

**The Métis of the South Saskatchewan:
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THE METIS OF THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN



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Introduction

European expansion from the late Middle Ages onward has had an immeasurable impact upon all the peoples and regions of the globe. Under European influence and domination, cultures and economies have been radically transformed. Another feature of European expansion has been the creation of new populations of people of mixed European and native parentage. In the regions of North America which today constitute the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in Canada, the mixed population - the Métis, the country-born of English-Scottish-Orkney men and native women - was to play a prominent historical role because of its relative numerical strength in these sparsely inhabited areas. In early historical times, smallpox epidemics significantly reduced the native population in the north west. Meanwhile, the rivalry between the Hudson's Bay and North West companies resulted in the employment of excessively large numbers of clerks, voyageurs and labourers in regions which were rich in fur-bearing animals. The white fur traders, unable to take white women into the wilderness, did not live celibately, concluding loose marriage alliances with native women of the bands patronizing their fur-trading posts. The families were large and the rate of survival of the offspring was superior to that of their native cousins because of their greater immunity to disease and the protection afforded by the posts to which they were attached and by which they were often employed.

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The métis and country-born were heir to a common native tradition and culture, but the values of the respective fathers differed, and consequently the two peoples developed in unique ways. The French-Canadians engaged in the fur trade shared the Indian's penchant for personal freedom and roaming, while the Orkneymen and the Scots were more dogged workers, and interested more in personal financial gain than in living for the moment. The Métis emerged as a roving hunter and the country-born as a relatively hardworking agriculturalist. The Métis were closer culturally than the country-born to the natives.

For much of the 19th century, the parklands natives and Métis lived beyond the frontiers of white civilization and participated in the region's traditional fur-trading economy. The valleys of the North and South Saskatchewan rivers in the parklands were relatively heavily timbered, affording to the nomadic native inhabitants adequate shelter from the winter wind, and wood for habitations and fuel. During the winter, buffalo were abundant in the valleys where they sought shelter. The natives traded pelts and pemmican, made from buffalo meat and fat; pemmican constituted the basic part of the fur trader's diet. As time progressed, French-Canadian freemen, men whose contracts had expired and who had decided to remain in the west, had become increasingly important in the procurement of pemmican for the posts, and they handed down this profession to their offspring. Other Métis hunted independently of the fur-trading posts, roaming in small bands and living in much the same manner as their Indian kin.

This unchanging pattern of life and the isolation of the parklands was not destined to endure beyond the second half of the 19th century. Population growth and political unrest in Europe resulted in a dramatic increase in the

1850s and afterwards of emigration from Europe to the United States and the British colonies in eastern Canada.

Concomitant with this upsurge in immigration was the rapid growth of the population along the North American Atlantic seaboard. Land-hungry whites began to move westward. At first, the migrations bypassed the prairies and the parklands, which were thought to have insufficient rainfall and wood resources to support agricultural settlements. The migrations continued inexorably until the habitable wooded regions of the west had been settled, leaving only the grasslands of the prairies and the parklands as the last frontiers to be penetrated.

Although the white settler bypassed the parklands, the indirect effects of his westward expansion were felt. Freightage emerged as a primary industry, and the Métis, equipped with their Red River carts, became the parklands' principal carriers, transporting merchandise and supplies from Winnipeg along the Carlton Trail to Edmonton and the new settlements farther to the west. Buffalo-hunting became more remunerative in the 1860s and 1870s; the discovery of new methods of tanning buffalo hides brought buffalo robes into fashion, and the demand for robes seemed to be inexhaustible. But the freighting and buffalo robe industries made the Métis more dependent for their livelihood upon the economy of the whites, at a time of rapid change and progress. Within an unexpectedly short period, the buffalo disappeared, and the advent of the railroad in the west ended the prosperity of the freighter. In addition, the parklands were now attracting white settlers who brought with them far more efficient agricultural methods than those practiced in the fledgling Métis agricultural colonies. The Métis, who lived one day at a time giving little thought to the morrow, in the 1880s faced the difficult task of adapting to the rapidly changing

conditions. The object of this study is to examine the development of Métis culture and values, the rise and progress of the Métis agricultural colonies along the South Saskatchewan River, and the impact of white settlement and a changing economy upon the South Saskatchewan Métis.

CHAPTER I

The Indian, French and British Forebears of the Métis

A

The Interdependence of the Indians and Whites in the Fur-trade

The European residents of New France were prohibited by both the civil government and the Roman Catholic Church from intermarrying or socially associating with the indigenous native population. It was felt that before such alliances could be permitted the Indians should be Christianized and exposed to European civilization and customs. Thus it was only when the Frenchman resided beyond the arm of the authorities that he could come into immediate contact with the Indian tribes. The number of Frenchmen residing in the west before the English conquest was small; when Pierre Gaultier de La Verendrye reached the prairies in 1731 he had only 50 men, and at the time of the fall of Quebec there were probably no more than 150 to 200 west of Lake Superior.

The restoration of peace opened an era of a free fur trade, replacing the French one of congés which had limited the number of traders and their engagés. By the mid-1780s the number of Canadians west of Grand Portage had at least doubled; they were hivernants, or winterers, those who did not annually return to Canada. The English on Hudson Bay

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moved inland into the Canadian Shield to counter the Canadians.

The natives encountered by the English fur-traders on Hudson Bay and the French in the west were principally Crees, though some also were Chippewa or Ojibwa. The French referred to the Cree variously as Cristinaux, Guilistinous, Kilistinons, Kinistinons, Kiristinons, Kiristinonnons, Krigi, Krigs, Kristinaux, Kristinons, Kyristinous, apparently from the Ojibwa's name for them, the Keethistino. They subsequently commonly were called the "Crees" or "Krees," a name, David Thompson noted, the Crees could not themselves pronounce because their language did not have a rough "R."¹ According to Edward Thompson Denig, the Crees called themselves the Nai ah yah' og, meaning "those who speak the same tongue." Another variation was Nihiaway. They were called by the Assiniboines Shi é yah, the Sioux Shie a lah, and their various other neighbours such as the Blackfeet, Gros Ventres and Crows variations in the pronunciation of the word Shi é yah.² David Thompson called them the Nahathaways from their parent linguistic stock.

Andrew Graham related that when the English first appeared on Hudson Bay, the Crees inhabited "the country from the sea-coast up to the lake @Lake Winnipeg@." They subsequently migrated into the interior for a number of reasons including a desire to obtain more furs to barter, the number of fur-bearing animals having been reduced by excessive killings, and for some a wish to avoid the Europeans. By the second half of the 18th century, they could be found from the head of the Nelson River to the Grand Portage and into the buffalo-hunting lands. Some remained behind at the English Factories on the Bay, procuring provisions for the English and doing other necessary services. These were the home-guard Indians.³

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Edwin Thompson Denig, writing in the 1830s, remarked that their boundaries were on the north and north-east of the Saskatchewan and Red Rivers, on the south and east of the Pembina River, on the west of the Coteau de Prairie or the divide, and "along the Coteau through Woody, Cyprus, Tinder Moose and Prickly Pear Mountains to or nearly to the head of the Saskatchewan, thence down that stream to its confluence with Lake Winnipeg and around that lake to its eastern extremity."⁴

David Thompson noted that their appearance depended upon the climate of the region they inhabited. Near Hudson Bay, where the climate was severe and animals were scarce, "they are seldom above the middle size, of spare make, the features round, or slightly oval, hair black, strong and lank; eyes black and of full size, cheek bones rather high, mouth and teeth good, the chin round; the countenance grave yet with a tendency to be cheerful, the mild countenances of the women make many, while young, appear lovely; but like the labouring classes the softness of youth soon passes away." Further into the interior, where the climate was not as inhospitable and animals more plentiful, "the men attain to the stature of six feet; well proportioned, the face more oval, and the features good, giving them a manly appearance; the complexion is of a light olive, and their colour much the same as a native of the south of Spain; the skin soft and smooth."

Thompson described the male Cree's dress as consisting of one or two loose coats of coarse broad cloth, or molton, a piece of the same sewn to form a rude kind of stockings to half way up the thigh, a blanket by way of a cloak; the shoes are of well dressed Moose, or Rein Deer skin, and from it's pliancy enables them to run with safety, they have no covering for the head

in summer, except the skin of the spotted northern Diver; but in winter, they wrap a piece of Otter, or Beaver skin with the fur on, round their heads, still leaving the crown of the head bare, from which they suffer no inconvenience.

The woman's dress

is of 1-1/2 yards of broad cloth sewed like a sack, open at both ends, one end is tied over the shoulders, the middle belted round the waist, the lower part like a petticoat, covers to the ankles, and gives them a decent appearance. The sleeves cover the arms and shoulders, and are separate from the body dress. The rest is much the same as the men. For a head dress they have a foot of broad cloth sewed at one end, ornamented with beads and gartering, this end is on the head, the loose parts are over the shoulders, and is well adapted to defend the head and neck from the cold and snow. The women seldom disfigure their faces with paint, and are not over fond of ornaments. Most of the men are tatooed, on some parts of their bodies, arms etc. Some of the women have a small circle on each cheek.⁵

The English on Hudson Bay and the French in the west from La Verendrye's time recognized that native women could perform valuable tasks at their fur-trading posts, such as preparing furs, buffalo skins, making clothing and snowshoes. Besides having these necessary skills, the Cree women usually were physically attractive and concerned with their appearance and personal cleanliness. Andrew Graham wrote that

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...the women are ramarkably cleanly. Their heads are dressed every day when they have time, and their hands and face washed. The married women fumigate their clothes with sweet scented grass at night before they go to bed; and should any intimacy pass between her and her spouse, he must be sure to wash his hands in the morning, before she admits him to take her by the hand, or eat any victuals.⁶

The roles of the Cree man and woman were clearly defined. Thompson noted that "the riches of a man consist solely in his ability as a hunter, and the portion of the woman is good health, and a willingness to relieve her husband from all domestic duties." Cree marriage alliances were much looser than their European counterparts; only the consent of the couple and parents was needed, and "when contrariety of disposition prevails, so that they cannot live peaceably together, they separate with as little ceremony as they came together, and both parties are free to attach themselves to whom they will, without any stain on their characters." However, if there were children, blame would be assigned to one or both of the partners.⁷

The Cree woman's skill in preparing furs, her acceptance of full responsibility for domestic work, her generally attractive appearance and her personal cleanliness made her a desirable companion for the fur trader during his sojourn in the fur-hunting grounds. The traditionally loose marriage alliance among the Cree was particularly advantageous to the trader. Marriage to a trader was equally beneficial to the woman. Her needs were provided for by the post, and in times of want she had little worry, especially at the Hudson's Bay Company's posts on Hudson Bay, which always had reserves of European provisions brought by ship each year from the British Isles. The woman

was also freer within her marriage than her counterpart in a non-mixed marriage; for while the native marriage was a loose alliance, so long as it endured the woman was subject to the traditional native punishments for infidelity.

Graham recorded that "Adultery is often revenged by the death of the woman, and jealousy is another occasion for crimes of this nature. If a woman commits adultery without the knowledge and permission of her husband, he makes no scruple of turning her out; and very often knocks out her brains with a hatchet, at the same time not daring to say anything to the man, though perhaps his tent-mate."⁸

The native woman married to a trader was not exposed to one of the principal fears of the natives who roamed through the Canadian Shield, that in times of want she would either become or would be eaten by a Windigo, a cannibal, a tradition common to the Cree, Ojibwa and Montagnais-Naskapi of the Woodlands. Isolated in small family units in the bleak and barren interior, the natives were often forced by inclement weather to remain indoors for lengthy periods of time, and being restless and inactive, their thoughts often turned to the Windigo, who was the subject of many of their myths and legends.⁹ Another uncertainty which weighed upon the woman was the loss of a husband who hunted for her and her small children. Though she was usually remarried by one of the brothers of her deceased husband, the woman's life was far from happy. She was subservient to the other wife or wives of her second husband, and could not expect from the latter her previous husband's kindness and consideration. For some women the burden of the second marriage was so unbearable that they committed suicide. Occasionally there are references in the journals of fur-traders to widows hanging themselves. As many of the servants at the Hudson Bay Company's factories remained on

the Bay for as many as two decades, the women in these mixed-marriage alliances had a more certain future.

The native woman was required to perform much of the heavy and laborious work required among roaming people. Duncan Cameron, a North-West Company fur-trader superintending the Nipigon department in the last two decades of the 18th century and first decade of the 19th, wrote that

The women are considered as mere slaves to their husbands, some of the bolder hussies nevertheless make themselves very independent and "wear the breeches," when the husband happens to be good natured. The women must dress the leather, make and mend the shoes of the whole family, skin and dress all their furs, mend their clothes, cook, put up and take down the lodge, cut and carry home all the fire wood, kindle the fire every morning, dry the men's shoes and rub them quite soft before they presume to present them to their husbands in the morning. They must set and attend the nets whenever they fish, and generally serve their husband even if they were doing nothing at the time, and themselves very busy.

Tasks such a putting up lodges, cutting firewood and hauling heavy loads were left to the woman, Cameron maintained, because "a man would consider himself degraded by doing that work, even if he had nothing to do all the time." Even pregnancy did not excuse a woman from carrying or hauling heavy loads, though they seldom miscarried. "Divine Providence," Cameron remarked "has bestowed on these women a constitution suitable to the miserable life they lead."¹⁰

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The demands were avoided to a great extent by the woman married to a European and residing about a post. The family of the woman married to the European also benefited. In times of want, they could prevail upon their daughter to solicit aid for them from her husband. The marriage alliance would also earn them better treatment at the husband's post. And the family could expect a generous payment for their daughter by a prospective white bridegroom. Several presents, including merchandise and liquor, were given to the parents in return for permission to marry a daughter. Daniel Harmon's interpreter, Payet, in the first decade of the 19th century paid \$200 worth of "rum dry goods etc." to the parents of his wife.¹¹ Sometimes the parents insisted upon more expensive presents and it was not unusual for a French Canadian to engage himself by contract to a bourgeois for an extended period of time to obtain the necessary money.

The native woman's love and care for her children was very often mentioned by white observers. John Long, a fur-trader in the Canadian Shield in the last two decades of the 18th century, wrote,

I believe it will not be disputed that the Indian women love their children with as much affection as parents in the most civilized states can boast; many proofs might be adduced to support this assertion. A mother suckles her child till it attains the age of four or five years, and sometimes till it is six or seven. From their infant state they endeavour to promote an independent spirit; they are never known either to beat or scold them, lest the martial disposition which is to adorn their future life and character, should be weakened: on all occasions they avoid everything

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compulsive, that the freedom with which they wish them to think and act may not be controlled. If they die, they lament their death with unfeigned tears, and even for months after their decease will weep at the graves of their departed children. The nation of Savages called Biscatonges, or by the French, Pleureurs, are said to weep more bitterly at the birth of a child, than at its decease; because they look upon death only as a journey from whence he will return, but with regard to his birth, they consider it as an entrance into a life of perils and misfortunes.

As soon as a child is born, if in summer, the mother goes into the water, and immerses the infant; as soon as this is done, it is wrapped up in a small blanket, and tied to a flat board, covered with dry moss, in the form of the bottom of a coffin, with a hoop over the top, where the head lies, to preserve it from injury. In winter it is clad in skins as well as blankets. In the heat of summer gauze is thrown over the young Savage, to keep off the mosquitoes, which are very troublesome in the woods. The board, on which the child is placed, is slung to the mother's forehead with a broad worsted belt, and rests against her back.

When the French took possession of Canada, the women had neither linen, nor swaddling cloaths; all their childbed furniture consisted of a kind of trough, filled with dry rotten wood dust, which is as soft as the finest down, and well calculated to imbibe the moisture of

the infant; on this the child was placed, covered with rich furs, and tied down with strong leather strings. The dust was changed as often as necessary, till the child was weaned.

Among the Indians who are in any degree civilized, the women feed their children with pap made of Indian corn and milk, if it can be obtained; but in the parts more northern, and remote from Europeans, wild rice and oats are substituted, which being cleansed from the husk, and pounded between two stones, are boiled in water with maple sugar: this food is reckoned very nourishing, and with broth made from the flesh of animals and fish, which they are frequently able to procure, cannot fail of supporting and strengthening the infant. Among several of the tribes of Indians, apa is made of sagavite, from a root they call toquo, of the bramble kind; this is washed and dried, afterwards ground, or pounded, and made into a paste, which being baked is pleasant to the taste, but of a very astringent quality. It is their common bread.¹²

No ceremony was involved in the conclusion of the marriage of the white trader and the native woman, "excepting that the bridegroom, at the time to retire to rest, shows his bride where their common lodging place is." When a matrimonial alliance was concluded, it was understood that it would endure only so long as there was harmony between husband and wife; not infrequently the marriage was broken and the wife went back to her family and the presents were returned. "One thing," Harmon remarked, "is secured by this arrangement, which is by no means always found in the

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civilized world, and that is, while persons live together, in a state of wedlock, they will live in harmony."¹³ Nevertheless, the families of mixed parentage lacked the cohesion characteristic of the French-Canadian, Scottish and English families.

B

The Two World-views Inherited by the Métis

a. The Indian World View

The off-spring of the mixed-union were heir to two very different cultures and religious views. First, we shall turn to the native legacy. It is difficult to draw a complete and accurate picture of the Cree's religious beliefs and his attitude towards his environment from the sketches of the early Europeans with whom they came into contact. The French did not trade directly with the Crees until the latter part of the 17th century. The Jesuit missionaries did not extend their activities beyond Lake Superior during the New France period. However, they did observe the religions and customs of other Woodlands peoples speaking dialects of the Algonkin language. The Jesuits were most interested in detailing the natives' religious beliefs, believing that they had emanated from the Devil, who was deluding them.

Algonkin languages are spoken over a wide territory stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains and from Hudson Bay to the Ohio Valley. The northern Woodlands people speaking dialects of the language include the Cree, Naskapi, Montagnais, Ojibwa and Micmac. According to Edward Sapir, "a very great lapse of time (probably several millennia) must be assumed to account for the

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geographical distribution and dialectic differentiation of the Algonkin languages proper."¹⁴ The beliefs and customs of the Algonkin-speaking peoples emanated from a common cultural background, and before the coming of the European to North America those cultural patterns probably were still very similar. To recreate the customs, beliefs and ceremonies of the Crees, observations by Europeans of related Woodlands Algonkin-speaking natives are employed.

Perhaps the earliest and most comprehensive detailing of an Algonkin-speaking people's religious beliefs are the observations upon the Montagnais by Father Paul Le Jeune, the Superior of the Jesuit Missionaries in Canada (1632-1639), in his Relations for 1634 and 1637. The Montagnais, he learned, believed that "a certain one named Atachocam" had created the world and "one named Messou" had restored the world after it had been destroyed by a flood. They gave to all nature superior to man the appellation Manitoo. When speaking of good they spoke of the good Manitou, of bad, the bad Manitou. Every species of animal had an "elder brother, who is, as it were the source and origin of all individuals, and this elder brother is wonderfully great and powerful." A dream in which an elder brother appeared was a guarantee that the dreamer would have a successful hunt in the animal represented by that elder brother. The Montagnais believed in the Khichikouai, the Genii of light or the Genii of air, who were cognizant of future events. The Khichikouai were consulted by jugglers' or medicine men's souls in a shamanistic ritual conducted in a tent. The sorcerer's soul was believed by the onlookers at the ceremony to rise above the tent, where it spoke and called the Khichikouai. From time to time the soul threw sparks. Le Jeune describes the sorcerer's tent and the ritual in the following manner:

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Towards nightfall, two or three young men erected a tent in the middle of our Cabin; they stuck six poles deep into the ground in the form of a circle, and to hold them in place they fastened to the tops of these poles a large ring, which completely encircled them; this done, they enclosed this Edifice with Castelognes, leaving the top of the tent open; it is all that a tall man can do to reach to the top of this round tower, capable of holding 5 or 6 men standing upright. This house made, the fires of the cabin are entirely extinguished, and the brands thrown outside, lest the flame frighten away the Genii or Khichikouai, who are to enter this tent; a young juggler slipped in from below, turning back, for this purpose, the covering which enveloped it, then replaced it when he had entered, for they must be very careful that there be no opening in this fine palace except from above. The juggler, having entered, began to moan softly, as if complaining; he shook the tent at first without violence; then becoming animated little by little, he commenced to whistle, in a hollow tone, and as if it came from afar; then to talk as if in a bottle; to cry like the owls of these countries, which it seems to me have stronger voices than those of France; then to howl and sing, constantly varying the tones; ending by these syllables, ho ho, hi hi, gui gui, nioué, and other similar sounds, disguising his voice so that it seemed to me I heard those puppets which showmen exhibit in France. Sometimes he spoke

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Montagnais, sometimes Algonquain, retaining always the Algonquain intonation, which, like the Provençal, is vivacious. At first as I have said, he shook this edifice gently; but, as he continued to become more animated, he fell into so violent an ecstasy, that I thought he would break everything to pieces, shaking his house with so much force and violence, that I was astonished at a man having so much strength; for, after he had once begun to shake it, he did not stop until the consultation was over, which lasted about three hours. Whenever he would change his voice, the Savages would at first cry out, moa, moa, "listen, listen"; then as an invitation to these Genii, they said to them, Pitoukhecou, Pitoukhecou, "enter, enter." At other times, as if they were replying to the howls of the juggler, they drew this aspiration from the depths of their chests, ho, ho. I was seated like the others, looking on at this wonderful mystery, forbidden to speak; but as I had not vowed obedience to them, I did not fail to intrude a little word into the proceedings. Sometimes I begged them to have pity on this poor juggler, who was killing himself in this tent; at other times I told them they should cry louder, for the Genii had gone to sleep.

Some of these Barbarians imagined that this juggler was not inside, that he had been carried away, without knowing where or how. Others said that his body was lying on the ground, and that his soul was up above the tent, where it spoke at first, calling these Genii, and throwing from time to time sparks of

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fire. Now to return to our consultation. The Savages having heard a certain voice that the juggler counterfeited, uttered a cry of joy, saying that one of these Genii had entered; then addressing themselves to him, they cried out, Tepouachi, tepouachi, "call, call;" that is, "call thy companions." Thereupon the juggler, pretending to be one of the Genii and changing his tone and his voice, called them. In the meantime our sorcerer, who was present, took his drum, and began to sing with the juggler who was in the tent, and the others answered. Some of the young men were made to dance, among others the Apostate, who did not wish to hear of it, but the sorcerer made him obey.

At last, after a thousand cries and howls, after a thousand songs, after having danced and thoroughly shaken this fine edifice, the Savages believing that the Genii or Kichikouai had entered, the sorcerer consulted them. He asked them about his health, (for his is sick), and about that of his wife, who was also sick. This Genii, or rather the juggler who counterfeited them, answered that, as to his wife, she was already dead, that it was all over with her. I could have said as much myself, for one needed not to be a prophet or a sorcerer to guess that, inasmuch as the poor creature was already struck with death; in regard to the sorcerer, they said that he would see the Spring. Now, knowing his disease, - which was a pain in the loins, or rather an infirmity resulting from his licentiousness and

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excesses, for he is vile to the last degree, - I said to him, seeing that he was otherwise healthy, and that he drank and ate very heartily, that he would not only see the spring but also the summer, if some other accident did not overtake him, and I was not mistaken.

After these interrogations, these fine oracles were asked if there would soon be snow, if there would be much of it, if there would be Elks or Moose, and where they could be found. They answered, or rather the juggler, always disguising his voice, that they saw a little snow and some moose far away, without indicating the place, having the prudence not to commit themselves.

Le Jeune concluded that the sorcerer himself was responsible for the unusual features of the ceremony, but one feature, the shaking of the tent, brought some doubt to his mind. He was convinced that the tent had been shaken by a man; yet he was surprised that any man had sufficient strength to shake it for so long a time. The natives maintained that the poles of the tent had been planted so firmly that a man could hardly have shaken it. As Le Jeune had not tried to shake it himself he could not verify or contradict this. His informants continued that they had observed in the past performances when the top of the tent, about seven feet high, had been stretched down to the ground. They explained that the Khichikouai, entered as swiftly as the wind, frightened the sorcerer, "making him think he is going to fall into an abyss, the earth appearing to open under him." The sorcerer "emerges in terror from his tent, which goes on shaking for some time after he has left it." A sorcerer trading at Tadoussac, Le Jeune was told, in the autumn of 1637 had reacted in such terror that

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"his clout was thrown out of it at the top, (of the tent) and his body was lifted up, so that those who looked inside no longer saw him; finally, he was heard to fall down, uttering a plaintive cry like a man who feels the shock of a fall. Having emerged from these enchantments, he said that he did not know where he had been or what had taken place." A native whom Le Jeune called the Apostate maintained that it was not the sorcerer who spoke in the tent but these Khichikouai. He invited Le Jeune to enter the tent and observe that his (Le Jeune's) "body will remain below, and thy soul will mount on high."

Some time after the ceremony, Le Jeune conversed with the sorcerer. The latter claimed that the Khichikouai was "as large as the fist," and his body was made of stone and was "rather long." It could be killed by a hatchet. Besides the Khichikouai, his people believed in the existence of a Manitou, who was the origin of evil, though he himself was not evil and did not hate men. The wife of the Manitou was responsible for evil and disease; she killed men and ate their flesh. Dressed in a robe woven from the hair of her most beautiful male and female victims, she sometimes appeared like fire.

Animals, men and even objects, Le Jeune was told, had souls. These souls could be described as shadows of the animate objects. The soul of a man had feet, a mouth and other parts of the human anatomy; it drank and ate and hence was given food when its host's body died. Upon death, it traveled to "a large village situated where the suns sets," crossing a body of water to get there. In the village, the sorcerer maintained, during the day the souls sat like sick people with their elbows on their knees and their heads between their hands, and during the night they behaved as healthy people did, hunting animals and working. Le Jeune was convinced that the sorcerer "invents every day some new

contrivance to keep his people in a state of agitation, and to make himself popular."

The power the sorcerer utilized in trying to cure people was also employed in endeavouring to kill people.

Le Jeune observed a ritual conducted by the sorcerer intended to kill a rival sorcerer in the Gaspé,

...Nevertheless, to better prepare myself for this sacrifice, I wished to learn if they had me in mind, and so I asked them where the man was that they wished to kill; they answered me tht he was in the neighbourhood of Gaspé, more than a hundred leagues from us. I began to laugh, for in truth I had never dreamed that they would undertake to kill a man a hundred leagues away. I inquired why they wished to take his life. They answered that this man was a Canadian sorcerer, who, having had some trouble with ours, had threatened him with death and had given him the disease from which he had suffered so long, and which was going to consume him in two days, if he did not prevent the stroke by his art. I told them that God had forbidden murder, and that we never killed people; that did not prevent them from pursuing their purpose. My host, foreseeing the great commotion which was about to take place, said to me, "Thou wilt have the headache; go off into one of the other cabins near by." "No," said the sorcerer, "there will be no harm in seeing what we do." They had all the children and women go out, except one who sat near the sorcerer; I remained as a spectator of their mysteries, with all the Savages of the other cabins, who were summoned. All being seated, a

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young man comes bearing two pickets, or very sharply-pointed sticks; my host prepares the charm, composed of little pieces of wood shaped at both ends like a serpent's tongue, iron arrow-points, pieces of broken knives, bits of iron bent like a big fishhook, and other similar things; all these are wrapped in a piece of leather. When this is done, the sorcerer takes his drum, all begin to chant and howl, and to make the uproar of which I spoke above; after a few songs, the woman who had remained arises, and goes all around the inside of the cabin, passing behind the backs of the people who are there. When she is reseated, the magician takes these two stakes; then, pointing out a certain place, begins by saying, "Here is the head," (I believe he meant the head of the man whom he wished to kill); then with all his might he drives these stakes into the ground, inclining them toward the place where he believed this Canadian was. Thereupon my host comes to assist his brother; he makes a tolerably deep ditch in the ground with these stakes; meanwhile the songs and other noises continue incessantly. The ditch made and the stakes planted, the servant of the sorcerer, I mean the Apostate, goes in search of a sword, and the sorcerer strikes with it one of these pickets; then he descends into the ditch, assuming the posture of an excited man who is striking heavy blows with the sword and poniard; for he has both, in this act of a furious and enraged man. The sorcerer takes the charm wrapped in skin, puts it in the

ditch, and redoubles his sword-cuts at the same time that they increase the uproar.

Finally, this mystery ends, and he draws out the sword and the poniard all covered with blood, and throws them down before the other Savages; the ditch is hurriedly covered up, and the magician boastfully asserts that his man is struck, that he will soon die, and asks if they have not heard his cries; they all say "no," except two young men, relatives of his, who say they have heard some very dull sounds, and as if far away. Oh, how glad they make him!

Le Jeune further elaborated upon this procedure in his Relation for 1637. The sorcerer went into his tent, and summoned the Khichikouai or "those who make the light." Upon their coming, he sent them after the soul of the person or the souls of the people he intended to kill. The soul or souls were brought by the Khichikouai to the sorcerer in the "form of stones, or in some other shape." Then the sorcerer struck the souls viciously with a hatchet or javelin until blood ran down them. The hatchet or javelin at the end of the ceremony was covered with blood. Afterward, the soul or souls became sick and the body of the victim or bodies of the victims eventually died. However, it was generally thought that a sorcerer who had killed would die shortly after his victims.

The psychological effect of this sorcerer on the various members of his clan intrigued Le Jeune. Almost all those who died he noted, thought that they had been "bewitched." "In fact, they nearly all die of consumption, being so thin that they are nothing but skin and bone when they are borne to the grave." The sorcerer was greatly feared because of his powers to do evil, and great caution was taken to avoid offending him; on the other hand, his

services were greatly in demand to cure diseases inflicted by other sorcerers. The sorcerer also interpreted dreams, the songs of birds and human encounters with animals and birds. For example if one dreamed of moose meat, it was a "sign of life;" if one dreamed of a bear, it was a "sign of death." A song, usually one which had been revealed in a dream, might be chanted by the sorcerer so as to permit him to have a fruitful hunt. And the making of ointments from such creatures as toads and snakes, used in the ritualistic killing of a person, were also revealed by the Khichikouai. Le Jeune concluded about Montagnais society:

...It is strange to see how these people agree so well outwardly, and how they hate each other within. They do not often get angry and fight with one another, but in the depths of their hearts they intend a great deal of harm. I do not understand how this can be consistent with the kindness and assistance that they offer one another.¹⁵

From the comment of the Apostate to Le Jeune that in the sorcerer's tent his "body will remain below and thy soul will also mount on high," it is evident that the Montagnais in this relatively early period of European contact believed in what is called by modern occultists existence on a second plane, the astral plane, the plane of one's spirit or astrosome. In the process of transferring consciousness from the body to the second plane, the consciousness is felt to rise above the seemingly lifeless body below. An important aspect of this state of existence is the ability to have one's wishes fulfilled. One possesses an omnipotence of thought; what is commanded is done. On this level, one can meet other souls, of both the living and the dead, as well as other spirit forces in the universe, and even can gain possession of another person's body by

overcoming his astrosome. The fact that the juggler or conjurer acted as a medium through which a Khichikouai spoke also indicates that the Montagnais recognized the existence of the occultist's etheric double, an etheric counterpart of the physical body which appears as a light enveloping the body and communicates information and experiences from the astral body to the physical body. These concepts will later be discussed in detail.

The observations made by later writers directly on the Cree are not as penetrating or expansive as Le Jeune's. The close similarities between Cree and Montagnais beliefs and ceremonies are apparent. Claude Charles le Roy de La Potherie wrote in the last years of the 17th century that the natives he observed about Hudson Bay believed in a good and an evil spirit, the former called the Quichemanitou and the latter the Matchimanitou. The Quichemanitou was the origin of all the beneficial parts of life and nature. The Matchimanitou, the god of misfortune, was worshiped "more from fear than from love." The two represented the sun and the moon. Hence, when the Quichemanitou's aid was sought in times of individual or clan sufferings, the sun was addressed. The family heads congregated at the lodge of one of the chiefs. A calumet was lit by the chief and he held it up three times to the rising sun. Then with his two arms extended, he made a complete circle with the calumet, tracing the course of the sun. This was followed by "the most submissive, respectful prayer it is possible to imagine" by the chief in which he begged the sun "to be favourable to their enterprises, and recommending to him all their families." The calumet was smoked by the chief for a moment and then it was passed around to all those assembled. Each person smoked in turn until there was no longer any tobacco.

In this everyday "worship," the individual addressed his Manitou, represented sometimes by "the claw of a beaver, a bit of a caribou's hoof, or a small ermine skin." For the curing of afflictions such as diseases, he consulted a "magician." La Potherie described the magician's so-called tent-shaking ritual to cure disease, though in less detail than Le Jeune. A "circular lodge of poles, sunk deep in the ground and surrounded with the skins of caribou or other animals, with an opening at the top, large enough for a man to enter by" was erected. In the course of his ceremony, the magician worked himself into a frenzy by means of "songs, crying etc.," and having made contact with the Matchimanitou, asked him any questions he desired. The answer was received "when there is heard a rumbling as of a falling rock and all the poles of the tent are so violently shaken that one expects to be overturned."

A young man, in order to become a great hunter, painted his face black and abstained from both eating and drinking for three days, a sacrifice to the Great Spirit. He then selected "in every kind of deer some particular part such as the tongue or the snout which is sacred to him," the part being called the Quetchitagan, meaning "the piece reserved." No member of the family "will dare to touch it except the hunter himself and the strangers who come to see him" no matter how scarce the game was at the time. It was thought that eating a prohibited piece would result in death for the taboo breaker. In times of want, the natives, La Potherie observed, promised the Great Spirit that they would not eat the first animal killed until they could give a share to a chief. They sometimes had to wait several months before a chief could be found; if the animal had spoiled by then, they burned it as a sacrifice.¹⁶

T.S. Drage, who voyaged with Captain Francis Smith aboard the ship California in 1746 and 1747 to discover the

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North West passage, confirmed that the natives whom he observed had two spirits, the Manitou, the Good Spirit, and the Vitico, the Evil Spirit which brought misfortune. The jugglers pretended to have an intimacy with the Victico, and in their conjuring tent, attempted to reach him, though they admitted that they did not reach him every time. They pretended to work cures by charms.¹⁷

Andrew Graham's account of the natives of Hudson Bay and David Thompson's of the natives inland elaborate further upon the Cree's beliefs. Graham repeated that the Indians with whom he was acquainted believed that there was a Good Spirit, a Kitchimanitow, and an Evil Spirit, a Whittico. He added that the Kitchimanitow had a number of Pawkuskumucks, or servants, who fly with wings through the air. After death, the individual who had been good during his lifetime continued to live, hunt and associate with his family and friends in the afterlife; a man who had been bad, lived always in want of food, despised by all and he never saw his deceased family or friends. Graham also mentions that jugglers or conjurers were prominent among them, that they "are supposed to have intelligence with the Evil Spirit, and by that means can procure anything to be done for the good or injury of others, foretell events, pacify the malignant spirit when he plagues them with misfortunes, and recovers the sick." Graham mentioned the conjurer's tent-shaking ceremony, but his knowledge of the ceremony was evidently second-hand. He wrote:

Jugglers or conjurers are very numerous amongst them. These are generally men who are good hunters, and have a family; some of them are very clever at it. They are supposed to have intelligence with the Evil Spirit, and by that means can procure anything to be done for the good or injury of others, foretell events,

pacify the malignant spirit when he plagues them will (sic) misfortunes, and recover the sick. They have also several tricks of sleight hand; such as swallowing a string with a musket ball hanging to it; taking it directly out at the fundamental; pretending to blow one another down; swallowing bears' claws, and vomiting them up; extracting them from wounds, or the breast, mouth etc. of a sick person; firing off a gun and the ball to remain behind; and a thousand other pranks which make them be held in great esteem by the rest.

The conjurer is often employed by other Indians to enquire concerning any affair or to retrieve any misfortune that has befallen them; or avert such as threaten them. And sometimes, if it be a general concern, several of them join to satisfy the man for his services. On these occasions a round, narrow, high tent (named Shebastakekan) is erected by the conjurer, by sticking strong sticks into the earth at a distance from each other, and about eight feet high; the top open but the rest covered with skins, so that no person can see what is going on. At a distance from the ground a stage is erected by tying poles across. Upon this the magician mounts to perform his duty. He makes a great many frightful howling etc. and shakes the whole fabric with violence; and is all over reeking with sweat. This exercise continues several hours before his familiar condescends to dictate an answer; and when the conjurer comes out, he appears quite frantic, staring wildly

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with frightful gestures. During the process all the other natives sit round with the most profound silence. The performer is painted black, and as ugly as the infernal genius he invokes. All the fires are put out, and one of the aged men stands by with the greatest gravity to light a pipe, and introduce it under the skins when called for. The people in general are so extremely superstitious, that they will give anything they have to these conjurers in fear of their conjuring them or their relations to death. By this means the imposter often receives considerable presents.

There were also Tuckathin, or doctors, who had knowledge of plants and herbs and also of astrology.

Every married man possessed a Manitow, an ornamented bag in which he kept his amulets and medicines, such as beaver teeth, bear-claws, eagle talons etc. A young man received his Manitow bag on the occasion of his marriage from an older man. After every increase in his family, he added some article, and upon the death of a child, "a piece of wood is cut with features of a face engraven and painted on it." The bag was always carried by the man, never was touched by a women and was displayed only at conjuring feats and public meetings.¹⁸

David Thompson called the Cree's Good Spirit the Kee che Keeche Manito, the Great, Great Spirit. This spirit was always benevolent towards humans. Nevertheless, he left man to conduct his own life, and "placed all other living creatures under the care of Manitos (or inferior Angels) all of whom are responsible to Him." By Thompson's time, the beliefs in the Kee che Keeche Manito and "the guardians and guides of every genus of Birds and Beasts" had become "obscure and confused." Deference was still paid to the

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Manito of an animal killed. Upon the killing of an animal such as a bear, the head was cast into the water; it was believed that a Manito for whom this rite was not performed would in future drive away the animals from guilty hunter. Thompson called the Evil Spirit the Metchee Manito.

Thompson's account of the Cree's concept of an afterlife adds little to Andrew Graham's observations. Thompson remarked that the Crees believed that those who have been good went to rejoin their families and friends in a land where there were abundant animals to hunt and the sun always shone. Thompson noted that many of the men seemed to be "half infidels, but the women kept them in order; for they fear the Manito's."

Thompson was somewhat more informative than Graham upon the conjurer's tent-shaking ceremony, relating his experience at two he attended. Unfortunately, he was more interested in proving the conjurer to be a charlatan than in giving a detailed description of the entire ceremony. The Cree conjurer of Thompson's day, it should be noted, was tied at the commencement of his performance; Le Jeune's conjurer had not been.

...One of my best acquaintances, named "Isepesawan," was the most relied on by the Natives, to inquire into futurity by conjuring; he was a good hunter, fluent in speech, had a fine manly voice; and very early every morning took his rattle, and beating time with it, made a fluent speech of about twenty minutes to the Great Spirit and the Spirits of the forests, for health to all of them and success in hunting, and to give to his Poowoggin where to find the Deer, and to be always kind to them, and to give them straight Dreams, that they may live straight. The time chosen was a fine

afternoon, in the open season; "Isepesawan" was the actor. After taking the sweating bath; he had four long slender poles brought of about sixteen feet in length; these were fixed in the ground to form a square of full three feet: At five feet above the ground four cross pieces were tied firmly; and about full three feet above these, another four pieces were strongly tied across the upright poles; all this, at the bottom and top, with the sides closely covered with the dressed leather skins of Deer; leaving one side loose for a door. This being done, fine sinew line was brought; with this, the thumb was tied to the forefinger in two places, the fingers to each other in the same manner; both hands being then tied they were brought together palm to palm and tied together at the wrist; then the arms tied close above the elbows. The Legs were tied together close above the ankles, and above the knees; sometimes the toes are tied together in the same manner as the hands; a few yards of leather line are tied round his body and arms; a strong line is passed under the knees, and round the back of the neck, which draws the knees to a sitting posture. A large Moose leather skin, or a Bison Robe, is wrapped around him, and several yards of leather bind the Robe or leather skin close around him; in this helpless state two men lift and place him in the conjuring box in a sitting posture, with his rattle on his right side. All is now suspense, the Men, Women, and Children keep strict silence; In about fifteen or twenty

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minutes; the whole of the cords, wrapped together are thrown out, and instantly the Rattle and the Song are heard, the conjuring box violently shaken, as if the conjurer was actually possessed; sometimes the Song ceases, and a speech is heard of ambiguous predictions of what is to happen. In half an hours time, he appears exhausted, leaves the leather box and retires to his tent, the perspiration running down him, smokes his pipe, and goes to sleep.

Thompson, convinced that the conjurer was a fraud, once endeavoured to catch him in the act. As the conjurer was being tied, Thompson dared the natives to permit the five Scotsmen with him to do the tying, in order to make sure no slip knots were being used. They readily agreed and the conjurer was tied as tightly as possible by the Scotsmen and placed in the conjuring box. Within 15 minutes, Thompson and his men were startled to see all the cords "thrown out in a bundle, the Rattle, and the Song ~~was heard~~ in full force, and the conjuring box shaken, as if going to pieces." The natives were amused to see the white men's incredulity, and "at length they consoled themselves by saying, the Devil himself had untied him, and set him loose."¹⁹

It should be noted that in Graham's account the sorcerer or conjurer communicated with the Evil Spirit, in La Potherie's with the Matchimanitou, and in Drage's the Victoco, implying that the power received was evil. On the other hand, Le Jeune's juggler communicated with the Khichikouai, and Thompson's conjurer with the "Great Spirit and the Spirits of the forest." The Khichikouai were neutral powers, neither good nor evil, as were Thompson's "Spirits of the Forest." Were the powers consulted by the magician's neutral, evil or good? That supernatural power

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is above good and evil was a common belief among such Siberians as the Ob Ugrians and Enveks. Among them, good and bad refer only to the use of the power. In the struggle between shamans, to the shaman who uses the power, the power is good; the shaman against whom it is used regards it as being evil.²⁰ Of our informants upon the sorcerers of the Woodlands Indians we have mentioned, only Le Jeune and Thompson gave us a first-hand account of a sorcerer's shaking-tent. The others may have learned about the ceremony through informants and were either misled or misinterpreted what they had been told.

A feature prominent in Siberian clan society was a concept of a totem animal and the accompanying belief in the transmigration of souls. Before investigating the extent of these beliefs among the Indians, there will follow a cursory discussion of the traditions of the totem animal, transmigration of souls and the nature of human souls among the Siberians. These traditions were well preserved into the 20th century and have been lucidly described by highly competent Russian researchers. The Ob Ugrians of Siberia believed that there were four human souls. The "shadow-soul" was palpable to all, was attached to the person during his entire lifetime and followed and remained with him in his grave, living in the graveyard in a manner similar to living men. The second soul was the urt, the "soul that goes down (on the river)." Located from birth in the head of a man, it left him during his sleep, visiting various localities and other souls. It was greatly feared because of the belief that it carried away, after the death of its host's body, the souls of living people. If it left its living body and was unable to return, death resulted. This soul went to the afterworld after death. The third soul lived much of the time outside the living body and came to the person only during his sleep; otherwise, it dwelled

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in the woods. After death, this soul lived in the deceased's clothing, which was hung on a tree near the village or graveyard. It had a short period of existence after the death of the body. The fourth soul was the reincarnation soul, associated with the body's breath, and was believed to return to the world in a new clan member's body. It lived in the hair, and was usually symbolized by a bird. The desire to capture and retain this soul was probably the reason for the practice of scalping enemies, which still persisted in Siberia during the Middle Ages. The reincarnation soul remained with the body in the graveyard until the body was decomposed, a period believed to be about three or four years. Then it either was reincarnated or it finally died.²¹

The basic unit of Siberian society organization was the clan. Life existed in three separate worlds or existences. The totem tree represented in itself the three worlds, the branches symbolizing the one above, the trunk the world of nature and the roots, the netherworld. Below the tree flowed the clan river, running down from the world above through the middle world and emptying into the netherworld. In the upper world lived the totemic mother of the clan, symbolized by the totemic animal. It was capable of taking half-human, half-animal or fully human forms as well as the animal's form, and it nurtured the souls of the deceased clan members and eventually sent them to the middle kingdom. In the world below, the souls of the deceased dwelled on another level. On all three levels, life was lived in the same manner, in a clan.

The greatest power of the shaman was his ability to transcend the middle world, and cure an ill member of the clan. The Envek shaman did this by ascending above the corporeal body, with his consciousness transferred to his animal double, the Khargi. Having entered the other worlds

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with his accompanying friendly spirits, the shaman obtained knowledge about which spirit was being used by an enemy to possess the clansman's body and steal his soul. To accomplish this the shaman employed a ritual very similar to the Woodlands Indians' shaking-tent. The shaman's body was observed by the onlookers of the ceremony to lie lifeless in the tent while his Khargi was on its mission.²² Care was taken in all worlds to carefully protect the souls of the clan members from being stolen; the loss of the souls resulted in the destruction of the clan on the three levels. To prevent the theft, supernatural forces were placed to guard the entrances of the worlds.

Among the Netsilik Inuit, the sorcerer sought to control Nuliajuk, the mother of animals, the mistress of land and sea, the principal universal power, by his tunraqs or spirits, and sometimes descended himself to the underworld ocean, in the form of his spirit or soul, to cajole her or even fight with her.²³

It is much more difficult to investigate the Woodlands Indian's beliefs in souls, totems and reincarnation. The early European observers of the Woodlands Indians either ignored these aspects or found no trace of them. One exception was John Long who mentioned, in his reminiscences written at the end of the 18th century, an Indian acquaintance who killed his personal totam. According to Long, "they never kill, hunt, or eat the animal whose form they think this totam bears." The following is Long's account of the episode:

The evening previous to the departure of the band, one of them, whose totam was a bear, dreamed that if he would go to a piece of swampy ground, at the foot of a high mountain, about five days march from my wigwaum, he would see a large herd of elks, moose, and other

animals; but that he must be accompanied by at least ten good hunters. When he awoke he acquainted the band with his dream, and desired them to go with him: they all refused, saying it was out of their way, and that their hunting grounds were nearer. The Indian having a superstitious reverence for his dream (which ignorance, and the prevalence of example among the Savages, carries to a great height), thinking himself obliged to do so, as his companions had refused to go with him, went alone, and coming near the spot, saw the animals he dreamed of; he instantly fired, and killed a bear. Shocked by the transaction, and dreading the displeasure of the Master of Life, whom he conceived he had highly offended, he fell down, and lay senseless for some time: recovering from his state of insensibility, he got up, and was making the best of his way to my house, when he was met in the road by another large bear, who pulled him down, and scratched his face. The Indian relating this event at his return, added, in the simplicity of his nature, that the bear asked him what could induce him to kill his totam; to which he replied, that he did not know he was among the animals when he fired at the herd; that he was very sorry for the misfortune, and hoped he would have pity on him: that the bear suffered him to depart, told him to be more cautious in future, and acquaint all the Indians with the circumstance, that their totams might be safe, and the Master of Life not angry with them. As he entered my house, he looked at me very

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earnestly and pronounced these words; "Amik,
bunjey ta Kitchee Annascartissey nin, O Totam,
cawwicka nee wee geossay sannegat debwoye:" -

or, "Beaver, my faith is lost, my totam is
angry, I shall never be able to hunt any more."²⁴

Among the Ojibwa vestiges of totem clan relationships was still evident during Ruth Landes investigations in the 1930s.²⁵ F.G. Speck found among the natives of Timagami in the 1910s that the totem or Ndodem, meaning "my emblem," was "regarded as an emblem which designates the group, and of which the members are proud in the same way, according to the Indians, as the Americans are proud of the eagle or the British the lion." No descent from the animal was claimed, and there were no dietary taboos. Speck's elderly informants believed that the totem had originated because of the abundance of the animal in their region.

Animals, however, had significance in the lives of individual members of the clan. Each person received a Wi sa na name, denoting the animal which after his birth approached his lodge for the purpose of seeing him. The animal's coming might be delayed for as much as one year. The name of the animal was revered by the recipient. It was unrelated to the totem animal and seldom coincided with it. There was no taboo against killing the animal. The recipient of the Wi sa na name usually maintained it until he earned a nickname because of some personal achievement.²⁶

Did the Algonkin-speaking Woodlands Indians believe in the existence of more than one soul and transmigration? Frank G. Speck, who was fluent in the Naskapi dialect, in the 1920s studied the references to the soul by the Naskapi he observed, and found that there was more than one term employed. He writes that "Whatever we mean by the term 'soul,' its lexical equivalent in the language of these

nomads is atca'kw (diminutive). The same word designates one's shadow." Another term "is met in the term of 'mirror,' Wa p n'atcakwoma n, 'see-soul-metal'." Another was Mista peo, or "Great Man," and another Nictu'ti, meaning "intellect comprehension," was in "frequent use."

The word Mista peo, meaning Great Man, also described the soul in its "active state," guiding the individual through life and giving him the ability "of overcoming the spirits of animals in the life-long search for food." Located in the heart, the Mista peo survived the body. It manifested itself in dreams. By interpreting dreams and putting the interpretations to the test, the individual cultivated an understanding of his Mista peo, and the latter in turn gave him more dreams. In this sense, the "inner life" of the individual was dominated by "The process of self-study, of dream cultivation and submission to dream control." The Mista peo demanded that an individual should be attentive towards his dreams, be honest, not practice deception and be generous.

Speck evinced a concept of reincarnation among the Naskapi in the way they spoke about the Mista peo.

The Great Man resides in each individual and it comes to the spritual conception among primitive peoples again. It seems to be a frequent opinion, according to my notes, that the Great Man of the human embryo is the reincarnation of an ancestor who wills to renew its life-cycle in another generation. It's early development in the maternal abdomen is nourished and built up from the body of the mother, fed and stimulated by the semen of the father, since sexual intercourse is not tabooed during pregnancy. At birth the little body

contains its Great Man and is nourished externally.

That the soul-spirit may be transferred in some way, rather difficult to understand since the individual's life depends upon its possession, seems to be the case. Napani of Lake St. John, for instance, being now so old, claims that his nictu't (as he calls his Great Man) has deserted him - that it has gone over to someone else.

Speck continued that the soul-spirit often took the form of a spark of illumination. In the tales of the Naskapi, the soul-spirit of a sorcerer was spoken of as a "spark of light or a little flame from the mouth." While he was conjuring his soul-spirit was away and his body appeared to be lifeless.

During the winter the wi tigo, or cannibal, used his Great-Man to overcome the Great-Man of a weaker person, then killed and ate the body.²⁷

It is difficult to extrapolate from Speck's observations basic universal principals in the world-view of the Naskapis. The Naskapi did not possess a rigourously organized body of traditions and beliefs, canonized and taught from generation to generation by a priestly class. The Naskapi had long been in contact with the whites by the time Speck appeared among them in the 1920s. However, the fact that the Naspaki did have various names for the soul, and their vague concept of transmigration might indicate that the Algonkin-speaking Woodlands Indians possessed some religious beliefs at the time of their first contacts with the Europeans which were somewhat similar to those of the Siberians. Knud Rasmussen noticed during the Fifth Thule expedition in the early 1920s that the Netsilik Inuit possessed a strong belief in transmigration. He writes that

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"The giving of names is an affair of the greatest importance, for of course it is essential to find out what 'dead soul' it is that wants to reside in the body of a new-born person."²⁸ The Inuit were closer to the Siberians in their beliefs, having come to North America later than the Indians. It can be expected that there was once a firm tradition of transmigration among the Indians, at least in the remote past.

One Siberian tradition which endured among the Algonkin-speaking Indians, at least among the Blackfoot of the 18th century, was the belief that a soul resided in a person's hair. An elderly Piegan of about 75 to 80 years related to David Thompson that many years before, Piegan warriors assembled to celebrate a historic victory over the Snake Indians. The old chiefs were called upon to settle the vexing problem of who should be given the scalps of the fallen enemy, and the accompanying problem of who could send the souls in the scalps "to our relations which are in the other world to be their slaves." The old chiefs ruled that "no one could send the soul of an enemy to be a slave in the other world, except the warrior who actually killed him; the scalps you hold are trophies of the Battle, but they give you no right to the soul of an enemy from whom it is taken, he alone who kills an enemy has a right to the soul, and to give it to be a slave to whom he pleases."²⁹

The Indian tradition inherited by the Métis can be summarized in the following manner. The Woodlands Indian believed that an infant was born with an absence of innate knowledge and abilities, similar to the English philosopher John Locke's concept of the mind being a blank slate at birth. As the male infant grew to childhood and the child to manhood, it was only through his discovery and harnessing of his supernatural powers that his superiority over other rival males was achieved. The success of his

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hunt depended upon whether his rivals and enemies had successfully employed their magical powers, their manipulation of the supernatural spirits, which in themselves were neither good nor evil, to keep the animals from his path. Failure to propitiate the spirit of his newly killed animal in the correct way could also lead to starvation. To survive and prosper in the Canadian Shield, the knowledge and the use of spirits in every activity of life was necessary, as was the ability to avoid offending animal spirits.

The Woodlands Indian's repugnance to hard work, which few early European writers fail to derisively note and detail, was dictated by the nature of his environment. His most pressing need was to procure food in the barren Canadian Shield. Hard work alone would not feed himself and his family. A good degree of luck was required to kill sufficient moose, deer and other animals to survive from year to year. In the relatively well-wooded Canadian Shield, there was rarely any difficulty in obtaining enough wood for firewood and the construction of shelters. The laborious work of gathering the timber and raising the lodges could be left to the non-hunters, principally the women. A search of the Hudson's Bay Company archives would show that the English fur-traders venturing inland from Hudson Bay into the Woodlands rarely were concerned with constructing their posts and gathering their firewood; however, frequently they feared starvation, because their lives depended on the success of their autumn fishery. If the trader's fishery failed, it was not because of an absence of hard work. He would conclude that bad luck was responsible for the failure, or the site of his post was a bad choice, or that it was a bad season at a lake which in the past had been productive.

The Woodlands Indians, having lived for centuries in the Shield, had adapted to their precarious existence by trying to establish a communion with the nature that fed them. They believed that they could survive only when they were in tune with nature. They did not kill or destroy animals; they only took food. The spirit of the animal was indestructible. Work in the abstract sense was alien to them. It could not feed them, and hence was unremunerative. The Woodlands Indian's methods of adapting to nature produced a society in which the instinct of self-preservation was paramount and governed relationships between individuals and modes of conduct. One must earn the good will of the powerful and avoid as much as possible any display of anger. Hatred and fear lurked within, because of real or imagined injuries or slights suffered in the past. Feelings of hatred were strongly repressed. These feelings often came to the surface under the influence of liquor.

These patterns of behavior were still evident among the Woodlands Indians of the first half of the 20th century, although the Indians were no longer subjected to a precarious existence and were settled in permanent communities. In the 1930s, Diamond Jenness wrote about the Indians of Parry Island:

Every man suspects his neighbour of practicing the nefarious art to avenge some fancied grievance, and the older and more conservative the Indian, the more he is held in suspicion. Probably there is not a single adult on the island who has not been accused of sorcery at some time or other, and who has not himself suffered some misfortune which he attributes to some cause.³⁰

Ruth Landes, to illustrate the extent to which the Ojibwa she studied suspected each other's intentions,

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discussed a gifted Ojibwa woman runner, who having defeated all her competitors believed when she fell ill that her envious rivals were using sorcery against her.³¹ And Alfred Irving Hallowell, commenting on the Saulteaux he observed, wrote that "almost every Saulteaux believes that it is possible for another person to harm him by covert means. This idea is supported by the fact that some individuals have confessed to killing dozens of persons by sorcery." The individual anticipated "harm rather than good...from others."³²

From the Rorschach psychological tests he gave his Saulteaux study group, Hallowell concluded:

The most prominent feature in the great majority of records is the emphasis on strong restraint and control. From the Rorschach evidence alone one would be bound to infer that the Saulteaux were a people whose personal lives were organized within the ambit of formalized habit patterns and that very little of their emotional and imaginative life escapes these bonds. Another inference would be that behind the façade represented by this severe control is wariness and caution. There is meager evidence of spontaneous emotional expression or testing other people's emotional reactions realistically in face-to-face relations. The sort of social roles the individual conceptualizes are on the whole very passive - standing, sitting, looking, sometimes talking. However, almost half of the individuals tested (over half of the inland women), in spite of their introverted personalities and their lack of spontaneous emotional reactions, were sensitive, in some

cases hypersensitive, to outer emotional stimuli. Among the inland men who showed this sensitivity, only one showed a tendency to adjust to it and act upon it, but his protocol revealed that tension and fear restrained him. Not able to adjust in his extraversional way, neither has he been able to adopt in any great measure the general pattern of reactions, so so that he is a very maladjusted person. Of the two inland women with a tendency to act upon their extraversional tendencies, one rigidly controls her hypersensitivity, and the other, not quite so rigidly controlled, has anxiety that interferes with her adjustment. In the group at the mouth of the river (Berens River) there are many evidences in the Rorschach records that changes are taking place in the basic personality structure. Many more of those who show sensitivity to outer emotional stimuli are attempting to adjust in an extraversional manner under the pressure of contacts with white people and their culture. These men and women, while on the whole less rigidly controlled and restrained, all show anxieties coming to the surface. The women, however, appear to be much more successful in their attempts at social adjustment. On the other hand the two persons who have broken most completely away from the old pattern are also women. One is a girl who has gone wild, losing all restraint, and the other is a very egocentric, hot-tempered individual by any Indian standards, who, however, retains a large measure of control.

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The imaginative life also shows evidence of repression although this is less repressed than outward emotional reactions. Evidently, unless the individual feels strong enough through acquired magic powers, all fantasy is dangerous, more especially aggressive fantasy of which there is little evidence. Where aggression is mainly covert, hostile thoughts must be inhibited in the individual himself for fear of inviting the evil thoughts of others to attack him. The greater development, relatively speaking, of fantasy over social and emotional rapport exposes the individual to the development of convictions divorced from any testing of their objective reality. There is thus a danger that he will act upon some distorted idea of what another intends.

The typical Saulteaux character structure as revealed by the Rorschach is largely built upon the basis of defense mechanisms against anxieties. This is understandable in view of the great lack of other developed technics for mastering the economic and social environment. The best defense against all these threats is, as Mead has pointed out, a rigid self-discipline to stand alone and to acquire as much personal magic power as possible. For so rigidly patterned a personality it is not surprising that the missionaries found these Indians resistant to any change of beliefs. It is not stubbornness, nor obstinacy, but an incapacity for change in the habitual ways of thinking and feeling.³³

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The principal method of relieving tension among the Saulteaux, Hallowell discovered, was the telling of jokes. Myths and sacred stories usually had their humorous side, bringing roars of laughter as they were being narrated at gatherings of families and friends. There was also a good deal of teasing between cross-cousins of the opposite sex, and exchanges of bawdy jokes between them was not only socially permissible, but was actually socially demanded.³⁴

We can now proceed to recreate the world-view of the Woodlands Indian. To do so it would be convenient to first examine more organized forms of religions which are related to the religion of the Woodlands Indian. We shall first discuss the modern-day occultists, then the ancient Egyptians, the Siberians and finally the Woodlands Indians. The reason for pursuing this course will soon become apparent.

The modern occultist recognizes a three-fold division of the living human and his personality: the physical body, the etheric double and the astral body. Every particle of the physical body is perfectly duplicated in etheric form in the etheric double. The latter completely envelopes the body at a distance of one quarter of an inch and appears as a faintly luminous light of violet-grey or blue-grey. The etheric double absorbs vitality, the Hindu prâna, from the sun and passes it to the physical body, and it also serves as a bridge between the physical body and astral body. The sun emits prâna as well as light and heat. Prâna gives life to all planes of existence; it is a totality of the life-forces, the "breath of life." Prâna makes the physical body act as a unit, as one entity, rather than as a collection of units. It is responsible for the building of the bodies of men and animals. When physical and astral prâna are combined, sensations of pleasure and pain are

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created. The prâna is transmitted from the outer body, the etheric double, which does not possess the ability to experience sensations, to the physical body's nerve cells. However, the impulse to experience a sensation originates in the third entity, the astral body, and is transmitted to the etheric double and then to the physical body through force centres. The physical, etheric and astral bodies each having 10 corresponding force centers. Memories of astral experiences are communicated by the astral body's force centres to the consciousness of the physical body through the force centres of the etheric double. Poorly developed etheric double force centres result in an inability to remember astral experiences. The 10 force centres are located on all 3 bodies at the base of the spine, the navel, the spleen, the heart, the throat, between the eyebrows, at the top of the head, and 3 are in the lower organs. Each of the first 7 distribute different kinds of prâna, each kind having a different colour. The development of the force centre located at the top of the head enables an individual to leave the physical body through it in full consciousness and re-enter it without a break in consciousness. The excess prâna in the physical body can be dangerous to the body's health, and therefore is discharged through the force centres. These discharges create the aura which surrounds the body.

At birth, the astral body lies dormant until the power called kundalini, a power located at the base of the spine force centre in the astral body and originally emanating from the sun, awakens and spreads to the other force centres. The other levels, the physical and etheric double bodies, also possess kundalini at the base of the spine, and its awakening in the physical body can be dangerous, causing madness if it descends to the lower three force centres instead of ascending to the six higher ones.

The etheric double takes form before the physical body is created, and the physical body grows into it, a process which is completed when the foetus is ready for birth. At death the etheric double withdraws from the physical body and hovers above it; then the individual's ego experiences in rapid succession the events of his life. The astral body subsequently disentangles itself from the etheric double, the time required varying from individual to individual. The etheric double then becomes an etheric corps and remains near the physical corps. Both disintegrate together.

The powers possessed by healers and mediums are obtained from the etheric double and astral body as well as from the physical body. A healer heals by transferring the excess prâna which emerges from his force centres, or as it is sometimes called, the median ducts, to the ailing person. This force can also be used to mesmerize a person. The vital force which emerges from the practitioner's force centres penetrates a duct or ducts of the subject, and drives the latter's prâna back into or out of his duct or ducts. The subject, then lacking his own prâna in the duct, has no sensation in the region surrounding the force centre.

A medium is a human who has the ability to manipulate his or her's etheric double to create physical materializations. The etheric double of the medium is separated from her physical body at a spiritual séance, and a clairvoyant can perceive the etheric double hovering usually on the left side of the medium. This etheric double is usually responsible for the appearance of materialized spirits; they are molded from the medium's etheric matter into material forms by the thoughts, usually the unconscious thoughts, of the sitters. Sometimes the etheric material used is drawn from the etheric doubles of the sitters. For the astral bodies of dead people wishing to communicate with the physical bodies of the living the etheric matter

supplied by the medium opens the desired channel; the astral body of a dead person can reach a physical body only through the etheric double. In the process, the medium's etheric double must be detached from his or her's physical body, causing a great drain of physical energy which leaves the medium exhausted. Finally, the occultists maintain that the medium moves objects, such as making a table rise, by creating rods, which are invisible to the onlookers, from ectoplasm, matter which is principally if not totally etheric matter, and attaching the rods to the objects moved.

It is believed by modern occultists that an individual can develop an etheric sight by using his imagination. This sight permits him to see through physical matter; matter appears transparent. On both the etheric double and astral levels there is an omnipotence of thought, an obeying of the wish of the thinker. The nature of the omnipotence of thought differs somewhat between the two levels: while astral matter changes so quickly with the thought that the transition appears too abrupt to experience, etheric double matter changes more slowly, permitting one to view the changes as they progress. Objects can also be magnetized or filled with an individual's vital force (prâna). The more pure the personalities and the intentions of the individuals coming into contact with the object are, the more beneficial the object will be to the owner, who receives radiations from it. This likely is the origin of the veneration and use of amulets and holy relics.³⁵

Of the societies which retained the traditional religion into historical times, none has left such a wealth of recorded material relating to its religion as has the ancient Egyptian. The material prosperity of ancient Egypt permitted the emergence of a leisure class. The priestly class, which formed part of this class, had much time at its disposal to collect and organize the beliefs and traditions

of pre-dynastic times into an organized body of knowledge. The occultists maintain that their traditions emanated from the ancient Egyptians. There is reason to think that this is true at least in part, although it is important to emphasize that Egyptian ideas were not unique; the Egyptians, however, were unparalleled in their organization of their knowledge, and consequently their ideas persisted long after their empire disappeared.

The ancient Egyptians divided the human's personality into at least six entities: the khat, the physical body; the ka, the double; the sahu, the spirit-body; the khaibit, the shadow; the ba, the soul of the ka, the body-soul; and the khu, the spirit-soul. The ka was always drawn by the Egyptians to resemble the human body, but it was regarded as being distinct from it. The ka guided and watched over the body, and at death it remained or at least spent most of its time in the tomb with the body. As the ka no longer could inhabit the body after death, an idol or statue of the dead person was placed in the tomb, serving as a home for the ka. Water and food was given to the ka so it would not perish.

The ba seems to have lived with the ka. After death it was separated from the ka, and could visit it in the tomb, though it spent most of its time travelling through heaven, and in the case of a Pharaoh, in the boat of the sungod Ra or Amon-Ra as well as in heaven. Both the ba and the ka lived during the human's lifetime in the heart, the ab, the seat of the person's emotions, pleasures and intelligence.

In their pyramid texts, the Egyptians do not offer any philosophic explanation of the nature of their "souls." The significance of each "soul" was understood as one today would understand an axiom in Euclidean geometry. The Egyptians portrayed these "souls" in action, and the modern observer must construct the Egyptian's world-view from the events depicted.

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We can conclude that the ka was regarded by the Egyptian in the same manner as the occultist regarded his etheric double. The ka was similar in many respects to the etheric double. Ka means double. The ka separated at death from the body, but remained in the vicinity of the body. It was fed, indicating that it could extract on the etheric level some kind of vital energy from the food. It was the home of the ba, and at death separated from the ba. The ka seems to have been attached to the ba in a manner similar to the attachment of the etheric double to the astral body during a human's lifetime. The ba appears to be the counterpart of the occultist's astral body, roaming like the astral body in the afterlife. Both the ba and the astral body persisted after death, but neither was thought to possess immortality.

The Khu or Aakhu was conceived by the Egyptians to be an immortal soul. It departed, immediately after prayers were said over the dead body, to join in heaven the Khus of the gods - the gods were thought to have the same souls as humans. This indicates that the Egyptians had developed a belief in an aspect of the human personality beyond the three temporal bodies of man, the physical, etheric double and astral. The khaibit was a fourth temporal aspect of the living human. The body was believed to cast a shadow in the temporal world and this shadow survived in the afterworld, though it was not immortal. The Sahu, the spirit-body, was bestowed upon the dead Egyptian by the gods; it was incorruptible and immutable.

Another feature of the ancient Egyptian's religion which is relevant to this study was the worship of Ra or Amon-Ra, who symbolized the sun's course through the heavens. Each important phase of the sun (Ra) was represented by a god; each god was but an aspect of Ra. The rising sun was Khepera and the setting sun Tem. After

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observations we have discussed, Frank G. Speck, studied his subjects' names for their "souls." Hence, we are limited in our efforts to only the Naskapi. One Naskapi word for soul was atca'kw, meaning "one's shadow." This may be the equivalent of the Egyptian's khaibit, or shadow. w p n'atcakwoma n means "mirror," perhaps the equivalent of the double, the ka. A third term is mista peo, or "Great Man," perhaps the Egyptian's ba. The nictu't seems to have been the reincarnation soul, the Egyptian's khu before it ceased to be a reincarnation soul.

The conjurer's tent-shaking ceremony shows us the Woodlands Indian's concepts of reality in action. Before we proceed into this subject, it should be emphasized that the Woodlands Indian was not a philosophic speculator; he did not have a leisure class to formulate and organize his religious beliefs. His world-view was expressed in his ceremonies rather than in his verbal communications. The khichikouai whom Le Jeune says the Montagnais sorcerer or juggler consulted can be considered from the occultist's view to be entities on the astral level. The juggler was heard to talk in a disguised voice and the Montagnais maintained that the khichikouai were speaking through the juggler. The occultist's counterpart to the juggler would be the medium, who uses, the occultist maintains, his or her's etheric double to give an astral entity the ability to reach and converse with physical bodies. Le Jeune noted that some of the natives attending the tent-shaking ceremony "imagined that this juggler was not inside, that he had been carried away, without knowing where or how. Others said that his body was lying on the ground, and that his soul was up above the tent, where it spoke at first, calling these Genii, and throwing from time to time sparks of fire." Here we see that the Montagnais attributed to the juggler not only the ability to provide the khichikouai with its means

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setting, Ra went into the underworld, and rose again the next morning refreshed and resurrected. This tradition was presented in the creation myth. Ra was the self-created creator, born in the primaeval waters of Nun, to which he returned each night and from which he was reborn each morning. Ra was the personification of the occultist's prâna, the vital force, which gave life to the three levels of the living human's personality, the physical body (khat) the ka and the ba. The Egyptian religion did not retain the belief in transmigration characteristic of the less developed societies based on clan organization; instead of transmigration, the Egyptians believed in resurrection.³⁶

The Egyptians were not alone on the continent of Africa in attributing to the human personality more than one aspect. For example, at the turn of the 20th century, the Tshi-speaking peoples of West Africa called their double the kra, the Ewe-speaking people the kla, the Bantu people the manu and Ba-thana, the doshi. The belief in more than one aspect seems to have been characteristic of the traditional, clan-based societies.³⁷

Before we endeavour to recreate the Woodlands Indian's world-view, it would be helpful first to turn to the Siberians, whose traditions and world view have been systematically presented by Russian ethnologists. From the observations of V.N. Chernetsov on the Ob Ugrians, we can conclude that the latter people had at least two of the "souls" of the occultists and ancient Egyptians: the "Shadow-soul" was the etheric double or ka, and the urt was the astral body or ba. The Ob-Ugrian's reincarnation soul was the Egyptian's khu, the immortal soul. The Envek's khargi was certainly the Egyptian's ba.

It is more difficult to recreate the Woodlands Indian's concepts of the human personality. Only one observer whose

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to communicate on the temporal level, but also the ability to reach himself the astral level. The shaking of the tent would be explained by the occultist as indicating that the juggler could create rods from his etheric matter and attach them to the tent.

Another feature of the Indian religion which European observers often mentioned was the prominent role the sun played in the Indian's rituals and prayers. For example La Potherie related that in times of want the sun was addressed by lighting a calumet, holding it up to the rising sun and then completing a circle with it, tracing the course of the sun. It is evident that the course of the sun was as important as the sun itself, as was the case among the ancient Egyptians. Though the Woodlands Indian does not seem to have formulated a theory of the emanation from the sun of a vital force or prâna which was responsible for engendering and maintaining life, he nevertheless appears to have accepted on a non-verbal level the existence of this energy.

Before concluding this attempt to recreate the Woodlands Indian's world-view, we must mention the Indian's practice of sending a male at puberty into the wilderness without food to experience a communion with his guiding spirits.³⁸ The ability of the individual to cultivate his etheric double and if possible to reach the astral entities was of paramount importance.

b. The Historical Development of the Christian World-view
The Woodlands Indians experienced serious difficulties in adapting to European culture and thought well into the 20th century. Why were these difficulties present? To understand the underlying reasons, we must examine the reaction of the Christian missionaries to the Indian's

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religion and world-view, and the basic differences between the Indian and the European in their beliefs and traditions.

From the earliest contact period of the Europeans with the natives of North America, the Roman Catholic missionaries regarded the art of the sorcerer, magician or juggler as the Devil's work. This contact with sorcery was certainly not the first such experience of the Roman Catholic Church. For much of its history, the Church had combatted recurring outbreaks of the religious traditions it had attempted to suppress. The Neo-Platonists and Gnostics did not disappear following the consolidation of Christianity in the Roman Empire during the 4th Century and afterward.

Before the Jews set down in writing, in the first millenium B.C., their oral traditions about creation, the concept of a purely material, inanimate nature created by a God in historical time, a universe which was independent of God's body and essence, was absent from the religions of Europe and the Near East. The Old Testament was subsequently included in the Christian religion, giving the religion a sense of continuity, with Jesus Christ's teachings about the salvation of the soul climaxing God's appearances to man during the ages. The salvation of the soul was the crux of the new religion, and salvation was attained by the individual through his good conduct and good works during his lifetime and through the grace of God. Christianity evolved as a religion of belief rather than of transcendental experience. Nature worked along orderly lines unless God graced an individual with the ability to perform a miracle. God or the Virgin Mary might reveal themselves to mankind, as the latter was said to have done in 1917 at Fatima, Portugal. The Christian tradition also included St. Augustine's doctrine that the empires and civilizations of the world were evolving toward the creation

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of a new kingdom of the righteous on earth. Thus within the religion there developed a concept of a linear world history. The emphasis was upon the material world, the world of the five senses.

As has been seen, the ancient Egyptians attributed to their gods the same division of personality as they did to humans. A god had a physical body (khat), a double (ka) and an astral body (ba). This tradition was continued in Christianity, the triple division being represented by God the body, Jesus Christ, the Messiah; the Holy Spirit; and God the Father. Nevertheless, the Christians did not retain the triple division of the human personality. Only the physical body was recognized. An immortal soul resided and was indeed trapped in the body, from which it was liberated only at death, and its fate was then decided by God. Transcendental experiences were usually explained as delusions caused by the Devil.

The Neo-Platonists and Gnostics retained the ancient Egyptian's basic beliefs and indeed began in western civilization a new doctrine, that the material world was an illusion. These ideas were inherited by the Muslim Sufi.³⁹ In the Indian sub-continent this doctrine had been formulated long before the emergence of the Christian religion. The Hindus and Buddhists believed and still believe that the material world results from the self-deception of the god Vishnu.⁴⁰ Concomittant with the rise and consolidation of Christianity was the emergence in Europe and western Asia of a new competing philosophy, of liberation from the material world. A short digression will be made here to show this third type of religion, the religion of liberation. The religions of salvation (Christianity and Islam) and liberation (Hindu and Buddhists and Muslim Sufi) in the last two millennia have been

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actively proselytizing among the peoples who still retained the traditional religion.

c. The Religions of Liberation. Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi According to the teachings of Buddha, it is a privilege to be born as a human because it gives one the opportunity to attain liberation through one's own efforts, through the application of one's consciousness, after eons of wandering through past reincarnations in the lower species of animals. The Hindus and Buddhists believe that a man can attain true liberation only when he recognizes the bondages of samsara or sangsara, the world of birth and death and rebirth and second death, the world of his wanderings; the bondages of his karma, his moral actions which cause future retribution and either good or evil transmigration; and his present existence in maya, the phenomenal universe which is a magical or illusory show, symbolized by the dance of shiva. The first step in this realization is to recognize that a reality besides the body and material universe exists, and that experience is possible beyond one's body. Once this is accepted there begins the ascent towards the true liberation or nirvana, where-it is not a state-there is a reconciliation of the contradiction of opposites, e.g., where such contradictory concepts as good and bad, being and non-being, have no relevance. Then there is the complete extinction of the individual's personality and experience and a termination of his rebirths.

The aspirant's first step is to rise above his body and enter the astral plane. On this level he possesses an omnipotence of thought; what he commands is done. If he wishes to journey to the other side of the world he need only think of doing so and it is done. He can pass through solid objects. This level, haunted by good and evil

spirits, is considered to be as unreal as the manifestations of the first level. It must be faced without fear if the aspirant desires to ascend. Recognizing this, the individual forsakes the manifestations and allurements of the astral plane and again ascends. On the next level he discovers that his consciousness is focused in a point of light. Dimensions and concepts of time are absent here, and there is a recognition that the macrocosm - the universe - and the microcosm - the individual's ego or self - are one. This is the reconciliation of a fundamental contradiction of opposites. But liberation is still distant. The individual's ego or personality still persists and screens the truth from him. The annihilation - "irrelevance" perhaps is a better term - of the ego, accomplished through the reconciliation of the opposites subject and object, is necessary before liberation is possible.

There is some disagreement upon the nature of the final step. For the Hindus and Buddhists, the concept of a supreme God is merely a voidness. Two basic schools exist, the monists and dualists. The monists believe that when one recognizes that maya, the phenomenal world, is but a manifestation of one's self and that one desires to extinguish the self, liberation can be attained. The dualists maintain that one must first see that "all that I have ever seen has been I," and that only by recognizing something other than the self, the existence of the voidness, can liberation be achieved in one's lifetime.

Liberation is also possible after the person's death, in the manner related in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which was designed as a guide for not only the dying and the dead, but also the living. In the state following death, one must decide between returning to the material world in a new body, to be reincarnated, or to shun maya and seek an end to this world of contradictions, pain and suffering. Upon

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death, the clear light of the Great Liberation appears to the soul or consciousness of the deceased. Recognition that "Thine own consciousness, not formed into anything, in reality void, and the intellect, shining and blissful, these two, - are inseparable," and that "The union of them is the Dharma-Kaya state of Perfect EnLightenment," is sufficient to permit one to enter into a state of Buddhahood. If this clear light is not recognized, a secondary light or Bardo, appears shortly thereafter. If it is not recognized, a third light, the Chönyid Bardo, appears. In this third stage, the dead person's consciousness begins to experience karmic illusions. He can see his weeping relatives and friends. Various sounds, lights and rays are also experienced, creating in the consciousness awe, fright and fatigue. sangsara, or phenomena, is now experienced, though in a different way than in pre-death life. Before the end of the first day two lights appear, the dazzling blue light of the Liberation and a dull white light. The dead man's bad or evil karma makes the blue light a terrifying sight and instills a desire to flee from it. If the consciousness flees or is overcome by its sangsara, illusions caused by bad karma, on the second day a white light bright and radiant appears, and a dull, smoke-coloured light from Hell alongside it. Bad karma now generates anger, which in turn produces fear and the urge to flee from the white light and the feeling of fondness for the dull yellow light. On the third day a dazzling yellow light appears and a dull bluish-yellow light from the human world. Bad karma generates egotism which generates a fear of the yellow light. On the following days the pattern is much the same unless these emotions can be overcome. On the fourth day, a dazzling red and a dull red appear; on the fifth, a dazzling green and a dull green; on the sixth, four lights of "the Four Wisdoms United," and six dull lights; on the seventh,

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five coloured lights, and a dull blue light. During this time, the evil karma is pulling the consciousness down to sangsara. During days eight to fourteen the wrathful deities of various natures, illusions created by the workings of evil karma upon the consciousness, emerge creating terror for the consciousness which fails to realize that the deities are products of the intellect. Recognizing this can still bring liberation. If one is now overcome by the guilt, fear, desire and anger generated by the evil karma, one now prepares to continue the reincarnation cycle. Open womb doors appear, and if the consciousness does not consciousness does not realize that the wombs are illusions produced by evil karma, rebirth begins. The consciousness is given a choice of wombs, but the choice is determined by the extent of the evil karma; the more evil the karma, the more the good wombs will appear to be bad and vice versa. The consciousness directed by strongly evil karma will "be liable to take refuge amongst brutes." During the period between death and reincarnation, the consciousness can hear and see its relatives and friends, who by reciting various holy phrases, can direct it towards attaining liberation or at least toward avoiding bad wombs.⁴¹

The stages of descent enumerated in The Tibetan Book of the Dead correspond in reverse order to the stages of ascent by meditator. Fear, guilt and the desire for the phenomenal world, which ultimately lead to bad acts which in turn enhances guilt and increases attachment to the material world, are responsible for the descent into a body. For the mediator, these emotions hamper the ascent; and when they are strong, they prevent the individual from acknowledging the existence of levels above the body. Knowledge acquired during one's lifetime about the various levels of ascent helps in the period after death. There is a tradition that some people who have attained liberation during their

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lifetime choose to descend after their deaths into new bodies in order to help others attain liberation, and they select the appropriate bodies to accomplish this objective: they choose bodies of those destined to become Gurus and Yogis. The crux of the Hindu and Buddhist beliefs is that so long as one desires a body one shall have one; the desire to have a body produces guilt and fear and when these emotions become strongly established in the individual they lead to bad acts, evil karma, which in turn magnify these emotions and make the liberation more difficult. The greater the evil karma, the greater the fear experienced in choosing a body; and the poorer the body selected, the less chance there is of accomplishing the liberation. Hence, he who selects the body of a brutish animal loses sight of the goal of liberation and condemns himself to endless rebirths into an illusory world. Man can seek no help from a God. Only his emotions bind him to the sensory world. He need do no more than abandon his emotions to achieve liberation.

The adherents of the Sufi sect, like the Hindus, are divided into monists and dualists. The monists believe that in the process of ascension one will recognize the phenomenal world as being manifestations of oneself, and in desiring to eliminate one's personality, one will reach liberation. The Sufis dualists' beliefs differ from their Hindu counterparts. The Sufis, being a sect of the monotheistic Muslim religion, believe that one can eliminate one's "I-ness" or ego, but it is only through God's love that one's second or transcendent self, called by the Hindus the atman, can be eliminated.⁴² One famous Sufi, Abu Yazid al-Bistami, is said to have reached a state in which he abided with God, uniting with God's personality and yet not losing his own consciousness. God showed him his universe for 90 thousand years, but at the end he saw that he had reached only "the starting-off point of the

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prophets," and then he "realized that the journey's end of the saints is (only) the starting-point of the prophets," and "to the final stage of the prophets there is no end." Finally, he reached the tent of the prophet Muhammad and saw "there a hundred thousand seas of fire without end and a thousand veils of light." Afraid of the destruction of his ego, he dared not approach. He failed to reach Muhammad because while he "saw God," he "had not the strength to see Abu Yazid." Realizing his self-deception, Abu Yazid said "'O my God, all that I have ever seen has all been I.'" When he asked God what he should do, he was commanded: "'If thou wouldst be delivered from thine own selfhood, thou must follow in the footsteps of our friend, Muhammad, the Arab.'"43 The implication here is that though man may ascend to God, only God can grant salvation, or in the Hindu sense, liberation.

d. Investigation of Experiences Beyond the Body

Can we dismiss the experience of rising above the body as being a mere illusion or fantasy? Scientists since the 1950s have examined this phenomenon. Before discussing their findings it should be noted that the science of today does not presume to enter into the subjective experiences of an individual. The scientist limits his experiments to investigating the objective manifestations associated with the subjective state: in the investigations of an out of the body phenomenon, he records, while the subject is undergoing his experience, the changes in his brain wave patterns on an Electroencephalogram. The normal waves in the waking state are Beta waves, and in the sleeping state Delta waves, the latter having a lower frequency than the former. There is another wave pattern which occurs upon the onset of sleep but does not form part of the EEG stages of sleep, the Alpha

waves. Dr. Ernest L. Hartmann writes that "The waking EEG is characterized by alpha waves (8-12 cycles per second) and low-voltage activity of mixed frequency. As a subject falls asleep, his alpha rhythm often disappears and reappears a few times and then is gradually lost."⁴⁴ Akira Kasamatsu and Tomio Hirai reported in 1966 that the EEGs of a typical Zen master - a priest with more than 20 years meditating experience - was as follows:

After Zen meditation has started, the well organized alpha waves of 40-50 uV, 11-12/sec. appear within 50 seconds in all the regions and continue for several minutes in spite of opened eyes. After 8 minutes and 20 seconds, the amplitude of alpha waves reaches to 60-70 uV predominantly in the frontal and the central regions. Initially, these alpha waves alternate with the short runs of activating pattern, but a fairly stable period of the persistent alpha waves ensues during the progress of Zen meditation. After 27 minutes and 10 seconds, rhythmical waves of 7-8/sec. appear for 1 or 2 seconds. And 20 seconds later rhythmical theta trains (6-7/sec., 70-100 uV) begin to appear. However, it does not always occur. After the end of Zen meditation alpha waves are seen continuously and 2 minutes later alpha waves still persist. It seems to be the after-effect of Zen meditation.⁴⁵

Two other categories of meditators were observed, Zen priests who had practiced meditation for periods of 5 or fewer years, and from 5 to 20 years. It was found that "the degree of EEG changes during Zen meditation are parallel with the disciples' proficiency in Zen training." Both this study and another performed by B.K. Anand, G.S. Chhina and

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Baldev Singh on Yogis, reported in 1961, concluded that the alpha wave activity could not be blocked by various sensory stimuli during the period of meditation. And the latter study reported that two Yogis who could keep their hands in ice water for 45 to 55 minutes "also showed persistent alpha activity both before and during this practice."⁴⁶

The above experiments cannot prove the existence of a state beyond the physical body; they can only show that changes in brain waves occurred while the subjects were meditating. The longer the subject had practiced meditation, the greater were the alterations of his brain waves. The constant practicing of meditation for long periods may also cause permanent changes in the brain's wave patterns.

The ability to experience out of the body sensations probably can be acquired by most people, employing the proper techniques of meditation and with training. These altered states of consciousness can also be experienced by a very small minority of people without practicing or knowing these techniques. As has been seen, the alpha waves associated with the altered state of consciousness occur at the onset of sleep. Hunger and fatigue facilitate the process and have been widely used by mystics in the past. In a hunting society in a region as barren as the Canadian Shield, the out of the body experience would have been far more common than in a modern urban society. The hungry hunter of the Woodlands, fatigued from pursuing some animal, would pause to rest for a short time. As he rested, the sleeping stage would approach. If he did not immediately pass from the waking to the sleeping state, he would experience an altered state of consciousness. Another important element in Woodlands society which made the individual more appreciative and conducive towards this experience was the attitude towards time. Time in our sense

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did not exist in the Woodlands hunting society, where there were no clocks and no calendars. The Woodlands native may have been aware of the changing of the seasons, but these were only events marking his lifetime. Age was not thought of in terms of time units, i.e. years, but was considered as a matter of states: a man was either a child, a youth, an adult or an old man. A hunter on his hunting excursion possessed a dimension of time related only to his objective.

He might wait for hours for the event to happen, the opportune moment to capture his quarry. The event took place when all the conditions came together - the time when, the hunter would say, the animal chose to "give" itself to be "taken." A characteristic of the altered state of consciousness is the absence, in the experience, of both time and space.

Males at puberty were sent out without food into the wilderness to experience an altered state of consciousness or a less ambitious form of communication with a Manitou through a dream or vision. Nevertheless, the ability to transcend the body, even under the most favourable conditions, was bestowed on so few persons, that the juggler or sorcerer who was thought to have this ability was indeed an honoured, envied and feared man. It was perhaps the Woodlands native's supreme accomplishment. Not every sorcerer experienced the altered state of consciousness; however, the charlatan, if his public performance was elaborate enough, could have duped the credulous. In so doing, he acquired the most sought after power. Some who claimed to be sorcerers were poor hunters who craved prestige, and stooped to this means of deceit.

In the final analysis we must recognize that the question as to whether the altered state of consciousness or out of the body experience is real or is merely an illusion of phantasy can be answered only from the perspective of the

society which is concerned with it. For example, The Tibetan Book of the Dead concludes that maya, which includes the astral state, will continue so long as there is a desire for the material world, which in sequence produces guilt, desire and bad acts, which in turn reinforce desire. For the natives of the Woodlands it was real and shaped lives and culture. The sorcerers of the Woodlands gained their powers from the fears and desires for the material world of the individuals within their bands. It was the victim's belief in the astral level which sealed his fate. The fears that one's enemies could also reach and use the powers of the astral level spawned a culture in which the individual was obsessed with the idea of survival in the material world and suspected everyone of being hostile towards him.

In modern western society the out of the body phenomenon is generally regarded as being an hallucination rather than a reality. The phenomenon has no relevance in a society whose culture is concerned with only the material world and whose religion promises the reward of a heaven for those people who are good during their lifetime. Nevertheless, the European peoples in the remote past did share with the other peoples of the world the belief in the astral level of existence, with its magical powers. These beliefs seem to be deep-rooted in man's psyche and ever require some form of outlet. Western urban man finds his release in his mental illnesses. Similar patterns of behaviour to the magical world of the sorcerer and shaman are observed in serious forms of obsessive compulsive neuroses and psychoses. Sigmund Freud discovered that the belief in the omnipotence of thought, which was characteristic of more "primitive" societies, was also present in the psyches of the patients he treated. When the patient could no longer control his ambivalent feelings - he hated the one he loved or should have loved - and the guilt

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associated with these feelings, he began unconsciously to fear his ability to kill with his omnipotence of thought and be killed by other people whom he imagined to have this power. In the obsessive compulsive neurotic, magical rituals, called habits, are performed to prevent the object of his ambivalent feelings from becoming ill. During the process of psychoanalysis, he is forced to come face to face with the event which generated his behaviour, an event which is rooted in his relationship with his parent or parents during childhood and was repressed from his memory. Freud and others found that at the moment the patient relived the repressed experience there was a cathexis or a release of the energy which had long been used to repress the memory. Usually the patient was able to reconcile his ambivalent feelings towards the parent.

The nature of this event or experience in childhood was the same from patient to patient. And the event had no less a colouring of fantasy than one would find in the world of the sorcerer or shaman. Nor could it really be determined by the psychoanalyst whether the patient was reliving a past traumatic experience or reliving a fantasy that all children create and are haunted by long after they have ceased to be children. This common fantasy would be the creation of what C.G. Jung called the collective unconscious. All societies have learned to deal with the elements which make up the human personality: the presence of ambivalent emotions, fear, guilt and the belief in the omnipotence of thought. Western society treats all departures from a mythical norm of mental health as being psychological aberrations to be treated by a psychiatrist; the traditional society such as the Woodlands Indians regards what the psychiatrist considers to be a psychological aberration as its norm and survives in an apparent state of paranoia; and the Hindu and Buddhist warn that human misery is caused by man's

ambivalent emotions, the contradiction of opposites which perpetuates the cycle of birth and rebirth and stands in the way of true liberation. These are three different world views treating the same problem.

e. Contact of European and Indian World-views

For the last two millennia, the two evolving new forms of religion, the Christian's and orthodox Muslim's one level of material existence and the Buddhist's, Hindu's and Muslim Sufi's more than two levels of material existence, have been engaged in proselytizing among the peoples who still retained the traditional religion. The discovery, conquest and settlement of the New World fell to the Christians. It is possible to speculate what would have happened if the discoverers and colonizers of the New World had been followers of the rival more than two levels religions. There certainly would have been a less abrupt and dramatic change in the Indian's religion and world-view. For example, in the first millennium A.D. the religion of Tibet absorbed Buddhist thought and practice and evolved in its unique way.

Despite the fact that the European Christian and the North American Indian differed in their attitudes towards nature, beliefs and modes of experience, both had somewhat similar concepts of a Supreme God or Great Spirit, of good and evil actions and of rewards for being and doing good. These common beliefs helped the Indian in his transition from his traditional to the Christian religion.

The Roman Catholic Church's missionaries held that the sorcerer's, magician's, or juggler's art was the work of the Devil and had to be expunged. Nor would they tolerate beliefs in individual Manitous. Thus they denied that a second level of existence was within the knowledge and grasp

of determined men. And this denial demanded that the Indian should abandon his desire to control nature.

The Europeans, having long since given up their traditional religion, could not be affected by the Indian sorcerer's powers. Their traditions were now so different from the Indians' that they could not understand the nature of his powers. Only when there was belief and fear, as there was within Indian society, could the sorcerer claim his victim.

Nevertheless, from the Indian sorcerer's point of view, the Europeans were also engaged in the practice in sorcery. Illness was used as a weapon by a sorcerer and the diseases spread by the whites, such as smallpox and measles, were regarded as a particular form of sorcery practiced by the whites. The terrible effects of these diseases demonstrated at least as effectively as guns and cannons the whites' great powers, and were instrumental in breaking the Indian's morale. The sorcerer was powerless against the infectious diseases.

From the Indian's world view, the European's powers were derived from his knowledge and use of his supernatural spirits. As the Europeans were Christians, their supernatural powers, which were palpably more powerful than the Indians', were the products of Christianity. An Indian sorcerer would probably have found much in common with the Roman Emperor Julian's ill-fated struggle against Christianity. In the latter part of the 4th century, Julian, in order to restore the gods who had flourished during the Roman Empire's gold and silver ages, is said to have performed a ritual evocation of the spirits of those gods. Before him paraded a sickly and emaciated legion of gods. Julian still would not yield to the inevitable conquest of Christianity. He marched to the east to subdue and enlist against the Christian religion the still vigorous

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spirit of the Zoroastrian religion. Trusting in his guiding spirits, he foolishly exposed himself to the enemy and was mortally wounded. His last words were "Thou hast conquered, Christ of Galilea."⁴⁷ His death removed the last obstacle to the consolidation of Christianity within the Roman Empire.

The Indians of the west, unable to drive the whites physically from their lands, had hopes similar to those of the Emperor Julian, hopes that the Indian's world would survive and in the future would even flourish as never before. The Ghost Dance Religion is perhaps the best known of the Indian Revivalist Religions. Its originator was the Paiute Wovoka. A short time before he began his preaching mission, Wovoka suffered from a severe fever. During his sickness, an eclipse occurred, a dreaded occurrence for the Paiute, who believed that the world was being swallowed by a monster and the result would be a world of eternal night. Wovoka fell asleep during the eclipse and saw himself entering another world, where people who had long since died lived their old lives, all happy and young, in a land filled with game. He was told by God that all people must love each other and the Indian must live in peace with his white neighbour. Those who followed this path would again see their friends in the other world, where sickness, old age and death did not exist. God gave him a dance, which if performed on earth, would hasten the event.⁴⁸

This doctrine spread to the various tribes in the western United States, and was interpreted in various ways. Some Indian religious leaders, being influenced by Christianity, regarded Wovoka as a Messiah. According to James Mooney, an ethnologist who personally investigated the doctrine of the Ghost Dance among the Plains tribes, there was a general belief that the Indians would be regenerated in a new world, and the whites "being alien and secondary

and hardly real, had no part in this scheme of aboriginal regeneration, and will be left behind with the other things of earth that have served their temporary purpose, or else will cease entirely to exist."⁴⁹

While the white's world-view and religious beliefs did not have a serious impact upon the culture of the Indian of the west until the second half of the 19th century, the Métis, being heir to both the European and Indian traditions, was required to reconcile the two traditions from his birth. The separate Métis identity which emerged at the turn of the 19th century showed a precarious balance between the two; they co-existed uncomfortably side by side.

The cultural conflicts continued into the 1880s, when Louis Riel appeared among the South Saskatchewan Métis with a religious as well as a political mission. As shall be seen in a later chapter, Riel was a devoutly religious Roman Catholic who at the same time was rebelling against some of the principal beliefs of the church and against the Pope himself. And though a Roman Catholic, he manifested some of the characteristics of an Indian sorcerer. It is not a coincidence that Riel succeeded in winning the South Saskatchewan Métis' allegiance to his religious as well as his political mission. Riel's mental state has been the subject of much debate, and a modern observer would be tempted to dismiss Riel as being psychotic. Nevertheless, Riel was not a 20th century white, and if we judge him from our present perspective and by our present standards we would be doing him an injustice. Riel manifested ambivalent emotions. The Métis inherited, however, two largely conflicting cultures, so ambivalence is to be expected in the makeup of the Métis' personality.

e. The French-Canadian and British Legacy of the Métis

The male forebear of the Métis was the French Canadian fur-trader, and of the Métis' English-speaking counterpart, the country-born, the English, Scottish and Orkney trader. The French Canadian adapted to the ways of the Indians, learned their customs and language and often adopted Indian dress. Edward Jarvis of Albany found on a visit in 1776 to two posts at Michipicoten on Lake Superior, one of which was owned by Alexander Henry the Elder, that most of the French Canadians were dressed "as Indians, as to whose manners they conform." The Indians were given the freedom of the one-building post, and after drinking bouts they were permitted to sleep the night in a section of the structure, a "kind of an outer room where there were beds for two men."⁵⁰

The French Canadian was esteemed by his employer for his physical stamina as a voyageur and his ability to undergo privations when provisions were short. Germain Maugenest, a trader engaged by the Hudson's Bay Company to found trading posts inland from Albany, complained that the Orkneymen whom he had been assigned could "not live the same as Canadians on fish always;" the Canadians were accustomed to hard labour "from their infancy."⁵¹ But the French Canadian was not an easily amenable person. While the Orkeyman was considered to be unusually slow in his movements, he was loyal and obedient to his employers and steady and persistent in completing his tasks. He did so with an eye toward his future advancement and enrichment. The French Canadian looked forward to his freedom on the prairies. After completing his voyage, he often mixed freely with the Indians, attracted by their apparent lack of concern about the future and their love of the buffalo hunt, feasts and amusements. Like the Indian, he was fond of boasting of his exploits and his horses and dogs. This love of freedom and lack of concern for the future may have been

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a weakness in his character, but it was a source of strength for men who were constantly facing difficulties and dangers.

When the Hudson's Bay Company first began to expand inland, it engaged several French Canadians. But it soon came to the conclusion that they were too undependable and intractable to be of service. They were hired subsequently only when sufficient men could not be obtained in the Orkneys. The Company found that its European servants were unwilling to be commanded by them, and Canadians set bad examples and at times corrupted the morals of the newly recruited Europeans. In the early 1810s, some Canadians were engaged to train Irish recruits for the newly created East Winnipeg district of the Northern Department. The Irishmen quickly picked up their bad habits and the program was immediately discontinued. It should be noted that while the French Canadian resided in his homeland on the other side of the continent, the Roman Catholic Church had much influence upon his conduct; but in the west the church's influence was absent, and he gravitated toward the Indian's way of life. The French Canadian was a proficient trader, recognizing and exploiting the Indian weaknesses.

After the union of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies, Governor George Simpson discharged the superfluous Canadian employees at the posts. Subsequently when Europeans, especially Orkneymen, could be obtained, he did not hesitate to substitute them for the Canadians.

Unlike the Hudson's Bay Company, the early free traders did not consider the ability to read and write indispensable for a clerk. George Sutherland of Albany observed in his Sturgeon Lake journal for 1779-80:

pedlars keep no accounts, and never ask a man whither he can write or not when they want a master for any of their houses. The only Question that is put too psic him, is if it be

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a frenchman parle vo.bo. Savage, and if he be an Englishman, can you speak good Indian. If he answers this question he gets a place at once if not he is cast, if he was the best scholar in America. The Canadians are so illiterate in general that they are often obliged to keep their Indian debts by marking notches in sticks.⁵²

After the major free traders united to form the North West Company, written records of the trade were regularly kept, and the illiterate French Canadian could no longer aspire to attain the position of clerk. In the western fur-trading society, he and his offspring formed the lowest level, with little hope of rising. On the other hand, many of the Hudson's Bay company's Orkney tradesmen had acquired at least the rudiments of reading and writing and rose to the position of clerks, factors at posts on Hudson Bay and masters of inland districts in the 18th and early 19th centuries. They recognized the value of education and frequently taught their country-born children to read and write. In 1808, the Hudson's Bay Company established a school at Moose Fort for the children of its servants, and instruction was later available at the other Bay posts. During the company's first century and one-half, a number of country-born rose to positions of responsibility, including masters and officers of the Bay posts and masters of inland posts. It was common for Orkney officers returning to Britain to leave their children annual stipends. Some of those who were forced by want of means to revert to the Indian's hunting life found their upbringing a serious handicap. However, the country-born still retained enough of their mothers' culture to make their adjustment to British society difficult, and consequently the company discouraged their settlement in Britain. Many of the

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Scottish traders of the North West Company also had their sons educated, sometimes sending them to Canada and even to the British Isles. The Orkney and Scottish fur-traders rarely adopted the customs and values of the Indian. Their attitudes toward the Indian way of life and the value they placed upon education produced an English-speaking country-born society whose cultural orientation differed from that of its French-speaking counterpart, the Métis.

Scottish traders often married Orkney country-born women, especially after the union of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies in 1821. The offspring were predominantly European in racial origin and adopted Scottish values. Some could not be distinguished from the Scottish settlers in Red River colony. They were frugal, relatively hardworking and tied to the soil. In religion the country-born were predominantly Presbyterian.

The conduct of the Métis and the increasing cost of maintaining large families led the North West Company in 1806 to exclude Indian women and their children from living within the posts. This did not stop the conclusion of interracial marriages or the turbulence caused by the Métis. The families settled around the posts, and when the children grew up, they often became dependent upon the posts for their livelihood. 53

Many French Canadians decided to remain in the west rather than return to Canada at the expiration of their contracts. They settled in small groups on land where cultivation on a small scale was possible, such as at Pembina by 1807 and at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. The latter, when Selkirk's settlers arrived had a population of 200. These were the so-called "Freemen." They were semi-nomadic, hunting the buffalo, trapping furs and fishing. Others were totally nomadic; they did not take up permanent residence and lived in the

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manner of the Indians. The freemen were often given the responsibility of supplying the posts with pemmican, and they handed down this tradition to their sons.

From an early date the Métis became aware of themselves as a separate group, intermarrying mainly among themselves, though to some extent with French Canadian freemen. This self-consciousness was reinforced when Lord Selkirk planted his colony at Red River.

The Métis lacked the dedication to the soil and doggedness of the country-born. Both sides of their families, the French Canadian and the Indian, shared the desire to live one day at a time, without undue cares for the morrow. Those who grew up in the freeman settlements learned the rudiments of farming. They adopted the voyageur's dress, modified by Indian decorations and moccasins. Their lodges and tipis were adopted from the Indians. Besides being buffalo hunters and farmers, they served the North West Company - and after the 1821 union the Hudson's Bay Company - as guides, canoemen and interpreters, and were largely responsible for the opening of western Canada.

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Chapter II

The Emergence of a Métis Identity

A

The Métis at Red River

The Métis were the hunters of Red River colony, supplying it with the much needed pemmican. The early fur traders found herds of buffalo grazing along Red River and the Assiniboine and on the Pembina plains, although in some years they disappeared, causing starvation among the traders and local Indians. As late as 1818, a large herd was within a short distance of Fort Garry. The early colonists were able to hunt sufficient buffalo to satisfy their needs. After 1818, the buffalo gradually began moving farther westward as the colony increased in numbers. The greater demand for pemmican in the colony and perhaps the establishment of the evanescent Buffalo Wool Company led to the formation of organized buffalo hunts by the colony's Métis residents. Two excursions were made annually to the buffalo hunting lands, in June and October. The first hunt was disposed of in the settlement in return for merchandise, tea and some food, and the second supplied most of their winter food. When these hunts failed, the migrations of the buffalo sometimes being unpredictable, many of the families went to the plains to reside among the Indians or fish in Lake Winnipeg. Alexander Ross says that the hunter was "the man everyone looked up to - a favourite in every place he visited," and the fame he acquired attracted to the colony Métis from other parts of Rupert's Land.

Immigration of freemen and Métis to the colony increased dramatically in 1821 and 1823 as a result of the union of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies. Governor George Simpson in 1821 closed many of the existing trading posts and reduced the number of employees at the posts which were maintained. The discharged men and their families were encouraged to settle at Red River. Some returned to Canada, but most went to Red River. The Métis became numerous and a formidable group in the colony.

Simpson recognized that the key to establishing a harmonious relationship with them was to cultivate good relations with Cuthbert Grant, despite his part in the Battle of Seven Oaks. Grant, of whom Simpson wrote "the half-breeds and Indians look up to him with great respect; indeed there is not a Man in the Country possesses half the influence over them," was taken into the company's service. When he indicated his dissatisfaction with his employment, he was given leave in 1824 and was encouraged by Simpson to concentrate the Métis at the White Horse Plain. As a result of the mushrooming Métis population, the supply of pemmican increased so rapidly that the demand could not keep pace, causing a glut. When the Métis complained of the want of markets, the Hudson's Bay Company officers mollified them with favours; in some cases the company purchased the pemmican and the little grain raised, and the following spring returned gratis the grain for seed and the pemmican for provisions. This made the Métis even more vocal.¹

They, however, as yet did not possess a clear concept of their destiny as a people, and their dissatisfaction was not channelled toward increasing their self-awareness. Those who migrated to Red River were exposed to a more European way of life, and they went through a period of adjustment. At Red River they no longer lived in Indian lodges. The Roman Catholic missionaries established great

influence among them and they became as a whole devout Roman Catholics. Through religion, they were taught the white man's morals and values. The church succeeded in instilling in the Métis a concept of loyalty toward the established order. Yet there still remained in their character a desire for independence, which they channelled into the buffalo hunt and the accompanying sojourn on the Prairies. The Métis never resolved the conflict between loyalty to the established order and independence. They appeared to be docile one moment and the next moment suddenly were vocally demanding respect for their rights. They were conscious of their inferior position within the colony, yet their numerical superiority to the whites. The Métis nation lacked only a leader to rouse it. Pierre Falcon's song, the "Chanson de la Grenouillère," celebrating the victory over Governor Semple at Seven Oaks, served as a national anthem and evoked a national awareness. It was the most popular song of the Métis voyageur, and was also sung in battle.

Voulez-vous écouter chanter
Une chanson de vérité?
Le dix-neuf juin, la bande des Bois-brûlés
Sont arrivés comme des braves guerriers.

En arrivant à la Grenouillère
Nous avons fait trois prisonniers;
Trois prisonniers de Arkanys
Qui sont ici pour piller not pays

Etant sur le point de débarquer
Deux de nos gens se sont écriés
Deux de nos gens se sont écriés
Voilà Anglais qui vient nous attaquer.

Tout aussitôt nous avons deviré

Avons été les rencontrer
J'avons cerné la band' des Grenadiers
Ils sont immobiles, ils sont tout démontés.

J'avons agi comme des gens d'honneur
J'avons envoyé un ambassadeur
Le gouverneur, voulez-vous arrêter
Un petit moment, nous voulons vous parler?

Le gouverneur qui est enragé
Il dit à ses soldats: Tirez!
Le premier coup c'est l'anglais qui a tiré
L'ambassadeur ils ont manqué tuer.

Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur
Il veut agir avec rigueur;
Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur
A son malheur, agit trop de rigueur.

Ayant ou passer tous ces Bois-brûlés
Il a parti pour les épouvanter;
Etant parti pour les épouvanter;
Il s'est trompé, il s'est bien fait tuer.

Il s'est bien fait tuer
Quantité de ses grenadiers
J'avons tué presque tout son armée
Sur la band quatre ou cinq s'ont sauvés.

Si vous aviez ou tous ces Anglais
Et tous ces Bois-brûlés après
De butte en butte les Anglais culbutaient
Les Bois-brûlés jetaient des cris de joie.

Que en a composé la chanson
Pierre Falcon, poète du canton
Elle a été faite et composée
Sur la victoire que nous avons gagnée
Elle a été faite et composée

Chantons la gloire de tous les Bois-brûlés.²

Thus the most celebrated day in Métis history was the day they met the whites in battle and were victorious. It is not surprising, therefore, that later in the century they were bold enough to defy the Canadian government twice.

By the 1830s the principle source of voyageurs for the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Department supply boats from the Red River settlement. The company could no longer obtain an adequate number of voyageurs in Lower Canada, the profession having almost completely died out there. Simpson decided in 1834 to recruit the majority of the voyageurs from among the Métis, though some Indians were also recruited. The principle brigade of boats after 1826 was the Portage la Loche brigade. It conveyed English goods from York Fort to the highly prized districts of Athabasca and Mackenzie River and brought out the fur receipts from those districts to York Fort. The route started from Red River and led through Lake Winnipeg to Norway House. At Norway House, the agricultural produce from Red River was removed from the boats and stored. Then the English goods which had been brought the previous year from York Fort to Norway House were loaded onto the boats, and the brigade resumed its voyage, turning westward across Lake Winnipeg to the Saskatchewan River, up that river past Cumberland House, north to Isle à la Crosse, and finally to Portage la Loche, also called Methy Portage. The boats were then unloaded and the packages, each weighing 100 pounds, were either conveyed by carts pulled by oxen or were carried by the voyageurs halfway across the 12-mile portage, where the men of the

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MacKenzie River brigade were encountered. The cargoes were exchanged, and the voyageurs of the Portage la Loche brigade retraced their route to Norway House, and then made their way along streams and lakes and by Oxford House to York Fort. If the company's ship had already reached Hudson Bay, they immediately returned to Red River; if she had not, they waited for her and then transported her cargo to the settlement. The average duration of the voyage from Norway House to Portage la Loche was 36 days, the return 21 days; Norway house to York Fort was 10 days and the return 21 days. The total time of the entire trip was about four months. The brigade left Red River in early June and was back by early October.

Initially, the Portage la Loche brigade numbered only seven boats. In 1848 the boats were divided into two brigades and in 1866, a third division was made, the three units totaling 17 boats. Each boat had a crew of eight under the immediate command of a "steerman" who earned £20 per trip. The "bowsman" earned £18 and each of the "middlemen," the men who did the rowing, made £16. Each brigade had one guide, usually an older man who had risen from the ranks of the "middlemen", and he earned £35.

According to Isaac Cowie, the Métis took great pride in being a voyageur. After making his first voyage with the Portage la Loche brigade, he could proudly say; "Je suis un homme." However, the Métis voyageur could not always be relied upon to fulfil his engagement. Both the company's method of hiring voyageurs and the Métis unpredictable behaviour were responsible. Often the voyageur's earnings from his four month trip was his sole means of income. He passed the months between trips in idleness, occasionally hunting and fishing. By the middle of winter, he and his family were in want of food. When the Hudson's Bay Company began recruiting voyageurs early in December, large numbers

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of needy Métis thronged the company's office. Each man was given an advance upon being engaged, and further advances were given at predetermined times until the brigade departed. As spring approached, the hired man began demanding more supplies from the company's store, and when his demands were refused, he threatened not to present himself on the day of the brigade's formation. Counter threats by the company to imprison those who broke their engagements were invariably laughed off with the comment that the stay in jail would be shorter than the four month brigade voyage. A few of the men who enrolled each year reneged upon their engagements; by the date of the departure of the boats about one-half of their wages had been paid in advances and had to be written off as losses. While the voyageur was with his brigade, his family drew upon the wages still owing to him.

The company's practice of making advances to the voyageurs and permitting his family to draw upon his wages while he was away encouraged insolent behaviour and even "mutinies" during the voyages. By the time the voyageur returned to Red River, little money was still owing him, so the company could not enforce discipline by threatening to withhold wages. Having delivered their cargoes to Portage la Loche and returned to Norway House, the voyageurs not infrequently refused to convey the furs to York Fort; they left them at Norway House and made their way back to Red River. On these occasions, they usually complained that the summer season was so advanced that they could not return to Red River from Hudson Bay before the lakes and streams froze. The "mutinies" became more common after 1866 and they were partially responsible for the abandonment of York Fort as a supply depot. The practice of making advances during the winter could not be terminated because it was the principle inducement for the Métis to engage himself; once

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he signed up in December he was assured that his family would not be in want throughout the winter. Summer was the Métis' buffalo hunting season, an enjoyable and exciting season's excursion on the prairies. No Métis would have engaged himself in the spring for a summer of exacting labour as a voyageur. Many of those who did not report for duty in June no doubt engaged themselves to survive the winter, and in the summer went on the buffalo hunt. On his return to Red River, the voyageur often squandered his remaining wages on liquor and in other irresponsible ways. He failed to provide for the winter, and when December came again he had to make a fresh engagement.³

The census of 1849 showed a population of 5,391 people in Red River colony. There were three principal communities: the French and Métis settlements of the Upper Settlement and Whitehorse Plains; the Scottish and Orcadian country-born settlement of the Middle Settlement (St. Paul's) and the Lower Settlement (St. Andrew's), and the Scots of Kildonan, the remnant of Selkirk's colony. In the French and Métis settlements of Upper Settlement and Whitehorse Plains, the Métis were in a decided majority; the French element was always small, bolstered through the years by a few immigrants from Lower Canada. A large group of Métis settled around Bishop J.N. Provencher's Roman Catholic mission at St. Boniface. Settlements of Métis also grew at St. Vital and St. Norbert, up the Red River. White Horse Plain was completely Métis, and its principle settlement was Grantown, founded by and named after Cuthbert Grant, the "Warden of the Plains." The Lower Settlement of the Orkney and Scottish country-born was more prosperous than the Métis communities; some of its residents lived as landed gentry, having retired as servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. There were, in addition, in 1849, 460 Swampy Crees and 77 Saulteaux. In all, the Protestants numbered 2,180 and the

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Roman Catholics 2,511.⁴

All the farms in Red River bordered the river, planned on the system introduced by Lord Selkirk from Lower Canada. The lot extended two miles into the interior, with a further two mile lot behind it granted as the "hay privilege" of the owner. The Métis, like their Indian forebears, built their houses in the wooded area on the river front, obtaining their needed fuel there and their fish from the water. They planted their patches of potatoes and barley in the clearings in the woods on the "silted river banks and 'dry points'." The women and old men gathered the hay on the plain behind. The river frontage and the long narrow strip into the interior gave the Métis ready access to both the river and plain, permitting them to pursue a hunting, fishing and agricultural life in a manner similar to their Indian relations.

The Scots retained their traditional method of constructing their cottages and byres. In Scotland they had erected them in the infield, usually at the edge of a stream in the valley; at Red River they were placed on the river side and crops were planted on the "little 'parks'" on the river banks. The Scottish agricultural system was crude and inefficient, and the harvest was at the mercy of the unpredictable weather. Scientific principles of farming were followed by only a few, and the agricultural system stagnated. Only 6,392-1/2 acres were planted in 1849.⁵

Red River life of this period is graphically portrayed by Alexander Ross, an old fur trader and prominent resident of the colony in his book, The Red River Settlement Its Rise, Progress and Present State. Ross, was sympathetic only to the Scots, and was particularly harsh and cynical toward the Métis way of life. Nevertheless, his is the best contemporary portrait of the Métis we possess, and it

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deserves extensive examination. Ross writes about their appearance and customs.

From Fort Garry I invited my friend to accompany me on a visit to the upper part of the settlement, as he was anxious to know what kind of life the Canadians and half-breeds lead in this part of the world. We had not proceeded far before we met a stout, well-made, good-looking man, dressed in a common blue capote, red belt, and corduroy trousers; he spoke French, and was a Canadian. That, said I, pointing to his dress, is the universal costume of both Canadians and half-breeds, the belt being simple badge of distinction; the former wearing it generally over, and the latter as generally under the capote. The stature of the half-breeds is of the middle size, and generally slender, countenances rather pleasing than otherwise. In manners mild, unassuming, not to say effeminate, and somewhat bashful. On the whole, however, they are a sedate and grave people, rather humble than haughty in their demeanour, and are seldom seen to laugh among strangers. The women are invariably fairer than the men, although at all season almost equally exposed. They are not, however, high coloured, but rather pale and swallow; resembling in their complexion more the natives of Spain, or the south of France, than the swarthy Indian here. I have, indeed, seen individuals as fair, and the

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tint of their skin as delicate, as any European lady.

The half-breed women are also slender, still more so than the men, but exceedingly well-featured and comely--many even handsome; and those who have the means are tidy about their person and dress. They are fond of show, and invariably attire themselves in gaudy prints, and shawls, chiefly of the tartan kind--all, as a matter of course, of foreign manufacture; but, like Indian women, they are very tenacious of the habits and customs of their native country. The blanket as an overall, is considered indispensable; it is used on all occasions, not only here, but throughout the continent, at home and abroad; if a stick is wanted for the fire, or a pleasure party is to be joined away from home, the blanket is called for. This invariable habit gives them a stooping gait while walking, and the constant use of the same blanket, day and night, wet and dry, is supposed to give rise to consumptive complaints, which they are all more or less very subject to. At the age of thirty years, they generally look as old as a white woman of forty; perhaps from the circumstance that they marry young, and keep their children long at the breast.

We have noticed the extreme bashfulness peculiar to the half-breeds, or what might more properly be termed their false modesty or shyness, similar to what is observable among the Formosans. It is exhibited in almost every circumstance; for, although many

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of them understand and speak both French and English, yet they are averse to speak any other language than their mother tongue. And if the traveller chance to meet one of them on the road, she will instantly shroud her head in her blanket, and try to pass without speaking. Speak to her, and she looks to the ground. Stop, and she turns to one side, and ten to one passes without answering you. For one of her own countrymen, however, a smile, a "bon jour", and a shake of the hand is always ready.

Such is the roving propensity of these people that they are never in their proper element, unless gossiping from house to house. Like a bird in the bush, they are always on the move; and as often in their neighbours' houses as in their own. It is not uncommon for a women getting up in the morning, to throw her blanket about her and set off on a gossiping tour among her neighbours, and leave her children foodless and clothesless among the ashes, to shift for themselves; yet, like most Indian women, they are generally tender mothers. We hope the ladies alluded to will take a useful lesson from these remarks. And likewise reform their shopping propensity and love of fineries, which do not bespeak industrious habits, or a great desire to manufacture their own clothing. These are blemishes not easily removed.

Canadians and half-breeds are promiscuously settled together, and live much in the same way, although we shall be able to

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point out some differences. They are not, properly speaking, farmers, hunters, or fishermen; but rather confound the three occupations together, and follow them in turn, as whim or circumstances may dictate. They farm to-day, hunt to-morrow, and fish the next, without anything like system; always at a non-plus, but never disconcerted. They are great in adventuring, but small in performing; and exceedingly plausible in their dealings. Still, they are oftener more useful to themselves than to others, and get through the world the best way they can, without much forethought or reflection. Taking them all in all, they are a happy people.

The men are great tobacco-smokers, the women as great tea-drinkers; but they seldom indulge in the luxury of sugar with this beverage. Debts may accumulate, creditors may press, the labourer may go without his hire, the children run naked, but the tea-kettle and tobacco-pipe are indispensable. We have already observed that they are passionately fond of roving about, visiting, card-playing, and making up gossiping parties. To render this possible, they must of course be equally hospitable in return; and, in fact, all comers and goers are welcome guests at their board. The apostle recommends hospitality; but we cannot give the name of hospitality to the foolish and ruinous practice we are speaking of: strictly following the Indian principle, "Divide while anything remains", and beg when all is done. This habit is carried to excess

among them, as most things are, the false indulgence of which reduces them to misery and want; and when there is nothing left at home, they live abroad at their neighbours' till they are generally all reduced to the same level. Far be it from us to find fault with a people for attachment to their own ancient usages; but all men must condemn a practice that not only fosters poverty in the individual homes, but is, in its consequences, injurious to society⁶

These individuals were the cream of the Métis community; the poorer and less resourceful were given much sympathy by Ross. He referred to these less fortunate as the "ice-barn farmers," and the "voyageurs, hunters, trip-men lake frequenters, fiddlers, idlers." He related that the most had been reared in poverty and had no desire to better themselves, some were at one time well off and their situation had deteriorated by "sheer force of habit and indolence." One such individual had retired from the Hudson's Bay Company's service with a sum of £4,000. His barn was a "miserable sort of hovel," with the snow "drifting through roof." The wheat which he stored during the winter froze but he cared little, because the company had agreed to purchase it, spoiled or not. The stables were no better.

The door had first been on the east side of the building; but when that had got choked up with dung, one had been cut on the west end, then on the north, and as a last make-shift, when I was there, one was cut on the south side fronting the dwelling house door, and not many yards from it; at the same time dung was

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piled so high all round, that nothing of the building, except the roof, was to be seen.

The owner had four or five married sons living on the farm; they avoided work, and passed much of their time in playing their fiddles. The father had spent £2,000 on them, principally for horses, but "they are as poor as when they got the first shilling." They thought only of hunting buffalo, fiddling and horseracing. They would not do their father's bidding around the farm. The only grain grown was for the Company; they preferred to eat meat.⁷

The interior of a Métis house was scarcely more flattering. In his book, The Great Fur Land published in 1879, H.M. Robinson describes the interior of the typical Métis house in the 1870s as being "one single apartment; occasionally, in the better class, though rarely, two apartments." The floor was "of planks sawed or hewed by hand and the ceiling, if there is any, of the same material." He continued:

In one corner is the only bed, a narrow couch, painted, generally, an ultra-marine blue, or a vivid sea-green. An open fire-place occupies one end of apartment, with the chimney within the walls. A table, one or two chairs, a few wooden trunks or boxes--doing duty with this people everywhere as table, chair, clothespress, and cupboard--and a dresser, constitute the furniture. About the walls somewhere, more especially over the bed, hang colored prints of the Virgin, the sacred heart, etc., together with a rosary. It may be that the daughter of the house--and there always is a daughter--has come under the influence of a convent for a season, and can read; perhaps write. In that event, there is a

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copy of the "Lives of Saints" on a bracket; and, it may be, a few periodicals. For the rest, the apartment is cheerless and uninviting. It may be clean but the chances are that it is not. That peculiar aroma, too, which pervades all inhabited chambers, here becomes often aggressive, and, as it were, wrestles with the visitor for the mastery.

In this apartment the family herd--a squaw mother often, and children so numerous and dirty as to be a wonder to behold. During the day its utter inefficiency to adequately accommodate the numbers it shelters is partially concealed, from the fact that they are seldom all in at one time. But on the approach of night, when the dusky brood are all housed, the question of where they are to sleep become startling prominent.

Robinson recalled that one stormy winter evening he took shelter in a small Métis cabin on the banks of "a northern river." When he retired to sleep, he found himself "the central figure in a closely-packed bed of thirteen, filled promiscuously with males and females."⁸

Ross also portrayed the prototype of the poor improvident beggars of the settlement, a class made up of some white voyageurs, but principally of Métis. He gave his character the name Baptiste L'Esprit. Baptiste wanted to see and hunt the buffalo on the plains, but he has no means of doing so on his own. So he made the rounds through the settlement, and having a reputation as an idler and undependable man, offered twice as much as the others for the rental of a horse. He did the same for his utensils, supplies and clothing. The expedition to the plains started off without him, but he caught up. Once on the plains, he

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was too lazy to hunt, and was maintained through the charity of the hunters. At the end of the hunt, he begged for and received buffalo meat, and entered the settlement in triumph. He and his wife squandered the proceeds from their meat, and did not pay their debts. He pleaded to his creditor that ill-fortune had befallen him, and the creditor, sympathetic and desiring to recover his debt, extended to him the use of his horse on the following hunt, and in the end Baptiste was doubly in debt to him. Of this class Ross observed: "They pretend to the character of civilized men, call themselves Christians, and occasionally frequent the church....They are notorious tabacco-smokers, and when their means will allow them the luxury, still more notorious tea-drinkers."9

Captain John Palliser compared the Orkney and Scottish country-born and the Métis in the following manner:

I mention this as one very remarkable instance of the determination of these English and Scotch half-breeds in carrying out what they once undertake; and there is little doubt, if their energies were only rightly directed in pursuit of agriculture, commerce, and trade, they would progress as rapidly as any Anglo-Saxon communities. There is a very remarkable difference between the Scotch half-breed and the Canadian or French half-breed; the former is essentially Scotch, he trades, speculates works, reads, inquires after and endeavours to obtain the information, and to profit by the advance of civilization in the old country as well as he can. Should his mother or his wife be Indian women, he is kind to them, but they are not his companions.

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The Canadian or French half-breed, probably on account of an indolent disposition, allied to sociable habits, becomes more and more Indian. If he has energy he is a hunter, and able to beat the Indian every department of hunting, tracking, running and shooting. But there his energy ends, his sympathies are all towards his Indian mother, squaw, and especially his (belle-mère) mother-in-law.¹⁰

The Métis, largely because of their nomadic way of life, did not attach much importance to education. Instruction was available at the Catholic Church's missions, but only the emerging petty bourgeoisie took advantage of the opportunity. On the other hand, literacy among the English-speaking Indians, especially the sons of officers, was common; those who were sent to Red River colony obtained a relatively good education which helped them launch careers in the company or the settlement. They blended in well in Red River society. The Métis, because of their roving, illiteracy and French language, were at the bottom of Red River society, incapable of being and unwilling to be assimilated, and conscious of their humble position and separate identity.¹¹

It is unfair to characterize the Métis as an indolent and shiftless people, however. The standards by which observers judged them were European; idle hands, it was thought, could come to no good and therefore one should always be busy. The Scottish and other European farmers at Red River may have always appeared to be busy, but they were not as hardworking as they would have liked the outsider to believe. The farming techniques brought by the Scots from their homeland were inefficient, and only a fraction of the farm was cropped. Agriculture stagnated, and the more

enterprising white colonists emigrated to the Mississippi, leaving behind the less capable to endure the uncertainty of Red River farming: the crops were often damaged by frosts and locusts, and some springs the Red River overflowed its banks. Without the Métis hunt the settlement probably never would have survived. In making his preparation for his excursions to the buffalo hunting grounds, the Métis worked harder than the white settler did at any time of the year. In the Victorian age, the Métis committed the unpardonable sins of enjoying his work and working only when he thought it was necessary.

When the occasion demanded, the Métis was an industrious and skillful handyman; he made his Red River cart, was a chair-maker, house-builder and blacksmith. Some had had training in a craft with the Hudson's Bay Company. In that company's Minutes of Council for 1830 we read;

87 That Chief Factors and Chief Traders in charge of Districts and Posts where regular Tradesmen are employed be authorised to engage strong healthy half-breed lads not under 14 years of age as apprentices to be employed with those Tradesmen for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of their business on a term of not less than seven years at the following Wages which are considered sufficient to provide them with clothes and other personal necessaries. The first two years at £8 p. annum, the next two years at £10 p. annum, the following 2 years £12 p. annum and the last year at £15, making for the seven years apprenticeship an allowance of £75. Such lads not to be employed with their Fathers nor in the Districts where their Fathers and Families reside".

The Métis began his preparations for the buffalo hunt early in the spring. Those articles he could not purchase he constructed, particularly the Red River cart.¹²

Perhaps the feature of Métis life which made the greatest impression upon the visiting European or American was the Métis' joie de vivre. A visitor at one of their dances would be received in 1850 with a greeting of Ho! Ho! Ho!, a salutation adopted from their Indian forebears. One observer at a dance at Pembina recalled:

The fiddle did not cease its scraping, nor the heels of the dancers for a moment in termit their vibrant thumps on the plank floor. The scene was a wild one, though within four walls. A huge mud chimney, with an open fire-place at the right, a four-posted bed, with blankets only, in the further left-hand corner; one or two chairs, which were politely handed the strangers; and all around the room, sitting upon the floor as Indians and tailors sit, were half-breed men and women, boys and girls--twenty or thirty in all; one mother, with bare breast, suckling her babe; another busy in keeping her little one's toddling feet out of the pan of melted grease low on the mud hearth, with a cotton rag hanging over the edge, alight, which made such dark shadows among the groups in strange places, shadow and light alternating against the rafters and the roof as the figures of the dance changed.

Jigs, reels, and quadrilles were danced in rapid succession to the sound of that "dem'd horrid grind", fresh dancers taking the place of those on the floor every two or three moments. The men were stripped to shirt,

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trousers, belt, and moccasins; and the women wore gowns which had no hoops. A vigorous shuffle from some thick-lipped young dancer, with his legs in flour-sacks, or a lively movement of some wrinkled hag, trying to renew the pleasures and activity of her youth, would call out a loud chorus of admiring "Ho! Ho! Ho!" and, fired by contagious enthusiasm, a black-eyed beauty in blue calico?, and a strapping bois brulé, would jump up from the floor and outdo their predecessors in vigor and velocity-the lights and shadows chasing each other faster and faster over the rafters; the flame, too, swaying wildly hither and thither; and above the thumps of the dancers' heels and the frequent ho's! and loud laughter of the ring of squatter sovereigns, rose the monomaniac fiddle-shrieks, forced out of the trembling strings as if a devil was at the bow.

These were the features of the dance among the less educated Métis. The more educated and well to do were a little more subdued.

Perhaps it is clear that here we saw the commonalty. The next night Joe Rolette gave a dance in his house, and here we saw the aristocracy of Pembina. There was the same enthusiasm, but less license; a better fiddle and the fiddler better; and more decorous dancing. Joe's little boy of eleven, home from his school at the Settlement, and his father-in-law, of near seventy, were the best of the dancers. The latter was as tireless as if his aged limbs had lost no

strength by exposure to all weathers and labor, as a hunter and voyageur, for a long life-time; and little Joe had extra double-shuffles, and intricate steps, and miraculously lively movements, which made his mother and little cousins very proud of him.

In the intervals of the dance Madame Gangrais, one of Joe's lady cousins, sang some wild French ballads and a Catholic hymn. Those of our boys who were singers responded with a few choruses-negro melodies, of course.¹³

When Louis Riel lived among the Montana Métis between 1879 and 1884, the Métis still retained their unique mode of dancing. At parties the fiddler played at the time the Red River jig, the Pair o' Fours, the Reel o' Cats, and dances of French origin. After one group retired from the floor exhausted, another would take its place. The men pounded their heels on the floor and shouted Ho! Ho!, which was the call for the gallop through the buffalo herd, or alternately "Hiah! Hiah!", the "alerte" of their Indian relations. At Métis weddings, after the priest had completed the ceremony, all kissed the bride; failure to do so was regarded as an insult. The bride then took her place in a chair, crossed her feet and struggled to prevent the bachelors from snatching one of her moccasins. If one did, the bridegroom was obliged to recover it with money, which sometimes was used to buy more liquor for the celebration.

Only the men sat at the feast table; the women took their places on the floor around the walls or in groups in the corners. Food was cooked in the fireplace, which was built of "logs set erect and plastered with mud. Usually, the only light in the room came from "a pan of tallow on the hearth, with a cotton rag for wick." The men were dressed

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in buckskin trousers embroidered with elaborate designs taken from the Cree, the five pointed star and floral patterns being the most commonly used. The younger women wore colourful calico dresses, the older women dark coloured ones. Both had "beaded ornaments and lavishly embroidered 'squaw boots', moccasins with high soft tops."¹⁴

The Métis were influenced in their mode of dancing by both their Indian and French Canadian ancestors. The French Canadian voyageurs and winterers were particularly fond of dancing. This passion struck the first Orkney servants of the Hudson's Bay Company who came into contact with them. George Sutherland of Albany Fort observed during his sojourn in 1780 with Canadians at Sturgeon Lake in Western Ontario that on Christmas night, after consuming large amounts of liquor, they danced all night among themselves, principally the minuet.¹⁵

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The Métis Buffalo Hunt

The great passion of the Métis was the buffalo hunt. Their indolence at the settlement and the indifferent state of their farms strongly contrasted with their great energy, discipline and self-government on the prairies. At the beginning of spring, preparations were begun for the excursion to buffalo lands. They conveyed their belongings to the hunt in Red River carts, which were capable of carrying as much as 700 pounds over indifferent roads without breaking. The carts were pulled by horses or oxen. Each hunter left with as many carts as he could obtain. He had at least one good buffalo horse, and in the 1850s, a gun

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of the "Northwest pattern (price \$8 wholesale)", a powderhorn and a shot pouch.¹⁶

In the latter part of June, the métis left the settlement in what was called a "brigade." It was "a travelling town sometimes-men and women, horses, oxen, dogs, and carts, tents, lodges, frying-pans, and all other housekeeping utensils that are portable, travelling together." They were accompanied by a priest, a tradition begun by Père Dumoulin of Pembina mission in 1822. One contemporary observer noted;

A large camp of half-breeds on their way to the plains is a sight to be seen. Their dress is picturesque. Men and women both wear moccasins worked with gaudy beads. The men's trousers are generally of corduroy or Canada blue, and their coats of the Canadian pattern, with large brass buttons, and a hood hanging between the shoulders. A jaunty cap surmounts the head, often of blue cloth, but sometimes of an otter or badger skin; and, whether with the coat or without it, a gay sash is always worn around the waist, the bright tassels hanging down the left hip. Into this are thrust the buffalo-knife behind, and the fire bag on the right side.¹⁷

Alexander Ross related the day to day activities of one such brigade in 1840.¹⁸

But now to our camp again--the largest of the kind, perhaps, in the world. The first step was to hold a council for the nomination of chiefs or officers, for conducting the expedition. Ten captains were named, the senior on this occasion being Jean Baptiste Wilkie, an English half-breed, brought up among

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the French; a man of good sound sense and long experience, and withal a fine bold-looking and discreet fellow; a second Nimrod in his way. Besides being captain, in common with the others, he was styled the great war chief or head of the camp; and on all public occasions he occupied the place of president. All articles of property found, without an owner, were carried to him, and he disposed of them by a crier, who went round the camp every evening, were it only an awl. Each captain had ten soliders under his orders; in much the same way that policeman are subject to the magistrate. Ten guides were likewise appointed; and here we may remark, that people in a rude state of society, unable either to read or write, are generally partial to the number ten. Their duties were to guide the camp, each in his turn-that is day about-during the expedition. The camp flag belongs to the guide of the day; he is therefore standard-bearer in virtue of his office.

The hoisting of the flag every morning is the signal for raising camp. Half an hour is the full time allowed to prepare for the march; but if any one is sick, or their animals have strayed, notice is sent to the guide, who halts till all is made right. From the time the flag is hoistted however, till the hour of camping arrives, it is never taken down. The flag taken down is the signal for encamping. While it is up, the guide is chief of the expedition. Captains are subject to him, and the soldiers of the day are his messengers: he commands all.

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The moment the flag is lowered, his functions cease, and the captains' and soldiers' duties commence. They point out the order of the camp, and every cart, as it arrives, moves to its appointed place. This business usually occupies about the same time as raising camp in the morning; for everything moves with the regularity of clock-work.

All being ready to leave Pembina, the captains and other chief men hold another council, and lay down the rules to be observed during the expedition. Those made on the present occasion were:-

1. No buffalo to be run on the Sabbath-day.
2. No party to fork off, lag behind, or go before, without permission.
3. No person or party to run buffalo before the general order.
4. Every captain with his men, in turn, to patrol the camp, and keep guard.
5. For the first trespass against these laws, the offender to have his saddle and bridle cut up.
6. For the second offence, the coat to be taken off the offender's back, and be cut up.
7. For the third offence, the offender to be flogged.
8. Any person convicted of theft, even to the value of a sinew, to be brought to the middle of the camp, and the crier to call out his or her name three times, adding the word "Thief", at each time.

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Having mentioned their honesty, we might state an instance in point: before reaching Pembina, on one occasion, a gentlemen on his way to the States forgot, in his camping place, a tin box containing 580 sovereigns in gold, and in silver and bills the amount of 450l. more. The following night, however, a halfbreed named Saint Matte happened to encamp on the same spot, picked up the box, followed the gentlemen a day's journey, and delivered box and contents into his hands to the utmost farthing, well knowing it was money. Considering their poverty, we might well speak of Saint Mette's conduct in the highest strains of praise. And this act might be taken as an index of the integrity of the whole body, generally speaking. This virtue is fostered among them by the mildest means; for what have such a people to fear from a breach of the penal code? Punishments here are scarcely more than nominal; and may well suggest the question to a more civilized community, whether it is always the severest punishments that have the best effect in reclaiming offenders.

On the 21st, after the priest had performed mass (for we should have mentioned that a Roman Catholic priest generally accompanies these expeditions), the flag was unfurled, it being now six or seven o'clock in the morning. The picturesque line of march soon stretched to the length of some five or six miles, in the direction of south-west, towards Côte à Pique. At 2 P.M. the flag was struck, as a signal for resting the animals.

After a short interval, it was hoisted again; and in a few minutes the whole line was in motion, and continued the route till five or six o'clock in the evening, when the flag was hauled down as a signal to encamp for the night. Distance travelled, twenty miles.

As a people whose policy it is to speak and act kindly towards each other, the writer was not a little surprised to see the captains and soldiers act with so much independence and decision, not to say roughness, in the performance of their camp duties. Did any person appear slow in placing his cart, or dissatisfied with the order of the camp, he was shoved on one side sans ceremonie, and his cart pushed forward or backward into line in the twinkling of an eye, without a murmur being heard. But mark: the disaffected persons are not coerced into order, and made to place their carts in line them selves--the soldiers do it for them, and thus betray their lack of authority; or rather it is their policy so to do, for it would be impossible, in such cases, to proceed to extremes, as in civilized life. The moment the flag was struck it was interesting to see the rear carts hasten to close up, the lagging owners being well aware that the last to arrive must take the ground as it happens, however, inconvenient. In less than twenty minutes all was in order.

The camp being formed, all the leading men, officials and others, assembled, as the general custom is, on some little rising ground or eminence outside the ring, and there

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squatted themselves down, tailor-like, on the grass in a sort of council, each having his gun, his smoking-bag in his hand, and his pipe in his mouth. In this situation the occurrences of the day were discussed, and the line of march for the morrow agreed upon. This little meeting was full of interest; and the fact struck me very forcibly, that there is happiness and pleasure in the society of the most illiterate men, sympathetically if not intellectually, as well as among the learned: and I must say, I found less selfishness and more liberality among those ordinary men than I had been accustomed to find in higher circles. Their conversation was free, practical, and interesting; and the time passed on more agreeably than could be expected among such people, till we touched on politics. Like the American peasantry, these people are all politicians, but of a peculiar creed, favouring a barbarous state of society and self-will; for they cordially detest all the laws and restraints of civilized life, believing all men were born to be free. In their own estimation they are all great men, and wonderfully wise; and so long as they wander about on these wild and lawless expeditions, they will never become a thoroughly civilized people, nor orderly subjects in a civilized community. Feeling their own strength, from being constantly armed, and free from control, they despise all others; but above all, they are marvellously tenacious of their own original habits. They cherish freedom as they cherish life. The

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writer in vain rebuke them for this state of things, and endeavoured to turn the current of their thoughts into a civilized channel. They are all republicans in principle, and a licentious freedom is their besetting sin.

Here, for a moment, I cannot avoid continuing my narrative in the personal form. Having left my friends in council, I took a stroll through the camp; and was not long there among the tents and children, before I discovered that there was a dark side to this picture. Provisions were scarce; scarcely a child I met but was crying with hunger, scarcely a family but complained they had no food. How deceiving outward appearances are! Had I judged of things by the lively conversation and cheerful countenances I saw on the little council bluff, I had been greatly deceived indeed. The state of the families in the camp revealed to me the true state of things: the one half of them were literally starving! Some I did see with a little tea, and cups saucers too--rather fragile ware, for such a mode of life--but with a few exceptions of this kind, the rest disclosed nothing but scenes of misery and want: some had a few pounds of flour; others, less fortunate, a little wheat or barley, which they singed, and were glad to eat in that state. Others, again, had no earthly thing but what chance put in their way--a pheasant, a crow, or a squirrel; and when that failed they had to go to bed supperless, or satisfy the pangs of hunger with a few wild roots, which I saw the children

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devour in a raw state! A plain hunter's life is truly a dog's life--a feast or a famine. To judge of these people's circumstances, it is necessary to look a little below the surface--to see the inside of their dwellings, their wives and their children. Mixing with the men only, the false side of things is always uppermost. Their improvidence and want of forethought has become a proverb. They live by the chase, and at times wallow in abundance; but, like Indians, never provide against a bad day. Every year, every trip, sad experience teaches them this useful lesson, "In times of plenty provide against scarcity;" but yet, every year, every trip, finds them at this season in the same dilemma. Every summer they starve themselves over again going to the plains. Reason is thrown away on them. All that can be said on the subject is, that it is "their way," and it would be as easy to change their nature.

Early in the morning of the 22nd, the flag was hoisted; but reports from various parts of the camp prayed delay. Horses had wandered, oxen could not be found: a hundred horsemen were out in search of the missing animals; some of them, during the night, had returned to Pembina, and before they got back, and all the strayed animals found, many were so exhausted with fatigue that it was judged proper not to resume the march that day. So the flag was hauled down, and strict orders issued for the next morning. In the then starving condition of the camp a day's delay was a serious

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consideration; but it was unavoidable. When animals are allowed to stray, the turmoil and hallooing about the camp and environs is deafening; and the pursuit in search of them, as well as the harassing work bringing them back again, is far more destructive to the animals, on expeditions of this kind, than the regular march itself. Hence the necessity of guarding them well at night, apart from the risk they run of being stolen by the enemy when out of sight of the camp.

Of late years, the field of chase had been far distant from Pembina; and the hunters do not so much as know in what direction they may find the buffalo, as these animals frequently shift their ground. It is a mere leap in the dark, whether at the outset the expedition takes the right or the wrong road; and their luck in the chase, of course, depends materially on the choice they may make. The year of our narrative they travelled a south-west or middle course; being the one generally preferred, since it leads past most of the rivers near their sources, where they are easily crossed. The only inconvenience attending this choice is the scarcity of wood, which in a warm season is but a secondary consideration.

Not to dwell on the ordinary routine of each day's journey, it was the ninth day from Pembina before we reached the Chieene river, distant only about 150 miles; and as yet we had not seen a single band of buffalo. On the third of July, our nineteenth day from the

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settlement, and at a distance of little more than 250 miles, we came in sight of our destined hunting ground; and on the day following, as if to celebrate the anniversary of American independence, we had our first buffalo race. Our array in the field must have been a grand and imposing one to those who had never seen the like before. No less than 400 huntsmen, all mounted, and anxiously waiting for the word, "Start!" took up their position in a line at one end of the camp, while Captain Wilkie, with his spy-glass at his eye, surveyed the buffalo, examined the ground, and issued his orders. At 8 o'clock the whole cavalcade broke ground, and made for the buffalo; first at a slow trot, then at a gallop, and lastly at full speed. Their advance was over a dead level, the plain having no hollow or shelter of any kind to conceal their approach. We need not answer any queries as to the feeling and anxiety of the camp on such an occasion. When the horsemen started, the cattle might have been a mile and a half ahead; but they had approached to within four or five hundred yards before the bulls curved their tails or pawed the ground. In a moment more the herd took flight, and horse and rider are presently seen bursting in among them; shots are heard, and all is smoke, dust, and hurry. The fattest are first singled out for slaughter; and in less time than we have occupied with the description, a thousand carcasses strew the plain.

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Those who have seen a squadron of horse dash into battle, may imagine the scene, which we have no skill to depict. The earth seemed to tremble when the horses started; but when the animals fled, it was like the shock of an earthquake. The air was darkened; the rapid firing at first, soon became more and more faint, and at last died away in the distance. Two hours, and all was over; but several hours more elapsed before the result was known, or the hunters reassembled; and who is he so devoid of feeling and curiosity, that could not listen with interest to a detail of the perilous adventure.

The moment the animals take to flight, the best runners dart forward in advance. At this moment a good horse is invaluable to his owner; for out of the four hundred on this occasion, not about fifty got the first chance of the fat cows. A good horse and experienced rider will select and kill from ten to twelve animals at one heat, while inferior horses are contented with two or three; but much depends on the nature of the ground. On this occasion the surface was rocky, and full of badger-holes. Twenty-three horses and riders were at one moment all sprawling on the ground; one horse, gored by a bull, was killed on the spot, two more disabled by the fall. One rider broke his shoulder-blade; another burst his gun, and lost three of his fingers by the accident; and a third was struck on the knee by an exhausted bull. These accidents will not be thought over numerous, considering

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the result; for in the evening no less than 1,375 tongues were brought into camp.

The rider of a good horse seldom fires till within three or four yards of his object, and never misses; and, what is admirable in point of training, the moment the shot is fired, his steed springs on one side to avoid stumbling over the animal; whereas an awkward and shy horse will not approach within ten or fifteen yards, consequently the rider has often to fire at random, and not unfrequently misses; many of them, however, will fire at double that distance, and make sure of every shot. The mouth is always full of balls; they load and fire at the gallop, and but seldom drop a mark, although some do to designate the animal.

When the runners leave the camp, the carts prepare to follow to bring in the meat. The carters have a bewildering task to perform; they have to make their way through a forest of carcasses, till each finds out his own. The pursuit is no sooner over than the hunter, with coat off and shirt sleeves tucked up, commences skinning and cutting up the meat; with the knife in one hand, the bridle hanging in the other, and the loaded gun by, he from time to time casts a wistful look around, to see that no lurking enemy is at hand watching for the opportunity to take a scalp. The hunter's work is now retrograde: the last animal killed is the first skinned, and night, not unfrequently, surprises him at his work; what then remains is lost, and falls to the

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wolves; hundreds of animals are sometimes abandoned, for even a thunder-storm, in one hour, will render the meat useless. The day of a race is as fatiguing for the hunter as the horse; but the meat once in the camp, he enjoys the very luxury of idleness. Then the task of the women begins, who do all the rest; and what with skins, and meat, and fat, their duty is a most laborious one.

We have stated, that when skinning the animals late, or at a distance, the hunters often run great risks. Many narrow escapes are reported on such occasions. It was while occupied on this duty, in an unfortunate moment, that Louison Vallé, as already noticed, lost his life by some lurking Sioux, who had concealed themselves among the long grass. Vallé had his son, a young boy, with him, who at the time happened to be his father's horse keeping a look-out. At the critical moment, he had shifted his ground a few yards, and the enemy rushing in upon him suddenly, he had just time to call out to the boy, "Make for the camp, make for the camp!" and instantly fell under a shower of arrows. But the deed was not long unrevenged. The boy got to the camp, the alarm was given, and ten half-breeds, mounting their horses, overtook the murderers in less than an hour. The Sioux were twelve in number; four got into the bushes, but the other eight were overtaken and shot down like beasts of prey. One of the half-breeds had a narrow escape, an arrow passing between his shirt and

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skin, the others got off scot free, and all returned to the camp in safety.

When the buffalo are very numerous, as was the case this year, they run several times in succession, and then a day or two is set apart for drying and manufacturing the provisions, which is done on low stages by the heat of the sun. All provisions, however, keep the better if made a little crispy with the heat of the fire. In the early part of the season the bulls are fat and the cows lean; but in the autumn the case is the reverse, the bulls are lean and the cows fat. A bull in good condition will yield 45 lbs. of clean rendered tallow; cows, when in good order, will produce, on an average, 35 lbs. Flesh and bones, however, boiled down and consumed, will yield fully double that quantity.

Father G.A. Belcourt described in a letter written in 1845, the skinning and cutting up of the buffalo and the dangers and hardships accompanying the tasks.¹⁹

At the close of a chase, the hunter props up the dead buffalo on its knees. Then he spreads out the hind legs so that the animal is supported on its belly. To begin with, the petite bosse is taken off. This is a small hump, weighing about three pounds, which is found above the neck where it is attached to the main hump. Next the hide is slit down the back and removed completely. Butchering follows.

The details of the latter operation are as follows:

1. Dépouilles, two layers of flesh along the ribs, extending from shoulder to rump. They are separated by a thin skin or cartilage from another layer of meat which lies below them.
2. Filets, sinewy muscles which connect the shoulder blades to the haunches.
3. Bricoles, two bands of fat which descend from over the shoulder to the under part of the neck.
4. Petits filets du cou, small sinewy muscles found near the extremities of the filets.
5. Dessus de croupe, parts immediately above the flanks.
6. Epaules, the shoulders.
7. Dessous d'épaule, the layers of flesh lying between ribs and shoulders.
8. Pis, fatty layer extending under the belly and up the flanks. The udder is included in it.
9. Ventre, muscular band of flesh which supports the intestines and extends under the belly from ribs on one side to ribs on opposite side.
10. Panse, the stomach, which is considered by the half-breeds to be something of a delicacy.
11. Grosse bosse, the hump which is highest immediately between the shoulder blades. It is composed of a number of broad, thin bones, inclined to the rear and very similar in conformation to the spines on a fish bone. This morsel has a delicious taste.

- 12. Gras or Suif, the suet from interior of the carcass.
- 13. Plats-côtes, or cutlets.
- 14. Croupe, the rump.
- 15. Brochet, meat which covers the stomach.
- 16. Langue, the tongue.

All else is left to the wolves.

To dress and butcher one of these animals is quite an arduous task, but our folk go to it with a will and skill truly astonishing. Some of them have been known to kill and dress ten buffalo, without any assistance, in less than ten hours. Since the heat tries them sorely, they are careful to bring a small keg of water along with the "meat carts," as we call those wagons which come out to the hunting grounds in order to transport the meat back to camp. Did they not take this precaution they would suffer horribly from thirst. In order to allay this torment, to some extent, they are accustomed to chew the raw cartilages found in the buffalo. When hungry they eat the kidneys, after first having pickled them in the animal's gall. I am told that some of them do not even take this trouble and swallow the kidneys raw.

The meat is cut up by the women, who work it between their palms into long strips about a quarter inch thick, which they hang upon a sort of frame as if they were so many pieces of laundry. The frames consist of a number of horizontal rows of wooden slats supported on tripods. After two or three days upon the frames, the meat is quite dried. It is then rolled up and the choicer pieces are packed

into bundles weighing sixty or seventy pounds each. The rest, after first being dried to a crisp over a hot fire, is laid out upon a hide and pounded into a powder. Melted fat is poured on the meat and the whole worked up with shovels into a uniform mass. Afterwards this mixture is packed into raw-hide sacks, from which no one has even troubled to remove the hair. These sacks are known as taureaux (bulls) or pemmicans. When the fat used is taken from the udder, they are called taureaux fins (fine bulls). Sometimes dried fruits, such as pears and cherries, are included in the mixture, and sacks so treated are called taureaux à grains (berry bulls). According to the local gastronomes, the first kind is good, the second better, and the third the very best. In order to illustrate by how much this process reduces the weight of the meat, I would mention that a cow buffalo furnishes only sufficient pemmican for half a taureau and three-quarters of a bundle of jerked meat. The most experienced hunters reckon that eight or ten cows are required to make up a cart load.

Parchment is obtained from the hides by drying them on stretchers and scraping the inner sides with a sharpened bone. The hair is removed with a small sharp tool specially intended for this purpose. This, also, is the work of the women. The men crack and boil the bones so as to extract the marrow, which is in much demand for frying. It is stored in the animals' bladders, and the marrow from two cows

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is needed to fill a bladder, weighing about twelve pounds.

Until the 1840s, the Métis formed a single expedition, assembling at Pembina. Sometime between 1840 and 1850, two hunting bands were formed, one called the Red River hunters, which set out for the Missouri Coteau in the hunting grounds of the Sioux in Dakota Territory, and the other, the White Horse Plain hunters, which went usually to the west of the Souris River and between the branches of the Saskatchewan. By the middle of the 19th century, the buffalo could be found only at a distance from Red River, and the rendezvous point of the expeditions was altered from year to year, depending upon the migrations of the animals, though in later years the Red River division usually assembled at Pembina Mountain. The migrations of the buffalo being unpredictable, the White Horse Plains division some years conducted its hunt in American territory, as it did in 1849 and 1851 in Dakota Territory; and the Red River expedition likewise sometimes was to be found north of the frontier, for example in 1850 in the vicinity of Turtle Mountain.

Each division conducted two hunts a year, the first in the spring, beginning about the middle of June, and the second in the autumn, beginning about the middle of October. The autumn hunt drew considerably fewer hunters than the spring hunt. Many Métis were too poor to maintain themselves at Red River during the winter, and as the cold season approached, these Métis left the settlement, some for the interior where they survived on deer, bear and moose, and others for the rivers and lakes where they hunted fur-bearing animals as well as the buffalo. As a result, in 1845 only about one third of the hunters were available for the autumn hunt.²⁰

The Métis who returned to the prairies in winter usually travelled in bands of 15 to 20 or more families.

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They roamed the prairie river valleys sometimes in the company of Indians, and did not reappear on their farms until spring. This practice was deprecated by the clergy, principally because the Métis when camping with Indians emulated their (from the priests' point of view) promiscuous behaviour. The church's moral teachings were thereby compromised, and the task of assimilating the Métis into Red River society was made more difficult.²¹ Despite the clergy's injunctions, they continued these wintering excursions until the buffalo was exterminated.

So long as there was the buffalo to eat, the Red River Métis did little to improve their farms and dwellings. H.Y. Hind observed in the 1850s that all the visitors to the settlement were surprised to see "that the houses of half-breed hunters generally show no signs of recent improvements, show no signs of care and attention devoted to ardens or the cultivation of fruit." He continued,

It must not be supposed that this stationary, or rather retrograde, condition, is unnoticed by the mass of the people. They see the comfort by which the retired factors, the clergy, and the traders of the settlement are surrounded, and the comparative luxury which exists at the forts; but they do not rightly understand how their own condition might be remedied, for the majority cannot discover in what way the reward of industry may be won, or where a market for labour is to be found, except that kind of wild labour in the distant prairie, or in the woods which they love instinctively, and which they have always been taught to consider most profitable, and alone capable of securing their comfort and happiness. Under such circumstances it cannot

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cause surprise that discontent prevails in the settlements"²²

By Hind's time, the buffalo was perceptibly declining in numbers and moving farther and farther from Red River. Yet the Métis, caught up in the excitement of the buffalo chase, one year before his visit to Red River, Hind relates, killed thousands of them merely for their tongues. They did not seem to recognize until late in the 1860s that this wanton destruction would eventually contribute to the end of that animal and of their own prairie life, which they "generally sign for...when in the settlements."²³

The fighting qualities which the Métis were to display during the Rebellion of 1885 were acquired on the buffalo hunt and in defending themselves on the plains against the Sioux. They were regarded from Cuthbert Grant's time as the defenders of Red River colony against these dreaded Indian marauders whose hunting grounds extended to just south of the colony. In their battles with the Sioux, the Métis manifested superior ability, organization and bravery. A Métis was considered by some to be the equal of as many as six Sioux. A Métis, as a result of his practice of hunting buffalo with guns-the Indians usually used bows and arrows on the hunt-could fire his muzzle-loaded gun with unexpected rapidity and with deadl accuracy without dismounting, while his horse circled the war party. The Sioux, on the other hand, had to dismount when firing. But the Métis, because of their inferior numbers, usually took up defensive positions in their battles with the Sioux. When a wagon-train of Métis was attacked, the carts were immediately formed into a circle, the women, children and horses were placed inside, and rifle pits were dug well in front of the circle to keep the carts out of the range of the Sioux arrows. In June 1851, 64 hunters and 13 boys held off about 2,500 Sioux at the Grand Coteau. Only one Métis

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was killed, a prisoner who had been captured before the battle and who tried to escape while the battle was in progress.²⁴ Hind believed that the Métis, with their "splendid organization," their complete knowledge of the prairies and their recent ability to buy supplies from the Americans, would prove formidable opponents on the prairies in the event of a disturbance or a rebellion.²⁵

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ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER III

The Métis Beyond Red River and the Expansion of the Roman Catholic Church

Many Métis residing beyond Red River were employed at the various Hudson's Bay Company's posts. They seldom held positions of responsibility, and usually served as "runners," visiting Indian winter camps, and "general servants." They rarely could attain a rank as high as postmaster. The country-born, the sons of company officers, on the other hand succeeded in reaching more elevated and prestigious positions. Besides having the advantage of being the sons of company officers, the country-born were more emenable than the Métis. The Métis at the posts were considered to be unpredictable and incurable grumblers. Also, after 1821, Simpson rarely promoted a clerk or postmaster to a more responsible position unless he possessed a good education. The officer who was interested in seeing his son advance in the company's service usually sent him to Red River for schooling. The sons of officers raised about the posts obtained only the rudiments of education and could not aspire to follow in the footsteps of their fathers. But many still became clerks and postmasters. The illiterate Métis remained at the bottom of the fur trading society.

Some Métis became fur trappers, living in nomadic colonies, in the manner of the Indian clans; others lived with fur hunting Indian bands. The number of Métis and country-born beyond Red River steadily increased throughout the period before 1870. The company's officers were

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encouraged to form alliances with the less "wild" Indians patronizing their posts for the benefit of the fur trade rather than bring out European wives who were unacquainted with the tasks performed by women at the posts. The Métis who remained on the Prairie were considered to be superior in hunting ability to those who migrated to Red River. Being less adopted to the ways of the white man they were, from the company's point of view more potentially dangerous.¹

A number of Métis and country-born on the prairies and in the parkland engaged themselves as guides and hunters with exploration parties and private travellers. During his first exploring season in the summer of 1857, Captain Palliser hired 12 or 14 Métis and country-born from Red River. For the second season, the summer of 1858, 12 were engaged from Red River and an additional 12 Métis from the settlement of Lake St. Anne west of Edmonton. Métis and country-born were again employed during the third season, as well as a number of Americans who had failed to cross the Rocky Mountains to the gold fields of the Fraser River. Outside the immediate vicinity of Red River settlement no coinage was as yet in use, and Palliser paid his men "in such articles as coats, trousers, blankets, guns, ammunition, tea, tobacco, axes, knives, etc."²

The Roman Catholic Church was relatively slow in reaching the Métis roaming through the river valleys in the parkland. Indeed, there were no missionairies in western Canada when Lord Selkirk planted his colony at Red River, and Selkirk's governor, Miles Macdonell, was required in 1814 to conduct marriages and baptisms. With the encouragement of Selkirk and Macdonell, the Roman Catholic Bishop Plessis of Quebec sent Reverend Pierre Antoine Tabeau to Red River to determine whether it was advisable to found a permanent mission there. Upon his arrival at Rainy Lake,

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Tabeau learned about the battle of Seven Oaks. He returned to Canada and recommended against a mission. Meanwhile, however, Lord Selkirk had succeeded in having a petition drawn up in the settlement for a priest. As a result, Reverend Joseph Norbert Provencher was delegated the powers of a vicar-general by Bishop Plessis, and dispatched to establish a permanent mission. He took with him as his aide Reverend Joseph Nicolas Sévère Dumoulin. The latter settled at Pembina, while Provencher made his residence at the Forks, in the vicinity of Fort Douglas. In 1821, Provencher was named Bishop of Juliopolis and coadjutor to the Bishop of Quebec for the northwest.³

The frontier dividing the United States and British North America was drawn slightly north of Pembina in 1821. Consequently, in 1823 Dumoulin closed his Pembina mission and much of the community removed to the White Horse Plains, about 15 miles from the Forks.

Father George-Antoine Belcourt established a mission in 1833 for the Chippewa on the Assiniboine, about 30 miles from its mouth. His flock was attacked and dispersed by the Gros Ventres or Hidatsas. About 1835 the mission was removed to a less exposed location at the present day St. Eustache. It was called St. Paul's mission or Baie Saint-Paul.⁴ Belcourt founded another mission in 1840 at Duck Bay, on Lake Winnipegosis. An Anglican clergyman, Reverend Abraham Cowley, established himself in opposition.⁵

In 1838, 40 Métis families established a wintering camp in the vicinity of Fort Edmonton. Their rowdy behaviour, their drinking and gambling taxed the patience of the post's master, John Rowand. Two priests, Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers, visited Fort Edmonton in September 1838, and Rowand, a Roman Catholic, apparently tried to prevail upon one of them to stay. Rowand subsequently wrote to Bishop

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Provencher of St. Boniface requesting the presence of a priest.⁶

The Hudson's Bay Company was hesitant to permit the Roman Catholic Church to extend its influence further into Rupert's Land, however. Governor Simpson was intent upon introducing the Methodists as a counterweight to the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant sects already established at Red River.

In the latter part of the 1830s, a steady decline began in the trade of several districts west of Lake Winnipeg. The Hudson's Bay Company attributed this decline to the "large" migrations of hunters to Red River settlement. The native influx into Red River was regarded as a serious menace by the white inhabitants, who already were outnumbered by four or five to one by the Métis, country-born and Indians. The migration was principally the result of the demand for native labour as carriers, but also to some degree from the encouragement given to the Indians by the Protestant and Roman Catholic missions to alter their way of life and change the locations of the residences.⁷ Chief Trader Donald Ross, the master of Norway House, recommended that a teacher or missionary should be provided for the Indian settlement in the vicinity of his post to keep his hunters from leaving, and Simpson concurred. Simpson concluded with his friend, Dr. Alder of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, an arrangement which provided that the society should dispatch three missionaries, one for Norway House, another for Moose Factory and a third for a post on the Saskatchewan River. The missionaries' salaries would be paid by the society, and the cost of transporting them to Canada and their board and lodging in the interior by the company. Missions could be extended "from time to time as may be found convenient." The three missionaries sent were James Evans for Norway House, William Mason for

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Rainy Lake, and Robert Terrill Rundle for Fort Edmonton.⁸

Rundle reached Fort Edmonton on 18 October 1840. The following year, Rowand renewed his request for a Roman Catholic priest, and his representations were presented personally to Bishop Provencher by a Métis named Piché.⁹ In September 1841, Evans voyaged with the Saskatchewan brigade to Fort Edmonton, where he was greeted by Rundle, and Evans then proceeded as far north as Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca. Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic clergymen reacted strongly against the Wesleyan activities in Rupert's Land. Provencher, apparently without having received the permission of the Hudson's Bay Company, sent Father Jean-Baptiste Thibault to the North Saskatchewan in the spring of 1842. Thibault journeyed there in a Red River cart. He passed a few months in the vicinity of Fort Edmonton and returned to Red River in October. In September 1842, only one Roman Catholic clergyman remained in Red River settlement; the others were in the field combatting the Wesleyan. During his winter tour in 1841-42, Evans had made a number of converts. However, the Roman Catholic priests and the Episcopalian missionaries, during the summer of 1842, succeeded in remarrying and rebaptising many of them.¹⁰

Thibault returned to the Saskatchewan the following summer and proselytized in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. Bishop Provencher, meanwhile, was seeking to introduce Jesuits from Europe into the northwest, but Governor Simpson was not receptive, writing to Provencher in June 1843: "In the matter of introducing foreign priests, I dare not in any capacity sanction this part of your Lordship's plan."¹¹ The stalemate between the company and the church continued in 1844, and Provencher was obliged to rely upon his priests at Red River for expansion. Thibault

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was again on the Saskatchewan in the summer of 1844. This time he established with his assistant Father Bourassa a mission at Devil's Lake, which he renamed Lake St. Anne, located about 50 miles northwest of Fort Edmonton. The distance of the mission from Fort Edmonton no doubt reflected Provencher's concern with retaining the good will of Simpson and his officials. Initially, about 40 Métis and Cree families gathered about Lake St. Anne mission.¹²

Fortunately for the Roman Catholic Church relations between Simpson and the Wesleyan missionaries, especially the superintendent of the missions, James Evans, were becoming unexpectedly strained. At first, Donald Ross admired Evans' "indefatigable" labour and praised him as "a perfect treasure in these wilds." Though the congregating of the Indians to receive instruction at Evans' mission on Playgreen Island in Playgreen Lake hurt the hunts somewhat, Ross thought that the benefits derived from Evans' work would more than compensate for this.¹³ The good will toward Evans did not last for more than a year. While Evans was absent at York Fort in September 1841, Peter Jacobs, who lived in a house near the Indian village, assumed responsibility for the mission, and lacking Evans' intelligence and good sense, he denounced in his sermons the conduct of at least one individual attached to Norway House and thereby alienated the Rosses and others at the post. From this time, the Rosses and the Hargraves and Gladmans at York Fort became increasingly ill-disposed toward Evans and his mission.

The first indication of this growing hostility occurred in the spring of 1842. In May 1842, Letitia Hargrave, the wife of James Hargrave, the master at York Fort, accused Mrs. Evans of "plundering" a garden when she passed Oxford House in the autumn of 1841. Her husband complained that though the Evanses and their staff had allowances of

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provisions equal to those of any chief factor, they still desired more. Letitia Hargrave was also angered by the tone of Mrs. Evans' letters: "Mrs. Evans also wrote me a letter that I could hardly stand from a Methodist. I replied by a middling stiff note commencing with dear Madam I feel satisfied that she is dangerous."¹⁴

In 1842, Evans applied to Governor Simpson for permission to found three new missions, but Simpson rejected the request because Evans' activities were interfering with the everyday pattern of the hunter's life and injuring the fur trade at Norway House. Evans discouraged the Indians from working on Sunday, and Ross and Simpson considered Sunday travelling indispensable to deliver the furs and mail to the ship on time.¹⁵

The subject of Sunday travelling featured prominently in Evans' speeches throughout the summer of 1842; indeed Ross observed that "Mr. Evans seems to view the subject as by far the most important object of his mission," and concluded that if Evans did not modify his opinion on this subject, he would produce results more harmful than he realized. Despite Evans' attitude on Sunday travelling, Ross was still sympathetic towards him and his mission. Ross noted that while the Wesleyans desired to live in peace with the missionaries of the other sects, the latter were openly hostile toward them.

The company and the Missionary Society in 1840 had agreed that the missionaries should be maintained at the company's expense, but it soon became evident that this expense was too heavy for Norway House to bear. In 1841, Simpson unsuccessfully proposed to the society that the company should be released from its obligation in return for an annual payment of money to the society. The following year, the cost of maintaining the Evanses at the fort increased and Ross wrote to Simpson that unless an

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arrangement were concluded to remove them, their presence would "certainly produce more evil than good, and the old Proverb, familiarity breeds contempt was never more signally realized than it is likely to be between us and the Missionaries."¹⁶

This indeed was evident by the spring of 1843. Relations between Evans and Ross were by then manifesting signs of strain, and their wives appeared to be "at open war." An intense rivalry had developed between Mrs. Evans and her daughter, Clarissa, and Mrs. Ross and her children. The former two apparently imprudently flaunted their "finery" and education, especially their knowledge of astronomy. Mrs. Ross and her daughter Jane did not know the names of the "commonest stars." The fact that Mrs. Evans and her daughter were whites in a Métis and country-born society also stood in the way of their acceptance. Although the liquor trade was prohibited, Donald Ross, during the winter of 1842-43, was in possession of 18 gallons of whisky and at least one of the men at the post was continually drunk. Evans undoubtedly began moralizing about the sins of drinking, and attempted to instill religion in the Rosses. Letitia Hargrave says that Ross, feigning friendship and interest, indulged in frequent conversations with him throughout the winter, and took detailed notes which he included in his communications with Governor Simpson. George Gladman, when he was temporarily in charge of Norway House in the spring of 1843, accused Evans of being deceitful, thereby provoking a quarrel. He sent a note to Simpson describing the quarrel, and according to Letitia Hargrave, Simpson upon receiving it, wrote a "sharp" letter to Evans requesting him to remove his residence to the Indian village. In fact, Simpson's letter was couched in the most polite language, the subject of his misunderstandings with Gladman and Ross was not mentioned,

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and the only reason given for his eviction was that the fort was at an "inconvenient distance" from the Indian village. Simpson, however, did mention that he was sorry to hear that he still was vehemently attacking the practice of travelling on Sunday. Ross, anxious to rid himself of Evans, immediately sent his head carpenter to construct a new "Mission Establishment" for the Evanses in the village. Their departure promised to reduce the post's expenses, as the three of them had consumed an inordinately large amount of butter and flour the previous year.¹⁷ But their removal also promised to increase the company's cost of maintaining the Indian village, a cost which Ross complained his post was unable to bear. Ross suggested to Simpson that instead of supporting the mission, whose expenses would annually rise, the company should make a fixed annual contribution to the Missionary Society.¹⁸

Simpson's cleverly written letter both puzzled and annoyed Evans, and he referred to it in his conversations with Ross as the governor's "very extraordinary letter." Ross wrote to Simpson; "I never witnessed the "human face divine" so thoroughly distorted by suppressed passions working in the mind, that was his during his recital to me of part of its contents." Evans did not regret the removal, but "the female side of the house is full of wrath, indignation and sorrow." That summer Evans was careful not to bring up the subject of Sunday travelling.¹⁹

After being requested to leave the fort, Evans addressed a cold and, in places, caustic letter to Simpson in which he stated that he had offered as early as 1841 to reside at the Indian village. He also denied that he was still assailing the practice of travelling on Sunday; he maintained that he never had spoken publicly on the subject, and when asked by an Indian for his guidance, he invariably had said that he should consider himself bound by his

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engagements, and if he believed so strongly against Sunday travelling, he should leave the service. In his subsequent correspondence with Simpson, Evans implied that he had been removed because he had disagreed with Ross, and the company wished to conceal from him some aspects of its trade. Simpson, in a coldly phrased letter, in June 1844, rebutted his implications, but refrained from pursuing the matter any further.²⁰

In 1843, William Mason was sent on Evans' request by the Methodist Church to serve as his assistant at Rossville and Jacobs took his place at Rainy Lake. Though Mason too dwelt at length in his sermons upon sabbath breaking, he was more acceptable to Ross because he preached that performing works of necessity and mercy on the sabbath was not sinful and it was less sinful to plough a field than to sing and dance on Sunday.²¹

Early in 1844, Evans and Mason quarrelled, apparently concerning an alleged advance made by Mason towards Evans' daughter, Clarissa. Relations between the two men subsequently deteriorated. In late summer 1844, Mason visited York Fort and spent his entire 10-day stay "reviling Evans for telling fibs, cheating the Indians, aspersing the Company and cheating him of his allowances from the Wesleyan Society." Mason had married Sophia Thomas, a sister of Mrs. Nicol Finlayson, who was the sister-in-law of Isobel Finlayson, the sister of George Simpson's wife, Frances. Mason was in an elite society and, being an ambitious man who could not easily overlook a slight on his character, he endeavoured to use his influence to further discredit Evans and obtain his recall to London.

In September 1844, Evans accidentally discharged his gun into the shoulder of his interpreter, Hassell, instantly killing him. Malicious rumours about the cause of the shooting soon began to circulate. A year after the

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accident, Letitia Hargrave wrote that "The Norway House people are aspering his (Evans') character and say that since that accident he has become deranged and that his conduct is immoral & c." Peter Jacobs' affair at Rainy Lake in 1845 with Miss Sinclair, a former resident of York Fort, further damaged the reputation of the Methodists.²²

In the spring of 1845, Ross, intending to attend the council meeting at Red River, gave notice to six Indians of the village that he required their services as boatmen. In former years the Indians had not objected to travelling with him on Sundays. This spring, Evans related to Ross that he desired to visit Red River, and asked for passage in his boat. Ross explained that it was necessary for him to travel on Sundays, and could not promise to remain ashore on that day. After some consideration, Evans declined to accompany Ross, and preached in a Sunday sermon that nobody should "set their foot in any craft that travelled on Sundays." Magnus Harper and Thomas Harper, some time after the incident, both signed statements that Evans had threatened to expell from his church and the Indian village anyone who dared to contravene this command. The first six Indians refused to go unless they were promised that they would not travel on Sundays, and another four were recruited, but apparently after another Sunday sermon, they changed their minds. Subsequently two others volunteered, but one withdrew his offer. Ross wrote to Simpson in a letter dated May 21, that "the moment Mr. Evans gets hold of them, his threats of temporal and everlasting punishment, and promises of employment pay, supplies, prospect of a better market for their furs and other advantages, induce them to break their solemn engagements." In another letter of the same date to Simpson, Ross requested Evans' recall. He accused Evans in this letter of manoeuvring to obtain "a share in the proceeds of the trade." A number of beaver

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skins, Ross claimed, had been cut up by the hunters during the winter to be sold or given as presents to friends and there was reason to believe that Evans' intended visit to Red River was for the purpose of making arrangements for the disposal of the hunts to the settlement's merchants. Ross warned that if Evans were not removed the trade would be ruined. Ross was unable to depart in time to meet Simpson at Red River,²³ but Evans did go to the settlement.

Evans admitted to Simpson that on several occasions some of the mission's Indians had sent furs to friends in Red River and had sold to each other furs for private use, but he maintained that he had restrained them from doing so "as far as I have felt myself justified." He pledged to eliminate such practices "if this be a [?] of any standing regulation having the Authority of Law." Simpson seems to have interpreted this as a questioning of his company's exclusive right to purchase all the Indians' furs.²⁴

After receiving Ross' letters of 21 May, Simpson on 11 June 1845, wrote a carefully worded letter to Evans stating that the inhabitants of Rossville, being deeply indebted to the company for their material and spiritual benefits, should feel an obligation to trade all their furs at Norway House, and he hoped that Evans would extend his co-operation. Five days later, Simpson applied to Dr. Alder of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for Evans' recall, maintaining that in both public and in private Evans had represented the company as being unfriendly to the Wesleyan cause and his "impracticable principles and unwarrantable pretensions" had injured both the mission and the trade. An extract from a letter written by Simpson to the governor and committee in London, dated 20 June was conveyed to the Missionary Society in London. In it, Evans was accused of desiring to encroach upon the company's trade.²⁵

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Another letter requesting Evans' removal was sent by Ross to Simpson on 6 August, and enclosed were sworn statements made in May by several Indians on the Sunday travelling dispute, and a statement by John Isbister that Evans had said that there was no law obliging the Indians to trade all their furs with the company. In late autumn, Simpson had at least one conversation with Matthew Richey, the Chairman of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in Canada, and placed before him these papers. Richey agreed that Evans' immediate recall was desirable. Although he believed that Mason had recently acted in concert with Evans in opposing the company's interests, Simpson thought that Mason, when freed from Evans' influence, would be capable of efficiently managing the mission.²⁶ It is evident from his letters that Simpson was anxious that a superintendent should not be sent to replace Evans because of the influence which came with the position.

During the autumn of 1845, Ross accused Evans of preaching to the Indians that after they had paid their debts, they could do what they desired with the remainder of their furs. Evans denied to Ross that he had encouraged the natives to withhold any furs from the company, but Ross brought Mason and Henry B. Steinhauer, who had come with Mason from Rainy Lake, forward as witnesses and demanded that Evans publicly disavow the statements he allegedly had made to the Indians. By the beginning of 1846, Evans and Ross were no longer on speaking terms, and their relations had "degenerated into mere bowing acquaintances."²⁷ And at the beginning of the new year, accusations of an illicit affair with an Indian woman were brought against Evans and Mason held an inquiry.

Simpson, in December 1845, received assurances from both Alder and Richey that Evans would be recalled to England in the spring. Ross was instructed to keep this

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information secret, and until Evans was ordered to England to maintain a conciliatory attitude towards Evans and Mason, but to discourage them from going to Red River before they had received the spring packet.²⁸ Acting upon Simpson's request, the Missionary Society, in April 1846, requested Evans to return to London, but stated in its letter only that it desired his attendance at the annual conference.

The Methodist missionaries failed to make a lasting impression upon the natives of Rubert's Land. Donald Ross, writing in the summer of 1844, said that Evans' early successes at Rossville had led him to the "erronious" assumption that converting the Indians would be easy. The appearance of the missionaries "attracted much of their curiosity, and attention," but made no lasting impression upon them, as they still desired to retain their "rude and savage independence." The Indians, Ross averred, were now more strongly tied to their traditional faith and superstitions than they had been five years before. They were also alienated from the Christian religion by the "hostile and conflicting" creeds they were exposed to.²⁹

Evans and his colleagues dwelt too heavily on the issue of morality and did not manifest the same degree of tolerance toward the Indians' way of life as the Roman Catholics and Anglicans. After Evan's death, Mason was given charge of the Rossville mission. While Evans' principle fault was his uncompromising character, Mason was an ambitious, petty and malicious person who commanded little respect. Under Mason's superintendence, the Rossville mission soon collapsed. Three years after Evans' recall, George Barnley at Moose Fort and Robert Rundle at Fort Edmonton returned to England. Evans had written to the secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in March 1846 that Rundle was encountering severe difficulties, that the

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Indians were warlike and under "Popish influence connected with pagon habits," and that any attempt to persuade them to form a settlement would be attended with "perhaps fatal consequences." But without such a settlement, education was impossible, and the work of converting the Indians would be only "partial"³⁰

The withdrawal of the Methodists from Rupert's Land left the field open to the Roman Catholic Church. Provencher's plan to introduce Jesuits into the northwest did not materialize. Instead, Provencher in July 1844 wrote to Joseph Signay, the archbishop of Quebec, suggesting that the Oblate Order of Marie Immaculate would be admirably suited for missionary work in the northwest; he was convinced that the secular clergy currently at Red River could accomplish "nothing." Shortly thereafter, Provencher asked Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal for some of his Oblates, Canadians rather than Europeans if possible for the present, so as not to offend the Hudson's Bay Company. Bourget wrote to Bishop de Mazenod, the founder of the Oblates, presenting Provencher's ideas and plans, and at the beginning of 1845 Father Joseph-Eugène-Bruno Guiges, the head of the Oblate order in Canada, received dispatches from de Mazenod in Marseilles instructing him to place two Oblates immediately at Provencher's disposal. The two Oblates selected, Father Pierre Aubert, a Frenchman, and Father Alexandre Taché, a Canadian, left Lachine in the latter part of June 1845 and reached St. Boniface on 15 August.³¹ The Oblate order was destined to play the principle role in extending the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the west and northwest, and acquired much influence and prestige among the Métis who settled on the Saskatchewan; and Father Taché was to succeed Provencher as Bishop of St. Boniface. Between 1845 and 1861, 20 Oblate

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priests, 8 brothers, and 2 secular priests who became Oblates were sent to Red River and the northwest.³²

The second Roman Catholic mission in the northwest was temporarily established at Lac-la-Biche late in 1844, and Father Rémas was sent there a year or two later to found a permanent mission. Another mission was planted at Ile-à-la-Crosse in 1846 by Abbé Louis Laflèche and Father Taché with the aid of the Hudson's Bay Company.³³ The following year, Taché was proselytizing at Reindeer Lake, and a mission was maintained there until 1851. It reopened by Taché in 1860 or 1861.³⁴ A network of missions was extended beginning in the late 1840s throughout the Mackenzie district. The missions were at Fort Chipewyan, Fond du Lac, Peace River, Great Slave Lake (Fort Resolution), Fort Simpson, Fort Rae, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Fort Norman, Fort Good Hope and Peel River.³⁵

Simpson was as impartial as the interest of his company permitted in his attitude towards the various competing Christian sects. He assured Bishop Taché that "the Company will not sanction any distinction being drawn between Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries, and more over, that it is their desire that missionaries of every denomination shall be treated with due respect and courtesy by the officers in their service."³⁶ However, by the early 1850s Simpson had concluded that the Roman Catholic Church was too active and its influence was becoming too extensive for the company's good; he was "disposed to throw the weight of their (the company's) influence on the side of the Protestant missionaries."³⁷ This does not mean that Simpson desired to limit Roman Catholic influence in the regions where the church was already established. Indeed, the officers of the company recognized the benefits derived from the Catholic missionaries, the ease with which they

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adapted to the country and their self-denial. The clergymen of the Church of England were less at home in the wilderness and were a greater drain upon the company's resources. The Anglican clergyman usually was accompanied by his wife, and as a rule took to Athabasca and MacKenzie River in the early 1850s "about two boat loads of goods, and provisions and luxuries."³⁸

After the experiences of the 1840s, the company took pains to avoid another outbreak of competition among the various creeds. The movement of competing clergymen into the various regions was carefully regulated. Simpson in 1859 prevented the Methodist Thomas Woolsey from establishing himself at Fort Edmonton, the Roman Catholic Church being firmly entrenched there.³⁹

Along the North Saskatchewan, Lake St. Anne remained the Roman Catholic Church's only permanent mission until the founding of St. Albert in 1861. Thibault was replaced at Lake St. Anne in 1852 by Father Albert Lacombe. In 1859, three Grey Nuns of the order of the Sister of Charity of Montreal arrived at the mission and started a school. The residents about the vicinity relied almost exclusively upon the buffalo for their sustenance; the soil proved to be poor for cultivation, and the crops repeatedly failed. In 1861, Father Lacombe sought a more fertile location for a mission closer to Fort Edmonton. In the cold of January of that year, Lacombe accompanied by Bishop Taché who was passing the Christmas and New Years holiday at Lake St. Anne, journeyed to the Sturgeon River and selected a site at the mouth of the river, only nine miles from Fort Edmonton. The new mission was named St. Albert, in honour of Lacombe's patron saint. The construction of the mission began in April 1861. By the summer, some Métis families had moved to St. Albert from Lake St. Anne, and were living in temporary dwellings of tents and sowing the fields. The convent of

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the Sisters of Charity was transferred to St. Albert in 1863, and they were followed by 20 Métis families.⁴⁰

The missionaries found that many of the Métis on the prairies and the parkland had never been instructed in the Christian religion, and they baptised many. The missionaries' elaborate and colourful religious ceremonies appealed to the Métis' highly developed concept of imagery. At first, the missionaries taught them the more simple tenets of the faith and concentrated upon instilling Christian morals, controlling the Métis' rowdy behaviour at the Hudson's Bay Company's posts, and eliminating polygamy and drunkenness. But the missionaries found it difficult to turn the Métis from their Indian way of life; often the Métis accepted the form of the religion and the elaborate rituals, but very little of the substance. And so long as the prairie Métis mingled freely with the Indians, the church could expect only to modify and not to alter Métis habits. As the Métis were dispersed throughout the prairies and parkland, not all of them were exposed to the missionaries. Some were absorbed into the Indian bands, and their offspring lost their consciousness of being Métis and were indistinguishable from the rest of the bands. Others retained their Métis identity but lived like Indians, without being exposed to missionary influence. And many of those who were reached by the missionaries, because of their nomadic life, did not have day to day religious guidance.⁴¹

One roving band of Métis in the 1850s was the Lac Ste Anne band, which Dr. Hector of the Palliser expedition encountered in March, 1858. It was led by an "old chief," Gabriel Dumont, an uncle of his namesake, Gabriel Dumont, who was also destined to become a chieftain along the Saskatchewan. The elder Gabriel Dumont was famous for his hunting ability and notorious for his violent temper and

drinking. He could speak Blackfoot and had crossed the Rocky Mountains many times. Hector observed as the band approached him that they formed "a motley troop with loaded horses and dogs, and travelling in a style hardly different from Indians." There were about 200 people, including women and children, in the band.

Their habits differ very little from those of the natives, except that their dress is all of European manufacture. Many of the men could talk French, but all prefer to talk the Cree language. The men are generally handsome, well-made fellows, but very few of the women are even comely. They were very hospitable, and we had many feasts of the finest buffalo meat, but the great delicacy that was at this time in season was the muskrat, which they were spearing in numbers through holes in the ice on the lakes. I found them rather oily and mousey-flavoured for my taste but not much more so than the flesh of the beaver, which has always been lauded.

There were 40 tents in this Métis camp; the tents were "merely Indian wigwams of buffalo skins sewed together and stretched over poles." These roving bands of "freemen," he noted, were generally "a thriving class," and they did not share the Red River Métis' fondness "of personal display and extravagance." Hector persuaded Gabriel Dumont to act as a guide for the expedition and also engaged 11 or 12 young men from the camp.⁴²

The prairie and the parkland Métis were by the white man's standard less civilized than their Red River counterparts; in some areas of the parkland, the Roman Catholic Church did not solidify its influence over the nomadic Métis until they came into regular contact with the

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Métis emigrating from Red River. Like the Indians, many of the Métis roaming between Fort Carlton and Fort Edmonton had an uncontrollable penchant for liquor. When visiting the trading posts, they demanded presents, and for fear of antagonizing them, the company's officers invariably gave way. The Métis were notorious for their excessive consumption of liquor and rowdy behavior about the posts. The elder Gabriel Dumont, as has been noted, was particularly fond of drinking. The journal of Fort Edmonton records in October 1823, that he, Joseph Laframboise, and Baptiste Primeau "kept drinking and singing like Indians over their cups for the best part of the night." In the summer of 1833, the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, in order to recruit the generally reluctant Métis to accompany the Bow River expedition, were obliged to distribute rum. At the drinking bout which ensued, Gabriel Dumont and Baptiste Primeau killed the stepson of a hunter named Miegan, and they gave Miegan a serious beating when he sought revenge.⁴³

Both the company and the Roman Catholic missionaries sought to free the parkland Métis from their dependence upon liquor. By the 1850s, drunkenness was no longer a problem at Fort Edmonton, but Archbishop Taché, on his visit to Fort Pitt in 1854, was "desolated at the debauchery of the Indians and Métis with drink."⁴⁴ It was not before 1860 that the joint efforts of the company and the missionaries succeeded in ending the liquor trade at the posts.

Despite the efforts of the missionaries, even the Métis who had regular religious instruction retained some of the beliefs of their Indian relations, H.M. Robinson wrote,

The religion of the half-breed is the creed of superstition. Roman Catholic in the main, he adds to its formulas a shadowy belief in the Great Spirit. He acknowledges a purgatory, yet

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fondly hopes that in the next world human shades will hunt the shades of buffalo and other animals which have lived here. When he dies, he hopes to be carried to the bosom of the saints; yet he feels that his shade will linger four nights round the place of his decease ere taking its flight to the village of the dead. He believes in signs and omens to some extent, and ties a certain number of feathers to his horse's tail, or paints rude emblems on his bark canoe, to increase their speed. Nevertheless, he yields implicit obedience to his priest, and obeys, in his volatile way, the traditions of his Church; but over all, cherishes a dim faith in the shades of shadow-land.⁴⁵

In the 1860s, a migration of Métis began into the parkland from the overcrowded settlements of Red River. Some of those migrating had been born in the parkland and most of the others were buffalo hunters associated with the White Horse Plain brigade which often hunted in the region between Forts Carlton and Edmonton. Some decided not to return to Red River from their hunts, and formed small wintering communities in the parkland, where there was an abundance of wood for log houses and for fuel, and where the buffalo sought refuge during the bitter winter.

Isidore Dumont, and his son Gabriel Dumont, of the Rebellion of 1885 fame, were two such men. Isidore Dumont's father was a French Canadian named Jean-Baptiste Dumont who had come to the Saskatchewan in the 1790s and had been employed first at Edmonton House and later at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt. He married a Sarcee Indian woman and by her had three sons, Gabriel, Jean and Isidore. Jean-Baptiste Dumont hunted and traded as a freeman along the Saskatchewan, where he died. His three sons followed his

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example, hunting buffalo and trading each year at the posts along the river. Gabriel remained on the Saskatchewan, but according to George Woodcock, Isidore, known to the Indians by his Cree name, Ai-caw-pow (also written Ak-a-pow and Ecapoo), meaning The Stander, moved to the White Horse Plain in the latter part of the 1830s. Isidore's second son, Gabriel, was born there between 1836 and 1838. In 1839, Isidore went to live with his father-in-law, a Laframboise, and the following year, returned to the Saskatchewan. Until 1848, he hunted in the vicinity of Fort Pitt, and then he once again removed to the White Horse Plain. In the succeeding years he hunted buffalo with the White Horse Plains brigade and took part in the 1851 battle with the Sioux at the Grand Coteau. Eventually, he became the captain of the White Horse Plains brigade. As the 1850s progressed, the brigade hunted increasingly more frequently along the Saskatchewan because of the northwest movement of the buffalo. Dumont and his family some years did not return to the White Horse Plains, wintering instead in the vicinity of Fort Ellice.

Gabriel Dumont married Madeleine Wilkie, the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Wilkie, a commander of the Métis Red River buffalo hunting brigade for over a decade. Gabriel left his family and hunted alone along the Saskatchewan. In the early 1860s, Gabriel appeared as a leader of a small Métis band. And in 1863, he was elected, at the age of 25, as the leader of a band of 200 hunters which had just previously been formed by the amalgamation of a number of smaller bands from the Touchwood Hills, and had migrated to the Fort Carlton region. The hunting brigade was organized and regulated on the model of the Red River expeditions. The residents of this wintering camp formed the nucleus of the permanent colony of St. Laurent which took root in the 1870s.⁴⁶ The camp was called by its inhabitants simply

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the "Wintering Camp," and seems to have been occupied from year to year in the 1860s.

Jean D'Artigue, a French-born North-West Mounted Policeman recruited in Montreal, has left us in his book Six Years in the Canadian North-West, a description of a permanent wintering camp of Métis buffalo hunters at Fort Trail Creek in the 1870s. He wrote that at about the middle of October, the hunters began to arrive, transporting their possessions in Red River carts. Those who had lived the previous winter in the camp had only to reopen their houses. The newcomers, however, were required to immediately begin constructing their habitations. Each newcomer selected a site which was sheltered from the wind and had sufficient timber and water. He cut down some trees and placing the trunks one above another, formed the walls of the new building. The roof

was constructed with poles placed in rows and covered with hay and earth. Holes were cut in the walls for door and windows, the latter being closed in when so required with the skins of animals; while the doors were made of slabs of wood split with the axe and fastened together with throngs of rawhide. The chimney was constructed with unburned bricks composed of hay and mud, and the floor formed of hewed logs completed the carpenter work. This done, they plastered the crevices well with mud and the cabin was ready for occupation. The ease with which they are constructed, and the wanderings of game, will account for the number of these cabins to be found throughout the whole North-West.

There were in all three to four hundred residents, including some Indians. During the evening and night the camp was

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extremely noisy. The Indians made deafening cries and held numerous pow wows, and from everywhere could be heard the "no less discordant screeches of the violins of the half-breeds."⁴⁷

A more complete and detailed description of a wintering camp of the 1860s and 1870s and the day to day activities of its inhabitants is given by H.M. Robinson in The Great Fur Land. He wrote, perhaps sarcastically, that the camp, when it had a priest, was automatically called a mission. He described his camp in the following manner:

Situated in the sparse timber bordering a small tributary of the Saskatchewan, the community consisted of French halfbreed hunters engaged in the usual winterquest of buffalo. It was a picturesque though not over cleanly place, and will probably look better in a photograph than it did in reality. Some thirty or forty huts crowded irregularly together, and built of logs, branches of pine-trees, raw-hides, and tanned and smoked skins, together with the inevitable tepee, or Indian lodge; horses, dogs, women and children, all intermingled in a confusion worthy of an Irish fair; half-breed hunters, ribboned, legged tasseled and capoted, lazy, idle, and if liquor was to be had, sure to be drunk; remnants and wrecks of buffaloes lying everywhere around; here a white and glistening skull, there a disjointed vertebra but half denuded of its flesh; robes stretched upon a framework of poles and drying in the sun; meat piled upon stages to be out of the way of dogs; wolf-skins, fox-skins, and other smaller furs, tacked against the walls of the huts, or

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stretched upon miniature frames hanging from the branches of trees; dusky women drawing water and hewing wood; and at dark, from every little hut, the glow of firelight through the parchment windows, the sparks glimmering and going out at the chimney-tops, the sound of violin scraped and sawed by some long-haired Paganini, and the quick thud of moccasined heel, as Baptiste, or François, or Pierrette footed it ceaselessly on the puncheon-covered floor.

Inside the huts a bare floor of pounded earth, or half-hewn boards; in one corner a narrow bed of boughs, covered deep with buffalo robes; a fireplace of limited dimensions, a few wooden trunks or cassettes; a rude table and a few blackened kettles; on the walls an armoury of guns, powder-horns and bullet-bags; on the rafters a myriad of skins. Every hut was the temporary home of several families, and we have slept in structures of this kind, of not more than twelve or fifteen feet in superficial area, where the families ranged from fifteen to twenty members, of all ages and both sexes.

In the wintering camp there was usually a store of a Métis free trader. Most likely he was a long experienced hunter whose proficiency in his profession and his potential as a trader had drawn the attention of the merchant with whom he dealt at a settlement. The merchant offered to outfit him for the winter on the condition that he would give him first choice to buy his furs. The proposal being accepted, the prospective free trader was given a "considerable" amount of goods, for which he paid a small amount in specie and furs down, taking the rest on credit.

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The size of his store in the wintering camp varied with the amount of merchandise; it sometimes had two "apartments" but usually only one. The goods were kept in boxes and bales and were not displayed. As a rule, as soon as a resident of the camp had obtained some furs or had extra provisions, he came in to trade. The furs and robes were usually bought cheaply because the Métis were attracted more by gaudiness than by quality. The trader was also a most respected man in the community, second only to the priest if there was one present. He was asked to settle disputes, umpire at horse races and sort out disagreements at the favourite Métis games of chance, grand-major, poker and the moccasin-game. Some of the traders stocked liquor. Then invariably

Every day turmoil reigns in the camp, and sound of revelry fill the midnight air. His otherwise quiet store becomes the rendezvous of a cursing, clamoring, gesticulating assemblage of men. There the betting and drinking of the afternoon are succeeded by the deeper drinking and gambling of the evening; and the sound of shuffling cards, the clinking of the buttons and bullets of the moccasin-game and the exclamations of triumph and despair of winner and loser are heard at all times. Rum flows freely; for the plain-hunter carries to the trading-store every peltry he can obtain. Under these circumstances the free-trader becomes a curse to his brethren, and his store a plague-spot upon the plains.

In April, the trader closed his store and left for the settlement, piling his furs into his carts. On the trail he encountered others coming with their receipts from wintering camps. He joined the single-file caravan, which by the time

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it approached the settlement was from two to three miles long. The returning traders presented a picturesque display: they were dressed in their summer tunics, brass-buttoned dark blue capotes, with moleskin or corduroy trousers and calico shirts. At the settlement, they were quick to inquire about the going price of the furs. Only after doing so would the Métis go to his creditor, giving him first choice but demanding the highest price. For fear that a refusal would induce him to go elsewhere and conveniently forget to pay his debt, the merchant usually accepted his price. With the proceeds of his sale, the trader often bought his family "all the gaudy finery that money can purchase" and threw for his friends a party at which rum was liberally dispensed. Many managed to squander the remainder of their money in other ways, and by the time summer drew to an end and it was time for them to return to their wintering camps, they were no richer than the previous year. They went back to their merchants, and concluded the same agreement. The cycle was annually repeated, and a good number of the Métis traders were never free from debt.

In his attitudes toward eating, family living, courting and marriage the Métis of the wintering camp strongly resembled his Indian relations. As long as there was fresh buffalo meat in camp, he kept eating. Robinson says that the feasting in each dwelling could be observed from morning until night. Everyone entering the house was invited to dine, and a refusal was considered to be an insult. However, if liquor was available, it and not the food was given prime attention. To the white observer, the Métis had an insatiable appetite and consumed "enormous" amounts of buffalo meat. Major Butler relates that on one occasion seven men ate at least 1600 pounds of meat in 12 days. On the thirteenth day there was no meat left. Robinson says that when he went to bed one evening he saw three men

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cutting up a buffalo calf; when he awoke, they were still around the fire roasting the calf's head; besides the head, nothing was left of the calf except the bones.

While the meat lasts, life is one long dinner.

A child scarce able to crawl is seen with one hand holding a piece of meat, the other end of which is tightly held between the teeth, while the right hand wields a knife with which it saws away between fingers and lips till the mouthful is detached. We have never seen a native minus his nose, but how noses escape amputation under these circumstances is an unexplained mystery.

While the Métis was a voracious eater, he could also go without food for many days. On the march he was contented with meagre portions of dried meat and even spoiled fish. The knowledge that the feast of today would lead to the famine of tomorrow did not persuade him to plan ahead. The Métis looked at the problem with the Indian's fatalistic logic: starvation in the future was a certainty, so why not feast when food was plentiful.

As can be expected, eating played a significant role in the relationship between families. A Métis visiting a neighbour's lodge expected to sample all his host's meat delicacies, and his expectations were never disappointed. A young man coming to call upon the girl he was courting was invited by the father to join him in eating, while the female members of the family waited upon them. It was customary for the father to offer the young man the choice buffalo hump and tea, and out of politeness occasionally to comment upon his poor appetite. When both were satiated, the father suggested a smoke. After the smoke, the young man retired with his lover to a corner of the lodge. Though the two were clearly in view, the family or families

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residing in the lodge, in the manner of the Indians, acted as if they had disappeared. In his love-making, the male used pet names, usually the Cree names of animals noted for their beauty and best representing the girl's personality and build; for a stout woman, the names of larger animals were selected.

After the young man had shown interest in her daughter for a sufficiently long period, the mother broached the subject of marriage by showing him the articles set aside as a dowry for the lucky man, usually consisting of a feather bed, some clothing and moccasins and pieces of earthenware and tin. The father then added that a musket would also be given, and took out "the black bottle" and drank to the health of the young man. When the latter began pondering his decision, the father invited him to again eat and drink with him. If the dowry was accepted, the couple was considered to be engaged. In preparation for his marriage day, the young man acquired as much buffalo meat and Jamaica rum as possible, and if he was able,

a fine-cloth capote of cerulean hue, and ornamental leggins of bewildering beadwork; for the unmarried half-breed in the consummation of his toilet first pays attention to his legs. His cap may be old, his capot out at the elbows, but his leggins must be without spot or blemish. A leggin of dark blue cloth, extending to the knee, tied at the top with a gaudy garter and worsted-work, and having a broad stripe of heavy bead or silk-work running down the outer seam, is his insignia of respectability.

Marriages were commonly held in the winter, and the ceremony was performed by the priest. On the marriage day, the groom presented his father-in-law with a few ponies or some

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provisions. Everybody in the community was invited to attend the wedding festivities.

There were almost always some Indian hangers-on in the Métis winter camp. The Indian's habitation of skins or bark was usually outside the camp a little into the forest.

His dwelling, inside or out, always presents the same spectacle: battered-looking dogs of all ages surround the lodge; in the low branches of the trees, or upon a stage, meat, snowshoes, dog-sledges, etc., lie safe from canine ravage. Inside, from seven to fifteen persons hover over the fire burning in the centre. Meat, cut into thin slices, hangs drying in the upper smoke; the inevitable puppy dogs play with sticks; the fat, greasy children pinch the puppy dogs, drink on all fours out of a black kettle, or saw off mouthfuls of meat between fingers and lips; the squaws, old and young, engage in nursing with a nonchalance which appals the modest stranger.

When the meat supplies in the wintering camp began to dwindle, small hunting parties set out to find the buffalo which took shelter from the Prairie winter in small bands in the wooded regions between the North and South Saskatchewan. Dog sledges were used to convey the meat home. The hunters made their camps in the thickest part of the wooded grounds, paying little attention to their personal comforts. They then divided into smaller units. Each unit struck out in a different direction, but care was taken to co-ordinate a circling movement around a region, driving the buffalo toward a common centre. Within the units further divisions were made, and the same strategy was employed in a meadow or other small areas. Travelling quickly on snowshoes, the hunters deployed for action when a band of buffalo was

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sited. Men were posted in a circle around the band with particular attention given to the openings in the woods through which the buffalo would try to escape. Then a hunter stealthily moved forward, trying to creep within gunshot range before being discovered. Often he covered himself with a white blanket or sheet, camouflaging himself against the snow and preventing his quarry from getting his scent. When within firing range, he opened fire. Most likely his gun was a flintlock musket obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company; even in the 1870s the Métis had few repeating or breech-loading rifles. After the shot, the herd invariably stood still for a few moments, determining the nature of the danger and the position of their attackers. This gave the marksman an opportunity to reload and fire one or two more shots. Finally the herd dashed toward an opening in the woods, where it was met by the short-range fire of the hidden hunters.

The buffalo was skinned with "a large and very heavy knife, like a narrow and pointed cleaver," a highly versatile instrument which also performed the duties of a hatchet. Then the buffalo was cut into pieces and brought to camp by sledge. The meat was placed together in a cache, to protect it from the wolves which lurked around the camp. The cache was pyramidal in form; logs, sunk slightly into the ground, rested at an angle upon a bank of snow with the meat underneath. The bank was beaten down and water was poured upon it, which upon freezing held the logs and the bank solidly together and made the cache impregnable by wolves. Unlike the hunts in the other seasons of the year, the winter hunt was not regarded as sport and entertainment. The bitterness of the winter and the rudeness of the temporary camp made the hunters anxious to complete their kills as quickly as possible and return to their families.⁴⁸

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Along the South and North Saskatchewan, regular expeditions were organized among the Métis in the spring, summer and autumn. General Sam Steele relates that the spring hunt began as soon as the snow melted, and lasted from a month to six weeks. The summer hunt followed, lasting until the middle of September. The autumn hunt, begun when the ground was frozen, did not end until the hunter had obtained enough meat for a good part of the winter. The meat was "kept frozen either in the outbuildings constructed for the purpose in the vicinity of their log houses, or on stages or scaffolding erected to keep it out of reach of the numerous dogs."

Most of the hunters took part in the spring hunt. A few remained behind to plant "small patches of garden stuff," and some others loaded the buffalo robes, furs and pemmican, obtained during the previous summer and autumn hunts, into their Red River carts and journeyed to the nearest Hudson's Bay Company post, bartering them there for tea, sugar, clothing, guns, rifles, ammunition and tobacco. All, both young and old, attended the summer hunt. Each night on the prairie, the carts were drawn into a circle "shafts inwards, hub to hub," and the horses placed inside to graze and the "lodges or teepees were pitched in a circle close to the carts." The diameter of the circle or corral was as much as 1,000 feet, and there were sometimes 300 or 400 lodges of both Métis and Indians within it. The spring and summer hunts were for pemmican and dried meat. The buffalo skins were tanned for leather, which was used to make harnesses, saddles, tents and mocassins.⁴⁹

Some country-born as well as the Métis engaged in buffalo-hunting. The principal buffalo-hunting country-born community was Victoria mission, located on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan about 70 miles downriver from Fort Edmonton. The Reverend George McDougall, the chairman of

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the "Hudson Bay Missions" for the Wesleyan Methodists, founded the mission in 1862, selecting the spot because there were numerous Wood and Plains Cree in the vicinity. It had adequate wood and shelter and game, and was within reach of the parkland and the prairie to the south where the buffalo was hunted. Before 1870, little emphasis was placed upon cultivation, and the crops planted invariably failed. The country-born of Victoria mission lived principally as buffalo-hunters, fur trappers, fishermen and freighters.⁵⁰

The buffalo, in the 1860s, were divided into two herds by the building of the Union Pacific Railway, a northern herd which grazed from the Platte River to Great Slave Lake, and a much larger one south of the Platte. The herds were broken into large bands. A favourite grazing area for the bands of the northern herd was along the North Saskatchewan between Fort Edmonton and Fort Carlton, the hunting territory of the White Horse Plains division. In the summer of 1862, the region immediately south of Fort Carlton was covered by buffalo for a distance of about 10 to 20 miles. But on the southern prairies by the mid-1860s few buffalo could be found east of Cypress Hills, about 500 miles from Red River. The country between the Cypress Hills and the foothills of the Rockies was the hunting grounds of the dreaded Blackfoot, who were almost constantly at war with the Crees until the appearance of the North West Mounted Police, and Métis hunters from Red River "never ventured west of the Moose Jaw, except in well organized, armed bands." The Hudson's Bay Company had abandoned this territory because of the Blackfoot's bellicose nature, leaving it open to the American whiskey traders who crossed the frontier in the early 1870s. The Cypress Hills itself had long been a battleground between the Bloods, Piegiens and Blackfoot proper and their allies, the Sarcees, on the one

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hand, and the Crees and Assiniboines on the other. A large band of Assiniboines, numbering perhaps 1,500 people, lived near the mountains; they did not venture too far from the foothills or out onto the prairie because of the presence of the Blackfoot.

Despite the threat of the Blackfoot and the absence of the Hudson's Bay Company, small bands of Métis families were to be found in the Cypress Hills, the Sweetgrass Hills, the Bearpaws, and Wood Mountain. The Cypress Hills were particularly attractive because of the abundance of buffalo, of game such as elk, bear and antelope, and fur-bearing animals such as beaver, mink, ermine and otter. The majority of the Métis on the southern prairies before 1870 had been raised about the trading posts, though there were some who, unable to tolerate the restraints of Red River society, had left for a more exciting life.⁵¹

By the early 1870s, the Red River expeditions and the smaller hunting parties organized by the Saskatchewan Métis had forced most of the buffalo grazing in the vicinity of Fort Carlton and further up the North Saskatchewan to retreat southward and westward into Alberta. The herd grazed in the summer of 1873 between Medicine Hat and the forks of the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan rivers, and the following summer there were an estimated seventy to eighty thousand buffalo concentrated in the vicinity of the Cypress Hills. Steele said that a "vast number" could be found between Buffalo Lake and the Hand Hills. Captain Cecil E. Denny related that when he accompanied Colonel MacLeod in the summer of 1875 to found Fort Calgary, "The valley where the city of Calgary now stands was actually black with moving bands of buffalo, and these extended to the south on the hills as far as the eye could see and the same to the east on the Elbow River." And similarly Robert Patterson of the Mounted Police saw the following summer on a march

between Battleford and Fort Walsh "thousands of buffalo and as far as the eye could reach the prairie was black with them." The Métis of the South Saskatchewan and Red River and the Indians north of the frontier, still finding large bands of buffalo, continued and even accelerated their killings. The waste of the Métis hunt was considered by Denny and other white observers to be "enormous," much of the meat being left to rot on the prairie. There were clashes between the Métis and the Blackfoot in this traditional Blackfoot hunting territory, and horse stealing was common on both sides.

While buffalo-skin hunters probably took a greater toll of buffalo than the Métis and Indians combined. They exported their buffalo robes through Fort Benton in Montana, and after the coming of the North West Mounted Police, through the representative of the Fort Benton merchants, principally those of I.G. Baker and Company and T.C. Powers and Company, residing about the police posts. In 1878, Sitting Bull's fugitive Sioux, numbering between 6,000 and 10,000 people, joined the hunt on Canadian territory in the Cypress Hills. In order to starve Sitting Bull into surrender, the American army, and the Métis, country-born and Indians in its employ, drove back, trapped and slaughtered large numbers of buffalo migrating from American territory to their favourite grazing grounds on the Bow River. There were still sufficient buffalo remaining on Canadian territory in 1878, but in 1879 the remnants of the once numerous northern herd moved south into Montana, concentrating in the region stretching south from the Milk River to the Little Rockies and the Bear Paw Mountains and across the Missouri River to the Judith Basin. There they were surrounded and killed by American and Canadian Indians. Those Blackfoot who did not follow the buffalo into Montana were reduced to starvation. Denny says that a few buffalo

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were still to be seen near the Cypress Hills and Wood Mountain as late as 1881, and until 1884, small bands of buffalo could occasionally be found between Wood Mountain and Battleford. In July 1888, the last of the Canadian herd, three old bulls, were killed on the Red Deer River valley. The last organized Métis hunt from Red River left Winnipeg in 1880. It returned empty-handed.⁵²

To the disappointment of the clergy, the Métis of the Saskatchewan in the 1870s clung to their nomadic way of life and only with the greatest difficulty could they be persuaded to undertake agriculture in earnest. Hence, they had not made a complete transition to a sedentary life when the buffalo disappeared, and like the Indian, they were required to undergo a sudden adjustment to the new conditions. Those Métis in the parkland who were totally nomadic were forced to settle down, and small communities were formed on the Saskatchewan. The only food available came from the land, and unlike the Indians, the Métis received no treaty payments. Destitute and obliged to embark upon a totally sedentary way of life, the Métis were angry and frustrated and ripe for revolt. Their grievances in the 1880s focused upon their right to have title to land on the Saskatchewan; but a large number of the Métis could not reconcile themselves to endure the hard, monotonous life on a farm. The dilemma they faced is strikingly illustrated by a conversation between the North West Mounted Policeman, Jean D'Artigue, and a Métis of Fort Pitt in 1880. D'Artigue commenced the dialogue by asking; "Now that the buffaloes have almost disappeared,...would it not be better for you to renounce this wandering life and cultivate the soil? What do you do here? I do not see even a garden near your house?" The man replied that he was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, "but I would cultivate soil, if I had what is necessary; cattle, agricultural

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implements, and above all, enough provisions for a year. Let the government come to the aid of the half-breeds, and they will soon become farmers." But, rejoined D'Artigue, the government would not do so because if the Métis are poor it is their own fault; they have been in a position to acquire wealth in the fur trade. To this the Métis replied: "You Frenchmen from France,...you always give us good advice. Your missionaries are constantly telling us to plow and sow, and educate ourselves, if we do not want to be supplanted by the whites--to take possession of the best lands and public offices, etc. But our opinion is that with a gun and horse, we have all that we require. We are wanting in foresight and energy, but the half-breed is so constituted." This Métis, like many others, recognized that a new era was beginning, but felt powerless to adjust to it.⁵³

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CHAPTER IV
The Métis as a Fur Trader
A
The Fur Trade Before 1821

Henry Kelsey was probably the first European to enter the Saskatchewan River area. He left York Fort on 12 June 1690 and on 10 July reached Deering's Point, which is probably either the modern Cedar Lake or The Pas. From Deering's Point, he went with the Indians inland to winter on the plains. In July 1691 he returned to Deering's Point to meet the natives coming back from the bay, and with them he again went inland. Dr. R. Bell conjectures that he probably paddled up the Saskatchewan River to the mouth of the Carrot River, and went up the latter river 28 miles before striking inland to the Red Deer River, which flows from Lake Winnipeg. His route between Deering's Point and York Fort was through Moose Lake.¹

Some of the natives trading at York Fort came northward from the Portage la Prairie region through Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis, then across Mossy Portage to Cedar Lake. With this in mind, Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye in 1731 established a post, called Fort La Reine, on the Assiniboine River. In 1739, he sent his son, the Chevalier de la Vérendrye, to explore the rivers falling into Lake Winnipeg, especially the Rivière Blanche, and erect trading stations on Lake of the Prairies (Lake Winnipegosis), where many of the Indians trading with York resided, and at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. In 1741, Fort Dauphin was

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established on Lake Winnipegosis and Fort Bourbon on the Saskatchewan, called by the Cree Indians the river Poskiac. In 1743 Fort Paskoya was founded on Cedar Lake, on the lower end of the Saskatchewan. It was open for only a short time, and was replaced by Fort Bourbon, located at the mouth of Rivière aux Biches (Red Deer River), on the northwest coast of Lake Winnipegosis. The Chevalier de la Vérendrye, in the course of his explorations, ascended the Saskatchewan as far as the fork which was "The rendezvous every spring of the Cree of the Mountains, Prairies and Rivers, to deliberate as to what they shall do - go and trade with the French or with the English."

Though the Vérendryes had plans to establish a post at the river's source, they conducted no further explorations. In 1850, a settlement called Fort Paskoya was restored by Joseph-Claude Boucher, Chevalier de Niverville, a lieutenant of Jacques Repentigny Legardeur de Saint Pierre, La Vérendrye's successor. From there, Niverville dispatched two canoes with ten men up the river to found a post; in the past, historians have conjectured that they reached the Rocky Mountains, but now it is felt they did not proceed beyond the Nipawin region. The settlement they founded was called Fort Lajonquière. Louis-François, Chevalier de LaCorne, Saint Pierre's successor, established a second Fort Paskoya, known later as the Pas, and another fort, which at the time was called Fort des Prairies or Fort Saint-Louis and later became known as Fort LaCorne. LaCorne's successors, The Chevalier de La Vérendrye (1756-1758) and Charles-René Dejordy de Villebon (1758-1760), were too ill-equipped to further expand the fur trading settlements.²

Anthony Henday, on his journey inland from York Fort in 1754 to observe the French and encourage trade, passed the

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Pas, then turned southwest, crossing the South Saskatchewan a little above the present Saskatoon at or near Clarks Crossing. He made his crossing in "temporary Canoes of Willows, covered with parchment Moose skins," a makeshift device used as late as 1858 because of the paucity of birchbark for canoes along the North and South Saskatchewan rivers. After residing among the Blackfoot, he returned in 1755 along the North Saskatchewan, passing this time both Fort à la Corne (Nipawin) and the Pas. During Henday's period, the region above the forks was inhabited by the "Asinepoet" Indians (Assiniboines), a branch of the Siouan family.³

The war with England in the latter part of the 1750s interrupted the conduct of the western fur trade, and for about five or six years after the fall of Quebec the English on Hudson Bay experienced no competition. By 1766, free traders had begun to appear inland. In 1767, William Falconer at Severn Fort sent William Tomison into the country of the "Assinipoets."⁴ Tomison crossed Lake Winnipeg from east to west. In 1772, Matthew Cocking, the second factor at York Fort, undertook a journey into the interior country to "promote" his company's declining trade. Like Henday, Cocking took the Hayes route to Knee Lake and from there turned almost due west to Cross Lake and the Nelson. The route from Knee Lake to Cross Lake was after his time forgotten. From Cross Lake, he went along the Mingo River to Moose Lake and then along small streams to the Saskatchewan. He proceeded up the Saskatchewan to the mouth of the Pasquia River, went on to Saskeram Lake, and from there, unlike Henday, again entered the Saskatchewan, ascending it to a few miles below the forks, near the present Fort à la Corne. From there, he struck overland southwest, crossed the South Saskatchewan below Clarks Crossing and resumed Henday's route near the elbow of the

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North Saskatchewan. After spending some time with the Blackfoot, he returned in 1773 overland as far as the vicinity of the present Prince Albert, proceeded up the North Saskatchewan to the forks and retraced his route to York Fort.⁵ The same year, the Canadian trader François Le Blanc, wintered with 20 men at Nipawin, and in 1773-74 he was with Bartholemy Blondeau on or close to the site of Fort à la Corne.

Samuel Hearne, the discoverer of the Coppermine River in 1772, was sent inland from York Fort in 1774 to establish a trading post at Pasquia or another eligible location on the Saskatchewan River. He made his way by the Hayes, Fox, Nelson, Grass and Goose rivers to Pine Island Lake, and there built Cumberland House. To the west of him along the river as far as Fort à la Corne he found numerous traders. Fort à la Corne was occupied in 1774-75 by François Le Blanc and Charles Paterson, and the following winter by Paterson, Blondeau, William Holmes, and Peter Pangman. In 1778-79, Robert Longmoor of the Hudson's Bay Company built UpperHudson House, and in 1779-80 William Tomison founded Lower Hudson House, 14 miles below it on the left bank of the North Saskatchewan.⁶

By 1792, Tomison and Peter Fidler had erected Buckingham House, in opposition to Angus Shaw's Fort George, well above the confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Battle rivers.⁷ But by 1795 the beaver even this far up the Saskatchewan had been depleted, and both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company steadily removed farther up the river from year to year until John McDonald of Garth in 1799 founded Rocky Mountain House for the North West Company and James Bird, in opposition, Acton House for the Hudson's Bay Company. It was to form Rocky Mountain House that David Thompson, in the summer of 1807, passed

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through Howse Pass and reached and then navigated the Columbia River.⁸

Although the Howse Pass was subsequently abandoned in favour of the Athabasca Pass, the Saskatchewan River still remained a main artery in supplying the Columbia Department overland. The Nor'Westers entered the Saskatchewan at the Grand Rapids, and brought their supplies to Fort Edmonton. From Fort Edmonton, they were forwarded to the Athabasca River. The outfits for the valuable Athabasca Department were also forwarded by way of the Saskatchewan. The route up the river as far as Fort Edmonton continued to be used after the coalition of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies in 1821, the outfits being brought inland from York. To facilitate overland transportation, George Simpson ordered a horse trail made between Fort Edmonton and Fort Assiniboine on the Athabasca River. Between the Grand Rapids, at the entrance of the Saskatchewan, and Fort Edmonton there were branch lines running into the valuable northern fur lands.

B

The Métis Enter the Fur Trade

After the union of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies in 1821, the new Hudson's Bay Company for a few years maintained a monopoly of the fur trade. However, the pre-1821 fur trade rivalry had shown that the Hudson's Bay Company's charter was unenforceable; and the British government was growing more critical about monopolies, so it was imprudent to take stringent and unpopular measures to implement it. So long as no new opposition appeared, the

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Métis winterers and the Indians brought their furs to the company's posts. By 1826, the fur-bearing animals of Red River district, which had been overhunted before 1821, were plentiful enough to attract the American Fur Company, which established itself on the frontiers of the settlement. Private traders were licenced by the Hudson's Bay Company to trade at Pembina in opposition to the Americans, on the condition that they sold their furs to the Company. Some of these free traders evaded their obligations, but most did not, and one of the Métis traders, Augustin Nolin, was instrumental in forcing William Aitkin, of the American Fur Company's Fond du Lac district and its representative at Pembina, to come to terms with Governor George Simpson. In 1833, Simpson agreed to pay Aitkin L300 per year for three years in return for his company's withdrawal from the frontier. The agreement was subsequently extended beyond the initial period. Ramsey Crooks, who succeeded as president of the American Fur Company after Jacob Astor's retirement in 1834, co-operated with Simpson throughout his tenure of office with Simpson to clear the frontier of petty traders.⁹

This strategy was never completely successful, and the Métis, after their buffalo hunts on American territory, sometimes traded with American traders. By the end of the 1830s, annual excursions were being made to St. Paul and Mendota (St. Peters). After Pierre Choteau, Jr. and Company purchased and reorganized the American Fur Company in 1843, the agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company came to an end and a new period of competition began. Henry H. Sibley, one of the company's new partners, contracted to supply with goods Norman W. Kittson, who in 1845 opened a post at Pembina. Kittson, a Canadian, concluded arrangements in 1845 with two disaffected merchants of Red River, James Sinclair and Andrew McDermot, to dispose of their furs. The

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Hudson's Bay Company had refused to export their merchandise through York Fort in an effort to suppress their trade.

As it had done in the 1820s, the Hudson's Bay Company reacted to the new American threat by competing at Pembina. But this time the strategy failed. Kittson continued on the frontier and the Métis became increasingly more involved in private trade. Some congregated at Pembina, where the popular Roman Catholic priest, George-Antoine Belcourt, had established a mission. The Métis houses at Pembina in the 1850s were almost all of hewn logs, "mudded in the chinks, and usually one but sometimes two stories high, having a single chimney."¹⁰

Finally, in 1849 John Ballenden, the governor of Assiniboia, moved to challenge the right of private trade in Rupert's Land by arresting William Sayer and three other Métis of Red River on charges of illegally trading with the Indians. This action brought forth protests from the settlement's Métis and country-born population, and when Sayer's trial began armed Métis were present at the courthouse. Sayer was found guilty, but Ballenden, recognizing that in the inflamed atmosphere no sentence could be enforced, dropped the charges. He publically stated that it was sufficient that the legality of the company's charter had been upheld. But the Métis, the country-born and others in Red River interpreted Ballenden's vacillation in the Sayer trial as an admission by the company that it was incapable of maintaining its fur trade monopoly in Rupert's Land.

Simpson also recognized this fact and moved to protect the trade by extending a series of posts through Red River district. For three years after Sayer's trial, free trade activity was relatively inactive because of the sudden decline in fur-bearing animals. The animals returned in 1852-53 as suddenly as they had disappeared. Free traders

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began penetrating inland from Red River. In previous years the company had encouraged the growth of private freighters to free itself from this risky and unprofitable business. The Red River cart, which was in existence by 1818 during the first buffalo hunt, gave the free traders a means of cheap and dependable transportation. In 1852-53, Swan River district was overrun and even the Saskatchewan was reached. The traders' returns were sent over the Minnesota border, and eventually found their way to the St. Paul market. English River district was penetrated through Swan River district in 1853-54 and 1855-56. Seventy or 80 free traders with more than 300 carts loaded with whiskey, cloth and tea crossed the plains in 1855-56 up to the Saskatchewan. By 1857-58 only the York and MacKenzie districts of the Northern Department had not been invaded. Small Métis settlements sprang up around the company's posts between Red River and Fort Edmonton along what became known as the Carlton or Saskatchewan Trail. The most active Métis and country-born petty traders in 1856 and 1857 were William McGillis, Urbain Delorme and Pascal and Alexis Bréland.

The value of the furs reaching St. Paul from Rupert's Land by 1857 had reached \$160,000 and in 1856 Governor Christie of Assiniboia estimated that about half the imports into Red River settlement came through Minnesota. Among the imports were large amounts of liquor.¹¹ The cart route most frequently used from Red River to Minnesota was the Plains Trail, running along the Red River valley to the Bois des Sioux River and east and then south through the Sauk and Mississippi river valleys to St. Paul. There was also a trail running to Mendota, where Sibley had his warehouse, but it was not as good and was not as frequently used.¹² Located at the head of navigation on the Mississippi River, St. Paul after 1850 was served by steamboats. Although American goods were as a whole dearer than their British

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counterparts, the savings in transportation costs made the former less expensive in Red River.

C

The Adventures of a Métis Fur Trader

A valuable account of the life of a Métis trader from the heyday day of the buffalo robe and fur trade in the early 1860s to the disappearance of the buffalo can be found in The Last Buffalo Hunter, the reminiscences of Norbert Welsh, as told to Mary Weekes. Welsh was 87 years old when he related his story, and it is to be expected that many of his details are coloured or inaccurate; but dates and events are of minor importance compared with his description of the way of life of a Métis trader. Welsh was born in Red River. His paternal grandfather was an Irishman who spelled his name "Welsh". Welsh does not say whom his grandfather married, but the early date would preclude a white woman. Welsh's mother was a Métis named Sauvé. Having English- and French-speaking relations, Welsh spoke both English and French as well as five Indian languages, Cree, Sioux, Blackfoot, Assiniboine and Stoney.

In 1862, at the age of 18, he engaged with a trading and buffalo hunting party organized by Joseph MacKay. The group also included MacKay's family and his brother-in-law and his family. Ten Red River carts and 15 horses were used. MacKay purchased his outfit from a Mr. Bannatyne, most likely Andrew Bannatyne, a prominent Red River merchant, and it consisted "tobacco, tea, sugar, powder, shot, small bullets, Hudson's Bay blankets, all kinds of prints and cottons, vermilion (lots of vermilion), axes, butcher knives, files, copper kettles, guns and the main

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thing -- alcohol, lots and lots of alcohol." Starting from Fort Garry in the second week of September, the party made its way to MacKay's headquarters at Big Stone Lake, near Victoria mission. Soon after reaching his destination, MacKay went buffalo hunting to obtain meat for the winter. He was typical of the successful trader: he was a good hunter as well as a trader, and lived as much as possible during the winter on country provisions.

During the winter, MacKay sent Welsh with an outfit of goods valued at about \$250, dried meat and pemmican to tour the Indian camps in the region. Welsh had two dog sledges, four dogs pulling each. He passed two days at an Indian camp of about 60 lodges, consisting mainly of Crees but including some Assiniboines and Chipewyans, located south of Fort Edmonton. He received about 22 buffalo robes and some wolf and fox skins valued at about \$360 but fetching considerably more when sold later that year at Fort Garry. The prevailing rate of trade with the Indians in the 1860s would be considered by modern standards to be weighted in favour of the traders. For example, a buffalo robe valued at \$1.25 would be exchanged for one pound of tea costing 25¢ at Red River, and one-half pound of sugar, costing 5¢. Tea was sold to the Indians for the equivalent in robes of \$1.00 per pound, sugar for 50¢ per pound and a big plug of T and B tobacco for \$1.00. The tobacco was purchased at Fort Garry for 80¢ per pound, and each pound had four plugs. Cottons and prints were measured by the extension of the arm, which was taken to be two yards. Each yard cost at Fort Garry 10¢ and was sold to the Indians at \$1.00 per yard. One pound of powder, costing 40¢ per pound by the keg, was sold for \$1.00. Bullets purchased for \$2.50 for a 25 pound sack were sold for \$10.50. There were different size of Hudson's Bay copper kettles. The gallon size sold at \$1.50, the two gallon size at \$3.00 and so on. The Indian indicated the

size he wanted. Butcher knives, bought for \$2.50 per dozen, were sold for \$2.00 for a large one and \$1.75 for a smaller one. Besides buffalo robes, the Indian traded wolf, fox, beaver, badger, otter and skunk skins.¹³

In the spring, Welsh and the trading party returned to Fort Garry. Welsh was now eager to become a trader on his own, but having no capital, he engaged with a country-born named Bobbie Tait for \$250 for the winter and the command of the trading party. With an outfit, much of which was liquor, valued at \$2,000 and 12 Red River carts, he sent out at the end of August 1863, and arrived at the end of October at Round Plain on the South Saskatchewan, (the present Dundurn), about 60 miles from where Batoche was later to stand, located in the winter hunting grounds of the Crees. Round Plain was a popular wintering camp for traders. In 1863-64, there were 30 to 40 traders' houses scattered about the plain. Immediately upon his arrival, Welsh built a storehouse, placed the goods inside and locked the door. A house was then built exclusively for storing the clothes and belongings of the men; it had no chimney or place to make a fire. Another house was raised to serve as the mens' residence. Much of Welsh's trade that winter was in alcohol. One gallon of alcohol was diluted with two gallons of water.

When the Crees in Welsh's vicinity learned of his presence, they came in with their buffalo robes to trade. Some wanted only goods, others both goods and alcohol and all too many only alcohol. Those who desired alcohol brought one or two gallon kettles and requested that they be filled, and the first few were given liberal amounts to encourage others to follow. By the third day of trading, those trading for liquor had squandered all their robes. But the drunken chief of the band persisted in demanding more. When

he was refused without payment, he drew his knife and lunged at Welch, who moved just in time to avoid being stabbed.

The principal band of Indians in the vicinity of Round Plain was Chief One Arrow's camp of 50 or 60 lodges, about 15 miles away. During the winter, Welsh joined One Arrow and his braves in hunting buffalo. The buffalo were herded into a pound and then shot. Welsh was given his share, 12 of the 170 killed. As can be expected, One Arrow's band was well supplied with liquor that winter; as soon as the buffalo had been killed and their skins prepared, traders came into the camp and peddled their liquor. So greedy were the pedlars that one, a Mr. St. Germain, even imprudently extended credit. The Indians were in the process of preparing the robes for him when Welsh came into their camp with three four-gallon kegs of liquor, each having one gallon of pure alcohol to three gallons of water. By offering his product at an attractive price, Welsh succeeded in inducing them to conveniently forget about their arrangement with St. Germain, and he left with "a very high load" of furs on his dog sledge. After a while, Welsh's conscience began to catch up with him, and he resolved to make his alcohol stronger, mixing one gallon of alcohol with two of water instead of three so the liquor could be disposed of as quickly as possible and he could concentrate upon selling his goods.

The traders at the camp departed together in the spring for Fort Garry, forming a caravan of 30 families and about 150 Red River carts. The caravan gave protection against the Indians, who lurked behind the traders, trying to steal the horses they had bartered for alcohol. A chief officer and four sub-officers were selected to police the procession; Welsh recalled that the chief officer on this occasion was Gabriel Dumont, who was then a trader as well as a buffalo hunter.¹⁴

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After his return to Red River, Welsh was hired by Andrew Bannatyne to accompany his shipment of furs to St. Paul. Bannatyne's brigade, consisting of 300 Red River carts pulled by oxen and horses and loaded with furs, set out at the end of May 1864. As a rule, there were about 100 men for each 300 carts. When Bannatyne's brigade reached the American border, the man in charge gave the customs officer an inventory of the furs and other articles, even the carts and horses, being taken to St. Paul. Bannatyne arrived one day later and made his settlement with the customs officer for the articles being imported. The brigade returned from St. Paul with American goods. At the American frontier, the inventory of goods submitted upon entering was checked against what was being brought back; if it was discovered that fewer horses and carts were returning, a duty was levied on the missing horses and carts unless it could be proven that the former had died and the latter had broken down on the two way trip. Customs duties were paid on everything imported into British territory.

The following summer, Welsh went into business for himself, and he took his winter residence on the south side of the Souris River. His outfit, supplied by Bannatyne, was modest, worth about \$500 and loaded on four carts. There were few Indians that winter on the Souris River, and he returned with only \$450 in furs, though he had a few goods left. Despite this, Bannatyne gave him on credit goods worth about \$200, and he obtained three more carts. Welsh started off in the same direction as the previous year, going up the Souris River to the Red Deer and the Missouri. This time he travelled from camp to camp the winterers in the region were principally Sioux and métis purchasing pemmican and dried meat, which he later sold to Chief Factor John McTavish at Fort Garry for \$1,175.

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Welsh liquidated his debt with Bannatyne, and in 1865 went to the Round Plain with an outfit of \$1,000. His old house was still standing, and he reoccupied it after making the necessary repairs. In November, 30 families of the camp, including Welsh, joined together to conduct a buffalo hunt. By the middle of December, enough provisions and fuel had been obtained for the first part of the winter. There followed around New Years a time of merriment, each man giving a "feast." Welsh observed about the "good time" in the North West:

One day I would put up a big feast and invite my friends to come. We would dance the old-time dances and the Red River Jig-reel of four, reel of eight, double jig, strip the willow, rabbit chase Tucker circle, drops of brandy, and all half-breed dances. There were always lots of fiddlers. Nearly every man could play the fiddle.

Then we would go to another family. I tell you, we had a regular good time. We had lots to eat and drink. Those that wanted to eat, ate and those that wanted to drink, drank. This feasting lasted about ten days.

Of all the dances among the halfbreeds breeds and the traders, I think the Red River Jig was the liveliest. There were some great dancers amongst the traders. In those days everyone danced. I mean, they all danced the step-dances and everything. Of course, there were many fancy dances, too, but in the main, the thing was to be able to step it up.

There was what you call a rabbit chase dance at the end of the dance-or ball. What great dances took place at the old Hudson's Bay

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posts! In the rabbit-chase dance, the men and women stood in a row. Their partners stood opposite them. One couple danced up and down within the column and parted at the end of it. The woman went behind the women's column, and the man behind the men's. When they got halfway up the column they stopped, then the man chased his partner in and out of the column until he caught her.

Now, the thing was started all over again, only this time, the woman did the chasing. Pretty good eh? This was kept up until each partner had had a turn.

I remember another dance. It was called the handkerchief dance. This was the last dance of the ball. A man got up with a handkerchief in his hand, tied it around a girl's or woman's neck, danced with her and then kissed her. But you may be sure it was the girls that were selected. Now the girl had to get up, dance around the hall behind her partner, choose another man, tie the handkerchief around his neck and kiss him. And so it went, until every man and woman had been kissed. This handkerchief dance wound up the ball. Everyone was satisfied until the next ball. And, you may be sure, that wasn't long.¹⁵

In January, another buffalo hunt was conducted on the blizzard swept plains in temperatures hovering about 40 degrees below zero. The hunting expedition was led by Ai-caw-pow, Gabriel Dumont's father. Many carcasses of buffalo were found rotting on the plains, the work of buffalo-hide hunters. When Welsh and the other traders of

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the camp at Round Plain were not engaged in feasting and hunting buffalo together, they were competing for furs and robes. There was a code of ethics which governed the competition, including an understanding that there would be no undercutting of prices. Welsh, however, instead of adhering to the going rate of two Hudson's Bay blankets for four buffalo robes, bartered two blankets for three robes, and reduced as well his price for tea, sugar, tobacco and ammunition. One Arrow's band "came in crowds" to his house, and within a short time he had disposed of all his goods. Having confined all his trade to his place of residence, he avoided the expense of outfitting dog sledges - dogs were expensive to buy and feed - and of travelling on the exposed plains. Welsh was angrily attacked by his neighbours for lowering his price, but they could take no action against him. He returned to Fort Garry with about 160 buffalo robes and 200 other furs, and sold them for \$4,300.

Welsh was again at Round Plain in the winter of 1867-68, combining trading with the Indians and buffalo hunting. He received \$5,000 in robes and furs. As he now considered himself a prosperous trader and desired to play the part, he purchased from James Mackay, of the Parish of St. James in Red River, ten newly designed Red River carts made in St. Paul for \$400. They had two wheels, but were lighter, more durable and looked neater than the traditional Red River cart.

In 1868, he carried an outfit worth \$2,000 to Round Plain. That winter, large bands of buffalo could no longer be found in his vicinity, and the Indians "almost starved." Welsh received only 75 buffalo robes, and the other traders did as poorly. Despite the disappointing returns, a brigade of traders, including Welsh, returned to Round Plain in the autumn of 1869; as Round Plain was considered a "lucky place" the traders were reluctant to abandon it. It

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traditionally had been the region on the plains most frequented by the buffalo in the winter, was near water and was well timbered. It was sheltered on the north, and open on the south. Few buffalo were seen again in 1869-70, the bands having moved south, and Welsh failed to recover his expenses. In the autumn of 1870, he left Fort Garry with a brigade of 25 or 28 families of traders bound for the South Saskatchewan. The buffalo was by 1870 difficult to find; unable to obtain sufficient meat on the march, the brigade tried to buy some pemmican at Fort Carlton. There was none for sale there, but the master, Lawrence Clark, gave each family a small allowance. After considerable searching, buffalo was located west of Battleford. There a small pox-ridden brigade was encountered led by Gabriel Dumont and consisting of two Métis and 25 Indian families. To avoid being contaminated, Welsh's brigade after the hunt went back to Round Plain.¹⁶

The buffalo having deserted the Saskatchewan, Welsh in 1872 went to Fort Qu'Appelle, and resided in the nearby village of Lebret. From Lebret, he went out hunting on the plains in the direction of the Cypress Hills and Wood Mountain. His hunts were fruitful, but for some reason the following winter he was again at Round Plain. He was lucky to find a large band of buffalo, and succeeded in realizing a respectable \$2,000 for his robes and meat. This, however, was his last winter at Round Plain. In 1874, he made the Cypress Hills his headquarters. He resided with about 60 families in a camp at Four-Mile Coulee, on the north side of the hills. His outfit was worth \$1,800. Buffalo here were still so plentiful that in one hunt in December, Welsh himself killed 100. Later in the season, the North West Mounted Police made its appearance. Fort Walsh, built on the south side of the hills, attracted within a short time

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large American buffalorobe trading companies, especially I.G. Baker and Company and T.C. Power and Company. The American concerns, having a wider variety of merchandise and paying higher prices than the petty traders, collected the lion's share of the choicest robes from the Indians. However, the traders were also buffalo hunters, and as the buffalo were abundant about the Cypress Hills, they could rely upon their own hunts to see them through. They brought their robes and pemmican to Red River or disposed of them at the Hudson's Bay Company posts along the route, as Welsh did at Fort Ellice in 1875. In the spring of 1878, there was a noticeable decline in the numbers of buffalo, and some Indians were starving. The following year, the buffalo disappeared from Canada. The Métis traders were forced to seek alternate means of subsistence. Welsh settled at Lebret, a growing community, taking up farming for a few years, then freighting and finally ranching.¹⁷

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Métis Trade in the United States

Métis traders and buffalo hunters were also to be found on American territory in the years before the destruction of the buffalo. The westward migration of the dwindling buffalo herds attracted Métis from both Red River and Rupert's Land into Dakota Territory. Undoubtedly some of those who settled had been members of the Red River hunting division. The most popular Métis settlement on American soil in the 1850s was Father Belcourt's mission at St. Joseph, founded in 1850. By 1856-57, it had 1,000 to 1,500 residents. The Métis living on British territory were

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forbidden by American law from hunting the buffalo across the frontier, and the United States government indicated in the early 1850s that it would enforce the regulation. So for a time it appeared that the destiny of the buffalo-dependent Métis might lie in the United States. However, St. Joseph was in Sioux territory. The reduction in the size of herds resulted in increased hostilities between the Sioux and Métis. The Sioux often lurked outside St. Joseph, killing its residents in ambush. The United States army took no measures to protect the town, nor did it enforce the ban against British Métis hunting on American territory. Individual Métis families began drifting back across the border in the late 1850s. When Belcourt was recalled in 1860 and the mission was placed under the supervision of the Bishop of St. Boniface, a large number of residents returned to Rupert's Land.¹⁸

Although small settlements of Métis were subsequently to be found in what was to become the state of Montana, the bulk of the Métis nation was centred north of the frontier. The Métis and the Sioux resolved their differences and made peace in 1862, with the brothers Isidore and Jean Dumont being instrumental in the negotiations between the two sides which took place at Devil's Lake, in American territory.

Although the termination of hostilities did not lead to large scale Métis migration into the United State, it did open new markets to the trader. The Sioux chief and medicine man Sitting Bull, desiring to become independent of the Americans for his supplies, in the autumn of 1871 journeyed to Red River and arranged that Métis traders should come later in the year to his camp with all the merchandise required by his people. About two months later, when the ground was covered with snow, the traders arrived at the Sioux camp with five sledges. Having traditionally in their dealings with the Indians reaped their greatest

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profits from a trade in liquor, unfortunately they brought only whiskey. Some of the warriors who anticipated the baneful effects of the alcohol wisely left before the trading began. For those who did not leave, the ensuing few days became a nightmare. The women as well as the men drank, and the inevitable turmoil resulted. Sitting Bull's band had been divided into factions for some years. Under the effects of the liquor, fights broke out among friends as well as enemies, and a number of people were killed. Some destroyed their tipis while others shot their horses and mules. Had the Métis not left with some of their liquor untraded -- they had gotten all the Indian wares they wanted -- the murders would have continued, for the relatives and friends of those killed would have sought revenge upon the murderers in the Indian fashion. When the Sioux sobered up, the camp was struck and the band divided into small family units to prevent further bloodshed.

Despite the tragedy, Sitting Bull stubbornly refused to abrogate his trading arrangements with the Métis. He still vowed not to deal with the Americans, and the following spring a Sioux representative of a white trader at the Yankton Sioux agency at Fort Peck was turned away. Sitting Bull's adopted brother, Frank Grouard, fearing another drunken calamity when the Métis returned, smuggled a report about the above-mentioned episode through the visiting Indian to the Indian agent at Fort Peck. As trading liquor to the Indians was illegal in the United States, soldiers were sent to a Métis camp in American territory on Frenchman's Creek, a tributary of the Milk River, where it was believed the traders were quartered. Grouard identified the guilty, and they were arrested and their horses were confiscated. The camp was searched for liquor, and all that was discovered was destroyed.¹⁹

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The Métis traders found other Indian bands who were eager to trade for liquor. United States Indian Agent W.L. Lincoln at Fort Belknap Agency in Montana reported in 1880 that the Gros Ventres and Assiniboinés of his agency were exposed to a large illicit trade; "many of the Half-breeds were engaged, and they not only trade legitimate goods, but also traded whisky."²⁰

The Métis also conducted with the Sioux a trade in guns and ammunition, the American authorities having taken precautions to prevent the licenced American traders from supplying them to the Sioux. The superintendant of Indian affairs for Montana Territory wrote, in the autumn of 1872, that the Sioux had obtained most of their guns and ammunition from the Métis of Red River; and United States General Nelson A. Miles, in the summer of 1879, complained to Major Walsh of the North-West Mounted Police that the Métis were arming Sitting Bull's Sioux, who were making incursions into American territory from Canada, and warned that the army would confiscate the property of anybody found trading ammunition to the Indians on American soil.²¹

The Métis residing in the United States were not forbidden by law from purchasing liquor. Many fell victim to this scourge. When Riel went to live among the Montana Métis in 1879, he was shocked by the chronic alcoholism prevalent in some communities. The favourite drink was "rum flavoured with 'pain-killer', or alcohol diluted with Florida water." Riel wrote that many Métis spent most of their money on liquor. "If he is a mere hunter on the prairie, liquor is one of the principle causes which make him poor and prevents him from settling. If he is trying to settle, the use of spiritous liquors empties his purse and makes him sink more rapidly into poverty, and poverty drives him away from his little farm." One winter, a whiskey trader sold 2,000 gallons of whiskey to a band of 15

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families. The women lined up to enter his saloon and squandered all the money set aside for food and clothes for their children. The Americans called the Métis the "breeds" and "coyote French", and considered him the "meanest creature that walks,". "He is never equal in courage to his father.... He surpasses his mother in dishonesty and treachery."

It was unfortunate that the Métis living on the American frontier came into contact with the lawless, vicious and unscrupulous element of American society, which advanced with the frontier and always kept one step ahead of the law: the remnants of "freebooters, the border banditti" whom the North West Mounted Police had run out of Canada, whiskey traders and horse thieves. Under their influence, the moral fiber of Métis society broke down. They seem to have been more influenced by this element than the relatively honest hunters, wolfers and the woodchoppers who supplied wood for the steamboats. The principal Montana Métis settlements were at Milk River, Fort Benton, Helena and Spring Creek (now Lewiston).²²

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CHAPTER V
The Founding of the Parish of St. Laurent
and its
Early Development, 1870-1880

The first steps toward establishing a permanent sedentary Métis settlement guided by a missionary along the South Saskatchewan were taken in 1870. A number of Métis families residing about 25 miles from Fort Carlton, desiring spiritual instruction, sent a representative to find a priest at Ile-à-la-Crosse. The Oblate Father Julien Moulin consented to pass the winter among them. In the spring, Moulin was transferred to Lac Caribou. That spring (1871), Bishop Gradin of St. Albert selected Father Alexis André O.M.I., then residing at St. Albert, to found a permanent mission. He accompanied the winterers near Fort Carlton on their annual buffalo hunt in the summer of 1871, then returned to St. Albert to seek an assistant. Bishop Gradin gave him as companion and assistant Father Bourguine, and the two missionaries joined the winterers in their camp on 8 October¹. By this time these parkland Métis had probably been reinforced by a number of Red River Métis -- during the summer and autumn of 1870, between 30 and 40 Métis families had migrated from Red River.²

A temporary church and a residence for the missionaries were erected. Fifty families were in the camp that winter, receiving daily religious instruction. Buffalo were plentiful in the camp's vicinity. Father André impressed upon his flock the importance of establishing a permanent colony,³ and at his urging, on 31 December, 1871, a

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general meeting of the Métis winterers was held. Previously, at the Métis settlement of St. Albert near Edmonton, the residents had chosen Chief Factor Christie of the Hudson's Bay Company as the president of their general assembly to counsel them, and a committee had been selected by the assembly to draft a code of laws for the "self-government" of the Métis settlements. Following the lead of the St. Albert Métis, the South Saskatchewan Métis chose a Hudson's Bay Company official, Lawrence Clarke, the master at Fort Carlton, as the chairman of their gathering. The assembly had originally been scheduled for Christmas day but had been postponed to permit Clarke to make the journey from Fort Carlton. The vice-chairman was Joseph Hamelin, a member of a family prominent at Red River, and the secretary, Father André.

Clarke opened the proceedings by stating that "whatever steps they took to form themselves into a permanent Colony, they would have the best wishes and sympathies" of his company. He underlined the importance of abandoning the "lives of semi-savages." Having no fixed abode and shifting with the "eccentric wanderings" of the buffalo like the prairie Indians, they were excluding themselves from the benefits offered by a "civilized" community, especially regular religious instruction and education. Without the latter, "they could never hope to rise in the world but must remain forever the slaves and helots of their more intelligent fellow citizens." Their national survival as a people now depended upon making this crucial transformation from wanderers to cultivators, for the buffalo would be annihilated within another generation and within a few years there would be an influx of "hordes" or resourceful and skilled agriculturalists from "other Countries." If they resisted change and refused to accept the inevitable, the next generation of Métis could look forward only to abject

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poverty; they would be scattered over the West, surviving upon the few fish they could catch in the small lakes and the handouts they received from the more resourceful settlers of the land. Clarke emphasized that the transition, if begun immediately, could be gradual. The west had not yet been invaded by settlers, so it was crucial for the Métis to stake their claims to good agricultural land and settle upon them permanently. If they delayed, the best lands would be taken by the anticipated new settlers. Having staked their claims, they for the present could continue hunting the buffalo, and in addition, could serve as freighters. They would thus have three alternate means of gaining their livelihoods; if one or two failed in a particular year, they would still have the third to fall back on. Hamelin endorsed Clarke's views.

After some discussion between Clarke and Father André, Clarke suggested that before the discussions proceeded, a point of departure should be agreed upon by those assembled: that the object of the meeting was "the full determination to found a French Métis Colony. If they would abide by and religiously carry out the Resolutions that may be adopted to achieve that end." He called for a vote by a show of hands. There was an unanimous yes vote, accompanied by much applause. The older, respected members of the community then each in turn rose to speak. The first, Isidore Dumont dit Ai-caw-pow, related that he knew a region between Fort Carlton and Prince Albert which was well suited for agriculture, had ample timber for building and fuel, good grass for horses and was not too distant from the buffalo country. Philippe Gariépy stated that he had examined the region and that "they could not find a better situation." There was a creek of good water on the claim which would be advantageous for their cattle and horses and might be used

as well for a "Mill Stream". Those who spoke acknowledged that a new age was beginning and that the Métis' national survival depended upon their ability to abandon their nomadic way of life.

When the elders had concluded their speeches, Hamelin proposed a resolution that a committee be chosen from those assembled, to be headed by Father André, and be empowered as early as the spring "to examine and choose and allot a claim near to Carlton -- for the proposed French Métis Colony, and that the present assembly will accept of the said committee's decision for the location of said claim as final;" that the members of the committee should be: Father André, Secretary, Hamelin, Jean Dumont Junior, Jean Dumont dit Chakaska, Isidore Dumont dit Ai-caw-pow, Joseph Hamelin, Philippe Gariépy, Joseph Paranteau Senior and Louison Batoche Senior. Clarke then cautioned that those voting for the resolution must accept the decision of the committee as being binding. After the establishment of the colony, no member would have the right to withdraw; those who did so would be branded as traitors. Those who desired not to be bound could abstain from voting. The resolution was carried amid great applause. Following an address by Father André and a resolution thanking Clarke for his good services, the meeting was adjourned.⁴

The Hudson's Bay Company's encouragement of permanent Métis settlements on the South Saskatchewan was motivated, at least in part, by business considerations. The South Saskatchewan Métis had indicated that they would discontinue their annual journeys to Manitoba after the summer of 1871.⁵ This would make them dependent upon the company's post at Fort Carlton for articles they could not produce themselves; and settling on the land would make journeys to Manitoba increasingly more difficult and impracticable.

The committee was to make a preliminary survey of the region during the winter; the harsh weather, however, forced a postponement. A second survey was made in May. The committee recommended that the colony should be planted on the south branch of the Saskatchewan, with its boundaries being the two sides of the river ten miles below the crossing and ten miles above the present wintering camp. Duck Lake was within the projected limits. The settlement was officially named the parish of St. Laurent, in honour of the martyred saint of that name and Father André's brother, Laurent André, a priest serving the diocese of Quimper, in France.⁶

As the Canadian government's administration as yet did not extend into the parkland, the Métis of St. Laurent, at Father André's suggestion, assembled on 10 December 1873 to discuss the drafting of laws and regulations "pour maintenir entre eux la paix et le bon ordre soit dans l'intérieur de la colonie soit dans les carvanes de chasse a la prairie."⁷ With the support of Gabriel Dumont, the settlement's most prominent individual, Father André succeeded in persuading those assembled to elect each year "from among their number a chief and councillors invested with power to judge differences and to decide litigious questions and matters affecting the public interest." The assembly decided that the president and the members of the council should be elected for one year, and during their yearly term, they should be empowered to judge all the legal cases which were placed before them. The president, upon the advice of the council, could convoke public assemblies for the purpose of submitting for their acceptance matters of importance.

The Métis recognized, when they drafted their laws and regulations and provided for the election of a president and

councillors, that they were not creating an independent state, but were taking these measures only because so large a society as the parish of St. Laurent could not exist without some organization. The residents of the parish acknowledged that they were loyal subjects of the dominion of Canada, and their government and law code would be abolished so soon as the federal government appointed magistrates for the community and established a sufficient force to implement the laws of the dominion.⁸

Gabriel Dumont was elected by the public assembly as the president and eight councillors were selected, Alexander Hamelin, Baptiste Hamelin, Pierre Gariépy, the son-in-law of Cuthbert Grant and a former commander of the White Horse Plains brigade, Baptiste Gariépy, Abraham Montour, and Isidore Dumont Jr., Jean Dumont Jr., and Moise Ouellette, the latter three being respectively Gabriel Dumont's brother, cousin and brother-in-law. Following the election of the president and the councillors, Father André suggested that they should take an oath before him pledging that they would perform their duties honestly and judge all the cases presented to their tribunal. The president and the councillors agreed to do so on the condition that all the members of the public assembly likewise swore that they would cooperate to enforce the laws made by the president and the councillors and carry out the judgements rendered. André then proceeded to read and explain the nature of the oath and pointed out that he would receive the oaths as their spiritual mentor and not as a civil official. All the members of the assembly then came forward, in turn, on their knees, kissed the bible, and swore that they would maintain the laws and punish those who broke them.⁹ In the tradition of the buffalo hunt, the enforcement of the law code and the decisions of the president and council were

delegated to selected captains and soldiers. Father André regarded the acceptance of the code of laws as marking a momentous occasion: it signified the dawning of a truly civilized community.¹⁰

The law code, having 28 clauses, was wide-ranging in its scope and application. In the Métis tradition, the penalty imposed upon a malefactor was the payment of a fine. The first five articles regulated the meeting of the council and the implementation of its decisions. The council and the president would assemble on the first Monday of each month in a house chosen beforehand by the president to consider cases submitted to their arbitration, and the president and any councillor who did not have a valid reason for being absent would be fined five louis. A captain refusing to carry out the council's orders and a soldier the orders of a captain would each be fined three louis and one louis and a half respectively.

As well a fine would be levied upon any person who insulted the council in the performance of its duties or the implementation of its decisions. To plead before the council, an individual would be obliged to inform the president beforehand, and deposit with him five shillings as security and also two louis, five shillings to compensate the president and the council for their loss of time. On the conclusion of the case, the loser would pay all the costs. If the plaintiff came to a compromise with the second party, the plaintiff would pay five shillings to the president and to each member of the council. Once a dispute was brought before the council, no arbitrators outside the council could judge it. Each individual pleading a case before the council would be required to promise that he would never appeal the decision of the council to another tribunal when the dominion government appointed regular

magistrates to administer justice in the north west. Every witness would be paid two and a half shillings a day.

Absent from the law code was any reference to the crime of murder, and of the crime of stealing, only the taking of another person's horse "without permission" was mentioned, the guilty party being obliged to pay a fine or two louis. The honour of an individual and the chastity of a young women were protected. Any person defaming the character of another was liable to pay a fine in proportion to the rank of the individual slighted or to the degree of the injury; and any young single man who dishonoured a "young girl" under the pretext of marriage, and subsequently refused to marry her, and any married man who dishonoured "girls", each would be fined 15 louis. A fine was levied for setting fire to the prairie after 1 August. Relations between servants and employers were regulated. A servant leaving his employer before the expiration of the term agreed upon would forfeit his wages, while an employer who dismissed his servant without adequate reason would pay his wages in full. On Sundays, a servant could be required to perform only duties "absolutely necessary;" on an "urgent occasion," the master could demand that he tend his horses, but only after the high mass. No servant could be prevented from attending church, "at least in the morning." In the payment of his fine, no married man possessing three or fewer animals would be obliged to give up any of them.¹¹

There followed on 10 February 1873 a public assembly, and it approved land-holding regulations based upon those at Red River. Each family head was permitted to possess a river-lot having a quarter of a mile frontage on the river and extending two miles into the interior. Each of his sons over 20 years old could own his own farm. The land proprietor was given the exclusive hay and wood cutting privileges, and no one could cut wood and hay on his

holding without his permission. Lands which were solely covered with wood and considered to be unfit for cultivation would be "common to all the inhabitants established at St. Laurent," though each individual was prohibited from cutting more wood than his family was capable of using in two weeks. All disputes arising concerning boundaries and limits of lands between neighbours would be settled by a commission of three men, appointed by the council. The party found guilty of trying to encroach upon his neighbour's property would be fined by the commissioners at the rate of five shillings a day.¹²

The Métis did not transfer to the site selected in 1871 for their permanent colony until the spring of 1874, remaining until then in their wintering camp. Father André wrote in his "Petit Chronique" for 1874 that it was with the greatest difficulty that they could be persuaded "à s'établir sur des terres d'une manière définitive." The easy life of the prairie drew them like a magnet, while the agricultural life "excite toutes leurs répugnances." Nevertheless, once they transferred to the new colony, the majority showed surprising energy. On the banks of the previously uninhabited South Saskatchewan one could see in 1874 "de jolies maisons."¹³

The limits of the mission's property at St. Laurent were "au nord la petite rivière qui coule à un demi mille de la mission; au sud le lac marque les limites de la mission. La mission possède de ce côté toute la terre qui se trouve ce côté de la petite coulée qui se trouve avant d'arriver à la maison de Charles Racette." The mission's land was purchased by Father André from Baptiste Hamelin and Joseph Parenteau. The mission possessed also the hay and wood rights, and all individuals were excluded from cutting both in the interior within two miles of the river. Father André was aided by Lawrence Clarke at Fort Carlton, who was

considered to be the benefactor of the colony. He donated money to the mission and also "une belle cloche." The Métis were generally well disposed toward the mission.¹⁴

According to George Woodcock, in his Gabriel Dumont, Gabriel Dumont in 1873 built his first house of logs plastered with clay and whitewashed. It had but two rooms, a large room for sleeping, dining and entertaining 21 feet long by 17 and one-half wide, and a kitchen 14 feet square. There was a number of small buildings about the residence in the Métis style, including a stable for Dumont's four horses, and a semi-underground icehouse, where meat and fish were stored during the winter. The buildings stood near the ferry he had started in autumn of 1872.¹⁵

By 1875, the mission consisted of "cinq corps de bâtiments." That year a house, covered with hay, was completed for the residence of the missionaries. It contained:

un oratoire privé assez convenable, un vestibule, un chambre de réception, une chambre à coucher pour le R.P. Supérieur. Elle a encore l'avantage précieux pour des missionnaires d'être conforme à nos Saintes Règles... Du reste il en est de même des autres bâtiments sans en excepter l'espèce de grange qui nous sert d'église. Tous: la cuisine, les hangards bâtis selon la coutume des architectes de pays en troncs bruts d'épinette de liard, bousillés en terre glaise et recouverts en chaume, annoncant la pauvreté d'une mission naissante et indiquant un état provisoire.¹⁶

The school house, however, remained uncompleted, the Métis still having shown little zeal in providing for the

education of their children. The cemetery also was not finished. In fact, the Métis, having shown so much energy the year before, now were apathetic, a pattern which was consistently to recur in the succeeding years. The lack of perseverance was a deficiency which Father André never failed to lament. The scattering of houses here and there and their indifferent state, André complained, "sont autant de tristes monuments de la paresse, de l'insouciance, de l'inconstance de cette peuplade de Métis qui n'ont pu encore jusqu'à ce jour reconnaître le devouement de ceux qui s'occupent de le bien-être matériel aussi bien que leurs intérêts spirituels." To them the prairie was an enchanted land which constantly drew them forth. The missionaries redoubled their efforts, both in sermons and in private discussions, to dissuade them from depending upon the prairie. Because of the alarming decline in the numbers of the buffalo, they were exposing their families more and more each year to the possibilities of death by starvation. "Rienne [sic] peut les ramener à des goutes plus civilisées et plus Chrétiens", André lamented.¹⁷

One year after the historic assembly of 10 December 1873, the people of St. Laurent assembled in the church to receive back from the president and the councillor the powers they had delegated to them, their term of office having expired. The president and the councillors, as a matter of course, "begged" the assembly to elect another president and other councillors; they stated that they would be content to be freed from their exacting duties which had occasioned for them a "great loss of time," though they were cognizant that the law code and its enforcement had had a beneficial effect, the community having lived in tranquility and having experienced not the "slightest disturbance." Father André then addressed those assembled, exhorting them

to do all they could to preserve and implement the laws, and to retain their confidence in the men who had watched over the laws throughout the year and had prevented, by the "wholesome measures which had been passed," the outbreak of disorders and quarrels. The election of the president and the councillors then proceeded. Gabriel Dumont was unanimously re-elected as president, and the councillors elected were Alexandre Hamelin, Baptiste Boyer, Abraham Montour, Moise Ouellette, Jean Dumont Jr., Isidore Dumont Jr. and Baptiste Hamelin. The president and the councillors were reaffirmed in the rights delegated to them the previous year, and the measures which they had passed during the first year of office were ratified by the public assembly.¹⁸

The public assembly having delegated to the president and the councillors the power to frame laws and having authorized them to levy upon each family residing in the parish of St. Laurent a contribution not exceeding one louis (dollar) for public measures, the president and the councillors on 25 January 1875 met to discuss the subject of a schoolhouse, which was urgently required for the education of the young. They unanimously agreed that each head of a family would be taxed one dollar, the money to be used toward the construction of the schoolhouse. The tax could be paid either in money, provisions or labour, and no head of a family would be exempt unless he presented himself before the council and proved his inability to contribute. Payments were to be made within one month to Moise Ouellette, who was encharged with the collection.¹⁹

Dumont and the councillors also framed a new buffalo-hunting code, designed to eliminate the excessive slaughter of the declining buffalo. Father André was particularly worried that these animals were "disappearing with terrible rapidity." The Métis, using "destructive weapons," were

responsible, with the whites, for the slaughter. More and more Métis were passing the winter each year on the prairie, and André surmises that if no restrictions were placed upon winter hunting, the buffalo would disappear within five years. The buffalo-hunting law code restricted the excessive slaughter somewhat, but André felt that only prompt action by the government could save the buffalo.²⁰

The 25 'Laws for the Prairie and Hunting' provided that every spring at the end of April, a public assembly would be held in front of the St. Laurent church to establish the date of the departure of the buffalo-hunting brigade for the prairie. Unless authorized by the council, no one could leave before this date, and anyone infringing upon this regulation would be subjected to a fine. Should a group of individuals conspire to start secretly beforehand the president would be authorized to order the captains and soldiers to pursue them any the president would be authorized to order the captains and soldiers to pursue them and bring them back, and the malefactors would be obliged to pay the wages of those captains and soldiers at the rate of five shillings a man. Those persons who were in want of provisions could be permitted by the council to start before the appointed date to seek sustenance on the prairie, but they could not proceed beyond a certain point where they would be obliged to await the brigade; those who hunted beyond the rendezvous point before the arrival of the brigade would be subjected to a large fine to be determined by the council and based upon the damage caused. Once the brigade arrived at the rendez-vous point, the prairie laws would be in force, and the captains, guides and trackers would be named. No one could start in the morning before the guide gave the signal, and the carts would be formed

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into a circle, the guide determining where each individual should stop his cart and pitch his tent. No shooting would be permitted if the buffalo were announced to be in the neighbourhood. All families would be required to extinguish their fires in the morning. Any party independent of the brigade living in proximity to it would be warned by the council not to run the buffalo beyond the time fixed by the council for the brigade, and if the party disregarded this notice, "the Council of the great camp, shall take measures to oblige these people to join the camp: should they not be willing to do so, they will oblige them to do so by force." Other measures dealt directly with the course of the buffalo hunt. Should a man be wounded by another during the hunt, the man who wounded him would be obliged to work for him until he recovered from his injury. A man who killed another's horse would pay the value of the horse. Anyone abandoning a buffalo on the prairie would be fined one louis, as would an individual starting before the hunting signal was given. Captains and soldiers failing to carry out their duties would also be fined.²¹

Father André believed that the buffalo-hunting law code, like the domestic law code adopted in 1873, could be implemented only if a priest were ever present on the Métis, journeys. The Métis were "so proud by nature and so independent in character", and if left "free from all check would have given way to all sorts of disorders."²²

A most fortunate incident occurred on the spring hunt in 1875 which severely tested the ability of the leaders of the Métis community to implement the new buffalo-hunting law code. A party of freemen comprised of four families journeyed to Fort Carlton from the Upper Saskatchewan where they had passed the winter of 1874-75. Having bartered the products of their winter hunt for fresh supplies at Fort Carlton, they joined a party of other hunters and Indians

who were going to the prairie to procure country provisions for themselves and their families.²³ Three Métis of St. Laurent, Baptiste Primeau, Alexandre Cadien and Théodor Covenant, were in the party formed, which also included two country-born, Peter Ballendine, a former officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, and William Whiteford.

Ten days after their departure the St. Laurent brigade, led by Gabriel Dumont and accompanied by Father Vital Fourmond, a recent arrival at St. Laurent, started off in the direction of Rivière la Biche (Red Deer River). After a 12 day march bands of buffalo were sighted, giving high hopes of a fruitful hunt. Ballendine and his party were in the vicinity and had begun their hunt without awaiting the brigade's arrival. As this contravened the buffalo-hunting code, Dumont on 17 June sent a letter by a courier requesting them to come into his camp. When Ballendine failed to appear, a meeting of the council was convened at it was decided that the new code should be strictly enforced and that an example should be made of these malefactors.²⁴ Dumont with 40 men, mounted and armed with repeating rifles, rode into their camp and seized their horses, carts, provisions and personal possessions, "leaving the plundered people on the plains "naked of transport conveyance for themselves and families." Soon Dumont returned the confiscated effects, and being unable to coerce the party into joining his camp, used "violent personal threats to individuals," and levied a substantial fine upon some members of the party.²⁵ Apparently Primeau was fined 5 pounds, Cadien 7 pounds, 10 shillings, and Covenant a pound, and goods estimated to be equal in value to their fines were taken from their carts.²⁶

The Indians who formed the bulk of the party were naturally upset by Dumont's actions, and at one point were determined to resist by force. They, however, were

dissuaded by Ballendine, who promised to communicate the details of the incident to Lawrence Clarke at Fort Carlton and demand redress. Ballendine and one of his men, most likely Whiteford, having been given permission by Dumont to proceed to Fort Carlton with their buffalo robes, reported their ordeal to Clarke, the only justice of the peace in the region.²⁷

Clarke immediately wrote an alarming letter to Alexander Morris, the lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories. The Métis of the Saskatchewan, comprising a population of 150 families, Clarke maintained, "have assumed to themselves the right to enact Laws, rules and regulations for the government of the Colony and adjoining Country of a most tyrannical nature, with the minority (?) of the Settlers are perforce bound to obey or be treated with criminal severity." A court of 14 persons, presided over by Gabriel Dumont as "President", had been established and before it "all delinquents are made to appear or suffer violence in person or property". The tribunal possessed the power to impose a heavy fine, and upon being found guilty of an offence, the accused was "obliged to pay to each of the members of the court, one dollar per diem for each sitting which penalties are levied instantly upon the personal Effects of the Parties against whom judgement is given, and all Protests treated with contempt." Further, the court claimed to have "the power to enforce their Laws upon all Indians, Settlers and Hunters, who frequent the Prairie country in the lower section of the Saskatchewan: and have levied by violence and Robbery large sums of money of inoffensive persons who resort to the Buffalo Country for a livelihood."

Clarke then proceeded to describe the episode on the prairie. This, he maintained, was not an isolated incident; he had received "Repeated complaints...of a like nature" and

requests for redress, but as he did not have a military or police force at his disposal, he had been obliged "to smooth matters over the best way I could." He concluded by asserting that both he and Chief Commissioner James A. Grahame of the Hudson's Bay Company agreed that unless a military force were stationed near Carlton, they could not "answer for the result, serious difficulties will assuredly arise and life and property be endangered." Within 50 miles of Carlton there was a large number of Indians and Métis who were in everyday contact with the settlers, and a force was necessary to secure their respect for the law, especially as he had received a report that the Indians intended to turn back the carts conveying the wooden poles and other materials intended for the construction of the telegraph line between Fort Pelly and Edmonton. Clarke maintained that he had not previously written upon these matters because "I hesitated to trouble you until I felt assured that the peace of the country was endangered: a certain feeling having got abroad that Hudsons Bay officials are necessarily alarmists and that information, with regard to the State of the County coming from them should be looked upon with suspicion."²⁸

Upon receiving Clarke's letter, Lieutenant Governor Morris conferred with Colonel Smith and James McKay, a respected Métis and member of the North West Council. Morris had thought that the Métis had only "designed to form a Prairie hunt organization," but Clarke's assertions that they were enacting laws for their colony and enforcing them upon the Métis, Indians and settlers alike, and "resorting to robbery and violence" were unexpected and called for prompt action.²⁹ He sent his recommendation that a detachment should be sent to Carlton to Sir E. Selby-Smythe, the commander of the Canadian militia who was at the time in the North-West Territories assessing the performance of the

Mounted Police. Selby-Smythe thought that Clarke's report might be exaggerated, but that its accuracy could not be determined without a local inquiry. He discussed the report with the commissioner of the Mounted Police, George Arthur French, stationed at Swan River Barracks, who concurred. A detachment of 50 men, commanded by French and accompanied by Selby-Smythe, left Swan River on 29 or 30 July. French, Selby-Smythe intended, would also serve as a stipendiary magistrate. Selby-Smythe planned, if he found that Clarke's report was accurate, to leave a party of Mounted Police at Carlton on French's return to Swan River. Selby-Smythe took personal responsibility for sending the detachment; he left without having obtained permission from the Department of Justice.³⁰

The march of 270 miles took only eight days. From his interviews with Clarke, Assistant Commissioner Hamilton and other local people, Selby-Smythe concluded that "the matter is one in no way requiring military interference." The appearance of the first Canadian government force ever to have crossed the Saskatchewan River, however, he believed, had had a salutary effect; for while the situation on the Saskatchewan did not warrant, at the moment, the interference of a military force, there was "an impression that if not checked at the out-set, the action of Dumont might reach a state in which force might become necessary." This the appearance of French's men had undoubtedly done, and he decided that it was necessary to leave a small detachment of about 12 men and six horses at Carlton for its moral effect and to arrest any person for whom a warrant could be obtained.³¹ From his investigations, he concluded that "Dumont and others are acting under the belief they are not doing wrongful acts acting under the counsel of Père André their Curé, but the execution of the Law by the police will I doubt not convince them of their

error."³² Selby-Smythe also advised the minister of justice that the question of the Indians' refusal to permit work on the telegraph to proceed could be solved only by the signing of the long-promised Indian treaty, not by the "interference of Military or Civil Power." Unfortunately, a government force had appeared in their territory before its signing, leaving open the possibility of some misunderstanding.³³

Selby-Smythe departed for the western part of the Saskatchewan 7 August, leaving French to oversee the deployment of Mounted Police in the Carlton region and to equitably dispense justice to the participants in the incident on the prairie. French recognized that it was the Métis custom, upon organizing a buffalo-hunting brigade, to delegate to the officers the power to implement the rules and regulations of the hunt. The penalties imposed upon the breakers of the rules were fines, and the rules were more strictly enforced when the brigade was in the immediate vicinity of the buffalo. Hence only the extension of these rules to those "who did not belong to his camp" could be considered illegal acts. And as Dumont allegedly did fine someone to whom the Métis regulations did not apply, he believed that Dumont should be held accountable. Dumont was still hunting on the plains, and French decided to leave Inspector Leif Crozier behind for a fortnight to assist Clarke, who was the only justice of the peace in the region, "in his magisterial capacity." In keeping with Selby-Smythe's orders, he detached from his force 12 men to be left behind for the winter at Fort Carlton and to be quartered within the Hudson's Bay Company fort. He foresaw no difficulty in maintaining these men; indeed Clarke was eager to please. However, French recommended that if the government intended, as it appeared necessary, to station "a

considerable number of men...in this neighbourhood next year," "a proper post" should be established "at or near the point at which the Telegraph line crosses th[e] South Branch of the Saskatchewan, as I had the honor to recommend last spring."³⁴

The presence of the 50 man Mounted Police force had an immediate effect upon the Métis community. Two Métis involved in the arrest of Ballendine and his party came into Carlton on 6 August to express their regrets for the incident.³⁵ They were concerned about the consequences of their actions and begged Clarke to intervene on their behalf with French. They maintained that they were not aware at the time that they were acting against the law, and promised that if they were pardoned, they would always "be good citizens and abide by and obey simply those who have the power of enforcing the laws of Canada." Dumont, Clarke expected, would be arrested and tried when he returned from the hunt. However, Clarke was now inclined to deal "leniently" with him, because it was evident that he had acted on the advice of others "who should have known better."³⁶

French returned to Swan River Barracks probably on 8 August and before leaving Carlton, he instructed Crozier to arrest Dumont on the charge of having illegally fined Primeau, who claimed that he did not belong to Dumont's brigade. Crozier was to remain at Carlton for a fortnight to act as a justice of the peace with Clarke if necessary.³⁷

Shortly after his return to Swan River, French ordered Sub-Inspector Frechette to question Father André about the episode on the prairies and obtain from him, if possible, a copy of the Métis 'Rules and Regulations.' The law code received from André was translated into English. French did not find any of the regulations in the code objectionable,

and he considered it natural for "these simple hunters" to adopt for their settlement at St. Laurent rules similar to those in force on the hunt. While the principle that a colony within a country could frame its own laws could be questioned in the legal sense, it was not unexpected that on the South Saskatchewan, where the laws of Canada "virtually" did not exist "and where the few Justices of the Peace are Hudson Bay Cos. officials, inimical to them (as they suppose), settlements should band themselves together for mutual protection." And rule 19 specified that all the residents of St. Laurent had voluntarily become members of the association. He discovered only two Métis acts that could be considered to be "criminal," the incident on the prairie this year and a similar one the previous year. And while Dumont's action this year could not be condoned, the leader of the buffalo-hunting party was a member of their association and Dumont therefore was justified in fining him. French concluded that "from what I have seen of the Half-Breeds, I consider them a well disposed law-abiding people, the few infractions of the law that do occur, being mainly due to ignorance of laws with which they have little chance of becoming acquainted." He recommended to the deputy minister of justice that "no further action be taken against Dumont or others, if they make good the Fines and losses which they have inflicted on persons outside of their organization."³⁸

Crozier, instead of trying to arrest Dumont, attended with Clarke a meeting of the Métis at St. Laurent on 20 August, Father André there elaborated upon the reasons why the Métis of St. Laurent had framed a law code and established a local government, expatiated upon how the government worked and assured Crozier and Clarke that the Métis had not intended to usurp the rights of the dominion,

and had acted only because the rule of law did not exist along the South Saskatchewan. Following the discussion, Crozier concluded that the Métis had been justified in setting up their local government, and Dumont's action on the prairie could be excused. Clarke, too, was prepared to forget the incident, and he merely admonished Dumont to maintain the peace and retain his loyalty to the dominion of Canada.³⁹

The 1875 episode further fanned the resentment of the Métis against the Hudson's Bay Company and its local officers. The Métis blamed the company for the incident. Ballendine had traded at Fort Carlton, and the Métis suspected that Clarke had supplied his men with provisions and had sent them out secretly to get a head start on the other hunters and traders.⁴⁰

Father André included in his copy of the rules and regulations of the parish of St. Laurent which he sent to Commissioner French his observations upon the approaching destruction of the buffalo. The Métis buffalo-hunting law code, he wrote, could not in itself avert the destruction of the buffalo, and strong measures by the government were required immediately. He recommended that the Métis and the whites should be permitted to hunt only from the first of June to the first of November; that they should be forbidden to pass the winter on the prairie under the penalty of a fine of 500 louis and the confiscation of their robes; that only the Indians should be permitted to hunt in the winter, and that the government should heavily tax the hides of all the cows killed during the winter. He continued:

A radical measure must be adopted if the total extinction of the Buffalo race is to be stopped. Such a law would oblige the Métis to abandon the life of winter camping which brutalises them and makes them savages, and

would oblige them to take to the cultivation of lands, which would greatly conduce to their becoming civilised and providing useful citizens of the state, but a severe law is required to prohibit the winter camps on the prairie. At present the government has the means of putting such a law in force as detachments of the Mounted Police are scattered all along the Saskatchewan.⁴¹

French, in his despatch of 14 September, called the attention of the deputy minister of justice to Father André's recommendations.⁴²

In 1875, the North-West Territorial Council established a committee under the chairmanship of James McKay to deliberate and present a report upon measures which could be implemented to regulate the buffalo hunt and save the animals. The committee recommended the following measures:

- 1) No buffalo-hunting should be permitted between the first day of January and first day of June;
- 2) no pound should be permitted to capture the buffalo;
- 3) the killing of buffalo under the age of two years should be illegal;
- 4) the departure dates of the various hunting brigades for the prairie should be fixed by the North-West Council;
- 5) during the season closed to hunting, the government should provide food for the Indians;
- 6) no small party of hunters should be allowed to start for the prairie in advance of the recognized brigades;
- 7) the penalty upon conviction for contravening these regulations should be a fine not exceeding \$100 dollars or less than \$25 dollars for each offence.

The regulations were passed the following year, but could not be adequately implemented to save the buffalo.⁴³

The Métis played a prominent role in the succeeding year in the annihilation of the buffalo. The incident during the summer hunt of 1875 did much to undermine the ability of the president and the councillors subsequently to enforce the buffalo-hunting code. On the second excursion on the prairies in 1875, the autumn hunt, disregard for the regulations of the hunt was general. The hunters were guided by their self-interest and greed rather than by the welfare of the group, and the few who adhered to the regulations had a poor hunt. The 'Petit Chronique' comments that "C'était le règne de l'anarchie et de l'égoïsme dans la prairie." The slaughter of the buffalo was terrible considering that their numbers already had been so reduced. Finally, the soldiers of the camp were able to stop the thoughtless carnage and unite the hunters, who were dispersed over the countryside. Instead of returning to the parish of St. Laurent, most of the hunters went to Lac de Boeuf, where as many as 260 families wintered that year. Among them were at least 10 merchants. Never had so many traders been seen in a Métis community. They were as greedy for robes as the Métis had been that autumn for buffalo. There were not enough robes for all the merchants and the bidding swelled the price. Everybody thought only of gain. The subsequent scarcity of buffalo caused misery and hunger.⁴⁴

Those Métis who remained at St. Laurent this winter were making slow but sure progress in their newly adopted sedentary way of life. Despite the severe climate of the country, the church was usually full each Sunday, 60 to 80 persons attending. A number of those who lived in the vicinity of the church sent their children daily to the school, which had 20 pupils. To Father André, a sign that there was a sincere desire among the majority of the Métis who remained at St. Laurent to become good Christians was

their devotion to the Virgin Mary and the Holy Mass. They paid for their "bancs à l'église, le petite dîme" and supplied the mission with candles. That year, two significant events occurred which gave evidence of the dawning of a new age along the Saskatchewan: the telegraph line was extended along the river and a steamboat commanded by Captain Moore arrived at Prince Albert.

In 1875, Mr. Stobart, an Englishman of some means, established a store at Duck Lake. Though a Protestant, he befriended Father André and gained the good will of all.⁴⁵

A little progress was made in the colony the following year. The buffalo still lured the Métis to the prairie, and again the colony seems to have been relatively deserted during the winter. However, a few of the winterers did realize that the days of the buffalo were numbered and began cultivating land, some settling about Duck Lake and some in the vicinity of the mission. While they made annual trips to Red River to sell their robes and purchase their supplies, they found time to slowly increase their cultivation. One of them was Moise Ouellette, who sowed 30 "minots" (bushels) of barley, as well as other crops. He and all his brothers had settled on farms in the vicinity of the mission. Their elderly father's greatest ambition was that his children should be gathered about the mission, engaging exclusively in agricultural pursuits. However, the harvest was not encouraging. Little rain fell between spring and autumn and the wheat died. The potatoes and vegetables were rather indifferent, though the barley did not suffer much.⁴⁶

In 1876, the Métis living in St. Laurent made a subscription for the completion of the cemetery, and the work was done by Philippe Gariépy. Also "On est venu à bout de poser un plancher à l'église, le parc et les champs de la

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mission ont été enclos." This year, Father Moulin accompanied the Métis on their first hunt in the spring, Father André having gone to Red River.

At Duck Lake, a new mission called Mission du Sacré-Coeur was founded in 1876. Mr. Stobart gave \$800 ("piastres") towards the construction of the church, which was "40 pieds de long par 25 de large et construit au dépens de la mission du St. Laurent." Father André, who was placed in charge of the new mission, celebrated Christmas mass there, attended by 60 people. He was replaced as resident priest at St. Laurent by Father Vital Fourmond.⁴⁷

Both St. Laurent and Duck Lake continued to grow slowly in population in 1877, about 12 families settling at the two missions. To accommodate the increasing population, the chapel ("chapelle") at Duck Lake was increased 12 feet in length.

At St. Laurent, "la modète chapelle" of the mission was finished except for its small belfry, which was scheduled for completion in the spring of 1878. One room was added to the house of the Reverend Father, "qui la relie à la chapelle et près trois ans de service ne pouvant déjà plus empêcher l'élément liquide de pénétrer partout a dû être remplacé par un couverture en bandeaux." The work was done by Sieur Landry, a carpenter, at the expense of the mission. The cemetery was finally completed, and on 2 November a cross was placed and the cemetery was consecrated. Part of the cost was borne by the church and part was raised by subscription. The school, having stood in a half-built state at the entrance, was given to the mission by the people of St. Laurent. But later in the year, at the suggestion of Moise Ouellette, it was taken over again by the Métis, who desired to direct their own school affairs, and was transported at public expense "de l'autre bord."

Nevertheless, the school was not completed, the people being, as Father André lamented in his "Chronique,"

toujours prêts à commencer dans un moment d'enthousiasme et ne finissant jamais ce qu'ils ont commencé, soit qu'ils n'aient pas assez d'accords entre eux, ou bien assez de ressources, n'étant pas riches pour la plupart, ou bien encore pas assez de persévérance dans leur bonne volonté.⁴⁸

On his voyage from St. Albert to France that year, Bishop Grandin of St. Albert stopped at St. Laurent, which was within his diocese. After surveying the mission's progress, he decided that it was sufficiently advanced to have a convent for nuns, and authorized the founding of one. Immediately a subscription was begun by Lawrence Clarke at Fort Carlton, who had always outwardly shown himself sympathetic toward the improvement of the colony, and several from the Métis community followed his example. Within the colony, there was a growing number of regular church goers. For the Christmas "fête," the pews in the chapel were put up for bidding and fetched double the price of the previous year, although there were 30 additional places available. There were about 100 communions at Christmas, "et la fête a été des plus touchantes. Les chants religieux dirigés par Maître Norbert Larence feraient envie à plus d'une ancienne paroisse des Anciens Pays." A post office was established at the mission of St. Laurent and was named Post Office Grandin, in honour of Bishop Grandin.

At Duck Lake, the church was partially erected and covered by George Ness in the autumn of 1877. Work was scheduled to resume in the spring with the financial aid of Mr. Stobart. The latter housed Father André, the settlement at Duck Lake having grown large enough to require his

continual residence there. A fence around the "parc" was made at the expense of the church.⁴⁹

In 1877, Father André visited the Indians in the vicinity of Duck Lake and found them less indifferent to the Roman Catholic Church's teaching than hitherto. At their request, he accompanied them on their summer buffalo hunt. Their principal chief, Beardy (Petit Barbet), who had much influence among them though he was still cool toward the church, did not hinder André's work. "Pour entretenir leurs bonnes dispositions et les éclairer de plus en plus" they were given "pour catéchiste" and as "maître d'école", a young Frenchman, M. Ladret, who was "très zélé pour leur instruction civile et religieuse." They had already begun to farm the land, and fields and permanent houses were evident.

Father André also went to Battleford and established a mission there. He found there a considerable number of Catholics and a number of Indians who were well disposed toward the Catholic Church. Lieutenant Governor Laird also showed him much attention and kindness.⁵⁰

The winter was particularly mild at St. Laurent, and during the summer there was ample rain which gave bountiful harvests of wheat, barley and potatoes in 1877. The summer buffalo hunt in 1877 was relatively successful, but the autumn one was not, the buffalo having removed further to the west.⁵¹ The Métis, however, persisted in the hunt the following year. Father André accompanied only a small brigade of Métis on the 1878 summer hunt. The majority of the hunters had started off ahead in small groups in various directions, hoping to come upon the ever shrinking bands of buffalo. They had to journey much farther than hitherto, and the few buffalo which were encountered were very scrawny. The unsuccessful hunt drove up the price of the

pemmican "14 sous la livre." The autumn hunt was even worse, obliging many families to pass the winter far from the colony. Father Lestanc resided at their principal wintering camp, at the confluence of the Bow River and Rivière La Biche (Red Deer River). During the winter, the hunters were required to travel still farther from the camp "pour se procurer les vivres nécessaires," and several attempted to cross the American border but were prevented by the customs officers.

In contrast to the failure of the hunts, 1878 was a particularly good year for crops. The harvests of all crops, without exception, were bountiful and so plentiful was wheat, especially at Prince Albert settlement, that the price of flour dropped from \$10 ("piastres") to \$5 or \$6 per bushel.⁵²

St. Laurent colony, this year, attracted seven or eight lodges of indigent Sioux who lived on the charity of the colonists, though Father André praised them for being much easier to satisfy than the Crees of Duck Lake. The failure of the buffalo hunts, Father André feared, would result in the future in an influx of other famine stricken Indians into the colony, "qui elle-même est loin d'être riche." His principle concern was for the young among his flock who still persisted in viewing the buffalo hunt as the sole means of supporting their families. He lamented,

En effet, un trop grand nombre de Métis,
toujours confiants en la vitesse de leur
coursiers et à leur habileté à manier la
carabine, n'ont pas sérieusement pensé jusqu'à
ce jour à se faire des fermes et s'exposent
ainsi avec leur famille à devenir eux aussi les
victimes de la famine qu'il est facile de
prévoir pour un prochain avenir, si le

Gouvernement ne prend pas des mesures efficaces pour la prevenir.⁵³

The following year (1879), the missionaries succeeded in prevailing upon the majority "de nos bons chrétiens" to abandon their nomadic prairie life and become agriculturalists. Again there was a bountiful harvest. One of the leading farmers was a septuagenarian, Isidore Dumont, the father of Gabriel Dumont, who harvested 190 bushels of wheat. His wife maintained a garden which for several years had been unrivalled in the colony for its yield. Despite his great attention to his farm, Dumont was able to make several long trips during the year "pour se procurer les ressources nécessaires à l'entretien de sa ferme et de sa famille." He served as a model to the younger generations, along with another patriarch, Moise Ouellette, an octogenarian. The latter exhorted all around him to follow his example, and often was not sparing in his criticism toward those whom he considered to be lazy and inattentive to religion. Four of his sons were among the best farmers of the community. One of them had the best herd of animals in the parish, and the most modern farm machinery available. His three brothers were striving to emulate his success. The elderly man, besides farming, made long trips of several weeks in the depth of winter, hunting muskrats and foxes.⁵⁴

Throughout 1878 and 1879, the priest's influence over the residents of the parish of St. Laurent, both in temporal and spiritual matters, steadily grew. The people, on the surface at least, appeared to be devout and obedient Christians, celebrating all the holy days with solemnity, especially Easter, Christmas and "les Quarante-Heures," when almost all the population of communion age filled the church. About 800 communions were made in 1878. A solemn

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procession "du Très Saint Sacrement" commemorating "le triomphe si consolant de N.S. Jésus Christ dans la sainte et adorable Eucharistie," was held in 1878. Everybody contributed to the procession, which Father André described.

Un beau dais donné par l'oeuvre des Tabernacles Ombrageait le divin Jésus de l'Eucharistie porté dans un ostensor de vermeil, donné par nos bienfaiteurs de France, entre les mains d'un vénérable missionnaire glorieusement chargé de ses vingt ans de mission, le Rév. Père Moulin. Une croix d'argent donnée par les mêmes que l'ostensor, ouvrait la marche de la procession. Par une heureuse Providence, trois Soeurs et un Frère destinés à l'Ile-à-la-Crosse, étaient venus en ces jours se reposer de leur long voyage.

Leur repos fut de travailler tous le temps qu'il passèrent à la mission avec un zèle infatigable à orner la fête du Seigneur en improvisant bannières, pavillons, reposoir avec un succès qui fit l'admiration de tous nos pieux Chrétiens. Mais, que dire de la dévotion de ces derniers? Comment peindre leur recueillement, la dévotion de leurs prières, la ferveur de leur chants? Ce sont des choses que l'on peut admirer en les voyants, mais que la plume est impuissante à exprimer en les recontant.⁵⁵

At Duck Lake, the church of Sacré-Coeur, though not completely finished, was opened in 1878 "au culte." Father André, who now resided at Battleford, travelled to Duck Lake every Saturday to preside at Holy Mass every Sunday. The church was almost always full, and 50 Christians made communion there at Christmas. The Indians were also showing

greater attention to the Catholic religion, and Father André instructed them in Cree. Chief Beardy had agreed that he would permit his daughter to receive religious instruction and be baptised. The house of Stobart, Eden and Cyril at Duck Lake continued its generous support of the mission, and even some Protestants attended Sunday mass.⁵⁶

The judge at Battleford held his first court in 1878. For the first time the Métis of the South Saskatchewan were subject to the laws of Canada, and the abrupt transition from the traditional Métis code of law and law enforcement to Canadian law and its enforcement produced much discontent within the Métis settlements. One incident particularly upset the community, and only Father André's timely intervention prevented the occurrence of an ugly incident. A young Métis was sentenced to three months imprisonment for killing a bull belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. His parents and several of his friends, believing that he had been unjustly sentenced, desired to liberate him by force. Several hot heads promised to join the party. On learning about their intention, Father André hurried to the site of their gathering. He was able to dissuade them from carrying out their plan, and promised to accompany a deputation to present the young man's case before Lieutenant Governor Laird. The latter was sympathetic and promised to do whatever he could on the behalf of the imprisoned man.⁵⁷

In 1879, fewer Métis families from St. Laurent were engaged in the buffalo hunt. Those who did were required to cross the American frontier, and it was with the greatest efforts and dangers that they were able to procure enough food to survive.⁵⁸ There was apparently only one hunt in 1880, in the spring. The "Chronique" for 1880 says: "Bon nombre de nos chasseurs, non obstant les décourageantes nouvelles de la prairie, sont encore parti le printemps

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denier; ils ont dû franchir la ligne américaine et ce n'est qu'au prix de bien des dangers qu'ils sont venus à bout de se charge à moitié." Because of the annihilation of the buffalo, the prices of dried meat and pemmican reached record highs in 1880; dried meat was sold at 15 cents a pound and pemmican at 25 cents, and even at these prices, it was difficult to procure any. On the last buffalo hunt, one of the leading citizens of the colony, a man with a large family, was killed while chasing a buffalo, leaving his family destitute.⁵⁹

As a result of the disappearance of the buffalo, the Métis of the colony were required to concentrate primarily upon cultivation and freighting for their survival. The unpredictability of the weather in this northern latitude resulted in alternate years of good and bad harvests. In fact, harvest sometimes differed the same year in neighbouring districts. In 1880, the wheat fields of the country-born at Prince Albert were devastated by blight and frost, while St. Laurent had a generally good harvest. The wheat, potatoes and vegetables were particularly successful at the missions of St. Laurent and Duck Lake. The "Chronique" attributed the sparing of the two colonies from the misfortunes of the Protestant country-born to the protection of St. Laurent, who rewarded them for having given succour the previous year to the starving Indians. The two missions harvested 350 bushels of wheat, 50 bushels of barley and 360 bushels of potatoes.⁶⁰

The following year, however, the harvests were only "passible." Part of the wheat was killed by frost, though the wheat which was sown along the river banks was generally more successful. The mission at Duck Lake harvested 424 bushels of wheat. The potato crop failed in soil that was mouldy and too sandy, and a large part of the potatoes planted in better soil froze because of the cultivators'

ENDNOTES

1. A.G. Gluek Jr., "The Fading Glory," The Beaver, (Winter, 1957), pp. 50-51; A.G. Gluek Jr., "The Minnesota Route," The Beaver, (Spring 1956), pp. 44-50.
2. M. McFadden, "Steamboats on the Red", The Beaver, (June, 1950), pp. 31-33.
3. B. Peel, "First Steamboats on the Saskatchewan," The Beaver, outfit 295, (autumn, 1964), pp. 16-21.
4. Gluek, The Fading Glory; op. cit., pp. 50-51; Gluek, The Minnesota Route, op. cit., pp. 44-50.
5. D'Artigue, op. cit., pp. 140-150; vide also B. Peel, Steamboats on the Saskatchewan, (Saskatoon: The Western Producer, 1972), pp. 18-73.
- ✓ 6. S.F. Kalus, "Early Trials to Carlton House," The Beaver, (Autumn, 1966), pp. 32-35.
7. G. Simpson, Narrative of a Journey Round the World, during the Years 1841 and 1842, Vol. 1, (London: H. Colburn, 1847), p. 82.
8. Kalus, op. cit., pp. 34-36.
9. M. McNaughton, Overland to the Cariboo, an eventful journey of Canadian pioneers to the gold fields of British Columbia in 1862, introd. V.G. Hopwood, (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1973), pp. 19-48.
10. Klaus, op. cit., pp. 32-39.
11. B. Peel, "On the Old Saskatchewan Trail," Saskatchewan History, (May, 1948), p. 6.
12. Ibid., p. 7.
13. Ibid.
14. M. McFadden, "Assiniboine Steamboats," The Beaver, (June, 1953), pp. 38-42.

coincided with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway on the prairies; and they combined to end the prosperity of the Métis as freighters. Subsequently freighting along the Carlton Trail was limited to the conveyance of goods in the immediate vicinity of the Saskatchewan River, and there mainly in short hauls. By 1890, a branch line of the CPR connected Prince Albert and Regina, terminating what traffic remained on the historic overland route.

C

Batoche and Ferries Across the Saskatchewan

A number of prominent travellers have left us accounts of their experiences along the Carlton Trail. Milton and Cheadle passed through Fort Ellice and the Touchwood Hills in the same summer as the "Overland" party, though two months later in the season. They recorded in their diary that upon reaching the South Saskatchewan on 25 September, their men "cut down trees, make raft, and cross for Company's barge; unload carts, and transfer all baggage and selves to other bank, leaving carts and horses behind to be fetched in the morning." The following morning, the carts were "taken to pieces and brought across in barge. The horses driven in and swam across, causing some trouble and enduring severe lodgepolling before they would be induced to enter the water."¹⁵

John McDougall, the Wesleyan Methodist minister, relates that in the early 1860s the Hudson's Bay Company "very often" kept a boat at a crossing of the South Saskatchewan a short distance from Fort Carlton. When he reached the spot late one Saturday in the mid-summer of

1864, he could find only a canoe, and a "chunk of hard grease" to make it waterproof, left by the company. The Saskatchewan was in full flood and McDougall was encumbered by the supplies that he was transporting from Fort Garry to his father's mission at Fort Edmonton. He and his party rested all day Sunday, and on Monday morning began the difficult task of taking the supplies across the turbulent river. First the canoe's seams were covered with grease. The canoe was then conveyed well above the crossing because the current would carry it a considerable distance downstream. Two men handled the canoe, one man pulling on a line and the other wading along the shore to direct it away from the rocks. Upon reaching the desired embarkation point, both jumped into the canoe and paddled as hard as they could. About 300 pounds of supplies were placed in the canoe for the first trip, and about 400 pounds on each of the subsequent trips, which continued until sundown.

The following morning, the harnesses, camping equipment and the remainder of the freight were conveyed across in the canoe. The carts were brought as far up the river as there was beach, the carts' wheels were removed and fastened to the boxes and the boxes then were tied together, making a raft of carts. A long rope was tied to the raft. Three men then started across the river in the canoe, two men paddling and one man letting out the rope. After a difficult crossing they attempted to pull the rafts across with the rope, but the strong current caused the rope to break, and the raft was carried downstream. The three men jumped into the canoe and chased it, and succeeded, with great exertion, to direct it into a steep bank on the desired side of the river. The carts were removed from the water and the wheels were put back. Then began the difficult and dangerous procedure of driving the livestock across. The men tracked and pulled the canoe upstream to where they had left them.

The cattle and horses were unwilling to ford the swollen and turbulent river. They were repeatedly driven in, and it required several hours of tedious work by McDougall and his men to force them to cross. The horses wandered well beyond the river, and the following day McDougall was obliged to track and round them up, a task made doubly difficult by the severe cuts to his feet he had suffered in the water the previous day. The horses greatly facilitated the conveyance of the carts up the steep bank, and McDougall, thankful that nobody had drowned, made his way toward Fort Carlton.¹⁶

Another individual whose ingenuity and fortitude were tested by the river was Captain W.F. Butler. Butler, stationed at Red River after the Red River Rebellion, late in the autumn of 1870 was sent overland by Governor Archibald with smallpox vaccine supplies to the Hudson's Bay Company posts and the missionaries. He arrived at the South Saskatchewan at the beginning of November, after enduring a snowstorm. The river was not completely frozen, a channel being open down the middle; "An interval of some ten yards separated the sound ice from the current, while nearly 100 yards of solid ice lay between the true bank of the river and the dangerous portion." He got his "waggon-box roughly fashioned into a raft, covered over with one of our large oil-cloths, and lashed together with buffalo leather." Sufficient ice was broken to launch the makeshift raft, and a man continued to break the ice in front with an axe. However, as the water began oozing through the oil-cloth into the waggon-box, it was directed back to shore and emptied and launched again, without success. Camp was made for the night. Further failures were experienced the following day, and camp was again made. The river froze hard during the night and a crossing was effected in the morning, though not without the loss of Butler's horse

Blackie, which fell through thin ice and had to be shot.¹⁷

Sandford Fleming, accompanied by his secretary Rev. George M. Grant, and the botanist John Macoun, crossed the trail in 1872, passing and meeting within a day's ride of the Saskatchewan "a great many teams and brigades...traders going west, and half-breeds returning east with carts well laden with buffalo skins and dried meat." Grant notes on his arrival at the Saskatchewan that a new Métis village settlement (St. Laurent) was in the making. He wrote:

At this point of the river, where the scow is usually kept and where a regular ferry is to be established next year, crossing is an easy matter. When there was no scow, every party that came along had to make a raft for their baggage, and a whole day was lost. Our buckboard carts, and Mr. McDougal's waggons made two scow-loads; and the horses swam across. Some were very reluctant to go into the water, but they were forced on by the men, who waded after them - shouting and throwing stones - to the very brink of the channel. Once in there, they had to swim. Some, ignorant of how to do it struggled violently against the full force of the current or to get back, when they were stoned in again. Others went quietly and cunningly with the current and got across at the very point the scow made. The river for a few minutes looked alive with horses' heads, for that was all that was seen of them from the shore. As the water was lower and the force of the stream less than usual, all got across with comparative ease. The river at this point is from two hundred to two

hundred and fifty yards wide. A hand-level showed the west bank to be about a hundred and seventy feet high, and the east somewhat higher. Groves of aspens, balsams, poplar, and small white birch are on both banks. The valley is about a mile wide, narrower therefore than the valley of the Assiniboine or the Qu'Apelle, though the Saskatchewan is larger than the two put together. The water now is a milky grey colour, but very sweet, to the taste, especially to those who had not drunk of "living water" for some days. A month hence it will be clear as crystal. In the spring it is discoloured by the turbid torrents along its banks, composed of the melting snows and an admixture of soil and sand; and this colour is continued through the summer, by the melted snow and ice and the debris borne along with them from the Rocky Mountains. In August it begins to get clear, and remains so till frozen, which usually happens about the end of November.

Near the ferry an extensive reserve of land has been secured for a French half-breed settlement. A number of families have already come up from Fort Garry. We did not see them as the buffalo-magnet had drawn them away to the plains. The scantling for a house was on the ground near our camp.

After crossing, most of us drove rapidly to Fort Carlton, -- eighteen miles distant, on the North Saskatchewan -- being anxious to see a house, store, and civilized ways and people again.¹⁸

A regular ferry service at Batoche's Crossing was not in operation as late as April 1875. By the latter date Gabriel Dumont had a toll crossing on his property at Gabriel's Crossing, five or six miles west of Batoche, founded most likely in the autumn of 1872. E.W. Jarvis, having explored, in the late autumn and winter of 1874-75, Smokey River Pass for the Canadian Pacific Railway, returned in April 1875 from Edmonton to Fort Garry. On reaching the South Saskatchewan at the beginning of May, he

spent from three to four hours making two trips across with the scow a long way up on our side to ensure making a good landing on the other side. At the French half-breed settlement here the people were driven out of their houses by the rising waters, which seem to have been higher this spring than for many years past.

The grass having been all burnt off last autumn, gives the country a cheerless aspect; and we had to go to the margins of lakes or swamps to find any feed at all for the horses.

About 45 miles on the other side of the river, near "Spathanaw" or the Round Hill, where a road branched off to the southwest (the Carlton Trail branched here), he saw a sign in both English and Cree which read:

	Cart.....1s.6d
Gabriel's Crossing	Waggon.....2s.0
	Horses..... 6

Traverse de Gabriel Dumont

Cree letters underneath¹⁹

Dumont's ferry was a scow 23 feet long and 12 feet wide, capable of carrying four Red River carts or two wagons, and their oxen or horses. It was run on a rope cable and was propelled by oars. On high ground near the

approach to the ferry stood a small store, 14 feet square, owned by Dumont.²⁰

In 1875, the North West Territorial Council passed Bills authorizing the construction of three toll ferries across the south branch of the Saskatchewan: two by Richard Fuller, one at Clarksboro north of Saskatoon and the other at Battleford, and one by George McKay of Prince Albert "situated at or near the place where the present crossing known as 'Philippe Gariepy' crosses the said River...." The Bill authorizing McKay's ferry specified the following tolls: for every vehicle drawn by one horse or ox, 20 cents; for every vehicle drawn by two horses or two oxen, 30 cents; for every vehicle drawn by more than two horses or two oxen, 50 cents; for every horse, cow or ox, 10 cents; for every sheep, hog, calf or colt, 8 cents; for every horse with its rider, 20 cents; for every foot passenger, 8 cents; and for every article or goods without a vehicle over 100 pounds, per 100 pounds, 2 cents. The Bill guaranteed that no other ferry would be constructed within three miles of McKay. In return, McKay was obliged to maintain his equipment in working order, make repairs at his own expense, and provide "a crossing of some kind" should the ferry not be in running order. Damaged equipment had to be repaired within 12 months under penalty of forfeiture of his right to operate the ferry.²¹

In 1877, James Trow, the chairman of the immigration and colonization committee of the House of Commons, his son and a Mr. Moss, equipped with a Red River cart and a buckboard, travelled through Touchwood Hills post, Humboldt, along the left branch of the trail following the telegraph line, then north of Muskiki Lake near Bremen to Gabriel's Crossing. Trow described his crossing in the following manner:

up. After many unsuccessful attempts along the numerous trails, at last we arrived at the mission and found Father Foremand (Fourmond) at home - "monarch of all he surveyed." This gentleman was alone, the only male inhabitant that could be found for miles. Fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters, absolutely all excepting a few old men and young children, were away to the plains with their horses, cattle and dogs; hunting the buffalo and preparing their winter supplies. The younger members of the family take charge of the stock, the father and oldest sons chase and kill the buffalo, the mothers and daughters prepare the pemmican and dried meat, and tan and cure the robes. Many of these hunters are satisfied with supplies sufficient for the year; others remain longer and return with loads for sale to white settlers and traders. The French half-breeds are very indifferent farmers; they love a roaming, exciting life, are fond of the dance and assembling for fun and frolic.... I produced my credentials a letter of introduction from His Grace Archbishop Taché to Father Foremond, who very kindly invited myself and party to dinner. Letting out our animals we took a stroll through the church property, while the reverend father prepared the dinner, for he was a man of all work. Father Foremond is a devoted Christian minister; his very appearance would convince the most skeptical that he was sincere and devoted to his charge.... The chapel is erected on the summit of the river bank..., overlook the residences

of his parishioners for miles on both sides. In front of the church on a raised platform or triangle is hung a large bell, which can be distinctly heard for miles. Near the church we found an enclosed burying ground. Down in the dingle north of the house in a sheltered nook we saw a beautiful spring boiling up.

Trow was ferried across at Batoche's Crossing by Louis Letendre, the father of Xavier Letendre. Louis Letendre at this time about 80 years old. Trow does not mention paying a toll;²² in fact there is no record of the to being charged at any time before 1880, and Trow is the fi traveller to relate that a resident of the village of Bat had ferried him across. When Senator T.O. Davis, on his way from Winnipeg to settle on the North Saskatchewan in 1880, used Batoche's ferry, it was operated by Alexander P. Fisher, afterwards one of Louis Riel's lieutenants in the rebellion of 1885. Batoche was by then probably too old to run it, and indeed the crossing had become known as Fisher's Crossing.²³

The Reverend Daniel M. Gordon of Ottawa, on his journey in 1879 from Edmonton, used Gabriel's crossing.²⁴ On his tour through Manitoba and the North West Territories, Governor General Lord Lorne crossed at Batoche; W.H. Williams, a newspaper correspondent accompanying him, used Gabriel's Crossing.²⁵ Five years later, in December 1884, 20 Mounted Police, including an officer and a sergeant, travelling in bitterly cold weather from Regina through Fort Qu'Appelle and the Touchwood Hills to Fort Carlton, slept one night at Philippe Garnot's hostelry in Batoche, dining on steak and rice pudding. Corporal J.C. Donkin observed in the village a Catholic church, a post office, a blacksmith shop and a few houses including Batoche's. Gabriel Dumont had a saloon in the village, "a

small low-roofed log building plastered with mud. In it French billiards was played, nauseous hop-beer was imbibed and much violent sedition was talked by the Métis who frequented the place."²⁶ The first cable used to operate Batoche's ferry was not strung up until 1884.²⁷

Gabriel's Crossing ferry and Batoche's ferry, by 1880 operated by Alexander P. Fisher and known as Fisher's Ferry, were competitors and advertised their merits in the Battleford newspaper, the Saskatchewan Herald. For example on 21 June, 1880 these two advertisements appeared in the newspaper.²⁸

IMPORTANT NOTICE

To Travellers and Freighters,

GOING WEST

Saskatchewan Ferry

The public are informed that FISHER'S Ferry, late Batoche's will be in good running order by the opening of navigation.

TWO SCOWS,

The largest and best on the river, will be in constant readiness; the road from Humboldt has been greatly improved and straightened; and a direct road laid out to the Elbow of the Saskatchewan -- making a saving of twenty-five miles. This road crosses an arm of Duck Lake opposite the Church, where a FREE BRIDGE has been built.

The hills on both sides of the river are in good order, and travellers can rely on LOWER PRICES AND BETTER ATTENTION

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than at any other ferry.

A.P. Fisher

NOTICE.

GABRIEL'S CROSSING.

The public are informed that GABRIEL'S Crossing is now in readiness for the accommodation of the public.

One Scow, the Best on the River,

will be in constant readiness. The road by this ferry is the SHORTEST by twenty-five miles going to or going east from Battleford.

The public promptly attended to

GABRIEL DUMONT.

May, 1880.

CHAPTER VII
Government Land Policy and
Surveys in the Northwest
A
Land Holding Regulations

As a result of the Hind (1857-58) and Palliser (1857-59) explorations of the prairies, it was generally believed in the 1860s and 1870s that there were two distinct zones in the west: a fertile belt, running in an arc from the parklands of Red River through the North Saskatchewan to the foothills of the Rockies, and an arid region to the south, the extension of the Great American Desert across the frontier. While precipitation was low in the fertile belt, evaporation was less than in the lands to the south, making it suitable for farming. The botanist John Macoun was responsible for challenging the thesis that the southern region was unsuitable for cultivation, and his opinion was endorsed by the builders of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In the Red River region, lack of precipitation was not a problem. Rather, the settlements there were often plagued in the spring by inadequate runoffs of melting snow which delayed the planting of seeds and sometimes paralyzed farming. The Red River Plain is the bed of the former glacial Lake Agassiz which contracted about 8,000 to 10,000 years ago. Since then, there has been insufficient time for the tributaries of Red River to create channels across the flat plain to connect with the gullies carrying water down from the higher levels. The water running down from the

northern plateau settles in marshes between the Red River and the escarpment. In 1826, 1852 and 1861 the river itself overflowed. Only minor work was done before 1880 to drain the swampy regions.¹ Agriculture was uncertain and the opening of new lands to cultivation was difficult. While agriculture stagnated, both in method and expansion, the population increased. In the 1860s there was a substantial increase in emigrations from Red River to the better drained lands above the escarpment.

The purchase by the dominion of Canada of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company gave the federal government ownership over an area five times the size of the dominion. The Manitoba Act of 1870 stipulated that all ungranted land would be administered by Ottawa. At first the supervision of this newly acquired territory was assigned to the Secretary of State, but in 1873 the Department of the Interior was created and assumed the function. Until 1930, the natural resources of the region remained the property of the government of Canada.

An order in council of 25 April 1871 and the "Act respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion" of 14 April 1872 provided that any man who was the head of a family, or any unmarried man 21 years or over would be entitled to enter for a quarter section of land of 160 acres. He or his widow could receive a patent from the land officer upon presentation of proof that he had resided upon and cultivated the land for three years after submitting his entry application. Originally, he was obliged to reside on his land at least six months in each year, although groups of more than 20 families desiring to settle in a village were exempt.² The homestead duties were altered in 1884. Three means of fulfilling them were then permitted: (1) the original method; (2) residence anywhere within two miles of the homestead for two years and nine months, and

three months in a "habitable house" on the homestead, provided that ten acres were broken the first year, and 15 in both the second and third, and (3) a five year period in which residence anywhere was permitted the first two years, but cultivation had to begin within six months; five acres had to be broken the first year, those acres cropped and ten additional broken the following year, and a habitable house built; the ensuing years the homesteader was required to conform to the terms of one of the three year systems.³

Until 1879, a homesteader could select any unappropriated land. That year (25 June 1879) the government appropriated 100 million acres as railway lands. The lands within five miles of the proposed railway line were disallowed for homesteading and exclusively placed up for sale with the intention of realizing \$2 per acre. Outside of the railway belt, free grants of 80 acres were made in the even-numbered sections of all townships.⁴ Before the legislation could be implemented modifications were made. The regulations of 14 October 1879 increased the grants of land from 80 to 160 acres because of a similar change in the American system. Henceforth, lands were designated either odd-numbered or even numbered sections, the odd-numbered sections within townships signifying railway lands. The railway lands extended 110 miles on either side of the proposed railway line and were divided into belts, numbered from A consecutively to E. Belt A, land lying five miles on either side of and immediately adjoining the railway line, sold at \$5 per acre; belt B, fifteen miles on either side, adjoining belt A, at \$4 per acre, belt C, 20 miles on either side, adjoining belt B, at \$3 per acre; belt D, 20 miles on either side, adjoining belt C, at \$2 per acre, and belt E, 50 miles on either side, adjoining belt D, at \$1 per acre. The pre-emption lands

within the belts were sold at the following rates: in belts A, B and C, at \$2.50 per acre; in belt D, at \$2.00 per acre, and in belt E, at \$1.00 per acre.⁵

In 1881, it was decided that a private syndicate would build the railway. The CPR received a land grant of 25 million acres. Had the grant been limited to the line, it would have formed a belt 75 miles wide. However, as Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia were excluded, the quota for these provinces had to be made up in the region between Winnipeg and Jasper.⁶ Thus a large portion of prairie land came into the possession of the CPR, and this became a source of lasting grievance among the settlers.

A new regulation implemented in May 1881 provided that even numbered sections within 24 miles on either side of the railway line (the CPR railway belt) should be held exclusively for homesteads and pre-emptions. The preemptions within the 24 mile belt would be sold at \$2.50 per acre, and the odd numbered sections also at \$2.50 per acre. Outside the railway belt, the even-numbered sections would be held exclusively for homesteads and pre-emptions, and the odd-numbered for sale as public lands, to be sold at a "uniform price" of \$2.00 per acre cash. Pre-emptions outside the railway belt would also be sold at the uniform price of \$2.00 per acre, paid in one sum at the end of three years.⁷

These regulations were superseded by those published on 23 December 1881 which established four classes of land throughout the North-West Territories and Manitoba, in anticipation of the construction of railways other than the CPR. The odd-numbered land of class A, land within 24 miles on either side of the CPR or a branch line of the CPR, was reserved for the CPR; odd-numbered class B land, lands within 12 miles on either side of any projected railway line other than the CPR and odd-numbered class C land, lands

south of the main line of the CPR not included in categories A and B, each sold for \$2.50 payable at the time of the sale, and class D land, lands other than those of categories A, B, and C, for \$2.00 per acre, also payable at the time of sale. Pre-emptions for classes A, B and C sold at \$2.50 per acre, and class D at \$2.00 per acre.⁸ Through these regulations, more prairie lands passed into the hands of railway promoters.

The term "pre-emption" was defined in 1874 as the right of any settler filing entry for a homestead to receive at the

same time there with an interim entry for any adjoining quarter section then unclaimed, and such interim entry shall entitle such person to take and hold possession and cultivate the same (but not to cut wood thereon for sale or barter) in addition to his homestead, and the the expiration of the period of three years or upon the sooner obtaining a patent for the homestead under the fifteenth sub-section of this section, to purchase the said adjoining quarter section at the Government price, but the right to such interim entry shall cease and be forfeited together with all improvements on the land upon any forfeiture of the homestead right under the fourteenth sub-section of this section; and the provision of this section applicable to homestead rights shall apply to land for which an interimentry is obtained except as herein varied.⁹

The provision of pre-emption was abused, but because of strong pressure upon the federal government, it was not rescinded until 1890. Unappropriated dominion lands were also available at \$1.00 per acre with purchases restricted

to one homestead (640 acres) per person. However, it was possible for one individual to acquire large holdings by exploiting loopholes in the regulations. The regulations of 25 May 1881 entitled homesteaders on odd-numbered sections of land north of the railway belt to purchase as many as 320 acres at \$1.25 per acre.¹⁰

In its agreement ceding Rupert's Land, the Hudson's Bay Company retained ownership of one-twentieth of the land in question. The Lands Act of 1872 provided the following method of allotting the quota: "seven of the 1844 quarter sections in the usual township and section 26 in every fifth township (i.e. township no. five, ten fifteen etc.)
 ✓ comprising together 36 quarter sections out of every 720." ¹¹
 There were also lands in townships reserved as School Lands.

To promote the colonization of the North West Territories, the Macdonald government also encouraged the formation of land companies. They were intended to emulate the methods of the American branch railways in attracting settlers. Regulations passed on 23 December 1881 provided that all odd numbered sections located north of the 48 mile CPR belt would be available to companies which could manifest their ability and interest in fostering settlement. Each company would be required to place two settlers on each of the odd- and even-numbered sections within five years; the government, however, retained ownership of all the even-numbered sections, which remained open for entry as homesteads and pre-emptions.¹² The formation of land companies was encouraged by the land boom which swept Manitoba after the signing of the Canadian Pacific Railway contract. But the boom ended in 1882, and of the 160 companies which had successfully applied, only 27 paid their first instalment, one-fifth of the price of each acre (\$2.00 per acre). One company, the Prince Albert Colonization

Before the government officially approved the system, work was begun on surveying the principal meridian. It was selected to be about 10 miles west of Pembina probably because the land it covered was not as densely wooded as the region to the east. Progress was interrupted by the Red River Rebellion.

On the recommendation of Adams Archibald, the lieutenant governor of the newly created Province of Manitoba, in September 1870 the Dominion government modified Dennis' 1869 proposed system so as to make it conform more closely to the American model and permit the newly opened territory to compete favourably for immigrants with the wellknown and well-publicized American model. An order in council was approved on 25 April 1871 embodying the new regulations. It provided that the crown lands of Manitoba and the North-West Territories would be surveyed in rectangular townships, each having only 36 sections of one mile square each together with road allowances between all townships and sections of one chain and fifty links in width. Townships would be numbered in consecutive order in a northerly direction from the international frontier, and would lie in ranges and would be numbered, in Manitoba, east and west of the Winnipeg meridian, run in 1869. Section 3 stated that "The International boundary shall form the base for Townships 1 and 2. The East and West lines between Townships 4 and 5, 8 and 9, 12 and 13 and 16 and 17, shall be base lines or standard parallels in the system." Section 6 dealt with the want of parallelism of meridians:

The "jog" resulting from convergence
of meridians shall be allowed and set out
on the following lines, that is to say:
For Townships 1,2,3, and 4, on line between
Townships 2 and 3

For Townships 5,6 and 8, on line between
Townships 6 and 7

For Townships 9,10 and 12, on line between
Townships 10 and 11

For Townships 13,14, and 16, on line between
Townships 14 and 15

Before divisions into townships would be made, the land would be laid out in blocks of four townships each "by projecting the base and correction lines, and north and south lines (to be designated meridian exteriors.)" On these lines, at the time of the survey, all township, section and quarter section corners would be marked, "which corners are to govern respectively in the subsequent subdivision of the block."

Dennis was appointed Surveyor-General of Dominion Lands in March 1871. In the same month (7 March 1871), the supervision of dominion lands was transferred to the department of the Secretary of State, and the Dominion Lands Branch was created as a branch of the department. The Dominion Lands Branch became a branch of the Department of the Interior on its establishment in 1873.¹⁴

The surveying of the vast territory was begun in 1871 by 21 deputy surveyors, 15 of whom were assigned to the territories, and six to the settlement belt along the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Lindsey Russell, in July, was appointed the inspector of surveys, being responsible for supervising the surveys in the field. During the 1871 surveying season, he inspected many of the crews and their work. Progress during the year was hampered by numerous and severe prairie fires.

The corps of surveyors was expanded the following year to 46, in addition to Lindsay Russell and two newly appointed assistant inspectors, Milner Hart and A.H. Whitcher. The crews employed numbered about 400 men,

intervals of six miles, including road allowances, forming within it the outlines of the 16 townships it contained. The total length of the line surveyed was about 147 miles. Lastly, the subdividing or "Contract Surveyor" would divide each township into the 36 sections, and then the sections into quarter sections, the total length of line being about 976 miles. This three stage procedure was found to reduce expenses.²⁰ But when only the block survey was done, it also created greater problems than the first method, for now there were 16 instead of four townships in a block.

During the early period of the surveys, it was discovered that despite the improvement in the surveying equipment, such as the replacement of the ordinary surveying chain with a measure consisting of a continuous steel band, errors would accumulate as block surveys progressed. Errors in latitude could be checked by astronomical observations, but not errors in longitude. The telegraphic lines had yet to be erected, and "purely astronomical methods of determining differences of longitude would not make such determinations with sufficient correctness to serve the purpose." As a result, a special survey was authorized by an order in council in July 1875. Using as its starting point the first or Winnipeg Meridian, it was to be extended to Peace River. It was designed to check upon the correctness of the work already done on township divisions and to extend the township system to isolated pockets of settlers who were well in advance of the main surveys.²¹

The government also believed that the special survey would be valuable in laying the ground-work for the prosecution of surveys along the line of the proposed route for the Canadian Pacific Railway, accelerating the construction of the railway by making the blocking out of the land grants along the line easier. In addition, the

timber and mineral resources along the line could be evaluated. This work was delegated to a separate party under the chief of the special survey, Lindsay Russell, aided by his first assistant, A.L. Lindsay.²²

The special survey was "carried by means of triangulation for 250 miles westward from the initial meridian, in the manner called the 'ray trace' system in the survey of India." Then, at the end of this triangulation, a short distance to the west of Fort Ellice, a second initial meridian was drawn by the special survey, and as it advanced westward, a series of standard meridians and parallels were produced as far as Edmonton; at intervals of four degrees of longitude, the third, fourth and fifth initial meridians were established. The distance of this survey covered about 1,700 miles and along it 21 astronomical stations were established and the latitude of each was determined "by the most refined processes of astronomical observation that were possible in the field. As the construction of the telegraph line lagged so much behind, the initial meridians had to be made by the calculations of the surveyors alone; it had originally been expected that the initial meridians would be checked "by independent determination of the differences of longitude through the means of the electric telegraph." The special survey was hampered by the delays and costs encountered in erecting the high stations for observations, the territory covered being generally flat; the stations were necessary for making accurate triangulations.²³

The special survey proceeded slowly in 1875, retarded because a broken leg suffered by Lindsay Russell made impossible his personal presence in the field. The following season it was extended as far west as Fishing Lake, about 180 miles of meridians and parallels being surveyed. At the commencement of the season, Lindsay

Russell determined that the telegraph should be employed in helping the astronomers chart the additional initial meridians beyond the second initial meridian. To accomplish this, W.F. King, his astronomical assistant, was detached from the main section of the party and sent to make observations at Battleford, and by means of the telegraph, correlate them with the readings made at Winnipeg. Unfortunately, the telegraph line between Fort Pelly and Winnipeg was not in working order at any time during the summer, and Battleford's longitude could not be determined.

Meanwhile, the decline of immigration to the northwest caused by the unfavourable economic conditions in Canada and the visitations of grasshoppers to Manitoba during the previous three years, obliged the dominion Lands Branch to reduce its surveying activities. Besides the special survey, 16 surveyors were active, five on block surveys, six on township subdivision, five in surveying Indian reserves, one on settlement belt surveys and one on the survey of the main highway. The low scale of activity continued the following year, there being a surplus of townships available for the comparatively few settlers coming in. Seventeen surveyors were employed, including two assigned to the special survey which this year was divided into two sections, the eastern section supervised by A.L. Russell, and the western section by W.F. King.²⁴

In 1877, Russell and his surveyors started from the eastern shore of Fishing Lake, where the previous year's work had been suspended, and pushed northwestward a distance of 300 miles. Besides surveying the standard meridians and the parallels, he also surveyed 30 miles of settlement. Russell picked up his equipment at Fort Ellice, and then he personally went ahead quickly to Swan River barracks, and obtained there a number of Mounted Policemen to work on the

extention of the one hundred and second Meridian to the Canadian Pacific Railway line "so as to prepare for a systematic checking of the longitude from there," the telegraph line from Winnipeg being in a poor condition.

Meanwhile, the main party of surveyors commenced from the eastern shore of Fishing Lake and extended the ninth base Line to the western boundary of range sixteen, hitting there Big Quill Lake, which ran about 12 miles across. Using a narrow strip of land between Big Quill and Little Quill lakes, they worked northward across the telegraph line to the tenth base line. The latter line was extended westerly to Longitude 106° W. which the surveyors had been instructed to run as the Third Principal meridian. Arriving a few days before the astronomic party, who were to use this point to determine a latitude "in order that all work might be both closed on and sprung from this principal meridian on the correct astronomic latitude," Russell, without waiting, conducted an approximate latitude observation, which saved valuable time. It so approximated the true observation that no corrections were subsequently required. A third principal meridian was produced north across the telegraph line, and across the south branch of the Saskatchewan as far as the north branch, from St. Laurent Settlement on the south branch to the west end of Prince Albert settlement on the north branch, a distance of about 72 miles. The main party set to work drawing the twelfth correction line eastward from behind Prince Albert toward the Indian settlement, and extending a meridian line into "the heart" of the later settlement. Meanwhile, one assistant, with a small party, was assigned the task of conducting an instrumental survey of Prince Albert and the Indian settlement. All buildings, fences and improvements and other information of value were recorded, and micrometric traverses of the road connecting the two

Mair.) a splendid steam saw and grist mill (Capt. Moore) and a water power grist mill, Ch. of England Bishopric, Presbyterian mission and school, blacksmith shop &c., &c. An experienced doctor has promised to take up his abode here and several minor stores are laying in stock, as well as another grist mill spoken of.

The land here is very nearly equal in richness to the famous Red River valley, the proportion of clay being somewhat less and the land more undulating. It is the first section of really excellent land of large extent met with since leaving the Province of Manitoba, and it was an agreeable surprise that so many improved agricultural implements had found their way thus early into this comparatively remote district.

The crops are occasionally injured by early frosts, but last year a most abundant harvest was gathered; every one being satisfied and cheerful as regards the prospects for the future of this enterprising settlement. Over twelve hundred acres were under crop last year among the settlers on the river front and many large fields were to be seen on Red Deer hill and various other parts of our work. I noticed wheat (samples herewith,) oats, barley, turnips, cabbages, carrots, onions, &c., of equal excellence to those grown in Ontario.

As high as fifty and one hundred dollars is asked per acre for small lots on the

immediate river bank in the heart of the settlement.

The settlers were much pleased at the extension of the surveys to their settlements as they were all anxious to have their individual land limits defined, and, as several of the block lines in their vicinity have been run, any proposed subdivision can now be immediately carried out. This satisfactory state of affairs rendered abortive the efforts of a certain intriguing person who had come to raise discontent among the English, Half-Breed and Indian settlers of the Saskatchewan district on the matter of land surveys, &c.

It is to be hoped that permission may never be granted for the wholesale importation or manufacture of spirituous liquors in these peaceful temperance districts, at present protected by wise legislation.

St. Laurent Settlements

These settlements are situated on both banks of the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River, immediately west of the 102nd Meridian. The settlers are French Half-Breeds with a population, estimated by Père André, their chief spiritual Adviser, at about four hundred.

Being fond of the chase these people are frequently absent long periods from home and do not give much time or attention to farming. From conversation with the priests and many of these hospitable people I infer that they are

desirous of having their claims surveyed as soon as possible.

They consider their land inferior to that at Prince Albert, being lighter and more broken but still quite capable of raising good crops.

Duck Lake

This settlement lies about 9 miles west of St. Laurent and twelve miles south-east of Carleton House. Apart from the extensive trading establishment of Messrs. Kew, Stobart & Co. (now Stobart and Eden) and a few Indians located here, there are not probably over fifty settlers principally French Half-breeds. As the good land hereabouts is rather limited, it is desirable to have the Indian reserve laid out at an early day so as to prevent further misunderstandings between them and the white settlers.

The Indian Settlement

This settlement is situated in the north bank of the South Saskatchewan River about fourteen miles south-east of Prince Albert.

Here about seventy families of "Persons who have taken the Indian Treaty money" and a few whites are located on a very choice flat. The Church of England has a resident English catechist who teaches school. The Indians here being very anxious about "the reserve which Lieutenant-Governor Morris allowed them to select for themselves," I met the chief and headmen by appointment. They said they were very anxious to have the place which they had

selected and built on and improved laid out as a reserve for them in order that the "encroachments" of their white neighbours might be stopped. They wished moreover to be good subjects of Her Majesty and to devote their time to agriculture.

The last words of their chief were "Tell the Government we value our land more than gold and would like them very much to portion out a Reserve for us right away."

There is constant enmity between the Indians and white settlers here, the post put up by the former having been thrown down by the latter who are also anxious to have the matter of boundary definitely settled.

As the twelfth Correction line runs through this settlement the survey of a reserve could be proceeded with at any moment.

Section number 4 of the special survey, in charge of Montague Aldous, in 1878 was engaged in surveying the settlements of Prince Albert and St. Laurent. They arrived on 3 July at Prince Albert, and camped at the west end of the settlement close to where the third principal meridian crossed the North Saskatchewan River. The first order of business was to draw the front base line, which they "started from a convenient point on the 3rd Principal Meridian twenty-one chains and fifty links north of the north-east corner of section twenty-five, township fortyseven, range one west;" it was run "eastward through the settlement, deflecting it north or south at such points as it was necessary to do so in order to follow as closely as possible the principal road through the settlement. On this base line all the front posts are placed." Then between the third principal meridian and the meridian

conducted. From the latter, it was concluded that the principal part of the settlement was located on the eastern side of the river, below Batoche's Crossing, and the survey was begun there. Starting from the third principal meridian at the northeast corner of section 12, township 44, range 1 west, a line west to the river was drawn. Then from this line the surveyors divided lots, conforming as nearly as possible to 10 chains in width and two miles in depth, one mile north and eight miles south along the eastern side of the river, with road allowances being left in the same manner as had been done at Prince Albert. The surveys were bounded by the eleventh correction line, which was determined by tracing the third principal meridian west to the South Saskatchewan River. After the eleventh correction line was produced, the surveyors' work was terminated for the year, and on 5 October they left for Winnipeg.

Aldous reported upon St. Laurent Settlement.

The entire population of St. Laurent [sic] consists of French Half-breeds, who, with few exceptions, live by buffalo hunting. They simply farm sufficient land to provide themselves with grain and vegetables for their winter use; they nevertheless, fully understand the advantage of securing land, being well aware that, in a very few years, the buffalo will be exterminated, and that then they will be compelled to turn their attention to agricultural pursuits.

There are numerous large hay meadows in the rear of the settlement, from one to two miles from the river. This hay is cut and stacked in the autumn season, and furnishes

abundance of fodder for their large bands of horses during the winter months.

The land on the east side of the river is generally of an excellent quality and such as can be farmed to advantage, while on the west side, except in small tracts, it is very light and sandy, and unfit for cultivation.²⁸

Lindsay Russell, the surveyor general, wrote on 31 December 1878: "The survey of the river frontage lots in that settlement (Prince Albert), and also of the similar lots for half the settlement of St. Laurent on the south branch, was effected."²⁹ In all, Aldous had surveyed in St. Laurent settlement 71 river-lots, from the northern edge of sections 14, 15 and 16, Township 44, Range 1, southward along the east bank of the Saskatchewan to the southern edge of Township 43, Range 1. The special survey was approved by the government in March 1879, but the land was not opened for entry until March 1885.³⁰

Were all the 71 river-lot surveyed farms occupied when Aldous made his survey in 1878? There is reason to believe that many were not. The Half-Breed Commission of 1885, investigating scrip and land claims in 1885, found that of the 71 lots, only 23 were occupied by claimants who had settled in 1879 or before. And of the 23 lots, in some instances individual claimants held more than one; for example, two held three each, and seven held two each. Some claimants did not appear before the commission or could not relate their date of settlement. Twelve did not appear, though 14 lots were claimed for them. However, 25 settling after 1879 claimed 29 of the river-lots, suggesting that there was either a relatively large turnover of property between 1879 and 1885, or that there was a considerable

number of vacant lots in 1879. In 1885, there were 49 claimants for 65 lots; six seem to have been vacant.³¹

J. Lestock Reed continued the surveys along the South Saskatchewan in the summer of 1879, subdividing Townships 44, Ranges 1 and 3, Township 42, Range 1, and Township 43, Range 2.³² The sectional survey system was employed because only 17 families were settled along the banks of the South Saskatchewan for 60 miles beyond Township 44 range 2, where the 17 river-lot divisions had been made by Aldous, and Reed decided that the small population did not warrant the expense of a river-lot survey.³³ Three townships, townships 45, Ranges 27 and 28, West of the second Meridian and township 45, range 1, west of third meridian, apparently were only blocked out by Reed. The refusal by Reed to employ the river-lot survey system was merely in keeping with the instructions of his employers. It would have been in his interest to have used the river-lot system because the cost of that system was nine times that of a sectional one, and the profits of the surveyor were proportionately higher.³⁴ A map published by the Department of the Interior in its annual report for 1881 shows the following townships: townships 43, ranges 1, 2 and 3, townships 44, ranges 1, 2 and 3, townships 45, ranges 27 and 28, township 45, range 1, and township 42, range 1.

In 1878, George Duck was appointed agent for dominion lands, and in August of the same year took his residence at Prince Albert. Not until October 1880 did he receive instructions to collect evidence by statutory declaration of all claims of settlement before the acquisition of the NorthWest Territories by the government of Canada. He reported in March 1881 that 23 lots had been occupied in Prince Albert settlement, none about Fort Carlton and Fort à la Corne. No investigation was made concerning St. Laurent parish. A large number of Prince Albert settlers, he

discovered, had come in 1879 and 1880. The land office at Prince Albert was not officially ordered to receive entries until 2 August 1881, and the instruction was not received until 21 September.³⁵ When the land office finally opened, the government refused to recognize improvements which had been made before the filing of entry as comprising part of the three year period required for the issuing of patents. This became a source of grievance at Prince Albert, and the issue was not settled to the inhabitants' satisfaction until 1884.

ENDNOTES

1. J. Warkentin, "Water and Adaptive Strategies in Settling the Canadian West," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, no. 28, 1971-72, pp. 59-60.
2. Canada. Acts of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Passed in the Sessions Held in the 32nd and 33rd, 33rd and 34th, 34th and 35th, and 35th and 36th Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, "An Act respecting the Public lands of the Dominion," 14 April, 1872, (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1872), pp. 65-67, clause 33; Canada. Department of the Interior. Department of the Interior, Orders in Council 1864-1873. no. 1 "Memorandum on the Subject of the Public Lands in the Province of Manitoba," 25 April, 1871, pp. 3-4.
3. J.L. Tyman, "Patterns of Western Land Settlement," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, no. 28, 1971-1972, pp. 117-121.
4. Canada. Department of the Interior. Orders in Council 1879 to 1881, no. 3. Memorandum, John A. Macdonald, 25 June, 1879, pp. 106-07.
5. Ibid., pp. 205-06. "Regulations Respecting the Disposal of certain Public Lands for the purposes of the Canadian Pacific Railway," 14 October, 1879.

6. Vide C. Martin, "Our 'Kingdom for a Horse': The Railway Land Grant System in Western Canada," The Canadian Historical Association, 1934, p. 77.
7. Canada. Department of the Interior. Orders in Council 1879 to 1881, op. cit., pp. 613-14, Memorandum, John A. Macdonald, 18 May, 1881.
8. Ibid., pp. 807-08, Canada. Dominion Lands Regulations.
9. Canada. Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Passed in the Session Held in the 37th and 38th Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, "An Act to amend the Dominion Lands Act", 26 May, 1874, Chap. 19, (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1874) p. 134. Section 8, Sub-section 2.
10. Tyman, op. cit., pp. 121-29.
11. Section 17 of "An Act respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion" states:

And where as it is found by computation that the said one-twentieth will be exactly met, by allotting in every fifth township two whole sections of six hundred and forty acres each, and in all other townships one section and three quarters of a section each, therefore -

In every fifth township in the said territory; that is to say: in those townships numbered 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, and so on in regular succession northerly from the international boundary, the whole of sections Nos. 8 and 26, and in each and every of the other townships the whole of

section No. 8, and the south half and north-west quarter of section 26 (except in the cases hereinafter provided for) shall be known and designated as the lands of the said Company.

Canada. Acts of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Passed in the Sessions Held in the 32nd and 33rd, 33rd and 34th, 34th and 35th, and 35th and 36th Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, "An Act respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion", 14 April, 1872, CAP. XXIII, op. cit., p. 61., Section 17.

12. Canada. Department of the Interior. Orders-in-Council 1879-1881, no. 3, Canada. Dominion Lands Regulations. ✓ L. Russell, 23 December, 1881, op. cit. pp. 809-11.
13. A.N. Lalonde, "Colonization Companies in the 1880s", Saskatchewan History, Vol. 24, no. 3, autumn 1971, pp. 101-14.
14. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1891, Pt. IV, (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1892), pp. 1-4. Report by J.S. Dennis; Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1883, Pt. II, (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1884), p. 4. Report of the Surveyor-General; Canada. Department of the Interior. Department of the Interior. Orders- in-Council 1864 to 1873, no. 1, "Memorandum on the Subject of the Public Lands in the Province of Manitoba", 25 April, 1871, pp. 71.
15. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1891, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
16. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 30th

June 1876, Pt. III, (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1877), pp. 4-5, J.S. Dennis Report.

17. Although the rates paid by the government to the surveyors differed according to the terrain, it was found difficult to compare regions in the west, and those surveyors in heavily wooded areas were invariably paid less. Vide Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1891, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
18. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1883, Pt. II, op. cit., pp. 4-6. L. Russell to MacPherson, 31 December, 1883.
19. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ending 30th June 1876, op. cit., p. 5.
20. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1883, Pt. II, op. cit., p. 6.
21. Ibid., p. 10.
22. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1891, Pt. IV, op. cit., pp. 9-10.
23. Ibid.; Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1883, Pt. II, op. cit., p. 10.
24. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1891, Pt. IV, op. cit. pp. 14-18.
25. Canada. ^{to be}Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 30 June 1878, Pt. III, Appendix no. 2, (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1878), pp. 10-11. A.L. Russell to L. Russell, 24 November, 1878.

26. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
27. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 30th June 1878, Pt. II, Appendix no. 6, op. cit., p. 23-24. Aldous to Russell, 13 November, 1878.
28. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
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Chapter VIII
Increased Immigration Along the South Saskatchewan
and the Question of Land Resurveys

A
The Growth of Settlements along the South Saskatchewan
in the early 1880s

During the latter part of the 1870s, the population of the South Saskatchewan Métis settlements grew steadily and by 1881, according to the census of that year, had reached almost 1,000 people. In 1881, the village of Batoche was in a formative stage, having two trading establishments, stores owned by Xavier Letendre (also called Xavier Batoche), and Emmanuel Champagne. Houses and cultivated fields could be seen "Pour une distance depuis 10 mille en bout de la traverse jusqu'à 15 mille en bas" and all the way to Duck Lake, making Batoche almost the geographical centre of the Métis colony. Batoche was also on the principal trading and transportation routes: the route from Winnipeg, the Carlton Trail, which supplied the entire North Saskatchewan to the Rocky Mountains, and "Une autre linge qui part également de S. Louis immédiatement dan [sic] la direction du sud ouest c'est celle de la prairie". The latter trail "nous apporte deux fois principalement chaque année les vivres, les cuirs, si necessaires pour toute le monde." The site upon which Batoche stood presented to the eye a land that was arable, covered with hay and trees, and having abundant water. The trees were distributed in

clusters and between the clusters were prairie lands having abundant hay. There was adequate wood for building, heating and fences. The hay sold at an advantageous price at the various settlements. Another appealing feature of the region in the vicinity of Batoche was the absence of flooding because of the high banks of the Saskatchewan; it was possible to build houses within 40 to 50 feet of the water without fear of inundation. The water supplied by the river and the shallow, small lakes nearby was palatable. ¹

The Métis houses at Batoche, as well as elsewhere throughout the South Saskatchewan communities, were designed for large families, the house of the more prosperous residents as a rule having building houses of two stories. The two-storied dwelling usually had a large living room downstairs, with a kitchen area in the L-shaped end. All the sleeping quarters were upstairs except the master bedroom, which was in "another corner of the living room, where the lady of the house displayed her best quilts, feather pillows, and white candlewick bedspread from Winnipeg." The houses lining the Saskatchewan faced the river and had a view of the road, with the hayfields and gardens running "back to the hills." The Métis imported from Winnipeg big heaters for their main room, and wood-burning stoves, pipes and window glass. "Floors were scrubbed white with lye made from wood ashes and home-made scrubbing brushes, and covered in places with braided mats. Girls were early initiated into the fine art of scrubbing floors, for the houses were cleaned throughly on Saturday in preparation for the customary Sunday visitors."²

The principal resident of Batoche was Xavier Letendre, called by the Métis "Little Batoche". His father, Louison Letendre, had been a prominent trader in the north west and had been nicknamed "Batoche" by the Indians. He married an English woman, Mary Hallet. When he moved with his son to

Batoche's Crossing, he was already advanced in age. He operated the ferry until he was at least 80, while his son managed the store.

Xavier Letendre, who married a Miss McCardle, an English-speaking woman whose father was Scottish, became in a short time became the most prosperous merchant in the North-West Territories. He had more than 100 carts freighting for him.³ An advertisement placed in Battleford's newspaper, The Saskatchewan Herald, in September, 1880, announced the opening of the Batoche family's new store in Batoche.⁴

N E W S T O R E
A T S O U T H B R A N C H .

J. B. B A T O C H E

Has now opened out in his new store at the South Branch at the Crossing known as Fisher's (formerly Batoche's) Ferry, a full assortment of

F i r s t - C l a s s G o o d s ,
Suitable alike for the Family or the Camp.
and embracing
G r o c e r i e s ,
 D r y G o o d s ,
 P r o v i s i o n s .
and general goods, all of which he will sell
at lowest rates.

Travellers and others can depend on getting supplies at all times.

Comfortable accommodation for travellers and transient guests.

South Branch, Sept. 1.
The store, in 1881, was stocked with dry goods

("merchandises sèches") valued at \$8,000 ("piastres"), as well as with country provisions; it was so well patronized "qu'hiver et été il est bien rare qu'un voyageur passe sans faire quelque compte." It was common for travellers along the Carlton Trail to spend the night at his house. Once a year, Letendre travelled to Winnipeg to sell his furs, accompanying his freighters. With his receipts, he planned to buy in 1881 a greater quantity of merchandise than hitherto to expand his business. Champagne's store was located "à quelques centaines de verges seulement de ma [Letendre's] maison," and also conducted a lucrative trade.

Letendre did not regard rival traders as threats to his business. Rather, Letendre thought Champagne would attract other merchants to Batoche. He was convinced that Batoche would soon become "le centre de la population, le centre aussi d'affaires considerables devoit devenir le centre d'une ville qui promettroit de prospérer." To this end, Letendre was personally encouraging other merchants to establish themselves within the village. Baptiste Boyer, a man of considerable means, had already selected a site and promised that he would begin building a trading establishment as soon as he returned from Winnipeg. Individuals representing several trading partnerships also had indicated their desire to locate in the village, and Letendre apparently had assured them that he would extend to them all the aid he could. He expected to see within a year five or six stores established, showing "leur richesses aux yeux d'un public enchanté."

Batoche, in 1881, still lacked some essential services that were necessary for a growing and prosperous village. The inhabitants were required to go to Duck Lake, five miles away, or to Prince Albert, 45 miles distant, to grind their grain, find a blacksmith and purchase sawed wood. Letendre

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was particularly anxious to obtain for the village a blacksmith shop, a flour mill and a saw mill.⁵

The structural feature of the village of Batoche was Xavier Letendre's palatial house, designed by an architect engaged by Letendre in Montreal and built by stone masons and carpenters from Winnipeg. Sarah J. Potter, who settled with her father and mother at St. Louis de Langevin in 1886, recalled in her article, "The Happy Inhabitants of Batoche," which appeared in The Western Producer in 1962, that the structure had

a large rounded tower on one side with many windows. Upstairs were six roomy bedrooms, sumptuously furnished with marble-topped dressers and carpets on all floors.

In later years, the back bedroom over the kitchen was always kept dark and locked, for here during the rebellion one of the youths of the district was killed making a last stand against the soldiers. Downstairs was a large hall with a beautiful curving staircase, a spacious kitchen, a dining room furnished with a lovely polished dining room suite and fine china, and the beautiful salon furnished with the most expensive furniture Batoche could purchase in the East.

Suspended from the ceiling of the salon was a sparkling chandelier three feet in diameter and lit with candles. On the floor was a rich silk plush carpet. There were many graciously designed chairs around the room and a divan covered with rich red satin brocade fashioned with fringes of pom-poms. In one corner was an upright piano, one of the first in the West.

Adorning the walls were original landscapes in oil, and luxurious tapestries from France. In this distinctive room were entertained all important visitors to the community, en route to Prince Albert or up the trail to Edmonton.⁶

Most of the house's furniture and furnishings was removed after Letendre sold the house to the government for use as the barracks of the Mounted Police detachment which was stationed at Batoche for a lengthy period after the rebellion of 1885. One of the warehouses was transformed into a jail. According to Potter, the tower was subsequently removed and the house was eventually moved to another location and was painted green.⁷

Letendre boasted in 1881 that his store and his house were "les deux édifices privés les plus finis que l'on puisse reconstruire dans tout le nord ouest à partir de Winnipeg," being built "plus grands et d'un style convenable" to a man of his stature and means." His house, he wrote, "avec étage de 32 pieds de front[?] se développe en arrière par une allong[?] de même style de 20 pieds de long."⁸

A prosperous village, Letendre believed, required the presence of a resident missionary. The two churches frequented by the inhabitants of Batoche were at St. Laurent and Duck Lake, seven and five miles distant respectively. As has been noted, travelling was difficult, especially when the river was high and the ice was too thin to walk upon. Letendre made repeated requests in the late 1870s for a missionary in his village without success. He redoubled his efforts in the winter of 1881, offering himself to lodge and maintain a priest. Finally, Father André acceded to his arguments, and on 30 March, Father P. Valentin Végréville

O.M.I., arrived in Batoche. He lived with Batoche throughout the spring.

At the end of July, Bishop Grandin arrived at St. Laurent to attend the visit of the Marquis of Lorne, the governor general of Canada. At the beginning of August, before the marquis' scheduled arrival, Grandin went to Batoche to view the site selected for the proposed mission. He approved the site, and the same day, having ascertained that the village's inhabitants desired to have St. Antoine de Padoue as their patron saint, officially named the mission the Mission of St. Antoine de Padoue. The following Sunday, Grandin made a second visit to Batoche, residing that night in Letendre's house. Letendre gave Grandin "une jolie somme d'argent," and promised that he would lodge and feed a missionary for a year. Grandin assigned Father Végréville to Batoche for one year, with the understanding that after this time he would confer the mission upon "un prêtre séculier," who would contribute from his own means toward the maintenance of the mission.

On 21 August, Father André sent out courriers to urge the residents of Batoche and St. Laurent to assemble at "la traverse à Batoche" to greet the Marquis of Lorne, whose arrival at the crossing was scheduled at 10:00 A.M. on the twenty-second. The Marquis was delayed, however, until the twenty-fifth. He was accompanied by 57 persons of rank and an escort of 16 Mounted Policemen. He was lodged in Letendre's house, and expressed his surprise that such a splendid house - he referred to it as "le petit chateau" - could exist "jusque sur les bord [sic] du Saskatchewan."

During his stay, he visited Father Végréville in his room in Batoche's house, and had a lengthy conversation with him about his 29 years experience as a missionary in the north west, 16 of them along the Saskatchewan.⁹

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Throughout the winter and spring, Végréville attended the spiritual needs of Batoche's residents, numbering 16 families, from Batoche's house. The absence of a permanent residence precluded him from conducting a school for their children. He was obviously dispirited in the spring of 1882 about the state of affairs, writing to Bishop Grandin on 30 May 1882,

Un seul mot de votre Grandeur ferait cesser cet état de choses; mais je n'entre pas dans de plus longs détails faire que ce mot pour le dire, il faut que votre Grandeur soit ici. Si elle vient tout s'arrangera dans peu de temps, si elle ne vient pas il est inutile d'en parler."¹⁰

Meanwhile, Végréville contented himself with raising enough money to build the church and rectory. His balance sheet on 2 May showed that the mission's assets totalled \$500.75 and in addition there was \$200.00 "a prendre au magasin de M.X. Batoche." Of this money, he expended \$150.00 for "Bois acheté à la mission de S. Laurent;" \$180 "Déposé chez le captain Moore, pour du bois de sciage été;" \$30 "Mis entre les mains de M.X. Batoche pour acheter different choses à Winnipeg," and \$10.75 for miscellaneous items, leaving a balance in hand of \$130. In addition, there was \$20.00 "a prendre au magasin de X. Batoche," and \$110.00 "entre les main de Gabriel Dumont." The money held by Dumont was raised by subscription and entrusted to Dumont's charge by Bishop Grandin during one of his visits in the summer of 1881. Father André apparently had reservations about leaving the money with Dumont, but Végréville refused to take direct control of the money and the collections without authorization from Bishop Grandin.¹¹

Végréville listed \$200 more as money promised by individuals, and Xavier Batoche had offered to give \$100

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more on the condition that Grandin would give \$500. With these two donations, Végréville wrote hopefully to André, "j'ai le bon espoir de recueillir, nous pourrions bâtir complètement une maison et une chapelle qui n'auraient pas coûté grand chose comparativement au diocèse." Végréville wrote five letters on this and other matters to Grandin, thereby by-passing Father André, his immediate superior, who was in charge of the St. Laurent mission and its satellites. André felt slighted, and this became a source of ill-feeling between the two priests.

By July, the money obtained by Végréville had increased considerably. Money raised by subscription totalled \$557.75, "à prendre au magasin de X. Batoche" was \$20.00, "entre les mains de Damase Carière" was \$20.00, money given by Bishop Grandin to Father André for the mission was \$500.00, and money donated but not yet received from Batoche was \$100.00. Also received were almost all the "bois d'entourage" and "50 planches dont 25 encore chez M. Sauvé fils." In addition, promised by not received were \$196.00, 160 "planches," two "minots de blé," four "jours de travail" and "le restant du bois d'entourage."

The following was the money already expended by the mission:

Bois de la charpente en partie	
(Père André)	\$150.00
Bardeau et bois de sciage non encore	
livré (C. Moore)	180.00
Payé à A. Belanger	58.55
Avancé à X. Batoche pour choses	
à acheter	30.00
Faux-frais (Gabriel Dumont)	8.00

Money that was due but as yet not paid was to A. Belanger, \$12.95, and to Batoche, \$20.10.¹² There is no information, in the period after July 1882 about the money

which was received and expended upon the construction of the church and rectory.

Végréville was replaced at Batoche by Father Julien Moulin, O.M.I., in the summer or autumn of 1882. In 1883, Moulin supervised the erection of a two and one-half storey rectory constructed in "Red River style," lumber being used in the gables and roof. The church was begun the following year, but its interior, as shall be seen, was still not completely finished when Bishop Grandin consecrated the church in September 1884. During the winter of 1883-84, Moulin began regular school classes in a room in the rectory. The dominion government, in June 1884, granted \$125.00 toward the expenses of the school, and during the ensuing year Moulin earned an annual salary of \$312.50. The parish of St. Antoine de Padoue became Roman Catholic School District Number 1 after the first schools ordinance of the North West Territories was passed in 1884.

On 10 August 1883, Moulin wrote to the post office inspector requesting a post office for his Parish. In his letter, Moulin complained;

the settlers are on the east bank of the river twenty miles up and about the same down. The great difficulty of the settlers is to cross the river in the fall and in the spring when the ice is running. The mail men this spring were obliged to leave their horses here - they have great difficulty to cross with the mail bags. If anyone of the settlers wants to get his letters he is obliged to pay two shillings, and sometimes wait for the ferryman to pull in the ferryboat and to walk in mire and mud. The bank of the ferry is very dirty in the fall and spring to go on foot which is very inconvenient.¹³

The letter was forwarded to the office of the postmaster general by the postal inspector, with the observations that Batoche and the region in its vicinity were growing in population; that Batoche was six miles from Stobart post office and seven from Grandin office, both on the west side of the river, making it "inconvenient" for the settlers to reach them at certain seasons of the year, and that ferrying the mail across the river was expensive for them. Fifty or 60 families could be served by a post office at Batoche, generating a revenue of about \$25, and it could be served weekly without additional cost because it was on the mail route between Prince Albert and Troy.

Batoche post office was established on 1 January 1884 and was housed in the rectory, with Father Moulin serving as postmaster. His salary for the first six months was \$8.50, and he earned in the succeeding 12 month period \$28.66. The gross revenue of the post office for the 18 months was \$92.07. At the same time, a contract was let to F. Clark to transport the mail fortnightly between Saskatoon and Batoche for \$225.00.¹⁴

Xavier Letendre's ambitious plans for Batoche in 1881 were never completely realized. Only two non-Métis owned stores, Walters and Baker, and Kerr and Brothers, were open in the village by 1885. Kerr and Brothers may not have been established until the latter part of 1884; George Kerr testified at Louis Riel's trial that he had lived in Batoche only since November 1884.¹⁵ Walters and Baker store was established by F.C. Baker of Winnipeg, in partnership with Harry Walters, in September 1882. Baker closed it in December 1882 and transferred his business to Prince Albert. Walters came out to the Saskatchewan in the spring of 1883 and reopened the Batoche store; his partner Baker, meanwhile, continued to supervise the one in Prince Albert.¹⁶ The Walters and Baker establishment at

Batoche was located on the east side of the river. George Fisher by 1885 had a store a short distance from Batoche's. The other Métis trading establishments were Champagne's and Baptiste Boyer's. Sarah J. Potter recalls another merchant, a Mr. Venne of Montreal, but he seems to have established himself at Batoche after the rebellion of 1885.¹⁷

In the period following the rebellion of 1885, Letendre, on his annual excursions to Winnipeg, some years would board a train for Montreal, where he could obtain a better return for his furs. Potter reminisces in "The Happy Inhabitants of Batoche" that Batoche's store and the other stores in the village stocked hardware and household goods, but also featured such luxury items as

rich velvets and satins; brocades from Paris; cashmere shawls and other fine woollen goods from England; beautiful hats adorned with ostrich feathers; flowers; ribbons; woollen blankets; dainty cotton printed goods; candlewick bedspreads; even brightly-colored parasols.

The wide variety of goods was welcomed by the ladies of the village who were able

to dress in the latest Paris fashions for the church, weddings or important events. Their dresses of velvet and satin were fashioned with basques, buttons and polonaises. In the summer all ladies of fashion carried a lovely silk parasol, and for winter many of them had fur coats.¹⁸

The Batoche Sports, a summer celebration commemorating the days of the buffalo hunt, was inaugurated in 1884 upon Louis Riel's coming to the South Saskatchewan. Sarah J. Potter relates that it was held on July 24 and the tradition was continued after the rebellion of 1885, the celebrations

being held annually without interruption between 1886 and 1958. Called by Riel "La Fete Nationale," the sports events were held on a cleared field three miles in length, surrounded by clumps of willows and berry bushes, located not far from the river. This charming spot was called "La Belle Prairie" A flag was designed by Batoche for the occasion; he drew the figure of a buffalo pursued at full gallop by a hunter, sent it to France where it was imprinted on a large white flag of cashmere. The material was so durable that the same flag still was used 75 years later. In the years after the rebellion, it was customary to canvass the merchants of Prince Albert for donations of prizes such as square tin boxes of tea, flour, bacon, salt and pound bags of candy. In more recent years, merchants erected concession stands and sold hard candies, raisins and tins of tomatoes and sardines.

A judges' stand constructed of green poplar wood was raised "with a good view of the track," and above the stand was a canopy of green branches shading the judges. Crowning the canopy was the white flag depicting a hunter pursuing a brown buffalo and at the top of the flag the words "La Fete Nationale." This summer celebration became famous throughout the west and wagons came from as far south as Qu'Appelle and Montana, from Edmonton, Battleford and other locations along the old Carlton Trail, and from the Prince Albert and Nipawin districts. As many as 3,000 people annually attended the events, and large crowds usually could be seen on the field by 9:00 A.M. The most popular sporting events of the celebration were the horse races, which were run, in the early days, over a straight mile track. In later years, a circular track was used. There were mile races, three-quarter mile and one-half mile sprints, pinto races, pony races for small boys for which the winners received a colt, and sulky races with two-wheeled carts. In

addition, there were Indian races: pony races, travois races and dog travois races with full load. Races for bucking horses also were featured, the individual coming in last winning the prize. The first prize for the races was usually \$5 or more, and the second, a bag of flour. Foot races were held between the horse races. There were foot races for men over 25, young men, boys 15 years and younger, smaller boys, young married women, girls, old ladies, Indian men, Indian boys and Indian women. The winners each received a bag of flour, and all the younger participants were rewarded with prizes of hard candies.

There were also individual and team events testing the strength and skill of the men: wrestling and gripping contests, tug-of-wars, pulling contests, rifle target shooting contests, the high jump, the broad jump, the hop, skip and jump, and horse-shoe pitching. The day's athletic program was completed by a game of lacrosse.

Following the athletic contests, a dance was held. The dancers kept step to the merry traditional Métis and Red River tunes such as the Red River jig, and the various Scottish reels, the French folk songs and the square dances which were played by the many accomplished fiddlers who were present. Cries of "au jour! au jour" rang out as dawn approached, and the dance invariably continued until the break of day. The younger children left for home after the athletic contests, and even before the beginning of the dance, long columns of wagons stretched into the horizon.

The Batoche Sports was discontinued after 1958 and "La Belle Prairie" was ploughed up and crops were planted.¹⁹

There is little information in the various archive depositories on the physical description of the buildings at Batoche. A very limited picture of the village can be obtained from a report submitted by Edgar Dosman in the

summer of 1963 to the Canadian National Historic Parks and Sites Branch. Dosman interviewed a number of elderly Métis who had been familiar with the village in the 1885 period. The recollections of these people were often hazy and Dosman was not fluent in French, so the information he gathered was rather limited.

Batoche's store is shown in a number of pictures and drawings of the village. Mrs. S. Potter, the Sarah J. Potter who wrote "The Happy Inhabitants of Batoche," related to Dosman that there was "a long big heater in the middle of store-counter & shelves behind, clothes hanging around walls." The cellar "about nine feet deep and 10' by 12' in size. The sides were walled with timbers and no light whatever could get in...we were covered with vermin." Joe Boucher, Dosman writes, "thought the inside was plastered with lime and gravel." Near the store stood a storehouse, probably owned in 1885 by Xavier Letendre. Mrs. Ranger asserted it was an ice house and Mr. Azure agreed. The roof probably was gabled in 1885. Xavier Letendre's house had a bar, according to Mr. Azure. Following the rebellion, it was occupied for a time by the Mounted Police, and was eventually purchased by a Mr. Kolwalchuk of Fish Creek, demolished and re-elected as a barn.

George Fisher's store was constructed of logs and, Mr. Azure related, sold groceries and dry goods. It probably did not have a lean-to in 1885. Fisher's house was constructed of logs, and was referred to by Mulvaney as "an unpretentious log shack." Eugene Caron told Dosman that it was approximately 22 feet by 24 feet. Baptiste Boyer's store was constructed of logs with sidings and contained groceries and dry goods.²⁰

After his recall from Batoche in 1882, Végréville was assigned the task of founding a new mission at St. Louis de Langevin. Végréville related, in a letter written in

January 1884 to A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, that until the winter of 1881 there was only one Roman Catholic church for the growing Métis community, at St. Laurent, on the west side of the Saskatchewan River, section 12, township 44, range 1, west of the third meridian. At the end of the winter of 1880-81, he was instructed to found a new mission at Batoche Crossing, township 43, range 1, west of the third meridian, "about 8 miles above St. Laurent and on the opposite (east) side, which was being more rapidly settled." The presence of a missionary and the fertility of the soil subsequently attracted a sizeable number of new colonists. After establishing this mission, he founded another at township 45, range 2, west of the second meridian, on the side opposite from St. Laurent (south side), above which the river makes a right angle, another region which was attracting immigration. By the beginning of 1884, the right bank was settled uninterruptedly from the Smith reserve, township 46, range 26, west of the second meridian to township 38, range 1 and 2, west of the third meridian, a distance of about 50 miles.

The lands occupied, however, had been laid out for a sectional survey in 1879, there having been insufficient colonists to warrant a river-lot survey. The actual division into townships, Végréville related, had not been done in most of the region; "only a few miles were surveyed in the same way as the rest of the country in sections. A base line was drawn for a few miles more, but not a single lot was surveyed within the limits marked."²¹ Township 45, range 27, for example, was not surveyed until 1882 and was still not open for entry when the rebellion broke out in 1885. The earliest date of settlement in this township was 1882.²²

In July 1883, Végréville, at the request of the inhabitants of St. Louis de Langevin, passed several days in each "village de cette mission pour satisfaire la devotion de ceux qui ne pouvaient profiter du Dimanche habituel," hearing confessions and giving the sacraments. At the beginning of August, Father André left his mission at Prince Albert for St. Laurent, and Végréville replaced him for two and one-half months. Végréville returned to St. Louis de Langevin in the middle of October. No mission structures seem to have been in existence by December 1883, though money had been raised by public subscription for a house for Végréville. Végréville was mainted entirely at the expense of the residents of St. Louis de Langevin. There may have been a school, though apparently not a school building, by the end of 1883.²³

Within a period of a few years, Végréville had founded the missions of St. Eugene (1879 or 1880), St. Antoine de Padoue (1881), St. Louis de Langevin (1883), and Prince Albert (1882). Végréville's missions were supported by Métis donations, rather small sums from the diocese and to some extent from Végréville's personal means, his family being associated with the wine trade in Vinay (Isère) France. In 1885, Végréville was recalled to St. Albert and stationed "au moulin de la Rivière Eturgeon."²⁴

B

Immigration and the Question of Land Surveys

Immigration became the most vital problem confronting the missionaries in 1882. In the "Petite Chronique Pour l'année 1882" we read that "La grand question du jour c'est L'IMMIGRATION qui devient chaque année plus forte." That year, 50 Métis families settled along the South

Saskatchewan, some above St. Laurent in the parish of St. Antoine de Padoue and others below at St. Louis de Langevin.²⁵

The Métis immigration was accompanied by an influx of English-speaking Canadians, which Végréville regarded as a direct threat to the viability of the emerging Métis settlements. He wrote to Father André in May 1882 that the missions should take all precautions to guard against this "fléau qui fait irruption sur nous," that if the missions were not wary, "Ces protestants vont venir fondre sur nous pour nous écraser."

Végréville was particularly fearful that the church could lose some of the property it claimed at Batoche. André had overlooked entering a claim for it at the Prince Albert land registry office. Végréville was not worried about the three acres occupied by the mission, but the land adjoining it on all sides could be protected only by securing it as a pre-emption. An English-speaking resident of Quebec had offered the mission a substantial price for the land bordering it, and having been refused, "il a dit qu'il allait dès cet été acheter vingt-cinq arpens au bout de nos terres." Also, some of the settlers in the mission's vicinity were cutting the trees on the land the church desired to pre-empt.

The English-speaking Canadians had already begun buying land from the Métis. The previous autumn, a Mr. Scarth had purchased 150,000 acres "à peu de distance" from Batoche. This land was sufficient for 800 Upper Canadian Protestant families, five times the Catholic population, which Végréville lamented, was in danger of being engulfed by a Protestant tide.²⁶

The incoming Métis divided their land upon their traditional river-lot system. Being ignorant about the government's land regulations they often directed their

questions to the missionaries, who not infrequently found themselves incapable of giving satisfactory answers. As a result, Végréville, at the end of 1881 and during the first half of 1882, addressed a number of letters to the dominion lands office in Prince Albert requesting clarification of a number of regulations. The first letter, sent at the end of 1881 or the beginning of 1882 to Lieutenant Colonel Sproat, asked 16 questions. They were:

- No. 1 What is the way to take a homestead?
- " 2 How much to pay for the entry?
- " 3 Is it necessary for a man to wait three years from the time he had his land entered, before he get [sic] his patent?
- " 4 Can the three years be shortened by previous settling on the same land?
- " 5 Can the three years be shortened, or even the patent obtained with the entry by paying to the registrar and how much?
- " 6 Certainly a man loses [sic] his entry by an absence of more than 6 months at a time, but does he lose [sic] it also by 1, 2, or 3 months absences counting altogether more than 6 months?
- " 7 Is it sufficient to have a hired man or family on the land, in order to keep the homestead, the owner dwelling in another place?
- " 8 Can the owner be elsewhere and partaking the profit with a family using the land and dwelling on it?
- " 9 Can the owner lend his land to a man to farm on it, and to take profit out of it, according to some money paid for the same?

- " 10 How much to pay for the patent?
- " 11 What is the way to get a preemption and how much to pay for it?
- " 12 Is there any time to wait before a man get [sic] the patent for a preemption?
- " 13 What to do to keep the land preempted? Is there any work to be done, or anything to be paid to keep the right to the preemption?
- " 14 Is the preemption necessarily joining the homestead, not being distant from it?
- " 15 Many people in the N.W.T. got what they call scripts or claims to a piece [sic] of land 160 dollars worth, and all the half-breed [sic] who were born before the transfert [sic] and get no script in Manitoba, have a right to the same in the N.W.T.
Are those scripts beside the right they got to a homestead?
Can they take their claim where they like and at once?
- " 16 Is there any formatlity or anything to be paid, or to be done, in order to have the full effect of the script? I mean to get the full possession of the land they are allowed by the said scripts?²⁷

Sproat gave the following answers in a letter dated
2 March 1882:

- No. 1 Actual settlement by yourself or family and in [?] proving same.
- " 2 Require to pay \$10 for Homestead Entry.
- " 3 Yes.

- " 4 No.
- " 5 No unless you abandon it as a Homestead and buy the land outright. In which case an old settler would be Entitled to Patent at \$1. per acre.
- " 6 Instructions are explicit that you cannot be absent a longer time than six months during the year.
- " 7 The owner or his family must reside on his Farm.
- " 8 The owner could be absent if his own family resided on the property and were cultivating and improving same and that such was his recognized home.
- " 9 He cannot safely do so as he has to swear to occupation.
- " 10 Nothing. The \$10 entry fee covers all.
- " 11 A regular application to Dom Land Agent. Same must adjoin Homestead - When making the Entry he pays \$10. fee and at the Expiry of three years thereafter he pays (if an old settler) \$1.25 per acre and if a new settler \$2 per acre.
- " 12 You get Patent for Preemption same time as you do for Homestead.
- " 13 You make Entry for Homestead and preemption at the same time [at] the Dominion Lands Office here. No other can get it unless the Conditions be neglected.
- " 14 Yes.
- " 15 Government has not yet recognized the Claims of the Half breeds outside of Manitoba to scrip.
- " 16 Action was taken by the NorthWest Council last session and memorial

forwarded to Governor in Council at Ottawa, asking that the Half breeds of the NorthWest be treated in similar manner to those in Manitoba but so far there has been no deliverance.²⁸

Végréville sent two other letters to the dominion lands office in Prince Albert, one on 29 April and another on 1 May with additional questions relating to land settlement. The former asked six questions:

- 1° Can the preemption be in a section even in a township different from the homestead?
- 2° Can a man lawfully take two or more preemptions?
- 3 - Can a man sell his homestead or a preemption by lots vz. to build a town before he get [sic] the patent?
- 4° Since in a township the odd numbers belong to the government and the even ones to the C.P.R. & Co., is there for the settler any difference between the two?
- 5° In each township the sections 11 and 29 are reserved for the schools and 8 and 26 for the H.B. Co - Can any man settle on those sections and get the entry and patent for the same?
- 6° Where is exactly the reserve of the Man of one bow?²⁹

The second letter is not in the Oblate archives. One of the questions asked related to the church's property.

Végréville received two replies, on 6 May from George Duck, and on 15 May from Sproat. The first answered his letter of 29 April point by point.

No. 1 - Yes if the lot be contiguous to the Homestead and are on even section.

No. 2 No he can only pre-empt 160 acres.

No. 3 Should a man wish to sell his Homestead in village lots he can buy from the Crown and get his Patent at once - or he may sell so long as he can assure the Purchaser of a good Title when Patent issues, which will be in three years after Entry has been made - but he would have to be careful that Conditions of Homestead had been properly adhered to.

No. 4 There are no Railway Lands in this district. The even numbers are solely and only for the settler for Homestead and Pre-emption. The odd numbers can be purchased to extent of 640 acres by anyone paying there for \$2 per acre.

No. 5 After survey anyone settling on H.B. Co. or school lands will not be recognized by the govt should he have settled on school lands prior to survey the govt will recognize the claim - if on H.B. lands, the party must apply to H.B. Land Office Winnipeg.

No. 6 Mr. Duck, the Dom Land Agent says he does not know the [] and bounds of this Reserve.³⁰

The second letter treated the church's property and the school sections. Sproat wrote that the school sections, sections 11 and 29, were not open for entry or sale unless occupied before the survey,

but are held by the Government until such time as it may be thought expedient in the general interest of the Country to sell they will then be sold by Public Auction and the purchase money funded the interest of which will be applied towards the support of schools.

In respect to the church's property at St. Laurent, as the lands claimed were lots 50 and 51, the lots were within the special survey of the parish of St. Laurent; as no plans of the parish had been received by the dominion lands office in Prince Albert, no entry could be made, "but upon receipt of the plans here, you can enter one as a Homestead and the other as a Pre-emption as you choose, the Order in Council of the 14th October 1879 withdrawing odd numbered sections from Homestead and Pre-emptions entry only affects Section Survey."

The church also claimed lots 52 and 53, a disputed claim. Duck advised Végréville that in such a case, as neither party can now enter it will be decided upon its merits on the application to enter but in all instances preference is given to the person in possession and in cultivation of land unless in occupation of others [sic] improvements."³¹

The Métis arriving in the early 1880s found that in taking possession of their lands they had not conformed to many government regulations, and having settled after the land surveys, they could not hope to obtain legal title to their holdings. They had no recourse but to petition the government to relax its regulations and recognize their manner of selecting homesteads. George Duck, the dominion lands agent at Prince Albert, wrote, on 11 March 1882, to the Minister of the Interior on behalf of the Métis of the South Saskatchewan that

As the majority of the settlers on the south branch of the River Saskatchewan, in the vicinity of the Parish of St. Laurent, have taken up lands previous to the survey, with narrow frontages, similar to those river claims in other parts of this district, and in view of

Before the reply from the minister's office was received, the Métis of the parish of St. Antoine de Padoue on 4 September 1882 petitioned the government, complaining, Compelled, most of us, to abandon the prairie, which no longer furnish us the means of subsistence, we came in large numbers, during the course of the summer, and settled on the south branch of the Saskatchewan; pleased with the land and the country, we set ourselves actively to work clearing the land, but in hope of sowing next spring, and also to prepare our houses for the winter now advancing rapidly. The surveyed lands being already occupied or sold, we were compelled to occupy lands not yet surveyed, being ignorant, for the most part, also of the regulations of the Government respecting Dominion Lands. Great then was our astonishment and perplexity when we were notified, that when the lands are surveyed we shall be obliged to pay \$2 an acre to the Government, if our lands are included in odd-numbered sections. We desire, moreover, to keep close together, in order more easily to secure a school and a church. We are poor people and cannot pay for our land without utter ruin, and losing the fruits of our labour and seeing our lands pass into the hands of strangers, who will go to the land office at Prince Albert and pay the amount fixed by the Government.

The petitioners further requested that they retain the even-numbered sections and have the land resurveyed along the river-lot system, 10 chains in width by two miles in depth.³⁴

The petition was signed by 46 persons, a number of whom had been farming on the South Saskatchewan for as long as a decade, some of them residing on the homesteads in St. Laurent parish which had been divided by Aldous in 1879 on the river-lot system. By correlating the names of the petitioners with the names of the South Saskatchewan Métis land claimants appearing on the table drawn up by William Pearce, investigating the South Saskatchewan Métis land claims for the Half-Breed Commission of 1885, the following pattern of settlement emerges. On the attached table, the name of the petitioner is listed, then the name of the claimant on Pearce's chart, the date of his settling on the land and of his filing entry, if he did so, and whether he was a north west Métis or country-born. In a few instances, the spelling of the names differ slightly. Some petitioners do not appear as claimants. Following this table is a diagram of a sectional township, illustrating divisions into sections of 640 acres and subdivisions into quarter-sections. The even numbered sections, which are shaded, are reserved for free grant homesteads, the odd numbered are government lands, and there are also two sections each designated as public school Lands and Hudson's Bay Company lands. The second illustration shows the manner in which land was settled in township 42, range 1, the township occupied by the majority of the above petitioners, again using the data supplied by Pearce in 1885. The numbers on the diagram correspond with the numbers beside the name of each land claimant on Pearce's table. Note that the settlers are heavily concentrated on the western side of the township, as many as six on one-half of a section, and free homesteads, government lands, public school lands and Hudson's Bay Company lands are indiscriminately occupied.³⁵

farms on the South Saskatchewan, they were surprised to find that the land had been divided into squares of 40 chains. Nevertheless, they proceeded to make their divisions upon their traditional river-lot system, and they were now faced with losing the benefits of the improvements they had made. Meanwhile, they were powerless against claim jumpers. He pointed to Prince Albert, where the lands had been divided into lots 10 chains in width along the river by two miles in depth; and all were satisfied there. André questioned why a resurvey had been refused "when you granted a similar favor to Prince Albert."³⁹ André here was mistaken; there is no evidence that a resurvey had been done at Prince Albert before January 1883. A river-lot survey had been conducted there by Aldous in 1879 at the request of the growing community. The dominion lands branch left to the surveyor's discretion whether sections of land should be surveyed in rectangular (sectional) or in river-lot divisions. The cost of a river-lot survey was about nine times that of a rectangular one, and as the profit of the surveyor was proportionately higher, he was usually accommodating when asked for a river-lot survey. But when the first surveys were conducted in 1879 along the South Saskatchewan beyond the immediate region of the then existing St. Laurent settlement, only 17 families dwelt along 60 miles of the river banks, and it was decided that the small population did not warrant the expense of a river-lot survey.⁴⁰

The South Saskatchewan Métis' hopes of obtaining a resurvey were bolstered by the success of the St. Albert Métis in resisting the imposition of a sectional survey upon their lands in 1883 and 1884. The surveyors did not reach St. Albert until the autumn of 1882. They began dividing the region upon the sectional survey system, though they informed the local clergy that they were doing so merely for their convenience, and that on the request of the parish's

residents, a special surveyor would come from Edmonton and resurvey their lands. A special surveyor from Edmonton subsequently was called in and commenced a river-lot survey, but while his work was in progress, he received an order from the Department of the Interior to suspend his activities. The residents were informed that the sectional survey would remain in force. They were understandably indignant, and through Father Leduc, who was supervising the mission while Bishop Grandin was absent, presented their case to the government: there were 200 families living along both sides of the Sturgeon River at a distance of six or eight miles on the east and six on the west. Most were Métis and country-born who had been born in the North-West Territories and were on their lands before 1869. All would lose some of their lands and improvements if the sectional survey were maintained and "in many cases two, three or four families would find themselves on the same half or the same quarter-section." They requested that they should receive the same equitable treatment accorded the residents of Edmonton, Prince Albert and the province of Manitoba.⁴¹

As an answer was not immediately forthcoming, a general meeting, with the consent of Bishop Grandin, was held in the schoolhouse at St. Albert on 8 January 1883. All the parish's male population was present and in an agitated mood. Some suggested that the government would listen only if they emulated the tactics of the Manitoba Métis in 1870, a resort to arms. Father Lestanc, who was present, impressed upon them the necessity of avoiding any rash course which could jeopardize their cause. After each individual had spoken in turn, it was decided that a moderate course should be adopted, that a delegation of two members of the settlement should be sent to Ottawa. The president of the meeting, Mr. Maloney, and Father H. Leduc were selected and given \$600 to defray their travelling



1879 also were prevented from filing entry. The 71 river-lots were not opened for entry until March 1885.

Another potential problem, which fortunately did not become a major source of grievance, was the acquisition by the Prince Albert Colonization Company in 1883 of township 45, range 27, west of the second meridian, one of the townships upon which stood the parish of St. Louis de Langevin. A survey conducted for the company by Rufus Stephenson found that there were 29 settlers and a church on its concession.

Stephenson's report gave the following details about the settlers in the township.

Joseph Dufresne, house, 4 acres broken.

John Toogood, house, 5 acres broken.

Geo. Alex. McLeod, house, stable, 32 acres in crop, 120 acres fenced.

St. George, house, 4 acres cultivated.

Maxime Lepine, extent of improvements not stated.

Norbert Turcotte, extent of improvements not stated.

Norman Mackenzie, 20 acres in crop.

Andre Letendre, 30 acres cultivated.

Michael Dumas, 5 acres cultivated.

Alex. McDougall, 5 acres cultivated.

Charles and Solomon Boucher, 12 acres in crop.

Baptist Boucher, 35 acres in crop, resided on it three years.

The Prince Albert colonization included among its shareholders members of Parliament and relatives of members, for example John White, M.P.; J.C. Jamieson, the son-in-law of Mackenzie Bowell, the Minister of Customs; William Sharples, the brother-in-law of Sir A.P. Caron, the Minister of the Militia; J.A.M. Aikins, the son-in-law of A.W.

McLelan, the Minister of Finance; Thomas McGreevy, M.P.; D.C. Plumb, the son of Senator Plumb; and A.F. Gault, the brother of M.H. Gault, M.P. White and Jamieson held "blind shares," paid up shares in the company, for which "no appreciable value is given," obtained as a reward for employing their political influence to secure from the government tracts of land. In April 1882, an order in council had placed at the company's disposal townships 43 and 44, and fractional township 45A, in range 27, fractional townships 43, 44 and 45, in range 28, and township 45, and fractional township 46A, in range 26, all west of the second meridian. Whit and Jamieson employed their influence to obtain an order in Council on 4 August 1883 permitting the company to exchange Township 43, range 27, for (fractional) township 45, range 27, west of the second meridian.

After receiving Stephenson's report, the company requested during the parliamentary session of 1884 that it be granted legal possession of the land, receive in exchange for it unsettled land, or be refunded the money it had paid to obtain it. The government refused to exchange the township or refund the money, and stated that the company had the legal right to eject the squatters. The company petitioned again, shortly thereafter, and received the same answer from Sir David MacPherson, the Minister of the Interior. It declined to eject the colonists because it anticipated armed resistance.⁴⁵

In November 1883, 31 settlers of St. Louis de Langevin sent a petition to George Duck, to be forwarded to the government, requesting river-lot surveys. Sixteen were settled upon lands held by the Prince Albert Colonization Company. The petitioners claimed that "Several amongst us are here since the years 1873-74 and '75, others, more numerous, since 1880," and protested the filing of entry of

Father Végréville discussed, at the end of 1883, the question of resurveying the South Saskatchewan townships with William Pearce, but the latter would not commit himself upon the government's policy, merely advising Végréville to communicate with Captain Deville, the Chief Inspector of Surveys.⁴⁹ Végréville did so in January 1884. In his letter, he complained that Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney had received a written promise that resurveying would commence in the autumn of 1883. However, no surveyors had appeared in his region at the time of his writing, January 1884; that as a result, his parishioners were becoming restless, and some were being "obliged to leave the settlement, some selling their land for a nominal price, and others abandoning it without any compensation." He noted that repeated petitions had been sent to Mr. Duck; they had emphasized that a delay or refusal to resurvey the South Saskatchewan would result in the breaking up of homesteads and the ruining of farmers. More settlers were being expected daily. There would be uncertainty about which lands should be occupied and whether improvements should be begun.

Again Prince Albert was singled out as a community which had received justice. Végréville continued, Opposite to the mission which we have established, that is to say, on the north shore Tp. 45 R.27 and 28, W.2, there are only two families, and already in the two townships the river squares have been changed into river lots. I see them marked on the map. For the last ten years a few families have been living on the north shore; there are about thirty at present. Next summer there will not be enough room for a part of those who have promised to come, and there is not a river lot which is

region; townships had to be regularized along the entire length, so that railway land grants could be systematically allocated. Meanwhile, the population of the Prince Albert region was steadily increasing in large measure due to the expected increase in the value of the land after the railway's construction. In 1874, there was a total population of 288 at the Reverend Nisbit's Presbyterian mission and along the river for 14 miles; in 1878 there were 1,000 and four years later the number had risen to 5,000. The Manitoba land boom of 1881-82 resulted in extensive homesteading up to the Little Saskatchewan, and some settlers made their way up the Carlton Trail to Prince Albert.

In the mid-1870s, disputes between neighbours relating to the boundaries of homesteads were becoming more common at Prince Albert. The survey of the immediate Prince Albert region was finally done in 1877 and 1878, and river-lot divisions were made. After the completion of the surveys, there was the difficult question to be resolved of who was entitled to free land. There was also the accompanying question of whether cultivation of land before the completion of the surveys should be recognized as fulfillment of homestead duties. By law, patents were granted only three years after the survey. The territorial government did not extend this requirement to those settling before 15 July 1870. However, the majority of the residents of Prince Albert region had arrived after this date. Other problems subsequently arose, including the withdrawal of odd-numbered sections in 1881 for the railways and the doubling of the \$2.00 per acre of pre-emptions on even numbered lots. In addition, the lands branch office in Prince Albert did not open until 1881 to register claims. The absence of patents in Prince Albert district discouraged

banks from opening, resulting in a paucity of money and the necessity to purchase goods on credit.⁵⁴

The routing of the CPR through Regina and Calgary added to the frustrations of the residents of Prince Albert: some were speculators who had hoped to make large profits when the railway was completed on the prairies. The residents of the North Saskatchewan saw the change of route as an attempt by the CPR to control and exploit the hitherto unused dry lands to the south; much of the most valuable land on the originally proposed route had been taken up, and the railway's promoters were not interested in enhancing the value of the residents' land.⁵⁵

William Pearce and his assistant, W. Ruttan, were sent in January 1884 to investigate the complaints of the Prince Albert settlers, and within two months they had resolved the major land-division and land-holding difficulties. But Pearce did not proceed to St. Laurent, Duck Lake, Batoche, Grandin and St. Louis de Langevin; he had little time to spare and was not sufficiently conversant with the French language. Neither his agent, George Duck, nor Duck's assistants were adequately equipped to conduct surveys. Pearce recommended:

- 1) To send with agent on the ground a surveyor who can make a rough traverse of improvements on each section, and then entries can be given by legal sub-division, so as to preserve to each man his improvements, as far as possible.
- 2) To lay out in river lots on ground, employing a surveyor of considerable experience in that kind of work; if he or his assistants spoke English so much the better, and give him sufficient latitude in his instructions, so that he could make the lot of such width as to

preserve to each claimant, so far as possible,
his improvements.

The difficulties in dividing land in the Métis parishes, Pearce noted, were compounded by the points and bays on the river; he feared that "no regular width of lots will meet the wishes of those people."⁵⁶ That summer he investigated the claims at Battleford and Edmonton.⁵⁷

In May 1884, George Duck, who spoke French, visited all the South Saskatchewan parishes, except St. Louis de Langevin, with at least one experienced surveyor, A.W. Kippen, who later served with General Middleton's army during the rebellion of 1885. Kippen related his surveying experiences at Batoche to Dr. H.A. Wright of Middleton's army corps while aboard a train from Chicago to Winnipeg to join Middleton. He recalled that upon arriving at Batoche during the spring of 1884, he recorded the grievances of the local settlers, then forwarded them on to Ottawa. While he awaited further instructions from the Department of the Interior, he began his surveys, on the sectional survey system. Presently, he received a directive that he should continue his sectional surveys and disregard the settlers' demands. When he communicated his instructions to the farmers, they became greatly excited. They ordered the surveying party to leave the settlement immediately, and threatened that if it did not, they would drive it out. Considering "discretion the better part of valor," the party immediately left. Kippen added to Dr. Wright that he believed that if he ever returned to Batoche, he would never leave alive, for the Métis knew him. He had a premonition that he would die and subsequently talked about it while on the march with the army.⁵⁸ He was one of the Canadians who fell at Batoche.

Much of the suspicion and ill-will manifested by the Métis toward the surveyors in May 1884 was caused by a lack of communication. The surveyors failed to express themselves in simple, clear language to the residents of the semi-literate community. The Métis were informed that although those who had lately settled had "ignored the regular surveys, and squatted regardless of the sections being odd or even-numbered, Hudson Bay or School sections," the sectional survey could be transformed into river-lot divisions without a resurvey. The procedure to do so would be as follows:

"upon survey, all who resided on these lands could obtain their claims as quarter-sections, and in many cases could demand this as a right; but if all parties could agree among themselves they could be granted entry by legal subdivisions or fractional portions of the same, thereby giving them river lots without entailing upon them and the country the delay and expense that would result from the necessity of making a new survey.

This explanation was too technical for the Métis and even their priests to understand. Only a resurvey would satisfy the Métis.⁵⁹

Duck's investigation found that all but about a dozen land claimants, "who have so crowded upon one another in settling that it will be necessary to make a survey on the ground," could obtain entry on application. Duck related to the Department of the Interior that in the region he had investigated, settlement had begun in 1872 and many had arrived after the survey of 1879. Improvements upon the land were general. He, however, did not submit his report until 19 October, and it was revised by William Pearce "and recommendations made in each case by the Land Board."⁶⁰

The government did not approve Duck's report and Pearce's recommendations until 9 February 1885.

The 71 river-lots of St. Laurent parish were finally opened for entry in March 1885. The basic land problems, however, remained unresolved. Contrasted with this was the relatively quick resolution of the grievances of the white settlers at Prince Albert: Pearce had made his investigations in January and February 1884, had made his report in March, and it has been accepted by the Minister of the Interior in May 1884.

The dominion government refused to acknowledge the principle that, insofar as a resurvey was concerned, the residents of the South Saskatchewan should be treated differently from the territories' other settlers. The St. Albert episode gave the Métis of the South Saskatchewan false hopes. The two situations were not analogous. William Pearce maintained after the rebellion of 1885 that the South Saskatchewan settlers had been unequivocally informed after the representations of Father Leduc and Mr. Maloney in Ottawa that the government did not feel itself obliged to bear the expense of resurveying their townships to suit the newcomers' "convenience, whims or caprice." He had told Father André in 1883, and Father Végréville and Charles Nolin in January 1884, that the sectional divisions could be altered to river-lot divisions by the settlers themselves except in "the case of claimants of those portions of Sections 1, 2, 11 and 12, lying east of the Saskatchewan in Township 45, Range 1, west 3rd." Even after the rebellion the government still resisted the idea of conducting a resurvey. At the end of October 1885, Pearce advised the government that someone who possessed some surveying experience could easily work out on the spot a solution satisfactory to all without the necessity of a resurvey.⁶¹

issue as historians have pictured it? Why did Gabriel Dumont and his brother Isadore Jr. apply for entry and in 1884 receive patents for their homesteads if they so strongly objected to the surveys?

C

Agitation in the Northwest Concerning Representation in Ottawa

The initial legislation establishing the machinery for administering the North-West Territories was enacted on 22 June 1869 and was entitled "An Act for the Temporary Government of Rupert's Land the North-Western Territory when united with Canada." A lieutenant governor, answerable to Ottawa, was appointed to govern the territories, aided by a council of not less than seven and not more than 15 persons selected by Ottawa. After the Manitoba Act created the province of Manitoba, the areas not included in the province were administered in conformity with the 1869 Act, though the offices of lieutenant governor of Manitoba and lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories were combined under one person. The first council, appointed in 1872, had 12 members, only two of whom were from the territories. In 1875, the Mackenzie government passed "The North-West Territories Act," which stipulated that when an area not in excess of 1,000 square miles acquired a population of a 1,000 people, it would become an electoral district and would have one seat on the territorial council. When the council grew to 21 elected members it would constitute a legislative assembly.⁶³ However, nothing was said about representation in Ottawa. This omission became the cause of much dissatisfaction as the northwest grew to maturity.

In 1871 there were about 1,000 people, excluding Indians, in the northwest. The population increased slowly in the 1870s and in 1881 there was only one elected member to the council. Nevertheless, in 1880 the Saskatchewan Herald at Battleford was already looking forward to northwest representation in the House of Commons. In expectation of the extension of the CPR along the North Saskatchewan, white, Métis and country-born settlers flocked there in substantial numbers. By 1883, Edmonton district had a population of more than 1,000, and in that year five more electoral districts came into being. In 1888, the council became a legislative assembly.

With the rise in the population after 1881 came an increasingly strident tone in the territorial press for representation in Ottawa. The prairie settlers had supporters representing their case in the House of Commons, but before the rebellion of 1885, the Macdonald government showed no inclination to satisfy their demands. Hence it was not unexpected that some on the prairies looked to Louis Riel to accomplish for them in 1884 and 1885 what he had for Manitoba in 1869 and 1870. The petition drawn up in December 1884 by Louis Riel for the Métis and W.H. Jackson and Andrew Spence for the white settlers included a demand for representation in Parliament and the cabinet. A year after the suppression of the rebellion, legislation was passed granting the district of Assiniboia two representatives and one each to the districts of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and in 1887 two senators were provided for the North-West Territories.⁶⁴

Endnotes

Chapter VII. Increased Immigration Along the South Saskatchewan and the Question of Land Resurveys

- 1 PAC, MG17, A17, O.M.I., Reel M-2084, Végréville Letters, n.a., n.d., n.p.
- 2 S.J. Potter and S. Clubb, "The Happy Inhabitants of Batoche," The Western Producer, 28 June, 1962, p. 19.
- 3 Ibid., p. 22.
- 4 Glenbow Alberta Institute. Archives, Saskatchewan Herald (Battleford), 27 September, 1880.
- 5 PAC, MG17, A17, O.M.I., Végréville Letters, n.a., n.d., op. cit.
- 6 Potter and Clubb, op. cit., p. 22.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 PAC, MG17, A17, O.M.I., Végréville Letters, n.a., n.d., op. cit.
- 9 Ibid., n.a., summer, 1881.
- 10 Ibid., Végréville to Grandin, 30 May 1882.
- 11 Ibid., Végréville to André, 2 May, 1882.
- 12 Ibid., "Etat des Comptes Pour l'erection de la Chapelle de S. Antoine de Padoue le 29 du mois du juillet 1882."
- 13 Quoted from Canada. National Historic Sites and Parks Branch, File B.A. 56-4, Vol. 1, n.a.
- 14 Ibid.

- 31 Ibid., Duck to Végréville, 15 May, 1882.
- 32 Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 48 Victoria, No. 116, A.1885, p. 46, Duck to the Minister of the Interior, 11 March, 1882.
- 33 Ibid., Minister of Interior to Duck, 21 October, 1882.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 47-48, Petition from St. Antoine de Padou, South Saskatchewan, 4 September, 1882.
- 35 Canada. Sessional Papers. Fourth Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 49 Victoria, A.1886, no. 8, "Detailed Report Upon All Claims to Land and Right to Participate in the North-West Half-Breed Grant by Settlers Along the South Saskatchewan and Vicinity West of Range 26, W. 2nd. Meridian", op. cit., pp. 14-15.
- 36 Ibid., p. 2; Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885, vol. 20, op. cit. p. 3,104.
- 37 PAC, MG17, A17, O.M.I., Petite Chronique St. Laurent Pour l'année 1883.
- 38 PAC, MG17, A17, O.M.I., Petite Chronique St. Laurent Pour l'année 1884.
- 39 Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 48 Victoria, A.1885, no. 116, pp. 54-55. André to Macdonald, 16 January, 1883.
- 40 Canada. Sessional Papers. Fourth Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 49 Victoria, A.1886, no. 8, "Detailed Report Upon All Claims to Land and Right to Participate in the North-West Half-Breed Grant by Settlers Along the South Saskatchewan and Vicinity West of Range 26, W. 2nd. Meridian", op. cit., pp. 2.

- 41 Vide Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoria, 1885, vol. 20, op. cit., p. 3,105, W. Blake's speech, July 6.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 3,105-3,106.
- 43 Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 48 Victoria, A.1884, no. 116, pp. 59-60, Memorial by Territorial Council to His Excellency the Governor General in Council, enclosed in Dewdney to the Secretary of State, 9 October, 1883.
- 44 Vide Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885, vol. 20, op. cit., p. 3,106, W. Blake's speech, July 6.
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CHAPTER IX
The Question of Scrip

The British Indian Department in North America from the eighteenth century recognized that the indigenous population within its administration possessed an "Indian title" to the land, and from time to time signed treaties with individual tribes and tribal confederacies, extinguishing their titles. No individual or corporation could legally obtain by cession title to Indian lands; for example, the treaty concluded on September 7, 1850, with the Ojibewa, by which the latter ceded the northern shore of Lake Superior from Batchewana Bay to Pigeon River, did not recognize the acquisition in the 1790s by the Hudson's Bay Company of a tract of land at Fort William and its immediate vicinity.¹ This practice was adopted by the Dominion of Canada after confederation in 1867, and in the 1870s was applied to the newly acquired North-West Territories. In 1876, the Dominion government concluded Treaty No. 6 with the Plain and Wood Crees of forts Carlton and Pitt on the Saskatchewan, thereby opening a vast new area to colonization. In return for their territorial cessions, the Indians obtained reservations, treaty payments, agricultural aid, and schools.

The Métis' and country-born's title to land was certainly a less clear-cut question, not having been encountered in the older provinces of Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company had never formally recognized the Métis and country-born as an indigenous population. Like the Canadian and European settlers of Red River colony, they were technically liable for payment to the company for farms

which they settled at Red River, though this payment was rarely if ever enforced.

The Métis, however, never ceased to believe that they were a native people and hence had an Indian-title to their lands. When the Canadian government attempted to take possession of Rupert's Land, acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company, the Red River Métis, led by Louis Riel, stopped the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, William McDougall, from entering Red River, demanding first from the government a formal recognition and guarantee of their title to the lands upon which they were settled.

As a result of the Red River uprising, the Macdonald government entered into negotiations with various respected residents of Red River regarding the rights of the inhabitants. The government was determined to find an equitable and satisfactory arrangement by which the region could be acquired by the government of Canada, so as to secure peace and order and assuage anti-Canadian feeling. The act creating the province of Manitoba, the Manitoba Act of 1870, recognized the Métis' and country-born's Indian title to the land and set aside 1,400,000 acres within the province for the Métis and country-born residing within its boundaries. The 1,400,000 acres provided was based upon a census conducted by Lieutenant-Governor Adams G. Archibald, the province's first resident Lieutenant-Governor, which revealed that the number of Métis and country-born living within the province did not exceed 10,000, and that if this number were taken as an accurate estimate and each was given 140 acres, an apportionment of 1,400,000 acres was necessary. Each free patent of 140 acres would extinguish the Métis' and country-born's Indian title. Originally, the government set aside not more than 40,000 acres for the original white settlers who came into the

century under the auspices of Lord Selkirk between 1813 and 1835, and non-Métis and non-country-born offspring of such settlers, estimated to number 350, or 140 acres for each. Subsequently the act was repealed, and the one replacing it in 1874, granted scrip instead of land to the white settlers and their offspring.² The law officers having ruled that under the terms of the Manitoba Act the heads of Métis and country-born families were not entitled to share in the 1,400,000 acres, the grant to each child, by an Order-in-Council of 23 April, 1873, was increased to 190 acres, and by an act in 1874, a grant of scrip of \$160 was made to each mother and father to extinguish their Indian title.³ By the same statute, \$160 in scrip was also given to each of the original white settlers and their non-Métis and non-country-born children.⁴

Unlike the Indians, who formed clans and tribes, and were treated collectively as a people by the government and received land in common (reservations), the Métis and country-born were treated individually. The 1,400,000 acres were not in blocks but scattered throughout the province. Also, it was recognized by the government that the Métis or the country-born had the option to consider himself an Indian and join an Indian band and take part in a treaty, but he could not be both an Indian and a Métis or country-born.

in all cases?

After the fall of the Macdonald government in 1873, the succeeding Liberal Mackenzie government questioned the accuracy and the utility of Archibald's census; it did not indicate how many were parents and how many were children. Hence, in May 1875 the government appointed Matthew Ryan and J.M. Machar to act as Half-Breed Commissioners, with powers to visit the various parishes and conduct new enumerations, as well as to grant scrip of \$160 to each original white settler and his non-Métis or non-country-born offspring.

The commissioners, in their final report, submitted to the Governor-General in Council in March 1876, listed the total number of Métis and country-born claims as 5,088, but admitted that an indeterminable number of eligible claimants were absent from Manitoba at the time of their investigations, some on the buffalo hunt and others who had permanently left the province. The commissioners recommended that no additional land should be set aside for the Métis and country-born children not enumerated; rather, they should be given scrip. Following the submission of the commissioners' report, the Land Agent in Winnipeg was authorized to continue the enumerations, and on August 10, he reported 226 additional claims. He estimated that about 500 others had been missed and for the sake of convenience, the Minister of the Interior increased the number to 519, and dividing the 1,400,000 acres among the claimants, increased the grant to each child to 240 acres. The estimate of the claimants was still considerably inaccurate, at least 500 too few. No land was made available for those who subsequently could file valid claims.⁵

Only after these enumerations did the government begin to apportion the patents, and this proceeded so slowly that when the Macdonald government returned to power in 1878 "they found that the half-breeds of St. Boniface, St. Norbert, St. François Xavier, Baye St. Paul, and St. Agathe, containing more than one-half of the half-breed population, amongst whom the reserve lands were to be distributed, had not only not received their patents, but the allotments had not even been made."⁶ Those residents of Manitoba on July 15, 1870 who had left the province for the prairie and parkland before the enumeration of 1876 felt equally entitled to land or scrip, and in the succeeding years they were to be prominently involved in political agitation in the North-West Territories.

By the time the land and scrip had been distributed in Manitoba, many had sold their farms to speculators for sums well below their values, and had spent the receipts on valueless things such as liquor. Thus many ended up with neither land nor money and were reduced to poverty. Some of these unfortunate people migrated to the Saskatchewan but, as shall be seen, the major migrations to that region by Red River Métis occurred in the early 1880s, during and after the Manitoba land boom and after the disappearance of the buffalo. Many seemed to have believed that they would be eligible for scrip a second time.

The first petition directed to the Dominion government by non-Red River Métis occurred in September 1874, at the time of the signing of Treaty No. 4 at the Qu'Appelle Lakes, from the Métis and country-born of "the Lakes Qu'Appelle and environs." They requested, in their petition addressed to Alexander Morris, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, that the government should grant them "the right of keeping the lands which they have taken or which they may take along the River Qu'Appelle", the right of fishing in that river and hunting freely on the prairies.⁷

There were no petitions from the Métis of the Saskatchewan until after the signing of Treaty No. 6 in 1876, though Bishop Vital Grandin of St. Albert, on April 5, 1875, wrote a long and detailed letter to Lieutenant-Governor David Laird, for presentation to the Dominion government, representing the sentiments and hopes the St. Albert Métis, and perhaps all the Saskatchewan Métis in the mid-1870s. Grandin complained that before the arrival of the North-West Mounted Police, the Territories "had not received the slightest mark of interest" from the Dominion government. The government was encouraging settlement now,

but had not as yet extended any benefits to the original settlers. He resented the stereotyped representation in the east of the Métis as being "good for nothing - a people idle and without economy." Their faults could not be denied, but their character had been historically shaped by circumstances.

If they were hunderfold worse if you will, those who have such advantages over them should not forget that the Métis are generally descended from the servants of the Hudson Bay Company. That these servants, almost exclusively engaged in voyaging, did nothing, or nearly nothing, during their long winters; and could not consequently give their children a liking for work - nor teach them notions of order and economy? The mothers had not the faintest idea. Besides, receiving each day the food necessary for the whole family, what was the good of managing? The company profits; and the company is rich, says a proverb well known in the country.

Many had never seen money and it had no value to them; bartering was their manner of business. Those paid by the company usually took their wages in goods. They were not "barbarous people, incapable of culture," as portrayed by more than one tourist to the general public in the east. Grandin requested that the government should take measures to encourage farming among them and improve communications in the country. "Everything is scarce and so difficult to get in this country that not only the Métis, but strangers themselves can only vegetate. What, in fact, can a poor immigrant do, who arrives here nearly at the end of his finance? He must pay \$20 for a bag of flour, \$1 for a pound

of tea, as much for a pound of tabacco, half a dollar for some needles and hooks, and everything in proportion."8

Perhaps the principal reason why no petitions were sent by the inhabitants themselves before 1876 was that the country was not officially opened for homesteading until after the signing of Treaty No. 6 in 1876. The first resident Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, David Laird, was not appointed until 1876 and did not reach his seat of government, Battleford, until the beginning of 1877. A petition was sent to Laird in 1877 requesting that the government recognize that "the issue of half-breed or old settlers scrip are as valid and binding as those of the half-breeds and old settlers of Manitoba", and that "a census of said half-breeds and old settlers be taken at as early a date as may be conveniently determined upon, with a view to apportioning to those of them, who have not already been included in the census of Manitoba, their just allotments of land and scrip."9

In February 1878, the residents of St. Laurent held a public meeting, with Gabriel Dumont serving as president and Alexander Fisher as secretary, to discuss the question of scrip. A deputation chosen by the assembly presented Laird with a petition in February requesting that those Métis who had not participated in the distribution of scrip in Manitoba should be granted scrip in the North-West Territories. The petitioners complained "That the sudden change from a prairie life to an agricultural life brought about by a rapid disappearance of the buffalo and the hunting regulations of the council of the North-West Territories have reduced your petitioners to a state of want and obliges them to address the Federal Government in order to obtain assistance in seed, grain and in agricultural implements. The same as has been given to certain foreign

immigrants in the Province of Manitoba. The implements of agriculture always extremely rare are sold at so high a price that your petitioners are unable to purchase them."¹⁰ A similar petition was sent in March by the St. Albert Métis, and one soon after by the Cypress Hills Métis.¹¹

Another grievance of the South Saskatchewan Métis before 1878 was that there was not a French-speaking representative on the Legislative Council of the North-West Territories. Indeed, the Council, created under the Act of Parliament of 1875 by the Mackenzie government and appointed in 1876, did not have one member from the Territories; all were from Ontario. The Métis, the majority of the residents of the Saskatchewan, felt that they were denied access to obtaining fair justice. Stipendiary Magistrate Richardson, the same Hugh Richardson who served as the judge at Louis Riel's trial, once raised their indignation by excluding from his court a number of Métis who had journeyed long distances, informing them that as he could not speak French and they could not understand English, they would be wasting their time. One French-speaking individual, Pascal Breland, was appointed to the six man council in 1878 before the Mackenzie government fell, and another, Mr. Rouleau, a stipendiary magistrate at Aylmer, Quebec, in 1882.¹²

The petition presented in February 1878 was sent by Laird to the government with the recommendation that "To prevent disputes between neighbors, it is highly desirable that the survey of lands settled upon along the principle rivers should be prosecuted with all convenient speed."¹³ And on the subject of the request for assistance for seeds and implements, he noted that he had received a similar request from the Métis of Bow River during the Blackfeet treaty negotiations and had previously recommended a favourable response.¹⁴ The Minister of

the Interior in the Mackenzie government, David Mills, responded unsympathetically, on March 18, 1878, to the request for agricultural assistance. He observed: "The application of the petitioners to be aided by the Government with seeds and agricultural implements in their farming operations, I confess I am not disposed to view favorably. I do not see upon what grounds the half-breeds can claim to be treated, in this particular, differently from the white settlers in the Territories." Furthermore, "The half-breeds who have, in some respects, the advantage over new settlers in the Territories, should be impressed with the necessity of settling down in fixed localities and directing their energies towards pastoral or agricultural pursuits, in which case lands would, no doubt, be assigned to them, in the same way as to white settlers. But beyond this, they must not look to the Government for any special assistance in their farming operations."¹⁵ There is no indication here that the MacKenzie government recognized that the Métis and country-born possessed an Indian-title in the North-West Territories; rather the Liberals seem to have regarded them in the same manner as they did the white settlers. Had the Liberal government continued in office and maintained this official position, discontent subsequently would have inevitably increased among the Métis and country-born of the Saskatchewan. But it fell in October, and it was left to another Sir John A. Macdonald government to resolve, once again, a Métis and country-born Indian-title and land problem.

In August 1878, the North-West Territorial Council recommended to the Dominion government that the Métis and country-born should be given grants of land or issues of money scrip towards the extinguishment of their Indian-title claims "in the form of a non-transferable location ticket, for say, 160 acres" for each head of a Métis or country-born

family and each child resident in the Territories on the date of its transfer to the Dominion of Canada; and that each person receiving such a "location ticket" should be entitled to select any unallocated Dominion land. However, the title to the land "so entered should remain in the Crown for ten years," and those who failed to make any improvements on their lands within three years, should have their claims subject to forfeiture. Aid in agricultural implements should be extended by the government once during the first three years. Those who had received land scrip in Manitoba should not be eligible for location tickets in the Territories.¹⁶

The Cypress Hills petition and the recommendations of the Territorial Council were conveyed to Ottawa by Lieutenant Governor Laird on September 30, 1878, with a personal warning that if measures were not speedily taken, dissatisfaction would mount.¹⁷ The Liberal Mackenzie government had fallen by the time the dispatches arrived, and was replaced by the Conservative Macdonald cabinet, with Macdonald personally serving as Minister of the Interior and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs.

The avowed intention of both the Macdonald government and the Roman Catholic Church in 1870 had been to encourage the Métis to settle on farms and become agriculturalists. The misery and poverty produced by the practice of unconditionally granting scrip convinced the returning Macdonald government that the claims of the Métis and country-born of the North-West Territories should be settled in a manner which would not expose them to unscrupulous speculators and would encourage them to become self-sustaining agriculturalists. Upon taking office, Macdonald sought advice on this matter from the Deputy Minister of the Interior and the church dignitaries in the North-West.

The Deputy Minister of the Interior, Colonel J.S. Dennis, recommended to the cabinet, in the latter part of December 1878, that "It must be freely admitted they [the Métis and country-born] have a claim to favorable consideration, and the question is, how is that claim to be satisfied so as to benefit the half-breeds, and at the same time benefit the country." He was inclined to reject, on the one hand, the outright granting of lands, and on the other, of treating the Métis like the Indians by concluding a treaty with them. Instead, he presented a compromise between the two: they should be offered some inducements - presumably he meant material aid - to settle and acquire the skills of agriculturalists and stock raisers, thereby serving as models to the Plains Indians who were now being obliged to undergo this painful transition. The nomadic Métis, if they wished, should be encouraged to form community settlements of bands of 50 or more families, and should be provided with, for some years, schools and teachers who could instruct them in agricultural and husbanding methods. Industrial schools were also recommended.¹⁸ Some investigation was subsequently conducted on the nature of industrial schools in both the United States and Canada.

Colonel Dennis' observations were conveyed to Archbishop Taché, whose advice was requested. Taché, in his reply, stressed that the Métis should not be compared with the Indians, "and it is not just to say that a certain class of them differ but little in name from the Indians. They have not the tastes, habits and instincts of the Indians. They are hunters, traders or settlers, but no portion of them can be classed with the savages of the plains." He emphasized that the Métis were a "highly sensitive race; they keenly resent injury or insult, and daily complain on

that point. In fact they are daily humiliated with regard to their origin by the way they are spoken of, not only in newspapers, but also in official and semi-official documents." Yet Taché then proceeded to outline a plan which was overtly paternalistic. He suggested that for the estimated 1,200 North-West Métis families, 12 reserves should be set up in locations the Métis considered desirable. Each reserve would be for a minimum of 100 families, each having an area of 12 square miles, the size of four townships. Each Métis, man, woman and child, residing in the North-West Territories on January 1, 1879, should receive two non-negotiable scrips of 80 acres each, selected in one of the above reserves. They should be forbidden by law from disposing of these properties for a minimum of three generations, excluding the exchange of entire lots among Métis. As for those who were already in settlements, they "ought to be confirmed in the possession of the lot or lots they claim, and on which there are improvements, even which is very rare, when they claim more than 160 acres. When the lots claimed are less than 160 acres, scrips for the balance ought to be given." Both Taché and Bishop McLean, who was also consulted by the government, underlined the necessity for immediate, decisive action to retain the loyalty and sympathy of the Métis in these crucial times, when the Plains Indians were finding that their buffalo-hunting days would soon be a thing of the past.¹⁹ The North-West Council, in 1878, also had warned that if scrip were not granted, there would be dissatisfaction.

The government responded by introducing the Dominion Lands Act of 15 May 1879, delegating to the Governor-in-Council powers

To satisfy any claims existing in connection
with the extinguishment of the Indian title,

preferred by half-breeds resident in the North-West Territories outside the limits of Manitoba, on the fifteenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, by granting land to such persons, to such extent and on such terms and conditions, as may be deemed expedient,

To investigate and adjust claims preferred to Dominion lands situate outside of the Province of Manitoba, alleged to have been taken up and settled on previous to the fifteenth day of July, eighteen hundred and seventy, and to grant to persons satisfactorily establishing undisturbed occupation of any such lands, prior to, and, being by themselves or their servants, tenants or agents, or those through whom they claim, in actual peaceable possession thereof at the said date, so much land in connection with and in satisfaction of such claims as may be considered fair and reasonable,²⁰

This statement of government policy only served to complicate the question of scrip. In the years immediately following the Lands Act of 1879, Macdonald temporised, unable to decide upon a policy which would both protect the Métis and country-born and not offend them. All the advice Macdonald received from prominent men in the west acquainted with the Métis and country-born cautioned against treating them as one would a responsible white settlers. They should be treated paternally. Yet all the correspondents cautioned that they should not be given the impression that the government believed that their powers of judgment and responsibility were inferior to those of the white man.

Meanwhile, agitation among the Métis and country-born mounted. A meeting held on October 8, 1881, in Prince

Albert passed a resolution requesting that scrip should be granted to all Métis and country-born whose Indian title had not be extinguished when scrip was granted to "their confrères in Manitoba." It was presented to the government by the representative of the district of Lorne, Lawrence Clarke, long an associate of the Métis and country-born.²¹ By 1882, the government still did not possess a comprehensive² policy respecting scrip. The Minister of the Interior wrote on February 15, 1882: "The condition of the half-breed population of the Territories, and the claims which have been preferred on their behalf to be dealt with somewhat similarly to those of the half-breeds of the Red River, have been receiving careful consideration, with a view to meeting them reasonably."²²

In fairness to Macdonald and his government, it must be noted that the question was more complicated than it appeared to be on the surface. The government's avowed intention was to encourage the Métis and country-born to become self-sufficient farmers and stockbreeders, and by some means to persuade them to settle on their land grants. But the legal means of doing so were absent. Macdonald argued that the Métis and country-born's title was literally vested "in the soil," which meant that the government could legally place conditions upon the granting of scrip. However, the Manitoba Act of 1870 recognized that the Métis and country-born possessed an Indian-title to the newly acquired Rupert's Land, and the government was required to extinguish this title. The Manitoba Act of 1870 states in part: "And whereas, it is expedient towards the extinguishment of the Indian title to the lands in the Province, to appropriate a portion of such ungranted land to the extent of one million four hundred thousand acres thereof, for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents..."²³ The wording

of the act did not give the government the right to tie the extinguishment of the title to any condition. The Métis and country-born argued, and with justice, that he had the option of considering himself an Indian, and take part with a tribe in the signing of a treaty, or he could elect to be considered a Métis or country-born, and as a Métis or country-born, he would receive scrip towards the extinguishment of his title. Having opted for the latter course, the Métis or country-born, after having had his title extinguished, would have to be recognized as having the rights of an ordinary white settler. Every settler by law was entitled to settle free of charge 160 acres of unappropriated land in the North-West Territories. Therefore, the Métis or country-born was entitled to scrip of "upwards of 200 acres", free and clear, which he could redeem in money; and then possessing the status of a settler, he could take 160 acres of unappropriated land as a homestead.

Macdonald unequivocally rejected this interpretation: from his point of view, the Métis or country-born, if he desired to be considered as either, was entitled only to a government grant of land. And when the imminent threat of rebellion early in 1885 finally forced Macdonald to declare and implement a policy, he conceded only that each Métis and countryborn was entitled to a grant of land and tied the grant to conditions of settlement. As shall be seen, Macdonald accepted the principle of an outright grant, irrespective of conditions of settlement, towards the extinguishment of the Indian title, only on the urgent requests of W.P.R. Street, the head of the Half-Breed Commission of 1885. Macdonald was obliged to abandon, in making this concession, his insistence that the Métis and country-born's Indian-title was literally vested "in the

soil" and accept that the Métis and countryborn possessed an Indian-title "to the land."

Defending his policy on the question of scrip in 1885 in the House of Commons, Macdonald first noted the advice his government had requested and received, and then lashing out at the opposition, expatiated upon the resistance of his government to accepting the principle that the Métis and country-born were entitled to liberal benefits which neither the Indians nor the white settlers possessed: in effect a treaty payment (scrip) and a free 160 acre homestead.

They were not suffering anything. The half-breed had his own lot, he was not cultivating the land that he had. Giving him his land and giving him more land was giving him nothing. The nomadic half-breed who had been brought up to hunt, having and merely his shanty to repair to in the dead season, when there was no game - what advantage was it to him to give him 160 or 240 acres more? It was of no use to him whatever, but it would have been of great use to speculators who were working on him and telling him that he was suffering. Oh! How awfully he was suffering, ruined, destroyed, starving, because he did not get 240 acres somewhere else, or the scrip for it, that he might sell it for \$50! No, Sir; the whole thing is a farce. Now, Mr. Speaker, we, at the last moment, made concessions, and we did it for the sake of peace. The Government knew, my hon. friend, Sir David Macpherson, the Minister of Interior, knew that we were not acting in the interests of the half-breeds in granting them scrip, in granting

him the land. We had tried, after consulting man after man, expert after expert, to find what was best for the country, and we found, without one single exception, they were all opposed to granting unlimited scrip and immediate patents to the half-breeds. But, Sir, an agitation arose, and the hon. gentlemen has rung the changes on Riel being brought into that country. Who brought him into the country? Not the Indians; not the half-breeds. The half-breeds did not pay the money. The white speculators in Prince Albert gave their money to Gabriel Dumont, and gave it to Lepine, and gave it to others. They had all got their assignments from the half-breeds; they had all got in their pockets the scrip or the assignment, and they sent down to bring Riel in as an agent to be a means of attaining their unhallowed ends. It is to the white men, it is to men of our own race and lineage, and not to the half-breeds, nor yet to the Indians, that we are to attribute the war, the loss of life, the loss of money, and the discredit that this country would have suffered had it not been for the gallant conduct of our volunteers. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am able to prove that there has been a deep laid conspiracy. I am able to establish that the cry of the half-breed grievances was merely a pretext. I am able to show that white man after white man has entered into it. And I tell you this, further, Mr. Speaker - I do not mean in the least degree to impugn the hon. member for West Durham; I do not at all mean to say that he was in

any way a party to it; but I tell him this, and I can prove this, that they have unscrupulously used his name and used the name of his party, and they have used that name, not only in the North-West with the half-breeds, not only along the frontier, but they have used it at Washington; at Washington his name has been quoted. I do not believe the hon. gentlemen is liable to the charge; but it only shows that you cannot touch pitch without becoming fouled.²⁴

Further on in his address, he revealed that he had yielded to the demands for unconditional scrip only because it was politic to do so. "I do not easily yield, if there is a better course open; but at the very last moment I yielded, and I said: 'Well, for God's sake let them have the scrip; they will either drink it or waste it or sell it; but let us have peace.' And my successor, my respected (sic) and able successor, Sir David Macpherson, acted upon that decision, which was carried out in January."

...We held out as long as we could, but such was the influence of the half-breeds, who already got a share of their lands in Manitoba, that they went to the North-West, they became dwellers on the plains, they played Indians, and pretended that they had lived in Manitoba; that they were suffering; that their Manitoba friends had got lands and scrip; and nine-tenths of the men claiming it had already got scrip, and were attempting to put up bargains in the North-West. Fourteen out of seventeen petitioners, in one case, were shown to have got lands already in Manitoba. Isidore

Dumont, brother of Gabriel Dumont, had land; he applied again, and it was one of his grievances that he did not get more land in the North-West. Gabriel Dumont got not only his 160 acres, as promised, but he had the best house in Batoche; and so it was with very many of these men - they had already got their lands and scrip, but they were greedy to get more. Appetite grew with eating; and though they had got all much more than originally by law they ought to have got, they are clamoring for more. ~~20~~ 25

Macdonald's stubbornness on this matter may, as he claimed, have been from his point of view in the interests of both the Métis and the country-born, and the country in general. Nevertheless, his procrastination was inexcusable. He erred in adding the duties of the Minister of the Interior to those of the Prime Minister and leader of his party, especially at such an advanced age. He did not give the Ministry of the Interior the required attention. His successor in 1883, Sir David Macpherson, was also advanced in years, lacked administrative experience and was not familiar with the needs of the residents of the North-West. Their procrastination exposed those honest, well-intentioned, hardworking Métis and country-born who could not register their land entries to the machinations of the covetous, more knowledgeable unscrupulous white settlers and land speculators. The Métis and the country-born felt that

"It would be impossible to state a case of a section of land in dispute between a half-breed and a stranger where the halfbreed has not been sacrificed. In many instances half-breeds who for a long time have been in possession of these lands, have had their lands taken away

from them and divided among strangers newly arrived; and these unfortunate half-breeds have been thereby forced to leave the place and go and settle elsewhere, where the same fate perhaps awaits them in the future. Is it believed we have no grievances? We have grievances, and we feel them deeply."²⁶

In January 1885, Sir David Macpherson, the Minister of the Interior, placed before the Privy Council a memorandum proposing that a commission be formed to enumerate the Métis and the country-born who would have been eligible for scrip had they been living in Manitoba on July 15, 1870.²⁷

The formation of the commission proceeded slowly. Among those who were consulted upon its composition was William Pearce, the Superintendent of Mines, a former surveyor in the NorthWest who had had considerable dealings with the Métis. He recommended as one of the commissioners Robert Goulet, a respected Métis who had resisted Riel in 1869 and had aided the Commission of 1876, and in March persuaded him to serve. A second commissioner selected was A.-E. Forget, a French Canadian and the Clerk of the North-West Council. W.P.R. Street, a lawyer born and practicing in London, Ontario, and a friend of Sir John Carling, a cabinet minister, was appointed as head of the commission. N.-O. Côté, a young French Canadian employed by the Department of the Interior, served as the Secretary of the Commission.²⁸

The commissioners did not receive their instructions until March 25, and then they were empowered only to determine the names of the Métis and the country-born heads of families and their children who were residing in the North-West Territories on July 15, 1870 and the heirs of those who had died. Inquiries and reports were also to be made and submitted about individual grievances, against the

government or amongst themselves, relating to the surveys of their lands.

On the scheduled day of the departure of the commissioners from Ottawa, March 27, news reached the capital that there had been a skirmish with the Métis at Duck Lake. Believing that his powers were too limited to mollify the Métis, Street asked the cabinet and received powers to "be able to hand to each half-breed his scrip before he left the room, after I had ascertained that he was entitled to it".²⁹ The government extended to the Métis and country-born the option of selecting either land scrip or money scrip.

These powers were contained in the Orders-in-Council of 30 March, 1885 and 18 April, 1885. The 30 March, 1885 Order-in-Council provided:³⁰

1. To each half-breed head of a family resident in the North-West Territories outside of the limits of Manitoba previous to the 15th day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, the lot or portion of land of which he is at the present time in bona fide and undisputed occupation by virtue of residence upon and cultivation thereof, to the extent of one hundred and sixty acres, the difference to be made up to him by an issue of scrip, redeemable in land, at the rate of one dollar per acre, and in the case of each half-breed head of a family residing in the North-West Territories, previous to the 15th day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, who is not at present in bona fide occupation of any land, scrip be issued, redeemable in land, to the extent of one hundred and sixty dollars.

2. To each child of a half-breed head of a family residing in the North-West Territories previous to the 15th day of July, 1870, and born before that date, the lot or portion of land of which he is at the present time in bona fide and undisputed occupation by virtue of residence upon and cultivation thereof, to the extent of two hundred and forty acres; and if the lot or portion of and of which he is in bona fide occupation, as aforesaid, should be less than two hundred and forty acres, the difference to be made up to him by an issue of scrip, redeemable in land at the rate of one dollar per acre; and in the case of each child of a half-breed head of a family residing in the North-West Territories previous to the 15th day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, who is not at present in bona fide occupation of any land, scrip be issued, redeemable in land, to the extent of two hundred and forty dollars.

The Minister of the Interior is of opinion that the scope of the enquiry to be made by the Commissioners appointed under the authority of the Order of Your Excellency in Council above mentioned should be enlarged, and that they be empowered not only to enumerate the half-breeds resident in the North-West Territories, outside of the limits of Manitoba, previous to the fifteenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, but also to report from time to time to the Minister of the Interior the persons who are entitled to be dealt with under Sub-clause e of Clause 81 of the Dominion

Lands Act, 1883, and also the extent to which they are entitled, it being understood that the expression "North-West Territories" contained in the third line of Sub-clause e of Clause 81 of the Dominion Lands Act of 1883 shall, for the purpose of the enumeration and report to be made by the Commissioners, be held to include all that portion of the Province of Manitoba as now constituted, which was not within the said Province as constituted under the Manitoba Act (33 Vict., Cap. 3).

The Order-in-Council of 18 April, 1885, amending the Order-in-Council of 30 March, 1885 provided:³¹

1. That the small water frontages of which Half-breeds are at present in bona fide possession, by virtue of residence and cultivation, be sold to them at one dollar per acre, the area in no case to exceed forty acres, and payment therefor to be made within two years.
2. That in satisfaction of their claims as actual settlers upon these small water frontages which are proposed to be sold to them, they be permitted to select from lands open from homestead and pre-emption entry as nearly as possible in the vicinity of their holdings one quarter section of 160 acres, more or less, the patent for which however, shall not issue until payment has been made in full for the lands of which they are now in occupation as aforesaid.
3. That in the case of children of Half-breed heads of families residing in the North-West Territories prior to the 15th day of July,

1870, and born before that date, instead of an issue of \$240 in Scrip, they be granted a certificate entitling them to select 240 acres of land from any lands open homestead and pre-emption entry.

The decision by the Macdonald government to accept the Métis' demand for unconditional scrip and to send a Half-Breed Commission to the North-West Territories was taken too late to avoid an armed Métis uprising.

ENDNOTES

1. HBCA, D.4/72, pp. 14-15. Simpson to the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, 5 July, 1851. For the treaty see Canada. Treaties. Indian Treaties and Surrenders, Vol. 1, (n.d.), pp. 147-149, no. 60.
2. Vide Canada. Statutes of Canada, Passed in the Session Held in the Thirty-Second and Thirty-Third Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Cap. III, "An Act to Amend and continue the Act 32 and 33 Victoria, chapter 3; and to establish and provide for the Government of the Province of Manitoba," 12 May, 1870, (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1870), pp. 20-27.
3. Canada Statutes of Canada. Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Passed in the Session Held in the 37th and 38th Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Chap. 20, "An Act respecting the appropriation of certain Dominion Lands in Manitoba," 26 May, 1874, (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1874), pp. 140-41. Clauses one and two state:
 1. To effect the purpose above mentioned, each half-breed head of a family resident in the Province on the fifteenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, shall be entitled, in the discretion of and under regulations to be made by the Governor General in Council, to receive a grant of one hundred and sixty acres of land or to receive scrip for

one hundred and sixty dollars, the latter to be receivable in payment for the purchase of Dominion Lands.

2. For the purpose of this Act the term "half-breed heads of families" shall be held to include half-breed mothers as well as half-breed fathers, or both, as the case may be:

But the land or scrip to which any half-breed mother shall be entitled under this Act shall be granted or allotted and given to such half-breed mother on such conditions as the Governor in Council may, from time to time, determine;

And in the event of the death of any half-breed father or half-breed mother, or both, between the fifteenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy, and the granting of the land or the issuing of the scrip, the land or scrip to which such half-breed head of a family is entitled shall be granted or distributed to such members of the family and on such conditions as the Governor in Council may, from time to time, determine.

4. Ibid, pp. 141-42. Clause 4 reads:

4. And whereas by the Act thirty-sixth Victoria, chapter thirty-seven it was provided that forty-nine thousand acres should be set apart from the ungranted lands of the Crown in Manitoba, to be divided as Free Grants to persons resident in the Province, being original white settlers who came into the country under the auspices of Lord Selkirk,

between the years one thousand eight hundred and thirteen and one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five, both inclusive, or the children, not being half-breeds, of such original settlers: And whereas it was thereby intended to give each of such settlers and their children one hundred and forty acres of land, and, in the absence of an exact census, the number of claimants was assumed as not to exceed three hundred and fifty, and the grant of land, forty- nine thousand acres, was estimated accordingly:

And whereas an accurate census of such persons and their children shews that they number five hundred and thirty or there-about, and an equal division of the land so set apart, as above, would only give to each claimant ninety-two acres and four-tenths of an acre:

And whereas it is expedient to recognize the right of each of such claimants to a grant of one hundred and sixty acres:

And whereas the said persons and their children have requested that such grant may be by an issue of scrip, and it is considered expedient to concede such request:

And whereas it is also expedient to recognize the claims to free grants of land on the part of certain original white settlers in the said Province, who settled in the country at an early date, but not under the auspices of Lord Selkirk, and to provide for the same by an issue of scrip, therefore--

Each and every person now resident in the said Province, being original white settlers who

came into the Red River country, whether under the auspices of Lord Selkirk or otherwise, between the years one thousand eight hundred and thirteen and one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five, both inclusive, or the Children, not being half-breeds, of such original white settlers, shall be entitled under regulations to be made by the Governor General in Council to receive scrip for one hundred and sixty dollars, the same to be receivable in payment for the purchase of Dominion Lands.

5. Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885, Vol. 20, op. cit., p. 3191; Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1885, Pt. 1, (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1886), pp. xviii - xxi, A.M. Burgess, 23 February, 1886.
6. Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885, op. cit., pp. 3,113-3,114.
7. Canada. Department of the Interior. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 30 June, 1874, (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1875), p. 31. Petition from Qu'Appelle Métis, 11 September, 1874. Also in Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada. 48 Victoria, A.1885, p. 7.
8. Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 48 Victoria, A.1885, no. 116, op. cit., p. 13, Vital J., 5 April 1875, translation.

9. Quoted in Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885; op. cit., p. 3,123.
10. Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 48 Victoria, A.1884, no. 116, op. cit., p. 28, Dumont and Fisher, 1 February, 1878.
11. Vide *ibid.*, pp. 32-35.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 25; Canada. Official Report of the Debate of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885, op. cit., pp. 3,134-3,135.
13. Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 48 Victoria, A 1885, no. 116, op. cit., p. 27, Laird to the Minister of the Interior, 13 February, 1878.
14. The petition from Blackfoot Crossing on 19 September, 1877 elaborates upon the smallpox epidemic of 1870, and its baneful lasting effects, especially the driving of many of the surviving Métis from the land. They now faced a want of capital to re-establish themselves as farmers. Vide *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23, Petition from Blackfoot Crossing, 19 September, 1877.
15. Quoted in Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885, op. cit., pp. 3,112-3,128.
16. Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada. 48 Victoria, A 1885, no. 116, op. cit., pp. 35-36, Forget, Clerk of the N.W.T. Council, 2 August, 1878.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 31, Laird to the Minister of the Interior, 30 September, 1878.

18. Ibid., pp. 93-96, Dennis to MacDonald, 20 December, 1878.
19. Ibid., pp. 84-88. Taché, 29 January, 1879.
20. Canada. Statutes of Canada. Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada Passed in the Forty-Second Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, "An Act to amend and consolidate the several Act Respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion," 15 May, 1879, (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1879), p. 262, Clause 125, sub-clause e and f.
21. Canada. Sessional Papers. Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, 48 Victoria, A.1885, no. 116, op. cit., pp. 80, 97. Petition submitted by L. Clarke, 7 June, 1881. For the assembly held in Prince Albert vide Ibid., pp. 69-70. Encl. in Dewdney to ---, 27 March, 1882.
22. Quoted in Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoriae, 1885, op. cit., p. 3,082.
23. Clause 31 of the Manitoba Act of 1870 reads:
And whereas, it is expedient, towards the extinguishment of the Indian title to the lands in the Province, to appropriate a portion of such ungranted lands, to the extent of one million four hundred thousand acres thereof, for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents, it is hereby enacted, that, under regulations to be from time to time made by the Governor General in Council, the Lieutenant-Governor shall select such lots or tracts in such parts of the Province as he may deem expedient, to the extent aforesaid, and divide the same among the children of the

half-breed heads of families residing in the Province at the time of the said transfer to Canada, and the same shall be granted to the said children respectively, in such mode and on such conditions as to settlement and otherwise, as the Governor General in Council may from time to time determine.

Canada. Statutes of Canada Passed in the session Held in the Thirty-Second and Thirty-Third Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Cap. III "An Act to amend and continue the Act 32 and 33 Victoria, Chapter 3; and to establish and provide for the Government of the Province of Manitoba," 12 May, 1870, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

24. Vide Macdonald's speech in the House of Commons in Canada. Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada Third Session - Fifth Parliament, 48-49 Victoria, 1885, op. cit., pp. 3,117.
25. Ibid., p. 3,118.
26. Quoted in Ibid., p. 3,120.
27. Canada. Department of the Interior. Department of the Interior Orders in Council, 1885 no. 7, "Certified Copy of a Report of the Committee of the Honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the 28th January, 1885," p. 33.
28. W. Pearce, "Causes of the Riel Rebellion, a Personal View," Alberta Historical Review, vol. 16, no. 4, autumn, 1968, pp. 21-22.; W.P.R. Street, "The Commission of 1885 to the North-West Territories," Canadian Historical Review, intro. H.H. Langton, vol. 25, 1944, pp. 38-41.
29. Street, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
30. Canada. Department of the Interior, Orders in Council 1885, no. 7, "Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee

of the Honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the 30th March, 1885," pp. 105-06. Vide also Canada. Sessional Papers, 48 Victoria, A.1885, no. 116, op. cit., pp. 11-14, Burgess to Street, 30 March, 1885.

31. Canada. Department of the Interior. Orders in Council 1885, no. 7, "Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honorable Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the 18th April, 1885," p. 123.

Petitioner	Claimant for Land on Pearce's List	Land Pt of Section	TP	Range	Date Land Open for Entry	Date of Entry	Date of Settle- ment	Settled before survey
Gabriel Dumont	Gabriel Dumont	S1/2 20	42	1	20 Sept 1881	1882	-	1
Jean Carron	Jean Carron Sr.	Lot 42	St	Laurent	6 - 3, '85	-	1881	-
-	Jean Carron Jr.	Lot 53	St	Laurent	6 - 3, '85	-	-	-
Baptiste Rochlot	Bpte Rocheleau	Pt 8 & 9	42	1	20 - 9, '81	-	1881	-
Moise Parenteon	Moise Paranteau	Lot 40	St	Laurent	6 - 3, '81	-	1882	-
Pierre Glonary	not listed							
Baptiste Delorme	not listed							
William Fidler	Wm. Fidler	Pt 6 -	42a	1	26-11, '83	26-3'84	1882	-
Baptiste Boyer	Baptiste Boyer	Lots 6&7	St	Laurent	4 & 3, '85	-	1874	-
Damase Carrière	Camas Carrière	Lot 23	St	Laurent	-	-	-	-
Napoleon Neault	Napoléon Nault	Lot 26	St	Laurent	4 - 3, '85	-	1882	-
Napoleon Neault	Napoléon Nault	Pt 31&32	42	1	Sept 1881	-	1878	-
André Neault	André Nault	Lot 25	St	Laurent	6 - 3, '85	-	-	-
Napoleon Carrière	not listed							
Patrice Touron	Patrice Touron	N1/2 18	41	1	4 - 12, '83	3-3,'84	-	-
Callixte Touron	Caliste Touron	Pt 30	41	1	4 - 12, '83	3-3,'84	-	-
Antoine Vandale	Ant. Vandalle	Pt 8 & 9	42	1	20 - 9, '81	-	1881	-
- Gervais	unknown							
Charles Larivière	not listed							

Date Referred: evidence in support of claim	Participated in Manitoba Land Grant	Northwest halfbreed	Doubtful	Entered by 1/4 Section
-	-	1	-	-
May '84	1	-	-	-
May '84	1	-	-	-
-	1	-	-	-
May '84	1	-	-	-
-	1	-	-	1
May '84	1	-	-	-
-	1	-	-	-
May '84	1	-	-	-
May '84	1	-	-	-
-	1	-	-	-
-	1	-	-	1
-	1	-	-	-
-	1	-	-	-

Petitioner	Claimant for Land on Pearce's List	Land Pt of Section	TP	Range	Date Land Open for Entry	Date of Entry	Date of Settle- ment	Settled before survey
François Tournon not listed								
Joseph Parenteau	J. Baptiste Paranteau	Lots 31&30	St Laurent		4 - 3, '85	-	1879	-
Baptiste Vandale	Bapte. Vandalle	Pt 7 & 8	42a	1	26-11, '83	-	1882	-
Antoine Ferguson	Antoine Ferguson	Lot 24	St Laurent		6 - 3, '85	-	1884	-
Baptiste Vandale	Bte. Vandalle	Pt 20 & 31	42	1	20 - 9, '85	-	1876	1
Joseph Tournon	not listed							
William Vandale	Wm. Vandale	Pt 8 & 9	42	1	20 - 9, '81	-	1878	-
Jean Carron	Jean Carron, Sr	Lot 52	St Laurent		6 - 3, '85	-	1881	-
R.P. Tseshher	not listed							
Mathias	not listed							
Parenteon								
Moise Glonory	not listed							
Zéphrin Duma	not listed							
Elizeard	Elzéar Parisien	Pt 7 & 8	43	1	Sept 1881	-	1876	1
Parisiên								
William Natome	not listed							
A. Fidler	not listed							
Isidor	Isidore	Pt 8 & 9	42	1	20 - 9, '81	-	1882	-

Date Referred evidence in support of claim	Participated in Manitoba Land Grant	Northwest halfbreed	Doubtful	Entered by 1/4 Section
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May '84	1	-	-	-
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May '84	1	-	-	-
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May '84	1	-	-	-
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May '84	1	-	-	-
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May '84	-	-	-	-
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Petitioner	Claimant for Land on Pearce's List	Land Pt of Section	TP	Range	Date Land Open for Entry	Date of Entry	Date of Settle- ment	Settled before survey
Villeneuve	Villeneuve							
Adolphe Nolin	not listed							
Ignace Poitra	not listed							
Ihéophile	not listed							
Gailette								
Jérôme Racette	Jerôme Recette	Pt 3 & 10	45	28	Sept '81	-	1883	-
Charles Gareau	not listed							
Xavier Botoche	Xavier Letendre	Lots 46,	St Laurent		4 - 3, '85	-	1872	1
		45, 47						
François Fidler	François Fidler	-	-	-	4 - 12, '83	-	-	-
Alexis Gervais	Alexis Gervais	-	-	-	4 - 12, '83	-	-	-
Joseph Delorme	Joseph Delome	Pt 7 & 8	42a	1	26 - 11, '83	-	1882	-
Maxime Poitra	Maxime Poitras	Pt 28 & 29	42	1	20 - 9, '81	-	1879	-
Emmanuel	not listed							
Champagne								
Louis Batoche	Louis Letendre	Pt 2 & 11	45	28	Sept '81	-	1872	1

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Participated
in Manitoba
Land Grant

Northwest
halfbreed

Doubtful

Entered by
1/4 Section

ec '85	1	-	-	-
ay '84	1	-	-	-
	1	-	-	-
	1	-	-	-
	1	-	-	-
ay '84	1	-	-	-
	1	-	-	-

Petitioner	Claimant for Land	Land			Date Land open for Entry	Date of Entry	Date of Settlement	Settled before Survey
		Pt of	Sec	TP	Range			
William Bremner Jr.	Wm. Bremner, Jr.	Pt 3 & 10	45		27	-	-	1883
Maxime Lepine	Maxime Lepine	Pt 2 & 11	45		28	Sept '81	-	1882
Octave Regnier	Octave Regnier	Pt 12 -	45		1	Sept '81	-	-
Bte. Boucher	J. Bte. Boucher, Sr.	Pt 11 & 14	45		27	-	-	1882
William Bremner	Wm. Bremner, Sr.	Pt 3 & 10	45		27	-	-	1882
John Oulette	Margu�rite Oulette (widow?)	Pt 12 -	45		1	Sept '81	-	1880
Chs. Lavall�								
Isidore Dumas	not claimant							
James Short	Not claimant							
Ambroise Dumont	Not claimant							

Date Preferred evidence in sup- port of claim	Participated in Manitoba half- breed land Grant	Northwest halfbreed	Doubtful	Entered by 1/4 Section
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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Petitioner	Claimant for Land	Land			Date Land open for Entry	Date of Entry	Date of Settlement	Settled before Survey
		Pt of	Sec	TP	Range			
Eugène Boucher	Chas. Eug. Boucher	Pt 11 & 14	45		27	-	-	-
Henry Smith	Not claimant							
Chs. Nolin	Chas. Nolin	Pt 2 & 11	45		28	Sept '81	-	1883
Alade	Alcide	Pt 5 & 8	45		47	-	-	-
Légaré	Légaré							
Norbert Turcotte	Norbert Turcotte	Pt 2 & 11	45		28	Sept '81	-	-
Solomon Turcotte	Not claimant							
L.S. Letendre	Louis Letendre	Pt 2 & 11	45		28	Sept '81	-	1872
Wm. Letendre	Wm. Batoche	Pt 2 & 11	45		28	Sept '81	-	-
Wm. Swain	Not claimant							
Epzéar	Epzéard	Pt 3 & 10	45		27	-	-	1883
Swain	Swain							
Willie Bruce	Wm. Bruce	Pt 4 & 9	45		27	-	-	1883

Date Preferred evidence in sup- port of claim	Participated in Manitoba half- breed land Grant	Northwest halfbreed	Doubtful	Entered by 1/4 Section
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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Sept '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	-	-	-	-
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Sept '85	1	-	-	-
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-	1	-	-	-
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-	1	-	-	-
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Dec '85	1	-	-	-
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Dec '85	1	-	-	-
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Petitioner	Claimant for Land	Land Pt of Sec	TP	Range	Date Land open for Entry	Date of Entry	Date of Settlement	Settled before Survey
Ant.	Antoine	Pt 4 & 9	45	27	-	-	1883	-
Richard	Richard							
Isidore	Marguente	Pt 4 & 9	45	27	-	-	1883	-
Boyer	Boyer (widow?)							
Solomon	Solomon	Pt 11 & 14	45	27	-	-	-	-
Boucher	Boucher							
J.B.	J. Bte.	Pt 11 & 14	45	27	-	-	1882	-
Boucher, Jr.	Boucher, Jr.							
LS. Schmid	Louis Schmidt	Pt 11 & 12	45	1	-	-	1880	-
Jos. Dumas	Not claimant							
Modeste	Modeste	Pt 5 & 8	45	27	-	-	-	-
Laviolette	Laviolette							
Moise	Moise	Pt 3 & 10	45	27	-	-	1882	-
Bremner	Bremner							
Joseph	Jos.	Pt 3 & 10	45	26	-	-	1882	-
Bremner	Bremner							
Jonas	Jonas	Pt 3 & 10	45	27	-	-	1885	-
Laviolette	Laviolette							
Alex	Alex.	Pt 5	45	27	-	-	1884	-
Bremner	Bremner							

Date Preferred evidence in sup- port of claim	Participated in Manitoba half- breed land Grant	Northwest halfbreed	Doubtful	Entered by 1/4 Section
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Dec '85	1	-	-	-
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Dec '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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-	1	-	-	-
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Dec '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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July '85	1	-	-	-
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