To Tony Lussier
best wishes

Sept. /75. Wp

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTIVE ASPECTS OF METIS SOCIETY, 1810 - 1870

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

G. HERMAN SPRENGER

JANUARY 15, 1972

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. T.C. Correll and Dr. Ray Wiest for their encouragement and advice in the early stages of this thesis; to Dr. Louise E. Sweet for her constructive criticisms, to Ian G. Dyck for invaluable assistance in map-making; and, to Hazel for editorial and typing assistance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Objectives of Thesis

The Métis Nation played an important part in the history and development of Western Canada. They are frequently mentioned in much of the literature dealing with the Old Northwest and the fur trade economy. Yet, inspite of their early prominence, the number of books and articles specifically concerned with the Métis people is very small. Of the works that do exist, almost all are historically oriented and provide the reader with a series of dates, events, and personalities, but little in the way of interpretation or analysis.

The period of time under discussion falls between the years 1810 and 1870. During these years the Métis lived in various parts of the Old Northwest--a vast geographical expanse which today is divided into the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, the Yukon Territory, the western half of the Northwest Territories, and the northern portion of the States of North Dakota and Montana. However, since the great majority of the Métis lived in the Red River Settlement and other nearby communities of southern Manitoba and northern North Dakota, the thesis, therefore, concentrates on the Métis of this area.

The objective of the thesis is to provide an analysis

of certain aspects of the life and society of the Métis people. First, there is the question of Métis ethnicity or ethnic identity. The Métis Nation was an ethnic group, and like any other ethnic group, its members could be recognized by certain distinguishing criteria. These criteria of membership, or boundary markers, are set forth in the second half of Chapter Two. The discussion of Métis ethnicity draws heavily on Fredrik Barth's (1969a, 1969b) work on the nature of ethnic groups. Chapters Three and Four attempt to analyze and explain the adaptation of the Métis to their ecological, economic, and social environments. In these chapters, the main proposition of the thesis is outlined; namely, that the Métis Nation of the historical period was a positively-adapted ethnic group. This interpretation, it should be noted, is diametrically opposed to traditional explanations which portray the Métis as unstable misfits. Finally, in the last chapter an effort will be made to define the nature of Métis society and locate it within the typology of societal types proposed by Service (1962) and elaborated by Wolf (1966) and Helms (1969a, b).

The thesis is not intended to be a detailed analysis of Métis society. Several important aspects such as the family, kinship, politics, and religion are only briefly referred to, or omitted entirely. Also, from an ethnohistorical perspective, the thesis only deals with a certain period of the history of the Métis Nation. The

events prior to 1810 which led to the formation of the Métis Nation, and the events of 1870 and after, which were times of crises and change for the Métis people, are not included in the discussion.

Theoretical Approach

The adaptive strategies of the Métis Nation are analyzed from the perspective of "general ecology" (Vayda and Rappaport, 1968). Over the years there have been a number of anthropological studies which may be classified under this label. Some outstanding examples are Marvin Harris' (1966), "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle," Harold Hickerson's (1965), "The Virginia Deer and Intertribal Buffer Zones in the Upper Mississippi Valley," and Roy A. Rappaport's (1967), Pigs for the Ancestors. These works have stressed the creative influence of the environment (flora, fauna, topography, weather, etc.) on human behaviour; that is, they do not see the environment only as a limiting factor. At the same time they have avoided environmentally deterministic conclusions. Vayda and Rappaport (1968: 494) point out the advantage of this approach:

> Consistent with usage in [general] ecology, the focus of anthropologists engaged in ecological studies can be upon human populations and upon ecosystems and biotic communities in which human populations are included. To have units fitting into the ecologists' frame of reference is a procedure with clear advantages. Human populations as units are commensurable with the other units with which they interact to form food webs, biotic communities and eco-

> systems. Their capture of energy from and exchanges of material with these other units can be measured and then described in quantitative terms. No such advantage of commensurability obtains if cultures are made the units, for cultures, unlike human populations, are not fed upon by predators, limited by food supplies, or debilitated by disease.

In order to analyze the adjustment of a particular population to its special circumstances, the general ecological approach calls for an investigation of the population's trophic (nutritional) requirements and the manner in which these trophic requirements are produced. Since trophic productivity is conditioned, in part, by the environment, technology, and in some cases, by the needs of neighbouring populations, these factors must also be taken into consideration in the analysis.

Viewed from a broader theoretical perspective, the adaptation of a particular human population to its environmental circumstances is an example of "specific evolution" (Sahlins and Service, 1960: 43). General ecological theory, therefore, may be considered to be a sub-theory of neo-evolutionary theory (See White, 1949; Sahlins and Service, 1960). In addition to explaining the adaptations of specific human societies (populations), neo-evolutionary theory also attempts to explain the entire course of human progress from its simple to complex forms. Many of the insights of this latter facet of neo-evolutionary theory are beyond the scope of this thesis and will not be discussed here.

The analysis of buffalo hunting and agriculture in the Red River Settlement which is presented in Chapter Four of this thesis, is an example of "specific dominance" (Sahlins and Service, 1960: 77). Specific dominance, however, is a special case of the "Law of Cultural Dominance". In the terminology of general ecological theory, the Law of Cultural Dominance might be stated in the following manner: In a given environment, that method of trophic production which is most efficient will expand at the expense of the less efficient methods in that environment (Sahlins and Service, 1960: 75-76). Therefore, since agriculture is generally superior to hunting and gathering as a method of trophic production, it will be adopted in favour of the latter. Specific dominance, however, states that in cases where hunting and gathering techniques are particularly well-adapted and highly efficient, it is unlikely that they will be abandoned for agricultural methods. Hunting and gathering societies of post-glacial western Europe and pre-Columbian California are cited by Sahlins and Service (1960: 77, 79) as ethnographic examples of specific dominance. Since these hunting and gathering societies already possessed a highly efficient and adequate method of meeting their trophic needs, they would not have adopted agriculture on their own accord. This would have been true even if the agricultural methods available at that time had proved to be superior forms of production (Sahlins and Service, 1960:

80). In these examples, it is of course difficult to determine which method of production was, or might have been, more efficient since both methods were not practised at the same time in the same environment. The somewhat analogous situation (buffalo hunting versus agriculture) which existed in the Red River Settlement, however, is amenable to analysis along these lines.

In the Settlement, both the Métis and the colonists had their own distinctive method of producing trophic needs. The former were hunters, while the latter were agriculturalists. Since both methods were practised side by side, a comparison of the efficiency of each method is possible. The evidence presented in Chapter Four clearly indicates that hunting was the more efficient method of producing trophic goods.

In the Red River Settlement, then, a generally less efficient method of production (hunting) was more efficient that a generally more efficient method (agriculture). Moreover, as an example of specific dominance, the adaptation of the Métis Nation might be preferred to those cited in Sahlins and Service, since the efficiency of the two available methods of production can be compared and determined with some accuracy.

Sources

The information on the Métis Nation, the Red River Settlement, the fur trade, and the Old Northwest, which is

presented in this thesis was compiled from published* primary and secondary sources. The Nor'Wester, the newspaper of the Red River Settlement which began publishing in 1859 and which is available on micro-film, was also consulted. Primary sources consisted of letters, diaries, journals, reports, and personal histories of fur traders, missionaries, explorers, travellers, and residents of the Old Northwest. These documents contain a great deal of ethnographic data, not only on the Métis, but also on the neighbouring Indian groups. A certain degree of caution should be exercised when reading these works for they were written from a European (trader, missionary, conqueror, etc.) point of view, and many of them are glaringly ethnocentric.

Secondary works, such as those of Arthur S. Morton (1939), George F. Stanley (1960), William L. Morton (1967), Harold A. Innis (1962), and E. E. Rich (1967) are histories of European, or European-Canadian expansion into the West. For the most part (the works of A. S. Morton and H. A. Innis excepted), they continue to display the same kind of ethnocentrism which is found in the primary sources. Marcel Giraud (1945) and Joseph K. Howard (1965) have produced the only noteworthy histories on the Métis Nation.

*Unpublished primary sources were not consulted. However, many such documents are housed in the (1) Public Archives of Manitoba, (2) Archiepiscopal Archives of St. Boniface, and (3) Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Ottawa. They undoubtedly contain a wealth of information on various aspects of Métis society.

Of these, Giraud's monumental work is by far the most comprehensive and most important work on the Metis Nation.

For all practical purposes, the anthropological literature on the Métis of the historical period is non-existent. Two short articles by Omer C. Stewart (1960) and James H. Howard (1961) which do mention them, confuse, rather than clarify, the very subject of the identity of the Metis people (See Chapter Two). There are, however, a number of studies which deal with the present-day socio-economic conditions of Métis peoples in different parts of Western and Northern Canada (See Valentine 1954, Legasse 1959, Card 1963 and Slobodin 1966). Some of these Métis groups are descendants of the Red River Métis. The studies themselves, however, are beyond the scope of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT AND AN ANALYSIS OF METIS ETHNICITY

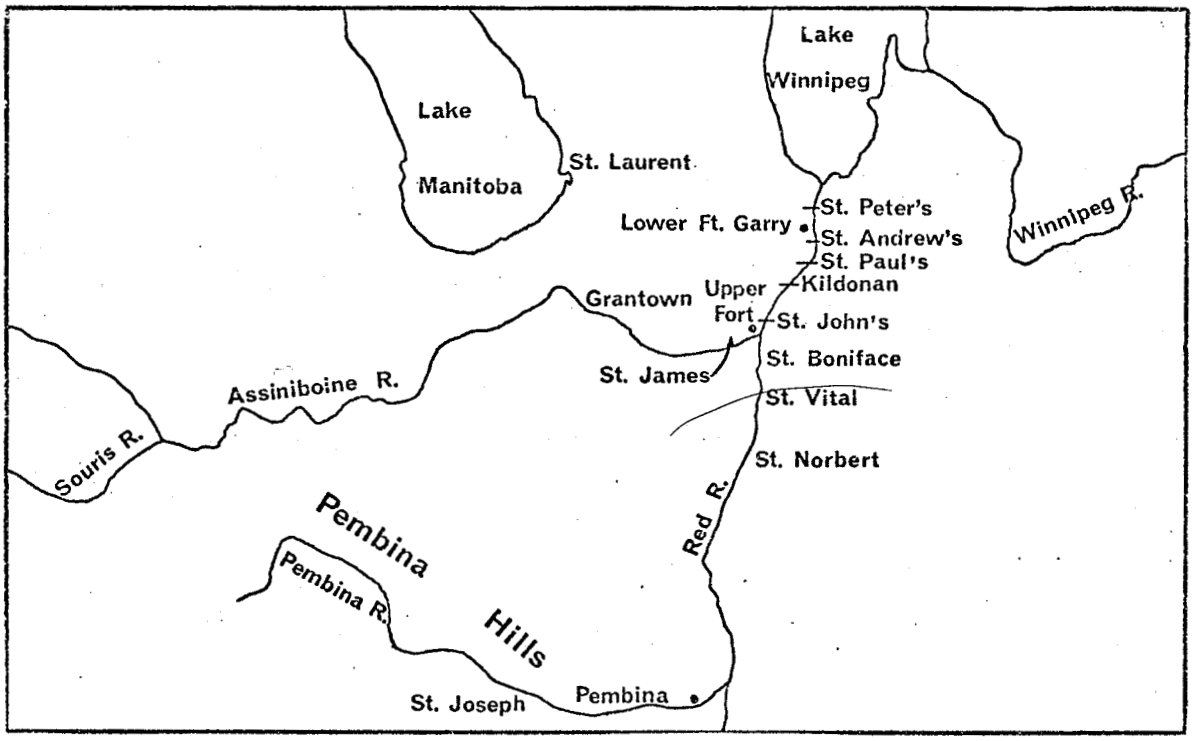
The Red River Settlement

The Red River Settlement, which was located at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, had an ethnically heterogeneous population. It was, in fact, not so much one community, as its name might imply, but rather a collection of several different communities stretched out along the banks of both rivers. Around 1850 the total population of the Settlement was approximately 5,000 persons (Ross, 1957: 409). The ethnic composition of this population was as follows: 2,500 Métis*, 2,000 Métis Anglaise,** and 300 Kildonan Scots. There was also a small contingent of French Canadian settlers living in the Settlement (Morton, 1956: xiv-xxi; Murray, 1967: 40).

The Métis parishes of St. Boniface, St. Vital, and St. Norbert were situated on the east bank of the Red River south of the forks (See Map 1). St. Boniface, the largest of these parishes, was established in 1818 and it was also the home of the French Canadians who were closely allied with the Métis. Métis subsistence activities revolved around buffalo hunting, part-time farming and

*The Métis were also known as the Métis Nation, the New Nation, the Red River Métis, and the Bois Brûlé.

**The Métis Anglaise were commonly called the English half-breeds. However, Cowie (1913: 501) notes that the Métis "designated" them as Métis Anglaise. This usage is followed throughout the thesis.



MAP 1. Red River Settlement and Neighbouring Communities.

trapping for furs. During the winter months some families remained in the Settlement while others wintered out on the prairies (Morton, 1967: 62; see also Chapter Three). Also, a substantial number of Métis men were employed part-time by the Hudson's Bay Company as tripmen or voyageurs (Morton, 1967: 82).

The Métis Anglaise lived in the parishes of St. Andrews, St. Paul, and St. John on the west bank of the Red River, north of the forks, and in St. James on the Assiniboine River west of the forks (See Map 1). Related to the Métis Anglaise and living in the same parishes, were their parents and grandparents--older Scots men and their Indian wives. These men, some of whom were moderately wealthy, were retired officers and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company who had decided to settle down with their families and spend the rest of their days in the Settlement. These people had begun their gradual migrations to the Settlement in the 1820's (Morton, 1967: 67).

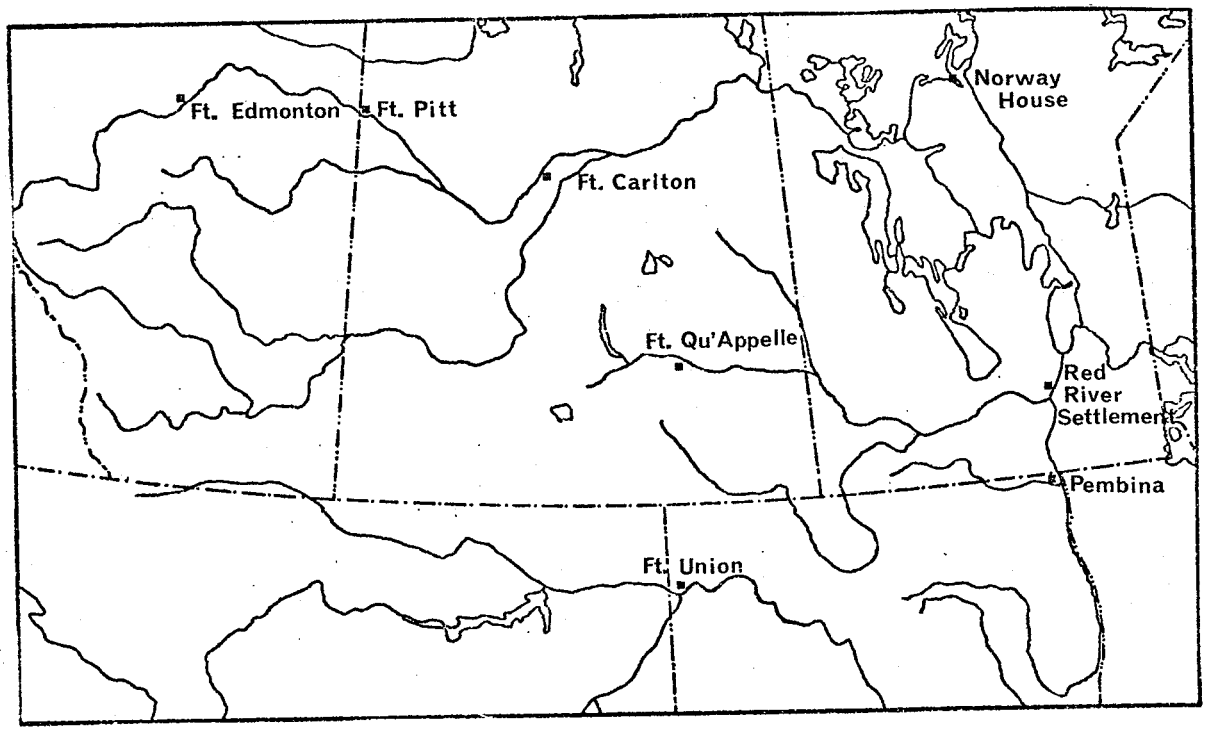
The Kildonan Scots made their homes at Kildonan. They were the remnants and descendants of the original Selkirk Settlers who had emigrated from Scotland between the years 1811 and 1817. The Kildonan Scots and the Métis Anglaise, but especially the former group, were full-time farmers, who made their living from their plots of land which stretched back from the banks of the Red River. They grew crops of wheat, barley, oats, potatoes, beets,

and corn and raised livestock such as cattle, horses, pigs and chickens (Hind, 1969: 225-229; Morton, 1967: 84-87). Many of the Métis Anglaise men were also active entrepreneurs in various economic enterprises in the Settlement (Stanley, 1960: 9; Palliser, 1968: 169).

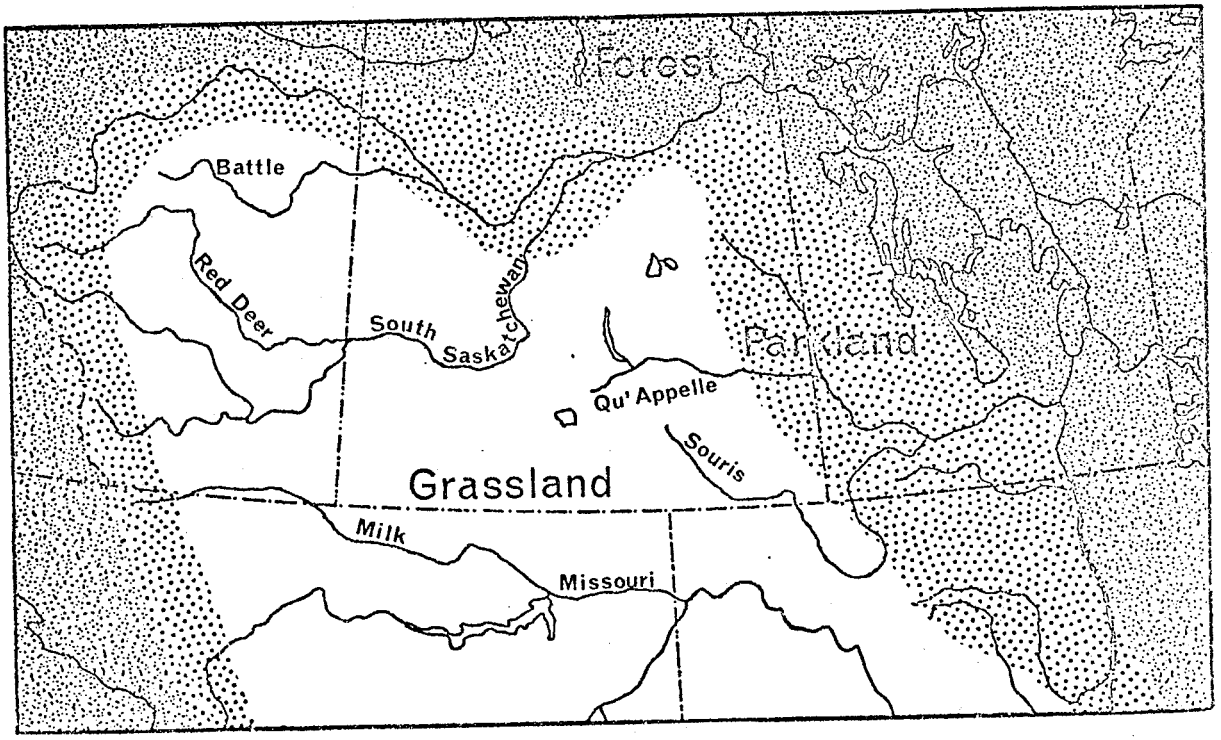
The Settlement was also the site of the major inland administrative and supply centre of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company's officials, servants, and their families lived in or nearby Upper and Lower Fort Garry (See Map 1). In some respects the Red River Settlement might be considered a fur trade company town. All of the residents of the Settlement were to a greater or lesser extent involved in the fur trade--the exclusive monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The fur trade economy has been described and analyzed in great detail and its main features are well known (See, for example, Innis 1962 and Rich 1967). Basically, furs were collected at the various trading posts (See Map 2) which were located throughout the area, and exported to England via Hudson Bay. At the same time, English trade goods entered by, and moved along the same routes in the opposite direction, and eventually reached all the trading posts.

In addition to the Métis parishes in the Settlement, there were also Métis communities located at Pembina, St. François Xavier (Grantown or the White Horse Plains), St. Laurent, and St. Joseph (See Map 1). Pembina, some sixty



MAP 2. Location of Some of the Fur Trade Posts at the Time of the Red River Settlement.



MAP 3. Vegetation Zones.

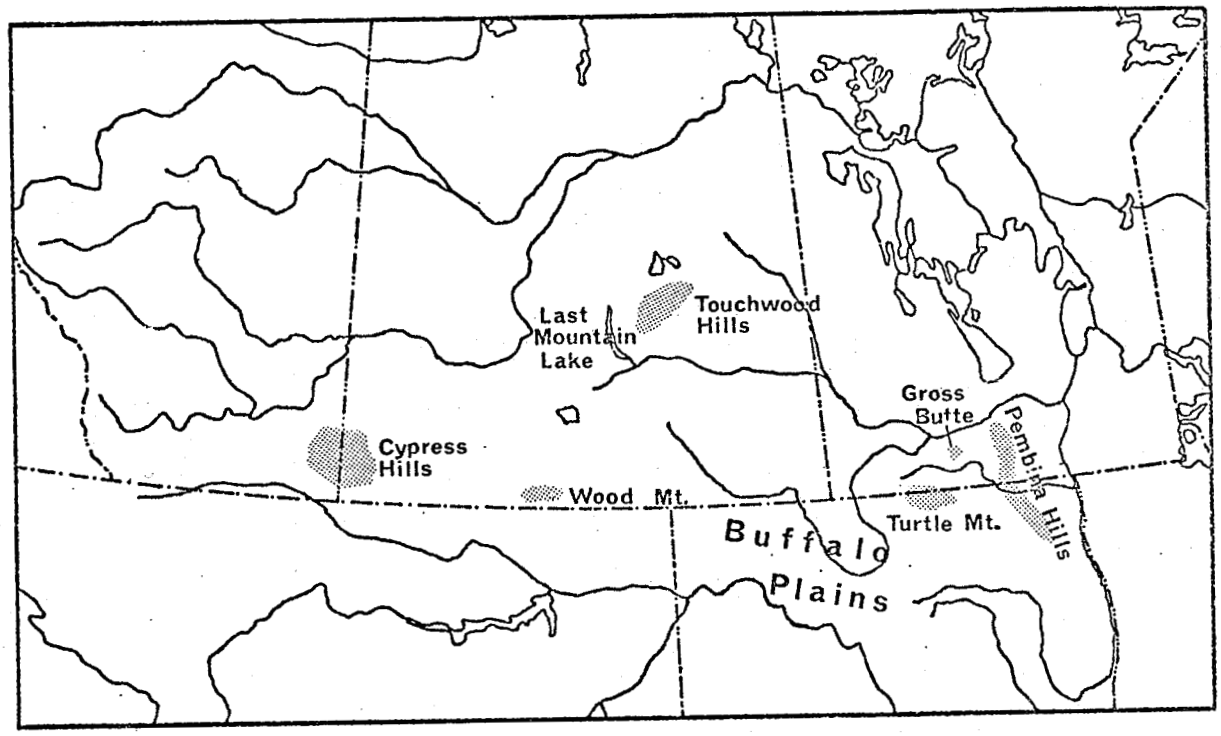
miles south of the Forks, was actually the site of the first Métis community of any appreciable size. Here, small groups of Freemen--former employees of the NorthWest Company and the XY Company--with their Indian wives and children had begun to concentrate as early as 1805 (Henry, 1965: 269). By 1816 to 1818, a small Métis settlement with a population well in excess of 300 people had developed (Nute, 1942: 158, 177). In 1823, after it was learned that Pembina was on the American side of the International Boundary, a few of the Métis moved to St. Boniface, but most moved to St. François Xavier (Morton, 1967: 62). By the 1850's the latter community had reached a population of 800 (Murray, 1967: 40). Some Métis, however, remained at Pembina and at mid-century it is estimated to have had a Métis population between 600 and 1,000 (Robinson, 1968: 68). During the 1850's many Métis from Pembina established the new parish of St. Joseph in the Pembina Hills (Giraud, 1945: 842-843). The parish of St. Laurent was established in 1858 with about ten families at the site of a long-time winter fishery (Giraud, 1945: 823, 1077).

The different bands and tribes of Indians who lived within a radius of a hundred miles or so of the Settlement and who visited it occasionally, may be divided into two groups: those of the boreal forest; and, those of the prairie and parkland (See Map 3 for vegetation zones). In the boreal forest the main ethnic groups were the Cree and

the Saulteaux (Ojibway). These were simple hunting and gathering bands whose subsistence consisted largely of moose, caribou, some deer and elk, and fish. The equestrian tribes of the prairie and parkland were also nomadic hunters and gatherers. They relied primarily on buffalo and, to a lesser extent, on antelope, deer, and elk for their subsistence. The Plains Cree, Plains Saulteaux (Ojibway) and Assiniboine inhabited the territory west and slightly south of the Settlement. These tribes were allied with the Métis in their long-standing hostilities with the Sioux (Yankton and Santee) who occupied the area to the south of the "Buffalo Plains" (See Map 4).

Ethnicity and the Métis Nation

Before proceeding with a discussion on some of the specific aspects of Métis ethnicity, a few brief comments on the nature of ethnic groups in general are in order. An ethnic group is normally considered to be a group of people who identify themselves, and are identified by others, as constituting a distinct social entity (the we-they feeling). The members of an ethnic group share a number of common values and attitudes and are for the most part biologically self-perpetuating (Barth, 1969a: 10-11). The feeling of belonging of the members of any one particular ethnic group may be further enhanced by certain overt signs. That is, in contradistinction to



MAP 4. Location of the "Buffalo Plains" and Popular Wintering Sites.

the members of other groups, they have in common a combination of several, although not necessarily all, of the following attributes: "race"; language; religion; style of dress; and certain traditions (history). Finally, in some cases an ethnic group may have exclusive possession of a territory and be uniformly adapted to its ecological features. Although specific combinations may vary from group to group and even for the same group through time, some of these factors, as will be explained below, are essential for the existence of ethnicity, while others are not.

(a) Intra-Ethnic Variation and Inter-Ethnic Uniformity: Edmund Leach (1964: 299) and Fredrik Barth (1969b: 117-119; 1969a: 12-13) have emphasized the fact that significant variations with respect to territoriality, ecological and economic adaptation, and social organization may exist within one ethnic group. These points are clearly illustrated in Barth's description of the Swat Pathans of Afghanistan and West Pakistan:

> Pathan communities exhibit a great range of cultural and social forms....(1) In a central belt of barren hills running through most of the country are found villages of mixed agriculturalists, organized in egalitarian patrilineal descent segments with an acephalous political form. (2) In favoured localities in the mountains, and in the broader valleys and plains, more intensive agriculture is practised, based on artificial irrigation; in these areas Pathans proper are landowners or owner-cultivators, while part of the village population consists of tenant Tajiks (south and west)

> or servile tenant and menial castes (east and north). Political forms are largely based on the segmentary organization of the Pathan descent groups, some places in acephalous systems, elsewhere integrated in quasi-feudal systems within the prevailing states and increasingly subject to bureaucratic administration. (3) Other sectors of the Pathan population live as administrators, traders, craftsmen or labourers in the towns of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as an integrated part of those two states. (4) Particularly in the south, a large sector of the ethnic group lives a pastoral nomadic life, politically organized as tribes with, in part, very great autonomy. Finally, some groups practise extensive labour or trading migrations which bring individuals and small groups periodically far outside the geographical boundaries of Pathan country (Barth, 1969b: 117-119).

Conversely, Harald Eidheim (1969: 39) notes that in some situations neighbouring ethnic groups display an amazing degree of uniformity and cannot be adequately distinguished from each other by any overt criteria. His example is taken from northern Norway where the local population is made up of Norwegians and Coast Lapps.

> As one moves from the interior towards the townships of the fjord and coast area, the ethnic proportions of the population are reversed. The proportion of Lappish speakers in some townships is inconsiderable, while in others it might amount to 20-25 per cent.... Lapps as well as Norwegians combine farming and fishing with no difference in ecologic adaptation along ethnic lines. Spatially, however, there is a tendency to ethnic clustering. The towns and fishing villages on the coast are entirely dominated by Norwegians.... In the fjord area and especially in the western part which concerns us here, visible signs of Lappishness, which prevail e.g. in the inland region, are either absent in the indigenous population, (as are reindeer herding and nomad life, Lappish costume and the public use of Lappish language) or they are rather unreliable criteria for classification of individual

> persons (as is physical type). People make a living from fishing and small farming in the same way as in peripheral settlements all along the North Norwegian coast. Clothing, food habits, housing, the major forms of social institutions, ideals and values are also so evenly distributed that there are seemingly only trivial differences from one locality to another. In short, an outsider, paying a casual and short visit in the area, will most likely notice no signs of ethnic diversity, not to speak of an ethnic border (Eidheim, 1969: 41).

It is in cases such as those described by Barth and Eidheim where the overt indicators for ethnic membership are few in number, or entirely absent, that the crucial importance of the more subtle criteria of ethnicity, such as self identity and shared values and attitudes--but especially the former--are brought to the fore.

(b) Ethnic Boundaries: "Self-ascription and ascription by others" is always a factor in ethnic identity. In most cases this is also supported or enhanced by a combination of some of the overt factors outlined at the beginning (Barth, 1969a: 13-15).

Whether differences between ethnic groups are substantial or slight is not important; what is important is the fact that differences do exist and that therefore ethnic boundaries may be identified. The boundary of an ethnic group is defined by its criteria for membership. Adherence to ethnic boundaries calls for prescribed modes of behaviour with the members of one's own group. Also, social encounters with members of other groups are channeled along certain lines; that is, some types of

activities are permissible, while others are not. Where ethnic differences are great, the rules and regulations for inter-ethnic relations may be quite complex and apply to a wide range of activities. Consequently, ethnic boundaries not only structure the articulation between ethnic groups, but they also facilitate the maintenance of ethnic distinctions (Barth, 1969a: 13-19).

Barth's suggestion that studies on the nature of ethnicity should focus on ethnic boundaries is well taken. George Murdock (1953, 1964) and Raoul Narroll (1964) have attempted to define an ethnic group as a homogeneous entity, distinguishable from others on the basis of overt criteria alone. This approach has serious limitations. Intra-ethnic variations are considered "bothersome" and tend to be "ignored". Moreover, in situations of inter-ethnic uniformity, ethnic groups cannot be identified. Their definitions do not reflect ethnographic facts (Leach, 1964: 299); they obfuscate rather than clarify our understanding of ethnic groups.

(c) The Métis as an Ethnic Group: As is the case with all ethnic groups the Métis people identified themselves, and were identified by others, as constituting a distinct social category. Pierre Falcon, who is known as the bard of the Métis, immortalized this we-they feeling in some of his folk songs:

> Would you like to hear me sing
> Of a true and recent thing?

> It was June nineteen, the band of Bois-Brûlés
> Arrived that day,
> Oh the brave warriors they!
>
> We took three foreigners prisoners when
> We came to the place called Frog, Frog Plain.
> They were men who'd come from Orkney,
> Who'd come, you see,
> To rob our country. (From The Battle of Seven Oaks by Pierre Falcon in MacLeod, 1959: 7)

Similar sentiments were also voiced by other Métis. Isaac Cowie (1913: 391) reports that during an evening gathering of singing and dancing, several of the men would often come forth with a hearty "Vive mon nation". Louis Riel, perhaps the most famous Métis, expressed Métis ethnicity in the following manner:

> True, our Indian origin is humble, but it is right that we should honor our mothers as well as our fathers. Why should we be concerned about the proportion of our European or Indian blood? Since we have some of each, gratitude and filial love command us to say: 'We are Metis! (Riel in Ryerson, 1968: 379-380).

Furthermore, other groups in the Settlement and throughout the Northwest, such as the French, Métis Anglaise, Scots, Cree, Saulteaux and Assiniboine, regarded the Métis as an ethnic group. The Indians referred to them as wagon men (Howard, 1965: 41), and every resident or traveller-explorer who has left us a written record, clearly indicates that the Métis were different from both the Indians and the Whites.

The Métis held in common certain values and attitudes. Hospitality and the sharing of material goods with one's relatives and friends were emphasized (Ross, 1957: 193-194).

Family ties were considered to be of importance; a man's "sympathies" were

> all towards his Indian mother, squaw and especially his (belle mère) mother in law (Palliser, 1968: 169).

The Métis stressed their political independence. They were natives of the Northwest and as such they did not acknowledge the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company or the Council of Assiniboia (Rich, 1967: 2620266; Stanley, 1960: 10, 12).

In addition to these subtle criteria of ethnicity, Métis self-identity was enhanced by a unique combination of several overt criteria. Biologically they were of Indian-European ancestry. Their religion was Roman Catholicism and French was their principle language. They had a distinctive style of dress which consisted of a blue capote, corduroy trousers with a red belt worn underneath the capote (Ross, 1957: 190). Territorially, their parishes were set apart from those of the other groups (the exception being St. Boniface which was shared with the French Canadians). The Métis were diversely adapted and as a result there was some variation within the group as far as subsistence and economic activities were concerned. However, most Métis families participated in one or both of the semi-annual Red River Hunts. Within the context of the Red River Settlement, buffalo hunting was a Métis occupation. Similarily, a great many families wintered on the prairies or went to the fisheries of Lakes Manitoba

and Winnipeg every year. During times of hardship in the parishes, this was the common practice of all. Nonetheless, variations did exist. Some men, for example, were hired hands or wage labourers for the Hudson's Bay Company throughout the year. They held positions such as guides, interpreters, traders, and herdsmen. Others were wage labourers only during the summer months, when they worked on the York boat brigades and the cart brigades. These were not exclusively Métis occupations, however.

Thus, the criteria of self ascription, shared values, "race", language, religion, ecological and economic adaptation, and territoriality signalled the boundary of the Métis ethnic group. On the basis of the earlier statements on the nature of ethnic groups in general, the fact that the Métis identified themselves, and were identified by others, as being a distinct ethnic group may be considered the most important of these criteria. The remaining criteria, important as they were, merely strengthened or enhanced the sense of ethnicity which was expressed in the we-they dichotomy.

Some of the overt criteria of Métis ethnic identity, of course, were not the exclusive possession of the Métis Nation. For example, the Métis Anglaise were also of mixed Indian-European ancestry; the French Canadians also spoke French and practised Roman Catholicism; while buffalo hunting and wintering on the prairies, although

not practised by any other groups in the Settlement, were nonetheless the traditional activities of the Plains Indians. However, the Métis were distinct from these groups since they alone possessed all of these factors in combination. Consequently, some of the overt boundary indicators of Métis ethnicity varied vis à vis these other groups. In order to distinguish between the Métis and the Métis Anglaise, one would ignore the fact that both groups were of Indian-European ancestry, but stress the differences of language, religion, and ecological and economic adaptation. Similarly, such criteria as language and religion would not be emphasized when making distinctions between the Métis and the French Canadians. One would note, however, that the Métis differed from the French in their Indian-European ancestry and in their ecological and economic adaptation. Again, vis à vis the Plains Indians, the criteria of ecological and economic adaptations would not be considered a boundary marker of Métis ethnicity; here, language, religion, and mixed ancestry were some of the important distinguishing factors. Finally, in some cases all of the criteria of Métis ethnicity are relevant as boundary indicators. This is true, for example, when the Métis are contrasted with the Indians of the boreal forest or with the Selkirk Settlers.

Before concluding this section, two aspects pertaining to the origin of the Métis Nation should be mentioned. The first is simply that the Métis were a new

or recently formed ethnic group. Most other ethnic groups have a long history and their origin is subsequently shrouded in a mythological past. This was not the case for the Métis. Their origin and development took place within the living memory of the individuals concerned. Second, the Métis Nation developed through a fusion of Indian and European peoples, unlike many ethnic groups which are formed by a fissioning or splitting-off process. Cases of fissioning are common in the ethnographic literature and undoubtedly represent the most frequent process in ethnic group formation. With the Métis Nation this process was reversed, but the result--the formation of a new ethnic group--was the same. Biologically or genetically, the Métis people were mixed; that is, their parents or grandparents or great-grandparents were Indian and European (the mothers were Indian and the fathers were European). The Indian side was represented by Saulteaux, Plains Cree (Howard, 1965: 41), and Assiniboine, while the European half was largely composed of French-Canadians.

(d) Métis or Indian? As noted previously, there is a great deal of evidence which can be marshalled to support the claim that the Métis were a distinct ethnic group. In a short article, Omer Stewart (1960), however, takes the position that the Métis were actually Saulteaux (Ojibway) Indians.* He refers to them as the "Cart-using Indians

---

*See p. 26 footnote.

of the Plains":

> The justification for designating the Plains Ojibwa as 'The Cart-using Indians of the Plains' comes with this recognition that the Metis or Half-breeds of the Red River area were usually Ojibwa half-breeds and <u>were then and are today Ojibwa Indians</u> (Stewart, 1960: 351; emphasis mine).
>
> Although Ross and others often wrote as if the half-breeds were distinct from the Ojibwa Indians, Ross also provided the evidence that the Red River half-breeds were Ojibwa (Stewart, 1960: 354).
>
> To designate half-breeds as Indians is to use <u>cultural</u> rather than biological criteria, with which to determine the classification (Stewart, 1960: 352; emphasis mine).

Stewart's reasons for saying that the Métis were Ojibwa Indians are as follows:

> In 1915 Aleš Hrdlička made a study of the <u>physical</u> anthropology of the Ojibwa of the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota upon which part of the Plains Ojibwa had been settled by the U. S. Government. His anthropometric measurements and careful observations of 696 Ojibwa were the basis for his writing that '...a large proportion of the tribe was found to be mixed with whites in all possible grades, while relative few are mixed with Indians of other tribes ...' Hrdlička's research led him to conclude that less than 10% of the 25,000 Ojibwa of 1915 were <u>full-bloods</u>.
>
> Oblate Father Laviolette of The Research Center for Amer-indian Anthropology at the University of Ottawa in a report this year on the 'Aborigines of the Prairie Provinces' wrote that: 'It is doubtful whether there are many <u>full-blooded</u> Indians in any of the three Prairie Provinces' (Stewart, 1960: 354; emphasis mine).

Stewart also cites the following quote from Ross:

---

*See also James H. Howard (1961: 171-178) for a similarly confusing account of Métis ethnicity vis à vis the Plains Ojibway. Howard suggests that the Plains Ojibway were a distinct ethnic group which was made up of two ethnic groups--one the full-blood Plains Ojibway, the other the mixed blood Métis-Plains Ojibway.

> The Saulteaux [Ojibwa] and half-breeds, be it remembered, are mostly all related, either by marriage, or other kindred ties....It was proved afterwards that a half-breed named Parisien was with the Saulteaux in the fight [with the Sioux in 1840], and had actually fired the first shot (Stewart, 1960: 354).

Inasmuch as all of Stewart's evidence in support of his position is biological, he has on the basis of his own criteria failed to prove his case. Implicit in Stewart's conclusion is the idea that in cases of ethnic mixture the children belong to one or the other of the two groups involved (Stewart, 1960: 352-353). He does not consider the possibility that the children might in some cases belong to a new or third group, as was the case for the Métis. Stewart greatly simplifies a complex situation involving the ethnic membership of an individual and his biological or genetic composition. In the following, I will attempt to clarify this situation.

Briefly, the situation in the Northwest may be summarized in the following manner. The Métis were a distinct ethnic group and all were of mixed Indian-European ancestry. The various Indian groups, such as the Plains Ojibwa, Plains Cree, and Assiniboine, were also distinct ethnic groups. Some, but not all, of the Indians were, like the Métis, of mixed Indian-European ancestry. For example, the Earl of Southesk while travelling along the Saskatchewan in 1859 describes one such individual:

> Napesskes, that clever good-looking Indian, accompanied us in the capacity of guide. By birth he was really of French half-breed

> origin, but having always lived with the Indians he completely resembled them in his looks and habits, and nobody much remembered about his European blood (Southesk, 1969: 108).

Further on in his narrative, Southesk (1969: 360) states that:

> Doubtless there are some children of white fathers, who, left with their mothers, have been brought up in Indian camps, and have little of the European about them--not even the language; but the Red River half-breeds are in a totally different condition.

Therefore, two individuals whose genetic compositions, in terms of Indian-European proportions, were identical, could actually belong to different ethnic groups--one could belong to one of the Indian groups, the other could be Métis. Stewart fails to make this distinction and concludes that since the Métis were of mixed ancestry, like some Indians, they were therefore Indians.

CHAPTER THREE

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES: THE RED RIVER HUNT AND WINTERING ON THE PRAIRIES

The Red River Hunt

During the historical period under consideration, the Red River Métis relied on the buffalo herds as their major source of subsistence and trade goods. Their organized buffalo hunts took place semi-annually in the summer and again in the fall.

The Métis were skilled horsemen and excellent buffalo hunters. John McLean, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, claimed that

> There are no better horsemen in the world than the Red River 'brules'; and so long as the horse keeps on his legs, the rider sticks to him (McLean, 1932: 376).

Lewis Henry Morgan, an anthropologist who visited the Red River Settlement in the summer of 1861, states that,

> The most expert and successful buffalo hunters in America are the half breeds of Pembina, and of Selkirk Settlement around Fort Garry (Morgan, 1959: 120).

Father Antoine Belcourt, a Catholic missionary who accompanied a hunt in the fall of 1845, commented on the hunters' expertise.

> The rapidity with which the half-breeds charge their guns is astonishing, it not being an uncommon occurrence for one of them to shoot down three buffaloes in the space of an acre (arpent) (Belcourt, 1854: 105).

The great size of these hunting expeditions has also drawn comment. Alexander Ross, writing in 1856, felt that

the camp of the hunt of 1840 covered an area equal to that of a "modern city" (Ross, 1957: 246). The artist, Paul Kane, saw a Métis hunt in the summer of 1846 and also remarked on its size:

> I have often witnessed an Indian buffalo hunt since, but never one on so large a scale (Kane, 1968: 60).

It should be noted that the hunt witnessed by Kane was by no means the largest Red River Hunt ever assembled.

The area within which the Red River Hunts took place lies mostly in modern-day North Dakota. At that time, this territory was known as the "Buffalo Plains" (See Map 4).

(a) Historical Aspects: Large-scale hunting expeditions were organized and departed from Pembina as early as 1818 (Giraud, 1945: 650-651). These early Red River Hunts were carried out only during the summer months. Statistical information on the early hunting expeditions is somewhat limited; however, Alexander Ross (1957: 84, 246) suggests that before 1825 the hunts were composed of approximately 350 persons and 540 carts. William Keating, the narrator of Major Stephen Long's expedition to the source of the St. Peter's River, notes that the hunt of 1823

> ...consisted of one hundred and fifteen carts, each loaded with about eight hundred pounds of the finest buffalo meat; there were three hundred persons including the women. The number of their horses, some of which were very good, was not under two hundred (Keating, 1825: 41).

By 1825, substantial numbers of Metis families had settled at St. Boniface and the White Horse Plains. Subse-

quent hunting expeditions, therefore, contained families from these communities as well as from Pembina (MacLeod and Morton, 1963: 109).

In 1826 or perhaps 1827, the first of the annual fall hunts of any size or significance was initiated (Giraud, 1945: 650). Generally speaking, the autumn hunts were much smaller than those of the summer for that year:

> Ordinarily not more than one-third assembled for the fall hunt of the buffalo (Belcourt, 1854: 101).

Over the years the size of the Red River Hunt increased steadily:

> In 1820, the number of carts assembled here for the first trip was..... 540
> In 1825..... 680
> In 1830..... 820
> In 1835..... 970
> In 1840.....1210
> (Ross, 1957: 246).

In 1840, Alexander Ross accompanied the summer hunt. His carefully itemized account shows that there were more than five times as many people and almost ten times the number of carts there had been in the early years. More precisely, there were 620 men, 650 women, 360 children, 1,210 carts, 655 cart-horses, 586 cart-oxen, and 403 buffalo runners (Ross, 1957: 244).

Up until about 1845, the Red River Métis from the three main settlements of St. Boniface, the White Horse Plains, and Pembina, had always joined forces to form one large expedition for both the summer and autumn hunts. After this date, however, the hunters normally split up

into two, and occasionally three, divisions. Although both divisions would usually rendezvous near Pembina for the start of the hunt, and sometimes meet while out on the plains, they nonetheless travelled and hunted apart from each other. The larger of the two divisions, composed mainly of the Métis from St. Boniface and Pembina, was known as the "Main-River party"; while the second division, known as the "White Horse Plain party", drew its members from that settlement.*

After 1845, therefore, the statistics of the Red River Hunt became decidedly more complex since the summer and fall hunts were now usually composed of at least two divisions. In addition, the sources do not always indicate the season or the division to which they are referring, nor are they always clear as to whether the totals they give include some Indians (Plains Chippewa or Plains Cree) as well (Roe, 1951: 402). In spite of these difficulties, it is clearly evident from the data which is available that the size of the hunts continued to increase. In 1852, for example, there were about 1,000 men out on the summer hunt (Giraud, 1945: 802). The combined totals for the "Main-River party" and the "White Horse Plain party" for the summer of 1860 show that about 2,690 Métis were involved. Of these, 710 were men and 1,980 were women and children. The two divisions also contained 1,483 carts, 1,372 horses and 350 oxen (The Nor'Wester, Tuesday, August 14, 1860 and Tuesday, August 28, 1860). By 1862,

---

*See p. 55 footnote.

the explorers Viscount Milton and W. B. Cheadle reported that:

> ...the number of hunters frequently exceeds 500,...and the number of carts often reaches 1500 or 1600...(Milton and Cheadle, 1970: 45).

(b) Products: For the Red River Métis, buffalo hunting was a major economic undertaking; its importance cannot be overestimated. The summer hunt of 1840 alone, returned with provisions valued at approximately £9,000 (1840 prices). This figure, however, does not indicate the full monetary value of the hunt since in addition, 1,630 men, women and children, 1,644 horses and oxen, and several hundred dogs had lived off the plains for a period of two months (Ross, 1957: 272-273, 244).

The products of the hunt consisted of pemmican, fine pemmican, dried meat, fresh meat, buffalo tongues, fat, and buffalo hides. Pemmican and dried meat were the chief products of the summer hunts, while fresh meat, which was preserved by the cold temperatures, was more important in the autumns (The Nor'Wester, Friday, November 1, 1861).

These products, of course, were not only utilized by the Métis hunters and their families, but were also sold and bartered in an ever-increasing market. The Hudson's Bay Company, for example, bought large quantities of pemmican, dried meat, and fat almost every year (Ross, 1957: 273; Rich, 1959: v.2, 516; Rich, 1967: 253). Those groups in the Red River Settlement that were primarily agricul-

turalists, such as the Selkirk settlers and the Métis Anglaise, depended on the "plains provisions", especially in times of crop failure (Ross, 1957: 273; the Nor'Wester, Friday, November 1, 1861 and Wednesday, November 9, 1864). Sometimes members of the latter group went out onto the plains to trade with the Métis. As John MacLean pointed out:

> Very few of them [Métis Anglaise] resort to the plains, unless for the purpose of trafficking the produce of their farms for the produce of the chase...(MacLean, 1932: 378).

Free-traders (private shop-keepers) in the Settlement bought and resold pemmican and undoubtedly required it to provision their boat and cart brigades as well (Lent, 1963: 60, 65). Additional markets for the products of the hunt were also found at such American fur trade posts as Pembina, and Fort Union on the Missouri River (Ross, 1957: 264-265). Finally, after 1860 a small, although perhaps not insignificant amount of pemmican probably obtained from the Métis, was used by steamship passengers travelling between Georgetown and the Red River Settlement. Lewis Henry Morgan was such a passenger. After describing how pemmican is made, he mentions that,

> We have had it daily on the boat. Not bad eating (Morgan, 1959: 123).

In exchange for their buffalo products, the Métis received money and goods in kind, such as farm produce, tea, liquor, tobacco, guns and ammunition, steel knives, axes, kettles, cloth and other sundry articles.

(c) Technology: In order to effectively exploit the resources of the "Buffalo Plains" the Red River Metis utilized what might be considered a "mixed-technology"--partly indigenous, partly foreign. The use of portable lodges made of buffalo hides and poles (teepees), and scaffolds for drying meat, and the making of pemmican were part of the heritage of the Plains Indians. Items of European derivation were such things as guns and ammunition, steel knives and axes, kettles, riding saddles, harnesses, spyglasses (one was usually owned by the leader of the hunt), and the two-wheeled cart (Ross, 1957: 244, 255).

The last item mentioned, the Red River cart, was then, as it is today, almost synonymous with the Red River Metis. The sign language of the Plains Cree depicted the Metis as wagon-men:

> ...forefingers of each hand circling each other (wagon-wheels), then the extended forefinger of the right hand drawn down the front of the body from the right side of the head (Howard, 1965: 41).

The carts were most practical and admirably suited for travelling on the plains. Except for strips of hide around the rims of the wheels, they were constructed entirely from wood, making repairs a relatively simple matter. They were difficult to overturn and could be easily dismantled in order to ford a river or a stream. When an expedition made camp, the carts were placed in a circle to keep in the horses and oxen. This circular arrangement also formed an effective barricade in case of an attack by

the Sioux (Howard, 1965: 54-55; W.L. Morton, 1961: 44; Stewart, 1960: 353-354).

The cart could carry a load of over 900 pounds and was considered to be

> worth four horses...as it would require five horses to carry as much on their backs as one will drag in each of those large carts (Henry, 1965: 211; see also Ross, 1957: 272).

The only draw-back of the carts, it would appear, was their "indescribable" noise since the wheels were not "greased because dust would coagulate and cement them to the axle" (Howard, 1965: 55). Horses and oxen were used on the hunts to pull the carts.

The most expensive single item on the hunt--fifteen times the price of a cart--was the buffalo runner. Buffalo runners were special horses which never pulled carts but were used almost exclusively for the chase. A good buffalo runner was fast and trained to run within a few yards of the intended victim. When the hunter fired, the horse would then fall away from the wounded buffalo so that it could not attack the hunter (Ross, 1957: 257, 259).

> They use trained horses, which are called buffalo runners that are not used at all until the hunt commences, when they are saddled and mounted for the chase. They are so well trained that the rider has no occasion to touch his bridle, and can give all his attention to loading and firing from the saddle (Morgan, 1959: 121).

(d) <u>Organization</u>: Every Red River Hunt could potentially end in disaster if either the buffalo herds were not found, or if it were attacked by the Sioux. Order and

co-operation, therefore, were essential, not only for the success of the hunt, but also for the safety of the expedition itself. With these objectives in mind (success and safety) the hunts were organized along para-military lines similar to those of the Plains Indians (See Lowie, 1963: 125-126; Lowie, 1967: 80-82).

Before the start of every hunt, at the great rendezvous just west of Pembina, the men held a council for the election of officers and the adoption of the rules and regulations of the hunt. This procedure was usually the same every year. Ten "captains" were appointed, one of these being the head captain or leader of the entire expedition. (Some well-known leaders of the hunt were Cuthbert Grant, Jean Baptiste Wilkie, Jean Baptiste Falcon, son of the Métis bard Pierre Falcon, and Gabriel Dumont.) Each captain had ten "soldiers" to assist him in the performance of his duties, which included enforcing the rules of the hunt and seeing that the camp was properly formed every night. In these matters the captains had the authority to use physical coercion, if necessary. Ten guides were also appointed and each of these took his turn in guiding the march for the day. The guide was assisted in this task by the "soldiers of the day", some of whom acted as scouts (Ross, 1957: 248-249).

The rules adopted for the summer hunt of 1840 were as follows:

1. No buffalo to be run on the Sabbath-day.

> 2. No party to fork off, lag behind, or go before, without permission.
> 3. No person or party to run buffalo before the general order.
> 4. Every captain with his men, in turn, to patrol the camp, and keep guard.
> 5. For the first trespass against these laws, the offender to have his saddle and bridle cut up.
> 6. For the second offence, the coat to be taken off the offender's back, and be cut up.
> 7. For the third offence, the offender to be flogged.
> 8. Any person convicted of theft, even to the value of a sinew, to be brought to the middle of the camp, and the crier to call out his or her name three times, adding the word 'Thief' at each time (Ross, 1957: 249-250).

Special circumstances might warrant an additional rule or two, as was the case in 1851 when there was danger of a Sioux attack (W.L. Morton, 1961: 41).

Most expeditions were accompanied by a Catholic priest who performed Mass on a portable altar, instructed the children in their catechism during the day, and joined the men in their discussions around the campfires at night. His influence, however, was not limited to religious affairs, for he also instilled among the people a "general feeling of confidence...and would act as umpire, if difficulties should occur, and do all in his power to promote harmony in the camp" (Belcourt, 1854: 101-102).

(e) A Buffalo Hunt: Every year around the middle of July, the Métis hunters and their families prepared themselves for the summer hunt. Supplies were arranged for and obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company shop at Fort Garry, and from private shopkeepers. These preliminary tasks

completed, the Métis from the different parishes set out for the rendezvous held on the Pembina River about a day's journey west of the point where that river joins the Red. At the meeting place a large camp was set up. While the people waited for the stragglers to arrive, they were busy at various tasks.

From the wooded area along the edge of the river they obtained

> Firewood, spare axles, lodge-poles, and materials for the construction of cart-bodies and lattice-work, whereupon to dry the meat. It became necessary to provide a full supply of all these articles, as...they were about to launch forth into an immense prairie, without a single tree to serve as a landmark to the voyagers (Belcourt, 1854: 102).

Young men hunted for wild fowl and children spent parts of the day fishing (Belcourt, 1854: 102).

Within a few days, after everyone had arrived, a council was held at which the officers of the hunt were appointed and the rules adopted. A decision was then made as to which general direction would afford the best chances of falling in with the buffalo herds. The following day the hunters broke camp.

When the expedition was on the move the carts travelled two or three abreast. Because of the large number of carts involved, and the fact that most of these had lodge poles of 15 to 18 feet in length attached to them, the caravans often stretched out for several miles (Belcourt, 1854: 102).

> The carts containing the women and children, and each decorated with some flag, or other conspicuous emblem, on a pole, so that the hunters might recognise their own from a distance, wound off in one continuous line, extending for miles, accompanied by the hunters on horseback (Kane, 1968: 53).

The caravan would sometimes rest in the early afternoon and then move on again. Around five or six in the evening, the brigade stopped for the day, and made camp. Barring complications, they would be off again early the following morning. In this manner, they would continue to move until they sighted the buffalo. On one occasion at least, they travelled for over two weeks before they saw any herds, but usually it took much less time (Ross, 1957: 250-255).

When the herds were found, the hunters prepared their buffalo runners for the chase. They tried to get within a few hundred yards of the buffalo before the signal to charge was given. The scene that followed gave the appearance of panic and mass confusion--buffaloes, horses and riders moving across the plain at top speed. Each hunter, after selecting his victim, rode to within a few yards of the fleeing animal, fired, marked his kill by dropping some small personal item such as a handkerchief, reloaded, and continued the chase. The horses were so well trained and the hunters were such excellent riders that all of this was accomplished without any break in their speed. The chase was usually short, lasting only between 15 minutes and an hour, and covering a distance

of about three to four miles. Three to four buffalo per man was not unusual for a run, although sometimes a hunter, if he was lucky, could kill as many as fourteen (Morgan, 1959: 124; Ross, 1957: 257; Belcourt, 1854: 104-105).

After the chase was over, the hunters began the work of skinning and cutting up the animals. They started with the last animal killed and worked their way backwards. A cart, brought to the scene by the hunter's son or some other member of the family, was used to carry the meat back to camp (Ross, 1957: 257-258; Belcourt, 1854: 106).

In the camp, the women cut the meat into thin strips and hung them on the scaffolds to dry in the sun or under a fire. After it had been dried, the meat destined to become pemmican was pounded into a flaky substance, and mixed with melted fat, poured into a bag of buffalo hide, and left to cool and take shape. These bags of pemmican were known as "taureaux" and weighed about 90 pounds, one half being meat, and the other half fat (Belcourt, 1854: 107).

The whole operation--the chase, drying the meat, and making pemmican--usually took three or four days. The expedition now moved on again in search of another, or maybe even the same, herd. This routine was followed until the carts were filled or until about the middle of August at which time the hunters returned to the Settlement.

The dangers of the hunt were many and might occur at

any time. During the chase, for example, guns occasionally misfired, riders were sometimes thrown from their horses or accidentally shot by another hunter. A man might be ambushed by a few Sioux warriors while he was skinning buffalo late in the evening, or if he was far away from the other hunters. Also, people were known to be killed by lightning during severe thunder storms (Ross, 1957: 257-259, 268).

(f) Some Factors Relating to the Minimum and Maximum Size of a Hunting Expedition: Although, as we have seen, the number of individuals participating in the Red River Hunts increased over the years, the size of any one particular expedition generally fell within a certain range. That is, there was a lower and an upper limit to the size of a hunt. Each of these threshholds was conditioned by different factors. On the one hand, the lower limit was conditioned by the requirements of defense. Each hunt had to have sufficient manpower in order to protect itself against attacks from the Sioux. If an expedition fell below the lower limit there was a strong possibility that it would be annihilated. On the other hand, the upper threshhold was conditioned by the need for mobility and the size of the sought-after buffalo herds. The larger Red River Hunts were cumbersome and found it difficult to move according to a planned schedule. Also, when smaller buffalo herds were encountered, many hunters could not

join in the chase for there was little point in sending 400 hunters after 200 buffalo.*

It will be recalled that the earliest hunting expeditions on record already numbered several hundred individuals. In his description of them, Monseigneur Provencher noted that the Métis travelled in bands in order to protect themselves against attack from the Indians (Sioux) (Giraud, 1945: 650; Nute, 1942: 364). The fact that the Métis hunters were in constant danger from the Sioux has also been noted by Ross (1957: 258) on the hunt of 1840, by Kane (1968: 54-55) on the hunt of 1846, and in W.L. Morton (1961: 41) concerning the hunt of 1851. Over forty years after the expeditions were first initiated, during the eighteen sixties, the Sioux were still considered a threat.

> While on this trip, they [the Métis] fell in with a large band of Sioux near Devil's Lake: it was supposed they could not have numbered less than 1,000 fighting men. This formidable body continued alongside them for several days and many were the interlocutions before a proper understanding could be come to. Suspicions and counter-suspicions being at length quieted, the peace concluded last winter at Fort Garry was confirmed and acted upon. It was stipulated, however, that there should be no sly approaches to each other's camps by night, and that if any infringed this rule, those molested were at liberty to shoot the culprits. On the day of parting the half-breeds made some presents to the Sioux chiefs, and so there will be good feeling at least for this year. The White Horse Plain hunters refused to make any peace last winter, fearing that it would on the

*Harold Hickerson (1965: 44) notes similar factors for the minimum and maximum size of the hunting bands of the SouthWestern Chippewa.

> part of the Sioux, be simply masked treachery. Consequently, the Sioux are at liberty to act with or against them, as they please (The Nor'Wester, Saturday, July 14, 1860).

> That fall [1860] the buffaloes had congregated in immense numbers south and west of the Turtle Mountains, about two or three days' drive from this place. The hunting party was very large, and consisted of men, women and children, with 800 carts and many hundred horses. As the hostile Sioux were abroad the party had to keep well together, while outriders were stationed at different points on the plain for the double purpose of watching the movements of the buffalo herds and to give notice if danger should appear, for, although the Sioux would not attack a very strong party, yet if a few hunters should chance to become separated in the chase they were liable to be cut off and destroyed (Hill, 1890: 539-540).

This long standing tradition of hostility between the Métis and the Sioux was caused by competition for the buffalo. On their hunts the Métis went into Sioux territory and,

> The Indians of the plain viewed the encroachment of the strange race on their hunting grounds, with feelings of jealousy and emnity. They [were] accordingly, continually on the alert; they attacked detached parties and stragglers; they also set fire to the prairies about the time the 'brulés' set out for the hunt, and by this means [drove] the game beyond their reach (McLean, 1932: 377).

It is, of course, difficult and perhaps not even advisable to assign a specific number to the lower limit of the size of a buffalo hunt. However, there appears to be some evidence to warrant the suggestion of an approximate number. In the summer of 1851, for example, there were two expeditions out on the "Buffalo Plains"--the Main-River party and the White Horse Plain party. The

former group, by far the largest, contained 1,300 persons, 318 of whom were hunters and about 1,100 carts. The latter group was made up of 67 hunters, an unrecorded number of women and children, plus 200 carts. Since it was known that the Sioux intended to attack the Métis, the two parties hunted together for the first few days. After this, they decided to split up. They were, however, to remain within twenty to thirty miles of each other. During the course of the summer, the smaller White Horse Plain party was attacked by several hundred Sioux warriors. These Métis were not certain that they could hold out against the Sioux, for as soon as the Indians were sighted, they sent for help from the Main-River party. As it turned out, the aid of the larger party was not required, for the White Horse Plain group successfully fought off the Sioux for two days. In the battle, the Métis lost only one man (W.L. Morton, 1961: 37-49). Under similar circumstances, a much smaller expedition would surely have suffered heavy losses. In all likelihood, they would not even have left the safety of the larger party to begin with.

Again in 1845, the fall hunt of the White Horse Plain party numbered 55 hunters and an undisclosed number of women and children, plus 213 carts. Antoine Belcourt who accompanied the hunt and described it does not make any mention of the Sioux. Either they were not in the area at the time, or a temporary truce was in effect. In any case, the Métis did not appear to be unduly concerned about the

fact that the expedition had only 55 hunters (Belcourt, 1854: 102,104).

To conclude then, the lower limit of the size of a hunting expedition was conditioned by the need for protection against the Sioux. Depending on local circumstances the lower limit probably ranged between 50 and 70 hunters. Some years, as in 1845, 55 hunters were considered to be adequate protection. In other years, as was the case in 1851, at least 67 hunters were necessary. Any expedition that had much fewer than 50 hunters would undoubtedly have been unsafe at all times.

The need for mobility was an important aspect of the Red River Hunts; the sooner the buffalo herds could be reached, the better. The large expedition of 1840, for example, travelled for 19 days or almost three weeks before they sighted any buffalo. The difficulties of co-ordinating the movements of such a large expedition were noted by Alexander Ross:

> Early in the morning of the 22nd, the flag was hoisted; but reports from various parts of the camp prayed delay. Horses had wandered, oxen could not be found: a hundred horsemen were out in search of the missing animals; some of them, during the night, had returned to Pembina, and before they got back, and all the strayed animals found, many were so exhausted with fatigue that it was judged proper not to resume the march that day. So the flag was hauled down, and strict orders issued for the next morning. In the then starving condition of the camp a day's delay was a serious consideration; but it was unavoidable (Ross, 1957: 254).

Smaller expeditions travelled faster than the larger

ones (W.L. Morton, 1961:41, note 18). Their greater mobility enabled them to reach the buffalo herds in less time, and hence, they had a distinct advantage over the larger expeditions.

Until 1845 the Métis hunters always formed one large expedition for both the summer and the fall hunts. By that time, however, the expeditions were becoming too large to be effective. They had reached their maximum size. After 1845, there were always two and sometimes three expeditions out on the "Buffalo Plains" each season. The formation of two hunting expeditions represented an adaptive response conditioned in part by the size of the buffalo herds and by the number of hunters involved in an expedition. It should be noted at this point that Frank G. Roe (1951: 409) and William L. Morton (1961: 40-41) have each attempted to explain why this division occurred. Roe suggests that it was caused by the fact that some men could not tolerate the restrictions of the larger expeditions; and Morton believes that it was the result of friction between the Métis of the White Horse Plain and those of St. Boniface and Pembina. Neither explanation is adequate.

The Red River Métis were what Watson and Watson (1969: 83-84) have called "advanced hunters"; that is, they specialized in the hunting of one herd animal, in this case, the buffalo. As such, their hunting methods were closely adjusted to the habits of that particular animal. The

size of the buffalo herds that were most frequently encountered, was of crucial importance to the hunters. It is a well known fact that large buffalo herds were not unusual. Indeed, references to the occurrence of extremely large herds, numbering up to and over ten thousand animals, are legion (See, for example, Roe, 1951: 334-366). Less spectacular, although of significance, is the fact that throughout the period under consideration, herds of much smaller size were always numerous and may in fact have been a more typical condition (Roe, 1951: 407). The following excerpt from the Rev. John McDougall's narrative, although a description of a larger herd, indicates nonetheless that these huge aggregations were the exception rather than the rule:

> During the afternoon I had a revelation given me as to the number and nomadic character of the buffalo. I had by this time spent three years in the buffalo country, and I thought I knew something about them....But that afternoon,...I saw more buffalo than I had ever dreamed of before. The woods and plains were full of them. During the afternoon we came to a large round plain, perhaps ten miles across, and as I sat on my horse on the summit of a knoll overlooking this plain, it did not seem possible to pack another buffalo into the space. The whole prairie was one dense mass, and as...I rode around this large herd I could not but feel that my ideas concerning buffalo and the capability of this country to sustain them were very much enlarged. I had in the three years seen hundreds of thousands of buffalo, and had travelled thousands of miles over new trails, but I had seen only a small number of the great herds...(McDougall, 1898: 94-95; emphasis mine).

> Often the early travellers reported days without seeing buffalo, or only scattered bunches or occasional individuals, from which to draw their meat supply (Bailey, 1926: 21; emphasis mine).

When the Métis hunting expeditions encountered these smaller herds, and especially if the expedition was a large one, it was of course impossible for all the hunters to join in the chase.

> During a summer expedition, the average number of general races--that is, the whole hunters to run at once--may be about ten or twelve; but there are <u>many</u> small or sectional races. When the buffalo are in small bands, only <u>a few</u> horses run in turn...(Ross, 1957: 263; emphasis mine).

Paul Kane (1968: 56-57) notes that the expedition that he accompanied in 1846 encountered several small herds before finally sighting a larger one. Similarly, the Main-River party on the summer hunt of 1860 also ran across several smaller herds, numbering between 15 and 250 buffalo (The Nor'Wester, Tuesday, August 14, 1860).

During the early years of the Red River Hunt, adjusting to the size of the buffalo herds posed no serious difficulties for the hunters, as the expeditions were still quite small. As the size of the hunts increased, however, between 1840 and 1845 they reached a point of diminishing returns in proportion to the number of hunters. The hunt of 1840, the largest up to that date, contained some 400 hunters, and as Ross notes on several occasions during that summer, the hunters were actually handicapped and inefficient because of their large numbers. After 1840 as the size of the expeditions continued to increase, the number of hunters being unable to hunt, much if not most of the time, would also have risen proportionately. Such

large expeditions were not capable of exploiting the buffalo herds effectively. The decision to split up into two smaller divisions was undoubtedly taken in order to rectify this situation. Subsequent descriptions of hunts clearly indicate that the hunters were not together because they did not want to spoil each others chances of success.

> As the Red river hunters had not joined us, we judged it proper not longer to follow the mountain on that side, lest we should do them an injury by raising the buffalo before them on the route we expected them to take. On the other hand, we were aware that a certain number of half-breeds had gone to establish their winter quarters near the end of the Turtle mountain, and on the Moose river; consequently we could hope for no success if we followed their trail. It was decided at length that we should pursue a middle course (Belcourt, 1854: 102).

> A general council was held, not only for the usual election of officers, but also to discuss 'the route the two "camps" would have to follow to keep apart sufficiently from one another so as not to injure each other's hunt' (Father Albert Lacombe in W.L. Morton, 1961: 41).

Consequently, the hunt of 1840, with 400 hunters, must be close to the threshhold for the maximum size of a Red River Hunt.

Wintering on the Prairies

Every year a great many Métis families spent the months of September through April, out on the prairies of Western Canada and the northern portions of North Dakota and Montana. This entire region, which was for the most part uninhabitable during the winter, was, nonetheless, dotted with many hills or small "mountains", and inter-

spersed with deep river valleys. These select localities, in contrast to the open prairie, abounded in natural resources which provided food, fuel, shelter, and water, and it was here that the winter camps were established. Some of the better known wintering spots were located at the Pembina Hills, Turtle Mountain (both on the Manitoba-North Dakota border), Wood Mountain, the Touchwood Hills, Gross Butte (all in Saskatchewan), the Cypress Hills (on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border)(See Map 4), along the Tongue and Souris Rivers in North Dakota, the upper reaches of the Assiniboine River in Manitoba, the Qu'Appelle River Valley in Saskatchewan, the North Saskatchewan River around Battleford, certain spots along the South Saskatchewan River, and along the Belly River in southwestern Alberta (Giraud, 1945: 820-821; The Nor'Wester, August 28, 1860).

All of these places were heavily wooded with aspen, poplar, a few spruce fir, and a relatively thick undergrowth of brush. The hills and "mountains", some of which were quite large (Turtle Mountain, for example, reaches a height of four to six hundred feet above the prairie and is about forty miles long and twenty wide), contained numerous small streams and lakes. These "prairie oases", as they might be called, were the natural habitat of a variety of game animals such as deer, elk, antelope, bears and rabbits, and fur animals such as beaver, muskrat, otter, mink, and lynx. In addition, during the winter,

buffalo in search of food and protection from the cold winds on the open prairie, moved into these sheltered areas in great numbers (Giraud, 1945: 820; Hesketh, 1923: 88; Roe, 1951: 191-196).

Some groups of families established their winter quarters early in September, shortly after they had returned from the summer hunt, while others did so only after the fall hunt had been completed in late October or November (Belcourt, 1854: 102; The Nor'Wester, August 28, 1860). A winter camp usually consisted of about thirty to forty families, although some camps were known to have been much larger and contained as many as 200 families (Giraud, 1945: 818, 821; Nute, 1942: 204). At first the people lived in teepees, but as the winter progressed, each family normally built a small, temporary, one-room log cabin (Giraud, 1945: 821; Cowie, 1913: 350). Sometimes, Métis camps were adjacent to similar gatherings of Saulteaux, Plains Cree, or Assiniboine Indians, who also wintered in these areas. In February of 1850, along the Manitoba-North Dakota border, there were several such camps all within a relatively short distance of each other. One Métis camp of about thirty cabins, was located at the foot of Turtle Mountain; another group of about fifteen to twenty families was located deep in the interior of the "mountain" alongside a group of Saulteaux. On the Souris River, slightly to the west, there were as many as four hundred Métis and some Assiniboine, while to the east and

closer to Pembina, a large group of Métis and Indians (probably Saulteaux) were camped on the Tongue River (Giraud, 1945: 818).

Throughout their winter sojourn, all concerned engaged in a variety of activities: hunting game animals, especially buffalo; fishing; trapping; and, preparing provisions (meat, marrow fat), furs and buffalo robes. Families often had a large supply of freshly frozen meat and, in order to keep it out of the reach of their dogs, they stacked it up on high, wooden scaffolds beside their cabins (Giraud, 1945: 821; Cowie, 1913: 350).

Although some of the camps were undoubtedly isolated from the Red River Settlement because of the great distance involved, this was not necessarily the case for all of them. From time to time, some of the winterers received visits from their parish priests, and most of them were sought out by traders, either from the Settlements or from a nearby trading post. On occasion, a trader, well supplied with trade goods, even set up a small trade store in the camp itself, and spent the winter there. These merchants, some of whom were Métis or Métis Anglaise, were usually under contract to the Hudson's Bay Company. They had with them a variety of articles such as tea, ammunition, fine blue cloth capotes with brass buttons, fine cloth trousers, broad l'Assomption belts, fine coloured flannel shirts, black silk neckerchiefs, foxtail plumes, anointments of pomatum, scented hair oil, silver finger rings,

and gilt earrings, which they exchanged for furs and provisions (Cowie, 1913: 258).

The winter camps were also centres of social activity and merrymaking, as the following excerpt from Isaac Cowie's narrative illustrates:

> The winter quarters of the two Metis Counsellors [Amlin and Breland] of Assiniboine had been taken up on the west side of Last Mountain Lake. ...As befitted persons of their importance, as well as to accommodate their large retinue of relatives and followers and for trading purposes, their winter camp was large, their single-roomed dwellings being especially spacious.
>
> My former travelling companion, Henri Hibert dit Fabian, accompanied me once when we spent the night under Mr. Breland's hospitable roof....
>
> After a feast of the best of buffalo meat, as well as cakes, rice and raisins beautifully cooked by Madame Breland, followed by a flowing bowl of rum punch, Mr. Amlin and his following came to join in further festivities. Fiddles were tuned up, and Red River jig and Scotch reel were joyously joined in by the young men and maidens, who were soon followed by their elders. The mirthful dance was later on, as the ladies retired, followed by joyous song and thrilling story of celebrated adventures on the voyage, in the chase, and in the encounters of the Metis with the Sioux. Each admirer extolled the excellencies of his favourite racing and hunting horse, and the speed and endurance of sled-dogs and their drivers. On the relative merits of all these there at once arose loud and lively argument, to allay which a song was opportunely called for. To wet the whistle, every now and again Mr. Breland, whose twinkling eye and amused smile showed the fun he was having quietly out of the excitement of his guests, would judiciously dispense a little liquid refreshment (Cowie, 1913: 390-391).

After the long winter, during the months of April and May, the families made their way back to the Settlement. They returned with carts filled with provisions of buffalo meat, marrow fat, beaver tail, and furs which

brought a good price at the Company store (Stanley, 1963: 9). At St. Boniface Cathedral, they registered the births, deaths, and marriages which had taken place during the winter (Giraud, 1945: 823-824).

NOTES

[1]The information contained in this paragraph is taken from several sources. For the hunters from all three settlements hunting and travelling in a body, see MacLeod and Morton (1963: 109-110). The first mention of more than one division is in Belcourt (1854: 102). See also Roe (1951: 402, 409). For three divisions of the hunt, see Kane (1968: 51) and the Nor'Wester (Tuesday, August 14, 1860 and Tuesday, August 28, 1860). For the rendezvous at Pembina see Belcourt (1854: 102), W.L. Morton (1961: 39-41) and MacLeod and Morton (1963: 110). For the names of the two divisions and their respective sizes, see the Nor'Wester (Thursday, June 14, Tuesday, August 14, and Tuesday, August 28, 1860) and W.L. Morton (1961: 39-40; 1967: 79).

CHAPTER FOUR

BUFFALO HUNTING VS. AGRICULTURE IN THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT

In the following pages I shall attempt to demonstrate that the Métis buffalo hunters played an indispensable role in the history of the Red River Settlement and the fur trade. The importance of buffalo hunting and the fact that it was an adaptive strategy on the part of the Métis has not been fully appreciated in the past. Most works dealing with the history of Western Canada and the fur trade depict the behaviour of the Métis as irrational, incomprehensible, and non-adaptive. George F. Stanley, for example, states that:

> ...the French half-breeds were indolent, thoughtless and improvident, unrestrained in their desires, restless, clannish and vain. Life held no thought of the morrow. To become the envied possessor of a new suit, rifle, or horse, they would readily deprive themselves and their families of the necessities of life (Stanley, 1960: 8).

Similarly, Alvin C. Glueck (1965: 15) characterizes the Métis as:

> An improvident people, most of them quickly spent their gains from the buffalo hunts and lived out the winter in uncertainty (See also, Ross, 1957: 253-4, 261; W.L. Morton, 1967: 66; W.L. Morton, 1969: 2).

Over the years the stereotype of the lazy, thoughtless, and improvident Métis has become so ingrained that glaring contradictions have found their way into the literature.

> There, with pemmican packed away and with fresh meat from the last hunt, these people enjoyed a round of social activities and waited for another

> season in the out-of-doors. They were an improvident people for the most part, but like their Indian kinsmen, they were devoted to their way of life (Murray, 1967: 23; emphasis mine).

Particularly incomprehensible to many writers was the fact that the Métis continued to hunt buffalo in a land that was considered by some to be an agricultural paradise.

> These were the men who owned the rich portions of Manitoba, the Portage plains, and the banks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers; but what cared they for rich homesteads so long as buffalo could be found within five or six hundred miles? (McDougall, 1896: 141-2).

> The English-speaking settlers on the west bank of the Red from the upper Fort to a few miles below the Lower Fort were mostly bona fide farmers, but the French and French halfbreeds who occupied the north bank of the Assiniboine and both banks of the Red above the forks,...were legacies from the fur-traders' empire and clung to the past. They loved their semi-nomadic life, and they would not be weaned away from it without bloodshed as long as the buffalo roamed the plains... (MacEwan, 1952: 46-47).

> With few exceptions the French half-breeds were neither extensive nor successful farmers. Brought up in the open prairies they preferred the excitement of the chase to the monotony of cultivating the soil (Stanley, 1960: 8).

> Descendants of French voyageurs and Indian women, they [the Métis] disliked steady agricultural labour even after they had ceased to roam and had settled in the colony. 'Divide while anything remains, and beg when all is done' was said to be their way of life, and their efforts at husbandry had always been feckless and destructive of the soil...(Rich, 1959: v.2, 515).

With respect to the non-adaptive nature of the activities of the Red River Métis, it has been said over and over again, for more than a hundred years now, that the Métis hindered the development of agriculture in the

Settlement.

> [A]lthough the Selkirk colonists achieved enough stability in farming to challenge the interests of the non-farm groups, the fur traders and the métis were able to discourage the widespread expansion of agricultural settlement (Murray, 1967: 29).

More specifically, the Métis, because they were out hunting buffalo at seeding and harvest time, denied the agriculturalists their labour, which was necessary for agriculture to prosper.

> After the expedition starts, there is not a man-servant or maid-servant to be found in the colony. At any season but seed time and harvest time, the settlement is literally swarming with idlers; but at these urgent periods, money cannot procure them. This alone is most injurious to the agricultural class...(Ross, 1957: 243-244).

> Pembina is deserted for the annual hunt, just when the labour of the population in the fields would be most effective...(John Palliser <u>in</u> Roe, 1951: 399).

> A further important factor accentuating this tendency [the lack of agricultural progress] was the scarcity of farm labour in Red River. As long as the Metis could make a precarious living by the hunt... they would not turn to the drudgery of the farm (W.L. Morton, 1949: 320).

In short, according to the views of Anglo-Saxon explorers, missionaries, residents of the Old Northwest, and eminent historians of Western Canada, the Métis were indolent, thoughtless, improvident, unrestrained in their desires, restless, clannish, vain and irresponsible. They despised agriculture and their efforts at farming were always destructive of the soil. Their love of open spaces and the freedom of the hunt prevented them from

becoming sensible and steady farmers. In addition, their irrational preference for the chase was in part responsible for the slow development of agriculture in the Red River Settlement.

Before one can adequately comment on the validity or accuracy of this assessment, the nature of agriculture and animal husbandry in the Red River Settlement, as well as the perennial trophic requirements of the fur trade economy, must be taken into consideration.

The Nature of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in the Red River Settlement

(a) Background: Before 1800, the two major fur-trading concerns, the Hudson's Bay Company and the NorthWest Company, exploited separate areas of the fur country. The former conducted its operations primarily along the shores of Hudson Bay, and maintained comparatively few inland posts; while the latter did almost all of its trading in the interior. During the first decade of the 19th century, however, the rivalry for furs became acute and the English company suffered as a result. Consequently, the Governor and the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company came to the realization that if they were to remain competitive with the NorthWest Company, they had to make a concerted effort to expand their area of operations inland. If this goal was to be achieved, however, an economically feasible method of provisioning the personnel of the new posts had to be devised. The solution to this problem, it was hoped,

would be found by establishing an agricultural colony in the heart of the Old Northwest (A.S. Morton, 1930: 103-106). A Hudson's Bay Company letter, dated 1815, explained the plan:

> The servants of the Hudson's Bay Company employed in the fur trade, have hitherto been fed with provisions exported from England. Of late years this expense has been so enormous, that it has become very desirable to try the practicability of raising provisions within the territory itself; notwithstanding the unfavourable soil and climate of the settlements immediately adjacent to Hudson's Bay, there is a great deal of fertile lands in the interior of the country, where the climate is very good and well fitted for the cultivation of grain.
>
> It did not appear probable that agriculture would be carried on with sufficient care and attention by servants in the immediate employment of the company, but by establishing independent settlers, and giving them freehold tenures of land, the company expected to obtain a certain supply of provisions at a moderate price. The company also entertained expectations of considerable eventual benefit, from the improvement of their landed property by means of agricultural settlements.
>
> With these views the company were induced, in the year 1811, to dispose of a large tract of their lands to the Earl of Selkirk, in whose hands they trusted that the experiment would be prosecuted with due attention, as the grant was made subject to adequate conditions of settlement (Hudson's Bay Company statement in A.S. Morton, 1930: 105-106).

Quite clearly, then, the founding of the Red River Settlement was basic to the expansionist plans of the Hudson's Bay Company. From the above letter, it is obvious that the demands placed on the colonists were considerable. They had to produce provisions not only for themselves, but also for the personnel of the Hudson's Bay Company. In their efforts to meet these demands, the colonists often fell far short of their goal. The harsh environment coupled

with a relatively simple technological inventory placed severe limitations on agricultural productivity.

(b) Environmental Factors: Throughout the history of the Red River Settlement, agricultural productivity was consistently hampered by a variety of natural hazards, such as frosts, droughts, floods, excessive dampness, mice, blackbirds, wild pigeons, locusts and mites. Serious and prolonged droughts occurred in the late eighteen thirties, throughout the forties, and again in the sixties. Locusts caused extensive damage during the years 1818 to 1822, and 1864 to 1867. Their depredations were less severe on a number of other occasions, as in 1848 and 1857. Total or partial crop failure due to frosts is recorded at least once in every decade between 1810 and 1870. Serious floods occurred in 1826, 1852, and 1861. Every year, a portion of the crop was lost to large numbers of blackbirds, wild pigeons and mice. The damage caused by mice was exceptionally great in 1825. (For reference to specific events and dates, see Appendix at end of the chapter. For reference to yearly attacks of birds, see Ross, 1957: 24)

In any given year, there was a strong possibility that one or several of these elements or pests would strike. They might effect the entire Settlement or only certain parts of it in a completely unpredictable manner. To compound matters, the interplay between some of the elements often worked to the detriment of the agriculturalists. A

flood in the spring delayed seeding time, thereby increasing the possibility that the harvest would be damaged by frost in the fall. Similarly, drought or excessive dampness lengthened the maturation process, again subjecting the crops to the danger of a fall frost. Locusts presented a double threat: after devastating the fields in the late summer or autumn, they laid their eggs in the ground and the following spring their larvae ate the freshly sown crops.

(c) Technological Factors: In addition to the setbacks brought about by unfavourable environmental conditions, the productive capacity of the colonists was also handicapped by their unsophisticated, or simple, agricultural technology. Operations such as seeding, reaping, and threshing, were carried out by archaic and time-consuming methods. Seed was broadcast by hand; sicles and cradle scythes were used for reaping; threshing was done by hand flails and the trampling of animals. Before 1824, no ploughs were in the Settlement, and only spades and hoes were used to prepare the fields. After this date, wooden ploughs with iron points and wooden mould boards, and some with iron mould boards, were introduced. These, however, were not very efficient in the thick and heavy soils of Red River (Murray, 1967: 38-40; W.L. Morton, 1949: 319; MacEwan, 1952: 204-206).

Throughout most of the history of the Red River Settlement (1812-1870), the benefits of mechanized agricultural machinery, which was to revolutionize farming in the West,

were not available to the colonists. Mechanical reapers and threshers reached Red River in the 1850's, but these were few in number (2 reapers, 8 threshers). Steel ploughs with polished steel mould boards were not introduced until 1867, and mechanical seeders arrived later still. In 1856, there was only one steam-powered flour mill. There were also 18 wind mills and 9 water mills. These, however, were subject to the vagaries of nature; for example, the latter had to be shut down during the prolonged drought in the 1860's (Murray, 1967: 38-40; W.L. Morton, 1949: 319; MacEwan, 1952: 204-206).

Productivity was further offset by the lack of adequate facilities for preparation and storage. This contributed to significant losses, and affected meat and dairy products as well as cereal crops.

> Smut in the cereal grains was a problem then as it is today. But with no smut-mills in the colony and no means of chemical control, this plant disease spread alarmingly and flour was contaminated. Threshed on ice-floors, grain was often damp and badly stored; coupled with smut, this produced flour which, on the whole, increased the popularity of pemmican (MacEwan, 1952: 22).

> Some sort of attempt to give the settlers a market for their produce had been made when the Company began to buy their surplus flour, barley, butter and pease as well as the Indian corn which had earlier been sought. The quality of such produce was uneven, and the fur trade suffered (from rancid butter and dirty flour) that the colony might benefit. Simpson, anxious to buy the Company's requirements from the colony, tried to establish an alternative to the dirty 'ice-barn' farmers (who threshed their wheat and kept their meat alike on the insanitary ice-floor of their unsavoury barns) by buying the wheat in the ear and getting it milled according to the Company's

> specification. The remedy was not completely satisfactory, and the amount of farm produce could never be predicted from year to year (Rich, 1959: v.2, 508; see also A.S. Morton, 1938: 26; Giraud, 1945: 759fn).

Several varieties of soft wheat, such as White Russian and Club, were grown in the Settlement. Unfortunately, none of these strains was particularly well suited to the climate of Red River. The colonists were continually importing new strains (MacEwan, 1969: 33; W.L. Morton, 1949: 311-312). The flour which was produced from these wheats was also of dubious quality. Lewis Henry Morgan was only one of many travellers who complained about Red River bread:

> The wheat may be good, and they say it is, but we saw no good bread. The flour is dark and the bread heavy. They use a good deal of unleavened bread, but it is very hard (Morgan, 1959: 127).

When Red Fife Wheat was introduced to the Settlement, it quickly replaced the older varieties. It was a hard spring wheat

> ...which yielded well, usually matured before the fall frosts struck in the Manitoba lowlands, and gave a white smooth flour of exeptional baking strength (W.L. Morton, 1967: 182).

Red Fife, however, only reached the Settlement in 1876 (MacEwan, 1969: 32-33).

(d) Livestock: Besides horses, the colonists also raised some cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens. Although the problems encountered here were different than those of raising crops, the end result was, similarly, not entirely successful. The difficulty of importing significant

numbers of large hooved animals, such as cattle, sheep, and pigs, from England via Hudson Bay, or from Canada via Rainy Lake, need only be mentioned to be appreciated. Consequently, only a few animals reached the Settlement by these routes. Animals were brought in overland from the United States to the southeast, but the length of the journey and the harshness of the terrain and climate made high casualty rates unavoidable.

In the early 1820's, the first attempt to import large numbers of cattle met with failure. Two herds destined for Red River starved en route. Subsequent efforts, however, did succeed, and by 1825, there were several hundred head of cattle in the colony (A.S. Morton, 1938: 22). In 1833, a party from the Settlement purchased 1,475 sheep in Kentucky. The long and difficult journey back proved to be disastrous, for, only 251 sheep actually reached Red River. The rest had all perished on the way (Rich, 1959: v.2, 511).

Once in the Settlement, the animals faced further hardships. Sheep and cattle could not be wintered on the range. Wolves, wild dogs, and long and cold winters severely depleted their numbers. As a result, the animals had to be sheltered and fed over the winter months. This, surprisingly enough, led to further difficulties: wild hay which was the staple fodder for the winter was often in short supply, especially during the years of drought or when prairie fires had swept across the nearby plains

(W.L. Morton, 1956:xxxi-xxxii; W.L. Morton, 1967:86; Rich, 1959: v.2, 512).

By 1849, although the absolute numbers of sheep and cattle stood at 3,096 and 6,014 respectively, they did not constitute a secure economic base, since the population of the Settlement itself was, by that time, over 5,000. Indeed, cattle were still being imported in an effort to improve quality as well as quantity, and the numbers of sheep actually declined in subsequent years (Rich, 1959: v.2, 512-513; Hind, 1858: 12).

(e) Consequences: The carrying capacity of any food-producing economy is seriously limited to the extent that natural disasters are a frequent occurrence. Concurrently, the inability to adequately prepare and store produce for future use exacerbates this situation and further limits the carrying capacity of that particular economy (See Sahlins, 1958: 124). Inasmuch as both of these factors were present for the agriculturalists in Red River, it is, therefore, not surprising that one finds frequent references to food shortages and near-famine conditions. John Bunn, a resident of the Red River Settlement, in a letter to a friend in England notes that the community is "often on the verge of Starvation" (Bunn to William Bayley, August 10, 1857 in Bayley, 1969: 96; emphasis mine). W. Mactavish, Governor of Assiniboia, writing in 1861 said:

> From 1857 till last year food was positively scarce here and there was difficulty in scraping

> enough for the soldiers (Mactavish in Giraud, 1945: 787 fn#3).

It should be remembered that the farmers were expected to produce food, not only for themselves, but also for the Hudson's Bay Company. The comments of Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Company, are appropriate at this point:

> There is at present no sufficient quantity of grains for the use of the settlers. Whether from climate, soil, indolence of the people, we cannot rely on the settlers for our supplies (Simpson in a letter of 1857 in Giraud, 1945: 787 fn#1).

> The banks of the river are alluvial and produce very fair crops of wheat; but these crops are frequently destroyed by early frosts; there is no certainty of the crops. We have been under the necessity of importing grain within these last ten years from the United States and Canada, for the support of the establishment (Simpson in a report of 1857 in A.S. Morton, 1938: 28; emphasis mine).

Additional references to food shortages may be found in the Appendix.

Between 1812 and 1870, there were at least 30 reports of partial or complete crop failures (See Appendix). These crop failures, and the food shortages which inevitably followed, were largely determined by the combined effects of an inhospitable environment and an unsophisticated agricultural technology. Over the long run, the agriculturalists in the Settlement were, for the reasons outlined above, incapable of providing the colonists and the personnel of the Hudson's Bay Company with an adequate and reliable source of food.

The Contribution of the Red River Métis

(a) Plains Provisions: Throughout the period under consideration, the farmers' harvests were regularly supplemented by "plains provisions" in the form of pemmican, dried meat, frozen meat, buffalo tongues, and fat. Substantial amounts of these goods were produced by the Métis hunters on their annual summer expeditions. In 1823, for example, the returns of the summer hunt came to 45 tons (Merriman, 1926: 92), and over the years, as the size of the hunt increased, so did the volume of buffalo products. In 1840, the total was 500 tons (Ross, 1957: 272), and by 1860 it had reached 640 tons (The Nor'Wester, August 14 and August 28, 1860). In addition, the returns of the fall hunt generally came to about one third of the volume produced during the summer.

From the very beginning, the Red River Settlement was, to a considerable extent, dependant upon "plains provisions" for its existence. During the early years of difficulty, crop failures forced the colonists to spend several winters at Pembina which was closer to the buffalo herds. Here they enlisted the help of the Métis to hunt for meat (A.S. Morton, 1939: 546-556).

> When the colony was first established upon the Red River, these Free Canadians, as well as the Brules, or Half-breeds, were on good terms with the settlers.---...the latter were occasionally employed by the colonists in hunting for them, and collecting provisions (Anon, 1817: 18; see also Appendix for the year 1817).

> The shortage of crops greatly retards the progress of this colony; everyone is busy trying to find a living. Every autumn there is an emigration movement from the post of The Forks, or St. Boniface, to the Pembina River,...all the families going to the latter place to be nearer the buffaloes (Bishop Provencher to Bishop Panet, November 24, 1819 in Nute, 1942: 354).

After 1827, when the settlement had managed to gain a foothold and began to prosper somewhat, the colonists then remained at the Forks throughout the year. However, this did not mean that they no longer depended on buffalo products for a part of their subsistence, since these goods were now brought into the Settlement by the hunters. Even during years of successful harvests, "plains provisions" are regularly mentioned as being an important component of a "carefree" winter:

> The harvest has been good, and there is no lack of plain provisions; abundance of weddings are therefore the order of the day...(Thomas Simpson to James Hargrave, December 1, 1834 in Hargrave, 1938: 160).

> The crops are good, and plain provisions overwhelming. Plenty and gaiety are the order of the day...(Thomas Simpson to Hargrave, December 9, 1835 in Hargrave, 1938: 207).

> There is no want of Sufficient of the Means of Subsistence throughout the Settlement this Year, the Crop was abundant, and Meat from the Plains equally Plentiful two of Mr. Prudens Sons brought no less than the meat of twenty four fat Cows at one Trip about latter end of October (John Charles to Hargrave, December 2, 1843 in Hargrave, 1938: 454).

During those years when the crops did fail, either wholly or in part, and famine threatened the Settlement, it was of course the pemmican, dried meat, frozen meat, etc.,

which saved the colony from the possibility of starvation.

> The hunters have been coming in during the past few days, from their third and last trip of this season. This is what commonly is known as the 'green meat party'--those who go for fresh, in contradistinction from dried meat and pemmican. They have only been three weeks away, and have come in heavily laden with 'cows meat'. We are happy to hear of such abundance. Our grain crop is rather scimp this year and it is well that meat provisions are plentiful this year (The Nor' Wester, Friday, November 1, 1861; emphasis mine).

> The Dry Meat hunters are dropping in daily and we are happy to be able to state that in general they are well loaded. It is fortunate in a year such as this when there is a scarcity of Provisions in the settlement, that the hunters should have proved so successful. The buffalo were near and in great numbers, being driven in this direction it is said by the Sioux; and the 'green meat' hunters who are now starting out, expect to kill abundance for their wants. Without having to go any considerable distance (The Nor' Wester, Wednesday, November 9, 1864; emphasis mine).

(b) Population Pressure: Particularly during the years of famine, the Red River Métis enhanced the Settlement's chances for survival in yet another way: namely, by reducing the "population pressure" around the area of the Forks. Harner (1970: 68) defines population pressure as follows:

> Population pressure consists of the demand on subsistence resources resulting from both the density of population and its level of technology in relation to a specific environment. Thus, population pressure exists when subsistence resources are scarce, i.e., when the demand for subsistence resources exceeds the supply.

Every year, the summer hunt drew several hundred (and in later years well over a thousand) men, women, and children, along with large numbers of horses, oxen, and

dogs, out on to the plains for a period of about two to two and one half months. Smaller numbers were involved for shorter lengths of time on the fall hunts. While they were out on the plains, the hunters, their families, and livestock lived off the land and thereby reduced the demand on the food resources of the Settlement. This meant that more food was available for the use of the full-time agriculturalists who remained in the Settlement, thereby increasing their chances of survival.

Similarly, when severe food shortages occurred in the winter months, those Métis families who usually passed this season (winter) in the Settlement, adopted a similar strategy, that is, they simply left the Forks in large numbers and wintered out on the plains or prairie. In his history of Manitoba, W. L. Morton has suggested that at these critical times, the Métis buffalo hunters were helpless and would have starved had it not been for the kindness of certain people in the colony:

> But if the Sioux had been troublesome, or the buffalo distant and the hunt short, then before spring there was hunger in the cabins and sometimes the charity of the wealthier and the more prudent people of Red River had to come to the relief of the brave métis in his distress (W.L. Morton, 1967: 81; see also W.L. Morton, 1956: xxxiv).

Morton's statement is somewhat misleading since it implies that this was the condition of all the Métis who normally wintered in the Settlement. This is doubtful. At best, it applies only to a few families who for some reason or

other (perhaps, due to illness or a death in the family) were unable to leave the colony with the others. For the great majority of the Métis people, however, there was no need for charity since they were resourceful enough to provide for themselves. In November of 1836, Thomas Simpson, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, wrote:

> The Catholic population of the main river have lost much of their hay by fire; and several families--with a number of horses--have in consequence gone to winter at the 'Turtle Mountain' (Simpson to Hargrave, November 28, 1836 in Hargrave, 1938: 250).

In connection with this it should be pointed out that the crop of 1836 had been a complete failure and it is very likely that as the winter progressed still more Métis families left for Turtle Mountain. Marcel Giraud (1945: 819-820) notes:

> In the bad years, when food was scarce in Red River, the Métis proceeded in great number, if not completely, to the Prairie where they often found an abundance of food. Thus in 1853, as a consequence of the destruction caused by the flood of the previous year, the Métis of Red River had used up their provisions of fresh meat. Therefore, they sought provisions in the area of Turtle Mountain where an autumn prairie fire had driven considerable herds of buffalo.
>
> In these winter camps, one not only found the most humble and poorest Métis--those who obstinately refused to make the least concession to the sedentary life. The representatives of the more prosperous Métis--those who had distinguished themselves by the diligence of their enterprises or who had participated in the political life of the colony--were also well represented there, all yielding to the attraction of the bison hunt, as well as to actual need (Writer's translation).*

*"Dans les mauvaises années, lorsque les vivres manquaient à la Rivière Rouge, les métis se portaient en plus grand nombre, sinon en totalité, vers la Prairie qui leur (cont. on next page)

Here again, because the Métis families left the colony in large numbers, there was a reduction in the "population pressure". As a result, more food was available for those who remained and their chances of making it through the hard winter were considerably improved.

(c) The Fur Trade Economy: In addition to contributing to the needs of the agriculturalists in the Settlement, the Red River Métis also supplied the Hudson's Bay Company with buffalo products, especially pemmican. The Company, in turn, used these goods for the provisionment of its northern posts and York boat brigades. Although pemmican was not the only type of food used by the voyageurs who manned the brigades, it was, nonetheless, the major item on their diet.

When compared with other foods such as domestic meats (beef, pork, mutton) and agricultural produce, the use of

---

..... p. 72) réservait souvent une profusion de nourriture. C'est ainsi qu'en 1853, à la suite des ravages causes par l'inondation de l'année précédente, les métis de la Rivière Rouge, après avoir épuisé leurs provisions de viande fraîche, allèrent chercher leur subsistance dans le secteur de la Montagne à la Tortue ou l'incendie qui avait, à l'automne, détruit les pâturages de la Prairie avait refoulé d'importants troupeaux de bisons.

Dans ces hivernements, on ne trouvait pas seulement les métis les plus humbles et les plus pauvres, ceux qui refusaient obstinément de faire la moindre concession à la vie sédentaire. Les représentants de la bourgeoisie métisse, ceux qui se distinguaient par l'activité de leurs entreprises ou qui participaient à la vie politique de la colonie y figuraient aussi bien, obéissant à l'attrait de la chasse au bison plus qu'à de réelles nécessités."

pemmican afforded certain advantages. First, since it was produced locally, the Company avoided the high cost of importing large quantities of foodstuffs from England and Canada. The Red River Settlement, as noted earlier, was not a reliable source. In relation to its weight and bulk, moreover, pemmican was more nutritious than the other foods available. This meant that the more profitable cargoes of the canoes and York boats, such as furs and trade goods, could be increased without sacrificing the nutritional quality and quantity of the provisions. The major advantage in using pemmican, however, was that it was almost imperishable--it would keep for years without going bad. Because of its amazing preservative capacity, large amounts of this food were conveniently stored at various points along the river routes and at the northern posts, to be used as the need arose. Finally, pemmican was a type of instant food,--it did not require any preparation or cooking and was consequently ideal for the voyageurs (Merriman, 1926: 82).

Therefore, since pemmican was vital to the operation of the fur trade, the Company made annual purchases from the Métis (Innis, 1962: 301; Rich, 1959: v.2, 516). Alexander Ross (1957: 273) mentions that after the return of the summer hunt,

> ...the Hudson's Bay Company, <u>according to usual custom</u>, issued a notice that it would take a certain specified quantity of provisions, not from each fellow that had been at the plains, but from each old and recognised hunter (emphasis mine).

Ross (1957: 273) also notes that for the years 1839, 1840, and 1841, the Company had spent £5,000 for the purchase of buffalo products. In 1850, Eden Colvile, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, reported that the Company had purchased 400 bags of pemmican (90 lbs. each) and 200 bales of dried meat (90 lbs. each)--27 tons in all--at Fort Garry, and that in all probability additional amounts had been obtained at the Company's post at Pembina (Colvile, 1956: 33).

Conclusion

The commonly accepted viewpoint that the Métis were a lazy, improvident people who preferred buffalo hunting to agriculture because the former activity was exciting while the latter was dull, is not borne out by the evidence available. Equally inaccurate is the theory that their buffalo hunting was detrimental to the development of agriculture in the Red River Settlement.

The Métis produced pemmican, dried meat, and other buffalo products on a large scale. This involved a great deal of careful preparation and hard work. The following passage from the letter of Father Antoine Belcourt describes some of the work which went into the making of pemmican. His account begins after the chase, as the men are skinning and cutting up the buffalo:

> Cutting-up is a labor which brings the sweat from the hunter, but our people display a surprising rapidity and adroitness in performing it. Sometimes, in ten hours' time, as many buffalo have

> been killed and dissected by one man and his family. The profuse perspiration affects them very much, causing inordinate thirst, so that they take the precaution to supply themselves with a keg of water, which is transported on the cart that goes to the meat....
>
> The meat, when taken to the camp, is cut by the women into long strips about a quarter of an inch thick, which are hung upon the lattice-work, prepared for that purpose, to dry. This lattice-work is formed of small pieces of wood placed horizontally, transversely, and equi-distant from each other, not unlike an immense grid-iron, and is supported by wooden uprights (trepieds). In a few days the meat is thoroughly desiccated, when it is bent into proper lengths, and tied in bundles of sixty or seventy pounds weight. This is called dried meat (viande seche). Other portions which are destined to be made into pimikehigan, or pemican, are exposed to an ardent heat, and thus become brittle, and easily reducible to small particles by the use of a flail; the buffalo-hide answering the purpose of a threshing-floor. The fat, or tallow, being cut up and melted in large kettles of sheet-iron, is poured upon this pounded meat, and the whole mass is worked together with shovels, until it is well amalgamated, when it is pressed, while still warm, into bags made of the buffalo-skin, which are strongly sewed up, and the mixture gradually cools and becomes almost as hard as a rock (Belcourt, 1854: 106-107; emphasis in original).

Furthermore, in view of the frequent occurrences of partial or complete crop failures, it is obvious that the Red River Settlement was anything but the agricultural paradise that some have made it out to be. The primary causes for the slow development of agriculture were the unfavourable environmental conditions and the rudimentary technology of the farmers. These two factors severely limited agricultural productivity and made it impossible for the farmers to meet the trophic needs of the people of the Settlement and the Hudson's Bay Company. However, the

Métis hunters, who exploited the vast herds of buffalo, met this need with products such as pemmican, dried meat, frozen meat, buffalo tongues, and fat. And over the years, the continuing difficulties of the farmers served as a positive stimulus for the increase and persistence of the buffalo hunt.

It may well be that buffalo hunting was more exciting than farming. More importantly though, it was also essential for the survival of the people of the Red River Settlement and the success of the fur trade economy.

CHAPTER FOUR: APPENDIX

1812

Approximately 138 settlers arrived too late to plant crops (Murray, 1967: 30). The settlers wintered at Pembina.

1813

"In the spring the colonists...planted peas, barley, oats, hemp, Indian corn, and potatoes....The late planting, a dry June, bad seed, grubs, weeds, and a lack of implements caused all but their potato crop to fail, so these people returned to Pembina for the winter" (Murray, 1967: 30).

"Drought and grubs ruined the crops of 1813" (W.L. Morton, 1949: 306 fn#6).

"The first cereal crops all failed. Winter wheat planted in the spring did not come up at all, and what grains did come up were taken by the early frosts" (MacEwan, 1952: 17 -- year uncertain, but probably 1813).

1814

"The seeds sown in 1814 yielded a good harvest, but the arrival of [83 more settlers] made it impossible to feed the entire community and have enough seed for the following summer" (Murray, 1967: 30). The settlers wintered at Pembina.

1815

"The crop [of 1815] was even better than that of 1814, but still it was not sufficient to see the Selkirk colonists through the winter" (Murray, 1967: 30). The settlers wintered again at Pembina and 133 left for Kingston, Ontario.

1817

On the 10th of September, "we had such a severe frost that it entirely checked the growth of the Potatoes, and after keeping them together as much as possible, we measured 360 Bushels in all, so that your Lordship [Selkirk] sees that we can eat none of them, and I wish there may be sufficient for seed, tho' I think there will. Upon the 14th of September we had such high winds that more than a third of our wheat was blown off the stalk, but I believe we have a sufficiency of that article for seed but none to eat, so that we must entirely depend upon the plains for subsistence" (Selkirk papers in A.S. Morton, 1938: 20).

1817 (cont.)

"The colonists had secured a great quantity of food by their buffalo hunt and they were preparing for their spring work. Last year's [1817] harvest was very bad, but they do not appear discouraged" (Selkirk to Bishop Plessis, August 9, 1818, in Nute, 1942: 134).

1818

"On the 3rd of August,...clouds of grasshoppers descended on the fields and in a trice devoured nearly everything. The few grains of Wheat remaining barely sufficed to seed the garden-bed farms the following Spring." The grasshoppers laid their eggs in the ground (Shanley, 1908: 11).

1819

"When I left [June 22], the colony was overrun with little grasshoppers, lamentable progeny of those of last year, which are not only going to take the very bread out of our mouths this year, but even almost all of the seed. God be praised! We can still eat meat" (Letter of Sev. Dumoulin, to Mgr. J.O. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, July 27, 1819 in Nute, 1942: 246).

"On the 26th of July innumerable grasshoppers again covered the whole colony." The settlers again wintered at Pembina (Shanley, 1908: 13).

1820

"The river was frozen over, and the winter set in with severity. Many were harnessing and trying their dogs in sledges, with a view to trip to Pembina, a distance of about seventy miles, or to the Hunters' tents, on the plains, for buffaloe meat. The journey generally takes them a fortnight, or sometimes more, before they return to the settlement with provisions; and this rambling and uncertain mode of obtaining subsistence in their necessity, (the locusts having then destroyed their crops) has given the settlers a fondness for tripping, to the neglect of improving their dwellings and their farms" (West, 1966: 22-23).

Rich (1967: 250) notes that in 1820 there was an invasion of grasshoppers.

1821

"The grasshoppers are again doing a good deal of damage this year, especially at The Forks; most of the garden stuff has been eaten. Fortunately they are going away

1821 (cont.)

without laying eggs" (Letter of Sev. Dumoulin of St. Boniface to Bishop Plessis, August 16, 1821, in Nute, 1942: 326).

"[July 20th,]...But the locust, an insect very like the large grasshopper, is beginning to make sad ravages, by destroying the crops, as it has done for the last three years, at the Settlement. These insects multiply so rapidly, that they soon overspread the land, or rather the whole country; and had not a wise Providence limited their existence to a year, they would no doubt (if permitted to increase) soon destroy the whole vegetative produce of the world" (West, 1966: 62-63).

November. "The locusts which had begun the work of destruction at my leaving the Colony for York Factory, had completely destroyed the crops..."(West, 1966: 70).

1822

"In 1822 they faced famine;...the corn crop failed and the colonists were left at the end of harvest with little more than would serve for seed for the next year....Still the crops were so unproductive that the almost total failure of the buffalo hunt in 1822 left Simpson depressed by 'the most distressing scene of starvation that can well be conceived' " (Rich, 1959: v.2, 507).

1823

"In 1823 Upper Red River was over-run by fires, and once more very few buffalo were to be seen and the provision trade failed. Decline in the buffalo hunts was all the more important because the grain harvest was uncertain" (Rich, 1959: v.2, 507).

1825

"The harvest appears good; they are cutting the barley this month. The wheat is ripening well, but there is still a large quantity of rust this year in spots" (Letter of Bishop Provencher of St. Boniface to Bishop Plessis, August 8, 1825, in Nute, 1942: 434).

"In 1825, for some unaccountable reason, mice were especially numerous, and their attack upon the grain, both before and after it was stacked, cut the yield seriously" (MacEwan, 1952: 20).

Giraud (1945: 837) reports a crop failure for 1825.

1826

"In 1826 floods came" (MacEwan, 1952: 20).

"It froze keenly during last night, which together with the late constant heavy rains has given the death blow to the standing crops of barley and wheat" (Bishop Provencher, October 1, 1826 in Giraud, 1945: 640).

"Our colony is not living any too well this winter, for there was practically no harvest. Most of the people have been compelled to emigrate to fishing grounds, for the buffalo hunt has failed completely this winter, after having yielded fairly well during the summer. I hope no one will die of hunger. As for ourselves, we are fairly well supplied" (Letter of Bishop Provencher to Bishop Panet, January 31, 1827, in Nute, 1942: 445).

1827

Giraud (1945: 837) reports a crop failure for 1827.

1831

"Our Crops are almost our only care, this year, by the bye, we do not expect so good a one as last year, owing to the extraordinary dry summer we have had, but, thank God, we hope to have as much as we can eat" (Letter of Thos. Bunn, August 3, 1831 in Bayley, 1969: 61).

1832

"The crops have failed--and what little flour we may get will be of bad quality--I wish our Indent from home had been larger--" (Letter of Donald Ross to James Hargrave, December 30, 1832 in Hargrave, 1938: 102).

1836

"On the 7th of June we had a heavy fall of snow, and on the following day the ice was the thickness of a penny piece on the water; but still nothing serious happened to damp our hopes, till the 19th of August, when the severity of the frost blasted our fairest prospects, by destroying the crops" (Ross, 1957: 187-188).

"Drought was a serious handicap...in the decade of 1836-46" (W.L. Morton, 1967: 85).

"Then by some malicious turn of events, Red River was struck by disastrous crop failures in 1836 and 1837" (Glueck, 1965: 30).

1837

"In 1837, extreme dryness at the start of the summer harmed the germination of the seeds. Then the dampness of August and September accompanied by severe frosts devastated the fields of wheat and potatoes" (Giraud, 1945: 778).*

See also the statement by Glueck under 1836.

1838

"1836 and 1838 were bad years for drought" (W.L. Morton, 1949: 312).

1840

"The 1840's were years of drought" (W.L. Morton, 1949: 312).

"From 1840 to 1846 the summers were hot and dry, affecting sometimes the Mississippi States of the Prairie Provinces, changing the plants of the plains into a brown, desert-like expanse" (Giraud, 1945: 778).**

"Our summer here has been rather extraordinary. From the 1st of June to the 1st of this month we had hardly a shower of rain, the consequence has been that our Barley is almost burnt up, & of course will be short, the wheat pretty good; but what is very peculiar, seven miles above us & 7 miles below they have had comfortable Showers & of course good crops. But thanks to the 'Best' there is no fear of scarcity" (Letter of Thos. Bunn, August 6, 1840 in Bayley, 1969: 72).

1844

Giraud (1945: 836) reports a crop failure.

---

*"En 1837, l'extrême sécheresse du début de l'été nuisit à la germination des grains, puis l'humidité d'août et de septembre, accompagnée de gelées rigoreuses, dévasta les champs de blé et de pommes de terre."

**"En 1840, en 1846 surtout, le pays connût au contraire ces étés torrides et secs qui affectent parfois les Etats du Mississipi ou les Provinces de la Prairie et transforment les herbages des plaines en une étendue fauve et désertique."

1846

"Our winter was much as usual, rather severe, but our Summer has been stormy. Last month particularly, very frequent storms of Thunder & lightning. Our Crops will be very deficient, owing mostly to the Hessian fly [its larva are very destructive to wheat] " (Letter of Thos. Bunn, August 8, 1846 in Bayley, 1969: 79).

"Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, no. 269, Alexander Christie to H. Fisher, March 2, 1847, reporting the crop of 1846 to be a complete failure" (W.L. Morton, 1967: 513, Note 73).

1847

"There was some discontent in 1846 and 1847 with the quality of the wheat grown....Twenty-five bushels [of Black Sea wheat] were sent out from Canada in the spring of 1847, with twenty-five of another, unnamed variety. Frost on August 28 and 30 injured it, and it failed to mature." (W.L. Morton, 1956: xxviii).

Giraud (1945: 836) reports a crop failure for 1847.

1848

Some wheat seed from England failed to mature; however, two bushels of wheat seed from Canada did mature (W.L. Morton, 1956: xxviii).

"The heat and drought brought their usual devastations. In the Grenouillère sector, the grasshoppers destroyed the wheat fields, and the Company fearing that the harvest would not suffice to feed the population, had to draw upon its stocks at York Factory, as they had the previous year called upon the reserves at Fort William" (Giraud, 1945: 779).*

1850

Giraud (1945: 837) reports a crop failure for 1850.

1852

In the spring of 1852, there was a serious flood.

---

*"Mais la chaleur et la sécheresse exercèrent leurs dévastations habituelles: dans le secteur de la Grenouillère, les sauterelles détruisirent les champs de blé, et la Compagnie, craignant que la récolte ne couvrit pas les besoins de la population, dût prélever sur les stocks d'York Factory, comme elle avait, l'année précédente, fait appel aux réserves du Fort William."

1855

1855, 1856 and 1857 -- "In these years excessive dampness, the harshness of cold and ice, the abnormally high flood waters of spring seriously affected the harvests and the nourishment of the animals" (Giraud, 1945: 779).*

1857

"We are often on the verge of Starvation--high water and a late Spring all but deprived us of a prospect of a crop--and now that our prospects have exceeded our utmost expectations--we are in hourly dread of a visitation from a plague of Locusts which, having completed the destruction of Minnesota, are within 20 Miles of the Settlement--should they come our position will be far from enviable..." (Letter of John Bunn, August 10, 1857 in Bayley, 1969: 96).

Giraud (1945: 777) reports destruction of crops by grasshoppers for 1857.

"The banks of the river are alluvial and produce very fair crops of wheat; but these crops are frequently destroyed by early frosts; there is no certainty of the crops. We have been under the necessity of importing grain within these last ten years from the United States and Canada, for the support of the establishment" (Governor Simpson in A.S. Morton, 1938: 28; emphasis mine).

1859

"Wet falls delayed ripening and made the danger from fall frost serious, as in 1859..." (W.L. Morton, 1967: 85).

1860

"The 1860's were...years of drought, distress and sometimes of famine" (Stanley, 1963: 49).

1861

"In consequence of the flood which had taken place in spring...the crops in the autumn of 1861 may be said to have failed. Wheat...yielded a very poor return, while the barley and potato crops were perfect failures. The misery consequent thereupon was, however, much alleviated by the fortunate circumstance, that the Plain buffalo hunts, with the Lake fisheries, turned out well" (J.J. Hargrave in A.S. Morton, 1938: 37-38).

---

*"...en 1855, en 1856, en 1857, l'excès d'humidité, la rigeur du froid et des gelées, la hausse anormale de la crue de printemps affectèrent sérieusement les récoltes et nuisirent au bétail."

1862

"The spring of 1862 was a period of starvation....Daily, dozens of starving people besieged the office of the gentlemen in charge at Fort Garry, asking for food and later in the season for seed wheat" (J.J. Hargrave in A.S. Morton, 1938: 38).

"The harvest of 1862 was below the average. There had been serious damage from a hailstorm in the month of August. Fortunately, it was restricted to an area in the centre of the colony" (A.S. Morton, 1938: 38).

1863

" 'Dry, dry', wrote Samuel Taylor in 1863, 'the Weather was never seen, people say, so long without rain, it Thunders often and yet no rain...it gets very rain like sometimes but it clears off and there is no rain.' With the drought came declining crop yields, the closing of the grist mills, the virtual cessation of water transport, a slowing down of the economic tempo of the Settlement. All this was bad enough: but there were the grasshoppers as well" (Stanley, 1963: 49).

"In 1863 extreme drought seriously injured the harvest. While the wheat crop was somewhat above the average, all other types of crops, especially potatoes, came near to complete failure" (A.S. Morton, 1938: 38).

1864

"The next year, 1864, saw a severe drought, such as had not hitherto been known in the Settlement. It was not broken by rain before the middle of July. With the great heat came a swarm of grasshoppers which was disastrous to the growing crops" (A.S. Morton, 1938: 38).

1865

"The depredations of the grasshoppers continued in 1865, but were largely confined to the part of the Settlement occupied by the Scots 'who were probably better able to support the loss than any other portion of the community.' The crops in St. Paul's parish were destroyed" (A.S. Morton, 1938: 38).

1866

"In 1866 some parts of the Settlement experienced a failure oftheir crops 'chiefly...in consequence of grasshoppers, early frost, and blackbirds but, on the whole, the harvest was very good. The succession of poor, or at least only

1866 (cont.)

partially successful, harvests for a seriously long term of years had weighed heavily on the agricultural interest of the Settlement'..." (A.S. Morton, 1938: 38).

1867

"The harvest of 1867 was considerably injured by a vast cloud of grasshoppers which lighted upon the Settlement at the beginning of harvest. 'Almost all the oats and barley were entirely destroyed, the wheat greatly injured' " (A. S. Morton, 1938: 38).

1868

"This swarm [of grasshoppers in 1867] deposited its eggs in the ground, and in the spring the larvae completely destroyed the crop" (A.S. Morton, 1938: 38).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATURE OF METIS SOCIETY

Many writers have commented on the fact that Métis society was neither like the tribal societies of their Indian neighbours, nor like the state societies of the Europeans, but rather, that it was somewhere in between. Métis society is not unique in this respect, for a great many societies can be described in this manner. Typologically, most of these societies may be classified as peasant societies (Wolf, 1966). Until quite recently, however, there was no satisfactory category for these "middle range" societies which did not "fit" the peasant type. In 1959, Joseph B. Casagrande noted this difficulty:

> I shall use the term intermediate societies to refer to these multifarious types of societies that stand in this middle range between the relatively self-contained tribal group or "primitive isolate" on the one hand and the urbanized center, metropolitan community, nation, state, or civilization on the other and that, as sub-societies and subcultures, stand in a certain relationship, usually of dependency, to the encompassing societies and cultures....I think the term has some utility. Its meaning is comparatively neutral, without the troublesome freight of connotation of words such as "peasant" or "folk" which it subsumes; and it does not supplant any other well-established term (Casagrande, 1959: 2).

Under this scheme, peasant society is seen as only one of several kinds of intermediate societies. Casagrande, nonetheless, is not very specific as to what some of these other types of societies might be, or exactly how they all differ from each other. Even so, I believe his

views are a step in the right direction. I would propose only that the term, intermediate society, be replaced by that of "state-allied society" (or "state-allied societal type"). The label, intermediate society, carries with it the connotation that these societies are in a transitional period between, for example, tribal society and state society. This, of course, is not necessarily the case with peasant societies (Foster, 1967: 12), and it may also not be true for the yet unspecified "other" societies. The term, state-allied society, however, may be applied equally to all of "these multifarious types of societies". It accurately reflects the nature of these societies, and has the obvious advantage of being easily integrated into the useful, but incomplete, band, tribe, chiefdom, state typology.

Mary Helms, (1969a, 1969b) has proposed a category under which some of these state-allied societies, which do not fall under the peasant label, may be classified. She has termed this type of society the purchase society. In this concluding chapter, I hope to demonstrate that Métis society was a purchase society.

Peasants and Purchasers: Similarities and Differences

As state-allied societies, both the peasant society and the purchase society are similar in "outward appearances". The economic, political, and social aspects of life in these societies are characterized by the fact

that the society is linked to a state. Indigenous and foreign, or state-introduced elements are thoroughly interwoven. For example, subsistence activities are combined with a market economy, indigenous technology with foreign technology, local leaders with outside officials (priests, teachers), native religion with state religion, and illiteracy with literacy (See Dalton, 1967: 544).

In spite of these similarities, peasant society and purchase society are distinctly different types of societies. The distinction lies in the nature of their articulation with the state. Briefly, peasant society is in a subordinate position in its relations with the state. Above and beyond the subsistence requirements of his own household, the peasant must pay a "fund of rent" to the state. Payments may be in the form of labour, produce, or money, and go to support the state elite. The peasant cannot avoid this fund of rent for he is under the effective political and military rule of the state; to attempt to do so would bring reprisals from the state elite (Helms, 1969a: 71; 1969b: 328-329).

In contrast to this assymetrical relationship, the articulation between the purchase society and the state is essentially symmetrical. Purchasers interact with the representatives of the state as partners in trade, or as wage labourers. They are never subject to the payment of a fund of rent. Purchasers avoid this rent because they are located on the frontiers of the state. Although the

state may claim jurisdiction over this area, it is unable to enforce its rule effectively. Purchasers, as a consequence, have a certain degree of political autonomy which is absent among peasants (Helms, 1969a: 71; 1969b: 328-9).

Another important difference between peasants and purchasers may be seen in the nature of the goods that each produces for the state, and in the significance of these goods to the state itself. Peasant society is, of course, the proto-type of all state-allied societies; for the appearance of the state also heralded the appearance of the peasantry. The two are, so to speak, opposite sides of the same coin (Wolf, 1966: 11). Although peasants provide the state with labour and textiles, they are most importantly producers of agricultural products (trophic needs) for the state elite. As such, their production is vital to the very existence of the state. Purchasers, on the other hand, are generally involved in the production of luxury goods, such as furs, rubber, exotic foods, and other valuable, but not basic, products. Whatever type of goods they may provide for the state, it is important to note that these goods are not essential for the survival of the state. Also, purchasers are not necessarily agriculturalists; they may be hunters, gatherers, and fishermen.

According to Helms' (1969a, b) preliminary investigations, there are a number of ethnographically well-known societies which may be classified as purchasers. Her list includes the Mundurucu of Brazil and the Montagnais

of Northeastern Canada (Murphy and Steward, 1956), the Snowdrift Chipewyan of Northwestern Canada (VanStone, 1965), the Eskimo of Point Hope, Alaska (VanStone, 1962), the Miskito of Nicaragua and Honduras (Helms, 1969a), the Tenetehara of Brazil (Wagley and Galvao, 1949), the Chin of Burma (Lehman, 1963), and the Lamet of Laos (Izikowitz, 1951).

Métis Society as a Purchase Society

Métis society was a purchase society from the very beginning. This was not the case for the above-mentioned societies, who were "transformed" into purchasers from a former condition as bands or tribes. As an ethnic group, the Métis Nation evolved after indigenous tribal groups had been contacted by the state. The mixture of native and state-introduced elements, which is so characteristic of purchase societies and all state-allied societies, was very much in evidence among the Métis. Features of the tribal societies of the Plains Indians and the European State societies were thoroughly interwoven, and exhibited themselves in the economic, political, and social aspects of Métis society. The following briefly illustrates the extent of this mixture.

(a) Economics: The subsistence pursuits of the Métis people, which centered around buffalo hunting, collecting, fishing, and sporadic agriculture, were combined with activities geared towards a market economy. The latter

included the provision of goods and services for the fur trade. Furs were trapped and prepared, and buffalo products such as pemmican, dried meat, frozen meat, buffalo tongues, and fat were produced on a large scale. Wage labour was important for some men who worked as voyageurs, cart-men, guides, interpreters, and herdsmen, and still others acted as middlemen in the trading of furs between distant Indian groups and Fort Garry.

(b) Settlement Patterns: Métis settlement patterns included sedentary, semi-sedentary, and nomadic arrangements. Permanent communities with log cabins and small farm plots were located at St. Boniface, St. Vital, St. Norbert, St. François-Xavier, St. Joseph, Pembina and St. Laurent. Only a few families and the aged were completely sedentary, most were semi-sedentary. During the fall and winter they lived in the settlements, and during the summer they went out on the plains to hunt buffalo. Many other families were on the move throughout the whole year--summer hunt, fall hunt, and winter camps--and only came to the communities for short visits and to trade.

(c) Technology and Other Skills: Local skills and knowledge related to buffalo hunting, making pemmican, and wintering on the plains, were incorporated with items of European technology, such as the two-wheeled cart, guns and ammunition, and spy glasses. The buffalo hunting expeditions were accompanied by a Roman Catholic priest who performed Mass

on a portable altar. The rules of the hunt were largely of Indian origin. However, one of the rules prohibited the running of buffalo on Sundays.

(d) Politics: Métis leaders, such as Cuthbert Grant, Baptiste Wilkie, Baptiste Falcon, Gabriel Dumont, and Louis Riel, co-operated with members of the Roman Catholic clergy such as Fr. Dumoulin, Fr. Belcourt, Fr. Lacombe, and Bishops Provencher and Taché who played an active role in political matters.

(e) Language and Literacy: The Métis were multilingual: they spoke Cree, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine, as well as French. Due to poor educational facilities and a lack of teachers, only a few could read or write. However, they were concerned that their children learn these skills (Nute, 1942: 204).

(f) Articulation with the State: The Métis Nation was linked to the English State through the Hudson's Bay Company, which may be viewed as an extension of the English State. Relations between the Métis and the Company were based on commercial transactions; in return for their goods and services the Métis received money and English trade goods. Politically, however, the Métis remained independent of the state. They were not subject to the payment of taxes or any other kind of rent. The Company's jurisdiction in the Northwest related primarily to matters

of trade. For example, trade in furs between private individuals and competing American companies was prohibited. The Métis challenged this claim. They held that as natives of the country, the Company's laws did not apply to them.

> The half-breeds held a meeting last Thursday, at which the Rev. Belcour...presided. They are to petition the queen for freedom of trade, a governor independent of the Hudson's Bay Company and an elective legislature, and if these are not granted, or if they do not receive any relief from the Hudson's Bay government at home, I am certain it will end in a revolution (N. W. Kittson to H. H. Sibley, Pembina, March 2, 1846, in Giraud, 1945: 919 fn#1).

Although the Métis' attempts to legitimize their position failed, the Company was nonetheless unable to enforce its monopoly.

> If we put a Red River man on trial at Norway [House], we run a great risk of an out-break there, as throughout the summer, when the court must be held, the settlers are passing up and down to York in large bodies while we have barely a dozen men at the place, and our inland brigades are mostly Red River half-breeds (G. Simpson to A. Colvile, December 23, 1854 in Giraud, 1945: 911 fn#1).

> We cannot conceal that they [the Métis] are now so numerous that we exist in the country almost by their sufferance (Simpson to A. Colvile, April 1, 1854 in Giraud, 1945: 928 fn#2).

> The Company's rights are treated by the Americans and half-breeds as fictions of law which we cannot and dare not attempt to enforce, and in our present position this is correct (Simpson to H. H. Berens, July 18, 1856 in Giraud, 1945: 901 fn#8).

It will be recalled that the distinguishing characteristic of a purchase society lies in the nature of its

articulation with the state. Purchase societies are allied to the state through commercial ties of trade and wage labour. However, since these societies are located on the frontiers of the state, they effectively avoid the political and military controls of the state and maintain their political autonomy. This was the case with the Métis Nation and, therefore, they may be classified as a purchase society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anon.
1817 Statement respecting the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement upon the Red River in North America; its destruction in 1815 and 1816, and the massacre of Governor Semple and his party. London: John Murray (Coles facsimile edition, 1970).

Bailey, Vernon
1926 A biological survey of North Dakota. U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, North American Fauna, no. 49.

Barth, Fredrik
1969a Introduction. In Ethnic groups and boundaries. F. Barth, ed. Boston: Little, Brown. pp. 9-38.

1969b Pathan identity and its maintenance. In Ethnic groups and boundaries. F. Barth, ed. Boston: Little, Brown. pp. 117-134.

Bayley, Denis
1969 A Londoner in Rupert's Land; Thomas Bunn of the Hudson's Bay Company. Sussex, Eng. : Moore & Tillyer.

Belcourt, Antoine
1854 Letter of 1851. In Information respecting the history, condition and prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co. Part IV, pp. 101-110.

Card, B. Y., G. K. Hirabayaski and C. L. French
1963 The Metis in Alberta society. Edmonton: University of Alberta, Committee for Social Research.

Casagrande, Joseph B.
1959 Some observations on the study of intermediate societies. In Intermediate societies, social mobility and communications. Proceedings of the 1959 annual spring meeting of the American Ethnological Society. Seattle: American Ethnological Society. pp. 1-10.

Colvile, Eden
1956 London correspondence inward from Eden Colvile, 1849-1852. Edited by E. E. Rich, with an introduction by W. L. Morton. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society (Its publication, v. 19).

Cowie, Isaac
1913 The company of adventurers; a narrative of seven years in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874 on the great buffalo plains. Toronto: William Briggs.

Dalton, George
1967 Bibliographical essay. In Tribal and peasant economies; readings in economic anthropology. G. Dalton, ed. Garden City, N. Y. : Natural History Press. pp. 539-546.

Eidheim, Harald
1969 When ethnic identity is a social stigma. In Ethnic groups and boundaries. F. Barth, ed. Boston: Little, Brown. pp. 39-57.

Foster, George M.
1967 Introduction: What is a peasant? In Peasant society; a reader. J. M. Potter, May N. Diaz and George M. Foster, eds. Boston: Little, Brown. pp. 2-14.

Giraud, Marcel
1945 Le metis canadien; son role dans l'histoire des provinces de l'Ouest. Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie.

Glueck, Alvin C.
1965 Minnesota and the manifest destiny of the Canadian Northwest; a study in Canadian-American relations. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hargrave, James
1938 The Hargrave correspondence, 1821-1843. Edited with introduction by G. P. de T. Glazebrook. Toronto: Champlain Society (Its publication, v. 24).

Harner, Michael J.
1970 Population pressure and the social evolution of agriculturalists. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 26 (1): 67-86.

Harris, Marvin
1966 The cultural ecology of India's sacred cattle. Current Anthropology 7 (1): 51-66.

Helms, Mary W.
1969a Peasants & purchasers: preliminary thoughts on a differentiation of intermediate societies. In Peasants in the modern world. P. K. Bock, ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. pp. 69-74.

1969b The purchase society: adaptation to economic frontiers. Anthropological Quarterly 42 (4): 325-342.

Henry, Alexander
1965 The manuscript journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson. Edited by Elliott Coues. Minneapolis: Ross & Haines. Originally published 1897. 2 vol.

Hesketh, John
1923 History of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa. North Dakota State Historical Society Collections 5: 85-124.

Hickerson, Harold
1965 The Virginia deer and intertribal buffer zones in the Upper Mississippi Valley. In Man, culture and animals. A. Leeds and A. P. Vayda, eds. Washington: American Association for the Advancement of Science. Publication no. 78, pp. 43-65.

Hill, Robert B.
1890 Manitoba: history of its early settlement, development and resources. Toronto: William Briggs.

Hind, Youle A.
1858 Red River Settlement and the half-breed buffalo hunters. Canadian Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review 3: 9-17.

1969 Narrative of the Canadian Red River exploring expedition of 1857 and of the Assinniboine and Saskatchewan exploring expedition of 1858. New York: Greenwood Press. Originally published 1860. 2 vol.

Howard, James H.
1961 The identity and demography of the Plains-Ojibwa. Plains Anthropologist 6 (13): 171-178.

Howard, Joseph Kinsey
1965 Strange empire. Toronto: Swan Pub. Co.

Innis, Harold A.
1962 The fur trade in Canada; an introduction to Canadian economic history. Rev. ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Originally published 1930, revised 1956.

Izikowitz, Karl G.
1951 Lamet: hill peasants in French Indochina. Ethnologiska Studier, no. 17. Göteborg, Sweden.

Kane, Paul
1968 Wanderings of an artist among the Indians of North America, from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's territory and back again. Edmonton: Hurtig. Originally published 1859.

Keating, William
1825 Narrative of an expedition to the source of St. Peter's River. London: Cox & Bayliss.

Leach, Edmund
1964 Comments. In On ethnic unit classification, by R. Naroll. Current Anthropology 5 (4): 299.

Legasse, Jean H. and Associates
1959 The people of Indian ancestry of Manitoba. Winnipeg: Department of Agriculture and Immigration, Province of Manitoba.

Lehman, Frederick K.
1963 The structure of Chin society. Urbana: University of Illinois Press (Illinois studies in anthropology, no. 3).

Lent, D. Geneva
1963 West of the mountains; James Sinclair and the Hudson's Bay Company. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Lowie, Robert H.
1963 Indians of the Plains. Garden City, N.Y. : Natural History Press. Originally Published 1954.

1967 Some aspects of political organization among the American aborigines. In Comparative political systems. R. Cohen and J. Middleton, eds. Garden City, N.Y. : Natural History Press. pp. 63-87.

McDougall, John
1896 Saddle, sled and snowshoe: pioneering on the Saskatchewan in the sixties. Toronto: William Briggs.

1898 Pathfinding on the plain and prairie. Toronto: William Briggs.

MacEwan, John Walter Grant
1952 Between the Red and the Rockies. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

1969 Harvest of bread. Saskatoon: Western Producer (Prairie Books).

McLean, John
1932 John McLean's notes of a twenty-five years' service in the Hudson's Bay Territory. Toronto: Champlain Society (Its publication, v. 19).

MacLeod, Margaret Arnett
1959 Songs of old Manitoba; with airs, French and English words, and introductions. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

MacLeod, Margaret A. and William L. Morton
1963 Cuthbert Grant of Grantown. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Merriman, R. O.
1926 The bison and the fur trade. Queen's Quarterly 34: 78-96.

Milton, Viscount and W. B. Cheadle
1970 The North-west passage by land. Being the narrative of an expedition from the Atlantic to the Pacific, undertaken with the view of exploring a route across the continent to British Columbia through British territory, by one of the northern passes in the Rocky Mountains. 6th ed. London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin. Originally published 1865. (Coles facsimile edition).

Morgan, Lewis Henry
1959 The Indian journals, 1859-62. Edited with an introduction by Leslie A. White. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Morton, Arthur Silver
1930 The place of the Red River Settlement in the plans of the Hudson's Bay Co., 1812-1825. Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association 1929: 103-109.

1938 History of prairie settlement. Toronto: Macmillan (Canadian frontiers of settlement, v. 2).

1939 A history of the Canadian West to 1870-71; being a history of Rupert's Land (The Hudson's Bay Company's territory) and of the North-West Territory (including the Pacific slope). London: Thomas Nelson & Sons.

Morton, William L.
1949 Agriculture in the Red River colony. Canadian Historical Review 30: 305-321.

1956 Introduction. In London correspondence inward from Eden Colvile, 1849-1852, by Eden Colvile. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society. pp. xiii-cxv.

1961 The battle at the Grand Coteau, July 13 and 14, 1851. Papers of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 3d series, no. 16; 37-49.

1967 Manitoba: a history. 2d ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Originally published 1957.

1969 A century of plain and parkland. Alberta Historical Review 17 (2): 1-10.

Murdock, George P.
1953 The processing of anthropological materials. In Anthropology today. A.L. Kroeber, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 476-487.

1964 Comments. In Ethnic unit classification, by R. Naroll. Current Anthropology 5 (4): 301-302.

Murphy, Robert and Julian Steward
1956 Tappers and trappers: parallel process in acculturation. Economic Development and Cultural Change 4: 335-355.

Murray, Stanley Norman
1967 The valley comes of age; a history of agriculture in the Valley of the Red River of the North, 1812-1920. Fargo, N. Dak. : North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies.

Naroll, Raoul
1964 On ethnic unit classification. Current Anthropology 5 (4): 283-312.

The Nor'Wester
1860 Saturday, July 14.
1860 Tuesday, August 14.
1860 Tuesday, August 28.
1861 Friday, November 1.
1864 Wednesday, November 9.

Nute, Grace Lee (ed.)
1942 Documents relating to Northwest missions, 1815-1827. St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society.

Palliser, John
1968 The papers of the Palliser expedition, 1857-1860. Edited with an introduction by Irene M. Spry. Toronto: Champlain Society (Its publication, v. 44).

Rappaport, Roy A.
1967 Pigs for the ancestors: ritual in the ecology of a New Guinea people. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rich, E. E.
1959 The history of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society (Its publication, v. 22). 2 vol.

1967 The fur trade and the Northwest to 1857. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Robinson, Elwyn B.
1966 History of North Dakota. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Roe, Frank Gilbert
1951 The North American buffalo; a critical study of the species in its wild state. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ross, Alexander
1957 The Red River Settlement: its rise, progress, and present state. Minneapolis: Ross & Haines. Originally published 1856.

Ryerson, Stanley B.
1968 Unequal Union. New York: International Publishers.

Sahlins, Marshall David
1958 Social stratification in Polynesia. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Sahlins, Marshall D. and Elman R. Service (eds.)
1960 Evolution and culture. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Service, Elman R.
1962 Primitive social organization; an evolutionary perspective. New York: Random House.

Shanley, Rev. J.
1908 The founding of the Catholic Church in North Dakota. North Dakota State Historical Society Collections 2 (Appendix to Part I): 22.

Slobodin, Richard
1966 The Metis of the Mackenzie District. Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, St. Paul University.

Southesk, Sir James Carnegie, Bart., 9th Earl of
1969 [1875] Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains; a diary and narrative of travel, sport, and adventure, during a journey through the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, in 1859 and 1860. Edmonton: Hurtig. Originally published 1875.

Stanley, George Francis Gilman
1960 The birth of western Canada; a history of the Riel rebellions. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Originally published 1936.

1963 Louis Riel. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Stewart, Omer C.
1960 Cart-using Indians of the American Plains. In Men and cultures. Selected papers of the 5th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. Philadelphia. pp. 351-355.

Valentine, V. F.
1954 Some problems of the Metis of northern Saskatchewan. Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science 20: 89-95.

VanStone, James W.
1962 Point Hope, an Eskimo village in transition. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

1965 The changing culture of the Snowdrift Chipewyan. National Museum of Canada. Bulletin, no. 209.

Vayda, Andrew P. and Roy A. Rappaport
1968 Ecology, cultural and non-cultural. In Introduction to cultural anthropology. James A. Clifton, ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. pp. 477-497.

Wagley, Charles and Eduardo Galvao
1949 The Tenetehara of Brazil; a culture in transition. New York: Columbia University Press.

Watson, Richard A. and Patty Jo Watson
1969 Man and nature; an anthropological essay in human ecology. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

West, John
1966 The substance of a journal during a residence at the Red River Colony. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp. Originally published 1824.

White, Leslie A.
1949 The science of culture; a study of man and civilization. New York: Grove Press.

Wolf, Eric R.
1966 Peasants. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall.