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A History of the Native Peoples of Québec, 1760-1867

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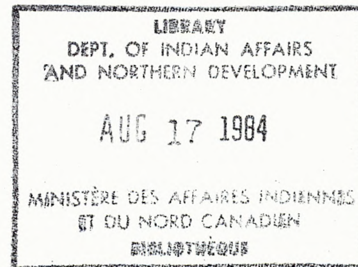
A HISTORY OF THE NATIVE PEOPLES OF QUEBEC, 1760-1867

by

DANIEL FRANCIS

DECEMBER 1983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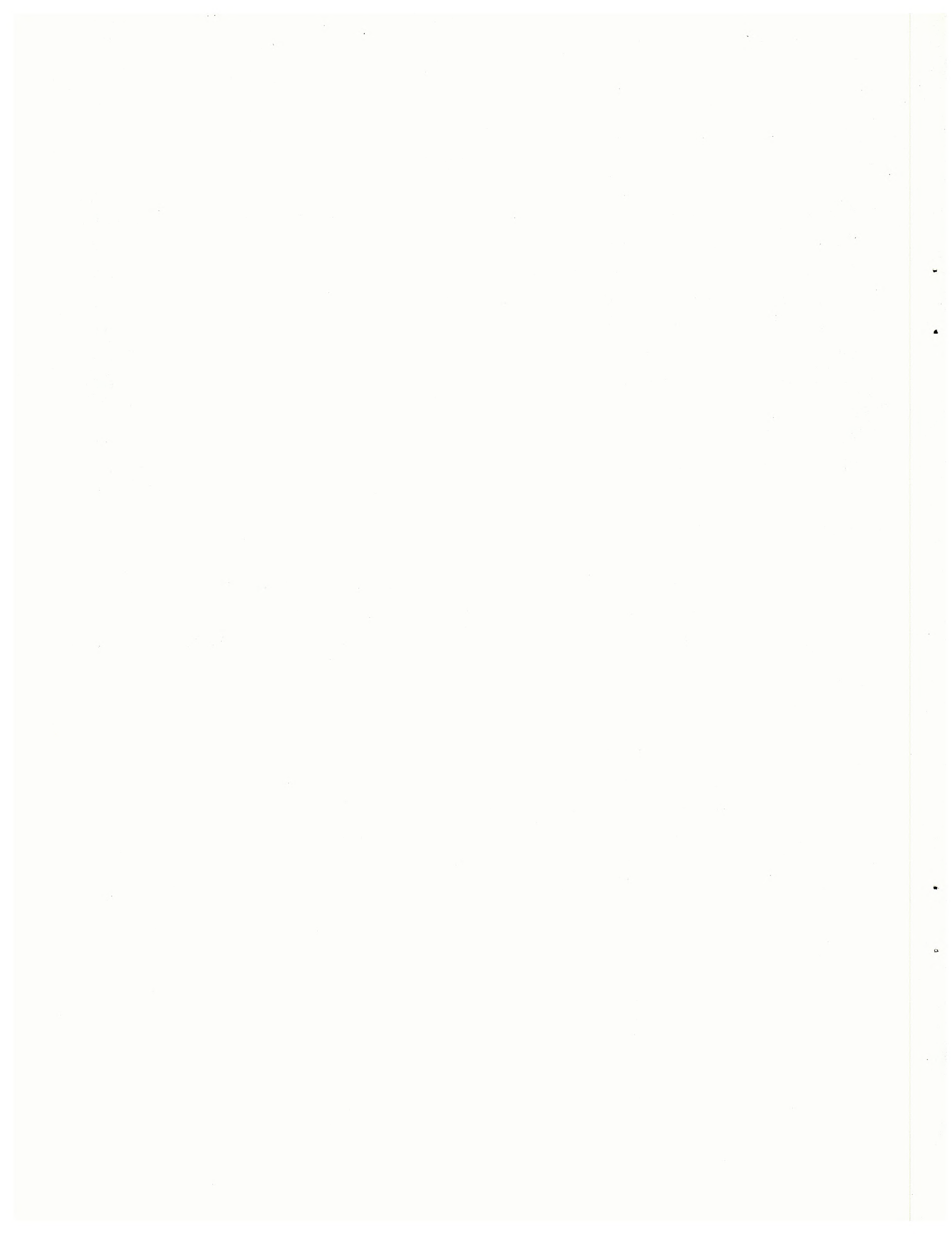


CHAPTER 1
The Native Peoples of Quebec: an Introduction

Any history of the Native peoples of Quebec during the crucial period between 1760 and 1867 must emphasize at the outset that the aboriginal population of the province presents a varied picture. There was not a single Native people, but several peoples, each with its own history and way of life. They inhabited vastly different regions of the province, from the Inuit on the frozen shores of Hudson Strait to the Micmac on the temperate coast of the Bay of Chaleur. They followed different subsistence patterns, from the caribou hunters of the interior to the agriculturalists of the St. Lawrence lowlands. They had different relations with Eurocanadians, from the fur trading posts of Hudson Bay to the mission reserves in the southern part of province. This brief history cannot hope to do justice to the experience of each group, and it would be misleading not to recognize their individuality.

At the end of the eighteenth century the province of Quebec occupied a much different area than it does today. Following the defeat of the French and the beginning of British rule in 1760, Canada was reduced to the shape of a long quadrilateral stretching approximately from the height of land north of the St. Lawrence River to the height of land on the south and from Anticosti Island in the east to the Ottawa River in the west. In 1774 the Quebec Act expanded these frontiers dramatically in the west, but in 1791 the present western boundary was pretty well fixed with the creation of Upper Canada (Ontario). The north shore of the St. Lawrence, from the St. John River eastward, and all of modern Labrador was granted to Newfoundland in 1763 but was returned to Quebec in 1774. Then, in 1809 it was transferred back to

Newfoundland until 1825 when Anticosti Island and the north shore of the St. Lawrence, all the way to the Strait of Belle Isle, once again joined Quebec. The northern border remained the height of land until after Confederation.[1]

This study is indifferent to these territorial changes. It presents the history of the Native peoples who inhabited what is now the province of Quebec between 1760 and 1867. At the time Amerindians living north of the height of land were residents of Rupert's Land, and from time to time those living east of the St. John River were Newfoundlanders, but for the purposes of this history they are all Quebeckers.

Twelve different groups of Native people inhabited Quebec at the end of the eighteenth century, though patterns of seasonal activity mean that the territory assigned to each group is only approximate. Far to the north, Inuit inhabited the coast from the Belcher Islands in Hudson Bay around to Killinek Island at the tip of Labrador. Migrating inland to hunt caribou, these people lived remote from even the nearest trading posts and did not establish sustained contact with Eurocanadians until the second half of the nineteenth century.

The east coast of Hudson and James Bays, south of Lac Guillaume-Delisle (Richmond Gulf) and the forested hinterland that drains into these bays, was inhabited by the Eastern Cree, a group of generalized hunters and fishermen who bartered furs with European traders and otherwise relied on traditional animal resources for subsistence.

East of the Cree, in the remote interior of the province, lived the Naskapi. Of all the northeastern woodland groups, the Naskapi were the least integrated into the fur trade. For the most part they kept to themselves, relying for their existence on the large caribou herds that migrated across the central plateau.

The Montagnais lived generally south of the Naskapi along the rivers draining into the St. Lawrence, from the Lac St-Jean-Saguenay River region in the west to the Strait of Belle Isle in the east. They were among the earliest Amerindians to begin trading with the French and frequented several posts along the St. Lawrence east of Tadoussac and up the Saguenay. There is discussion among researchers today whether the Naskapi and the Montagnais have always been distinct cultural groups or whether the Naskapi were formerly a subgroup of the Montagnais.[2] For purposes of this study the conventional distinction will be made, a distinction held by contemporary members of both groups.

Another group of Amerindians, the Algonquins, inhabited the Ottawa Valley on either side of the Quebec-Ontario border from Lake of Two Mountains as far north as the Lake Timiskaming region. Like their Cree neighbours to the north, the Algonquins were well integrated into the fur trade but still followed a way of life dependent on traditional animal resources.

These peoples -- the Inuit, Cree, Naskapi, Montagnais and Algonquin -- shared certain characteristics that set them apart from other Quebec Native peoples. They inhabited regions distant from Eurocanadian settlement; therefore their contacts with colonists were confined in general to fur traders and, later in the period, missionaries. Many of them lived outside the boundaries of Quebec as it was then constituted, so government policy, both local and imperial, did not affect them. Although they traded regularly, they followed ways of life that would be considered traditional; that is, they hunted and fished for subsistence on hunting territories that they considered to have been theirs since time began.

In contrast to these peoples were other Native peoples who inhabited the more thickly populated St. Lawrence corridor in villages where they congregated for at least part of the year. For the most part

these peoples were in regular contact with European settlers and were deeply affected by official Indian policy as it developed in the colony. The most numerous were the Iroquois who inhabited villages at Caughnawaga, across the river south of Montreal, and St. Regis, upriver at the Quebec-Ontario border. In both places agriculture was practised. In the summer some of the men worked as raftsmen in the timber trade and the women made handicrafts for sale. Some of the Iroquois still hunted in the winter, but their hunting territories had been seriously reduced.

Another smaller group of Iroquois lived at a Sulpician mission on Lake of Two Mountains along with some Nipissing and Algonquin people. The Iroquois apparently made a success of agriculture here, but the Nipissing and Algonquins were chiefly hunters who roamed the Ottawa Valley and came into the village only in the summer to trade furs.

Farther to the east, between Montreal and Trois Rivières on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, was the Abenaki village of Odanak, or St. Francis. This village was established in 1700 as a Jesuit mission and attracted Amerindians from all over northeastern New England. By the nineteenth century Native people made their living by farming, trapping, hunting and simple manufacturing of handicrafts.[3]

The St. Maurice River valley was inhabited by yet another group of Amerindians, the Tête de Boule or, as some scholars prefer, the Attikamek. They followed a nomadic existence, fishing, hunting and trading furs at Trois Rivières and Weymontachie.

A comparatively sedentary group were the Huron of Lorette near Quebec City. Descendants of the survivors of the destruction of Huronia in the mid-seventeenth century, they engaged in seasonal hunting and trapping but also farmed and manufactured handicrafts.

Joseph Bouchette listed the manufactured items in his Topographical Dictionary, published in 1832: "mocassins, snowshoes, sashes, baskets, Indian sleighs, fur caps and mittens, collars of porcupine quills, purses, reticules, bows, arrows, paddles, small canoes and little figures of Indians."[4]

Northeast from Quebec City along the St. Lawrence near Rivière du Loup on the Rivière Verte, about 140 Amalecite people from New Brunswick were settled by the government in 1828. Apparently destitute, these people received agricultural supplies and set about cultivating the land.[5]

Finally, there were the Micmac who congregated at the mouths of the Restigouche and Cascapedia Rivers each summer to fish and meet their missionaries. Distant from the centres of the province, the Micmac were neglected for many years by government officials as their land and fishing rights were violated routinely.[6]

It is impossible to present accurate and complete figures showing the size of the Quebec Native population in the period 1760-1867. For many years no one bothered to count. Even when they did, remote groups were ignored, and population figures were therefore only partial totals. Figures are also unreliable because at different seasons large numbers of men were away hunting and could not be counted. For all these reasons the available statistics are suspect. Nevertheless, a table has been compiled showing the reported population for the various Amerindian groups in two different years. The figures are only approximate but they may be useful (see Table 1).

Every history has a theme, and this one is no exception. It attempts to describe the way in which Amerindian and Eurocanadian societies accommodated one another during a particularly difficult period in their relationship. This theme provides a context in which events are presented and interpreted. Two chapters deal with the evolution of

government policy regarding Native people from the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to the beginning of colonial responsibility for Amerindian affairs in the 1860s. Two chapters describe the effects of the fur trade and missionary activity on the Native peoples of Quebec, while the history of the Inuit is treated in a separate chapter. The conclusion assesses the place of Native peoples in Quebec before Confederation.

Table 1. Quebec Amerindian Population, 1828 and 1858

	1828	1858
Abenaki	459	559
Algonquin	455	438
Amalecite	---	171
Cree	---	1300
Huron	179	282
Iroquois	1597	2412
Micmac	450	556
Montagnais	---	470
Naskapi	275 (1830)	200 (1856)
Nipissing	355	176
Tête de Boule	150 (1825)	---

Note: Where no figure for the appropriate date is available, other figures are included and the year noted in parentheses.

Source: Canada, Legislative Assembly, Journals, "Report of the Special Commissioners to Investigate Indian Affairs in Canada", Appendix 21, 1858; Alan Cooke, "A History of the Naskapis of Schefferville", unpublished report (Montreal, 1976), p. 51; Norman Clermont, Ma Femme, Ma Hache et Mon Couteau Croche: Deux Siècles d'Histoire à Weymontachie (Quebec: Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, 1977), p. 29; PAC, RG 10, Vol. 792, Report of H.C. Darling, 24 July 1828.

1 Huron at Lorette, by Coke Smyth, *circa* 1840 (PAC-C1041).

CHAPTER 2

Indian Administration, 1760-1845

When French forces capitulated to General Jeffrey Amherst at Montreal in September 1760 and New France became an occupied British colony, Native people in the new province came under the authority of the British Indian Department. Created five years earlier in an attempt to impose coherence on Indian policy in the British colonies, the Indian Department was superintended by Sir William Johnson (1755-1774) and subsequently by his nephew Colonel Guy Johnson (1774-1782) and his son Sir John Johnson (1782-1828). The department was an arm of the military, the Johnsons reporting to the commander of British forces in North America. Its purpose was straightforward -- to maintain Indian allegiance to the British cause.

As the Seven Years War drew to a close, British authorities recognized that Native people were anxious and disgruntled. They feared for the future of the fur trade, they objected to the encroachment of white settlement, and generally they regretted that they no longer would be able to protect their interests by playing off one colonial power against the other. In the west this state of unease culminated in open rebellion against the British, a revolt led by the Ottawa chief, Pontiac.

In Quebec, Amerindians did not take up arms, but they shared the anxiety about British intentions. Was their land secure? Would traders return to the woods now that war had ceased? One pressing issue was the future of the King's Posts on the Saguenay River and farther east along the north shore of the St. Lawrence. The Montagnais people who hunted in this area informed the military governor at Quebec, James Murray, that wartime disruptions of trade had left them destitute and requested that the posts resume business immediately.[1] Murray appointed an agent to administer the posts directly and then adopted the French policy of leasing the trade to

private merchants. The situation at the King's Posts was just one small example of the difficulties experienced during the transition period from French to British rule.

In a more general way the British responded to the unsettled situation in North America with an Indian policy designed to secure and pacify its frontier areas. The principal document embodying this policy was the Royal Proclamation issued in October 1763. This document dealt with the boundaries of the American colonies, their government structures and land granting procedures but principally it was concerned with Indian policy. In order to assure the Amerindians that they would not lose their lands, the Proclamation established a vast reserve area to the west and north of the settled colonies in which land could not be purchased or occupied without permission from the Crown. Within the colonies, including the province of Quebec, no individual was permitted to buy any land already reserved for the Amerindians. If Native people wished to sell some of their land within the colony, it could only be purchased by the Crown's representative at a public meeting held expressly for the purpose. The Proclamation also regulated the fur trade by requiring that traders obtain licences before entering the fur country.[2] The purpose of the Proclamation was to restrict settlement to the eastern seaboard of North America, where it could be regulated easily by imperial authorities, and to remove any threat of violence against the colonies by pacifying the Native population.

During the first decades of British control, Indian policy continued to be motivated by the need to preserve the friendship of Native peoples in order to preserve the security of the American colonies. With the support of William Johnson, imperial officials imposed a series of regulations in 1764 that attempted to restrict the fur trade to licensed traders and a limited number of trading locations.[3] These regulations proved unworkable and were shortly abandoned, but the close supervision of Amerindian-Eurocanadian relations was not.

In Quebec, ordinances restricted the sale of liquor to Native people, banned the purchase of "any cloaths, blankets, firearms or ammunition belonging to an Indian" and made it illegal for Eurocanadians to settle in a Native village without special permission.[4]

These laws were intended to protect Amerindians from unscrupulous colonists, but fear was as much a motive as goodwill. In the wake of violence on the western frontier, officials were concerned that if Amerindians felt cheated of their lands or possessions they would retaliate with force. Governor Murray expressed this fear plainly:

> It is well known that all Savage people are naturally indolent and calculate only for the present moment and were they indulged at pleasure with spirituous liquors to which they are unconquerably addicted ... they would in a few days, perhaps often in a few hours, consume the whole produce of their year's labour.

Finding themselves destitute, Murray continued, they would "wreck their Vengeance indiscriminately on the first Europeans or other white people they meet."[5] To Governor Murray, Amerindians were an unstable, volatile element in colonial society. Kind treatment was a way to pacify and befriend them; it was not a moral obligation. British Indian policy in the late eighteenth century was not concerned with the well-being of the Native people, it was concerned with removing a military threat to the security of the colonies.

Initially the Indian Department was not a large bureaucracy. It consisted of the superintendent of the northern department (there was also a southern department with responsibility for lands lying south of the Ohio River) and his local agents and interpreters. The principal task of these officers was to supervise distribution of the annual presents, though as time passed they were called on more frequently to mediate disputes between Native people and settlers.

The dispensing of presents was a custom going back to the French regime; indeed, it probably had its origins in Amerindian trading practices. The British begrudgingly continued the custom. It was expensive and, strictly speaking, no promise had been made to keep it up, but officials agreed it was a reasonable, even a necessary, price to pay for the friendship of Native peoples and a peaceful frontier. From the Amerindian point of view, presents were a form of payment for past services -- an obligation, not a gift.

Presents were dispensed in the summer at central locations where Native people were expected to gather. They consisted of clothing, blankets, tobacco and various implements. Sometimes food rations were also given to the needy. In Quebec, presents were restricted to Native people who inhabited the Upper St. Lawrence, approximately between Quebec City and St. Regis. The Micmac at Restigouche received them only occasionally when they made the long trip to Quebec.[6] The Montagnais of the King's Posts were likewise excluded, and of course the Cree, Montagnais and Naskapi of the north lived beyond the borders of the province and did not qualify.[7]

The basic thrust of British Indian policy did not change in the years before the War of 1812. In 1774 the Quebec Act created a much larger province, but instructions to Governor Carleton early the next year contained familiar clauses regarding Indian Affairs.[8] The British successfully retained Amerindian allegiance during the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), when most Quebec Native people supported the loyalist side -- actively with arms or passively by not joining the Americans. In September 1775, at the very beginning of the conflict, a party of Caughnawaga Iroquois fought off an American force advancing on Montreal from Lake Champlain, arguably helping to preserve an ill-prepared province from defeat.[9] Other Amerindian warriors were organized by the Indian Department and deployed throughout the war in several theatres. However, Quebec Native people were not as active in the war as the groups farther west, whose territories were actually at risk.

As long as Britain and the United States vied for the support of the Native peoples on the western frontier, British officials continued to treat Amerindians principally as military allies. Lord Castlereagh, the Colonial Secretary, reaffirmed this approach in a letter to the Governor of Lower Canada in 1809:

> ... attention must be kept up to conciliate the Indian Tribes, upon the following Principle, that if in a Contest they are not employed to Act with us, they will be engaged to Act against us, and that we are to consider not so much their use as Allies as their Destructiveness if Enemies.[10]

The objectives of British policy were political and diplomatic, not social or economic, aimed at securing their colonies to the north. For their part, Native people followed a policy of calculated self-interest, supporting the British because they seemed to pose the lesser threat to their lands and traditional way of life.

During the War of 1812, warriors from St. Regis, Caughnawaga, Lake of Two Mountains and St. Francis saw action in battalions led by officers drawn from the Indian Department.[11] Native soldiers fought on the western front as well as in Lower Canadian campaigns. A group of Caughnawaga warriors led by Captain Dominque Ducharme figured prominently in the defeat of the Americans at Beaver Dam near Niagara in June 1813. Ducharme was later an Indian Department agent at Lake of Two Mountains.[12]

For one group at least, the War of 1812 presented a difficult choice. The international boundary ran through the Iroquois settlement of St. Regis, established in the mid-eighteenth century by a breakaway group from Caughnawaga. At the outbreak of war, some of the Iroquois, especially those with hunting grounds in American territory, were drawn to the American cause. After the war their missionary argued that the people had been coerced into fighting for the United States,

but Indian Department officials nevertheless ruled that only "loyal" Iroquois would continue to receive presents and annuities and that "American Indians" could not inhabit the Canadian side of the border.[13] The bitter divisions created in the community by this episode persist to the present.

Following the War of 1812, the military thrust of Indian policy was reaffirmed when responsibility for Indian affairs was transferred from civil authority back to the military. But at the same time, several factors were combining to initiate a change in the relationship between Amerindians and colonial administrators in the Canadas. Native people were alarmed at the spread of settlement in Lower Canada and at the insistent encroachments on their land by Eurocanadian trappers, hunters and farmers.

The situation at Lake of Two Mountains was typical. The Algonquin and Nipissing who congregated there possessed hunting territory in the lower Ottawa Valley, lands they considered guaranteed by the Proclamation of 1763. Yet land in the region was granted to settlers without compensation to the Amerindians, and animal resources were being destroyed at an alarming rate. Sir John Johnson, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, admitted in 1824 "that the Settlement of the Country, and the indiscriminate and injudicious destruction, by the Settlers, of the Beaver, and other Animals, from which the most valuable Furs are obtained, is likely soon to deprive Them of the means by which They have hitherto Supported Their Families."[14]

Similar complaints were heard regularly from the other Amerindians who inhabited villages along the St. Lawrence corridor. British officials recognized that it was no longer adequate to deal with the Native population simply as military allies. The frontier of settlement was pressing against their territories, and some sort of accommodation would have to be worked out. Unfortunately for the Native people, they had only limited power to influence the form this new

accommodation would take. When the British required warriors to protect their American colonies, Amerindians were able to bargain for the protection of their lands from a position of strength. Now that the British no longer needed Native allies, they had less reason to take their interests into account. Because of this relative decline in the power of Amerindians to negotiate their own future, the decade of the 1820s has been called a crisis point in their history.[15]

At the same time as events in the Canadas required a new policy, British imperial authorities were considering how to reduce the expense of maintaining their colonies. This concern was natural in the wake of the War of 1812, and the Indian Department was a likely candidate for some judicious pruning. Following the war, the department in Lower Canada was paying the salaries of twenty-six officials, including the superintendent general, deputy superintendent and various storekeepers, resident agents, interpreters, surgeons, school teachers and missionaries.[16] As an economy measure, the department's budget was gently reduced, but the savings were not substantial enough to satisfy economy-minded officials who began to question the importance of the annual presents.

In 1827 Lord Goderich, the British Colonial Secretary, informed Lord Dalhousie, Governor of British North America, that he intended to reduce the cost of the department with an eye to abolishing it eventually. As a first step, Goderich proposed that presents be distributed in the form of cash.[17] Four months later Dalhousie responded negatively to Goderich's proposals. On the immediate question of cash presents, he told his superior, the Native people would only squander such a windfall, especially on liquor. The point of presents was to protect Amerindians from their weak natures; even they themselves recognized this, he said. As for the broader issue of abolishing presents entirely, Dalhousie speculated that the Native people were so accustomed to receiving them that they would rise in arms against such a change "and we should soon find them most

formidable enemies".[18] In other words, the old policy of Indian allies or, as it has been called, the policy of conciliation, was still endorsed in the Canadas, and it would not allow the abolition of presents.[19] (See Table 2.)

However, Lord Goderich had supporters in the colony, one of whom was Commissary General R.J. Routh. Early in 1828 Routh prepared a memorandum on the question of presents and the Indian Department generally. He argued that handing out annual gifts was the only significant function left the department and that it could be done just as easily by the commissariat. But more to the point, the entire exercise was unnecessary, even fraudulent. Many of the Native people who received them had intermarried and had "lost the character of Indians"; many sold the presents for cash; none was any longer an important military ally. As far as Routh was concerned, "They have the same means of gaining their livelihood as any Canadian Farmer or Workman in the Province; there does not appear to be now any one satisfactory reason for issuing Presents in Lower Canada." He recommended that, on one year's, notice the amount of the presents be reduced; ultimately he hoped to see them abolished.[20]

Meanwhile, spurred by the trend in Goderich's thinking, Lord Dalhousie asked Major General H.C. Darling, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, to prepare a report on the Indian Department. Darling's conclusions were submitted in July 1828. He not only deprecated the idea of abolishing the Indian Department, but he strongly urged the government to become more active in defending the territorial rights of the Native peoples. Darling gave several instances of Amerindians being dispossessed "by intrigue and oppression of various designing individuals". He predicted that if the Native peoples lost their lands they would become hopelessly dependent on the government, or they would starve or turn to violence.

Whatever the result, it would be more expensive in the long run than funding an effective Indian Department. Darling concluded:

> While the Indians of the Lower Province remain in their present state ... until further improvement be made in their Moral Condition, by the instruction and education of their Youth, leading gradually to the Attainment of sufficient knowledge to enable them to Manage their own Affairs, to Cultivate with advantage their Own Lands, and until they are admitted individually to the Rights of His Majesty's Other Subjects, among whom they live, I am humbly of the Opinion, that the Superintendence of Government, by means of Officers specially appointed between it, and the Indians, will be found indispensable.[21]

In the debate about the future of the Indian Department, Darling's position was ultimately endorsed. Regular complaints from Native people about trespass on their lands indicated that relations between them and Eurocanadian colonists were too volatile to leave unregulated. Not only would the Indian Department be preserved, however, it would be given a new purpose.

Motivated in part by the humanistic ideas of the anti-salvery movement, the Aborigines Protective Association and many missionary societies, the British colonial office began to concern itself with the economic and social well-being of the Native population. Sir George Murray, secretary of state for war and the colonies, expressed the new policy direction early in 1830. "It appears to me," he wrote

Table 2. "Estimate of Presents Required for the Supply of Natives in Lower Canada, 24 June 1829"

		Quebec District	Montreal District
cloth	yds.		67-1/2
caddies	"		
molton	"		27-1/2
raftemen	"		10
strouds	"		3
blankets	1 point	123	302
	1-1/2 point	94	252
	2 point	57	316
	2-1/2 point	348	952
	3 point	289	788
irish linen	yds.	114	159
calico	"	1065	2985
cotton	"	810-1/2	2544-1/2
silk handkerchiefs			5
laced hats			5
plain hats			4
thread	ozs.		15
gartering	yds.		
shoes	pair		12
combs			38
awls		637	1740
fire steels		289	788
butchers' knives		637	1740
needles			
tobacco	lbs.	654	1686
ball	"	616	1629
shot	"	1848	4887
flints		1232	3258
gunworms		289	788
silver armbands	pair	8	12
" brooches		586	1000
" ear-bobs	pair	586	1000
gorgets, silver		8	12
medals		10	16

		Quebec District	Montreal District
chiefs' guns		60	100
rifles		60	100
common guns		100	150
brass kettles		50	50
tin kettles		50	50
gin locks		30	50
half axes		100	150
tomahawks with pipe handles		100	150
fish hooks		700	1000
claspknives	doz.	7	10
canoe awls	"	7	12
mirrors	"	4	3
flags		12	12
cod lines		12	18
mackerel lines		18	24
seine rope	lbs.	30	50
seine twine	"	30	50
net thread	"	60	75
ribbon	yds.	700	1000
sheeting	"	150	250

Source: British Parliamentary Papers, Papers Relative to the British Possessions 1834 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 56.

to the governor of Lower Canada, "that the course which had hitherto been taken in dealing with these people, has had reference to the advantages which might be derived from their friendship in times of war, rather than to any settled purpose of gradually reclaiming them from a state of barbarism and of introducing amongst them the industrious and peaceful habits of civilized life."[22]

It was left to the governor, Sir James Kempt, to determine exactly how this might be done. He proposed settling Amerindians in villages with sufficient land for agriculture. A missionary and a government agent would live in each village. Residents would receive building materials, seed, agricultural implements and whatever else they needed to get established, perhaps in lieu of regular presents.[23] The purpose of this policy was to transform Amerindians from nomadic, woodland hunters to settled cultivators of the soil, thereby assimilating them into Eurocanadian society and eradicating a troublesome social problem.

Cost was still an important consideration. It was expected that once they were established on the land, Native people would quickly become self-sufficient, and the Indian Department could wither away. Thus, from the bureaucratic point of view, 'civilization' was considered a policy to reduce colonial expenditures.[24] As part of this new policy, Indian affairs ceased to be a responsibility of the military and became part of the civilian public service in 1830. The department was divided along provincial lines, and in the lower colony a Secretary for Indian Affairs reported directly to the Governor's military secretary.

Indian administrators recognized differences between the Indian peoples in Upper and Lower Canada. Those in Lower Canada had been in contact with European settlers since the beginning of French colonization. Many had been living at least seasonally in long-established villages and were already converts to Catholicism.

The villages of Lorette, St. Francis, Bécancour, Caughnawaga, St. Regis, and Lake of Two Mountains were all established, prior to the conquest, by Catholic missionaries who sought to settle groups of Amerindians so they could evangelize among them more easily. In Upper Canada, on the other hand, Amerindians had had only limited contact with Eurocanadians. Most still lived nomadic lives of hunting and fishing. Naturally the Indian Department was more concerned with these people and paid less attention to implementing the new policy in Lower Canada.

The Indian Department was not given adequate funds and had to rely on outside help to carry out its responsibilities. For instance, the commissariat administered the annual presents, and missionaries were relied on to establish schools. Relations with missionaries were extremely important in Lower Canada. When the British first took over the colony they did not interfere with the well-established relationship between the Catholic Church and the Amerindians, an approach that eased the transfer of loyalty from the French to the new British regime. The dependance on the church as an intermediary meant that in Lower Canada the Indian Department shared authority with the missionaries. The new policy of civilization, however, was not developed in collaboration with the church, and after 1830 it led to conflict, especially in the area of education. Indian affairs administrators were frustrated regularly by clergy living at the Native villages who discouraged their people from attending classes taught by Protestants and/or Anglophones. For all these reasons the initiatives outlined by Governor Kempt were applied only half-heartedly in Lower Canada after 1830.[25]

Furthermore, and most important, Amerindians themselves did not rush to become settled agriculturalists just because colonial officials thought it would be good for them. As Secretary for Indian Affairs Duncan Napier warned, "I have not discovered any disposition in the Indians of this Province to become useful Settlers, or to assume the

habits of Civilization."[26] Judging by petitions from several Native communities, Amerindians wanted the government to secure their hunting territories and traditional way of life, not destroy them. However, official policy unquestionably represented an all-out assault on Native culture.

In 1836 the policy of civilization was reviewed by the Colonial Office, where officials were still looking for ways to reduce spending.[27] Once again it was suggested that annual presents be abolished. In response to a request from London, a committee of the Executive Council in Lower Canada carried out a review of the Indian Department; their report was submitted in June 1837. The committee report firmly rejected any proposal to stop distributing presents, "until the Indians shall be raised to a Capacity of maintaining themselves on an Equality with the rest of the Population of the Province." This objective was to be accomplished chiefly by educating younger Native people and settling them in agricultural communities. The committee also recommended other measures "for assimilating the Indians as much and as soon as possible to the rest of the Inhabitants of the Province." Amerindians should be encouraged to adopt "the European mode of dress", to stop using their own languages and to give up their traditional forms of government. But until these changes had taken effect, presents should continue.[28] This report shows that the function of presents had changed, at least from the Eurocanadian point of view. No longer were they principally a payment for military services; now they were a means of supporting a Native population through a period of socio-economic transition.

In 1842, the continuing failure to implement an effective Indian policy prompted Governor Sir Charles Bagot to appoint a three-man commission to study the administration of the Indian Department. When it reported in January 1844 the commission reviewed the history of Indian Affairs in the colony. It pointed out that formerly Native peoples were dealt with as military allies and that little was done

"to raise their mental and moral condition."[29] Lately this situation had changed, but only slightly. The Indian Department was still failing to protect Amerindians from Eurocanadian settlers and from their own "half-civilized" natures. Presents, while necessary, caused the Native people to depend on government charity:

> This reliance has doubtless had the effect of encouraging their natural indolence and improvindence; of keeping them a distinct people; of fostering their natural pride and consequent aversion to labour; and of creating an undue feeling of dependence upon the protection and bounty of the Crown.[30]

The commissioners itemized several problems facing Quebec native people. Abuse of alcohol was common, encouraged by unscrupulous whiskey traders who schemed to cheat Amerindians out of their possessions. Hunting territories were becoming exhausted of game, a trend made more serious by the steady encroachment of farmers and loggers. Most Native people were not making the transition to farming, still relying on the hunt for subsistence. Association with Eurocanadians was generally having unfortunate effects on Native character, making them dependent, lethargic, suspicious and deceitful.

The 1844 report stated that the purpose of government policy should be "to endeavour, gradually, to raise the Tribes within the British Territory to the level of their white neighbours; to prepare them to undertake the offices and duties of citizens; and, by degrees, to abolish the necessity for its farther interference in their affairs" -- in a word, to assimilate them. For the commissioners, it was not an opinion but a fact that "a wild and roving life" was no longer possible for the Native people of Quebec. The frontier of settlement was rolling over their lands, and the Amerindians had to come to terms with it. There was, in the opinion of the commission, no reason why Native people could not become equal citizens in colonial society. Their present situation was the result not of inferiority but of mismanagement:

> The chief obstacles to the advancement of the race are, their want of self-dependence, and their habits of indolence, which have been fostered, if not created, by the past policy of the Government; their ignorance or imperfect knowledge of the language, customs and mode of traffic of the whites, and that feebleness of the reasoning powers, which is the necessary consequence of the entire absence of mental cultivation. None of these difficulties appears insuperable....[31]

The commissioners' report endorsed the policy of civilization. It recommended that Amerindians settle down and become farmers. To encourage them to do so, the commission suggested that presents be continued but that they take the form of agricultural and domestic supplies and implements. Schools and churches should be established at every village, because education was the key to Native advancement. When the commissioners spoke of education they meant it in the broadest sense to include instruction in agriculture, trades and crafts and in property and money management. The report also recommended several changes in the organization of the Indian Department. Chief among these was the removal of resident agents from the various settlements. The commissioners believed that the agents were responsible for the paternalism that characterized Indian policy and sapped Native self-reliance.[32]

The commission of 1842-44 rehearsed all the familiar arguments about Indian administration in Quebec, but it did not propose any new departures. Assimilation through agricultural settlement and education remained the cornerstone of government policy. Presents, the final link with the old policy of conciliation, were continued, but now their function was to promote assimilation, not to reward allies. Meanwhile, as mid-century approached, Amerindians were clamouring for relief from the subsistence crisis brought on by the despoiling of their lands. And, in the longer run, they wanted protected territories where they could pursue the way of life they had always known.

CHAPTER 3
The Creation of Reserves

At the centre of the relationship between Eurocanadians and Amerindians in Quebec was the issue of land. The Proclamation of 1763 and subsequent instructions guaranteed Native people "the Possession of such Parts of our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds."[1] For the most part these lands were distant, forested tracts where Amerindians hunted for subsistence and trapped furs for barter. Their exact boundaries were obscure, but as long as they remained beyond the frontier of settlement no one really cared. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Amerindian lands were besieged by Eurocanadian intruders, and the land question became pressing.

Prior to 1850 there were two categories of land in Quebec owned or claimed by Native people. One included the wilderness hunting territories; the other consisted of lands granted to the Amerindians or to missionaries on their behalf. For the most part these latter tracts dated from the French regime and were located in the St. Lawrence corridor. At St. Regis the Iroquois owned about 20,250 hectares of land, most of which they rented to tenants, though some they farmed themselves. Similarly, at Caughnawaga the Iroquois possessed 16,000 hectares, half of which they rented out. The Iroquois, Nipissing and Algonquin at Oka on the Lake of Two Mountains inhabited a small tract of 105 hectares granted to Sulpician missionaries for the use of the Native people. They also claimed a large part of the lower Ottawa Valley as their hunting territory, but much of this land was overrun by settlers and loggers.

The Abenaki owned several thousand hectares at Odanak and another tract in Durham Township to the south granted to them in 1805. Some of this land they farmed, the rest they rented. At Bécancour the

Abenaki retained only a small portion of the seigneury that had been given them originally in 1708. The Huron at Lorette owned about 650 hectares around the village, as well as several hundred more hectares of wilderness not far away. Finally, the group of Amalecites from New Brunswick were granted 1,200 hectares of land on a branch of the Rivière Verte about 225 kilometres east of Quebec in 1828.[2] To help them get established as farmers, Lord Dalhousie granted them provisions and implements, but subsequently this settlement was ignored by the government; in fact the commission of 1842 did not even know that the Amalecites still occupied the land.

All of these tracts were fairly secure; their Amerindian occupants had some sort of title or recognized interest in them. Native people occupying the fringes of the colony, however, had a far less secure hold on lands they considered their own. A review of their different situations indicates that while each case was unique, each also conformed to a general pattern of Eurocanadian encroachment and resource depletion.

One of the most longstanding land problems faced by the Indian Department in Lower Canada was the case of the Native people at Lake of Two Mountains. The Nipissing and Algonquin who were attached to this settlement actually visited it for only a brief period each summer to collect their presents. The Iroquois who inhabited the village had adopted an agricultural way of life, but the others preferred to follow the hunt. They claimed for this purpose a large territory on either side of the Ottawa Valley as far north as the Mattawa River, where they hunted game and traded furs at the several posts along the river. As early as 1820 they were complaining to the government that settlers and loggers were moving onto their land.

In 1824 Sir John Johnson agreed that "Extensive Grants have been made of the Territory claimed by the Algonquin, and Nepissingue Indians, without any Compensation whatever being made to them ...".[3] These

encroachments were ruining the country for the Amerindians. The fur trade declined, even though the Hudson's Bay Company kept its posts open to discourage free traders from penetrating farther north, and in 1836 the report of the Executive Council characterized the inhabitants as "among the most helpless and destitute of the Indians of Lower Canada."[4] The previous year a cholera epidemic had swept through the area, killing many. Several years later Indian agent James Hughes made this sad assessment:

> They were once the richest and most independent tribes of this continent, but are now the reverse. Great parts of their hunting grounds have been assumed by Government, and laid out into townships; a vast extent has been taken possession of by Squatters, and the rest almost entirely ruined by lumbermen. Their deer have disappeared, this beaver and other furs annihilated, caused by continual and annual fires made in their forests by lumber men.[5]

However, petitions for compensation were put off routinely and nothing was done.

At the head of the Ottawa Valley, another group of Algonquin people inhabited the region around Lakes Timiskaming and Abitibi. These Amerindians had been exchanging furs with Quebec traders since the end of the seventeenth century and sometimes descended to the Hudson's Bay Company posts on James Bay. Until 1821 the Algonquins of Timiskaming continued to enjoy a pivotal location between traders from the bay and from the St. Lawrence. After 1821 the area was dominated by the newly-organized Hudson's Bay Company. For the most part the fur trade did not interfere with Amerindian lands, but in the 1830s loggers arrived, followed by storekeepers and settlers. Loggers traded liquor with the Amerindians and offered them casual jobs. Squatters occupied their land. Once again disease, this time tuberculosis, decimated the local population. The same process that had reduced the inhabitants of the lower Ottawa was repeated farther north a few years later.[6]

The Upper St. Maurice was the territory inhabited by the Tête de Boule, or Attikamek, people. Roaming the woods in small groups of families hunting and trapping, the Tête de Boule descended the St. Maurice each spring during the French period, bringing their furs to Trois Rivières. In the 1770s a trading post was established in their territory, saving them the trip to the St. Lawrence. It was operated first by the North West Company, then by the Hudson's Bay Company.[7] Apart from the traders, Eurocanadians were slow to penetrate the St. Maurice, so there was little threat to the traditional subsistence pattern of the Tête de Boule until mid-century. Indeed, the 1844 commission called them "the least civilized of any tribe in the Lower Province."[8] However, loggers soon began to arrive on the St. Maurice in force, clearing the land, driving off the game and drawing settlers in their wake, with familiar results for the Tête de Boule.[9]

Curiously, one of the first Amerindian groups to establish trading contact with the European fishermen and merchants in the St. Lawrence during the sixteenth century was, by the nineteenth century, little known to officials making Indian policy in Quebec and London. The Montagnais inhabited hunting territories around Lac St-Jean and east of the Saguenay River along the north shore of the St. Lawrence. Dependent on the hunt and the fur trade, they were ignored by the government for most of the pre-Confederation period. The commission of 1844 did not mention them, and in the same year Secretary of Indian Affairs Duncan Napier admitted that they had never received any presents and that he knew nothing at all about them.[10]

The only Eurocanadians who did know the Montagnais were fur traders. East of the Lac St-Jean-Saguenay area was the trading district called the King's Posts. Created in 1663, the Domaine du Roi was leased to private traders who enjoyed monopoly privileges in return for an annual rent. The British retained this arrangement; in 1802 the North West Company leased the posts for twenty years, followed by different Quebec merchants until the Hudson's Bay Company took over the posts in

1831. The number and location of posts in the district varied, but the main trading centres were Metabetchouan on Lac St-Jean, Chicoutimi and Tadoussac on the Saguenay, and Ile Jérémie, Godbout and Sept-Iles on the north shore. Beyond Sept-Iles there were other trading districts, Mingan and Milles Vaches, where Montagnais traded at posts located at the mouths of the major rivers draining into the St. Lawrence.

Generally speaking the Montagnais who inhabited this vast forest area formed two groups. One group was oriented to the marine resources of the north shore. Some inhabited the coast year round, hunting seal and fishing for salmon at the river mouths. Others attended the summer fishery and traded furs but generally passed the winter inland, hunting and trapping at the headwaters of the Betsiamites, Outardes and Manicouagan Rivers. The second group inhabited the Lac St-Jean-Saguenay region, visiting the posts in the summer to trade and fish, then dispersing back to their hunting grounds for the winter.[11]

The isolation that for so long protected the Montagnais was shattered in the 1840s. Loggers were moving up the Saguenay and along the north shore, building sawmills and destroying the forests. Surveyors and settlers followed. The Eurocanadian population of Saguenay-Lac St-Jean jumped from fewer than 1500 in 1844 to over 5000 in 1851 and double that a decade later.[12]

In the face of such a rapid influx of immigrants, the Montagnais petitioned the government for relief in 1848. They requested that land be set aside on Lac St-Jean for their exclusive use as a fishing spot, that they receive presents like other Amerindians in the province, that they receive a share of the proceeds from land sales in their territory, and that other Native hunters be banned from their lands until the wildlife recovered. The provincial legislature responded to the Montagnais petition by voting a $2200 grant to

alleviate their immediate distress, but their petition was one more indication how severely the spread of settlement was imperilling Amerindian economic activity.[13]

Not all Amerindian grievances dated from the 1840s. In 1824 a delegation of four Huron chiefs from Lorette travelled to England to request that King George IV grant them the seigneury of Sillery, which they claimed because their ancestors had settled there in the seventeenth century. Huron hunting territories were being depleted by Eurocanadian settlers and by people from other Native groups, and the Huron hoped to secure additional lands. The delegation made an impressive spectacle.

> They appeared in their grand national dress: their faces were painted and their hair, long and flowing, was decorated with feathers and with the tails of various animals. To their ears were appended large silver rings of rude and fantastical workmanship; their noses were decorated with similar ornaments and they wore silver plates on their arms. They were armed with tomahawks and scalping knives, which they wore in ornamental belts.[14]

The delegation accomplished little, however; the King simply referred them to the colonial government, which in turn refused their claim. The Huron also suffered from their proximity to Quebec City. At one time Lorette was "the constant resort of the dissipated youth of Quebec. It became the scene of midnight orgies, and profligacy of the worst description, until the extent of the evil attracted the attention of the Police authorities ..."[15] It was the activity of these "bad birds with black hearts", as the Iroquois called them, that required the government to enforce laws regulating interaction between Native people and Eurocanadians.

2 Micmac encampment, Point Levi, 1839, a watercolour by Mrs. M. Chaplin (PAC-C847).

The Micmac who inhabited the mouths of the Restigouche and Cascapedia Rivers in Chaleur Bay also had a list of grievances. They began petitioning the government as soon as the British took control of the province. Initially the Micmac complained about their Acadian neighbours, who were fishing salmon in the areas claimed by the Native people. In the 1780s loyalist settlers arrived in the area, beginning a long and complicated history of trespass, land surrenders and broken promises. Eventually the Micmac found their territory reduced to a small tract of a few hundred hectares surrounding their village at the mouth of the Restigouche.[16]

In 1836 the Executive Council report concluded that the Micmac "are not now in Possession of any Land, and are among the most destitute of the Indians in this Province."[17] They received presents only intermittently, and Eurocanadian fishermen were depleting stocks of salmon -- a resource the Micmac depended on for food and as a trade item -- by illegally using nets and over-fishing. By mid-century the Micmac were demanding that the government regulate the fishery and compensate them for land they believed had been stolen from them.[18]

Accumulated grievances represented by petitions from Native people all over the province made it clear that something would have to be done to secure their lands. A preliminary step was taken by the legislature in 1850, when it created the position of Commissioner of Indian Lands to administer Native land issues.[19] At the same time fines were levied against loggers who did not have licences and against anyone who acquired Native land illegally. An interesting aspect of the 1850 law, called "An Act for the better protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada", was that it contained the first legal definition of an Indian. This step was believed necessary to preserve tribal lands only for members of "the Tribe or Body of Indians interested in such lands". According to the law, Indians were:

> First. - All persons of Indian blood, reputed to belong to the particular Body or Tribe of Indians interested in such lands, and their descendants.
>
> Secondly. - All persons intermarried with any such Indians and residing amongst them, and the descendants of all such persons.
>
> Thirdly. - All persons residing among such Indians, whose parents on either side were or are Indians of such Body or Tribe, or entitled to be considered as such: And
>
> Fourthly. - All persons adopted in infancy by any such Indians, and residing in the Village or upon the lands of such Tribe or Body of Indians, and their descendants.[20]

Over the years this definition has changed, but the act of 1850 is significant because, in the words of historian John Tobias, it "established the precedent that non-Indians determined who was an Indian and that Indians would have no say in the matter."[21]

In 1851 the Canadian legislature confronted the land issue head-on by authorizing an outright grant of 93,150 hectares of land to the Native peoples.[22] The grant took the form of eleven separate reserves; that is, tracts of land set aside for the exclusive use of Amerindian inhabitants. Unlike reserves in western Canada, those in Quebec did not represent an alienation of aboriginal claims to the land negotiated as part of formal treaties. However, implicit in the grant was a recognition that the Native peoples of Quebec deserved to be compensated for lands that had either been taken from them or ruined by the activities of Eurocanadians. The legislation also required that 1000 pounds (currency) be distributed annually among the various Amerindian peoples. Once again, this payment was a form of relief, not a payment for land title.

The original reserves created by the 1851 legislation were located at Lake Timiskaming, at Maniwaki on the Gatineau River, at Coleraine in the Eastern Townships, at Doncaster, at La Tuque on the St. Maurice River, at Roquemont northwest of Quebec, at Viger near Rimouski, at the mouth of the Restigouche River, on the Peribonka River, at Metabetchouan on Lac St-Jean, and at Manicouagan.[23] Subsequently some of these lands were traded by the Amerindians for others more suitable. The reserves as they eventually took shape in the years before Confederation were as follows:[24]

1. Timiskaming - The original grant totalled 15,550 hectares at the head of Lake Timiskaming on the Ottawa River. The reserve belonged to the Algonquin inhabitants of the region.

2. Maniwaki - Also known as River Désert, the original grant on the west side of the Gatineau River totalled 18,530 hectares and was given principally to the Algonquin and Nipissing from Lake of Two Mountains. Some Tête De Boule were also included.

3. Coleraine - This 810-hectare reserve was given to the Abenaki of Bécancour. In 1882 the land was given back to the government and the reserve no longer exists.

4. Doncaster - The original grant was 6,480 hectares, divided between the Iroquois at Caughnawaga and those at Lake of Two Mountains.

5. La Tuque - The Tête de Boule received a couple of tracts of land on the St. Maurice River in the vicinity of La Tuque. One, called Coucoucache, was flooded in 1932 and is no longer inhabited. The other was at Weymontachie, long a centre of the fur trade.

6. <u>Roquemont</u> - A tract of 3,880 hectares, it was used primarily as a seasonal hunting and trapping reserve by the Huron of Lorette. The land was sold in 1904.

7. <u>Viger</u> - This reserve of 1,480 hectares was granted to the Amalecites of Rivière Verte. They abandoned it in 1869 and later it was sold.

8. <u>Restigouche</u> - Granted to the Micmacs, this reserve of 3,890 hectares was located at the mouth of the Restigouche River where the Amerindians had long requested more land.

9. <u>Pointe-Bleue</u> - The 1851 legislation created a 6,480-hectare reserve on the Peribonka River and a 1,620-hectare reserve at Metabetchouan, both for the Montagnais people. In 1856 both were traded for a slightly larger tract at Pointe-Bleue on Lac St-Jean.

10. <u>Bersimis</u> - The 1851 legislation granted the Montagnais of the King's Posts another large reserve at Manicouagan, but during the 1850s Betsiamites on the St. Lawrence coast became an important trading and missionary centre, and in 1861 the Montagnais traded their Manicouagan land for a 25,500-hectare tract along the St. Lawrence east of the Bersimis River.

The creation of reserves was in no sense a solution to the problems facing the Native peoples of Quebec. Some settled on the designated tracts and took up farming, but most preferred to use them as seasonal fishing and hunting areas, continuing to roam their traditional hunting territories as well. Assimilation, which was the main objective of government policy from the 1820s, was clearly not taking place, at least not a rate satisfactory to policy makers.

In 1857 another step was taken to ease the transition for Native people into the mainstream of colonial society. The legislature passed "An Act to encourage the gradual Civilization of the Indian tribes". The Act introduced the notion of legal enfranchisement.[25] As described in the Act, enfranchisement was a process by which an Amerindian could willingly cease being an Amerindian in a legal sense. Any male native person, 21 years or older, literate in French or English, minimally educated and "of good moral character and free from debt" was eligible to be enfranchised. Others who did not qualify on all counts could be put on probation for three years. Enfranchised Native people took names and surnames of their own choosing and received a portion of the land and annuities allotted to their people. In return an enfranchised person gave up "all claim to any further share in the lands or moneys then belonging to or reserved for the use of his Tribe, and shall cease to have a voice in the proceedings thereof." In other words, enfranchisement removed any legal distinction between Amerindians and Eurocanadians.

Some historians view the 1857 Act as a complete break with past policy.[26] Previously civilization had been thought of as a process experienced as part of a tribal group. The objective of the new legislation, however, was to draw the individual away from the tribal group so that assimilation might take place individually. As well, the law allowed for the alienation of Amerindian land to enfranchised individuals without tribal consent, thereby violating the Proclamation of 1763. Quebec Native people opposed the law, but without effect. More significant was their passive resistence; only one Amerindian agreed to enfranchisement in the Canadas before 1867.[27]

With the land question becoming increasingly difficult, in both Canada East and Canada West, the legislature appointed another special commission in 1856. Reporting two years later, the commission recognized that land was the main issue complicating Amerindian-

Eurocanadian relations. Eurocanadians wanted to settle it, while Amerindians wanted to preserve it for their own use. "The Indian and European races are therefore to a certain extent influenced by antagonistic interests," the commissioners admitted frankly.[28]

Like its predecessors, the commission of 1856 was concerned with decreasing the cost of administering Indian affairs in the Canadas. Presents were no longer an issue; they ended in 1858. The Indian Department already employed fewer people than formerly. The Superintendent General had a two-man secretariat at his headquarters, while policy was administered locally by five regional superintendents. Only one of these officials was located in Quebec; the rest had responsibilities in Canada West. The commissioners explained that

> the superintendent in Lower Canada has been in the habit of carrying on much of the business with the tribes through the medium of local agents. These persons are appointed by the several tribes with the sanction of the Government, and are principally employed in collecting the rents and other dues from those holding leases of the Indian lands. They are also the depositories of the public money of the several bands to which they are attached, and make payments thereupon according to the written orders of the chiefs.

Local agents were not paid a salary; instead they received a percentage of these revenues. The commissioners felt that because agents were unsalaried they had become independent of the Indian Department and recommended that they be put on a fixed salary.

Despite the seemingly modest scale of the Indian Department, the need for economy was still pressing. The commission urged the imperial government to continue its annual grant of 2000 pounds, but if the grant was to be cut off, the commission proposed that the sale of Native lands be used to subsidize the department. However, the report specifically excepted Quebec from its land proposals:

3 Village of Jeune Lorette, *circa* 1808, by George Heriot (PAC-C11-65).

> We do not propose to touch the land in Lower Canada in any part of this scheme; the tracts which the bands in that section of the Province occupy in settled districts are almost without exception so small as not to afford any surplus after allotting a farm to each family - many of them indeed are too small to admit of the whole band being so located. Large tracts which have been handed over to them under the Act 15-16 Vic. c. 106 ... are so remote as to be at present almost if not quite unsaleable.

The report is nonetheless relevant, because it candidly betrays the attitudes motivating Native policy in both provinces. The commission recommended that, if necessary, Native lands considered not to be of use to Amerindians should be sold and the revenue used to support the expenses of the Indian Department. There was no necessity to get the agreement of the Native people to these sales. Settlement was spreading, and it was impractical to set aside large tracts of land "for the sake of a few individuals who are too idle to reap the benefit of them". Reducing the extent of Native lands would also serve the purpose of assimilation, because it would make hunting more difficult and farming the only recourse. The commission recognized that there might be Amerindians who would refuse to surrender their lands but "we do not consider that the interests of the country at large are to be thwarted by the prejudices of a small portion of the community." Ignoring the intent of the Proclamation of 1763, the commissioners concluded that "in cases where the Indians obstinately refuse to accede to any terms of surrender, we are of opinion that gentle means of coercion might be applied without prejudice to their real interests."

These drastic suggestions for stripping Amerindians of their lands were never carried out, at least not in Quebec. Instead of using Native lands to finance the Indian Department, the colonial office relinquished all responsibility for Native affairs, handing it over to the provincial government in 1860. The continuing importance of land policy was reflected in the fact that the Crown Lands Department was given jurisdiction in this area.

For two years the Indian Department had no permanent superintendent under the new arrangement. The commissioner of Crown Lands was nominally in charge, but he had responsibility for the entire Crown Lands Department. It was not until 1862 that Wiliam Prosperous Spragge was appointed Deputy Superintendent-General of Crown Lands and first full-time head of the provincial Indian Department.[29] His staff in Quebec amounted to two visiting superintendents, one responsible for St. Regis, the other for the rest of the province. The department also supported several missionaries and schools at the various settlements and distributed agricultural supplies, all paid for out of the annual grant, which by 1866 amounted to $5953.16[30] Responsibility for Native affairs remained with the Crown Lands Department until Confederation.

CHAPTER 4

Native People and the Fur Trade

During the pre-Confederation period, Indian administrators were important agents of acculturation affecting the Amerindians of Quebec, but they were not the only influence. Another was the fur trade. Most Native peoples participated in the trade to one degree or another. Even relatively settled groups, including the Iroquois at Caughnawaga, the Hurons at Lorette and the Abenaki at St. Francis, continued to hunt and trade furs in a limited way. However, for Amerindians living at the headwaters of the rivers draining into the St. Lawrence and across the height of land in Rupert's Land, the trade was their most important economic activity and represented almost their only contact with Eurocanadian society. This chapter provides a brief sketch of the fur trade in northern and eastern Quebec, its expansion across the province, and its effects on the Native peoples of the province.

The fur trade in Quebec had two orientations, one south toward the St. Lawrence, the other northwest toward James Bay. The James Bay trade was controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company, created in 1670 to exploit the rich fur resources of the Hudson Bay hinterland.[1]

During the eighteenth century the company was interested primarily in the vast territory to the west of Hudson Bay, but from the earliest years a company trader visited eastern James Bay annually to trade with the Cree who inhabited the region. In 1719 the first permanent post was built on the eastern shore near the mouth of the Eastmain River. At the conquest this small wooden outpost remained the only Hudson's Bay Company trading establishment in Quebec. It welcomed Native traders from as far north as Lac Guillaume-Delisle (Richmond Gulf), as far south as the Moose River, and inland as far as the headwaters of the rivers draining into James Bay. Theoretically the company enjoyed monopoly privileges in its territory north of the

height of land, but Eastmain House encountered brisk competition from French coureurs-de-bois in the pre-conquest period. After 1763, competition continued in the form of the "pedlars from Quebec" who penetrated the woodlands east and south of the bay, choking off the flow of furs.

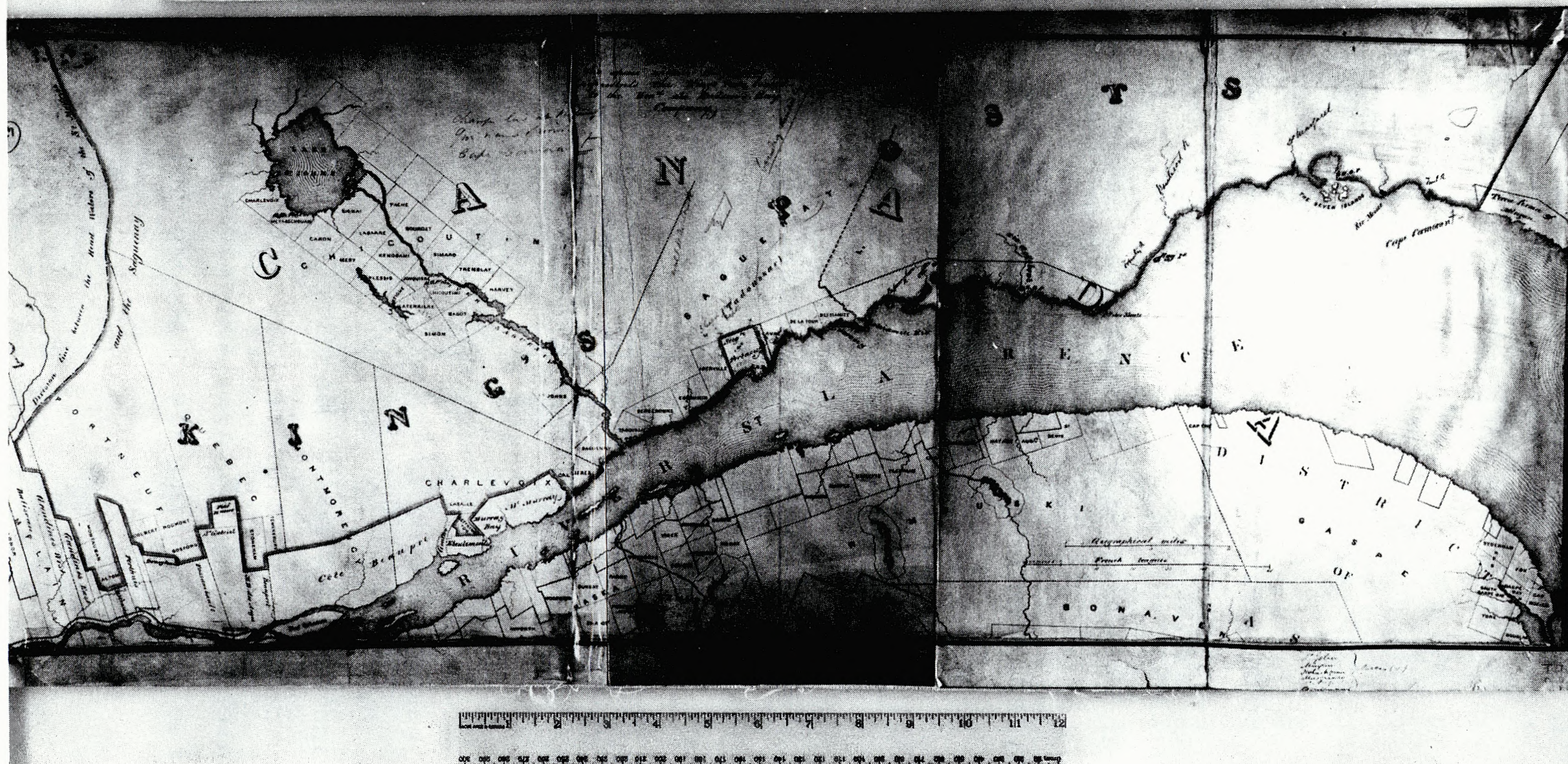
In 1803 the North West Company, the Montreal-based concern that was slowly coming to dominate the Canadian trade, actually entered the bay itself, building several posts along the east coast between Moose Fort and La Grande Rivière (the Fort George River). Competition at such close quarters erupted into violence between traders before the interlopers withdrew three years later, preferring their familiar policy of encircling the bay from the interior.

Meanwhile, the Hudson's Bay Company was responding to opposition inland by establishing more posts in eastern James Bay. First, the company built Rupert House at the mouth of the Rupert River in 1776. Then, between 1793 and 1820, a series of establishments was located inland toward the height of land to oppose Canadians trading at Abitibi, Waswanipi, Mistassini and Chamouchouane. These posts were at Neoskweskau (1793), Nemiscau (1794), Mistassini (1812), Nichicun (1816) and Waswanipi (1819).

During the same period the Hudson's Bay Company expanded to the north. The company had long been interested in exploiting the resources of the east coast of Hudson Bay. An attempt to located a post at Lac Guillaume-Delisle during the 1750s failed, as did another expedition in 1793, but a sloop was sent regularly to the mouth of the Great Whale River in the summer to trade for oil with the Amerindians who gathered there to hunt white whales. The Amerindians who attended the summer whaling were from the interior. They harpooned the beluga from canoes in the shallow estuaries of the Great and Little Whale Rivers or used nets to trap them. After feasting and trading all summer, they travelled inland to hunt caribou in the fall before returning to their accustomed winter hunting territories.

The Hudson's Bay Company was attracted to the north not only by the possibility of extending the fur trade but also in the hope of establishing contact with the Inuit. In 1803 Big River Post (later Fort George) was built at the mouth of La Grande Rivière and later, in 1813, it was relocated at Great Whale River. But once again the company's efforts failed. Food supplies at the new location were precarious and fuel was scarce. After three years the traders retreated back to Big River Post, content to confine their northern activities to the annual slooping voyage. It was not until 1851 that the company again located a post in the north, this time at Little Whale River. The post was intended to be the headquarters of a newly-organized whale hunt as well as to draw in trade from the Inuit. Finally the company was successful at keeping a northern outpost in business, and Little Whale River Post remained in operation until 1890.

Meanwhile, in the central interior of the province, the 1821 merger of the rival fur companies created a reorganized Hudson's Bay Company that took control of the trading posts all along the height of land. At Abitibi, Timiskaming, Grand Lac, Waswanipi and Mistassini the company prepared to enjoy a monopoly, even closing some posts for reasons of economy. However, farther to the east the King's Posts remained in the hands of Canadian merchants. These posts, located in the Saguenay River basin and east along the north shore of the St. Lawrence, had been leased to various Quebec merchants until 1802 when the lease was taken over by the North West Company. Within a few years the company had also taken over posts in the seigneuries of Mille Vaches and Mingan farther east on the north shore. Combined with its posts on the St. Maurice River, this gave the North West Company convenient access to their interior establishments and control over most of the furs flowing south toward the St. Lawrence.



4 A map of the King's Posts, *circa* 1842 (PAC-NMC30703).

At the merger in 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company expected to fall heir to all these possessions and in fact it did lease Mille Vaches and Mingan. But a Quebec merchant, John Goudie, outbid the company for the King's Posts. Goudie and subsequent owners used the posts as a base from which to initiate a decade of confused competition with the Hudson's Bay Company in the interior and along the north shore.[2] The use of liquor as a trade item increased, and small posts opened and closed in several locations as both sides attempted to attract the Native people.

It was in this context that the Hudson's Bay Company launched its "Ungava Adventure".[3] The company had long suspected that the northern interior of the province was an untapped source of furs. In 1814 two Moravian missionaries published an account of their voyage into Ungava Bay three years earlier in which they enthusiastically described the resources of the area. The Hudson's Bay Company refused to permit the missionaries to establish a settlement there and dispatched its own expeditions to reconnoitre an overland route between Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay.

Finally, in 1830 Nicol Finlayson established a company post, Fort Chimo, on the Koksoak River not far from Ungava Bay. Fort Chimo drew trade from the Inuit who lived along the coast and the Naskapi who inhabited the interior. The Hudson's Bay Company had been trying to establish a stable trading relationship with both these groups for many years. Officials hoped that Fort Chimo would be the breakthrough, but it was not. The Inuit were friendly enough, but the Naskapi proved reluctant traders. These proud, independent people preferred to hunt caribou in the interior and did not wish to interrupt their annual cycle to trap furs and carry them to the post. As one trader concluded:

> They are not Fur Hunters nor is the mode of Life they lead favorable to it, the Chace of the Deer leads them to the barren parts of the Country, while the Fur-bearing animals are only to be found in the woods, moreover their favorite occupation furnishes them with all they require.[4]

There were also other problems facing the new post. Provisions for the men were scarce, furs were not as plentiful as the company had hoped, and supply routes were unreliable. In 1843 Fort Chimo was abandoned. However Fort Nascopie, an interior outpost to the south, remained open and became the centre of the Hudson's Bay Company trade with the Naskapi, who grew accustomed to getting their guns and ammunition there. Then, in 1866, Chimo was reopened, the problem of supply solved by the use of steamships. It dealt principally with the Inuit for foxskins and whale oil and with the Naskapi for marten pelts and caribou skins.[5]

Meanwhile, in 1831, the Hudson's Bay Company won control of the King's Posts, giving it a virtual monopoly over the province's fur trade. From the Saguenay eastward, the company operated posts at Tadoussac, Portneuf, Ile Jérémie, Godbout, Sept-Iles, Moisie, Mingan, Nabisipi, Natashuan and Musquaro.[6] In 1835 rival traders opened a post in Esquimaux Bay (Hamilton Inlet) on the Labrador coast, an initiative that Hudson's Bay Company Governor George Simpson believed threatened the trade in the interior and at Mingan. The company quickly established its own post in the bay and drove the competition from the field.[7] However, by the 1840s the fur trade was declining in the eastern region. Settlers and loggers were disrupting the Amerindians' annual cycle and destroying the habitat of the animals. As well, the spread of the Eurocanadian settlement meant an increase in the number of small scale, part-time traders who cut into Hudson's Bay Company returns. In 1859, the company did not renew its lease on the King's Posts and during the next decade divested itself of the other St. Lawrence posts.[8]

Unlike the Indian affairs administrators, fur traders were not aggressive about changing the customs and activities of the Amerindians. As long as hunters brought in a steady supply of furs, traders did not see their role as 'civilizing' them. Quite the contrary; it was in the interests of the trading companies to maintain the Amerindians in their traditional ways.

Historians in the past have tended to exaggerate the effects of the fur trade on Native culture. The conventional argument has been that Amerindians quickly developed complete dependence on European trade goods such as guns and metalware and lost all control over their own lives. More recently, however, this point of view has been modified.[9] It is now recognized that Amerindians provided a wide range of services without which the trade could not have continued. They hunted food for the men at the posts, manufactured canoes and snowshoes, acted as couriers and worked as voyageurs transporting goods to and from the interior. In many ways Eurocanadian traders were dependent on the Amerindians, not the reverse. As well, many of the conventions of the trade were accommodations to Native customs. Pricing policy, the trading ceremony, giving presents and credit -- all these practices developed in collaboration with the Amerindians. The fur trade was not a system of exploitation imposed on a subject people. Trading practices were shaped in large part by the environment of the north and the cultures of the people who lived there.

As for the adoption of Eurocanadian technology, it was neither as rapid nor as complete as is sometimes supposed. The Naskapi, for example, had no need for European woolens, preferring their own caribou hides, while other Native peoples lived too far from reliable supplies of ammunition for guns to be dependable. In other words, there were many variables affecting the degree to which the various Native peoples used European trade goods.

The effects of the fur trade were different for each people. Even within groups, individuals adapted to it in varying degrees. Among the Cree of Eastern James Bay, for instance, a distinction developed between homeguard and inlanders. The homeguard were people whose hunting territories were relatively close to a post. They had more frequent contact with the traders, often hunting seasonal provisions and doing jobs around the post. As the nineteenth century progressed, members of the homeguard tended to become part-time employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, supplementing their trapping and subsistence activities with periods of labour for wages. At such times their families congregated at the posts, creating embryonic settlements.

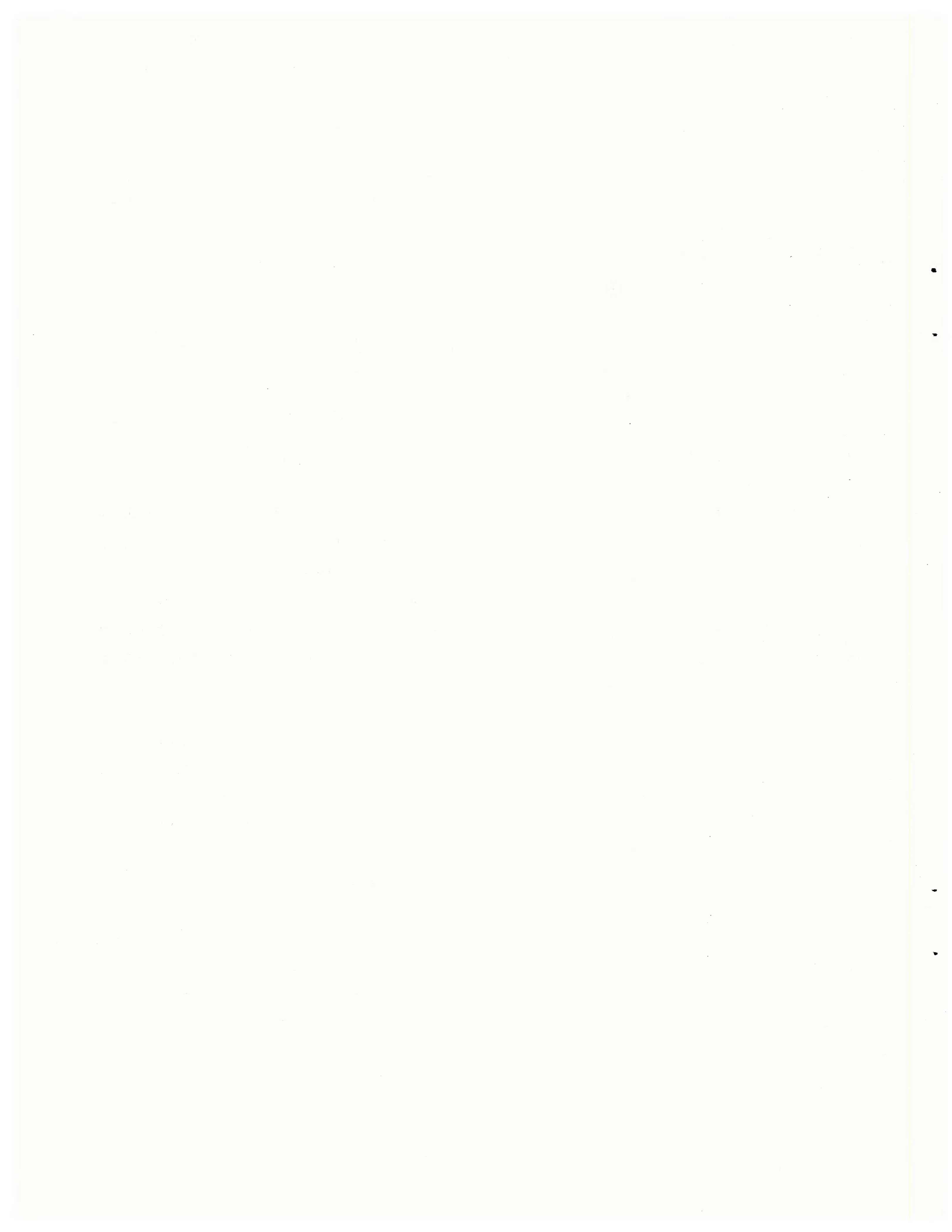
By contrast, the inlanders occupied distant hunting grounds up the rivers draining into the bay. They visited the posts only briefly to deliver their furs and were not as involved in the entire complex of fur trade activities as their homeguard cousins. When the traders extended their posts into the interior, inlanders were often engaged to carry supplies back and forth, but this was about the extent of their wage employment. For them, subsistence activities remained substantially unaltered. At the King's Posts and along the St. Lawrence a similar distinction existed among the Montagnais. In contrast to both the Cree and the Montagnais, the Naskapi were remote from the trade. The difficulty traders had establishing posts in their territory, and the fact that the Naskapi annual cycle did not always lend itself to trapping furs, meant that they participated in the trade as and if they wanted. The records are full of complaints by traders about the independence and 'unproductivity' of these people.

The fur trade in Quebec was not static during the period between 1760 and 1867. Until 1821 it was characterized to a greater or lesser degree by competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the other traders based on the St. Lawrence. By about 1800 the North West Company had emerged as the most important southern competitor. For the Amerindians, competition had both advantages and disadvantages.

Among the benefits were lower prices for European goods, the opportunity to play off one trader against another, and easier access to trading posts. Among the disadvantages were the increased use of alcohol to attract trade and the proliferation of trading establishments in their territory.

The proliferation of posts had indirect effects on the Native way of life. The increase in the number of inland posts created a demand for Amerindian guides, canoemakers and voyageurs, accelerating the tendency for some Native people to take work with the traders in the summer instead of engaging in traditional activities. When competition ended, or at least declined, traders could afford to be less concerned with the needs of the Amerindians. Posts were closed, presents and credit were cut back, and prices were increased. For the most part Native people could do nothing about it, because they now had no alternative to the Hudson's Bay Company. There were always exceptions, but broadly speaking the economic independence of Quebec Native people was less pronounced in the 1860s than it had been at the beginning of the period.

At the conquest, the fur trade was the principal economic activity engaged in by Amerindians in Quebec. The transition to British rule did nothing to change this, and the trade continued to dominate economic relations between Eurocanadians and Native people well into the nineteenth century. This remained the case throughout the period in northern Quebec, but, in the southern areas in the 1830s, Amerindian hunting grounds were invaded by pioneer farmers and loggers -- advance parties for the waves of settlement that would follow. The activities of the newcomers jeopardized the fur trade and precipitated a crisis in the welfare of certain Native peoples, a crisis that influenced the formulation of Indian policy in the decades before Confederation.



CHAPTER 5

Native People and the Missionaries

Along with traders and administrators, missionaries played a significant role in transforming Native culture in the pre-Confederation period. During the French regime, Catholic missionaries were charged with caring for the welfare of Amerindians in the colony. They travelled widely in the interior, carrying the word of God to distant peoples and establishing mission villages close to Quebec and Montreal. As a result, when the British took control of the colony, most of the Indian people living at the settled core of the province were nominally Catholic, worshipping at Catholic churches and relying on resident missionaries for advice and assistance. The British recognized the value of the missionaries and enlisted them in the attempt to assimilate the Native people of Quebec into Eurocanadian society.

During the British colonial period, missionaries continued to be attached to the settlements at St. Regis, Caughnawaga, Oka, Odanak and Lorette. Aside from Oka, which was a Sulpician mission, the others were established originally by Jesuits. After the suppression of this order in 1784, the settlements became the direct responsibility of the provincial Catholic hierarchy.

The Indian Department customarily granted annual sums for the support of resident missionaries, recognizing the influence the clerics had over the Amerindians. The King's Posts were visited by Jesuits until 1782 when Father La Brosse, the last of a long line, died at Tadoussac. Thereafter, the Bishop of Quebec arranged with fur traders in this area and farther up the north shore of the St. Lawrence to pay the missionaries salaries and provide them with transport and lodgings.[1]

It was apparently not until the 1830s that missionaries began to visit the upper reaches of the Ottawa and St. Maurice Rivers. Members of the Association de la Propagation de la Foi visited Lake Timiskaming in 1836 and the next year extended their mission field to Lake Abitibi. At the same time, others travelled up the St. Maurice and Saguenay Rivers to proselytize among the Tête de Boule and the Montagnais. Missions lasted for only a few weeks in the summer, though chapels were built at Timiskaming (1839) and on the St. Maurice (1840).[2]

In 1841 the Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, visited France in search of religious workers and invited the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to send missionaries to Quebec. Later that year the first Oblates arrived in the province and, in 1844, they began missionary work among three Native peoples. At Timiskaming and Abitibi, Father Nicholas Laverlochère took up the work begun by his predecessors among the Algonquin and, before the decade was over, he extended his visits down to James Bay. By 1864 a permanent mission residence named Saint-Claude was built on the Ontario side of Lake Timiskaming across from the trading post.

On the St. Maurice, the Oblates annually visited trading posts frequented by the Tête de Boule and established several small chapels. Eventually they crossed the height of land and added Waswanipi and Migiskan to their summer itinerary. Weymontachie became the centre of this mission area. The third initiative was among the Montagnais on the Saguenay and along the north shore of the St. Lawrence. From headquarters at Grande-Baie on the Saguenay south of Chicoutimi, the missionaries toured the main trading posts on Lac St-Jean and farther north. Likewise on the north shore they visited Portneuf, Ille Jérémie, Betsiamites, Godbout and the other tiny outposts each summer.[3] By the 1850s Oblate activity in this area became centred at Lac St-Jean and at Betsiamites.[4]

The Oblates had a keen desire to establish a mission among the Naskapi north of the height of land. The Naskapi had begun descending to the St. Lawrence each summer; there they encountered missionaries. According to Henry Hind, whose account was published in 1863, "they occupy the tableland, and it is only lately that they have visited the coasts and shores of the Gulf and River St. Lawrence in considerable numbers. They make their way from the interior, chiefly by the Manicouagan, the St. Marguerite, the Trinity and the Moisie rivers."[5] The Oblates baptized their first Naskapi in 1846 at Ile Jérémie and subsequently met many other members of this people during their summer visits. Repeated attempts by missionaries during the 1850s to cross over to their country failed, and it was 1867 before Father Babel succeeded in establishing a mission at North West River in Esquimaux Bay.[6]

Protestant missionaries were resident at St. Regis and Caughnawaga in the 1840s, but it was primarily in northwestern Quebec that they had most influence. The first missionary in the James Bay region was the Reverend George Barnley, sent by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society to Moose Factory in 1840. His responsibilities included Rupert House and Fort George. For personal reasons Barnley was withdrawn in 1847. Four years later, the Anglican Church Missionary Society dispatched John Horden to Moose. Horden was much more successful than his Methodist predecessor, building churches and schools and training a Native clergy. In 1872 the diocese of Moosonee was created, and Horden became the first bishop. However, his success was not matched farther north, where attempts to establish missions at Fort George and Little Whale River during the 1850s were thwarted by scarce provisions, small populations and indifference on the part of the Native people.

5 St. Regis, 1830s, by W.H. Bartlett (PAC-C2335).

Missionaries encouraged Amerindians to give up their nomadic hunting practices in favour of a settled, agricultural way of life. This was in keeping with the government policy of assimilation, and the Indian Department willingly supported missionary activity with cash grants. However, relations were not always happy between missionaries, who invariably were Catholic Francophones, and administrators, who invariably were Protestant Anglophones. Officials recognized that the Amerindians at the St. Lawrence settlements were Roman Catholic converts and that any attempt to change their religion would alienate them. The influence of the missionaries was thus a factor the Indian Department had to take into consideration when it contemplated the Indian question. "They are so completely under the Control and influence of their Priests," complained Secretary for Indian Affairs Duncan Napier in 1829, "that any Measure which might be adopted for their moral improvement and instruction would, I fear, be exposed to the Opposition of the missionaries, unless sanctioned by the Heads of the French Church."[8] Napier and his colleagues believed that missionaries often interfered in matters that were not strictly clerical.

A case in point was education. Schools were an important part of the government's strategy for assimilation. The 1836 report of the Executive Council made this clear:

> Believing it however to be incumbent on the State to prepare the younger Generation of Indians for another and more useful Mode of Life, the Committee would earnestly press upon His Majesty's Government the Necessity of establishing and maintaining Schools among them in which the Rudiments of Education shall be taught, joined, if possible, with Instruction in Agriculture and some of the Handicrafts ...

> ... It may therefore be necessary to make it a Condition of their continuing to receive Presents either for themselves or their Families, that they should send their Children to such Schools; and it may be hoped that the Clergy will lend their Aid in recommending and enforcing the Measure, as a necessary Part of any Plan for assimilating the Indians as much and as soon as possible to the rest of the Inhabitants of the Province.[9]

However the clergy did not lend their aid, at least not when the schools were run by Protestant teachers or the language of instruction was English. Within two years of the report, English schools at both St. Regis and Caughnawaga were forced to close because the resident missionary used his influence among the Amerindians to have them withdraw their children.[10] Schools were eventually established at most of the settlements, but they were schools approved by the church.

Missionaries also antagonized the government by acting as spokesmen for the Amerindians when they presented their grievances to the Indian Department. Complaints and petitions were often written, or at least approved, by missionaries who agreed that the Amerindians had been robbed of their land and resources. For example, in 1850 Lord Elgin received the following plea from a leading cleric on behalf of the Montagnais of the King's Posts:

> I do not doubt that your Excellency considering that these poor Indians have been deprived gradually of part of their means of living by the industry and trade which since a few years are exploiting the territory inhabited by their fathers (a state of things which the Government has been obliged to approve and even encourage in the interests of the country as a whole) recognizes that it would be unjust to let them die of destitution, while the Government withdraws from the exploitation of timber and from the sale of a few parts of that territory, revenues more than sufficient to enable it to prevent that misfortune and the extinction of a race of men who have all the more right to its protection in that it is weaker and of a minor importance in the mind of the community.[11]

Missionaries were a buffer between Native people and Eurocanadian society. They endorsed the program of assimilation but, at the same time, genuinely feared for the welfare of the Amerindians and used their position to lobby for services, land and cash allowances.

Missionaries were also often at odds with fur traders. Traditionally the church opposed the liquor traffic. Wherever they went, missionaries tried to stamp out the use of liquor and to promote temperance among the Amerindians. Traders were naturally irritated at this meddling, at least early in the period, when fierce competition for furs led to an increased use of alcohol as both a present and a trade item. After union, the Hudson's Bay Company began to introduce prohibition in its domain and by 1851, no liquor was allowed for any purpose in eastern James Bay.[12] However in areas where competition among fur traders continued, so did the traffic in liquor. By mid-century loggers and settlers were penetrating the interior of the province and becoming a more important source of alcohol than the fur traders.

The Hudson's Bay Company was not much interested in the spiritual life of Amerindians. It was concerned with trade, and its response to missionary activity depended on how it expected that activity to interfere with the Native people's ability or willingness to trade. For instance in the 1840s when Oblate missionaries arrived in the Timiskaming district, company governor George Simpson at first opposed their influence, fearing it would attract Amerindians away from the James Bay posts toward the interior. He changed his opinion when he saw that the Oblates would not be discouraged, allowing them to establish missions in company territory. He feared that if missions were confined to the Canadian side of the height of land, "they would be likely to withdraw the Indians from the Company's territories and bring them into contact with petty traders from Canada ...".[13] Simpson also tried to arrange separate spheres of interest for

Protestant and Catholic missionaries in northern Quebec. He believed that when they competed at close quarters the Amerindians naturally were confused and upset by conflicting doctrines.

Basically Simpson would have preferred to do without missionaries altogether. Summer missions at the trading posts tended to last for several weeks, keeping the Native people in the neighbourhood for much longer than scanty food resources allowed and inevitably causing a drain on company stores. Permanent missions would encourage a settled population and create a bigger problem, as Simpson explained to the Bishop of Montreal in 1848:

> Should a permanent R.C. mission be established at any given point on the shores of Hudson's Bay, I am apprehensive it would attract so large a population of Indians as to incur the danger of starvation, not only to themselves, but to the establishment or trading post in the neighbourhood of which it might be erected, as the inhospitable character of the climate renders it quite impossible to raise agricultural produce to any extent and the natural resources of the country in fish and game are quite inadequate to the support of the natives, even during their transient visits to the posts, without the aid of imported supplies from Europe.[14]

Ever present in Simpson's mind, of course, was the consideration that permanent missions would distract the Amerindians from hunting furs for the company.

Missionaries relied on the goodwill of fur traders to reach distant Native peoples. They travelled with the supply canoes and usually stayed in accommodation provided by the traders. The Hudson's Bay Company could easily frustrate the missionaries by denying these services. A case in point was the attempt by the Oblates to reach the inland hunting territories of the Naskapi from the north shore of the St. Lawrence. It was company policy in the 1840s and 1850s to keep the Naskapi in the interior away from coastal areas where they might come into contact with rival traders. Governor Simpson wrote irritably in 1853:

> It is very doubtful that any benefit would result from the proposed flying visit of the Canadian Missionaries, while it is quite certain they would be productive of expenses and inconvenience in many respects, not the least of which would be the opening up of communication between Mingan and NW River, by which route we would soon find that a great part of our Esquimaux Bay trade made its way into the hands of our Rivals on the St. Lawrence.[15]

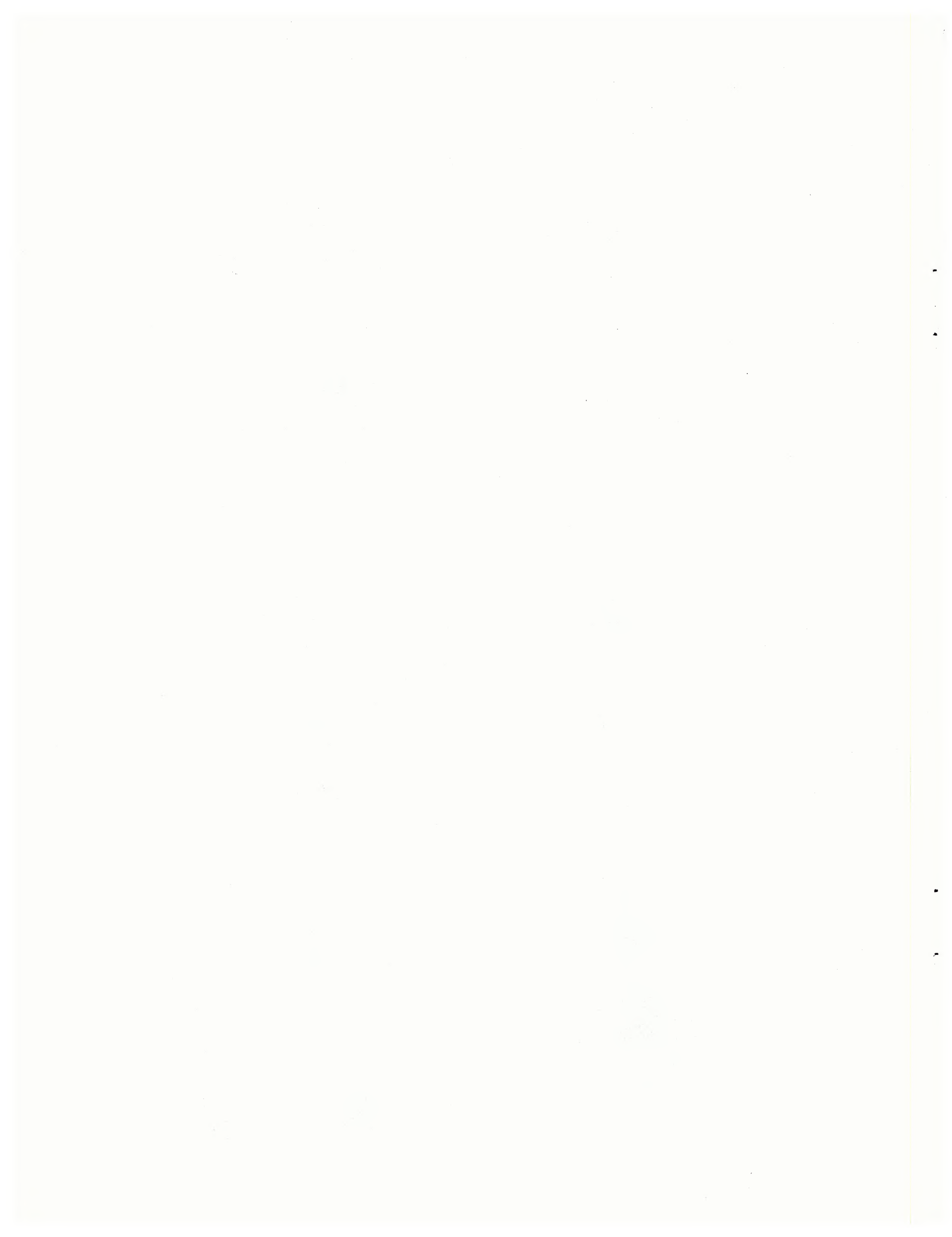
The company did not want the Oblates pioneering transport routes into Naskapi territory for others to follow, and the company's opposition to the missionary venture contributed to its failure.

Eventually traders and missionaries reconciled their differences and, by the end of the period, most Amerindians in Quebec had at least occasional contact with Christianity. In the south, of course, contact was longstanding and extensive, and missionaries were important agents of acculturation. In the north and east, the influence of the church was less marked. It is difficult to evaluate to what extent Christianity replaced traditional Native religious beliefs. Certainly there is ample evidence that Amerindians were eager to have missionaries come among them, and in the south at least, the majority of Native people were Catholic converts. However, elements of traditional religion persisted, and the Native people probably had other than purely spiritual reasons for welcoming these representatives of Eurocanadian society.

Aside from religious matters, missionaries had a profound effect on the socio-economic activities of the Amerindians. By encouraging settlement, they interfered with Native subsistence cycles and encouraged a reorientation of the Amerindian economy toward at least seasonal wage employment. This had already occurred at the St. Lawrence villages, where hunting territories were either alienated or virtually exhausted of game, and the inhabitants made their living by farming and summer employment on the timber rafts. To the north the

process had only just begun by the end of the period. Missionaries also attacked Native social customs, such as polygamy, and interrupted traditional communal festivities. In sum, of the three acculturative agents influencing the Native peoples of Quebec, missionaries were the most radical. Their objective was nothing less than the complete transformation of Native culture.

6 Village of Lorette, by F. Holloway (PAC-C11010).



CHAPTER 6
The Inuit of Quebec

In the pre-Confederation period, the Inuit of Quebec inhabited the northern coastal regions from approximately Lac Guillaume-Delisle (Richmond Gulf) in the west to Cape Chidley in the east. Speck argued that Inuit once inhabited the east coast of James Bay, but recent studies have found no evidence for such a southern occupation in the historical period.[1] Apparently the lower north shore of the St. Lawrence River east of Mingan was inhabited by Inuit in the eighteenth century, but these people retreated back into Labrador well before the century ended. After 1850 a small number of Inuit reappeared on the lower north shore, probably to find employment in the Gulf fishery.[2]

In 1890 Lucien Turner, who lived at Fort Chimo during the previous decade, divided the Quebec Inuit population into three groups.[3] The first, whom Turner called the Suhinimiut, inhabited the coast of Labrador, down the east coast of Ungava Bay and up the western side as far as the mouth of the Leaf River. The second group, the Tahagmiut, lived on the northwest coast of Ungava Bay and along the southern shore of Hudson Strait, while the third group, the Itivimiut, occupied the eastern Hudson Bay region. Generally speaking, the Inuit followed a two-phase annual cycle. In the spring and summer they were oriented to the sea, living on the coast where they killed primarily seal, white whale and waterfowl. Late in the summer they moved inland, where they hunted caribou and fished during the fall. Winter found the Inuit back at the coast hunting seal through the ice. As the fur trade became established in their territory, winter was also a time for trapping fox.

For the most part, the Inuit of Quebec experienced only occasional contact with Europeans prior to about 1830. The Ungava Bay people periodically crossed to the Labrador coast to the Moravian missions established after 1770. In Hudson Strait the Inuit of the south shore

may have intercepted the Hudson's Bay Company's annual supply vessels from England on their way to and from trading posts in the bay. However, on their way into the bay these ships generally kept to the north side of the Strait, and on their way out they did not want to prolong an always precarious voyage, so any trade between the vessels and the Inuit was very sporadic.[4]

It was the perseverance of Hudson's Bay Company traders that finally brought the Inuit into sustained contact with Eurocanadians. In eastern Hudson Bay the company had been trying off and on since the middle of the eighteenth century to reach Inuit people living to the north. In 1754, and again in 1793, Inuit and traders were involved in bloody confrontations at Little Whale River. When the company established posts at Fort George (1803) and briefly at Great Whale River (1813-1816) it continued to be unsuccessful at drawing in the wary Inuit.[5]

Much of the reason for Inuit hesitancy can be attributed to the long history of animosity between them and the southern Amerindians. Since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century, Cree warriors from the base of James Bay engaged in summer raids against the Inuit in the vicinity of Lac Guillaume-Delisle, taking scalps, captives and plunder.[6] As they were familiar with guns, the Cree invariably were victorious in these encounters, and the Inuit must have learned to regard the traders as allies of their enemies. For various reasons the southern Cree stopped their raids at the end of the eighteenth century. However, Amerindians living farther to the north and closer to the Inuit continued to be hostile until finally, by the 1830s, the Hudson's Bay Company successfully engineered peaceful relations, setting the stage for the beginning of trading contact with the Inuit.

In April 1839 a family of six Inuit arrived at Fort George, guided there by Amerindians who had been offered a reward by the postmaster for bringing any of their traditional enemies to trade. This family

lived on the Belcher Islands and had wandered south to hunt. The next year a large party of about forty Inuit appeared at the post. They had been rounded up by a man named Moses, an Inuk from western Hudson Bay who had been sent to Fort George by the company expressly to make contact with the northern people. Apparently the traders at Fort George were the first Eurocanadians these Inuit had ever seen. Their visit marked the beginning of peaceful trading relations between the two groups in northwestern Quebec.[7]

After 1840, Inuit came regularly to Fort George each March and April to trade fox furs, seal blubber and caribou skins. Traders distinguished between the mainlanders, who inhabited the coast north of Little Whale River, and islanders who lived on the Belcher Islands. During their stay at Fort George, which lasted up to several weeks, they lived in ice houses along the coast and hunted seal, bear and fox. In May most of them returned north to hunt beluga whales at the mouth of the Little Whale River or to pursue the caribou inland.

By the middle of the decade a small Inuit homeguard remained near Fort George year round. The company debated establishing a post on the Belcher Islands, where about thirty-five families lived and where the most valuable fox pelts were thought to come from, but eventually it decided to place a post at Little Whale River that would attract both mainlanders and islanders. Little Whale River Post, established in 1851, was the centre of the Inuit trade for the rest of the period.[8]

The only other spot where Inuit and Eurocanadians had sustained contact during the period was at Fort Chimo. Located on the Koksoak River about forty kilometres from its mouth, this post opened in 1830 and traded for fox skins and oil with Inuit inhabiting the shores of Ungava Bay. This region was also the scene of hostility between Inuit and their Amerindian neighbours, in this case the Naskapi. According to Lucien Turner: "The prime cause of hostility was trespassing upon the hunting-grounds of each other, the Eskimo asserting priority of

right and endeavouring to repress the encroachment of the Naskopies."[9] During the trading period, however, relations seemed to improve.

The Inuit did not frequent Fort Chimo as regularly as the Hudson's Bay Company might have wished. During the late summer navigation season, when they could make the trip to the post in their water craft, they were traditionally leaving the coast for the inland caribou hunt. As well, seal and whale oil were among their most important trading products, and they had no way of transporting it in any quantity over long distances. Anyway, the trip along the ice-choked shore and up the Koksoak was time-consuming and arduous. To overcome these difficulties the Hudson's Bay Company experimented in 1832 with a coasting vessel that visited the Inuit at their camps. This proved effective in Hudson Bay, but in northern Ungava Bay and Hudson Strait the navigation season was too short. Inuit wishing to trade had to come to Fort Chimo themselves, and for the most part only those who lived close by did so. The rest were content to receive their European trade goods by bartering them from their neighbours.[10] Then, in 1843, Fort Chimo was closed, and the Inuit were left with no points of contact in north and northeastern Quebec for the rest of the period.

Inuit in Quebec during the pre-Confederation period were exposed to only one major acculturative agent, the fur trade. Missionaries failed to penetrate so far north, and because their territory was well beyond the borders of the province, administrators had no authority there. Traders established regular contact only 1830, so the effects of imported technologies and disruptions in the annual subsistence cycle were only beginning to be felt by the end of the period. As the period ended, the Inuit of Quebec were poised to confront many of the changes already experienced by Amerindians to the south.

CHAPTER 7
Conclusion

In 1862 William Spragge, Deputy Superintendent of Crown Lands, reported on the Montagnais of the St. Lawrence north shore:

> The Indians resident below Quebec [on the] north side of the St. Lawrence have as yet made little attempt to support themselves by agriculture. The localities in which during the Summer season they reside were apparently selected on account of the advantages they afforded for fishing. But as the principal Salmon streams have, under the Fishery Act, been leased to Fishermen who, while they supply the markets of the Province more regularly and cheaply than formerly, yet deprive the Indians of the means of subsistence which they used to enjoy. It would therefore seem but reasonable that they should receive compensation in some other form for the deprivations to which they are thus subjected. During the autumn and winter, a large number of these Indians proceed inland to their hunting grounds, and by the disposal of the Furs taken there, to the Hudson's Bay Co. and other traders, and with the game which they kill they support themselves. They do not appear to have made any great progress in civilization.[1]

These remarks sum up the situation of all the Native peoples of Quebec on the eve of Confederation. Many of their traditional resources, and much of their land, was handed over to Eurocanadians, or ruined by them, with very little compensation. As a result, Native people were experiencing a subsistence crisis that was only partly remedied by cash relief from the government. At the same time, Native people were frustrating official policy by continuing to engage in trapping, hunting and fishing instead of becoming settled agriculturalists. The circumstances of each Native people varied in their details, but most were experiencing problems like those facing the Montagnais.

The situation of the Native peoples had changed dramatically since the beginning of the British regime. In the late eighteenth century, most Amerindians, and all Inuit, lived far from centres of Eurocanadian population, following ways of life based on the exploitation of animal resources. The principal point of contact between Native people and European society was the fur trade, and although the trade had significant consequences for Native culture, it did not pose a threat to the existence of that culture. Initially, British Indian policy was conciliatory and non-interventionist. As long as the military situation on the continent remained problematic, Native people were treated as independent allies, and the necessary steps were taken to keep them wedded contentedly to the British cause.

After the War of 1812, relations between Native people and Eurocanadians became more complicated. As the military situation stabilized, Amerindians lost their usefulness as independent allies. Instead, by the 1820s, Indian administrators were viewing them as subject peoples who had to be accommodated in colonial society. This shift in perspective had profound implications for Indian policy, implications that were accentuated by several other factors.

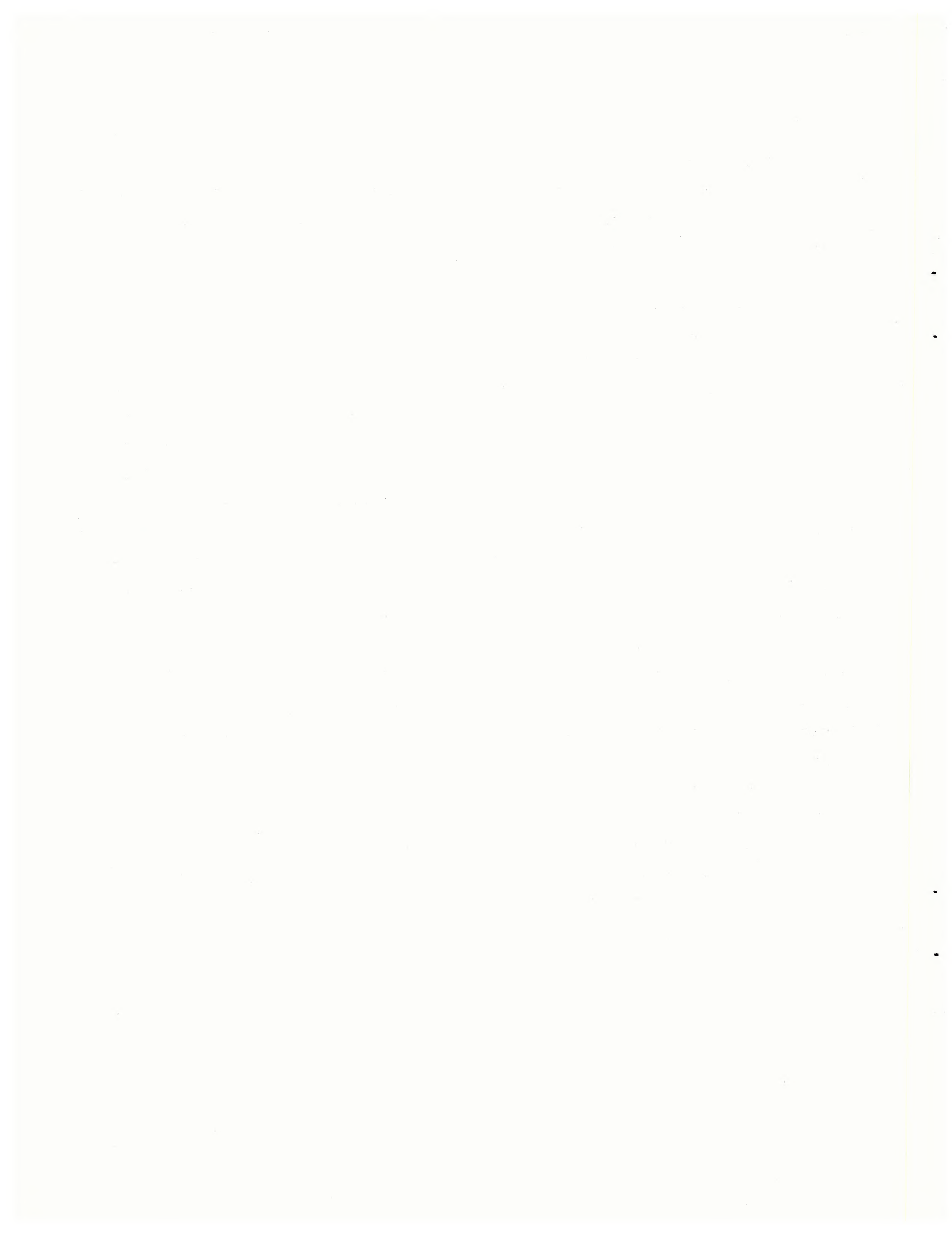
First, the Eurocanadian population of Quebec was expanding rapidly and spilling over into land claimed by the Amerindians. The activities of settlers, loggers, millers, miners and surveyors threatened the traditional sources of subsistence for Native people. As a result, they demanded compensation and protection, prompting administrators to invent policies that were much more interventionist than formerly.

At about the same time, the operation of the fur trade was undergoing unmistakable changes. In 1821 the rival fur trading companies, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, merged, with the result that a monopoly existed in much of Quebec. Monopoly allowed the Hudson's Bay Company to alter the terms of trade to the disadvantage of Native people, who lost some of their independence with respect to the company.

Finally, a third factor was the strong desire on the part of administrators in Britain to reduce the costs of administering Indian affairs in the colonies, a desire that had a strong influence on the formulation of new policies.

For all these reasons, the Native people of Quebec during the 1820s and 1830s became a problem to be solved instead of all ally to be conciliated. It was agreed by policy makers in the colony and in London that Amerindians should be encouraged to become self-sufficient members of colonial society, able to get along without a paternalistic bureaucracy and expensive subsidies. Through persuasion and coercion, Native people were weaned from traditional pursuits and settled on farms where they were to become agriculturalists. Economic reorientation was accompanied by intellectual and moral improvement in the form of schools and religious teaching. Officials were confident that Native people would be assimilated into Eurocanadian society and largely disappear as a culturally distinct group.

However, for the most part, the Native people did not want to be assimilated. Like the Montagnais described by Deputy Superintendent Spragge, they refused civilization. Instead, they wanted protection from the interlopers who were despoiling their hunting grounds and compensation for the land and resources that had been taken from them. In other words, the Native people wanted to preserve their way of life; they preferred coexistence to assimilation. The gulf between these two objectives was a measure of the problems confounding Indian affairs in Quebec as the period drew to a close.



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