2003 and *The Daily Phoenix*, 13th April 1912.

63 Kozakavich, Op. Cit., letter to author, 25th April 2003 and *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, 19th April 1912.

64 Kozakavich, Op. Cit., email to author, 23rd April 2003 and *The Daily Phoenix*, 19th April 1912.

65 Kozakavich, Op. Cit., email to author, 4th August 2006

66 *The Daily Phoenix*, 23rd April 1912.

67 Kozakavich, Op. Cit., email to author, 4th August 2006 and *The Saskatoon Daily Star*, 23rd April 1912.

68 Kozakavich, Op. Cit., email to author, 3rd August 2006

69 Margot (or Margaret) Beaton was the stage name of Jeanne Russell's sister, Helene.

70 Kozakavich, Op. Cit., letter to author, 25th April 2003 and *The Daily Phoenix*, 26th April 1912.

71 Kozakavich, Op. Cit., email to author, 4th August 2006 citing *The Daily Phoenix*, 11th May 1912.

72 Pratt. Op. Cit., pg. 6.

73 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 136.

74 Pratt. Op. Cit., pg. 6.

75 Sharon Maier. Op. Cit., letter to author, 11th April 2003 and *The Leader*: 4th July 1912. Henrietta Crossman and her company had previously presented the play at Maxine Elliott's Theatre in New York. It opened on the 10th August 1911 and ran for 60 performances. *The Real Thing*, <http://www.ibdb.com/production.asp?ID=7318> (accessed 23rd April 2003).

76 Ruddy. Op. Cit., pg. 136.

77 Robert C. Roman. "Boris Karloff." *Films in Review*: August-September 1964, Vol. XV, No. 7, pg. 390.

78 Record of divorce of Grace Harding Pratt and William Henry Pratt: British Columbia Archives, Microfilm No. B6311, File No. 202.

79 Although Karloff claimed to have attempted to join the British Army at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, I have been unable to find any documentation to verify this fact. Although a non-American and not eligible for enlistment, Karloff, like other aliens, was still required to register for the draft. Karloff duly registered in Chicago in 1917 under his real name of William Henry Pratt. The registration card is dated 1st June and lists Karloff as 'en route' with (what appears to be) the 'Leona Fuedell Stock Company'. The card also records Karloff's grounds for exemption: a 'varicocele' (enlarged veins in the scrotum) and 'diluted valve' (possibly the heart defect that is often mentioned). Roll: 1452381, Draftboard 1, <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (accessed 7th January 2006) Of particular interest is the fact that Karloff is listed as 'married.' As this was after his divorce from Grace Harding and

before his marriage to Montana Laurena Williams in July 1920 the card suggests Karloff was married six times. Although the name of this wife is not mentioned it is probably the actress Edith Doreen de Wilton (a. k. a. Olive de Wilton). Although no hard evidence has, so far, been uncovered to prove that Karloff and Olive de Wilton were married the circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that this was the case. This evidence is as follows:

- i. Olive told her friend, Brian Doherty, that she and Karloff had been married. As Cynthia Lindsay wrote, 'Doherty says Olive de Wilton spoke of Boris with no animosity but with considerable affection and a strong memory of near starvation. She was dark and sallow, dressed strangely, wore no makeup, and was, according to an actor who knew her, "an almost Charles Addams character."' [Lindsay: Op. Cit, pg. 20.]
- ii. Karloff's draft registration card lists his status as 'married,' as detailed above.
- iii. The 1918 Vallejo City Directory contains the listing; 'Karloff, Boris (Olive W.) actor Airdome Theatre, rms 614B Capitol.' (James Kern, Director Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum, email to author, 12th April 2003)
- iv. The unpublished private journal of Mrs. Loveny Nora Ruttan (née Skogheim), a resident of Hardisty, Alberta in which she wrote, "Mr. Cluff was an Englishman from Sussex... Mr. Cluff eventually married a very young girl whose name was [Ethel] Doreen De Wilton... Doreen departed for England to pursue her career as an actress & later became the first wife of the famous actor Boris Karloff." [In fact, de Wilton left for England after her relationship with Karloff.]
- v. An extant photograph of Alfred Aldrich, a friend of both Karloff and de Wilton. On the back the photograph is inscribed, by Aldrich, 'To Boris and Olive' (Michael Dawe, Red Deer and District Archives, email to author, 29th September 2006)

It should also be noted that this Olive de Wilton is not to be confused with the actress Olive Wilton who had appeared on Broadway in 1904 and 1905, or the English actress Olive Wilton who toured Australia in 1906 before settling there in 1914. She moved to Tasmania in 1920 (Jenny White, Flinders University, Adelaide Australia, email to author, 29th May 2003 and the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.12, pg. 534-535 (Melbourne University Press, 2002)).

80 Wood Soanes. "If Hollywood Bus-boy Falls On You Smile – He May Be Of Royalty." *The Oakland Tribune*: 20th March 1932

81 Although Karloff claimed extra work on the unnamed Borzage

picture Karloff also often said that his first picture was *His Majesty the American* (1919), starring Douglas Fairbanks.

82 Ruddy. Op. Cit, pg. 137.

83 Karloff would continue to appear on stage when his schedule would allow. Here is a list of the plays he appeared in after arriving in Los Angeles:

May 1919 – ‘Eyes of Youth’ with Nana Bryant and the Fulton Players at the Fulton Theatre in Oakland

Jan 1928 – ‘The Idiot’ at the Belmont theatre in Los Angeles

April 1928 – ‘Monna Vanna’ with Olga Zacek at the Trinity Auditorium, Los Angeles

May 1928 – ‘For the Soul of Rafael’ with Olga Zacek at the Trinity Auditorium, Los Angeles

May 1928 – ‘Hotel Imperial’ with Olga Zacek and the Sprague Repertoire Company at the Egan Theatre, Los Angeles

August 1928 – ‘Window Panes’ with Sarah Padden at the Egan Theatre, Los Angeles

1929 – ‘Kongo’ at the Capitol Theatre, San Francisco

May 1930 – ‘The Criminal Code’ at the Belasco Theatre, Los Angeles.

84 J. P. Shanley. “Nothing To Be Scared About.” *New York Times*, 6th March 1955.

85 Robert C. Roman. “Boris Karloff.” *Films in Review*: August-September 1964, Vol. XV, No. 7, pg. 390.



S-F 379, Ed Sebestyén fonds, File 237. Caption: “. . . and this should be another good year too, dear.” 500,000 Babies Born in Canada Last Year. Published in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* on April 3, 1959.

Correction

The Fall 2006 (Volume 58, Number 2) Issue of *Saskatchewan History* contained full page copies of the following cartoons by Ed Sebestyén on pages 42-44. The following caption information was accidentally omitted:



S-F 379, Ed Sebestyén fonds, File 234. Caption: “Some of us neighbors thought we’d drop over and welcome you home!” P.M. Home for Easter. Published in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* on March 20, 1959.



S-F 379, Ed Sebestyén fonds, File 238. Caption: “Maybe they figure the country’s overcrowded?” New Curbs To Reduce Immigration to Canada – News Item. Published in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* on April 4, 1959.

Book Reviews

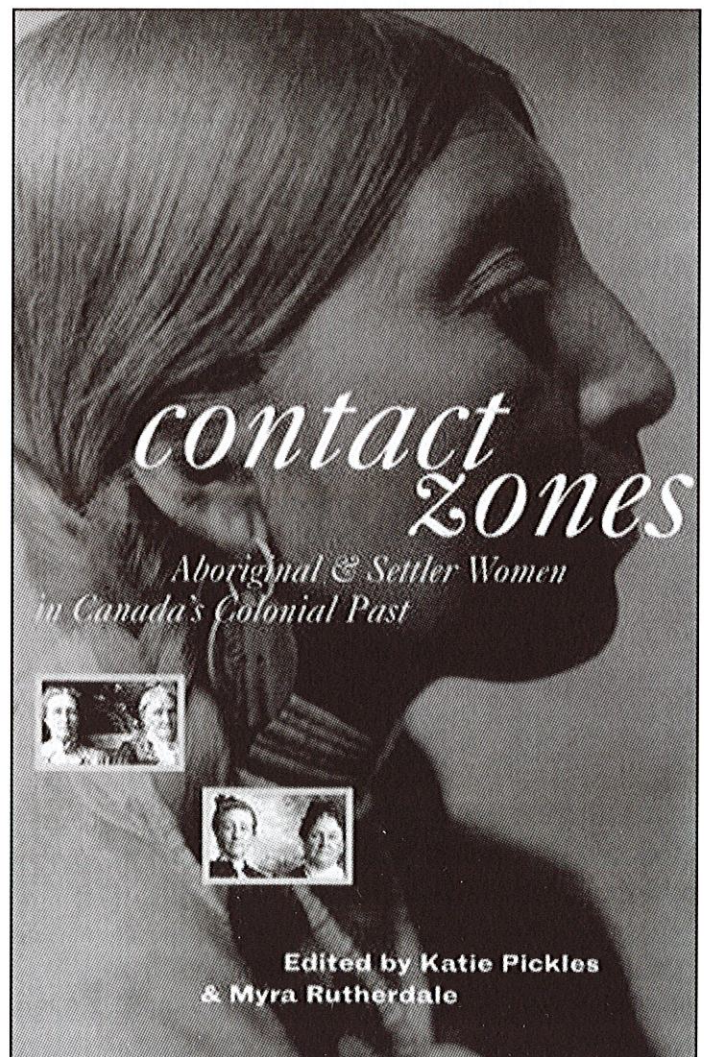
Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (eds.), *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005.

Combining Mary Louise Pratt's idea of a contact zone with feminist and post-colonial theories, the contributors to *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* demonstrate that the female body was a place where colonization occurred. New Zealand historian Katie Pickles and Canadian historian Myra Rutherdale explain that the purpose of this collection of essays is to "locate Canadian women's history within colonial and imperial systems." Beyond this, this timely collection of essays also demonstrates the necessity of including women's experiences in discussions of Canadian Native-newcomer encounters and relationships.

Contact Zones is divided into three sections. Part one, entitled "Dressing and Performing Bodies: Aboriginal Women, Imperial Eyes and Betweenness," explores some of the different ways in which Aboriginal women responded to, were shaped by, and contested colonization. Discussions of Métis beadwork, the poetry of E. Pauline Johnson, the lectures of Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, and the complex relationships between nuns and Aboriginal girls within the residential schools by contributors Sherry Farrell Racette, Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag, Cecilia Morgan, and Jo-Anne Friske highlight some of the different ways that gender identity was influenced by contact experiences. By viewing clothing, public performances, and relationships as reflective of an individual's gender identity, and changes to that identity, these authors locate the agency of the Aboriginal women that they discuss. They demonstrate that these women were far from invisible, and suggest interesting ways to access the historical stories and experiences of Aboriginal women. Gerson and Strong-Boag's analysis of E. Pauline Johnson's poetry, for example, as well as Cecilia Morgan's examination of Iroquois lecturers Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture adopt more biographical styles, emphasising the role of performance and interpretation

in colonial relationships. These works also demonstrate the necessity that individuals not simply be viewed as products of their gender, class, and ethnicity.

Part two of this thought provoking book, entitled "Regulating the Body: Domesticity, Sexuality and Transgression," examines church and state attempts to control the bodies of Aboriginal women and girls. Contributors Adele Perry, Sarah A. Carter, Robin Jarvis Brownlie and Joan Sangster demonstrate how Aboriginal women were perceived by Anglo-Canadian authorities, and the efforts made by these authorities to enforce "proper" gender roles and behaviour.



Part three, entitled "Bodies in Everyday Space: Colonized and Colonizing Women in Canadian Contact Zones," explores how the appearance of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in public spaces both reinforced and challenged preconceived notions about gender identity and colonialism. Jean Barman, Myra Rutherdale, Dianne Newell, and Katie Pickles each discuss the influence of outward appearances in the creation and interpretation of gender identities in different contexts ranging from the streets of Victoria to Missions in Northern Canada. There is a greater emphasis on the roles of settler women in this section. *Contact Zones* ends with Katie Pickles' chapter "The Old and the New on Parade: Mimesis, Queen Victoria, and Carnival Queens on Victoria Day in Interwar Victoria," which examines the increasing social power of settler women and the growth of the colonial system. The decision to end with this essay, rather than a conclusion implies that there is a continuation of these attitudes today. In this regard, the editors are successful in their goal to leave readers with the impression that that the "spaces for negotiating sexuality, race, gender, and class were gradually circumscribed by an increasingly harsh and pervasive white, elite, colonial system." However, this also implies that Canadian women's history ends with the beginning of the Second World War, and denies Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women of the past sixty years with the voice and agency that this collection seeks to give to those who came earlier.

The essays in *Contact Zones* draw from a variety of archival sources, such as journals, pictures, correspondence, and speeches as well as recent scholarly work. The use of beadwork and clothing as a historical source was interesting and innovative. However, with the exception of Jo-Anne Friske's discussion of residential schools, there is a significant lack of oral testimony in this volume. This coupled with an absence of Aboriginal authors means that there is a lack of Aboriginal women's own perceptions of gender identity and colonial experiences.

Contact Zones examines many different aspects of the relationship between gender identity and colonialism in Canada. Each chapter provides an introduction to a different aspect of this area of study, and should provide young scholars with the foundations for future research and scholarship. Beyond filling historical

holes and highlighting the role of gender in colonialism in Canada, *Contact Zones* also fills a significant gap in the historiography. This book would be an excellent resource for upper-level undergraduate students. All twelve essays fit well together, but may also be read individually without losing anything.

Good books provoke thought, discussion and raise further questions for scholarship. In this regard *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* is truly a good book. The contributors to this volume have demonstrated the importance of locating Canadian women's history within colonial and imperial systems. Such an inclusion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women is an essential element in understanding not only women's history but Canadian history.

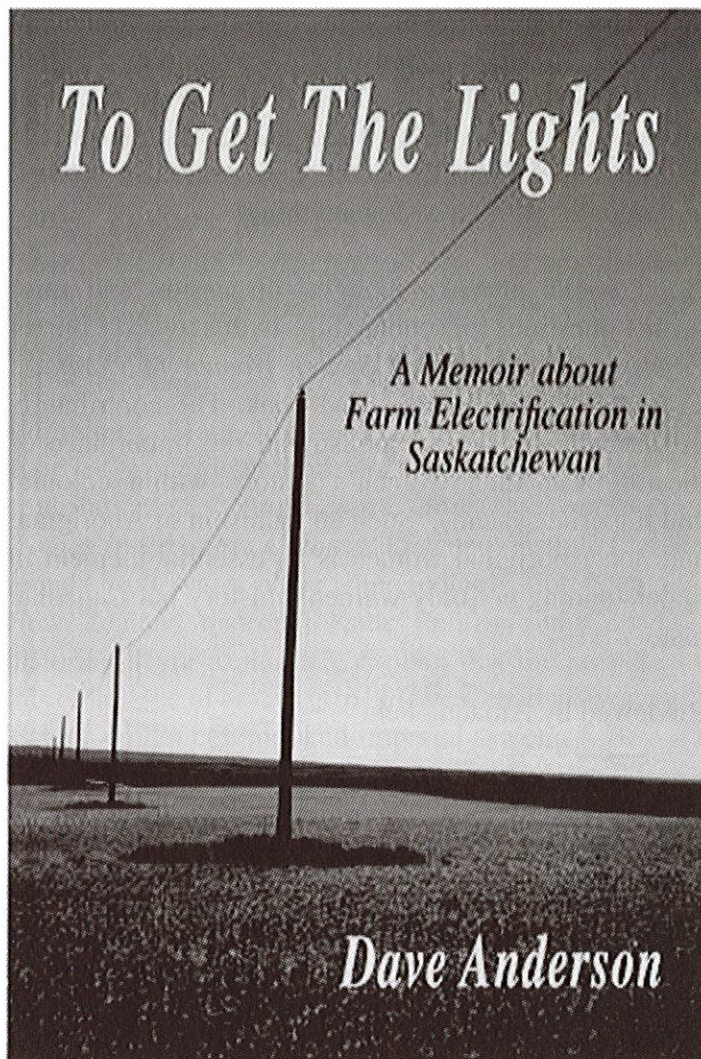
Reviewed by Amanda Fehr

Dave Anderson, *To Get the Lights: A Memoir about Farm Electrification in Saskatchewan*. Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2005.

No other effort improved and transformed life in rural Saskatchewan as much, or so quickly, as rural electrification. It was almost a miracle, because no other province had farms so widely scattered. Shirley Douglas tells how her father, T.C. Douglas, flying in a plane over Saskatchewan after dark, was asked, "What is the greatest thing you have done for the province?" Tommy replied, "Look down, right there. The twinkling lights."

The story begins on 1 February 1949, when The Rural Electrification Act was proclaimed and the Saskatchewan Power Corporation (SPC) replaced the former Saskatchewan Power Commission. By the end of 1951 only 8,000 farms had electrical service, behind target. Dave Anderson joined the Farm Electrification Division in August 1952, the very month the farm electrification program shifted into high gear.

The title of the book comes from a meeting north of Yorkton in 1954. A lady of Ukrainian origin, with



little English, waited patiently for three hours to tell Anderson, “Meester, vee gotta gat dee lites ... not for me. For dee keeds.” For her grandchildren. So they could study.

Thirty years ago, Clinton Oliver White’s 566-page scholarly book provided the formal, official account of the corporation. White, however, fails to mention that Dave Anderson, in charge of public relations, wanted the SPC history to be published in time for Canada’s 1967 Centenary. Accordingly, Anderson initiated discussions with Drs. Hilda Neatby and Jean Murray in 1963. The two professors were ecstatic, because this could be the first-ever Doctoral dissertation in their department. Anderson then arranged for a formal contract to be signed in the Bessborough Hotel dining room between David Cass-Beggs of SPC and J.W.T. Spinks, President of the University, with himself and Neatby present. Clinton White was chosen as author and began work out of Anderson’s office until Anderson was promoted in 1964 to a different position and the facilitation of

access to archival material fell to others. White’s Ph. D. thesis was completed in time for fall convocation in 1968, but was not published in book format until 1976 by the Canadian Plains Research Center.

The other side, the “inside story” and the human side of supplying power to Saskatchewan farms is at long last available from Dave Anderson, the man who was, for a time, in charge of the farm electrification project for one third of the province. Anderson was based in Yorkton with his wife, and eventually three sons and three daughters, but rarely got home except on weekends, missing much of his childrens’ childhoods.

As one of two “farm service reps” for SPC for a third of the province, Anderson organised meetings with farmers, usually in the evening; one lasted until 2 a.m. The roads at times were impassable or nearly so, and many travel adventures occurred.

Anderson’s experiences are presented in a chatty and interesting style. They include heartwarming stories, some that may bring a tear to the reader’s eye. In 1956, “Nut Mountain South” was two farms short of the number required for the project to go ahead. Anderson intervened. He persuaded an elderly couple, planning to retire soon and move out, to pay up simply so that their neighbours could get power; but the next fall they were able to fix their combine under their new lights, the only reason they got that year’s crop off before the imminent rain – and they were so comfortable with their new conveniences that they put their retirement on hold. The second farm couple simply did not have \$100 for their down payment, so at the very last minute, Anderson personally arranged with a seed grower at nearby Kelvington to purchase some of the young couple’s grain, which necessitated a hurried trip from the municipal snowplow and a visit from a trucker that night, before the district papers could be signed.

Two qualities shine through. The first is Anderson’s deep love for Saskatchewan. He quotes appropriately from Wallace Stegner and W.O. Mitchell, gives lyrical descriptions of the changes in the birds and flowers in the countryside each spring, and tells of places and people of historical importance. The second is Anderson’s sympathy for First Nations People, who were not allowed to vote until 1960 or have electricity on reserves until 1962; Anderson once bent the rules to

provide power to a successful Indian farmer living on the edge of his reserve.

In 1954, when SPC construction crews fell behind because of excessive rain, and had no hope of meeting promised dates of power delivery, Ted Durnin, engineer in charge of construction, persuaded farmers in the Saltcoats West area to put in the poles themselves. This was, as Anderson says, a “made-in-Saskatchewan, practical and useful solution.” Two hundred farms were served that year through this method, and in Saltcoats West the fifteen farmers involved were paid about \$225 each for ten days work; a farmer and son could thus earn roughly the cost of their power connection. In three years, this self-help method served nearly 4,000 farms.

There are heroes. The first is Charlie Smith who deserves to be remembered as the initial man in charge, the “father of farm electrification.” A genial sort who worked “with his employees, not over them.” Second is W.B. Clipsham, the SPC Chief Engineer, who developed a 13.8 kV single-wire power line to replace the former double-wire lines of 6.9 kV, thereby reducing the cost of wire, insulators and poles. Among the farmer heroes was George Lincoln of Wawota, who headed the local sign-up committee. He raised \$5000 among his neighbours to give interest-free loans to younger “starter” couples to make a down payment and benefit from electricity. He later organized a “Lights Up Wawota” banquet and celebration when power came in.

Efforts above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty provide evidence of true Christmas spirit among SPC workers. The first was when they worked overtime to hook up power at Lake Edward School east of Spalding, turning on the lights just as the Christmas concert began. On another occasion, SPC workers delayed their own Christmas arrival home, in order to give the hamlet of Fone Hill its power late in the afternoon of December 24. New gifts, electric trains, stoves, refrigerators, and electric kettles, were thus in operation on Christmas day.

By the end of 1966, more than 66,000 farms had been served with over a million poles and 73,000 miles of single-wire, 13.8 kV power lines -- a prodigious accomplishment almost in defiance of economic considerations because SPC had the lowest density of customers of any North American utility. Anderson noted the “unbridled pleasure” of farm housewives, in

particular, but even the cattle and poultry did better once power was hooked up.

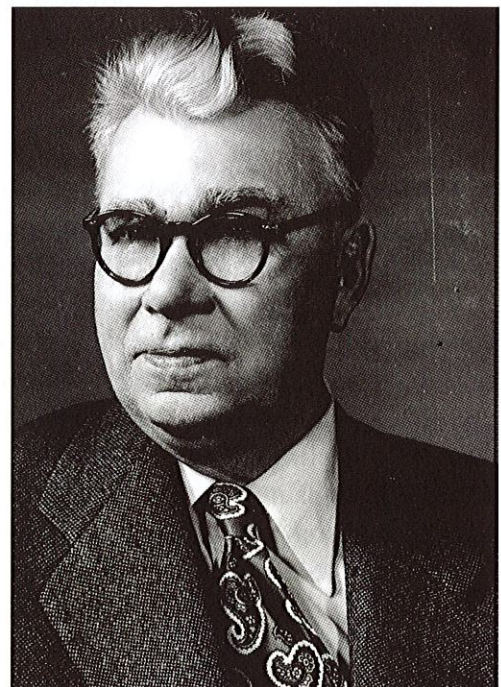
This book belongs in every Saskatchewan school and library, and will be of interest to the many families who benefitted from rural electrification.

Reviewed by C. Stuart Houston

Whelan, Ed, and Pemrose, “*Run it by Jack*”: *Tommy Douglas’ First Attorney-General J.W. Corman*. Regina: Whelan Publications, 2002.

“*Run it by Jack*” is a somewhat difficult book to categorize. It is part-biography, part-memoir, and part-oral history. Its authors are two dedicated amateurs, both veterans of CCF/NDP activism and government, who plainly feel a personal and political bond with their subject, and his era, that runs deeper than historical interest. The result of their labours is a book that, while uneven, gamely attempts to fill the (too large) vacuum of published scholarship on Saskatchewan’s vibrant and colorful political history.

The book traces the career of J.W. Corman from his early Moose Jaw law practice to the height of his influence as the top legal mind of the first Douglas



J. W. Corman
(Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-B 4822)

administrations. The authors succeed very ably both in humanizing the intensely private Corman, and in illustrating the vitally important role he played in the CCF transition from opposition to government (not only was Corman the only lawyer in the 1944 CCF caucus, but also one its very few MLAs with any real governing experience, having been Moose Jaw's mayor and an active Liberal and Social Credit party member). They further provide a reasonably strong mix of chronological and topical organization in examining the events and issues of Corman's public life. This is aided by several useful appendices. In addition to being informative (especially relative to its slim length), the book is frequently an entertainment as well (never more so than Corman gleefully tweaks and manipulates his Liberal adversaries).

The Whelans go into some depth in describing several of the major legislative initiatives of the CCF era, such as Farm Security and the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights. In so doing they succeed in showing the CCF government as one of immediate action on a range of issues (especially relief-related), as well as the ultimate limitations of that government's power (as when much of its farm and mortgage security programs are overturned by the courts). These discussions also reveal Corman as one of the too often overlooked workhorses of government. Orators and firebrands understandably command our attention, but the real work of governing is dependent on quieter skills. It is clear that Corman had these in abundance, and the authors skillfully capture this fact by showing him in action, whether in Cabinet, on the stump, or in day-to-day administration.

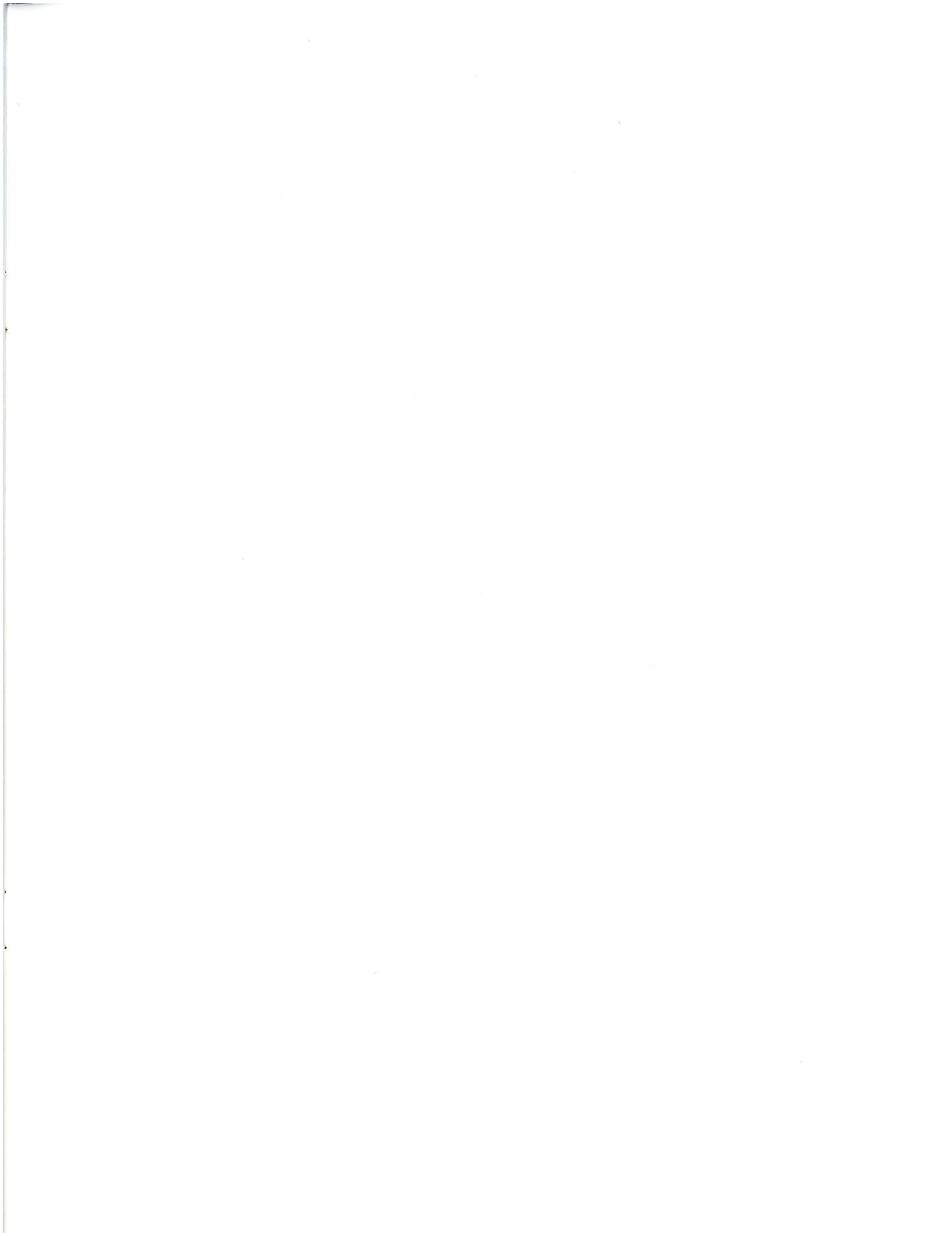
Like any work, this book also has its shortcomings, most of which stem from its authors' closeness to the subject matter and absence of formally scholarly training. On the technical front, the book lacks formal source citations (though a bibliography is provided). While the veracity of the authors is not in question, proper documentation would greatly aid the interested reader in learning more about the topic, as well as adding weight to the argument. Editorially the book is nearly free of objectivity and at times approaches both polemicism and hagiography. This is understandable given the passion the authors clearly feel, and to their great credit the Whelans are commendably honest and forthright in their aims and biases. However, "preaching to the choir" is a failing of the book, undermining the argument and leaving key questions unanswered. Perhaps the best examples of

these are "Why did Corman abandon decades of Liberal party membership for the fledgling CCF?" and "What was the root of opposition to CCF initiatives after 1944?". Too often the book offers a "We were right; They were wrong. We won; They lost" answer. Whereas the real achievements of Corman and the CCF would in fact appear greater if placed in a firmer, more objective context. What specifically "radicalized" Corman? What specific Liberal missteps led to a landslide voter mandate to the untried CCF? How did the socialist CCF draw away so many prominent Liberals and Social Credits? The image of the inevitability of CCF victory conveyed by the book is unconvincing, if only because it is separated from the essential (and surely compelling) political realities contributing to that success. The book stimulates the readers' interest, but frustrates as often as it satisfies.

To their credit, however, the authors have created a book that is both readable and useful to anyone interested in a pivotal era in Saskatchewan political history. They provide information even someone raised and educated in the province may lack. This reviewer, for example, was surprised to discover his own arms-length inter-familial connection to the 1944 CCF caucus.

Amateur historians like the Whelans face many obstacles in research, writing, and publication (this book is actually self-published), and must expend their own resources and dedication to see a project completed. They deserve respect and commendation for providing an educational service to their community, and for addressing subject matter inexplicably overlooked by professional historians. "*Run it by Jack*" is more than worth the time to read it, and is recommended to the curious.

Reviewed by Clay Andrew Poupart



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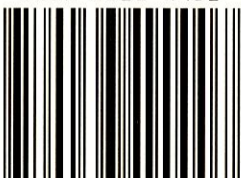
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