# THE GENESIS AND ANATOMY OF GOVERNMENT POLICY AND INDIAN RESERVE AGRICULTURE ON FOUR AGENCIES IN TREATY FOUR, 1874 - 1897

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study of government policy and agriculture on four agencies in Treaty Four, 1874-97, challenges the widely-accepted belief that reserve farming failed despite concerted efforts of government to train, equip and assist because Indians were culturally resistant to becoming farmers. Although farming did not become the basis of a stable economy on reserves, an initial positive response to agriculture on the part of many reserve residents was evident in the years 1874-1897. The Indians of this period consistently displayed greater determination to see farming succeed than did government administrators. Government policy, combined with the same environmental and economic adversities that plagued all farmers, contributed to the decline or blunting of the initial positive response.

Victorian Canadians believed that the future of the Indians lay with farming although they perceived Indian society to be the antithesis of an agricultural way of life. The plains Indians, who throughout their history showed an ability to adapt and change, were well aware of the advantages farming offered and by the late nineteenth century were anxious to explore this option . The Canadian government however showed little determination to ensure that agriculture prospered on the reserves. In the years

from the Qu'Appelle treaty of 1874 to the disappearance of the buffalo in 1879, little agricultural aid or instruction was offered, despite repeated requests from Indians. The home farm policy, hastily implemented in 1879, proved of little benefit to most Indian farmers as the instructors and their farms were remote from the reserves. With massive government cutbacks in funding and staff after 1883, efforts to establish agriculture on reserves became even more difficult.

The goal of government policy after 1885 was to destroy the "tribal" system and enhance individualism. Measures designed to control and monitor Indian movement and activity eventually had an effect on reserve agriculture. By 1890 however, Indian farmers had overcome some obstacles that had hampered agriculture in the past and were adopting dry-land farming techniques, purchasing necessary implements, and specializing in grain. The severalty and peasant farming policies, enforced during the years 1890 to 1897, set tight limits on agricultural productivity and expansion. These policies were crucial factors in the checking of the initial positive response to agriculture. With the erosion of the Indian land base in the years after 1896, the opportunity for agriculture to form the basis of a stable economy on reserves became ever more remote.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE INDIAN FARMER IN PRAIRIE HISTORY

"We are the wild animals; you cannot make an ox of a deer," said an Indian once to Sir John A. Macdonald.[1] G.F.G. Stanley quoted this in his pioneering study The Birth of Western Canada, as an explanation of why agriculture on reserves met with little success. Although written fifty years ago, Stanley's interpretation of why farming failed to provide a living for the residents of Western Canadian reserves remains the most widely accepted. Stanley argued that the Indians' fundamental problem was their own inability to adapt; they wished to preserve "traditional" values and these were incompatible with economic development. They were a people concerned only with immediate necessities, and it was not in their nature to accumulate property and to look to the future. The Indians were content to live off relatives and then the government. They socialized, travelled and shared too much. The cultural traditions that the Indians cherished and refused to relinquish, made them notoriously poor farmers, stockraisers and businessmen.

Stanley's approach to this issue reflected a cluster of ideas about Indians that prevailed in his generation and beyond. The plains Indians were depicted as a simple and primitive people who rigidly clung to tradition and custom.[2] Fundamental to their nature was a "wild love of freedom and intolerance of restraint".[3] During their "golden age" of freedom, they lived in "savage opulence", hunting the plentiful herds and warring among themselves.[4] The years brought no change to their static existence until the arrival of the white man. Stanley's view was that because theirs was a fragile, weak, primitive culture, the Indians inevitably declined under the impact of a more complex civilization.[5] The destruction of their self-reliance and independence began with the introduction of the white man's manufactures, to the extent that "one time luxuries became necessities, and the hapless Indian, forgetting the weapons and usages of his fathers, henceforth became dependent upon the white man for his homely needs, and even for life itself".[6] With the rapid changes marked by the coming of the railroad, the settlers, and the extinction of the buffalo, the Indians, "centuries behind in mental and economic development", could not readily adapt to meet the new conditions of life which were strange and unfamiliar. In Stanley's words, "his savage self-reliance gave way to a childlike dependence, and he [was] overwhelmed with a feeling of helplessness".[7]

The administration of Indian affairs in Canada was, according to Stanley, marked by "strict honesty, justice and good faith".[8] The government undertook to protect, care and guide the Indians during the difficult period of transition from "savagery to civilization". The government pursued a deliberate course of placing Indians upon reserves, developing an interest in labour among them, and attaching them to agriculture, in order to teach them the white man's means of support. The Indians, Stanley believed, had no desire to settle down: "they were loath to abandon the thrilling life of the chase for the tedious existence of agriculture".[9] They desired to prolong the old life for as long as possible, clinging to "the old gods and the old ways of life", instead of welcoming social and economic advancement.[10] When the buffalo suddenly disappeared from the plains the effect was disastrous, but only then did the Indians realize the necessity for some radical modification of their way of life. The lure of rations pried them loose from adherence to their nomadic culture, although some of the "wildest", most independent Indians clung desperately to the past and "stubbornly" congregated about Fort Walsh, despite destitution, because they wished to be where their friends were and where their dead were buried.[11] Considerations of international policy, and social and economic reasons demanded that these Indians be removed; if they were to be profitably employed and instructed in agriculture, reserves would have to be found elsewhere. The

Indians were "reluctant", "dilatory", "full of complaints", "excuses", and "impossible demands". But government officials and the North West Mounted Police eventually succeeded in persuading them that their only hope for survival lay with agriculture on their reserves.

According to Stanley the government initiated a program of instruction in agriculture and stock raising in order to lift the Indian out of his "tutelage and dependence", to prepare him for a "higher civilization", and "to encourage him to assume the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship".[12] The agricultural policy was not an unqualified success however. The government's program was open to some criticism but Stanley found that it was essentially the character of the Indians that militated against a rapid advance in agriculture; for "the character moulded by centuries could not be transformed in a few years".[13] Indians had a restless disposition. Their aversion to uncongenial labour was "proverbial". Unable to resist the temptation, wild Indians were prone to raid their own garden plots. The optimistic, sanguine expectations of officials were "not based upon an understanding of Indian character, or a thorough appreciation of the distance which the primitive Indian had to travel to reach the white man's scale of proficiency".[14] It was the Indians' characteristic mental attitude, and not government policy, or economic, and environmental factors, that kept them in poverty.

The reserve agricultural program has not been the subject of a thorough study. Histories of Indian policy for Western Canada have tended to be sweeping in topic, geography and time span.[15] When historians have touched on the issue of reserve agriculture, they have tended to agree with Stanley's interpretation. It is assumed that farming failed from the start. The Indians are depicted as reluctant to give up their freedom and independence to take up the settled life of agriculture, despite the efforts of government officials. They are presented as a people unable to abandon old traditions and customs in order to adapt to the new conditions of life. Instead they roamed the plains in search of buffalo and starved in considerable numbers before they agreed to entertain farming. Their failure to adapt to agriculture is generally attributed to the persistence of Indian culture, which is seen as static or dormant, incapable of coping with the introduction of new ideas or technology.

In his 1979 Ph.D. thesis, "The North West Mounted Police and Canadian Indian Policy, 1873-1896", John Jennings, wrote that farming was considered by Indians to be women's work, and former proud hunters refused to occupy themselves with domestic chores, as "tending potatoes came perilously close to work that was demeaning for a warrior".[16] Indians could not immediately see that what they had believed in for centuries was wrong, and they were not enthusiastic about embracing the new era. Jennings

believed the Indians had to be coerced to work and adopt agricultural skills, and this was effected through the "work for rations" policy.[17] A.J. Looy devoted a chapter to Indian farming in his 1977 thesis "The Indian Agent and his Role in the Administration of the North-West Superintendency, 1876-1893".[18] He concluded that farming was essentially a failure due to the Indians "inveterate inclination to leave their reserves for a variety of reasons" and their "improvident" nature.[19] They shared their resources to the last degree with those in need, and would uproot their crops to help their non-treaty friends. In his observations on reserve agriculture, Hugh Dempsey, biographer of Red Crow, Big Bear and Crowfoot, has suggested that while the Indians of Treaty Seven were able to garden or farm on a small scale with simple technology, they were incapable of making the leap to larger acreages, mechanized equipment and bank loans because of their cultural heritage.[20] They were unable to understand the modern business techniques commercial farming required, and they slipped further and further behind their white neighbours.

Expanding on the idea that the persistence of the Indians' culture prevented them from becoming successful farmers, it has been suggested that agriculture violated concepts sacred to the religion which Indians were unable or unwilling to abandon.[21] It is argued that because Indians had a deep-seated respect for nature, they could not bring themselves to lacerate Mother Earth's breast with the

plough.[22] Indians treated the earth well, leaving no great scars, and thus could not farm. The most oft-quoted evidence in support of this is attributed to Smoholla of the Nez Perce, who founded the dreamer religion and preached the rejection of white man's civilization in the mid-nineteenth century.

> My young men shall never work. Men who work cannot dream; and wisdom comes to us in dreams. You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's breast? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest. You ask me to dig for stone. Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die I cannot enter her body to be born again. You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it and be rich like white men. But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?[23]

This statement has been widely used to explain the "failure" of Indian farming all over North America.[24] As James R. Gibson concluded in a recent study, Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846, farming was "antithetical to the traditional native life-style", and was "also at odds with the Indians' spiritual doctrine, for they believed in the inviolable oneness of humanity and nature and in the supreme chieftaincy of the earth, their mother. Some Euroamerican pursuits, including cultivation, violated this belief."[25] Gibson then quoted the protest of Smoholla, which has become, like the statement of Stanley's anonymous Indian, a convenient and tidy explanation for the "failure" of Indian agriculture.

Those who adhere to the view that Indians rejected farming because of their relationship with nature explain the success of pre-contact native agriculture in North America by stressing that the digging stick or hoe "carefully caressed" rather than violently tore at Mother Earth.[26] It is believed that the Indians were appalled by the strangers who sliced into the ground with ploughs to turn the earth over, showing no gratitude to or care for the land. Many believe that non-natives, who have disregarded the beauty and integrity of the land and engendered ecological disasters have much to learn from the Indians' sense of the sacredness of nature: "Decades of soil erosion, brown rivers, and dust bowls that followed the plow seem to show that the Indians had good reason for feeling the way they did."[27]

Students from disciplines other than history have considered the issue of reserve agriculture. In Tribe Under Trust: A Study of the Blackfoot Reserve in Alberta, (1950), anthropologists L.M. Hanks and J.R. Hanks argued that the initial reaction of the Blackfoot to farming was that such activity was beneath their dignity, and that the efforts of instructors were met with stubborn resistance.

> In fact, to grovel in the dirt when one was accustomed to riding over it on a fast buffalo horse seemed demeaning. Though the instructors tried to enlist the young men by threats and promises, many were set against it. This was the white man's way of doing things, and they were Indians. The whites had already done enough to disrupt the Indian way of life without insisting that all work like whites.[28]

The Hanks believed that most of the Blackfoot condemned agriculture because they did not want to forsake Indian ways and patterns. Only those not successful from a Blackfoot perspective, those not distinguished in warfare, or lacking in property, those with little to gain from following Indian patterns, adopted agriculture.[29] Indians, the Hanks continually stressed, view the world quite differently from non Indians. Many of the chiefs changed their minds about agriculture however, when they saw there could be benefits in the way of immediate, tangible rewards for their efforts. They saw that they could buy axes, blankets and beads, and could return the generosity of others.

According to the Hanks, the Blackfoot embraced agriculture only to the extent that it was consistent with, or enhanced their own traditions and customs. They did not for example, adopt the idea of working steadily to improve the standard of living in the future, nor did they wish to acquire the possessions with which a white man would equate success. The Blackfoot had a different concept of wealth; once they had acquired enough shelter, food and clothing to allow a comfortable existence there was no need for further exertion. Farming was incorporated as a means of becoming wealthy according to Blackfoot custom and tradition. They could afford ostentatious give-aways, and display generosity on visits to neighbouring reserves. The goal of the Blackfoot farmer was not to invest in fencing, housing and machinery, but to acquire a sacred bundle, a "supernatural

assurance against vagaries of weather and fortune", which was a token of concrete achievement in Blackfoot society, and had always been the Blackfoot way of indicating a change in status.[30] What the Blackfoot wanted above all was to be allowed to "gather and sing their songs, to eventually join their deceased friends in the Sand Hills and live apart from white society".[31] "All the grandeur for the Blackfoot," the Hanks wrote, "lay in the past."[32]

The authors of the 1966 report A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada edited by H.B. Hawthorne, were concerned with the issue of why some of the most economically depressed reserves were in agricultural districts of the prairies where there was ample land suitable for raising crops or livestock.[33] Reserves such as Piapot, Oak River, Pequis and James Smith, situated in the midst of fine farm land, were among the most depressed and dependent. The farms on these reserves were marginal or sub-marginal, "too small in terms of acreage and capital investment to be operated efficiently to provide adequate returns".[34] There was not enough land to support all band members, but even what land they had was not used at peak efficiency. The authors found that on many reserves, farming had been abandoned entirely.

While it seemed logical to bring together idle people and idle resources, the authors recommended against this. They believed that the Indian Affairs department had devoted much time and effort to the encouragement of farming in the

past, pouring in large amounts of capital and technical aid on numerous occasions, and they questioned the merits of this policy.[35] "Encouragement of Indians to farm," it was concluded, "seems a particularly inappropriate policy in all but a few cases."[36] Such efforts were frustrated in the past by Indian "apathy, suspicion, and non co-operation".[37] The authors believed that with few exceptions, Indians "have shown a lack of preference or aptitude for farming".[38] The department could not be blamed for the failure of farming: "A far more important reason for failure, however, probably lies in attitudes of apathy or disinterest among Indians to farming as a way of life."[39] Indian disinterest in farming combined with their small-scale, inefficient methods. Without the motivation, skill, and experience of the white farmers, they perpetuated unprogressive, obsolete methods.

The authors of the Hawthorne report explained that the Indians were attuned to a set of values, ideas and attitudes that precluded them from farming. As a "non-industrial" people, "modern" concepts of economic status and prestige were meaningless to them.[40] Indians did not act as "economic men" as understood by non-native society, but functioned according to their own rules. Indians had no natural impulse to acquisitiveness. They were content with a standard of living at a near-subsistence level. They had no concept of working harder or longer to accumulate money and goods. Close ties to family or kinship groups discouraged the acquisition of capital, and stifled success

at business, because a man's relatives claimed a share of any good fortune. It was explained that in non-industrial cultures, rhythms of work were different. Indians were accustomed to working at an irregular pace; at certain times of the year activity was strenuous but other whole seasons were devoted to relaxation.

The findings of the Hawthorne report reflects "dualism theory" devised in the 1960's by social scientists working on Africa and Latin America as an explanation for the origins and co-existence of development and underdevelopment.[41] Dualism theory recognizes two distinct and largely independent sectors of the economy, each with a history, structure and dynamic of its own. The modern, industrial, or capitalist sector is "characterized by high productivity, is market-oriented, receptive to change, and pursues rational and maximizing aims".[42] The other sector is regarded as pre-capitalist, subsistence-based, traditional or primitive. This sector is stagnant, without innovation or change. It is affected by totally different incentives than those upon which the capitalist economy responds to such as price changes and wage raises. The primitive sector "displays little market awareness, shows a high preference for leisure, and tradition or custom dominates over rationality".[43] Those involved in the traditional sector do not save or make productive investments, instead they fritter away savings and acquire prestige items.

Those who applied this approach to the history of Africa argued that the root cause of rural poverty was the failure of the traditional sector to adapt their tribal economy to novel conditions and learn modern methods of farming.[44] It was stressed that Africans were hostile to innovation and market relations as they were inhibited by their traditional attitudes toward land, property and family ties, and they adhered to supernatural beliefs. They were improvident and carefree, did not rationally dispose of their resources, and perpetuated unscientific agricultural methods. Despite the best efforts of missionaries, agricultural instructors and administrators, the Africans resisted economic rationality. The problem lay with the nature of African society; Africans could not adapt their traditional economy and they thus forfeited participation in the market economy.

These ideas proved attractive to segregationists in Africa.[45] Ordinary economic incentives clearly did not apply to a primitive people. Raising wages could be dangerous among a people who did not respond to cash incentives and had a high preference for leisure; raises could lead to labour being withheld or output declining. The theory supported the view that the primitive sector did not want integration, but wished to live apart to pursue a traditional way of life. It also upheld the view that Africans were content with a near-subsistence standard of

living. Africans viewed the world differently from whites, and were not likely to change.

This approach to African history has recently been criticized by historians of agriculture in Central and Southern Africa.[46] In The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry (1979), Colin Bundy argued that the prevailing explanation for the "failure" of African agriculture has overlooked or underestimated an initial period of early prosperity when many African farmers responded positively and successfully to economic changes and market conditions.[47] A large proportion of Africans reacted "rationally" to the expanding market economy with its new pressures and opportunities. Some participated in the market economy to a limited extent while others made considerable adjustments, and for them producing a cash crop for market became a principal concern. Bundy found that during this initial period of a positive response, Africans enthusiastically embraced advanced methods of crop rotation and technological innovations. This stage however was short-lived. By the 1880's, symptoms of rural decay and underdevelopment were evident. Bundy argued that a variety of interventions and interests operated to curtail and distort the direction of economic change that had little to do with the supposed backwardness of the traditional sector. Groups who sought to inhibit or deflect peasant production translated their interests into political action. Laws were designed to check African farming and protect white farmers

from "unfair" competition. By curtailing African farming, the flow of labour to white farms was stimulated. Communal systems were replaced by individual tenure which set tight limits on agricultural productivity. African agriculture was not aided by the same massive program of subsidies, grants, rail facilities, and credit programs that were available to the white sector. The Africans' access to markets deteriorated. These factors reinforced and perpetuated disabilities due to geography, and natural setbacks of drought, flood, and fire. There was a retrogression in African agriculture. Advanced methods of cultivation became impractical or redundant. Anthropologists and other twentieth century observers of Africans on their reserves found the residents to be living what appeared to be thoroughly traditional lives, stubbornly persisting in conservative, obsolete methods, totally unaffected by the modern, progressive sector. They concluded that the cause of African rural poverty was the persistence of African "backwardness". Evidence of an earlier period of an initial positive response was not apparent to the eye, and lay hidden in government, missionary and other records.

In a recent study of American Indian farming, a somewhat similar pattern was detected. In Indians, Bureaucrats and Land: The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming, (1981), Leonard A. Carlson found that before general allotment was enacted in 1887, the residents of many

reservations proved willing and able to farm.[48] Although not all Indians were farmers, Indian participation in farming was widespread. But this initial stage was followed by stagnation and regression. Indian farming declined markedly after the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act, which Carlson argued, was shaped by non-Indian economic interests. Indian farmers then fell further and further behind white farmers.

Very little has been written on the agriculture of Canadian Indians in the reserve period, but one study of reserve farming in Ontario, "Parry Island Farmers: A Period of Change in the Way of Life of the Algonkians of Southern Ontario", by E.S. Rogers and Flora Tobobondung, (1975), suggests that the pattern of an early positive response, only then followed by a decline in farming, prevailed in Canada as well.[49] The Algonkians of southern Ontario rapidly adopted farming between 1820 and 1840, growing wheat, oats, peas, potatoes, Indian corn and other vegetables. They often sold grain to Euro-Canadians. Somewhat later, Indians to the north adopted farming. By 1875, and for several decades after, the Parry Island native farmers differed little from their Euro-Canadian farming neighbors. In the early years of the twentieth century there began a marked decline in Indian farming.

The prevailing view that the Indians of Western Canada failed to adapt to agriculture because of their cultural traditions is in need of revision, and through several brief studies this process of revision has begun. John Tobias

argued in "Indian Reserves in Western Canada: Indian Homelands or Devices for Assimilation", (1975), that the Plains Cree were anxious to acquire the skills and tools that would allow them to farm but that eventually they gave up agriculture because of restrictive government regulations including the permit system, the subdivision of reserves and the ban on the use of machinery.[50] In "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885", (1983), Tobias similarly argued that contrary to the prevailing view, the Cree did not reject an agricultural way of life, and that much of the political activity of their leaders was based on concern about the lack of assistance to farm.[51]

In "Agriculture and Agitation on the Oak River Dakota Reserve, 1875-1895", (1983), I found that there was an initial period of enthusiasm for agriculture at Oak River which was accompanied by some success.[52] This was followed by a period of stagnation and decline. The reasons for the decline were not that the Indians' culture limited their capacity for farming but that along with environmental setbacks, Indian farmers were subject to regulations that denied them the technological and financial opportunities to form a strong agricultural base.

Noel Dyck's article "An Opportunity Lost: The Initiative of the Reserve Agricultural Programme in the Prairie West", (1986), also "questions the cultural determinism implicit in the commonly held notion that the aboriginal cultures and personality types were unequal to

the demands of a settled, agricultural way of life"[53] Dyck concludes that because of a lack of commitment on the part of government officials the opportunity to create self-supporting communities through the reserve agricultural programme was lost. Dyck believes the events of 1885 sealed the fate of the agricultural programme because of the coercive system of administration that was subsequently imposed.

These articles share similar approaches to and conclusions about reserve agriculture but none deal with the issue in a comprehensive manner. This study of reserve agriculture in the years 1874-1896, with particular focus on four agencies in Treaty Four, (see Figures 1 and 2), suggests that there was an initial positive response to farming on the part of many reserve residents. Not all Indians wished to farm but nor was farming limited to just a few individuals. Government efforts were not met by Indian suspicion, apathy and resistance. The Indians in this period consistently displayed greater resolution and determination to see farming succeed then did government administrators, quite in contrast to the well-established view that the government made constant, sincere, unflagging efforts to cajole and pressure the Indians into taking up an unfamiliar and unpopular lifestyle. In spite of this initial positive response evident in the years 1874-1896, nothing like prosperity was ever achieved, and Indian farmers did not enter the grain-centered cash economy of

their white neighbours that began to prosper after 1896. Factors having little to do with cultural distinctions combined to atrophy agricultural development on reserves. Those who stress that the fundamental problem was that Indians were culturally or temperamentally resistant to becoming farmers have ignored or downplayed economic, legal, social and climatic factors. Reserve agriculturalists were subject to the same adversities and misfortunes as their white neighbours, but they were also subject to government policies that tended to aggravate rather than ameliorate a situation that was dismal for all farmers.

The second chapter will examine why agriculture appeared to Victorian Canadians to be the ideal solution to the problems that plagued Western Canada's Indians. Agriculture would provide a firm foundation in "civilization" and citizenship. It would wean the Indian from his nomadic habits, teach him the value of a permanent abode and the security of a margin of surplus. Agriculture would foster competition and individualism which would erode the tribal unit. Farming offered added benefits as it would confine Indians to within specified boundaries, and it would relieve the public treasury as Indians would learn to feed themselves. Yet it was the image of the Indian as the antithesis of the farmer that was to remain foremost in the public mind, to be drawn on whenever convenient.

The second chapter also presents a glimpse of nineteenth century plains Indian life, which bore little

resemblance to the perceptions of most Canadians of the time. The plains Indians had a history of rapid adjustment to changing economic circumstances and environments long before the settlement period, the plains Indians were well aware of the advantages farming offered. Farm produce was highly prized as a trade commodity. Uneasy about their economic security as it became clear that the buffalo were disappearing, the Indians of the West became increasingly anxious to explore agriculture as an alternate subsistence base. Several bands had begun to cultivate and keep domestic cattle well before the treaties of the 1870's.

Despite enthusiasm for the agrarian solution, Canadians, through their government, proved reluctant to extend much in the way of aid or instruction to see that farming could begin. The years 1874-79, covered in Chapter Three, were critical as success at diversifying the plains Indian economy at this time could have relieved the crisis caused by the disappearance of the buffalo. Throughout this period it was the Indians rather than government officials who manifested the greater desire to pursue agriculture, but new or expanded agricultural activity was minimal.

Chapter Four describes the government's "home farm" program which was hastily contrived in response to the food crisis which was grave by 1879. Instead of creating large depots of produce with which to feed the Indians the government found itself saddled with the added burden of supporting a host of instructors, their families and

employees. The Indians gained little from the program in the way of instruction as the home farms were distant from the reserves, which the instructors seldom visited. To deflect criticism from the government however, the Indians were blamed for the limited success of the ineffectual policy. The Indians' supposed ineptitude for farming, disinclination to work, preference for leisure and willingness to subsist on rations were presented as the causes of the failure of this program.

In 1883, a massive program of retrenchment within the Indian department meant the final end of the home farm policy in its original form. Chapter Four examines the years of retrenchment to 1885, with emphasis on conditions in the Qu'Appelle district. The Indians here had received very little benefit from the home farm program. Farming had scarcely begun on most reserves, and massive cutbacks in staff and funding were not warranted. The object of Indian protest of this period was primarily to obtain the means with which to make a living by agriculture.

There was some new direction and emphasis to department policy after 1885 and this is the subject of Chapter Five. Officials were concerned less with providing economic security than in eradicating Indian culture. Measures aimed at the destruction of the tribal system, and the enhancement of individualism were devised, as were regulations that rigidly monitored the movements and activities of the Indians. In the period to 1890 however, covered in Chapter

Six, Indian farmers with the aid of local department personnel, made important strides in overcoming many of the obstacles that had hampered reserve farming in the past such as oxen shortages, and the absence of threshing and grist facilities. Indian farmers began to acquire the mechanical implements required to cultivate the prairies where low and irregular rainfall, and early frost necessitated speed at sowing and harvesting time. Drought, frost, hail and prairie fire made the 1880's difficult years for all, and despite advances, few tangible rewards resulted. Indian farmers were none-the-less moving in the direction of commercial farming, with their specialization in wheat, purchase of implements, and adoption of dryland farming techniques.

Crucial factors in the checking of the initial positive response to agriculture were the severalty and peasant farming policies enforced during the years 1890 to 1897 when Hayter Reed was at the zenith of his power in the department. These policies, examined in Chapter Seven, set tight limits on agricultural productivity and expansion, and they severely curbed initiative and enterprize.

It is argued in the conclusion that a central goal of department policy in the years after 1896 was to effect the surrender of Indian reserve land, and the opportunity for agriculture to form the basis of a stable economy on fertile reserves became ever more remote. The rationale used to justify and promote land surrenders however was once again

that the Indians could acquire the means to begin a new agricultural life.

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5. Ibid., p. 217.

6. Ibid., p. 198.

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9. Ibid., p. 218.

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11. Ibid., p. 234.

12. Ibid., p. 236.

13. Ibid., pp. 238-9.

14. Ibid., p. 238.

15. J.D. Leighton, "The Development of Federal Indian Policy in Canada, 1840-1890", (Ph.D. Diss., University of Western Ontario, 1975), Chapters 10 and 11, John L. Taylor, "The Development of an Indian Policy for the Canadian North West, 1864-79", (Ph.D. Diss., Queen's University, 1975), John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy", in As long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows, ed. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), pp. 39-54.

16. John N. Jennings, "The North West Mounted Police and Indian Policy, 1873-1896", (Ph.D. Diss., University of Toronto, 1979), p. 277.

17. Ibid, p. 279.

18. A.J. Looy, "The Indian Agent and his Role in the Administration of the North-West Superintendency, 1876-1893", (Ph.D. Diss., Queen's University, 1977).

19. Ibid., p. 185.

20. Hugh A. Dempsey, "One Hundred Years of Treaty Seven", in One Century Later: Western Canadian Reserve Indians Since Treaty 7, ed. Ian A.L. Getty and Donald B. Smith, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978), p. 28.

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27. Ibid.

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37. Ibid., p. 58.

38. Ibid., p. 160.

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51. John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885", Canadian Historical Review, 64, no. 4 (1983).

52. Sarah Carter, "Agriculture and Agitation on the Oak River Dakota Reserve, 1875-1895", Manitoba History, 6 (1983).

53. Noel Dyck, "An Opportunity Lost: The Initiative of the Reserve Agricultural Programme in the Prairie West", in 1885 and After: Native Society in Transition, ed. F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1986), p. 121. In "The Administration of Federal Indian Aid in the North West Territories, 1879-1885", (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1970), Dyck pointed out that many bands made sustained efforts to farm. He attributed the failure of these efforts to incompetent government officials.

# CHAPTER II

## TWO SOLITUDES: MYTH AND REALITY OF THE PLAINS INDIAN AND AGRICULTURE

Hayter Reed, deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs from 1893 to 1897, gave an address during his term of office on the aims of the government in its dealings with the Indians. The permanent solution to the Indian problem involved "the laborious and often dangerous work of transforming bands of savages into peaceable agricultural labourers".[1] Reed quoted from a book entitled Bible Teachings in Nature.

> Corn precedes all civilization; with it is connected rest, peace and domestic happiness, of which the wandering savage knows nothing. In order to rear it nations must take possession of certain lands; and when their existence is thus firmly established, improvements in manner and customs speedily follow. They are no longer inclined for bloody wars, but fight only to defend the fields from which they derive their support. The cultivation of corn, while it furnishes man with a supply of food for the greater part of the year, imposes upon him certain labours and restraints, which have a most beneficial influence upon his character and habits.[2]

Reed's belief that agriculture was the great panacea for what were perceived to be the "ills" of Canada's Indians was a conviction shared by most Canadians who pondered the

future of the Indians. That the Indians were not farmers was viewed as an essential weakness of their society. Victorian Canadians believed Indian life was full of imperfection, but at the foundation of their objection was the certainty that a life of virtue was dependent upon an agrarian base and that vice resulted from a hunting migratory base. Indian life was viewed as a chaotic search for game, without forethought or provision for the future, characterized by periods of both wild extravagance and utter destitution, which led to deeply-ingrained habits of improvidence and indolence. Hunting and gathering was perceived as living irresponsibly and recklessly off the fat of the land. Despite the vast acreages at their disposal, Indians were without field, farm, town or city and thus lacked any notion of private property, which was understood to be the very basis for "civilization" itself. Agriculture offered a remedy and purgative to the maladies of the Indian way of life.

The Victorian Canadian perception of Indian culture reflected long-established, deeply-embedded Western attitudes toward the wilderness and those who lived there, attitudes that were codified in the Scriptures.[3] Concepts of order and progress were framed by Biblical injunction.

> Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea; and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.[4]

Man's purpose on earth was to reclaim and resurrect the wilderness, to "break" the land, "bust" the sod and impose on it a human will and purpose. Victorians, enormously proud of their railways, steamships, and factories, were confident that during their lifetime, man was reaching the pinnacle of the vast crusade to subdue nature.[5] Reason and "civilization" were replacing the superstition and barbarism of the nomadic, predatory, precarious life of the past.

A source of anguish to late nineteenth century observers of Western Canada's native population was the Indians' apparent ignorance of man's obligation to subdue the earth. The Indians displayed no visible evidence of any degree of control over the environment; they appeared to be not the masters but at the mercy of natural forces. The most glaring evidence of the Indians' inability to master their environment was that they left no marks of their presence on the land. Living by hunting, fishing and collecting nature's bounty, the Indians were perceived as doing nothing to work and improve the land. The Indians of the plains were viewed as "thoughtlessly, carelessly living on the surface. Like the butterfly flitting from plant to plant, so these men roamed and camped and dreamed, not of mines and means which were above and beneath them on every hand".[6]

The buffalo hunting of the plains Indians was perceived as an unhealthy enslavement to natural forces. Because their mobility, social cycle and material comfort was

dependent on the buffalo's pattern of concentration and dispersal, the plains Indians were viewed as "the most dependent among men", as "without buffalo they would be helpless, yet the whole nation did not own one".[7] The "buffalo and tribal communism" prevented the introduction of private property and individualism, two concepts that were regarded as essential to civilization.[8] "Owning the land in common, there was in it no wealth to any one of them", wrote one authority on Indian life.[9] It was thought that the tribal system prevented scope being given to individual activity and ambition, and that the Indians' propensity to share their possessions was an obstacle to self-reliance. Without any particular place to call home save for a "miserable wigwam", it was believed that the Indians lacked a focus for their hopes, interests, and ambitions. Lacking a fixed abode they could have no notion of a proper family life; nineteenth century literature on the Indian described a cruel and heartless domestic regime in which children, women and the aged were mistreated.[10] The simple material wants of the Indians led to a listless indolence. As an early missionary to the West commented, the Indians were without "acquired wants and appetites which rouse men to activity in civilized life, and stimulate them to persevering industry, while they keep the mind in perpetual exercise and ingenious invention".[11]

There was a general belief that private property and possessions would put an end to Indian warfare which was

viewed as an irrational, bloodthirsty sport, perpetuated endlessly because the Indians had little property to lose. It was felt that Indians kept their possessions to a minimum in order to effectively make war. They had to be prepared to fight and to run so they "could not be burdened with property, if they had much it impeded progress, which with them meant fight, or it would be stolen and enrich the enemy".[12] One missionary lectured the Indians that private property would promote peace among the tribes. "You call this your country, but even now in the dead of winter you dare not sleep in quiet. 'No', said I, 'not until a stronger power friendly to you comes upon the scene will you really own a bit of land and live at peace with other men'".[13]

According to informants of the late nineteenth century, Indian society lacked not only an idea of private land ownership, but any concept of the need to possess a margin of surplus. The Indians appeared to place themselves wholly at the whim of nature's caprices, refusing to consider their economic future. "Improvident" was the label most commonly ascribed to the activities of the Indians. On an incessant quest for food it was always "feast or famine" in Indian society. With no forethought in providing for the future, they continually exposed themselves to want and often faced long periods of starvation.[14] Also seen as a cause of poverty and starvation was the Indians' willingness to share the spoils of a hunt with neighbours, to gorge until not a

mouthful was left rather than providing provender for judicious consumption.[15] To the Victorian Canadian observer, this was evidence of a listless, lethargic approach to life. "Indolence", the twin of improvidence was seen as another unfortunate feature of the Indians' character. The Indians' reluctance to work was viewed as a cause of their inability to bring the natural world within their control and ownership. It was believed that only with private property would the Indian be induced to adopt steady habits of work.

Hunting was not "work" in Victorian circles. It may have been a pleasureable pastime, but it did not involve the requisite systematic, habitual toil toward the creation of something of lasting value such as a building, a farm or a city. Hunting was rightfully a leisurely recreation for those who could afford it. Describing the plains Indians one authority explained that "In the first place, they had never worked. The Indian loves his gun, his bow and arrows; he rejoices in hunting, trapping, and fishing, occupations that are the sports of the aristocracy in the civilized countries from whence have come his rulers".[16] The Indians' method of hunting buffalo by constructing pounds was viewed as "indiscriminate slaughter", devised simply because the hunters were not satisfied with the ordinary methods of destroying the buffalo.[17] Hunting was regarded as an occupation requiring little skill, knowledge or technology; it was recklessly and improvidently living off the fat of

the land. The "proud lords" lounged at their ease about the camps, leaving any hard labour to the women. Nineteenth century literature on the Indian depicted the life of the Indian woman as little better than that of a beast of burden.[18] Once they had outlived their usefulness they were casually slain or abandoned to perish.

Agriculture was the solution to the at best peculiar and at worst deplorable characteristics and idiosyncrasies which the Indians tenaciously and perversely cherished. The Indian had to be taught to make his living from the soil. No other occupation could so assuredly dispossess the Indian of his nomadic habits and the uncertainties of the chase, and fix upon him the values of a permanent abode and the security of a margin of surplus. Agriculture would teach an appreciation of private property and instill a will to own and master nature. With one place to call home in which to centre hopes and ambitions, the Indian could enjoy the ennobling, refining influences and virtues of a happy family life which included sobriety and respect for women and the elderly. Farming a piece of land would introduce an independent spirit, and foster competition which would erode the tribal unit. Agriculture would nurture habits of industry and diligence. Required to perform regular duties at certain times of the year, the Indian would grasp the necessity of habitual toil, systematic work and attention to detail.

The Indian's farm was to be his place of probation, a training ground in the lessons of civilization and citizenship. No other trade or profession could provide this firm foundation; only perhaps with subsequent generations could loftier aspirations be contemplated. Agriculture was seen as particularly suitable to the Indian character. Some thought they might suffer spiritually and physically in the confines of a shoe, tailor, carpenter or blacksmith shop.[19] Farming offered a healthy, vigorous outdoor life. In the scientific community, agriculture was viewed as a key stage in man's evolutionary sequence of progress from savagism to barbarism to civilization.[20] Each step, from the invention of the bow and arrow, to the domestication of animals and cultivation of maize, to smelting iron ore and so on, was regarded as essential to the next and could not be transcended. The Indians of North America had to follow the logic of progressive development. Agriculture and private property would afford the Indians the opportunity to climb the remaining steps to civilization within the space of a few generations, greatly speeding up the process that had been so gradual in other civilizations. One Canadian authority on the Indians explained that it was only when the Germanic barbarians became landed proprietors that the way was paved for their civilization.

> When they were compelled by a change in their circumstances to adopt a sedentary life, and follow the pursuits of agriculture, there arose an inequality among the people from the fact that the chiefs became landed proprietors and employed

> those under them as laborers. The former equality, arising from their tribal relationship, gave place to an individuality which paved the way for the evolution of the Germans, Hungarians and other civilized nations of the nineteenth century.[21]

Agriculture as an occupation was not subservient to the world of business, industry, medicine or law but was the worthiest of employments, certainly not just for Indians, but for all who would choose to settle the prairie West and help create a vast agrarian empire. Homesteaders were assured of this through a "country life ideology" which emerged as Western settlement proceeded, resurrecting ancient idealizations of the agrarian way of life.[22] This ideology was propagated through schools, newspapers, agrarian periodicals, railway promotion, agricultural exhibitions, womens' institutes, homemakers clubs and other farm organizations. Farmers were told that agriculture was the foundation of the wealth and prosperity of a nation, "the mainspring of national greatness and the moulder of national and personal character".[23] Farming was promoted as a noble and sacred occupation, a natural and healthy way of life that elevated "morally and emotionally, if not intellectually".[24]

The country life ideology endowed the land with an almost mystical power to transform and elevate, even the lowest or weakest of men. As master of his own quarter section, the western homesteader enjoyed individual freedom and personal accountability. This ideology was embedded in

the homestead policy. Designed to accommodate single-family establishments this policy "deliberately made the Canadian prairies the region of the small independent operator, the place where every man had his own small plot of land on which he could live according to the dictates of his own conscience and from which he could derive benefits commensurate with his own exertions".[25] The decision to base the settlement of the West on the family farm and its small independent operators was not the result of vigorous scientific inquiry into the best means of bringing the rich prairie lands under cultivation, rather it was social and religious thought that determined the pattern of Western settlement.

To all those who shared in the powerful ideology of the developing order in Western Canada, there was no question but that the Indian way of life had to stand aside. In their refusal to progress, improve, develop and prosper, the Indians were ignoring God's gift. It was inconceivable that this prospective home for millions could forever continue to be the hunting ground of "the wandering children of the forest and the prairie". This was a land for a hardy, thrifty race of men who would farm, build houses, roads and railways. The fertile prairies were too valuable to be kept as mere buffalo preserves; the land cried out for "real occupation".[26] That the Indians were not perceived to be in "actual and constant use of their land" was a conventional nineteenth-century rationalization for the displacement of

the Indians which appeared self-evident to non-native observers.[27] Citing the Swiss Jurist Emmerich de Vattel's Law of Nations, the 1844-5 "Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada" presented the argument that an "unsettled habitation" did not constitute a "true and legal possession" and that other nations were lawfully entitled to take possession and settle these lands.[28] It was believed that the failure of a people to cultivate the soil meant that they were incapable of occupying the country and were thus in no particular need of most of the land. A crowded nation was justified in laying claim to land which "belongs to mankind in general, and was designed to furnish them with subsistence".[29]

That the Indians did not farm was ample justification for others to lay claim to their land, but a further rationalization was that since the Indian could be taught to farm, they would gain much more than they would lose. The reward was the prospect of an ennobling enterprize through which they could achieve status, stability, self-respect, and dignity. The Indians were to be afforded the opportunity to become useful citizens and civilized men. An added advantage was that the Indians would not be in need of their extensive hunting grounds as they would have the means to feed themselves.

It was assumed that Indians had the desire to control nature but that they lacked the necessary skill, knowledge and technology. The Indians were viewed as "amenable to

training". With adequate incentive they would "work" and their latent energies blossom.[30] They required intervention to push them along this course however. Left to themselves the Indians would be quite content to remain as they always had been. Authorities on the Indians often remarked on their obstinate pride in their culture, and their "misguided" view that theirs was the superior civilization.[31] It was believed that centuries of isolation, without opportunity to compare themselves with the customs, beliefs and accomplishments of other cultures, had produced a "sublime ignorance" as well as unfortunate notions of superiority.[32] The Indians were perversely reluctant to countenance any change. "They believe the native culture is best suited for themselves, and having developed under it, and enjoyed it so long, they care not to give it up for an untried system".[33] Indian culture was perceived as static or dormant, in a state of inertia. It was believed that their way of life had remained the same for centuries. The Indians seemed asleep to the larger destinies of the human race, and if left to themselves, they would never be awakened. Present contentment was not a suitable goal for any race of men, especially when they were the inhabitants of a land with enormous resource potential:

> They never thought of nor speculated upon the magnificent array of mighty power within their sight and sound, and in the centre of which they were living all the time. They worried not because of stacks or stooks, nor yet "stocks". They lost neither appetite nor sleep because of marts or merchants. They heard not the clank and

> clink of multiple machinery, and much less the roar and rush of transcontinentals. None of these things moved them, for truly it had not entered into their life, nor come as yet into their thought.[34]

Awakened from their slumber of centuries, the Indians were to be allowed the opportunity to participate in the great enterprize of exploiting the rich resources of the West. Officials, missionaries, and others concerned with the Indians generally assumed that their future was amongst the stacks and stooks. This assumption did not emerge from any commissions of inquiry into the question of the future of the Indians of the West; it simply appeared as a natural evolution, so natural in fact that very little thought was devoted to the issue of how Indian agriculture might best be encouraged and patronized, or what alternatives might be explored. There was a vague, optimistic hope that nature would fulfill its destiny in civilizing the Indian, and that by merely grasping the handles of a plough, the Indian could become a useful citizen.

The goal of transforming the Indians of Western Canada into farmers was not however, one of the driving forces behind the move to bring the West into Confederation. This project was conceived by a predominantly commercial elite in central Canada who wished to see the West exploited as a means of ensuring the viability of their own region.[35] The economic blueprint for the West that was evident in the

Confederation debates and later became embedded in Sir John A. Macdonald's National Policy involved the construction of a transcontinental railway, the rapid settlement of the West, the creation of a grain-exporting economy, and the growth of a highly protected domestic market for finished goods from the East. The occupants of the West were largely irrelevant to these plans except to the extent that their land had to be surrendered and their peaceful acquiescence secured. It was clear that the region was to be an agricultural frontier, and those who took into account the future role of the Indians in this scheme offered farming as the recipe for a secure and decent life. Although there was recognition that the Indian situation in Manitoba and the North West differed in many respects from that of the older provinces, government officials followed the general principles of Indian policy that had evolved there, originally inherited from the imperial government.[36]

The traditional means of placating the Indians of British North America was through treaties which provided compensation in return for the extinguishment of Indian claims to the land. The Proclamation of 1763 laid the foundation for the treaty system.[37] Intended to minimize contact with the Indians, the Proclamation established a boundary line, essentially creating a vast Indian country in which the Indians were regarded as the proprietors. A basic principle of British Indian policy, first articulated in this Proclamation was that only the Crown and not private

citizens could acquire Indian land. Responsibility for Indian affairs was then a branch of the military and the major purpose of Indian policy was to secure the loyalty and contentment of these valuable military allies. Although a program of settlement and "civilization" was envisaged in the Proclamation, steps toward this ideal were not taken by the military administrators. The imperial government distributed presents and rewarded wartime service to confirm the Indians' allegiances, and this policy was successful in maintaining the loyalty of the Indians during the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

The value of the Indians as military allies began to wane after 1815 as immigration increased and border hostilities declined. With their usefulness at an end the policy of distributing presents to the Indians was brought into question, as was the need for the existence of an Indian department within the military.[38] Threatened with the elimination of his department in 1828, the superintendent of Indian Affairs suggested a new function for it, advocating that "steps be taken to civilize and educate the Indians and that agricultural goods be substituted for annual presents".[39] Here was the genesis of a new policy toward the Indians which took shape in the 1830's, and continued well into the twentieth century. The ultimate goal of the policy was to bring about the cultural transformation of the Indian in order to eventually achieve the total assimilation of Indians into white society. As a

distinct cultural group the Indians would disappear. The three basic means to this end were missionaries, schools and agriculture. It was believed that this policy could succeed only if the Indians were collected into settlements where they could be instructed in religion and trained in agriculture. Theoretically however, the need for special settlements or reserves or even a special Indian branch of the government would one day disappear if the policy of assimilation succeeded as the Indian would be fully equipped to enter white society. With this program officially adopted in 1830, Indian affairs ceased to be a branch of the military, and was brought under civil control. Here costs could be kept to a minimum as the budget would be under the annual scrutiny of Parliament. Public money was not to be used however; the program of "civilizing" the Indians was to be funded by the sale of the Indians own land.

Vigorous support for this new philanthropic attitude was provided by a vocal humanitarian lobby in Britain that was critical of the Empire's treatment of its new subjects, and advocated the need to reclaim Canada's Indians from their state of "barbarism", instruct them in the industrious, peaceful habits of the "civilized", and protect them from unscrupulous interests while this process proceeded. These sentiments coincided with the concerns and goals of missionaries working among the Indians. Missionaries came to be increasingly relied upon as agents of assimilation as they financed themselves. The policy of

settling Indians on reserves also fit in well with the demands of the settler economy that was taking shape in central Canada. To the pioneer heading into the wilderness intent on working and improving the land, the Indian was regarded as a nuisance and a barrier to progress.[40] As the family farm was to be the unit of settlement the Indians were not required as a labour force. The sole economic benefit to be derived from the Indians was through the transfer of their land. The Indians' possessory title to the land, recognized in the Proclamation of 1763, had to be purchased. Land surrenders became necessary as European settlement accelerated and these were accomplished through treaties between the Crown and an assembly of the Indians involved. The earliest of these Upper Canadian treaties provided only once-for-all payment in goods, but later treaties included annuities.

The concept of the reserve as a training ground or laboratory for civilizing the Indian, which became a cornerstone of Canada's Indian policy, began to take shape in the 1830's with the adoption of the idea that Indians should settle in villages, be weaned from their nomadic life, and taught to cultivate the land.[41] It was believed that these laboratories of transformation could best succeed if they were remote from the rest of civilization, as it was felt that with close proximity the natives adopted only the worst characteristics of the society around them.[42] The new program was launched with two experiments at Coldwater and

Lake St. Claire. The plan was that the Indians would first clear land for a communal farm which would supply them with rations while each family prepared their sixteen acre plot for cultivation.[43] Labourers, farmers and mechanics were hired to provide guidance by their example, and missionaries and teachers worked among them. Over the years other reserves were set aside but by 1850 there was considerable disillusionment with the policy of settling Indians on remote reserves. The schemes were not deemed to be a success as few concrete achievements had resulted.[44] A re-evaluation of the reserve program led to the conclusion that reserves should not be isolated but surrounded by settlement. It was decided that smaller reserves for individual bands could be located next to non-Indian communities that would serve as examples which would lead to more rapid assimilation.[45]

In the 1850's the goal of Christianizing, educating, and making farmers out of the Indians of Upper Canada still appeared to be in the distant future. Legislators believed that in the meantime, steps should be taken to protect the Indians during their period of incubation. The Indian was given special status in legislation passed in 1857 that was ultimately aimed at removing all distinctions between them and other Canadians but actually created such distinctions through exclusive laws. The Indians were to be governed on a completely different basis from other Canadians. The Gradual Civilization act of 1857 defined who was an Indian

and stated that such a person could not enjoy the privileges and rights of other Canadians until he could prove that he was literate, free of debt, and of high moral standing.[46] As a reward for meeting these criteria, an Indian would be given fee simple title to up to fifty acres of reserve land, and after a probation period of one year he could receive the franchise. The curious paradox of Canada's Indian policy was codified in this act. The ultimate purpose of this policy was to eliminate the Indians' special status so that he would become indistinguishable from other Canadians, yet the policy singled out Indians as a race apart, placed them on settlements remote from non-Indians and provided them with a special administrative agency that would serve Indians only. This policy tended to preserve rather than destroy the corporate and distinct character of Indian society.

The Canadian government took over control of Indian affairs from the British authorities in 1860. Under British control, a number of departments shared responsibility for vital decisions, and the result was neglect and unsystematic administration.[47] In 1862 policy was centralized in one "clientele" department, replacing the piecemeal system of administering Indian affairs, despite concerns that it might duplicate services, increase costs and foster the isolation of the Indian population. The new Indian Affairs office was first an agency within one of the branches of Crown Lands, and after 1867 within its successor the Department of the

Interior. In 1880 an independent Department of Indian Affairs was established but its superintendent general was usually also the Minister of the Interior. Until 1913, the major costs of managing Indian Affairs came not from the taxpayers but from the funds derived from the Indians' own estate.[48] From its cramped office space in the East Block of the Parliament buildings, the department operated in a "quiet backwater".[49] It was held in low professional esteem, and its needs were not a priority. As one historian has concluded, "The history of the Indian Department affords rather convincing evidence for the cynical view that where there are no votes, administrative services are bound to be neglected or starved for funds."[50] The department must have aroused some interest among politicians and civil servants in 1870 however, as the Dominion had just acquired the North West and decisions had to be made as to how to deal with the Western Indians.

The Indians who peopled the mind of the Victorian Canadian, with their welter of erroneous practices, ideas and superstitions, bore scant resemblance to the actual residents of Western Canada in the nineteenth century. The would-be farmers of the southern plains of present-day Saskatchewan were primarily Plains Cree, with smaller groups of Assiniboine, Plains Saulteaux and Dakota. Plains life

until the mid-nineteenth century was secure and even bountiful; it was a life in which the material wants of the people were adequately satisfied. They had good shelter, clothing and plenty of high protein lean meat. Plains dwellers had a rich artistic and ceremonial life and they enjoyed sports, craftwork and other pastimes. Acquainted with the European trader since the late seventeenth century they had incorporated aspects of this relationship into their social life and economy, but they had not become dependent on European technology and they had experienced little cultural disruption. The residents of the plains had few material possessions, and to the European observer this indicated a low standard of living, but the prosperity of an efficient hunting band required a high degree of mobility. It was economically undesirable to amass stocks of food, clothing, tools and ornaments, as these led to immobility. Their lifestyle demanded movement; once the food resources in the vicinity of one camp were depleted it was necessary to move elsewhere. This was quite far removed from the primitive foraging for subsistence, the aimless roaming from camp to camp under the ceaseless spectre of starvation described in most literature of the nineteenth century. The movements of the plains Indians were not haphazard and irrational. Theirs was a successful economy, based on a thorough knowledge of the terrain and the habits of their game. It involved a great measure of planning, foresight, preparation and discussion of tactics, but plans could not

be rigid or formal. The plains dwellers had to be flexible and sensitive to shifting considerations and conditions such as the weather, prairie fire or the strategies of their enemies. They were resourceful and inventive in adapting to their environment, developing highly efficient techniques and aids to capitalize on their opportunities.

By the 1870's, the land occupied by the southern branch of the Plains Cree, the "Downstream People", extended from the Assiniboine River west to the Cypress Hills and from the forty-ninth parallel to midway between the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan.[51] The two levels or "steppes" of the plains of southern Saskatchewan are separated by the Missouri Coteau, with its east-facing Missouri escarpment, the great prairie ridge of the hunters that heralds the beginning of "La Grande Prairie" to the west. Geographical expeditions that studied this land in the 1850's and 1860's were little impressed with this slightly undulating, treeless plain, concluding that it was arid and barren, unsuitable for the sustenance of man. The natural vegetation was grass- spear grass and wheat grass. As Captain Butler wrote the prairie was an "ocean of grass".[52] The only exceptions to grass were the valleys of the rivers and streams where belts of timber fringed their sides, and the outliers such as the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, the Touchwood Hills and Moose Mountain, where wood and water was available. These wooded, elevated points were important landmarks and watchtowers of the plains Indian world from

which the surrounding territory could be scouted for the buffalo. The tender grasses that so little impressed the exploring expeditions were vital to people of the plains as they nourished the buffalo.

The foundation of the plains economy was the buffalo; a knowledge of the habits of this animal and its environment was essential to Indian survival and prosperity. The buffalo followed a natural cycle of concentration and dispersal that was seasonal and sufficiently regular to be described as migratory.[53] In the autumn and winter they scattered in small herds to the coulees, river valleys and the aspen parklands to the north. In the shelter of the wooded areas the snow remained soft enough for the animals to paw through to the grass beneath. The abundance of grass on the open plains in the summer months drew the herds together where they grazed in huge masses. In general the herds moved northward to the parkland belt in the winter and in the spring moved in a southerly direction toward the grasslands. Buffalo movements were not capricious and unpredictable, and the hunters did not simply travel at random, hoping to come across a herd. There were departures from the regular pattern but the causes of these variations and their effects upon buffalo movements were understood by the local inhabitants.[54] In an exceptionally mild winter for example, when there was little snow, the buffalo might remain far out on the grassland. Extensive prairie fire could also affect the normal migration pattern of the

buffalo. The buffalo response to these stimuli was to a large degree predictable.

Indian life on the prairie followed a pattern of concentration and dispersal that paralleled that of the buffalo. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Plains Cree cycle could begin in June or July, when a major section of the tribe gathered along the South Saskatchewan as the buffalo roamed the open plains when the grass was most lush. Concentrated hunts were organized at these large encampments, policed by members of the "Warrior Society" who kept order in the camp, ensuring that the buffalo were not disturbed until preparations for the hunt were complete.[55] Individuals who broke rank endangered the whole camp as the herds could stampede prematurely. Generally the summer hunt involved the rapid surround of a herd, forming a corral.

The large supply of food in one vicinity, allowing the concentration of many people, enabled the bands of Cree to begin to develop the cohesiveness of a tribal unit. For the "band" societies of the woodlands where game remained scattered, large populations could not be sustained in one area for any length of time, and the family hunting units were dispersed and generally more independent of each other.[56] The concentration of the buffalo on the grasslands allowed the Cree to define themselves as a definite political unit, separate from their neighbours. At these summer encampments the bands of Cree reinforced their solidarity in language, custom, ritual, and in military and

trade strategy. The annual summer rendezvous of the Cree functioned as their "intermittent town".[57] For a few short weeks the Cree governing councils, markets and training programs were active, reinforcing the connecton of an individual band to larger, complex society. It was a time for visiting friends, for trading, gambling and sports competitions. The Sun Dance, a central ceremony of the Cree during which they asked their spirit powers to bless mankind, was held almost annually at the summer encampments and was a major integrating force.

The chiefs of the various bands met in council at these gatherings to discuss trade and military policies and strategies. The Plains Cree did not have a centralized system of chieftainship but there existed a ranking of principal leaders; a hierarchy that was tacitly recognized by all.[58] According to an informant on the Cree, at mid-century La Lance took precedence at councils.[59] He was a noted warrior and a distinguished medicine man. Second in the hierarchy of chiefs was Chocab or Eyes Open, head of the Calling River or Qu'Appelle Cree. He was not so much a warrior as "a prudent financier in matters regarding trade, knowledge in leading the camp and placing his people in situations where good hunts can be made".[60] Third in rank was a chief who had formerly been first - the Fox, or Plusieurs des Aigles, known to the traders as "Le Sonnant", or "Ostenguide", a warrior, peacemaker and medicine man.

Large summer encampments on the plains lasted only a few weeks. Once the herds were no longer in the vicinity of the camp, the bands separated and began to move in the direction of their wintering territory. Plant food, a vital ingredient in the diet of the plains, was gathered during the summer months. A large variety of roots, berries, seeds, and fruits were collected. The most important wild plant food to the Plains Cree was the prairie turnip, also known as the white apple or "pomme blanche". The harvest season for this tuber lasted only for a matter of weeks, so that the progress of its growth had to be carefully observed.[61] Women and children harvested the root with digging sticks of cherry or birch, fire-hardened and slightly curved. Large quantities were peeled, dried in the sun, and pounded until reduced to a fine powder. Great amounts were stored in buffalo skin bags for winter use.[62] During the long winter period this flour may well have contributed to the general health of the buffalo hunters because of its vitamin C content. It has been postulated that this root it was "at least re-seeded by Plains gatherers".[63] Berries were collected in wooded areas of the hills and valleys in midsummer. Quantities of these were also dried and stored for winter use in puddings and in pemmican.

In the autumn, residents of the plains, like the buffalo, retreated to the parklands or uplands. Buffalo were hunted through the construction of pounds. Drive lines

or fences were built of timber, converging at the point of the pound or corral. The pound was usually constructed just over the edge of a hill or coulee. Its size depended mainly on the number of people in the band, and was based on the number of animals they could handle once they had driven them into the pound.[64] The poundmaker was the man responsible for the construction of the pound and he was also in charge of the drive. Various techniques were devised to manoeuver the animals to the pound from distances of as much as fifty miles. Smoke in the direction of the herd and the movements of runners gradually coaxed them to the drive lines, which might have extended three or four miles out from the pound and have been several miles apart. At this point the man called "he who brings them in" caught the attention of the herd by giving the distress call of the bison calf, and the animals gradually moved toward him within the wings of the pound. If the buffalo began to stampede to one side the people manning the flanks would rise up and frighten them off in the opposite direction. Within the pound the animals were killed with bows and arrows. The use of guns risked frightening the animals who might break down the corral and escape.

During the months of buffalo hunting by pounds, large stocks of pemmican, tallow, dried meat and buffalo robes were laid in for trade in spring at the Hudson's Bay Company posts.[65] Some Cree bands also trapped wolves, fox, muskrat, marten and ermine for trade. The deepest cold of winter was

the most difficult time; game was scarce, scattered, and what there was had to be stalked on foot. Moose, elk and deer were hunted by some Cree bands, and small animals such as rabbits were snared. After spring break-up the Cree caught river fish by building weirs that interrupted the downstream run.[66] Spring was also a time for wild fowl hunting. Maple sap was collected and made into sugar. As the weather became warmer, the bands once again began to converge on the plains.

Plains Cree bands were loosely organized, shifting units, easily joined and easily left.[67] Several families, normally related to the chief, formed the stable nucleus of a Cree band but they were open and fluid organizations. Saulteaux, Assiniboine and mixed-bloods were often found in Cree bands. Newcomers might be young men who married into the band or they might be attracted by the reputation of the leader as a poundmaker, medicine man or warrior. A chief who was a noted poundmaker might attract a large following during the winter months and a much smaller summer following.

The band members acknowledged the leadership of a man who inspired confidence and compliance. He was perhaps an individual respected for his good judgement and courage, known for his accomplishments in battle, recognized as an experienced and industrious hunter, distinguished as an orator, or revered as a medicine man. The chief also had to possess wealth and liberality. Like the head of an extended

family, the chief was expected to show concern for the needs of everyone in the camp. The chief freely gave his possessions to the needy in his band. After a successful hunt, the chief's wife distributed the choicest cuts of meat to the poor.[68] Sons of the poor or orphans were attached to the chief's household where they were treated as members of the family. On occasions for ceremonial gift-giving and at feasts the chief was expected to donate the largest share. The more lavish a chief was in his charity and gift-giving, the greater his reputation. The chief's kinsmen contributed to his expenditures, at the same time enhancing their own prestige. A chief with a large network of relatives within his band could afford to be very generous. When quarrels and disputes arose in camp the chief was expected to ease tensions. This often involved bestowing a gift upon an aggrieved person, or replacing from his own possessions an item an individual believed had been stolen. Controversial matters were often referred to the council of prominent men of the band. A band might have several chiefs, but one would tacitly be recognized as outranking the others, or at different times of the year the services and expertise of one might be at a greater premium.[69] A chief's son clearly had an edge when the question of succession arose as he already possessed the necessary wealth and support of a kinship network. But succession was not necessarily hereditary. If the abilities of a chief's son did not

inspire confidence another outstanding man would by common consent gradually be accepted as leader.

The Worthy Young Men Society and the Warriors ranked next to the chief in prestige status in Cree society.[70] To be a member of the Worthy Young Men a man had to have gained a reputation as a brave fighter, daring horse raider or skilled hunter. Exploits were ranked according to the degree of danger to which an individual was exposed. To kill an enemy from an ambushed position for example did not carry the same prestige as shooting at the enemy while also under fire. When a Worthy Young Man had acquired sufficient wealth in horses, hides and other material possessions he would be asked to join the "okihcitaw" which has arbitrarily been translated as "warriors". The word does not strictly imply what the word warrior means in English. According to a Cree informant there is no violence in the word "okihcitaw", rather it is a "person that does honorable things, like looking after his elders, feeding the starving orphans, anything like that".[71] As men of prestige and distinction the members of this society were expected to freely sacrifice their possessions for the good of the community, providing help to widows and the elderly, and feeding visitors. Members of this society policed the summer hunt.

Competitiveness, and the quest for individual status were not absent from Plains Cree society. Gradations in status and material wealth were recognized. At council

meetings, for example, men with "small, poorly furnished tipis and little surplus food were seated near the door... and were not given a blanket or robe to sit on. Their inferior rank was indicated in this way and their opinions were little heeded."[72] Material wealth, in horses, guns, hides, tents and dogs, was individually owned but its conspicuous distribution was the means of attaining prestige. An individual freely distributed goods because it contributed to his own status and security.

The Plains Cree were well acquainted with concepts of debt and credit, spending, buying and selling. By the time of the treaties they were also familiar with the standards of pounds, shillings and pence.[73] An American fur trader writing in the mid-nineteenth century described the Cree as

> good judges of the qualities of merchandise, [they] count with facility and show great shrewdness in their dealings. They practise economy in their domestic life, trade only useful articles, take good care of provisions and make the most they can of everything. The majority reckon up on the value of their hunt and consult their wants before they enter the store and cannot be enticed to buy articles they do not need.[74]

An employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Qu'Appelle noted that the Indians were endowed with "extraordinary memories as to recall each item they had given and received during the year, in many cases for years, if not for life".[75]

The Cree had a history of rapid adjustment to changing economic circumstances and environments. Quite contrary to

the belief that the Indians of the plains had maintained an undeviating lifestyle for centuries, the Cree were very recent arrivals to the prairie West and their history was one of constant change and adaptation. Before European contact the Cree occupied the eastern woodland country from north of Lake Superior to Hudson Bay.[76] To the west of the Cree, occupying a mixture of the shield country and a large portion of the plains of south central Manitoba were the Assiniboine, a Siouian-speaking people who at some point had separated from their close relatives the Yankton Dakota. The Cree and Assiniboine lived together peacefully and, as allies in trade and military strategy, their histories are closely parallel.

The Cree inhabited the shores of lakes in summer to fish, and in winter ranged inland, hunting moose and caribou. By the mid-seventeenth century, the Cree were in contact with the western flow of European goods and were important suppliers of furs to the Ottawa-French network.[77] When the Hudson's Bay Company was established on the mouth of the Nelson River in 1670 the Cree were in a strategically advantageous position to control the trade as this was their home territory. As any other inland group coming to trade had to pass through the land of the Cree and Assiniboine, these allied groups began to take over the position of middlemen, obtaining a large, steady supply of arms and ammunition at York Factory.[78] Adept in the manufacture and use of the canoe, the Cree were readily able to exploit the

network of waterways in their terrain to transport trade goods and raw materials. A period of territorial expansion followed. The Cree and Assiniboine expanded their trading and hunting territory in a northwesterly direction, sometimes by force, further isolating other tribes from the European source.[79] In 1720, the Touchwood Hills marked the southern limits of Assiniboine territory, and the Cree occupied the territory to the east and north of them.[80] By the early eighteenth century, the Cree and Assiniboine had effectively formed a blockade; very few other groups travelled to York Factory, and those that did were usually accompanied by a Cree or Assiniboine.[81] Cree contacts at this time included the Blackfoot whom they supplied with firearms, forming an alliance against the enemies of the Blackfoot, the Snakes and Kootenays.[82]

The trade in furs constituted a partnership that required the cooperation of Indian and European. Recent studies have stressed that the Indians did not play a servile role in this relationship, that the Indians were not passive objects of exploitations, but that Indian and European shared a mutually beneficial economic system.[83] As middlemen, the Assiniboine and Cree dictated the terms of trade to a large extent. The trading system that evolved was a compromise between Indian and European traditions.[84] The Indians were not hapless victims but active participants in this partnership. They manipulated competition, bargained shrewdly and were demanding consumers. The

Assiniboine and Cree middlemen determined the kind and quality of trade goods, directing the rate and nature of material culture change. There was no rapid and complete dependence on European technology. The Indians did not become critically dependent on firearms for example; after the late seventeenth century, gun sales took a decidedly downward trend.[85] Cree and Assiniboine culture developed along with the fur trade. Changes in cultural and social patterns may be traceable to European influences but these were voluntary Indian adaptations rather than Indian accommodation to directed acculturative changes.[86] The Indians did not entirely surrender freedom of action and control over their own destinies.

Shortly after the mid-eighteenth century the Assiniboine began to move to the south and west and the westernmost Cree, on the fringes of prairie, began to spend time on the grasslands hunting buffalo. Several explanations have been suggested for these migrations. One is that the Cree were forced to abandon the woodlands because the fur and game resources had been depleted.[87] More recent evidence suggests however, that the Cree made a conscious choice to opt out of the pelt trade in favour of the buffalo hunt.[88] The Saulteaux migrated to the land abandoned by the Cree where there remained an adequate fur-animal population to continue a profitable trade in prime furs. With the establishment of posts in the interior after 1763 the demand for provisions increased. Taking advantage

of this new economic opportunity to work as provisioners to the trading companies, many of the bands chose to become fully involved in the buffalo hunt.[89]

The introduction of the horse was an important factor in the Cree adaptation to plains culture. By 1770, the Cree and Assiniboine were receiving horses from the Blackfoot, and they likely first acquired horses between 1732 and 1754.[90] Another important impetus for the southward migration was the development of links with the continent-wide Indian network of trade that centered on the Mandan villages on the Missouri.[91] As the buffalo increasingly satisfied all of the requirements of the Cree and Assiniboine, they became less interested in European trade goods.[92] As an employee of the North West Company described them in 1794

> The Inhabitants of the Plains are so advantageously situated that they could live very happily independent of our assistance. They are surrounded with innumerable herds of various kinds of animals, whose skins defend them from the inclemency of the weather, and they have invented so many methods for the destruction of animals, that they stand in no need of ammunition to provide a sufficiency for these purposes.[93]

By the 1790's, the western branch of the Cree had followed the Assiniboine in adopting plains culture. The most easterly bands of Cree retained the woodland culture and some on the border of the plains practiced a mixture of both. The Cree showed themselves to be remarkably flexible in rapidly adjusting to the rewards and demands of three

different environments - the forest, parklands and plains. Through their contact with other plains tribes, the Cree learned and adopted many of the characteristics, techniques and traits of plains culture. Yet even those branches of the Cree that moved furthest to the west retained aspects of their woodland heritage, developing a unique strain of plains culture. They maintained the burial practices of their woodland relatives, continued to make birchbark containers, maintained the use of the cermonial long lodge and used snowshoes.[94] Unlike the other plains Indians, in the religious ceremonialism of the Cree the horse and buffalo were not venerated objects. In their art forms, specifically their beadwork patterns, the Cree maintained the elaborate floral motifs of the woodlands, in contrast to the classic plains pattern of rectangular and triangular designs.

The nineteenth century in Cree history is generally depicted as a time of growing dependence on imported influences such as liquor and guns which led to senseless, random acts of violence. This combined with the decimation brought by disease from the old world to lead to the collapse of a political and social system well before the plains Indians entered the reserve period.[95] A recent interpretation suggests quite a different image of the Cree in the nineteenth century.[96] It is argued that during this period the Cree nation was consolidated. The Cree forged and retained a tribal identity during the nineteenth

century, and developed a distinguished diplomatic and military record. This identity was not dependent upon or undermined by relations with European traders. Acquisition of a supply of horses was the underlying purpose of most of their military and trade strategy and this was a commodity not controlled by European traders. Throughout this period the Cree continued to make decisions with reference to their own interests, maintaining systems of political and economic alliances in which the European trader was one of several but not a determining variable. Life on the plains in the nineteenth century was characterized by hostility- wars and small raiding parties - but this was not the aimless indulgence in bloodthirsty "sport" that the Victorian observer perceived. Cree leaders assessed and analyzed their current economic and military problems, devised appropriate strategy and tactics, and mobilized the forces necessary to carry them out.

The horse was the instrument and symbol of prosperity on the plains and was thus the focus of military and trade strategies to the mid-nineteenth century. For the hunt, and to maintain a high degree of mobility, the well-being of a plains band depended on a sufficient number of fast, responsive, well-trained mounts. Until the early nineteenth century, the Cree had two sources of horses. One was through their alliance with the Blackfoot, who obtained horses through the Arapaho-Cheyenne horse market.[97] Horses were also available through the Mandans with whom the Cree

and Assiniboine were allied. The Mandans were semi-sedentary villagers who cultivated corn, beans, squash and sunflowers on the upper Missouri. From the Cree and Assiniboine the Mandan received military aid against their common enemy, the Dakota. To the northern hunters, corn was important in the formation of this accord - it was sought after as an ideal portable food supply.[98] The Mandan controlled the major horse mart of the eastern plains, but their horses were expensive and became more so to the Cree and Assiniboine after 1795 when they ceased to be the sole suppliers of European goods to the Mandan. A trend toward stealing Mandan horses in the early years of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of the end of the Cree-Assiniboine-Mandan alliance. By this time the Cree-Blackfoot alliance had also broken down and the commanding role of the Cree and Assiniboine in the European fur trade had been undermined with the establishment of the inland posts.

From approximately 1810 to 1850, the Cree sought to construct new trade and military patterns to replace those that had collapsed. To satisfy the growing demand for horses, the Cree and Assiniboine began a concerted program of horse raiding from the Blackfoot, the Hudson's Bay Company and Canadian traders. In Cree society, to acquire a horse in this manner was a prestigous act whereas the purchase of a horse carried no merit. As one observer explained, this was not perceived as "theft".

> As late as the sixties and early seventies it was common to say:
> "Bringing them in," and not "Stealing" horses.
> The gossip between the lodges never spoke of "stealing horses - he "brought them in," "they ran them in." "Did you see that bunch of horses? He just now brought them home."
> No imputation of theft was thought of. It was a meritorial [sic] act. Such feats of cunning, and skill and acts of daring as were accomplished in running off another man's horses, were lauded and placed the actor away above par among his fellows...repeatedly to return from the land of the enemy with bands of horses gave the hero prominence and respect among his fellows.[99]

The horse raiding was followed by a period of concerted Cree-Blackfoot warfare. The Cree's purpose remained the acquisition of horses. Until 1850, a loose alliance of Cree-Assiniboine-Crow and Flathead surrounded the Blackfoot on three fronts.[100]

After 1850, the growing scarcity of buffalo added a new factor in plains warfare. The retreat of the buffalo is illustrated in the progressively westward extension of Hudson's Bay Company posts. By 1830, Brandon House, on the Assiniboine above the Souris mouth, was marginal to the buffalo hunting territory and was replaced by Fort Ellice, near the junction of the Assiniboine and the Qu'Appelle. Fort Ellice became the key buffalo hunting post until the 1850's, when the Company began to receive the largest supply of its pemmican from the Touchwood Hills, and this in turn was replaced by Fort Qu'Appelle in the 1860's.[101] A system of "flying posts" became important sources of pemmican. These were small temporary winter encampments in wooded

areas or outliers such as the Turtle or Moose Mountains where the buffalo hunters wintered near the herds.

As the herds retreated further and further west, the Cree and Assiniboine were forced to approach Blackfoot country during the hunting season. Among the few solutions open to the hunters of southern Saskatchewan was to extend their borders westward through military activity. In the 1860's, the Cree and Assiniboine of the Qu'Appelle and Swan River Districts were the aggressors and invaders of Blackfoot country, advancing toward the Cypress Hills.[102] A state of war existed all along the Cree-Blackfoot border after 1869, heightened by the Cree campaign of revenge for the death of Maskepetoon (Broken Arm), who was killed while approaching a Blackfoot camp on a peace mission. In the fall of 1870, the Cree organized a massive thrust into Blackfoot territory. Big Bear, Piapot, Little Mountain and Little Pine led from six hundred to eight hundred warriors.[103] They anticipated victory, believing that the Blackfoot had been greatly incapacitated by the small-pox epidemic of 1869-70. In a battle at the junction of the Oldman and St. Mary's river the Cree were soundly defeated, losing between two hundred and three hundred men.[104] This was the last major Indian military confrontation on the plains. In the autumn of 1871 the Cree and Blackfoot concluded a formal treaty which continued unbroken. The Cree were allowed to hunt what buffalo remained in Blackfoot territory.[105]

Invasion of Blackfoot territory was not the sole expedient open to the Cree. They also approached the problem of the growing scarcity of buffalo by attempting to exclude intruders from the hunt. At an important Cree council in the Qu'Appelle in 1859 all the speakers objected strongly to the Métis hunting in the plains country in winter.[106] They stated that all "strangers" should be required to purchase dried meat or pemmican, and not hunt for themselves. In the 1870's, the Cree explored the alternative of approaching the Canadian government to exact a promise to limit the hunt to Indians. The Cree and Assiniboine who congregated in the Cypress Hills into the 1880's, led by Piapot, Big Bear, Little Pine and Foremost Man, continued to demand exclusive hunting privileges.[107] At a Cree council in the Qu'Appelle in 1876, each chief and headman separately made the same request to the Indian agent that something be done to prevent the extermination of the buffalo.[108] In all the agent's previous relations with the Indians he had never seen such a course adopted. He believed it demonstrated their alarm at the decline in their means of subsistence and the grave importance they attached to the issue.

By the 1870's it was clear to the Indians of the plains that economic conditions were once again changing and yet another adjustment was required. Anxious about a food supply for themselves and their children, many were willing to explore the possibilities of agriculture. Such an

exploration did not constitute a complete, radical departure from their heritage, customs, knowledge, technology and disposition, as many Victorian observers believed. Explorers, frontiersmen, missionaries, and other visitors to North America often failed to give much notice to the importance and extent of Indian agriculture, or they dismissed it as a form of gardening. Indian agriculture long pre-dated the arrival of Europeans on the continent. The American Indian excelled in the art of plant domestication, profoundly modifying and molding wild species to meet human needs. Northern Europeans, who borrowed all of their domesticated plants, did not appreciate the skill and time involved in the process, and did not place a high premium on this accomplishment.[109] As one historian has suggested, Europeans intent on settlement may have felt compelled to view the way of life of the "savage" as imcompatible with agriculture.

> Their belief in the virtues of agrarian life and the savage state of the native population was paramount. Firm in the notion that they were the vanguard civilization, to acknowledge that Indians could be farmers too required admissions that few were willing to make. Hunting and savagery were synonymous in the frontier mind and no one doubted the savagery of the Indians.[110]

Agricultural products accounted for about 75% of the food consumed by North American Indians.[111] The most intensive cultivation was in Meso-America where a large population was sustained. Indian corn or maize was the most important of the crops in the New World, but beans and

squash were almost as common and a large variety of grains, fruits, legumes, roots, stimulants and fibres were cultivated. Agricultural operations were conducted entirely with hand implements. (The plough and draft animals were introduced by Europeans.) The digging stick was the basic agricultural implement, used most frequently for planting and to lift and turn the soil. Grass, brush and trees were cleared by burning in most cases. The northern Missouri River tribes manufactured rakes from wood to handle brush when clearing land. Hoes with animal bone blades were used on the prairies and in the East. Certain fundamental characteristics of Indian agriculture reflected the exclusive use of hand implements, in particular the practice of mixed cropping, and the care of individual plants.[112] The "hill" method of planting was widespread and much attention was paid to weeding. In the areas most intensively farmed men were the principal farmers, and where agricultural produce was a secondary source of subsistence, women did most of the farm work, although men helped to clear and harvest.[113] Exceptions to this general division of labour were among the Ojibwa and on the northern periphery of Indian agriculture.

The Cree were acquainted with cultivated plant food and techniques of agriculture through several of their contacts. They had been in touch with the trading empire of the Hurons which extended for hundreds of miles into the interior. Huron contacts included the Algonkian of Lake Nipissing who

travelled further north to trade Huron corn and tobacco for the furs and dried meat of the Cree and more distant tribes.[114] To the south, the Mandan, Arikara and Hidasta Indians maintained a flourishing agricultural economy on the Upper Missouri. Described as the "grand mart of the plains", the Mandan trade empire extended north to Hudson Bay, south to the Spanish settlements, west to the Pacific coast, and at least as far east as the Lake of the Woods.[115] The Cree had ample opportunity to view the techniques and technology of the Mandan's corn, beans, squash, pumpkins, sunflowers and tobacco. The ground was broken with hoes and digging sticks. The blade of the hoe was manufactured from the shoulder of the buffalo until it was replaced by the iron "scapula" hoe in the early nineteenth century.[116] Fields were planted three years in succession and were then allowed to lie fallow. Squash was harvested first and it was hung to dry in long strips. Most of the corn was allowed to ripen on the stalk and was braided when dry. Dried corn was ground into a coarse flour and some was made into hominy. Beans and sunflowers were stored whole or pounded into a coarse meal.

The agriculturalists of the Upper Missouri are generally regarded as being the most northerly of Indian farmers. Recent archaeological research however has presented firm evidence of prehistoric agriculture in Western Canada.[117] On the east bank of the Red River near the town of Lockport Manitoba, gardening hoes made from the

shoulder blades of bison, grinding stones for milling seeds into flour, and kernels of corn were excavated at levels dating to the fourteenth century A.D.. Bell-shaped underground pits for the storage of the harvest were also located. Pottery found within the storage pits was decorated in a style distinctive to the corn farmers of the Dakotas and Minnesota. It is believed that women from the southern farming cultures married into the northern bands and introduced agriculture to the Red River valley.[118] This phase of agriculture was apparently short-lived. Around 1500 A.D., a cold trend which shortened the growing season ended the cultivation of corn in prehistoric Manitoba.

There was also a phase of Indian agriculture in Western Canada that took place after the European presence that was to some extent influenced by it, but remained essentially Indian in character.[119] An early centre of Indian agricultural activity was at Netley Creek, just below Lake Winnipeg. Here a small group of Ottawa Indians, who had migrated from the Michilimackinac area in the late eighteenth century, cultivated corn and potatoes from at least 1805. In the early decades of the nineteenth century Indian agricultural activity was noted at sites on the Red River, on the Assiniboine between Brandon House and Portage la Prairie, and on the shores of Lake Manitoba. Indian agriculture also expanded into the lake country to the east, at Roseau Lake and Lake of the Woods. On a number of islands, and on sites along the shore of Lake of the Woods,

potatoes, corn, pumpkins, onions and carrots were reported to be growing. Sites near large bodies of water were found to be advantageous because the moderating effects extended the growing season.

It is believed that the Ottawas played a critical role in disseminating agriculture among the Saulteaux who migrated to the Manitoba lowlands in the late eighteenth century.[120] According to John Tanner, an Indian "captive" in Western Canada in the early nineteenth century, it was "Sha-gwaw-koo-sink, an Ottawa, a friend of mine and an old man, [who] first introduced the cultivation of corn among the Ojibeways [sic] of the Red River country".[121] When the Ottawas left Netley Creek in 1811 or 1812, Chief Pequis' Saulteaux band continued to grow corn and potatoes on the site. About 1819, D.W. Harmon noted that the "Saulteaux were becoming agriculturists."[122]

In Manitoba in the nineteenth century before treaty, Indian participation in gardening and farming was not uncommon. Even where the climate and soil quality was prohibitive such as at Norway House and Grand Rapids the Indians kept gardens.[123] At Fort Alexander the Indians cultivated wheat, potatoes and corn.[124] At the Indian settlement of Fairford, a stopping place for Hudson's Bay Company brigades, quantities of produce were raised that helped support the fur trade.[125] The predominantly Indian residents of St. Peter's Parish on the Red River farmed to such a large extent that in 1875 it was reported that they

had 2000 acres under cultivation.[126] Yellow Quill's band grew potatoes and corn along the valley of the Assiniboine at a place traditionally known as the "Indian Gardens", which had been cultivated by themselves and their forefathers for a great number of years.[127] Chief Nanawanan and members of the Roseau River band kept large gardens which were cultivated long before treaty was made with them.[128] In the early 1870's the Dakota Indians planted gardens and small grain crops such as oats and barley along the Assiniboine.[129] Indians also worked as hired hands on the farms of settlers in Manitoba. W.M. Simpson, Indian commissioner, reported in 1871 that

> in the province of Manitoba, where labour is scarce, Indians give great assistance in gathering in the crops. At Portage la Prairie, both Chippewas and Sioux, were largely employed in the grain field, and in other parishes I saw many farmers whose employees were nearly all Indian.[130]

J.A.N. Provencher, Indian commissioner at Winnipeg observed in 1875 that the Indians of Manitoba had become "sufficiently familiar with the elements of industry and agriculture" and there was thus no obligation on the part of the government to provide instruction or aid in farming beyond the distribution of implements, tools and cattle.[131]

Some Indian agriculture was encouraged by missionary activity. Archdeacon Cochran of the Church Missionary Society was instrumental in organizing the Indian agricultural settlement at St. Peters in the 1830's. In the late 1850's, Cochran established a second Indian mission at

Portage la Prairie and some 120 people took advantage of this opportunity.[132] Father G.A. Belcourt founded an agricultural settlement of Indians and Métis at Baie St. Paul on the Assiniboine in the early 1830's. Indian efforts at mission agriculture are generally depicted as meagre and in the long run unsuccessful.[133] Until after 1870 however, few residents of the North West farmed extensively, and for very few was the farm an exclusive object of industry and attention. Red River was the major agricultural centre but it did not prove the starting point of a stable agricultural economy, as farming remained subordinate to the hunt or the trip.[134] When H.Y. Hind visited Red River in the late 1850's he commented that with few exceptions farming operations were conducted in a slovenly manner.[135] Fields appeared altogether abandoned as weeds abounded. Valuable manure sat in piles in front of stables or was thrown in the river. In Hind's opinion, the negligence and imprudence that characterized farm operations at Red River was mainly due to the absence of a market. A Mr. Gowler for example, farmed fifty acres on the Assiniboine a few miles from the Forks and although he owned a great deal more land he found it useless to crop it as there was no market for any surplus produce.[136] Implements were primitive and few at Red River and this kept acreages small.[137] A field of five acres was considered large. Until the introduction of barbed wire in the 1880's, the fencing of large fields was considered too expensive. Before 1869 no one farmed away from the rivers

as the belief that water could be secured by digging wells was not popularly accepted.[138] Indian efforts at agriculture in the period before treaties in Manitoba would have compared favourably with the farming activities of most other residents.

Several generations of Indians to the west of Red River had the opportunity to observe and even participate in agricultural activity by the time of the treaties. The farms at fur posts served as models and sources of inspiration. At Carlton House, abundant crops of barley and potatoes were raised, and wheat and hops met with some success.[139] Barley and potatoes were grown at Edmonton House and Fort Vermillion. Domestic cattle were also introduced at Hudson's Bay Company posts. A garden was kept at Brandon House from 1795.[140] At first the crops were limited to potatoes, turnips and Indian corn which was fed to the horses. In the spring of 1804 the vegetable crop was more varied as onions, beans, peas, carrots, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers and thyme were planted. Wheat, oats and barley were cultivated in 1816. Later the Hudson's Bay Company kept gardens and grew small grain crops at Fort Ellice, Fort Pelly and Fort Qu'Appelle. Indians were hired to tend the crops, to hay and look after the horses and other stock.[141] These were hardly "model" farms in the sense of being exemplary, but observers of these early experiments gained some knowledge of the arduousness of farming in the as yet unchartered conditions of the North

West. Crops were often damaged by frost and scourged by squirrels, gophers and dogs. Grasshopper plagues occurred almost annually, often totally destroying everything but the potato crop.[142] Like an approaching storm or prairie fire, grasshoppers appeared on the horizon, reducing fields to blackened ruins within the space of a few hours, and robbing the trees of their leaves. From his experiences at Fort Qu'Appelle in the 1860's, Walter Traill despaired that "farming here is all a delusion".[143] Grasshoppers lay three inches deep inside the stockade of the Fort and

> To prevent them from filling the Fort I had to keep half the men in double shifts carting them out in order to live. The ducks and prairie chickens ate grasshoppers until they were unfit for us to eat. Even the eggs tasted of them. The train dogs got fat and the cattle became poor for lack of grass. The whole valley looked like a burned-over prairie. They came in clouds like smoke and for twelve days the air was alive with them as high as one could see. They darkened the sun and lay an inch thick on the ground. The lakes and rivers stink with the dead ones.[144]

The grasshopper plagues of the nineteenth century may account for why the Plains Cree did not progress very far in their early efforts at agriculture. From his post at Fort Union on the Missouri River from 1833 to 1856, fur trader Edwin T. Denig was acquainted with a band of Cree Indians, the "Pis cha kaw a kis" or "Magpies".[145] They were settled at what he called the "Tinder Mountains" and they "lived in log cabins covered with earth and raised considerable quantities of maize and potatoes."[146] The Tinder Mountains were quite likely the Touchwood Hills of present-day

Saskatchewan, known to the Métis as "Les Montagnes des Tondre", a mispronunciation of the English word "tinder".[147] (Touchwood was used as a tinder.) Denig was convinced from the agricultural successes of this settlement and those at Red River and Pembina that the soil of the territory claimed by the Cree was of excellent quality.[148] The agricultural settlement in the Touchwood Hills dispersed however. When Reverend Joseph Reader of the Church Missionary Society arrived there in 1875 he found only two or three families resident.[149] He believed that only a few years earlier there had been quite a little settlement of Indians and mixed-bloods who lived in houses and cultivated the soil but that the grasshoppers compelled most of them to seek refuge elsewhere. Many of their houses had since been burnt by "ill-disposed persons" but the scattered former residents remained "willing and desirous to farm".[150]

A number of bands in what became the Treaty Four district were engaged in some form of agriculture or stock-raising prior to treaty. These were predominantly Saulteaux bands which included mixed-bloods with a variety of Indian, French and English origins among their numbers. The westernmost branches of the Saulteaux had followed the movements of the Cree to the west and south in the early nineteenth century, but unlike the Cree most did not fully become plains dwellers. They rode out on long hunts into the grasslands but were not solely dependent on the buffalo for subsistence. The territory occupied by the Saulteaux at

the time of the treaty was on the western margin of the transitional zone between the plain and the parkland belt. Their movement west may be traced in the Fort Ellice journals. In the 1820's, the Saulteaux only occasionally visited Fort Ellice but this gradually increased to the extent that for the last thirty years of the life of the post the Saulteaux supplied most of the furs.[151] The Saulteaux also provided much of the casual labour at Company posts.

Chief Pasquah's band of fifty families of Saulteaux and mixed-bloods raised crops of potatoes, turnips and carrots, had a small herd of cattle, and had houses at Leech Lake, half way from Fort Ellice to the forks of the Qu'Appelle road leading to Fort Pelly, or just south of present-day Yorkton.[152] Little Bones' band also had houses and gardens at Leech Lake.[153] This was a predominantly mixed-blood band of Saulteaux, many of whom were employed regularly at Fort Ellice, by contract or casual labour.[154] In 1883, Little Bones showed a government surveyor a plough they had been using for thirteen or more years. It was purchased from a Métis at Fort Qu'Appelle and was dated 1861.[155] They also had a byre "wherein they kept their cattle in olden times".[156] Seven families from the Saulteaux band of Waywaysecappo also known as the Fort Ellice band resided on the north side of the Qu'Appelle at Round Lake where they had a few houses and cultivated some land.[157] Most of the band lived and hunted along the western ridge of the Riding

Mountain, Duck Mountain range.[158] Yellow Quill's Saulteaux band at Egg Lake, a small outpost of the Swan River District to the north of Quill Lake, had houses at Fishing Lake. They had root crops, horned cattle and horses.[159] Gabriel Coté, or Mimiy, the "Pigeon", chief of a band of Saulteaux and English mixed-bloods associated with Fort Pelly, had houses, cattle, and farmed on a small scale near Swan River.[160] The bands of The Key and Kishikonse, Saulteaux and mixed-blood, cultivated potatoes and other root crops and had considerable numbers of cattle and horses.[161] In 1875, Kishikonse's band of thirty-six families had ninety-seven head of cattle and fifty-seven horses.[162]

The need to diversify their economy likely accounts for the tendency of the Saulteaux bands of the Treaty Four district to turn to agriculture. The rapid decline of the buffalo in their region forced them to turn to other game animals and to explore other alternatives. Company journals from the Swan River District suggest that there was a serious shortage of food by mid-century as game resources were depleted.[163] Before this time many of the bands had trapped furs in the autumn and early winter months in the woodlands and hunted buffalo in mid-winter in the adjacent parklands.[164] As the herds scattered and withdrew to the south, the Saulteaux bands would have been forced to abandon their woodland trapping region entirely in winter in order to travel to the buffalo ranges. They could not both continue to trap furs and rely on the buffalo as a source of

food. Beset with serious food shortages, their options included permanent migration to pursue the buffalo, or obtain an alternative food supply. The Saulteaux remained in their woodland-parkland environment. After mid-century the Hudson's Bay Company traded large amounts of pemmican in the Swan River District and it has been suggested that without this supply the bands would have abandoned the region during the winter to pursue the buffalo.[165] Clearly the Saulteaux also responded to seasonal and local food shortages through their gardens and cattle. Their crops, which were predominantly roots, formed an important winter food supply. Their initial source of seed and cattle was quite likely the Hudson's Bay Company posts so that their close association with this Company, and their experience as farm labour undoubtedly encouraged and enhanced this development.

This study focuses on some Treaty Four bands further to the west of the Saulteaux of the parkland that were primarily Plains Cree but included Saulteaux, Assiniboine, and mixed-bloods among their number. At the time of the treaty, these bands subsisted almost entirely on the buffalo. They settled on reserves in the Touchwood Hills, in the File Hills, and along the Qu'Appelle at the Crooked Lakes, and to the east of Fort Qu'Appelle. Collectively they were known as "mamihkiyiniwak", the Downstream People, as opposed to the Cree to the north of the South Saskatchewan and the Qu'Appelle, known as the Upstream

People.[166] The Downstream People consisted of four main groups. The "Pusakawatciwiyiniwak", or the Touchwood Hills people, hunted between Long Lake and the Touchwood Hills.[167] The Calling River or Qu'Appelle people, the "Katepwewupiwiyiniwak" hunted from the Crooked Lakes west to the Cypress Hills, and north to the Big Sand Hills.[168] The most easterly of these bands wintered around the Qu'Appelle Lakes and in the File Hills. They tended to stay further east in their hunt, along the Qu'Appelle as far as the elbow of the Saskatchewan, although they attended large encampments in the Big Sand Hills.[169] By the 1870's, a western group of the Calling River people spent most of their time far out on the plains toward the Cypress Hills and along the south branch of the Saskatchewan.[170] They wintered on the Coteau near Old Wives Lake, and by the early 1870's, along Swift Current and near the Cypress Hills. The mixed Cree-Assiniboine people, known at "nehiopwat", the Young Dogs or Little Dogs ventured the deepest into the far plains.[171] The Cree also referred to them as "paskwawiyiniwak" or the Prairie People, indicating their remoteness from the parkland. Quite likely they were in the vanguard of the Cree migration into buffalo territory. Of the Downstream People they appear to have participated the least in trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Rabbit Skin people, or "Wapucwayanak", hunted between the Qu'Appelle and the Assiniboine in wooded country. These Cree bands were the most attached to the fur trade and they

mixed considerably with the Plains Saulteaux.[172] It has been suggested that the Rabbit Skin people were moving apart by treaty time because of the general westward movement of the Cree, and they were hunting with other bands.[173]

"Cawacatoose", also known as the Poor Man, the Lean Man, or Le Maigre, was chief of what is believed to have been the main portion of the Touchwood Hills people at treaty time. In 1876 the band consisted of thirty-nine Cree families.[174] The Hudson's Bay Company recognized Poor Man as the head chief of the Touchwood Hills People.[176] His brother "Kanocees" was also highly respected for his skill and courage. At the battle on the Belly River in 1871, Kanocees was credited with saving the defeated Cree from the same fate as the 135 who died, which included twenty Indians from the Touchwood Hills.[177] This band settled on a reserve in the Big Touchwood Hills.

In the 1870's "Kaneonuskatew", One That Walks on Four Claws, or George Gordon was chief of a band of forty-seven families of Plains Cree, Swampy Cree, Saulteaux, Scottish mixed-blood, and Métis origin.[178] This was the most mixed of the predominantly Cree bands. The chief was well regarded by the Hudson's Bay Company as among other things a "first rate guide", entrusted with the responsibility of leading cart brigades from the plains back to the Company posts.[179] This band had several houses and farmed on a limited scale in the Little Touchwood Hills prior to the treaty.[180] A member of this band, Charles Pratt, was a

native catechist of the Church of England, educated at St. John's College in Winnipeg. Captain John Palliser met Pratt at his mission on the Qu'Appelle Lakes in the late 1850's. He had a comfortable house and cultivated an excellent garden of among other things hops, corn, barley, and potatoes.[181] Pratt reported to Palliser that "the Crees are beginning to apprehend the scarcity of buffalo, and many are most anxious to try agriculture".[182] Pratt resided with Gordon's band for a number of years before 1875, and his replacement, sent to the reserve in the Little Touchwood Hills believed that Pratt was responsible for encouraging agriculture among them.[183]

Twenty-five Plains Cree families formed a band under "Kisecawchuck" or Day Star. It is believed that by the time of the treaty this band had only recently formed a distinct group apart from the main body of the Touchwood Hills people.[184] They were moving westward in their hunt to the area of the South Saskatchewan in close association with Ready Bow's band of the Qu'Appelle people. Day Star, Ready Bow, and Little Black Bear were reputed to have led 900 lodges of Cree and Saulteaux in successfully repelling an attack from the Blackfoot in 1866 at Red Ochre Hill, near Swift Current.[185] It is believed that only fifteen Cree fell in this battle, as opposed to 300 Blackfoot. This band settled on a reserve in the Big Touchwood Hills.

"Muscowequan" or Hard Quill's band of forty-six Saulteaux and mixed-blood families eventually settled in the

Touchwood Hills. Muscowequan's father, "Katenawup" was chief at the time of the treaty but died shortly afterward.[186] Before to the treaty some members of this band had maintained gardens along the Qu'Appelle Valley.[187]

A main portion of the Calling River people settled on reserves at the Crooked Lakes. At the time of the treaty "Kakeesheway" or Loud Voice led fifty-five Plains Cree families.[188] These were the more easterly of the Calling River People, hunting along the Qu'Appelle as far west as the elbow of the Saskatchewan. Their chief, then about eighty years old, was described in 1876 as having

> always been the acknowledged chief of the Qu'Appelle Cree tribe and is yet the principle leader although now an old man. All the other Cree chiefs give way to his decision and in many instances demand council from him before acting.[189]

As spokesman for the Cree at the treaty negotiations, Loud Voice must have been respected for his ability to deal with white people. He was recognized by the Hudson's Bay Company as the head chief of the Qu'Appelle Cree, regarded as a man "always for the causes of peace and good will".[190] Loud Voice was a distinguished medicine man, and was noted for his bravery and sound judgement in battle.[191] As his name denoted, the chief had a distinctive voice which he used to full effect. According to a Company man, "you could hear him from a long distance, quite distinctly in the early mornings calling up his tribe from their slumbers, and the echo was often heard, when he raised his voice in measured

tones, in the Qu'Appelle valley".[192] He died in 1884 and was succeeded as chief of his band by his son "Ochapowace", and their reserve bears his name.

Chief "Chacachase's" band, numbering 110 in the mid-1870's, was connected with the eastern division of the Qu'Appelle people.[193] This band eventually settled with Loud Voice's on the reserve at the Crooked Lakes.

"Kakewistahaw" or He Who Flies Around, had a large following of some sixty-three families at the time of the treaty.[194] The band was primarily Cree with some Saulteaux members. The chief was a son of the Fox, or Le Sonnant, formerly chief of the Cree tribes south of the Saskatchewan.[195] This band hunted farther to the west than the rest of the Qu'Appelle people, approaching the Cypress Hills in the 1870's. This chief and his followers did not rate highly with the Hudson's Bay Company, which indicates that they were likely not markedly affected by the trade.[196] "Sakemay", a Saulteaux who became the chief of a separate band followed Kakewistahaw at the time of the treaty, and his group also settled at the Crooked Lakes.

Chief "Cowessess" or Little Child was a Saulteaux who led a mixed band of Plains Cree and Saulteaux.[197] In the mid-1870's this band was hunting on the plains as far west as the Cypress Hills. Louis O'Soup, a prominent Saulteaux spokesman, was a member of this band.

Also resident at the Crooked Lakes was a small group of seven families from what was known as the Fort Ellice band,

who at the time of the treaty had houses and cultivated land at the site that was eventually surveyed as their reserve.

Chief Pasquah's band of fifty families came to occupy a reserve on the Qu'Appelle about five miles west of Fort Qu'Appelle. Pasquah, or The Plain, was also believed to have been a son of the Plains Cree chief The Fox, although his followers were predominantly Saulteaux.[198] Before the treaty this band resided at Leech Lake where they had houses, gardens, and cattle. Muscowpetung's band of Cree and Saulteaux settled on a reserve to the east of Pasquah's.

The main body of Young Dogs, or mixed Cree and Assiniboine, followed Chief Piapot at the time of the treaty. Piapot's following was estimated to be over one thousand in the late 1870's.[199] It is believed that he had influence over the Assiniboine, the Qu'Appelle Cree and the more southerly Upstream People when they were camped in the southern plains. In their hunt the travels of this band extended west to the Cypress Hills, to the north as far as the South Saskatchewan and south to the Missouri.[200] They wintered at Wood Mountain or in the eastern Cypress Hills. Piapot was regarded by the Hudson's Bay Company as ambitious, troublesome, but honourable.[201] The reserve for this band was later established to the west of Muscowpetung's.

Among the people who settled at the File Hills were the followers of Little Black Bear or "Keeskee hew mus coo musqus". It is believed that his band was comprised of

western Qu'Appelle Cree and Young Dogs.[202] This chief's personal following was not large but he apparently had considerable influence in the summer camps. Little Black Bear was a noted warrior, having been one of the Cree leaders at Red Ochre Hill in 1866.

"Wahpemoosetoosis" or White Calf's band also took up residence at the File Hills, then under the leadership of Starblanket or "Ahchacoosacootacoopits".[203] This was not a large band, numbering seventeen Cree families in the mid-1870's.[204] They were associated with the eastern Qu'Appelle people who followed Loud Voice, hunting along the Qu'Appelle and on the Coteau. It is believed that this band and others that settled at File Hills were the Rabbit Skin people who had traditionally hunted in the wooded country between the Assiniboine and the Qu'Appelle.[205]

Twenty-eight Cree families followed Chief "Okanese" or Little Rose Bud in the mid-1870's, and they eventually settled on a reserve at File Hills.[206] It is believed that these were western Qu'Appelle people. The chief was apparently also a son of The Fox.[207]

"Cau ah ha chapew" or Ready Bow's band was reported to comprise twenty-six families around the time of the treaty.[208] Descendents of the band claim that they were originally Assiniboine but inter-married with the Cree to the extent that they attached themselves to the Qu'Appelle people yet they hunted with a portion of the Touchwood Hills people.[209] This chief's son, Peepeekeesis, succeeded to the

band leadership, and the reserve at File Hill bears his name.

In the 1870's many Indians of Treaty Four appeared willing to explore agriculture as an alternative to the hunt. They were keenly aware well before the food crisis that began in 1878-79 that the buffalo could no longer sustain them. Missionaries in the Touchwood Hills for example reported appalling conditions of poverty and near-starvation in the early and mid-1870's.[210] Agriculture appeared to hold out the hope of a steady supply of food. Indians of the plains were acquainted to some extent with agriculture and its products and some had begun to supplement the hunt with small crops and cattle. In some ways their training made them better suited to farming than new arrivals to the West. Although the plains Indians lacked formal education in agriculture their highly specialized empirical knowledge of nature approached a science. They were aware of the vegetation in their environment, and they knew when and how to harvest it. They were much better informed on rainfall and frost patterns, on the availability of water and on soil varieties than the settlers from the East and overseas who were to follow. Even the most experienced Ontario farmers, who did not always succeed on the prairies, might well have benefited from the training Indians had to offer.

Yet the Indians needed assistance to farm. They required implements, seed and oxen, and for a band to settle and develop a piece of land required interim provisions. The Indians could also profit immensely from a practical program of instruction in agriculture. These were among the demands that plains Indians brought to the bargaining table when the treaties were negotiated. As Victorian Canadians saw farming as the key to the permanent solution to the "Indian problem", conditions appeared favourable to a meeting of mutual interests. The Canadian government however showed little determination to see agriculture established on the reserves. That the Indians might become agriculturalists provided justification for limiting the Indians' land base and isolating them on reserves. Once these goals were accomplished the Indians were largely left on their own. The image of the Indian life as the antithesis of an agricultural way of life persisted and was often drawn upon as an explanation for the failure of farming to provide an adequate economic base for the plains Indians.

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140. Sarah Carter, "The Souris-Mouth Posts, 1793-1832", unpublished paper prepared for the Province of Manitoba, Historic Resources Branch, 1980.

141. Mae Atwood, ed., In Rupert's Land: Memoirs of Walter Traill, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1970), p. 85.

142. Grasshoppers often totally destroyed the crops at Brandon House in the early years of the nineteenth century. In Cowie's ten years in the West these plagues occurred almost annually. See Cowie, p. 336.

143. Atwood, p. 86.

144. Ibid.

145. Denig, p. 109. The research of F.V. Hayden, published in 1862, confirmed the existence of a Cree band known as the Magpies. See John R. Swanton, The Indian Tribes of North America, Smithsonian Institute Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 145, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 554.

146 Denig, p. 109.

147. Personal interview with Father G. Laviolette, St. Boniface, Manitoba, 27 July, 1983. Touchwood is a fungus which swells on poplar, willow and other trees. It was highly prized by plains dwellers as it caught fire readily and was used as a tinder.

148. Denig, p. 105.

149. Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), records relating to Indian Affairs, Record Group 10 (RG 10), vol. 3622, file 4945, Rev. Joseph Reader to Lt. Gov. Morris, 17 May, 1875.

150. Ibid.

151. N. Jaye Goosen, "Indians of the Fort Ellice Region", unpublished paper prepared for the Province of Manitoba, Historic Resources Branch, 1976, p. 17.

152. Kenneth J. Tyler, "Paskwaw", in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, ed. Frances Halpenny, vol. 11, 1881 to 1890, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 674-5.

153. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3578, file 505, J.C. Nelson to Edgar Dewdney, 6 November, 1883.

154. Goosen, p. 21.

155. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3578, file 505, Nelson to Dewdney, 6 November, 1883.

156. Ibid.

157. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, Angus McKay's report on Treaty Four for 1876, and vol. 3625, file 5489, W. Christie's report on Treaty Four for 1875.

158. Goosen, p. 17.

159. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report, 1876.

160. Ibid.

161. Ibid., vol. 3625, file 5489, Christie's report, 1875.

162. Ibid.

163. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade, pp. 220-21.

164. Ibid., p. 224.

165. Ibid.

166. Mandelbaum, p. 11.

167. Ibid., p. 10.

168. Fraser Papers, p. 7.

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170. Ibid.

171. Mandelbaum, pp. 9-10.

172. Fraser Papers, p. 6.

173. Ibid.

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177. Ibid., p. 239 and 414.

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179. Cowie, p. 338.

180. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report, 1876, p. 31.

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187. Ibid., vol. 3672, file 10,853, Pt. 1, Dickieson to L. Vankoughnet, 26 February, 1879.

188. Ibid., vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report, 1876, p. 37.

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197. Cowie, p. 385.

198. Tyler, "Paskwaw", pp. 674-5.

199. Fraser Papers, p. 18.

200. Ibid., p. 17.

201. Cowie, p. 389.

202. Fraser Papers, pp. 18-19.

203. Ibid, p. 22.

204. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report, 1876, p. 37.

205. Mandelbaum, p. 9.

206. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report, 1876, p. 40.

207. Fraser Papers, p. 18.

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209. Fraser Papers, p. 20. This study does not include evidence from the Standing Buffalo Dakota Reserve in the Muscowpetung Agency.

210. Provincial Archives of Manitoba (hereafter cited as PAM), Church Missionary Society, Charles Pratt journal, 1872, Rev. Joseph Reader's Annual reports for 1874, 1876.

# CHAPTER III

## THE "QUEEN'S BOUNTY": GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO INDIAN AGITATION FOR AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

Treaty Four was concluded in 1874, but by the time the buffalo disappeared from southern Saskatchewan in 1878-79, almost no progress was made in the Indians' transition to an agricultural way of life. The government showed very little commitment, although the Indians consistently displayed a willingness to adopt agriculture. While the treaty provided some meagre assistance in the way of implements, cattle and seed, these were distributed in a haphazard manner, if at all. Insisting on a strict and inflexible interpretation of the treaty, government officials refused to distribute items promised until the Indians were actually cultivating on their reserves, which proved impossible until surveys were completed and they had received some assistance. It readily became apparent that instruction in farming was necessary, and that the Indians had to be given provisions to allow them to remain on their reserves to seed in the spring, but these were not provided as they were not promised in Treaty Four. Officials in Ottawa who controlled policy and budget had no understanding of the needs and aspirations of the

Indians of the West, and they were quite indifferent to whether agriculture succeeded or not.

In devising a policy for the Cree, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine of what became the Treaty Four district there was much room for innovation. The buffalo hunters were in a unique situation as they faced the rapid and total extinction of their subsistence base. Measures designed to accommodate the Indians of the older provinces might have been altered and modified to deal with phenomena peculiar to the West. For the period of the 1870s however, the government relied on the policies and approaches pursued in the East. The innovations that were introduced resulted largely from pressure brought to bear by the Indians rather than from any government initiative.

The question of what policy should guide Canada in its relations with the Indians of the North West appears not to have been a matter of wide discussion by the public or in the press. Recommendations from interested parties were placed before government officials from time to time however and advice was occasionally sought. Foremost in the minds of those concerned with Indian affairs in the early 1870s was the establishment of law and order. Alarming reports of unchecked crime, anarchy and disorder were received from residents and observers in Western Canada. It was believed that the future of the region depended on the swift enforcement of the law.[1] The Minnesota "massacre" of the 1860s was vivid in the memories of many commentators, and

there was widespread anxiety that there was potential for a similar disaster in Canada's West. Promoters of the North West Mounted Police, organized in 1873, were generally concerned less with the future of the Indians than with the security of the lives and property of prospective settlers.[2]

There were observers who sensed however, that a prevailing spirit of unease and discontent among the Indians of the North West was caused not by the liquor traffic but by an anxiety about a future supply of food. By the early 1870s, government officials had been repeatedly warned that the buffalo was an endangered species, and urged to speedily adopt protective measures. Recommendations were made to limit the hunt to Indians only, to prohibit the export of buffalo hides and pemmican, to prevent slaughter by pounds and to regulate the hunt so that each hunter procured annually only what he required for himself and family.[3] Recognizing that these could only form "stop gap" measures however, other schemes and options were proposed to government officials.

E.H. Meredith, deputy minister of the new Department of the Interior in 1873, was, among other things, responsible for drawing up memos on Indian affairs in the West. Like most of his generation of Ottawa civil servants, Meredith had never visited the West and had no knowledge of or acquaintance with Indian people.[4] Meredith sought the advice of Alfred Selwyn, director of the Geological Survey on the question of the future of the western Indians.

Selwyn, whose expertise was gained through one trip from Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains in 1873, suggested that a hardy race of domestic cattle be introduced in areas where the buffalo were already absent.[5] As the Indians cared well for the horses they raised there was every possibility, in Selwyn's view, that they could become a "contented pastoral people, the change being the natural gradation from the hunter to the agriculturalist". Selwyn believed that to continue the policy of treaties involving annual payments was a mistake as the Indian did not learn to become industrious and self-reliant but was instead reduced to the position of a "permanent pauper". On the basis of his experience, Indians squandered any money they had. Selwyn recommended that instead of a cash annuity, the Indians be given credit at stores to be drawn upon only in cases of dire necessity. He believed an efficient border police could be raised among the plains tribes to help stop illicit trading and enforce measures which might be adopted for the preservation of the buffalo.

Meredith was impressed with Selwyn's ideas. His policy proposal for food provision in the North West incorporated many of Selwyn's recommendations, including the notion that cattle be introduced in an effort to make the Indians a pastoral people before they attempted agriculture.[6] To prevent the Indian from becoming a "permanent state pauper" Meredith proposed that the Indians work on the railways and

on survey crews and that they serve as guides and constables in the military and with the police.

Charles N. Bell, a young man who was also with the Geographical Survey, provided government officials with a number of suggestions about the Indians of the West.[7] His central idea was that what game remained in the territory should be kept exclusively for the Indians so that they would not starve while they learned to farm. Bell anticipated that the Indians would object to settling on reserves and proposed that the selection of final sites be delayed until the Indians were reconciled to the idea. In the meantime each tribe could be confined to its own territory in "large temporary reservations" which encompassed their hunting grounds until the game disappeared. Bell believed it would be necessary to station troops at the borders of these reserves to hold the Indians "in check" and to prevent encroachment by settlers, hunters and miners. He was gravely concerned that such encounters could lead to warfare in which the plains Indians would "fight it out to the last".

Other policy suggestions for the Indians of the North West included recommendations made by John Christian Schultz in the House of Commons in 1873.[8] Schultz believed that the amounts paid to the Indians of Treaties One and Two were inadequate in meeting even their most essential needs, estimating that the Indians ceded an average of forty square miles per person in exchange for only three dollars each.

He urged that subsequent treaties be more liberal. In his opinion the Indians should not be given a perpetual paltry annuity but a larger sum annually for a stipulated period of perhaps twenty-one years. He suggested that reserves be surveyed on the basis of 160 acres per individual rather than per family and that these be located far from centres of white population. Schultz recommended that a fund for the Indians be created from the sale of one section from each township of Dominion Lands, as was the case with school lands.

Government officials disregarded advice that they might improve on past settlements and avoid some of the oversights and blunders in their relations with the Indians of the North West and they ignored recommendations that the unique needs and characteristics of these people be taken into consideration in devising policy. The government relied instead on the general principles of Indian policy that had evolved in the East and were extended westward in the seven numbered treaties concluded between 1871 and 1877. Following practices established by William B. Robinson in 1850 in treaties negotiated with the Indians of Lakes Huron and Superior, the western treaties arranged for the transfer of large tracts of land well in advance of settler pressure. Aboriginal title was recognized and its relinquishment accepted in these treaties. In return the Indians received annuities, reserves and assurances that they could continue to hunt and fish on the unsettled portions of the land they

had ceded. Negotiations were entrusted to treaty commissioners who held large public meetings with Indians.

The Indians played an important role in determining both the timing and the nature of the western treaties. The Saulteaux of southern Manitoba and the North West Angle effectively created the fear of violence against those who might venture into their territory before treaties were negotiated with them and this pressure influenced the timing of Treaties One, Two and Three which were concluded by 1873.[9] Plans were to eventually extend this process westward but the government did not believe it had compelling reasons to do so in 1873 when the cabinet decided to proceed only as land was required for settlement.[10] The Indians of the North West however, urged that some form of agreement between them and the government be effected. For several years they had expressed a sense of unease and anxiety about the intentions of the Canadian government. Among the rumours that swept over the prairies were that the land had been sold without consultation and that troops stationed at Red River threatened hostility to Indians.[11] In 1871 a deputation of Cree chiefs expressed these concerns to W.J. Christie of the Hudson's Bay Company at Edmonton House.[12] They were assured at that time that they would be liberally treated with when the government applied for their land. Each succeeding year anxieties heightened however as no moves were made to proceed with treaties. The Cree were reported to be extremely restless in the spring of 1874.[13]

As government representatives had not yet appeared they had "the idea that no treaty is to be made with them, but that settlers are slowly moving west, occupying their country, killing their game and burning the woods & prairies".[14] Uneasiness increased with the presence of railway, telegraph and survey crews. The plains Indians were disturbed by the survey of large tracts of land around Hudson's Bay Company Posts in the winter of 1873 and disputes arose about the rightful ownership of these sites.[15] The Saulteaux of Fort Ellice notified Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris in the fall of 1873 that they were disturbed by the presence of survey crews in their midst and they wished to inform him that they had never been party to a treaty to extinguish their title.[16] The following spring Chief Poor Man of the Touchwood Hills sent his brother Kanooses to interview Morris and ascertain whether it was the case that someone was coming to see them about their land.[17] By interfering with the survey, and preventing the construction of the telegraph, the plains Indians made it clear that they would not allow settlement until their rights were fully recognized.

The Indians of the North West were anxious to treat as a means of ensuring their economic security in face of a very uncertain future. Early on they adopted the strategy and goal that any arrangement for their land had to involve assistance in developing an agricultural base. The Cree

chiefs of the northern plains conveyed this message to Governor Archibald in 1871. Their spokesman, Sweet Grass stated:

> We heard our lands were sold and we did not like it; we don't want to sell our lands; it is our property, and no one has a right to sell them. Our country is getting ruined of fur-bearing animals, hitherto our sole support, and now we are poor and want help - we want you to pity us. We want cattle, tools, agricultural implements, and assistance in everything when we come to settle - our country is no longer able to support us.[18]

Once negotiations were underway, the Indians were responsible for the introduction of the terms which provided for an alternate subsistence base. The government initially intended to offer only reserves and annuities.[19] In Treaties One and Two the government's terms were rejected by the Indians who demanded implements and farm animals. As the treaty commissioner claimed he had no authority to give his assent to these requests, these were listed in a memorandum entitled "outside promises". It was not until 1875 that the government accepted these as formal obligations, after considerable agitation from the Indian leaders of Manitoba. The Saulteaux of Treaty Three also requested agricultural aid and twice refused treaties that offered only reserves and annuities. Farm implements and domestic animals became a standard clause of subsequent treaties but the Indians made every possible effort to ensure that the terms would adequately provide the necessities for a new way of life.

The Qu'Appelle treaty or Treaty Four, was negotiated in September of 1874. The treaty commissioners were Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and the North West Territories, David Laird, Minister of the Interior, and W.J. Christie, a retired chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Loud Voice was the chief spokesman for the Cree at this meeting. It appears that many of the Cree were absent on the buffalo hunt, certainly Piapot's band and Okanese's were not present.[20] There was tension and disagreement between the Cree and Saulteaux during the negotiations. The recorded proceedings of Treaty Four do not represent an example of the plains Indians seeking guarantees that they be provided with the necessities on which to base a new agricultural life. Instead discussion was dominated, perhaps manipulated by the Saulteaux through their spokesman the Gambler, who insisted that the status of the Hudson's Bay Company be settled before any of the treaty terms be considered. According to Morris the Cree were willing to discuss the treaty from the beginning, but the Saulteaux held out and attempted to encourage the others to do so as well.[21] The Saulteaux objected to the survey of the Hudson's Bay Company reserve without their consultation. The claimed that the £3,000,000 paid by Canada to the Company should rightfully be theirs. They objected to the Company trading in their territory except at the posts and they asked that the debts owed by the Indians to the Company

be cleared as some compensation for the Company's profits from the transfer of their land.

It was not until the sixth and final day of the conference that the terms of the treaty were considered, and there was very limited questioning, bargaining or discussion. At the request of Kanooses, the terms of the North-West Angle treaty were explained by Morris, who stated they could expect no more than what was granted there and would in fact receive proportionately less as they numbered about one-half of the Lake of the Woods Indians. In return for the release and surrender of their rights, titles and privileges to the tract ceded the Indians were to be assigned reserves after consultation with each band. These were "to be of sufficient area to allow one square mile for each family of five, or in that proportion for larger or smaller families".[22] The treaty stipulated that the government could sell, lease or otherwise dispose of these reserves once the Indians' consent had been obtained but that the Indians were not themselves entitled to sell or otherwise alienate any of their reserve land. Each chief was to receive an annuity of $25.00, for each head man, of which there would not be more than four, $15.00, and for every man, woman and child, $5.00. Every year, powder, shot, ball and twine to the value of $750.00 would be distributed among all the Treaty Four bands. To encourage the practice of agriculture among the Indians certain articles were to be given "once for all".

> to any band thereof who are now actually cultivating the soil, or who shall hereafter settle on these reserves and commence to break up the land, that is to say - two hoes, one spade, one scythe, and one axe for every family so actually cultivating; and enough seed, wheat, barley, oats and potatoes to plant such lands as they have broken up; also one plough and two harrows for every ten families so cultivating as aforesaid; and also to each Chief, for the use of his band band as aforesaid, one yoke of oxen, one bull, four cows, a chest of ordinary carpenter's tools, five hand-saws, five augers, one cross-cut saw, the necessary files, and one grindstone..."[23]

The terms providing for the encouragement of agriculture differed in some important respects from those negotiated by the Plains Cree at Treaty Six two years later. In Treaty Six, each family received four hoes and two spades. Every three families rather than every ten shared a plough and harrows. Each chief in Treaty Six received two yoke of oxen, two more cows than in Treaty Four, and a boar and two sows. A horse harness, and wagon was also promised to each chief. A handmill was to be given to each band that raised sufficient grain to warrant the use of one. Perhaps the most significant difference bearing on the encouragement of agriculture was the promise in Treaty Six that

> during the next three years, after two or more of the reserves hereby agreed to be set apart to the Indians, shall have been agreed upon and surveyed, there shall be granted to the Indians included under the Chiefs adhering to the treaty at Carlton, each spring, the sum of one thousand dollars to be expended for them by Her Majesty's Indian Agents, in the purchase of provisions for the use of such of the band as are actually settled on the reserves and are engaged in cultivating the soils, to assist them in such cultivation..."[24]

The Indians adhering to Treaty Six at Fort Pitt were also granted three years of provisions not to exceed one thousand dollars. The Treaty Six Indians were persistent in bargaining for these interim provisions to allow them to begin farming. It appears likely they were aware of the limited progress made by the Treaty Four Indians who did not have such provisions. The Indians of Treaty Six were also promised that in the event of any pestilence or general famine they would receive assistance, a clause not included in Treaty Four.

During the first four seasons after the treaty was signed, new or expanded agricultural activity was minimal among the Treaty Four bands. Unfortunately these were critical years, when the beginning of an agricultural base could have been established before the buffalo disappeared altogether from the plains. Yet farming was possible only for the small number of bands who had their reserves surveyed during this period for according to the government interpretation of the treaty, implements and cattle had been promised only to those bands settled and actually cultivating. Consultations between officials and Indian bands on the selection of reserve sites began in the fall of 1875. The issue was not immediately raised after the treaty was signed as was the case in Treaty Six. William Joseph Christie was assigned the task of conferring with the bands in choosing reserves "where they shall be deemed most

convenient and advantageous to the Indians".[25] Christie, one of the Treaty Four commissioners, was the "country-born" or mixed-blood son of Governor Alexander Christie of the Hudson's Bay Company.[26] He was educated in Scotland and had a distinguished career with the Hudson's Bay Company, serving as chief factor in charge of the Saskatchewan District before his retirement to Brockville, Ontario. Christie was familiar with the residents of the Treaty Four region as he had been chief trader at Swan River in the 1850s. He was fluent in Cree and perhaps also in Saulteaux.[27] Christie's assistant, M.G. Dickieson, a clerk in the Department of the Interior, was also present at the "long interviews" held with the bands in the fall of 1875. Dickieson was later appointed Indian agent and assistant Indian superintendent of the North West superintendency.[28] William Wagner of the Dominion Land Survey also attended these sessions. He had experience surveying reserves in Manitoba.

Christie's instructions from David Laird, Minister of the Interior, were that the reserves should not be too numerous and that as far as possible it would be best to group together as many bands that spoke the same language as would consent to such an arrangement.[29] Laird provided Christie with a memorandum drawn up by the Surveyor General, Colonel Dennis, on the question of reserve sites and stated that he concurred with these views. Dennis suggested that

a tract of land suitable for a reserve should include a mixture of water, arable land, and land on which the Indians might continue to hunt.

> the interests of the Indians should be considered so far as to give them all the necessary frontage upon a river or lake, to include an abundance of land for farming purposes for the Band at the same time the tract should be made to run back and include a fair share also of land which may not be so desireable for farming but would be valuable for other purposes connected with the Band, such as hunting etc.[30]

With the possible exception of the stipulation that sites should include land undesirable for farming on which the Indians might continue to hunt, the features of ample water, timber and arable land did not differ from those which an average homesteader of the time might have considered necessary for a successful venture. A further suggestion however, did not reflect concern that reserve sites be located near the markets which would make them viable agricultural tracts. Dennis recommended that they "be selected in such manner as not to interfere with the possible requirements of future settlement, or of land for railway purposes".[31] He included a map indicating the approximate line of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), in order that reserve lands would not be set apart "in the vicinity of the line". The proposed route of the line ran through the heart of what was then considered to be the land with the greatest agricultural potential, the "fertile belt". Clearly Dennis did not consider it necessary or

important that the reserves be located within this belt, or that Indian farmers have access to railway facilities for reaching distant markets.

The exploring expeditions of Captain John Palliser and H.Y. Hind, both of the late 1850s, were largely in agreement concerning the agricultural potential of the North West and through their work the terms "fertile belt" and "Palliser's triangle" became standard in geographical descriptions of the land. (See Figure 3.) The treeless prairie, deficient in wood, water and vegetation, was regarded as arid and unfit for permanent habitation. The fertile belt, dramatically depicted in Hind's Narrative, published in 1860, extended from Pembina up the Red to the Forks and northwest along the Assiniboine, taking a southerly swoop to include the Touchwood Hills, continuing to the forks of the Saskatchewan, and following the North Saskatchewan to the Rocky Mountains.[32] Also included within the fertile belt were isolated outliers on the arid plains such as Moose Mountain, Pheasant Hill, and the File Hills. The good soil, ample timber, adequate precipitation, and rich pasturage of the fertile belt was believed to be capable of sustaining a vast population. The image of an arid south and a fertile parkland belt persisted into the 1880s. It was not until then that a suitable set of dry-belt farming techniques designed to cope with conditions peculiar to the western plains began to develop. Botanist John Macoun rejected Palliser and Hind's gloomy assessment of the southern

plains, claiming that the "so-called arid country was one of unsurpassed fertility".[33] Macoun published his findings in 1882. His evaluation of the potential of the grasslands lent support to the 1881 decision to re-route the CPR directly westward from Winnipeg.[34] Many of the Treaty Four reserves, initially surveyed in the belief that they were remote from the proposed railway through the fertile belt, ended up in enviable proximity to the main line when the decision was made to adopt the southern route.

In the mid-1870s however, the image of a barren southern plain and a fertile parkland belt prevailed. This belief was reflected in the proposed route of the CPR and in the progress of the sub-division survey which proceeded in a northwesterly direction from the Portage Plains, along the north branch of the Saskatchewan Trail. (See Figures 4 and 5.) W.J. Christie's own opinions on the land most suitable for farming in the West were squarely in agreement with those of Palliser and Hind.[35] He highly praised the valley of the North Saskatchewan from the forks to Edmonton, and the land to the north of Edmonton. He did not include any country to the south as well adapted for farming. Christie's criteria were essentially good soil, abundant timber, plenty of water, and lakes with whitefish.

The criteria the Indians had in mind in selecting their sites, and what concept they had of a reserve in 1875 is more difficult to ascertain. In the recorded treaty proceedings the issue was not discussed at any length. This

is in contrast to the Treaty Six negotiations during which the commissioners were met with pointed questions and concerns, including whether they would be free to select another site if the original did not please them, and if timber became scarce on their reserve, whether they would be free to take it anywhere on the common.[36] At Qu'Appelle the assembly was simply told that reserves would be surveyed when people were ready to "plant the seed".[37] Nothing was said about the move to reserves being compulsory; they were told it might be a long time before the land was settled, and they were assured that they could continue to hunt and fish where they liked in the meantime.

In 1875 the government was prepared to survey reserves only for those bands that clearly manifested a desire to settle and farm immediately. The evidence suggests that the bands prepared to do so in the westerly section of Treaty Four were free to choose any site they pleased, and that there was no attempt to either persuade them to take up certain tracts, or dissuade them from others. The same could not be said of those bands further to the east whose site selections potentially interfered with the proposed line of the railway.[38] Most of the westerly bands willing to have their reserves surveyed in the mid-1870s chose the Touchwood Hills, a site these bands had long been associated with as a winter encampment, near the Hudson's Bay Company post they were accustomed to trading with. The Touchwood Hills were within what on Hind's map was regarded as the

fertile belt, but they were remote from the land then being surveyed for settlement. The records of the surveyor of these reserves indicate that he relied on the instructions of the Indians as to how the survey should proceed, and it could not proceed without their consent and assistance.

Following his interviews with the bands in 1875, Christie divided the Indians into three groups. Nine bands within Treaty Four had begun to farm already "to a slight extent", and wished to have their reserves surveyed as soon as possible.[39] Among these were the bands of George Gordon and Poor Man who selected sites in the Touchwood Hills. At this time Pasquah wanted his reserve at Leech Lake where his band had houses and gardens but he later changed his mind. A second group of eight bands were not yet prepared to settle but described to Christie where they wished their reserves to be located. Included in this group were the bands of Loud Voice, Star Blanket, Ready Bow, Day Star, Piapot, Little Black Bear, and Muscowequan. Christie defined a third group that expressed no desire to select reserves and commence farming. These were the bands that followed Kakewistahaw, Chacachas, Cowessess, and Okanese.

William Wagner was instructed in August of 1875 to survey George Gordon's reserve at the Little Touchwood Hills, Poor Man's at the Big Touchwood Hills, a reserve for the seven families from the Fort Ellice Band at Crooked Lakes, and Pasquah's at Leech Lake. Wagner's duties were much more varied than simply running the boundaries of

reserves. In the case of Gordon's reserve, Wagner was obliged to negotiate for a number of days before the band agreed to choose a site. It was Wagner who calculated the number of square miles this band was entitled to, and in 1875 he also had the responsibility of distributing implements among some of the Treaty Four bands, and of reporting whether adequate provision had been made for wintering stock. In fact the task of implementing some of the most immediate treaty terms fell to a surveyor.

Wagner began with the survey of Gordon's reserve on the west side of the Little Touchwood Hills. (See Figure 6.) Here the band had several houses and about twenty acres under cultivation.[40] On his arrival Wagner was informed by the chief that they did not wish the survey to proceed that fall as they wanted to hold a council with all the chiefs who intended to settle at the Touchwood Hills.[41] According to his account, Wagner explained to Gordon that "It was not their business, that each tribe had to look out for themselves", but this did not succeed in persuading the chief to allow the survey to begin.[42] On returning to his camp Wagner met a man named McNab who informed him that Pasquah had sent a messenger and presents to Gordon, advising him to oppose the survey of his reserve. Two days later Wagner was asked by Charles Pratt and his son to return to Gordon's camp. It took another two days to come to an "understanding" but the survey began although it was not completed until the following year. During the councils

which were held, five families (thirty people) declared that they wished to be included in the band. Wagner calculated that the band was entitled to seven square miles more than the forty-one square miles suggested by the Indian commissioner. He described the reserve as generally hilly, broken by lakes and ponds with "bad water" inhabited by muskrats. It was for the most part well wooded with prairie to the southeast which was covered with willows and hazel. Wagner found the soil "good" and described it as class 2 which meant moderate limitations might restrict the range of crops. He noted that most of the land in the immediate vicinity of Touchwood was fertile, a prairie which was "part [of] or [a] continuation of the Fertile Belt".[43] The site of the reserve itself however, located "in the woods" confirmed Wagner's belief "that from this and the next generation no hope can be entertained that the 'red man' will entirely devote himself to agriculture - but gardening will be carried on", provided he continued, that they were given instruction for two years. He noted that their 1875 crop produced good returns but their potatoes, harvested in October, were not ripe as they had been sown in July. An official who visited Gordon's reserve in 1876 described it as:

> well adapted for farming and grazing purposes. It is well wooded with poplar but no other kind of timber is to be found on it. What there is however answers very well for building and fencing. The soil is very good and easily worked and is well watered by several lakes which in

> summer time swarm with wild fowl affording an almost inexhaustible supply of food for the Indians.[44]

In the fall of 1876, Angus McKay, Christie's replacement as government agent for Treaty Four, consulted once again with the chiefs and head men of the Treaty Four bands with regard to their reserves. McKay was a prominent Red River Métis, born at Edmonton House.[45] He was fluent in Indian languages as well as in French and English. Four days were spent on the issue of reserves at Qu'Appelle where the bands were gathered to receive their annuities. Surveyor Wagner was also present at these interviews. McKay found that at first they were "unwilling to point out localities or to entertain the idea at all", as they were under the impression "that once they accepted their reserves they would come under the subjection and control of the white man".[46] According to McKay he "pointed out where they were in error", and they agreed to locate their reserves. Day Star and Ready Bow expressed a desire to begin farming, and Loud Voice also wished to go on his reserve. Two bands that had not pointed out localities the year before, those of Chacachas and Kakewistahaw, indicated where they wished their reserves to be surveyed. Part of Kakewistahaw's band expressed a desire to go on the reserve the next season while the rest were still inclined to follow the buffalo.

Wagner surveyed three more reserves in the Touchwood Hills in 1876. Poor Man's was surveyed on the south side of the Big Touchwood Hills at a place called "the old Fort".

According to McKay, Day Star's band also expressed a strong desire to farm. He believed that some members of this band would also begin work in the spring of 1877. Their reserve was surveyed in the Big Touchwood Hills, adjoining Poor Man's on the west side. (See Figure 7.) A number of the members of Ready Bow's band also stated that they wished to build houses and break land in the spring of 1877. Their reserve was surveyed on the south side of the Big Touchwood Hills, east of and adjoining Poor Man's. McKay reported that these three reserves were very similar. They consisted of very good farming country with numerous grass meadows and small lakes. The timber available was small but "fit for building purposes of the Indians." He believed the timber would improve greatly in a few years as it grew rapidly, and described the country as being of a rolling nature, "with good soil in parts rather light but easily worked". Yet within a few years all of the reserves in the Touchwood Hills were found to contain far too litte arable land.

A small reserve was surveyed that same year for the seven families of the Fort Ellice band, also known as the Mosquito or Sakemay band.[47] This was at the head of Crooked Lakes where they had houses and land under cultivation. McKay praised it as a site for a reserve mainly because there were large numbers of fish and wildfowl. He described the soil as light on top of the bluff but good in the river valley, although portions were covered with young poplar.

It was well supplied with grass meadows which promised a large supply of hay.

In 1875 Pasquah indicated that he wanted his reserve surveyed at Leech Lake where his band had houses and gardens. McKay reported in 1876 however that the chief and his band wanted their reserve on the south side of the first or upper Qu'Appelle Lake, a few miles east of Fort Qu'Appelle, and the site was surveyed that year by Wagner. The main advantage of the location, according to McKay, was that the lake was well stocked with fish which suited the tastes of the band as many families subsisted entirely on fish and wildfowl for much of the summer. The timber was very small, and the soil in parts light however, and McKay described the reserve as "rather a poor one", although there were numerous hay meadows. A number of families were living on the reserve in 1876 and were making attempts to farm.

Within two years of signing their treaty then, reserves had been surveyed for six of the Touchwood and Qu'Appelle bands who had been cultivating at the time of the treaty or expressed a desire to begin farming. These bands received little assistance or encouragement in their efforts to farm. Government officials were reluctant and tentative about distributing those items promised in the treaty for this purpose. During the 1875 season no steps were taken to issue implements and seed to these bands and cattle were supplied to Pasquah's band only, who received two oxen and four cows.[48] The bands prepared to farm expected their

complement of implements, cattle and seed immediately, whether or not their reserves had been surveyed. In mid-July of 1875, two messengers sent by chiefs from the Qu'Appelle arrived in Winnipeg to inform Lieutenant-Governor Morris that they wanted their cattle and implements delivered at once.[49] One of these was sent by Chief Poor Man of the Touchwood Hills. Christie was present at his interview with Morris, who anxiously wired the Minister of the Interior, David Laird, for instructions. Laird replied that the Qu'Appelle chiefs were "rather fast" as their reserves had not yet been selected.[50] If Christie on his return that fall reported that they were really farming, their application for cattle and implements would receive immediate attention. Government officials were determined to adhere strictly to the exact wording of the treaty which stated that implements, cattle and seed would be given to "any band now actually cultivating the soil, or who shall hereafter settle on these reserves and commence to break up the land"[51] This wording was quite deliberate and it was repeated in Treaty Six. Morris explained at those proceedings that goods were to be given only to those actually cultivating the soil "for if given to all it would encourage idleness".[52] The surveyor who was entrusted with the duty of distributing these goods however, simply did not believe that Indians could properly take care of farm implements and cattle. The concern of the Department of the Interior in July of 1875 was that "the Government should not

be put to the expense of sending implements and cattle that are not likely to be used for the purpose for which they are intended".[53] Morris informed Poor Man's messenger that according to the terms of the treaty, cattle and implements were to be distributed only when the Indians were actually located on their reserves.[54] Poor Man's reserve was not surveyed until the following year. The messenger was also told that Christie would report on the numbers of Indians who had actually commenced to cultivate the soil, and that as soon as possible, the implements promised according to the terms of the treaty would be supplied.

W.J. Christie recognized that the Indians were crippled in their efforts to begin farming without implements and cattle and he recommended that these should be given not only to those actually cultivating the land but to those who "manifested a disposition to do so".[55] He reported in July of 1875 that the Indians themselves stated that without implements they could not begin to break the land. Surveyor Wagner was authorized to distribute implements among some of the Touchwood Indians in the fall of 1875 but the order reached him too late.[56] Wagner stated that he would not have issued implements even if the order had reached him in time, as he believed that the Indians would only sell them. According to Wagner "outsiders" at the Touchwood Hills were not buying from the Hudson's Bay Company store as they were awaiting the distribution of tools and implements among the Indians.[57] The surveyor was also authorized to deliver

cattle to Poor Man's band if he determined that there were adequate provisions for wintering stock. Wagner decided that there was not. He was cynical about the ability of the Indians to care for cattle as he learned that Pasquah had attempted to sell one of his oxen, and being unable to do this, "had commenced to eat a cow".[58] The surveyor warned the officer in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company store at Fort Qu'Appelle that purchasing cattle given to Indians was considered a misdemeanour but he was not optimistic that many of the cattle would be left in the spring.

These distressing reports from Wagner alarmed the government into further caution and parsimony in distributing cattle and implements. In April of 1876, Angus McKay was authorized to distribute implements to those he believed "would actually require and use them".[59] He was to procure a branding iron with the letters "I.D." (Indian Department) to clearly mark any implements he issued. He was instructed to purchase a small quantity of seed grain, potatoes, and garden seed for the Treaty Four Indians but he was to see that these were applied strictly to the purpose for which they were intended and not sold or consumed. McKay was authorized to supply those Indians actually engaged in planting with a small quantity of provisions, not to exceed $150.00. He was to learn the fate of the cattle given to Pasquah's band and to recommend whether cattle should be given to any other bands that would actually require them and would take good care of them. Similar

instructions governed the distribution of ammunition and twine; they were to go only to those Indians likely to make good use of them. McKay was issued two sets of carpenters' tools which were to be given only to those bands settled on reserves and likely to make use of the tools in building houses.

By the time instructions reached McKay in the spring of 1876, the season was too far advanced to purchase seed wheat.[60] McKay bought potato and turnip seed in Winnipeg but these also proved to be of little use as the potatoes were damaged en route and the season was too far advanced to plant either. McKay did not arrive at Fort Qu'Appelle until mid-July. He was informed that most of the Indians were hunting buffalo in the vicinity of the Eyebrow Hills. Some members of what he called the "Qu'Appelle band" were present to receive their seed, and he distributed fifty bushels of seed potatoes among them. Pasquah's band received part of this amount and was also issued a tool chest, a plough, two harrows, twenty hoes, twelve scythes and snaithes, ten axes, twelve spades, a cross-cut saw, a pit saw, a grind stone, a whipple tree, a cross bar, twelve scythe stones, five augers and twelve files.[61] Gordon's band at the Touchwood Hills received fifty bushels of seed potatoes, a chest of tools, a plough, two harrows, forty-four hoes, twenty-four scythes and snaithes, twenty-four axes, five hand saws, a cross cut saw, a pit saw, eighteen spades, a grind stone, two pair of chain traces, two whipple trees, one cross bar, twelve

scythe stones, five augers and fourteen files.[62] These were the only Cree bands in Treaty Four to receive implements that year, despite the fact that at least three other bands had clearly expressed the desire to build houses and break land the following spring.

While travelling among the Qu'Appelle and Touchwood Indians, McKay "perceived that in one or two cases they had already commenced building houses and putting up hay for winter use, in anticipation of getting cattle from the government".[63] He reported that the Indians had complained that they could not construct buildings because they had no animals to draw timber, and they could not break land for farming purposes until they were supplied with implements and animals. While attempts had been made to build shelters and break land, little could be accomplished without draught animals. McKay was not critical of Pasquah's treatment of his cattle. He reported that Pasquah's excuse for killing one of his cows was "That he had not been supplied with scythes and snaithes the summer before, and consequently he was unable to put up a sufficient supply of hay to feed them over the winter".[64]

During the season of 1876 then, agriculture progressed not at all in the Qu'Appelle and Touchwood portions of Treaty Four. An important lesson was learned however. It was realized that if seed grain was to be of any use it had to be sent to the different distribution points in the autumn. It was found that the department could purchase

most of the seed required from the Company posts in the vicinity, and this would save the cost of transporting goods from Winnipeg. Barley was purchased that fall at Portage, and stored for distribution in the spring. It also became evident that there were grave problems involved in asking the Indians to congregate at certain points in the spring to receive their seed. When McKay arrived at Fort Ellice in mid-June he found the Indians there in a state of starvation.[65] They had understood from Christie that seed would be issued early in the spring, and because they were daily expecting the seed they had not gone out to hunt. They would have suffered severely had the post master not supplied them with rations in return for making a road. The Indians at Fort Pelly were similarly angry at the delay in the delivery of their seed and implements, and at Qu'Appelle, most of the Indians were absent hunting.

Angus McKay's career as Indian agent in Treaty Four lasted only the season of 1876. He was transferred to northern Manitoba. Lawrence Vankoughnet, deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, explained to Sir John Macdonald in 1879 that the department viewed McKay as a most "undesireable person", whose record "is not of such a nature as to justify it in placing much confidence in him".[66] Laird had reported that McKay had incited the Indians to express dissatisfaction at the manner in which they were treated by the government, "founding his statement to them upon the fact, that certain farming implements and

presents which were under the Treaty agreed to be given the Indians at a certain time were not forthcoming on the date they were expected by them".[67] According to Vankoughnet, McKay knew very well that the delays were caused by the great floods of that year. He suspected that McKay had "intrigued" with his brother the Honourable James McKay, freighter of supplies to the Indians, to delay the distribution of articles for several days after they had arrived, and bill the government for the large sum that it cost to feed the Indians while they were detained. McKay had to be sent where he could "do little or no harm". Despite his frequent requests for a transfer to a more settled region in the West, McKay rounded out his career with Indian Affairs in northern Manitoba.

Allan McDonald replaced McKay as Indian agent for Treaty Four. Born in British Columbia, and educated in Montreal, McDonald was the son of a family prominent in the Hudson's Bay Company, whose mother was of Indian ancestry.[68] He had some experience with agriculture as his father farmed at Fort Langley and later at Fort Colvile where he grew up. McDonald was an officer in the Canadian forces and eventually a colonel, participating in both Riel "rebellions", and was part of the military escort that accompanied the Treaty Four commissioners in 1874. Unlike Christie and McKay, who journeyed into the agency for only a few months of the year, McDonald made Swan River his home. He was one of a small number of agents working within what

was by 1877 called the North-West Superintendency, which included Treaties Four, Six and Seven, an area of 206,000 square miles, with an estimated population of 17,000 Indians.[69] David Laird, a recent resident of Battleford, combined the duties and responsibilities of Lieutenant-Governor and Indian superintendent for the North-West Superintendency. Laird was an editor and publisher from Prince Edward Island who became one of the province's first Members of Parliament in 1873. He was appointed Alexander Mackenzie's Minister of the Interior and served in that position until 1876 when he headed west as Lieutenant-Governor of the North West.[70] M.G. Dickieson was appointed Laird's assistant, and he also held the position of Indian agent for Treaty Six. As Laird outlined their duties, the resident local agents were to pay annuities, distribute the "annual presents", instruct the Indians in farming, and encourage them to help themselves.[71] It was also hoped they might exercise a "moral and industrial influence" over the bands.

Agent McDonald's report for 1877 suggests that there was little progress in agriculture that year among the Qu'Appelle and Touchwood Indians. A man hired for a few days in the spring before McDonald's arrival in the agency worked with Gordon's band and gave them a small quantity of provisions.[72] During his tour of annuity payments in August, McDonald distributed some implements but regretted to report that he was unable to assist on the reserves where

farming had begun because the places indicated to him for payments were in all cases some distance from the reserves. Two bands on their reserves in the Touchwood Hills began farming operations that spring. Poor Man's band was reported to have three acres under cultivation but the crop was in a low lying area and was damaged by the rains of the season.[73] McDonald gave this band two hay forks, three whet stones, and a tool chest in 1877. These are the first implements they are reported to have received but some may have been issued by a man hired for a few days that spring. McDonald had no knowledge of what cattle and implements were supplied to the Indians before his appointment.[74] The implements he issued to the three families from Day Star's band, who began work on their reserve that spring, indicate that he adhered strictly to the formula outlined in the treaty for those bands beginning to farm. They were given six hoes, three spades, three scythes, three snaithes, three axes, two hay forks and three whet stones. Ploughs and harrows were on hand in storage at Qu'Appelle but these were not distributed, presumably because there were not as yet ten families cultivating, as stipulated in the treaty.

After his first season with the Treaty Four Indians, McDonald came to believe that the Indians had "far more difficulties to contend with in raising the first crop than is generally supposed".[75] A major problem was that there was not an adequate supply of food on hand on the reserves in spring when work was begun and families could simply not

congregate. He urged that a sum be placed to the credit of the agent to purchase a supply of provisions to be distributed to those actually engaged in ploughing and sowing. McDonald also recommended that the Indians be paid annuities on their reserves, rather than asking them to travel in some cases over seventy miles. He felt this might induce some families to establish themselves on the reserves and turn their full attention to agriculture.

David Laird also felt that the Indians of Treaty Four should be granted provisions at seed time and he asked in December of 1877 that $1,000.00 be set aside for that purpose for the next spring, noting that provision was made for this in Treaty Six.[76] Laird asked for a further $1,000.00 to allow him to hire competent persons to assist the Indians in putting in their crops in the spring. He believed the money would be "most usefully employed in teaching the Indians who are beginning farming operations, how to set and work their ploughs and other implements, and the proper quantities and methods of sowing their seeds".[77] Although Laird was not as yet familiar with conditions peculiar to farming in the West, he was well acquainted with agriculture as his father was reputed to have been one of the best farmers on P.E.I. Laird was also attempting to raise wheat and keep some cattle at Battleford.[78]

For a number of years, agents in the field had urged officials in Ottawa to provide the Indians with some instruction in agriculture. As farm instructors were not

promised in the treaties officials in Ottawa were not prepared to provide them. Agents were blithely expected to instruct in agriculture but this soon proved impossible because of their other responsibilities over vast territories. In 1875, M.G. Dickieson informed Laird, who was then the Minister of the Interior, that only with instruction in working the land and planting would the Indians be induced to settle and cultivate.[79] Otherwise he was pessimistic about their agricultural future. The greatest impediment according to Dickieson was the "belief inherent in the mind of every Indian that it is derogatory to the dignity of man to work".[80] He warned that:

> It cannot be expected that a wild untutored savage who perhaps never saw a plough, or any of the larger agricultural implements, and never used a hoe or any of the smaller farming tools can at once be turned into a farmer skilful enough to have sufficient from the land allotted to him to maintain himself and family. He might almost as well be expected to run a steam engine or to take charge of any other complicated piece of mechanism as to do this, he knows nearly as much of one as the other.[81]

Dickieson proposed that 640 acres of land on each reserve be set aside as a model or stock farm under the supervision of a skilful agriculturalist who was also acquainted with the Indians and their languages. The farmer would direct the Indians in cultivating their own plots but Indians could also be employed building, fencing and farming on the model farms. Dickieson suggested that one such farm be organized on an experimental basis at first, and he

recommended a reserve for the Fort Pelly Indians. The surplus produce raised he believed could be sold to the North West Mounted Police, or to the railway and telegraph crews. Laird disregarded this advice in 1875; it was not until he arrived in the West that he came to see the necessity of farm instruction for the Indians.

In a number of his reports, surveyor Wagner also pointed out the pressing need for instruction in farming. Wagner was particularly concerned for the agricultural future of the plains hunters of the Treaty Four district who he believed were at a disadvantage compared to their woodland neighbors to the east who had at least observed farming, and knew what to do with their implements.[82] As for the plains hunter however, "I am sure that of itself imagination will not be able to give him a clue how to set a plough share or cultivate seeds given to him".[83] Wagner urged the government to provide those bands "whose interests for a bona fide settlement are proven", an agriculturalist who was fluent in their language to assist for at least six months, from seeding to harvest.

As agents in the field became fully convinced that the Indians needed more assistance, particularly in the way of instruction in agriculture, before they could raise any quantity of farm produce, officials in Ottawa became less inclined to consider any increased expenditure. David Mills, Laird's successor as Minister of the Interior, was unfamiliar with conditions in the West, but was certain,

despite the advice of his informants, that more than enough was being done to encourage agriculture.[84] Mills' correspondence with Laird indicates that he had limited understanding of the whereabouts and circumstances of the Indians. His concerns were to keep costs down, and to limit assistance, as he believed that too much would encourage idleness, and the Indians would not then be inclined to make exertions to help themselves.[85] Mills was convinced that implements and stock had been haphazardly and lavishly distributed, that storehouses were brimming with unrequired implements, that the issued tools were lying idle, and that the cattle were being consumed. Based on information collected in 1877, Mills had his accountant Robert Sinclair draw up tables showing the numbers of implements and cattle purchased and distributed, and featuring a special category of items issued that were not stipulated in the treaty.[86]

David Laird was unsuccessful in dislodging Mills' conviction that the government had been anything but generous in its treatment of the Indians. Laird was angry and discouraged to learn in the spring of 1878 that his request for two to three thousand dollars was refused on the grounds that "there is no provision therefor in the estimates".[87] The winter of 1877-78 had been difficult for all residents of the North West. Buffalo were scarce, the Indians were very poorly off and in some cases starving.[88] Except for a few stray herds the buffalo did not return after the winter of 1878. A successful crop season in 1878

appeared critical to government officials in the West. Unless adequate produce could be grown and stored a winter of starvation was imminent, or the government would be forced to feed the Indians, certainly in Treaty Six where they were assured of assistance in the event of a famine. Laird and other agents in the field were certain that if the Indians were issued provisions in the spring, and given some instruction in agriculture, a large quantity of potatoes and grain could be raised.[89] These measures could save the government the very large expense of feeding the Indians over the winter. In April of 1878, Dickieson strongly urged the government to approve Laird's recommendations that men be hired to assist at seeding time and that provisions be issued to the Treaty Four Indians, even though these were not provided for in the treaty "as I think we are on the eve of an Indian outbreak which will be caused principally by starvation, it does not do to scan the exact lines of a treaty too closely".[90]

The Minister of the Interior did not act on the recommendations of his representatives in the North West. Laird's request for provisions for the Indians of Treaty Four at seed time was struck off the estimates as Mills "did not think it well in the public interest to make an unauthorized expenditure, thus anticipating the action of Parliament".[91] Mills also cut in half the amount Laird had proposed would be needed for the Indians of Carlton and Pitt at seed time, claiming that the clause promising provisions

was to go into operation only when the Indians were located on their reserves, and most of these had not yet been surveyed. Mills allowed Laird $600.00 to engage persons competent to instruct in agriculture. He had lowered Laird's estimate of $1,000.00 because he regarded it as the duty of the local agents Dickieson in Treaty Six, and McDonald in Treaty Four, to direct and advise the Indians in their efforts at farming. "During the greater portion of the year the ordinary Indian Agents have very little to do," Mills wrote, "and the amount of compensation is very large in proportion to their work."[92] The services of agents "not disposed or not competent to instruct and actively aid the Indians in putting in and taking care of their crops ought not in my opinion, to be retained," he continued. Laird's tenders for the supply of beef and flour for the Indians of Treaty Four during payment of annuities were struck out of those let in Winnipeg, and he was not informed of this until the spring of 1878.[93] He was clearly incensed at the attitude of the Minister. Laird warned that the government had to chose one of three policies: "to help the Indians to farm and raise stock, to feed them, or to fight them."[94] As his suggestions were not being acted upon, Laird informed Mills that he would be extremely gratified to receive his instructions. The Minister replied that the Indians should be induced to raise the necessary means of subsistence themselves, and this could only be done by getting them on their reserves and taking the requisite steps to instruct

them in agriculture.[95] "The Indians," Mills wrote, "should be constantly impressed with the necessity of their devoting themselves to agriculture at once to avoid famine."[96]

The crop season of 1878 in the Treaty Four district saw no improvement over the previous years. A grant for the purchase of provisions was approved too late to be of any service.[97] Laird reported that the sole agent in Treaty Four could scarcely even see to the distribution of seed grain and the payment of annuities.[98] That season only two ploughs, two harrows, thirteen spades, eighteen axes, forty-one hoes, four oxen, one bull and one cow were issued in all of Treaty Four.[99] Laird noted in his annual report that this limited amount was in part explained by the numbers of implements and cattle issued in previous years but also that "it must be admitted that most of the Indians connected with that Treaty are very backward about engaging in agriculture".[100] Certainly there was a marked contrast between the progress of the Treaty Six Indians and those of Treaty Four who had concluded their treaty two years earlier and should have been in the advance. In Treaty Six, many bands had by 1878, made what officials lauded as "commendable efforts".[101] The bands of Red Pheasant, Ahtakakakoop and Mistawasis, all formerly plains hunters, had from twenty to forty acres under cultivation and there were some remarkable success stories such as John Smith's band that had 120 acres under crop, and the band at White Fish Lake farmed 200 acres.[102] The plains hunters of Treaty

Four in 1878 were still almost totally dependent on the buffalo. Department officials puzzling over this contrast began to settle on the idea that the Indians were willfully rejecting the reserve system and an agricultural way of life, and inflexibly maintaining their traditions and customs, stubbornly, even in the face of the certain extinction of their means of subsistence.

Throughout this period the plains Indians continued to manifest a desire to explore agriculture as an alternative to the hunt. They were clearly disappointed however, at the government's indifferent approach toward assisting them. They were dissatisfied with the Treaty Four terms which they believed did not provide them with adequate means to create an agricultural subsistence base, and they sought revisions, arguing after 1876 that they deserved to be on an equal footing with the Indians of Treaty Six.[103] They were also angry that the government was not faithful in honouring the treaty and delivering the farm equipment, seed and cattle promised. Aware of the very limited progress of the bands who had endeavoured to settle on reserves and farm, chiefs had good reason to be sceptical about following their lead as it would be inviting starvation unless some assurance of support in their efforts could be attained. The Treaty Four Indians were in a more vulnerable position than the Indians of Treaty Six as they could not rely on the protection of a famine clause. There was little response however to the request of the Treaty Four bands. Among many officials they

gained a reputation for making outrageous demands, for being sullen and embittered, and for being unwilling to take steps to support themselves.

Although the department blithely claimed that the Indians had no complaints, and that they were grateful for what was being done for them, there clearly existed an undercurrent of discontent from the time Treaty Four was concluded. When W.J. Christie returned to the scene of the treaty negotiations in 1875 he encountered an unexpectedly large number of Indians, about 468 lodges, or double the number present in 1874.[104] The Indians absent the year before believed that no treaty had been concluded and that the proceedings of 1874 were preliminary to the negotiation of a treaty that year. Christie had been warned before his arrival that this idea prevailed. His informant believed that those Indians who had concluded the treaty on behalf of themselves and their compatriots did not have the courage on returning to the plains to tell their partners that they had signed a treaty for all of them.[105] Christie was to secure the adhesion of those chiefs absent the previous year but the terms were not open to negotiations; his duty was only to fully explain these terms. The Indians gathered at Fort Qu'Appelle were prepared with a list of demands, as if in anticipation of negotiations. Their objectives reflected an anxiety about a future supply of food, and a concern that they be equipped with the necessary skills and technology to successfully farm. They asked that a man be sent to show

them how to use their implements and tools, that they be assisted in building their houses, that a mowing machine be provided for each reserve, that a grist mill be built, that a forge be established on each reserve and a blacksmith appointed.[106] They wanted a store placed on each reserve which could serve as a depot of provisions in years of starvation. They asked for a supply of medicine and requested that they not be called upon to fight in the event of war. The Saskatchewan Cree were to put forward many of these same demands the following year. The Fort Qu'Appelle Indians refused to accept their annuities, and refused to back away from their demands for four days. Christie's position was that discussion was pointless and he warned the assembly that if they declined to accept the terms of the treaty he would report to the government that they had broken the agreement. Government officials saw the treaty as a "covenant" between the Indians and government and it was impossible to comply with new demands.[107] The Indians asked that their requests be forwarded to those in authority, which Christie promised to do and only then did they agree to sign their adhesion to the treaty.[108] Christie included his account of these proceedings not in his final report to Laird but under separate cover, dealing with matters "which we thought you might not wish referred to in our general report".[109] An official publication describing the Qu'Appelle treaty noted that a "gratifying feature" connected with the process was "the readiness, with

which the Indians, who were absent, afterwards accepted the terms which had been settled for them, by those, who were able to attend".[110]

For several subsequent years, annuity payment time became an opportunity for the Indians to collectively urge their demands, which they customarily forwarded before they would accept payments. In 1876, a large number of the Qu'Appelle Indians had followed the diminishing herds of buffalo to the Cypress Hills where they were paid by Inspector J.M. Walsh of the N.W.M.P. The assembled bands chose Louis O'Soup as their spokesman.[111] They asked among other things for the cattle promised them, for a blacksmith, and for land to be broken for them on their reserves as they were unable to do this for themselves. Walsh replied that their wishes could not be entertained and assured them they would have no trouble breaking their land as white men would be in the neighbourhood who could instruct them in the use of implements which they could learn in a few days.[112]

Agent McDonald was greeted by a much more tense and strained situation at Fort Qu'Appelle in the fall of 1877, where fourteen bands were assembled or 2,290 treaty Indians.[113] A few days before McDonald's arrival the Indians demanded a share of the provisions ordered for them during annuity payment time. These were being stored at the Hudson's Bay Company post and they warned the man in charge, Mr. Mclean, that unless they were supplied they would help themselves to twenty bags of flour and twelve cattle. In a

display of determination, 150 armed and mounted Indians paraded through the camp with the avowed intention of seizing supplies. A quantity of provisions was eventually issued, which eased the tension to some extent. The question of the amount of rations due the Indians was debated for some days after McDonald's arrival. He agreed to increase the rations after receiving a message from Loud Voice stating that the agent was underestimating the numbers present, that besides the treaty Indians there were many more who had a right to enter, and others who he supposed had not, but that all were hungry, and their women and children were calling for food.[114]

Two days after the issue of rations was settled the chiefs with their bands assembled at noon near Loud Voice's lodge and advanced in line. McDonald, accompanied by a N.W.M.P. and an interpreter met them within fifty yards of his tent and was introduced to each chief. O'Soup was chosen spokesman for what was said in their council. According to McDonald's account O'Soup's message was that:

> At the time the treaty was made with them the Governor promised that all the Indians in the plains would be dealt with alike. They would like to know how it is that the Saskatchewan Indians have received more. By the Governors promise they consider they have not been dealt with in the same liberal manner as the others and they now ask that the same be extended to them.[115]

The resentment displayed by the Qu'Appelle Indians was not without some justification. Morris had clearly taken the position during the Treaty Four negotiations that the

Queen wished to deal with all of her "red children" alike. They were told that the Queen's representatives did not have the power to grant more than what was agreed to in Treaty Three.[116] O'Soup asked for a written promise that their application would be sent to Parliament and stated that "they will consider their demand granted if the Agent goes to Qu'Appelle next year if it is not he need not come".[117] It appears that the Indians were prepared to sever connections with the agents of the government if their demands were not met. McDonald refused a written promise, assuring them his actual promise was good enough. He warned them that the agent was likely to show up whether or not their demands were met. The chiefs hesitated for some time to come forward and accept their annuities but finally Loud Voice advanced to McDonald's table. "With this many were relieved of an anxiety they had felt for nearly three days," McDonald wrote, "as the Indians were exhorbitant in their demands and I had no power but myself."[118]

As with earlier appeals for increased assistance, no action was taken on the Qu'Appelle Indians' application that the more liberal terms granted the Saskatchewan Indians be extended to them. What appears to have had some impact on the policy makers however, was the lone deputation of Pasquah, who presented himself to Joseph Cauchon, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba in the spring of 1878. An anonymous interpreter at the interview was asked by Cauchon to record the message Pasquah was instructed by his people

to deliver.[119] His specific complaints were that although he and his men had broken thirty pieces of land for planting, they were supplied with neither cattle to break and work the land, seed to sow it, nor provisions to feed them while at work. Provisions were issued to them at seed time only once. Pasquah stated that they were compelled to eat their dogs while at work in the spring. He claimed that while they had four ploughs they had received only one yoke of oxen, one of which had promptly became lame and was useless. He also complained that they had been promised materials for houses when they were ready to build but could get none. The agent, he stated was hard "like iron" in his dealings with them. Pasquah appeared to offer himself as an agent to his people of the good will of the government, declaring that if he could be given enough food and tobacco to hold a great feast, it would maintain peace. The causes of apprehension and unease in his district according to the Chief were the fatal scarcity of the means of life, the frequent massing together of tribes that were hitherto apart if not actually hostile, the presence of the refugee Dakota in the Qu'Appelle, and recent arrests made by the N.W.M.P.

The translator of Pasquah's message, who seemed acquainted with the Indians of that region, and was sympathetic to their plight, provided abundant commentary and observations on the chief's errand, and was not hesitant to sternly lecture Pasquah's hosts on their want of tact and hospitality. Pasquah was dismissed by Cauchon who claimed

that he had no jurisdiction in the matter and was told he should see Laird in Battleford about his complaints. Pasquah received a small "dole" of provisions and nothing else as a result of his mission. The translator believed this would produce a "bad effect" on his mind, and he warned that Pasquah and his people would see in it

> an implied contempt for his nation, one ever steadfast in their friendship to the English people when they were but a handful in their midst, and indeed Sir, it is of old the wont of the great colonizing race to extend a velvet hand when weak and an iron one when strong.[120]

The translator urged that while bestowing tokens of friendship and good will upon Pasquah might not have been strictly provided for in the treaty, these were "readily embodied in the larger convenant of sound policy and good sense". The chief's request for presents was "slight and paltry" compared to the almost "ruinous concessions" that a "civilized people" might demand in an analogous situation. In asking for presents the Cree were "but following out their ideas of <u>expressed amity</u>", which involved the customary exchange of genuine convenants valued only in this connection, as pledges of good will, bearing weight. Pasquah's requests were not intended to increase his personal fortune, according to the translator. The chiefs were "continually stripped of their effects in friendly alliance", and because of their deliberate generosity were frequently among the poorest in a band. Pasquah's mission was

> to take you the representative of the Queen by the hand, and gather assurance of a continued spoken anew amity on your part, such acception [sic] as he can carry word back to his people and enlist their content and I would here say that it is almost to be regretted that the Governors of the Dominion in this newly acquired Indian territory are not permitted a just discretion in the way of such gifts, visible tokens of friendship to the Tribes as would recall often to them through their chiefs a well considered liberality.[121]

The interpreter also spoke in defence of Pasquah's claims that his band lacked animals, seed and provisions, for of all the Indians in his district this chief was "thoroughly alive to the future", and the necessity of farming, having prior to treaty a good herd of animals of his own. As a people "passionately fond of their offspring", the Cree would happily and easily adopt measures to provide their children with a secure supply of fish, potatoes, milk and grain that could "always prevent hunger among their little ones in summer and can be secured against a similar pinch in winter". If they once acquired the means to provide this security "they will not easily loose their hold upon such safety". At the moment however, the Indians were divided in their attention to the chase, and not knowing about the possibilities in their favour they were "at times profoundly depressed at thought of the future". The translator warned that the Cree were

> subject at times to an irritation of feeling against the white race who while establishing themselves in every comfort in their broad domain, have directly or indirectly caused such havoc among their game and subsistence as would seem to leave no room for them to do other than suffer and die.[122]

Pasquah's audience with Cauchon in the spring of 1878 aptly summarized the legacy of the first four years of government administration in Treaty Four. Even those bands who had exhibited an enthusiasm for agriculture from the outset were able to display only the most meagre of results. Through a combination of neglect, parsimony, maladministration, and a lack of understanding, the Indians received little encouragement in their efforts to diversify at a time when it was clearly a most critical objective. Indian policy for the West in the 1870's has been described as an enlightened one of "gradualism" that was suddenly proved to have been based on the wrong assumptions in 1878 and 1879 when the buffalo became "unexpectedly scarce".[123] This farsighted scheme envisaged that the Indians would gradually withdraw from the hunt and settle on reserves as farmers, but that the two livelihoods would for some time co-exist, until the new became as familiar as the old. The gravity of the situation was simply not realized until the buffalo suddenly did not appear, according to this interpretation. The policy of "gradualism" however, is little more than a retrospective justification for a period of indifference and neglect, when reports of the inevitable disappearance of the buffalo were disregarded. The result of these early years of administration was an erosion in the spirit of amity and entente with which the venture might have been more successfully broached. The gulf of understanding between the Indians and department officials widened and deepened as

both sides began to regard the other with fear, distrust and aversion. The Indians had reason to feel that they were led by deception along a path which had ended in betrayal. Their irritation and anxiety was increased by hunger and an uncertain future. Department officials began to blame the Indians for their misfortunes, and to view their spokesmen as troublemakers, incapable of telling the truth. They began to perceive the items promised to the Indians in their treaties as gratuities, or government charity rather than as payments for the land which the Indians had ceded. Laird's reaction to Pasquah's mission for example, was that the chief was a "great beggar", the "most untruthful chief whom I have met in the Superintendency", and he urged that not much importance be attached to his complaints.[124]

Pasquah's mission was not entirely futile. Having in his possession the interpreter's record of the interview, the Minister of the Interior, in a letter of July, 1878, questioned Laird as to how the Indians might best be taught to farm. In Laird's reply of November, 1878, was the genesis of a new policy for the encouragement of agriculture on reserves in the North West, a policy which was hastened by alarming warnings of an outbreak among the Indians caused by starvation. As M.G. Dickieson wrote to Ottawa that same month:

> When the Government has to spend $1,000.00 to perform what $10.00 would at present,they may wake up to the fact that they have been sleeping on a volcano.[125]

1. Philip Goldring, "The First Contingent: The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-74", Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, 21., (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1979), p. 10.

2. Jennings.

3. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229.

4. Sandra Gwyn, The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of Macdonald and Laurier, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1984) p. 127.

5. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, A.R. Selwyn to E.H. Meredith, 21 April, 1874.

6. Ibid., Meredith's Memorandum on Indian Policy in the North-West Territories, "The Food Question", n.d.

7. Ibid., letter of C.N. Bell, 23 March, 1874.

8. PAM, John Christian Shultz Papers, box 17, No. 7809, "The Indian Question", Extract from the Official Report of the Senate Debates, Thursday, 16 April, 1885. Dr. McInnes read J.C. Schultz's speech, originally delivered in the House of Commons, March, 1873.

9. Tobias, "Subjugation of the Plains Cree", pp. 520-1.

10. John L. Taylor, "Two Views on the Meaning of Treaties Six and Seven", The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties, ed. Richard Price, (Toronto: Butterworth and Co., 1979), p. 15.

11. Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, (1880: rpt. Toronto: Coles Publishing Co., 1971), p. 169.

12. Ibid., pp. 169-171.

13. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, letter of C.N. Bell, 23 March, 1874.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. PAC, David Laird Letterbooks, Copy of a protest of Indians against the survey, Fort Ellice, 11 Oct., 1873, addressed to Lt.-Governor Morris, p. 53.

17. Ibid., Memorandum of a conversation between "Kamooses", a Cree Indian of the Qu'Appelle and Lt.-Governor Morris, 18 May, 1874, p. 44.

18. Quoted in Morris, pp. 170-1.

19. Taylor, p. 15.

20. F.L. Hunt, "Notes on the Qu'Appelle Treaty", The Canadian Monthly and National Review, 9, no. 3, (March, 1876), p. 179.

21. Morris, p. 82.

22. Ibid., p. 331.

23. Ibid., pp. 332-3.

24. Ibid., pp. 354-5.

25. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3622, file 5007, Department of the Interior Memorandum, 7 July, 1875.

26. PAM, William Joseph Christie Papers, Finding aid introduction.

27. Morris, p. 178.

28. A.J. Looy, "Saskatchewan's First Indian Agent, M.G. Dickieson", Saskatchewan History, 32, no. 3, (1979).

29. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3622, file 5007, instructions to W.J. Christie from the Minister of the Interior, 16 July, 1875.

30. Ibid., Memorandum of Colonel Dennis, Surveyor General, 15 July, 1875.

31. Ibid.

32. Hind.

33. Quoted in John L. Tyman, By Section, Township and Range: Studies in Prairie Settlement, (Brandon: Assiniboine Historical Society, 1972), p. 37.

34. Ibid., p. 35.

35. PAC, RG 15, Records of the Department of the Interior, vol. 237, file 8015, Christie to Dennis, 12 April, 1877.

36. Morris, p. 215.

37. Ibid., p. 96.

38. There was concern for example that Coté's reserve might interfere with the proposed route of the C.P.R.

39. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3625, file 5489, Christie to Hon. David Laird, 7 October, 1875.

40. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3632, file 6418, W.L. Wagner to Laird, January, 1876. p. 13.

41. Ibid., p. 4.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

44. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, Angus McKay's report on Treaty Four, 1876, p. 30.

45. Sarah Carter, "Angus McKay", Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 12, (in press).

46. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report, 1876, p. 22.

47. Ibid., pp. 31-2.

48. Ibid., p. 36.

49. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3622, file 5007, telegram, Morris to Laird, 10 July, 1875.

50. Ibid., p. 36.

51. Ibid.

52. Morris, p. 217.

53. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3622, file 5007, superintendent general of Indian Affairs to W.J. Christie, 24 July, 1875.

54. Ibid., Christie to Laird, 16 July, 1875.

55. Ibid.

56. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3632, file 6418, Wagner to Laird, January 1876, p. 10.

57. Ibid., p. 11.

58. Ibid., p. 10.

59. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3632, file 6379, instructions to McKay from the Department of the Interior, 26 April, 1876.

60. Ibid., McKay to Meredith, 20 June, 1876.

61. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report for 1876, p. 52. The "snaith" is the curved shaft or handle of a scythe.

62. Ibid.

63. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3632, file 6379, McKay to Meredith, 18 August, 1876.

64. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3642, file 7581, McKay's report, of 1876, p. 36.

65. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

66. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3648, file 8162-2, confidential memorandum, Lawrence Vankoughnet to Sir J.A. Macdonald, 8 May, 1879. Lawrence Vankoughnet was appointed deputy superintendent general in 1874 and he remained at this post until 1893. The real power of decision making within the department of Indian Affairs was in the hands of the deputy superintendent general. Vankoughnet had no knowledge of or acquaintance with Indians and he was ignorant of conditions in Western Canada. His father was a political friend of John A. Macdonald and this may account for why he was awarded this position. According to Douglas Leighton, "A Victorian Civil Servant at Work: Lawrence Vankoughnet and the Canadian Indian Department, 1874-1893", in As long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows, ed. Ian A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983), pp. 104-119, Vankoughnet was a conscientious, earnest, model Victorian civil servant, although "his personal inflexibility, his attitude of administration 'by the book' left too little room for common humanity." (p. 106) In The Private Capital, Sandra Gwyn noted that the Toronto Mail regarded Vankoughnet as "an imbecile" and that when he was first appointed, Meredith was obliged to rewrite his reports, (p. 128).

67. Ibid.

68. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3648, file 8162-1, newspaper clipping, n.d., "A Link Broken". See also Jean M. Cole, Exile in the Wilderness: The Biography of Chief Factor Archibald McDonald, 1700-1853, (Don Mills: Burns and MacEachern Ltd., 1979).

69. Looy, p. 104.

70. John W. Chalmers, Laird of the West (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1981).

71. Looy, p. 104.

72. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3672, file 10,853, pt. 1, M.G. Dickieson to Vankoughnet, 26 February, 1879.

73. PAC, RG 10, vol 3654, file 8904, Agent A. McDonald's report for 1877, 28 December, 1877.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3654, file 8904, Laird to David Mills, 31 December, 1877, p. 4.

77. Ibid.

78. Chalmers, p. 8 and p. 134.

79. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3609, file 3229, Dickieson to Mills, 7 January, 1875.

80. Ibid., p. 2.

81. Ibid., p. 3.

82. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3649, file 8187, extract from a description of the Moose Mountain reserve.

83. Ibid.

84. David Mills, Member for Bothwell was first elected to Parliament in 1867. He was sworn in as Minister of the Interior in 1876 and held this post until 1878. In 1872 he was employed by the Ontario government to define the North-Western boundary of the province and this appears to have been his only acquaintance with the territory west of central Canada.

85. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3654, file 8904, Mills to Laird, 22 May, 1878.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., fragment of a letter from Laird to Mills, n.d., (1878).

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid., and vol. 3672, file 10,853, pt. 1, Dickieson to Meredith, 2 April, 1878.

90. Ibid., vol. 3672.

91. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3654, file 8904, Mills to Laird, 22 May, 1878, p. 1.

92. Ibid., p. 3.

93. Ibid., fragment of a letter, Laird to Mills, p. 6.

94. Ibid., p. 4.

95. Ibid., Mills to Laird, 22 May, 1878, p. 6.

96. Ibid.

97. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3665, file 10,094, Laird to Mills, 11 November, 1878.

98. Ibid.

99. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 12, no. 7, (1878), p. 56.

100. Ibid.

101. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3672, file 10,853, Dickieson to Vankoughnet, 26 February, 1879.

102. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 12, no. 7, (1878), p. 64.

103. See John L. Tobias, "The Origins of the Treaty Rights Movement in Saskatchewan", in 1885 and After: Native Society in Transition, ed. F. Laurie Barron and James Waldram, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1986), pp. 241-252.

104. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3622, file 5007, Christie to Meredith, 9 September, 1875.

105. Ibid., W.J. Maclean to Christie, 29 July, 1875.

106. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3625, file 5489, Christie to Laird, 7 October, 1875.

107. Morris, p. 86.

108. Tobias, "Subjugation of the Plains Cree", p. 524.

109. PAC, vol. 3625, file 5489, Christie to Laird, 7 October, 1875.

110. Morris, p. 79.

111. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3637, file 7088, Inspector J.M. Walsh's report on the payment of annuities, 12 September, 1876.

112. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 10, no. 11, (1876), p. xxxvii.

113. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3656, file 9092, McDonald's report on annuity payments in Treaty Four, 20 October, 1877.

114. Ibid.

115. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3664, file 9944, McDonald to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, 6 June, 1878.

116. Morris, p. 122.

117. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3656, file 9092, McDonald's report, 20 October, 1877.

118. Ibid.

119. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3665, file 10,094, Interpreter to Joseph Cauchon, Lt.-Governor of Manitoba, 1 June, 1878.

120. Ibid.

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid.

123. Looy, p. 110-1.

124. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3665, file 10,094, Laird to the Minister of the Interior, 11 November, 1878.

125. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3672, file 10,853, pt. 1, extract of a letter, M.G. Dickieson to Robert Sinclair, 16 November, 1878.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE HOME FARM EXPERIMENT

A scheme which included instruction in farming to the Indians of the North West was hastily contrived in the fall and winter of 1878-79. Information and advice was feverishly compiled. David Mills, Minister of the Interior, began this process in July, 1878, when he interrogated his Indian superintendent, David Laird, on the issue of how the Indians might best be encouraged to farm.[1] Laird's response of November of that year was directed to the new Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, John A. Macdonald.[2] In Laird's opinion, the best plan was to have a permanent agricultural instructor resident with the bands. Where a number of reserves were grouped together, one instructor might take charge of three or four bands. For the first few years of farming, seed and provisions would have to be issued in the spring, as the Indians were generally absolutely destitute at that time.

Laird was sceptical about the viability of farming within the reserve system which he believed perpetuated tribal society, frustrating the ambitions of individuals genuinely interested in farming. This point of view was to gain wide acceptance among department officials. On

reserves the industrious became the prey of the "indolent and thriftless", Laird believed. Indians who made efforts to set aside produce for the use of their families, only to see it consumed by their starving brethren, lost heart, and dropped to the level of the "precarious hand-to-mouth system of the band". In Laird's view, each Indian should be given his own quantity of land in non-transferable scrip, not in large blocs, but in any section open for settlement. Some might choose to live near fishing lakes while others might opt to settle near centres of population where they could get work. Laird believed that if the Indians were settled among other residents of the West, they could turn to their neighbours for the aid and example they might require.

Macdonald also sought full information from M.G. Dickieson on conditions in the North West, when the agent's alarming letter of November, 1878 was brought to his attention. Dickieson was concerned that officials in Ottawa had the faulty idea that the buffalo were still abundant on the plains and offered detailed evidence of their scarcity.[4] The Indians were starving Dickieson claimed, even at the former principal wintering places of the buffalo. The widespread shortage of pemmican throughout the North West was evidence of the rapidly diminishing herds. Hudson's Bay Company storehouses that had stocked thousands of bags in previous years were empty. Destitute Indians arrived almost daily at the Indian office in Battleford seeking assistance. Dickieson provided a review of the progress of farming in

the North West, stating that while some bands had made commendable efforts, the great majority of the Indians, certainly those in Treaty Four, were as yet dependent on the buffalo and would be destitute of food in a very short time. He urged that practical men be hired to instruct in farming and that the Indians be given some assistance in the way of provisions at planting time.

W.J. Christie was consulted on the issue of how the Indians might best be encouraged to farm.[5] He was optimistic that what he called the "Thickwood Cree", the Indians of Pelly, the Souris, Ellice, the Touchwood Hills, Carlton and Victoria, who lived on the margin of the plains, could be induced to settle and cultivate plots of land. What remained of the buffalo herds could then be left to the true plains Indians, among whom Christie included the Blackfoot, Blood, Sarcee, and the Cree of Fort Pitt and Qu'Appelle. In Christie's opinion the most feasible plan was to distribute cattle among these bands before the buffalo were completely extinct. Christie was certain that if the treaty provisions had been faithfully fulfilled, those Indians settled on reserves would possess what was required to cultivate the soil although he stressed the necessity of instruction and supervision in breaking the ground, and in the use of implements. He cautioned that the Indians always expected the faithful fulfilment of any promises made to them by white men.

Christie recalled that at the treaty negotiations some of the Treaty Four bands, and nearly all of those in Treaty Six expressed a willingness to settle on reserves, and they clearly expected to receive their cattle and implements immediately. He recommended kind treatment and conciliatory measures beyond what was strictly stipulated in the treaty as he believed the most forceful means of influencing the Indians to settle was to give every encouragement to those already on their reserves. Christie urged that the Indians be granted some of their repeated requests, especially assistance in food when breaking the ground and planting for the first year or two, but also farm instructors, blacksmiths, mowers for hay, and instruction in building log houses. He recommended that depots of provisions be established at selected sites, noting that the Hudson's Bay Company had always provided the Indians with assistance in times of need, often at great expense, but that this kind treatment allowed the Company to maintain its position.

The government's new program was first given official voice in Lawrence Vankoughnet's annual report for 1878.[6] The exact details of the policy were vague at this point. The Indians were to be furnished with instruction in farming or raising cattle, with the object of making them self-supporting. The priorities Vankoughnet outlined were to induce the Indians to abandon their nomadic ways by building houses and barns, to subdivide the reserves into lots assigned to each head of family, and to establish schools on

reserves where there were sufficient residents to warrant one. At this time Vankoughnet had the idea that the school teachers would also instruct in farming and raising cattle. Inspecting officers would visit the reserves, mark the progress of the Indians, purchase cattle, seed and implements for them, see that the instructors were attending to their duties, and organize annuity payments. This program was to apply to both the North West Territories and Manitoba.

Specifics of the plan were hurriedly sketched in during the early months of 1879. The newly-created position of Indian commissioner was central to the administration of the program. Edgar Dewdney was appointed to this position in May of 1879. Dewdney was a civil engineer, Member of Parliament for Kootenay, a loyal Conservative and a friend of John A. Macdonald.[7] In the Prime Minister's opinion Dewdney was eminently suitable because he understood the Indians and their wants, and was accustomed to frontier conditions.[8] As a surveyor, Dewdney was acquainted with the life of the frontier but he had no experience with the plains Indians and was probably chosen because of his political loyalty. David Laird resigned as Indian superintendent in 1879. M.G. Dickieson served as acting Indian superintendent for a brief time but as Dewdney's appointment rendered this position unnecessary, he was demoted to Indian agent. Dickieson left for the East in

1879, accepting a position in the more tranquil Department of Finance.[9]

Dewdney's responsibilities, as outlined in May, 1879, included a wide variety of tasks, of which the farming program was but one.[10] His more immediate priorities were to see to the distribution of relief to the destitute, to encourage the Indians congregated about Fort Walsh to settle on reserves, and to persuade the refugee Dakota under Sitting Bull to return across the border. The farming program was to be implemented through a squad of farm instructors, located at seventeen sites, called farming agencies, initially selected by Laird. For the Treaty Four Indians farm instructors were to be located at six sites: one near Fort Ellice, one near Fort Pelly, one at Pasquah's reserve, one in the Touchwood Hills, and two in the Cypress Hills. Nine farming agencies were selected in Treaty Six, and two in Treaty Seven. There were also to be two "supply farms" in Treaty Seven, one near Fort Macleod and the other near Fort Calgary, which were regarded as distinct from the ordinary farming agencies. These were intended to be extensive farms on which large quantities of produce would be raised, but the farmers at these sites were not given the additional responsibility of instructing Indians. The farming program did not apply at all to the Indians of Treaties One, Two, Three and Five. In his first announcement of the new policy, Vankoughnet stated that the program was to extend to Manitoba but this plan must have

been shelved in the early months of 1879. It was explained some years later that farm instructors were sent only to the plains people, formerly dependent on the buffalo, whose means of subsistence failed them.[11] It was the food crisis in the North West that generated the farm instruction program in 1879; it was not inspired by a benevolent concern that the Indians be aided in the transition to an agricultural way of life.

In July, 1879, the appointment of Thomas Page Wadsworth to the position of inspector of agencies was announced.[12] Born in Weston, County of York, Ontario in 1842, and of English descent, Wadsworth was a resident of Ontario at the time of his appointment, and this was his first position with the public service. His duties were to supervise all operations in connection with the "practical farming schools", to purchase and distribute the food supplies, implements, and cattle required for them, and to help select the sites for these farms. He was to take note of what supplies were on hand and to confer with the agents as to the condition and probable requirements of the Indians. It was explained to Wadsworth that the object of the farm schools was twofold. The first was to

> ...induce the Indians to come in and learn how to breake [sic] up land, how to sow grain, to reap, save and thresh the latter, to put up houses, to take care of stock, to use and take care of farm implements, and generally to teach the Indians and Half Breeds, also, how they may become self subsisting without being dependent upon the chase for a living for themselves and their families.[13]

Wadsworth was also informed that it was hoped these farms could raise enough produce to become depots of supplies for the Indians in case of famine. Provided with a map of the North West Territories, Wadsworth was to leave immediately, and after the season's travel, take up residence at Battleford.

The new farming program was designed to solve, at one swoop, most of the problems that plagued administrators of Indian affairs in the North West. It was hoped that the policy would provide a solution to both the short-term and the long-term question of subsistence for the Indians. Architects of the program sanguinely expected that the instructors could, after one year, raise enough grain and root crops to support themselves, their families and employees. It was also hoped that within a short space of time the instructors could raise a surplus to contribute toward the expense of feeding the Indians. The farm instructors were to help solve the long-term problem of subsistence by imparting their knowledge of farming to the Indians, mostly by precept and example. As the program was initially conceived, the instructing function of the farmers was decidedly secondary to their mandate to raise food. A program designed primarily to teach the Indians to farm rather than to raise large quantities of produce to feed them might have been planned quite differently. Farm instructors were told to confine most of their operations to their agency farms but to visit the Indians from time to

time to instruct in breaking, seeding, harvesting, storing grain and root crops, and in building houses, barns, and root houses.[14] As Dewdney understood the farm program, the educational aspect was limited to what the Indians might learn by observation, or by working on the agency farm.[15] In Dewdney's opinion the government desired to "obtain as great a return of food for the distressed Indians at as cheap a rate as possible".[16] Indians anxious to learn to farm would "soon pick up sufficient information to settle down and work a piece of ground for themselves".[17] The agency farms in the North West came to be known as "home farms". In Great Britain this term referred to the main farm on a large estate which was usually farmed by the landlord, and was situated near his residence. The other farms on the estate were let to tenants. Some were show-piece or "model" farms, while others were run purely as commercial propositions.[18]

Agency farms were also designed to function as depots of supplies of seed, implements and provisions. It had been recognized during the first few years of treaty administration that if these goods were to be on hand in the spring, they had to be transported in the fall and stored over the winter. The food crisis in the North West however, demanded the presence of supply depots on a year-round basis. Issuing relief was to become one of the primary functions of the farm instructors. Aid was not to be distributed gratuitously however, it was to be used as a means of

instilling a self-help mentality which it was believed would eventually free the Indians from their poverty. In the minds of many officials, the Indians' want of food was due, not to the collapse of their economic system, but to personal failing, indolence and extravagance. "Work for rations" would introduce the principle of work. It was declared that "The system pursued in affording relief to the Indians is calculated to accustom them to habits of industry; and at the same time to teach them to depend on their own efforts for subsistence."[19] Massive aid was viewed as demoralizing and enfeebling; it would encourage idleness and pauperism. It was felt that the Indians would deliberately choose pauperism if they became comfortable in the idea that they would be abundantly supplied. Able-bodied Indians were to receive rations only when they had satisfied the farm instructor that they had performed some work of value either on the agency farm or on the reserve. It largely fell to the farm instructors then to establish and administer the government's relief program.

The farm instructors were burdened with responsibilities and duties of herculean dimensions that would have taxed the resources and patience of the most qualified, capable candidates. Unfortunately, many of those assigned to the formidable task were ill-suited and unprepared. The instructors were almost all from the eastern provinces, mostly Ontario. They were unfamiliar with conditions of life in the West, and knew nothing of the Indians, their

languages, customs, or recent history. They had to be provided with both guides and interpreters. Arriving in the midst of a famine they tended to be shocked and repelled by the unsightly distress that surrounded them. While the instructors may have had extensive knowledge of farming, unique, unanticipated conditions prevailed in the North West which demanded modification of techniques that were suitable elsewhere. Red River farmers, or former Hudson's Bay Company employees might have been more qualified for positions as farm instructors. A rationale forwarded for not choosing local people, familiar with the Indians and their territory was that "strangers" were likely to carry out their duties better than local people, as they would not have their favorites, and would treat all fairly and alike.[20]

It is clear however, that the Prime Minister had his favorites, and that patronage extended to the position of farm instructor. The instructors were chosen by Macdonald himself, from a list furnished by Vankoughnet, who claimed to have interviewed them all, making strict enquiries as to their abilities as farmers.[21] The list was initially compiled by J.S. Dennis of the Department of the Interior, who sent letters to Members of Parliament asking them to submit names of men they thought would be suited to the position.[22] Dennis explained that the object was to obtain young, practical farmers, who had some acquaintance with the construction of dwelling houses and outbuildings, such as

were commonly used by farmers in the eastern provinces. These young men were to proceed to the North West where they were to settle down among the Indians on their reserves, for the purpose of teaching them how to farm and take care of stock. Dennis cautioned that these farmers would be isolated from any white settlers by some hundreds of miles in several cases and must expect to have to suffer "more or less privation", for a salary of $730.00 per annum.[23] For the first year they would be allowed subsistence supplies from those they brought with them but after that they would be expected to live on the produce they raised. They were to be supplied with implements and stock, and the government would defray their travelling expenses. Dennis asked the members to note that as the cost of sending men to the West was so great, they should be very careful not to recommend anyone whom they doubted.

It appears that even this initial process of compiling a list was not completed until the spring of 1879, and the instructors were hastily chosen and dispatched to the North West. In the case of one instructor at least, Vankoughnet did not have the opportunity to conduct a personal interview. Thomas Farrow, Member of Parliament from Bluevale, Ontario, had recommended a Mr. James Patterson of St. Helens for the position of farm instructor.[24] Farrow described Patterson as a man with a good deal of experience in a new country as he had arrived in Ontario when it was in its primitive state. Patterson was an excellent scholar, Farrow

informed Dennis, and he could also impart all the practical knowledge required for both farming and building. James Patterson left for the North West late in August of 1879, travelling through the United States to Fort Benton, from where he and three other instructors destined for the Treaty Seven district, were to proceed north. F. White of the North West Mounted Police encountered the party of instructors on their journey that fall, and was dismayed to find that Mr. Patterson was an aged man and a cripple, who was walking with the aid of a crutch and stick.[25] An embarrassed Vankoughnet informed the Prime Minister of this, explaining that Patterson had not been required to visit Ottawa as the season was getting late when the last batch of instructors was appointed.[26] He admitted that "it cannot be supposed that a man so crippled as to require the aid of a stick and crutch can do farm work effectively", and he recommended that Patterson be recalled and an able-bodied person appointed in his stead.

The farm instructors gained a reputation for being incompetent men, chosen from the government's "swarm of camp followers" and "carpet baggers".[27] They were the object of much amusement, scorn, and after 1885, indignant outrage, certainly among opponents of the Macdonald government. Whether or not this constituted an accurate assessment of the talents of the instructors, they and the Indian farmers were blamed for the limited success of a program which was hastily and poorly conceived and for which there were

unrealistic expectations. As Macdonald confessed in the House, there was not time to theorize, men had to be sent at once to provide assistance, and he hoped that when the problem could be considered at greater leisure, a more scientific mode of government for "our Indian wards" might be devised.[28]

In July, 1879, a special train conveying one squad of farm instructors headed for the terminus of the steel, which was then St. Boniface. There they were to meet with their guides and supplies and depart for their several destinations. Some of the confusions and adversities that plagued the program from its inception may be illustrated by tracing the fortunes of Mr. James Scott, appointed instructor to the Touchwood Hills bands. Scott's personnel file reveals nothing of his background except that he had "extensive knowledge of farming" and "general business experience".[29] He boarded the special train at Toronto on June 21, leaving his wife and family behind in Brampton. In company with the instructors headed for Pelly, Ellice and Qu'Appelle, Scott left Winnipeg for the Touchwood Hills on July 21. A guide was provided at Winnipeg to take them as far as Ellice and from there the Hudson's Bay Company officer was to hire guides to take them to their locations. They left Winnipeg "under protest", as they were very heavily loaded down, "to please those in charge".[30] This was the instructors' first lesson in the fact that economy was to govern all of their operations, even at the expense of good sense. The

instructors brought with them everything from farm implements and provisions to window sashes, doors, stove pipes and tea pots. Some of their supplies were sent on by boat to Ellice but they were still over-burdened. The instructors found it impossible to proceed further than Portage la Prairie without acquiring two more carts. Here Thomas Heenan, the instructor destined for Qu'Appelle, was taken ill and returned home, leaving his outfit in the care of Mr. Scott. Scott arrived at Ellice on the tenth of August, only to learn that the balance of his supplies had not arrived as promised so he was obliged to purchase what was absolutely necessary for both his and the Qu'Appelle farm. He was also informed that Reverend Père Joseph Lestanc, his interpreter, had moved several hundred miles from the Qu'Appelle district. Continuing on to Qu'Appelle, Scott there parted company with Adoir Graveline, Mr. Heenan's assistant, who was to carry on in his absence. Scott arrived at the Hudson's Bay Company store in the Touchwood Hills on the evening of August 20th, his horses completely jaded and his carts badly damaged. His journey from Winnipeg had taken thirty days.

Accompanied by T.P. Wadsworth, Scott visited the reserves late in August to locate the farm. They chose a site which both described as excellent for farming operations.[31] It consisted of an optimistic 640 acres; 400 acres were intended for cropping, there were 80 acres of hay meadows, and the balance was mostly woodlands, with a small

lake. It was situated on the main trail between Winnipeg and the Territorial capital at Battleford, about a mile east of Poor Man's reserve, and twelve miles from the Hudson's Bay Company post.

Wadsworth left Scott with the set of instructions that were distributed to all instructors. He was first to cut sufficient hay to winter his four oxen. He was then to erect a stable and a house for himself. These buildings were to be as small and as inexpensive as possible: structures that could later be used as granaries. The rationale for this was that it might be desireable to alter the location of some of these farms before long, and they should do no more building than was absolutely necessary.[32] Wadsworth advised that Indian labour be used for building, getting out fence rails and pit-sawing. They could be paid in flour, tea, and in some cases pork. Scott was to insist on work being done in exchange for the distribution of food, except to the infirm. Scott was then to look over his farm, decide what width of land would be sown, and determine what variety and amount of seed grain would be required. He was then to visit each of the reserves and make similar plans for the Indians' farms. Wadsworth advised that in deciding what kind and amount of seed was required for the Indians, the instructor should keep in mind how much he could oversee, and have properly planted for them. The inspector recommended that instructors resist the urge to over-extend operations and emphasized quality over quantity. He asked

instructors to plough the prairie twice, which he admitted was double the work, and not as much land could be sown, but the procedure would almost certainly result in a better crop. Scott was also to examine the tools each band had on hand. As the bulk of his provisions had not arrived, Wadsworth authorized Scott to purchase what he needed from the Hudson's Bay Company store.

Scott's farming operations did not begin until September tenth, due mainly to the late arrival of much of his equipment. His interpreter, who was also to be his general assistant, was a man of over seventy years and he proved to be of little use as a labourer. Another of his assistants badly injured his foot while chopping wood and was unable to work for much of September. As winter was approaching, and housing timber was not available nearer than seven miles, Scott opted to build his granary and live in it until spring, hauling house timber during the winter. He hired a mower and stacked forty tons of hay. As Scott's report for that fall made no mention of ploughing it is likely that no land was prepared for a spring crop.

Some of the conflicts and tensions that were to beset the program soon became apparent. The question of who owned the produce raised on the instructor's farm was to become a contentious issue. Scott arrived with the impression that what he raised was his to dispose with as he pleased. He understood that his salary was for his services as instructor. On being greeted by the Touchwood bands however

he found that

> The Indians look on everything we have with us, and all we raise besides, as their property, and if we even cut the grass off their land for our stock, they can claim it, and in all probability will do so. Now if such is the case I am positive I did not understand it so and I am sure none of the other instructors did either, as we discussed it all over, on the train coming up.[33]

Scott also found that the Indians would not tolerate him purchasing the supplies he required, such as potatoes and barley, from the Hudson's Bay Company, as they claimed the right to sell to him from what they raised. The instructor was obliged to purchase from the Indians, who charged Hudson's Bay Company prices.

The experiences of Farmer Scott were repeated, with variations, throughout the Territories in the fall of 1879 at the seventeen agency farms and two supply farms. As the plan was initially conceived in Ottawa, these farms were to be <u>on</u> the reserves, but as the program materialized, they became increasingly detached from the reserves and the Indians. Most of the farms were located off the reserves, and the farmers were urged to perform the bulk of the work "with our own labour".[34] Dewdney explained that if the farms were on the reserves, and the Indians performed the labour, they would feel that they were entitled to the improvements, and to any crop raised.[35] It would also arouse jealousies, as each band would feel that they were entitled to a farm. The farmers would be much more "independent" off the reserves. Any surplus produce raised

could be stored in a central depot. Scott and the other instructors were informed that they did not own the surplus produce they might raise, and it certainly did not belong to the Indians. Any surplus, as well as the stock and the implements were the property of the department, to be held subject to the order of the Indian agent for the district.[36] The department learned through experience that disagreements over property were intensified when the home farms were located on the reserves. In the Fort Pitt district, inspector Wadsworth and farm instructor Williams selected a site for the agency farm on Chief Sekaskoot's reserve while the chief and the band were away hunting.[37] When the chief returned he would not permit Williams to occupy the farm, or to make use of the hay he had cut and stacked unless he paid twenty dollars. Three days of negotiations followed and in the end the department was required to take a lease on the land for five years, which gave the instructor the right to cut wood and hay.

The home farm program had a very brief life in its original form. By 1884, the department had officially retired the policy, but by this time it had already undergone much modification. As the initial plan materialized, the government found itself responsible for the support of the instructors, their families and employees who ran farms with such dismal returns that they contributed very little to the expenses. The department found it had created for itself an immense burden in the North West, to

add to the initial problem of finding a means of support for the Indians. It generally turned out that the instructors, in trying to make successes of their farms, had very little time to instruct the Indians. Being some distance from the reserves, very seldom employing Indian labour, and producing little surplus, the home farms performed no function at all. There were several notable exceptions to this pattern, but on the whole the original plan was found to be unworkable. This was recognized after several years, and the instructors were asked to devote their attention to the Indians. The home farms were either closed or they continued to operate on a very limited scale. Feeling the need to justify the considerable expenses of the program however, the government was not prepared to take the blame for the poorly-conceived policy and instead tended to dismiss criticism by disparaging the Indians' ability and willingness to cultivate the soil.

From an administrative point of view, the home farm policy was disastrous. Difficulties with personnel arose early, and the program was characterized by resignations and dismissals. Frank L. Hunt, appointed instructor to the Qu'Appelle Indians near Pasquah's reserve, tendered his resignation by the spring of 1880. He had appeared eminently suitable to the task, with fifteen years experience in farming and stock raising, and a "familiarity with frontier life and its requirements".[38] Unlike most other instructors, Hunt had some previous knowledge of and

association with the Indians he was to work with, he spoke Cree and was married to the daughter of the late head chief of the Qu'Appelle Cree. Hunt had been present at the Treaty Four negotiations, publishing an article on the proceedings, and at the time of his appointment was working as a journalist in Winnipeg.[39] He spent one bitterly cold winter at his new posting and found that his job consisted of administering relief to Indians in acute distress. He described the bands as genuinely in need, and suffering greatly, showing clear signs of starvation. The children, he wrote, were "really crying for food".[40] His own supplies were totally drained and he was obliged to purchase more from the Hudson's Bay Company store. He became gravely concerned that the Indians would attempt to possess government property by force, and worried that he would be the target of any violence. He appealed for a strong military or police force to be near at hand. Hunt was uncomfortable about administering relief, and had "grave doubts as to the outcome of this sort of aid". Citing these reasons, as well as ill-health, he resigned from his position.

Hunt was not the only instructor to tender his resignation in the spring of 1880. Mr. Sherrin, the instructor near the Battleford reserves, and Mr. Read, his assistant were both asked to resign.[41] Sherrin was found trading government provisions with the Indians for furs and cash, pocketing the proceeds. Read informed on Sherrin, who

countered with the claim that Read could not be relied upon, that he stole from his own father, would not do any work, and had never been on a farm in his life. Dewdney decided that the incident, claims, and counter-claims cast both in a poor light. Instructor Donnelly, at Saddle Lake also resigned that spring, informing Dewdney that he had hoped to bring his family out if the location suited him but found on arrival that he could not think of doing so.[42] Mr. R.W. Gowan, farm instructor to the Stonies at Morleyville, also asked for a replacement, remarking only that things were not satisfactory with the Indians, and he could not carry out the instructions given him.[43] Although offered a position at a much reduced salary at Moose Mountain, Gowan's name disappeared from the list of farm instructors. Mr. H. Taylor, in charge of the government supply farm near Pincher Creek, tendered his resignation in May, 1880. Although an investigation into the matter proved inconclusive, he and an accomplice were implicated in the slaughter of government cattle that winter, and it was claimed that they sold the meat to settlers.[44]

Dewdney was irritated at the situation in the spring of 1880 as a good number of the new home farms were without instructors. The outlook for a successful crop year already looked dim as the instructors had arrived too late in the year to prepare much land for sowing. To salvage the season, Dewdney was determined that men-on-the-spot be hired as replacements, and he was convinced that residents of the

North West would be much more suitable for these positions. He was angry that the Prime Minister continued to insist the positions be filled by men on his patronage list. Macdonald's priority was not the needs of the Indians but keeping his political allies content. A dispute between Dewdney and the Prime Minister erupted over the appointment of Mr. Charles Daunais De Cadis, of Terrebonne, Quebec, recommended to Macdonald by the Member for Terrebonne, Louis F. Masson.[45] Macdonald had notified Vankoughnet that he wanted this man appointed on the first vacancy, as there were no French instructors in the North West. Vankoughnet decided that DeCadis would replace Sherrin at Battleford. Dewdney had already hired an instructor and an assistant from Winnipeg, and he objected to the appointment of more farmers from the eastern provinces. He believed that many of the farmers had "made a convenience of the Government", in accepting their positions, seeing, "a good chance of getting their expenses paid to enable them to look at the country and see for themselves where would be the best locations to settle if the country suited them".[46] Transporting men from the East incurred large expenses, and Dewdney urged that farmers vacating their posts within a certain time be required to give three or even six months notice, or be asked to pay the cost of their transport and other expenses. Dewdney believed it was imperative that steps be taken to hire only those accustomed to dealing with Indians. He stated that it was the exception to find a farm

instructor, formerly unacquainted with the Indians who was able to "hold his own" with them. "This is especially so when they are starving", Dewdney wrote, the instructors "either give away too much and that means being too lavish with the Government supplies or they get disgusted with their position and take the first opportunity of getting out of it."[47] Many of the farmers sent from the East had no idea what they had to contend with once they arrived on their farms. Dewdney argued that only those likely to be contented with their lot should be appointed. He had reason to believe that a number of the farmers felt they were above the position, and were thinking of "their own advancement more than the work they have undertaken from the Government".[48]

Despite Dewdney's objections, De Cadis was appointed to replace Sherrin at Battleford, where he proved unsuccessful as both a farmer and an instructor. He took little interest in the Indians, and was not on good terms with them.[49] After just over a year at his position, De Cadis was transferred to the Edmonton district, where he was placed in charge of a soup kitchen. Macdonald however, was eventually persuaded to hire men already resident in the North West. They were paid at a much reduced rate, and the time and expense involved in transporting men from the East was saved. Those who were still offered appointments from Macdonald's patronage list were told they would have to pay their own way out, which was discouraging.[50]

The new farming program was the target of severe criticism in the House of Commons in the spring of 1880. David Mills, the main spokesman for the opposition, claimed that the instructors were entirely unsuitable to the task. These men were not farmers, he stated, declaring that Scott at Touchwood, and Sherrin at Battleford were engaged in "mercantile pursuits" before they went west, and Hunt at Qu'Appelle was a newspaper man in Winnipeg.[51] (The Prime Minister replied that "Perhaps it was an agricultural newspaper.")[52] The Conservative member for Provencher in Manitoba, Joseph Royal, regretted that the farm instructors were not chosen from among the mixed-blood population. He believed that clever farmers might have been selected at a lesser cost, and with a greater chance of success than sending out "indifferent Ontario farmers".[53] To the opposition however, the instructors were not at the root of the problem; they objected to any increased expenditure on the Indians. Mills believed that the government's new policy acted "not to secure a survival of the fittest, but a survival of everybody, to put the industrious and enterprizing upon an equality with the careless and idle".[54] He urged the government to throw the Indians upon their own resources, stating that the Indians who left their reserves were more prosperous than those who remained. Edward Blake agreed that the Indians should not be allowed to look to the government for help but rather, a spirit of independence should be implanted.[55] Also alarmed at the increased

expenditure, J.C. Schultz remarked that in his opinion it was impossible to convert the horse-riding, buffalo-hunting Indian of the plains into a farmer. He favoured a plan that would see the Indians transferred to the "great fishing regions", north of the proposed line of the railway, distant from the land which would be desired by the settlers.[56] Here could be found all the conditions required for successful agriculture, and the Indians could still indulge their "love of the chase". It would also result in much relief to government expenditure in winter. Royal agreed with Schultz that it was "sheer folly to attempt to make farmers out of the roaming bands of the plains".[57]

The Prime Minister mustered some arguments in support of his government's new program. He believed it was absolutely necessary that the Indians be induced to settle and take up agricultural pursuits. This was in the interests of peace, for as long as the pressure for food existed, "starvation, operating upon the savage minds" might result in the Indians quarrelling among each other, or attacking the whites.[58] It was in the interests of the orderly settlement of the West that the Indians be taught to farm properly, as their "slatternly and slovenly" mode of farming retarded "civilization and improvement" in the vicinity of a reserve.[59] Macdonald agreed with Schultz that it would be highly desireable if the Indians could be induced to move north, but he noted that unless they consented to such a move it would involve pressure.[60] The

Prime Minister had no evidence that the Indians were complaining about their instructors. He agreed with Royal that residents of the West might have been employed as instructors, because to simply teach the Indians to break the ground, scientific farmers were not required. Rather, the job called for "a rough man who knows himself how to handle the plough".[61] Macdonald assured the House that future vacancies would be filled by residents of the West, who understood the Indian character. The Indians were not learning to rely on the government for food Macdonald claimed, as "we are rigid, even stingy" in distributing rations.[62] His government's position on the Indians of the North West was that "we cannot allow them to starve and we cannot make them white men. All we can do is endeavour to induce them to abandon their nomadic habits, and settle down, and cultivate the soil".[63] "The whole thing is an experiment however," Macdonald admitted, "and if it does not succeed, we can alter the mode of operations."[64]

With criticism of the program coming even from the government benches, Macdonald would have welcomed evidence of the success of his government's measures. Unfortunately, Dewdney was not able to provide this. The farming program did not distinguish itself during the 1880 season, and the results of subsequent years were dreary. Department officials in the East, and Members of Parliament, confounded by the discrepancies between the outlay for the farm program and the limited returns, had little appreciation of the

difficulties involved in raising crops in the North West, or of the wide variety of factors that could frustrate and retard the enterprize. In attributing blame for the limited success of the program, they preferred to belittle and deprecate the abilities of the Indian farmers.

Farming at this time in the Territories was a dubious, precarious undertaking for anyone, even an experienced Ontario farmer. It was not to be for a decade and more that a suitable set of techniques for dry-land farming were discovered through trial and error and the work of the experimental farms. It was gradually to be found that prairie farming demanded new methods of ploughing, seeding, cultivation, and summer fallowing to preserve moisture. For many of these operations, implements in common use in the East were found to be unsuitable to the prairie soil. The brief growing season required new, early-maturing varieties of seed, and as time was limited for the performance of any farming operation, prairie agriculture was to prosper only with the most efficient, time-saving machinery.

The Indian farmers and their instructors were without any of this information and technology when they began farming in 1879. It appears that when the program was established there was no recognition that peculiar conditions for farming might prevail in Western Canada. It was clear already from the experiences of farmers in Manitoba in the 1870's that because of the late springs, early frosts, uneven moisture, and unrelenting winds,

Ontario methods could not simply be transplanted with success.[65] None of this evidence however, was taken into account. The Indian farmers and their instructors were simply expected to produce, and quickly. Through their pioneering effort to farm the prairie west of Manitoba on any scale, they were the first to encounter many of the limitations and requirements of prairie farming that were later to baffle and frustrate the "homesteaders". Farming at this time in the Territories operated under such restraints and uncertainties that few pioneer farmers would have contemplated planting their families at this extreme limit of settlement, let alone their extended families of grand-parents, in-laws, the weak and the ill. Indian farmers laboured under many disadvantages. They were often without the essential requirements of food, good health, clothing and footwear. They functioned with limited oxen, implements and seed, and were virtually without any capital to obtain these on their own. There were few opportunities for alternate employment to help through the lean times. In some cases the land they settled proved to be unfit for cultivation. As this farming experiment began before the appearance of the railroad and the small towns that followed its route, Indian farmers had limited access to markets to dispose of the crops they raised, and with the absence of grist mills, they had difficulty even making what crops they raised useful to them.

Very little in the way of returns should have been anticipated after a first season of the farming program, especially as the instructors arrived too late in the fall of 1879 to prepare land for spring sowing, and many of the home farms were without instructors by the following spring. Breaking the sod was a slow and laborious task. Where there was bush, it had to be cleared first, and any stones had to be hauled away. If the spring run-off was early, a farmer might be able to harrow enough acres during a first season to plant small amounts of grain and root crops, but very often there was no crop the first year. During late springs, no land could be broken in time for seeding, as oxen and implements would bog down after the first furrow. Farmers breaking the prairie generally first turned the soil in shallow furrows to rot and then "backset" at a deeper level, not sowing until the following spring.[66] Inspector Wadsworth recommended this method to his instructors, recognizing that it decreased the amount of acreage that could be broken.[67] Ploughing once, he explained, would turn up only a very thin sod which would make it difficult to cover the seed on account of the small quantity of soil on top of the sod. A second ploughing turned the loose subsoil for a seed bed on top of the sod.

The efforts of the Indian farmers and their instructors were hampered by the kind of ploughs the department issued. By the late 1870's, Manitoba farmers had learned that American ploughs, especially the "John Deere", with its

chilled steel mould-board, were far superior for Western conditions than the Ontario models.[68] The Indian department however, endeavoured to introduce Canadian manufactured ploughs which proved to be unsatisfactory.[69] Ploughs made by Geo. Wilkinson and Co., of Aurora, Ontario for example, "worked for a short time, but the mould-board and point both proved soft in temper".[70] Other Canadian ploughs were entire failures and were discarded as useless. It was not until after 1882 that the department began to specifically request John Deere ploughs for the North West in calls for tenders, after determining that no Canadian plough was satisfactory for prairie work.[71]

It became readily apparent that there were grave problems involved in asking the instructors to attend to both their own farms and those of the Indians. In the climate of the North West, only a short space of time was allowed for the completion of the central tasks of farming. Seeding for example, had to be completed by a certain time early in the spring to lessen the danger of exposure to frost. The instructor could not both prepare and seed his own land, and oversee the same activities on many different reserves. In some cases this resulted in the use of very improper techniques as when seed was scattered on the sod, and merely harrowed to lightly cover the grain.[72] Seeding was performed broadcast by hand on these early farms in the North West. Prairie farmers were eventually to discover that this method, successful in Ontario, was unsuitable on

the plains.[73] Broadcast seeding left the grain only lightly covered, where it speedily became too dry to germinate, it could not take advantage of the moisture in the subsoil, and it was subject to the unrelenting prairie winds. It was not until the late 1880's however, that Western farmers began to sow their seed in drills, at a uniform depth.[74] The inefficiency of the broadcast method of sowing may in part account for the limited returns from these early farms.

Wheat was the major grain crop on these farms, followed by barley and oats, with root crops of potatoes, turnip and carrots. Officials in the North West expressed some doubts about whether the Indians should rely heavily on wheat. It had to be planted as soon as the snow was gone in the spring, and fall ploughed, so that with the limited amount of oxen available, only a small acreage could be assured of success. Wadsworth believed his instructors should encourage the Indians to grow mainly potatoes, as they had the greatest success with this crop.[75] As wheat required grist mills, it could be of very little use as a crop. Barley however, could be soaked, pounded, and boiled in soup. Seed of any variety was often in short supply, or was of poor quality. It was reported in a number of cases that acres were lying idle because no seed was available, or that more land might have been broken, had the seed been spared.[76] Bad roads and swollen streams often made it impossible to transport seed before the season was too far advanced for planting.[77] Although the Indians were

encouraged to save their seed for the following spring, this was difficult when food supplies ran low in winter.

Oxen provided the motive power for these early farmers and for the homesteaders who followed them. They were cheaper than horses, did not require stabling except in winter, and did not have to be fed oats. They were difficult beasts to work with at the best of times, having a tendency to head to a slough for a drink whenever they pleased, even while hitched to the plough or harrows.[78] If bothered by mosquitoes or flies, they simply refused to work. Some of the oxen supplied to the Indian department appear to have been particularly stubborn. Freight animals, that had never ploughed or worked in pairs were sent to some reserves.[79] Some of the oxen were not broken and would not allow the farmers to drive or go near them. A good many bands received wild Montana cattle in 1878, beasts that were unaccustomed to work, and unapproachable except on horse-back.[80] The milk cows they were given were of the same description. Cattle distributed to the Carlton bands were "sorefooted, poor and wild", and most of them died over their first winter.[81] In the spring of 1878 it was reported that little ploughing could be accomplished in the Touchwood Hills, as not one of the oxen would permit being hitched to the plough.[82] They attempted to hitch the bull to the plough but this was also unsuccessful.

The extent and quality of farming operations on a reserve was subject to the availability of oxen. From the

beginning of the farming program the scarcity of working cattle was recognized and lamented by officials and Indians alike. This deficiency was a great drawback to breaking, cultivating, haying, harvesting, and fall ploughing. It was noted with regret that because of the scarcity of oxen not as much land could be broken or prepared for seeding each year as the farmers would have liked. In the often brief period of time from between spring run-off, to when the seed had to be in the ground to allow it to ripen before the frost, only a certain amount could be accomplished with the limited oxen available. At this crucial time the more fortunate farmers were able to get their seed in the ground while the majority had to delay their spring operations, risking destruction by frost.[83] The presence of the home farms further complicated the situation as in some instances oxen was available to the Indians only when the greater portion of work on the instructor's farm was completed.[84]

The treaty provisions for oxen, as well as for farm implements, were found to be totally inadequate. Dewdney noted in 1881 that "The want of more teams and implements is felt by the Indians from one end of the territory to another."[85] He singled out Treaty Four as particularly wanting, as only one yoke of oxen was distributed to each band, and one plough for every ten families. To earn a living from the soil a yoke of oxen was required by every farming family, Dewdney claimed. During this period the department began to loan a limited number of cattle above

treaty obligations to some bands.[86] Most officials were convinced that the Indians would prefer to eat their cattle than use them as beasts of burden. The idea that the cattle be loaned only was to prevent "killing and abduction".[87] This was despite the fact that reports of the Indians killing their cattle were extremely rare, even during the leanest of winters. Some officials commented on the great care and attention Indians paid to their animals.[88] The system of loaning cattle presented problems as in some cases the Indians refused to be responsible for wintering the animals, wishing to hand them back to department officials once the season was over.[89]

Haying and harvesting were operations that required all the available oxen and wagons, and as during most seasons these had to be completed at about the same time, the scarcity of teams and implements placed both in jeopardy. The period of time between the day the wild grass had grown to sufficient bulk and the time it became woody and of inferior quality was quite short. Mid-summer was generally the time to put up a supply of hay for winter feed but the exact time to begin haying varied, depending on whether it was a dry or wet year. The wild grasses were cut with sickles or scythes and left for a time to cure on the field where it was turned and shaken up to admit light and air. The hay was then gathered, loaded onto carts and wagons and stacked. Haying was accomplished on most reserves with hand implements, although during this early period a few of the

bands acquired mechanical mowers and rakes. As with most farming operations in the North West, speed and efficiency were at a premium, and periods of dry weather had to be used to the limit. Just at the time the prairie grasses were ready for cutting, the barley might well have ripened, and the wheat harvest often curtailed haying activities. Hay that was made once the crops were harvested was inferior.[90] For this reason, mowers and rakes were the earliest and most numerous of the machines that farmers acquired in Manitoba.[91] Officials in the North West began to recognize that such machinery was vital to farming in that region. With reapers and mowers to help speed the harvest of hay and grain, much less was lost to frost.[92] The department did not provide these, but several bands, including those of Pasquah, Little Child and Sakemay, purchased mowers and rakes in the 1883 season, selling sufficient hay to pay for them.[93] It was not individuals but groups or bands who together owned these implements.

The harvest was accomplished with the scythe and grain cradle. After reaping, the grain was raked by hand, bound into bundles, and set into shocks or stooks. A mechanical reaper was noted on only one reserve during this period, and binders, which not only cut the grain but tied it into bundles, were as yet unknown in the Territories. Threshing was the process of beating the kernels of grain out of the heads at the top of the stalk. This was done with the flail, or by animals trampling the grain on a smooth surface

such as hard-packed ground. On some reserves the grain was threshed little by little as required throughout the winter, on ice with a flail.[94] Shovels of grain were tossed into the air when the breeze was right, as it would carry away the lighter chaff, and the cleaned grain would fall into a pile. Two reserves in Treaty Six together purchased a threshing machine in 1881, which was paid for by the bands, but this had broken down by 1883, and they were once again threshing on ice with the flail.[95] There was also a threshing machine in the Treaty Seven district, but it was in poor repair, as it was continually moved over great distances.[96]

Most of the crop failures of this period were attributed to frost, either because of the scarcity of teams and implements at harvest time which slowed the process, or because the grain failed to ripen altogether before it was struck. It has become a Saskatchewan folklore tradition that in the earliest period of settlement, frosts on the great wheat plains could occur every month of the year, an event now very rare.[97] It is not known what variety of wheat was attempted on the reserve and instructor farms but it was to be many years before experiments secured an early maturing variety of wheat for the North West. Red Fife was found in the late 1870's to yield well in the Manitoba lowlands, but even it took too long to mature in less favourable seasons in the North West.[98] Some of the more successful early farmers on the plains realized that the

varieties of wheat available were not suitable for the prairie and they concentrated on other crops, such as barley and oats.[99] On reserves in the North West during this period, fall ploughing was encouraged as it was discovered that these fields could be sown ten days ahead of the rest in spring, and the grain would ripen two weeks earlier.[100] The shortage of working oxen often prevented the completion of fall ploughing. Frost destroyed not only the grain crop but often large portions of the potato crop.[101] Drought caused crop failure some years, when the grain and roots did not vegetate but died away. Hail totally destroyed crops in certain districts. Damage to crops was also caused by horses and cattle breaking into the fields.

Even if a wheat crop overcame all the obstacles and was successfully harvested and threshed it was found to be of little use if it could not be ground into flour. In his request for a grist mill, which he claimed was promised to him before he left the Cypress Hills, Poundmaker stated that his people were starving beside their big stacks of grain, as they could do nothing with their wheat.[102] In attempting to explain why the expenses for feeding the Indians did not diminish from year to year, Dewdney stated that as there were no grist mills, the Indians could not subsist on their own produce, which, he claimed, they otherwise possessed in sufficient quantity.[103] He was also loath to encourage or allow the Indians to travel great distances to where there were grist mills, as work would stop, and nomadic habits

would be reinforced.[104] Officials in the field often commented during this period that Indian farmers could not realize the value of farming until they had access to mills, and that this was a cause of their being at times disheartened and discouraged with the enterprize. Inspector Wadsworth believed that "they will attach more value to farming as soon as they can have the products of their labour turned into a substantial article of food".[105]

The Indians' lack of clothing and footwear greatly hampered their farming operations. After his first visit in the fall of 1879, Wadsworth predicted that this would be the greatest drawback to their work in the next spring.[106] The buffalo had formerly been the main source of all their apparel. Dewdney stated in 1880 that the plains Indians were in a "deplorable state" with respect to clothing.[107] To cover their feet they were cutting up old leather lodges but these were also rapidly diminishing. Three, and sometimes four families were being crowded into one lodge. They were also often hungry, weak, and ill, and could not work, no matter how willing they were. Suddenly reduced to a diet that consisted of flour and salt pork, the Indians were prey to many illnesses. Some of the bacon they were issued was "rusty, old and thin and altogether unfit for food".[108] Rations were distributed in a manner calculated to discourage the recipients from thinking that they could rely on this as a means of support, and they were often suspended for many days at a time. It was impossible for

the Indians to remain on the reserves as they were compelled to hunt, trap, fish and gather roots and berries over a much wider territory. Once seeding was finished, and sometimes even before, many residents of the reserves were out on the plains, leaving behind only a few to tend the crops. They were generally encouraged to do this by their agents and instructors, as it resulted in a saving to the department, despite the fact that farming operations were virtually suspended.[109]

The Indians had very limited opportunities to obtain capital to purchase clothing and other necessities. They were paid in rations for work on the reserves or home farms. In some districts, work on public trails and bridges was completed by Indians under the work for rations policy.[110] They cut large amounts of rails for fencing and cordwood, often when there was no demand for most of the wood.[111] Dewdney reported after the first year that work for rations was very difficult to enforce, particularly on the Plains Cree reserves.[112] The Cree, he reported, were quite willing to work, but it was almost impossible to provide it as the tools and implements provided under treaty could not keep very many employed. Newcomers, who constantly augmented the populations of the reserves during this period, were promised rations on their arrival, and officials at times found themselves rationing to the same extent both those who had performed work and those who had not. Some agents believed the Indians would see the advantage of their work

if they were paid in wages, to enable them to purchase clothing and other necessities.[113] The Indians did not always see the work they performed for rations as their course of study in the mysteries of self-help and industry. The Piegan for example, refused to work on the agency farm unless they received wages.[114] Although the agent attempted to convince them that the work they performed was for their own benefit and enlightenment, they did not see it in this light. They were willing to work for themselves for rations, but for extra work, expected wages. Even those bands with a surplus to sell during this period, had no markets, and were similarly at a loss for meat, clothing, tea and tobacco.[115] Some officials urged the department to purchase grain from Indians with a surplus, as money which went to contractors could go to the Indians, and it could be bought at a much lower figure.[116] Yet this was reported to have been done on very few occasions. In 1882 the instructor for Little Black Bear's band at File Hills purchased eight bushels of seed wheat from them and in exchange distributed tea, tobacco, and calico.[117] Instructors and agents were later informed however, that they could not exchange provisions for the Indians' wheat.[118]

Department officials hoped that the solution to the Indians' lack of capital for food, clothing and other necessities would come with increased settlement and greater opportunities for employment. There was little recognition

or concern that this would directly interfere with reserve agriculture. Dewdney suggested that the Indians be employed getting out ties and grading for the CPR. He believed a section of perhaps ten or more miles of line could be set apart for the purpose. The department would furnish the tools and provisions "the price of which could be deducted from the amount agreed to be paid to the Indians for the ties furnished; any balance due them could be paid in clothing or other necessaries, and, perhaps, a little cash, which would be a great inducement for them to enter into this arrangement".[119] The plan was mentioned to the Qu'Appelle Indians, and according to Dewdney they were willing, even anxious to undertake the work. In districts where settlement had begun, it was reported that the Indians were employed breaking land, getting out rails, and fencing for the settlers, for which they were paid a good wage.[120] As had already been found in Manitoba however, it was to become difficult to persuade the Indians to work on their reserves for rations when they could obtain lucrative employment elsewhere.[121] The debilitating scarcity of implements and teams was further exacerbated when these were taken to work off the reserves at key times of the year.

The reports of agents and instructors throughout the Territories during this period confirm that the Indians began their agricultural enterprize with considerable energy and curiosity. They showed a keen desire to farm, were anxious for information and advice, and were willing to

perform the work they were called upon to do.[122] Department officials in the field attributed setbacks not to the Indians' character and traditions, but to the economic and climatic conditions that made farming a dubious and uncertain undertaking. Only one particularly vocal and articulate agent, whose views were eventually to be of considerable influence, claimed that peculiar idiosyncracies of the Indians' culture prevented them from becoming successful farmers. Hayter Reed, appointed Indian agent at Battleford in May 1881, argued in his reports that because of the Indians' "inherent, restless disposition" they simply found reserve life monotonous, and rather than making any exertions, preferred to trust to the Supreme Being to care for them in their trials.[123] Reed assigned the causes of the Indians' poor crops to their religious ceremonies which diverted attention from their farms, and to their propensity to share their crops, and "raid" their own fields. His views were to prevail above those of many others. Reed's explanations for the Indians' limited success at farming were more convenient than those which involved a complex of factors which included climate, geography, oxen, implements, seed, mills and markets. They also absolved the government of much responsibility in the matter.

The home farm policy, as it was originally planned in the winter of 1878-79, enjoyed a very brief life. By 1884, the government had officially retreated from the policy. The original seventeen farms had been increased to twenty-

four during this period, but the new appointees, as well as the original instructors were asked as early as 1881 to spend all their time and energy on the Indian fields.[124] Their home farms were to consist of no more than fifteen or twenty acres, and the idea that these were to perform an educational function had been abandoned. New recruits were no longer brought from Ontario but were men of the country, hired more for their ability to work with Indians than for their skills as farmers. It had simply been found that farmers could not successfully attend to both their home farms and the reserve farms. To supervise seeding and harvesting on reserves that were in some cases fifty or sixty miles apart, large teams of assistants were required. The instructors seldom visited the reserves, and they lacked even basic knowledge about the bands under their supervision, such as the population of each band, or what implements were in their possession.[125] According to one agent the instructors preferred to work for themselves rather than be subject to "the constant monotony of teaching".[126] While this may have been true in some cases, the instructors were often unfairly blamed for the failure of the poorly-conceived policy.

The job of farm instructor became increasingly inconvenient, particularly for those who were in the original group from the eastern provinces. In response to concern that the cost of these farms was excessive, it was announced in the spring of 1881 that instructors were to be

charged twenty-five cents per diem for their board, and that each family member would be charged half that.[127] The amount of food they consumed, from the produce raised on their farms, was also to be charged against them. Many of the farmers voiced strong opposition to the circular letter which brought this news. John Tomkins, the instructor at Duck Lake, insisted that the farmers had clearly understood that they and their families were to be supported by the government.[128] On the strength of this some had brought their families with them from the outset. Tomkins had waited to bring his family out until suitable accommodation was made, as had been recommended by the deputy superintendent general. He would never have done this, taking his children away from school, had he known that such a regulation would be made. Tomkins argued that his wife, who did all the housework and cooking for the agency, paid for her own and the children's board, and saved the wages of an extra man. He also intended that his wife should teach the Indian women to do housework, to make butter and other items.

James Johnston, instructor for the Pelly agency did not have his children with him, but he objected to paying board for himself.[129] He considered that his services resulted in a great saving to the department. He had stacked enough hay for example, to winter seventy-five head, saving the department the expense of letting a hay contract. James Scott at the Touchwood Hills replied to the circular letter

by billing the department for the support of his family in Ontario from April 1, 1879 to April 1, 1880, claiming that each instructor with his family was to be supplied with board for the first year, and as this arrangement had been carried out for those who brought their families along, it should also apply to his family in Ontario.[130] He understood that after the first year he was to raise enough on his farm to support himself and family but he charged that the government had not fulfilled its part of the bargain in "sending them out early enough to get their breaking done during the summer and they had been set back nearly a year in their farming operations". Scott still maintained that any surplus he raised belonged to him. He believed he had sufficient produce on hand that spring to cover the cost of his board, and to support his family. The Indian agent, he stated, could purchase from him the seed grain and potatoes required for the Indians, at the same rate as any others would have to pay for the seed. Scott resigned from his position on September 1, 1881.

The farm instructors were also informed that season that they could not employ their relatives as farm hands. Dewdney had received repeated applications from the farmers to hire their own sons, and this had been authorized in some cases. Dewdney believed the practice should be discontinued as instructors did not have control over their sons, and did not get as much work from them.[131]

The home farm program was severely criticized in the House of Commons during its brief life. Opposition critics detected many of the obvious weaknesses of the program, but they also expected immediate, miraculous results. Members who spoke on the issue from both sides of the House revealed a lack of understanding of Territorial conditions which made farming a dubious enterprize for Indians and instructors alike. David Mills believed that the home farm policy allowed the Indians to watch other men do their work, and in some cases did not even afford this advantage, as the farms were remote from the reserves.[132] Mills could not understand why non-Indians were employed on these farms. He insisted that if any one was to be employed, it should be Indians. He declared to the House that

> It is said by Dr. Cook, in his lectures to the theological students of Belfast, that clergymen should be taught to preach as we teach dogs to swim, by throwing them into the water; and it appears to me that Indians must learn agriculture in very much the same way. They must be put at the work, and it is by what they do themselves that they learn to cultivate the soil.[133]

Mills also urged that the Indians be given a share of the crop raised for their wages. This would give them a special interest in producing as much as possible, and would result in a large saving to the public treasury.

In his first annual scrutiny of the accounts for the farm instructor program, Mills could find nothing to indicate that the instructors had succeeded in producing enough to sustain themselves, let alone providing for

Indians.[134] The instructors he argued, were better supplied with the implements of husbandry than most farmers in the older provinces, and he believed they ought to be able to show something for their efforts. Mills did not see why the instructors should be paid at all; furnishing them with the necessary implements was adequate. If the government continued to pay them, and take their crops from them, they would have no motive to do anything, assuring the smallest results for the largest outlay. "They will be precisely in the position of the African slaves in the Southern States who, not receiving the profit of their industry and whose wages not depending on the results, will do as little as possible", Mills declared.[135] Mills estimated in the spring of 1882 that the cost of maintaining the farms in the Territories had reached $90,000.00, with no results to warrant this expenditure.[136] He objected to the purchase of any more implements stating that these obligations had been met in 1878, and that as far as he could learn, the Indians consumed their oxen, and sold their implements. Two years later Mills continued to insist that the program was a great failure.[137] In the 1882 annual report of the department he could find no indication of what these farms had produced, as distinct from the products and expenses of the reserves.

Other opposition members attacked the home farm policy on different grounds. One contended that the program had failed because the government had continued to feed the Indians in their idleness, at the same time as they supplied

them with all the means for agriculture.[138] James Fleming found no fault with the policy, which he believed was calculated to promote the well-being of the Indians, but he argued that this policy had not been carried out.[139] Faith had not been kept with the Indians, who had been led to believe by the negotiators of the treaties that happiness and prosperity would result. He presented evidence that some bands had not received their implements, cattle and seed, and that other promises were broken and frauds practiced. He believed that the natural result of this breach of faith was that the Indians could well "resort to some means to make themselves square".[140] In his opinion, this was why the Indians were displaying less self-reliance than formerly, as a means of protest. Philipe Casgrain, claiming to take Fleming's argument one step further, stated that the policy of the government went against the "natural law" relating to Indians, which was that the race was becoming rapidly extinct.[141] It was therefore an enormous waste of money to attempt to "civilize" the Indians as this was a goal which could never be realized. Casgrain knew of only one Indian who had ever become thoroughly civilized, and he had white blood in his veins. Agricultural experiments such as that tried by the missionaries at Garden River had only displayed the "inaptitude [sic] of Indians to enter into civilized life", Casgrain argued.[142] Houses were built for them and garden plots set aside, but they preferred their wigwams, and there was not a root to be

found in any of their gardens. The Indians of the North West were similarly a "doomed race", according to Casgrain; it was only a question of how soon they would disappear.

For some years, Prime Minister Macdonald attempted to defend the farm instructor program in the House. In 1881 he argued that the program had met with sufficient success to justify the expense.[143] The Indians he claimed, had followed the example of their instructors and "betaken themselves, in a rude way, to cultivating the soil- to scratching it I might say".[144] They were learning to use their oxen as animals of labour rather than as their items of diet. He contended that the Indians must have instructors who must be paid as "You cannot get men, from motives of philanthropy, to settle amongst a band of Indians which is away from his own kindred and lineage".[145] With few exceptions Macdonald argued, the instructors had proved themselves worthy of their salaries. He acknowledged that the allocation for the Indians of the North West was large and warned it would continue to be so until the Indians learned to cultivate the soil.

By 1884 however, Macdonald admitted in the House that "The Indian farms were an experiment; and I do not think that, on the whole, they have been successful".[146] His government was not to be blamed for this failure; its only fault was in overestimating the abilities of the Indians. Great pains had been taken to hire men well trained in farming and it had since been found that it was less

important to have first rate farmers than men accustomed to dealing with the Indians. His government had kept faith with the Indians. The provisions of the treaties had been carried out, and "if there is any error, it is in an excessive supply being furnished to the Indians".[147] Expressions of discontent on the part of the Indians could readily be dismissed as they always grumbled, never professed to be satisfied, they bullied their agents and played tricks to get more than what they were entitled to. Their dissatisfaction was encouraged by those who were "living and getting fat upon inciting the Indians to discontent".[148] The policy had failed because the Indians, "idlers by nature, and uncivilized", could never learn to farm in anything but a rude manner:

> What you want is to get the Indians to plant a few turnips, and perhaps in a rough way which would shock a model school alumnus, and raise cattle and roots, and perhaps by-and-bye [sic] grain, rather than that they should receive the instructions of a first-class farmer.[149]

Macdonald had come to the conclusion that the Indians were more likely to become carpenters, blacksmiths or mechanics. They were not, in his opinion, suited to agriculture as they "have not the ox-like quality of the Anglo-Saxon; they will not put their neck to the yoke".[150]

An official memorandum drawn up by Vankoughnet in 1884 announced that the home farms were to be closed at Bird Tail Creek, Fort Pelly, Crooked Lakes, Qu'Appelle, Indian Head, Duck Lake and Prince Albert.[151] Vankoughnet explained that

the Indians in the vicinity of these farms had

> sufficient opportunity to observe how farms should be conducted and as these farms cost a great deal to work them, and the Indians derived little or no benefit from the work expended on them, it was considered in the interests of the Indians and at the same time a saving to the Department were the Instructors to devote the whole of their time and attention to instructing the Indians to cultivate and raise produce on their own farms in the Reserves.[152]

The decision to end the home farm program was not as sudden as suggested in the memo, which was primarily intended to clarify confusion in Ottawa about the state of these farms.[153] For some years the government had been quietly retreating from the program, closing the farms entirely or reducing staff and size. The explanations publicly advanced for these closures tended to emphasize the successes rather than the shortfalls and blemishes of the program. Prime Minister Macdonald announced in 1882 that the farms were to be closed in several localities as "The object for which they were established, namely: the practical exemplification to the Indians of the manner in which farms should be managed, has been attained".[154] It is unlikely that either Macdonald or Vankoughnet had full confidence in this claim. The farms were closed because they had failed to raise large quantities of food for the Indians, maintaining them had cost more than the value of the products raised, and they had proved an administrative nightmare.

The government felt it could now afford to drift out of the program as it was vaguely hoped that increased

settlement would help solve some of the Indian department's difficulties. As settlement proceeded the government felt it was no longer responsible for some of the services provided by the home farms. They were not required as depots of seed, tools, and other hardware when these could be obtained in the settlements. The government did not want to appear to be in competition with the settlers and businesses whom they had encouraged to move to the West, for there was considerable jealousy over the very limited markets. With other forms of employment available, there was less pressure and obligation to transform all Indians into farmers. It was reasoned that those who could not make a living cultivating could work for settlers, for millowners, lumberers, or on the railroad. It was anticipated that the closing of the farms would result in a substantial saving to the government, and it was hoped that in some cases, a profit could be made from the sale of the improvements.

The final demise of the home farms coincided with the inauguration of a new scheme to bring the Indians to "civilization". Through the industrial school system, unveiled in 1883, efforts would be concentrated on a new generation of Indians. They would be taught useful trades, and the English language both of which would increase their employment opportunities. The older generation it was reasoned, had been given every encouragement to make a transition to farming but had proved themselves incapable.

The last vestiges of the home farm scheme were put to rest late in 1883. That year Vankoughnet undertook an extensive tour of the North West, and he became convinced that there was a great deal of needless expenditure.[155] A massive program of financial retrenchment was hastily implemented following his return to Ottawa. The wholesale dismissal of clerks, assistants and instructors throughout the Territories was ordered. Agents were to act as their own clerks and storekeepers, and their travelling expenses were greatly curtailed. Farm assistants were to be hired for the growing season only. They would be called "instructors" but they were not to receive the higher wage of the former instructors. Vankoughnet was concerned that authority no longer be divided between the agent and the instructor; instructors were to report directly to the agent, and they clearly occupied a subordinate position. The local authority and discretionary powers of the agent, instructors, and Indian commissioner was reduced. No deviations from the acknowledged rules, no matter what the explanation, were to be tolerated. There was in particular to be a much stricter supervision of the distribution of rations. These were to be issued only in return for work and under no other circumstances. The custom of distributing food when important officials visited reserves was put to an end. Vankoughnet considered it a "most irrational" tradition, which squandered supplies at the same

time as it demoralized the Indians, as they would not work as long as the food lasted.[156]

The policy of financial retrenchment was applied throughout the Territories in the fall of 1883, without respect for local conditions and despite the objections of many local authorities. The Indians of the Qu'Appelle and the Touchwood Hills district of Treaty Four were generally recognized as among the most poorly off, and in comparison with the Indians of Treaty Six, particularly those on the Carlton reserves, they had made very little progress in farming. Inspector Wadsworth believed the Indians were not to blame for this situation, as they appeared "tractable and willing", but rather felt that the instructors sent to this district had not proved to be "good men" as had those in Treaty Six, who had taken an interest in their work, and remained at it.[157] He urged in his reports that instead of slackening, extra efforts should be made in this district, recommending in 1882 that a man be sent to each of the reserves to camp and work constantly with the Indians.[158] Among other reasons for their lack of headway was that the Indians of this district had made virtually no start at farming by the time of the starvation crisis of 1879. It was only in the face of the great want and distress that he encountered in the spring of 1879 that agent McDonald distributed implements to all who applied for them.[159] The comparative lack of agricultural progress in Treaty Four during this period was also because may bands had only

recently settled their reserves. Indians from the Qu'Appelle were among the last to leave the Cypress Hills. They were not stubbornly refusing to settle or take to the plough. Observing the government's timid measures to help those already settled, chiefs were reluctant to confine their bands to reserves as they believed it would invite starvation and death.

The Indians of the Qu'Appelle and Touchwood Hills district had the benefit of some association with the home farm program as it was originally conceived. The farm started by Mr. Scott in the Touchwood Hills in the fall of 1879 remained in operation until 1883. It appears that there never was very much more under cultivation on this farm than the original thirty-five acres broken by Scott. During its last season the farm consisted of twelve acres of oats, and root crops.[160] By 1881, the farm was not operating to the satisfaction of farm inspector Wadsworth. Despite the fact that he had helped select the site for the farm he complained that it was entirely too far away from the four Touchwood bands, and the Nut Lake and Fishing Lake Indians to the north, all under the charge of the instructor.[161] In its location the farm could serve only as a base of supplies. Because the Touchwood Hills were so far away from the agency buildings at Fort Qu'Appelle however, a depot of supplies was required at the site. Wadsworth suggested that the instructor work a small home farm, and distribute his men on the various reserves from seeding to

harvest, discharging this staff in winter. In 1881 this farm employed nine men for varying lengths of time as well as a full-time instructor, and for all this Wadsworth found little improvement in the bands. This farm was the object of his criticism at its most pointed: "I would sooner suggest the abandonment of this 'home farm' altogether than to continue the system of the past two years, where the pretence of work upon the home farm has been a cloak for idleness".[162]

Visiting the farm in 1883, Hayter Reed, recently appointed to the position of acting assistant Indian commissioner, recommended that the farm be closed "owing to the limited number of Indians on the different Reserves adjacent thereto, and the slight advancement made as compared with the outlay".[163] In Reed's opinion, the instructor should reside on the reserve with the largest population, and the one most distant from the best hunting grounds. Here no ground should be cultivated as a home farm, so that the instructor could give all his attention to the bands. Assistants could be temporarily hired for the outlying bands. Reed was prepared to almost totally ignore the farming efforts of bands occupying good hunting territory, reasoning that these people were not likely to devote any attention to tilling the soil. The home farm in the Touchwood Hills was closed in December 1883.

Farming had progressed to some extent on reserves in the Touchwood Hills by 1884, but two central problems

plagued agriculture in the district. (See Table 1.) Much of the land in the Touchwood Hills was swampy and covered with timber so that there was a shortage of arable land, and there were not enough oxen for the acres that were under cultivation. On most reserves well over half the families farmed to some extent so that a lack of interest in agriculture was not an obstacle.

Most commentators saw Day Star's band members as the most promising farmers in the Touchwood Hills. The chief was particularly interested in agriculture; his garden was described as "a model of neatness and everything growing luxuriantly", earning him a silver medal from the Governor General in 1881 as the most advanced Cree chief in farming in Treaty Four.[164] In the spring of 1882, this band was well-enough off to sell seed potato and wheat to the agent, as they still had a large supply on hand.[165] The shortage of arable land on this reserve was to a small extent ameliorated in 1881 when the survey lines were re-run to take in prairie land in exchange for timber land to the north.[166] By 1883 however, the chief was once again requesting that the reserve be re-surveyed to include more arable land.[167] On George Gordon's reserve, which was mostly woods and lakes, the boundaries were also changed to take in some open prairie land suitable for farming.[168] The residents had been farming as best they could in the hills and on knolls, and in small clearings in the timber. It was recognized as early as 1877 that the reserve contained too

little arable land and many of the farms were located off the reserve.[169].

For the Indians of the Qu'Appelle a home farm was established in the fall of 1879 near Pasquah's reserve. The farm was located about five miles from Fort Qu'Appelle near a beautiful stream with wooded ravines.[170] This farm suffered from a constant turn-over in staff. Frank Hunt resigned as instructor after his first winter. He was replaced by Mr. G. Newlove who arrived in the fall of 1880 and by the 1882 season he had been replaced by Mr. S. Hockley. In that year the farm had twenty-five acres of wheat, oats, barley and corn under cultivation, but that was its final year of operation. In the annual report of that year it was remarked that the farm had been closed, and in future all work was to be done on the reserves.[171] No reasons were given for the closure.

For most of the life of this home farm, Pasquah's band was the sole beneficiary of the instructors' attention and of the demonstration function of the farm, as for some years theirs was the only reserve in the vicinity. They were very advanced in their farming compared to others in the district, and this was due to a number of advantages, one of which likely was that the instructor could devote all his attention to one band. Wadsworth remarked in 1881 that at Qu'Appelle the system of having a man responsible for each reserve had met with excellent results.[172] Pasquah's band had also made a good start at farming before the famine

crisis of 1879. The availability of oxen may also account for the success of their farming; in 1884 the band had twenty-eight. Three families each purchased a yoke of oxen in 1883 and the agent presented these with ploughs and harness as an encouragement to others.[173] This band also profited from their close proximity to Fort Qu'Appelle. In the winter many band members worked for settlers, and they provided timber to the N.W.M.P. post there.

Muscowpetung's band only began to settle near Pasquah's reserve in 1881, and so derived little benefit from the home farm scheme. (See Figure 8.) Surveyor Nelson conferred with the chief in the fall of that year, and the reserve was selected to the west of and adjoining Pasquah's, south of the Qu'Appelle.[175] Nelson described the soil as of good quality, as he found much of the land in the Qu'Appelle district. The bottom lands along the river front consisted of rich soil and extensive hay grounds. There was a limited supply of wood however; poplar and a few small maples only grew in the gulches that extended back from the valley. Opposite, on the north side of the Qu'Appelle, some hay grounds were reserved for the use of the Indian department. Agent McDonald described this as one of the best reserves in the treaty area for agricultural purposes.[176]

The home farm in the Touchwood Hills, and the one near Pasquah's reserve were the sole manifestations, in this district of Treaty Four, of the program that was originally conceived in 1879. Many of the Indians who eventually

settled in the Qu'Appelle however, received lessons in farming from two home farms that were established in the Cypress Hills, one for the Cree and one for the Assiniboine. Several of the bands that were pressured to return to the Qu'Appelle had initially chosen reserves in the Cypress Hills. In 1879 a home farm was established in the Cypress Hills, on Maple Creek, thirty miles northeast of Fort Walsh. Here Cowessess or Little Child selected a reserve, and members of his band settled here although the survey was never completed.[177] In 1881 Piapot chose a reserve about ten miles north of the Maple Creek farm.[178] This farm was supervised by John Setter, who unlike most in the first contingent of farm instructors was a "man of the country", a son of a Hudson's Bay Company man, born at Red River.[179] Agent McDonald reported that Setter had excellent crops after one year, considering that there had been no rain and seeding had been completed late in the season.[180] He noted that the Indians had displayed a "great deal of energy in trying to make a success of their first agricultural enterprize".[181] The following year there were 115 acres under cultivation at the Maple Creek farm of wheat, oats, turnips and potatoes.[182] Some of the Indians were reported to be working at their farms remarkably well; they took considerable pride in their gardens, and were annoyed that there was not more seed available.[183] A number of Indians planted wheat for themselves, and the agent recommended that the farm be supplied with a portable grist mill as he

believed that if the Indians could grind their grain, large numbers could be induced to break up land for the following year. The agent was confident that the Indians here could be self-sustaining in another year.

Despite the fact that the home farm in the Cypress Hills proved to be one of the great successes of the program, it was closed because of the decision in the winter of 1881-2 that all Indians in the Hills should be moved to the north or east. The reason generally cited for this decision is that officials feared conflict between the American and Canadian Indians living in close proximity.[184] A more recent interpretation suggests that Canadian authorities were concerned about the danger posed by a concentration of the Cree on contiguous reserves in the Cypress Hills, as this would effectively create an Indian territory in which the residents would be difficult to control.[185] To encourage removal from the Cypress Hills, rationing was discontinued, Fort Walsh was closed, and the home farm ceased to be.[186]

Many of the Indians who had congregated in the Cypress Hills settled on reserves at the Crooked and Round Lakes during the early 1880's. (See Figure 9.) This was described as "a most beautiful part of the country, right on the Northern [sic] edge of the great plains, [with] fine poplar bluffs, some small lakes and the choicest of wheat land, an ideal location chosen by the Indians themselves. This had always been a great wintering place for the

Indians, there being plenty of fish in the lakes".[187] Setter, transferred to this site in 1880, was not to run a separate home farm. All work was to be done on the reserves with his men working with and among the Indians.[188] Loud Voice's reserve formed the eastern boundary of this group, having Round Lake as its northern boundary. Loud Voice, very old and blind for several years, died in 1883 and was replaced as chief by his son Ochapawace. Chakachas' band also resided on this reserve. Members of this band settled in 1883 and 1884, when they broke land toward the western end of the reserve. Residents of this reserve worked large fields as a community except for four who farmed on their own. Each head of family kept a small garden.

Kakewistahaw's band occupied a reserve just to the west of Loud Voice, in the valley between the Round and Crooked Lakes. Members of this band were among the last to leave the Cypress Hills region. In 1882, thirty-three followers of Kakewistahaw were found in a starving condition at Wood Mountain, and these people arrived at Fort Qu'Appelle in June of that year.[189] The farming Indians worked one large field in common, and a few had separate fields.

Adjoining Kakewistahaw's reserve on the west was a reserve that was first known as O'Soup's. A headman of Cowessess' band, Louis O'Soup persuaded a faction of the band to leave the Cypress Hills and return to Qu'Appelle, where a reserve was surveyed in 1880.[190] O'Soup apparently hoped he would be recognized as chief in Cowessess' absence.

In 1882 however, O'Soup promised to receive Cowessess with friendship when he arrived with the remainder of his band that year. On this reserve a number of notable individual farmers were emerging by 1884. Among these was Nepahpahness, whose operations Inspector Wadsworth applauded in 1884. He had

> purchased, for the support of his family, fourteen sacks of flour since the spring. His live stock consists of three cows, two oxen, one heifer, two steers, three calves, three horses, two foals. He has planted- furnishing his own seed- thirty-two bushels of wheat, five bushels of barley, thirty-four bushels of potatoes, and one acre of turnips, and has about ten bushels of grain left in his granary. He has a mower and rake and double waggon in his house, a good cook stove, chairs, table clock, milk pans and churns.[191]

Wadsworth described Nepahpahness' grain as the best he had seen that year. Nekahneequinep, O'Soup, Sasalue, Louison, Jacob Bear, Ahkingkahpempatoot, Nasaagan, Joseph Sprevier, Gardé, and Petewaywaykeesick all had farms of their own and cultivated an average of nine acres each, mostly in wheat with the exception of Gardé who had twenty-five acres in wheat, nine in barley, four in potatoes, and two in turnips.[192]

The Indians of this reserve had a long history of association with the Hudson's Bay Company as hunters and employees and some of those who were most prominent in this relationship were among the well-to-do farmers. Nepahpahness had been a steersman with the Company and Jacob Bear was a bowsman.[193] Gardé or Gaddie and O'Soup also had

close connections with the Company. This association was maintained well into the reserve period. At the request of Nepahpahness and a number of others, the Company opened a store on the reserve in 1883. N.M.W.J. McKenzie was sent to run the store which operated out of Nepahpahness' house.[194] It functioned from fall until spring, the hunters bringing in chiefly red fox, lynx, wolves, mink, muskrat, fisher marten, wolverine, and a few dressed moose and red deer skins.[195] McKenzie encouraged the Plains Cree Indians of these reserves, who did not participate in the fur hunt, to dig the abundant seneca or snake root. A chief ingredient in patent medicines, seneca root was worth anywhere from twenty-five cents to eighty-five cents per pound.[196] The roots had to be dug, washed clean, spread on a blanket and dried in the sun. McKenzie, who believed he was responsible for introducing this industry to Saskatchewan, shipped many tons of the root to the United States from Crooked Lakes.[197] McKenzie was also a carpenter and his participation may have been behind the superior housing that observers noted on the Cowessess reserve. He helped Nepahpahness build a one-and-a half storey home which the owner in later years ran as a stopping place for settlers heading north from Broadview.

Forming the western boundary of the Crooked Lakes reserves was the Sakemay or Mosquito band. These were Saulteaux fur hunters associated with the Fort Ellice band who had seldom ventured out on the plains and had wintered at Crooked lakes for many years. Theirs was the first

reserve to be surveyed at this site in 1876. In the early 1880's, this band was divided into two factions. About half of the band, the brothers and families of the late Sakemay, known as the Shesheep faction, were settled on the north side of Crooked Lake where their reserve had originally been surveyed.[198] This portion of the band accepted no aid from the government in the way of oxen or implements. Yellow Calf's faction of the band began breaking land about two and a half miles south of this settlement, and were accepting their share of implements, livestock and provisions. Agent McDonald urged the Shesheep faction to join the rest of the band to the south, as he felt the soil was too light and gravelly, and there was not enough wood at the old site. In 1884 however, Shesheep still desired to be separated from Yellow Calf and his supporters.[199]

Four reserves were surveyed in a grid-like fashion in the File Hills in the fall of 1880. (See Figure 10.) Surveyor Allan Patrick noted on his arrival in 1880 that there were several small houses, and some evidence of cultivation.[200] These bands subsisted mainly upon waterfowl and fish and not buffalo. Patrick surveyed upon the principle that each band was to have, in proportion to their numbers, an equal quantity of wooded land and fertile soil.[201] He believed that the western slope of the File Hills provided the residents with hay lands and water, while the eastern slope was well-adapted for farming. The hills in the centre of this group of reserves he noted, were

covered with good building timber. It was soon recognized however, that from the point of view of agriculture, the File Hills was not a good choice. Surveyor Nelson visited the reserves in 1884 and found that well over half of these reserves was characterized by swamps, ponds, and lakes, with poplar bluffs and clumps of willow.[202] This was the western slope. In the centre of the reserves, at the height of the Hills, were heavy woods. Prairie land suitable for farming was found only along the eastern slope, and Little Black Bear's reserve had the most of this. Agent McDonald lamented in 1883 that the three other reserves were so cut up by lakes and marshes that large fields could not be made.[203]

A home farm on the 1879 model was never in operation at the File Hills. The agency farm, adjacent to Okanese's reserve, never consisted of more than about eight acres of barley, wheat and potatoes. From the beginning, instructors here were urged to devote all their attention to the Indian farms.

Farming was off to a start by 1884 on the Touchwood Hills, File Hills, Crooked Lakes and Qu'Appelle reserves, but it could scarcely be boasted that here the home farm program had been attended with such success that massive cutbacks were warranted. Very little of the money and effort expended on this program had been directed toward this district of Treaty Four. The Indian leaders on these reserves insisted that they were not given enough assistance

in the way of implements and teams to make farming a success. Like other Indian spokesmen throughout the Territories in the early 1880's, they grasped every opportunity to implore the government to allow them the means to make a living by agriculture. Indian protest of this period reveals a recognition that even if the farm materials promised by the treaty commissioners had been faithfully delivered, which in some cases they were not, these were not adequate to form an agricultural economy on the reserves. The Indians felt that at the treaty negotiations, they had been promised and assured that they could make a living by agriculture and they now suspected that they had been duped and misled by the "sweet promises" of the commissioners. This spirit of discontent reached its height in 1884 and 1885 but it had been simmering for some years. No plot on the part of Louis Riel was needed to foment Indian dissatisfaction and resentment. Virtually all of the Indians' grievances were ignored by department officials and other representatives of authority. A formula for dismissing complaints and criticism was by this time well-established. The Indians were simply not be be believed as they were perceived as chronic grumblers, lazy idlers and beggars, susceptible to the nefarious influence of those who might profit by stirring up discontent.

The visit of the Governor General, the Marquis of Lorne in the summer of 1881 was welcomed by Indians throughout the Territories as an opportunity to collectively voice their

concerns. Clearly the visit had been anticipated for some time, and presentations were carefully prepared.[204] The Indians appeared to regard this man as particularly powerful, especially because of his marriage to a daughter of Queen Victoria. The Indians assured the Governor-General that they were committed to farming; as their hunting ground was now a solitary wilderness they saw no option but to work the ground.[205] They appealed for more "strength" in the way of implements and teams to properly work the land. Among the spokesmen present at the meeting held at Fort Qu'Appelle were Loud Voice, O'Soup, Yellow Quill, Strong Quill (Muscowequan), Kanocees, Day Star and Day Bird. They stressed that they could not live by what was given to them in the treaty; they requested a new arrangement, translated as a "reformation" of the treaty.[206] They declared that their women and children were starving, that they had eaten their horses and dogs, that they had no shoes, mittens or clothing, and they could not live on the rations issued to them. They asked for more oxen and implements to allow them the means to keep themselves alive. They asked if one of their number might be allowed to go to Ottawa to plead their case. They implored the Governor-General not to pass by quickly, as many officials did, but to carefully consider and help settle the matters that concerned them. His Excellency however, dismissed most of their grievances, believing that the Indians preferred to smoke their pipes and make eloquent speeches than to work. "Hands were not

given by Manitou to fill pipes only but to work," he lectured the assembly at Qu'Appelle, adding "I am sure that red men to the East when they work do well and do not starve and I have noticed that the men who talk most and ask most do not work".[207]

The Indians of the Territories continued to use every channel of expression open to them to express their need for more implements and cattle. These requests sometimes appeared in the annual reports of the Indian agents. In 1883 for example, agent McDonald reported that Kakewistahaw, Loud Voice, Little Black Bear, Peepeekeesis and Muscowpetung were asking for work oxen, ploughs, and harrows.[208] In having their case heard however, the Indians faced many obstacles. Interpreters did not always faithfully translate the meaning of their words to officials, and agents often refused to hear the Indians' appeals, claiming that they had no power to do anything about them.[209] Chiefs and other individuals often applied to visit Ottawa. In a private letter to Dewdney of January, 1881, an exasperated agent McDonald wondered "What is to be done with O'Soup: I never meet him without his bringing up the subject of his visit to Ottawa."[210] The matter went all the way to Vankoughnet who thought that perhaps when the railway was completed it might be a good idea to have some chiefs visit the settled portions of the Dominion.

Indians of the Territories also posted their complaints through the mail. In a letter to Dewdney of August, 1881,

Red Pheasant, chief of an Eagle Hills Cree band, asked for more implements, and for a blacksmith as they were unable to repair the tools they had.[211] In his annual report of 1882, Dewdney quoted extensively from a letter he had received from Poundmaker. Dewdney used it as evidence that the Indians were not simply begging for more rations so that they might live in idleness, but were truly committed to making a living by agriculture.[212] Poundmaker asked for the grist mill and the oxen promised him, and for his ploughs and wrenches. He stated that his band had always been short of implements, and that last year they did not have enough potato and seed wheat to sow all the land they had prepared. There was a great deal of distress on his reserve as rations had been suspended for forty-one days. They could not work on empty stomachs, and members of his band were compelled to rove and hunt. Poundmaker concluded that "It seems to me that we are as anxious to be independent as the Government are [sic] to get rid of the burden of supporting us."[213]

The Cree chiefs of the Edmonton district wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior in January of 1883, which was also published in the Edmonton Bulletin.[214] They stated that their dire poverty that winter had compelled them to seek redress directly from the government. They were writing because their interpreters, hired by the government, refused to translate their exact words to their agents. If attention was not paid to their case, they would assume the treaty was meaningless, and that

"the white man has doomed us to annihilation little by little".[215] They had understood that the conditions of the treaty were inviolable and reciprocally binding, and that neither party could be guilty of a breach of faith without impunity. They considered that their treatment constituted a breach of faith, as they had not received one-half of what had been promised to them. They had not been given the number of oxen, ploughs, axes, hoes, and other implements promised, and on no occasion had they received more than half the seed they required to sow the land they had prepared. Once a proud and independent people, they were now reduced to being "mendicants at the door of every white man in the country, and were it not for the charity of white settlers who are not bound by treaty to help us we should all die on government fare".[216] Their young women they claimed, were reduced by starvation to prostitution, a thing unheard of among their people before. They asked that the means be allowed them to work for themselves, as provided for in the treaty. They now suspected that the treaty was a farce enacted to kill them all quickly, and warned that the motto of the Cree was "If we must die by violence let us do it quickly". Prime Minister Macdonald dismissed the claims and grievances contained in this letter, remarking that Indians were never satisfied. He believed that this letter was written by a man he would not name but described as "one of the curses of the North West, one of the white men, despised by God and Men".[217]

In the Treaty Six district, disappointment over the state of agriculture on the reserves culminated in a council of chiefs at Carlton in August, 1884.[218] They alleged that the cattle given them were an insult as many were wild or were so intractable that they could not be cared for. The cows they were supplied with were also wild and as they could not be stabled, had died of cold and exposure. They believed this was evidence of bad faith on the part of the government, as they had been promised well-broken beasts. The chiefs claimed that the wagons they were issued were of a poor quality. The assistance they were given in the way of relief was not enough to allow them to work effectively on their reserves. They looked forward with the greatest fear to the approaching winter as they had neither food or clothing. The chiefs claimed that during the treaty negotiations they had been told they would be taught to live like the white man. The Indians now saw that their farmer neighbours had threshing mills, mowers, reapers and rakes. They believed they were entitled to this sort of machinery as the government had pledged to put them in the same position as the white man. They asked that the inferior implements and wild cattle they had been given be replaced. It was stressed that there was not enough of anything supplied to them to allow all to farm, although a living by agriculture had been promised to them, and many desiring to settle were forced to leave the reserves. They feared that the government which had pretended to be friendly, was

cheating them. Requests for the redress of their grievances had been made again and again without effect. They were glad that their young men had not resorted to violent means to achieve this but warned that the treatment they received at the hands of the government was almost too much for them to bear, after the "sweet promises" made in order to get their country from them. If their council produced no results by the summer of 1885, they would take measures to get what they desired.

Assistant commissioner Hayter Reed was sent to make enquiries into these complaints.[219] Reed visited individually each of the chiefs who had attended the council and reported that in each case, they refused to restate their grievances. The chiefs had clearly agreed that they would not negotiate with authorities as autonomous bands, which would have shattered their leverage. Reed however believed this silence meant that there were really no grounds for complaint. On the specific grievances, Reed reported that all the chiefs present had received their full complement of cattle and while he admitted that there was "not a little" in what they said about the cattle being to a certain extent wild and difficult to manage, he implied that for the most part this claim was manufactured as an excuse for them to kill the beasts or not provide for them. The Indians he stated, had been given cattle above treaty stipulations on loan, and they were objecting to this system simply because they had to care for these animals rather

than being able to mistreat or kill them. The wagons Reed inspected appeared adequate but he noted that everything in the hands of Indians received rough useage, and any article given to them must be more than ordinarily good to withstand the wear and tear they would be subject to. Indians, he believed were inclined to claim that anything they had damaged or spoiled was bad to begin with and must be replaced. In his opinion, all implements issued to the Indians, save in a few exceptional cases, were of good quality. While they might be short of some items promised to them Reed explained that the practice was to issue tools and implements only if the agent thought these would be used to advantage, and not in the numbers demanded by the Indians as everything would have been broken or lost long before they knew how to handle them properly. If they were given more cattle Reed admitted, they might be able to employ more implements but in his opinion, the implements issued from time to time were sufficient for the number of cattle on the reserves. As for the request for mowers, reapers, threshing machines, and other labour-saving machinery, Reed felt that "The stipulations of the treaty I think in so far as plows, harrows, hoes, scythes, etc. go, will cover all their reasonable requirements until they become well enough advanced to look after themselves". These Indians, Reed explained, had suffered from bad crops this past year; this had alarmed the better-conducted Indians, and the "ill-disposed" had used this pretext to urge upon

authorities a grant of aid in the way of food supplies. He had evidence that several members of one band, who were "more half-breed than Indian", had been in touch with Riel. These people were "ready to endorse any movement which they believe might get them supplies without having to work for them".[220] In conclusion Reed stated that "There are Indian as well as white agitators and the hard times make one and all, good and bad, only too prone to give any assistance they can toward procuring more from the authorities without having to work for it".[220] Reed reflected the view held by many department officials that Indians' complaints were simply not to be believed, as they were lazy, did not properly care for the cattle and implements that were given them, and were encouraged to complain by those who might profit from such agitation. This approach to Indian petitions, letters and deputations allowed grievances to be dismissed without serious consideration.

The discord that prevailed among the Indians of Treaty Six by 1884 had its parallel among the Treaty Four Indians. The new policy of financial retrenchment was enacted in the midst of one of the most severe winters since 1879. In December of 1883, most department employees on the reserves were bluntly informed that their services were no longer required. Mr. Setter, farm instructor at Crooked Lakes was told in the middle of the month that his services, as well as those of every employee of the department were to be dispensed with from the 31st.[222] In Setter's case the

pretext for dismissal was that he kept the books carelessly, issued supplies and rations lavishly, and had Indians loitering about his house doing nothing. Peter Hourie, a Scottish mixed-blood from St. Andrews Manitoba, who was to have a lengthy association with the Indian department, was sent to the Touchwood Hills in December of 1883 to take over the stock, stores, books, and inventory from instructor MacConnell who was abruptly dismissed along with all other employees. A labourer on these reserves protested that he had nowhere to put his family at that time of year on such short notice, and was willing to stay for half his salary, but his request was denied.[223]

The appalling conditions that prevailed in the winter of 1883-84 are evident in Hourie's report on the state of the Touchwood Hills bands.[224] The Indians had nothing to live on for much of their grain crop of that season had been destroyed by frost and they had long since exchanged their barley for food. Only a few had a little grain they were attempting to save for seed in the spring and they had already consumed all of their root crops. The Indians were unable to hunt anything. The weather was bitterly cold, there were very few animals and the snow was too deep for stalking game. Hourie wrote that "for my part I have never experienced such a depth at this time of year".[225] The Indians were poorly clad and they had no shoes. There was not hide even to make the nooses of rabbit snares with. There was plenty of work that might be done, such as cutting

fence rails, but Hourie admitted the Indians could not work without footwear and clothing. He found that the Indians were "very much downcast and afraid they are going to starve".

It was in the midst of this bitter winter that the few employees left on the reserves were instructed to reduce rations. Hayter Reed, recently appointed assistant commissioner, was anxious to impress his superiors with the strict enforcement of the retrenchment policy. Known as "Iron Heart" among the Indians of Battleford where he began his career with the department, Reed's reputation was soon to spread.[226] He was convinced that rations had been distributed much too freely and decided they should be issued to the aged only. The young and able-bodied were to be given limited amounts of powder, shot and caps to provide for their families.[227] Some bands, Reed decided, did not require rations at all. A protest against this policy of starvation erupted on the Crooked Lakes reserves in February, 1884.[228] Yellow Calf's band was one that Reed had felt could subsist entirely without rations. He believed they could live on fish and game, and as a mill was expected to begin operation in the district, the band could soon have their grain ground. The band was informed that their rations were to be curtailed so that enough would remain for the spring work. February was commonly the leanest of months in the Indians' calendar; it was even impossible to procure fish as at this time they refused to take the bait.

On February 18, Yellow Calf and about twenty-five armed men demanded an interview with their new farm instructor, Hilton Keith, at which they requested enough flour and bacon to last them several weeks, warning that if they did not receive this they would help themselves to the stores. Keith insisted that his instructions did not allow him to distribute rations to young men. They then made a rush for the warehouse. According to Keith, while trying to defend the stores he was knocked down, kicked, bruised, and struck at with a knife by many of them.[229] The Indians "swarmed in like bees" and stole flour and bacon. They then assembled and barricaded themselves in a shanty, where what officials described as a "war dance" was held over several days.

Inspector Burton Deane led a party of ten policemen to the shanty, but as he estimated that there were about sixty persons present he felt it was out of the question to begin making arrests. He sent for reinforcements and Superintendent Herchmer, Deane and twenty men again approached the shanty on the 23rd. Bloodshed on this day was only narrowly averted. The Indians were armed and clearly displayed a determination to fire if the police persisted in their attempt to enter the shack. Yellow Calf stated that he might just as well die than be starved by the government, echoing the words of O'Soup, who several days earlier had explained to Deane that the reasoning of an Indian was that "if he were allowed to starve- he would die-

and if were doomed to die he might as well die one way as another".[230]

The matter was eventually settled through negotiation. Hayter Reed persuaded Yellow Calf and three others to give themselves up for trial. O'Soup was chosen as the spokesman for the Indians at these meetings. He justified the actions of the Indians on the grounds that they were starving, and their request for rations had been refused, and that they had no choice but to help themselves to the stores. Since the treaty, the Indians had consistently maintained that what was in the storehouses on the reserves belonged to them and in helping themselves they were only taking what was their own. If the provisions were intended for the band they should have them and not starve. The stand was similar to that of bread rioters in Europe who proclaimed that the hungry were entitled to take bread where they could find it.[231]

This view was fundamentally opposed to that held by Reed and other officials. They saw the stores as the property of the government and not of the Indians; they were to be distributed in a manner to encourage industry and initiative, and the recipients were to be grateful and deferential. Reed refused to admit that the incident had been caused by starvation. He attributed the outbreak to the Indians' dancing, which he believed worked them into a frenzy, and "fanned by the re-iterations of the prowess of their fathers and ancestors", caused them to cast all

reflection to the wind.[232] He claimed he was lenient to the offenders only to restore public confidence. Charges were eventually dropped against Yellow Calf, and the other three who pleaded guilty were discharged.

Much of the protest of this district of Treaty Four centred about the measures and movements of Piapot, who did not permanently settle on a reserve until 1884. Piapot was not stubbornly refusing to reconcile himself to the new order by defying reserve life. He protested that the government was not keeping its promises to the Indians settled on the reserves; as they were not provided with the means to make a living they were dying of sickness and starvation. Piapot also consistently maintained his right to choose a reserve for his band and this issue was central to much of his defiance of authorities.

In the summer of 1881, Piapot chose a site for his reserve in the Cypress Hills, but by the next spring, he and the other Cree and Assiniboine associated with the Qu'Appelle were told they would receive rations only if they moved back to their former territory. In preparation for their return, agent McDonald chose a reserve site for Piapot's band near Indian Head. The reserve featured two large lakes which McDonald believed had fish, plenty of wood for building and fuel, extensive tracts of marsh land for hay, and some fine areas of agricultural land.[233] McDonald was convinced that Piapot could do no better than to choose this location. On the 23rd of June 1882, Piapot left the

Cypress Hills with about 470 followers.[234] They were given seventeen days' rations, and were to be supplied with more at Old Wives Lake. There was an alarming amount of sickness and a number of deaths among the Indians who were moved east. The agent described it as a kind of diarrhoea brought about by the change from fresh meat to bacon.[235] Upon the death of his grandaughter from this disorder, an old and blind man committed suicide, pushing a sharp stick down his throat. The agent wrote that such deaths had a demoralizing effect upon a new Indian camp.

On Piapot's arrival at Qu'Appelle at the end of July, 1882, a meeting of some of the chiefs, some white settlers, and Major J.M. Walsh was organized.[236] Piapot spoke very forcibly at this gathering, declaring that the rations his people were receiving were not enough, that his people were sickening because they were accustomed to a diet of fresh meat, that he had heard the people on the reserves were dying of starvation, and he did not want his followers to die that way. He intended to choose his own reserve, and did not want one chosen for him. Piapot claimed he had been promised land in the Touchwood Hills when he signed the treaty, but he now thought of choosing the Qu'Appelle flat. Other chiefs present at this meeting were apparently brought to attest to the good treatment they had received since settling on their reserves. A speech by Cowessess pleased officials but Day Star made many complaints.

Unimpressed with the reserve chosen by the agent, Piapot returned to the Cypress Hills, claiming that promises made to the reserve Indians were not being kept. He and other Cree leaders insisted on being granted the reserves promised then in the Cypress Hills in 1880-81.[237] Once again rationing was curtailed in the Cypress Hills to enforce the policy of removal, and Piapot and his followers were compelled to return to Indian Head; they were loaded into boxcars at Maple Creek. Two of these slipped off the siding, and rolled down an embankment.

Piapot was still not pleased with his reserve at Indian Head however, and by September of 1883, he had not yet informed officials whether or not he intended to stay.[238] That winter, forty-two members of Piapot's band died. Dr. O.C. Edwards, who visited the reserve in the spring of 1884 reported that the disease, now general on the reserves, was a form of scurvy, due entirely to the exclusive use of salt foods.[239] He recommended fresh meat and vegetables as the only proper treatment for this disease. Deaths on the reserves were also attributed to scrofula and venereal disease. Like an ominous portent, a fire that swept through Piapot's reserve that spring burnt the trees in which the dead were placed, and the bodies were scattered on the ground.

Piapot and his band moved off their reserve in mid-May of 1884, giving as his reason the large number of deaths at that location.[240] The chief maintained his right to chose a

reserve for himself; he wanted a site where his people could obtain fish, as he claimed that sickness was due to a diet of bacon. He also wanted a meeting with Dewdney in the presence of Charles Pratt of Touchwood to discuss the issue of the items promised him in the treaty that he had not received. For a time the band camped on the adjoining Assiniboine reserve but soon began to head for Pasquah's reserve, where Piapot stated there was plenty of fish, and where he intended to hold a sundance. Piapot had a good number of sympathizers at this point, including members of Yellow Calf and Loud Voice's bands. Pasquah was also known to be angry at the authorities. The previous year he had stormed out of the agent's office when his request for ammunition and clothing for his people was denied on the grounds that he could not expect to be given what he was able to earn for himself.[241] Piapot sent a messenger, Barnaby, to Duck Lake to inform the Treaty Six chiefs that he had left his reserve.

Officials of the department interpreted Piapot's desire to change his reserve as merely an excuse to avoid work.[242] Reed felt that although the sickness among them, and their wish to have a site with running water and fish "may weigh with them", he was certain that the real reason was a desire to get away from work on the reserves and "enjoy themselves in a sundance".[243] Ingratiating himself with the distant Vankoughnet, Reed explained that the Indians' tales of "woe" were seldom to be believed, and that experience in working

with Indians was required before the truth could be ascertained. Stories of Indian starvation and death that had reached Vankoughnet's ear from the letters of newly-arrived settlers were exaggerations according to Reed. These people were afraid of Indians; the Indians knew this and took advantage of this fright by imposing their sad stories on them. Reed informed his superior that department officials were often presented with pitiable stories which were found, on enquiry to be false. One chief claimed to him that he was starving and had not had anything to eat for some days, "and by chance I found a large bannock in the capot of his coat".[244] In another case he once found a large piece of bacon hidden behind the door of a cabin of an Indian who said he was starving. Reed admitted that the death rate was high but insisted that "The first seeds of their complaints were sown during the sojourning of the Indians in the Fort Walsh District, owing to immoral habits, and were it not for this fact the use of bacon would not have such a hurtful effect".[245]

Agent McDonald recommended that a strong force be organized to seize Piapot and his men on the first overt act.[246] This chief he stated, "must be made to feel his power in this country is nothing". Reed endorsed the view that Piapot be taught to be "a little more subservient to the wishes of the Department".[247] Agent McDonald was to see that a member of Pasquah's band objected to the presence of Piapot so that he could be charged with trespassing. A

force of fifty-four policemen armed with a canon left Regina on May 18, finding Piapot's encampment on May 21. A dangerous confrontation was avoided however when Piapot agreed to a meeting at Fort Qu'Appelle to discuss his grievances.

In 1884, Piapot was the victor. He won the right to select his own reserve and he succeeded in holding a sundance in June of that year. Piapot indicated that he wanted his reserve immediately west of and adjoining Muscowpetung's, near Pasquah's on the Qu'Appelle.[248] He declared that if he could not have this site he would like a reserve at the Red Sand Hills or Red Deer Lake, 150 miles northwest of Regina, as there was abundant fish, plenty of wood and good hunting. Officials did not endorse this as this would place Piapot too close to the Treaty Six bands. Offered land at Last Mountain the chief declined, insisting that he wanted land with running water where fish could be found. Department officials were reluctant to grant the land near Muscowpetung's as it already belonged to a colonization company, and several residents had taken up homestead. It was to prove to be an administrative headache but Piapot's initial request was granted. Agent McDonald agreed that the location on the Qu'Appelle was a good one as it contained arable land, running water, hay meadows, and sufficient wood for building and fence rails.[249] A large portion of the land was stony however, and for this reason McDonald felt the location would not interfere with white

settlement as long as better land was available elsewhere. In July of 1884, McDonald traced on a map the two townships of fifty-six square miles, with a frontage of six miles on the river, for Piapot and three of his headmen, who agreed. Piapot commented that he expected all that he had been promised in the treaty as soon as he went on his reserve. The chief and thirty-seven lodges settled this site in August, 1884.

In 1884 the Indians of this district of Treaty Four were reported to be in a depressed and unsettled state of mind. The severe winter, sickness and death, reduction in rations, Yellow Calf incident, and Piapot's protest all contributed to this. In the spring it was rumoured that the Indians were determined to do no more work, but this did not materialize. It was reported in fact that some bands had never worked harder. At the File Hills for example the Indians were "never so anxious to get their crops in as they are this spring".[250] It was to be a disastrous farming season however. It was a late spring, and the ground could not be worked until the end of April. Many of the oxen did not winter well, and they were too thin and weak to work. Not enough seed wheat was sent to some reserves and in many cases it arrived late. To add to this it was a year of drought, and whatever crop came up was destroyed by frost.[251]

Very few of the Indians of the Qu'Appelle actually participated in the resistance of 1885. Nineteen residents

were reported to have "gone north" during the events of that spring, but is was not established whether any of these took any active role.[252] A Hudson's Bay Company employee on the Crooked Lakes reserves, N.M.W.J. McKenzie, was placed in charge of government supplies for the duration of the uprising, and he was instructed to keep the Indians on their reserves at all costs. McKenzie reported that the young men kept nightly councils, and had devised a plan to plunder the Pheasant plains, join the File Hills Indians in the capture of Fort Qu'Appelle, and await reinforcements from the Moose Mountain reserves.[253] According to McKenzie the older men in council were successful in restraining the young men. The Qu'Appelle chiefs chose to take advantage of what they perceived as a position of strength with the threat of widespread turmoil in the North West, to renew pressure for their treaty rights. As department officials were often on the reserves in the spring of 1885 there was increased opportunity to make appeals, and as officials were instructed to assess the state of mind of the Indians they were not as quick to disregard or dismiss their councils. Requests, messages and petitions were forwarded to department superiors, and members of the government. The Indians were perhaps encouraged to believe that they enjoyed some strength in bargaining as the department's desire to keep them "busy and contented" meant a generous supply of seed grain that spring, and increased rations. McKenzie reported

that he kept the Indians "gorged" on flour, bacon and tea.[254]

Early in April of 1885, in the critical days between the battle at Duck Lake and the final confrontation at Batoche, agent McDonald visited all the reserves under his supervision and secured expressions of "loyalty", and confirmation that they intended to remain on their reserves and sow their crops.[255] The Indians made it clear that they regarded their "loyalty" as a promise they had made at the time of the treaty to obey and abide by the law, and to maintain peace and good order. They maintained that in turn, they hoped the promises made to them would be honoured. In a telegram to the Prime Minister, which they asked to be read in Parliament, Chiefs Pasquah and Muscowpetung through their counsellor Charles Asham, expressed these ideas.[256] They asked that the Prime Minister not "think anything disloyal of us, it hurts us, we depend upon promises made by Great Mother to us because of our keeping faith".[257] They hoped that when the troubles ended more help would be extended so that they could make a better living than before. Piapot and his head men also sent messages to the Prime Minister in April of 1885.[258] This chief stated that he was counselling his men to stay out of trouble, that it had been eleven years since he had given up fighting and that he understood the treaty to mean that he was "not to interfere with the white man and the white man [was] not to interfere with me".[259] His head men

stated that they were prepared to heed the chief's advice to refrain from hostilities and attend to their work, but they were short of tools, and could not all be kept at work. O'Soup, spokesman for the Indians of the Crooked Lakes reserves, also used the opportunity to appeal for more implements and cattle, particularly on behalf of the "rising young men", many of whom were married with children, and had nothing to begin farming with.[260] O'Soup stated that they were very proud of their farming operations that spring but that 1885 was the first year they had been supplied with enough seed. He claimed his people were anxious to make themselves independent of government assistance.

The "loyalty" of the Qu'Appelle Indians may well have been facilitated by their proximity to the CPR, and their opportunity to witness the trainloads of troops that embarked at Troy Station, camped at Fort Qu'Appelle, and headed north along the trail that went by the File Hills and through the Touchwood Hills. (See Figure 11.) Hundreds of teams and teamsters freighted supplies along this same route in the spring of 1885. Many of the local farmers deserted their fields and took up freighting- a more lucrative and certain occupation. Detachments of troops were stationed in some of the settlements, and in villages like Broadview, volunteer militias marched through the streets, brandishing rifles. Scouts kept vigilant eyes on the nearby reserves. An atmosphere of panic and apprehension prevailed in the spring of 1885. Rumours circulated that the Indians

intended to raid the plains, kill settlers, destroy homes and steal cattle.[261] The isolated farmers met to devise plans to pool their farm implements to form barricades and in Broadview, the engines were kept hitched up to the coaches to spirit away the women and children at the first sign of uprising.

What is often overlooked in accounts of these anxious months is that reserve residents were equally uneasy and apprehensive. The presence of troops was particularly unsettling. For a time the Touchwood Hills bands congregated on Gordon's reserve. According to Chief Gordon, they were alarmed at the presence of so many soldiers on the road.[262] Some teamsters in the transport service damaged and burned houses and flooring on Poorman's reserve, and this frightened the band into moving off the reserve. Day Star's band followed their example. The File Hills bands were similarly anxious about the actions and motives of the troops. On April 26 a detachment of infantry and twenty men from the Governor-General's Body Guard marched to the File Hills to intercept carts that were reported to be heading north to supply the Métis.[263] Upon hearing that soldiers were marching toward them, the File Hills Indians formed one large encampment close to the woods on the Okanese reserve. Agent McDonald could not persuade them to leave this camp, and the people were convinced that the soldiers would take them away to prison. Early in May the File Hills Indians suddenly moved off their reserves. Instructor Nichol

believed the move might have been the result of a rumour brought in by a runner, but he also reported that the news of the loss of men up north had excited the troops stationed nearby "who would like nothing better than to fight at the first chance".[264] The File Hills Indians were implicated in the theft of some horses and other property of settlers in the district, but were soon persuaded to return to their reserves where they were read a "proclamation" from Dewdney which declared that only three residents could leave the reserve at a time, for the purpose of purchasing supplies only, and only with a pass from the farm instructor.[265] This was their first introduction to the pass system which would control Indian movement for the next forty years.

At the end of May it was reported that the File Hills Indians had continued to act in a "disloyal" manner by killing twenty head of cattle on their reserves.[266] Enraged at this behaviour, agent McDonald recommended that the File Hills bands be treated in the same manner as the "disloyal" bands to the north who had been involved in the rebellion.[267] Dewdney concurred in McDonald's view that the chiefs and head men be deposed, that the guilty be severely punished, that all be ordered to surrender their arms, and that their annuities not be given them until the costs of their actions were covered. For many years the File Hills bands were to feel the weight of this punishment for their actions in the spring of 1885, which had been largely generated by fear but were interpreted as rebellious. The

other Qu'Appelle bands were not subjected to the same punitive measures, indeed a few individuals perceived as setting an example of loyalty to the others were rewarded, with livestock or installments paid on their machinery. But they too were to feel the weight of new repressive policies that the government felt justified in implementing because of the "rebellion" of a few. What immediately evaporated after the defeat at Batoche was the position of strength, real or illusory, that the Indians felt they had enjoyed earlier in the spring. N.M.W.J. McKenzie noted with some satisfaction that with the news that the "war" was over

> the bottom was completely knocked out of every Indian on the Reserve and I could lead them with a silk thread after that. I also did not fail to "rub it in" good and plenty, to many of the know-alls and hot heads who were so brave a short time before. They were completely subdued and quite tractable ever after, there being no more trouble with any of them during my sojurn among them.[268]

Much of this tractability was due to the new relations of coercion and obedience that characterized the years after 1885.

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3. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3672, file 10,853, Macdonald to Vankoughnet, November, 1878.

4. Ibid., Dickieson to Vankoughnet, 26 February, 1879.

5. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3665, file 10,094, Christie to Vankoughnet, 31 March, 1879.

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13. Ibid.

14. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3648, file 8,162-2, memorandum, 28 June, 1879.

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19. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 14, no. 14 (1880), p. 2.

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21. 1880 Commons Debates, 2: 1941 (Macdonald).

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25. Ibid., Vankoughnet to Macdonald, 3 November, 1879.

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27. 1886 Commons Debates, 1: 719 (M.C. Cameron).

28. 1880 Commons Debates, 2: 1944 (Macdonald).

29. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3682, file 12,516, personnel file, James Scott.

30. Ibid., Scott to Dennis, 21 August, 1879, and vol. 3699, file 16,431, Scott to Dennis, 1 October, 1879.

31. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3706, file 18,745, Wadsworth to Vankoughnet, 10 February, 1880.

32. CHC Sessional Papers, vol. 13, no. 4 (1879), p. 99.

33. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3699, file 16,431, Scott to Dennis, 1 October, 1879.

34. CHC Sessional Papers, vol. 13, no. 4 (1879), p. 100.

35. Ibid., p. 101.

36. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3682, file 12,516, Vankoughnet to Scott, 17 September, 1879.

37. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3706, file 18,745, Wadsworth to Vankoughnet, 10 February, 1880.

38. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3687, file 13,698, Frank L. Hunt to Macdonald, 28 May, 1879.

39. Hunt, "Notes on the Qu'Appelle Treaty".

40. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3687, file 13,698, Hunt to Dewdney, 16 March, 1880.

41. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3706, file 18,847, W.L. Orde to Dewdney, 14 January, 1880, and vol. 3701, file 17,309, Dewdney to Vankoughnet, 17 April, 1880.

42. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3701, file 17,309, Dewdney to Vankoughnet, 17 April, 1880.

43. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3728, file 25,940, R.W. Gowan to C.T. Galt, 3 May, 1880.

44. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3714, file 21,229, Galt to Vankoughnet, 22 May, 1880.

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49. Ibid., Wadsworth to Vankoughnet, 30 September, 1881.

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125. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 15, no. 6 (1881), p. xviii.

126. Ibid.

127. 1881 Commons Debates, 2: 1351 (Macdonald).

128. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3686, file 13,057, John Tomkins to Dewdney, 20 January, 1881.

129. Ibid., vol. 3687, file 13,611, James Johnston to Dewdney, 24 February, 1881.

130. Ibid., vol. 3682, file 12,516, James Scott to Dewdney, 21 January, 1881.

131. Ibid., vol. 3733, file 26,640, Dewdney to Vankoughnet, 2 February, 1881.

132. 1881 Commons Debates, 2: 1350 (Mills).

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid.

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid.

137. 1884 Commons Debates, 2: 1610 (Mills).

138. Ibid., p. 1108.

139. Ibid., p. 1103, (James Fleming).

140. Ibid., p. 1104.

141. Ibid., p. 1105, (Philipe Casgrain).

142. Ibid.

143. 1881 Commons Debates, 2: 1351 (Macdonald).

144. Ibid.

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146. 1884 Commons Debates, 2: 1450 (Macdonald).

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149. Ibid.

150. Ibid.

151. PAC, John A. Macdonald Papers, vol. 149, Memorandum Vankoughnet to Macdonald, 31 January, 1884.

152. Ibid.

153. 1884 Commons Debates, 1: 59 (Cameron).

154. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 16, no. 5 (1882), p. xi.

155. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3664, file 9,834, Vankoughnet to Macdonald, 13 November, 1884.

156. PAC, Edgar Dewdney Papers, Reel M-2816, Vankoughnet to Dewdney, 5 December, 1884.

157. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 16, no. 5 (1882), p. 190.

158. Ibid.

159. Ibid., vol. 13, no. 4 (1879), p. 107.

160. Ibid., vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), pp. 192-3.

161. Ibid., vol. 15, no. 6 (1881), p. 121.

162. Ibid.

163. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3668, file 10,644, Reed to Dewdney, 28 December, 1883.

164. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), p. 120.

165. Ibid., vol. 16, no. 5 (1882), p. 204.

166. Ibid., vol. 15, no. 6 (1881), p. 133.

167. Ibid., vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), p. 120.

168. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3703, file 17,728, J.C. Nelson to Dewdney, 31 December, 1884.

169. PAM, Church Missionary Society, no. 709, Joseph Reader Journal, Touchwood Hills, 1877.

170. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3706, file 18,745, Wadsworth to Vankoughnet, 10 February, 1880.

171. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 16, no. 5 (1882), p. 271.

172. Ibid., vol. 15, no. 6 (1881), p. 121.

173. Ibid., vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), p. 71.

174. Ibid., p. 205.

175. Ibid., vol. 15, no. 6 (1881), p. 134.

176. Ibid., vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), p. 71.

177. Kenneth J. Tyler, "Kiwisance", Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 11, 1881 to 1890, p. 477.

178. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3757, file 31,397, Edwin Allen to Dewdney, 5 July, 1881.

179. McKenzie, p. 70.

180. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 14, no. 14 (1880), p. 105.

181. Ibid.

182. Ibid., vol. 15, no. 6 (1881), p. 44-45.

183. Ibid., p. xxxii.

184. Tobias, "Subjugation of the Plains Cree", pp. 529-531.

185. Ibid.

186. The site of this home farm later became the Horace Greely ranch which is commemorated by a plaque on the road from Maple Creek to the Cypress Hills Provincial Park.

187. McKenzie, p. 70.

188. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 15, no. 6 (1881), p. 47.

189. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3744, file 29,506-2, McDonald to E.T. Galt, 20 June, 1882.

190. Tyler, p. 477.

191. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 18, no. 3 (1884), p. 138.

192. Ibid.

193. Cowie, p. 214.

194. McKenzie, p. 82.

195. Ibid., p. 88.

196. Ibid., p. 94.

197. Ibid.

198. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), p. 71.

199. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3703, file 17,728, Nelson to Dewdney, 31 December, 1884.

200. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 14, no. 14 (1880), p. 115.

201. Ibid.

202. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3703, file 17,728, Nelson to Dewdney, 31 December, 1884.

203. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), p. 72.

204. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3768, file 33,642, Qu'Appelle Chiefs' Address.

205. Ibid.

206. Ibid.

207. Ibid.

208. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 17, no. 4 (1883), pp. 117-8.

209. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3673, file 10,986, Edmonton Bulletin, 7 January, 1883.

210. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3732, file 26,638, McDonald to Dewdney, 7 January, 1881.

211. PAC, Dewdney Papers, Translation: Red Pheasant to Dewdney, 31 August, 1881.

212. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 16, no. 5, (1882), p. 195.

213. Ibid.

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215. Ibid.

216. Ibid.

217. 1884 Commons Debates, 2: 1107 (Macdonald).

218. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3697, file 15,423.

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224. Ibid., Hourie to Dewdney, 29 December, 1883.

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227. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3666, file 10,181, Reed to Vankoughnet, 27 February, 1884.

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235. Ibid., McDonald to Galt, 31 July, 1882.

236. Ibid., McDonald to Galt, 29 July, 1882.

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239. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3745, file 29,506-4, Dr. D.C. Edwards to McDonald, 13 May, 1884.

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# CHAPTER V

## ASSAULT UPON THE "TRIBAL" SYSTEM: GOVERNMENT POLICY AFTER 1885

The Macdonald government's Indian policy was the object of much criticism after the events of 1885. Malcolm Cameron, Liberal Member of Parliament for Huron West, amassed much of the hostile criticism and launched a stinging indictment of Indian administration in the House in April, 1886.[1] Cameron's speech was printed in the Parliamentary debates and was widely circulated in pamphlet form. He compiled what he claimed was a mass of "independent testimony" which proved that gross injustice had been done to the Indians. Cameron's first target was the officials sent west, who he alleged, from commissioner Dewdney down to the lowest employee, were totally unfit to discharge their duties, as they were selected for political reasons, without regard to fitness or character. Cameron produced the opinions of missionaries, members of the North-West Council and other prominent citizens of the West who testified that Indian department officials were dishonest, unscrupulous, and tyrannical in their relations with the Indians, that in some cases they were brutal, drunken and

immoral, and that their behaviour had contributed to the outbreak of rebellion.[2] The Member for Huron West claimed that faith with the Indians had been "shamefully, openly, persistently and systematically broken by this Government".[3] As proof that the treaties had been violated and promises broken, Cameron cited evidence from the department's own annual reports that certain bands had not received their oxen, implements, seed and other items. These same reports, as well as newspaper accounts, and police reports showed the extent of hunger and privation among the Indians. Cameron charged that the department deliberately pursued a policy of starvation to reduce the Indians into submission, a policy he described as cruel and atrocious, and one that ought not to prevail in any civilized country.[4] It was no surprise Cameron declared, that the Indians were discontented as a result of their being "robbed, defrauded and swindled, frozen to death and starved to death".[5]

Alternative policies and approaches were suggested by non-native critics of Indian administration in the aftermath of 1885. E.R. Young, a former missionary in the North West and a recognized authority on the Indians, believed that the reserve system was a failure, and a great mistake.[6] He was convinced that the solution lay in the formation of a large "Indian Province" north and east of Lake Winnipeg. Young contended that the uprising had destroyed the confidence of the white settlers, and there could never be peace and

contentment if the reserves remained scattered through the settled territory. In their own northern province, the Indians would be

> more advantageously place, both for their own happiness and welfare and for the future progress and safety of the great prairie regions, which we hope to see yet filled with millions of people, who will till the soil and live happy and contented on its resources.[7]

E.R. Young was not alone in his call for Indian "removal". An Edmonton candidate for a seat in Parliament in 1887 demanded that the Indians be removed and their land opened up to white farmers.[8] This extreme policy was denounced by others however. John Maclean, a missionary to the Bloods and noted authority on the native people of the West, argued that a removal policy was not in accordance with principles of justice.[9] He had a variety of other suggestions to end the discontent that prevailed among the Indians. The one true remedy he believed, was the establishment of Indian District Councils, composed of agents, farm instructors, missionaries, teachers and the chiefs recognized by the government. These councils might meet annually for the purpose of hearing Indian grievances and they could send delegates to an Indian Territorial Assembly. These delegates would report on the "progress and poverty" of the tribes in their district and present resolutions on matters affecting their interest.

The Macdonald government's response to mounting public criticism and suggestions for a new direction in Indian

administration was to firmly justify past policy. Critics were dismissed as irresponsible, partisan faultfinders; their reports of Indian misery, disease and starvation were fabricated by people without the remotest acquaintance with Indians. The government claimed to have provided the Indians with far more than had ever been contemplated in the treaties. In the annual report of the department of Indian Affairs for 1885, Macdonald was at pains to point out that the Indians of the West were happy, contented and well-fed.[10] The few bands that had revolted were aroused and deluded by half-breed supporters of Riel according to Macdonald. The actions of these bands were portrayed as mad and lunatic; there were no rational reasons or sound motivations for their behaviour. In his report for the same year Dewdney similarly argued that to explain the participation of some bands, one had to look for reasons other than the administration of Indian affairs.[11] In Dewdney's mind the wisdom of past policy might be thrown into doubt if the Indians had revolted _en masse_, but this had not happened. A few had heeded Riel's message, but according to Dewdney this was because as a people they were "extremely susceptible to influence", and because of their nomadic tendencies, they welcomed any change, without reflection for the consequences. Most of the Indians were contented and had remained loyal. Dewdney believed that this contentment was due entirely to the success of the policy of distributing liberal rations when work was

performed, and refusing food when unjustifiable laziness was shown. All criticism of this policy was dismissed as the sentimental, sensational reports of "would-be-philanthropists", "based upon statements of lazy Indians, who may perchance, have had their rations stopped, owing to a refusal to work".[12]

Macdonald met criticism in the House of Commons with similar arguments. Although under no obligation to furnish food to the Indians, his government had shown nothing but tenderness and benevolence in distributing rations according to Macdonald, but they were issued to the Indian "without letting him feel that he had enough for himself and his family without working".[13] "Pseudo-philanthopists" were telling the Indians that they were suffering, and that the government could not let them starve and this was encouraging the Indians to think they could eat without working.

Macdonald did not attempt to answer all of Cameron's charges against the department of Indian Affairs but he had sent a copy of the speech to the North West where his department officials were investigating each allegation. Macdonald promised that the "vindication" of the department that would result from this inquiry would be distributed as widely as the copies of Cameron's speech. This was scarcely an independent, impartial inquest into the allegations; department officials were asked to probe into accusations of their own wrong-doing. Macdonald even admitted in the House

that there was no question about the outcome of the inquiry into Cameron's statements: "The evidence will show there never was a greater tissue of false statements".[14]

The result of the department's investigation into allegations of its own misconduct, mismanagement and irregularities was published in pamphlet form as The Facts Respecting Indian Administration in the North-West.[15] Past policy was staunchly defended. Cameron's speech was dismissed as the blind, partisan harangue of a Liberal who was motivated not by zeal for the public welfare, but by the interests of his party. Department officials were depicted as zealous in their care for the interests of the Indians, who were treated justly and generously. The pamphlet presented what had become the official department view of the Indians. It was stated that as the Indians had no habits of thrift and perseverance, they desired to get all they could from the government for free, and they believed it was the white man's duty to maintain them in idleness and comfort.[16] It was claimed that the Indians had received far more than they had been entitled to under treaty, but that to complain was a chronic feature of their nature, and they frequently made absurd and unreasonable requests. The Indians were encouraged to complain "by men who had the interests of the Indians less in view than the political effect of Indian dissatisfaction and even Indian warfare".[17]

Cameron's "mis-statements" were particularized, and for each a "correction" was provided, based on what was

presented as a searching and impartial investigation of the facts. It was argued that Cameron's charges were either without foundation or his evidence was wrenched from its proper context. Cameron, it was claimed, had in many cases mistakenly taken at face value the absurd and unreasonable requests of the Indians, which was not evidence on which to condemn the department. Any sickness and disease was due in large measure to the Indians' fondness for whiskey, as well as to their "custom of wearing moccasins, and their mode of life generally [which] are very unfavorable to longevity and to health".[18] The pamphlet accused Cameron of deliberately misconstruing the facts to incite another Indian rebellion. His speech encouraged the Indians in their "exaggerated" notions of their rights and could well ignite again the "lurid blaze of savage warfare", endangering the lives of thousands of peaceful settlers.[19] Women could once again be dragged into horrible captivity, and priests massacred. Cameron, the "apologist for these savages and the traducer of their victims", was appealing to them to rise in rebellion once again. His criticism was unpatriotic and dangerous.

The "Facts" pamphlet proclaimed that the department of Indian Affairs was fully justified in its policy and administration prior to 1885. It embodied and expressed what had become a formula response to all criticisms of their operations. Critics were either partisan, ignorant of the true situation, or they had gullibly believed the

chronic grumbling of "lazy" Indians. "Outside agitators" were seen as the cause of dissatisfaction in many cases. Much criticism was deflected by placing the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Indians, with their assumed disinclination to work, propensity to beg, and their fondness for alcohol. The department consistently maintained the position that spokesmen for the Indians were simply not to be believed, no matter what their statement.

In the public debate over Indian policy and administration that began in 1885, supporters of the department of Indian Affairs invariably produced the same line of defence. Every year when the annual reports were made public, the controversy was vigorously renewed for a time in the press. Critics of the department's program emphasized reports of Indian starvation, rumours of unrest, and revelations of appalling conditions, that were the result of the government's harsh measures.[20] While some expressed great sympathy for the plight of the Indians, others claimed they were a lazy shiftless lot who were being fed and protected by the government in idleness. Officials of the department were described as political hacks, guilty of cruel and callous behaviour.

Defenders of the department pointed out that a humane, benevolent program had created prosperous contentment on the reserves.[21] While some Indians remained listless and refused to improve their situation, the government was not to be blamed for this, and taking into consideration the

former habits of the Indians, the achievements of the department were all the more remarkable. Department employees were lauded as knowledgeable, experienced, honest, energetic and economic. Critics of the program were accused of unpatriotically breeding discontent. Those who expressed pity for the Indians' plight were viewed as sentimental philanthropists who knew nothing of actual conditions. According to supporters of department policy those who demanded that rations to the Indians be increased were simply encouraging Indians to resist efforts to make them work for a living. Favorable comparisons were drawn between Canadian and American Indian policy, and these became particularly self-congratulatory after 1890 when the battle of Wounded Knee, the murder of Sitting Bull and the "Messiah Craze" all appeared to point to the fact that by contrast, the Indians of Canada had been treated with justice.

The issue of the Indians' ability to farm was central to this debate. Newspapers that approved of government policy gave the annual reports a warm reception each year, and applauded the Indians' progress at farming. Under headings such as "Raising Crops Not Scalps", gratifying proof of the success of the system was presented.[22] As evidence of the rapid strides made in the transition to a quiet, settled life, statistics were quoted of the acres under cultivation, the bushels of produce raised and their value, the ploughs, threshing mills and other machinery in use, and the numbers of cows, pigs, sheep and oxen that were

under Indian care.[23] All were depicted as important milestones on the road to civilization. Instead of performing their ancient pagan dances, the Indians of the West were "dancing around their threshing machines and spending most of their time in getting their produce to market".[24] A rapid transformation had been achieved.

> Accustomed to a roving life, it was no easy matter to transform him into a farmer. But the work has been manfully undertaken, and now, instead of meeting in the Indian the feathered, painted, and treacherous master of the prairies, we find in him the inoffensive settler; poor, yet progressing; rough in his habits, yet much like a white man in that he boasts the dress of civilized life, with, in a few instances, a beaver or plug hat for Sunday wear.[25]

Another paper that applauded the efforts of the department boasted that "an Ontario farmer visiting an Indian reserve might well be excused for taking it for a white man's farm worked on an extensive scale; and not one of the reserves of the children of the soil".[26] The participation of the Indians in Territorial agricultural fairs was hailed as evidence of their remarkable progress. Beside the spearpoints, bows, and other remnants of the life left behind were exhibits of grain, vegetables, livestock, bread, butter and knitting, and the Indians were reported to be "as happy and proud of the admiration their handiwork elicited as so many children".[27]

Newspapers favourable to the department often published the observations of visitors to the reserves. In May, 1889, Dr. Henry Dodd of the N.W.M.P. reported to the Regina Leader

on a recent visit to the Crooked Lakes reserves.[28] Dodd believed these reserves served as brilliant examples of the humane and far-seeing policy of the government. He had the highest praise for the officials on the reserves whom he found to be remarkably intelligent, earnest, painstaking, judicious and energetic. Farming operations were progressing splendidly to the extent that Dodd predicted that in the immediate future these Indians would be chiefly self-sustaining. A Mr. Malcolm McMillan, while on a pleasure trip through the Territories in 1889, visited the Assiniboine reserve near Indian Head and published his observations.[29] He was surprised to find nicely laid out, fenced off fields, in which the ploughing was exceptional, much better than the work of a great many white settlers. Cattle, pigs, sheep and poultry compared favourably with any he had seen on his trip. All of this reflected great credit on the efficient and courteous Indian agent. McMillan anticipated that at an early date, the Indians would be supporting themselves by farming. An unidentified, longtime resident of the West sent the Ottawa Citizen news of the success of the Indian farmers in the Battleford district, many of whom, it was predicted, would be self-sustaining after the season of 1890.[30] Praise was heaped on commissioner Hayter Reed for his work in speedily advancing the Indian.

With equal regularity, a school of pessimistic thought on the issue of the capacity of the Indian to farm published

its views. Disparagement of the Indians' efforts arose from a mixture of motives. Liberal papers that condemned government programs tended to have little praise for the Indian farmers. Among the pessimists were those from either party, resident in the West, who regretted that the Indians were allowed to retain large tracts of valuable land which could be occupied "by better men".[31] These people were unimpressed by the Indians' attempts to cultivate the land. The pessimistic school published items such as an 1889 Manitoba Free Press article, which questioned whether it was particularly praiseworthy or remarkable that the Indians of a certain reserve in the district of Assiniboia had produced 2,600 bushels of wheat in 1888.[32] It was pointed out that here there were 100 Indians, and three instructors to supervise the work, while on a neighboring farm, an Anglo-Saxon bachelor had raised half that amount entirely on his own. It was concluded that the two white instructors on the reserve should have been able to produce the 2,600 bushels on their own, which proved that "these Indians were not only perfectly worthless themselves, but they completely destroyed the usefulness of a white man sent to instruct them in ways of industry and thrift".[33] An article in the Qu'Appelle Vidette of the same year also used the example of the Assiniboine reserve to arrive at the "legitimate conclusion" that the whole band was more than useless, and that the usefulness of two white men was destroyed by contact with Indians.[34] It was argued that the Indians'

white neighbours, with inferior land, had in some cases produced double the amount of grain. Credit could not be given to the Indians for their cattle and sheep as these had been given to them as gifts along with abundant supplies of food. The dark side of the picture was that "The Indians are being fed in idleness, unconditionally, so that there is no incentive to industry, as the man who works helps to maintain himself, and the man who does not is provided for by the Government".[35] The Indians, it was argued, should receive not one cent from the government, as in British Columbia and Alaska, where they were a "happy, contented, and prosperous people".

The public debate over Indian policy and administration that gained momentum after 1885 did not move the department of Indian Affairs to seriously and thoroughly investigate past approaches and conduct. Efforts to present a sterling public image in the light of criticism became more marked after 1885, evident in a more deliberate editing of annual reports before publication, in the tendency to steer visitors and officials toward certain "showpiece" reserves and away from others, and in the increased emphasis on Indian participation in fairs and exhibits where the successes of the department were advertised. Public facade was more of a priority after 1885 than was serious inquiry into allegations of maladministration.

An attempt was made to determine whether the Indians had received what they were entitled to in the way of oxen

and implements. Cameron had condemned the government for not honouring its promises at all, or for issuing inferior, dilapidated tools and livestock. An 1885 investigation had revealed that the department could not say with certainty what had been distributed, as the records were in a chaotic state.[36] In an 1886 attempt to ascertain whether the Indians had received what they were entitled to, Hayter Reed adopted the tactic of clouding the issue by dwelling on the confusion surrounding exactly how cattle and implements were to have been initially distributed.[37] It was claimed that it was impossible to arrive at a really exact account of the distribution. In an effort to define entitlement within its narrowest possible limits, Reed presented Vankoughnet with the argument that the population of a band at the time of the signing of the treaty could not be used as a basis for the distribution of implements and cattle, because since then band size had decreased through withdrawal from treaty, through the division of bands, and from "natural causes".[38] Although the experience of Piapot's band was scarcely typical, Reed drew on this as his example of population change. This band had numbered 941 in 1882, but three years later had dwindled to 386. Reed believed it would be "manifestly incorrect" for this band to receive as their due the implements and oxen for 941 people.[39] He felt it might be reasonable to take band populations for the year 1886 as the basis for distribution, but he suspected that the Indians would claim they were entitled to the treaty tools

and implements for those who had died since the treaty, withdrawn from treaty, or settled elsewhere.

Reed upheld the department's practice of issuing items only as it was considered they were required, and dismissed the Indians' claim that they should have received what was promised them immediately on settling on the reserves, as many tools would have been thrown aside. He pointed out that distribution problems arose when a family left one reserve for another and took their implements, as these had been issued to a certain three, or a certain ten families. According to Reed the formula most in accordance with the words of the treaty was to take as the basis for distribution the population of each band in the year when the "greater proportion of the families therein having settled upon a Reserve had commenced to farm".[40] He was convinced in any case that there was no danger of Indians not receiving their full complement, as the implements issued to them through the generosity of the department more than met any obligations under treaty.

Vankoughnet agreed that the Indians could not justly claim that all should have received their cattle and implements once settled on the reserve. Treaty Four had stipulated that implements were to be supplied to any band "then actually cultivating the soil" or "who should thereafter commence to cultivate land".[41] It was evident to Vankoughnet that "the intention was only to give the implements and cattle to Indians who were then, that is at

the date of the Treaty cultivating lands or who should afterwards commence to cultivate land". As these were to have been given "once for all", he could see no difficulty in determining what might still be owing. The fairest means of ascertaining whether the Indians had received what they were entitled to was to calculate the number of tools and implements given to families who had been cultivating every year since the date of the treaties, and estimate whether these had received their full quota. The way Vankoughnet interpreted the treaties, these were not to have been given to a "certain" ten or three families; they were to have been issued in that proportion. Treaty Four for example stated that one plough was to be issued to a band for "every" ten families actually cultivating.

Investigation had revealed that the issue of whether or not the Indians had received their full complement of cattle and implements was clouded in confusion. Department officials could not say with certainty what had been distributed, nor could they agree on what should have been distributed. Publicly however, the department maintained the position that the Indians had received what they were entitled to and more, and that there was thus no truth to Cameron's allegation.

It appears that there was little effort to seriously inquire into other matters raised by Cameron except for one. Cameron had charged that government employees were involved with Indian women on the reserves. Many of them, he stated

in the House, revelled in "the sensual enjoyments of a western harem, plentifully supplied with select cullings from the western prairie flowers".[42] He claimed that 45% of one class of official in 1885 were under medical treatment for a "peculiar kind of disease" as a result of their scandalous behaviour. Immediate action was taken on this issue. Lengthy lists were drawn up of who was married and who was single.[43] The single were instructed to marry posthaste, or they would be replaced by married men.

Some effort to examine and assess Indian policy was made in the "Select Committee of the Senate on the Existing Natural Food Products of the North-West Territories".[44] The central aim of the inquiry was to find a means of saving money by encouraging the Indians to subsist upon the resources of the country. The report, which included a brief list of recommendations, and transcripts of the testimony given, was distributed to all Indian agents and farm instructors in 1887. Under the chairmanship of Senator John C. Schultz, the committee framed a list of questions that was sent to individuals seen as authorities on the North West, including Senators, Members of Parliament, missionaries, Hudson's Bay Company men, and farmers. No Indians were consulted. Some replied in writing while others were interviewed by members of the committee. The point of much of the questioning was that if the Indians were left without government support, what might they subsist on? Presumably natural products had once supported

these people; why could they not continue to do so? A great deal of the committee's time was spent discussing how products such as wild rice, fish and rabbits might be conserved and propagated rapidly. The commissioners were very interested in the possibility of wild turnip as a main source of food. It was speculated that the Indians might eat birds, frogs, grasshoppers and gophers. There was discussion on the question of whether the Indians should be provided with buffalo rather than with cattle to raise on the reserves.

The issue of whether the Indians were capable of feeding themselves through farming was central to the investigation. Each witness was asked "What grains, grasses, fruits, roots and vegetables will... yield the greatest results from the indifferent tillage which is to be expected from such bands of Indians as are new to agricultural pursuits?"[45] The commissioners received some contradictory evidence and advice on the question of the capacity of the Indians to farm. The opinions of Professor Robert Bell, and Amédée Forget, are representative of these conflicting views. Bell, a geologist, geographer, and scientist who had made several visits to the West, was skeptical about the Indians' suitability for agriculture. His were the typical views of an observer who had little acquaintance with Indians. Bell stated that until the present generation, the Indians had never seen white men cultivating the ground, and they could not believe such a

thing was possible.[46] According to Bell, Indians looked upon sheep, pigs, and cattle "as we would on creatures from Africa".[47] He insisted that the plains Indians were the least inclined to agriculture because as they were formerly dependent on the buffalo they were lazy; all the plains Indian had to do was get on his horse and his "squaw" did all the work. These Indians stubbornly refused to believe that the buffalo had been exterminated, Bell testified. He believed the bush Indians were more industrious, as they had learned over the years to stalk game in a manner that required patience and perseverance, and they had been obliged to paddle as well as manufacture their canoes, which familiarized them with work. The Indian of the plains however, could not work. Professor Bell found that their hands were "soft like a woman's" and that

> they think it is beneath their dignity to work. They have not been accustomed to it, and they say it has never been done by their forefathers. I have lectured them on the subject, but they have told me: 'It is according to the traditions of your forefathers, but we have never done anything of the kind, and our fathers have never worked.' For an Indian to interfere with the ways of the Great Spirit by growing plants, seems something that they cannot comprehend- they cannot do it- they will not grow potatoes.[48]

Bell found that the Indians would not make provision for the future. When he gave them some seed they boiled it up and consumed it that very evening. He claimed they would not dig a pit or build a cellar to store roots. Even with winter coming they would sell their last bushel of corn or

potatoes to buy some trifle. (Such as a pocket handkerchief, one of the commissioners suggested.)

Bell's estimation of the Indians as farmers was in marked contrast to the testimony of Amédée Forget, then clerk of the North-West Council. Unlike Bell, Forget was a resident of the West, and he was familiar in particular with the Indians of the Battleford district where he farmed from 1877 to 1880, just at the time when the Indians were beginning to cultivate.[49] He had also recently visited the reserves along the Qu'Appelle. Forget maintained that Indian farmers "have been as successful as their white neighbors".[50] He found that

> In all cases where an Indian started a garden he seemed to be giving more care to it than we did ourselves. At any time during the summer you could hardly detect one blade of grass growing between their vegetables. Their gardens were kept clean.[51]

Forget was firmly convinced that there was good disposition on the part of the Indians to work but that they, like all other farmers had to contend with difficulties in cultivating the country. Because of crop failure, they had not been rewarded for their work. Forget had "not the slightest doubt if the crops had been good every year, today the Indians would be as good farmers as any others", and he believed that if the Indians' crops had been equal to their anticipations, they would be in a position to sustain themselves to a great extent.[52] He noted however, that bad

felt that such "reverses" had a worse effect on Indians that on white farmers. Questioned about the apparent reluctance of Indians to work, Forget replied that this was due to crop failure more than anything else, and he had observed that where crops succeeded, all worked without complaint. Unlike Bell, Forget drew few distinctions between Indian and white farming on the prairie.

The committee made a number of recommendations based on their investigation. The first was to seed the reserves with wild rice. As a cheap and healthful food product that required little care and attracted wild fowl, it was believed it would be of great advantage to the Indian population. It was also recommended that spawns of sturgeon, white fish and other varieties be distributed, and that methods of drying, salting, smoking, freezing, or pemmicanizing fish be encouraged, particularly for the rationing of Indians, until they had learned agriculture. It was decided that bison should not be re-introduced into the care of the Indians as "the presence of these animals would disturb the present agricultural training of the Indians, and interfere with the farming and herding efforts of the whites".[53] The report did not include any commentary on the broader issues of Indian policy and administration. No conclusions were ventured on the topic of the Indians as farmers despite the lengthy testimony on the subject. As a vehicle for assessing and evaluating past policy, the Commission had little impact.

The criticism of Indian policy and administration that emerged after the events of 1885 did not evoke any serious reconsideration of past practices. Criticism was indignantly rejected as uninformed, unwarranted interference. The department sponsored some inquiry into allegations of its own misconduct but publicly proclaimed that it was totally exonerated. Past policies became even more firmly entrenched after 1885, and some were undertaken with much greater vigour and commitment. The emphasis after 1885 was on efforts to dismantle the tribal system and promote individualism, and on increased supervision, control, and restriction of the activities and movements of the Indians. Aspects of both of these policies had an important influence on the progress of agriculture on the reserves.

Hayter Reed was the major architect of Indian policy in the North West in the decade following the rebellion. Reed quickly rose in the department from the position of Indian agent at Battleford in 1881, through the ranks of assistant Indian commissioner in 1884, and commissioner in 1888, and in 1893, assumed the position of deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, replacing the aging Lawrence Vankoughnet. Reed had little direct experience with, or knowledge of Indians before his first posting with the department. His training and career interests were military.

Reed was born in 1849 in L'Original, Prescott County, Ontario and was educated at Upper Canada College, and at the Model Grammar School in Toronto.[54] He was devoted to a military life from an early age. At sixteen he was a volunteer in the militia, and that same year he graduated from the Royal Military School with a first class certificate. Reed was drill instructor with the Kingston Rifle Battalion at the age of eighteen and came as a soldier to Western Canada. In 1871, he was serving with the Provincial Battalion of Rifles when they were dispatched to Fort Garry as reinforcements during the Fenian scare.[55] Reed was adjutant to the Battalion and eventually garrison adjutant to the whole force in service in the North West, and he remained with this garrison until it was disbanded in 1878. He retired from military service with the rank of Major in 1881, and was called to the bar of Manitoba in 1872. Although educational qualifications at this time were flexible, admission to the bar required considerable study, and the passing of an examination. It appears however that Hayter Reed was never active as a lawyer.

Like many soldiers from Ontario posted in the West, Reed remained after his unit was disbanded. In 1880, he was working out of Winnipeg as "chief land guide" with the Department of the Interior.[56] This was in the midst of the "Manitoba fever"; the "boom" years which saw the influx of thousands of immigrants to some of the best land in the province. The land guide's job was to provide information

to settlers on suitable sites, and in some cases, accompany them to assist in the selection of land. In this position, as in his later work with Indian Affairs, Reed showed a high level of ambition, as well as a dedication to the larger purposes of the government he served. The practical, daily tasks of the man-on-the-spot were not, in Reed's case, allowed to obscure the goal. As a land guide he provided his superiors in Ottawa with numerous suggestions as to how the entire immigration system might be improved, how Canadians might be prevented from making the United States their home and how erroneous perceptions of the West might be dispelled.

The chief land guide was dedicated to the idea that anyone could succeed as a farmer in the West with very little capital if he were enterprizing and willing to forego the superfluous luxuries of "modern" life.[57] In 1880, Reed assured prospective settlers that the opportunities were excellent, even at points as far west as Prince Albert, Battleford and Duck Lake.[58] Here they would find wholesome food, comfortable clothing and substantial housing, and Reed believed they would soon find that very little more was required. Despite the absence of railway facilities, pioneers could still be guaranteed a market for their produce. Reed emphasized that the government's demands alone for the Indians, the Mounted Police, surveyors, and other crews, would absorb all of a farmer's surplus. The old proverb "while the grass is growing the steed may

starve" would not apply to prudent men willing to work hard and take advantage of all contingencies. He was committed to the idea that with diligence and perseverance even those with the most humble means could succeed at farming on the Canadian prairie.

> So soon as the prairie grass grows, with a good ox and a Red River cart, a man can 'go anywhere and do anything', as the Iron Duke once said of the British Infantry, and enjoy the fruits of independence.[59]

In 1881, Reed left his job as a land guide and assumed the position of Indian agent at Battleford, claiming in later years that he was dispatched to this post "owing to the fact of the Indians having become unmanageable", suggesting that it was not so much as a result of his own interests and inclinations that he began a career among the Indians, but that he responded to a call like a soldier asked to dispose of an unpleasant situation.[60] Reed later described the Battleford Indians as the "scum of the plains".[61] The skills of the new agent were those of the military man- of the drill instructor and the officer; he was a man accustomed to giving commands and having them obeyed without question. He had been trained in the virtues of rigid discipline and strict adherence to rules and regulations. Deviation from the rules, and insubordinate behaviour was not tolerated. Questions about, or objections to the system were not permitted. From the beginning of his career with the Indian department, Reed insisted upon strict

obedience to the rules and regulations. He would not countenance any criticisms, objections or complaints. The agent would not tolerate for example, the custom of the Indians presenting their views at the annual treaty payments, threatening instead not to pay at all.[62] Reed believed it was folly to imagine that the Indians should be consulted about, or have any say in determining their own fate.

> As well might the Christian or civilized parent allow his children to follow uncurbed the dictates of the blind promptings of their own unregenerate human nature and grow up the outcasts of society, as leave an ignorant savage to determine his own course for himself.[63]

A firm hand was necessary in dealing with the Indians, Reed was convinced, and he refused to negotiate, compromise, or make concessions. An inflexible attitude would soon demonstrate to them that "extravagant" demands were pointless.

In an address given in the 1890's, Reed expressed the view that the Indians' poverty and distress had nothing to do with broken treaty promises, a lack of implements, oxen or any other "imaginary" injustice. He saw the Indians' propensity to blame the government for their misfortunes as simply a campaign to avoid work while still being fed. Reed believed the Indians' problem was a moral one, and the cure lay in the reform of their character and tribal society.[64] Through the introduction of the concept of "work", and by not tolerating "idleness", this reform could be effected.

Reed saw the Indians as parasites, living off the work of others, and they would remain so until they were made to understand and that they had to work for the assistance they received. The job of the Indian agent, Reed believed, was to compel obedience, and "when moral suasion failed the only means of coercion was to stop their rations and try and establish the apostle's law that if a man would not work he should not eat".[65] From his earliest appointment with the department, Reed took the success of the work for rations policy as his special mission. With the ultimate goal of the policy always kept firmly in mind, the misery and suffering that it created could be viewed as a necessary stage in a training program.

Reed soon earned a reputation as a severe and unyielding administrator. "Iron Heart" refused to issue provisions unless work was performed, no matter how pitiful the pleas.[66] A farm instructor on the Poundmaker reserve described Reed as an exacting taskmaster. He had

> calculated to a nicety how much work a yoke of oxen and a plow were capable of performing in a given time and the Indian fell a good deal short of this. He had figured out how little food it was possible to get along with and the Indian was always hungry. The Indian was lazy, therefore he must have short rations.[67]

As Indian agent Reed did not win the admiration of many of his subordinates. Another farm instructor in the Treaty Six district described him as "entirely lacking in sympathetic understanding of the Indians, of their difficulties, and to

his management or mismanagement of Indian affairs the writer attributes much of the unrest existing amongst the different bands".[68]

Hayter Reed's talents however, were appreciated by his superiors. It is not surprising that his approach to Indian affairs pleased officials in Regina and Ottawa. As Reed saw the Indians as solely responsible for their state of affairs, the government was absolved of any responsibility. This approach justified a harsh, strict policy, and it allowed Indian grievances to be readily dismissed. Reed was promoted to the position of acting assistant commissioner in 1883, and assistant commissioner the following year. Dewdney's new second-in-command was appointed just in time to help implement Vankoughnet's scheme of retrenchment which involved a much more severe rationing policy. Reed was in complete sympathy with this rigid approach.[69] As incidents of Indian protest mounted in 1883 and 1884, Reed continued to insist that there were no just grounds for complaint. Dissent and dissatisfaction was generally attributed to "outside agitators". For Reed this usually meant the Métis. He harboured suspicion, even contempt for the Métis throughout his career.

Like a commanding officer whose orders have been disobeyed, Reed was outraged at the participation of Indians in the events of 1885. He regarded this as a display of disobedience and insubordination that warranted severe punishment. Reed was satisfied at the prospect of having a

large number of Indians publicly hanged. (Eight Indians were hanged on the barracks square of Battleford Post on November 27, 1885.) The assistant commissioner wrote Dewdney that "I am desirous of having the Indians witness it- No sound threshing having been given them I think a sight of this sort would cause them to meditate for many a day."[70] Reed advocated extremely repressive measures in the aftermath of 1885. His memorandum relative to the future management of the Indians, which became the core of the memo Vankoughnet presented to John A. Macdonald in August 1885, revealed a wrathful, vengeful anger and Dewdney found parts of it to be intemperate.[71] The memo none-the-less defined the basic lines along which Reed would guide Indian policy as he acquired power and influence in the late 1880's and 1890's. Certain measures that were presented in 1885 as punitive, temporary, and for selective bands only, became permanent and universal.

The assistant commissioner's 1885 memo divided Indian bands into the "loyal" and the "disloyal", and a system of rewards and punishments was devised.[72] The loyal bands were those that had remained on their reserves, sown their crops, obeyed their agents and instructors, and ignored the messages of runners. Individuals in the loyal bands who were seen as influential in maintaining this loyalty were rewarded with cows, oxen, sheep, or a payment toward a piece of machinery. In Reed's view this would help cement the

bonds of unity between the loyal Indians and the authorities.

Reed insisted that the participation of certain bands in the 1885 uprising constituted a violation of the treaties and this meant that for these bands, the agreement was negated. He recommended that in the case of the disloyal bands, the "tribal system" should be abolished. The chiefs and councillors of these bands should be deposed and deprived of their treaty medals, as they had broken the treaty. By the "careful repression" of the leaders, "a further obstacle will be thrown in the way of future united rebellious movements".[73] Instructors and agents would direct their orders to individuals, and would not be hampered by consultations with the chiefs. As a means of controlling the movement of Indians involved in the rebellion, Reed recommended in his memo that all Indians travelling off the reserve should be required by the police and the municipal authorities to produce a pass from an official of the department declaring their business in the locality.

The recommendations contained in Reed's 1885 memo, that the tribal system be abolished, and that there be more rigid supervision of the Indians' movements and activities, became entrenched aspects of Indian policy, and not only for the "rebel" bands. These were not new ideas, and Reed was not solely responsible for them, but they were the policies he fully endorsed and attempted to rigidly enforce. Appointed

commissioner in 1888, Reed was in a position to articulate his views and compel obedience to them. Reed professed that his ultimate goal as an administrator of Indian affairs was to amalgamate the Indians with the white population.[74] As he explained in a speech dating from the 1890's,

> It can surely never be seriously contended that it is for the interest of the commonwealth to continue a day longer than is necessary a foreign element in its midst, for even should such element be controlled as not to constitute a source of [illegible] danger, it must assuredly for negative reasons, be one of weakness to the State. Unity of interests, unity of sentiments are required to give strength to the whole.[75]

Although amalgamation was his long-term goal, Reed believed the Indians of the present generation were not prepared to merge with the white population. He thought that the banding together of Indians on reserves militated against their conversion into citizens, and his ultimate aim was to see the reserves broken up, but in the meantime, "it seems better to keep them together, for the purpose of training them for mergence with the whites, than to disperse them unprotected among communities where they could not hold their own, and would speedily be downtrodden and debauched".[76] The Indians on reserves, Reed believed, had to be gradually trained for enfranchisement, and for the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. They must be led, step by step, to provide for themselves through their own industry, and be inculcated with a spirit of "self-reliance and independence". Reed boasted that under

his administration "The policy of destroying the tribal or communist system is assailed in every possible way, and every effort made to implant a spirit of individual responsibility instead."[77]

Reed believed that the most effective means of undermining the tribal system was through the subdivision of reserves into separate farms. Large fields worked in common fostered the tribal system in his view, and did not encourage pride and industry, as the individual farmer did not feel it worth his while to greatly improve land that other members of the band also claimed as their own.[78] With a certificate of ownership, the enterprizing Indian would make permanent improvements. Reed was also convinced that private property created law-abiding citizens. Property would render the Indians averse to seeing the existing order of things disturbed, as "Among them as among white communities, the lawless and revolutionary element is to be found among those who have nothing to lose but may perhaps gain by upsetting law and order".[79]

Subdividing in severalty was not a new idea in Canadian Indian policy, nor was Reed the first official to promote the scheme for the Indians of Western Canada, but under his administration the program began in earnest.[80] Dewdney had heartily endorsed the idea of severalty as a means of striking at the heart of the "tribal system" by fostering self-reliance and a spirit of emulation of white society. Dewdney argued that the Indians should have initially been

given individual farms and not reserves in common as they would have learned a sense of personal proprietorship and responsibility.[81] During Dewdney's term as commissioner, agents were asked to impress the advantages of this system upon the Indians, and the program was implemented on three reserves in Manitoba. Under Hayter Reed the survey of reserves in severalty was much more extensive.

At the outset of his career as commissioner, Reed was convinced that another means of fostering an independent, proprietary spirit among the Indians was to allow the industrious to purchase some property in the way of wagons and implements, out of the proceeds of the proportion of produce they were allowed to dispose of. In order to allow individual Indians to acquire some personal property, their rations could not be suddenly and completely withdrawn once they met with some success, as they would be left wondering whether their exertions were worth the effort.[82] If the industrious were compelled to devote all of their earnings to the purchase of food, while those who produced half the crop received the balance from the government, there would be no incentive to work. The industrious had to be allowed to invest a fair share of their earnings. Reed's policy was to continue to assist the enterprizing Indian for a time so that he could purchase wagons, harness and implements, and so that

> he develops into the stage of being a property holder, and soon begins to look down upon those whose laziness compells them to seek assistance

> from the government. Meanwhile what he had purchased secures him the means of assured independence while he has been acquiring the spirit to make it safe to discontinue helping him and his position awakens a spirit of emulation in his less industrious brother.[83]

Reed believed that as the farming Indians gained a sense of pride in their prosperity, they would be less inclined to share their produce with their "impecunious neighbors", as in the days when communist ideas prevailed.[84] This would hopefully compel the more reluctant Indians to put themselves into the hands of the government for similar training. For most of the 1880's, the Indians' purchase of mowers, horserakes, threshing machines and other machinery was heralded in the annual reports as evidence of a new spirit of individualism, of prosperity and overall progress. Such purchases were also used as evidence that the Indians were not "squandering" their earnings as many were convinced they were prone to do.

Another means of encouraging individualism and a sense of pride in property was the cattle "on loan" system which Reed endorsed. Through this, Indians acquired under certain restrictions, proprietary rights to cattle. Reed was not the original engineer of this scheme. It became known as the "Birtle system" because it was first introduced there by agent L. Herchmer. Under this system individual Indians were given cattle "conditionally" for a specified number of years, at the end of which they were to return the animal, or one of equal value, to the Indian agent, but they were

allowed to keep the progeny as their personal property. The cattle returned to the agent were then loaned to other members of the band. The philosophy behind the program was that the Indians would have greater incentive to care for their cattle if they were given an interest in them. On many reserves, agents had reported that it was difficult to get the Indians to provide and care for their cattle.[85] Some observers believed this was because the herds were the common property of the band, and no individuals felt responsibility for them.

Before the introduction of the Birtle system, any cattle given to the Indians above those stipulated in the treaty were on loan only, apparently to prevent abduction or slaughter. Some Indian farmers had protested that since the cattle were not theirs, they would not winter them, which was costly, but would instead hand them back once the work season was over.[86] The problem was that the Indians received little benefit from keeping cattle. Inspector McGibbon recognized this when he described the situation in the Touchwood Hills in 1886.[87] Here the Indians received the benefit of the work performed by their oxen but nothing more. Their cattle could not be sold or slaughtered without the consent of the agent. The department did not buy cattle from the Indians for their rations but instead imported bacon. There was nothing to encourage the Indians to raise and keep cattle. McGibbon wrote that "At present [the Indian] has to feed cattle and look after them but he cannot

see what it is for... if he knew he would get something in hand for his labor it would make a great difference."[88]

The Birtle system, which was intended to address some of these concerns, was implemented on many reserves after 1885. It was the source of much confusion however, and its central purpose of fostering a sense of individual ownership was largely defeated as the department would still not allow any Indian to dispose of any beast without the consent of the agent, and such consent was rarely given.[89] At the same time the Indians were to be made to understand that the progeny was theirs alone. It is not surprising that agents complained that they had difficulty in making the Indians understand that while the cattle was theirs, they had to have the agent's permission to sell, slaughter or barter.[90]

Another means of undermining the tribal system pursued after 1885 was to destroy the traditional system of leadership. The chiefs of bands perceived to be disloyal in 1885 were deposed, and Reed hoped that as the other chiefs and headmen died off, these offices might be allowed to lapse.[91] Reed did not try to hide the fact that he welcomed the death of "notorious" chiefs such as Pasquah and Peepeekeesis. He explained that the influence of the older chiefs was not beneficial, as they were naturally conservative, and even if they did feel they should lead their people down the path of industry, they were often compelled "in order to retain their influence over the lazy and intractable, to become, against their better judgement, the mouth-piece for the

ventilation of imaginary grievances and the presentation of utterly unreasonable demands".[92] Reed wished to abolish the offices of chief and headmen altogether "as one of the strongest aids towards the destruction of communism, and the creation of individuality".[93] Individuals were to directly seek the advice and leadership of their agents and instructors. Government officials were to deal with individuals and not with bands. Chiefs and councillors were not to be regarded as spokesmen for a band unless they fully endorsed the policy the department was implementing.[94]

The period after 1885 was characterized by increased efforts to dismantle the tribal system, and also by much more rigid supervision of the activities and movements of the Indians. To carry out the program of thorough surveillance, the number of department employees in the West was greatly increased. In the region now known as Saskatchewan, the number of Indian agencies expanded from two to ten.[95] Allan McDonald for example, previously the sole agent for Treaty Four, became the Crooked Lakes agent, and three other agents were appointed to the reserves formerly under his supervision. Resident farm instructors were placed on each reserve, whereas before 1885 there was generally only one for each grouping of reserves.

The increased resident supervisory staff facilitated the implementation of the pass system after 1885. A pass system was first adopted as a temporary measure during the crisis of 1885 as a means of controlling and monitoring the

movements of the Indians, essentially to keep them from joining the "rebels". On May 6, 1885, Major General Frederick Middleton wrote to Dewdney wondering whether it would be "adviseable to issue proclamation warning breeds and Indians to return to their Reserves and that all found away will be treated as rebels. I suppose such a proclamation could be disseminated without difficulty."[96] Dewdney replied that while he had "no power to issue proclamation as you suggest", he had however, circulated a "notice" advising Indians to stay on their reserves or face arrest on suspicion of being "hostiles".[97] This notice was distributed throughout the agencies. The File Hills residents, for example, were read what was called a "proclamation" which declared that at any one time, only three Indians could leave the reserve, for the purpose only of purchasing supplies, and only with a pass from the agent.[98] By June of 1885, with the final confrontation at Batoche over for some weeks, Dewdney was prepared to relax the restrictions on the movements of the Indians.[99] He viewed the pass system as a temporary measure, adopted because of the exigencies of the time. Dewdney believed it was futile to continue to attempt to confine the Indians to their reserves as the pass system had no validity in law. Neither the Indian Act nor any other federal legislation empowered the department to institute such a system.[100]

The possibility of implementing a pass system had been raised on occasion before 1885 but had been rejected because

it ran directly counter to promises made to the Indians. Treaty Six for example stated that the Indians had the "right to pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered"[101] Although in the early 1880's Lawrence Vankoughnet had been in favour of a pass system, John A. Macdonald, and commissioner A.G. Irvine of the N.W.M.P. rejected the proposal.[102] Irvine believed that any attempt to confine the Indians to their reserves would be "tantamount to a breach of confidence with the Indians", as they had been assured that they were at liberty to travel and that residence on a reserve was not compulsory.[103] Irvine had been present at the Treaty Seven negotiations at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877 and recalled that "this concession largely contributed to the satisfactory conclusion of the treaty with the Blackfoot."[104]

Dewdney's assistant commissioner, Hayter Reed, did not share his superior's reluctance to continue the pass system. In August of 1885, Reed informed Dewdney that he was not allowing Indians of the Battleford district to leave their reserves without passes.[105] On their daily patrols, the N.W.M.P. sent back any Indians found off the reserves without passes. Reed was aware that "this is hardly supportable by any legal enactment", but argued that "we must do many things which can only be supported by common sense and by what may be for the general good".[106] In his memo on the "future management" of the Indians, Reed recommended that the pass system be implemented throughout

the West.[107] Although he recognized that the treaties gave the Indians permission to go wherever they pleased, Reed believed that towns and villages, which were owned by municipalities, might be regarded as properties from which the Indians, by treaty, were prohibited from entering. The treaties had stipulated that Indians could not encroach on the property of white settlers. Dewdney by this time concurred with Reed's views on the necessity of a pass system for all Indians.[108] Vankoughnet and John A. Macdonald agreed. Macdonald believed that if the pass system could be introduced "safely", it was "in the highest degree desireable".[109] He clearly recognized that the system rested on no legal foundation and cautioned that "in case of resistance on the grounds of Treaty rights [it] should not be insisted upon".[110]

Books of passes were sent to the Indian agencies in 1886.[111] When an Indian applied to the agent for a pass he had to first produce a letter of recommendation from his farm instructor.[112] Indians who had acted in an "unsatisfactory" manner during the crisis of 1885 carried passes that noted this fact, for the information of the police or other officials to whom it might be presented.[113] As the system evolved, Indians were required to carry passes for all activities that took them from their reserves, including hunting, trapping, fishing, picking berries, collecting seneca root, shopping in the towns or visiting another reserve. Indians visiting their children in industrial

schools were required to carry passes.[114] They were issued only to parents who promised not to interfere with their children or try to bring them home. As the presence of adults was seen as a disruptive, degenerating influence, this system effectively limited the number of visitors, the period of time they were allowed to remain, and the frequency of visits.[115]

It was difficult for the Indians to ignore or protest the pass system as agents threatened to withdraw the recalcitrant from the rations list.[116] It is clear however, that if large numbers of Indians had made up their minds to go, pass or no pass, perhaps to visit another reserve for a sundance, the Indian agent was powerless to stop them. Hayter Reed instructed his agents that under these circumstances, it was more expedient to issue passes, rather than to refuse them, as agents could keep track of who was going where and for how long. If control could not be achieved, it was important to maintain the appearance of control. Reed warned the Indian agents that

> the greatest caution has to be exercised, for were they to offer resistance and conflict ensue, they have the law on their side. Under these circumstances Agents must often against their own wishes issue Passes to Indians who they know will leave in any case, and so preserve an appearance at least of control and a knowledge of their movements.[117]

Reed believed that it was important that the agents conceal from the Indians the fact that the pass system had no validity in law. It appears however that the Indians

were aware of this. Commissioner S.B. Steele of the N.W.M.P. reported in 1891 that his men in the Fort Macleod district were doing their best to turn back Indians without passes but that "a difficulty arises in the fact that few of our men can speak sufficient Blackfoot to make themselves understood and the Indians when it suits their purpose can be very obtuse: they are aware too that we have no legal right to turn them back".[118] Government officials compounded the confusion surrounding the pass system by not publicly admitting its existence. A letter written by Edgar Dewdney, published in the Calgary Herald in 1890, stated that the government could not insist upon the Indians staying on their reserves, and informed readers that under treaty, "they are allowed to move about as freely as white men, provided they behave themselves".[119]

Officials of the N.W.M.P. were never comfortable with the absence of any legal foundation for the pass system. They were trying to demonstrate to the Indians that the police enforced a rational system of laws that operated to the benefit of all. In 1892, commissioner Herchmer was advised by some circuit court judges that the system was illegal, and that the police would surely lose if their right to enforce it was challenged in the courts. The legal opinion of government law officers was sought and they proved to be "unequivocally opposed to continuation of the practice".[120] In 1893, a circular letter was issued from

Regina directing all police officers to refrain from ordering Indians without passes back to their reserves.

Hayter Reed would have none of these weak-kneed, legalistic concerns. He urged the police to continue enforcing the pass system on the grounds that the "moral responsibilities of the Indian Department transcended treaty obligations".[121] Reed's views triumphed. By at least 1896 the police had reversed their position. In that year commissioner Herchmer issued a circular letter instructing police who encountered any Indian without a pass to "use all possible pressure to persuade him to return to his reserve".[122] Yet, the police continued to vacillate. In 1904 they once again informed the department of Indian Affairs that they would not order Indians back to their reserves.[123]

The imposition of a pass system in the spring of 1885 was perhaps understandable as a temporary "war measures" act. Its essential purpose was to control and confine what was perceived as a potentially hostile population. It also functioned to protect the Indians during the months of crisis. The bitter fighting had dimensions of a racial confrontation. According to one side's interpretation, all whites were loyal citizens and all with darker complexions were under suspicion. The settlers and the troops distrusted all Indians and Métis, their fears fed by tales of atrocity at Duck Lake and Frog Lake. In this tense

atmosphere it was perhaps in the interest of the safety of the Indians that they be confined to their reserves.

A more perplexing question is why the pass system, adopted as a temporary, expedient measure, was continued after 1885. It should have been allowed to lapse, as Dewdney suggested, as early as June, 1885. Architects of the policy professed that it was in the best interests of the Indians. Authorities on the Indians had long testified that contact with white people was physically, mentally, and spiritually injurious to the Indians.[124] In the settlements, natives always found "the lower stratum of society ready to teach the willing learner lessons of immorality; and degradation is sure to follow any close relationship with white people in the early stages of their training".[125] In particular it was hoped that the pass system would prevent Indian women of "abandoned character" from loitering about the settlements. It was also a means of severely limiting the Indians' access to alcohol. It was believed that the pass system would enhance the agricultural program on the reserves, as the Indian farmers could no longer abandon their crops on a whim at critical times of the season. The rural life offered the Indians a noble and healthy occupation that was morally elevating. Urban life, by contrast, was a corrupt environment that led to physical and moral degeneracy.

The pass system was authorized and sanctioned by the idea that as "probationary" citizens, the Indians must be

kept separate from the rest of society. But it is clear that the system also served the interests of the resident and potential white settlers. To begin with it was used to allay any anxiety that the Indians were a military threat. Wild and frightening rumours of Indian unrest and uprising continued to circulate for some years after 1885. To restore confidence in law and order, and to ensure that peace would prevail, the Indians were confined to their reserves. Prospective settlers had also to be assured that they had nothing to fear from Indians if they homesteaded on an isolated patch of Canadian prairie. Eastern Canadian, American, and European newspapers had published exaggerated, sensational accounts of blazing homesteads and scalped settlers.[126] In 1885, immigration to the prairies was at a virtual standstill. The Indians and Métis had dealt a crippling blow to Macdonald's vision of a densely populated West. The National Policy could wither and die unless large numbers of settlers were attracted to the West to develop its agricultural potential, and create a staple for export. More than any other measure, the pass system ensured that the Indians could no longer threaten the dream of a prosperous, peaceful West. The settlers' interests, and not the Indians', were paramount. As historian John Jennings has observed, "The human rights of the Indians, as well as the treaty promises, were sacrificed in deference to the success of the National Policy".[127]

In the early years of the pass system, Indian department correspondence reflected concern that the Indians potentially constituted a military threat. Hayter Reed was determined to prevent united rebellious movements in the future.[128] The pass system limited opportunities to "scheme" and "intrigue". A primary function of the pass system was to keep Indians from communicating with each other. Should any strange Indians arrive on a reserve, agents were to carefully enquire into their business, and to promptly inform the Regina office of such arrivals.[129] As memories of the 1885 crisis faded, the Indians came to be viewed as more of a source of irritation and annoyance than as a military threat. The pass system was maintained as the best method of expunging this vexatious nuisance. To the settlers it was viewed as a means of preventing the Indians from "loafing" about the towns for whatever immoral purposes, killing settlers' cattle, and hoarding all the game and fish of a district.

Once in place, there was pressure from the public to maintain the pass system. Citizens' groups approached the department about strengthening the system. With the Sarcee reserve in close proximity, citizens of Calgary were particularly vocal and strident in demanding that the system be enforced. In 1890 The Calgary Gun Club for example requested that Indian agents issue no passes to Indians from the beginning of nesting season until September 1 as a means of ending the Indians' "war of extermination" against

immature birds.[130] When in 1893 the police temporarily stopped enforcing the pass system, there was a storm of angry criticism. Newspapers loudly protested that their towns were overrun by Indians.[131] A Calgary paper argued that the government had the perfect right to curtail the Indians' right to free movement guaranteed under treaty because the government had itself gone beyond the terms of the treaty by issuing rations to the Indians.[132] There is evidence that the pass system was still in use in the area covered by Treaties Four, Six and Seven, as late as the mid 1930's.[133]

Officials of the department controlled Indian movement after 1885, and they also came to have control over the financial transactions of the Indians. Through the permit system, the Indians' ability to sell their products, and purchase goods, was strictly monitored. Although the Indian Act empowered agents to make such regulations before the mid-1880's, it appears that it was only then that the permit system began to be rigidly enforced on reserves in the North West. A series of amendments to the Indian Act prevented the Indians from selling their possessions, and products of the reserves, and discouraged anyone from purchasing the same.[134] Under Section 80 of the Indian Act of 1880, Indians were forbidden from trading or bartering the "presents" which they received under the terms of their treaties, without the assent of the superintendent general or his agent.[135] The implements and cattle distributed

under the treaty were regarded by the department as the private property of the Indians, but officials still believed that it was in the Indians' interest that these be protected and regularly accounted for.[136] Amendments to the Indian Act in 1881 and 1882 stipulated that the Governor-in-Council could from time to time prohibit or regulate the sale, barter, exchange or gift by an Indian or Indian band, of any grain, root crop, or other produce grown on any reserve in Western Canada. This regulation did not cover furs and game, and Indians did not require permission from the agent to sell these. Subsequent amendments concerned penalties to the possessors of presents, roots, grain and other crops sold to them by Indians.[137] The department was anxious to curtail purchases of "useless articles at excessive prices", and there was concern about the accumulation of debt.[138] To trade or barter with Indians in Manitoba, or the North-West Territories, a special license from the department was required after 1891. Before a merchant was allowed to trade on a reserve, he was obliged to submit a list of his goods, and he was forbidden to sell what were regarded as trinkets or useless articles.[139]

The rationale behind restricting the sale of the Indians products, and regulating their purchases was, as John A. Macdonald explained, that if "the Indians had the power of unrestricted sale, they would dispose of their products to the first trader or whiskey dealer who came along, and the consequence would be that the Indians would

be pensioners on the Government during the next winter."[140] It was believed that the Indians should not be permitted to sell anything as long as they subsisted on government rations and did not raise enough to feed their own families. The Indians were viewed as utterly helpless in managing their own business transactions. It was generally believed that Indians has a propensity to sell all of their possessions, at any price, in order to purchase useless trinkets and whiskey. The permit system was seen as a means of teaching the Indians to husband their resources, and as a means of protecting them from unscrupulous merchants selling at excessive prices. Regulations restricting the sale of the products of the reserve took into consideration that these resources were held in common by the band, and they acted to check the possibility that one or just a few members might acquire more than a fair share.[141]

It was not until the mid-1880's that the permit system was enforced in the West because it was only then that the crops were sizeable enough to warrant such attention. In 1884, Dewdney anticipated that on some reserves in the North West large quantities of grain would be raised, and he was concerned that

> as very few of our Indians are capable of looking after their crops when the grain has been threshed out, I think it is a matter of great importance that some well defined plan be adopted for the purpose of securing to the government, a return for the assistance given the Indians to help them to raise food and also to secure for the Indians a proper return of their own crop.[142]

Dewdney argued at this time that some of the larger reserves would require a new kind of farm instructor, one who was also a business manager, who would handle financial transactions, for the Indians, and keep a separate account with each family.

Although the Macdonald government's Indian policy was harshly criticized after 1885, little effort was made to seriously investigate and re-examine past practices. Instead officials and politicians staunchly defended and justified the government's treatment of the Indians. It was publicly proclaimed that the government had been generous and benevolent in providing the Indians with far more than had ever been stipulated by treaty. This was despite the fact that privately officials could not say with certainty what had or should have been distributed. Critics were dismissed as partisan, as distant observers ignorant of the true situation, and as dangerous instigators of discontent and rebellion. This debate did not end in 1885 but was renewed with vigor each year when the annual reports of the department were released to the public. The question of whether or not the Western Indians were capable of farming was central to this debate and diametrically opposed views were presented in the press in the years after 1885.

There was new emphasis to Western Indian policy after 1885 however and Hayter Reed was a main generator of this approach. Attention was focused on the destruction of the tribal system and the enhancement of individualism while

regulations were devised which provided for more rigid supervision of the Indians' movements and activities. The new regime had implications for the agricultural activity of reserve residents. They were encouraged to take up separate farms, to purchase personal property in the way of farm implements, and to acquire private stock. To ensure among other things, that the Indians attended to their farm work, their movements off reserve were restricted by a pass system. The Indians' ability to sell their products and to purchase goods was strictly monitored through the permit system. The agriculture of reserve residents was subject to a host of restraints above and beyond those they shared with other farmers of the district.

1. 1886 Commons Debates, 1: 718-730 (Malcolm C. Cameron).

2. Ibid., p. 721.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 724.

5. Ibid., p. 725.

6. Young, "The Indian Problem", p. 469.

7. Ibid

8. David Lupul, "The Bobtail Land Surrender", Alberta History, 26, no. 1 (1978), p. 29.

9. Maclean, Indians of Canada, p. 267.

10. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 19, no. 6, (1885), p. xi.

11. Ibid., p. 141.

12. Ibid.

13. 1886 Commons Debates, 2: 1761, (Macdonald).

14. Ibid., p. 1762.

15. Department of Indian Affairs, The Facts.

16. Ibid., pp. 3-7.

17. Ibid., p. 7.

18. Ibid., p. 31.

19. Ibid., p. 4.

20. See for example Free Press (Manitoba), 4 January, 1889, The Empire (Toronto), 16 January, 1889, Vidette (Qu'Appelle, 19 December, 1889, Mail (Toronto), 2 December, 1889 and The Week (Toronto), 13 February, 1892.

21. See for example the Leader (Regina), 3 October, 1888, 21 May, 1889, 14 October, 1890, Saskatchewan Herald 26 July, 1884, 5 March, 1890, Free Press, 8 February, 1889, 3 December, 1889, 1 May, 1890.

22. Free Press, 1 January, 1891.

23. Free Press, 8 February, 1889.

24. The Empire (Toronto), 8 December, 1890.

25. Mail, 20 April, 1891.

26. Vidette, 3 March, 1892.

27. Globe, (Toronto), 22 October, 1892.

28. Leader, 21 May, 1889.

29. Free Press, 3 December, 1889.

30. Citizen (Ottawa), 13 November, 1890.

31. Lupul, p. 29.

32. Free Press, 4 January, 1889.

33. Ibid.

34. Vidette, 19 December, 1889.

35. Ibid.

36. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3665, file 10,080, Dewdney to Vankoughnet, 28 May, 1885.

37. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3752, file 30,421, Reed to Vankoughnet, 2 August, 1886.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41 Ibid., Vankoughnet to Dewdney, 14 August, 1886.

42. 1886 Commons Debates, 1: 720 (Cameron).

43. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3755, file 31,061, Dewdney to Vankoughnet, 19 February, 1886.

44. Canada. Senate Journals. 1887, vol. II, Appendix 1, Report and Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee of the Senate on the Existing Natural Food Products of the North-West Territories.

45. Ibid., p. 24.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., p. 23

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., p. 34.

50. Ibid., p. 33.

51. Ibid., p. 34.

52. Ibid., p. 48.

53. Ibid., p. 5.

54. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, Audet's Biographical Notes.

55. Ibid.

56. PAC, RG 15, vol. 245, file 23,563, Part 1.

57. Ibid., Hayter Reed "Canadian and United States Immigration", May 1880.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, Audet's Biographical notes.

61. PAC, RG 10, deputy superintendent general letterbooks, vol. 21, large letterbook, Reed to T.M. Daly, April, 1893, No. 470-1.

62. Beal and Macleod, p. 79.

63. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, "Address", p. 33.

64. Ibid., p. 4.

65. Ibid., p. 65.

66. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3755, file 30,961, Reed to Dewdney, 13 June, 1881.

67. Jefferson, p. 126

68. "Harry Loucks" in The Voice of the People: Reminiscences of Prince Albert Settlement's Early Citizens, (Prince Albert: Prince Albert Historical Society, 1985), p. 129.

69. See chapter 3, p. 78.

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72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., 20 July, 1885.

74. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12, (1889), p. 165.

75. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, "Address", p. 30.

76. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12, (1889), p. 165.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p. 166.

79. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, "Address", p. 29.

80. See chapter 7.

81. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 20 , no. 6 (1886), pp. 108-9.

82. Ibid., vol. 22, no. 16 (1888), p. 125.

83. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, "Address", p. 27.

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85. Ibid., vol. 19, no. 6 (1885), p. 98.

86. Ibid., vol. 16, no. 5 (1882), p. 50.

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111. Bennett, p. 4.

112. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 21, no. 15 (1887), p. 73.

113. Bennett, p. 4.

114. Jennings, p. 281.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid., p. 295-96.

117. Quoted in Ibid., p. 298.

118. Quoted in Bennett, p. 4.

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120. R.C. Macleod, The North West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 146.

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123. Macleod, p. 146.

124. Maclean, Indians of Canada p. 26.

125. Maclean, Savage Folk, p. 18.

126. Lalonde, p. 97.

127. Jennings, p. 315.

128. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3710, file 19,550-3, Reed "Memo", 20 July, 1885.

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132. The Herald, 14 June, 1893.

133. Bennett, p. 7.

134. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", p. 48.

135. Isabel Andrews, "The Crooked Lakes Reserves: A Study of Indian Policy in Practice from the Qu'Appelle Treaty to 1900." (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1972), p. 112.

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# CHAPTER VI

## FARMING IN THE QU'APPELLE REGION TO 1890

Indian residents of the Qu'Appelle region were not joined by significant numbers of newcomers until 1882. Until that time, settlers had largely ignored the Qu'Appelle in favour of the Saskatchewan country, believing that to the north, the land was more fertile and wooded, and anticipating that the transcontinental railway would be built through that region. The Qu'Appelle region became more attractive after 1882 when the CPR was built across the southern plains. The main land rush was in the years 1882 and 1883. The number of homestead entries plummeted in 1884 and 1885, and immigration was at almost a complete standstill in 1886.[1] In that year the population of the Qu'Appelle region, broadly understood as extending from Virden to Moose Jaw, numbered 23,500.[2] Settlers from Ontario and Britain comprised about half the population with a wide diversity of ethnic groups, including Germans, Hungarians and Icelanders, making up the other half.[3]

Settlement at this time was clustered along the CPR; few homesteaders had ventured more than thirty miles north of the line, or twenty miles south. Farming in the more distant areas was not seen as feasible until branch line

construction was completed. Transportation was the essential pre-requisite of agriculture, as it permitted the development of an exportable cash crop and the import of essential farm implements, household goods and food. Because of this vital transportation facility, immigration agencies, the Department of the Interior and the railway itself promoted settlement in the Qu'Appelle. It was because of the railway that the district was settled at this time; knowledge of the environment was as yet inadequate and it was uncertain whether arable agriculture was possible in this region of variable rainfall and early frosts. A large part of the district was within "Palliser's Triangle", and even though John Macoun, the Ontario botanist, had optimistically appraised the treeless, short-grass country for agriculture, an appropriate method of farming this dry land had yet to be devised.

The single family homestead was the principal economic unit in the development of the Qu'Appelle district. Homesteads of 160 acres were available for a ten dollar registration fee. Within three years a homesteader could receive title to his land if he met a residence requirement, had constructed a habitable dwelling, and had a certain number of acres in crop. Farm-making costs varied considerably, but few homesteaders made a large initial investment. It has been estimated that the costs for the average settler to set up a homestead in his first year fell in the range of $590.00 to $1,193.00.[4] This estimate takes

into consideration the cost of constructing a house, stable, granaries, fencing and a well. The settler also had to purchase some provisions, and to begin cultivation the average homesteader required a breaking plough, a stubble plough, a mower and rake, a team of oxen, and a wagon.

Farming operations were primitive for the first few years of limited equipment and small acreages. Seeding by hand was a common practice, as was harvesting with scythe and cradle, hand-binding, and threshing with a flail.[5] In most cases this early pioneering stage, characterized by crude cultivation methods, did not last more than a few years. The farmers of the Qu'Appelle began early on to specialize in grain, particularly wheat. Even in the mid-1880's farms were more specialized here than just to the east in Manitoba, where there was more cattle and mixed farming.[6] The larger acreages of the specialized wheat farmer, and the need for speed to conserve time demanded the use of machinery such as the mechanical drill seeder, self-binding reaper and the steam thresher.

Although the single family homestead was the most common feature of the landscape, a wide diversity of farming enterprizes was found in the Qu'Appelle district in the 1880's.[7] There were a number of community experiments, as well as ethnic, religious, working-class and aristocratic colonies. Hungarians settled at Esterhazy, Icelanders at Thingvalla, and Russian Jews at Wapella. A New Sweden and a New Finland were also established in the district. There

were English colonies such as the East London Artisan's colony near Moosomin, the Scottish crofter colony south of Wapella, and the Primitive Methodists of the Pheasant Plains. Aristocratic Englishmen settled at Cannington Manor, and a community of French counts and noblemen took up residence near Whitewood. The Major William R. Bell farm at Indian Head, founded in 1882, was the largest company farm in the West, comprising over 57,000 acres and employing 300 men in the summer months.[8]

The settlers who joined the Indians in attempting to farm this district in the 1880's provided no real model of successful husbandry. The 1880's were characterized by failure rather than by success, and these years have been described as a "nightmare to pioneers".[9] Among this generation of pioneers, references to the "drought years" meant not the 1930's but the 1880's.[10] Many of the colonies found farming a severe struggle and did not survive the decade.[11] The Bell Farm was bankrupt by 1889. Homesteaders deserted the district in large numbers in the 1880's. In 1886, homestead cancellations greatly outstripped entries.[12] In a case study of three townships in the Abernethy district of the Qu'Appelle in the 1880's, Lyle Dick found that the great majority of the settlers did not persist, and that there was a cancellation rate of 59% of all entries.[13] Dick argues that the Darwinian model, based on the survival of the fittest, is not in itself a sufficient explanation as to why some farmers succeeded and others did not although he

identifies as a "deeply ingrained theme" in prairie folklore the idea that "hard work, determination and perseverance were the basis of the settler's success".[14] Dick contends that the question of why settlement rewarded some and not others is a much more complex story that cannot be accounted for solely in terms of the human attributes of adaptability and individual enterprize. Dick found that certain districts revealed much higher incidents of failure than others, and argues that a lack of rail service accounted for much of the failure in the 1880's. Settlers most distant from the railway, such as those in the Balcarres district near the File Hills, registered the highest cancellation ratios.[15]

The adverse climatic conditions of the 1880's also account for the high failure rate. In 1886, drought nearly totally devastated crops and at this point many settlers had suffered three successive crop failures as there was drought in 1883, drought and frost in 1884 and frost in 1885. 1889 was another year of drought and early frost and in 1890 the crop was widely injured by frost. Federal aid in the form of seed grain relief was offered to destitute settlers in the North West during these years.[16] The farmers' techniques often aggravated the situation in the early years, before methods suitable to semi-arid regions were developed. Farmers began the way they did in their homelands where moisture was abundant. Many who broadcast their seed for example were met with failure as the seed did

not germinate.[17] Wintering stock was a problem in the Qu'Appelle district during the drought years. When hay and water were scarce, some stock raisers drove their cattle northward into the Saskatchewan country. There were hazards other than drought and frost including hail, prairie fire, grasshopper and gopher infestation. Blizzards were a hazard to livestock in winter.

A major difference between the Indian farmer and his neighbours in the 1880's was that while the newcomers had the option to leave and try their luck elsewhere, the reserve residents had little choice but to persevere. The pass system discouraged Indians from seeking alternate employment outside the reserve. Clause 70 of the 1876 Indian Act excluded Indians from taking homesteads in Manitoba and the North West, so the Indian farmer could not seek better railway, market, or soil advantages.[18] This issue was brought to the attention of Indian Affairs officials in 1886 when Joseph Tanner, a member of the Gambler's Saulteaux band, attempted to take out a homestead near Maple Creek, at a spot where he and his family had resided for some time and had made improvements.[19] Tanner, described by Dewdney as a "well-to-do Indian earning his livelihood as a whiteman", ran the mail for the police between Fort Walsh and points in the States.[20] He was not allowed to take out a homestead as he refused to become enfranchised, give up his annuity and his Indian status. Tanner's wife applied for homestead entry but was informed

that a farmer's wife was not the sole head of a family and could not obtain entry. Indian farmers then had no choice but to stay on their reserves; a new life on a different plot of land was not an option for them.

In the late 1880's however, relations between the Indian farmers and their instructors were characterized by a high degree of co-operation. Indian farmers were anxious to see agriculture succeed. On the whole the instructors of this period appear to have been competent men who were also genuinely anxious to accomplish this goal. Despite the grim climatic conditions of these years, 1885-1890 may be described as a time when significant strides were taken toward alleviating many of the problems which had handicapped and impeded Indian farming in the past, although this resulted in few immediate rewards, and new difficulties emerged. For the most part, local department officials played a constructive role in facilitating favourable conditions, although their superiors were often slow to respond and always claimed to be financially constrained. During this period efforts were made to address problems such as the scarcity of milling and threshing facilities. The Indians began to acquire some of the implements and machinery necessary to sustain and expand their enterprize. Efforts were made to secure some portion of the limited markets in the North West for the Indians' produce. Farmers on the reserves experimented with methods of soil preparation, seeding and cultivating. Most of their efforts

were directed toward a specialization in wheat culture rather than toward mixed farming. The presence of visiting and in some cases resident blacksmiths on the reserves was an immense bolster to agricultural operations. Steps were also taken during this period to ameliorate the problem of oxen shortages. Although it was a time of great advancement in learning to cope with the conditions of the North West, the results were generally unimpressive because of crop failure. The tangible rewards were minimal during these years but the way was paved for some measure of success when conditions improved.

The resident supervisory staff on the Treaty Four reserves was greatly increased after 1885. Allan McDonald, previously the sole agent for Treaty Four became the agent for the Crooked Lakes agency. His staff consisted of three farm instructors, a clerk, interpreter, cook and labourer. J.B. Lash was appointed agent to the Muscowpetung Agency. A former N.W.M.P., Lash had first worked in the department as a clerk and he was serving as agent at Carlton in 1885 when he was taken prisoner by Riel. His clerk and interpreter was Henry Halpin, a former Hudson's Bay Company clerk at Frog Lake who had been taken captive by Big Bear's band, but had testified in defence of the chief at his trial.[21] There were three farm instructors at this agency, two interpreters, a farm assistant, storeman, and the wives of two of the instructors were hired as cooks. Hilton Keith was the agent for the Touchwood Hills. Keith had been

instructor at Crooked Lakes at the time of the Yellow Calf incident. His staff consisted of two farm instructors, a clerk and an interpreter. At File Hills, P.J. Williams was appointed agent. He was one of the original Ontario farm instructors brought west in 1879. The staff here, much smaller than at the other agencies, was comprised of one instructor and one interpreter. For the most part the instructors were young married farmers from Ontario, the Maritimes and Scotland. The interpreters were generally described simply as "halfbreeds".

In the years after 1885, reserve farmers began to acquire some of the machinery necessary to facilitate their operations. Mowers and rakes were the most common purchases. Some reserves were fortunate in their abundant hay supplies, and a number of bands sold hay, to other reserves, to settlers and to the N.W.M.P. on contract. Selling hay was one of the very few opportunities for outside employment available to reserve residents. In 1886 there was a heavy yield of hay on the Muscowpetung agency and 200 tons were sold to the N.W.M.P. in Regina.[22] That same year Yellow Calf and his party sold 150 tons of hay.[23] With the proceeds from the sale of their hay, the Indians of the Muscowpetung agency purchased a mowing machine and a horse rake, seven double wagons and four double sleighs, items that could sustain and bolster this industry. Yellow Calf and party also sold enough hay in 1886 to purchase two mowing machines and horse rakes.[24] Little Bones band which

had joined Sakemay's also had a mowing machine, and the Chacachas party had a mower and were cutting hay for sale. Agents and farm instructors felt that access to mowers and rakes was essential, and not only for those bands that sold hay. In 1884, agent McDonald had strongly recommended that the Touchwood bands be granted their request for this machinery as he wrote that they could not get sufficient hay out with scythes, and would not have their haying finished before harvest with the slow hand method.[25] The File Hills farm instructor similarly argued that as stock was increasing, the bands required mowers and rakes to provide enough hay.[26] Hay was particularly difficult to obtain with scythes in dry years, when the danger of not being able to procure enough was at its highest. Agent McDonald reported in 1890 that on the Crooked Lakes reserves it would have been impossible to cut the amount of hay required to winter their cattle without mowing machines, as it was a dry year and two or three acres in some cases had to be gone over before a ton was secured.[27] Some agents claimed that the Indians under their charge did not have enough strength because of illness to put up adequate hay with scythes.[28]

Self-binders were also acquired during this period. As one Treaty Four agent explained, this implement lessened the danger of being caught by frost during a protracted harvest, and it also reduced the waste experienced in binding with short straw, encouraging the farmers to cultivate a larger area.[29] The File Hills agent reported in 1888 that it would

be impossible to harvest their 130 acres of wheat in time to save the crop from frost without a reaper.[30] Local agents and instructors argued that these implements were a necessity and were totally in favour of their acquisition. Distant officials were more reluctant to recognize these implements as necessary, and were certainly not prepared to purchase them for the farmers.

The department's policy on the acquisition of mowers, self-binders and other machinery was that if individuals could afford to buy these from their own earnings, they should be allowed, even encouraged to do so. This was part of the program of inciting the "industrious" to invest in useful articles, so that they could gain a sense of pride in their property, and be seen to stand head and shoulders above the more "lethargic" band members. The department itself only rarely provided these items, and regularly, requests of agents and instructors were turned down. Almost all of the machinery purchased during this period was from the Indians' own earnings. Generally these purchases were made by the band, or at least a number of farmers together, in contrast to the goal of official policy. Individuals could seldom afford these items. The money came from the proceeds of crops or from pooled annuities. Machinery was rarely paid for outright, but in instalments, over a number of years. Kakewistahaw's band for example made their first payment of $55.00 to Massey Harris for their self-binder in 1888, from the proceeds from the sale of their wheat, and

$20.00 was still owing.[31] Bands were in debt to local merchants not only for machinery but for vital items such as binding twine. The Indian agents oversaw and kept account of these transactions. In 1887, the Crooked Lakes band entrusted their agent to purchase four self-binders for them, which they were to pay for out of that season's crop. In 1889 Little Black Bear's band bought a self-binder which the agent acquired for them from a settler in the vicinity, and that same year the Touchwood bands purchase a self-binder.

On the Crooked Lakes reserves, agent McDonald arranged with the Massey Manufacturing Company to act as their agent for implement sales within the agency.[32] He received a commission of ten per cent of sales, which he invested in further equipment or supplies such as binding twine, or he paid for repairs on the Indians' machines. McDonald was originally given authorization for this arrangement by Hayter Reed and it continued for six years until 1891.

Indian farming in Treaty Four continued to suffer from a scarcity of threshing machines, although this was to some extent ameliorated during the years 1885-1890. Agents and instructors appear to have discouraged the farmers from threshing out their grain with cattle and ponies, and instead waited for the use of a threshing machine in the district. But reserve residents were often among the last to have the use of a threshing machine. In October of 1889 a farmer living near the Piapot reserve noted that the

threshing in the district had finished up with his, and on the last night, six Indians arrived with their oxen to take the machine to the Indian reserve.[33] Often a machine was not available until December or January. In 1887, the Crooked Lakes reserves did not acquire the use of a separator until March, when one was obtained from a settler at $4.00 per day, and a steam engine at $2.00 per day.[34]. Until this process was completed, the crop was of no use to the farmers, either in flour, or in cash proceeds. Threshing in winter took much longer so that costs increased, and it also resulted in much loss of grain. Winter threshing on the reserves involved "camping out" both for the men and for the horses as there were no stables or houses near the stacks. When temperatures were thirty degrees below, as in January, threshing was almost impossible. The sheaves were simply frozen mounds of snow, and when they were heaved up, ice and snow covered the men.[35] The engine would often refuse to start in the bitter cold. Sheaf racks had to be mounted on sleigh runners in the winter and because of the short days, lamps had to be lit to allow the pitchers to see where to throw the sheaves.

By the late 1880's distant department officials were recognizing the need, long felt by those on the spot, to have readier access to threshing machinery. The acquisition of a small steam thresher for two bands in the Carlton agency was approved in 1888.[36] The engine was also to be used for a grist mill. Each farmer contributed $1.00 toward

the purchase of the engine. A similar arrangement was approved for the Battleford agency the following year. In 1888, agent McDonald of the Crooked Lakes agency purchased a steam engine and a separator from the Bell Farm.[37] Buildings for these were erected on the Cowesses reserve. The want of threshing machinery was still keenly felt however, on the File Hills, Muscowpetung, and Touchwood reserves. Where there were threshing machines, the Indians soon became proficient at operating them, dispelling the concern of some officials that Indians lacked the capacity to operate them properly. In 1889, Wadsworth visited a band engaged in threshing and noted that

> these men have become expert in working a thresher; the farmer was there directing and going about the machine with an oil can, but the driving, feeding and other expert duties connected with working the machine, as well as the laborers' part, were being satisfactorily performed by the Indians'.[38]

By 1885 agents and instructors had for years been lamenting the fact that there were seldom grist mills in the vicinity of reserves. It was generally felt that there was no purpose to the Indians' cultivation of wheat as long as it could not be ground.[39] It was believed that some bands could be entirely self-supporting if they had access to milling facilities.[40] Officials also felt the Indians would not fully appreciate the value of farm work until there were grist mills in the neighbourhood, as it was only then that they could actually see and consume the results of their

labour. Upon obtaining a grist mill one agent wrote that it had "effected greater practical results among the Indians than a thousand sermons preached to them on the benefits derived from labour; the prospect of raising their own bread supply, has given an impulse to the efforts of all, and has made the hitherto idle ones obedient and industrious".[41]

In the mid-1880's, the department began a program of granting bonuses to individuals who would establish mills in the North West. At Moose Mountain in 1885 for example, Captain Pierce and Robert Bird constructed a saw and grist mill with the "Patent Roller Process" for flouring. The $2,000.00 bonus from the department secured to the Indians of the district precedence in grinding their grain for ten years at rates of toll a quarter less than ordinary customers for the first two years, and for the remaining eight years, a toll of one-eighth less.[42] This appears to have been the first of such bonuses, and the system was extended in the ensuing years.[43] These mills did custom work for farmers, with the miller securing an income by collecting grain as his customary fee. The larger merchant mills were less concerned with custom work than with the purchasing and marketing of grain. The miller graded the flour; first class wheat might be graded "Strong Bakers" while coarse flour, gristed perhaps from badly frozen wheat, would be returned in sacks marked "XXX".

Indian farmers of the Crooked Lakes agency took their grain first to the Indian Head mill, then to the Whitewood

mill and eventually to a department subsidized mill at Wolseley. Muscowpetung agency farmers took theirs to the mill in Fort Qu'Appelle, and likely the File Hills Indians did the same. The nearest mills to Touchwood Hills residents were fifty-five and sixty-five miles away, which were vast distances to haul grain during a severe winter. The agents and instructors, as part of the effort to promote a sense of individual pride in the Indian farmer, had each present the miller with his own amount of flour, so that he could actually see and appreciate the return, despite the fact that in some cases it was nearly all returned to the agency warehouse, mixed, and issued as rations.[44]

The business of milling was open to much abuse in the North West as millers' tolls were not regulated by law, and it was found that the Indians, like the other farmers, lost a good deal after satisfying the "greed" of the miller.[45] Inspector Wadsworth complained that both the yield and the quality of flour from these mills was unsatis-factory, even at the subsidized mills, where the spirit of the contract was not always carried out. The charge of grinding was more than the Indians could pay. At the Wolseley subsidized mill Wadsworth found in 1890 that the Crooked Lakes farmers were returned only thirty-three pounds of flour to the bushel of No. 1 hard wheat, which was ten or twelve pounds less than it would yield with good milling.[46] He estimated that in the same year the Muscowpetung Indians lost thirty-three per cent of their crop in their transaction at the Fort

Qu'Appelle mill. In some cases the miller reckoned the market value of the wheat, then deducted his toll, and paid the balance in flour and bacon, charging retail prices. Wadsworth found this to be a most unfair way of doing business, "for if the Indian sold his wheat for cash he could invest the whole money in flour and not have to pay for grinding that he never receives".[47] He described the quality of much of the flour as poor and unwholesome. Wadsworth discovered the File Hills Indians eating bannock the colour of mahogany, and he "grieved" for the Indian farmers who had to eat these as the fruit of a hard summers' toil.[48] The agent here admitted however, that he mixed the Strong Bakers with the XXX before issuing flour to the Indians.

Some owners of subsidized mills found it frustrating to grind for the Indians. Hillyard Mitchell at Duck Lake complained that he could not continue to do so without losing money, and announced that he would do no more gristing for the Indians.[49] Their grain, which they brought in small amounts of little more than half a bag, was "as a rule, dirty and full of smut, and they expect me to take these drib drabs and grind them for them".[50] In 1891 he complained that the mill was a source of trouble ever since it was erected and stated he would be pleased to open negotiations with the government to take it off his hands.

In other quarters there was considerable lobbying and scrambling to obtain the government bonus toward the

construction of a mill. In February of 1890, a Mr. Thorburn of Broadview travelled to Ottawa to ask Dewdney for a bonus toward a mill in his town.[51] In that year however, the program of granting bonuses was ended.[52] It was decided that it was better to establish mills on the agencies, as the "excessive toll which is taken in the Territories is avoided, the Indians get the full benefit of their industry, are saved the loss of time consumed in going to the mills and hanging about them waiting for their grists, and a feeling of pride and independence is engendered".[53] Officials believed that trips to the mill allowed the Indians to loiter about town and drink; a mill on the agency would further confine the Indians to their reserves. The agents and instructors could also see that all of the grain was properly used by the Indians. They could grind for each family what they needed for a specific time, and this would be a lesson in economy.

A mill was established on the Crooked Lakes agency in 1890. Vankoughnet remained reluctant about this move, wondering "whether in view of the uncertainty of growing wheat in the District, the department would be wise in incurring any great expense in affording facilities to the Indians for grinding grain".[54] Commissioner Reed however disagreed, as he believed the prospects for growing grain were "hopeful", and he felt the mill would encourage the Indians in their efforts.[55] The Indians had made a request for a mill to Governor General Stanley on a recent visit,

and Reed wished to see this complied with. The Crooked Lakes residents constructed the mill themselves. They cut and drew the logs, freighted materials and machinery, and built the mill and engine house. Indian farmers however, still had to pay for the use of the mill to "cover the cost of working expenses".[56] They were charged in wheat bran or cordwood at the rate of eight cents per bushel. The toll for off-reserve customers was twelve and one-half cents per bushel.

Implements on the reserves were in much improved working order after 1885, as the department displayed greater concern to supply the services of blacksmiths. Blacksmith shops were built on most agencies and skilled blacksmiths either visited or took in work from the reserves. In the past much delay and loss of time had resulted when repairs had to be sent to the nearest town's blacksmith. During the critical brief periods of seeding in spring and harvesting in fall, breakdowns of implements and wagons were frequent, and they could cripple operations. Although wooden parts could sometimes be replaced by the farmer, the breakage of metal parts was much more serious. Blacksmiths were also required to point or sharpen plough shares. Agent McDonald reported in the spring of 1889 that their blacksmith, John Pollock, was kept constantly employed in the shop, repairing ploughs and wagons, and pointing shares.[57] Very little time was lost while ploughing, as in

each case the farmer had to wait only a few minutes for his share.

In 1885 a shortage of work oxen remained an acute problem on most reserves in this district of Treaty Four.[58] By 1890 most bands had much larger herds which included work oxen, cows, steers, heifers, bulls and calves. Much of this increase must have been due to the system of "cattle on loan". The File Hills agents reported in 1889 for example that there were 281 head on all the reserves and that the Indians "owned" four-fifths of these under the loan system.[59] In the tabular statements for most years cattle was listed as under "departmental control", which meant that the animals were branded "I.D." and could not be sold, bartered or slaughtered without the consent of the agent. Yet the livestock was held by individuals, and was not held communally. On each reserve cattle were reported to be held or owned by individual Indians. Kakewistahaw's band for example had 110 head under departmental control, held by twenty-one different Indians.[60] Some had work oxen only, others had only cows, while some had a variety. These individuals were likely those involved in the cattle on loan program. Owners of cattle acquired on loan were to regard the beasts as their own but the agent still retained final control as they could not be disposed of without his consent. The advantage to the owner, besides the use of the work oxen and cows, was that from time to time he was permitted to sell or slaughter. Officials remained

convinced that the Indians could not be trusted to dispose of their cattle in a prudent, wise manner. The judgement and discretion of the agent was seen as essential. The cattle on loan policy eroded the practice of cattle held in common by a band, except perhaps for the bulls, but it did not give the owners a full degree of proprietorship.

Indians could and did obtain private cattle that were not under departmental control. These could be acquired in a number of ways: by purchase, by increase of private stock, by gift for "loyalty", by exchange for native horses or by "dickering" through some sort of barter. On Ochapawace reserve for example in 1890 there were twenty-eight cattle along with the eighty-four head under government control.[61] By the mid-1890's, Inspector Wadsworth regarded it as a matter of alarm that private herds of livestock were on the increase in the North West.[62] Stock which the Indians could use, trade, sell, and kill as they chose, without reference to the agent, would be a "hard matter to control and contend against" Wadsworth believed.[63] The inspector noted that the private stock "not only receives the best care, but it <u>increases more rapidly</u> than that 'under government control' I think if it is not regulated now, it will become a monster hard to contend against".[64] The complexities of the issue were highlighted at branding time when the Indians were intent on establishing their private ownership. One agent complained that it was a "brain twister" to establish the

proprietorship of private cattle, and that "to trace some of these through the twistings and turnings to their present owner is more difficult than pleasant".[65] The agent found that at the "palaver" before branding "it would take a man like Tallyrand to dodge some of their questions" although it usually ended with the branding done and the cattle under the agent's control.[66] It appears that department officials insisted on branding all cattle "I.D." and the Indians made some private mark of their own on their animals, usually a slit or hole in the ear.[67] In the mid-1890's permission was granted to Indians in "good circumstances" with a number of cattle, to acquire brands of their own, but these were also to be used in conjunction with the "I.D." brand.[68]

Despite all of the confusions of the cattle on loan system, and the thorny question of the private ownership of cattle, the problem of a scarcity of working oxen on the reserves was to some extent ameliorated during these years. There were still shortages however on some reserves at certain times of the year. In the spring of 1890 for example the File Hills agent had to send most of his teams to three different destinations for seed potatoes, seed rye, and feed oats.[69] The teams were gone for five days and because of bad roads the oxen were in poor condition on their return and were unfit to work for two or three days. This was just at harrowing time.

In the period 1885-1890 all settlers in the Qu'Appelle region were in the process of learning to cope with the

environment. It was a time of experimentation, discovery and adaptation of dryland farming techniques. The droughts of 1885 and 1886 pointed out the hazards of growing grain in the district, suggesting that tillage operations would have to be carried out more carefully, and changes in techniques would have to be made. Indian farmers participated in these innovations. During this period the practice of summer-fallowing was widely adopted on reserves in Treaty Four as a means of conserving and replenishing soil fertility, and to overcome some of the problems of inadequate rainfall.[70] Farmers in this area were among the first in the North West to experiment with summerfallowing. Credit for the discovery of the technique has been variously assigned to Angus McKay, an Indian Head farmer, W.R. Motherwell, an Abernethy farmer, and to the Bell Farm at Indian Head.[71] In any case it was discovered in 1886 in the district of Assiniboia that during the drought of 1886 certain fields yielded considerably better than others. These were fields that had been ploughed but not planted the previous year. A good number of fields were in this state because in the spring of 1885, many farmers had been engaged in the transport of troops and supplies to the north, not returning until it was too late to seed. The following year a good yield was harvested on the land that had lain fallow throughout the summer season of 1885. This pointed to the conclusion that in areas of little rainfall, it might prove feasible to plant crops only every second year, so that each

crop could use the moisture from two seasons.[72] It was also found that there were less weeds on land that had been summerfallowed.

Fall ploughing of the stubble fields was also recommended as a method of ensuring better yield. Summerfallowing and fall ploughing were both techniques found to improve farming in districts that specialized in wheat. There was simply not enough time in the spring alone to prepare an adequate seed bed over large acreages. In the short run however, until new fields were broken and ready, the adoption of summer fallowing meant that less land was seeded, as fields were used only every second year. Summerfallowing did not mean that fields were simply abandoned for a year; they were cultivated, harrowed in one direction and several weeks later harrowed in the opposite direction, usually in June after the rest of the land was seeded.

While the general adoption of the practice of summerfallowing in the North West was a slow process, it appears to have been widely in use on reserves as early as 1886. In that year on the Crooked Lakes reserves, agent McDonald reported that they were summerfallowing a good deal of the old land, and by 1890, he noted that the Indians did not work any land under crop for more than two years except what was summerfallowed.[73] On all the agencies wheat was no longer sown on "dirty" or "foul" land that was weedy. Instead it was left fallow. Breaking and fencing of new land continued, but in the interim, the seeded acreage of

the Indian farms did not increase during this period. Officials placed a great deal of confidence in the possibilities of the new farming techniques. In his annual report of 1887, Dewdney proclaimed that the disappointments of the past were due to imperfect systems of cultivation. He estimated that the area under cultivation on reserves was about one-tenth less than the previous year but explained that

> This reduction of area is to be attributed to the teaching of experience which has convinced the best farmers in these Territories that success can only be hoped for from the more careful cultivation of a smaller acreage and the retention of a proportion of the land unseeded in order to allow of its being summerfallowed.[74]

Fall ploughing was encouraged since the early days of reserve agriculture. This allowed earlier sowing in spring, although in later years the method came under much criticism.[75] No one knew with certainty at this time precisely what techniques were most appropriate for the environment, and there was much controversy and divided opinion over methods. Passing through the Touchwood Hills in 1886, Inspector McGibbon noted that a problem on the reserves, and one common among white settlers as well, was that the fall ploughing only skimmed the ground, and in a dry season, the roots did not get the nourishment they needed.[76] Keith, the Touchwood agent, pointed out that he was attempting to regulate the depth of the furrow according to the moisture of the soil.[77] There was some deep

ploughing as well as shallow on the reserves. Keith explained that many practical farmers in the district believed that deep ploughing did not produce good returns. During years of extreme drought, when the ground was dry and hard, the land could not be worked and little fall ploughing was done on the reserve farms. This situation was widely reported in 1886 and 1889.

In the years of almost total crop failure the success of one or two fields served as a source of encouragement and inspiration. In 1889 for example, crops were disastrous throughout the Qu'Appelle valley but on the Cowesses reserve, several fields yielded remarkably well.[78] This success convinced McDonald that wheat, oats and barley, with proper cultivation, could be gown in the district. He believed the methods used on these fields could serve to guide future operations.

Reserve farmers experimented with various kinds of seed grain during this period. In prairie agricultural circles, the debate over the use of hard or soft wheats continued throughout the 1880's.[79] Some farmers were convinced of the superiority of hard Red Fife, which, because of its hard kernel and flour strength, commanded a high price. Red Fife however, required a fairly lengthy growing season. It germinated slowly, and had to be sown very early, often before the frost was fully out of the ground when the soil could not be properly worked. As it was often sown after just the surface of the land was worked, the young plants

were in a poor condition to withstand a dry season. Because it took so long to mature, it was subject to frost. Soft White Fife could be sown later, when the soil was better worked, which produced more vigorous healthy plants. White Fife generally ripened before the frost, and it was less prone to rust or smut than Red. By the 1890's Red Fife had become the dominant variety of wheat grown on the Canadian prairies, as a system of farming evolved that permitted earlier seeding and harvesting. It was still too often caught by early frost however, and experiments continued throughout the prairies.

Reserve farmers experimented with both Red and White Fife.[80] Agents and farm instructors communicated with William Saunders of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, established in 1886. In 1889 Saunders supplied the Crooked Lakes reserves with eight bushels of "Russian" seed wheat which the farmers experimented with, planting half on new land backset, and the rest on deeply-ploughed stubble.[81] Quite likely this was a sample of the "Ladoga" which Saunders brought from Russia in 1887 and was used in extensive experiments by farmers.[82] It ripened in advance of Red Fife but yielded much less. It was found however, not to be a marketable wheat. In milling and baking tests of 1892, Ladoga produced a bread which was yellow in colour and coarse in texture.[83] News of the shortcomings of this variety spread quickly throughout the agricultural press and the grain buyers became prejudiced against it. In 1892 the

department of Indian Affairs considered acquiring this unmarketable grain from settlers left with supplies of it, as it could be obtained at a greatly reduced price.[84] Dewdney claimed he could not understand why the buyers were not interested in Ladoga, and felt that it surely made good flour.

Complaints about the late arrival of seed in the spring, and about not acquiring enough to seed the prepared acreage declined considerably during the years 1885-1890. For the most part Indian farmers saved enough seed from their crop of the previous year, and seed was issued only to those just beginning to farm.[85] During some seasons however, the seed was not worth saving for the spring. Seed touched with frost could meet with disastrous results. During some seasons seed was distributed to Indian farmers that required it. In this respect their situation did not differ from other settlers in the North West. In 1886 for example, the government set aside $46,884.00 to supply seed to settlers in Saskatchewan.[86]

Frost destroyed much of the crop of 1885, and along with seed, the government had to supply foods and other provisions to impoverished settlers.[87] Seed grain relief to new settlers was widespread before 1896, and many in dire circumstances also required food and fuel. The N.W.M.P. identified the needy and distributed relief in winters of extreme want, sometimes having to establish temporary posts for that purpose.[88] In some years Indian farmers were able

to retain seed for the spring when other settlers in the district had to be supplied by the government.[89]

In their gardens, reserve residents experimented with varieties of bushes such as currant, gooseberry and raspberry, sent from the Central Experimental Farm.[90] Some systematically laid out the grounds around their homes, and had carefully arranged kitchen as well as ornamental gardens. In 1886 it was reported that some of the Crooked Lakes residents showed "considerable taste" in laying out the grounds around their houses.[91] In one case an attractive tree-lined avenue formed an entrance to a house and garden. Inspector McGibbon reported in 1889 that on the Pasquah reserve

> Some of the Indians have very tastefully laid out gardens, neatly fenced with flower beds and gravel walks, and borders of cobble stones. Currant bushes and many other plants, useful as well as ornamental, could be seen, the whole displaying considerable taste.[92]

Agent McDonald carried out his own experiments with trees, fruit bushes, and plants such as strawberries and rhubarb in his agency garden. He procured Indian corn from the Gros Ventre which he planted in 1888. He believed his garden was instructive as "there is hardly an Indian visits the office without examining the garden before leaving".[93]

Indians participated in the agricultural fairs held annually throughout the Territories. The prize lists indicate that they were growing a wide variety of vegetables in their gardens, including potatoes, turnips, carrots,

onions, beets, peas, beans, squash, pumpkins, and Indian corn.[94] The Indian women displayed samples of their preserves, bread, butter, knitting, sewing and weaving, while men's manufactures included ox collars, ox harness, hay fork handles and brooms. The Indians generally participated in their own separate category, with individuals competing for the best bag of wheat, barley or oats, or for the best cattle and horses. The judge for the competition was very often a department official from one of the reserves.[95] The department contributed a sum to the Territorial agricultural societies toward the payment of prizes to Indian exhibitors.[96] It was widely believed that if the Indians were to compete in the general categories, against all other contenders, they would find the fairs a disheartening, discouraging experience. When the Indians did compete with the white settlers however, they appear to have taken their fair share of prizes. At the Broadview fair in 1888 for example, Louis O'Soup took first prizes in the categories of the best milk cow, and best pair of three year old steers, and he won a special prize for the fattest steer, against all competitors.[97] That same year, an Indian farmer from Pasquah's band took the second prize for wheat, against all competitors. At the Prince Albert fair to the north, farmers from the Okemasis and Beardy reserves took first prize for wheat against all contenders. At the Regina Agricultural Fair of 1890, the first prize for White Fife in the general class was won by an Indian.[98]

The department of Indian Affairs actively promoted Indian participation in the fairs and exhibitions of this period. They were viewed as a means of stimulating a healthy spirit of competition.[99] It was hoped that rivalry at the fairs might to some extent replace former pastimes such as gambling, horse stealing, and tribal warfare. Indian participation in the fairs was seen as a means of displaying the worthy work of the department. Concrete evidence of Indian "progress" and "advancement" were exhibited for all to see. Newspapers favourable to the government applauded the Indians' exhibits and praised the department's efforts. At the fair in Regina were found "a thousand evidences of what the Indian Department is doing for the wards of the nation".[100] The Indian exhibits were complimented at great length, in hopes of silencing the East's "cynics and slanderers" of government efforts.[101] A correspondent of the Regina Leader reported from Qu'Appelle in 1887 that

> If any one wants any proof of the wisdom of the policy and the energy which is shown by the Indian Department he need only have attended the Agricultural Shows to be made certain that they are working out a grand result. The Indian exhibits have been simply grand and to see the interest taken in the competition by the Natives themselves, must be a great inducement to the Commissioner to not only foster, but increase the opportunities for exhibits by Indians. A bloodthirsty brave could not have exhibited greater joy when waving aloft a dripping scalp and recounting the engagements in which he had secured it, than at these shows did the now peaceful chief who would lead you gently to his exhibit and show with the greatest glee that he had obtained the scarlet ticket or first prize. All honor to the

> Lieutenant-Governor and his Indian agents for showing up this spirit of peaceful emulation amongst the different tribes.[102]

Aside from their propaganda value, the agricultural fairs exposed the Indian farmers and their instructors to the latest innovations in farm improvement. The primary function of these annual gatherings was to disseminate new ideas.[103] Fairs were showcases for farm knowledge. Countless demonstrations and displays dealt with a wide variety of topics: tillage methods, agricultural machinery, seed grain varieties, dairy farming, cheese-making, and stock-breeding. Practical agriculturalists exchanged opinions at these gatherings, drawing on their own experiences. Fairs were the prime media of farm improvement in the 1880's. Here farmers could obtain both elementary, fundamental information to make their farm operations more successful, and the latest in technological and scientific information. But for the white farmers as well as the Indians, rivalry engendered by competition was seen as the key to farm improvement, as it would teach the losers important lessons.

> Moved by criticism of their exhibits, the also-rans and the ignorant would, in theory, discard their shoddy workmanship and inefficient ways, their inferior crops and defective seeds, their second-rate machinery and scraggly stock. Soon they would become paragons for others to follow.[104]

Although the years 1885-1890 may be characterized as a time when serious effort was made to overcome some of the

difficulties of farming in the Treaty Four district, it could scarcely be described as a period of agricultural success. Crops failed most years. Serious problems with wintering stock emerged. It was an era when Indian farmers began to feel the pressure of competition from other settlers for the now demarcated, limited resources of the Territories, which led to increasingly strained relations. When the Indian farmers did manage to raise anything to sell, their competition was keenly resented in the scramble to capture the available markets. Sickness, and a lack of clothing and footwear continued to plague the Indians and to hamper farming operations.

In 1885 the Indians' promising crops were severely damaged by a general frost in August. 1886 was a drought year throughout the North West. Crops on all four agencies, with few exceptions, were a total failure. The crops looked well until the end of June but they stunted and dried up in the extraordinarily hot, dry weather of July.[105] By August it was clear that the grain was scarcely worth cutting. The harvest was remarkably poor; the File Hills agent estimated that if every bushel of grain on all four reserves was put together, it would not amount to 100 bushels.[106] The instructor on the Muscowpetung reserve reported that their harvest could be put into two little sacks.[107] Barley and oats were a complete failure, as was the vegetable and root crop. The Qu'Appelle river was dry, and because the land could not be worked no fall ploughing was done.

Agents and instructors reported that the Indian farmers were acutely disappointed and dispirited at the meagre results of their efforts, and the officials seemed to share their despair. On the Day Star reserve for example, the farmers were very disheartened, as it was reported that they had never had a grain crop after all of their years of effort.[108] For several years frost had totally destroyed the crop and then drought produced similar dismal results. Inspector McGibbon reported from the Muscowpetung agency that year that "It is to be regretted that the labor bestowed has not met with more success, not so much for the loss as for the effect it has on the Indians".[109] Agent Williams at File Hills was ready to give up on farming in 1886 as it had consistently been a failure and he saw no signs of improvement.[110]

1887 was also a season of severe drought. The crops looked well until June but then hot dry winds in July and August severely damaged the crop. Some fields suffered that year from gopher infestation, particularly on Pasquah's reserve. This was followed by wet weather in September which interfered with the harvest. The 1888 season brought some relief from the drought. A late thaw that spring, cold and snow delayed the commencement of operations until mid-April, so that seeding was late but moisture may have been preserved into the warmer months. The return of grain and roots on most agencies that fall was satisfactory. The File Hills agent reported that this was very gratifying to the

Indian farmers as this was the first year that they had enough to grist or sell.[111] Hail did a good deal of damage to crops on the Crooked Lakes reserves in July of 1888 however, particularly on Kakewistahaw's reserve.[112] The chief was reported to be very downcast; his wheat had looked promising and the damage to him was complete. The hail cut the ears off his wheat as if by a scythe. All but two of the farmers on this reserve totally lost their crop.

The drought returned with a vengeance in 1889. That year on the Crooked Lakes reserves every care had been taken to see that the land was well-ploughed, properly seeded, and harrowed.[113] Anticipating a wet season, a larger than usual area had been seeded to wheat, with not as much seed sown per acre. Agent McDonald boasted in May that he had never seen the land in better shape. Hot dry winds soon appeared however, and by June it was clear that many farmers would not even get back their seed. Crops were almost a total failure except for one or two fields on the uplands. When the threshing was finished they had 1000 bushels in place of the 11,000 expected in June. Agent McDonald noted that this was discouraging not only to the Indians but to himself and the instructors. He could still report at the end of July however, that even with the discouraging prospects, the Indians were turning the land over for another trial the next year, as "they say we must get wet years soon".[114] The same dismal story prevailed throughout the district. The grain cops were a total failure, and the roots fared little

better. Aside from the drought, frost was reported in some areas two or three times in July. When threshed and fanned, the File Hills harvest consisted of 135 bushels, and the agent regretted to report that it was "frozen at that".[115] The potatoes of that season were no larger than marbles and they did not even realize the seed. The agent described the farmers of the reserves as "all disheartened at seeing no prospects of any return for their work done in the spring, in the way of crops".[116]

The 1890 season was more favourable. Spring was late and seeding delayed, but by July the growth of grain was extraordinary because of ample rainfall. Agent McDonald anticipated in mid-summer that if the crops escaped hail and frost, the Indians would for the first time be well paid for their work, and encouraged to go more extensively into farming.[117] Hail did hit other farms in the vicinity but avoided the reserves. Crops were splendid on the reserves along the valley, and they were ready to harvest early but then wet, cold weather set in. Because of long, continuous rains the grain remained in stooks for several weeks and it shrunk considerably. Some frost also touched the grain in August. Damage was particularly severe in the File Hills. Just as the harvest began there in September, heavy snow and high winds broke down all the uncut grain, which had to be salvaged with scythes and sickles.[118] For the most part however, the 1890 crop was a vast improvement over other years.

Like other settlers in the Qu'Appelle district, reserve residents experienced problems wintering their cattle in the years 1885-1890. This greatly affected farming operations in springs when the cattle emerged too weak to properly work. An adequate supply of hay was often difficult to procure. Hay was scarce during excessively dry seasons; abundant sloughs one year might be completely barren the next. On some reserves during years when hay grounds were poor, there was not enough hay for the livestock of a band. Often arrangements were made to allow Indians to cut hay on another reserve, while some bands had to obtain hay land off the reserve. Pasquah's band had a hay camp in the Touchwood Hills, eight miles east of Gordon's reserve.[119] They wintered their stock there, building stables and houses for the families who stayed. Some of the File Hills bands often had difficulty obtaining enough hay on the agency to winter all of their stock. In 1889, thirty-four head were sent to the Pelly agency to winter at Cote's reserve.[120] Little Black Bear's band wintered stock at the Beaver Hills, about thirty-five miles from the File Hills, where they built houses and stables. Hauling supplies from the agency over the hills in mid-winter involved great hardship. The agent reported in February of 1890 that it took three yoke of oxen four days to freight six bags of flour and two quarters of beef up to the Beaver Hills.[121]

The predominantly dry weather of these years made the grasslands extremely susceptible to prairie fire, and many

hay stacks, as well as houses, stables, fences and timber were consumed. Prairie fire was a major hazard, particularly between the years 1885-1896. Dropping a lighted match or emptying a pipe could begin a fire, but sparks from the locomotives of the CPR were responsible for many as it was only in later years that the railway was required to maintain fireguards on either side of the track by ploughing furrows.[122] It was the Indians of the North West who pioneered the practice of burning the grass to form fireguards around the boundaries of reserves in springtime, just after the snow had melted.[123] In the pre-reserve period, Indians had protected valuable stands of trees by burning off the surrounding grass cover, just before the snow melted in the timber, reducing the risk of lightning igniting the grass and spreading into the adjacent timber.

It was only when settlement in Western Canada became sufficiently dense to control fires that they ceased to be a major hazard. In the 1880's however, autumn was an anxious time because of the threat of prairie fire. As one Qu'Appelle pioneer described

> The prairie grass is, after the summer heat, dry as tinder, and, once started, the devastating fire will burn in thin lines of flame, spreading in all directions, for weeks at a time if no rain comes. It increases in volume as it grows, and with increasing heat creates its own wind. Sometimes, having decided that it is far enough away, and the wind in the wrong direction for it to come upon us, we went to bed, to be awakened an hour later to find it right upon us, a sudden change of wind having brought it down with a rush...Twice we lost our winter supply of hay through these awful

> fires, and the year before we left, three horses were burnt so badly that the only humane course was to shoot them.[124]

Hay stacks were particularly vulnerable. While fireguards could be burned around them this was ironically one of the major causes of fires.[125] Fires also reduced the grazing capacity of large areas.

The drought of 1889 was accompanied by disastrous prairie fires. The Muscowpetung agency lost 572 tons of hay to fire.[126] A fire started that summer at the Beaver Hills hay camp, destroying at least 100 tons of hay. In December the agent for File Hills reported that this fire was still burning "as incredulous as my statement may seem".[127] In June of 1889 Surveyor Nelson was in the File Hills and reported temperatures of 104 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade with fires raging in the woods, hay swamps and surrounding prairie. The surface soil was burnt in many places to a depth of six or eight inches. Nelson speculated that "Bush and prairie fire probably cause more damage than frost and drought".[128]

Prairie fire swept through Okanese and Star Blanket's reserves in July, 1889, destroying buildings. The residents were forced to run with their children, tents and belongings to the edge of the lake. This was in the midst of haying season, but because the Indians had to spend so much time fighting fires, haying could not be attended to.[129] After the harvest, little fall ploughing was done because most of the residents had houses, stables, and fencing to construct

because of the damage. When fencing was weak or damaged, much hay was lost by the cattle breaking into the stacks. Prairie fires then hampered the capacity of reserve farmers to carry out the whole cycle of farming operations.

Because of the scarcity of hay during some seasons, the Indian farmers found themselves in competition with other settlers for hay land. In 1886, settlers in the neighbourhood of Moosomin and Broadview began their campaign to have the Crooked Lakes Indians surrender their land that bordered the CPR, arguing to the Minister of the Interior that "it would be desireable in the public interest and in the interest of the Indians themselves that they should be moved back six miles from the railway".[130] The land was valued especially for its abundant hay.[131] The citizens informed the Minister that the Indians would be quite willing to have their reserve narrowed if they were compensated. Agent McDonald strenuously disagreed, stating that such an act would be looked upon with suspicion by the Indians, and that "no doubt a report would spread throughout the country that the Indians are being plundered".[132] McDonald noted that there was some valuable hay land north of Sakemay's reserve which might fairly be exchanged for the land to the south but there were homesteaders on this land already. The agent felt that if the proposition was carried out the Indians would be giving up more valuable land than they would be receiving. These arguments persuaded Vankoughnet that in

1886, a move to surrender these lands was neither prudent or expedient.[133] When pressure was renewed in 1891, McDonald voiced the same objections.

> If these lands are surrendered by the Indians, no reasonable money value can recompense them, as their hay lands would be completely gone, and this would necessitate no further increase of stock, which would of course be fatal to their further quick advancement and would be deplorable, and the only alternative I can see is to give them hay lands of equal quantity and value immediately adjacent to the Reserves interested, which I do not think is possible now.[134]

The surrender of 53,985 acres of land along the CPR was eventually obtained in 1907. Similar pressure was exerted throughout the North West, and very often it began with the settlers' jealousy of hay lands reserved for the use of Indians. In 1890 for example, citizens of the Battleford area petitioned the department of Indian Affairs to cancel hay land reserved for Indians and not to set aside any more tracts of land.[135].

Areas where the Indians customarily cut hay off the reserves became the objects of heated competition. For years the Indians of the Muscowpetung agency cut hay on a tract of land on the north side of the Qu'Appelle river. Reserve residents came to rely more and more on this tract as hay became scarce elsewhere. Local department officials believed that this land, although not strictly part of any reserve, was reserved exclusively for the use of the Indians, and for the department's horses and cattle. Confusion over who actually owned the rights to this land

emerged in the late 1880's when settlers began to encroach, having acquired permits to cut hay there from the Dominion Lands agent in Regina. In August of 1888, Agent Lash confronted a number of settlers, warned them that they were trespassing, told them that their permits were cancelled, and stated that he would seize the hay already cut.[136] The settlers refused to admit his authority, and would not return the permits until they had cut the full quantity of hay for which their permits were issued. It turned out that the odd-numbered sections of this hay land were owned by the CPR, and the railway did not wish to relinquish the land as it was "required by a number of settlers for their hay".[137] The secretary of the CPR informed Vankoughnet that the Indians did not really require this hay for their own use, as in the past they had sold large quantities of hay. Agent Lash vehemently defended the right of the Indians to sell hay, arguing that by doing so, they relieved the government to the extent of their earnings, and made a step toward becoming "independent and useful members of the Commonwealth".[138] The agent's chief ground of objection to the withdrawal of hay land was in fact the existence of this industry.

> These Indians have with no small difficulty been brought to throw themselves heartily into the business of making and selling hay and to deprive them of those lands which they have cut there unquestioned so long that they regard them as their own, can hardly fail to have a discouraging effect.[139]

The dispute over the rights to this hay land continued for many years. In such disputes, despite the best efforts of agents speaking in the interests of reserve residents, the interests of the other settlers usually emerged as paramount.

By the late 1880's, farmers in the North West were complaining loudly about the "unfair" competition from Indians in obtaining a share of the markets for farm produce, and a share of contracts for the supply of hay, wood and other products. In his annual report for 1888, commissioner Reed noted that "serious complaint has been made by some settlers of the effect of this competition upon them".[140] During his visit to the Battleford district that year, Reed reported that he had been "assailed" by such complaints. The markets in this region were strictly limited and local because of the absence of a railway, and Reed believed that until a railway extended the settler's opportunities, his department must do what it could to prevent jealous competition.[141] Competition for markets, Reed claimed, was disastrous to the Indians in any case, as they were so anxious to find purchasers that they would part with their products for a "trifling consideration".[142] Reed arranged with the Battleford citizens to divide up the limited markets in the district. Much of the trade in cordwood was left to the Métis, as this was their mainstay over the winter. The Indians were allowed to supply wood to the agency and for one more year, to the industrial school.

The sale of grain in the district was left almost exclusively to the settlers. Their principal market was the N.W.M.P. barracks. Reed noted that the Indians consumed most of their grain, and the department might purchase in flour any surplus they had. It is not certain whether similar arrangements prevailed in other districts. The permit system would have been a convenient means of regulating the Indians' participation in the market economy.

As the disputes over hay land and markets illustrate, the years after 1885 saw increasingly strained relations between Indian and white farmers, a situation that was aggravated by the lean times. Local department officials generally came to the defense of the Indians' interests, while more distant officials appeared more willing to please the settlers, who were more politically powerful, at the expense of the Indians. The recent arrivals believed that everything should be done to encourage their enterprize, as they were the actual settlers, the true discoverers and developers of the country's resources. It was believed that the government had bought the land from the Indians, and it was now the government's "right and duty to look after the interests of the settlers, both present and future, for whom the land was bought, and out of whose earnings it is expected ultimately to be paid for".[143]

Throughout the North West there were numerous incidents of encroachment on Indian land, principally for timber and hay. Some of these incidents were more serious than others.

In 1889, a disagreement over hay on the Little Bones reserve at Leech Lake became very tense. Settlers had been given permits to cut hay on the reserve, but the Chief was convinced that they were cutting more hay than their permits allowed. He raised the matter with a Mr. Arthur Moore who claimed that in the heat of the conversation, Little Bones threw his right hand behind his back as if to draw a knife.[144] Agent McDonald and three constables were called to the scene and the matter was settled without violence. McDonald believed Little Bones' denial that he had never attempted to draw his knife, and he warned Moore not to come to hasty conclusions with Indians without a proper interpreter.[145]

During the late 1880's settlers continually trespassed on the Crooked Lakes reserves, removing logs and rails for fencing. In 1887 the body of a trespasser was discovered on the Kakewistahaw reserve. He had nearly completed cutting a load of rails which were piled near the body.[146] Nearby settlers were convinced that the murder had been perpetrated by the Indians, as the chief of that reserve had on several occasions displayed annoyance at the theft of logs or rails. To see that justice was done, the police and a party of citizens began crisscrossing the reserves, hunting out the "murderers". These actions did little to smooth a tense situation. Agent McDonald was certain he could trace the crime to two individuals and clear the Indians.[147]

Reserve residents often found themselves blamed for incidents that enraged the settlers. In the fall of 1886 a Touchwood Hills farmer lost through fire 500 bushels of potatoes, stacks of oats, forty tons of hay, and all his stables and granaries.[148] He presented the department of Indian Affairs with the bill, claiming that he had observed three Indians ride by his stable that day in search of a stray bull. One of the Indians was smoking. This settler was mad, not only at the Indians but at the weather, the country, and the whole business of farming. He lost his first three crops to frost and his next to fire. Appealing to the Prime Minister himself the Touchwood farmer stated that he would have to leave the country unless the department made good his loss. In a post script he informed Macdonald that

> I have had to batch it and live alone ever since I left Scotland, over eight years ago all through the loss I sustained by this fire which is the most miserable life under the sun.[149]

The department refused to compensate the settler. The Indians in question claimed that they were many miles away when the fire began.

A lack of adequate clothing and footwear continued to be a problem during the years 1885-90. Agents often reported that the majority of Indians were destitute of proper wearing apparel, especially covering for their feet, and they noted that Indians could not be expected to do much work without footwear.[150] Second-hand clothing was

periodically sent by church societies in the East, and the agents generally appeared grateful for this. Inspector McGibbon objected however, on the grounds that the department was trying to teach the young to be tidy and industrious, and this could not be accomplished with old, second-hand clothing.[151] He also found that some Indians were prejudiced against old clothing, as they were convinced they belonged to dead people. The health of the Indians was poor. They suffered from influenza, consumption and scrofula, and were often reported to be too weak to work.[152].

Some reserves fared much better than others during the period 1885-1890. The Crooked Lakes and Muscowpetung agencies enjoyed some decided advantages over the File Hills and Touchwood Hills. Land on the former reserves was better suited to agriculture and they were closer to the railway and to settlements where there were some markets for their products. They also had greater access to milling and threshing facilities. On the Muscowpetung agency the Indians cut dry wood and sold to the grist mill at Fort Qu'Appelle, and they sold hay in years of heavy yield. They also began to freight their own supplies of bacon and flour from the railway. It appears that it was up to the discretion of the local agent to decide which band needed, and was in a position to fill a contract. One agent explained that he kept the cordwood market reserved for Indians who did not have flour of their own. They borrowed

oxen during winter from the farming Indians who had flour.[153]

The Crooked Lakes Indians also earned money from the sale of hay and wood, and from freighting. Some burnt lime to sell to settlers at Grenfell. Others dressed hides, attended to cattle for settlers, collected seneca root, and sent cream to the Broadview creamery. Some worked on larger farms in the district, such as the chickory fields of the Count de Raffignon at Pipestone Creek. The Indians of the Crooked Lakes and Muscowpetung agencies had some cash and they were in a better position to acquire the wagons and machinery that could benefit their farming, freighting, and other small industries.

The residents of the Touchwood Hills and File Hills reserves had very limited opportunities to earn money. The problem was particularly acute in the Touchwood agency. Inspectors, agents, and instructors continually lamented that these people had absolutely no opportunity to earn money, as they were situated sixty to eighty miles from any settlements. It appears that in the Touchwood Hills the Indians were not permitted to do their own freighting of supplies. When this was suggested in 1885, Dewdney replied that great caution had to be taken with this policy as freighting by Indians was often attended by loss which could not be recovered.[154] An added disadvantage in this district was that merchants charged exorbitantly high prices for all items because of the distance from the railway. The same

situation prevailed in the File Hills, although there were slightly more chances to earn some money. In the late 1880's for example, the File Hills residents were awarded a contract to provide cordwood to the Qu'Appelle Industrial School.

Local officials associated with the Touchwood and File Hills agencies urged the department to buy cattle from the Indians instead of importing bacon for rations. This would allow the Indians to earn some money and it would encourage the cattle industry. The File Hills agent believed it could be a means of dispelling the despondency that existed.[155] This suggestion was not approved however. Nor would the department authorize local agents to allow the Indians to exchange their wheat, potatoes, hay or other items for provisions such as tea or bacon. On occasion the department purchased grain from one band in order to supply another. The Indians were not however, paid market prices by the department. Commissioner Reed explained that they were not given market rates because the department provided them with all the necessaries to raise their grain.[156] This was the cause of discontent among the Indians. In 1889 for example, a reserve in the Battleford area had a surplus of oats to sell. The department offered them twenty cents per bushel, when the market price approached twenty-seven or thirty cents.[157] Not content with this price the Indians protested and threatened to sell their product to other buyers. Commissioner Reed however, had made an agreement with the

Battleford residents that the market for grain would be left for them. He authorized the agent to pay the Indians at the market rate "for oats which we do not wish them to put upon the market".[158] The balance however was to be taken at the rate first authorized of twenty cents and care was to be taken that the aggregate sum which the oats would bring at twenty cents be not exceeded.

Despite drought, frost, prairie fire and hail, Indian farmers in the Qu'Appelle region made some advances in the 1880's. Many of the problems that had hampered Indian farming in the past had to some extent been ameliorated, such as oxen shortages, and the scarcity of threshing and gristing facilities. Indian farmers were beginning to acquire the means and methods of expanding and fomenting their enterprize. They were learning the techniques of dry-land farming, and they were acquiring the machinery their agents and instructors agreed was essential given the conditions of prairie farming. They were moving in the direction of commercial farming with specialization in wheat culture, although not in conformity with the individualistic model of the independent homesteader. Bands pooled their resources for the purchase of implements and on many reserves the fields were tilled in common. Local department officials found this system to be preferable to the cultivation of small, individual tracts of land. Inspector McGibbon felt it was better to have four or six men working a good-sized field than to have small patches here and

there.[159] Agents and instructors found that larger fields were easier to supervise than small separate fields.[160]

Indian farmers had survived the grim 1880's and were willing and had few options but to continue trying, unlike at least half of the homesteaders who became discouraged and left. Local white farmers remember the year 1890 as "the turn of the tide; after that all went well".[161] Although there were disappointing years ahead for the Qu'Appelle farmers, they were nothing like the string of misfortunes that had plagued them in the 1880's. All did not go well for Indian farmers in the 1890's however, and they did not join in the new era of relative prosperity. They did not make the leap to large-scale commercial farming during these years despite earlier indications that they were moving in this direction. More than any other factor, unprecedented administrative control and restriction of their farming activity in the period to 1897, ensured that they remained small-scale producers. During these crucial years, agriculture failed to form a strong base for the reserve economy.

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# CHAPTER VII

## PRELUDE TO SURRENDER: SEVERALTY AND "PEASANT" FARMING

1889 to 1897 were years of unprecedented administrative involvement in reserve agriculture. The two main instruments of intervention were allotment in severalty and the "peasant" farming policy, both of which set extreme limits on Indian agricultural productivity. The size of Indian farms was limited and advanced farming techniques were discouraged. The methods, habits, and attitudes associated with large-scale commercial farming, which Indian farmers were acquiring in the 1880's, were censured. Together with the permit system, severalty and "peasant" farming severely curbed initiative and enterprize. As these policies functioned to curtail the expansion of Indian farming, Indians did not appear to non-natives to be "productively" using their reserve land to full capacity. This paved the way for the alienation of much reserve land in the years after 1896.

In his annual report of 1888, Indian commissioner Hayter Reed announced that reserves in the North West were to be subdivided into separate farms.[1] He pronounced this to be the best means of undermining the tribal system, as it

would implant a spirit of individualism and self-reliance, creating self-supporting farmers. Reed shared his commitment to severalty with several generations of Indian policy makers in Canada, British North America and Great Britain. Although a general allotment policy was new to reserves in the North West, the concept had long been endorsed, and was a central feature of legislation dealing with Indians. The 1857 Gradual Civilization Act, passed by the Assembly of the United Canadas, was based upon the assumption that "civilization" could only be achieved if a bond were established between an Indian and his property, similar to that established between a white settler and his personal domain.[2] Advocates believed that only individual tenure would create the industrious, self-reliant native farmer. The act stipulated that if a board of examiners found an Indian applicant to be literate in either French or English, free of debt, and of good moral character, he would be awarded a plot of reserve land, which would be removed from tribal control. After a one year probation period, the applicant was enfranchised, and accorded the rights and privileges of other citizens, cutting his tribal ties. The goal of the act was full assimilation into colonial society, and the abandonment of traditional, tribal culture. The independent, self-governing native communities that had evolved on reserves were to disappear as individuals were enfranchised and reserves eroded.[3] Throughout Canadian history, severalty has been linked with the dissolution of

reserves and the weakening of the band unit. The intent of the 1857 act and subsequent acts was that Indians would disappear as a distinct cultural group, as would the reserves as individuals were enfranchised and took with them their share of the land.[4]

Canadian Indians consistently objected to allotment in severalty. Tribal councils across the colony immediately recognized the intent of the 1857 act which would remove tribal control over reserves for the sake of enfranchisement. It was rejected as an attempt to "break them to pieces", and reserve residents refused to co-operate.[5] They wished to maintain tribal integrity through consolidation and firmly rejected the concept of individual tenure and subdivision of reserve land. Indians launched a campaign to repeal the act, and only a handful of Indians ever applied for enfranchisement. The general Indian position that emerged across the colony in the 1860's was that they remained in favour of reserve resource development and education, and endorsed activities designed to achieve self-sufficiency on the basis of an agricultural economy. They would not however, participate in a system which promoted assimilation.

Despite opposition from tribal councils, the 1869 Enfranchisement Act implemented new coercive strategies to encourage individual landholding and enfranchisement. Officials attributed the failure of the 1857 act to the conservative, stubborn intransigence of Indian leaders and

to traditional native government: obstacles on the road to "civilization". The act of 1869 instituted federal control of on-reserve governmental systems and did not recognize native self-government.[6] After 1869, the government had the financial and political control to make enfranchisement a reality.

The 1876 Indian Act permitted the government to further encourage and direct the sub-division of reserves, by empowering the superintendent general to have reserves surveyed into individual lots. Band members could then be assigned lots by the band council. Individuals acquiring lots received "location tickets" as a form of title, but first they had to prove that they were literate, free of debt, and of good moral character, as under the earlier legislation. Upon receiving his location ticket, the applicant entered a three year probationary period. If he proved himself "sober and industrious" during this probation, and demonstrated that he would use the land as a Euro-Canadian might, he was enfranchised and given full title to the land.[7] Because the granting of fee simple title could potentially open up the reserves to white occupancy, most bands in the older provinces continued to oppose enfranchisement, and refused to allot reserve land to individual band members. Without a location ticket, enfranchisement was impossible, and a location ticket could not be issued without an allotment. The ability of band councils to thwart the goal of enfranchisement was curtailed

in 1879 however, when power to allot reserve land was taken from the band and given to the superintendent general.[8] Indians of the older provinces continued to resist the subdivision of their reserves by refusing to accept location tickets.[9]

Clause 94 of the 1876 Indian Act excluded the Indians of Manitoba and the North West Territories from the eight clauses that pertained to enfranchisement, and this was repeated in the 1880 act as clause 107.[10] Legislators felt that the western Indians were not advanced enough in "civilization" to take advantage of the enfranchisement clauses.[11] They were to remain exempt until the superintendent general considered them to be sufficiently advanced. The goal of reserve subdivision however, was not shelved and forgotten for long. The earliest officials associated with Indian affairs in the North West were committed to the idea of individual tenure. In his annual report for 1878, Lawrence Vankoughnet wrote that reserves in Manitoba and the North West should be subdivided into lots, with each head of family receiving a location ticket.[12] David Laird wrote in 1878 that the great aim of the government should be to give each Indian his individual property as soon as possible, although he thought these lots should not necessarily be reserve land, but any tract of land open for settlement.[13]

In 1886, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald instructed Dewdney to allot to each Indian on every western reserve the

land he would likely require for cultivation, and while Dewdney was Indian commissioner, portions of three reserves in Manitoba were subdivided into eighty acre lots.[14] Department officials were clearly planning to implement a general severalty policy as early as February, 1887. In that month, A.W. Ponton, a brother-in-law of Hayter Reed, was appointed assistant surveyor to J. Nelson. Dewdney reminded Vankoughnet in a letter regarding this appointment that "in pursuance of the policy which has been recognized as the only true one for the development of a sense of individual responsibility, as opposed to the system of communism among the Indians viz: the sub-division of reserves, it will be necessary to have a large amount of field work done".[15]

Under Hayter Reed's term as commissioner, the subdivision of reserves in the North West proceeded rapidly. Reed announced his determination to implement the policy in October of 1888, after completing a tour of reserves in the Saskatchewan district. Passing through the Battleford region, Reed was pleased to note signs of individualism, of the Indians taking up separate farms.[16] He believed this resulted in nice clean houses and other signs of "progress". He informed Vankoughnet that

> I have come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when the Reserves should be divided up, and parcelled into separate farms. The Indians would I think, in the main be please to have this done, and I need hardly remind you of the advantage likely to result from such assault upon the communist system, which is apt to prevail.[17]

Vankoughnet approved of Reed's policy, as he felt it would contribute "materially and rapidly" to the Indians' advancement if they were to take up farms in severalty on the reserves. He recommended that "where indications are manifest of a disposition on the part of Indians to take up separate holdings on the Reserves that the latter should at once be subdivided by survey".[18]

The severalty policy was presented to the public by officials as the instrument which would strike most effectively at the heart of the "tribal" or "communistic" system, and implant instead a spirit of individual responsibility. A sense of possessory rights was proclaimed to be "essential to the formation of those self-interested motives which attach individuals to localities and render them unwilling to leave them for any light cause".[19] Allotment in severalty was presented as the best means of imparting a sense of proprietary rights. The allottee would be inspired to improve his holding. He would have to expend labour on cultivating, building and fencing, which would result in superior cultivation, improved housing, and better fencing, all of which would have the effect of binding the owner to the locality.[20] It was believed that ownership would implant in the Indians a "wholesome spirit of emulation", impossible under a system of community of ownership.[21] Dewdney insisted in 1890 that it was only "By inculcating such ideas and fomenting such motives in him will the Indian be reclaimed from his condition of savagery

and led to adopt a mode of life which will render him both self-supporting and self-respecting."[22] Reed believed that teaching the Indians to hold and farm their land in severalty was the central means of preparing the Indians for enfranchisement.[23] Amalgamation with the white population was the goal, but before this could be accomplished, the Indians had to be inculcated with a spirit of self-reliance and independence which would fit them for enfranchisement.

Indians who objected to the subdivision of reserves were described as "lacking in intelligence" because they could not recognize the advantages which would accrue to their people, or they were portrayed as the "idle-good-for-nothing" members of a band, who rejected anything welcomed by the "better class" of more industrious Indians.[24] Indians, according to Reed, often imagined "sinister motives".[25] Based on experiences in the older provinces, department officials believed that objections to severalty arose mainly from self-interested motives. "It is probable", Dewdney wrote, "that men of influence in these bands, who have acquired possession of more land than they think they would be allowed to retain were a fair distribution of the land in the reserve to be made, use that influence with their unsuspecting kinsmen to cause them to object to the severalty principle being applied to them."[26] Department officials dismissed all Indian objections to severalty on the grounds that once the superior advantages of the system were impressed upon them, apprehensions would

rapidly dissipate. Indians who showed a preference for separate lots were lauded as those with the most advanced ideas.[27]

Public opinion appeared to heartily endorse the department's policy of allotment in severalty. Respected spokesmen such as Father Lacombe agreed that farming Indians could be made more industrious if they were permitted to take up land in severalty.[28] The Ottawa Journal hailed the subdivision of the western reserves as a "step forward", for "as soon as the Indians are willing to throw up tribal connections and treaty money, they retain these lands as personal property, and become citizens".[29] The Moosomin Courier considered severalty to be a very fine stroke of "national policy" for the red man; "Chief Bull frog and his band" had already been introduced to the modern system of farming but they now needed individual ownership as "self-interest is a wonderful stimulant".[30] The Courier proclaimed that "superior houses, better fences, larger fields, and more extensively cultivated areas" already attested to the success of the policy, although it is unlikely that reserve residents were at this date conforming to the allotment survey. These words were taken almost directly from Dewdney's annual report of 1889, in which he had outlined the happy results likely to attend distribution in severalty.[31] According to the Courier, opposition to severalty among bands in the East was due to the nefarious influence of "the scoundrels who failed to cause a rising of

our Indians in '85- the political emissaries of a consumptive Party and their tools, the squawmen."[32]

A letter published in a November 1890 issue of the Ottawa Citizen from "Nichie" of Battleford, gave a glowing appraisal of the severalty policy, in terminology that bore striking similarities to department publications.[33] The author observed that Indians with allotments made worthy efforts to improve and better their condition. He felt this system annulled tribal influence, "the bane of Indian progress", and instead engendered a healthy spirit of rivalry between individuals and bands. Under the system of all things held in common the industrious worker had to share whatever was harvested with the idle, discontented and worthless which discouraged to progress. The author perceived that the desire to occupy separate holdings was spreading, particularly among the young men and he predicted that the time was not far distant when the Indians would no longer be consumers of government "grub" but producers, relieving the government larder.

The plan to subdivide reserves in Western Canada coincided with a general allotment policy in the United States which was codified in the Dawes Act of 1887. Allotment enjoyed a high degree of public support across the border. The policy of concentration and isolation upon reservations had failed to resolve the Indian "problem".[34] Private property was seen as the key to transforming the Indians into civilized agriculturalists. Pride of ownership

would generate individual initiative and teach the Indians self-support. Private property would break up the tribal relationship; the yoke of authoritarian chiefs would be broken, and "progressive" Indians could accumulate wealth and property. It was generally believed that an end to isolation would greatly further the progress of Indian farming as Indians would reap the benefit of close association with enlightened white farmers. The isolation of the reservation was blamed for the tardy progress of the Indians; their environment was closed to all progressive influences. Assimilation, through allotment in severalty, seemed to offer a permanent solution. Isolation was condemned as an obstacle to national unity, and as a means of keeping alive racial distinctions.[35] Reservations seemed to have no place in a country which championed the concept of equal rights for all.

Many Americans involved in the movement for Indian reform in the 1880's had previously been involved in the anti-slavery movement. These reformers argued that the privileges of liberal democracy and civil rights should be extended to all, and severalty was seen as a final step toward treating Indians like all other Americans.[36] Individual ownership was seen as the key to the civilization of the Indians; it was a right cherished as basic to the American heritage. Severalty was also seen as a means of protecting Indian lands from unscrupulous land grabbers, as it provided each owner with a valid title.[37] The American

government had proved itself perpetually unable to restrain settlers from encroaching on and appropriating Indian land. Many reformers were convinced that Indian title would be recognized as valid only when land was actually owned in fee simple. To humanitarian reformers, the 1887 Dawes Act was a major triumph.

The beauty of the American general allotment policy was, as one historian has written, that it appealed "simultaneously to humanitarian instincts and overt self-interest".[38] The Dawes Act appeared to guard Indian interests at the same time as it reflected the economic interests of non-Indians. It was obvious from the outset that allotment meant that much reserve land would be open for settlement. By granting land to individual Indians, "surplus" lands could be defined and made accessible. After a stipulated acreage went to each Indian family, the remaining land would be thrown open to white settlement, and sizeable portions of reservations would be sold. Many of those who supported the measure were simply interested in securing Indian land at a time when farm land was becoming increasingly scarce.[39] As historian Brian Dippie has observed, "Left unsaid was the fact that past experience showed that the great preponderance of land actually allotted to the Indians would also wind up in white hands, thereby completing the sweep of the reservations."[40]

The Dawes Act empowered the President to allot in severalty part or all of any reservation. One hundred and

sixty acre allotments were to go to each head of family, with orphans to receive eighty acres, and children under eighteen, forty acres.[41] Individuals were allowed to choose their own lots but if they failed to do so after four years, one would be chosen for them. These allotments were inalienable, that is they could not be sold for twenty-five years, and the President held the title in trust. If an individual proved himself sufficiently industrious after that period of time, he received title to the land in fee simple. "Surplus" lands were to be disposed of by the government to "actual settlers". Proceeds from the sale of these lands were to be held in trust, and could be appropriated by Congress for the purposes of Indian education and "civilization".

Allotment proved not to be the grand panacea that its supporters had hoped. It had appeared so simple- the land was to be parcelled out and the surplus sold, but the Dawes Act proved to be complicated to administer. Intricate legal problems arose over the questions of heirship and leasing. Government bureaucracy's role in Indian affairs increased rather than disappeared as it had been assumed that it would. The Act had not provided for any future increase in the Indian population, as it was based on the assumption that the Indians were decreasing, even vanishing, or that Indians in the traditional sense would disappear as they were absorbed into the rest of the population. The twenty-five year trust period was shortened in 1906, when

discretionary powers to do so were granted to the Secretary of the Interior, accelerating the rate at which patents were granted. Sixty per cent of the Indians who received their patents were dispossessed of their land in the first three years after restrictions were eased.[42] By 1920, more than two-thirds of those who had received clear title had been partially or totally dispossessed. Indian land in 1887 had comprised 138 million acres. Sixty million acres were declared surplus and sold to whites. Of the allotted land, twenty-seven million acres, or two-thirds were sold.[43]

The Western Canadian version of allotment in severalty bore resemblances to the American model, but there were also distinct differences. The rhetoric was precisely the same; that allotment in severalty would create stable, sedentary farmers and would prove to be the shortest path to Indian enfranchisement. The ultimate goal of the disappearance of reserves altogether was also the same. Officials of the day never imagined that reserves could become permanent features of the landscape, and they worked to hasten their dissolution. As with the American plan, the allotment of Western reserves would clearly demarcate the used and "unused" portions of reserves. Land that was "surplus", that is available for surrender and sale, could be ascertained. As in the United States, few in Canada believed the Indians would have subsequent need of the land, or that they should be in possession of "unused" land that it appeared they had no need of. It is likely that Canadian

policy makers were influenced by the popularity of allotment in severalty across the border. Hayter Reed, a major promoter of the scheme, visited and consulted with American officials in 1888 and 1889, when optimism about the 1887 Dawes Act was high.[44] Canadian officials were aware of the potential profitability of severalty however, well before that date.

John A. Macdonald expressed enthusiasm for severalty in 1886, not as a means of promoting private ownership, individual initiative, and self-support, but as a means of defining "surplus" land on reserves that might be sold.[45] He reasoned that the funds raised from the sale of these lands could help his government escape from the financial burden of assisting the Indians. Macdonald thought that a source of capital could be established for the benefit of the bands if surplus lands were sold, and that from these funds, articles beyond those stipulated in the treaties could be furnished. He believed this could be accomplished simply and swiftly. Dewdney was instructed to allot to each Indian on every reserve the land he would likely require for cultivation, so that the amount of surplus land available for surrender and sale could be ascertained. Although favourable to the idea, Dewdney did not believe it could be hastily implemented. He claimed that he was attempting to locate families on separate plots of land on the various reserves but warned that "the process would necessarily be a

long one", and he believed that the time when reserve land could be declared surplus was far away.[46]

As commissioner and later deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, Hayter Reed vigorously promoted reserve subdivision as the path to land surrender. A major departure from the American model was that in Western Canada, reserve land that was considered by non-residents to be "surplus" could not simply be thrown open for settlement. In Canada, reserve land could not be sold without the consent of the Indian band. Treaty Four for example, stated that reserve land "may be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of by the said Government for the use and benefit of the said Indians, with the consent of the Indians entitled thereto first had and obtained."[47]

Reed worked diligently to facilitate the process of surrender and sale. As deputy superintendent general, he sought a means of evading the surrender provisions of the Indian Act in cases where reserves had been "abandoned", or where membership in the band had been greatly reduced.[48] Acting on a dubious interpretation of the legal opinion of the Deputy Minister of Justice, and with the aid of an 1895 amendment to the Indian Act, his department began to arrange formal transfers for bands who had "abandoned" their reserves. Reed's objective was to deplete the membership of a band, leaving no one with a legal interest in the reserve. He believed this "abandoned" land could then be sold without formal surrender or compensation to the Indians.

Reed was interested in promoting reserve land surrender not simply to satisfy the cupidity of white settlers interested in prime agricultural land. He was intent on eliminating reserves regardless of the quality of the land. In 1889 Reed began to formulate a plan to break up the File Hills agency altogether. In a private note to Vankoughnet, Reed described these Indians as a troublesome lot, and stated that he had come to the conclusion that the best course of treatment was to break up the agency, and distribute the bands throughout the Crooked Lakes, Muscowpetung, Touchwood and Pelly agencies.[49] Dispersed, the File Hills residents would, he believed, be discouraged from their "fractious" behaviour. This would save the considerable cost of maintaining a separate agency, Reed noted. He felt the abandoned reserves might be kept as hay land, or "in some way disposed of, to allow compensating the Indians whose reservations might be called upon to receive additional occupants".[50] In subsequent correspondence, Reed presented further arguments for abandoning the File Hills, including "the disadvantages of the district for the cultivation of grain, the dearth of game, and the absence of a market for the industries of the Indians, and of opportunity for them to get freighting or other work, by means of which to contribute toward their own support".[51] Both Vankoughnet and Dewdney approved of Reed's scheme. Vankoughnet noted that the dispersal of Big Bear's band had been attended with good results, and hoped that similar

action with respect to the File Hills would be as successful.[52]

Reserve subdivision was another means of facilitating surrender. The system adopted to subdivide reserves in Western Canada was to preserve the plan of ranges, townships and sections of the adjacent Dominion lands, and to further subdivide each section into sixteen lots of forty acres each, or quarter-quarter sections.[53] The official reasons given for choosing the forty acre lot as the standard for the subdivision were that it afforded "compact settlement" and it enabled each Indian to select a certain quantity of the choicest farm land on a reserve.[54] It was explained that if the subdivisions were larger, they might take in land which was "not required", land which was unfit for cultivation, or land which was occupied by other Indians. According to Reed, the forty acre lot allowed the Indian farmer to select land most suitable for agriculture, without being compelled to take into his farm land which he did not want.[55] The plots were also kept small Reed explained, because should a survey line cross existing improvements, two adjacent forty acre lots could be selected so as to include them. Whereas if the subdivisions were larger, they might take in land which was not required. Reed stipulated however, that in no case should an Indian be allowed to take up more land than the number of members in his family entitled him to.[56] The surveys were to cover portions of the reserves that were already cultivated or were likely to

be soon under cultivation.[57] They were to include "a certain area of the most desireable farm land".[58] Surveyor Nelson described his understanding of the policy.

> As many of the Indian reserves are of large extent, and the area likely to be brought under cultivation, in comparison, small, it was decided that the subdivision surveys should cover only such portions of the respective reserves as may reasonably be expected to be required for settlement within the next few years.[59]

Surveyors subdivided the portions of reserves that were cultivated, and what they believed to be a sufficient surplus to allow for any possible expansion in the next ten years.[60] Lands valued for hay, wood, or other natural products were to remain common property.

Indians desiring or induced to locate on the forty acre lots were to be issued "certificates of occupancy" by the Indian commissioner upon the recommendation of the agent. These certificates were issued pending the issue of location tickets under section seventeen of the Indian Act. Reed described the certificate of occupancy as a "preliminary title towards the more complete tenure inferred by the issue of the location ticket".[61] This was seen as a temporary scheme for intermediate registration. Reed believed the certificates would offer the same inducement as the location ticket, and this intermediate system would "pave the way for the more cumbersome and expensive [system] provided by law, which could not yet well be inaugurated in the present state of advancement of the Indians".[62] Under the 1876 Indian

Act, Indians had to be literate, free of debt, and of "good moral character" in order to receive location tickets. As it was assumed that few Indians in the West could meet these stipulations, the certificate of occupancy was devised as an interim measure. Reed, Vankoughnet and Dewdney worked at amending the Indian Act to meet the circumstances of the Western Indians, but in the meantime the temporary certificate allowed the policy to proceed.

Reed and other department officials were particularly insistent that the subdivision surveys conform with the Dominion Land Survey. This was a departure from the method of subdividing reserves in the older provinces. Officials believed that the process of eventually passing these lands down to "others" primarily through sale would be greatly eased if the legal descriptions conformed with the Dominion Land Survey. Reed was convinced that unless this was done, it would surely lead to much trouble when "they begin to hand down their property to those who would come after them".[63] Vankoughnet agreed with Reed on the importance of conformity with the Dominion Land Survey.

> This will prove to be the most satisfactory course for every reason, inasmuch as if the Indians are allowed to take up farms without the same being defined by proper lines of survey, the matter of ultimately subdividing the Reserves will prove to be a most embarrassing one, as it has been found in the case of Reserves thus irregularly partitioned off in the older Provinces.[64]

The department of Indian Affairs' right to describe subdivisions of reserves as "legal", or in conformity with

the Dominion Land Survey, was questioned by the Inspector of Surveys of the Department of the Interior in 1891.[65] It was pointed out that reserves were not Dominion Lands, and it was suggested that the townships might be described by some distinguishing name, such as that of the agency or chief. Reed strenuously defended the plan to conform with the survey. He explained that it would be much more convenient as he looked "forward to the time when, as is now being done with the Pass-pass-chase Reserve, some Indian lands will be disposed of, or exchanged."[66] (The Passpasschase reserve south of Edmonton, was the first reserve in the North West to be surrendered under the 1876 Indian Act.) Reed argued that to designate the townships by some other distinguishing name would have the effect of "keeping alive that distinction between the two races, to reduce which, to the narrowest possible limits, is the object of the Department's policy, in dealing with the Indians".[67] The objection of the Inspector of Surveys was withdrawn, and the subdivision of reserve land proceeded in accordance with the theoretic sections and legal subdivisions of the Dominion Land Survey. The Inspector reminded Vankoughnet however that "the term 'legal subdivision' as applied to Indian lands has no meaning susceptible of a precise definition. The Dominion Lands Act defines what a 'legal subdivision' is as relating to Dominion Lands but there is no such provision in the Indian Act."[68]

To subdivide reserves in conformity with the Dominion Land Survey was expensive and time-consuming. The survey involved not only the lines bordering the road allowances, as with the Dominion lands, but the lines bordering each separate subdivision had to be run. More road allowances had to be surveyed because of the small size of the allotments. The subdivision surveys included a two mile long road running north and south through the centre of every two sections in addition to those surrounding the sections themselves. Reed believed there should be an additional one-mile east-west road between every two sections as well. He argued this was necessary to "permit of ready communication between the different subdivisions of the Sections".[69] Reed clearly felt that extra road allowances were necessary if the blocks were to be reduced to forty acre lots. Other officials of the department disagreed, both with Reed's suggestion of an additional road allowance, and with the north-south roads already being surveyed.[70] It was argued that the maintenance of these roads, either in money or statute labour, would be burdensome and that these road allowances were simply a waste of land. They would require miles of extra fencing which would drain the pocket of a farmer. It was pointed out that the road allowance system in the North West had proved to be sufficient for the needs of the settlers, and was also within their ability to keep in ordinary repair.

Reed's request of an additional road was turned down, but the north-south road was retained.

Subdivision surveys of reserves in the North West began in the summer of 1889, on the Muscowpetung and Crooked Lakes agencies. Portions of Piapot, Muscowpetung, Pasquah, Kakewistahaw, Sakemay and O'Soup were subdivided that year. Another survey crew, working in the Treaty Six district, subdivided portions of Moose Woods and Beardy. In 1890 work was completed on O'Soup's, and portions of White Bear and the Assiniboine reserve were subdivided. In 1891 the Ermineskin and Sampson reserves were subdivided. The Oak River Dakota reserve and the Carlton reserves of Mistawasis, Ahtakakoop and Petty-quaw-key were subdivided in 1892. That year survey work began on the Blood reserve. Certain agencies such as the Touchwood Hills and File Hills were not subdivided, although their boundaries were defined, and made consistent with the Dominion Land Survey. In the Treaty Four district, the subdivided reserves were those that were close to the railway and/or were attractive for agricultural purposes. The residents of reserves whose land was not highly valued were evidently not seen to be in need of the lessons private property was to impart. Reed stated that "considerable discrimination" had to be made in selecting the reserves for subdivision.[71] One consideration taken into account was the degree of serious objection that might be anticipated from a band. Bands not "sufficiently advanced in civilization and intelligence" might, Reed

admitted, not understand the necessity of this work being done.[72] Reed was concerned that suspicions about the department's purpose might be aroused which could lead to "trouble of a serious nature".

The subdivision surveys were protested by reserve residents who were neither consulted nor informed before the crews arrived to begin work. They clearly felt, as had the Indians in the older provinces, that the subdivision of reserves was a preliminary step toward depriving them of their land. Trouble began on the Piapot reserve in July of 1889. Before the survey work began Hayter Reed and the surveyor held a council with Piapot and his head men, where it was explained to them "the purpose of the survey, and the manner in which it would be performed".[73] The survey began the same day. The surveyor's policy was to employ residents of the reserve being subdivided at the rate of seventy-five cents a day, which would have acted as an inducement to co-operation. The survey of Piapot's reserve proceeded without incident until July 1 when the Indians quit work and went to Regina for the annual races and sports. When they returned they refused to resume work. The Indians asked for higher wages but surveyor Nelson felt that this was not the only cause of their refusal to continue. Nelson met with Piapot who had been told by O'Soup at Regina, that it was very wrong for Piapot to permit surveyors to cut up his land into little squares, and that he would surely come to grief "as it was the intention of the Government to restrain him

and his people within the lines that the surveyors were running inside the reserve."[74] O'Soup told Piapot that he would not allow the surveyors to plant stakes on his reserve. Piapot told Nelson that he was greatly disturbed after talking to O'Soup "and feared that he or any of his people who might assist in making the subdivision <u>might be poisoned</u> ('Muskegee')".[75] Nelson informed Piapot that he would be compelled to hire white men to complete the survey, and the services of a few men from the nearby Scottish settlement were secured for a few days. Eventually the Indians agreed to begin work again.

Officials saw O'Soup as a mischevious, obnoxious influence, and blame for the Indians' reluctance to comply with the survey was placed on his shoulders. Hayter Reed instructed Agent McDonald to speak to O'Soup, and tell him that if it was true that he spoke in the way alleged, "I am much surprised that a man of his intelligence would do so...", thwarting department efforts to advance the real interests of the Indians.[76] Reed did not suppose that O'Soup really believed the department had any "sinister motives", but if he did harbour these notions, McDonald was to persuade him otherwise and point out the advantages of the system which would improve and elevate the Indian.

In his interview with agent McDonald, O'Soup cleared himself of any undue interference, showed that he understood the "intention" of the department in subdividing the reserves, and left the impression that there was error or

misunderstanding in Piapot's account of their meeting.[77] O'Soup testified that he met Piapot outside the colonization store in Regina on July 2 and they shared a pipe. Piapot had said that the surveyors had taken him by surprise in surveying the reserve like a checker board, and he could get no satisfactory answers as to why it was being done. O'Soup placed himself in an exceedingly good light, stating that he was the first to go to Crooked Lakes and choose a reserve, and that he had requested that a reserve be surveyed. He claimed that he tried to persuade Piapot that the survey was to the advantage of the Indians. He apparently told Piapot that if he understood why the surveys were being done, he would not object. O'Soup's account of his words to Piapot, as recorded by McDonald were

> Look at the White man how he has his land surveyed to him. What quantity of land do you see that he receives. The Government wishes us to take an example by them, and wants our lands (that is the improvements) surveyed to us, and that we have to live on them for three years, and at the end of that time we get a paper to show that it is our individual property that no one else can take it from us, and that when the time comes for election for a member to represent us at Ottawa, we will have a right to vote the same as a Whiteman. This is what I understood the Government is going to do.[78]

O'Soup stated however that at Crooked Lakes the Indians were startled about the surveys because like Piapot, they did not understand the government's intentions, and he was going to leave it to his head men to decide whether they wanted the survey or not. O'Soup claimed he was informing other

Indians that they ought to be glad that the government took such an interest in them.

In the summer of 1889 survey work continued on the Pasquah and Muscowpetung reserves. In September a council was held with the Crooked Lakes Indians to discuss the subdivision of the reserves, which was according to surveyor Nelson "a subject on which the Indians are desirous of hearing full explanations".[79] At the council, agent McDonald explained the purpose of the survey and showed the plans. At the end of the meeting the head men were reported to be unwilling to express an opinion. Chief Kakewistahaw however agreed to co-operate and said he would take the responsibility of having his reserve subdivided on his own shoulders. While surveying this reserve Nelson reported that Yellow Calf of the Sakemay reserve visited camp on several occasions to obtain information on the survey and requested that his be surveyed next. The Sakemay reserve was subdivided as were portions of O'Soup's reserve. (See Figure 12). Chief Ochapowace objected to the subdivision survey and no work was done on his reserve. Opposition was grounded on the idea that the survey was a preliminary step toward depriving them of their land.[80] Residents of this reserve were not happy that a wagon road for settlers was to cross their land.[81] This road was a great boon to the settlers north of the Qu'Appelle as they had difficulty hauling to the rail line over the steep hills on the eastern boundary of the reserve. Surveyor Nelson complained that he

could only get two men from this reserve to work two days on the survey of the road.[82]

In 1890 at Moose Mountain, members of White Bear's band and some others also objected to the survey, although a portion of the land was subdivided.[83] In his annual report of that year Reed dismissed any protest but warned that great caution had to be exercised in the subdivision of reserves "to avoid rousing the suspicions of the Indians, who often imagine sinister motives in a manner and to an extent which those unacquainted with them could hardly credit".[84] Reed described the Indians who co-operated as the more industrious and intelligent members of their bands.

Indian objection to the subdivision survey continued after the survey work was complete. In the years to 1896 it was occasionally reported that individuals were taking up residence on their forty acre lots, but these were few and far between; there appears to have been no general movement. Agents were to make every effort to induce the Indians to locate on these lots but there was little they could actually do to enforce this policy. Officials reported publicly that the scheme was progressing and succeeding. Dewdney gave a glowing account in his annual report for 1891, but is is clear from his private correspondence that he had no idea to what extent Indians had taken up their locations, and that what information he had was not encouraging. He reminded Reed that it had cost the government a great deal to afford this "privilege" to the

Indians and he urged that every effort be made to induce them to take advantage of it.[85] Again he was concerned that the Indians be properly located, to avoid the disputes which had arisen in the older provinces.

It appears that after the early 1890's the program of subdividing portions of reserves into forty acre lots that conformed with the Dominion Land Survey was halted. After the change of government in 1896 subdivisions were surveyed only after land was surrendered, purely for the purposes of sale. Officials saw no need to subdivide reserves where surrenders were refused.[86] The rationale for the earlier subdivisions, that they were in the agricultural interests of the Indians, was dropped. The subdivision surveys of the early 1890's however, did allow department officials to effectively restrict Indian settlement on reserves to the subdivided portions only. Indians were not allowed to locate on unsubdivided land, were forced to concentrate and could not disperse.[87] In 1904 for example, a resident of the Cowesses reserve hoped to stop the imminent surrender of the southern strip of his reserve by locating in the extreme southwest corner. He was refused permission as this land had not been subdivided.[88]

In 1889, Hayter Reed announced that one of the most potent reasons for insisting that Indians farm their land in

severalty was the new "approved system of farming adopted".[89] This new system was to be implemented on the Western reserves for the next eight years. Reed believed that Indian farmers should be encouraged to emulate "peasants of various countries" who kept their operations small and their implements rudimentary.[90] In Reed's opinion, a single acre of wheat, a portion of a second acre of roots and vegetables, and a cow or two could sufficiently provide for an Indian farmer and his family.[91] He argued it was better for Indians to properly cultivate a small acreage than to focus on extending the area under cultivation. This restricted acreage eliminated any need for labour-saving machinery. Peasants of other countries Reed contended, farmed successfully with no better implements than the hoe, the rake, cradle, sickle and flail, and he believed the Indians had to be taught to handle these simple tools. They were to broadcast seed by hand, harvest with scythes, bind by hand with straw, and thresh with flails. In some districts Indians were to be discouraged from growing wheat altogether in favour of root crops and this further eliminated the need for any machinery. As part of the program, Indians were to be required to manufacture at home from materials readily available, many of the items they needed such as harrows, hay forks, hay racks, carts and ox yokes. Each Indian family was to form a self-contained, self-sufficient unit, untouched by the fluctuations of the general market economy.

The central rationale advanced in support of the peasant farming policy was that it was "the manner best calculated to render [the Indians] self-supporting when left to their own resources".[92] Reed repeated many times in his correspondence and public pronouncements that he believed the time was not far distant when the Indians would have to depend entirely upon their own resources. "Our policy", he stated, "is to make each family cultivate such quantity of land as they can manage with such implements as they can alone hope to possess for long enough after being thrown upon their own resources."[93] If the reserves were subdivided, the surplus land sold, and the Indians resident on their forty acre lots enfranchised, the Indians would indeed by left to their own resources as there would be no bands, reserves, or department of Indian Affairs.

The Indians were to aim, not at breaking up large quantities of land, but at cultivating a restricted amount which could be worked with the family's own resources solely. Labour-saving implements Reed argued, were "likely to be beyond acquisition by the majority of Indians for some time after they may have been thrown upon their own resources".[94] Reed was not pleased that Indians tended to club together to purchase implements; this reinforced the tribal unit. He did not want to see the Indians become self-sufficient as bands, but as individuals. On their own, these individuals were not likely to be able to afford machinery. Although Reed conceded that there were

individual Indians who were independent of government assistance and could not be restrained from purchasing machinery out of their own earnings, he felt such cases were rare. If Indians received any assistance at all in the way of seed grain, rations or other goods, then they were not self-sufficient and should not be making payments on machinery. Well-to-do farmers could instead pay for the labour of other Indians.[95] Indian women Reed hoped, could work in the fields, particularly at harvest time. Agents and inspectors were to cancel the sales of machinery to Indians even though these were purchased by the Indians and not by the department. At Duck Lake in 1891, six or seven Indians together purchased a self-binder with the approval of the farm instructor.[96] The implement dealer had to acquire the consent of the agent, who was ordered by McGibbon to object to the sale. No sale or delivery took place.

Labour-saving machinery was not required by Indians according to Reed, because they should be discouraged from extensive grain growing, and instead the cultivation of roots should be promoted on reserves.[97] In Reed's view, root and not cereal crops taught Indian farmers to be diligent and attentive.

> I've always advocated growing as many root crops as possible but Indians have to be humoured a good deal in such matters; and as soon as they begin to make some little progress they become fired with an ambition to grow larger quantities of wheat and other cereals [rather than] roots which require

> working and weeding at the very time they like to be off hunting while the former only require to have cattle kept away by means of a good fence.[98]

The need to go into debt to buy machinery such as self-binders was a further reason to halt the use of these implements according to Reed. Farmers who had to obtain credit were not regarded as self-sufficient. He believed the system of purchase on credit of farm machinery had widely and ruinously affected white settlers, and he shared with other department officials the view that Indians were prone to run into debt and were unable or disinclined to discharge their liabilities.[99] It was wiser, Reed felt, to wait and see whether the climatic conditions of the country warranted the purchase of labour-saving machinery. Machinery, he argued, would not bring prosperity; it had instead been the means of ruining large numbers of settlers.[100] By the early 1890's, the department was alarmed that it might be thought liable for Indian debts. The Indian Act excluded Indians from taxes, liens, mortgages, or other charges, and from loss of possessions through debt, so their commercial affairs were not open to the claims of creditors.[101] In 1891 a circular letter was sent to all agents to notify parties in the habit of trading with the Indians that the department would not be responsible for debts incurred by Indians "whether the same were by virtue of orders from agents, chiefs, Indian councils, or otherwise".[102] Merchants were warned personally and by advertisement that the department would not be responsible for any such

accounts. Legislation was considered which would prohibit, under severe penalty, the giving of credit to Indians. Indian debt and credit was effectively controlled however, through the permit system, under which only transactions authorized by a department agent could take place between a merchant or buyer and an Indian.

Another argument Reed forwarded against the use of labour-saving machinery by Indians was that rudimentary implements afforded useful employment for all. The possession of machinery Reed believed, allowed the Indians to do nothing but "sit by and smoke their pipes while work is being done for them without exertion on their part", a situation he believed they preferred.[103] In his view the use of such implements was justified only when manual labour was scarce, and this was not the case on Indian reserves.

The same argument was advanced for the necessity of home manufactures. Gainful employment during spare time prevented the "mischief which emanates from idleness", and trained the Indians for the time when they would be totally thrown upon their own resources.[104] Indian men and women were first encouraged and then required to make an endless list of items "in common use upon a farm".[105] Women's manufactures included mitts, socks, willow baskets, mats, and straw hats. Men were expected to make ax and fork handles, ox collars and harness, wooden harrows, bob-sleighs, and Red River carts. Compliance with this

policy was readily enforced when requests for the purchase of these items were simply stroked off the estimates.

Reed drew on aspects of an evolutionary argument to support his peasant farming policy. In the late nineteenth century, those who took an evolutionary view of the North American Indian and other "primitive" people believed that there were immutable laws of social evolution.[106] It was thought that man developed progressively through prescribed stages from savagery through barbarism to civilization. These stages could not be skipped, nor could a race or culture be expected to progress at an accelerated rate. The Indians were perceived to be many stages removed from nineteenth-century civilization, and while they could take the next step forward, they could not miss the steps in between.

Aspects of this school of thought supported Reed's stand on machinery. He argued that Indians should not make an "unnatural" leap from barbarism to a nineteenth century environment, including all its appliances.[107] The Indian was "prone to desire to imitate the white man's nineteenth century civilization somewhat too hastily and too early".[108] Reed explained at length in the first of his annual reports outlining the peasant policy.

> The fact is often overlooked, that these Indians who, a few years ago, were roaming savages, have been suddenly brought into contact with a civilization which has been the growth of centuries. An ambition has thus been created to emulate in a day what white men have become fitted for through the slow progress of generations.[109]

While labour-saving machinery was necessary and suitable for white farmers then, Indians had to first experience farming with crude and simple implements. To do otherwise was unnatural, and defied immutable laws of evolution. The policy was not to equip Indians to compete with the "advanced civilization" around them. In Reed's view Indians had not reached the stage where they were in a position to compete with white settlers.[110]

Hayter Reed was apparently convinced that the ideal of the independent, self-sufficient farm could exist on the Canadian prairie. The Indian farmer could subsist, he believed, totally isolated from the fluctuations of the market economy, maintaining a self-contained economic unit. The ideal self-sufficient farmer was one who built with his own hands the shelter and furnishings required for himself and family.[111] The farmer's family ate food that was the result of their own labours. They produced their own meat, cheese, butter and bread. Garden products were dried or otherwise preserved and stored, and they ate wild ducks, geese, prairie chicken, rabbits and berries. The family manufactured at home the non-agricultural goods required including clothing, soap, ax handles and sleigh runners. Self-sufficient farmers neither bought nor sold, and they took no part in the exchange economy, or their exchange activities were so negligible and insignificant as to be unworthy of evaluation. The self-sufficient farmer did not produce for a market, and although he might acquire a

surplus, this was not his primary objective; it was rather a "security blanket" or a "fortuitous result".[112] As such a wide variety of goods were produced to satisfy the needs of his family, the self-sufficient farmer was not a specialist, as only a minimum of effort could be devoted to any single item.

It is often assumed that the start-up period in prairie agriculture was a time of subsistence, or self-sufficient farming.[113] Certainly it is true that pioneer farmers used to derive more of their consumption goods from their farms that did subsequent generations, but the self-sufficiency of the farm unit was never absolute. Economist Vernon Fowke argued that the notion that Canadian pioneer agriculture was ever basically self-sufficient is incorrect.[114] According to Fowke, pioneer farmers were at no time self-sufficient but were "from the beginning tied in with the price system and the urban economy on a national and international basis".[115] If Canadian agriculture had approached self-sufficiency, it would not have required the governmental assistance it has received for over 300 years.[116] Agriculture, Fowke argued, has been consistently and deliberately moulded by public moneys in Canada because it has been used as a basis for economic and political power. From the time of Confederation, Western immigration and agricultural settlement was seen as essential to the well-being of the entire economy. If the settlers were self-sufficient, they could hardly have provided the investment opportunities

necessary to inject vitality into the Canadian economy. In order to enrich the East, commercial and not subsistence farmers were required on the new investment frontier: farmers who would ship their products to distant markets and buy their implements, provisions and clothing from Eastern manufacturers.

The farmer in Western Canada was intent on commercial rather than subsistence farming. He aimed at producing a surplus for market that was equal in importance to his family's needs. This surplus was not simply fortuitous but the result of the farmer's plans to produce that which would bring him the greatest returns, and he was prepared to shift farming practices according to the demands of the market. Farmers produced for markets and profits. Their farms became specialized, dependent units, integrated into the market economy. Western farmers' concerns and their problems of freight rates, orderly marketing, branch lines and elevator facilities, evident from the earliest days, were all consistent with the needs of commercial farming.

Even in the initial years the homesteader was dependent on other segments of the exchange economy.[117] The farmer had to purchase his transportation, and outfit himself with the necessary provisions and farm implements. The equipment of the pioneer farmer, Fowke argued, should not be dismissed as negligible, as these purchases contributed to the creation of profitable investment opportunities. Although the farmer may not have produced a marketable staple for

some years, he had products to sell locally such as hay and wood. Exchanges might be made through barter rather than with money, but these none-the-less constituted commercial transactions. Many homesteaders earned money away from the farm for a good number of years. Some worked as hired hands for a larger operator, while others had a second skill or trade and found employment in the towns. Farmers joined survey crews and railway construction gangs or worked as freighters.[118] Some went to far-off mining and logging camps. Homesteaders were in need of cash and could rarely acquire enough to finance their operations. They could not borrow against their land until title was acquired, which was after three years or longer. The farmer required credit to secure his provisions, implements and other supplies. It became standard practice to have credit advanced at the beginning of the crop season for seed, tools and consumable goods with payment made at harvest time.

Towns that "mushroomed" along the CPR at Moosomin, Whitewood, Broadview, Qu'Appelle, Indian Head and Sintaluta distributed great quantities of supplies. These trading centres could not have been supported if the settlers were self-sufficient. Older communities such as Fort Qu'Appelle, and older concerns, such as the Hudson's Bay Company, began to cater to the needs of settlers. Kenlis, Chickney, Saltoun and Pheasant Forks, served settlers who lived some distance from the track. Staple groceries most commonly purchased included tea, sugar, salt, rice, oatmeal and dried

fruit.[119] Merchants accepted farm produce in exchange, especially butter and eggs, as well as wood, game, furs, and seneca root. Business was brisk some weeks. In 1883 an Indian Head merchant reported that he kept his store open from half past six in the morning until midnight and sometimes later.[120]

Diversified subsistence farming was not then a characteristic of the pioneer farms of the prairie West. From the beginning they were tied in with the larger local, national and international economy. Nor were the difficulties of the 1880's pointing to the ideal of the self-sufficient farm as the solution. Large-scale, single-crop farming plus the techniques and technology of dry farming would eventually produce agricultural prosperity on the plains. Like other Western farmers, the efforts of Indian farmers pointed more in the direction of commercial than subsistence farming, evident in their focus on wheat culture, acquisition of machinery to accommodate large acreages, and adoption of techniques such as summerfallowing. In their need to acquire cash, make purchases and sell products, Indian farmers were just as tied in with the larger economy. Yet the peasant farming policy required Indian farmers to step aside and function in isolation from the rest of Western Canadian society. Subsistence diversified farming remained at best a questionable model for the arid Canadian plains, and it has been argued that it was impossible given the geographical conditions of the prairies.[121]

The ideal of the self-sufficient farmer continued to have general public appeal however, whereas the concept of agriculture as a market and profit-focused business was not universally accepted.[122] This required new ideas, attitudes and knowledge. Under commercial agriculture, what and how much should be produced were not determined simply by the family's needs and desires. Under market conditions the farmer made a business decision and had to take into consideration a variety of factors such as the nature of the soil, the characteristics of commodities, and world prices. Commercial farming involved a "rational" approach to technology. Potential profit and not immediate need had to guide the purchaser of expensive implements on credit who could expect that payment would in part come from the increased productivity contributed by the new implement. The efficient, profitable management of the farm enterprize required new attitudes toward technology, credit and debt, for whites as well as Indians. Hayter Reed clearly felt that Indians were incapable of understanding these concepts, and could not operate farms as business enterprizes. His views on the inability of Indians to manage their own financial affairs, to handle debt, credit, or the new technology, precluded commercial farming.

In continuing to uphold the ideal of the family farm as a self-contained economic unit however, Reed was not alone. The notion that self-sufficient farming was a superior way of life remained a cherished ideal, even though it may never

have existed in reality. It has been observed that in America, the ideal of the self-sufficient farmer was never more than

> a nice dream of a golden age when individuals supposedly were self-dependent and possessed all of the virtues that accompany such a position. In a sense it is the Robinson Crusoe story applied to that sturdy figure, the Colonial or frontier farmer. It is isolationism applied to the individual, since it is based on the idea that once upon a time individuals could function completely upon their own.[123]

The ideal of the independent, self-sufficient homestead was reflected in attitudes that persisted, even among some farmers, and Reed appeared to share in these. Many harboured a suspicion of new technology or change in farming practice, and were alarmed at debt and credit which was viewed as extravagant speculation.[124] The notion that the self-sufficient family farm possessed an immunity to financial crises persisted, as did a disapproval of purchasing what could be produced at home. The farmer who accomplished all by the sweat of his brow was deemed to be the most worthy.

The peasant farming policy was applied on reserves in the North West from 1889 until the year Reed left the department in 1897. Appointed deputy superintendent general in 1893, Reed was in an even stronger position to see that his policy was implemented. It appears to have been very much his policy alone, carried out over the protests of instructors, agents, inspectors, commissioner, and Indian

farmers through a rigid system of financial control. As commissioner, Reed kept a vigilant eye on every kettle and lamp ordered, and he maintained close surveillance as deputy superintendent general. Agents were not allowed to spend a "single copper" without the authority of the commissioner.[125] Reed's replacement as commissioner, Amédée Forget, had very limited powers of expenditure; even the most minute expense had to be sanctioned by Reed. Forget could under no circumstances authorize the purchase, hire or use of machinery. The commissioner requested greater powers of expenditure in 1894 in order to be able to respond to requests requiring immediate action during critical seasons. Reed replied that

> I would say that I am only too desirous that you take upon your shoulders this part of the work, and thus relieve me of it. The fear I have had- to be candid- is that my policy might not be strictly carried out, and I forsee that if it is slackened in the slightest, it will lead us not only to a largely increased expenditure but upset what I have in view, and this is, causing our Indians to work upwards by learning how to cut and sow their grain in the most crude manner possible, and not beginning at the large end of the norm, with self-binders and reapers.[126]

During haying and harvest time the full weight of the policy was felt. Agents and instructors were to see that the Indian farmers accomplished these tasks without the aid of any machinery. Even when bands had reapers and self-binders in their possession, purchased before the policy was adopted, the farmers were to use hand implements. Larger farmers were to purchase the labour of others rather

than revert to the use of machinery, or they were to restrict their acreages to what they could handle with hand implements. "The general principle", Reed explained in 1893, "is not to allow them machinery to save them work which they should with hands available on Reserves, do by help of such implements as are alone likely for long enough, to be within their reach."[127]

The peasant farming policy was protested from its inception by department officials in the field. They were dismayed by a policy which appeared to rob the Indians of any potential source of revenue. Their main objection was that the use of hand implements, particularly at harvest time, which coincided with haying, involved much loss in yield, as both had to be secured with haste. As the Edmonton agent wrote in 1896,

> Personally, I do not see how any band of Indians in this district can ever raise sufficient grain or cattle to become self-supporting as long as they have to work with sickles and scythes only, as the seasons are so very short, haying and harvesting coming together. Perhaps in the south where the seasons are longer the system would work successfully, but up here no whiteman attempts to do so.[128]

Agents throughout the North West however, even those much further to the south than the Edmonton Agency, agreed that the seasons were simply too short for the use of hand implements. Once ready to cut, it was of vital importance that the grain should remain standing for as brief a time as possible. The Carlton agent advised that because the

climate brooked no delay with regard to securing grain, existing conditions in the North West could not be equated with the early days of farming in the Eastern provinces when hand implements were used.[129] Grain could be lost to frost, hail, dry hot winds, or an excess of moisture if not harvested as quickly as possible. Agent Grant, of the Assiniboine reserve, protested that "the seasons in this country are too short to harvest any quantity of grain, without much waste, with only old fashioned, and hand-implements to do the work with".[130] In his view it was not possible to harvest with hand implements the 240 acres of grain on his reserve in proper time in such a climate without a great loss in yield. The grain, he stated, had to be cut as soon as it was ready to avoid loss as the harvest weather was as a rule very dry, with hot winds. Grant estimated that in two years, the amount of grain lost in his agency would be a sufficient quantity to pay for a binder. Loss occurred, not only through the grain being too ripe, but in the gathering and binding by hand as well. Grant informed Reed that the prairie straw was dry and brittle, and would not tie the grain without breaking, which caused considerable loss. While the farmers on his reserve used the long slough grass to bind grain, collecting this took up much time while the grain was in danger of over-ripening.

Agents also complained that the cradles broke constantly during harvest, which caused delays for repairs. The policy of employing labour to help take off a crop

proved to be seldom feasible. Workers had their own fields to attend to. One agent reported that farmers who did hire others spent more in paying their labourers than their crop was worth.[131] He tried to get neighbours to exchange work in each others' fields but those available to help were those without crops, and the farmers had to pay for their labour.

Inspector McGibbon was also at odds with the peasant farming policy. He informed Reed in 1891 that it was contrary to common sense to universally ban the use of machinery.[132] Exceptions had to be made and flexibility shown. McGibbon gave the example of the Onion Lake band which had 500 acres under crop. He felt it would result in a great deal of loss if the department insisted this be cut with cradles. Another example was a farmer with about fifteen acres "of as pretty wheat as could be seen anywhere".[133] The man was in frail health however, and could not secure the help of others as they had their own fields to look after. McGibbon observed the man cradling and his wife binding but was certain that "the waste on that field alone would be nearly half the crop".[134]

Agents and instructors reported difficulty enforcing compliance with the peasant policy. It was almost impossible to get the Indians to cut with cradles or sickles, especially those who had implements already.[135] Agents provided Reed with numerous examples of farmers who attempted the work and gave up, refusing to return, and of

others who would not even attempt it.[136] It was reported that the Indians became discouraged, and lost all interest in their crops.[137] These were not "lazy"Indians. Agent Campbell of the Moose Mountain Agency cited the example of an Indian farmer who he considered to be the most "progressive" in the agency.[138] He began to cradle his grain but quit declaring that he would let his grain stand and never plough another acre. The man chose instead to work on the straw pile of a threshing machine, a job "not usually considered pleasant", which indicated that he was not averse to hard work. Agent Grant described the reaction of "Black Mane", who had fifteen acres of very good wheat and who

> when told that he would have to cut and bind it by hand, gave up his oxen, and left both his wheat and reserve. I gave his wheat to his brother. I have been told that he is now at Wolf Point, in the States. This will show how hard it is to compel an Indian to harvest his grain by hand.[139]

It was frequently mentioned that Indian farmers were not strong enough, either because of age or sickness, to harvest their grain by hand.[140]

The Indians were discouraged when they saw white farmers using machinery. Agent Grant reported that the Indians on his reserve worked for white settlers and used binders when they stooked for them and they got discouraged when asked to cut and bind their own crops by hand.[141] Indian farmers were also keenly aware of what methods were used on reserves throughout the North West. McGibbon reported in 1891 that "the Indians know all that is going on

at the various agencies".[142] The Carlton agency Indians knew precisely how many binders the Crooked Lakes Indians had for example, and how many seeders were in another agency. Chief Mistawasis demanded to know in 1891 why the Battleford Indians, and John Smith's band had reapers when his farmers were not allowed them.[143] McGibbon informed the chief that these were purchased before the policy was adopted, that such sales were now being cancelled, and that he and his men should be out in the fields cutting and stacking grain rather than wasting valuable time talking.

Restrictions on the use of machinery were not the only aspects of the peasant policy that agents objected to. The home manufactures program proved unrealistic. Wooden forks for example, made by the Indians, could simply not be used for loading hay, grain or manure.[144] Iron forks were required and even these frequently broke or wore out and had to be replaced. Appropriate materials such as hides and lumber were not available in some districts to manufacture items such as ox plough harness, wagon tongues or neck yokes. Poorly made or faulty neck yokes could break going down a hill, and cattle could be injured if not killed. Other items struck from agents' estimates included lanterns, and tea kettles. Agents protested that Indians could not look after their cattle at night without lanterns and that not having proper kettles resulted in the waste of much time.[145]

Hayter Reed was not the slightest bit sympathetic to or moved by the objections and complaints of his agents, inspectors and commissioner. His uniform response was to dismiss their claims. Reed was aware of a "lack of sympathy" among agents and employees, but he was convinced that they all simply preferred to adopt the method that was easiest for themselves, and were inclined to be too lenient with the Indians.[146] "Naturally," Reed wrote to McGibbon, "Indians and their overseers prefer to take the method easiest for themselves, and it is only after a hard and long continued fight, that I am beginning to get the policy carried into effect."[147] Officials in the field, Reed believed, desired to make things as easy as possible for the Indians and consequently for themselves.[148] Indians naturally preferred to have machinery do their work for them.

Reed refused to give in to the "whims of Farmers and Indians", and advised that growing less grain or losing some of the crop was preferable to the use of machinery.[149] He did not believe however, that any grain should be lost by harvesting with hand implements. Reed felt that loss in yield was due entirely to the "half-heartedness" of employees.[150] With greater firmness they could manage to save their crop. If grain was being lost the solution was for the farmers to confine their acreages to what they could handle. Reed informed one official that "any loss suffered in the course of enforcing the policy will prove in the long

run true economy".[151] Supplementary hay, Reed naively assumed, could be acquired after harvesting, and he saw no conflict between the two operations.

Farm instructors were told not to meddle in the issue of machinery but to simply obey orders. Agents explained to all employees working in the fields with the Indians

> that it was their duty to set aside completely any opinions they might hold regarding the feasibility, etc., of carrying out this policy, and to act and speak always as if they had full confidence in the wisdom of getting the Indians to cut their grain by hand, and in the possibility of succeeding in doing so.[152]

Inspectors were instructed to neither convene or be present at meetings with Indian farmers, as this would give an "exaggerated importance" to their requests for machinery.[153] Instead they were to vigorously defend the department's policy and severely discourage labour-saving machinery. Political opposition to the peasant policy was also dismissed by Reed.

> It may distress one in opposition to the Government to see what he does not understand the reasons of, but I fancy if we were to pamper up Indians in idleness while we supply machinery to do their work, the opposition would soon give tongue to the distress occasioned by such a course.[154]

Department employees risked dismissal if they refused to comply with the peasant farming policy. Agent Finlayson of the Touchwood Hills agency was fired because he would not "make his Indians provide hay and harvest their crop without

the use of labour saving implements as the department is opposed to for Indian use".[155] Despite this powerful lever with which to enforce policy, Reed's policy showed signs of crumbling by the season of 1896. That year many disgruntled and angry agents defied orders and reverted to the use of machinery. At his Regina office, Forget was harangued by officials requesting permission to use machinery.[156] That season was subject to severe hailstorms. Seventy thousand acres of crop were destroyed in western Manitoba in one storm, and many settlers were hailed out near Regina.[157] It was of vital importance that the crop be cut as soon as it was ready. Forget granted permission to several agents to borrow or hire binders from settlers. He informed Reed that authority was granted only on the understanding that the agent

> make a bona fide effort to secure the whole crop, or as much of it as possible, by hand appliances and it is understood that only upon all such efforts failing to secure the crop with sufficient rapidity either on account of the state of the weather or the inadequacy of the workers, is the authority to employ machinery to be made use of.[158]

Some agents openly defied the peasant policy or only complied to a point during the harvest of 1896. Agent McDonald of Crooked Lakes stated that no efforts were made that season by himself or his staff to make the Indians harvest their grain without the aid of labour-saving machinery.[159] His reasons were that earlier attempts had failed, as he found the Indians became discouraged and would

not work. McDonald could simply not ask his larger farmers such as Gaddie, O'Soup, and Nepahpaness to do away with their machinery as they had large acreages under crop and all the necessary implements. The agent claimed to have honestly done his best to carry out the department's policy, but the Indians were "so far advanced" with such large acres of grain that he could make no headway. He had tried to get those with smaller crops to harvest by hand, but they always had someone with a binder cut their crop for them. Had he expressed "violent opposition to the Indians, I should only have achieved the result of making the smaller farmers so sullen, that they would have put in no crop at all, had they the prospect to cut it with a sickle, and the large farmers would have met me with contempt, and gone their own way, with a wide breach between us".[160] McDonald noted that the harvest of the season of 1896 amounted to over 9,000 bushels of wheat, as well as 3,500 bushels of oats, "which would have been impossible without implements".[161]

J.P. Wright, the Touchwood Hills agent, similarly admitted that the harvest in his agency was accomplished with the aid of labour-saving machinery.[162] Gordon and Poor Man's bands each owned a self-binder, and it was useless the agent claimed, to ask them to cut their grain with sickles and cradles for they would not do it. Wright reminded Reed, as all the agents did, that the Indians were always busy with their haying at harvest time and the grain had to be cut with as little delay as possible. Other agents in the

North West in 1896 claimed to have accomplished one-half or less of the harvest by hand methods before they were obliged to save the balance of the crop with machinery.[163] In 1897 however, Reed remained adamant.[164] The peasant policy was to be rigorously pursued. Although he admitted that where individual Indians had large crops, machinery to secure them might in some cases be necessary, he expected that a strong effort be made to carry out the policy for all others.

Agents' reports reveal glimpses of how Indian farmers reacted to the peasant farming policy. Many became angry and discouraged, some refused to work and gave up farming altogether. The channels for Indian protest during the 1890's were few. Grievances expressed to instructors and agents generally went no further. Inspectors were not allowed to hold audiences with the Indians. The published reports of agents and inspectors were to divulge only that "which it was desired the public should believe".[165] Visiting officials, journalists or other observers were taken to a few select agencies. When the Governor General planned a visit to the West in 1895, Reed arranged to have him visit only the most "advanced" reserves, such as the Crooked Lakes.[166] The August visit was to be hastily diverted elsewhere however, if the crops failed on the reserves.

An 1893 petition from the head men of the Pasquah and Muscowpetung bands, addressed to the House of Commons, succeeded in evading all obstacles and came to the attention

of officials in Ottawa.[167] The Indians resented the restrictions on their freedom, and the interference of the agent in all of their affairs. They were angry that they were not allowed to take their grain to the mill without the permission of the instructor. They claimed that families did not have an adequate supply of flour on hand, and the rations were not sufficient to support the old people unable to work. The Indians protested that when they worked for the agent or with the government herd of cattle they were paid only in poor quality beef or in the "grub and clothes rightfully belonging to us", but when they worked off the reserve they always got good pay. The petitioners believed they should be paid for the hay from the reserve used to feed the government herd, and for the timber used in the construction of government buildings. They protested the permit system.

> Whenever we have a chance to sell anything and make some money the Agent or Instructor steps in between us and the party who wants to buy, and says we have no power to sell: if this is to continue how will we be able to make a living and support ourselves? We are not even allowed to sell cattle that we raise ourselves.[168]

The petitioners asked for a binder, as it was too slow work taking off the grain with a cradle. The document stated that "the Commissioner objected to us buying a Binder as he said it would make the young men lazy".[169] The Indians claimed that "when we ask the Agent for farm implements he sends us to the Commissioner, and he in turn sends us back

to the Agent. This has completely discouraged us, as our old implements are worn out."[170] It was stated that "many of the fields we used to farm are now all grown over with grass".[171] Much of the blame for their problems was focused on the agent who had been with them for six years. The petition ended with the request that the present agent be removed, to be replaced by someone "with a human heart".

This petition received little attention; the allegations were dismissed and the document filed away and forgotten. Hayter Reed denied the legitimacy and of refuted the charges and grievances. Nothing in the provisions of Treaty Four he stated, assured government support for old people unable to work.[172] Friends and relatives were expected to care for the needy according to their ability. He explained that Indians were required to have permission to take their grain to the mill in order to prevent them from gristing what they should retain for seed or for flour later on. Reed could not see why the Indians resented maintaining a government herd that was kept for their benefit. They could "hardly expect" to be paid for hay and timber which was used in keeping up the agency which was there solely for their benefit. Reed vigorously defended the permit system which prevented the purchase of Indians' produce without the department's consent:

> Otherwise Indians would be defrauded, and would part with hay while their cattle was left to starve- grain and roots which they require for sustenance, etc. etc., squander the proceeds, and then come on the Government for support. Our

> object is to make them acquire the limit of stock to afford them an annual surplus to dispose of, meanwhile when they have a steer or other animal which can not be profitably kept longer they are allowed to sell. If left to their own discretion there would not be a head of stock left.[173]

As to complaints about a lack of machinery on the reserves, Reed referred to his latest circular letter outlining the policy relative to labour-saving implements. He described agent J.B. Lash as a "humane man", but one who possessed the firmness that was in the best interests of the Indians themselves.

Agent Lash claimed that the document did not represent the true state of affairs on the agency, and in the tradition of department officials, placed the blame on the sinister motives of one man.[174] This discredited all of the grievances. Lash believed the petition was the work of Thomas Stevenson who acted as interpreter. Stevenson was in "comfortable" circumstances, with a few cattle, horses, and implements, but he was bitter because according to Lash, his application for rations had been refused. Stevenson had been trying to make the Indians dissatisfied, and had been urging them to "send a Petition to Ottawa", hoping that by doing so Lash would be removed from his position. The Indians, Lash believed, simply wanted more rations and more cash for whatever they did.

The 1893 petition from the Pasquah and Muscowpetung Indians was dismissed, but in the 1890's this was not an isolated incident. Discontent over the peasant policy,

permit system, and other restrictions was more widespread. Also in 1893, the Dakota of the Oak River reserve in southwestern Manitoba began a protest over the same issues, and they succeeded in receiving wider attention.[175] The Oak River Dakota, pronounced by inspector Wadsworth to be "in the van of Indian farmers in this country" in 1891, had 540 acres under cultivation, 350 head of livestock, and they had acquired mowers and rakes, binders and a threshing machine.[176] All had been accomplished without the aid of a resident farm instructor, nor had they the opportunity to avail themselves of the original home farm program. A farm instructor was stationed on the reserve in 1891 however, and he began to attempt to carry out department policy with respect to labour-saving machinery. The permit system was also strictly implemented, so that control of the proceeds of the grain crop was taken out of the hands of the farmers. Instructor Scott was to see that no grain left the reserve without a permit. The department professed particular concern that certain individuals owed money to implement dealers. Three who were singled out as heavily in debt owed $214.00, $147.00, and $119.00 to Massey Harris.[177] Here and on other reserves, the permit system became a means of paying off these and other debts over the heads of the Indians. Grain buyers, when presented with a permit, were asked to pay a sum to the implement dealers, a sum to the instructor, and any balance to the Indians. From his fund,

the instructor was to pay certain bills, such as those for threshing rentals.

Residents of Oak River found the presence of the instructor and his regulations an unnecessary encumbrance on their freedom after years of handling their own financial affairs. Three Dakota visited Ottawa in 1893 to explain their grievances, and petitions and letters were sent to department officials. Their main objection was that the permit system discouraged their interest in farming, as they did not know what they got in return for their crops. They protested that they could not sell their grain without a permit, and they resented the farm instructor keeping some of the proceeds.[178] The Dakota received the standard response from the department; they were told they had no grounds for complaint and that they should obey their instructor who had their best interests in view. As usual, "outsiders" were blamed for fomenting discontent.[179] Department officials variously blamed the missionary at Oak River, another man believed to be scheming for the position of instructor on the reserve, and a Dakota from a neighboring reserve who was associated with the Presbyterian church.

The Dakota continued the protest however, by defying regulations and marketing their grain without permits. The department then took action against the grain buyers at Oak Lake who were fined for buying grain from Indians without permits. The buyers were enraged at this and at the entire

permit system which they felt turned them into collection agencies for Massey Harris.[180] The grain buyers were convinced that the government was working in the interests of the implement dealers, and the fact that the presiding magistrate at the grain buyers' convictions was the agent for Massey Harris at Griswold did little to allay their suspicions. At least one grain dealer threatened to instruct his agents not to buy wheat from Indians, with or without permits, as the best means of protecting the interests of his company.[181]

The Oak River residents succeeded in attracting the attention and sympathy of the Virden Chronicler, which demanded an investigation into the grievances of the Indians and the grain buyers about the permit system.[182] The citizens of Oak Lake, Griswold, and Oak River were reported to be "greatly incensed" over the actions of department officials. It was felt that the matter might assume serious proportions, "and we do not want another rebellion". The permit system, it was claimed, had become a source of annoyance and injury to the Indians, as they farmed their own land, worked hard all summer, yet through the "obnoxious order are not allowed the full benefit of the fruit of their labour. They are thus placed at a disadvantage in competition with their white and more highly civilized neighbors."[183] The Chronicler stated that the way in which permits were issued was very irregular and peculiar. Some of them read: "pay Indian $2.00, pay John Jones $3.00, and

pay the Massey Harris Co. balance of proceeds on sale of grain."[184] In this way, parties who purchased from Indians were turned into collection bureaus, the article continued. It was noted that in light of the recent convictions and fines, grain buyers had almost concluded not to purchase any more grain from Indians except at low rates: "an Indian's wheat is just as good as a white man's but dealers claim that by purchasing it, [they] are making themselves liable for prosecution."[185] The item concluded with the statement that

> White civilized men often find it annoying to have to submit to obnoxious regulations and Orders-in-Council and how much more so do the untutored children of the plains, who but a few short years ago, roamed at will over the prairies, knowing no master but their own sweet fancy.[186]

The Dakota continued to protest the permit system in 1894 with a letter and a petition. They also asked that the farm instructor be removed. They eventually persuaded officials to hold an investigation into their complaints. Citizens of Griswold were interviewed first. All declared that the permit system was decidedly in the interests of the Indians, and all spoke in favour of the farm instructor.[187] At two days of meetings held on the Oak River reserve, the residents were divided into two factions. The largest group of twenty-five supported the protest. A group of ten, led by Chief Pat, advocated compliance with the rules and regulations of the department. The complainants stated that they no longer cared whether or not they raised large crops

because they never knew what they got in return for them.[188] They admitted to selling their wheat without permits contrary to the rules of the department. One farmer defiantly stated that he relied on his own opinion when to sell, and that he would sooner give his grain away for pig feed than be governed by the permit system. Supporters of the department claimed that the others spoke nonsense, and that without the agent, instructor, and the regulations, there would be alcohol and murders on the reserve. They did not approve of the petitions, letters, and the visit to Ottawa as they knew all complaints should go through the agent.

On the basis of this inquiry, Wadsworth concluded that all evidence was in favour of the permit system and the farm instructor.[189] He believed the Dakota were attributing their distressed condition to their farm instructor and the permit system, when their debt burden, and series of poor crops were at the root of the problem. Once again, outside agitators were seen to be behind the protest. An outsider, in Wadsworth's opinion, gave the Dakota the idea they had "the right to dictate to the Department".[190] Wadsworth also believed that the Dakota were lazy, and that this was at the heart of the matter. The Indians would rather "trust to luck" than work if they could get out of it.[191]

The agent was instructed to read to the Oak River residents a letter from Hayter Reed informing them that the permit system was in their best interests, and that if the

department did not control their business affairs, they would only deteriorate.[192] Reed wanted the Dakota to know that the purchase of machinery on credit had adversely affected white settlers to the extent that laws were being considered to control sales on credit by implement dealers. Reed expressed strong disapproval of the protestors, for trying to find fault with their instructor, and for refusing obedience to lawful instruction. He asked the agitators to emulate the example set by Chief Pat, whose conduct was approved by the department.

The protest led by the Dakota was the most successful of the 1890's, but it led to no reconsideration or revamping of the permit system. Yet the 1893 Pasquah and Muscowpetung petition and the Dakota protest marked the beginning of a lengthy tradition of western Indian protest against this system. The consistent point of the protest was that the system curbed enthusiasm for farming among reserve residents. Along with severalty and peasant farming, the permit system further precluded Indians from commercial farming, as they could not buy, sell nor transact business. Indian farmers had no control over the marketing aspects of their economic strategies. It is clear that an eventual consequence of the permit system was that grain and stock buyers hesitated to do business with Indians.

Indians further to the east, where the permit system was in place earlier, began to protest well before the 1890's. In 1883, Indians at Long Sault objected to the

restrictions forbidding them to dispose of their surplus corn, potatoes, fish and hay.[193] The chief had ten sacks of potatoes in his cellar, rotting, which he could have sold. His son had offered to sell seventy bushels of potatoes to a lumbering camp but no one would purchase them because of the penalty they would incur. The potatoes were all frozen and lost. One chief maintained "that those restrictions have a tendency to discourage them from cultivating more land than is required to produce enough food for themselves and families".[194] Another stated that "they were told to cultivate the soil, and forbidden to sell the products of the same, consequently their young men would not engage in farming".[195]

The department's "kindly supervision" over the sale of the Indians' produce, seen as a regulation necessary for their welfare, raised considerable resentment, and led to a sense of despondency and defeat. Western Canadian Indian authors claim that the permit system, along with other regulations, created a listless and discouraged people: "Robbed of pride, independence and initiative, many willing and honest workers had been destroyed by the 'loaded gun' in the permit system meant to protect them. They usually assumed an outward attitude of indifference but underneath it they felt very deeply a sense of failure and the waste of their life."[196] Edward Ahenakew's fictional character "Old Keyam", tried to fit himself to the new ways in his youth, and knew success but he suddenly slackened all effort, and

ceased to work or to care.[197] ("Keyam", a Cree word with many shades of meaning has been interpreted as "I do not care" or "the hell with it".)[198] Old Keyam described how every man on the reserve had to go begging for a permit every time he wanted to sell even a load of hay.

> This may be 'kindly supervision', but it is most wretchedly humbling to many a worthy fellow to have to go, with assumed indifference to ask or beg for a permit to sell one load of hay that he has cut himself, on his own reserve, with his own horses and implements... what kind of policy is it that aims at bringing a people to a point of self-respect, and then by the nature of its regulations destroys the very thing for which it works... For myself, I think that I would rather starve than go to beg for such a trifling thing as a permit to sell one load of hay, while I am trying to make every hour of good weather count.[199]

Old Keyam resented the fact that Indians had to waste days in some cases, waiting to receive permits, while their families were short of food, or when they were in a hurry or busy. They might have driven miles from another reserve only to find the agent away. Several trips might have to be made before an Indian received a hearing. On some agencies, the permit system became a disciplinary device in the hands of the agent. An agent could refuse to grant a permit to an Indian he did not like, totally crippling his ability to buy needed implements, seed or stock.[200]

Resentment was particularly high over restrictions on the sale of cattle, which was also regulated by the permit system. It did not matter whether a man was destitute or owed money, he had no say over when or whether he could sell

or slaughter. As Old Keyam explained, this meant that the Indian with cattle but no ready money could not plan in the same way as a white man: "He is told that the commissioner has said that no cattle are to be sold until the fall. It is useless to plan under this system, yet planning is what successful work requires. He does not get the chance to practise the adjusting of his work to his means."[201] Old Keyam knew Indians who would not invest in cattle when they had money, say after a successful hunt, because the I.D. brand would be put on them, and once this happened, that would be the end of any say they had in the matter.

The few written sources available from the Indian point of view attest to a pattern of an initial positive response to farming with some success, that was eroded especially because of the weight of crippling regulations.[202] As Joe Dion wrote in My Tribe the Crees, it was "small wonder that the best men in our ranks eventually got discouraged and simply gave up trying because even the most humble wage earner will resist a domineering employer when his direct supervision gets to be a hindrance rather than an asset."[203] Dion believed that because of the permit system and other regulations the cattle business on his reserve died and farming was discontinued entirely by many. The Indians could voice little objection because they had no channel for their grievances. They could adopt however, a policy of passive resistance, non-cooperation, apathy or disinterest. It has been suggested that this was a tactic pursued by

reserve residents.[204] It began not immediately after the treaties, but some years later, after concerted efforts by many to accommodate to agriculture.

Few Canadians had knowledge of actual conditions on reserves. Eventually all "trespassing" on reserves by all non-residents was prohibited, and whatever information was released was carefully pruned.[205] Missionary John McDougall, who had the opportunity to observe the regime of the reserve, was clearly outraged when he spoke on this topic in 1902.[206] He described the wretched living conditions and went on to say

> Then on top of all this are his limitations if he is a treaty Indian. He cannot visit a friend on a neighboring reserve without a permit. He cannot go to the nearest market town unless provided with a permit. In what was his own country and on his own land he cannot travel in peace without a permit. He cannot buy and sell without a permit. He may raise cattle but he cannot sell them unless the government official allows. He may cultivate the soil but he is not the owner of his own produce. He cannot sell firewood or hay from the land that is his by Divine and citizen right, and thus reap the result of his own industry unless subject to the caprice or whim of one who often becomes an autocrat. Said an Indian to me a few days since "I raise cattle, they are not mine, my wood I cannot sell- my own hay I cannot do what I would with- I cannot even do as I like with the fish I may catch. How can I become a man?" This was the cry of one who was born in absolute liberty. Another said "The Farm Instructor owns more than half of any Indian who lives here. We are not men we are slaves." The Indian has become the victim of excessive government regulations. In this case paternalism has been carried to a criminal extreme. Independence and manhood have been most awfully discounted.[207]

The motivations behind the severalty and peasant farming policies had very little to do with the encouragement of agriculture on the reserves. Hayter Reed's central concern was to further erode the Indians' land base until eventually reserves were abolished altogether. Severalty was a short-cut policy, through which Reed hoped to accelerate the process of Indian enfranchisement, which meant the end of reserves. Severalty would confine the Indians within circumscribed boundaries, and their "surplus" land could be defined and sold. The veneration of private property, self-sufficiency, and individual initiative gave severalty its veneer of humanitarianism, and allowed many to believe that what was being done was in the best interests of the Indian. The convenient doctrine that the Indians must be taught to farm was once again drawn upon to justify divesting the Indians of their land. The Indians saw through the rhetoric and attempted to oppose severalty, realizing that what was at stake was their land. The peasant farming policy served to justify severalty as it would demonstrate that Indians could indeed subsist on small plots of land without modern methods or equipment. To encourage or enhance farming under Western conditions was clearly not at the basis of this policy. The agents reported that the program was not feasible, given the geographic and climatic conditions of the prairies. It was clear that the simple farming life of the individualistic, self-sufficient yeoman would not have a significant part in

the future of the West. Farmers were having to adopt the costly technology, large acreages, and dry land techniques that Western conditions demanded, or be left behind permanently. Yet as with earlier programs, officials and politicians could readily fall back on a host of widely-accepted myths about the Indians' supposed cultural unsuitability for farming to account for "failure" or tardy progress.

1. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 22, no. 16 (1888), p. 28.

2. John S. Milloy, "The Early Indian Acts: Developmental Strategy and Constitutional Change", in Getty and Lussier, p. 58.

3. Ibid., p. 57.

4. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", p. 45.

5. Milloy, "The Early Indian Acts", p. 59.

6. Ibid., p. 62.

7. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", p. 44.

8. Ibid., p. 47.

9. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), p. x.

10. The Historical Development of the Indian Act, p. 77.

11. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", p. 45.

12. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 12, no. 7 (1878), p. 6.

13. Ibid., p. 65.

14. Kenneth J. Tyler, "A Tax-eating Proposition: The History of the Passpasschase Indian Reserve", (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1979), p. 114.

15. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3774, file 37,060, Dewdney to superintendent general, 9 February, 1887.

16. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3806, file 52,332, Reed to superintendent general, 27 October, 1888.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 24, no. 18 (1890), p. xxviii.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., vol 23, no. 12 (1889), p. lx.

22. Ibid., vol. 24, no. 18 (1890), p. xxvii.

23. Ibid., vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), pp 165-6.

24. Ibid., p. x and p. 166.

25. Ibid., vol. 24, no. 18 (1890), p. 136.

26. Ibid., vol 23, no. 12 (1889), p. x.

27. Ibid., p. lx.

28. PAC, RG 10, deputy superintendent letterbooks, Vankoughnet to Dewdney, Nov. 1889.

29. Journal (Ottawa), 20 June, 1889.

30. Courier (Moosomin), 13 March, 1890.

31. CHC, Sessional Papers), vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), p. lx.

32. Courier, 13 March, 1890.

33. Citizen, November, 1890.

34. Dippie, p. 160.

35. Loring B. Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren: The Reformation of United States Indian Policy, 1865-1887, (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), p. 126.

36. R.W. Mardock, The Reformers and the American Indian, (University of Missouri Press, 1971), p. 213.

37. Dippie, p. 162.

38. Ibid., p. 163.

39. Priest, p. 232.

40. Dippie, p. 163.

41. Priest, p. 217.

42. Dippie, p. 190.

43. Clyde A. Milner II, With Good Intentions: Quaker Work Among the Pawnees, Otos, and Omahas in the 1870's, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 197.

44. The Red Man, (Carlisle, P.A.), p. 197.

45. Tyler, "The Passpasschase Reserve", p. 114.

46. Ibid.

47. Morris, p. 332.

48. Tyler, pp. 151-154.

49. PAC, Reed Papers, vol. 21, large letterbook, no. 94, Reed to Vankoughnet, November, 1889.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., no. 200, Reed to Reynolds, 2 May, 1890.

52. Ibid., vol. 15, no. 1598, Vankoughnet to Reed, 13 November, 1889.

53. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), p. 166.

54. Ibid., p. 302 and PAC, RG 10, vol. 3811, file 55,152-1, Reed to Indian agents, 19 November, 1889.

55. Ibid.

56. It is not clear precisely how much land in total each head of family or child was to receive under the severalty plan, or exactly how much land was to remain common property. In 1890 Reed suggested that the quantity of land to which an Indian may be entitled under Section 16 of the bill to amend the Indian Act be increased from 100 to 120 acres as the subdividions by survey contained 40 acres each. This likely means that under the severalty plan each family of five was entitled to 120 acres. Treaty Four allowed one square mile for each family of five. See PAC, RG 10, deputy superintendent general letterbooks, vol. 1102, Vankoughnet to Dewdney, 1 March, 1890.

57. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3811, file 55,152-1, Reed to Vankoughnet, 3 July, 1889.

58. Ibid., Reed to Indian agents, 19 November, 1889.

59. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), p. 302.

60. Ibid., vol. 26, no. 14 (1892), p. 222.

61. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3811, file 55,152-1, Reed to Indian agents, 19 November, 1889.

62. Ibid.

63. PAC, RG 10, deputy superintendent letterbooks, vol. 1114, p. 107, Reed to Indian agent, Battleford, 24 November, 1893.

64. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3806, file 52,332, Vankoughnet to Reed, n.d. 1888.

65. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3811, file 55,152-1, Reed to Vankoughnet, 30 July, 1891.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., John R. Hall to Vankoughnet, 1 December, 1891.

69. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3811, file 55,152-1, Reed to Vankoughnet, 14 June, 1890.

70. Ibid., memorandum, 25 June, 1890.

71. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3854, file 79,422, Reed to Nelson, n.d. 1891.

72. Ibid.

73. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3835, file 65,911, Nelson to Dewdney, 31 November, 1889.

74. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3579, file 619 pt. 2, Nelson to Reed, 8 July, 1889.

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76. Ibid., Reed to McDonald, 10 July, 1889.

77. Ibid., McDonald to Reed, 15 July, 1889.

78. Ibid.

79. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), p. 304.

80. Ibid., vol. 23, no. 18 (1890), p. 136.

81. Ibid., p. 136 and vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), p. 307.

82. Ibid., vol. 24, no. 18 (1890), p. 146.

83. Ibid., p. 147.

84. Ibid., p. 136.

85. PAC, RG 10, Reed Papers, vol. 12, no. 421, Dewdney to Reed, 16 Jul, 1891.

86. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3959, file 141,977-4 and 141,977-7.

87 PAC, RG 10, vol 3561, file 82 pt. 4, J.A. Sutherland to J. McKenna, 14 June, 1904.

88. Ibid.

89. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12 (1889), p. 162.

90. Ibid., vol. 25, no. 14 (1891), p. 193.

91. Ibid.

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93. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, "Address", p. 28.

94. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 26, no. 14 (1892), p. 48.

95. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3964, file 148,285, Reed to Amédée Forget, 24 August, 1896.

96. PAC, RG 10, Reed Papers, vol. 13, no. 869, Alex McGibbon to Reed, 16 March, 1891.

97. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3793, file 46,062, Reed to Dewdney, 11 April, 1888.

98. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3746, file 29,690-3, Reed to superintendent general, 30, September, 1886.

99. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3908, file 107,243, Reed to agent Markle, March, 1895 and CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 25, no. 14 (1891), p. xvii.

100. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3964, file 148,285, Reed to Forget, 24 August, 1896.

101 The Historical Development of the Indian Act, pp. 64-69.

102. CHC, Sessional Papers, vol. 25, no. 14 (1891), p. xviii

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127. PAC, Reed Papers, vol. 14, Reed to T.M. Daly, 10 March, 1893.

128. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3964, file 148,285, Chas. De Cases to Reed, 19 Novmeber, 1896.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid., W.S. Grant to Reed, 1 October, 1896.

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132. PAC, Reed Papers, vol. 13, no. 869, McGibbon to Reed, 16 March, 1891.

133. Ibid.

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135. PAC, Reed Papers, vol. 14, no. 989, R.S. McKenzie to Reed, 16 December, 1890.

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137. Ibid., Grant to Reed, 1 October, 1896.

138. Ibid., J.J. Campbell to Reed, 8 October, 1896.

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146. Ibid., vol. 14, no. 1206, Reed to McGibbon, 7 November, 1891.

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166. Ibid., vol. 1117, p. 319, Reed to Forget, 20 July, 1895.

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172. Ibid., vol. 14, no. 1353, Reed to Daly, 13 March, 1893.

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177. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3908, file 107,243, agent Markle to Reed, 25 November, 1893.

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183. Ibid.

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# CHAPTER VIII

## AN OPPORTUNITY LOST

The Laurier Liberals were fortunate to win the election of 1896 just at the dawn of a new age of prosperity in Canada. Conditions favourable to the realization of the National Policy of industrialization, east-west railway traffic, and western settlement, had at long last come into being. The end of a drought cycle ushered in a period of greater rainfall on the prairies. In the "wheat boom" of the first decade of the new century, the hard spring wheat of the West became the leading export staple of the Canadian economy. As the frontier of free homestead land closed in the United States, the Canadian prairies became the site of the last great land rush of North American history. There was a dramatic rise in land values on the prairie and an increased interest in the Indian lands of Western Canada. Indian farmers of the West had little place in this new age of prosperity. By the turn of the century agriculture did not form the basis of a stable reserve economy, and after that date the likelihood of this faded even further, as the new administrators of Indian Affairs promoted land surrenders, which further limited the agricultural capacity of reserves. As in the 1870's, Indians were encouraged to

sell their land as a means of acquiring the necessities to begin a life of agriculture.

The central aim of Indian administration under the Liberals was to keep expenses at an absolute minimum, to centralize operations in Ottawa, and to see that patronage was extended to Liberals rather than Conservatives.[1] Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior and superintendent general of Indian Affairs immediately began overhauling Indian administration in the interests of efficiency and economy by slashing budgets, dismissing personnel and reducing salaries. Farm instructors for example, who had earned up to $600.00 were reduced to a range of between $300.00 and $480.00 per annum.[2]

One of Sifton's first actions was to place the Department of the Interior and Indian Affairs under a single deputy minister, dismissing deputies A.M. Burgess and Hayter Reed, a move that was not then customary practice on the part of an incoming minister.[3] Thus abruptly ended Reed's career in the civil service. He was given the humiliating choice of a lower position or superannuation. Reed chose the latter, and from July 1, 1897, was placed upon the retired list, at the age of only forty-eight. "His services", Reed later bemoaned, "were dispensed with much against my consent, while I was in the prime of life and in good health of mind and body."[4] Reed appealed to Laurier who replied that he could not interfere in the organization of the department, and that his minister must exercise his

own judgement.[5] Laurier counselled Reed that "if you were to take the advice of a friend, I would think that you would serve your interest by quietly acquiescing".[6] In 1905, Reed found employment as manager-in-chief of the Canadian Pacific Railway's hotel department.

Many of the new faces appointed to posts in Indian Affairs were, like Sifton, residents of the West, but they were not by virtue of this more knowledgeable about or tolerant of Indians. Indians were viewed by some merely as obstacles to western development, and some believed that programs which aimed at "educating and elevating" the Indians were foolhardy.[7] James A. Smart, a political friend of Sifton, was placed in charge of the department of Indian Affairs and the Interior. Smart was a Brandon hardware merchant who was also involved in real estate, insurance and the loans business.[8] He knew nothing about Indians.[9] The amalgamation of the two departments under one head tended to reinforce the view of Indians only in the context of western development, although in 1902, Indian Affairs was once again given its own deputy superintendent general when Frank Pedley, a Toronto lawyer, was appointed. Other new men in the department had "little direct contact with Indians, and most were relatively unsympathetic, if not 'hardline' in their attitudes".[10]

The encouragement of agriculture on reserves was not completely ignored under the Liberal administration. It was during the Laurier years that the File Hills Colony, an

experiment in farming and social engineering, won even international recognition.[11] This program, begun in 1901, was due to the inspiration of W.M. Graham, agent for the Qu'Appelle agency which included the former File Hills and Muscowpetung agencies.[12] Carefully selected graduates of residential schools were settled on assigned tracts of land on the Peepeekeesis reserve in the File Hills. The colony was established to counteract what was known as "regression": the tendency of students to lapse into their "old habits" once they returned to their parents and to the reserve.[13] Colonists were to have no contact with "traditional" Indians, and interaction between the colonists was carefully monitored to detect any backsliding into traditional ways. Indian dances and ceremonies were forbidden and colonists were to use the English language only. To take the place of Indian celebrations, annual fairs and exhibitions were organized, and baseball teams and a brass band were also intended to provide alternatives to traditional forms of recreation. At the File Hills branch of the Farmers' Institute lectures on agricultural topics were sponsored. By 1907 there were twenty farming families in the colony and it was regarded as a great success. The colony was "touted" in the press, and hailed by visiting officials from other parts of Canada and beyond as a sterling illustration of the success of the Canadian system.[14]

The attention that the department and church groups lavished on the File Hills colony was atypical but because

visiting officials and journalists were directed to the colony, the unfortunate impression left with the public was that the agricultural economy of the Indians was relatively prosperous. The major preoccupation of Indian Affairs administrators was not with promoting agriculture, but with inducing Indians to surrender substantial portions of their reserves, a policy which ran counter to efforts to create a stable agricultural economy on reserves. Under the Laurier government, the Indian Act was amended to facilitate the surrender of reserve land. A 1906 amendment allowed the government to distribute in cash up to 50% of the purchase price the land, from a former ceiling of 10%.[15] The reasoning behind the department's policy on land surrenders was explained in 1908.

> So long as no particular harm nor inconvenience accrued from the Indians' holding vacant lands out of proportion to their requirements, and no profitable disposition thereof was possible, the department firmly opposed any attempt to induce them to divest themselves of any part of their reserves.
> Conditions, however, have changed, and it is now recognized that where Indians are holding tracts of farming or timber lands beyond their possible requirements and by so doing seriously impeding the growth of settlement, and there is such a demand as to ensure profitable sale, the product of which can be invested for the benefit of the Indians and relieve pro tanto the country of the burden of their maintenance, it is in the best interest of all concerned to encourage such sales.[16]

Not all department officials were in favour of an unrestrained, comprehensive program of reserve land surrender. David Laird, Indian commissioner, often opposed specific

surrenders on the grounds that the residents required the timber, hay or farm land they were asked to give up.[17] Laird believed in general, however, that reserve lands were "much in excess" of what the Indians could profitably use "even when their maximum working power was reached".[18] Sifton himself was reluctant at least publicly to give in to pressure to surrender Indian land, insisting that the government's role was to act as trustee for the Indians.[19] His attitude did not prevent those beneath him, such as Smart and Pedley, from speculating in Indian lands, even while acting as the supposed representative of the Indians.[20]

There were those in Indian administration, such as Frank Oliver, appointed superintendent general of Indian Affairs in 1905, who were in favour of the wholesale alienation of reserve land. Oliver even originally hoped reserve land could be thrown open for settlement without the consent of the Indians.[21] During his term of office, bands across the North West were pressured to surrender, and hundreds of thousands of acres were alienated.[22] It was Oliver who introduced the 1906 amendment to the Indian Act which permitted the distribution of 50% of the purchase price, a measure he predicted would accelerate the surrender process. In 1911, two amendments introduced by Oliver gave the department even greater powers of coercion. The most controversial was section 49a, known as the "Oliver Act",

which permitted the removal of Indians from any reserve next to a town of 8,000 or more inhabitants.[23]

Oliver had a low estimate of the potential of Indians; he believed they would never be "civilized", would never profitably use their land, and he was convinced their presence in areas of settlement retarded the progress of a district. Oliver believed it was useless to try to make farmers out of Indians.[24] The Edmonton Bulletin, Oliver's newspaper, campaigned from the 1880's for the removal of Indians from areas of settlement. In 1901 for example, the Bulletin welcomed the surrender of the Passpasschase reserve.

> The lesson of this reserve may very well be applied to the case of others similarly situated. The Indians make no practical use of the reserves which they hold. Where the land is good and well situated for market white men can turn it to much better account than the Indians do. A township in a good hunting country and near a fishing lake is more valuable to the Indians than a township of fine agricultural land near a railway station. It is a loss to the country to have such lands lying idle in the hands of the Indians when white men want to use them and are willing to pay for them. It is a loss to the Indian to compel him to remain in uncongenial surroundings to which he cannot adapt himself when he has the opportunity to remove to congenial surroundings, and by the sale of the land ensure himself a comfortable annuity.[25]

These sentiments received widespread support from farmers, townspeople, merchants, railroad executives, newspaper men and speculators. All those with a stake in the expansion of agriculture were interested in reducing the size of Indian landholdings. Reserves were viewed as

barriers to prosperity because it appeared the residents made no practical use of their land. It was widely believed that Indians held land out of proportion to the number of occupants. Large tracts of "idle", "unused", "excess" or "surplus" land were seen as retarding influences on the economic development of a district, especially when these tracts were first-class agricultural lands and were situated close to railways.

It was reasoned that land sales were in the best interests of the Indians as well. The notion that the reserve prevented assimilation gained strength after 1900.[26] It was felt that Indians could be more easily drawn into the mainstream of Canadian society if they were removed from the isolation and protection of the reserves. In the case of some surrenders, such as the Coté surrender of the Kamsack townsite, it was argued that it was in the Indians' interest that they be close to an active, prosperous railway town with a well-established market, as the Indians would have to learn to make their living in the same way as other settlers.[27] In other circumstances however, as in the case of the Roseau River reserve in Manitoba, it was claimed that Indians should occupy isolated territory where they would not be tempted to drift into the settlements.[28]

Surrender was presented as being in the best interests of the Indians because funds could be created from the sale of land. These funds could alleviate distress on the reserves and further relieve the country of the burden of

supporting Indians. An incentive held out to the Indians was that if they disposed of their excess property, they would be able to obtain the means to become farmers. Indians were assured that with the money from land surrenders they could buy the machinery and horses required to start farming on a large scale.[29] It was proposed to the Coté Indians for example, that the money from the surrender be used to outfit young men willing and able to farm.[30] The cost of each outfit would eventually be repaid to the band, providing a perpetual source of farm outfits. Ten years after the surrender, a new agent to the Coté band urged that a further surrender of land was required as the only way "to get these men in good shape again".[31] The surrender of more land would place the Indians further from the bad influence of the town it was reasoned, and the Indians would be able to work together communally at farming tasks.

Indian resistance to surrender was generally pronounced and adamant to begin with but was broken down through a variety of tactics. There were factions; bands were rarely unanimously in favour of surrender. Much discontent was deflected by the lure of immediate cash payment, the prospect of paying off debts, raising the standard of living, aiding the aged and infirm, and acquiring the means with which to farm.[32] In some cases not just one but a number of votes were taken on the reserve, until the desired results were achieved.

In the Qu'Appelle district of Treaty Four many thousands of acres of reserve land were surrendered. (See Figure 1 and Table 4.) Most negotiations were handled by W.M. Graham, who was enthusiastic in his pursuit of reserve land surrender. Graham was certain that Indian reserve agriculture would never expand greatly and for this reason Indians could well afford to surrender extensive tracts.[33] Graham obtained large surrenders from the Pasquah and Muscowpetung bands in 1906 and 1909, and he eventually succeeded in securing surrenders of portions of the Crooked Lakes reserves, a goal long sought by local non-natives.

Pressure for the surrender of portions of the Crooked Lakes reserves, which began in 1886, continued throughout the 1890's. Agent McDonald's consistent response to such pressure was that the land coveted by the settlers, the southern boundary near the CPR line, contained the best hay land for the bands, and that no amount of cash could adequately recompense them for the loss of this land.[34] Pressure intensified after 1896 with a new government in power, and a new agent at Crooked Lakes. In the Indian Affairs file dealing with the surrender is a sheet of "Rideau Club, Ottawa" stationery, dated February 5, 1899, on which an anonymous cipher calculated the amount of land each Crooked Lake chief was "entitled" to.[35] It was reckoned that Ochapawace for example was entitled to twenty-four square miles. Twenty-eight square miles of the reserve could be sold and this would still leave the residents with

sixty-four square miles. The statistician was likely R.S. Lake, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the North West Territories, who approached Sifton in 1899 about the surrender of a three mile strip along the southern boundary of the Crooked Lakes reserves.

Lake's figures were investigated by A.W. Ponton, who found them correct according to the census of 1898, as the population of the bands had greatly decreased since the reserves were first set aside.[36] Ponton recommended that Lake's suggestion be adopted as he believed the Indians were not benefited by the land, that it was altogether unoccupied, and that "while it remains tied up, settlement of the large agricultural district lying south of the railway is prevented owing to the lack of market towns between Whitewood and Grenfell."[37] McDonald's replacement at Crooked Lakes, agent Wright, felt the surrender unwise for the same reasons as his predecessor, but he was about to experiment with the cultivation of brome grass as a substitute for hay, and felt that if this succeeded, the Indians might agree to surrender, as they would no longer have to haul hay from the south.[38]

In 1902, the residents of Broadview, Whitewood and surrounding district submitted a petition with two hundred signatures requesting the sale of a three mile strip along the southern boundary of the Crooked Lakes reserves to "actual settlers".[39] The petitioners claimed that the reserves severely retarded the development of their towns,

that the Indians occupied land in excess of their requirements, that no use was made of the three mile strip as no one resided there, and that the land was not used for either hunting or agricultural purposes. The department replied that it would do its best to procure the consent of the Indians to a surrender.[40]

David Laird discussed the question of surrender with residents of Crooked Lakes in the spring of 1902. He found the Indians "strongly opposed to surrendering any portion of their reserves".[41] Many clearly remembered that Laird was present when Treaty Four was signed almost thirty years earlier. Chief Kakewistahaw, over ninety years old, remembered Laird well.

> When we made the treaty at Qu'Appelle you told me to choose out land for myself and now you come to speak to me here. We were told to take this land and we are going to keep it. Did I not tell you a long time ago that you would come some time, that you would come and ask me to sell you this land back again, but I told you at that time. No.[42]

Others also expressed the concept of the reserve as land set aside under the terms of solemn treaties, to be handed down inviolate and in trust.[43] A member of Ochapawace's band remembered that at Qu'Appelle Laird had "advised our chief and all of us to take up land and bring up our people on the land. When our chief died he left us instructions to look after the reserve... we cannot consent to part with any of it".[44] One spokesman stated that "the quantity you have asked us for is the only decent farming land on my reserve

and I don't think any of my partners will agree to the sale of any of it".[45] Another informed the Indian commissioner that his reserve was small enough. Laird admitted that the surrender of the southern portion of the reserves would mean the loss of the best of their land.[46]

The pressure for surrender did not ease however. In June, 1906, W.M. Graham returned from a meeting at Crooked Lakes convinced that if he had the papers and cash handy, he could have secured a surrender.[47] According to Graham the residents were interested because they had heard that Pasquah's band had received a good cash payment for surrendering land. In January, 1907, Graham obtained the surrender of 53,985 acres from the Cowesses and Kakewistahaw bands.[48] Each surrender required a number of meetings before a majority signed the documents. Graham described those in opposition as "non-progressive", while those in favour were "very intelligent".[49] In his report to his superior Graham stated that the people of Broadview were delighted: "As you are aware this land lying idle has been a great drawback to these towns and they have been trying for years to bring about a surrender."[50]

There were other means, aside from land surrenders, through which reserve land was eroded as the twentieth century proceeded. The "greater production campaign", launched in 1918, was designed to increase food production for the war effort by intensively cultivating the largest possible area of "unused" reserve land on the prairie, and

by investing Indian bands' "idle funds" in the scheme.[51] W.M. Graham was a major architect of this scheme and he was appointed commissioner for Greater Production for the prairie provinces. A 1918 amendment to the Indian Act allowed the superintendent general to lease uncultivated reserve lands for this patriotic purpose without a surrender, or the consent of the band members.[52] This was the cause of much resentment among reserve residents; in some cases the Indians hastened to fence their land, as it could then not be considered unused, and would prevent leasing.[53] The rationale for the policy was that Indians were reluctant or unwilling to cultivate or otherwise productively use their land. Arthur Meighen, superintendent general of Indian Affairs from 1917-20, explained the 1918 amendment to the Indian Act.

> The Indian Reserves of Western Canada embrace very large areas far in excess of what they are utilizing now for productive purposes... We would only be too glad to have the Indian use this land if he would; production by him would be just as valuable as production by anybody else. But he will not cultivate this land, and we want to cultivate it; that is all. We shall not use it any longer than he shows a disinclination to cultivate the land himself.[54]

When asked in the House how reserve residents would fare if some of their best lands were expropriated for the scheme Meighen replied that "I do not think we need waste any time in sympathy for the Indian, for I am pretty sure his interests will be looked after by the Commissioner."[55] A further amendment allowed the department to spend band funds

for public works to "improve productivity" without the consent of the Indians.[56]

Under the greater production scheme, individual Indians were encouraged to increase their crop production, reserve land was leased to non-Indians for cultivation or grazing, and on some reserves such as Crooked Lakes and Muscowpetung, "greater production farms" were established. These farms were managed by the department agents, using Indian labour and Indian farm machinery. The project was plagued by problems of mismanagement, and the financial returns were not impressive. The experiment was phased out after 1921 with the fall of the Meighen administration. Graham however, was allowed to retain 400 acres of the Muscowpetung reserve as an experimental farm. Officials also resolved to end further leases of reserve land as these tracts were very often "neglected, abused and rendered useless".[57]

After the First World War, Indians were induced to surrender reserve land, 60,000 acres in Saskatchewan alone, because of the terms of the Soldier Settlement Act which empowered the Soldier Settlement Board to acquire by means of "compulsory purchase" any agricultural land in areas where "lands remain underdeveloped, and agriculture is being retarded".[58] The department of Indian Affairs resolved to seek further surrenders of reserve land for settlement by non-Indian veterans.[59] Under the threat of expropriation, many Indian bands surrendered their "underdeveloped" land. In the summer of 1919, Graham launched a concerted campaign

to procure Indian reserve land for the Soldier Settlement Board. He finally succeeded that year in securing the surrender of southern sections of the Ochapawace reserve. The Indians of this Crooked Lakes reserve had consistently resisted surrender, even when as in 1907, they were offered nearly three times as much money as the neighbouring reserves.[60]

Indian veterans were not treated in the same way as other returning soldiers. Land was not purchased for them under the Soldier Settlement Act. Instead a new addition to the Indian Act in 1919 empowered the superintendent general to grant location tickets for reserve land to Indian veterans, without acquiring band council assent.[61] In this way the amount of reserve land held in common was further eroded. Compulsory enfranchisement, enacted in 1920, modified two years later, but reenacted in 1933, also eroded reserve land. Enfranchised Indians received title to a share of reserve land, further dwindling the amount of land under band control. The goal of Indian Affairs administrators was to abolish reserves. As Duncan Campbell Scott succinctly stated in 1920,

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department.[62]

With the erosion of Indian land after 1896, the possibility that reserves could become stable agrarian communities became ever more remote. The reserves remained pockets of rural poverty. Twentieth century visitors to reserves found Indians living in some cases in the midst of fine farm land that was not cultivated at all, was leased to non-natives, or worked with obsolete methods and technology.[63] It appeared that despite years of government programs and the best efforts of farm instructors and agents, Indians stubbornly clung to the past and remained impervious to "progressive" influences. It was concluded that Indians lacked industry and that it was not in their nature to farm. Their "failure" to farm was the result of personal weakness, as they were shiftless, and did not like physical drudgery. These observations, which differed little from the perceptions of Victorian Canadians, were reflected in the histories that have been written until very recently. The Indians' initial positive response to agriculture, evident in the years 1874-1897 was obscured and forgotten. The role of Canadian government policy in restricting, limiting, and destroying reserve agriculture was equally obscured and forgotten.

1. D.J. Hall, "Clifford Sifton and Canadian Indian Administration, 1896-1905, "Prairie Forum, 2, no. 2 (1977), p. 129.

2. Ibid., p. 132.

3. Ibid., p. 129.

4. PAC, Reed Papers, no. 42225, Reed to Wilfrid Laurier, 9 February, 1900.

5. McCord Museum, Reed Papers, Laurier to Reed, 24 February, 1897.

6. Ibid.

7. Tyler, "The Passpasschase Reserve", p. 158n.

8. Tyler and Wright Research Consultants Ltd., "The Alienation of Indian Reserve Lands During the Administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1896-1911", no. 4, The St. Peter's Reserve, unpublished report prepared for the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1978, p. 21.

9. Hall, p. 130.

10. Ibid.

11. Frederick H. Abbott, The Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada, (Washington: n.p., 1915), p. 55.

12. E. Brian Titley, "W.M. Graham: Indian Agent Extra-ordinaire", Prairie Forum, 8, no. 1 (1983).

13. Ibid., p. 27.

14. Ibid., p. 28.

15. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", p. 49.

16. Historical Development of the Indian Act, p. 107.

17. Lupul, p. 31.

18. Historical Development of the Indian Act, p. 108.

19. Hall, p. 142.

20. Tyler and Wright, pp. 40-74.

21. Hall, p. 142.

22. Tyler, "The Passpasschase Reserve", p. 159.

23. E. Brian Titley, A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), p. 21.

24. Ibid., p. 158n.

25. Quoted in Tyler, p. 156, Bulletin (Edmonton), 28 October, 1901, p. 2.

26. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", pp. 48-9

27. Stewart Raby, "Indian Land Surrenders in Southern Saskatchewan", The Canadian Geographer, 17, no. 1 (1973), p. 40.

28. Hall, p. 143.

29. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3560, file 81, pt. 8, J. Carruthers to Laird, 25 January, 1904.

30. Ibid.

31. Raby, p. 42.

32. Ibid., pp. 42-46.

33. Ibid., p. 41.

34. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3732, file 26,623, McDonald to Dewdney, 10 March, 1891.

35. Ibid., "Rideau Club, Ottawa" note, 25 February, 1899.

36. Ibid., A.W. Ponton to J. McKenna, 17 February, 1899.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., Laird to superintendent general, 22 April, 1899.

39. Ibid., Petition from the residents of Broadview and Whitewood, 1902.

40. Ibid., J.D. McLean to Rev. J.G. Stephens, 2 April, 1902.

41. Ibid., Laird to McLean, 6 May, 1902.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., W.M. Graham to Frank Oliver, 19 June, 1906.

48. Ibid., Graham to McLean, 18 February, 1907.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Titley, A Narrow Vision, p. 40.

52. Historical Development of the Indian Act, p. 113.

53. Sluman and Goodwill, p. 121.

54. Historical Development of the Indian Act, pp. 112-3.

55. Quoted in Titley, A Narrow Vision, p. 41.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., p. 42.

58. Lupul, p. 36.

59. Titley, A Narrow Vision, p. 46.

60. PAC, RG 10, vol. 3732, file 26,623, Graham to McLean, 18 February, 1907.

61. Historical Development of the Indian Act, p. 114.

62. Quoted in Ibid., p. 115.

63. Hawthorne, pp. 57-58, pp. 159-160.

# APPENDIX

## Department of Indian Affairs Officials

### Superintendents General of Indian Affairs

| | |
|---|---|
| John A. Macdonald | 1878-1883 (and 1887) |
| Edgar Dewdney | 1888-1892 |
| T.M. Daly | 1892-1896 |
| Hugh J. Macdonald | 1896 |
| Clifford Sifton | 1896-1905 |
| Frank Oliver | 1905-1911 |
| R. Rogers | 1911-1912 |
| W.J. Roche | 1912-1917 |
| Arthur Meighen | 1917-1920 |

### Deputy Superintendents General of Indian Affairs

| | |
|---|---|
| Laurence Vankoughnet | 1874-1893 |
| Hayter Reed | 1893-1897 |
| James A. Smart | 1897-1902 |
| Frank Pedley | 1902-1913 |
| D.C. Scott | 1913-1932 |

### Indian Commissioner

| | |
|---|---|
| Edgar Dewdney | 1879-1888 |
| Hayter Reed | 1888-1893 |
| Amédée Forget | 1893-1897 |
| David Laird | 1897-1909 |

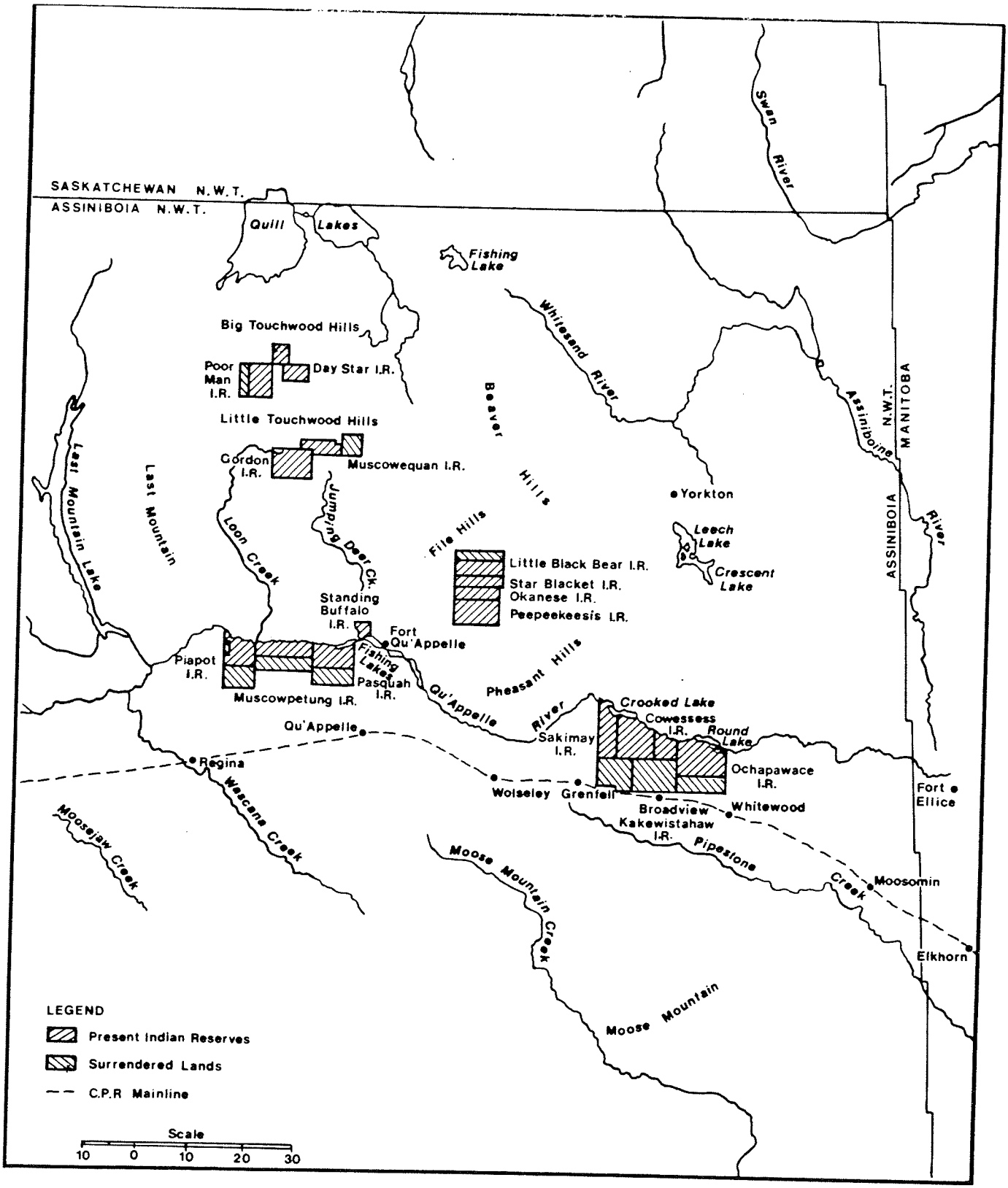



Figure 1: The Touchwood Hills, File Hills, Muscowpetung and Crooked Lakes Agencies.

Source: Stewart Raby, "Indian Land Surrenders in Southern Saskatchewan". The Canadian Geographer, 17, no. 1 (1973), p. 38.

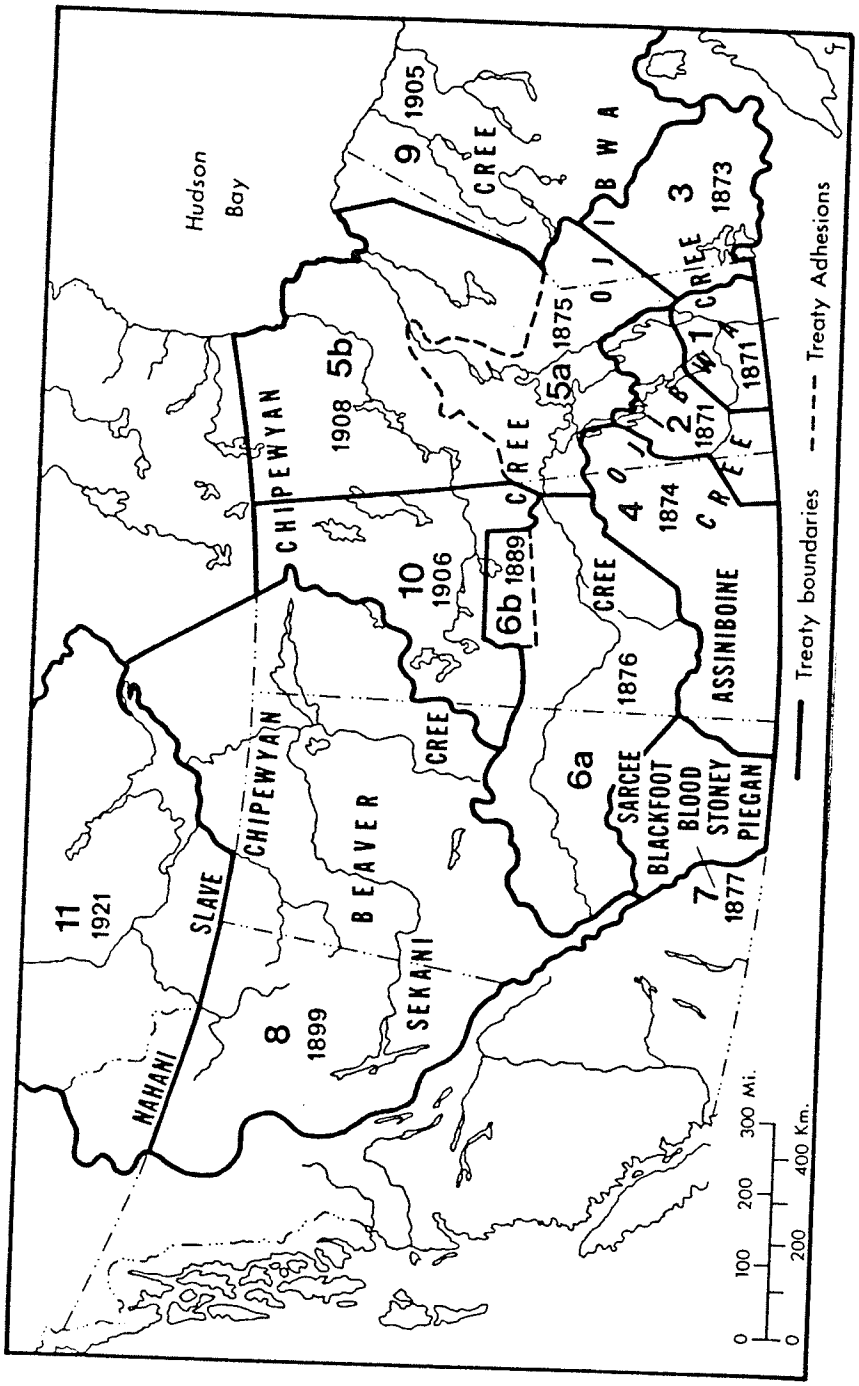



Figure 2: The numbered treaties of Western Canada

Source: G. Friesen. The Canadian Prairies: A History. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

Note: Treaty 6a should read 6. 9a and 9b are not marked.

MAP OF THE HIND EXPEDITION (1857-58)

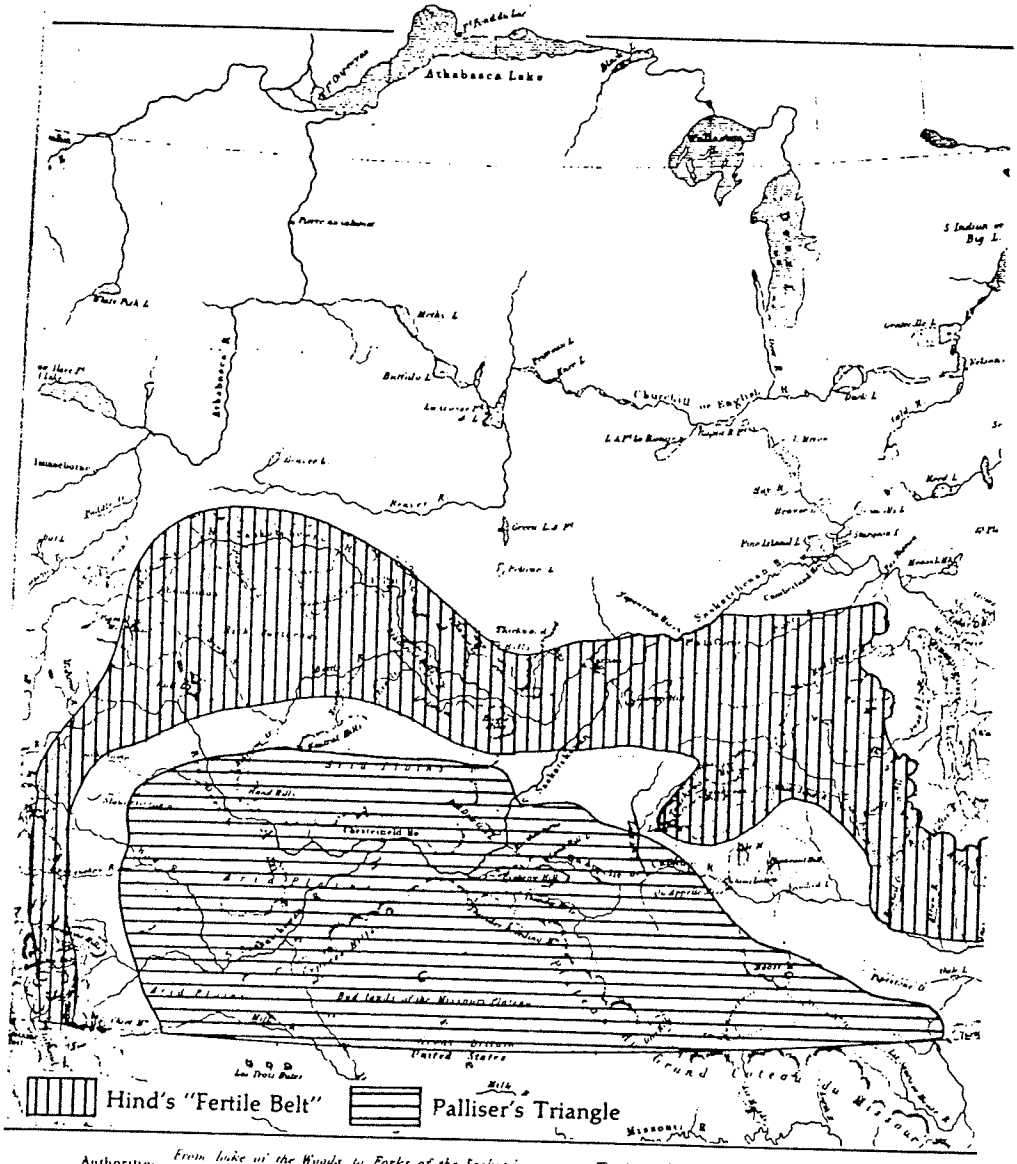



Figure 3: Source: John Archer. Saskatchewan: A History. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980. p. 49.

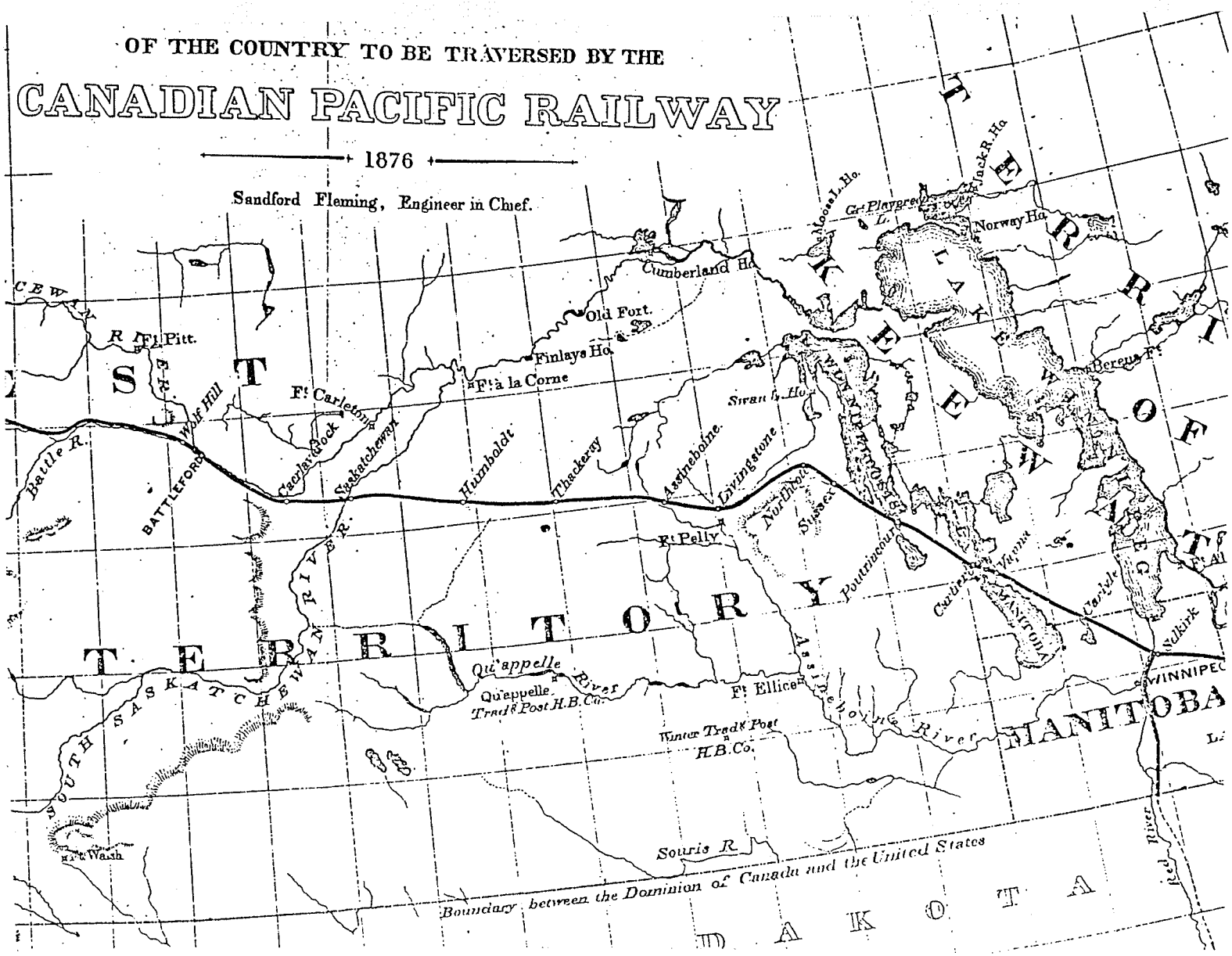



Figure 4: Source: Canada. House of Commons. Sessional Papers. Vol. 10, no. 6 (1876).

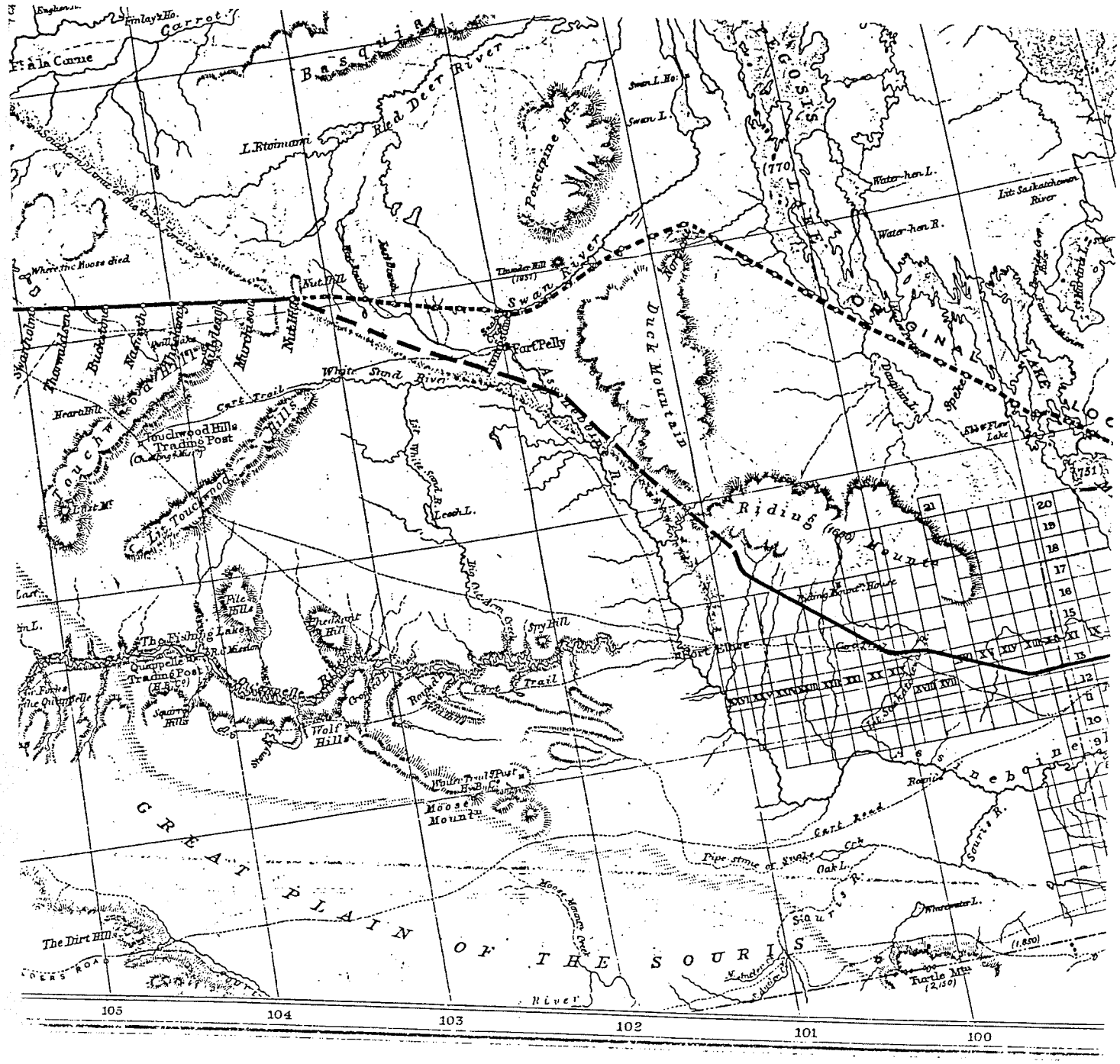



Figure 5: "Plan of part of the line of the CPR west of Lake Superior".

Source: CHC. Sessional Papers. Vol. 111, no 123 (1879).

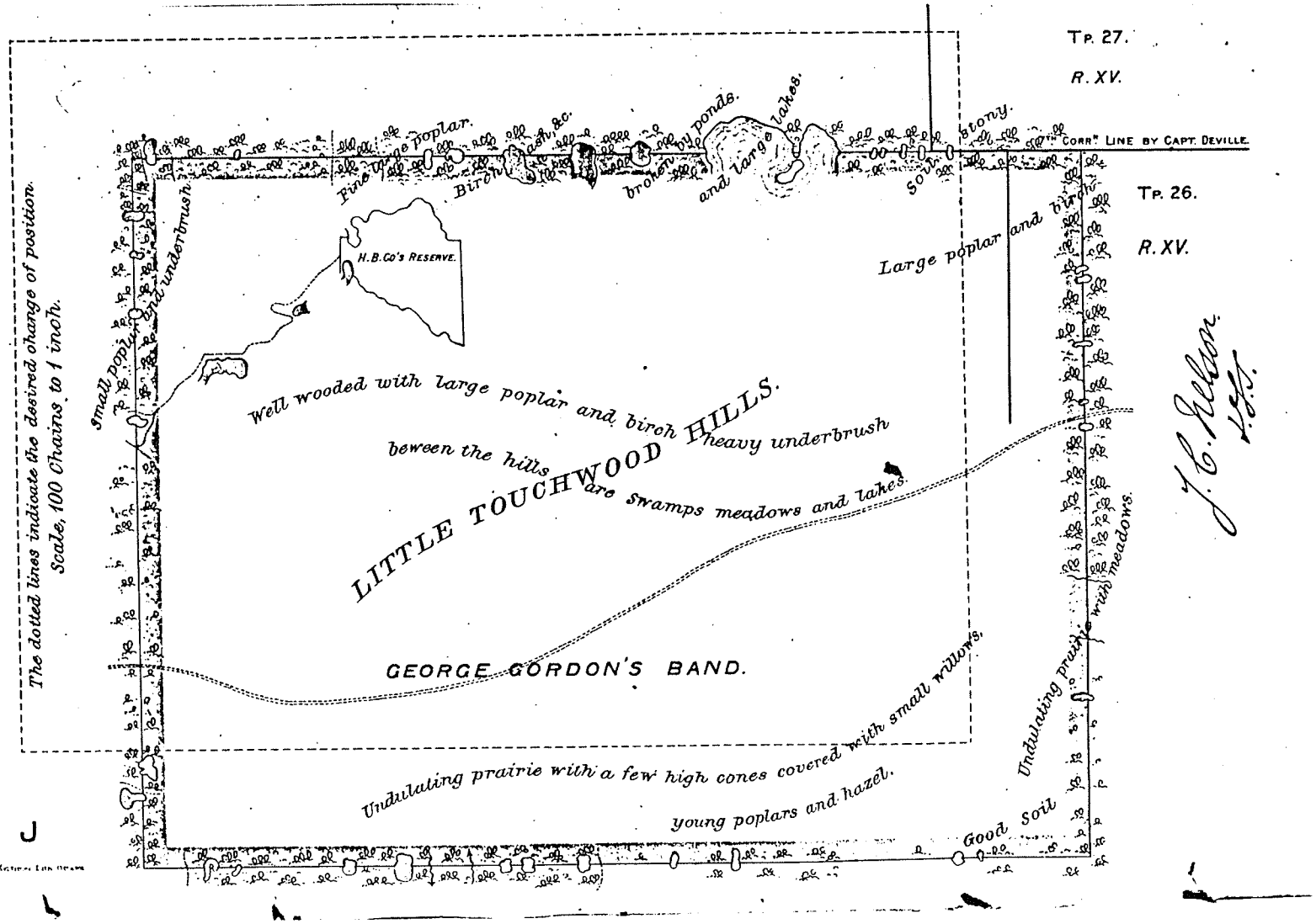



Figure 6: Gordon's Reserve, Touchwood Hills, 1881.

Source: CHC. Sessional Papers. Vol. 15, no. 6, (1881).

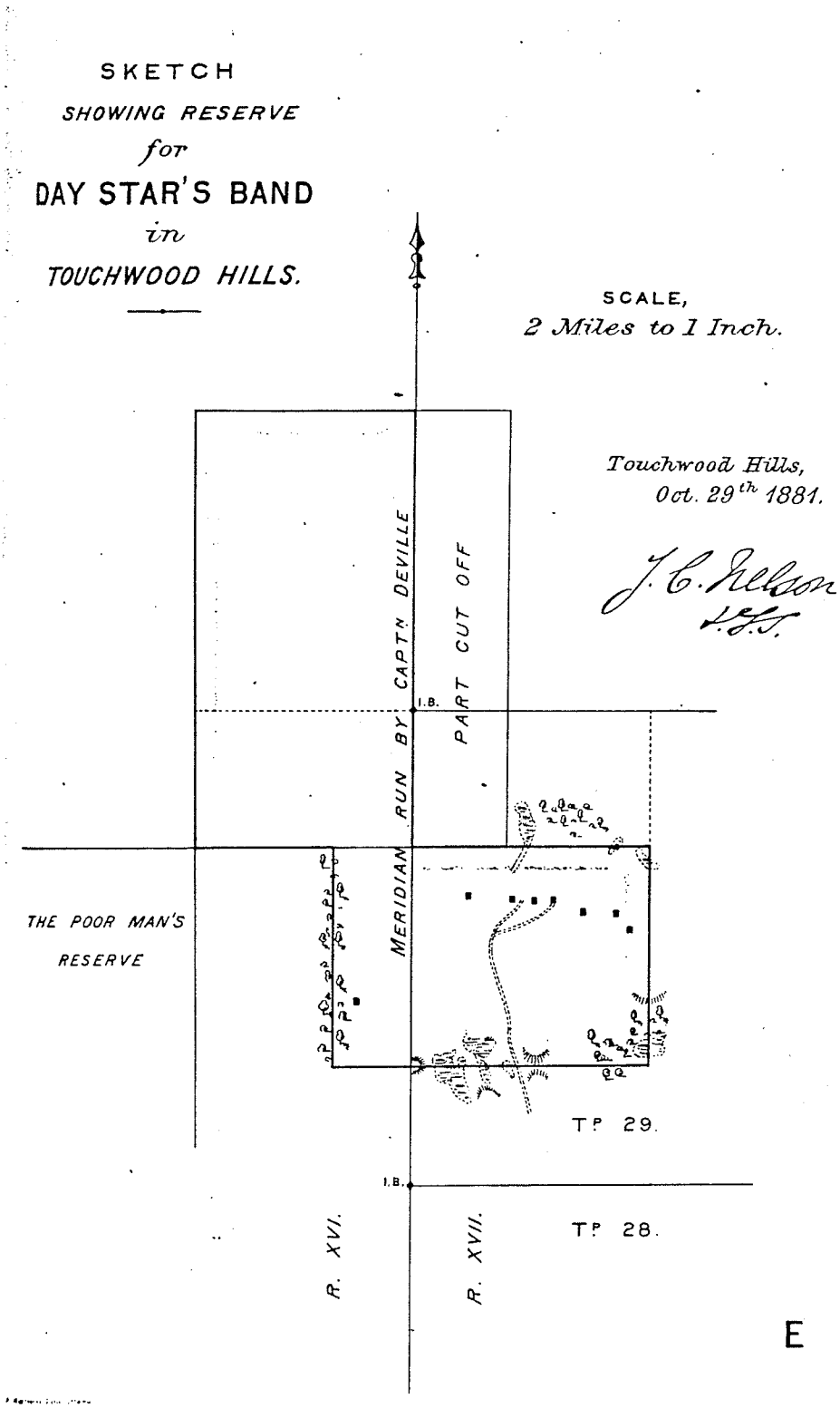



Figure 7: Source: CHC. Sessional Papers. Vol. 15, no. 6 (1881).

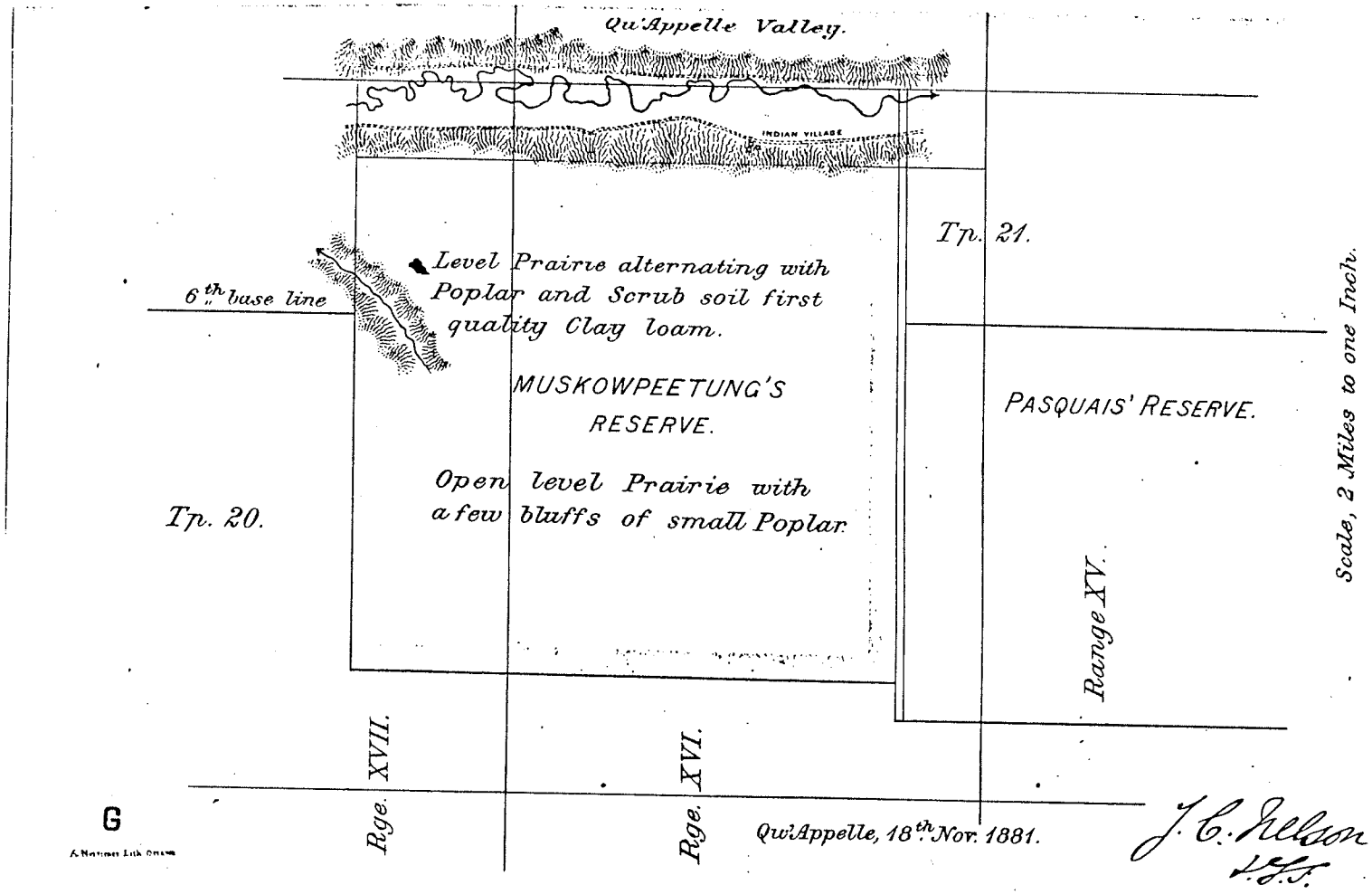



Figure 8: Source: CHC. Sessional Papers. Vol. 15, no. 6 (1881).

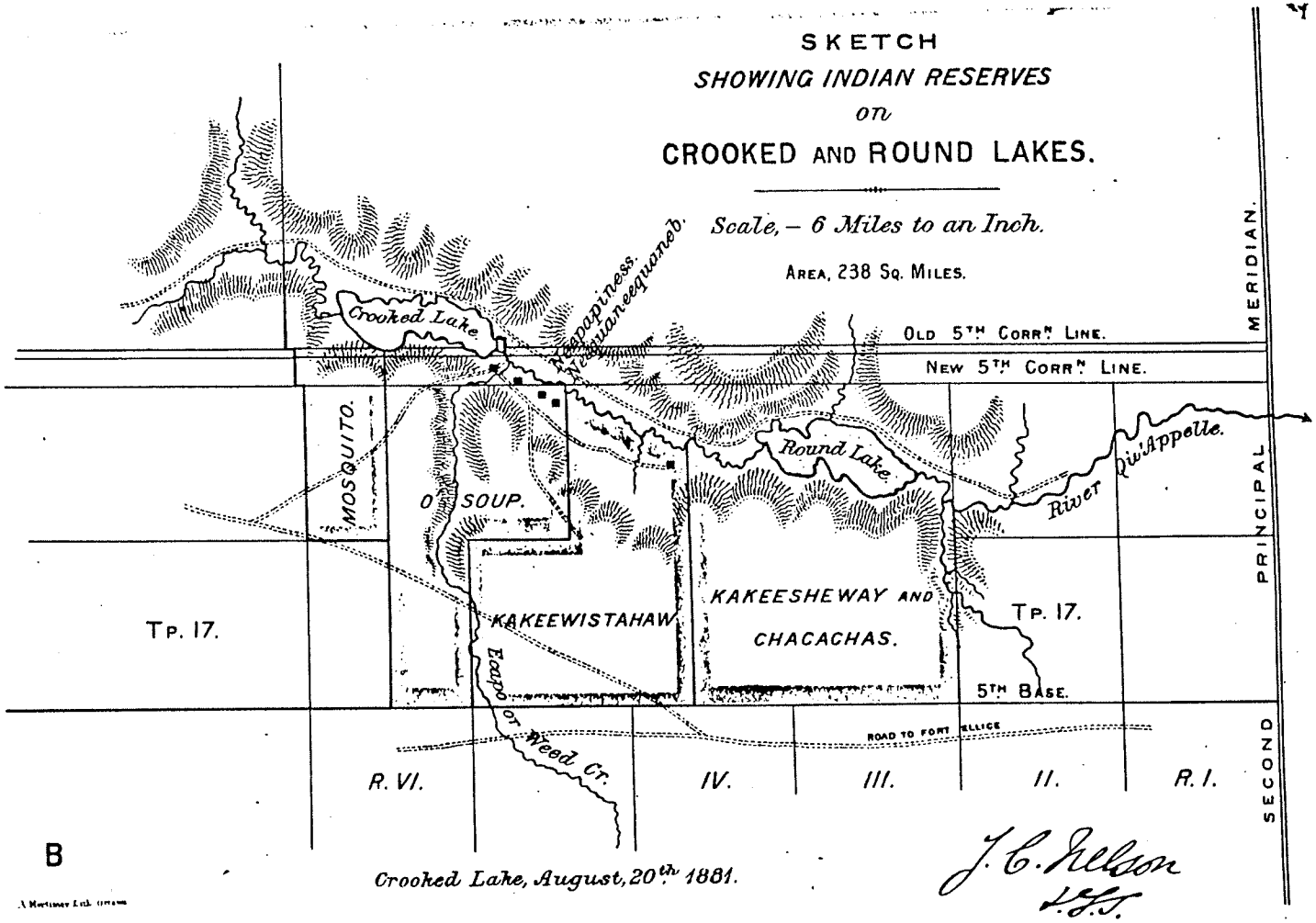
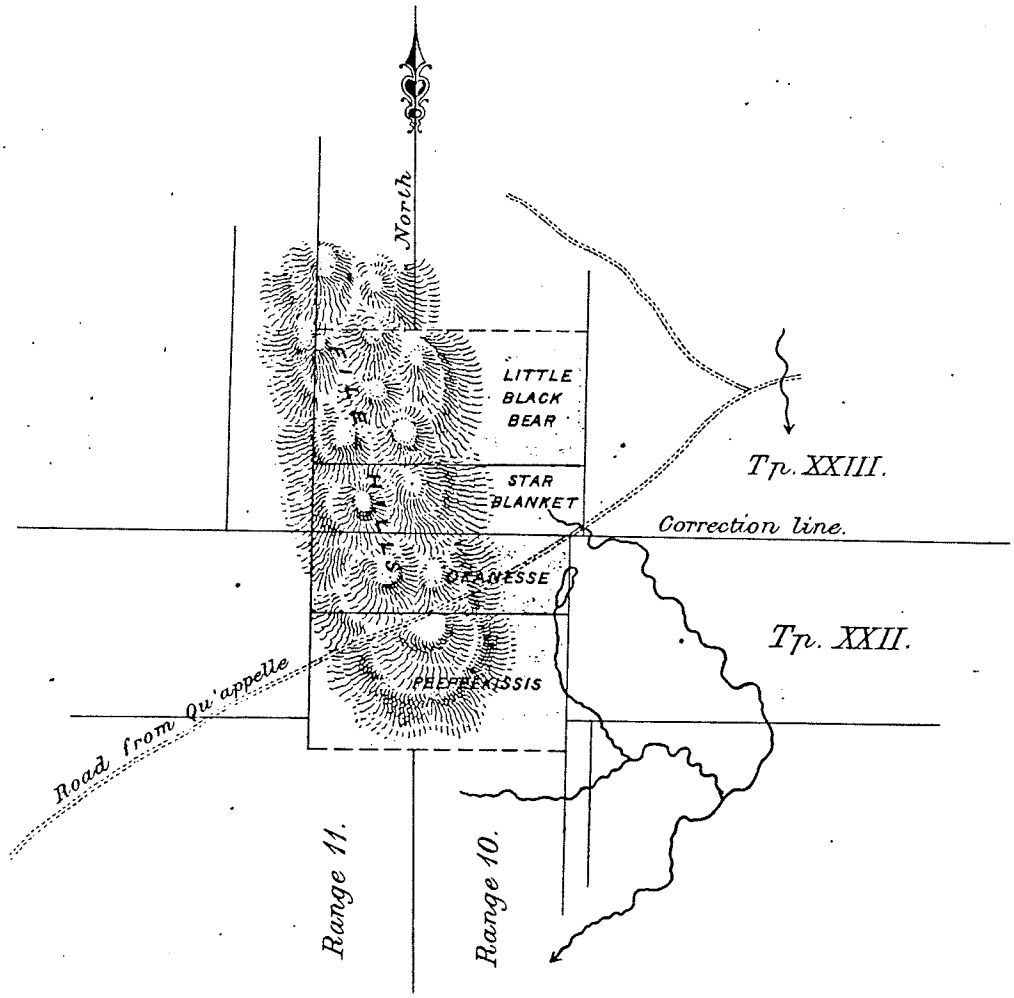



Figure 9: Source: CHC. Sessional Papers, Vol. 15, no. 6 (1881).




*Sketch Showing Reserves in the File Hills, the dotted lines are yet to be run.*

J. C. Nelson
D.L.S.

A. Mortimer Lith. Ottawa

Figure 10: Source: CHC. Sessional Papers. Vol. 15, no. 6 (1881).

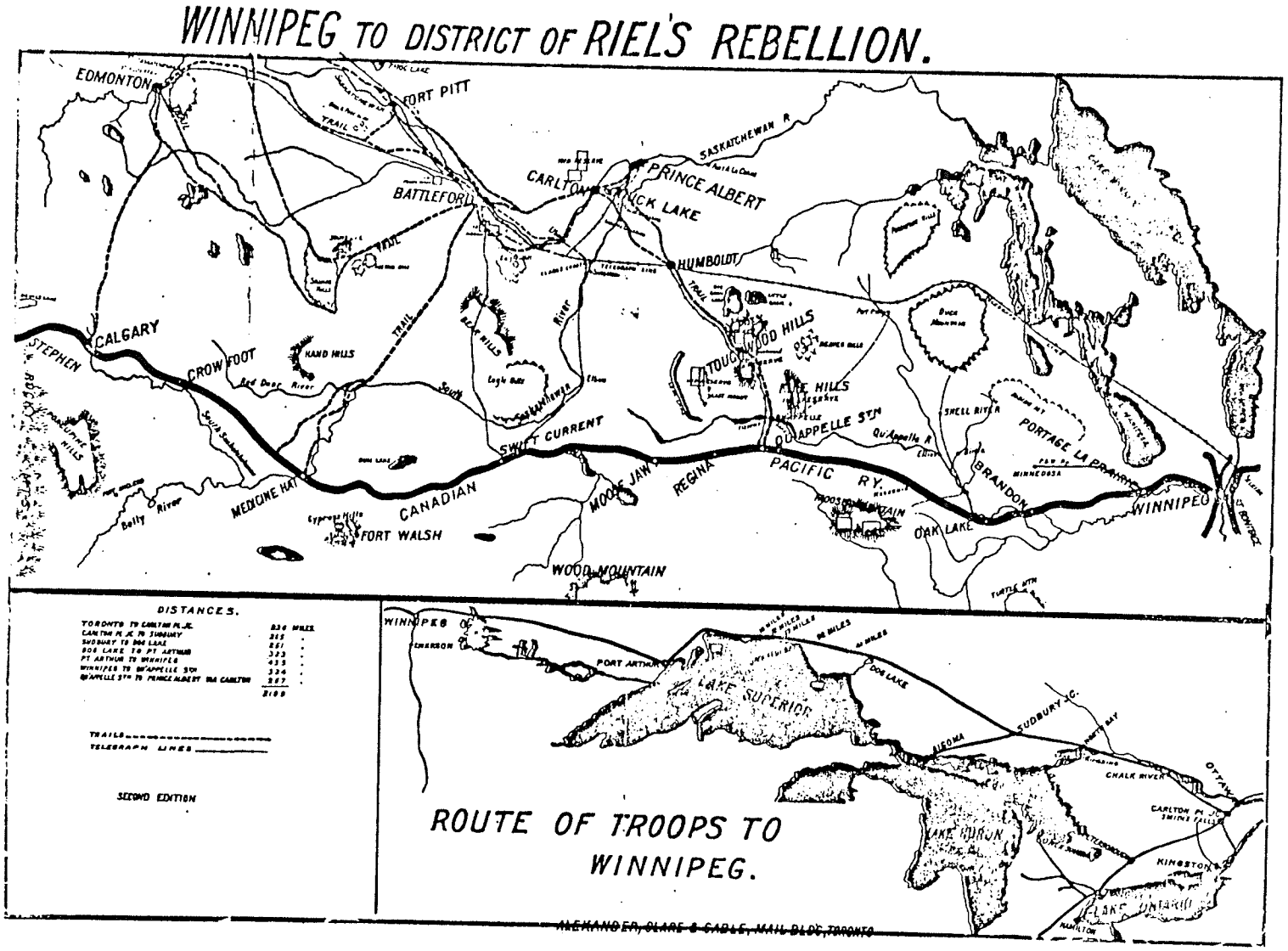



Figure 11: Source: Walter Hildebrandt. The Battle of Batoche: British Small Warfare and the Entrenched Métis. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1985, p.4.

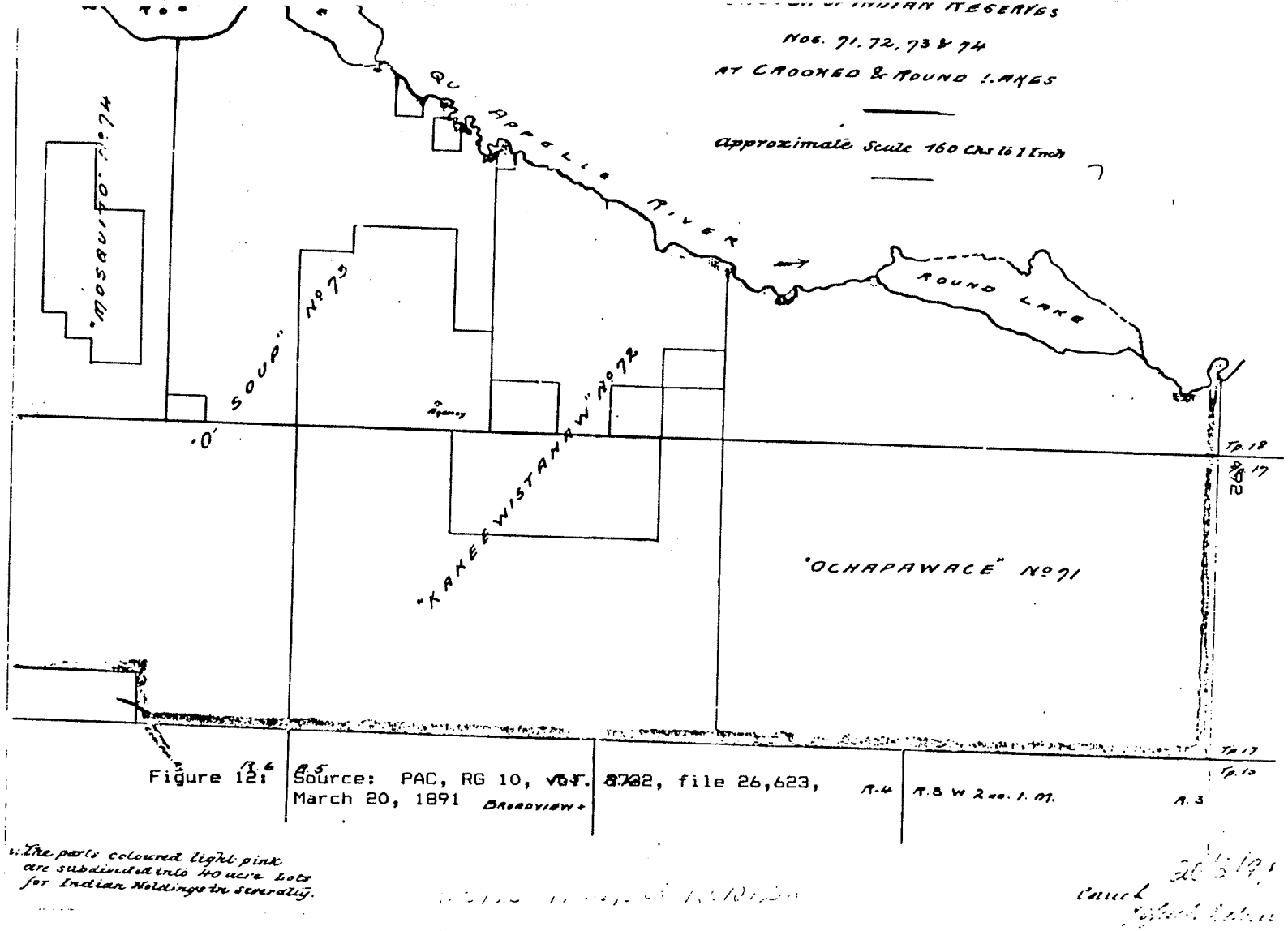



Figure 12: Source: PAC, RG 10, vol. 3732, file 26,623, March 20, 1891

1. The parts coloured light pink are subdivided into 40 acre Lots for Indian Holdings in severalty.



Figure 12: Source: PAC, RG 10, vol. 3732, file 26,623, March 20, 1891

TABLE 1

1884
Source: Canada House of Commons, Sessional Papers, vol. 17, no.4, pp. 192-205.

| | Population | Number of families farming | Number of families not farming | Acres under cultivation | Oxen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gordon | 229 | 22 | 22 | 115 | 5 |
| Muscowequan | 269 | 16 | 29 | 60 | 7 |
| Poor Man | 160 | 25 | 2 | 79 | 7 |
| Day Star | 97 | 13 | 9 | 67 | 7 |
| Pasquah | 273 | 33 | 39 | 189 | 28 |
| Muscowpetung | 182 | 23 | 21 | 68 | 13 |
| Ochapawace | 363 | 18 | 51 | 74 | 8 |
| Kakewistahaw | 248 | 12 | 37 | 55 | 8 |
| Cowessess | 285 | 16 | 54 | 86 | 18 |
| Sakemay | 138 | | | 17 | 6 |
| Little Black Bear | 141 | 13 | 16 | 47 | 6 |
| Star Blanket | 111 | 10 | 12 | 31 | 4 |
| Okanese | 82 | 9 | 12 | 41 | 6 |
| Peepeekeesis | 142 | 15 | 19 | 55 | 2 |

1890
(Touchwood Hills - 1889)
Source: Canada, House of Commons, Sessional Papers, vol. 24, no. 18 (1890), p.p. 250-279.

| | Approximate population | Acres broken | Acres under crop 1890 | Acres under crop 1889 | Acres fenced | Tons hay cut | Wheat sown | Wheat harvested (bush.) | Oats sown | Oats harvested (bush.) | Barley sown | Barley harvested (bush.) | Rye sown | Rye harvested (bush.) | Roots sown | Roots harvested (bush.) | Garden | Under loan: Horses | Under loan: Oxen | Private Property of Indians: Horses | Private Property of Indians: Oxen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **File Hills Agency** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Little Black Bear | 80 | | 68 | 60 | 70 | 100 | 50 | 250 | | | | | 12 | | 4 | 500 | 2 | | 12 | 30 | |
| Star Blanket | 47 | | 31 | 31 | 35 | 100 | 20 | 75 | | | | | 6 | | 4 | 500 | 2 | | 8 | 10 | |
| Okanees | 59 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 65 | 150 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 16 | 14 | |
| Peepeekeesis | 77 | 10 | 126 | 141 | 75 | 100 | 80 | 2,000 | 20 | 800 | | | 12 | 250 | 12 | 2,000 | 2 | | 17 | 15 | |
| Totals | 263 | 20 | 226 | 234 | 245 | 450 | 150 | 2,325 | 20 | 800 | | | 30 | 250 | 20 | 3,000 | 7 | | 53 | 69 | |
| **Crooked Lakes Agency** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ochapawace | 146 | 250 | 128 | 128 | 240 | 260 | 95 | 1,100 | 2 | 32 | | | 10 | 58 | 18 | 1,384 | 2 | | 31 | 25 | 4 |
| Kakewistahaw | 124 | 280 | 118 | 105 | 380 | 180 | 87 | 1,335 | | | 4 | 30 | 12 | 48 | 10 | 870 | 5 | | 27 | 24 | |
| Cowessess | 150 | 580 | 224 | 207 | 740 | 160 | 170 | 2,335 | 23 | 625 | | | 12 | 130 | 13 | 1,230 | 5 | | 25 | 43 | 4 |
| Sakimay | 192 | 210 | 99 | 134 | 600 | 150 | 85 | 1,142 | | | | | 4 | 50 | 6 | 591 | 3 | | 23 | 50 | |
| Totals | 612 | 1,320 | 569 | 574 | 1,960 | 750 | 437 | 5,932 | 25 | 657 | 4 | 30 | 38 | 286 | 37 | 4,075 | 15 | | 106 | 142 | 8 |
| **Muscowpetung Agency** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Piapot | 216 | 315 | 126 | 136 | 320 | 450 | 91 | 1,330 | | | 9 | 20 | | | 22 | 1,956 | | | 43 | 105 | |
| Muscowpetung | 104 | 122 | 63 | 94 | 97 | 337 | 52 | 541 | | | | | | | 7 | 311 | | | 29 | 32 | |
| Pasquah | 124 | 157 | 96 | 124 | 200 | 300 | 77 | 1,580 | 2 | 102 | 6 | 87 | | | 9 | 926 | | | 39 | 70 | |
| Totals | 444 | 594 | 285 | 354 | 617 | 1,087 | 220 | 3,451 | 2 | 102 | 15 | 107 | | | 38 | 3,193 | | | 111 | 207 | |

Touchwood Hills Agency 1889 Returns - 1890 not available.
Source: Sessional Papers, vol. 23, no. 12. (1889), pp 182-189.

| | | | (1888) | (1889) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Muscowequan | 160 | 20 | 96 | 72 | 100 | 250 | 70 | 175 | 8 | | | | | | 17 | 120 | | | 17 | 15 | 1 |
| Gordon | 159 | 69 | 132 | 94 | 160 | 350 | 101 | 300 | 7 | 4 | | | | | 19 | 150 | | | 21 | 22 | 5 |
| Day Star | 81 | 43 | 24 | 46 | | 160 | 12 | 20 | | | | | | | 11 | 42 | | | 14 | 15 | |
| Poor Man | 117 | 93 | 85 | 65 | 93 | 150 | 70 | 160 | 4 | | | | | | 10 | 45 | | | 15 | 20 | |
| Totals | 517 | 225 | 337 | 277 | 353 | 910 | 253 | 655 | 19 | | | | | | 57 | 357 | | | 67 | 72 | 6 |

TABLE 3

1897
Source: Canada. House of Commons, Sessional Papers, vol. 32, no. 14 (1897), pp. 436-451

| | Resident Indian Population | Cultivated (including made pasturage) | Acres fenced | Ploughs | Harrows | Seed drills | Mowers | Reapers | Threshing machines | Wagons | Work oxen | Steer | Milk cows | Young stock | Horses | Wheat | | Oats | | Barley | | Roots | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Acres sown | Bush harvested | Acres sown | Bush harvested | Acres sown | Bush harvested | Acres sown | Bush harvested |
| Touchwood Hills Agency | 850 | 333 | 2,429 | 64 | 21 | - | 4 | 1 | - | 17 | 57 | 206 | 230 | 312 | 1 | 86 | 358 | 111 | 1,436 | 31 | 144 | 39 | 4,879 |
| Muscowpetung Agency | 715 | 315 | 700 | 80 | 44 | 2 | 27 | 4 | 4 | 67 | 97 | 124 | 110 | 159 | 551 | 231 | 4,955 | 24 | 833 | 8 | 70 | 49 | 7,012 |
| File Hills Agency | 280 | 165 | 165 | 45 | 18 | 2 | 17 | 1 | 2 | 22 | 45 | 142 | 212 | 145 | 95 | - | - | 70 | 1,300 | 22 | 380 | 27 | 1,995 |
| Crooked Lakes Agency | 636 | 697 | 1,280 | 93 | 42 | 11 | 27 | 11 | 3 | 49 | 96 | 102 | 195 | 187 | 231 | 491 | 9,032 | 139 | 2,983 | - | - | 65 | 4,864 |

TABLE 4

Indian Reserve Land Losses

| Reserve | Original Area (acres) | Per Capita acreage 1900 | Area, 1928 (acres) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pasquah | 38,496 | 258 | 22,141 |
| Muscowpetung | 38,080 | 401 | 20,123 |
| Piapot | 34,560 | 203 | 16,755 |
| Kakewistahaw | 46,720 | 412 | 13,404 |
| Cowessess | 49,920 | 300 | 29,083 |
| Ochapawace | 52,864 | 482 | 34,624 |
| Muscowequan | 24,256 | 153 | 16.423 |
| Poor Man | 27,200 | 238 | 18,934 |
| Little Black Bear | 27,760 | 425 | 17,055 |

Source: Stewart Raby, "Indian Land Surrenders in Southern Saskatchewan", The Canadian Geographer, 17, no. 1 (1973), p. 39.

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- Department of the Interior Records.
- David Laird Letterbooks.
- Sir John A. Macdonald Papers.
- Hayter Reed Papers.

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